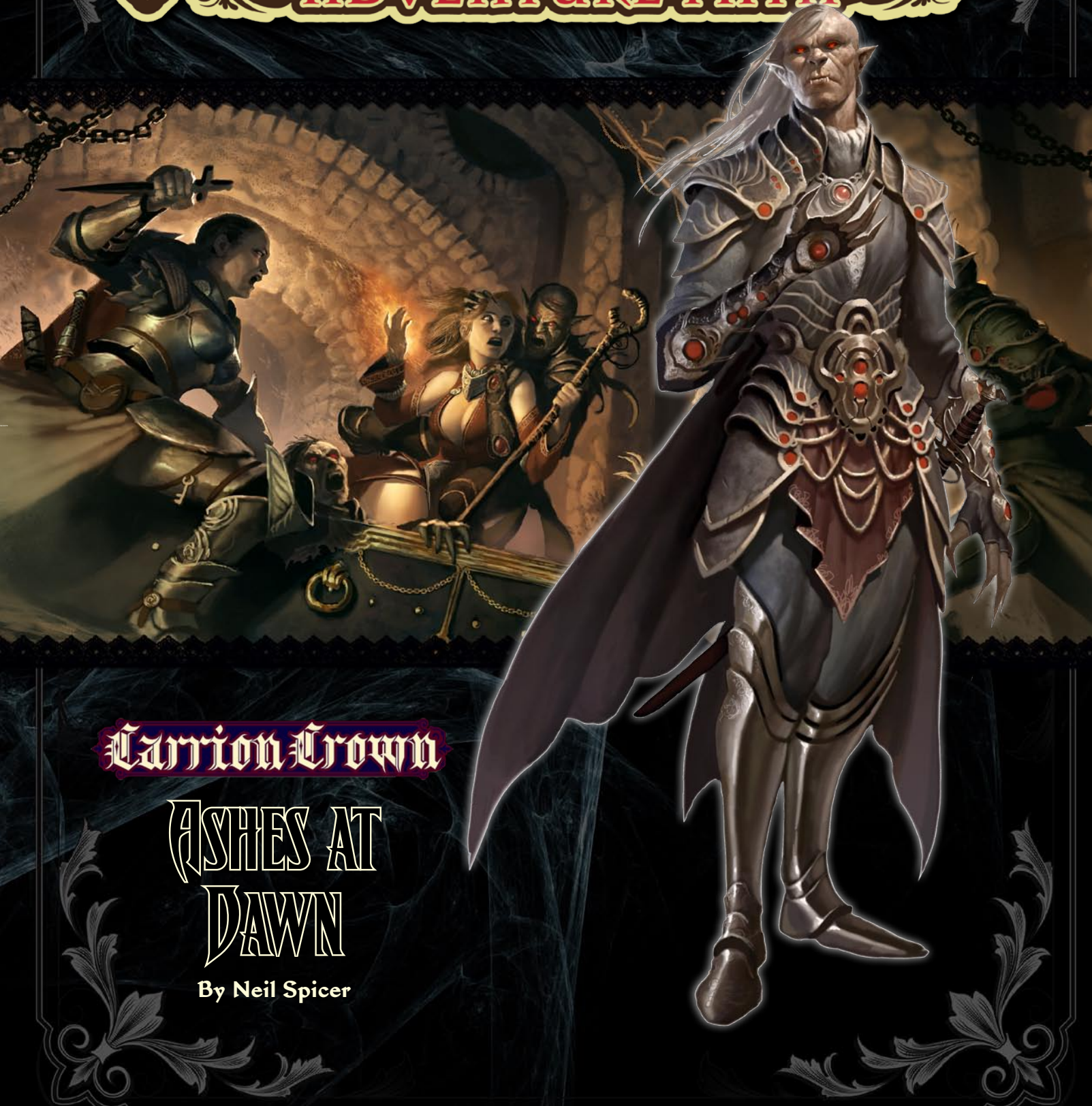


# PATHFINDER

## ADVENTURE PATH™



**Carrion Crown**

ASHES AT  
DAWN

By Neil Spicer



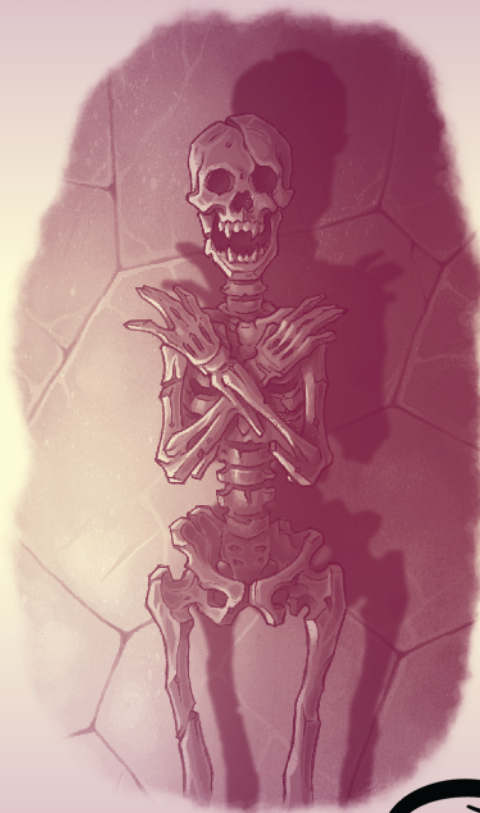
## Castle Kronquist

Amid the brambles of the Keldenwood loom the dreaded spires of Castle Kronquist. During the reign of the Whispering Tyrant, the vampire general Malyas imposed the lich's cruel order upon Ustalav, his merciless regency the source of many tales of atrocities. While the vampire lord was slain during the Shining Crusade, his body was never destroyed and his remote citadel never toppled. Although officially the fortress is just another ruin on the Odranto border, the people of Ardagh claim that something still lurks within Castle Kronquist, something that counts the midnight hour of every new moon with the tolling of ominous bells.



## The Vampire Afterlife

Vampires are notoriously interested in the fates they might face should they be destroyed, many swearing themselves to deities and fiends uniquely interested in their kind. While Urgathoa is chief among these powers, other forces tempt the dark souls of these undead. From her home on the Abyss, Zura, the Vampire Queen, encourages her undead followers to glut their thirst and sow destruction among the living. Yet amid the Hellish realms of Malebolge sprawl the catacombs known as the Revenant Court, where the Infernal Duke Lorcan and the Blood Emperor Ruithvein court the most insidious of vampiric souls in an eternal subtle war for souls and the perfect resurrection.





ADVENTURE PATH • PART 5 of 6

# ASHES AT DAWN

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## ADVENTURE PATH™

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“Ashes at Dawn” is a Pathfinder Adventure Path scenario designed for four 11th-level characters.  
By the end of this adventure, characters should reach 13th level.

This product makes use of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery 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](http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/prd).

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## Carrion Crown



# Bloodsuckers

This is the most frightening volume in the Carrion Crown Adventure Path. Well, for me at least, because now it's time to see if I'm a liar.

We'd been talking vaguely about Carrion Crown since PaizoCon 2010, when someone on the messageboards eventually hit us with what seemed to me to be a very obvious question: "Why would I help the vampires?" I understand this sort of question when all the details about a campaign's plot are unreleased, abbreviated, or still forming. But as we weren't ready or even able to release a lot of details yet, my only answer was essentially, "They have something the PCs want, putting characters into a 'You scratch our backs and we'll scratch yours' situation."

For a certain subset of those in the discussion, this was not an acceptable answer.

"But vampires are evil!" "My party won't work for the undead!" "I'm a paladin!" Wah, wah, wah!

The world's a hard place, and even harder when there're *fireballs* and zombies! Toughen up!

I wrote and deleted responses running the gamut of diplomatic shades, but I never posted anything with quite that tone. Most frustratingly, after considering and discussing the concern for a few days, I was forced to admit there was some validity to it. So I told folks we had top men on the job—I was planning to write it myself, after all—and assured them that, come volume #47, they'd be pleased with the outcome.

Well, you're holding the outcome in your hands.

You don't have to dig deep through Paizo's backlist to catch the drift of my tastes. In short, I also always rooted for Skeletor over He-Man and the Joker over Batman. So obviously, like many GMs, I like the bad guys, I like overwhelming odds, and I like shades of gray and seeing the heroes forced beyond their comfort zones.



## FOREWORD

But some folks like their adventures in black and white—the good guys are good, the monsters are bad. That sounds simplistic, but in a game where factors like alignment might be viewed as cementing one's moral core into a two-letter abbreviation, why shouldn't it be that easy? On top of that, there are game rules built upon being able to place every character and creature into one of nine ethical compartments, granting real benefits or penalties based on which quadrant one falls into.

And most of the time this works just fine.

As is typically the case, though, things get hazy as soon as they get into matters of personal interpretation. Let's take the cases most likely to be drummed up by this particular adventure. Is it evil (or against the tenants of her faith) for a worshiper of Pharasma to do anything aside from launch into a crusade against the vampires of Caliphaz? Or, even more basically: vampires are evil, so does my paladin lose his abilities by not immediately attacking them?

In both cases, I'd say no. While neither group should be happy about the situation, when their choices are a) prevent someone from murdering evil monsters to stop a cult from recreating the greatest villain Golarion has ever known, or b) don't, and thus passively allow this unholy resurrection, it'll be up to them to decide which threat is more dire and what's in their faith's best interests. But this is where it's actually up to a GM to make the call, not me. While paladins have a proviso in their code that allows them to temporarily fraternize with evil characters in the pursuit of a greater good, it's the Pharasmians that make things a little hazier. Pharasma hates undead, and her church seeks their destruction, but does that mean that one of her faith has to go on an undead killing spree when faced with the options above? I'd say that Pharasma, being a goddess with insight and foresight beyond any mortal, would understand the decision of one of her followers to temporarily ally with enemies to stave off a proven greater threat.

Again, though, it's not my call, it's a choice for the adventure's GM. As a group's GM is the final authority on how the rules work in his game and how interpretive elements interact with his group and campaign, it's up to him to decide whether or not characters can take the occasional walk on the dark side, and what the ramifications of doing so might be.

With all that in mind, once it became clear I wasn't going to be able to personally fulfill my promises, I started looking for someone who could. After he had just finished doing such an awesome job with *Pathfinder Adventure Path #42: Sanctum of the Serpent God*, Neil Spicer seemed like the man for the job. So I snagged Neil at Gen Con and in the Marriott lobby gave him the sales pitch on writing this adventure. He was all about it, but I told him right up front that there was a pretty huge catch: he was going to have to write this adventure in such a way that the players could

## ON THE COVER

The mastermind behind Caliphaz's coterie of vampiric elite, Luvick Siervage, rises from his coffin to grace this month's cover. You'll face this ancient vampire lord—or not—in this month's adventure, "Ashes at Dawn."

ally with the vampires or go through and slaughter them all. Oh, and he was getting no extra space or concessions to do so. Kind of a tall order. We spent the better part of an hour talking about how we could even do that, but in the end he accepted the challenge and headed off to put together an undead murder mystery.

You'll find the results on the following pages. Ultimately, I'm quite pleased and think Neil did a great job. The adventure definitely assumes that the PCs are at least temporarily playing nice with the vampires, but even if they don't, it—and, more importantly, the campaign—can still progress if an overzealous do-gooder launches a crusade. But whether you make nice with the vampire nobles of Caliphaz or wear your stakes down to nubs, that's all up to you.

## DANCES FOR THE DEAD

These days, vampire movies and their soundtracks are easy to find. Finding good ones useful to your roleplaying, however, is another matter. Here are a few.

Bell, Joshua: *The Red Violin*  
 D'Ambrosio, Marco: *Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust*  
 Giacchino, Michael: *Let Me In*  
 Glass, Philip: *Dracula*  
 Goldenthal, Elliot: *Interview with the Vampire*  
 Jones, Trevor: *From Hell*  
 Kid, Jesper: *Assassin's Creed 2*  
 Kilar, Wojciech: *Bram Stoker's Dracula*  
 Söderqvist, Johan: *Let the Right One In*  
 Tartini, Giuseppe: *Violin Sonata in G minor*  
 Zimmer, Hans: *Sherlock Holmes*



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## Carion Crown



## Rises at Dawn

**A** hidden world lies beneath the streets of Ustalav's storied capital, one buried and consigned to oblivion beneath layers of history and progress. But these subterranean byways are far from empty, home to a forgotten host who shun the light of the sun and hold their own court in sumptuous halls beneath the unknowing feet of the city's citizens. For centuries, these faded remnants of past glory have kept their own counsel, proud and aloof, but now they stir once more. And those who wander Caliphas's fog-shrouded night had best beware, lest they fall victim to the bloodlust of these silent killers.

—Josephine Havelock, *The Secret History of Caliphas*





## ASHES AT DAWN

### ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Few vampires adhere to the Whispering Way, a philosophy whose chief tenet espouses the complete transformation of Golarion into a world of undead. For though the vampires of Ustalav certainly meet that requirement, their quality of life and primary sustenance depends on the blood of the living. Thus, if successful, the Whispering Way would leave no one for vampires to feed upon, relegating every vampire to an anguished existence of eternal thirst and little to slake it.

At the culmination of the Shining Crusade and the defeat of Tar-Baphon, several vampire clans recognized this symbiotic relationship with the living and turned their backs on the Whispering Tyrant, making no attempt to rescue him from his prison in Gallowspire. Instead, they recalled their armies, melting away into the dark holds of Ustalav to form their own unholy courts.

When Adivion Adrissant began developing his theory for recreating the Whispering Tyrant, he meticulously studied Ustalav's ancient history—both before and after the Shining Crusade—and learned of the vampire clans' treachery. Anticipating their probable opposition to his goal, Adivion devised a plot to strike at the vampires first, slaying their most intractable members and giving way to a younger, more malleable generation that Adivion could persuade to support the Whispering Way. But to carry out his plan, he needed an ally within vampire society itself—someone to target and betray their most obstinate elders—and an incentive to sway the turncoat to his cause.

Adivion's inquiries into the mysteries of necromancy soon brought him into contact with twin witches named Aisa and Hetna Dublesse, living in nearby Barstoi. These sisters had found an undead blood knight in the ruined mountains of Virlych, bringing him under their control through potent charms and hexes. Enticing them with promises of lichdom and power beyond that of the hag who mentored them, Adivion recruited the witches into his efforts. In exchange, they agreed to perfect an addictive blood-based drug, an ambrosia that Adivion could use to tempt and arm his vampire traitor, using the essence of the ever-bleeding undead knight as a secret ingredient. The witches succeeded beyond Adivion's wildest dreams, creating a potent *bloodbrew elixir* capable of temporarily negating the control the vampire elders wield over their spawn.

Adivion then turned his attention to locating a suitable traitor, finding his accomplice in a Varisian tailor named Radvir Giovanni. A relatively lesser vampire, Radvir languished under the thrall of his ancient master, Luvick Siervage, the leader of the vampire clans of Caliphass and the primary general responsible for abandoning Tar-Baphon after the Shining Crusade. Adivion invited Radvir to his estate to share his vision with the vampire, appealing to the tailor's vanity and desire to free himself from Luvick. Adivion promised Radvir a grand future in

### ADVANCEMENT TRACK

Characters should be 11th level at the start of "Ashes At Dawn," and reach 12th level by the time they track down the vampire murderer Radvir Giovanni. After their final confrontation with the witches of Barstoi at the Abbey of Sante-Lymirin at the end of the adventure, the PCs should be 13th level. "Ashes At Dawn" uses the medium XP track.

the lich-king's undead court upon the Tyrant's return, and presented him with an amphora of the witches' brew. The *bloodbrew* temporarily granted Radvir free will, and he was able to sense a wider world of possibilities without his master's control.

Pledging himself to Adivion, Radvir returned to Caliphass with the *bloodbrew* and instructions to initiate a nightly reign of terror—not against the living citizens of Ustalav, but against the vampires of Caliphass. Not only did Radvir's nightly slayings of his too-comfortable kin allow him to eliminate those who might stand in Adivion's way, but as more prominent vampires fell to his carefully orchestrated murders, Radvir was able to climb the social ladder, eventually securing a full seat on the vampires' ruling council. This unfettered access to his master's inner circle also allowed Radvir to forge false evidence blaming the murders on the human nobles of Caliphass and find a patsy to blame for the crimes—an ancient vampire nosferatu named Ramoska Arkminos. At the same time, Radvir has been fomenting unrest among the younger vampires by stirring their bloodlust with the addictive *bloodbrew*. From their ranks, he aims to build a new army to aid the reborn Whispering Tyrant while he supplants Luvick himself.

Of course, the witches of Barstoi have their own reasons for aiding the Whispering Way, and it has little to do with Tar-Baphon's return or Adivion's promises. Years ago, Aisa and Hetna belonged to a notorious coven under an annis hag named Oothi, who mentored them in the ways of witchcraft. When Oothi was captured a few years ago by adventurers and sentenced to burning at the stake, she used a *swarm skin* spell to separate her flesh from her bones, transforming into several spider swarms to escape her execution. Oothi rejoined Aisa and Hetna, intending to have them retrieve her bones once the townsfolk had discarded them so she could re-form her body. The citizens of Barstoi proved especially superstitious, however, and dispersed the witch hag's bones across Ustalav to prevent her return. Since then, Oothi's intellect has remained trapped in the spider swarms while she urges her proteges to reassemble her scattered skeleton.

## Carrion Crown

Aisa and Hetna have already rebuilt much of the hag's skeleton one bone at a time. But they still lack their mentor's skull, which they've determined lies somewhere in the Abbey of Sante-Lymirin on the outskirts of Caliphass. Recently converted to a winery, the abbey actually belongs to Countess Carmilla Caliphass. The aging countess is well known for her obsession with maintaining her youthful beauty, so the witches approached Carmilla, describing their unique blood alchemy as means of developing an elixir of youth. Dissatisfied with the alchemists she had previously hired to research the secret of eternal youth, Carmilla presented their work to Aisa and Hetna instead, including a process for mixing *sun orchid elixir* with vampire "humors"—the bodily fluids that keep vampires ageless. Aisa and Hetna readily agreed to continue this research in exchange for sole use of the abbey, using the countess's assignment as a cover for their own search for Oothi's skull, the continued production of Adivion's *bloodbrew*, and the disposal of Radvir's victims. After draining every possible fluid from each vampire corpse delivered by Radvir, the sisters lay the bodies out in different parts of the city so the morning sun can burn them to ash. Both human night watchmen and Luvick's vampires have discovered these "murders," giving rise to fear and paranoia among both the living and the dead in the streets and salons of Caliphass.

### ADVENTURE SUMMARY

On the trail of the Whispering Way, the PCs journey to the city of Caliphass. Arriving in the capital, the PCs contact the local chapter of the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye to secure the organization's assistance in catching up to the Whispering Way. While they wait for an audience with the Order, the PCs become aware of a spate of murders occurring in the city, serial killings that seem to be targeting vampires. The PCs eventually determine the location of the cult's hideout, only to find it abandoned. But they meet an unlikely ally there—the half-vampire dhampir Quinley Basdel. Quinley offers to introduce the PCs to Luvick Siervage, the leader of the city's vampires, who can help the PCs find the Whispering Way in exchange for solving the vampire murders.

The PCs venture into the decadent society of the Vampire Underground, hidden in the subterranean cellars beneath Caliphass, where they can question (or slay) the vampires, ultimately discovering that the vampire tailor Radvir Giovanni is behind the killings. Confronting the vampire in his upscale tailor shop, the PCs learn of Radvir's alliance with the witches of Barstoi at the Abbey of Sante-Lymirin.

After an assault on the monastery, the PCs learn the witches have brewed an entirely different potion unrelated to the components being gathered by the Whispering Way. Ultimately, the PCs discover that the cult has relocated

to Virlych, and have kidnapped Count Lucinean Galdana of Amaans. Rescuing the count from the Whispering Way's stronghold sets the stage for the campaign's exciting conclusion in "Shadows of Gallowspire."

## PART ONE: CALIPHASS

After recovering *Raven's Head* and information about the Dark Rider's next destination in "Wake of the Watcher," the PCs should begin their journey from Illmarsh to Caliphass, following the winding coast road along Avalon Bay, through Thrushmoor and Vauntil. The adventure assumes the PCs travel by horseback, but they can also use other means to reach the city, such as a boat, flying, teleportation, or other magic.

### THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN (CR 12)

This encounter occurs a day's ride from Caliphass. If the PCs are using an alternative mode of travel to get to the city, the dullahan will catch up with them eventually. Unless the PCs take steps to hide themselves and *Raven's Head* with magic such as *mage's private sanctum*, *nondetection*, or *obscure object*, the headless rider relentlessly tracks them down, whether on the road to Caliphass or on the city's streets. If the headless rider catches up to the PCs within the city, this encounter should take place before the PCs enter the Esoteric Vaults (area A13).

---

The road narrows as it passes between two hillsides topped with skeletal trees looming to the east and west. Just ahead, a stone bridge spans a wide, fast-moving stream with stone sentinels in stag-antlered helms guarding each end.

---

**Creatures:** A headless figure astride a dark horse with flaming hooves stands in the middle of the bridge. This is Barliss Rask, one of the Dark Riders from Feldgrau and one of Adivion Adrissant's most trusted agents. After successfully delivering the *Carrion Crown* components he was entrusted with to Adivion in Caliphass, Rask was transformed into a dullahan, an undead headless horseman, as his reward. When the second rider did not return from Illmarsh, Adivion arranged for the casting of several divinations to learn his fate. Realizing that *Raven's Head* was now in the hands of the PCs, Adivion ordered Rask to retrieve the mace and discourage the PCs from meddling further in his business. Since riding the coast in search of them, he's already added several heads to his saddle, a fact he enjoys highlighting in an attempt to intimidate and demoralize his opponents.

Rask rides a nightmare named Shenaleure, summoned by a *lesser planar ally* spell to aid Rask. Three dire ghouls, undead wolves with sickly gray skin and rotting, matted fur, also accompany Rask, hiding on either side of



# ASHES AT DAWN

the road approaching the bridge. Now these minions wait along the Old Coast Road, ready to ambush the PCs on their way to Caliphass. Although Adivion only charged him with retrieving *Raven's Head* and scaring off the PCs, Rask relishes his newfound power and is eager to fight.

As the PCs approach, Rask hails them, demanding that they abandon their interest in the affairs of the Whispering Way and turn over *Raven's Head* in exchange for letting them go. During the course of their conversation, Rask attempts to learn the PCs' names through formal introductions so he can later target them more effectively with his death's calling ability. A DC 15 Sense Motive check easily sees through his ruse, as Rask has no intention of letting them live. If the PCs offer to hand over the mace, Rask instructs them to throw it to the ground, maintaining his distance so he can prepare a charge. Whether the PCs cooperate or not, he soon spurs Shenaleure and attacks, calling on the dire ghouls to come out of hiding.

**BARLISS RASK** CR 10  
XP 9,600

Male variant dullahan fighter 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 111)  
LE Medium undead  
**Init** +3; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; Perception +20  
**Aura** frightful presence (30 ft., DC 21)

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 24, touch 12, flat-footed 23 (+11 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 natural)  
**hp** 142 (13 HD; 10d8+3d10+81); fast healing 5  
**Fort** +12, **Ref** +9, **Will** +14; +1 vs. fear  
**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, channel resistance +4; **Immune** undead traits; **SR** 18

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 20 ft.  
**Melee** +1 *flail* +19/+14 (1d8+8/19–20 plus 1d6 fire)  
**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (15 ft. with flail)  
**Special Attacks** burning flail, death's calling, summon mount

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** Rask activates his death's calling ability against the strongest-looking warrior, using the victim's name if possible, then makes Spirited Charges and Ride-By Attacks while Shenaleure tramples any opponents on the ground. Rask uses his burning flail to trip or disarm foes while Shenaleure breathes smoke on them.

**Morale** Believing himself invincible, Rask fights until destroyed.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 25, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 22  
**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 31



Moribund Key

**MORIBUND KEY**

**Aura** strong necromancy; **CL** 12th  
**Slot** none; **Price** 40,000 gp; **Weight** 1/2 lb.

**DESCRIPTION**

Greater agents of the Whispering Way use these silver medallions as keys to their sanctuaries. Each *moribund key* bears an engraved skull with two gray, burned-out *ioun stones* for eyes. Small openings line the coin's outer edge. By turning the skull's head, an inner plate marked with runic symbols lines up with these openings to establish different combinations.

Each setting matches symbols inscribed on objects of great importance to the cult, such as statues, paintings, and doors. The proper arrangement of these runes activates stored spell effects in such objects, including powerful wards, *programmed images*, or the release of *arcane locks*. The bearer of a *moribund key* can cast *message* at will, and *spectral hand* and *vampiric touch* 3 times per day. In addition, the skull's eyes glow when undead approach within 60 feet. A *moribund key* bestows one negative level on any good creature carrying it. The negative level remains as long as the medallion is carried and cannot be overcome in any way while the medallion is in that creature's possession.

**CONSTRUCTION**

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *detect undead*, *knock*, *message*, *spectral hand*, *vampiric touch*; **Cost** 20,000 gp

**Feats** Improved Critical (flail), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Trample, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (flail)

**Skills** Handle Animal +19, Intimidate +19, Perception +20, Ride +14, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +11, Survival +17

**Languages** Common, Infernal, Varisian

**SQ** armor training 1

**Gear** +2 *full plate*, +1 *flail*, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *moribund key* (see sidebar), *ring of protection* +1

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Burning Flail (Su)** When Rask wields a flail, the weapon deals +1d6 points of fire damage and can be used as a weapon with 15-foot reach. Rask does not threaten the area into which he can make an attack, but he can use the weapon against foes anywhere within his reach (including adjacent foes). This ability replaces the dullahan's normal chilling blade ability.

## Carrion Crown

### SHENALEURE

CR 6

XP 2,400

Female advanced nightmare (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 216, 294)

hp 63

#### TACTICS

**Morale** If Rask falls from the saddle and Shenaleure has fewer than 20 hit points remaining, she uses *plane shift* to abandon her pact and escape.

### DIRE GHOUL WOLVES (3)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

NE Large undead (*Tome of Horrors Revised* 370)**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +15

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)**hp** 67 each (9d8+27)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4;**Immune** undead traits

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 50 ft.**Melee** bite +14 (2d6+12 plus paralysis and trip)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Special Attacks** paralysis (1d4+1, DC 16)

#### TACTICS

**Morale** The dire ghouls fight until destroyed.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 27, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 2, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 14**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 27 (31 vs. trip)**Feats** Improved Natural Attack (bite), Run, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)**Skills** Perception +15, Stealth +8, Survival +5 (+9 when tracking by scent); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception, +4 Stealth, +4 Survival when tracking by scent

**Treasure:** Aside from a few grisly trophies—his victims' heads—Rask also carries a curious coin medallion known to members of the Whispering Way as a *moribund key* (see sidebar on page 9). The cult's most trusted agents carry these devices to gain access to the cult's secret bolt-holes, gathering places, and strongholds throughout Golarion.

## ARRIVING IN CALIPHAS

After the PCs deal with Barliss Rask (or bypass him entirely), they should reach Caliphas without further incident. Caliphas is a large city, however, making finding the Whispering Way here a daunting task. A DC 10 Knowledge (local) check is enough to realize that the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye should have a cathedral or meeting hall in a city this size, and is quite likely the only organization with enough detailed records and knowledge of ancient Ustlav

to assist the PCs in researching the clues they've gathered so far—the Carrion Crown poem found in Feldgrau, the *Raven's Head* mace, and possibly the *moribund key*, as well as any other earlier information they gathered on the Whispering Way. In fact, a DC 20 Knowledge (local) check reveals that the Order's Caliphas cathedral contains a well-stocked collection of obscure lore known as the Esoteric Vaults.

The Order in Caliphas is even more secretive than Judge Daramid and her peers in Lepidstadt, but a DC 25

Knowledge (local) check or DC 30 Diplomacy check to gather information reveals that the Order meets at the Haraday Theater on Constance Street, and that its master is a man named Edjureus Modd. Gaining access to the secretive Order or its high-placed aristocratic master is another matter entirely, and inquiries at the theater or at Modd's estate are rebuffed unless the PCs succeed on a DC 20 Bluff or Diplomacy check. Mentioning Judge Daramid's name grants a +5 bonus on the roll, and success results in an invitation to attend one of the Order's social functions on the next Oathday at the Haraday Theater.

The PCs have until then to explore the city, purchase or sell equipment, and arrange lodging in one of the city's numerous inns. The city of Caliphas is

described in more detail beginning on page 60. If the PCs have not yet encountered the dullahan Barliss Rask, he should catch up to them during this time.

## MORNING MURDERS

The morning after their arrival in Caliphas, the PCs awaken to find the common room of their inn abuzz with rumors of new murders in the city. The PCs can easily learn from the other guests that Caliphas has been plagued by a series of mysterious murders of late, in which bodies turn up on the city's streets drained of all fluids, only to dissolve into ash by morning. According to the town criers outside, the newest murder was discovered this very morning.

If the PCs decide to investigate the crime scene themselves, they can easily find it, surrounded by several constables, night watchmen, and a crowd of onlookers. They are gathered around a headless body lying on its stomach in an alleyway between an inn and a tavern. Any inquiries by the PCs are directed to **Captain Boverde Hoptler** (LN male human aristocrat 2/fighter 5), commander of the city watch, who is overseeing the investigation. A less-than-pleasant man on a good day, this pinched keeper of the peace is in especially ill humor this morning. His initial attitude is unfriendly, but if made at least friendly, he allows the PCs to observe the investigation as long as they don't interfere.



**Boverde Hoptler**



## ASHES AT DAWN

As the investigation unfolds, the constables determine the body fell from the roof of the inn, though the proprietor denies renting a room to the pallid victim. On the roof, two large piles of ash in the shape of humanoid figures lie curiously stretched out in the morning sun, a sharpened wooden stake buried in each pile of ash. Soon after the discovery of these remains, constables call out from the street below—the body they’ve dragged from the alley into the sunlight has also decomposed into ash, leaving behind another wooden stake. The bodies are those of vampires murdered by Radvir Giovanni and drained of their humors by Aisa and Hetna Dublesse, the wooden stakes left in the vampires’ bodies to immobilize them. When Radvir dumped the bodies on the roof before sunrise, one of them fell to the alley below and was shielded from direct sunlight until the constables removed it from the alley.

Despite this evidence, Captain Hoptler refuses to believe that someone is killing vampires, suggesting instead that the whole matter must be an elaborate hoax, as such creatures haven’t been seen in Caliphas in centuries. Regardless of whatever courtesies he may have extended them thus far, Hoptler warns the PCs that the murders are none of their concern, and they would be well advised to mind their own business.

### AN EVENING AT THE HARADAY THEATER

The following Oathday evening, the PCs can head to the Haraday Theater to meet with the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye.

The aged, stately structure of the Haraday Theater lies nestled among several shops. The rough wooden exterior bears the signs of numerous repairs and modifications, though it seemingly has need of many more. The building itself has two entrances, one to the west and another to the south, both illuminated by large, wall-mounted oil lamps. Well-dressed servants stand outside these doors, welcoming arriving carriages and turning away passersby who linger next to the glass windows of what appears to be a large meeting hall.

When the PCs arrive at nightfall, the door guards turn them away unless they have invitations or can Bluff their way in with a DC 20 Bluff check. Once inside, they are asked to wait in the lounge (area A2) or the gathering room (area A4) until the initiation ceremony of a new aspirant to the Order is over. A handful of the Order’s lower-ranking acolytes already fill these rooms, conversing with one another over

wine and cigars. Though the PCs aren’t allowed to view or participate in the ceremony itself, they may hear snippets of various chants or catch glimpses of the elaborate regalia worn by the Order’s secretive members as they file out of the theater’s gallery. Edjureus Modd and the rest of the Order’s full members arrive soon after to polite applause and the welcoming of their newest acolyte.

### MEMBERS OF THE ORDER

The PCs not only can avail themselves of the Order’s hospitality, but can also mingle with its members as well.

These prominent figures in Caliphas society include Master Edjureus Modd, noted Osirionologist Abraun Chalest, and the visiting count of Amaans, Lucinean Galdana. The goal of these social encounters should be to convince the Order to grant the PCs access to the Esoteric Vaults in the theater’s basement. Each of these personages can wield at least some influence in granting the PCs access to the Order’s collections, provided the PCs properly impress or interest them in the course of their conversations.



Abraun Chalest

### ABRAUN CHALEST

A pudgy, aged gentleman, **Abraun Chalest** (LN male human aristocrat 3/expert 6) wears a befuddled expression behind an expensive pair of silver spectacles. Always smiling and prone to loud laughter, he has an immediately likable demeanor. Chalest serves as a curator at the Quarterfaux Archives in Caliphas, occasionally (and secretly) “borrowing” certain pieces for the Order. A renowned expert on Osirian culture and quite well traveled, he proves especially curious about the PCs and their adventures. He spends most of the evening in the gathering room (area A4), but he soon seeks out the PCs if they do not come across him first. Chalest represents the easiest method of gaining access to the Esoteric Vaults since he has his own key to the basement downstairs.

Chalest has an initial attitude of friendly, but he won’t open the Order’s secret collection to just anyone. The PCs must first succeed on a DC 17 Diplomacy check to make him helpful. If the PCs wish him to open the vaults without mentioning it to Edjureus Modd, the DC becomes 23. The PCs can improve their chances by conversing with Chalest about ancient history and hidden lore. A DC 20 Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), or Knowledge (religion) check grants the PCs a +2 bonus on their Diplomacy check with Chalest.

**Story Award:** If the PCs successfully make Chalest into a helpful supporter, award them 3,200 XP.

## Carrion Crown

### EDJUREUS MODD

The master of the Esoteric Order in Caliphass, **Edjureus Modd** (LN male human aristocrat 7) is the one who has the final say on granting the PCs access to the Esoteric Vaults. But the snobbish aristocrat remains quite stubborn about allowing strangers near the priceless relics he himself has only just begun to examine. Modd only recently ascended to his position after the death of the Order's previous master. Arrogant and pretentious, Modd cares little for adventurous sorts (including the PCs), remaining far more focused on the power and prestige he's cultivated among the club's prominent members instead. The tall, somewhat stocky aristocrat stands in the conservatory (area A5), preening under the adulation of his associates, who hang on his every word.

Modd starts out with an initial attitude of unfriendly. Before he will even consider granting them access to the Esoteric Vaults, the PCs must make him at least indifferent with a DC 27 Diplomacy check. Once indifferent, an additional DC 22 Diplomacy check is needed for him to agree to the request (if made helpful, he opens the vaults as well). PCs with an understanding of aristocratic etiquette can make a DC 20 Knowledge (nobility) check to gain a +2 bonus on the checks. Likewise, securing Count Galdana's aid (see below) may add an additional bonus to diplomacy with Modd.

Alternatively, a DC 19 Intimidate check can force Modd to open the vaults, but he becomes unfriendly afterward, and offers them no more aid. In this case, any further dealings with the Order in Caliphass will likely have to through Abraun Chalest or Count Galdana.

**Story Award:** If the PCs successfully convince Modd to let them use the Esoteric Vaults, award them 6,400 XP. If they actually make Modd helpful, award the PCs 12,800 XP instead.

### COUNT LUCINEAN GALDANA

An imposing, rugged figure, **Lucinean Galdana** (NG male human aristocrat 2/ranger 6) is the adventurous count of Amaans, currently visiting Caliphass to attend the royal court. Galdana only begrudgingly holds membership in the Esoteric Order, more because of social expectation and to maintain connections with those controlling the nation's power and commerce than anything else. He appreciates

good fighting men more than the braggadocio of Ustalav's decadent nobles. Count Galdana can most likely be found in the trophy hall (area A6), but also in the lounge (area A2) or the gathering room (area A4).

Galdana has an initial attitude of indifferent, and requires a DC 22 Diplomacy check to make friendly and gain his support. He particularly enjoys stories about adventures involving dangerous beasts, discussions of hunting, and bawdy tales, and a DC 20 Knowledge (dungeoneering), Knowledge (nature), or DC 20 Perform (comedy) check grants the PCs a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks with the count. If made helpful, Galdana agrees to intercede with Modd on the PCs' behalf, granting them a +5 bonus on checks to convince the master to grant them access to the Esoteric Vaults.

**Story Award:** If the PCs successfully make a friend of Count Galdana, award them 6,400 XP.

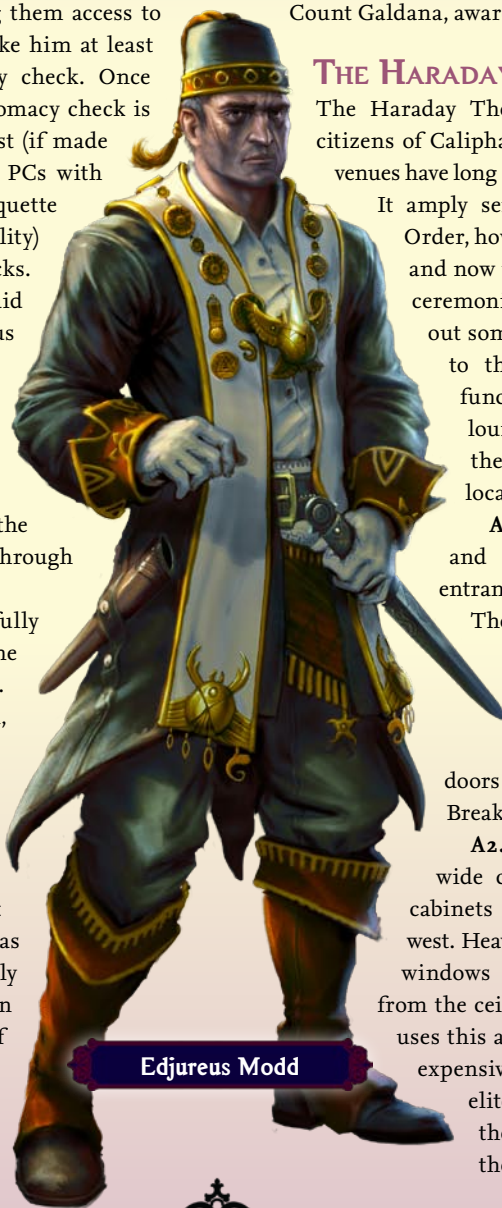
### THE HARADAY THEATER

The Haraday Theater no longer entertains the citizens of Caliphass, as newer and more accessible venues have long since supplanted it in importance.

It amply serves the needs of the Esoteric Order, however, who purchased the theater and now use it for official gatherings and ceremonies. The Order occasionally rents out some of the facility's smaller rooms to their own members for private functions, and operates an exclusive lounge on the side. A summary of the Haraday Theater's rooms and locations follows.

**A1. Foyers:** Dark hardwood floors and paneled walls highlight the entrances to the secretive social club. The exterior doors stand open, while dim lamps illuminate those ahead. When no meetings are scheduled and the building is closed, these strong wooden doors are locked (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25, Disable Device DC 30).

**A2. Lounge:** Round tables fill this wide chamber, and mahogany liquor cabinets line the walls to the east and west. Heavy drapes hang beside three large windows and lit iron chandeliers hang from the ceiling 15 feet overhead. The Order uses this area as an active tavern, albeit an expensive one, to ensure only the most elite clientele (and hence, usually their own membership) patronize the facility.



Edjureus Modd



## ASHES AT DAWN

**A3. Bar:** Trusted servants of the Order serve drinks from this small bar, stocked with an impressive array of libations from across the Inner Sea region.

**A4. Gathering Room:** Large bookshelves and heavily draped windows line the walls of this room. The Order routinely rents out this space for private gatherings and social functions. A cigar box on one of the bookshelves contains rolled cigars from nearby Molthune.

**A5. Conservatory:** A large piano dominates the southwest corner of this room, with twin crystal chandeliers hanging overhead. The Order often uses this chamber as an upscale viewing hall for funerals, weddings, recitals, or dancing.

**A6. Trophy Hall:** This wide hallway displays a number of valuable paintings, miniature sculptures, and stuffed animal heads mounted along the north and south walls. Four alcoves lead to stairways going down, while burnished copper-bound doors close off either end of the hall.

**A7. Atrium Observatory:** This perfectly square chamber is open to the sky above, closed off only by a permanent *wall of force* 15 feet overhead. The Order occasionally uses this room to assess a variety of astrological auguries as well as for routine stargazing. Several runes mark the floor's inlaid tiles, each one activating a different *silent image* that overlays the night sky to trace one of the visible constellations.

**A8. Gallery:** This immense chamber includes four cushioned benches between columns supporting the rafters of the 20-foot-high ceiling. An open banister in front of the benches overlooks a performance space below, which contains an iron platform hanging from iron chains tied to a pulley and winch overhead. In years past this room played host to small theater performances. The Order rarely uses it for that purpose anymore, and has transformed the theater into a gallery for observing new member initiation rites and other allegorical ceremonies instead.

**A9. Storerooms:** These rooms all contain extra chairs, tables, and benches for reconfiguring the rooms that the Order occasionally rents out for special functions. They contain nothing of real value.

**A10. Procession Hall:** The walls of this hall depict a number of esoteric creeds and inscriptions, all serving as reminders for new initiates of their responsibilities to the Order. It serves as a mustering hall for processions into the ceremonial chamber (area **A11**). Two small doors lead north and south into privies.

**A11. Ceremonial Chamber:** This large basement contains several supports for the theater overhead. The large opening in the room's ceiling looks up into the gallery (area **A8**), where the audience can view ceremonies below. The Order uses this chamber for conducting secret meetings and esoteric rites and ceremonies.

**A12. The Descending Spiral:** The door into this area is made of strong wood, ironbound and locked with a

superior lock (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25, Disable Device DC 40). Bookshelves groaning beneath the weight of hundreds of tomes line these wooden stairs, which descend in a spiral along this chamber's walls to the theater's subbasement 30 feet below. Most of the books here are relatively common reference works, but a single archway at the bottom of the stairs leads to the Order's more valuable collections (area **A13**).

**A13. Esoteric Vaults:** This area is described below.

### A13. THE ESOTERIC VAULTS

Once they have obtained permission to access the Order's vaults, the PCs can venture into the basement below the Haraday Theater. If they secured Abraun Chalest's assistance, he accompanies the PCs into the vaults. If the PCs did not get permission, they can attempt to break in when the theater is empty.

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Piles of statuary, pottery, paintings, and art fill these chambers, clustered around large wooden crates, barrels, and narrow bookshelves full of ancient, musty tomes, with only narrow, meandering pathways between them. In the final vault to the east, a large worktable lies half-buried under piles of scrolls, books, and clay tablets, illuminated by magical work lights overhead.

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These linked subterranean chambers lie crammed full of treasures and accumulated lore important to the Order. All of the rooms in the vaults are considered difficult terrain because of the tight confines between boxes, crates, and stacks of scrolls, statuary, pottery, and stone tablets.

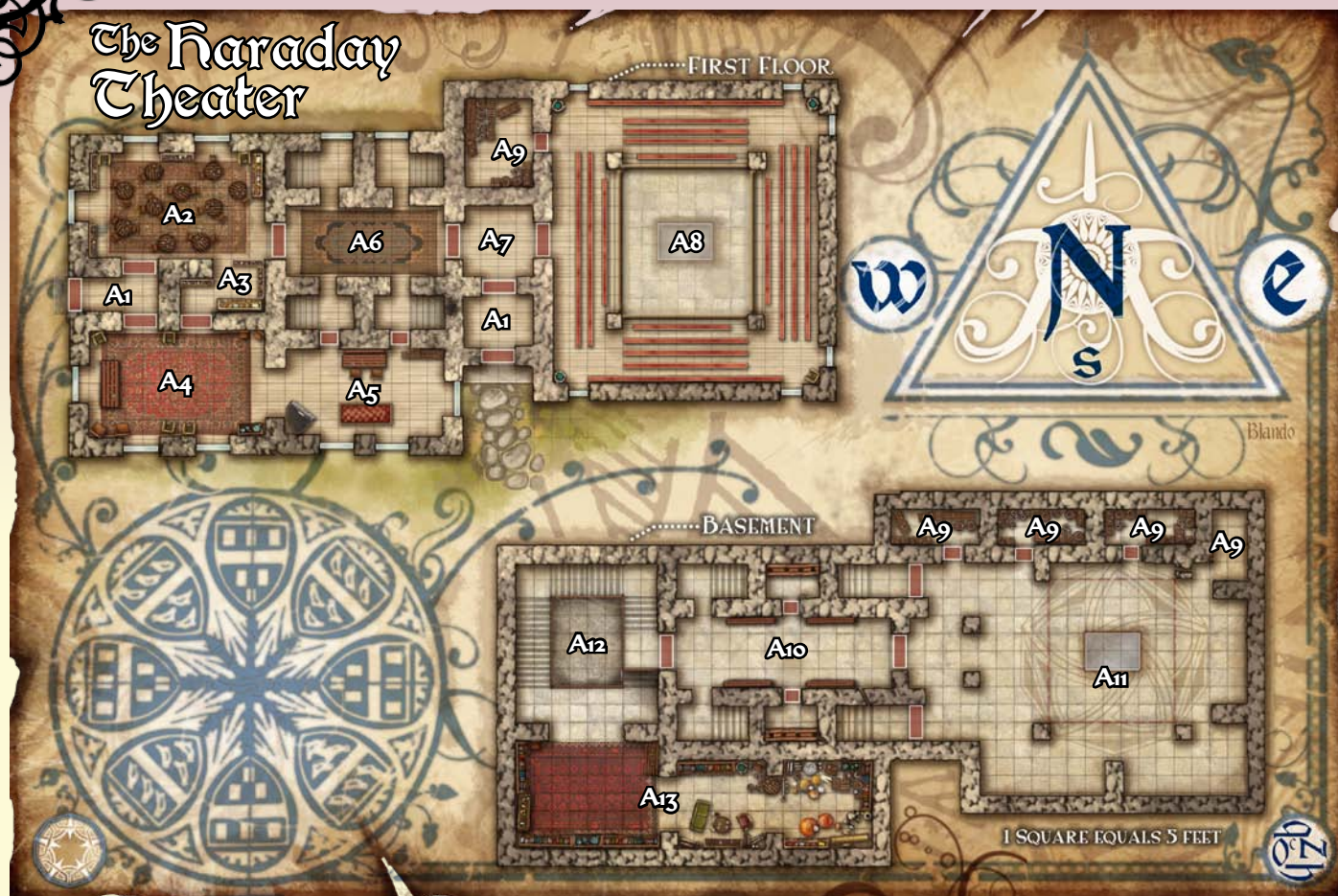
While in the vaults, the PCs can research the *Whispering Way*, the *Carrion Crown* poem, the *Raven's Head* mace, and the *dullahan's moribund key*. The PCs can make Knowledge checks to learn about these topics on their own, but the Esoteric Vaults allow them to make such checks untrained. If the PCs have ranks in the required skills, using the library grants a +6 bonus on these Knowledge checks. Each such check takes 1d6 hours of poring through old scrolls, tomes, and records.

If the PCs don't wish to research these topics themselves (or they don't possess the proper skills to make full use of the collection), they may seek additional help. If made helpful, Abraun Chalest is happy to do the research for them; otherwise, they can convince him to help with another Diplomacy check. Alternatively, the PCs can hire one of the Esoteric Order's other members to carry out the research at a rate of 1,000 gp per day.

**The Carrion Crown Poem:** If the PCs have not yet deciphered any of the *Carrion Crown* poem found in Feldgrau, they may use the Esoteric Vaults to do so. A DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion) check recognizes that the poem is actually a formula for a magical elixir for creating



# Carrion Crown



a lich. This check is enough to also realize that the formula is tied to a specific person, though who that person might be is unknown. A DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion) check can identify the specific components collected by the Whispering Way for the formula, including the mace *Raven's Head*. See page 63 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #45: Broken Moon* for more information on these components and the verses that identify them.

**Raven's Head:** If the PCs acquired the legendary mace *Raven's Head* in Illmarsh, they can use the Esoteric Vaults to research more of the weapon's history. A DC 35 Spellcraft check in conjunction with *detect magic* is enough to identify the item's properties, but a DC 20 Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (religion) check, or a DC 30 Knowledge (nobility) check, can learn some of the weapon's history, as presented on page 55 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #46: Wake of the Watcher*. Alternatively, a *legend lore* spell can reveal much of the same information about the mace's history. If the PCs do not have access to this spell, Abraun Chalest can provide them with a *scroll of legend lore* from the Order's collection for the standard price.

**The Whispering Way:** The PCs have likely learned quite a bit about the Whispering Way by this point, but

you can use the Esoteric Vaults to fill in any remaining gaps in their knowledge. Knowledge (arcana) and Knowledge (religion) are the best skills to use to learn more about this mysterious organization. See page 16 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #43: The Haunting of Harrowstone* for guidelines on skill check DCs. You may also provide them with additional information from "The Whispering Way" in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #45*. In addition, a DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion) check discovers mention of a mysterious item used by the cult, known as a *moribund key* (see below).

**The Moribund Key:** If the PCs obtained the *moribund key* from the dullahan Barliss Rask, they can also use the Esoteric Vaults to learn more about this item. *Detect magic* and a DC 27 Spellcraft check identifies the item's magical properties, while a DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion) check reveals the function of these items and their connection to the Whispering Way. In addition, a *legend lore* spell can also be used to discover this information. Once the PCs know how *moribund keys* are used, a DC 40 Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (local) check discovers a chronicle of several items the Whispering Way once kept in Caliphaz, including a



## ASHES AT DAWN

gargoyle statue reputed to show believers the way to the cult's hidden stronghold in the city.

If the PCs don't have the *moribund key*, they can still learn about it while researching the collections for information on the Whispering Way. In this case, the PCs must still succeed on a DC 40 Knowledge (history) check to locate the most useful information, including passages detailing the existence of *moribund keys*, their purpose, and the Caliph's gargoyle statue.

### THE WHISPERING GARGOYLE (CR 13)

After researching the *moribund key*, the PCs will most likely want to find the statue that supposedly leads to the Whispering Way's hideout. If the PCs share this information with Abraun Chalest, he recognizes the drawings of the statue and recalls one just like it in the Esoteric Vaults. It was salvaged from a mausoleum when the city relocated its cemetery and built over several ancient gravesites in the course of expansion. Alternatively, the PCs can find the statue themselves with a DC 30 Perception check while searching through the vaults' crowded collection.

When the PCs find the statue, read or paraphrase the following description.

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Half-covered by a fallen tapestry, a hideous stone gargoyle crouches upon a solid block of rough-hewn black granite. Its wings lie folded over its back, their sharp spurs reaching almost to the 10-foot-high ceiling overhead. The statue's claws, teeth, and strangely protruding ribs all appear crafted from iron. A carved necklace with a skull-shaped medallion bearing curious runes along its outer edge hangs upon the gargoyle's chest.

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If the PCs examine the statue with *detect magic*, a DC 23 Knowledge (arcana) check determines it resonates with strong auras of abjuration and illusion. The runes on the statue's medallion show the proper arrangement of runes on the *moribund key* to activate the statue's stored spell effect. If the PCs don't have the *moribund key*, they can still activate the statue with a DC 25 Use Magic Device check.

Dialing the correct runes into the *moribund key* and then placing it over the statue's necklace triggers a *programmed image* lasting 13 rounds. The illusion depicts an aerial representation of ancient Caliph's with a single building highlighted by an unearthly green glow. This marks the location of the hidden stronghold used by the Whispering Way in Ustalav's capital, a site that predates the Shining Crusade. A DC 20 Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check recognizes the site as the Quarterfaux Archives in Caliph's. If he is present, Abraun Chalest immediately recognizes the site without a skill check.

**Trap:** The activation of the statue's *programmed image* also triggers a powerful protective ward. A translucent image of

four liches appears at the cardinal points surrounding the projection of the city, demanding the fifth catechism of the Whispering Way in harsh whispers. A DC 34 Knowledge (arcana) or (religion) check supplies the answer: "Undying form, undying opportunity." Failure to answer with the correct phrase immediately summons four bone devils to punish those who would seek to steal the secrets of the Whispering Way. The bone devils topple shelves, smash crates, and send books and scrolls flying as they suddenly appear among the narrow walkways between the piles of stored records. The cascade also inadvertently buries Abraun Chalest, if he is present, temporarily knocking the old scholar unconscious.

#### WHISPERING WARDENS TRAP

CR 13

XP 25,600

Type magic; Perception DC 34; Disable Device DC 34

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** spell; **Reset** automatic (1 minute); **Bypass** password (DC 34 Knowledge [arcana] or [religion] check to know)

**Effect** spell effect (*summon monster IX*, summons four bone devils for 17 rounds)

#### BONE DEVILS (4)

CR —

hp 105 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 74)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The devils target foes with *dimensional anchor* to keep them from escaping, then cast *quicken invisibility*. They cast *major image* to create illusions of more summoned bone devils and seal the room's exits with *walls of ice* before attacking their trapped foes.

**Morale** The bone devils fight to the death.

**Story Award:** Regardless of whether the PCs bypass, disable, or trigger the trap, award them XP equivalent to a CR 13 encounter.

### AN UNLIKELY ALLY

Once the PCs identify the location of the Whispering Way hideout in the Quarterfaux Archives, Abraun Chalest can ensure they reach it without any trouble. The entrance to the cult's lair lies in the basement of one of the museum's older (and least visited) structures dedicated to the history of the former county of Grodlych. An ancient fresco in one of the displays depicts the first count of Grodlych, an excommunicated priest of Pharasma named Laudmeir Vandolmayne. The heretic is shown clutching a book whose cover bears eerily familiar, stylized symbols matching those on the *moribund key*. By setting the correct runes on the *moribund key*, the PCs can release the *arcane lock* barring the secret stone door behind the fresco. Alternatively, the PCs can discover the secret door with a DC 30 Perception check. Once found, a DC 40 Disable Device check opens

## Carion Crown



the door, or the door can be broken down (hardness 8, hp 60, Break DC 38).

After opening the portal, however, the PCs face grave disappointment. Although the Whispering Way certainly used the hideout to conduct their operations in Caliphaz, the cult's agents have already moved on, heading into the Hungry Mountains of Virlych to enact the next phase of their plan to resurrect Tar-Baphon. Searching the cramped, musty confines of the bolt-hole beneath the archives turns up nothing more than discarded, battered furniture, broken alchemical equipment, and a few scraps of paper hinting at the Whispering Way's activities in gathering components for some elixir or potion, though none of these notes contain any specific information or clues as to the cult's current whereabouts.

**Creature:** A dhampir rogue named Quinley Basdel hides among the shadows, taking note of the PCs as they explore the abandoned hideout. Quinley is only half vampire, born from a pregnant mother bitten by a vampire midwife during childbirth. Quinley's mother

died while in labor, but when she rose from her grave as a vampire herself, she returned for her son and stole him away to raise on her own. Luvick Siervage granted Quinley's mother sanctuary among the vampire clans of Caliphaz, and the boy grew up in the city's Vampire Underground.

Quinley's mother was one of the first vampires slain by Radvir, and the dhampir has charged himself with doing everything possible to find her killer. His investigations into his mother's murder (and those of other slain vampires) have led only to dead ends, but he had heard rumors of increased activity by the Whispering Way in Caliphaz. Knowing of the vampires' historical enmity with the Whispering Way, Quinley tracked the cult's activities to this hideout, only to find it abandoned. With the arrival of the PCs, the dhampir believes he might be able to get some aid in solving the murders.

When the PCs are ready to leave, Quinley steps into view, holding out his empty hands in a gesture of peace. He greets the PCs as follows.



## ASHES AT DAWN

“Good evening. It seems I’m not the only one searching for the Whispering Way. But alas, it appears that they deserted this place some time ago. My name is Quinley Basdel, and I’m searching for my mother’s killer. Perhaps we might be able to assist each other?”

The dhampir cares nothing for the Whispering Way, but he is dedicated to finding the murderer who killed his mother. Quinley offers the PCs a trade. He knows that the vampires of Caliphas turned their backs on the Whispering Tyrant after the Shining Crusade over 800 years ago, and are no friends of the Whispering Way. If the PCs help him solve his mother’s murder (and thus, the other vampire murders), Quinley can get them access to the Vampire Underground, where they can talk with the vampires and possibly gather more information about the Whispering Way. It doesn’t hurt that bringing such unsolicited aid to the vampires could also garner Quinley favor with Luvick Siervage.

Quinley answers the PCs’ likely questions as follows.

**How can you assist us?** “The vampires of Caliphas might be able to tell you where the Whispering Way went. I can introduce you to them.”

**What do you want in return?** “Someone is murdering vampires in the city, most notably my mother. I have no proof, but I suspect that another vampire is responsible. The killer has been too selective, too successful, and too secretive to be a normal living vampire hunter. I want you to help me find this serial killer, unmask him, and bring him to justice.”

**Why would we want to stop someone from killing vampires?** “Vampires are monsters, unrepentant villains, it’s true, but they have found a niche in this country. When the Whispering Tyrant fell at Gallowspire, the vampires laid down their weapons and conceded the field in exchange for peace. Since the Shining Crusade, the vampire clans of Caliphas have maintained the status quo. Now Ustalav’s rulers hold court without fear of the Tyrant’s return and the vampires are left alone. But these vampire slayings could create an entirely new war in the city and across the nation. And in a war between humans and vampires, who do you think would win?”

**How do you know so much about vampires?** “My mother was one. I am not, though I have her blood. I’m not affiliated with the clans of Caliphas, but I do work for them occasionally as a free agent. And I know their leader, Luvick Siervage, an elder vampire who predates even the Whispering Tyrant.”

**Where can we find these vampires?** “The Vampire Underground. Long ago, the streets of Caliphas were raised to install a proper sewer. The ground floors of many of the city’s buildings became basements, their basements became subbasements, and so on. The vampires claimed

some of these areas for themselves. I can take you there, but we may have to get past a few guardians on the way.”

**How do we know they’ll talk to us rather than attack?** “Once we get past their guardians, I can get you an audience with Luvick. If you tell him you can find whoever’s killing his people, he’ll listen to you.”

**Why should we trust you?** “Whatever your quarrel is with the Whispering Way doesn’t concern me. I just want to find my mother’s killer. She may have been a vampire, but she was still my mother. I’m just one man. I could use your help, and I can help you in return. I have connections aboveground as well, if you need references.”

If the PCs are unwilling to work with (or for) vampires, Quinley has no qualms working with the PCs against the vampires, as long as they help him find the killer. With the death of his mother, Quinley has no further personal ties to Luvick or the vampires of Caliphas. If the PCs want to slay all the vampires they meet, Quinley has no problem with that, so long as he can avenge his mother’s death. Note that Quinley is neither undead nor evil, so working with him should not be a problem for good clerics or paladins.

If the PCs attack Quinley, he drinks his *potion of invisibility* and tries to flee. He wants nothing more than to do with them, and focuses his efforts on finding his mother’s killer.

## QUINLEY BASDEL

CR 8

## XP 4,800

Male dhampir fighter 3/rogue 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 89)

CN Medium humanoid (dhampir)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +12

## DEFENSE

**AC** 23, touch 16, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 shield)**hp** 72 (9 HD; 3d10+6d8+24)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +13, **Will** +5; +1 vs. fear, +2 vs. disease and mind-affecting effects**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, evasion, negative energy affinity, resist level drain, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge**Weaknesses** light sensitivity

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +1 *silver rapier* +15/+10 (1d6+3/18–20)**Ranged** +1 *hand crossbow* +14 (1d4+1/19–20)**Special Attacks** sneak attack +3d6**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 9th; concentration +10)  
3/day—*detect undead*

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** Quinley drinks his *potion of cat’s grace* before combat. If expecting a truly difficult fight, he drinks his *potion of displacement* and *potion of invisibility* as well.**During Combat** Quinley relies on his Mobility and Spring Attack

## Carion Crown

feats for hit-and-run tactics, making sneak attacks if possible.  
**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, Quinley drinks his *potion of invisibility* and flees. If unable to escape, he surrenders, counting on his high-level connections with both humans and vampires to pull him out of sticky situations.

**Base Statistics** Without his potion, Quinley's statistics are  
**Init** +4; **AC** 22, touch 15, flat-footed 17; **Ref** +11; **Melee** +1 silver rapier +13/+8 (1d6+3/18–20); **Ranged** +1 hand crossbow +12 (1d4+1/19–20); **Dex** 18; **CMD** 24; **Skills** Acrobatics +14, Disable Device +12, Stealth +16.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 22, **Con** 12, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12  
**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 26

**Feats** Dodge, Iron Will, Mobility, Spring Attack, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

**Skills** Acrobatics +16, Bluff +15, Diplomacy +13, Disable Device +14, Knowledge (local) +12, Perception +12, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +18

**Languages** Common, Varisian

**SQ** armor training 1, rogue talents (charmer\*, hard to fool\*, honeyed words\*), trapfinding +3

**Combat Gear** *potion of cat's grace*, *potion of displacement*, *potion of inflict serious wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, silver crossbow bolts (10); **Other Gear** +1 chain shirt, +1 buckler, +1 hand crossbow with 10 bolts, +1 silver rapier, cloak of resistance +1, thieves' tools, 57 gp

\* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

**Development:** If the PCs seem hesitant to work with Quinley, the dhampir can provide references from none other than the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye. Though not a member of the Order, Quinley has worked for them on multiple occasions, and both Abraun Chalest and Edjureus Modd can vouch for his credentials. If the PCs tell them their intentions, Chalest and Modd warn them not to do anything that might shift the balance of power between humans and vampires in the city. The vampires have peacefully coexisted with the humans of Caliphass for hundreds of years, but rousing their ire could threaten the peace and stability of Caliphass and eventually spread throughout Ustalav.

If the PCs do decide to work with Quinley, he can be a valuable ally. The dhampir has one foot firmly planted in both the lands of the living and the dead, and can assist the PCs in navigating both societies. He is a free agent, working as a thief for hire or paid muscle, both as a daytime agent for the vampires of Caliphass as well as in human society, and has connections with organizations both high and low, from the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye to various criminal organizations.

### CONCLUDING PART ONE

The Whispering Way is once again a step ahead of the PCs, but fortunately the PCs have allies they can turn to for help. If the PCs rebuffed Quinley Basdel's offer of mutual aid, the following NPCs can all set the PCs on the next step in their investigations. Exactly who can give them the best aid depends on your players and their characters, and the relationships they have developed so far.

**Abraun Chalest or Edjureus Modd:** These two members of the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye both know that the vampires of Caliphass turned their backs on the Whispering Tyrant after the Shining Crusade over 800 years ago, and are no friends of the Whispering Way. They are also aware of the mysterious unsolved murders plaguing Caliphass of late, and believe that the vampires



Quinley Basdel



## ASHES AT DAWN

are the victims of these killings. They recommend going to the vampires for assistance, and offering to help solve the vampire murders in exchange for information about the Whispering Way. They can inform the PCs of a known entrance to the Vampire Underground under the Glass House in Restoration Park.

**Lucinean Galdana:** The visiting count of Amaans is busy at court and has no time to meet privately with the PCs, but he can recommend that they speak to either Edjureus Modd or Abraun Chalest at the Esoteric Order. Both men are extremely knowledgeable, and might be able to suggest other avenues of investigation that the PCs have not thought of.

Alternatively, if the PCs want to do things by themselves, a DC 30 Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (local) check is enough to know of the vampires' animosity to Tar-Baphon and the Whispering Way, and realize the possibility that the vampires may have information that the PCs can use. If the PCs want to seek out the vampires on their own, an additional DC 25 Knowledge (local) check locates the entrance to the Vampire Underground in Restoration Park (see Part Two).

### PART TWO: INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRES

With no other clues to follow, the PCs have no choice but to seek out the vampires of Caliphaz, who have long been opposed to the machinations of the Whispering Way. Quinley Basdel (or information from the Esoteric Order) can lead the PCs to the vampires, but in order to speak with their leader, Luvick Siervage, the PCs must enter the so-called "Vampire Underground," a warren of tunnels and subbasements below the city streets. The closest and most accessible entrance lies beneath the Glass House, a greenhouse in Restoration Park, which sits in the shadow of Prince Ordranti's Castle Strythe, but the PCs must first make their way past the vampires' guardians.

### RESTORATION PARK

When the aristocrats of Caliphaz decided to build a city park over part of the buried level of the city, sealing off the underground sewers, a half-elf druid named Merrick Sais volunteered to take up their cause and serve as the park's warden. Merrick particularly enjoyed working in the moonlight so she could bask in the park's beauty away from so many of the city's visitors. Unfortunately, this habit also exposed her to the vampires who occasionally used the park to stalk their prey.

Luvick Siervage himself made Merrick a vampire, but has since released her from his thrall in exchange for guarding one of the few known entrances into the underground realm where most of the city's vampires make their lairs.

### VAMPIRE SLAYERS

Certain PCs such as clerics of Pharasma, paladins, and even rangers with undead as a favored enemy might balk at the notion of working with evil vampires to solve the vampire murders of Caliphaz. After all, a serial killer who puts an end to such monsters could be viewed as a hero rather than a problem. It should be made clear to your players that working with the vampires might be necessary to oppose a greater evil (the Whispering Way and the return of the Whispering Tyrant), and to avoid the escalation of a costly and needless war between the vampires and the living citizens of Caliphaz. Most paladin codes are flexible enough to allow such temporary alliances for the greater good, and it is worth remembering that assisting the vampires in the short-term in no way obligates the PCs to continue aiding them after they stop the Whispering Way. In addition, the knowledge gained by meeting the vampires during this adventure could easily serve as the backdrop for a new campaign against the vampires of Caliphaz once the events of the Carrion Crown Adventure Path are concluded.

"Ashes at Dawn" assumes that the PCs are willing to work with the vampires (to a point at least) to solve the murders, but they are not required to do so to succeed in this adventure. If they want to kill all of the vampires they meet, they may certainly do so, though the adventure will be much more difficult. Nevertheless, the PCs should still be able to find all of the clues they need to track down the Whispering Way and move on to the next adventure whether they talk peaceably with the vampires or slay the monsters where they stand.

Merrick hasn't forgotten her former life, however. She still relishes landscaping and caring for the plants, and continues her maintenance of the park. Now, however, she does so exclusively at night, relying on dominated minions to handle the operation of the Glass House during the day while she sleeps. Merrick also has an extreme dislike of nighttime visitors, viewing them as legitimate prey to feed her own bloodlust, which she now embraces as an extension of the animal nature she's always felt inside.

With the recent spate of murders, Luvick has commanded Merrick to prevent anyone from entering the Vampire Underground, aside from other vampires. This includes the PCs and even the dhampir Quinley Basdel, who will need to battle their way through the deadly guardians who stand watch over the approaches to the underground. The PCs can proceed directly to the park if they want to seek out

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the vampires during the day, while they're likely resting in their coffins, or they can wait until the sun goes down. The primary locations in Restoration Park are described below.

**B1. Park Entrance:** This is the park's south entrance. The park is officially open from dawn to dusk, though there is no gate to stop nocturnal visitors. Watchmen from the city's constabulary pass this area about twice an hour, day and night, but generally do not venture into the park itself.

**B2. Sesasgia Caliphvaso Memorial:** This life-sized alabaster statue mounted on a block of granite depicts the austere countenance of Sesasgia Caliphvaso, the countess who refounded the city of Caliphvas after the defeat of the Whispering Tyrant.

**B3. Standing Stones:** Merrick's agreement with the city on the creation of Restoration Park allowed her to construct this trio of standing stones, establishing the whole park as her sacred grove. A DC 15 Perception check notices faded bloodstains on some of the stones. Most citizens ascribe these to vague druidic rituals, but in fact they mark this location as a frequent hunting ground for the city's vampires.

**B4. Reflecting Pool:** Tall columns line both sides of this reflecting pool, commissioned by Ilmhost Vheist, a scholar and early leader of Ustalav, in the aftermath of the Shining Crusade as a reminder to the inhabitants of Caliphvas of the dangers the nation has faced over its proud history. The tall columns along the pool's south side are carved in the likeness of Ustalavic soldiers facing a menagerie of threatening creatures carved on the pillars on the far side, including Kellid barbarians, Belkzen orcs, werewolves, and the undead knights of the Whispering Tyrant. This latter group includes both a headless dullahan as well as an armored blood knight. A sturdy stone footbridge crosses the pool, joining a path that ventures deeper into the park.

**B5. The Valiant Charge:** A massive statue dominates this clearing, depicting Soividia Ustav, the founder of Ustalav, astride a rampant destrier with an upraised blade.

**B6. Pond of Contemplation:** Merrick created this natural pond through a combination of *move earth* and *control water* spells. She finds its natural contours much more soothing than the reflecting pool. She often visits here at night and even during the day as well, by casting *tree stride* and remaining within the tree trunks to look out upon a world that sunlight denies her.

**C. The Glass House:** The park's greenhouse is described in more detail below.

### THE GLASS HOUSE

The Glass House is a massive structure, towering 40 feet tall, easily as high as many of the park's trees. A relatively recent addition to the park, the greenhouse showcases a variety of flowering plants imported from warmer climes, and draws many visitors each year. Huge glass windows

stretch between the greenhouse's iron frameworks. Inside, Merrick has also crafted long canvas shades for the windows to block the sun when she desires. She often draws these shades at night before going out to hunt, locking the doors behind her. The adventure assumes the PCs arrive at night to better make contact with the vampires. If the PCs visit the Glass House during the day, however, each location notes what changes in each encounter.

### C1. MAIN ENTRANCE

A small rise of steps leads to a wide portico. Two massive pillars of stone support a roof overhead and flank a pair of ornate, gold-clad doors inscribed with sun motifs.

The doors remain open during the day, but Merrick locks them after hours (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 25, Disable Device DC 25).

### C2. GREENHOUSE

The cloying humidity and heat of an active greenhouse fill this huge atrium. Exotic flowers, creeper vines, shrubbery, and even trees grow throughout the open space. A vaulted ceiling arches forty feet overhead, supported by four thick columns, while a stone-tiled path winds past each exhibit.

All told, over 75 different species of plants and fungi grow in the Glass House, each one carefully labeled and cared for by Merrick and her assistants.

**Hazard:** Merrick has bred a variety of shrieker mushrooms that are active only at night. Four shriekers (see page 416 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*) grow by the main entrance to the greenhouse to serve as a natural alarm system. They are dormant during the day so they don't frighten visitors, but at night they sound the alarm whenever there is light or movement within 10 feet, alerting Merrick (at area C3), her guardian flytrap (at area C4), and even the vampire spawn in the basement (in area C9).

### C3. PRUNING STATION (CR 12)

A small wooden table sits by the tiled path here, with a variety of shears and other pruning tools strewn across its surface.

**Creature:** If the PCs visit the Glass House at night, the half-elf vampire druid Merrick Sais is hard at work pruning several plants near this area. If alerted by the shriekers at area C2, she uses wild shape to transform into a bat. She flies into the trees to observe those entering her lair while hanging from a tree limb, waiting for the flytrap at area C4 to make a meal of them. During the day, Merrick rests in *tree shape* form in area C8.



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# Carion Crown

## MERRICK SAIS

CR 12

XP 19,200

Female half-elf vampire druid 11 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 270)

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +35

### DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 14, flat-footed 24 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural)

**hp** 119 (11d8+66); fast healing 5

**Fort** +15, **Ref** +10, **Will** +14; +2 vs. enchantments, +4 vs. fey and plant-targeted effects

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, resist nature's lure; **DR** 10/adamantine or magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits;

**Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

**Weaknesses** vampire weaknesses

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *silver dagger* +16/+11 (1d4+8/17–20) or slam +17 (1d4+12 plus energy drain) or wooden fist +17/+12 (1d3+14)

**Ranged** javelin +11 (1d6+7)

**Special Attacks** blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 19), energy drain (2 levels, DC 19), wild shape 11 hours/day, wooden fist (+5, 8 rounds/day)

**Druid Spells Prepared** (CL 11th; concentration +16)

6th—*repel wood*<sup>D</sup>, *sirocco*\* (DC 21)

5th—*call lightning storm* (DC 20), *stoneskin*, *tree stride*, *wall of thorns*<sup>D</sup>

4th—*ball lightning*\* (DC 19), *command plants*<sup>D</sup>, *dispel magic*, *flame strike* (DC 19), *ice storm*

3rd—*call lightning* (DC 18), *greater magic fang*, *plant growth*<sup>D</sup>, *quench*, *speak with plants*, *spike growth* (DC 18)

2nd—*barkskin*<sup>D</sup>, *bull's strength*, *chill metal* (DC 17), *flame blade*, *fog cloud*, *tree shape*

1st—*charm animal* (DC 16), *entangle*<sup>D</sup> (DC 16), *faerie fire*, *longstrider*, *magic stone*, *produce flame* (2)

0 (at will)—*flare* (DC 15), *guidance*, *mending*, *resistance*

**D** Domain spell; **Domain** Plant

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** While observing the PCs, Merrick casts *barkskin*, *bull's strength*, *greater magic fang*, and *stoneskin*.

**During Combat** Merrick remains in bat form as long as she can, using Natural Spell to cast a *wall of thorns* to fill the greenhouse's paths. If the PCs leave the path and enter the undergrowth, she casts *spike growth* and *entangle*

before attacking with her spells. If any opponents get separated from their companions, Merrick flies down and takes humanoid form, activating her bramble armor and attacking with her dagger, wooden fists, or *flame blade*.

**Morale** Charged with defending this entrance to the Vampire Underground by Luvick Siervage himself, Merrick fights until destroyed, returning to her coffin in area C10 to recuperate.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 24, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 29

**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (dagger), Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Lightning Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Mobility, Natural Spell, Skill Focus (Perception)<sup>B</sup>, Toughness<sup>B</sup>, Wind Stance

**Skills** Bluff +18, Knowledge (nature) +16, Perception +35, Sense Motive +17, Spellcraft +12, Stealth +20, Survival +15

**Languages** Common, Druidic, Elven

**SQ** bramble armor (1d6+5, 11 rounds/day), change shape (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*), gaseous form, nature bond (Plant domain), nature sense, shadowless, spider climb, trackless step, venom immunity, wild empathy +15, woodland stride

**Combat Gear** *feather token* (tree), *javelins of lightning* (3); **Other Gear** +2 *leather armor*, +1 *silver dagger*, javelins (3), *cloak of resistance* +2, diamond dust (worth 750 gp), holly and mistletoe, spell component pouch, 218 gp

\* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

## C4. GUARDIAN FLYTRAP (CR 11)

An unusual array of exotic plants dominates this part of the greenhouse exhibit, displaying every color of the rainbow. Their hues are made more vibrant by the backdrop of an enormous mass of cactuslike vines covered with white leaves.

The undergrowth in this exhibit conceals an earthen pit shaped by Merrick that accesses the

### Merrick Sais

Glass House's basement and the sewers beneath the city streets through area C7. A DC 30 Perception check is required to notice the pit while its current guardian stands over it. Once the flytrap is killed, the entrance is clearly visible.

**Creature:** Among the varied plants in the Glass House grows a unique specimen of giant flytrap with white leaves, nurtured and cared for by Merrick like a prized pet. The half-elf vampire named the plant Dragon, and like its mistress, the huge





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monstrosity also has an unhealthy taste for blood. Merrick uses *command plants* to keep the flytrap dormant during the day, but it awakens each night to feed on the special “guests” that Merrick brings it. The plant assumes that PCs who wander into its reach to be just such guests, quickly assaulting them with its hungry mouths.

### DRAGON CR 11

XP 12,800

Advanced giant flytrap (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 134, 294)

hp 175

### C5. SEWER GRATES

Two iron grates (hardness 10, hp 30, Break DC 28) outside the Glass House also provide access to the sewers, leading to small subterranean chambers (area C6). The vampires use *gaseous form* to pass through these grates, but Luvick doesn't want any unauthorized visitors using these entrances, so they are concealed with *illusory walls* (DC 16 Will save to disbelieve).

### C6. STORM DRAINS (CR 8)

These 15-foot-diameter chambers lie beneath the concealed sewer grates above (area C5). A shallow trough in the floor carries a small trickle of water to the main sewer beyond (area C8). Large iron grates (hardness 10, hp 30, Break DC 28) block the passages leading to the sewer, while allowing air and water (and vampires in *gaseous form*) to freely pass through.

**Trap:** To further discourage unwanted visitors, the vampires have trapped these chambers with permanent *symbols of stunning* that trigger when someone stands on the floor. When triggered, the symbols also set off an *alarm* spell, alerting the vampire spawn in area C9, who immediately come to investigate any intrusions. Since the symbols are triggered by touching the floor, creatures in *gaseous form* do not trigger the traps (including vampires, who would be immune to the symbols' effects anyway).

### SYMBOLS OF STUNNING (2) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

Type spell; Perception DC 32; Disable Device DC 32

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Duration** 130 minutes or 150 hp; **Reset** automatic (10 minutes)

**Effect** spell effects (*alarm* and *symbol of stunning*, stunned for 1d6 rounds, DC 20 Will save negates); multiple targets (all creatures in 60-ft.-radius burst, up to 150 total hp)

### C7. BASEMENT ACCESS

A wide hole gapes in the ceiling of this circular chamber, where numerous roots have wormed their way between the ancient bricks of its walls.

The underground sewers of Caliphass include a number of these small bolt-holes, usually meant as storm drains to catch runoff water from the cobblestone streets overhead. Architects built over this particular chamber when the city planners reclaimed the land to turn it into a park. Merrick used *move earth* and *stone shape* to access the sewers from the Glass House, providing an easier route for vampires and their dominated thralls to come and go through the park. The hole in the ceiling leads to area C4. The two rectangular chambers to the west are used as storerooms, and contain extra gardening supplies for the park and greenhouse.

### C8. SEWER

A narrow, five-foot-wide walkway hugs the wall of this low-ceilinged sewer. Its swift current pushes east, frothing and gurgling under a stone bridge crossing to the other side.

The citizens of Caliphass rely on the natural waterways and streams flowing under the city to carry sewage into the city harbor. As a result, Caliphass's sewers require less maintenance and upkeep than most, a fact that enables the vampire clans to keep an even lower profile than they might otherwise enjoy. These tunnels are 10 feet high, but the ceilings stand only 5 feet above the level of the walkways.

### C9. COMMON ROOM (CR 10)

A large tapestry covers the north wall of this room. Two clay urns flank the southern door, while other doors lead east and west. Bloodstains cover a disturbingly large area of the floor underfoot.

**Creatures:** Merrick occasionally picks off late visitors to the Glass House or those taking midnight strolls through the park, keeping some of these victims as controllable vampire spawn to serve as additional guards and messengers when she needs to contact Luvick. There are a total of six vampire spawn here. Five of them are under Merrick's direct control; the sixth is her oldest spawn, whom she freed with the promise of someday rewarding her by making her a full vampire. During the day, the vampire spawn rest in their coffins (in area C11). At night, they bring their own dominated prey back here to take turns draining them of blood. When the PCs first enter, the spawn eagerly circle them in an unnerving manner, as if savoring a well-prepared meal, before attacking.

### ENSLAVED SPAWN (6) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Advanced vampire spawn (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 271, 294)

LE Medium undead

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

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### DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 38 each (4d8+20); fast healing 2

Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +7

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +2; DR 5/silver;

Immune undead traits; Resist cold 10, electricity 10

**Weaknesses** vampire weaknesses

### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

**Melee** slam +7 (1d4+4 plus energy drain)

**Special Attacks** blood drain, dominate (DC 16), energy drain (1 level, DC 16)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The vampire spawn take turns trying to dominate their foes so they can grapple and drain blood.

**Morale** The vampire spawn fight until destroyed.

### STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 16, Con —, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 19

Base Atk +3; CMB +6; CMD 19

**Feats** Toughness, Weapon Focus (slam)

**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Disguise +11, Intimidate +11, Perception +10, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +18

**Languages** Common, Elven, Varisian

**SQ** gaseous form, shadowless, spider climb

## C10. MERRICK'S SEPULCHER

The strong scent of pine and cedar permeates this chamber, emanating from three upright wooden coffins. In each corner of the room stands an ornate three-foot-tall clay urn decorated with carvings of gilded leaves and forest animals.

Several flagstones have been removed from the floor, forming a cross-shaped earthen trough between the coffins. Merrick maintains three separate coffins here, each one elaborately carved from a different type of tree—cedar, pine, and cherry. She doesn't normally use any of the coffins, however, saving them for vampire guests who are fleeing persecution after their own coffins are destroyed.

**Creature:** During the day, Merrick can be found resting in this chamber. Rather than sleeping in a coffin, she uses *tree shape* to take the form of an ash tree in the center of the earthen trough, reaching her roots into the natural earth.

### MERRICK SAIS

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 119 (see page 22)

## C11. SPAWN CRYPT

Six alcoves line the sides of this narrow hallway, each one raised slightly above the floor and holding a stone sarcophagus. A stone door lies at the far end of the passage.

Merrick's six vampire spawn rest in these coffins during the day. The vampire druid used *stone shape* to form each one from the stone of the sewer walls. The exit to the west leads deeper into the city's sub-levels and the ultimately to the Vampire Underground.

## THE VAMPIRE UNDERGROUND

After winning their way past the guardians of the Glass House, the PCs enter the heart of the vampires' underground territory. This decadent playground mimics the social politics of the city above, and just as in their former lives among Ustalav's nobility, the elder vampires hold their own versions of court, trading in a treacherous currency of favors, gossip, and intrigue.

Unless otherwise indicated, the underground ceilings reach 15 feet high in most rooms. Doors are made of either strong wood (hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 23) or, in some places, heavy iron (hardness 10, hp 60, Break DC 28). Small lanterns and oil lamps provide normal illumination in rooms, but the passageways outside are unlit.

You should familiarize yourself with this entire section before running it, as the vampire inhabitants of these rooms can be encountered in almost any order, depending on which sections the PCs explore first. In particular, make sure you are familiar with area D6, the audience hall, as this is where the PCs meet Luvick Siervage, and this area sets the tone of the investigations to follow.

Although the PCs can make their way through the Vampire Underground by slaying every vampire they meet, the adventure assumes that they take a more peaceful approach. If the PCs gain the clues they need to find the murderer using social skills, diplomacy, and roleplaying to question the vampires instead of killing them, award them experience as if they had defeated those vampires in combat.

Unless otherwise stated, when any of the vampires in the following section are reduced to 0 hit points, they assume gaseous form and retreat to their hidden lairs elsewhere in the city. For the purpose of this adventure, those vampires are considered defeated—they will not return to face the PCs again, and the PCs should get full experience points for defeating them. If the PCs want to track down defeated vampires and destroy them for good, such actions are beyond the scope of this adventure, but you can look to the Caliphas article on page 60 for more inspiration, as well as this volume's bestiary for more encounters to throw against the PCs as they seek to cleanse Caliphas of its vampiric taint once and for all.

## SEWER GUARDIANS (CR 11)

It takes the PCs over an hour of walking through the sewers to reach Luvick's court in the center of the Vampire Underground. This encounter takes place about halfway along the route.



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**Creatures:** A gang of eight vampire spawn accosts the PCs in a dank sewer tunnel. Enslaved thralls of one of the city's vampire nobles, these vampire spawn look upon the PCs as intruders in their territory. A successful DC 29 Diplomacy check convinces the spawn to refrain from attacking and bring the PCs to Luvick's court. If Quinley Basdel is with the PCs, they gain a +5 circumstance bonus on this check. Otherwise, the vampires seek to slake their thirst with the PCs' blood. A DC 25 Sense Motive check recognizes that the vampires are under the influence of some sort of drug. In fact, all of these vampire spawn are addicted to Radvir's *bloodbrew elixir* (see page 35) and have 8 additional temporary hit points as a result (already incorporated into their stat block).

**ENSLAVED SPAWN (8)** **CR 5**  
**XP 1,600 each**  
 hp 46 each (see page 23)

### D1. GUARD POST (CR 12)

A handful of wooden chairs and flimsy tables fill this room, and a weapon rack takes up the entire western wall. Three iron doors lead north, while a set of double doors stand open to the south.

Following the tunnels from the Glass House, the PCs enter Luvick Siervage's demesne from the western passage near this guard post. The rear half of the guard post has been converted into a prison for confining unruly guests, both living and undead, though the cell is currently empty.

**Creatures:** Four vampire enforcers guard this approach to the Vampire Underground from the subbasement of an old warehouse. If the PCs were brought here by other vampires, or are accompanied by Quinley Basdel, the guards escort them to Luvick Siervage in the audience hall (area D6). If alone, the PCs must make a DC 30 Diplomacy check to convince the guards to take them to Luvick. Otherwise, the guards attack on sight.

**VAMPIRE ENFORCERS (4)** **CR 8**  
**XP 4,800 each**

Human vampire fighter 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 270)  
 LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)  
**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +18

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 26, touch 16, flat-footed 20 (+3 armor, +4 Dex, +2 dodge, +6 natural, +1 shield)

**hp** 92 each (7d10+49); fast healing 5

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7; +2 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +2, channel resistance +4; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

**Weaknesses** vampire weaknesses

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 60 ft.

**Melee** +1 longsword +16/+16/+11 (1d8+9/19–20) or slam +14/+14 (1d4+8 plus energy drain)

**Ranged** mwk light crossbow +13/+13/+8 (1d8/19–20)

**Special Attacks** blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 18), energy drain (2 levels, DC 18), weapon training (heavy blades +1)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The vampires drink their *potions of haste* and *magic fang* before combat.

**During Combat** The vampires move quickly into melee and make Vital Strikes, using their slam attacks and energy drain against less armored foes. The guards work together to flank more difficult opponents.

**Morale** The vampires fight until destroyed.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 21, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 20

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 28

**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Disruptive, Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Mobility, Rapid Reload, Stand Still, Toughness<sup>B</sup>, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

**Skills** Acrobatics +10, Bluff +13, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +18, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +17

**Languages** Common, Varisian

**SQ** armor training 2, change shape (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*), gaseous form, shadowless, spider climb

**Combat Gear** *potion of haste*, *potion of inflict moderate wounds*, *potion of magic fang*, *screaming bolts* (2), *silversheen*, silver bolts (10), tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, darkwood buckler, +1 longsword, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, *cloak of resistance* +1, 34 gp

### D2. VENTS

A 2-foot-square shaft penetrates the ceiling here, climbing into darkness above.

These vents lead to iron grates (hardness 10, hp 30, Break DC 28) on the streets of Caliphaz 30 feet above. Far too narrow for most Small or Medium-sized creatures to traverse, the vampires use gaseous form to access the vents, either to prey upon the unwary at night or as emergency escapes. Two vampire enforcers (from either area D1 or D8) patrol these exits every hour.

### D3. RECEIVING ROOM (CR 11)

Comfortable chairs and small tables decorate this opulent chamber, and a plush rug covers the floor. The sounds of music and laughter emanate from doors to the south.

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**Creatures:** Four vampire nobles occupy this chamber, spawn of the vampire elder Lady Evgenya in area **D4**. The vampires graciously welcome visitors and invite them inside, appearing as friendly aristocrats having a small party in the next room, but they attempt to dominate any unsuspecting guests to keep as their unwilling slaves and feed on them. If the PCs have Luvick's signet (see area **D6**), the nobles question the PCs as to their business, alerting Evgenya via their telepathic link so she can listen in as well. Once Evgenya is satisfied that the PCs mean her no harm, she telepathically instructs her spawn to allow the PCs to enter her decadent apartments.

### VAMPIRE NOBLES (4) CR 7

#### XP 3,200 each

Human vampire aristocrat 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 270)

CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

**hp** 73 each (7d8+42); fast healing 5

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

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits, **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

**Weaknesses** vampire weaknesses

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk rapier +11 (1d6+4/18–20) or slam +10 (1d4+6 plus energy drain)

**Ranged** mwk dagger +9 (1d4+4/19–20)

**Special Attacks** blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 17), energy drain (2 levels, DC 17)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The nobles attempt to dominate as many foes as they can, using these unwilling allies to attack foes while the vampires make energy drain attacks.

**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 35 hit points, the nobles flee into the next room to join their mistress, where they fight until destroyed.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 19

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 23

**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Mobility, Persuasive, Toughness<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Focus (slam)

**Skills** Bluff +22, Diplomacy +16, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (nobility) +11, Perception +20, Sense Motive +20, Stealth +11

**Languages** Common, Varisian

**SQ** change shape (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*), gaseous form, shadowless, spider climb

**Gear** masterwork rapier, masterwork dagger, *cloak of resistance* +2, courtier's outfit, jewelry worth 100 gp

## D4. LADY EVGENYA'S SALON (CR 13)

The celebratory strains of lutes and harpsichords fill the air in this well-appointed, if ostentatious, chamber. Several figures dressed in finery befitting nobles of Ustalav's ancient past dance on a parquet floor.

The vampire noble Lady Evgenya Zunaida holds court in this opulent chamber, surrounded by her spawn and their dominated thralls.

**Creatures:** The room is filled with vampires and humans engaged in decadent revelry. The most seductive of these wanton revelers is Lady Evgenya, the daughter of a minor Caliph noble. Becoming a vampire has allowed her access to an even greater world of prestige, built upon a large court of enslaved spawn, four of whom are in attendance. She hand-selects these sycophants, choosing them for their beauty and skill at pleasing her. In addition to the vampires, a dozen dominated humans (N human aristocrats 2 or commoners 2) mingle in the room, dancing or playing a variety of musical instruments. The vampires occasionally slip away to enjoy further pleasures of the flesh with these playthings in the apartments to the south. A DC 15 Sense Motive check is enough to recognize that the humans in the room are under some sort of enchantment effect. If the PCs attack, the vampire spawn rush to defend their mistress, using their dominated slaves as living shields. If the PCs want to question Lady Evgenya, see Development on page 27.

### ENSLAVED SPAWN (4) CR 5

#### XP 1,600 each

**hp** 38 each (see page 23)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The vampire spawn attack with slams and energy drain, though they take advantage of any weakened foe by making blood drain attacks as well.

**Morale** The vampire spawn flee in gaseous form if Evgenya abandons the fight. Otherwise, they fight until destroyed to defend their mistress.

### LADY EVGENYA ZUNAIDA CR 12

#### XP 19,200

Female human vampire aristocrat 1/sorcerer 10 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 270)

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +18

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 27, touch 17, flat-footed 22 (+4 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

**hp** 141 (11 HD; 1d8+10d6+102); fast healing 5

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +15



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**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits, **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10  
**Weaknesses** vampire weaknesses

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** slam +8 (1d4+4 plus energy drain)

**Special Attacks** blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 21), energy drain (2 levels, DC 21)

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 10th; concentration +16)

5th (4/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 21)

4th (6/day)—*crushing despair* (DC 22), *dimension door*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 20)

3rd (7/day)—*blink*, *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt*, *suggestion* (DC 21), *twilight knife*\*

2nd (8/day)—*acid arrow*, *false life*, *glitterdust* (DC 18), *hideous laughter* (DC 20), *invisibility*

1st (8/day)—*charm person* (DC 19), *disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 17)

o (at will)—*acid splash*, *bleed* (DC 16), *daze* (DC 18), *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 16), *mage hand*, *message*, *read magic*, *resistance*

**Bloodline** Arcane

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Evgenya casts extended *false life* and *mage armor* on herself every evening.

**During Combat** Evgenya casts *blink* and tries to avoid direct combat while her spawn engage opponents. She targets foes with her spells and wands, and uses *charm person*, *suggestion*, or her dominate ability to gain further allies. If forced into melee combat, Evgenya casts *twilight knife* and uses it to flank while she makes slam attacks.

**Morale** Evgenya flees most battles if reduced to fewer than 70 hit points, casting quickened *dimension door* with her metamagic adept power to escape.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 18, **Con** —,

**Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 23

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 25

**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Craft Wand, Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Quickened Spell, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Penetration, Toughness<sup>B</sup>

**Skills** Appraise +5, Bluff +20, Diplomacy +20, Fly +10, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Perception +18, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +12

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Varisian

**SQ** arcane bond (raven familiar named Aripa), bloodline arcana, change shape (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*), gaseous form, mastermind (44 HD, telepathy), metamagic adept (2/day), new arcana, shadowless, spider climb

**Combat Gear** *wand of acid arrow* (15 charges), *wand of magic missile* (CL 7th, 25 charges); **Other Gear** *cloak of resistance* +2, *ring of protection* +2, jewelry worth 300 gp, noble's outfit, signet ring

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Mastermind (Su)** Evgenya can have a number of enslaved spawn totaling four times her total Hit Dice. In addition, Evgenya has the telepathy ability, and can communicate telepathically with her spawn. Evgenya may exercise or end her use of this ability as a standard action and maintain her connection to her

spawn for as long as she wishes. She may only use this ability with one spawn at a time. While using this ability, Evgenya enters a catatonic state similar to her daily rest and is treated as helpless, though she is alert to any jarring noises, the presence of any visible creature within 5 feet, or any damage that befalls her body (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Classic Horrors Revisited* 50).

\* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

**Development:** If the PCs wish to question Lady Evgenya, they first have to entertain her whims. She takes a fancy to any PC with a high Charisma score, regardless of gender, asking that PC to dance with her while they talk. If the chosen PC makes a DC 15 Perform (dance) check, or if any PC makes a DC 25 Knowledge (nobility) check to engage her with the proper etiquette, Lady Evgenya takes an active interest in helping them. Otherwise, the PCs must make DC 21 Diplomacy check to make her at least friendly toward them.

Lady Evgenya is upset by the vampire slayings, as many of her friends have fallen victim to the murderer. She's noticed several things about the murders, however. One thing that the victims all have in common is that they each controlled large numbers of enslaved spawn. These spawn, now freed by their masters' deaths, have been acting strangely—almost as if they have a new master, though she has



Lady Evgenya Zunaida

## Carrion Crown

no idea who that might be (in fact, the spawn have no masters, but their addiction to Radvir's *bloodbrew* makes it seem so). Given the size of her own undead court, Lady Evgenya suspects the murderer will soon come for her as well. In addition, Lady Evgenya believes she has found a pattern in the slayings—namely, that many of the victims have disappeared after hunting in Restoration Park, which has led many vampires to avoid that area in fear of attracting attention to themselves.

If the PCs kill Lady Evgenya and her vampires instead of talking to them, they can still question any surviving human slaves, now freed from the domination of their vampire masters. Each of the three clues mentioned above can be learned with a separate DC 20 Diplomacy check to convince the poor victims to tell the PCs what they know. Alternatively, a DC 30 Perception check while searching the back rooms turns up Lady Evgenya's diary, in which she has recorded all of her suspicions, as outlined above.

If the PCs can make Lady Evgenya helpful, she agrees to help them lure the killer into an ambush. If the PCs accept her help, see To Catch a Killer on page 35.

### D5. CATHEDRAL (CR 11)

A small shrine stands in the middle of this large chamber, centered on a statue of a horned man with fangs and bat wings holding a wickedly spiked flail in one hand. Beyond the shrine sit two long tables with elaborately carved darkwood chairs.

This shrine is the Vampire Underground's cathedral, dedicated to the infernal duke Zaebos, whom the vampires venerate as lord of arrogance, nobility, and perversion. A DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check recognizes the statue of the devil and his symbols. The ceiling is 20 feet high in the central chamber, while the smaller side rooms have 10-foot-high ceilings.

**Creatures:** A vampire inquisitor named Desmond Kote occupies this ancient cathedral, long buried and forgotten by the world above. Currently, Kote is leading two vampire nobles in honoring Zaebos, but they turn to confront any infidels invading their god's sanctum. Kote cast *desecrate* on the statue of Zaebos earlier in the day, granting all of the vampires in the room a +2 profane bonus on attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws. If the PCs have Luvick's signet (see area D6) and want to question Kote, see Development on page 29.

#### DESMOND KOTE

CR 9

XP 6,400

Male human vampire inquisitor 8 of Zaebos (*Pathfinder RPG*

*Bestiary* 270, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 38)

LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +26

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 27, touch 14, flat-footed 23 (+6 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural, +1 shield)

**hp** 87 (8d8+48); fast healing 5

**Fort** +14, **Ref** +11, **Will** +15

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

**Weaknesses** vampire weaknesses

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** +1 *morningstar* +15/+10 (1d8+12) and +1 *spiked shield* +14 (1d4+7) or

+1 *morningstar* +17/+12 (1d8+12) or

slam +15 (1d4+11 plus energy drain)

**Special Attacks** bane (8 rounds/day), blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 18), energy drain (2 levels, DC 18), judgment 3/day, scythe of evil (4 rounds, 1/day), second judgment, solo tactics

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +12)

At will—*detect chaos*, *detect evil*, *detect good*, *detect law*

8/day—*touch of evil* (4 rounds)

8 rounds/day—*discern lies* (DC 18)

**Inquisitor Spells Known** (CL 8th; concentration +13)

3rd (3/day)—*retribution\** (DC 18), *righteous vigor\**, *searing light*

2nd (5/day)—*desecrate*, *flames of the faithful\**, *hold person* (DC 17), *weapon of awe\**

1st (6/day)—*bane* (DC 16), *command* (DC 16), *divine favor*, *magic weapon*, *true strike*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *bleed* (DC 15), *brand\** (DC 15), *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *resistance*

**Domain** Evil

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** In addition to the *desecrate* effect, Desmond casts *magic weapon* on his spiked shield, *weapon of awe* on his morningstar, and *divine favor*.

**During Combat** Desmond casts *righteous vigor* and *flames of the faithful* while his noble followers engage opponents, then activates his scythe of evil ability on his morningstar. Desmond attacks with his morningstar and spiked shield, taking advantage of his nobles' positions to use his Outflank and Precise Strike feats. He uses his judgment ability as necessary to boost the attacks of his allies and himself, and casts *retribution* on anyone striking him in combat.

**Morale** Desmond fights until destroyed.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 25

**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Improved Shield Bash, Intimidating Prowess, Lightning Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Outflank\*, Precise Strike\*, Toughness<sup>B</sup>, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (morningstar)

**Skills** Bluff +20, Diplomacy +12, Intimidate +24, Knowledge



## ASHES AT DAWN

(local) +5, Knowledge (planes) +8, Knowledge (religion) +12, Perception +26, Sense Motive +24, Spellcraft +12, Stealth +19, Survival +12

**Languages** Common, Infernal, Varisian

**SQ** change shape (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*), gaseous form, monster lore +5, shadowless, spider climb, stern gaze, track +4

**Combat Gear** *wand of inflict moderate wounds* (10 charges);

**Other Gear** masterwork breastplate, masterwork spiked light steel shield, +1 *morningstar*, *cloak of resistance* +2, 83 gp

\* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

**VAMPIRE NOBLES (2)****CR 7****XP 3,200 each**

hp 73 each (see page 26)

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** The vampire nobles maneuver themselves into flanking positions so Desmond can use his teamwork feats.

**Morale** The vampires fight until destroyed, eager to show their devotion to their diabolic patron.

**Development:** Desmond Kote is impressed by shows of strength and religious knowledge. Before he agrees to talk with the PCs, they must convince him of their worth. A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check proves the PCs' knowledge of Hell's hierarchy, or a DC 23 Intimidate check displays their prowess and mettle. Alternatively, the PCs can make a DC 29 Diplomacy check to make Kote friendly toward them.

Kote has begun investigating the murders, and has collected the wooden stakes found in the ashes of the victims. He has discovered that all of the stakes seem to be of similar make, carved from furniture legs made in the same pattern. If the PCs kept the wooden stakes found at the murder scene earlier (see *Morning Murders* on page 10) and compare them with Kote's stakes, they can confirm that all of the stakes follow the same pattern. If the PCs wish to investigate these distinctive stakes further, see *To Catch a Killer* on page 35. Kote can also confirm Lady Evgenya's suspicions that the freed spawn of the victims have been acting strangely, but like her, has no idea why.

If the PCs slay the vampires instead of talking to them, they can find Kote's collected stakes with a DC 25 Perception check. See *To Catch a Killer* on page 35 if the PCs want to track down the origin of the wooden stakes.

If the PCs make Desmond Kote helpful and come to him with suspicions that Radvir Giovanni is the murderer, the inquisitor provides them with six *undead bane arrows*, but warns them not to use the arrows against vampires loyal to Luvick Siervage or risk incurring Zaebo's wrath.

**D6. AUDIENCE HALL (CR 12)**

A grand promenade opens into a wide audience hall, decorated with elaborate tapestries and art befitting a royal of Ustalav's ancient bloodlines. An immense throne dominates the far wall, while two antechambers stand to either side of the promenade to the east and west.

Luvick Siervage, the undisputed leader of the vampire clans of Caliphass, rules the Vampire Underground from this massive chamber. How you run this encounter depends on your players' goals. If the PCs are seeking a peaceful audience with the elder vampire, offering their help in solving the murders in exchange for information on the Whispering Way, then Luvick himself is present, holding court among his nobles. If the PCs are instead going through the Vampire Underground slaying vampires, he is not here.

**Desmond Kote**

## Carion Crown

Luvick Siervage is an ancient CR 18 vampire, far too powerful for the PCs to face at this level. In this case, Luvick has left a decoy in his place. With the current spate of murders among his kind, the vampire elder has taken refuge in some secure bolt-hole until the killer is found and it is safe to emerge once again. Luvick's decoy is one of his most trusted spawn, a vampire bard named Florian Lamorath, who wears a *hat of disguise* to appear as his master. Through his mastermind ability, Luvick is telepathically linked with Florian, allowing the elder vampire to communicate with his proxy and give him commands as needed. All that being said, if you think the PCs are up to the challenge of fighting Luvick himself, his stats may be found in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #48: Shadows of Gallowspire*. Replacing Florian with Luvick himself makes this a CR 18 encounter.

**Creatures:** In addition to Luvick (or Florian), four vampire nobles are currently attending court, discussing the politics of the day and their measured, subtle, plans for manipulating the powers that openly rule Ustalav. Dressed in archaic finery befitting ancient Ustalavic nobles, these vampires eye the PCs hungrily, curious about the intentions of prey who would willingly walk into a predator's lair.

Luvick Siervage displays a calculating, controlled demeanor, which makes his rage all the more potent when he drops his mask of civility in favor of the bloodthirsty beast within. A well-practiced swordfighter and skilled aristocrat, the elder vampire has lived for over 2,000 years, having slain more beasts and humanoids than nearly anyone else in Ustalav's storied past. He predates even Tar-Baphon's rise to power and, as such, holds himself above the Whispering Tyrant's schemes. After all, while the lich-king provoked and eventually fell to his combined enemies, Luvick has successfully maneuvered the vampires to ensure their secret survival in the shadows of mortal civilization. He proves an interesting conversationalist for any PCs who linger to speak with him, but the vampire may well take in more information about them than they gain from him.

When the PCs first come before Luvick, the ancient vampire speaks:

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"As in the days of old, those of mortal flesh stand before me. Yet you do not cower like most who look upon my undying face. My servants tell me you came of your own free will, even with the knowledge that many here would feast upon the blood surging in your veins. But is it bravery you possess, or foolishness? I respect your boldness... for now. Why have you come here, mortals?"

---

Luvick respond to the PCs' most likely statements and questions as follows:

**We want to solve the vampire murders.** "How very noble of you. What concern of yours are they?"

**We were told you might have information about the Whispering Way.** "Very interesting. And what business do you have with the Whispering Way?"

**If we solve the murders, can you help us find the Whispering Way?** "I am no friend of the Whispering Way, and I would prefer to see the Whispering Tyrant remain confined in Gallowspire, as he has been these last fourscore decades. If you find me the killer, I will tell you what I know of this cult, and where they might have gone."

**What do you know about the murders so far?** "My people are being killed—what more do I need to know? My agents are still gathering information, but in truth, we know little."

**Are there any suspects?** "We have someone in custody, a nosferatu named Ramoska Arkminos. He claims to have nothing to do with the slayings, but that one has played a mysterious game for many years. In addition, one of my retainers has acquired evidence suggesting that Caliphas's nobility are behind these attacks. Perhaps the two are related."

**A nosferatu?** "A creature cursed with eternal life and hunger, but without the grace and elegance and eternal youth of a true vampire. More beast than vampire, really."

**Can we interview your people and see this evidence?** "I see no reason to deny you. Speak with Lady Evgenya—she knew many of the victims, and is convinced that she is next. Her apartments lie west of here. Desmond Kote, in the cathedral to the north, may have some insight, as well. If you wish to see the evidence we have gathered so far, speak to my retainer Radvir Giovanni in his store to the east. Ramoska Arkminos is being held in the old pump room, also to the east. You can question him as well, if you wish, though I doubt you'll get any more out of him than we have."

**Can you assure our safety while here?** "I can. Take this signet—any vampire who sees it will know you are my creatures, and leave you unharmed. But take care—vampires are a fractious lot, and even my most loyal subject would not hesitate to drain your blood if provoked. Remember always that to them you are prey, and show them the respect accorded to predators."

**Anything else?** "I demand only one thing. When you find this killer, you bring it to me. Anyone who strikes down vampire elders will face judgment from one as well."

Luvick has nothing more to add. He gives the PCs a signet ring with his sigil and dismisses them. Should the PCs attack Luvick unexpectedly, he immediately assumes gaseous form and escapes through a narrow crack in the wall while his nobles hold off any pursuers. He swears vengeance against the PCs, and can become a recurring enemy of the PCs for the remainder of the campaign and even beyond. Should the PCs attack Florian in Luvick's guise, he orders the nobles to attack while he threatens the PCs from his throne.



## ASHES AT DAWN

### FLORIAN LAMORATH

CR 9

XP 6,400

Male human vampire bard 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 270)  
LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +22

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 24, touch 16, flat-footed 18 (+2 armor, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

**hp** 95 (8d8+56); fast healing 5

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +14, **Will** +8; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits,

**Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

**Weaknesses** vampire weaknesses

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk silver longsword +12/+7  
(1d8+5/19–20) or

slam +11 (1d4+7 plus energy drain)

**Ranged** mwk dagger +12 (1d4+5/19–20)

**Special Attacks** bardic performance

23 rounds/day (move action, countersong, dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +3, inspire courage +2, suggestion), blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 19), energy drain (2 levels, DC 19)

**Bard Spells Known** (CL 8th; concentration +13)

3rd (3/day)—*charm monster* (DC 18), *haste*, see *invisibility*

2nd (5/day)—*blur*, *hold person* (DC 17), *mirror image*, *silence* (DC 17)

1st (6/day)—*charm person* (DC 16), *expeditious retreat*, *grease* (DC 16), *hideous laughter* (DC 16), *ventriloquism* (DC 16)

o (at will)—*detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Florian casts *blur*, *mirror image*, and *expeditious retreat* while his nobles engage foes, then uses his bardic performance and spells as needed. If forced into melee combat, he casts *haste* and fights with his silver longsword.

**Morale** Florian fights until destroyed to protect his master.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 20

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 27

**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Deceitful, Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Lightning Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Mobility, Toughness<sup>B</sup>, Vital Strike

**Skills** Bluff +26, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +16 (+26 with *hat of disguise*), Intimidate +16, Knowledge (history) +13, Knowledge (local) +13, Knowledge (nobility) +17, Perception +22, Perform (act) +16, Perform (oratory) +16, Sense Motive +22, Stealth +24

**Languages** Common, Elven, Varisian

**SQ** bardic knowledge +4, change shape (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*), gaseous form, lore master 1/day, shadowless, spider climb, versatile performance (act, oratory)

**Combat Gear** *potion of inflict light wounds*; **Other Gear**

masterwork dagger, masterwork silver longsword, *bracers of armor* +2, *cloak of resistance* +1, *hat of disguise*, jewelry worth 100 gp, noble's outfit, signet ring worth 50 gp

### VAMPIRE NOBLES (4)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 73 each (see page 29)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The vampire nobles attack any enemies in the audience hall, attempting to dominate strong foes to bolster their own defenses and making energy drain attacks on those remaining.

**Morale** The vampires fight until destroyed or until Florian is defeated, at which point they assume gaseous form and flee.



Luvick Siervage

## D7. TAILOR SHOP (CR 13)

A sign bearing the symbol of a needle and thread hangs outside a wooden door, marking this buried building as some sort of tailor shop.

The vampire tailor Radvir Giovanni maintains this satellite storefront to cater to those vampires unwilling or unable to visit his larger shop in the city's artisan district—many of them seek out his expertise to alter or repair the outfits they most cherished in life. Inside the shop, a variety of meticulously crafted outfits in several different styles hang along every wall.

**Creature:** Well-traveled and long-lived, Radvir Giovanni produces outfits from nearly every historical period of Ustalav dating back for the last several hundred years. If the PCs are here to talk to Radvir at Luvick's request, the vampire tailor is here, making alterations to a 300-year-old courtier's outfit. See Development on page 32 for Radvir's answers. If the PCs attack him, Radvir immediately assumes gaseous form and flees to his lair, the Nobleman's Stitch (see Part Three), as he has no wish to fight the PCs here, surrounded by vampires who would kill him for his treachery. If the PCs are slaying vampires in the Vampire Underground instead of questioning them, Radvir is not here. In this case, the PCs will encounter him later in Part Three.

### RADVIR GIOVANNI

CR 13

XP 25,600

hp 149 (see page 40)

## Carrion Crown

**Development:** If questioned about the vampire murders, Radvir relies on his Bluff skill to hide his own role in the slayings. He sticks to the same story he provided Luvick—that the human nobles of Caliphass are hunting down vampire elders. To support his claims, he can show the PCs documents purportedly taken from several minor members of Caliphass's aristocracy. These missives identify specific vampire elders and their lairs, and commission their deaths in an attempt to deprive the vampires of leadership. Radvir claims to believe that Ramoska Arkminos, a known servant of one of Ustalav's nobles, was contracted to carry out the killings. In fact, Radvir forged these documents, and has been trying to convince Luvick to order attacks against the nobility in retaliation. If Radvir is not present (or if the PCs slay him), the forged documents can be found with a DC 20 Perception check.

Any character examining the documents can make a DC 29 Linguistics check to recognize them as forgeries. Should the PCs wish to track down any of the actual nobles mentioned in the letters, a DC 20 Knowledge (nobility) or DC 30 Knowledge (local) check discovers that all of them have conveniently left Caliphass, a fact Radvir was keenly aware of when he framed them for the crimes.

After the PCs have questioned him, Radvir decides they are too dangerous to his plans to let them live. Shortly after they leave, he initiates a plan to permanently eliminate the PCs (see *Tying Up Loose Ends* on page 35). If confronted with his forgeries, Radvir immediately assumes gaseous form and flees to his lair. Once there, he sends his agents to likewise accomplish the same task.

### D8. PUMP ROOM (CR 12)

A collection of rusted metal machinery lies behind these double-doors with many broken pipes extruding from the eastern wall.

City engineers once used the machinery in this room to manually pump sewage through the adjoining pipes. Once they built over the existing street level, the pump was abandoned. Now it lies disused and in disrepair. A locked iron door to the south (hardness 10, hp 60, Beak DC 28, Disable Device DC 30) leads to a secure cell (area D9), where Luvick has imprisoned the nosferatu Ramoska Arkminos.

**Creatures:** Four vampire enforcers guard the eastern approach to the Vampire Underground from these ruins. The guards attack on sight, unless the PCs carry Luvick's signet (see area D6) or are accompanied by Quinley Basdel. If the PCs ask to speak with Ramoska Arkminos, the guards escort them to area D9.

**VAMPIRE ENFORCERS (4)**  
**XP 4,800 each**  
 hp 92 each (see page 25)

**CR 8**

### D9. SECURE CELL (CR 14)

The worked walls of this bare room end in rubble to the south, where the ceiling has collapsed. Rats, centipedes, and other vermin crawl over the floor in a living carpet.

Luvick has turned this half-collapsed chamber beyond the pump room into an impromptu cell for his lead suspect in the vampire murders.

**Creature:** Imprisoned within this cell sits a nosferatu wizard and alchemist named Ramoska Arkminos, servant of the vampire noble Ristomaur Tiriatic, count of Varno. Although a captive of Luvick Siervage, Arkminos represents a powerful potential ally and source of aid to the PCs, and they to him, if they work together.

For years, Countess Carmilla Caliphass of Caliphass has sought to extend her life and looks, and she recently contacted Conte Ristomaur Tiriatic of Varno for assistance, knowing of his secret interest in alchemy. Conte Tiriatic agreed to loan her his head researcher, Ramoska Arkminos, in return for some future favor. At the countess's behest, Arkminos put his considerable mind to the task of creating an elixir of life. Over the course of several months, Arkminos failed to gain the results Carmilla desired, and she replaced him with the witches of Barstoi.

At some point during his work for the countess, the Whispering Way also made contact with Arkminos, seeking his assistance in testing the potency of their *Carrion Crown* elixir. They gave him a small sample of the elixir, which Arkminos confirmed would support the transformative process of creating a lich, but neglected to pay him for his work. Indeed, Adivion Adrissant regards Arkminos and his master as elder vampires who will need to be removed from the equation anyway once the Whispering Tyrant returns, so the cult absconded with all of Arkminos's research when they left Caliphass for Virlych, leaving the nosferatu with only the *Carrion Crown* sample, too small to be of any use.

With his subsequent capture by Luvick Siervage's vampires, these events have soured Arkminos against Caliphass. As such, he's more than happy to help steer the PCs into conflict with the Whispering Way, provided they can clear his name with Luvick. In exchange, Arkminos can provide the PCs with details of both the Whispering Way and the *Carrion Crown*.

When the PCs first enter Arkminos's cell, read or paraphrase the following.

"Good evening. More of Luvick's spawn, are you, come to gloat some more? No, I can see you're no vampires. His loyal slaves, then, fawning over 'His Grace' while your true minds scream silently and helplessly inside. No? Then what business do you



## ASHES AT DAWN

have with me? Perhaps you came to free me. If so, I can assure you I would be most grateful.”

Imprisoned here by himself, Arkminos is more than willing to engage the PCs in conversation, if only to assuage his boredom. In their ensuing discussion, Arkminos responds to their likely questions as follows:

**Who are you?** “I am Ramoska Arkminos, a servant of the count of Varno.”

**Why are you here?** “Luvick Siervage suspects I might have something to do with the murders of vampires in the city, but he is sadly mistaken.”

**Why haven't you escaped?** “My kind cannot turn to mist like other vampires. I can only take the form of vermin, and neither rat nor bat, centipede nor spider, can pass through solid wood and stone.”

**Why does Luvick suspect you?** “He is scared. And my kind and his, though similar in some ways, are actually quite different. I am an outsider who serves a powerful master, and Luvick feels threatened by this. He needs a scapegoat, and I fit the role well. I suspect my recent work with the Whispering Way might have something to do with it as well.”

**What is your relationship with the Whispering Way?** “I am both a student of the arcane and an alchemist by trade. The Whispering Way hired me to test the potency of a potion they're creating, a powerful admixture providing a path to lichdom. I hasten to add that I am no supporter of their goals, but the opportunity to test my expertise on such a concoction proved too enticing to resist.”

**Why do they want such a potion?** “Obviously, they mean to administer it to someone. Judging by the formula I studied, someone of great importance, as it was crafted for a specific person. My personal favorite for the potion's recipient is Prince Aduard Ordranti, ruler of all Ustalav.”

**Why would the prince want to become a lich?** “I do not believe the cultists created this elixir at the prince's request. It's meant to poison someone, to force such a transformation, even against the unwilling. You could save him, or whoever it's meant for, if you help me.”

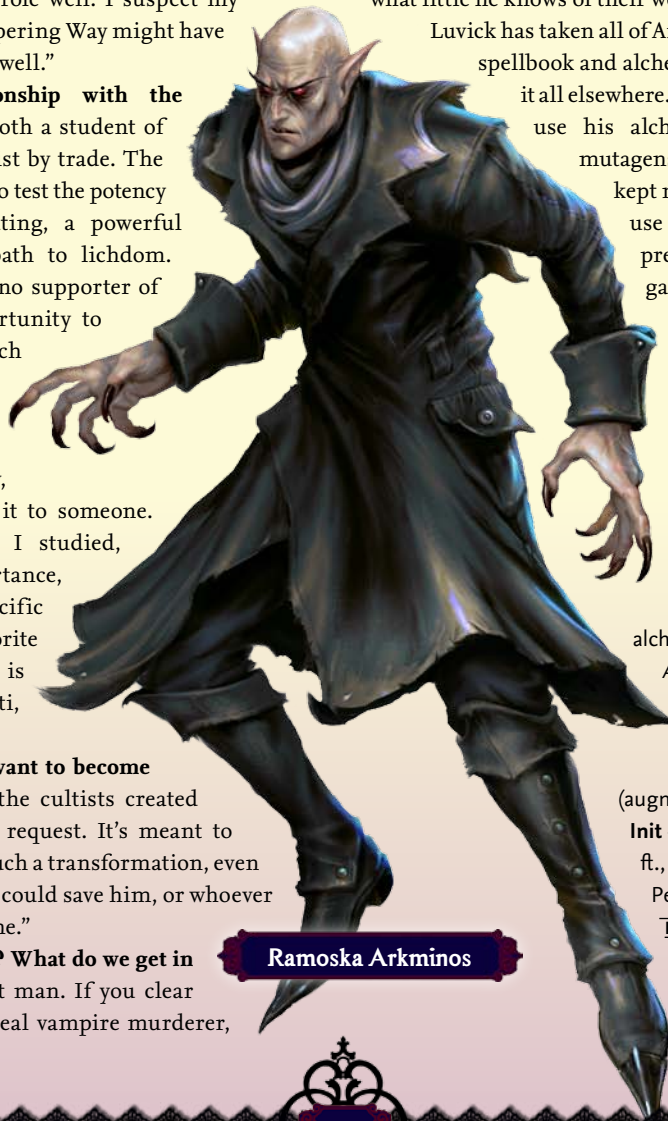
**Why would we help you? What do we get in return?** “I am an innocent man. If you clear my name by finding the real vampire murderer,

I'll tell you all I know of the Whispering Way and their recent activity. I'm sure you already know that they've left Caliphas. I can tell you where they've gone, and perhaps study the sample of their elixir in more detail to see if I can find anything more. All I learn I'll share with you.”

**Why would you turn on the Whispering Way?** “Because they neglected to pay me. As I said, I was just a simple hireling, not a loyal follower, and I expect payment for my work. If I can repay them for their treachery with the points of your swords, then I'll consider it a fair trade. All that matters to me now is escaping here and returning home. Politics and religion hold no interest for me.”

Arkminos will answer any other questions the PCs might have, but he will tell them nothing about the Whispering Way until they've proved that Radvir is responsible for the murders and cleared the nosferatu's name. Arkminos also has nothing to say about the witches of Barstoi, as he has no knowledge of their connections to the murders or the Whispering Way. If the PCs later bring him information about the witches' involvement, however, Arkminos shares what little he knows of their work for Countess Caliphvaso.

Luvick has taken all of Arkminos's gear, including his spellbook and alchemical formula book, storing it all elsewhere. As a result, Arkminos cannot use his alchemist extracts, bombs, or mutagens. Fortunately, Arkminos has kept most of his spells prepared to use if the opportunity to escape present itself (and is able to gain some spells back each day with his Spell Mastery feat), so he is not helpless. Nevertheless, he has no wish to fight the PCs, and does so only for as long as it takes him to escape.



Ramoska Arkminos

**RAMOSKA ARKMINOS CR 14**

**XP 38,400**

Male human nosferatu  
alchemist 4/wizard 9 (*Pathfinder  
Adventure Path #8 88,  
Pathfinder RPG Advanced  
Player's Guide 26*)  
LE Medium undead  
(augmented humanoid)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60  
ft., low-light vision, scent;  
**Perception** +24

### DEFENSE

**AC** 25, touch 13, flat-footed  
22 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +8  
natural)

## Carion Crown

hp 126 (13 HD; 9d6+4d8+74); fast healing 5

Fort +13, Ref +12, Will +14; +2 vs. poison

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4; **DR** 5/wood and piercing; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, sonic 10

**Weaknesses** vampire weaknesses

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### OFFENSE

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**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +7 (1d6)

**Special Attacks** blood drain, bomb 9/day (2d6+5 fire, DC 17), dominate (DC 20), hand of the apprentice (8/day), metamagic mastery (1/day), telekinesis (DC 20)

**Alchemist Extracts Prepared** (CL 4th)

2nd—*resist energy*, see *invisibility*

1st—*detect undead*, *disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*, *shield*, *true strike*

**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 9th; concentration +14)

5th—*cone of cold* (DC 20), *hold monster* (DC 21)

4th—*crushing despair* (DC 20), *detonate\** (DC 19), *phantasmal killer* (DC 19)

3rd—*deep slumber* (DC 19), *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt* (DC 18), *stinking cloud* (DC 18)

2nd—*invisibility*, *scorching ray*, *summon swarm*, *touch of idiocy*, *web* (DC 17)

1st—*mage armor*, *magic missile*, *memory lapse\** (DC 17), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16), *shocking grasp*, *silent image* (DC 16)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *mage hand*, *message*

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### TACTICS

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**Before Combat** Ramoska casts *mage armor* before combat, using his Spell Mastery feat.

**During Combat** If pressed into combat, Ramoska uses his dominate ability to gain an ally to defend him. He uses his spells to hold off opponents as long as possible, but only so long as he is winning.

**Morale** Ramoska has no interest in fighting the PCs. If unable to defeat them, he casts *detonate*, followed by quickened *invisibility* (using metamagic mastery) to make his escape, in swarm form if possible.

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### STATISTICS

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**Str** 10, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 21, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 18

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

**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Master Alchemist\*, Persuasive, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Craft [alchemy])<sup>B</sup>, Skill Focus (Heal)<sup>B</sup>, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Mastery (*dispel magic*, *hold monster*, *invisibility*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*), Throw Anything, Toughness

**Skills** Craft (alchemy) +31, Diplomacy +20, Fly +10, Heal +17, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (nobility) +12, Knowledge (planes) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Linguistics +10, Perception +24,

Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +20, Stealth +20, Use Magic Device +10; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth

**Languages** Aklo, Ancient Osiriani, Common, Draconic, Hallit, Infernal, Necril, Varisian; telepathy 60 ft.

**SQ** alchemy (alchemy crafting +4, identify potions), arcane bond (rat named Andrzej), discoveries (precise bombs [5 squares], smoke bomb), mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural, 40 minutes), poison use, spider climb, swarm form, swift alchemy

**Gear** none

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### SPECIAL ABILITIES

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**Blood Drain (Su)** This functions as the vampire ability of the same name (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 271).

**Damage Reduction (Su)** A nosferatu has damage reduction 5/wood and piercing (this includes all wood-shafted weapons like arrows, crossbow bolts, spears, and javelins, even if the weapon's head is made of another material).

**Dominate (Su)** This functions as the vampire ability of the same name (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 271).

**Spider Climb (Ex)** This functions as the vampire ability of the same name (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 271).

**Swarm Form (Su)** As a standard action, a nosferatu can change into a bat swarm, centipede swarm, rat swarm, or spider swarm. The swarm has the same number of hit points as the nosferatu, and any damage done to the swarm affects the nosferatu. A nosferatu in swarm form is immune to any physical spell or effect that targets a specific number of creatures (including single-target spells such as *disintegrate*), with the exception of such spells and effects generated by the nosferatu itself, which treat the nosferatu as one single creature if it so chooses. While in swarm form, a nosferatu cannot use its natural claw attacks or any of its special attacks, although it gains the natural weapons and extraordinary special attacks of the swarm it transformed into. It also retains all of its usual special qualities. While in swarm form, a nosferatu is still considered an undead creature with its total number of Hit Dice. It can remain in swarm form until it assumes another form, retakes its original form as a standard action, or until the next sunrise.

**Telekinesis (Su)** As a standard action, a nosferatu can use *telekinesis*, as the spell (caster level 12th).

\* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

## D10. DRUG MERCHANTS (CR 13)

A rank odor permeates this large chamber. To the northeast stand the bricked-up walls of some nameless building's subbasement, while a natural cavern stretches to the south.

**Creatures:** Two free-willed vampire sorcerers loyal to Radvir run an illicit business from this ruined cellar, selling Radvir's *bloodbrew elixir* to addicted vampire spawn, eight of whom lounge about the chamber enjoying the



## ASHES AT DAWN

addictive drug. A DC 25 Sense Motive check is enough to recognize the signs of addiction to some mind-altering substance in both the dealers and their customers. If the PCs take an interest in the vampires' activities here or ask questions about the murders or the *bloodbrew*, the dealers grow suspicious and use their Silent Spell and Still Spell feats to cast *expeditious retreat* followed by *greater invisibility* to flee. Before adopting gaseous form and escaping through the sewers back to the Nobleman's Stitch (see Part Three), they launch fireballs into the southern cavern to destroy all evidence of the *bloodbrew*. This action knocks the vampire spawn addicts out of their stupor, and they immediately attack the intruders who threatened their supply of the drug. Both the vampire drug dealers and the vampire spawn addicts currently have 8 temporary hit points from the *bloodbrew* in their systems (already incorporated into their stat blocks).

### VAMPIRES (2) CR 9

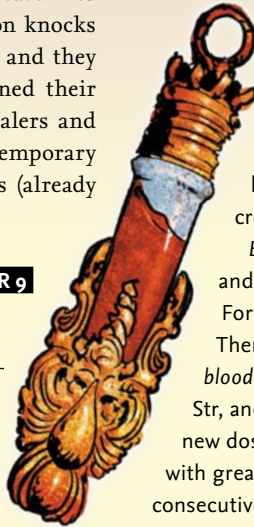
XP 6,400 each

hp 110 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 270)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** If forced into combat, these vampires attack with *magic missile*, *scorching ray*, *vampiric touch*, and *web*.

**Morale** The vampires rely on *greater invisibility* and gaseous form to facilitate their escape.



### VAMPIRE SPAWN ADDICTS (8) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Enslaved spawn (see page 23)

hp 46 each

**Treasure:** A wooden crate in the southern cavern holds 5 full doses of *bloodbrew elixir* (see sidebar), in addition to 20 ampoules containing samples of the drug. None of these samples are powerful enough to represent a full dose of the elixir, but they are enough to start building an addiction in any vampire who samples them.

## TYING UP LOOSE ENDS (CR 11)

Once he becomes aware of the PCs' intention to solve the vampire murders, or if discovered and forced to flee to his lair, Radvir decides to eliminate the PCs as threats. He sends his two vampire drug dealers from area D10 (or two vampire lookouts from area E1, if the drug dealers have been slain) to hopefully remove the PCs from the equation. To avoid attracting unwanted attention, the vampires only attack once the PCs leave the Vampire Underground.

### VAMPIRES (2) CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 102 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 270)

### BLOODBREW ELIXIR

Aura faint necromancy; CL 3rd

Slot none; Price 1,000 gp; Weight —

#### DESCRIPTION

This ruby red wine carries an aroma of fresh-spilled blood with a persistent finish tasting of iron and scarberries.

Anyone who drinks the concoction gains 1d10+3 temporary hit points for 1 hour. In addition, an enslaved vampire or vampire spawn who drinks the elixir is freed from its creator's control for 1 hour, becoming a free-willed undead creature for that time. At the end of the hour, the vampire is once again enslaved under its creator's control.

*Bloodbrew elixir* is highly addictive to vampires, and any vampire who drinks it must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or become addicted to the *bloodbrew*. Thereafter, the vampire must drink a new dose of *bloodbrew* every day, or take a –2 penalty to Dex, Con, Str, and Wis and lose her fast healing ability, until a new dose is taken. The addiction can only be cured with greater restoration, or the vampire must make three consecutive saves, one per day, against the elixir's DC, after a day of not taking the drug. Should the vampire take a new dose of the elixir before the addiction is cured, any past successful saves are negated.

A living creature who drinks the elixir gains the temporary hit points, but takes a –2 penalty on saves against energy drain and negative energy effects, including channeled negative energy, for 1 hour. *Bloodbrew elixir* is not addictive to living creatures.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, Craft (alchemy) DC 25, *false life*, *protection from evil*; **Cost** 500 gp

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The vampires cast *false life* and *mage armor* before going into combat, and mask their approach with *greater invisibility* before attacking with *fireball*, *scorching ray*, and *magic missile*. If pressed into melee combat, the vampires make slam attacks coupled with *vampiric touch* or *chill touch*.

**Morale** The vampires fight until destroyed.

## TO CATCH A KILLER (CR VARIES)

After obtaining as much information as possible from the vampire clans, the PCs have several possible avenues to explore to apprehend the murderer. Regardless of which

## Carion Crown

course of action they choose, the PCs should eventually find themselves heading to Radvir's tailor shop, the Nobleman's Stitch, in Part Three.

If the PCs discovered the addictive properties of the *bloodbrew elixir* making its way through the vampire spawn population, they can follow Radvir's drug dealers from area **D10** back to his lair, which they visit every 3 days or so for a new batch.

After finding Desmond Kote's collection of wooden stakes in area **D5**, the PCs can also trace the origin of the distinctive carvings on the stakes. A DC 20 Craft (carpentry) check, a DC 25 Diplomacy check to gather information, or a DC 30 Knowledge (local) check can trace the unusual carvings on the stakes to a furniture maker located just across the street from Radvir's tailor shop. If questioned, the carpenter can easily identify his neighbor the tailor as the buyer of the furniture legs.

If the PCs found Radvir's "evidence" and recognized the documents as forgeries, any of the vampires (or a DC 15 Knowledge [local] check) can tell the PCs the location of Radvir's shop.

Finally, the PCs can attempt to stake out Restoration Park in the hope of catching the killer in the act. If they managed to establish positive relations with Lady Evgenya, the vampire sorceress will assist them with their ambush. While she will not put herself at risk, Evgenya casts *disguise self* on one of her spawn (or one of the PCs), instructing that spawn or PC to masquerade as her and sending the character into Restoration Park as bait. Radvir already intends to target Evgenya next, so this ruse automatically works in drawing an attack.

**Creatures:** If the PCs lure Radvir into another murder attempt, the vampire shows up late at night accompanied by four of his vampire enforcers from area **E13**. Vampires are notoriously difficult to kill, even for other vampires, so Radvir and his minions have carefully worked out a strategy to ensure their success. While his enforcers hide themselves among the evening mists in gaseous form, Radvir uses his *hat of disguise* to appear as a lone, drunken reveler, a perfect target for hungry vampires. When the enforcers drift close enough to Radvir's target, they assume their normal forms and attack with surprise. Their job is only to distract the victim and keep it from escaping. While the victim is dealing with his enforcers, Radvir employs his Use Magic Device skill to activate his *wand of halt undead*. Once the victim is paralyzed and helpless, Radvir stakes the vampire through the heart, slaying it, and he and his enforcers carry the body back to his shop.

Naturally, these tactics most likely fail if the vampires try them against the PCs. In this case, Radvir orders his enforcers to hold off the PCs while he assumes gaseous form and flees back to his lair. Even if Radvir escapes,

however, the PCs can slay his enforcers and follow their gaseous forms back to his shop.

### RADVIR GIOVANNI

**CR 13**
**XP 25,600**
**hp 149** (see page 40)

### VAMPIRE ENFORCERS (4)

**CR 8**
**XP 4,800 each**
**hp 92 each** (see page 25)

## PART THREE: THE TRAITOR REVEALED

After acquiring clues in the Vampire Underground, and possibly staking out Restoration Park to catch the vampire murderer in the act, the PCs should now know that Radvir Giovanni is the murderer, and can trace him to his lair, the tailor shop called the Nobleman's Stitch.

### THE NOBLEMAN'S STITCH

Radvir makes his primary lair in the basement of his upscale tailor shop. He runs one of the more affluent shops in Caliphas, catering to the nobility and other members of the upper class to establish many of the city's fashion trends. He has a reputation for impeccable style and skill, and many wealthy customers seek him out for the latest fashions and outfits for special occasions. Radvir relies on a staff of dominated humans to run his shop; these humans are present during the day, but return to their homes in the city at night.

The Nobleman's Stitch takes up an entire block in the heart of the city's artisan district, just across the street from a furniture shop (whose chair legs Radvir uses for wooden stakes). A handful of long-burning oil lamps hang from street poles spaced along the street. The tailor shop is two stories tall with a basement that opens onto the subterranean tunnels that eventually connect to the Vampire Underground. The old-style building has superior masonry walls with good wooden doors that are barred outside of normal business hours (hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 25). The ground floor and second floor of the main building have 15-foot-high ceilings, while the adjoining warehouse (area **E7**) is a full 20 feet in height. Ceilings in the basement are only 10 feet high. Radvir keeps heavy drapes pulled over every window during daylight hours, but opens them at night, allowing dim light from the moon and stars to filter inside.

Most of the locations in the Nobleman's Stitch are free of encounters, though combat could certainly spill over into these rooms. Encounter areas that warrant additional details are described after the following summary of the



## ASHES AT DAWN

building's rooms. Remember to take into account any of Radvir's minions whom the PCs have already encountered, and adjust the following encounters accordingly.

**E1. Display Windows:** Two sets of windows displaying well-dressed mannequins look out onto the streets of Caliphas. This area is described in more detail below.

**E2. Shop Floor:** A variety of wares are on display on numerous shelves and tables on this open shop floor. During the day, Radvir's charmed servants see to the operation of the shop, though the vampire occasionally takes a direct hand closer to sunset when the drapes are drawn across the windows. The staircase to the north leads to the shoe room (area E10) on the second floor.

**E3. Dressing Rooms:** Customers try on tailored garments in these small dressing rooms with full-length mirrors. Radvir avoids interacting with clients here in order to hide his aversion to mirrors. The stairway at the end of the hall leads down to the basement (area E13) and bears a permanent *alarm* spell that mentally alerts Radvir in area E14 when anyone passes it.

**E4. Fitting Room:** Radvir takes his clients' measurements in this fitting room. Several shears, pincushions, and measuring tapes lie scattered across a table in the corner. On the rare occasion when he inadvertently pricks a client with a pin, Radvir hurriedly calls for his staff to finish the job before the urge to taste the client's blood overcomes him.

**E5. Kitchen:** A large fireplace warms this small kitchen, occasionally used by Radvir's charmed staff to prepare and take their meals.

**E6. Storerooms:** Radvir uses these small storerooms to store the items necessary for running a successful tailoring business, including cleaning supplies, props for his display windows, and his inventory of trade goods. The contents of the easternmost storeroom in the basement have been cleared to make room for three wooden coffins belonging to Radvir's enslaved vampire spawn.

**E7. Warehouse:** This large warehouse, used to store raw materials for cloth making and shipments to clients outside Caliphas, is detailed below.

**E8. Bulk Cloth Storage:** A long wooden cabinet filled with bolts and pallets of cloth covers the western wall of this room, where Radvir keeps the cloth he dyes and other special orders. Though far too bulky for easy removal, the more expensive fabrics have a net value of nearly 2,500 gp.

**E9. Balcony:** This wooden balcony overlooks the shop floor (area E2) 15 feet below.

**E10. Shoe Room:** Several racks of shoes, boots, and other footwear take up most of this upstairs loft. The stairs to the south lead down to the main shop floor (area E2). Hidden among the footwear on the shelves are *boots of levitation*, *boots of the winterlands*, and *slippers of spider climbing*, noticeable only with *detect magic* or the like.

**E11. Sewing Room:** Four mannequins wearing unfinished garments stand in this poorly ventilated room, where Radvir employs half a dozen skilled seamstresses during the day. He has seduced and dominated every one of them during their tenure in his shop.

**E12. Upstairs Apartments:** These rooms, which house Radvir's dominated guards, are detailed below.

**E13. Basement:** This large basement of the shop is detailed below.

**E14. Dye Room:** This chamber houses dyes for Radvir's creations. It is detailed below.

**E15. False Coffins:** This chamber, which contains four stone coffins, is detailed below.

**E16. Coffin Room:** Nine wooden coffins and a single larger stone sarcophagus lie spread throughout this long chamber. Radvir's free-willed vampire allies use these coffins as their resting places, retreating here if reduced to 0 hit points in battle. The stone sarcophagus at the northern end of the room is actually a false tomb. A lever inside the sarcophagus opens both of the secret passages to the east, which lead to Radvir's crypt (area E17) and the shattered foyer (area E18). A DC 25 Perception check is required to notice the secret doors, each of which contains minute cracks that the vampires can pass through in gaseous form.

**E17. Radvir's Crypt:** Radvir keeps his personal coffin, a massive stone sarcophagus atop an elevated dais, in this hidden chamber. A long tapestry depicting shining Taldan knights battling the undead legions of the Whispering Tyrant hangs on the far wall. The tapestry is worth 5,000 gp. If Radvir flees to his crypt, he summons the sentries from area E18 to stand guard over his coffin until his fast healing can restore him.

**E18. Shattered Foyer:** This hidden, half-collapsed room, which connects to the underground tunnels beneath Caliphas, is detailed below.

**E19. Underground Access:** Rubble from the partially collapsed wall of the subbasement foyer spills out into this subterranean passageway, which serves as an emergency escape route into the sewers and an easy access point into the Vampire Underground.

### E1. DISPLAY WINDOWS (CR 12)

Three mannequins stand in the shop windows overlooking the streets of Caliphas. Each wears the latest, most elegant fashions of the day.

Radvir displays his newest sartorial creations in these windows during the day.

**Creatures:** At night, three free-willed vampire lookouts replace the mannequins, holding completely still and staring out the display windows with unblinking eyes. If the PCs



# Carion Crown



break into the shop, the vampires cast *invisibility* and *expeditious retreat* before leaving the windows to attack intruders.

## FREE-WILLED VAMPIRES (3) CR 9

XP 6,400 each

AC 27, touch 17, flat-footed 22

hp 115 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 270)

Speed 60 ft.

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The vampires cast *false life* and *mage armor* before going on lookout duty.

**During Combat** The vampires rely on their *invisibility* to hide their approach, striking the strongest-looking opponents with *vampiric touch*. If hard pressed, they assume gaseous form or change into dire bats to fly up to the balcony (area E9) where they fire *scorching rays* and *magic missiles*. The vampires will not cast *fireball* while inside the shop, but have no problems doing so outside.

**Morale** The vampires retreat once they fall below 30 hit points. One moves to the upstairs apartments to awaken Radvir's charmed guards in area E12, while another passes through the floorboards in gaseous form to warn Radvir

in the basement (area E14). If slain, the vampires return to their coffins in area E16.

## E7. WAREHOUSE (CR 11)

Wooden rafters support the ceiling of this large warehouse. A number of crates and barrels containing ingredients for dyes and other materials lie stacked to the north and south.

**Creatures:** Adivion Adrissant provided Radvir with three of the Whispering Way's allies—nabasu demons—to help him overthrow Luvick. These hideous batlike fiends have taken up residence in Radvir's warehouse as guardians. In addition, eight ghouls, victims slain by the nabasu's death-stealing gazes, lurk among the warehouse's crates. The demons usually lair within the warehouse rafters, hanging upside down from them while maintaining *deeper darkness* to hide their presence.

## NABASU DEMONS (3) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 103 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 64)



## ASHES AT DAWN

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** Two of the demons teleport to the floor to prevent opponents from fleeing while the third casts *mass hold person* in tandem with its death-stealing gaze. The nabasus employ *telekinesis* to lift unaffected foes into the air and attempt to summon babau demons to join the fight.

**Morale** The nabasus fight to the death, casting *regenerate* or *vampiric touch* as needed to stay in the battle.

**GHOULS (8)****CR 1****XP 400 each**hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)**E12. UPSTAIRS APARTMENTS (CR 12)**

A single bunk bed and a handful of accompanying furniture occupy this room. The window on the south wall looks out over the rooftop of the adjoining warehouse.

**Creatures:** Radvir has used his dominate ability to charm a number of mercenary guards into defending his shop. He concentrates on maintaining his connection to them every morning, and he renews the domination every other day before it wears off. During daylight hours, they guard the shop and its staff while Radvir sleeps in the basement. At night, Radvir's enslaved vampire spawn take over guard duties, and the guards sleep in these chambers, two to a room. A DC 15 Sense Motive check is enough to tell that the guards are under some sort of enchantment effect.

**CHARMED GUARDS (6)****CR 7****XP 3,200 each**

Human fighter 8

N Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +2; **Senses** Perception +9**DEFENSE****AC** 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+8 armor, +2 Dex)**hp** 80 each (8d10+32)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1; +2 vs. fear**Defensive Abilities** bravery +2**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +1 longsword +16/+11 (1d8+8/19–20)**Ranged** mwk light crossbow +11 (1d8/19–20)**Special Attacks** weapon training (heavy blades +1)**TACTICS**

**During Combat** The guards use Vital Strike and Power Attack, assaulting enemies with their longswords.

**Morale** The guards defend the shop to the death unless freed from Radvir's domination.

**STATISTICS****Str** 18, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 24

**Feats** Alertness, Cleave, Great Fortitude, Greater Weapon Focus (longsword), Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

**Skills** Climb +10, Intimidate +12, Perception +9, Ride +8, Sense Motive +1

**Languages** Common**SQ** armor training 2

**Combat Gear** *potions of cure moderate wounds (2)*; **Other Gear** +2 breastplate, +1 longsword, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, 200 gp

**E13. BASEMENT (CR 12)**

A flight of stairs descends into the northwest corner of this basement room. The ceiling rises fifteen feet overhead, and several boxes and crates stacked along the south wall reach nearly the same height.

**Creatures:** Four free-willed vampire enforcers guard Radvir's sanctum beneath the shop. These vampires all owe him for freeing them from the service of their masters. Now they eagerly embrace Radvir's vision for overthrowing Luvick and the other elders and ushering in a new age of vampirism for Ustalav. They attack anyone entering the basement.

**FREE-WILLED VAMPIRE ENFORCERS (4)****CR 8****XP 4,800 each**

hp 92 each (see page 25)

**TACTICS**

**Morale** The vampires fight until destroyed, then retreat to their coffins in area **E16**.

**E14. DYE ROOM (CR 13)**

The stench of powerful chemicals overlaid by blood fills this large chamber. A large vat of pale yellow liquid sits to the north. Three gaunt bodies, stripped and impaled with wooden stakes, hang from iron crossbars on the south wall.

This room usually operates as a dye factory for Radvir's tailor's shop, but now serves a more sinister purpose—chemically preserving and storing the collected bodies of the vampires captured by him and his allies.

**Creatures:** When not actively hunting more victims, Radvir Giovanni and three of his enslaved spawn occupy this room each night, preparing the bodies for delivery to the Abbey of Sante-Lymirin—a process he entrusts to no one else. Unwilling to risk an escapee making it back to Luvick, Radvir stakes each vampire through the heart, then places it in a simple pine box from his warehouse and ferries it across up the coast to the abbey in a small boat. The vampire traitor and his enslaved spawn attack anyone entering the chamber.

# Carrion Crown

## ENSLAVED SPAWN (3)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 38 each (see page 23)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The vampire spawn attack with slams and energy drain, positioning themselves to flank with Radvir so their master can make sneak attacks.

**Morale** The vampire spawn fight until destroyed in defense of their master, retreating to their coffins in area E6, but they flee the shop in gaseous form if Radvir is defeated.

## RADVIR GIOVANNI

CR 13

XP 25,600

Male human vampire rogue (spy) 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 270, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 135)

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20

### DEFENSE

**AC** 30, touch 19, flat-footed 22 (+5 armor, +1 deflection, +6 Dex, +2 dodge, +6 natural)

**hp** 149 (12d8+92); fast healing 5

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +18, **Will** +5

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, evasion, improved uncanny dodge; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits, **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

**Weaknesses** vampire weaknesses

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 60 ft.

**Melee** +1 *conductive\* bladed scarf* +19/+19/+14 (1d6+8/19–20 plus energy drain) or

slam +17/+17 (1d4+7 plus energy drain) or

wooden stake +12/+12/+7 (1d4+5)

**Ranged** wooden stake +17 (1d4+5)

**Special Attacks** blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 21), energy drain (2 levels, DC 21), poison use, sneak attack +6d6

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If alerted to the PCs' presence, Radvir drinks a draught of *bloodbrew elixir* and his potions of *cat's grace*, *displacement*, and *haste*.

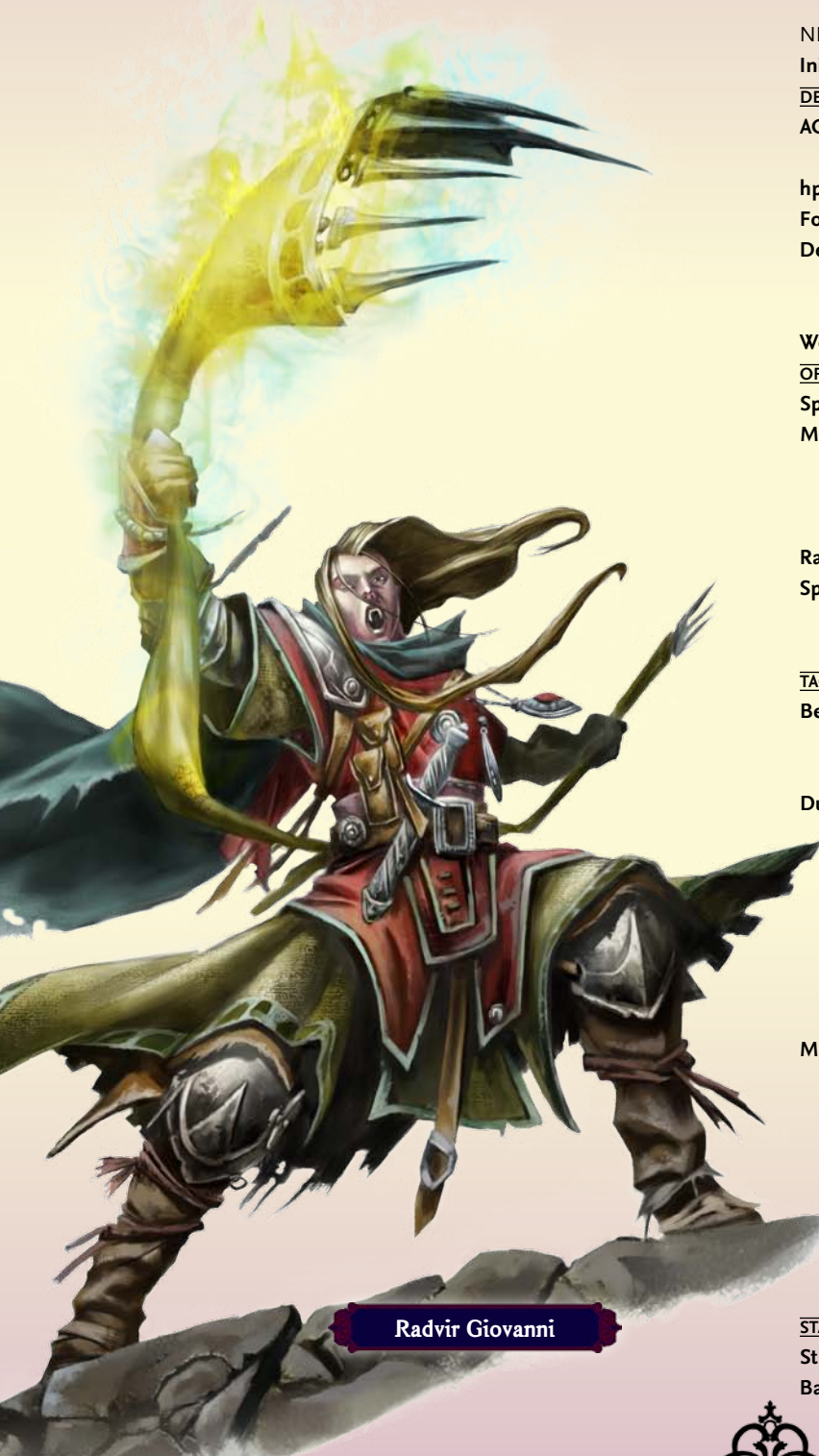
**During Combat** Radvir makes sneak attacks as often as possible, flanking with his enslaved spawn if needed. If surrounded by multiple opponents, he uses Whirlwind Attack to strike all of them. He channels his energy drain ability through his *conductive bladed scarf*, focusing his energy drain attacks on the same foe. If overwhelmed, Radvir assumes gaseous form and flees, only to return later to make hit-and-run sneak attacks.

**Morale** Knowing his fate if taken back to Luvick for judgment, Radvir fights until destroyed. He uses his familiarity with his shop to his advantage, always retreating in gaseous form to another location so his fast healing can restore him to fighting shape. If forced to abandon his shop, Radvir makes for the Abbey of Sante-Lymirin to warn Aisa and Hetna Dublesse of the danger posed by the PCs. If reduced to 0 hit points, Radvir returns to his coffin in area E17.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 25, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 20

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 34



Radvir Giovanni



## ASHES AT DAWN

**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bladed scarf), Improved Critical (bladed scarf), Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Lightning Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Lunge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Toughness<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (bladed scarf), Whirlwind Attack

**Skills** Acrobatics +22 (+34 jump), Bluff +34, Craft (clothing) +17, Craft (shoes) +11, Disable Device +16, Disguise +15 (+25 with *hat of disguise*), Escape Artist +16, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (nobility) +11, Linguistics +15, Perception +20, Sense Motive +23, Sleight of Hand +22, Stealth +25, Use Magic Device +20

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Halfling, Hallit, Infernal, Kelish, Skald, Tien, Undercommon, Varisian, Vudrani

**SQ** change shape (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*), gaseous form, rogue talents (another day\*, bleeding attack +6, combat trick, honeyed words\*, hunter's surprise\*, weapon training), shadowless, skilled liar\*, spider climb

**Combat Gear** *bloodbrew elixir* (4 doses; see page 35), *potions of cat's grace* (2), *potions of displacement* (2), *potions of haste* (2), *wand of halt undead* (12 charges); **Other Gear** +1 mithral chain shirt, +1 *conductive\** bladed scarf, wooden stakes (9), *hat of disguise*, *ring of protection* +1, courtier's outfit, jewelry worth 100 gp, 208 gp

\* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

**Development:** The bodies on the rack are staked vampires awaiting transport to the Abbey of Sante-Lymirin. If the stakes are removed, the vampires immediately return to life with 0 hit points and assume gaseous form, fleeing back to their coffins elsewhere in Caliphast to recover. If the PCs follow the vampires and confront them, use the normal vampire statistics on page 270 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*.

Incredibly meticulous, Radvir keeps a journal in a drawer in the table. The journal contains a list of not only the vampire elders he's targeted, but also the nobles of Ustalav he framed by falsifying evidence against them. The journal makes it clear that Radvir was acting on behalf of Adivion Adrissant and the Whispering Way to help pave the way for the return of Tar-Baphon. The book also includes several notes in individual envelopes from Aisa and Hetna Dublesse. These missives detail ongoing requests for more vampire

bodies to be delivered to the Abbey of Sante-Lymirin in exchange for additional *bloodbrew elixir*. The journal includes the abbey's location and Radvir's own musings on the witches' intentions for the bodies. He believes the sisters are trying to create a potion for undead transformation, but wrongly associates it with the Whispering Way, not realizing that Aisa has been working to turn herself into a vampire.

### E15. FALSE COFFINS (CR 12)

Four stone coffins lie on the floor of this dark chamber. The room is devoid of further decoration.

**Creatures:** Only one of the coffins in this room is real—the closest one to the door lies empty and unused. The other coffins are actually advanced mimics that Radvir keeps as pets. Each one has assumed a form similar to the real coffin to fool would-be vampire-slayers. The mimics attack if someone attempts to open the coffin lids, or cast *ghost sound* to further lure and trick the unwary.

#### COFFIN MIMICS (3)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Mimic rogue 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 205)

N Medium aberration (shapechanger)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +24

#### DEFENSE

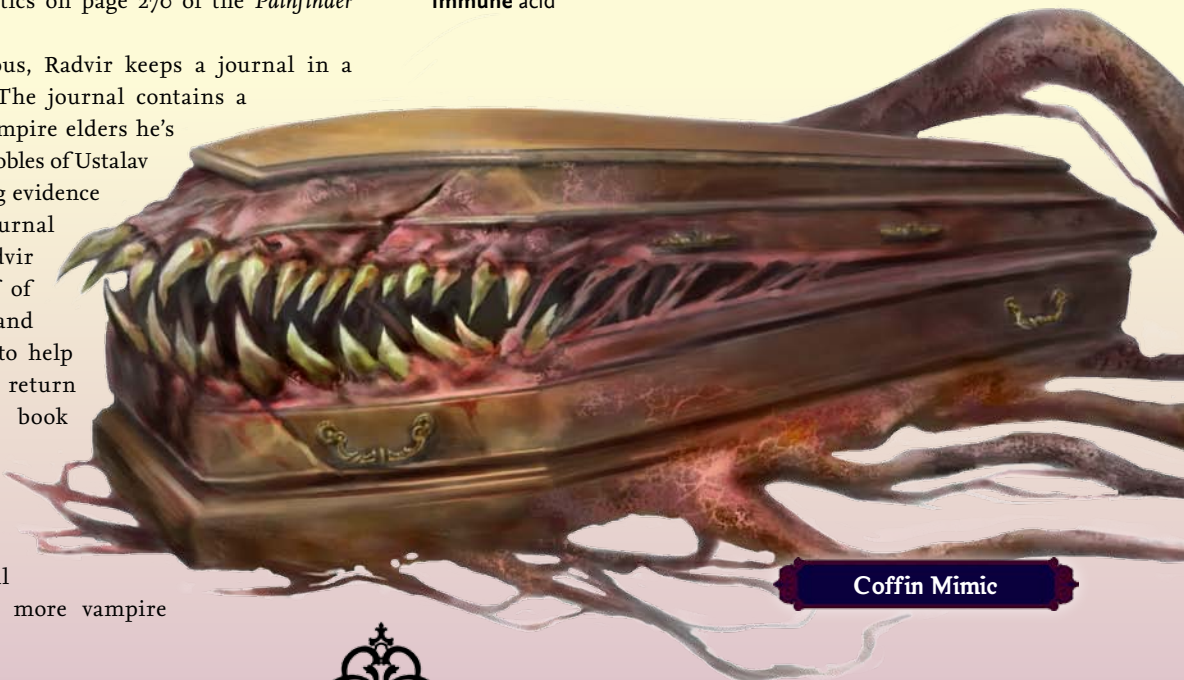
**AC** 24, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)

**hp** 118 each (14d8+56)

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

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge;

**Immune** acid



Coffin Mimic

## Carion Crown

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 15 ft.

**Melee** slam +17 (1d8+9 plus adhesive)

**Special Attacks** adhesive (DC 19), constrict (slam, 1d8+9), sneak attack +4d6

**Rogue Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th, concentration +8)

3/day—*ghost sound* (DC 11)

2/day—*mage armor*

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If alerted to intruders, the mimics cast *mage armor*.

**During Combat** The mimics attack anyone nearby, making sneak attacks and flanking with one another if possible.

**Morale** The mimics fight to the death, pursuing foes throughout the shop if necessary.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 22, **Dex** 18, **Con** 19, **Int** 12, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 31 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Dodge, Fleet, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Lunge, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (slam)

**Skills** Bluff +16, Climb +22, Disguise +16 (+36 when mimicking objects), Escape Artist +20, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +18, Perception +24, Sleight of Hand +16, Stealth +21

**Languages** Common, Varisian

**SQ** mimic object, rogue talents (major magic, minor magic, surprise attack), trapfinding +3

## E18. SHATTERED FOYER (CR 10)

To the south of these two linked rooms, a cascade of fallen rubble leads into subterranean tunnels, likely sewers, judging by the stench emanating from the opening.

The underground tunnels eventually connect to the Vampire Underground after passing through several of the city's smellier sewers.

**Creatures:** Radvir has posted two vampire sentries at this hidden entrance to his lair. The vampires usually remain in dire bat form, hanging from wooden beams supporting the shop's ground floor. They attack any intruders.

### FREE-WILLED VAMPIRE ENFORCERS (2) CR 8

**XP** 4,800 each

**hp** 92 each (see page 25)

### TACTICS

**Morale** The vampires fight until destroyed, retreating to their coffins in area E16.

## LUVICK'S JUDGMENT

If the PCs successfully capture Radvir and deliver him to Luvick Siervage, the vampire elder executes the traitor, first wrapping him in enchanted chains to prevent transformation into gaseous or animal form, then mounting

Radvir on a pike at the top of one of the city's towers to burn away in the morning sun. If Radvir manages to escape the PCs, however, he flees to the Abbey of Sante-Lymirin, taking up residence with the witches Aisa and Hetna Dublesse. In either case, once Luvick is made aware of the role played by the witches in harvesting vampire bodies, he requests that the PCs put an end to them as well.

**Story Award:** If the PCs are working with Quinley Basdel to find his mother's killer, award them 4,800 XP when they defeat Radvir. Likewise, if the PCs agreed to help Ramoska Arkminos, award them 38,400 XP for clearing his name when Radvir is defeated.

## PART FOUR: THE BELLS OF SANTE-LYMRIN

With the information gleaned from their raid on the Nobleman's Stitch, the PCs should now be aware of Radvir's association with the Whispering Way and his alliance with the witches of Barstoi at the remote Abbey of Sante-Lymirin outside Caliphas. This ancient monastery dates back to the end of the Shining Crusade, but since then, it has fallen into disrepair. Countess Caliphvaso bought the abbey a few years ago and converted it into a winery and warehouse. Now the twin witches Aisa and Hetna Dublesse use the place as their base of operations, working for both the countess and Advion Adrissant, even as they anxiously search for their mentor's skull.

### THE ABBEY OF SANTE-LYMRIN

A simple dirt road climbs these high bluffs overlooking Avalon Bay, leading to a two-story stone abbey connected to a squat carriage house by a tree-lined terrace. An adjoining bell tower rises sixty feet from its southern exposure, commanding a wide view of Caliphas to the south.

Located a few miles north of Caliphas along the coast, the abbey is dedicated to Saint Lymirin, a divine servant of Iomedae, and perhaps coincidentally, the patron saint of first blood. Although Countess Carmilla Caliphvaso bought the abbey and turned it into a winery, she has also used it for more self-serving purposes. One of the countess's best-kept secrets is the fact that she has been artificially extending her life and beauty for years, using drops from a single dose of Thuvian *sun orchid elixir*, which she stole from her mother long before the woman's death from old age. This vital elixir is now running out, however, and Carmilla's secret bids to obtain another dose have repeatedly failed. Thus, she has been seeking a new method to extend her life without the use of *sun orchid elixir*. To this end, Carmilla has quietly gathered many learned arcanists



## ASHES AT DAWN

to devise a new fountain of youth, including the nosferatu Ramoska Arkminos, whom she later dismissed, and the witches Aisa and Hetna Dublesse, who claimed knowledge of blood magic well suited for such experimentation, and now occupy the monastery.

The abbey's sizeable estate includes not only the monastery and winery, but also several acres of vineyards and woodlands. The main buildings possess 5-foot-thick walls of superior masonry, and unless otherwise noted, doors are made of strong wood (hardness 5, hp 20 hp, Break DC 23). The ground and upper floors (including the bell tower) all have 20-foot-high ceilings, while the rooms in the abbey's basement only reach a height of 15 feet. During the day, natural light illuminates those rooms with windows. Torches and oil lamps provide the only light belowground.

### F1. CARRIAGE HOUSE (CR 13)

The musty smell of hay and manure permeates this carriage house. A large carriage and a smaller cart are parked next to a large pile of hay beside five horse stalls.

**Creatures:** The witches Aisa and Hetna used a scroll of *planar ally* to summon a glabrezu named Dolthysuun to guard the abbey's ground floor while they focused on their own tasks. Currently, the demon uses *veil* to make himself appear as a standoffish stablehand in the carriage house. Once every half hour or so, he uses *greater teleport* to check on the storehouse (area F2), the dining hall (area F3), and the winery (area F12). Dolthysuun lures any newcomers into a false sense of security before falling upon them with ravenous glee.

In addition, one of Oothi's spider swarms also keeps watch here (see sidebar on page 45). The spiders hide among the rafters, ready to assist Dolthysuun in defending the abbey, or fleeing to warn the other witches if he falls. If anyone falls to the ceiling as a result of Dolthysuun's *reverse gravity*, Oothi's spider swarm moves over them to deal swarm damage. If forced to flee, the swarm escapes through a hole in the roof to reach the outdoor terrace (area F13).

#### DOLTHYSUUN

CR 13

XP 25,600

Glabrezu demon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 61)

hp 186

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Dolthysuun invokes his *power word stun* against any obvious spellcaster among the PCs, then uses *reverse gravity* to cause opponents trying to close with

him to fall to the ceiling 20 feet overhead. He casts *mirror image* before attacking in melee, and uses *chaos hammer*, *confusion*, or *unholy blight* to further harm foes.

**Morale** Dolthysuun only agreed to serve Aisa and Hetna in exchange for 12 opals worth 1,000 gp each. If reduced to 50 hit points or fewer, he attempts to bargain for his life, offering to leave the abbey in exchange for an equal payment.

### F2. STOREHOUSE

This stone-tiled chamber stores barrels, crates, boxes, and half-filled sacks of grain.



Dolthysuun



# Carion Crown



This room handles the delivery of supplies to the abbey and shipments of wine into Caliphas. The small storerooms to the east and west only contain empty crates and barrels.

**Treasure:** Seven casks of fine aged wine sit in the main storehouse; each bears the markings of Countess Carmilla Caliphaso's estate and is worth 500 gp.

## F3. DINING HALL (CR 12)

A wide foyer to the east leads into this huge dining hall. Wooden chandeliers with luminous candles hang from the ceiling overhead, their long ropes strung through the rafters and tied off on the eastern walls. Twin staircases descend from the north and south ends of the hall.

The two stairways lead down to the basement beneath the abbey.

**Creatures:** Six mercenary guards occupy this wide dining hall. Aisa and Hetna purposefully chose them for their weak minds and physical prowess and cast *charm monster* on each of them to secure their loyalty. The witches renew these spells as necessary, and have come to enjoy

the guards as playthings. All of the guards believe they're in love with the witches and will do anything to please them, including defending the abbey against unwelcome intruders. A DC 25 Sense Motive check notices that the guards are under some sort of enchantment effect.

Occasionally, the demon Dolthysuun (in area F1) comes to check on them, taking on the guise of the abbey's nonpracticing, rotund abbot. In this disguise, Dolthysuun can command the guards just as easily as Aisa or Hetna and joins them in battle if alerted in the carriage house.

### CHARMED GUARDS (6)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 80 each (see page 39)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The guards hold off intruders while one runs to warn Dolthysuun in area F1.

**Morale** The guards defend the abbey to the death.

## F4. PANTRY

This unusually cool chamber is filled with a heavy, cloying fog.



## ASHES AT DAWN

This room contains all of the perishable foodstuffs for feeding the abbey's inhabitants. It bears a permanent chilled *solid fog* effect to keep everything cool.

### F5. KITCHEN

A large fireplace dominates the southern half of this kitchen, which is used to prepare food for the abbey's current inhabitants. Wooden cabinets line the west and northeast walls, while a butcher's block takes up the center of the room.

### F6. WORKROOM

The witches and their servants use this workroom as a meeting place to discuss their active search for Oothi's skull. A large piece of parchment lies on a table, bearing a crude drawing of the abbey grounds. Several markings on the map indicate where they've searched for the skull with no success, including the bell tower (area F7), carriage house (area F1), storehouse (area F2), and winery (area F12).

### F7. BELL TOWER (CR 12)

A set of stone stairs winds along the walls of this square tower. In the center of the roof, long ropes descend through a perfectly round hole about a foot in diameter.

This massive bell tower once helped warn the citizens of Caliphass of attacks on the city's outskirts. Now its bell and upper stories are silent and in disrepair. A DC 15 Strength check is required to pull the ropes to properly ring the bell.

**Trap:** If the Strength check to ring the bell exceeds the DC by more than 5, the bell pulls free and comes crashing down through the center of each tower floor.

#### FALLING BELL

CR 12

XP 19,200

Type mechanical; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28

#### EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset none

Effect falling bell (10d6 bludgeoning damage, DC 25 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-foot-square area)

### F8. SEA CAVE

The waters of Lake Encarthan lap at a narrow strand of rocky beach. A dark cave opening looms in the side of the bluff beneath the abbey.

The cave opens into a 10-foot-wide, natural stone passage that leads to an underground cavern in the abbey's basement (area F33).

### ALONG CAME A SPIDER...

Six scuttling spider swarms have taken shelter in the nooks and crannies of the aging walls and rafters of the Abbey of Sante-Lymirin. These creatures are all that remain of the sinister intellect of the great annis hag Oothi, who trained and mentored Aisa and Hetna Dublesse in witchcraft before she transformed herself with a *swarm skin* spell (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 248) to escape execution. Oothi cannot use any of her own abilities while in swarm form, and she cannot re-form her body until all of her bones have been retrieved and reassembled, but she can perceive what the swarms do and control their actions, which makes her an ideal lookout for virtually every part of the monastery as the two sisters search for her missing skull. Currently, Oothi's spider swarms occupy the carriage house (area F1), the winery (area F12), the outdoor terrace (area F13), the second story of the bell tower (area F20), the hall of procession (area F25), and the bayside cavern (area F33). Oothi automatically alerts the witches with her *telepathic bond* if the PCs enter any of these areas.

#### SPIDER SWARMS (6)

CR 1

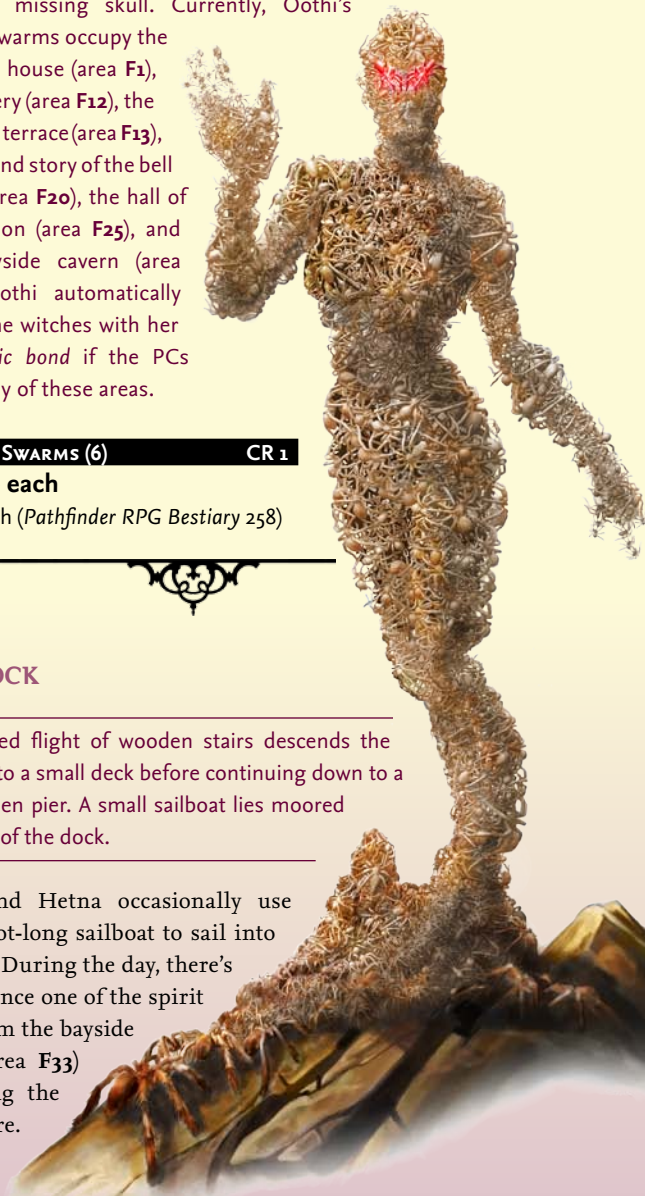
XP 400 each

hp 9 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 258)

### F9. DOCK

A weathered flight of wooden stairs descends the bluff here to a small deck before continuing down to a long wooden pier. A small sailboat lies moored at the end of the dock.

Aisa and Hetna occasionally use this 15-foot-long sailboat to sail into Caliphass. During the day, there's a 50% chance one of the spirit nagas from the bayside cavern (area F33) is hunting the waters here.



## Carion Crown

### F10. WELL

A large stone well sits here in the shade of a grove of young apricot trees.

This deep well serves as the primary source of fresh water for the abbey. The original monks dug it so they wouldn't have to venture down the bluffs to fetch water from the bay every morning. About 15 feet down the slick stone walls of the well, a secret door opens into the abbey's catacombs (area F24). It can be found with a DC 20 Perception check by anyone who climbs down into the well. Unknown to the witches of Barstoi, Oothi's skull lies at the very bottom of the well under 15 feet of water, shielded from divination by a permanent *nondetection* effect (CL 17th). If the PCs discover the skull, they might be able to use it as a bargaining chip with the witchfires in area F12, the nagas in area F33, or Aisa and Hetna (in areas F18 and F30).

### F11. VINEYARD

The grapevines in this tilled field were picked clean from the last harvest. The servants of Countess Caliphvaso have already harvested and processed the grapes from this vineyard, storing the resulting wine in the casks in the winery (area F12).

### F12. WINERY (CR 12)

Three huge wine casks dominate the warehouselike interior of this stone building, beneath a vaulted ceiling rising nearly twenty feet overhead. Four wooden vats line the western wall next to a pair of double doors, and five smaller barrels sit on the tiled floor near a similar exit to the southeast. Smaller doors exit to the north and south.

Over the years since the Abbey of Sante-Lymirin was founded, many of Iomedae's followers relocated from Ustalav to Lastwall or farther north to the Worldwound, and the abbey was abandoned. Recently, Countess Carmilla Caliphvaso purchased the estate and repurposed it into a winery. With the coming of the witches of Barstoi (and the last harvest of grapes already processed into wine), however, the countess's retainers have relocated to her estate on the far side of the city, leaving the abbey and its resources to Aisa and Hetna. The large wine casks hold new wine from the last harvest, still fermenting. The wooden vats are for crushing grapes, while the barrels next to the southeast door are empty, waiting to be filled with aged wine. A secret trap door in the northeast corner leads to the smuggler's tunnels in the basement (area F23). It may be found with a DC 20 Perception check.

**Creatures:** Oothi's rivals once included a coven of green hags named Besda, EriLu, and Mertine. After many

conflicts, Oothi finally slew them, but the malevolent trio proved too tenacious for death—they came back as witchfires and continued to oppose the annis hag's plans. When Oothi was forced to transform into spider swarms, the undead hags turned their attentions to Oothi's proteges. Now, as the witches of Barstoi stand on the brink of reassembling their mentor's bones, the witchfires have redoubled their efforts to oppose the witches and gain revenge by destroying Oothi once and for all. Aisa and Hetna have thus far driven the witchfires away from the abbey proper, but have been unable to destroy them entirely, and the three undead hags have taken up residence in the abbey's winery. The witchfires appear as young, beautiful women with insubstantial bodies wreathed in auras of sickly green fire, but they are currently hiding within the large wine casks. If they realize the PCs are working against the witches of Barstoi, the malevolent undead hags might attempt to bargain with them in the hope of acquiring Oothi's skull and preventing her restoration. They can also fill in the PCs on the nature of Oothi and her spider swarms. Otherwise they attack, passing through the sides of the casks to take the PCs by surprise.

Unknown to the witchfires, another of Oothi's spider swarms (see the sidebar on page 45) quietly hides beneath the large wine cask in the northeast corner of the winery. She watches over the trap door leading to the basement and only attacks if the PCs discover this secret entrance. The swarm waits until most of the PCs are climbing down the wall of the shaft before moving into the shaft to cover and bite them. Anyone swarmed in the shaft must make a DC 15 Climb check with a –5 penalty or fall 15 feet to the floor below and take 1d6 points of falling damage.

#### BESDA, ERI LU, AND MERTINE (3)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Witchfires (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 284)

hp 115 each

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** One of the witchfires attempts to summon will-o'-wisps while her companions attack intruders with witchflame bolts. The witchfires use *pyrotechnics* on any fire source brought into the winery, and focus their attacks on any opponents engulfed in witchflame.

**Morale** The witchfires flee if reduced to fewer than 40 hit points, but if confronted with Oothi's skull (see area F10), the witchfires fight until destroyed to claim the skull for themselves.

### F13. OUTDOOR TERRACE

A layer of soil covers this outdoor terrace, teeming with small flowering trees and shrubs. A stone table with twin benches sits by the eastern balcony, next to a small herb garden.



## ASHES AT DAWN



**Creature:** Another of Oothi's spider swarms (see the sidebar on page 45) hides among the shrubs here. The swarm preys on birds that land among the trees and serves as an outdoor lookout, monitoring the abbey's storehouse entrance below (area F2). Oothi avoids using this swarm for combat at all costs, holding it in reserve above all others so she can survive. Because of the thick undergrowth, an active search and a DC 25 Perception check are required to notice the swarm. If discovered, the swarm retreats by fleeing over the terrace wall or into the carriage house (area F1) through small cracks in the masonry.

### F14. STUDY

A pair of large windows in this study look out upon the terrace. This room served as a quiet place for the abbey's abbot to meet with outside guests when Iomedae's monks occupied its halls. Now it lies empty and is seldom used.

### F15. LIBRARY (CR 12)

Large bookshelves cover the walls of this room, broken only by an occasional window overlooking the abbey's grounds to the west.

A headless skeleton stands erect in the northwest corner, lashed to a long wooden pole, its bones tied together with bits of string.

The headless skeleton of Aisa and Hetna's mentor, the annis hag Oothi, stands by one of the windows, meticulously strung together with each piece labeled to indicate where it goes. A DC 21 Knowledge (nature) check can identify the skeleton as that of an annis hag.

**Creatures:** Aisa and Hetna summoned four powerful invisible stalkers to safeguard this library and Oothi's bones. The invisible stalkers attack anyone who disturbs the hag's skeleton, but otherwise remain hidden by hovering against the ceiling.

**ADVANCED INVISIBLE STALKERS (4)** **CR 8**  
**XP 4,800 each**  
 hp 94 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 181, 294)

**Treasure:** The books and scrolls on the table also hide a libram on transformative blood magic, a resource Hetna and Aisa have routinely consulted since liberating it from a traveling bloatmage from Kaer Maga, substituting the blood



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knight's blood for many of its recipes. The book is also a spellbook, and contains the following wizard spells: *clone*, *horrid wilting*, *insanity*, *iron body*, *transformation*, and *vision*.

### F16. MAIN BEDCHAMBER

A massive canopy bed dominates this chamber, next to a comfortable seating area centered around an ornate rug. Twin dressers stand on either side of the bed, and paintings of the Ustalavic countryside hang on the southern wall.

This master bedroom once belonged to the abbey's abbot. Now the sisters Aisa and Hetna share it. The full-length paintings on the southern wall actually hide two secret doors (DC 30 Perception check to notice) connecting to the guest rooms (area F17).

### F17. GUEST ROOMS

A sturdy, if spartan, bed, dresser, and table with a single chair occupy this small bedroom.

Aisa and Hetna assign these guest rooms to the infrequent visitors they receive at the abbey. Currently, only the easternmost room is inhabited, and a simple wooden coffin lies next to the bed here. The coffin belongs to the vampire ex-paladin Halloran Idriss (see area F24), but he spends as little time here as possible.

### F18. LABORATORY (CR 12 OR 13)

The pungent odor of strange chemicals and reagents hangs in the air of this wide chamber. Several tables fill the room; they're covered with dozens of glass bottles and flasks, some placed upon small burners, connected to one another with elaborate glass tubing. A large cauldron sits over an open flame in the southern fireplace, bubbling with a dark reddish liquid.

**Creature:** Hetna Dublesse, the older of the witch twins by 5 minutes, occupies this laboratory, using it as a small factory to produce Radvir's *bloodbrew elixir*. Of the two witches, she still holds the most loyalty to Oothi. However, because of her sister's expertise in necromancy, she left Aisa in charge of the search for their mentor's skull (and in control of their undead blood knight) in the basement below. Meanwhile, Hetna busies herself with managing their charmed guardians and erstwhile allies while fending off Countess Caliphvaso's frequent inquiries about their progress with the elixir of youth, on which little actual work has been accomplished.

If alerted to the PCs' presence, Hetna assumes her vindictive host has finally sent someone to throw her and Aisa out of the abbey. Hetna calls on the charmed guards

in area F19 to join her, instructing them to hide behind the tables or wait in one of the adjoining rooms until she calls for them to attack. Hetna then casts *invisibility* and flies to the ceiling on her *broom of flying*.

#### HETNA DUBLESE

CR 12

#### XP 19,200

Female human witch 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 65)

CE Medium humanoid (human)

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

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 25, touch 18, flat-footed 20 (+4 armor, +3 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural)

**hp** 131 (12d6+87)

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +12, **Will** +15

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 dagger +6/+1 (1d4/19–20)

**Ranged** +1 dagger +11/+6 (1d4/19–20)

**Special Attacks** hexes (cauldron, charm [2 steps, 6 rounds], coven, evil eye [–4, 9 rounds], misfortune [2 rounds], retribution [6 rounds], waxen image [6 uses/image])

**Witch Spells Prepared** (CL 12th; concentration +18)

6th—*cloak of dreams*\* (DC 23), *mass suggestion* (DC 23), *unwilling shield*\* (DC 22)

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 21), *cure critical wounds*, *mass pain strike*\* (DC 21), *mind fog* (DC 22)

4th—*charm monster* (DC 21), *confusion* (DC 21), *dimension door*, *poison* (DC 20)

3rd—*blink*, *dispel magic*, extended *false life*, *lightning bolt* (DC 19), *suggestion* (DC 20)

2nd—*cure moderate wounds*, *hold person* (DC 19), *invisibility*, extended *mage armor*, *vomit swarm*\*, *web* (DC 18)

1st—*burning hands* (DC 17), *charm person* (DC 18), *command* (DC 18), *ill omen*\*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 17), *unseen servant*

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 17), *detect magic*, *message*, *read magic*

**Patron** Deception

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Hetna casts extended *false life* and extended *mage armor* every day, and casts *poison* into her *witching gown* (activating its *spite* effect; see page 51). She also drinks a *potion of bear's endurance* before combat.

**During Combat** Hetna casts *cloak of dreams* on the first round of combat. While her guards deal with intruders, Hetna prepares a waxen image of the PCs' most dangerous-looking warrior, making that character run through the window by the fireplace and fall to the ground 20 feet below. Thereafter, she attacks enemies with *mass pain strike*, *confusion*, *mind fog*, *mass suggestion*, or *lightning bolt*. Once anyone closes with her in melee, Hetna casts *blink* and *unwilling shield*, then targets her opponent with *ill omen* followed by *baleful polymorph* or *charm monster*.



## ASHES AT DAWN

**Morale** If reduced to 65 hit points or fewer, Hetna smashes her *elemental gem* to summon a Large air elemental with which to occupy the PCs while she flies to the ceiling or out a window to heal herself. She returns to the battle until she reaches 30 hit points or fewer, at which point she casts *dimension door* to join her sister Aisa in area F30.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 18, **Con** 18, **Int** 23, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 23

**Feats** Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft

Wondrous Item, Dodge, Extend

Spell, Iron Will, Spell Focus (enchantment), Toughness

**Skills** Bluff +10, Craft

(alchemy) +25,

Diplomacy +10, Fly

+19, Intimidate +19,

Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (history) +21,

Knowledge (nature) +21, Knowledge (planes) +21,

Perception +10, Spellcraft +21, Stealth +10, Use Magic

Device +15

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Draconic, Giant,

Sylvan, Varisian

**SQ** exceptional resources, permanent spells, witch's familiar (bat named Murk [stores all prepared spells and patron spells, plus *beguiling gift*\*, *glyph of warding*, *spite*\*, *summon monster V*, and additional spells of your choice])

**Combat Gear** *elemental gem* (air), *potions of bear's endurance* (2), *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +1 dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +3, *belt of incredible dexterity* +4, *broom of flying*, *headband of vast intelligence* +4 (Knowledge [history] and [planes]), *ring of protection* +3, *witching gown* (contains *poison*; see page 51), alchemist's lab, spell component pouch, 723 gp

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

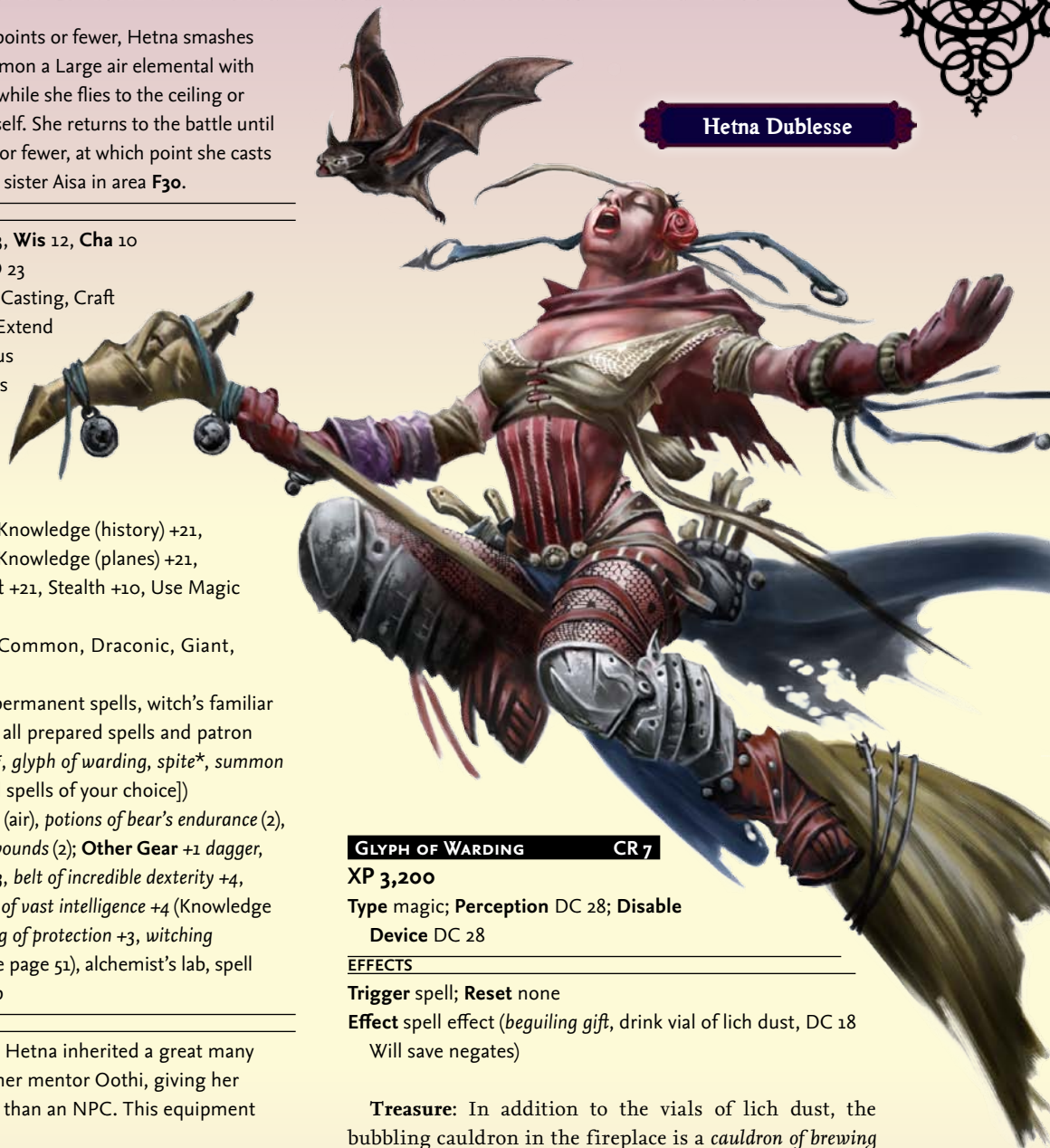
**Exceptional Resources (Ex)** Hetna inherited a great many magical resources from her mentor Oothi, giving her the wealth of a PC rather than an NPC. This equipment increases her CR by 1.

**Permanent Spells (Ex)** Hetna benefits from the following permanent spells cast on herself: *darkvision*, *see invisibility*, and *telepathic bond* (with Oothi).

\* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

**Trap:** Among the many bottles and flasks on Hetna's tables lies a polished oak box holding seven glass vials labeled "Youth Tonic." All of the vials contain a *magic aura* effect to appear as potions, but they actually contain lich dust poison (see page 560 of the *Core Rulebook*) dissolved in water. The box is trapped with a *glyph of warding* that triggers a *beguiling gift* effect (see page 205 of the *Advanced Player's Guide*), forcing the character opening the box to drink one of the "potions." Anyone sampling one of these concoctions is afflicted with the poison.

Hetna Dublesse



### GLYPH OF WARDING CR 7

XP 3,200

Type magic; Perception DC 28; Disable

Device DC 28

### EFFECTS

Trigger spell; Reset none

Effect spell effect (*beguiling gift*, drink vial of lich dust, DC 18 Will save negates)

**Treasure:** In addition to the vials of lich dust, the bubbling cauldron in the fireplace is a *cauldron of brewing* (see page 302 of the *Advanced Player's Guide*). It contains a half-completed batch of *bloodbrew elixir* (see page 35). PCs who meet the construction requirements can finish Hetna's work by spending half the item's cost (250 gp) and working for 4 hours.

Numerous research notes are also scattered about the lab. Most of these are Aisa and Hetna's, detailing both their work in searching for an elixir of youth at the behest of some noble patron, as well as the alchemical process for manufacturing *bloodbrew elixir*. A DC 25 Craft (alchemy) check or DC 23 Spellcraft check identifies the *bloodbrew elixir* recipe. Also among the notes are four *scrolls of protection from evil*, used by Hetna to create the *bloodbrew elixir*. Several more notes were left behind by Ramoska Arkminos when

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he left Countess Caliphvaso's employ. His penmanship is markedly different from Hetna's, and each page bears the nosferatu's initials. His notes also deal with the extension of life through both magical and alchemical means, but a DC 20 Craft (alchemy) check or Spellcraft check reveals that his research was never completed. There is no mention of the *bloodbrew elixir* in Ramoska's notes.

Finally, a small, elaborate glass vial sits in a velvet lined coffer on the table, containing just two or three drops of a golden fluid. This is all that remains of Countess Caliphvaso's precious *sun orchid elixir* (see page 301 of *The Inner Sea World Guide*), given over to the witches for experimentation. The elixir can be identified with *detect magic* and a DC 32 Spellcraft check. There is far less than a full dose of the elixir left, but there is enough to grant someone who drinks the few drops that remain 1d12 years of additional life.

## F19. BARRACKS (CR 11)

Eight bunk beds occupy this common sleeping room; its windows look out over the abbey's grounds and vineyards.

**Creatures:** The monks of the original abbey shared this room as a communal dormitory. Now, the mercenary guards charmed by Aisa and Hetna sometimes use it to stay overnight when the witches need help with another shipment of *bloodbrew*. Four off-duty guards occupy the room during the day, though Hetna likely summons them for added protection as soon as she becomes aware of the PCs' intrusion (see area F18). If found here, the guards attack any intruders. A DC 25 Sense Motive check notices that the guards are under some sort of enchantment effect.

### CHARMED GUARDS (4)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 80 each (see page 39)

### TACTICS

**Morale** The guards defend the abbey to the death unless freed from the witches' charms.

## F20. BELL TOWER (SECOND FLOOR)

Four windows allow a modest amount of natural light into the second floor of the abbey's bell tower. Stone stairs along the walls lead both up and down, while two doors open to the west and north.

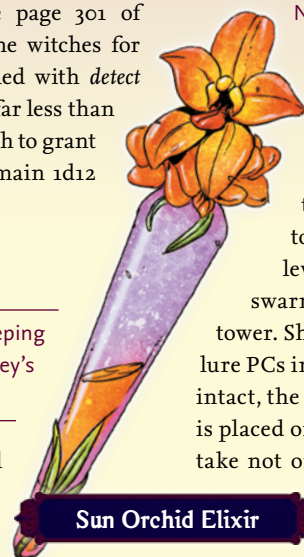
**Creature:** One of Oothi's spider swarms (see the sidebar on page 45) occupies the center of the bell tower, clinging

to the walls and ceiling above the staircase. It recently drank (and crawled through) a spilled *elixir of hiding* among the potions in Hetna's laboratory (area F18), so a DC 23 Perception check is required to notice the swarm overhead. After warning Hetna, the swarm withdraws, climbing the bell tower's ropes and attempting to lure the PCs onto the weakened floor in area F21.

## F21. BELL TOWER (THIRD FLOOR) (CR 13)

Nine windows allow a tremendous amount of natural light inside the third floor of the abbey's bell tower, while two ropes continue up through a small hole in the ceiling.

**Trap:** Most of the abbey's inhabitants know to avoid climbing any higher than the bell tower's second story, because the floor on this level is extremely weak. Only Oothi's spider swarms have explored the higher levels of the bell tower. She uses this area as a retreat to hide herself or to lure PCs into a sudden fall. Though the stairways remain intact, the center floor gives way if more than 100 pounds is placed on it. Those in the area when the floor collapses take not only falling damage, but are buried beneath a cascade of loose rock and timber that falls down as well.



Sun Orchid Elixir

### WEAKENED FLOOR

CR 13

XP 25,600

Type mechanical; Perception DC 26; Disable Device DC 26

### EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset none

**Effect** 40-ft.-deep pit (4d6 falling damage, DC 30 Reflex save avoids); falling debris (Atk +20 melee, 4d6 bludgeoning damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-foot-square area)

## F22. BELL TOWER (FOURTH FLOOR)

A single flight of stairs reaches the highest floor of the abbey's bell tower. A massive iron bell hangs from wooden pivot posts in the center of the tower floor.

Once, the 8-foot-tall bell called the abbey's monks to their prayers and meals, and helped warn the city of attacks, but because of the tower's instability, it no longer sees any use.

## ABBAY BASEMENT

Beneath the abbey lie several hidden passageways and an underground chapel dedicated to one of Iomedae's greatest saints, Saint Lymirin, but the abbey's current owner, Countess Caliphvaso, has done little to revive the



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shrine's original purpose. The basement now play host to the countess's wine cellars and the minions of the witches of Barstoi rather than the honored dead of Iomedae.

### F23. SMUGGLER'S TUNNELS

After the abbey was abandoned, smugglers built these secret passageways to access the basement and store their contraband. A trap door in the ceiling of the southernmost room leads to the winery (area F12). All of the secret doors in this area (to areas F12, F24, and F27) require DC 20 Perception checks to find.

### F24. OSSUARY (CR 12)

Carved stone columns resembling angels with outstretched wings support the ceiling of this wide, long chamber. Decayed bones and half-rotten burial shrouds spill out of ten five-foot-wide alcoves in the chamber's walls.

This ossuary houses the honored remains of the abbey's monks and Iomedae's faithful. The witches' frenzied search for their mentor's skull has disturbed the bones interred here, which now lie strewn across the floor. Secret doors in the alcoves lead to the abbey's well (area F10), the smuggler's tunnels (area F23), and the wine vaults (area F31). All of them can be found with DC 20 Perception checks.

**Creature:** Among these catacombs lurks a dangerous, if reluctant, opponent—but also a potential ally. Halloran Idriss, a vampire ex-paladin of Iomedae, is one of Radvir's newest enslaved spawn. Investigating the murders in Caliphaz, Halloran staked out Restoration Park and encountered Radvir, but proved no match for the vampire turncoat. Once he had killed the paladin, Radvir carried Halloran's body to the witches' lair, offering him up as a guardian for the abbey, while slyly placing an ally among the witches to keep an eye on their progress with the *bloodbrew elixir*. Radvir instructed the witches to never let Halloran partake of the *bloodbrew* or risk the ex-paladin turning on them all. The witches use *command undead* to order Halloran about, renewing the spell occasionally to maintain his loyalty to them. For now, they've kept him busy in the ossuary, searching through the bones buried in the abbey's walls for Oothi's skull.

If the PCs killed Radvir or turned him over to Luvick for execution, Halloran has become a free-willed vampire, no longer under Radvir's control. However, the ex-paladin is still miserable as a vampire and cannot bring himself to leave the Abbey of Sante-Lymirin while the witches pervert its sanctity. He has heard the witches mention Oothi and recognizes her name as that of a powerful annis hag who once led the coven of Barstoi. Halloran is quite familiar with Oothi's atrocities and has done everything in his power to hide the skulls in the catacombs and prevent them

### WITCHING GOWN

**Aura** moderate abjuration; **CL** 7th

**Slot** body; **Price** 35,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

#### DESCRIPTION

Spun from combed cotton, this simple, unassuming gown bears a strong aura of witchcraft. These magical garments are highly sought after by witches, for though anyone may wear a *witching gown*, only a witch may realize its full potential. A *witching gown* grants its wearer a +2 resistance bonus on all saving throws and a +2 competence bonus on all Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate skill checks. When worn by a witch, these bonuses double.

In addition, a witch may change the appearance and style of the gown to match her whims (as the glamered armor special ability) and adopt virtually any disguise, gaining a +10 bonus on Disguise checks that incorporate the gown's appearance. Only a true seeing spell or similar magic can pierce this effect.

Lastly, a witch may cast a single touch range spell of 4th level or lower into the gown. Thereafter, the gown holds the magic for up to 24 hours, functioning as a spite spell against the next foe to strike the witch with a successful melee attack or combat maneuver. The gown's spite spell counts as an active spite effect for the witch wearing the gown.

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *charm person*, *disguise self*, *resistance*, *spite* (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 246); **Cost** 17,750 gp

from returning the hag-witch to her natural form. He also knows the spider swarms contain Oothi's intelligence and loathes their presence.

Though evil, Halloran still reviles what he's become. Over the past few days, he's had to feed on the witches' charmed guards, an act that further shames him. He wishes nothing more than to die rather than endure an undead existence preying on others in such a fashion. If the PCs hesitate in slaying Halloran, he requests they stay their hand, offering aid against the witches and servants in exchange for redemption (see Development on page 52). He can tell the PCs about the witches and Oothi, and their work with Radvir to slay the elder vampires of Caliphaz (though he knows none of the details of the witches' arrangement with Adivion Adrissant and the Whispering Way). He can also tell the PCs about the wood golems in area F28, the blood knight Konas Esprillian in area F29, as well as Aisa's transformation into a vampire.

# Carion Crown

## HALLORAN IDRIS

CR 12

XP 19,200

Male human vampire fighter 4/ex-paladin of Iomedae 8  
(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 270)

LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +15

### DEFENSE

**AC** 30, touch 14, flat-footed 26 (+7 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural, +3 shield)

**hp** 174 (12d10+104); fast healing 5

**Fort** +17, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9; +1 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, channel resistance +4; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

**Weaknesses** vampire weaknesses

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +2 *ghost touch* longsword +20/+15/+10 (1d8+9/17–20) or slam +17 (1d4+7 plus energy drain)

**Ranged** mwk light crossbow +16 (1d8/19–20)

**Special Attacks** blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 23), energy drain (2 levels, DC 23)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Halloran eschews his slam attacks in favor of the sword he once wielded in service to Iomedae, making good use of his combat feats when possible.

**Morale** Halloran fights until destroyed, unless the PCs manage to dispel or suppress the control Radvir, Aisa, and Hetna have over him. If no longer under their command, Halloran ceases to attack and attempts to parley with the PCs, asking for their assistance in atoning for his fall from grace (see Development, below).

### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 24

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 31

**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Cleave, Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Great Cleave, Improved Critical

(longsword), Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Improved Vital Strike, Lightning Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Power Attack, Stand Still, Step Up, Toughness<sup>B</sup>, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

**Skills** Bluff +15, Diplomacy +15, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (nobility) +11, Knowledge (religion) +11,

Perception +15, Ride +5, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +12

**Languages** Common

**SQ** armor training 1, change shape (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*), gaseous form, shadowless, spider climb

**Gear** +1 *breastplate*, +1 *heavy steel shield*, +2 *ghost touch longsword*, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts

**Development:** If the PCs spare Halloran, they may attempt to redeem the fallen paladin.

This requires an *atonement* spell cast by a lawful good spellcaster, or by a curate of the Dawngrace Memorial in Caliphas (see page 63). If he receives atonement, Halloran changes his alignment to lawful good and immediately tries to redeem himself by seeking out a righteous death of his own choosing in the light of the sun. If prevented from killing himself, Halloran eventually returns to his previous alignment of lawful evil, as the temptations of his undead form prove too much for him.

**Story Award:** If the PCs redeem Halloran, award them XP as if they had defeated him in combat.



Halloran Idriss



## ASHES AT DAWN

## F25. HALL OF PROCESSION

A single torch mounted in a sconce along the wall at the base of the stairs lights this long hallway. Double doors seal the way south, while two chambers lie open to the east and north.

**Creature:** One of Oothi's spider swarms (see the sidebar on page 45) watches the stairs to the dining hall (area F3) in the event anyone ventures into the basement to disturb Aisa. If confronted, the swarm skitters beneath the doors to the south, hoping to occupy intruders with the vampire Halloran Idriss in the ossuary (area F24).

## F26. MORTUARY (CR 7)

This chamber lies empty and disused, covered in a fine layer of dust. A mural of a winged human woman with an eagle's head covers the east wall.

The mural depicts the eagle-headed form of Saint Lymirin, one of Iomedae's greatest celestial servants.

**Trap:** The stone door to the south bears a *symbol of fear* to dissuade anyone from entering or disturbing Aisa's resting place (area F27). Aisa has attuned the symbol so that she, Hetna, and Oothi's spiders can freely pass it.

## SYMBOL OF FEAR CR 7

XP 3,200

Type magic; Perception DC 31; Disable Device DC 31

## EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Duration** 120 minutes or 150 hp; **Reset** none**Effect** spell effect (*symbol of fear*, panicked for 12 rounds,

DC 23 Will save negates); multiple targets (all creatures in 60-ft.-radius burst, up to 150 total hp)

## F27. ABBOT'S TOMB

A large stone sarcophagus lies in the center of this chamber, surrounded by lit candles in iron candelabras.

The abbey's monks laid their last abbot to rest in this chamber, but Aisa has repurposed it as a resting place for her own coffin. The secret door to the smuggler's tunnels (area F23) can be found with a DC 20 Perception check.

## F28. EXSANGUINATION ROOM (CR 11)

The rank smell of blood fills this dark chamber, overlain by the even stronger scent of garlic emanating from several cloves strung inside the doors. Four bodies lie prostrate on the slightly slanted floor. Blood and other fluids drain from several hollow sticks perforating their skin, trickling through individual troughs to collect in large basins against the back wall.

## USING THE HARROW DECK

If the PCs redeem Halloran Idriss, award each player a free draw from the Harrow Deck, as outlined in the *Carrion Crown Player's Guide*. If you are using the optional system presented in the *Carrion Crown Player's Guide*, the entire party receives The Crows card instead. This specific card can be played to grant all of the PCs a +2 bonus on initiative, a +2 dodge bonus to AC, and a +2 insight bonus on Reflex saves for the duration of one battle. The Crows card can only be used once, and the entire party must agree to use the card.



This room once served as an embalming chamber for bodies buried in the abbey's catacombs. Aisa and Hetna have since turned it into a collection facility for harvesting the vital fluids and humors from vampires to be used in creating Radvir's *bloodbrew elixir*. One of the basins near the far wall is filled with holy water rather than vampiric humors, and contains several severed heads floating within. These are all that remains of the witches' previous victims—once the vampires were drained of all their fluids, the twins decapitated them and deposited their heads here, to prevent them from returning to life if their stakes were removed before the morning sun turned their bodies to ash. The heads are in various stages of decay and cannot be brought back to life (or unlife), as the vampires' bodies have all been destroyed by sunlight.

**Creatures:** Four advanced wood golems (gifts from Countess Caliphvaso) stand guard over the bodies in this chamber. The countess ordered the golems to follow the witches' instructions in her absence. Aisa carved one of each golem's arms in the form of a wooden stake (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 179) and assigned the golems to guard this room and impale any vampire that regains awareness and mobility. The golems also attack anyone entering the room other than Aisa or Hetna.

## ADVANCED WOOD GOLEMS (4) CR 7

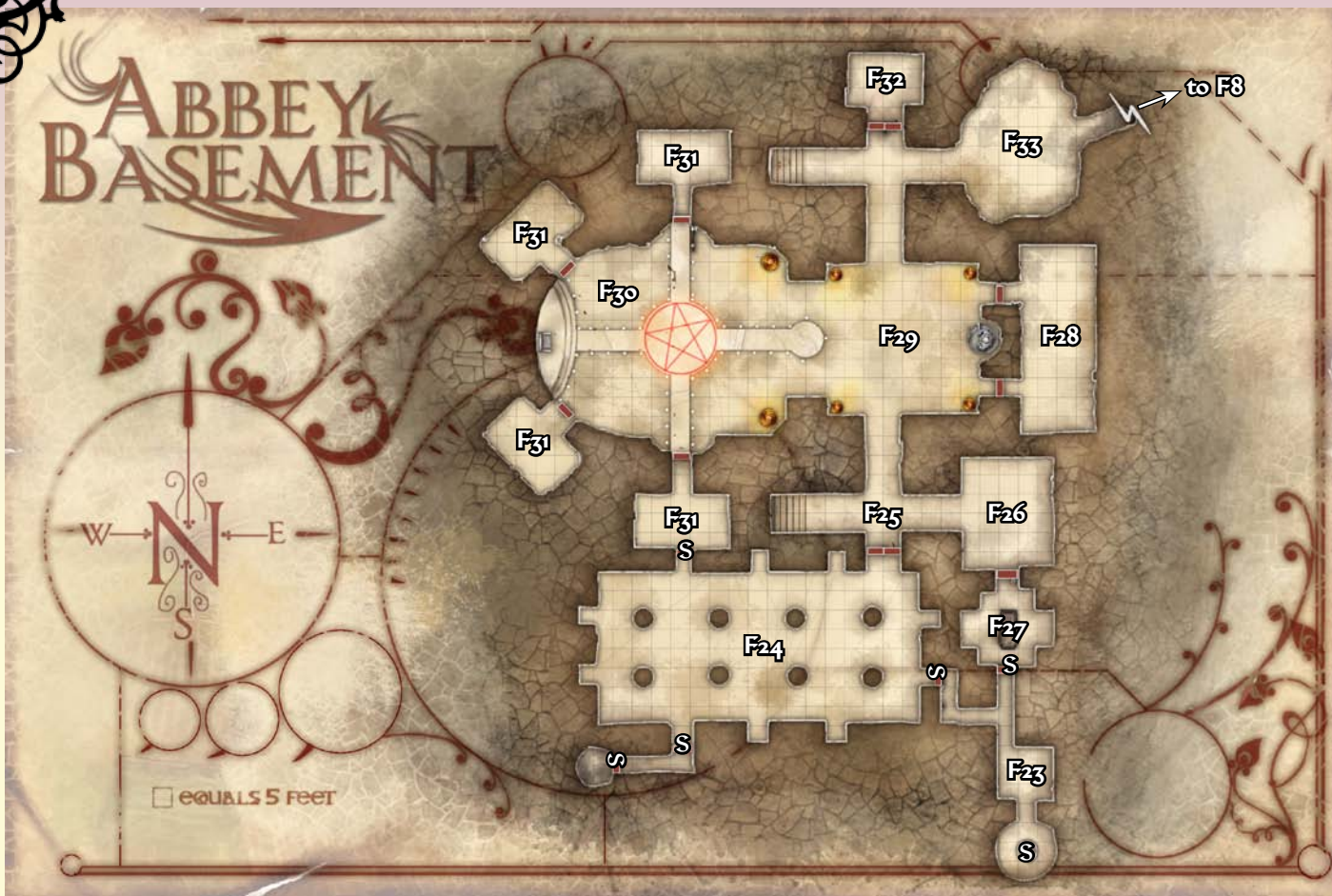
XP 3,200 each

hp 64 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 164, 294)

Melee 2 slams +14 (2d6+6) or wooden stake +14 (1d4+6)



# Carion Crown



## TACTICS

**During Combat** The golems pulverize and bludgeon anything that moves, taking turns with their splintering attacks to bring down foes. They attack any vampires in the room with their wooden stakes.

**Morale** The golems fight until destroyed.

**Development:** The four bodies in the room are more of Radvir's victims, each one a slain vampire with a stake through its heart. If the stakes are removed, the vampires immediately return to life with 0 hit points and assume gaseous form, fleeing back to their coffins in Caliphas to recover. If the PCs track the vampires back to their coffins to destroy them, use the normal vampire statistics on page 270 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*.

## F29. SHRINE OF SAINT LYMIRIN (CR 13)

Four bronze braziers light each corner of this chamber. To the west, a small circle of candles illuminates a pathway through a wide arch that leads deeper into this long hall. A massive statue depicting a winged woman with an eagle's head and

holding aloft a longsword stands between two alcoves against the eastern wall.

Like the mural in the mortuary (area F26), the statue depicts Saint Lymirin, to whom the abbey and this shrine are dedicated.

**Creature:** Before Saint Lymirin's statue stands an undead atrocity in direct defiance of the goddess of honor and valor. Konas Esprillian is an undead knight who fought on the blood-soaked battlefields of the Shining Crusade in service to the lich-king Tar-Baphon. Bathed in the blood of his slain enemies, Konas found his ultimate resurrection and reward from the Whispering Tyrant when Tar-Baphon transformed him into a blood knight. But when his master was imprisoned beneath Gallowspire, the knight fell into madness, bereft of guidance and thought. He retreated into the mountains of Virlych, where Aisa and Hetna found him while retrieving the spine of their mentor Oothi. Through their necromantic charms, the witches substituted their guidance for that of Konas's lost master and brought him with them to Barstoi and then to Caliphas. Since then,



## ASHES AT DAWN

Aisa has used the knight's never-ending blood to fuel many of her most potent experiments, including Radvir's *bloodbrew elixir* and the transfusion that turned her into a free-willed vampire.

The witch casts *command undead* on the blood knight every few days, making Konas the sisters' most powerful guardian. He is standing watch over the Shrine of Saint Lymirin to ensure no one interrupts Aisa in the meditation hall (area F30). If alerted to the PCs' presence in the abbey, Aisa orders Konas to defend the entrance to the hall, buying her time to prepare herself.

**KONAS ESPRILLIAN****CR 13****XP 25,600**Male human blood knight fighter 12 (*Advanced Bestiary* 29)

LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10**Aura** blood slick (10-ft.-radius spread, DC 20)**DEFENSE****AC** 26, touch 15, flat-footed 22 (+10 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 shield)**hp** 142 (12d10+72)**Fort** +14, **Ref** +12, **Will** +7; +3 vs. fear**Defensive Abilities** bravery +3; **DR** 10/bludgeoning; **Immune** undead traits**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +2 *bastard sword* +24/+19/+14 (1d10+14/17–20 plus bleed) or +2 *bastard sword* +20/+15/+10 (1d10+14/17–20 plus bleed) and +1 *bastard sword* +19 (1d10+10/17–20 plus bleed) or slam +19 (1d4+10 plus blood drinking plus grab)**Special Attacks** bleed 2, blood drinking, fountain of blood (DC 20), poison blood (DC 20), weapon training (heavy blades +2, natural +1)**TACTICS**

**During Combat** Konas attacks with two bastard swords, one in each hand. He uses his fountain of blood ability to produce a blood slick to poison and knock down opponents, focusing his attacks on prone foes. He moves to threaten any spellcasters with his Disruptive feat and to eliminate any clerics before they can channel positive energy to harm him.

**Morale** The blood knight fights until destroyed.

**STATISTICS****Str** 22, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 19**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +18 (+22 grapple); **CMD** 33

**Feats** Bleeding Critical, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Disruptive, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Greater Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Greater Weapon Specialization (bastard sword), Improved Critical (bastard sword), Lightning Reflexes, Toughness, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)

**Skills** Escape Artist +12, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (engineering) +5, Perception +10; **Racial Modifiers** +10 Escape Artist

**Languages** Common**SQ** armor training 3, blood body, bonded armor**Gear** +1 *full plate*, +2 *bastard sword*, +1 *bastard sword*, *brooch of shielding*, *cloak of resistance* +2, *ring of protection* +1**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Blood Body (Ex)** A blood knight can store items within its liquefied form. It can retrieve any item stored in its body as a move action or as a free action that is part of a move. An item to be stored must be of a size and shape that fits within whatever portion of the blood knight's armor it is placed.

**Blood Drinking (Ex)** Any living creature damaged by a blood knight's slam attack takes 1 point of Constitution damage in addition to the normal damage. If the blood knight grapples an opponent, it deals 1d4 points of Constitution damage each round that the grapple is maintained. The blood knight gains 5 temporary hit points for 1 hour each round it drains blood.

**Blood Slick (Ex)** A blood knight constantly drips slippery blood in a 10-foot-radius spread around itself. The blood slick functions as a *grease* spell with a save DC of 20. Blood knights are immune to any blood knight's blood slick.

**Bonded Armor (Ex)** A blood knight always wears the armor in which it died. It cannot remove this armor or exchange it for another suit. If the armor is destroyed, the blood knight is destroyed as well. The blood knight has a +5 bonus on saving throws made on behalf of its armor.

**Fountain of Blood (Ex)** As a full-round action, a blood knight can spray blood from its armor in a great cascade. Each creature within a 15-foot radius is covered in blood and must succeed on a DC 20 Fortitude save as though it had ingested the blood knight's poisonous blood. The blood fills the area until the blood knight's next turn. Creatures entering the spray while it persists are subject to its effects, but a creature can be affected only once per round. The area covered by the blood spray becomes coated as though by a blood slick and remains slippery for 6 rounds, or until the blood is washed away with at least 5 gallons of water or other liquid, or burned away with normal or magical fire as a full-round action. Creatures and objects within the area that do not have total cover are coated with the blood, which functions as a *grease* spell for the purpose of using and handling items (DC 20 Reflex save negates). Failure means the item is immediately dropped. A creature coated in blood gains a +10 bonus on Escape Artist checks. Once the blood knight has used its fountain of blood attack, it must wait 1d4 rounds before it can do so again. Blood knights are immune to any blood knight's fountain of blood.

**Poison Blood (Ex)** Fountain of blood—contact or ingested; *save* Fort DC 20; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *initial effect* 1 Con damage; *secondary effect* nauseated for 1 minute; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

## Carrion Crown

### F30. MEDITATION HALL (CR 14)

Two large braziers sit to either side of the archway leading into this domed chamber, casting a disturbing green glow and flickering shadows across the walls and ceiling. Walkways lined with candles lead to a pentagram inscribed in blood in the center of the floor. Against the western wall, a throne sits atop a raised dais.

**Creatures:** Aisa Dublesse sits atop the throne in this chamber. Unlike her older (by 5 minutes) sister Hetna, Aisa no longer has any interest in finding Oothi's skull. Tired of hunting down the hag's skeleton, she judges that she and her sister have both now surpassed Oothi's skill in witchcraft. Aisa rather enjoys the absence of their mentor, and is toying with the notion of taking over their coven by recruiting a lesser, more controllable hag to replace the annis hag. For now, Aisa has effectively abandoned the coven for the pursuit of personal power through vampirism. She has recently become a willing vampire—not through the blood drain or energy drain of another vampire, but from an alchemical-magical process of her own devising involving the transfusion of copious amounts of alchemically-treated blood from the blood knight Konas Esprillian and vampiric humors drained from slain vampires—and she revels in her newfound power. Assuming that Adivion Adrissant lives up to his promise, Aisa is looking forward to exploring lichdom in addition to vampirism as a method of expanding her power beyond anything the sisters had ever dreamed. Unfortunately, Hetna seems less interested in this new avenue of possible power, but with every day that passes in which Oothi's skull remains unfound, Aisa works to convince her sister to abandon the search.

Aisa feeds her vampiric hunger with frequent draughts of *bloodbrew elixir*, and is now strongly addicted to the magical concoction. She attacks anyone who interrupts her work here, eager to create enslaved spawn to serve her. If Hetna escaped the PCs in the laboratory (area F18) and fled here to join her sister, Aisa has turned on her twin, draining Hetna of all of her blood. This kills Hetna, who will rise again as a vampire in 1d4 days. It also empowers Aisa with 30 additional temporary hit points (not reflected in her stats below).

#### AISA DUBLESSE

CR 14

XP 38,400

Female human vampire witch 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 270, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 65)

CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *see invisibility*; **Perception** +18

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 29, touch 19, flat-footed 24 (+4 armor, +4 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

**hp** 160 (12d6+116); **fast healing** 5

**Fort** +15, **Ref** +14, **Will** +16

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

**Weaknesses** vampire weaknesses

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** slam +11 (1d4+7 plus energy drain) or  
*staff of cackling wrath* +11/+6 (1d6+7)

**Special Attacks** blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 23), energy drain (2 levels, DC 23), hexes (agony [12 rounds], cackle, cauldron, coven, evil eye [-4, 9 rounds], flight [*feather fall* at will, *levitate* 1/day, *fly* 12 minutes/day], retribution [6 rounds], slumber [12 rounds])

**Witch Spells Prepared** (CL 12th; concentration +18)

6th—*cone of cold* (DC 22), *mass fester\** (DC 23), *slay living* (DC 23)

5th—*cloudkill* (DC 21), *inflict critical wounds* (DC 22), *suffocation\** (DC 22), *waves of fatigue* (DC 22)

4th—*black tentacles*, *dimension door*, *poison* (DC 21), *solid fog*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *lightning bolt* (DC 19), *suggestion* (DC 19), *twilight knife\**, *vampiric touch*

2nd—*command undead* (2, DC 19), *death knell* (DC 19), *hold person* (DC 18), *spectral hand*, *touch of idiocy*

1st—*beguiling gift\** (DC 17), *chill touch* (DC 18), *detect undead*, *ill omen\**, *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 18)

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 17), *message*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 17)

**Patron** Plague

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Aisa casts extended *mage armor* every day, and casts *vampiric touch* into her *witching gown* (activating its *spite* effect; see page 51). Before combat, she drinks a draught of *bloodbrew elixir*, as well as *potions of bull's strength* and *eagle's splendor*. She then casts *solid fog* and hides herself in gaseous form near the ceiling.

**During Combat** Aisa drifts along the edges of her *solid fog* cloud in gaseous form until the PCs move toward it, at which point she reforms to cast *waves of fatigue* before withdrawing inside the fog for cover. If the PCs pursue her, she activates her flight hex to levitate to the ceiling and conjures *black tentacles* on the chamber floor. She targets opponents with her hexes, spells, and wands, making touch attacks with *spectral hand*. In melee combat, Aisa makes slam attacks to energy drain her foes, casting *twilight knife* to flank with her.

**Morale** Aisa fights until reduced to 50 hit points or fewer, using *dimension door* or gaseous form to retreat through the secret door in the southernmost wine vault (area F31) into the ossuary (area F24), where she heals herself before returning to finish the battle. If reduced to 0 hit points, Aisa assumes gaseous form and flees to her coffin in area F27 to recover.



## ASHES AT DAWN

## STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 23, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 24

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 36

**Feats** Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Defensive Combat Training, Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Extra Hex\*, Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Spell Focus (necromancy), Toughness<sup>B</sup>

**Skills** Bluff +25, Craft (alchemy) +25, Diplomacy +20, Disguise +10 (+20 with *witching gown*), Fly +16, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (history) +21, Knowledge (planes) +21, Knowledge (religion) +18, Perception +18, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +21, Stealth +18, Swim +9, Use Magic Device +22

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Draconic, Elven, Infernal, Varisian

**SQ** change shape (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*), exceptional resources, gaseous form, permanent spells, shadowless, spider climb, witch's familiar (cat named Nightfang [stores all prepared spells and patron spells, plus *enervation*, *ray of exhaustion*, *spite*\*, *summon monster V*, *symbol of fear*, and additional spells of your choice])

**Combat Gear** *bloodbrew elixir* (4 doses; see page 35), *elemental gems* (earth, fire), *potions of bull's strength* (2), *potions of eagle's splendor* (2), *potions of inflict serious wounds* (2), *scroll of planar ally*, *wand of ray of exhaustion* (22 charges), *wand of enervation* (16 charges); **Other Gear** *staff of cackling wrath*\* (10 charges), *headband of vast intelligence* +4 (Knowledge [history] and [religion]), *lesser extend metamagic rod*, *ring of protection* +4, *witching gown* (contains *vampiric touch*; see page 51), spell component pouch, 715 gp

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Exceptional Resources (Ex)** Aisa inherited a great many magical resources from her mentor Oothi, giving her the wealth of a PC rather than an NPC. This equipment increases her CR by 1.

**Permanent Spells (Ex)** Aisa benefits from the following permanent spells cast on herself: see *invisibility* and *telepathic bond* (with Oothi).

\* See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

## F31. WINE VAULTS

Wooden wine racks covered in dust and spiderwebs fill this room. Numerous bottles sit on the racks, surprisingly new and recently stocked, but empty.

When the monastery was active, the monks stored their bottled wine in these rooms. Now Aisa and Hetna use them for storing Radvir's *bloodbrew elixir*, but Aisa depleted the stockpile to fuel her own transformation into a vampire and feed her newfound hungers. Now only empty bottles remain. The southernmost vault contains a secret door

leading to the ossuary (area F24), which can be found with a DC 20 Perception check.

## F32. STOREROOM

A number of long, coffinlike crates lie stacked in this room. Several of the boxes lie open, their lids scattered across the floor amid loose straw and swaths of crumpled, bloody cloth.

Aisa and Hetna accept delivery of Radvir's staked vampires in this chamber, each one arriving in a long pine box stuffed with straw and scrap cloth from his tailor shop. None of the boxes currently contain any bodies, as they've already been moved to the exsanguination room (area F28).



Aisa Dublesse



## Carion Crown

*It is my understanding that you are responsible for my release from Siervage's custody, and for that you have my undying thanks. I now make haste to return to my home, but there is one final piece of business I must attend to. As promised, I will tell you what I know of the Whispering Way and their plans. I leave it up to you to decide your next step.*

*Upon further study of the sample of the elixir the Whispering Way gave me, it appears my theory that Prince Ordranti is the cult's target was ill-founded. Instead, I've determined that the concoction is meant for someone else—Count Lucinean Galdana of Amaans. Judging by the components used in the elixir's creation, the cult doesn't just plan on transforming Galdana into a lich, however. Rather, it seems they intend to remake him into the most powerful lich this world has ever known—some sort of vessel for the Whispering Tyrant himself. I desire no part in such ill-conceived goals, and urge you to find Count Galdana before they do.*

*At this point, I am convinced that the Whispering Way has fled to their greatest stronghold, the fortress-monastery of Renchurch, in the haunted highlands of Virlych's Hungry Mountains, ready to enact the final phase of their plans. Should you decide to venture there in search of them, I wish you good fortune.*

*Sincerely yours,  
Ramoska Arkminos*

### Player Handout

## F33. BAYSIDE CAVERN (CR 12)

Luminous lichen illuminates this natural cave, reflecting from shallow pools of stagnant water on the floor. The sounds of the waters of Avalon Bay echo from a cave opening to the east.

Discarded bones and half-eaten bodies lie scattered about the floor and in the pools, the remains of sailors caught in the bay outside by this cavern's inhabitants. A 10-foot-wide, natural stone passage leads east to the sea cave (area F8) in the bluffs beneath the abbey.

**Creatures:** The annis hag Oothi once established a tenuous relationship with a trio of spirit nagas who sought to oppose her coven, using charms, threats, and

the promise of future rewards to entice them to serve her. However, with Oothi's power diminished and her intellect trapped in the spider swarms, the nagas chafe under Aisa and Hetna's leadership, growing restless and concerned that they may never receive the rewards Oothi promised them. If the nagas recover Oothi's skull, however, they believe they can bargain with the annis hag anew, provided the two witches have been removed from the equation. Thus far, the treacherous nagas have yet to gather the courage to attack the witches outright, so for now they follow the sisters' orders to keep watch over this cavern and its underground entrance to the abbey. If given the opportunity, the nagas attempt to charm or bribe the PCs into slaying the witches for them, even offering aid in the form of spellcasting if they agree to do so, but the evil nagas will turn on their erstwhile allies if given the slightest opportunity.

Unknown to the nagas, another creature keeps watch over this cavern, guarding against their treachery and any intruders in the abbey. One of Oothi's spider swarms (see the sidebar on page 45) lurks among the stalactites on the ceiling, warning Aisa of the nagas' duplicity or the presence of the PCs.

### SPIRIT NAGAS (3)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 95 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 213)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The nagas cast *displacement* on the first round of combat, attacking with *magic missiles* or *fireballs*.

**Morale** The nagas fight until reduced to 25 hit points or fewer, at which point they cast *invisibility* and flee the cavern.

## RAMOSKA'S MISSIVE

If the PCs agreed to help clear Ramoska Arkminos's name and did so by eliminating Radvir and dealing with the witches of Barstoi, the nosferatu sends a charmed street urchin to deliver a letter to the PCs at their inn or as they walk the streets of Caliphas (see **Player Handout**).

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The letter from Ramoska Arkminos should be enough to send the PCs in search of Count Galdana, but if the PCs attempt to warn the visiting count, they find his apartments at the Majesty Hotel empty, with clear signs of a struggle pointing to his abduction at the hands of the Whispering Way. Inquiries with the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye confirm that Count Galdana has gone missing, and any divinations to find him point to the same location mentioned in Arkminos's letter—Renchurch.

If the PCs did not work with Ramoska Arkminos, Luvick Siervage can tell them of the Whispering Way's relocation



## ASHES AT DAWN



to Renchurch, and rumors he has heard of the cult's plans to resurrect the Whispering Tyrant in some fashion. Luvick also shares his suspicions that the Whispering Way has targeted a highly placed member of Ustalav's nobility for some nefarious purpose. Soon after, the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye contacts the PCs as well, informing them of Count Galdana's disappearance and leaving little doubt that it has some connection to the cult. The PCs should stand ready to ride to Galdana's aid—not only to save a newfound ally among Ustalav's elite, but also to ensure he doesn't enable the Whispering Tyrant's return to Golarion. The PCs' journey to Renchurch, where they must face the unnatural storms and unquiet dead of Virlych, a jagged, mountainous region of black stone and lifeless lands, constitutes the final installment of the Carrion Crown Adventure Path, "Shadows of Gallowspire."

Meanwhile, the PCs could find further adventure in Caliphaz. If they befriended Quinley Basdel and found his mother's killer, the dhampir could become a cohort

for one of the PCs. In addition, the PCs could have more dealings with the city's vampire clans. Although Luvick Siervage is pleased with the defeat of Radvir and the witches of Barstoi, the vampire elder also realizes the PCs know far too much about his underground society. If they parted on good terms, Luvick agrees to continue the status quo, and he and his supporters leave the PCs unmolested. If the PCs were overly zealous in the slaying of vampires, however, Luvick's court could come to view them as enemies.

Likewise, the potential exists for the powerful hag Oothi to return. If the PCs neglected to slay all of her spider swarms, she could easily go unnoticed as they put down her proteges. Oothi could locate her skull on her own, mounting it on her skeletal remains (in area **F15**) to return to her normal form. Thus restored, the hag could form a new coven to carry out her revenge on the PCs and develop new ambitions, perhaps even allying with the Whispering Way or bring some new terror to the lands of Ustalav.



## Carion Crown



## Caliphaz

**E**xercise utmost caution when walking the streets of Ashtown, with especial concern in the area of Ipston's Cross and Ratpen Alley, as numerous unfortunates in the surrounding blocks have gone missing or worse these past weeks. Citizens are encouraged to stay indoors or travel in numbers after dusk. Any persons who witness what appears to be a gentleman with a horseman's cloak and a hooked cane or who hear sounds reminiscent of the dragging of dozens of miniature chains are to notify a member of the Department of Constables and Investigators at once.

—Typical warning posted in Caliphaz



## CALIPHAS

Obsessions, traditions, innovations, and ambitions crash in a storm of secrets over Caliphas, the capital of the Immortal Principality of Ustalav. Over the ages, the fog has lifted from a certain rugged harbor on the northern shore of Lake Encarthan to reveal wildly differing scenes—a rugged trade outpost, a bastion of the dead, a hotbed of discord, and, today, a cultural war zone. Here the beliefs, goods, and wealth of southern Avistan besiege the staunch, provincial traditionalism of Ustalav. Whether through insight or manipulation, the royal court left the nation's historical seat of power in Ardis 30 years ago, relocating to be among the rising merchant families and powermongers of Caliphas. Since then, the city has known wealth, prestige, and growing arrogance. Today, under the thick fogs and regular storms that are as much a part of the city as its crowded streets, steeplelike spires, and treacherous nobility, Caliphas is a city that promises grandeur, but only for a select few. For those without the titles, talent, or wealth to win the city's fickle affections, Caliphas remains a labyrinth of crime, corruption, disease, exploitation, and horrifying secrets, where lives are cheap and the unwary are all too often swallowed by the fog, never to be seen again.

### CALIPHAS GAZETTEER

Seven districts divide the city of Caliphas: Ashtown, Blackwood, North Cushing, West Cushing, Dowell, Eskcourt, Hawthorne Rows, Laurel Hill, Leland, and Valpole, each made distinct by its geography, population, or trade. Just beyond the city lie several boroughs that support it, the best known being Crossleigh, where many of Ustalav's finest ships are built and harbor; Wrenhyde, the garden country where many of Caliphas's elite keep their manors; and Graystove, where coal and the lives of peasants fuel the constant production of brass, bronze, and great works in metal.

Additional notes on Caliphas—specifically on Castle Stryithe, Havenguard Lunatic Asylum, Lethean Manor, Maiden's Choir, and the Quarterfaux Archives—can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Rule of Fear*.

**Barragaro Road:** While much of the city's commerce is conducted in shops and stands throughout the varied districts, it's said that one can find anything one wants on Barragaro road. From dusk to dawn, vendors, barrow boys, and traders of all types loudly haggle over goods, from folksy crafts and jerked fish skewers to stolen wares and mysterious curiosities. Although many of the merchants are daily fixtures, some dealers appear, sell their wares for a day, and then are never seen again. The raucous, bustling street always has a carnival atmosphere, attracting street performers and tourists, but also hucksters, con artists, and pickpockets of all types. Just off the sloping street

runs Vaingrier Alley, also called Oracle's Alley, where sham soothsayers read fortunes in dice and bones, Sczarni dancers distract easy marks, and several of the city's dealers in magical goods—of both dubious and masterful quality—keep shop. The flower seller **Madam Camille** (N female human expert 4) and her remarkable hallmark hats are among Barragaro's most venerable fixtures; the rosy-cheeked matron possesses an uncanny memory for who's selling what and who shops where.

**Brookman's Alley:** Urban legends claim that Brookman's Alley is the most haunted street in all of Caliphas, and that on the night of the full moon, blood bubbles up from the cobbles in the shape of a child's skipping squares. Anyone who passes through the alley on such nights without treading upon the squares in the proper order supposedly draws the attention of the ghosts who haunt the place. Tales regarding the ghosts' identity contradict one another, however; some claim they were the sisters Yarri and Yvette, who were mysteriously slain while playing, while others maintain there is but one ghost, the ghost of a Kellid boy stoned to death by the same girls.

**The Cairns:** Numerous families of Kellid descent cram into several tightly packed blocks of tenements and aggrandized shacks. Vying for more space, the residents have taken to building elaborate cellars, many of which connect to a maze of shared halls and communal living spaces. Among the alleys and ramshackle courtyards topside stand numerous distinctly Kellid decorations, including crude menhirs of wood and scrap metal, the graffiti on some bearing bold similarities to glyphs associated with the strictly outlawed shamanistic Kellid faiths of old. The noseless crone **Brynran Khoraseid** (CN female human oracle 7), the oldest resident of the Cairns, is regarded as grandmother and leader by much of Caliphas's impoverished Kellid population.

**Castle Balatz:** Traders and travelers across Ustalav and beyond curse the name Balatz, Caliphas's main trade gate. All merchants and newcomers to the city must enter through the fanglike portcullises of the fortress, where taxes are levied and travelers are documented. Although the members of the city constabulary who guard the gate are susceptible to taking bribes, the gazes of the military patrols minding the castle walls often deter even the greediest guards. Balatz also holds the offices of **General Drannon Ulvodoss** (LE male human cavalier 8/noble 2), head of the Ustalavic army, and of his support staff. While the aging general has never seen battle—his father having won him the title in a decades-old political machination—he seeks every opportunity to indulge his power, constantly counseling the prince to warlike ends.

**Castle Borgoffi:** While Castle Golbanze is Caliphas's shield against threats from the sea, Borgoffi is the city's rusting sword. Bristling with ballistae and mangonels, the



# Carion Crown



- |                                   |                       |                              |                      |   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| 1. The Cairns                     | 6. Dawngrace Memorial | 12. The Quarterfaux Archives | 17. Traitor's Drop   | 23. Havenguard Lunatic Asylum & Caliphas Pathfinder Lodge |
| 2. Crown and Carriage Livery Yard | 7. The Hound's Tooth  | 13. The Majesty              | 18. Barragaro Road   | 24. Devil's Cut   |
| 3. Haraday Theater                | 8. Castle Mashir      | 14. Restoration Park         | 19. Brookman's Alley | 25. Castle Golbanze                                       |
| 4. Whiteshaw                      | 9. Maiden's Choir     | 15. Castle Stryithe          | 20. The Seventh Eye  | 26. The Reaping Rock                                      |
| 5. Castle Balatz                  | 10. Palace of Voices  | 16. Dalliance                | 21. Castle Borgoffi  |   |
|                                   | 11. Mists and Dreams  |                              | 22. Lethean Manor    |   |

fortress boasts a vast arsenal of deadly projectiles, including hull-perforating spears, alchemist's fire bombs, and casks of quicklime. The castle's eccentric master of arms, **Ritambros Deymarian** (N male human alchemist 4), also experiments in the development of new weapons of war, and has been known to pay for such strange materials as molds from the Darklands, undead body parts, and diseased rats to employ in the creation of his prototype arms and ammunitions. Yet for all of its armaments, Borgoffi sees little action outside of regularly scheduled exercises. **Colonel Joelm Colmar** (N male human fighter 5), the commanding officer of the fortress, resents his position, seeing the post as a boring

career cul-de-sac. On most days, he entertains himself by tending to his two dozen pet ravens, kept in an expansive coop on the castle's roof.

**Castle Golbanze:** The shattered skeletons of decades' worth of wrecked ships strewn below the walls of Castle Golbanze shock many travelers crossing Lake Encarthan, leading some to mistake Caliphas for a fortress-city only momentarily freed from the grip of war. In truth, Caliphas hasn't known invasion from the sea since the Shining Crusade, but the capital of Ustalav is prepared nonetheless. Castle Golbanze looms over the Reaping Rock, vigilant for threats from the waves, its numerous hook- and fire-



## CALIPHAS

throwing weapons bristling from its sharp crenellations, while its tower beacons warn vessels away from the jagged rocks below. Facing inland, the fortress's walls drop toward the docks of the royal navy, where many of Ustalav's black-and-purple-sailed ships find moorage. Under the command of the honorable **Admiral Marris Riddian** (LG female human fighter 9), the fortress and navy keep both the capital and the broader Ustalavic coast safe from threats, and only rarely engage with threats from lake pirates, aquatic monsters, and seafaring Razmiran zealots. Operating under the direction of the admiral, some of the Ustalavic navy's most famed and infamous ships and captains include the *Devilfish*, under the command of **Captain Almira "Cardinal" Perine** (NG female human ranger 6); the *Princess Maraet*, the ship of **Captain Liald Gaspair** (LE male human bard 5); and the largest vessel in the fleet, the *Indomitable*, commanded by **Captain Leos Tailor** (LG male human cavalier 8).

**Castle Mashir:** Guardian over Caliphas's harbor and west gate, Castle Mashir serves triple duty as military bastion, seat of the city's port authority, and prison. The fortress's three facets function with near autonomy, though the humorless **Brigadier Holladyne Vronds** (LN male human fighter 7) presides as the official commander. So named for its lack of exterior entrances, the Gateless Tower is the fort's prison, its squat shape and thick walls housing Caliphas's most dangerous prisoners.

**Warden Browden Celdmoor** (LN male human expert 5) takes his role as rehabilitator especially seriously, extolling the virtues of Pharasma's worship and forced labor. The office of **Harbormaster Jasaline Morstenni** (LG female human rogue 5) overlooks the city's busy western docks. Strict and stern when it comes to matters of nautical taxes and safety, Morstenni holds the respect of her officers and regulars on the city's docks, her charm and good looks easing the sting of the citations and fines typically left in her wake.

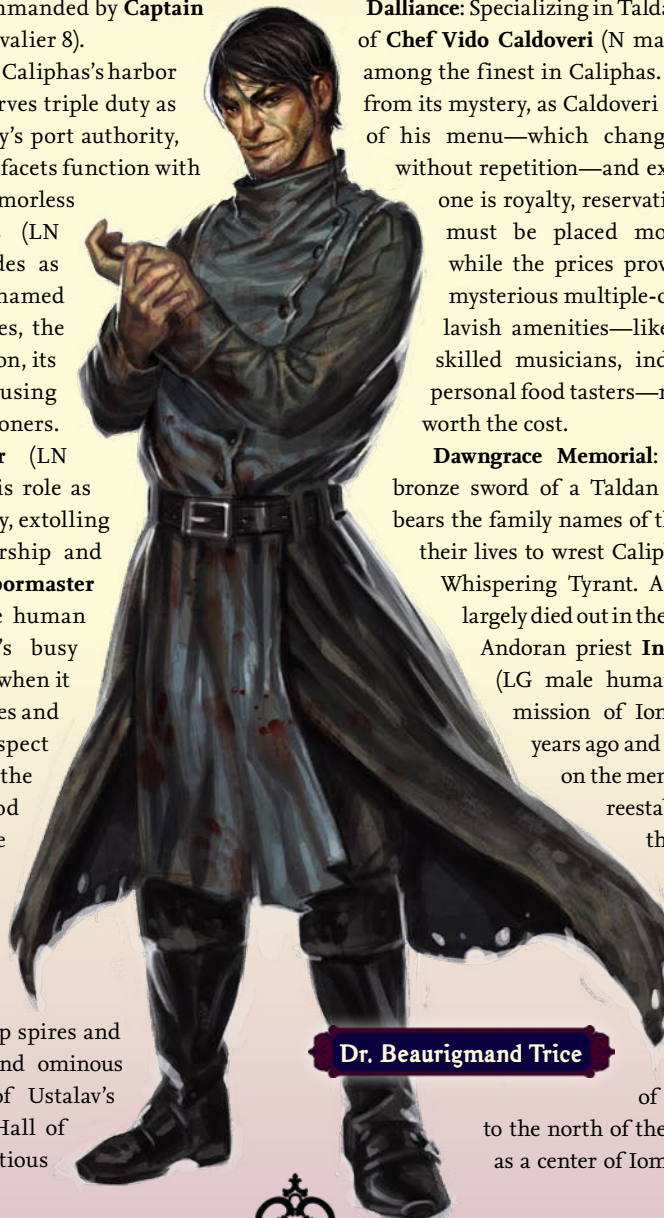
**Castle Stryithe:** The seat of Ustalav's government seems the perfect setting for treachery. Beneath a crown of needle-sharp spires and knotting buttresses, the vast and ominous structure holds the throne of Ustalav's prince, the 16 stations of the Hall of Peers that make up Ustalav's fractious

Congress of Counts, the Gallery of Ancestors portrait hall, and numerous meeting chambers, treasuries, libraries, rooms for visiting ambassadors, and other luxuries of the nation's rulers. Yet some claim that the castle wasn't built for the princes of Ustalav alone, but also for those who would oppose them, with secret chambers, arsenals, traps, and passages lurking throughout the castle, as well as a secret command center capable of turning the entire palace into a deathtrap with the flip of a lever.

**Crown and Carriage Livery Yard:** Many of Caliphas's nobles board their personal steeds at the Crown and Carriage, the city's most prestigious stables. Owner **Ullammo Torisi** (LN male human fighter 2) has ties to the Whitestaff Ranch in Canterwall, and occasionally has fine steeds for sale—including the fell ponies popular among riders of many of the nation's rockier counties.

**Dalliance:** Specializing in Taldan cuisine, the restaurant of **Chef Vido Caldoveri** (N male human bard 4) ranks among the finest in Caliphas. Part of its appeal comes from its mystery, as Caldoveri closely guards the secret of his menu—which changes nightly, supposedly without repetition—and exotic ingredients. Unless one is royalty, reservations to dine at Dalliance must be placed months in advance, and while the prices prove as extravagant as the mysterious multiple-course meals, the house's lavish amenities—like private dining rooms, skilled musicians, individual wait staff, and personal food tasters—make the experience well worth the cost.

**Dawngrace Memorial:** Beneath the tarnished bronze sword of a Taldan knight, a granite block bears the family names of the 12,488 souls who gave their lives to wrest Caliphas from the grip of the Whispering Tyrant. Although Iomedae's faith largely died out in the city over 80 years ago, the Andoran priest **Indrenen "Oak" Corbakas** (LG male human cleric 9) led a small mission of Iomedaeans to Caliphas 4 years ago and consecrated a new shrine on the memorial grounds. Since the reestablishment of Dawngrace, the clergy has garnered few adherents, the locals proving resistant to turning from the Pharasmin traditions of their people. The Iomedaeans' hopes of reclaiming the Abbey of Sante-Lymirin, situated to the north of the city, and rededicating it as a center of Iomedae's worship have also



**Dr. Beurigmand Trice**

## Carion Crown

met with frustration, as negotiations are bogged down in a bureaucratic quagmire aggravated by the abbey's current owner, Countess Caliphvaso.

**Devil's Cut:** Although the Reaping Rock creates an ideal natural harbor, it's not without its drawbacks. Much of the filth that slips into Caliphas harbor, be it runoff from industry, drainage from the city sewer, sediment washing along the coastline, or other refuse, becomes trapped within the cove. While a significant amount sinks to the bottom, that which floats upon the black water eventually finds its way to the Devil's Cut, a filthy quagmire of trash and pollution almost thick enough to walk upon. Scavengers, both animal and human, frequently pick over what washes up in the constantly churning muck, the occasional lost treasure or unlooted body rewarding those with the stomach to face the wretched smell. But some unfortunates tell of tarry things that slip beneath the surface of the muck and drag down any who would steal their reeking treasure.

**Haraday Theater:** This failing theater is fully detailed on page 12.

**Havenguard Lunatic Asylum: Dr. Beaurigmand Trice** (NG male bard 10) firmly believes that humans hold the power within themselves to help one another. To this end, he has pursued a life as a healer, yet he forgoes reliance on divine magic. Through a lengthy career, his interests have come to focus on maladies of the mind, the study and healing of which brought him to construct Havenguard Lunatic Asylum. Many in Caliphas misunderstand Dr. Trice's intentions and unconventional treatments, viewing the asylum as a prison or house of horrors. Yet the good doctor has been able to help untold numbers of unfortunates, and for those whom he can't aid medically, Trice relies upon his position as a Pathfinder venture-captain to find others capable of offering assistance. To this end, he maintains Ustalav's largest Pathfinder lodge on his hospice's grounds. With the asylum's seemingly endless number of patients, Trice has come to rely more and more on his assistant **Cereis Linas** (N female sorcerer 6), especially in regard to the fascinating but frightening case of **Mr. Tembs** (CE male witch 10), a confessed but unconfirmed murderer with at least three deadly personalities.

**The Hound's Tooth:** Packed every night with craftsmen, stevedores, and others of the city's working class, the Hound's Tooth offers little in the way of atmosphere or food, but the drinks are cheap and only lightly watered, which is enough to keep the crowd happy. A former constable, barkeeper **Shaid Boxmon** (NG male human ranger 3) lives above the tavern with his wife, Fhanna, and two teenage sons, Quinn and Shaid, Jr. Protective of his family and those he deems worth the effort, Shaid knows more about the dark side of Caliphas than he is comfortable sharing, and has been known to violently expel patrons from his bar merely for giving him a bad feeling.

**Lethean Manor: Countess Carmilla Caliphvaso** (LE female human aristocrat 4/rogue 11), ruler of both Caliphas city and county, makes her home within this palace of crimson flowers and ruby glass. Her frequent galas number among the most prestigious social events in the city, and regularly include invitations to members of the lower classes who have managed to capture the countess's attentions. These fetes are typically of such decadence that participants regularly cannot remember the festivities—or go missing altogether.

**The Majesty:** An endless river of visiting nobles and dignitaries passes through Caliphas, and all expect to indulge in the same opulent accommodations they demand at home. Catering to the elite of the elite—as only they can afford the extravagant prices—the Majesty Hotel rises four stories and boasts more than 100 rooms, several decorated in themes to make guests from foreign countries or climes more comfortable. Four lavish suites sprawl across the penthouse floor, though of these only three are ever rented, as the owner, **Orenthal Rightier** (LN male human expert 7), refuses to ever let Room 404.

**Maiden's Choir:** The royal church of Pharasma counts most of the city's pious among its congregation. **Mother Verith Thestia** (N female cleric 12) presides over the ancient and impressively domed structure, which has existed in some form since even before the reign of the Whispering Tyrant. Some whisper that a horrifying remnant of the lich lord's rule still lies locked away in the temple's catacombs, but both Mother Thestia and **Zetiah Mardhalas** (LN female inquisitor 6), the cathedral's merciless exorcist, deny such claims.

**Mists and Dreams:** The smell of cloves and cinnamon dominates the cramped, smoky tea house of the veiled Vudrani fortune-teller **Tidadimara** (CN female human rogue 4). In truth, though, there's not a Vudrani splinter in all of Mists and Dreams—the “imported” teas are mixtures of local varieties, the “naga” over the bar is in fact the head of a Garundi mercenary stitched to the body of an overlarge blacksnake, and Seleis “Tidadimara” Savoisi was born in Magnimar, not Bannaquet as she claims (and which she mispronounces as “Bana-quaint”). The true business of Mists and Dreams takes place in its cellars, where Tidadimara runs a pesh den selling the concoctions of the mysterious Dr. Low.

**Palace of Voices:** The royal theater and opera, the Palace of Voices stands as the pinnacle of society and entertainment for the Ustalavic elite. Brother and sister **Paulo** (NE male human bard 4) and **Marrian Caramiezta** (CE female human rogue 5) own the theater, having jointly inherited it from their deceased parents. Although both love the stage and the storm of society and prestige that surrounds it, they loathe one another and have diametrically opposed philosophies on how to run the



# CALIPHAS

centuries-old opera. While the owners nurse childhood grudges and petty rivalries, the staff and stage company look to conductor **Aldentor Rudono** (N male bard 9) for leadership. Rudono is an aging musical genius who leads the theater to riveting season after season, while keeping up a love-hate relationship with Headmistress Calmadra Vhalikackos of the Karcau Opera.

**The Quarterfaux Archives:** The hundreds of thousands of relics, rarities, curiosities and documents that make up the royal collection of Ustlav reside in the cold vaults, libraries, and exhibits collectively known as the Quarterfaux Archives. While only a fraction of the collection is kept on display, scholars and students from among the country's most elite families come here to study under some of the greatest—if most conservative—minds in the nation. Very few are allowed access to the greater collection, typically only those of noble lineage whose families have made significant donations to the museum, but even then there are still certain works and artifacts that can only be viewed with the written permission of the museum's head curator, **Regan Saramul** (LN female bard 7).

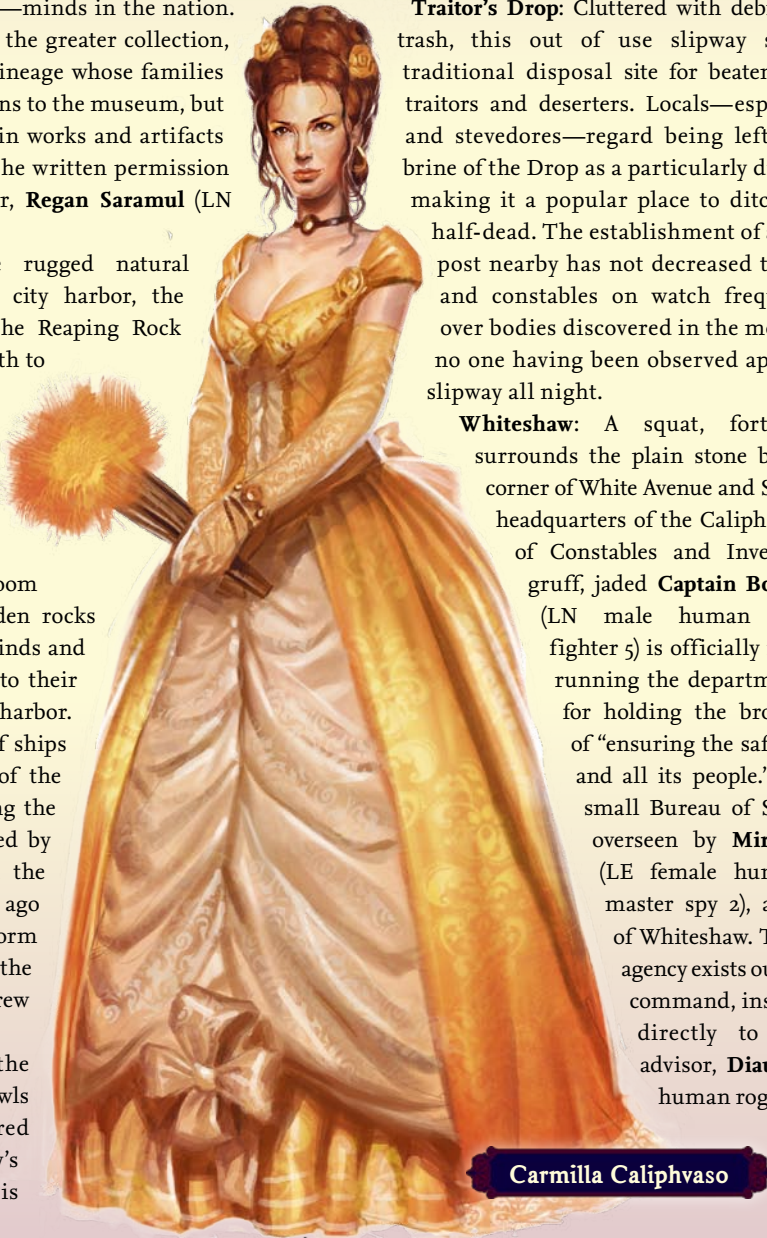
**The Reaping Rock:** The rugged natural breakwater that shelters the city harbor, the cliffs collectively known as the Reaping Rock have brought both life and death to Caliphas. The cliffs are a great boon to the city, sheltering both the country's naval and merchant fleets from the storms that frequently blow across Lake Encarthan. Yet the mossy cliffs have also spelled doom for dozens of vessels, as hidden rocks conspire with unpredictable winds and currents to send whole crews to their deaths within sight of a safe harbor. The broken hulls of dozens of ships lie strewn along the length of the Rock, the most infamous being the wreck of the *Silver Star*, crashed by a heartbroken navigator, and the *Trackless*, a vessel lost 40 years ago that reappeared during a storm in 4710 AR and wrecked upon the cliff, with no signs of the crew ever found.

**Restoration Park:** In the shadow of Castle Stryithe sprawls the fastidiously manicured gardens and lawns of the city's largest park. Restoration Park is detailed starting on page 19.

**The Seventh Eye:** Incongruously situated amid several warehouses near the city's eastern docks, this strange restaurant keeps unpredictable hours. The Seventh Eye only opens when its owner, the mysterious **Dr. Low** (LE male human sorcerer 10), wishes it. Few beyond his network of agents have ever met Dr. Low face to face, but reports invariably describe him as an unfailingly polite and well-cultured man of obvious Tian descent, with some honoring him as a mystic and genius, while others curse him as a criminal and sadist. For years, the city constabulary has sought to pin charges of kidnapping, smuggling, slavery, illegal magic, murder, and other crimes on the imperturbable foreigner, only to have their leads evaporate or witnesses vanish at the last moment.

**Traitor's Drop:** Cluttered with debris and harbor trash, this out of use slipway serves as the traditional disposal site for beaten or murdered traitors and deserters. Locals—especially sailors and stevedores—regard being left in the filthy brine of the Drop as a particularly disgraceful end, making it a popular place to ditch the dead or half-dead. The establishment of a constabulary post nearby has not decreased the Drop's use, and constables on watch frequently marvel over bodies discovered in the morning despite no one having been observed approaching the slipway all night.

**Whiteshaw:** A squat, fortresslike wall surrounds the plain stone building at the corner of White Avenue and Shaw Street, the headquarters of the Caliphas Department of Constables and Investigators. The gruff, jaded **Captain Boverde Hoptler** (LN male human aristocrat 2/ fighter 5) is officially responsible for running the department, as well as for holding the broader mandate of “ensuring the safety of Caliphas and all its people.” However, the small Bureau of Special Affairs, overseen by **Mirakas Vashalnt** (LE female human rogue 6/ master spy 2), also works out of Whiteshaw. The mysterious agency exists outside Hoptler's command, instead reporting directly to the prince's advisor, **Diouden** (LN male human rogue 10).



**Carmilla Caliphvaso**



## Carion Crown



# Urgathoa

**U**rgathoa (ur-guh-THO-uh) is an utterly amoral, hedonistic goddess, concerned only with satiating her own interests regardless of the consequences for others. She was once a mortal woman full of a thirst for life, and somehow in death she found the strength to tear herself from Pharasma's endless line of souls and return to Golarion, becoming a divine being and the world's first undead creature. Her existence is a corruption of the natural order; some say her first divine footprints upon the soil of the Material Plane birthed plague and infection, and the first shadows and wraiths were born of her breath.



## URGATHOA

The goddess's half-rotted form limits the sensations she can experience, so she makes up for this lack with gluttonous depravity—she has tasted the brains of human infants to savor their innocent thought-meats, torn the heart from the last living member of a race just to know the sensation of its hot blood on her hands, and brought low with boils and leprosy the most handsome princes just to see the unique patterns on royal flesh. She believes that the dull existence of a dead soul is pointless and tedious compared to the vibrant intensity of mortal or undead sensation, and that creatures should cram as much sensation into existence as possible. Asceticism is repugnant to her, and she particularly loathes those who follow the strict taboos of the Prophecies of Kalistrade.


From the waist up, Urgathoa appears as a beautiful, raven-haired woman—presumably much like her mortal self, though she is as pale as a hungry vampire. Her lower half is rotted and withered, becoming more decayed farther down until only blood-covered bones remain at her feet. When she walks, she leaves bloody, bony footprints. Although she sometimes manifests a naked avatar, she usually appears wearing a sheer red or black gown. From neck to toe, the gown is stained with patches of black, brown, and red, remnants of meals better left undescribed. On rare occasions, she assumes a monstrous shape similar to a daughter of Urgathoa, with one huge arm covered in fanged mouths and a tail made of multiple fused spinal columns.

Urgathoa's realm in the Great Beyond is a cluster of cities in a wasteland part of Abaddon, filled with undead residents indulging all of their mortal vices in great excess. She and hers are left alone by the daemons of that realm, observed but untouched—Urgathoa's focus is on the mortal realm and the pleasures of living, not the destruction of mortal souls. The main threat to her realm is attacks from Pharasma's minions, who intend to "repatriate" undead souls to the Boneyard and force them into their proper destination in the afterlife.

Though the Pallid Princess's church is interested primarily in undeath, some cults focus on her gluttonous aspect, indulging in decadent feasts of food, alcohol, drugs, or sex. Unfortunately, in many cases these "uncorrupted" cults decline into more depraved practices such as cannibalism, and this leads to necromantic profanities and conversion to ghouls, vampires, or similar creatures.

When Urgathoa is pleased, common food tastes like a delicious meal, water tastes like fine wine, and meals are

never so filling that the eater feels uncomfortable. She rarely uses animals as messengers, but sometimes sends a death's head moth (which she uses despite Desna's love of moths) to lead a devout worshiper to a reward or clouds of biting flies to warn away or punish a mortal. She sometimes rewards female clerics who serve her particularly well by transforming them after death into hideous undead creatures called the daughters of Urgathoa (see page 309 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide*). Though she is not considered a provider deity, there are stories of starving members of the faith unexpectedly finding an injured or freshly killed animal suitable for butchering (or, in at least one story, humanoid meat under similar circumstances). When she is angry, she makes food and water taste like ash despite all seasonings, fills the belly with gnawing hunger that cannot be quenched, or inflicts rotting or swelling diseases that make it difficult to eat or speak. She has been known to render an offender's legs insensate or paralyzed so the victim must crawl, or reverse the taste of his food so that garbage and sewage are the only things he can manage to swallow. A person stricken by such a curse can usually alleviate



*"Seize what you can, tear it apart, and savor its sweet, bloody taste, for existence is dull without the blessing of sensation."  
—Serving Your Hunger*

the condition by making a large sacrifice to Urgathoa, either at a temple or by providing some gluttonous feast, drug experience, or other orgiastic excess in her name. Rarely, the only way to alleviate the curse is by willingly engaging in cannibalism, an act that taints the offender's soul and all but guarantees allegiance to the Pallid Princess.

Urgathoa is neutral evil and her portfolio is gluttony, disease, and undeath. Her weapon is the scythe, a tool for reaping crops and a weapon traditionally associated with death. Her holy symbol is a death's head moth, often drawn so the skull-markings are exaggerated, or even depicted as a skull with moth wings, legs, and head. Her domains are Death, Evil, Magic, Strength, and War.

As all of her interests are often considered vices, she has very few nonevil followers. Her primary worshipers are dark necromancers, undead, and those who hope to become undead (including servants of vampires, spellcasters pursuing the path of the lich, and so on). This means that her faith is illegal in most lands, or at least shunned and driven out if discovered, and in these places her priests must keep their activities secret. Commoners are suspicious of even those who limit their worship to mere gluttony, as men and women who struggle to feed themselves in winter are envious of those who can afford to live in excess, and rumors are quick to follow anyone

## Carion Crown

known to praise the goddess of undeath. Occasionally, a gluttonous prince or merchant may secretly keep a shrine in the goddess's name, praying for bounties of food, drink, sex, or other physical pleasures.

In some lands, desperate folk pray to Urgathoa to relieve symptoms of plague (much as they pray to the demon lord Pazuzu to protect infants from the demon goddess Lamashtu), but Sarenrae is usually a better choice for prayers of healing. Neutral necromancers may worship her and gain a measure of tolerance from their communities if they prove themselves useful by rounding up or putting to rest uncontrolled or destructive undead—better that the bones of the dead guard the hermit necromancer's tower than wander into town to harry the living.

In Geb, the Pallid Princess is worshiped openly and is practically one of the official religions of that country. Vampire barons, ghoulish counts, and various undead nobility pray to her in chapels at midnight, requesting that she keep them safe from the bright day, peasant uprisings, and abominations from the Mana Wastes. Living residents of Geb pray to her that they may gain her favor by becoming undead, that their deaths may be quick and painless, or that the too-common fate of being animated as a skeleton or zombie will turn out to be a truly mindless existence rather than an eternal prison for the mind in a corrupted body. Most worshipers in Geb pray to the Harlot Queen as a saint or proxy for the Pallid Princess—though the reanimated ruler has no divine tie to Urgathoa, the goddess accepts this as a quirk of her favored nation. Public temples are often guarded by bloody skeletons—usually called “sons of Urgathoa” because they also leave bloody footprints where they walk—who act as counterparts to the powerful, intelligent daughters of Urgathoa.

Prayer services to Urgathoa consist of susurrant whispers, quiet chants, and eerie moans. Music has almost no role in church services, though drums may be used to keep a beat or announce visitors and mealtimes. Services usually involve a meal or ritualistic consumption of a small amount of food blessed by a priest—anything from a sweetmeat to bread and gravy, animal flesh, or a living or cannibalistic meal, depending on the congregation. Wealthier churches provide lavish feasts for the faithful (sponsored by wealthy patrons or paid for by selling spells or undead labor), and it is not unheard of for a priest to move to a starving village and offer intoxicating foods to layfolk in the hopes of gaining followers.

The Pallid Princess has a strange view of marriage. As most of her faithful are undying, she believes that two people who bind themselves to each other are creating a union that can persist beyond death itself—marriages within the church do not include vowing “until death parts us”—and knows that sharing the pleasures of life and undeath makes them greater than experiencing

them alone. As such, she supports marriage among her followers—even between the living and the undead, as long as the undead partner plans to make the living one an undead, or at least to extend the living partner's life somehow (such as a vampire who feeds her blood to her husband to extend his life). As undead couples cannot bear children, Urgathoa doesn't care about the genders of the people, only that the commitment is true.

Adoption in the church is common, particularly by predatory undead who kill living parents and raise the offspring as their own; this increases the number of creatures worshiping the goddess. Divorce is frowned upon, as it shows disrespect to the partner and to the goddess herself. Murdering a spouse is an acceptable alternative, however, especially if the dead spouse remains in or near the home as a skeleton, zombie, or mummy (a widowed vampire priestess may be guarded by several of her own animated dead husbands during the day). Pregnancies are uncommon among the faithful, considering that most of them are undead and the church allows contraception to keep pregnancy from interfering with hedonistic pursuits, though many temples have at least one woman, called a “blood mother,” whose role is to bear children, either to raise them as members of the church or to offer them as sacrifices in horrid rituals. Urgathoa has no opinion on abortion or infant exposure; her rivalry with Pharasma (and the Lady of Graves' opposition to killing the unborn) has made her spiteful toward expectant mothers of that faith, and she teaches her priests minor curses and hexes that can harm or kill a fetus or birthing mother.

As the church embraces death if it leads to undeath, they have no prohibition against suicide, and taking one's own life in the goddess's name is thought to be a way to boost her opinion of you, or increase the chances of rising as some form of undead. Old priests with no means to turn themselves into undead may offer their spirits to the goddess while offering their flesh to the living. Though suicides are usually the purview of minor goddess Naderi (see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Gods and Magic*), this ritualistic martyrdom invokes the power of Urgathoa. Devout worshipers expect to be raised as undead of some kind.

In the church, the date someone becomes an undead is a memorable event called ashemorn, commemorated annually like a birthday. For undead that cannot stand the light, it also represents the last time they saw daylight. Ashemorn is a solemn event and a time for personal reflection rather than sharing with others, especially as some undead don't know what day they turned (because of delays between dying and rising) or have been undead so long they no longer remember or have ceased to consider it relevant. A particularly sentimental undead who can create spawn may choose to convert a loyal minion on his own ashemorn as a gesture of affection.



## URGATHOA

## TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Each of the Pallid Princess's temples is built like a feathall, with a large central table serving as an altar and numerous chairs surrounding it; her hidden temples use this same setup, but with a less ambitious scale. Most temples are adjacent to a private graveyard or built over a crypt, and often inhabited by ghouls (which embody all three of the goddess's interests). Though the goddess does not use daemons as minions in her own realm, it is not unusual to find daemon servants and guardians in Urgathoa's most powerful temples. Her largest temple in Mechitar, the capital of Geb, is the Cathedral of Epiphenomena, which is staffed by priests both living and undead.

The church is organized as a matriarchy, with a powerful priestess (only rarely a priest) at the head of each temple. If the priestess is a daughter of Urgathoa, the entire temple is considered especially blessed. The rest of the congregation is divided into the ghula—members of privilege who may or may not be members of the priesthood—and the famished, initiate members acting as servants to the ghula until they prove themselves worthy of recognition by the church. If one of the famished is of higher social status outside the church than a ghula, a wise ghula treats the famished respectfully, lest they suffer repercussions outside the church or once the high-status famished becomes a ghula. Like most evil cults, the secret church is scattered and cell-based. The most powerful or charismatic priest in the area is the local leader, and there are few occasions where cells meet or combine.

When a priest gains the ability to create undead (typically with the *animate dead* spell, though a vampire, ghast, or shadow's ability to create spawn counts), he or she also gains the title of Necro-Lord. This gives the priest additional privileges (such as first choice of food and servants) and powers (such as immunity to disease and resistance to channeled energy) without any additional responsibilities.

Ceremonial clothing for a priest is a loose, gray, floor-length tunic with a bone-white or dark gray shoulder-cape clasped at the front. Traditionally, the lower half of the tunic is either shredded or adorned with strips of cloth or tassels to give the overall appearance of increased damage as it approaches the floor, mirroring the goddess's own decay. Some of these garments are heavily embroidered with tiny skulls and bones, and layered with carefully sewn cuts to flash hidden layers of red and white. Some priestesses wear corsets under their gowns, while others prefer clothes that can accommodate an engorged or pregnant belly.

## A PRIEST'S ROLE

Two-thirds of Urgathoa's priests are clerics, and the other third are necromancers, witches, necromancy-inclined sorcerers (particularly those with the undead bloodline), antipaladins, and miscellaneous undead





## Carion Crown

who rise to positions of power in the church whether or not they have magical ability. These priests have no duties to the church other than mutual protection and aiding those who wish to become undead, for Urgathoa is satisfied when mortals excessively consume in her name and is content with the rate at which undead propagate themselves. This doesn't stop cult cells from taking a more aggressive stance, such as planning to convert the population of an entire town to zombie slaves. More than half of her clergy are women, and this proportion is closer to three-quarters in lands where women are expected to be subservient to men, for this faith is a way for women to gain power.

Commoners often have little use for priests of Urgathoa, fearing their association with vice and undeath. However,

her priests remain useful despite this reticence. As they understand both bodies and souls, Urgathoan priests can advise how to bury a corpse to prevent it from rising as an undead on its own and how to protect it from predators. Her priests usually conceal their allegiance and find employment in jobs that allow them frequent access to dead bodies, such as gravedigger, mercenary, or (if desperate) butcher. Some have been known to pose as clerics of Pharasma, offering blessings and funereal rites to communities lacking a true priest of the Lady of Graves. Malicious members use this ruse to provide commoners with "newly invented" charms, tokens, fetishes, and gestures that supposedly ward off the undead, then direct undead allies to these communities for easy hunting. In lands suffering from plague, they may pass themselves off as knowledgeable healers, treating some of the sick and leaving others to die, or perhaps curing uncomfortable but harmless illnesses while infecting patients with quiet but deadly diseases.

Only in undead-controlled lands such as Geb do Urgathoa's priests practice their faith openly, where they serve all the normal functions that publicly respected priests hold in society, such as spiritual advisor, healer, government official, and so on.

### HOLIDAYS

As a goddess who believes in celebrating existence every day and night, Urgathoa places no additional significance on certain dates. Her followers have attached special meaning to nights with no moon and celestial conjunctions with the undead-filled world Eox.

### APHORISMS

Given that its cult includes living beings, feeding undead such as ghouls and vampires, and other creatures that do not need to feed at all (including bodiless undead), there are many different sayings among the countless cells of the faith, all created by mortals, for the goddess is more concerned with gratification than words. The two most common aphorisms of the church are as follows.

**Feed Your Pain:** The faithful recognize that eating fills a physical and emotional need, even for undead that do not have to consume anything to survive—it is the act of eating, of consuming and satisfying an urge, that is the reward. This phrase normally indicates the start of a meal, but priests sometimes say it encourages layfolk to distract themselves from their problems with food or other excesses.

**By the Blood and the Mouth:** This is an oath, a promise to keep a secret, with the expectation of punishment should the oath be broken. It is





## URGATHOA

usually accompanied by a gesture, touching a finger and thumb to the sides of the neck (almost like a sign for choking), followed by kissing or licking the first two fingers of that hand.

### HOLY TEXT

Urgathoa's unholy book is *Serving Your Hunger*, penned by Dason, her first antipaladin. It explains her basic tenets, and also includes recipes for decadent foods (some copies include suggestions for cooking various humanoids) as well as common means of becoming undead (focusing mainly on vampires, ghouls, and wights).

### RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

For an evil deity, Urgathoa has few enemies. She is content to indulge her own needs, and as other powerful entities leave her to do that, she is involved in few divine conflicts. However, deities such as Pharasma and Sarenrae pursue her and her kind whenever they are found. The Pallid Princess reciprocates this attention, destroying divine minions and mortal followers of these goddesses in a petty tit-for-tat arrangement. Good-hearted Sarenrae isn't entirely hateful toward Urgathoa, and seeks ways to "heal" the undead goddess, which only throws fuel on the fire.

Urgathoa has a motherly relationship with two minor deities. Zyphus, the Grim Harvestman, keeps his divine realm within Urgathoa's territory. Zyphus is loyal to her, but does not belong to her, and she makes no longstanding claim on him. Their relationship is one of convenience and overlapping interests—he appreciates that sometimes a minor disease can unexpectedly turn fatal, suiting his morbid humor, and she appreciates that his priests often rise as undead to continue their work. Urgathoa is also trying to take the young goddess Naderi under her wing; as the patron of romantic suicides, the Lost Maiden believes that love endures beyond death, a sentiment that the Pallid Princess supports. This interest puts Urgathoa at odds with Shelyn, who was once Naderi's sovereign, but some priests also vaguely claim that the goddess of art has taken and hidden something from the goddess of the undead, intensifying their enmity. Urgathoa's relationship with ghoulish demon lord Kabriri and vampire demon lord Zura is strained—sometimes they are allies, sometimes enemies, and undead worshipers tend to drift between these cults.

As mentioned earlier, Urgathoa despises ascetics, and if the *Prophecies of Kalistrade* came from an actual deity, she would certainly oppose that entity. Instead, she is mildly annoyed by Irori's strict discipline, but can't actually make herself fight with him because he preaches moderation rather than abstinence (and some part of her wants to sample his physical perfection). The goddess supports the

### CUSTOMIZED SUMMON LIST

Urgathoa's priests can use *summon monster* spells to summon the following creatures in addition to the normal creatures listed in the spells.

#### **Summon Monster I**

Bloody human skeleton\*

#### **Summon Monster VII**

Daughter of Urgathoa\* (*The Inner Sea World Guide*)

\* This creature has the extraplanar subtype but is otherwise normal for its kind.

Whispering Way, seeing the promotion of undeath as a good thing. However, her priests are allowed to form their own opinions of that organization. An undead or undead-allied priest may see the Whispering Way as a blessing and work with them, but a gluttony-priest may avoid interactions with the undeath cult out of squeamishness or divergent interests. Vampires and ghouls are in a unique position relating to the Whispering Way—they are undead creatures that must feed on the living, and if the cult manages to convert the entire world to undeath, some of these undead would starve, so they shun the cultists or even work to keep them from becoming too successful.

### PLANAR ALLIES

Urgathoa's divine servants are usually undead creatures infused with divine power; some are more outsider than undead. Her herald is Mother's Maw, a flying fanged skull as large as an ogre, surrounded by a cloud of flies, trailing maggots, and dripping blood from its sharp teeth (see page 82 for more details). Counted among the ranks of her blessed minions are the following creatures.

**Barasthangas:** This pale devourer's undead flesh is so thin and tight that her white bones and gray connective tissues are visible. In addition to the normal abilities of a devourer, she can expend essence points to cast *contagion* (3rd), *gaseous form* (3rd), and *waves of fatigue* (5th). Her price for service is a suitably powerful creature whose soul she can devour.

**Fjarn:** This burly Ulfen man is gray like a corpse and has an unnerving rictus. Once a proud Linnorm King, he was tragically forced to kill and eat his own honor guard by a series of personal tragedies, and when he killed himself out of shame he rose as a ghastr in the service of Urgathoa. He still retains his barbarian powers, and likes to eat his fallen foes.



## Carion Crown



# Guilty Blood; 5 of 6

## Fateful Lot

My escort, one of an army of dour black-clad clones that tromped automatically through the Ardis Department of Constables, surprisingly unhanding me a step before reaching the station's heavy front doors. The first thing I'd learned after my utterly dispassionate arrest and processing was that not only did no one here care that I'd committed a crime, no one especially cared about my reasons. Or me at all, in fact. Every patrolman I encountered—a difficult number to guess considering their identical uniforms—went about his duties with the same malaise. It was like the whole department suffered from a reoccurring boil, the habitual lancing of which had changed from a matter of medical care to a routine chore.

Wherever we were going, at least it wasn't the crushingly boring communal cell I'd spent the night in. Soon after arriving, I'd quickly confirmed what I'd long suspected: a life behind prison bars was not for me, especially if habitual tooth-grinders and sobbing drunks to flank your sleeping pallet were fixtures of all jailhouses. Regardless of the noise, I must confess that it was the first night in months where I hadn't worried about having my throat slit in the dark. Still, I'd prefer not to repeat the experience. The clone-constable hadn't seen fit to speak more than my name before rousing me and marching down the hall. I'd followed silently with curious dread, not expecting any answers out of this solidier ant, but also not expecting



## FATEFUL LOT

any real danger. I'd figured wherever we were headed had to be better than a day of listening to the petty tragedies of addicts and failed pickpockets.

I was wrong.

Brass rivets seemed angled to reflect the morning sun's already piercing rays directly into my eyes. The strange contraption of polished wood, shining filigree, and sturdy wheels appeared at once both ingenious and maniacal, descriptions also fitting its occupant.

"Ah, there we are at last," came the bored voice, hiding a hint of a witch's cackle. "I thought they might have lost you wherever they keep you hooligans filed away."

I'd kept Ms. Kindler waiting, apparently. She sat there grinning in her wheeled chair, a much more compact device than the bath chairs that typically carried swaddled invalids from quack to coffin. I resisted the urge to smack the wrinkles from her condescending look.

"Funny how often spirit hunting leads to petty theft," she went on. "You've been up to quite a bit of mischief, my dear. I'd have thought you would have learned your lesson after your last trespass turned out so poorly."

The sound of my own gritting teeth sent a shiver through my sneer. I started down the steps, barely restraining myself from sending her chair rolling down ahead of me.

"Manners, young Lady Cylphra," she tutted. "Your freedom didn't come cheap. At the very least you can repay me by wheeling an old woman home."

As furious as I was at the woman for sending me into the den of that nightmare at Barttley Manor, and for indirectly contributing to last night's arrest—from a certain point of view—the chains of my upbringing tightened mercilessly and dragged me back up the steps to my elder's aid. As I took the handles on the back of her chair I took some measure of satisfaction in knowing how many stairs and rough cobbles lay between here and Kindler's home, and the foreknowledge that we'd be hitting every one.

To her credit, Kindler minded her tongue on her backward avalanche down the station stairs, and we were soon holding up foot traffic on Willowbank Avenue. Nearly half of our journey passed in silence before she returned to her musing.

"I was awfully surprised to hear you'd been arrested—a clever girl like you."

Her voice needled my patience. "You're awfully well connected for an old lady. Lots of grandkids, or are they all just admirers of your stories?"

"Spend your life doing favors for others and they'll do favors for you when you no longer can. It's an arrangement that's played out quite well for me this far." She waited a moment before adding, "And admirers. I'm quite good, you know."

The semi-peace of our silent stroll broken, I had to know. "Did you know about Barttley?"

"Yes." The word was flat, unapologetic.

"And you sent me there anyway?" I sped the chair over a particularly deep pothole, taking a moment's bitter pleasure in her gasp of surprise.

"Don't fuss," she said, readjusting her dark sun hat. "You obviously came through it. Barttley's mostly molded away, and sometimes it's useful to have firsthand accounts of old news—even if the worms have gotten at most of his sanity. He's dangerous to all the right people out there in his rot."

"He tried to rip me apart!" I protested.

"You're the one who went chasing after corpses, and you're upset that you found one? If Barttley bothered you so, then why are you here? Why didn't you just go home?"

Her questions' validity made them all the more frustrating, and good answers didn't leap to mind. "I'm no coward," was all I could come up with, and it sounded weak and hollow even as I said it—especially knowing how often the urge to flee had gripped me in the past days.

"No, you're not, are you." Her candid response surprised me and we wheeled on in silence for several minutes. I could tell something was percolating under the bonnet bobbing in front of me and I eyed it suspiciously, increasingly unsure of what to make of its wearer.

"So you obviously turned up something in your visit with Mr. Barttley. What did he have to say about your ghost?"

I told Ms. Kindler of my encounter at Barttley Manor, of the horrible patchwork dog-thing, my discussion with Mr. Barttley, how he tried to attack me, and how I inexplicably wound up face-down in the mud outside. I ignored her chuckle and went on, telling her how I tried to warn Lord Halboncrant and was thrown out, only to encounter Prince Lieralt outside. Finally, I explained meeting with Rarentz Troidais, how he'd come by the dagger that had once imprisoned the prince's soul but had since pawned it, and how I'd been trying to recover it when I was arrested.

Ms. Kindler listened but didn't remain quiet as I told my story, interjecting that Lord Halboncrant hadn't been found dead, as I'd expected, but had vanished entirely, the same as both Lord and Lady Geirais. She also frequently interrupted to ask clarifying questions as I went on, not only about what I'd discovered, but about what I thought of certain things or how I felt in situations. At some point during the discussion I started to feel as though I were being interviewed for a job—one I was relatively sure I didn't want.

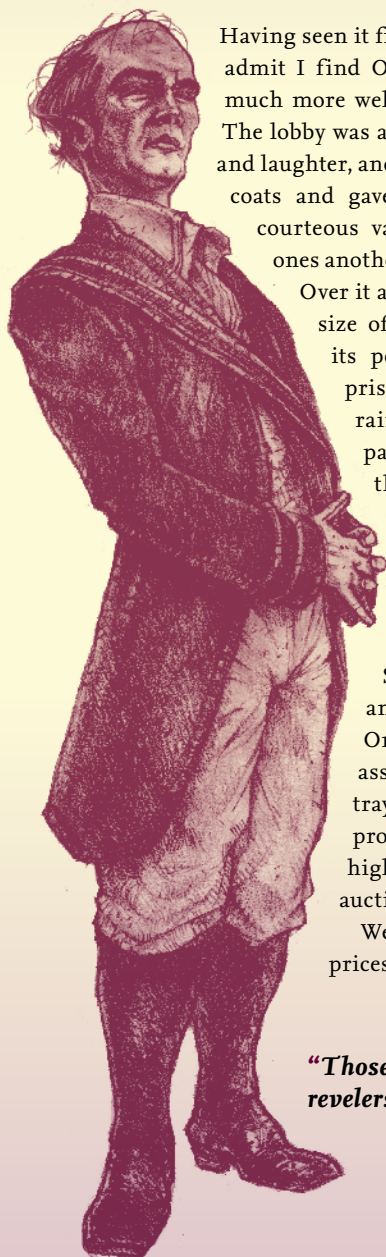
By the time everything was said I was dragging the wheeled chair up the steps of Ms. Kindler's earwig-infested porch. As she unlocked her door I mumbled something by way of thanks and turned to take my leave.

## Carion Crown

"Where do you think you're off to?" Kindler said as she wheeled herself inside. The condescension that had vanished midway through our walk had crept back into her voice. My look back and half-shrug were apparently all the comment she needed, as she didn't wait for more of a response. "Come in, Ms. Cylphra. You have some studying to do."

"Excuse me? What for?" I was thoroughly perplexed, and didn't really have the time to visit with the old woman any longer—not that I had any clue as to how I might get the prince's dagger after the previous night's debacle.

"There's work to be done before tonight," she said, rising shakily to her feet. "As I said, it's funny how often spirit hunting leads to petty theft."



Having seen it from both sides, I have to admit I find Omberbain's Auctioneers much more welcoming from the front. The lobby was abuzz with conversations and laughter, and while men doffed their coats and gave stern instructions to courteous valets, ladies cooed over ones another's gowns and coiffures.

Over it all hung a chandelier the size of a modest sailing ship, its pearl fixtures and glass prisms scattering miniature rainbows across the wood-paneled floors and walls, the colors playing like sprites over portraits of dour strangers and displays of heavily polished but entirely virginal armaments.

Servants in the black and orange livery of Omberbain's circled the assembled nobles with trays of refreshments and programs detailing the highlights of the evening's auction.

Were it not for the reserve prices fixed near so many of

***"Those assembled weren't revelers. They were vultures."***

the fine items on display, one might have mistaken the scene for a gallery opening or reception in some noble's private showroom. In truth, though, those assembled weren't revelers. They were vultures. The objects on the block this evening weren't pieces of art, after all—they were heirlooms and antiques, family treasures carted in from the collections and lives of those who had committed the greatest sin a member of the Ardis aristocracy could: they'd gone broke. Now came the scavengers to gape at the corpses of whole houses laid bare, pecking and mocking the most intimate parts now that the innards had spilled into the open. Many of these gawkers were less than a half-step away from the same fate themselves, come not to buy but to mingle with the rest, all sharing in the communal lie of their worthiness and privilege.

All my reasons for forsaking this rose anew, leaving a fresh taste of bile in my mouth. Of course, now that we were there, the crowd wasn't entirely made up of vultures—there were now vultures and thieves. I much preferred being in that latter camp.

No sooner had I pushed Ms. Kindler's wheeled chair through the door than a tick detached from a circle of vultures. A greasy man wearing an orange-and-black sash like a royal commendation, he flung his arms wide in greeting as he came toward us, the few hairs on his oily pate clinging desperately to their places. "Lady Kindler, as I breathe, what an unexpected pleasure! Let me be the first to welcome you to Omberbain's."

I halted the chair abruptly, trying not to bowl the man over as he rushed forward. Ms. Kindler cursed, and I knew it wasn't for my awkward handling. Around us, several of the nearer conversations had quickly paused and renewed with a new topic. Although Ailson Kindler might not be widely known by appearance, she was surely known by reputation, and extra attention would not make our task this evening any easier.

"Farbass Omberbain, my word—so flattering of you to remember an old woman," Kindler said as our host came to a halt just before us. I must admit I was impressed. There was a shaking wistfulness in Kindler's voice I'd never heard before, the exact tremble one would expect from a dowager with a foot in the grave. Even more impressive was how it came through the gritted teeth of an utterly false smile.

"My lady, how could I forget? Omberbain's wouldn't be here if it weren't for you. You will always have a seat of honor in our hall—though I dare say, not a discount." He chortled breathily at the obviously well-used joke. Ms. Kindler affected a mindless coo in response.

"Will we have the honor of you calling tonight's auction, Mr. Omberbain?" she asked. "You inherited your father's skill, if I recall, and I'm sure you've improved upon his technique in the years since he passed on."



## FATEFUL LOT

“Oh, you flatter me, your ladyship. I don’t know how much of an honor it is, but yes, I’ll be overseeing the evening’s bidding. With Mr. Baldermol as my ringman.” He nodded vaguely to a stiff gentleman standing by the doors leading into the auction hall, an unfortunate figure with a face that appeared to be mostly chin.

I let my attention wander from the conversation, as I obviously wasn’t a part of it. No surprise considering the uniform Ms. Kindler had dressed me up in. Scanning the group casually, careful not to make eye contact with any of the nobles present, I tried to distinguish any potential hurdles to our plan—anyone who seemed likely to play hero when the chance arose. No one in the crowd fit the profile, but I was chagrined to see the auction house wasn’t entirely defenseless. To the contrary, in fact. I’d expected two, maybe four aging watchmen, mostly serving as stage dressing to imply the rubbish up for auction had some significance and value. Instead, at least eight footmen that I could see chafed in their formal wear. One openly adjusting his jacket revealed a heavy baton slid into his orange cummerbund. Already looking bored at their posts, these guards certainly didn’t carry the air of professionals, but they might still complicate matters. My confidence in not spending another night in the constables’ lockup was not increasing.

“We’ll just have to see,” Ms. Kindler said noncommittally. It wasn’t her words, but her repetition of the sentence that drew me back to the conversation.

“Well, do keep us in mind. An Ailson Kindler original tale would fetch top coin, and as you’re a friend of the house, I’m sure we could come to an arrangement regarding our percentage.” Mr. Omberbain hurried on excitedly, the color of gold almost evident in his eyes. “But don’t answer me now. Just think it over during the course of the auction. We’ll talk afterward.”

Some new arrival blessedly caught the greasy auctioneer’s attention. “Lady Kindler, if you’ll excuse me. Do enjoy the evening’s events, and good luck in your bidding.” He leaned close to her level, whispering conspiratorially, “We’ll talk later.”

Ms. Kindler smiled vapidly and nodded, putting on a fine show even as she reached back to touch my hand. I took that as my cue to see to our escape in case Omberbain’s attentions returned to us.

“Man’s breath smell’s like a river trout,” Ms. Kindler groused as I wheeled her to the rear of the decadent lobby, hiding behind the statue of a stag-horned knight that had won relatively few attendees’ consideration. I couldn’t help but chuckle. “Fetch a program, dear,” she said, “and let’s see what we’re in for.”

With little trouble I waved over a servant who handed me a lavender handbill. Beneath a colophon bearing a

stylized “O,” two even columns listed the lots on the block that evening. While interesting pieces of artwork, items of especial worth, and the names of dishonored former honors dominated much of the space, several larger lots also listed attractive particularities. The second lot after the evening’s intermission included multiple pieces of display weaponry. Amid the showpieces and weapons of imaginary heroes ran the most understated description on the page: “barbarian dagger with gemstone.”

“It’s this one here or it’s none of them,” I said, leaning to show Ms. Kindler.

She made her own examination and nodded. “The timing should be manageable if this is the one. That Baldermol fellow Omberbain pointed out, he’ll be the one to watch. Keep a careful eye on him and you’ll manage fine.”

“I’m still not sure I have the talent for this. It’s really more my brother’s forte.”

“Oh, should we fetch him then? If he’s here, you really should have introduced him.” Kindler looked up at me archly. Her sarcasm dropped as quickly as she’d summoned it. “You’ll do fine, girl. No getting squeamish now. Let’s find our seats.”

For two of the most fantastically dull hours of my life, Ms. Kindler and I sat in the lavish auction hall in silence, watching nobles dicker over niceties they’d likely have to auction themselves in a few short months. Aside from Mr. Omberbain’s florid descriptions and speedily slurred bid calling, the bargaining transpired in silence, adversaries staking increasingly ludicrous sums, more desirous of the prestige of winning than the actual items on the block. For most of the time, though, I kept my attention fixed on the craggy Mr. Baldermol and his mysterious role in the evening’s business. He and Omberbain shared a language of glances, nods, and gestures I found utterly mysterious. Even as the auction house’s owner announced a twenty-minute intermission and invited the assemblage to partake of refreshments in the lobby, I had little more insight into the gentleman’s duties than I had when I entered. As I rolled Ms. Kindler back into the lobby, I let her know.

“Little time to worry about that now,” she said, waving my concern away. “We’ll make do.” She pointed toward a dimly lit hallway leading deeper into the building. “The house keeps offices and meeting rooms this way. Let’s see if we can find one to our liking.”

I wasn’t concerned that anyone was going to miss an elderly lady and her maid, and so made no disguise of our intentions, strolling away from the muttering assemblage. Once in the shadowy hall a few yanks on sturdy door handles revealed a packed cleaning closet, a locked office door, and finally a cramped meeting

## Carion Crown

chamber. It was an impersonal side space, likely for agents to discuss their employers' business, in which a half-dozen high-backed chairs circled an antique wooden table. Little effort had been made at decoration, aside from a few sizable frames that looked empty in the gloom, and a sideboard bearing two sturdy candelabra and a pocket flint.

Ms. Kindler nodded her approval and we rolled inside. Before I had finished lighting one of the candles, she had already produced a thick fold of parchment and was quickly opening it square by square. I could feel the first dull thrum of a headache beginning behind my eyes as I scanned the unfolded sheet. Dozens of elaborate symbols wound unevenly across the page, their shapes straddling the line between letters and diagrams. Their complexity aside, each figure appeared to writhe and readjust upon the page, and focusing on any one only seemed to make it lift away like a fleck of dust floating in one's eye. It could have merely been a trick of the poor light and the wavering candle flame, but I knew the truth: magic hated me.

When she'd originally produced this folded-up spell—which she'd been using as a place marker in some massive tome—Ms. Kindler had subjected me to something of a refresher on arcane theory. I'd had some instruction in the field in my youth, but the combination of my own impatience and my brother's easy talent had soured me toward the subject completely. Since then, I'd had enough mishaps with would-be wizards and magical devices to realize the arcane arts held me in similar regard.

I opened my mouth to again protest this part of our plan, but Ms. Kindler—likely anticipating my complaint—cut me off. “You'll be wanting to fetch him now, we haven't much time.”

Restraining most of my grumbling, I found a false smile and went back into the lobby. It took me several minutes to locate Mr. Baldermol, long enough to leave a fluttering sensation in my gut out of fear that he'd departed early and the entire evening had been for naught. Finally, though, I found him emerging from a washroom and approached him, to his obvious surprise. I didn't say much, and he said even less, but I let his imagination fill in the innuendo as he curiously followed me back to the meeting room.

Letting him enter before me, I could sense his confusion as he saw the old woman sitting there in the candlelight, smiling up at him pleasantly. He straightened, obviously reassessing the situation. I brought the handily placed twin to the pewter candelabrum on the table down on the back of his head before he had time to excuse himself. With polite quietness he crumpled to the ground and I closed the door behind us. In the hall beyond a muffled echo announced that the auction would resume in five minutes.

“Alright, girl, we'll have to do this quick,” Ms. Kindler said, pulling the magical document close to the table's edge. I was done complaining at this point, and I resigned myself to the coming failure or success.

“Look closely at the face,” she went on, trying to be helpful but just putting me even more on edge. “That's the most important part. This will all be rubbish if you can't picture the face just right in your mind.”

I did what she said, taking in Mr. Baldermol's unhandsome features, imagining how they would look were they not half flattened upon the wood floor. With them set in my mind, I turned to face the page.

As expected, the symbols seemed to scatter as I looked at them, as though each line was written in ants rather than ink. Concentrating as best I could, I skimmed the page one final time, mouthing the complex and variable syllables as best I could remember. It was like reading a page in Kelish. I could make the sounds passably, but the meanings were utterly lost on me. Oh well.

I began and the sounds spilled out, varying from guttural gibberish to lilting murmurs. Although she couldn't unleash the page's magic for me, Ms. Kindler was obviously reading along, and rather than speaking the words was humming a sigil or two ahead of me, noting the syllables of each complex sound like a music instructor punctuating the beats of a song. My speed would have probably made the most inexperienced apprentice laugh, but I deliberately captured each symbol before continuing my steady pace.

I was shocked when a glow like ghost light began rising from the ink upon the page, a faint light that leaked up through the runes as though they were more than just strokes upon a page, and instead miniature windows letting in a radiance from somewhere else. I hesitated between sounds, but Ms. Kindler's touch on my elbow spurred me on. As I went on, the light intensified slightly, playing over the symbols as I read them. I had expected this, and in the moment's thrill sped up my reading, hoping to complete the page while the power remained present. The sounds came swiftly, and energy spilled from the words, exaggerating their shapes and crisscrossing the page. Nearing the end was like an avalanche. I was barreling through the words, speaking the sounds before I was entirely sure of the symbol I was looking at. It seemed to be working, so I went on.

Then something went wrong. It was immediate and unforgiving. The light spilling from the shapes was more than just a gentle glow. It was fire. I knew immediately that I'd lost control, and the ghost light tracings that had elaborated and enhanced the symbols upon the page lost their shape, spilling over the parchment like a sheet of flame, consuming ink and page and meaning in a blazing breath. The parchment was gone.



## FATEFUL LOT

I gasped as though someone had smacked me, but aside from that could do little more than gaze at the empty table. Outside in the lobby, an echoing voice announced the end of the intermission.

“Don’t you have someplace to be?” Ms. Kindler asked.

I looked at her, puzzled. She was smiling her condescending half smile, and in response, all she did was tap my hand. What I looked down at wasn’t my hand, but a wrinkled, furless bear’s paw; a giant weathered thing, a man’s hand. The big scarred hand of Mr. Baldermol, in fact, poking out of a gentleman’s jacket. I couldn’t help but laugh and touched my face. It still felt like mine.

“Yes, yes, you’re the complete picture—and quite a sight at that. But it’s not going to do us a lick of good if you don’t get moving.”

I jumped as Mr. Omberbain hissed in my ear, “What’s wrong with you. Pull it together!”

I straightened my posture—or rather, Baldermol’s posture—and cast my eyes across the stiff-looking crowd. From my place standing before the stage I had a view of every seat in the house. Well, every seat but one. Ms. Kindler in her wheeled chair was nowhere to be seen.

On the stage behind me, Mr. Omberbain threw himself into an extravagant description of the next item up for auction. I’d stood through several of these now, trying my best to emulate the real Mr. Baldermol’s actions, acknowledging bidders and trying to take cues from Omberbain as best I could, but obviously I wasn’t grasping some vital aspect of my duties. So be it. All I had to do was last a few items more.

It took the better part of an hour before finally Mr. Omberbain announced our reason for coming that night.

“The next item for bidding is a true treasure, my friends: an exotic piece, cut from the wild mountains of the north, forged with the ferocity of the barbarian tribes, and wielded by many a savage queen. Don’t be fooled by its designs in gold and gemstone—even though they show delicacy and detail of the highest mastery—this fine dagger is much more than just a display piece, its razor-edged blade sharpened upon the hearts of a hundred virgin sacrifices. The bidding opens at 500. Shall we have 500?”

The bidding went swiftly, the blade fetching just over 900 gold pieces at the end—a paltry sum considering many of the ludicrous amounts bandied about that night. It wasn’t surprising, though—the dagger wasn’t a stylish

piece one might display upon a desk or in a sash. Rather, it would probably just get hoarded into a curio case, another piece for the servants to dust. It was small, though, so without surprise the auction’s winner stood to receive his winnings. Delicately, Mr. Omberbain handed the blade down to me upon a tasseled amber pillow.

How could anyone not know this diabolical thing for what it was? No sooner had I touched the pillow than my blood seemed gripped, pulled toward the blade. Had I some cut, I imagine my gore would have leapt right out of me and arced to the dagger, which would have drunk up every drop. It was thirsty—for blood, for life, for something more, making its unholy desires obvious in the obscene crimson glinting of its ruby hilt.

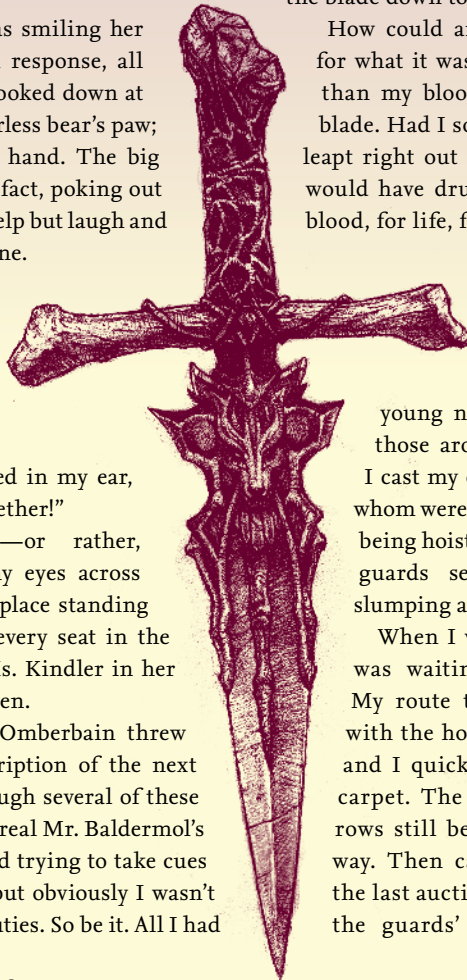
Swallowing hard, I marched Baldermol’s figure stiffly toward the dagger’s new owner, a pudgy young nobleman bobbing his head proudly to those around him. I tried to be nonchalant as I cast my eyes over the rest of the crowd, most of whom were directing their attentions to the next lot being hoisted onto the stage. Even the well-dressed guards seemed bored with the proceedings, slumping at their posts.

When I walked by the row the dagger’s owner was waiting in, no one immediately noticed. My route to the lobby door was unobstructed, with the house’s main doors waiting just beyond, and I quickened my pace up the aisle’s long red carpet. The murmur of confusion started in the rows still before me, and several eyes shifted my way. Then came a less than courteous call from the last auction’s winner. That was enough to catch the guards’ wandering attentions, and as they tried to suss out the source of the commotion, I folded the pillow into a sheathe around the dagger and broke into a full run.

The rows of perplexed and aghast nobles raced by me, shouts rising along with several gentleman making overtures of boldness. The guards had drifted from the doors over the course of the evening, and by the time they had their batons drawn I’d already be past them. The doors to the lobby opened wide, agreeably swinging out so I might sprint through unimpeded.

A barrier of brass and hardwood wheeled directly into my path, moving intentionally and obstructing most of the door’s opening. From her wheeled chair, Ms. Kindler’s narrowed eyes fixed on me as I charged toward her. She raised one liver-spotted hand and called out in a surprisingly firm voice.

“Stop, thief!”



***“How could anyone not know this diabolical thing for what it was?”***



## Carion Crown



## Bestiary

**N**umerous delightfully dreadful attractions tempt guests to visit the freshly renovated and reopened manor of the Beumhal estate. While the mistress of the house, Ms. Korinnia Avorbia, and her staff of trained servants attend to patrons with first-class service, they also perform a vast repertoire of haunting tales and plays, some of which guests might not even realize they're caught in the midst of. My stay afforded both cheers and chills, and my only complaint was the endless racket emanating from the strictly forbidden fourth floor, where overzealous staff insisted on rattling chains and clanking steel until all hours of the night.

—Notice on House Beumhal in an Ardis circular



## BESTIARY

Menaces to stalk city streets and the paths of the dead fill this month's entry into the Pathfinder Bestiary. While some are the creations of mad magic-users, threats and guardians capable of blending into even the most crowded urban centers, others are actual physical embodiments of death, servants of both the goddess of death and the goddess of undeath.

### PC VAMPIRES?

Whether they are abducted by Radvir's minions, punished by Luvick, or tempted by Evgenya's charms, an outside chance exists that one or more PCs could actually become vampires. Typically, this might prompt the creation of new characters as the retired ones become NPCs under the GM's control—an interesting development in its own right, as the players' new PCs then have to contend with the newly turned vampires. However, such characters could remain in the game under the players' control instead, thereby roleplaying this development as a new twist in the Carrion Crown plot.

The +2 CR adjustment associated with the vampire template shouldn't unbalance the encounters in this month's adventure and *Pathfinder Adventure Path #48: Shadows of Gallowspire* to any great degree. Villains from both adventures should have ample means of targeting such PCs with spells and effects capable of harming or even controlling undead. If desired, you could also gradually introduce their new vampire abilities (as well as the characters' shift to an evil alignment) to maintain the Average Party Level for most encounters. In this situation, vampire PCs should face periodic Will saves (with the same DC as their own dominate ability) to control their blood-thirst and resist their master's growing control. Radvir's *bloodbrew* may at least aid in this regard.

In addition, if under the thrall of Luvick or Evgenya, such PCs could find themselves charged with acting on behalf of the vampire elders in opposing the Whispering Way. In this fashion, the PCs gain new patrons, albeit ones with a decidedly evil intent all their own. Roleplaying a PC's rescue and eventual redemption from the taint of vampirism could easily extend the party's adventures before picking up Adivion's trail, or later on as a continuance of the campaign after the final adventure.

### ON THE ROAD... AGAIN

The path along the western cliffs of Avalon Bay is one of the best-kept and most regularly traveled routes in all of Ustalav. Outside of the occasional highwayman or band of Sczarni, few serious threats prey upon travelers on these roads, especially once one enters the county of Caliphass. (A group of 2d6 highwaymen makes a CR 11 encounter, and can approximate either a group of Sczarni or other bandits on the road; see the *GameMastery Guide*

### ENCOUNTERS IN CALIPHAS (SLUMS AND SEWERS)

d% roll	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1–4	1 nabasu	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 64
5–9	1 giant slug	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 254
10–15	1 alchemical golem	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 135
16–23	1d4 ghosts	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 144
24–31	1d8 madmen*	9	GMG 262
32–35	1 night hag	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 215
36–38	1d4 soul eaters	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 254
39–42	1 vampire	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 270
43–51	2d8 cultists	10	GMG 278
52–56	1d4 dark nagas	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 211
57–62	1d4 greater shadows	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 245
63–66	1d6 invisible stalkers	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 181
67–69	1d4 mihstu	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 190
70–74	1d4 mohrgs	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 208
75–86	2d4 highwaymen	11	GMG 259
87–93	1d4 vampires	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 270
94–96	1 omox	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 79
97–100	1d6 vampires	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 270

\* Use stats for gladiator.

for details.) On their journey from Thrushmoor to the city of Caliphass, the PCs pass near Vauntil, a town of skilled folk artisans, rich with flowers, good food and wine, and fierce competition for noble patronage. Along this path, a dullahan stalker is likely the only serious danger the PCs will face (see page 8 for details). But once the PCs venture inside and under the city of Caliphass, it's a different story. See the Encounters in Caliphass table for some ideas on what might menace the PCs as they make their way through the slums and sewers of Ustalav's capital.

#### VAUNTIL

N small town

**Corruption** +2; **Crime** –2; **Economy** +2; **Law** +2; **Lore** +2;

**Society** –2

**Qualities** prosperous, tourist attraction

**Danger** 0

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government** overlord

**Population** 733 (714 humans, 11 halflings, 7 elves, 1 half-elf)

#### MARKETPLACE

**Base Value** 1,500 gp; **Purchase Limit** 7,500 gp; **Spellcasting** 4th




**Minor Items** 3d4; **Medium Items** 1d6; **Major Items** —

# Carion Crown



## LIVING TOPIARY

*Shuffling forward on brambly limbs, this walking green hedge has the rough shape of a griffin and appears to move on its own.*

<b>LIVING TOPIARY</b>	<b>CR 4</b>	  
<b>XP 1,200</b>		
N Medium plant		
<b>Init</b> +6; <b>Senses</b> darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +6		
<b>DEFENSE</b>		
<b>AC</b> 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 natural)		
<b>hp</b> 42 (5d8+20)		
<b>Fort</b> +10, <b>Ref</b> +3, <b>Will</b> +1		
<b>DR</b> 5/slashing; <b>Immune</b> plant traits		
<b>Weaknesses</b> vulnerability to fire		
<b>OFFENSE</b>		
<b>Speed</b> 30 ft.		
<b>Melee</b> 2 slams +6 (1d6+4)		
<b>Spell-Like Abilities</b> (CL 5th)		
Constant— <i>pass without trace</i>		
3/day— <i>hedge stride</i> (see below)		
<b>STATISTICS</b>		
<b>Str</b> 17, <b>Dex</b> 14, <b>Con</b> 19, <b>Int</b> 6, <b>Wis</b> 10, <b>Cha</b> 9		
<b>Base Atk</b> +3; <b>CMB</b> +6; <b>CMD</b> 18 (22 vs. trip)		
<b>Feats</b> Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Power Attack		
<b>Skills</b> Escape Artist +8, Perception +6, Stealth +9 (+15 in		

undergrowth); **Racial Modifiers** +8 Escape Artist, +2 Stealth (+8 in undergrowth)

**Languages** Common, Sylvan (cannot speak)

**SQ** assimilate, move through hedges, shapeshift

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any land

**Organization** solitary, garden (2–4), or boscage (5–7)

**Treasure** none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Assimilate (Ex)** As a full-round action, a living topiary can consume any undergrowth or bushy plant matter it is currently touching and then incorporate that matter into its own form. The topiary can do this at a rate of 5 cubic feet per round, healing 1d8 points of damage when it does so. If the living topiary is at maximum hit points, this ability has no effect.

**Hedge Stride (Sp)** This ability functions as *tree stride*, but rather than allowing for teleportation from tree to tree, it permits the living topiary to teleport from one area of brush or hedges to another area of similar vegetation within 1,500 feet. A living topiary can use this ability three times per day.

**Move through Hedges (Ex)** A living topiary may move through any solid object made of brambles or thick, porous plants without penalty. It must begin and end its turn outside of the object.

**Sculpt Shape (Ex)** As a standard action, a living topiary can alter itself to take on the basic form of any creature. The change is purely cosmetic, and does not change its size, grant it any special powers, or alter its abilities.

Although often thought to come from purely fictitious imaginings, the inspiration for classical topiaries comes from a very real-life source: animal-shaped shrubs. Part plant, part beast, living topiaries are moving flora that look like decorative lawn ornaments used to fancy up gardens and groves, though their bestial nature and aloof demeanor prove they are far from mere decorations.

Living topiaries range in height from shrubs only a couple feet off the ground to towering hedges. The average specimen is about 4 feet tall and 6 feet in length, and weighs 200 pounds.

## ECOLOGY

Living topiaries hail from distant forests and long-forgotten fields, remnants of gargantuan plants that once walked the earth. Some theorize that the things originally came from the First World, where odd phenomena such as animal-shaped flora are not unheard of. Living topiaries wander the lands with singular purpose: to search for more plants to consume and turn into their own kind.

Living topiaries can be composed of virtually any variety of shrubbery. As they travel, these transforming hedges pick up loose plant life, which then becomes part



## BESTIARY

of the living topiary itself. When an individual topiary has collected enough supplementary undergrowth that is has doubled in size, it can divide itself in two. This method of asexual reproduction is quite rapid and efficient, and would result in a booming population of living topiaries if the plants were not so fragile.

Ironically, some of the topiaries' most deadly predators are also typically the tamest. Herbivorous creatures such as caribou and berry-eating birds frequently nip at the hulking masses of brush when they are at rest, often in such small increments that the topiary hardly notices. These natural predators sometimes make it difficult for living topiaries to grow and reproduce, keeping their size in constant flux. Natural hazards such as drought and fire also present constant danger to topiaries, as frequent movement expends much of their energy and stored water supply. Entire fleets of the wandering flora have reproduced in exponential numbers only to be consumed by the rapid spread of a brush fire.

Though somewhat delicate, topiaries often live for several decades, as their bodies are constantly refreshed with new plant matter. Almost always on the move, however, a topiary sometimes accidentally finds itself in an area void of adequate additional shrubbery or water, such as a vast plain or desert. In such situations, an individual deprived of nutrients can quickly dry out and shrivel over the course of several days.

Living topiaries subsist purely on photosynthetic energy and water and thus seek out areas with abundant amounts of both. However, even stronger than this survival drive is their innate compulsion to find different types of plants in order to turn themselves into more diverse topiaries. The desire for diverse genes is enough to scatter living topiaries across entire nations, causing their appearances to be sporadic and unpredictable.

### HABITAT & SOCIETY

Nomadic by nature, living topiaries wander from forest to forest in continual search of ever more diverse plants to collect and assimilate. Driven by this instinct to absorb different types of undergrowth and brush, living topiaries see the benefit in spreading themselves thin rather than collaborating in huge numbers.

On their own, living topiaries are primarily solitary creatures, though upon dividing into a new pair, topiaries may travel together, their subconscious goals as similar as the topiaries' twinned appearances. In this way, it may come to be that a fair number of the plant drifters journey alongside each other, creating a sort of herd. It's at this point that living topiaries tend to branch off from one another, knowing that while there is strength in numbers, traveling in such herds does not allow for the maximum amount of diversity while collecting other plants.

### CREATING LIVING TOPIARIES

While druidic lore tells of naturally occurring topiary creatures springing full-grown and alive from the depths of wild forests, places infused by strange magic, or portals to fey realms, these creatures can also be created in a fashion similar to most constructs. Rather than being cultivated by wizards and other arcane spellcasters, though, they are most often created by druids and servants of nature deities who summon spirits of the natural world to infuse their lovingly sculpted topiary shapes with life. Aside from requiring the creator to craft a topiary in a suitably lifelike shape, a variety of exotic herbs, salves, fertilizers, and rare earths are required to bring the plant to life, making the process a costly endeavor.

#### LIVING TOPIARY

**CL** 8th; **Price** 10,500 gp

#### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Knowledge (nature) 6 ranks, *command plants*, *freedom of movement*, *plant growth*; **Skill** Knowledge (nature) 14 or Profession (gardener) 18; **Cost** 5,500 gp

### CUSTOMIZING LIVING TOPIARIES

As created beings, living topiaries might come in a wide variety of forms, depending on the whims and needs of their creators. Noted here are some of the most common variations found among these elusive and deadly plant creatures, along with the differences in their pricing and costs for the purposes of creating them.

**Brambles (CR +1)** These living topiaries are made out of plants with deadly thorns. Those with this ability deal 1d8 points of piercing damage with their attacks (rather than 1d6 bludgeoning). **Price** +3,500 gp, **Cost** +1,750 gp.

**Extra Limbs (CR +1)** A living topiary is sometimes created with a shape that has more than two limbs. Topiaries with this trait have four slam attacks rather than two. **Price** +5,000 gp, **Cost** +2,500 gp.

**Flame Retardant (CR +0)** Formed out of plants with relatively few leaves or from woods that are especially difficult to burn, or treated with oils that resist fire, living topiaries with this ability are not vulnerable to fire. **Price** +2,000 gp, **Cost** +1,000 gp.

**Innocuous (CR +0)** Pruned into the shape of ornate trees, elegant pillars, fanciful castles, or other similarly decorative plant or architectural shapes, these living topiaries gain a +6 racial bonus on Stealth checks and a +12 bonus when attempting to blend in as simple undergrowth. **Price** +2,500 gp, **Cost** +1,250 gp.

**Poisonous (CR +1)** Living topiaries with this ability are created from naturally poisonous plants and then treated to enhance their deadly nature. Attacks from these topiaries are poisoned with terinav root (DC 16). **Price** +3,500 gp, **Cost** +1,750 gp.

# Carion Crown

## MOTHER'S MAW

This skull is as large as an ogre and surrounded by buzzing flies. Its bat wings are too small to actually carry it, yet it moves through the air as easily as a bird. It is surrounded by the stink of rotting meat, spice, and perfume.

### MOTHER'S MAW

CR 15



XP 51,200

NE Large undead (evil, extraplanar)\*

Init +11; Senses darkvision 60 ft., lifesense, scent; Perception +28

Aura desecrate

### DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 16, flat-footed 23 (+7 Dex, +14 natural, -1 size)

hp 230 (20d8+140)\*; fast healing 5 or 20 (see Devour Soul)

Fort +13, Ref +16, Will +18

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, DR 15/bludgeoning and good; Immune cold, electricity, undead traits, Resist fire 30; SR 26

### OFFENSE

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

Melee bite +26 (5d6+17/19-20 plus d10 bleed, 1d6 Con drain, grab, and mummy rot [DC 26])

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon (60-ft. cone, 15d6 negative energy, Reflex DC 26 half, usable every 1d4 rounds), channel negative energy 9/day (DC 19, 6d6), devour soul, swallow whole (special acid damage, AC 17, 20 hp)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +18)

Constant—*desecrate*At will—*contagion* (DC 19), *dimension door*, *ghoul hunger*\*\* (DC 18), *inflict critical wounds* (DC 20)1/day—*animate dead*, *create undead*, *eyebite* (DC 22), *plane shift*\*\* See *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Gods and Magic*.

### STATISTICS

Str 33, Dex 25, Con —, Int 21, Wis 20, Cha 22

Base Atk +15; CMB +27 (+31 grapple); CMD 44 (can't be tripped)

Facts Cleave, Command Undead<sup>B</sup>, Critical Focus, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Staggering Critical, Stunning Critical<sup>B</sup>, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +27 (+19 jump), Fly +28, Intimidate +29, Knowledge (planes) +25, Knowledge (religion) +28, Perception +28, Profession (cook) +25, Sense Motive +28, Stealth +26

SQ deathless, true herald

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Constitution Drain (Su)** Creatures that are hit by the Maw's bite must succeed at a DC 26 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of Constitution drain. On each successful attack, the herald gains 5 temporary hit points. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Create Spawn (Su)** Any creature slain by the Maw (including those that die from any of its special attacks or disease) rises 1 round later as a bloody skeleton loyal to the herald.

**Deathless (Su):** The Maw is destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points, but it returns to unlife 1 hour later at 1 hit point, allowing its fast healing to resume healing it thereafter. The Maw can be permanently destroyed if it is destroyed by positive energy, if it is reduced to 0 hit points in the area of a *bless* or *hallow* spell, or if its remains are sprinkled with 20 vials of holy water.

**Desecrate (Sp)** The bonuses from the Maw's constant *desecrate* spell-like ability (always centered on it) are calculated into the stats above.

**Devour Soul (Su)** By using its swallow whole ability, the herald can deal 12d6+18 points of damage to a swallowed creature as if using a *slay living* spell. A DC 21 Fortitude save reduces this damage to 3d6+18. A swallowed creature must make this save every round on the herald's turn. The soul of a creature slain by this attack becomes trapped within the herald's skull (the creature's body is regurgitated immediately as a mangled wreck of shattered bone and chewed meat). The creature cannot be brought back to life until the herald's destruction (or a spell deflection—see below) releases its soul. The Maw can hold only one soul at a time. The trapped essence provides the Maw with fast healing 20, lasting 1 round for every Hit Die of the devoured soul. The trapped soul gains one permanent negative level for every round it spends within the Maw—these negative levels remain if the creature is brought back to life (but they do not stack with any negative levels imparted by being brought back to life). A soul that is completely consumed may only be restored to life by a *miracle* or *wish* spell. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Spell Deflection (Su)** If any of the following spells is cast at the Maw and overcomes its spell resistance, it instead affects the devoured soul: *banishment*, *chaos hammer*, *confusion*, *crushing despair*, *detect thoughts*, *dispel evil*, *dominate person*, *fear*, *geas/quest*, *holy word*, *hypnotism*, *imprisonment*, *magic jar*, *maze*, *suggestion*, *trap the soul*, or any form of charm or compulsion. While none of these effects harms the soul, the caster makes a DC 25 caster level check when a spell is deflected—success indicates that the trapped soul is released from its prison and the creature whose body it belonged to can now be restored to life as normal.

**Swallow Whole (Ex)** If a creature cuts its way out of the Maw after being swallowed, the Maw can use swallow whole once its fast healing repairs the damage caused by its prey cutting itself free.

**True Herald** Despite its type and Hit Dice, Mother's Maw is the herald of Urgathoa. Despite its type and Hit Dice, it can be conjured using the spell *greater planar binding*.

**Vomit Swarm (Su)** Once per round as a free action, the Maw can vomit forth a swarm of maggots (use the statistics for army



ants on page 16 of the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*) into a square adjacent to it, after which the swarm moves in a direction of the Maw's choosing. These swarms persist for 10 rounds.

The Mother's Maw is the herald of Urgathoa. A disgusting undead creature that comes to the mortal realm at the command of the Pallid Princess, it is an unsubtle thing of ravenous hunger, with little purpose but to kill, eat, and animate corpses as undead. Though it is as brilliant as a lich, its only interests are in satisfy its cravings for sensation.

The Maw has little interest in the desires of mortals (or of undead in the mortal world) except for how they intersect with Urgathoa's orders. If it is necessary to eat a hundred members of her cult, or to drive an entire city of ghouls into a lava pit, the Maw does it. It can speak but finds little worth talking about, so many assume it is as mindless as an animated skeleton. However, when not on a mission of death, disease, or gluttony, it is a font of knowledge about food, wine, exotic scents, and other strange experiences only an undead creature can understand, and is quite willing to speak on these matters to an interested party—assuming the sight of the enormous talking, winged skull isn't a distraction to listeners.

Although the Maw normally appears as a bare skull, it sometimes covers itself with its swarms. Whether this is out of a morbid sense of humor or an attempt to remember an old sensation from its life is unknown. It has confirmed that it was once a devourer, and before that a living creature, but it does not give further details

## ECOLOGY

The Mother's Maw is an immortal undead, able to recover from almost any attack and lacking the need to eat or drink. However, it still enjoys these things and is driven by a desire to experience sensation like the worst mortal hedonist. It has been known to eat and spit out entire herds of cattle (one steer at a time), to crash into winery casks to soak itself for hours in fine and mediocre vintages alike, to roll in exotic spices, or to wrap itself in fine cloth until it looks like a giant mummy skull. Worshipers of the Pallid Princess who wish to curry the herald's favor know to have large amounts of food, drink, or other luxuries for it to experience, consume, or defile.

Sometimes the goddess commands the Maw to be quiet, and it finds a resting place such as a large temple where it can wait for days or weeks, using only its power to animate the dead to create servants for the faithful, or in an old battlefield or graveyard, casually creating dozens of undead that lurk about it like cultists around a gross

idol. When the Herald leaves, the undead are left behind, either for the worshipers to maintain or turned loose to attack the living. It has no respect for life, and if left to its own devices, it casually kills things as a distraction, often reanimating them and killing them again.

## HABITAT & SOCIETY

Because of its innate ability to create undead, the herald is sometimes accompanied by skeletons, zombies, and ghouls, which caper about it, endlessly adoring the emissary of the goddess of undeath. It has been known to ferry allies into battle, or (rarely) to rescue a powerful undead creature, spiriting its passenger away to safety within its bony gullet, relying on its own defenses to keep its passenger safe. It is particularly fond of raveners and vampires, and has gone out of its way to aid them when given the choice of several allies.

# Carion Crown

## PHANTOM ARMOR

Though at first appearing to be an ordinary suit of armor, this imposing being begins to move, its lumbering movements slow and methodical.

### HOLLOW HELM

CR 1



XP 400

NE Tiny undead

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

#### DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +2 size)

hp 9 (2d8)

Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +3

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2; Immune undead traits

#### OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee 1 slam +4 (1d4+1)

Special Attacks skull cage

#### STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 10

Base Atk +1; CMB +0; CMD 11 (cannot be tripped)

Feats Improved Initiative

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +12

Languages Common (cannot speak)

SQ freeze

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Freeze (Ex)** A hollow helm can hold itself so still it appears to be a normal suit of armor. A hollow helm that uses freeze can take 20 on its Stealth check to hide in plain sight, disguised as normal armor.

**Skull Cage (Ex)** A hollow helm sometimes pretends to be normal armor, letting a creature try to wear it before revealing its deadly nature. If the hollow helm makes a successful combat maneuver to grapple an opponent of Medium size or smaller, the grappled creature is also blinded. Creatures that purposefully try to wear a hollow helm are automatically grappled. This blindness lasts until the hollow helm's grapple is broken. A hollow helm cannot attack a creature it is grappling. If a hollow helm is damaged while it is grappling, the creature it is grappling takes an equal amount of damage.

### GUARDIAN PHANTOM ARMOR

CR 2



XP 600

NE Medium undead

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

#### DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20 (+9 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 13 (3d8)

Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +3

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2; Immune undead traits

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +5 (1d8+2/19–20) or  
2 slams +4 (1d4+3)

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 13, Con —, Int 7, Wis 11, Cha 10

Base Atk +2; CMB +4; CMD 15

Feats Improved Initiative, Power Attack

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +6

Languages Common (cannot speak)

SQ freeze

### GIANT PHANTOM ARMOR

CR 4



XP 1,200

NE Large undead

Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

#### DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18 (+9 armor, –1 size)

hp 37 (5d8+15)

Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +4

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; Immune undead traits

#### OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee heavy flail +7 (2d6+7/19–20)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

#### STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 11, Con —, Int 7, Wis 11, Cha 15

Base Atk +3; CMB +9; CMD 19

Feats Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Perception +7, Stealth +3

Languages Common (cannot speak)

SQ freeze

### PHANTOM LANCER

CR 6



XP 2,400

NE Large undead

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

#### DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 20 (+9 armor, +1 Dex, +2 shield, –1 size)

hp 76 (9d8+36)

Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +6

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; Immune undead traits

#### OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee mwk lance +9/+4 (1d8+4/x3)

Ranged longbow +7/+2 (1d8/x3)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks trample (1d6+4, DC 17)

#### STATISTICS

Str 17, Dex 15, Con —, Int 7, Wis 11, Cha 18

Base Atk +6; CMB +10; CMD 22 (26 vs. trip)



# BESTIARY

**Feats** Dodge, Fly-By Attack, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Mobility

**Skills** Perception +12, Stealth +10

**Languages** Common (cannot speak)

**SQ** armor rider, freeze

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Armor Rider (Su)** A phantom lancer is not actually two creatures, but rather a single spirit animating both a suit of humanoid-shaped armor and a ridden creature's barding. Therefore, it does not need to make the checks normally associated with riding another creature.

Raised from the corpses of knights and soldiers slain by treachery rather than battle or conflicts considered crimes even in the heat of war, phantom armors appear as suits of animate armor, walking or floating of their own accord. Most phantom armors haunt the halls and blasted battlefields where they were slain, seeking revenge against their murderers or, should that prove impossible, confronting any living creature that might give them the opportunity to do battle once more. Dastardly necromancers have also discovered the process for binding violent spirits to suits of armor, giving rise to eerie servants that combine endless patience with cold brutality.

Phantom armors come in many shapes and sizes; some appear to be nothing more than animate helms while others resemble armored giants.

## ECOLOGY

Phantom armors—being undead and having no need for sleep or sustenance—make perfect guards, especially given their single-minded demeanors and their innocuous appearances. While a phantom armor's "suit" is hollow, the spirit of a dead warrior still inhabits it, forever caught in the cold embrace of steel and forced servitude until it is defeated in battle. Of course, since not all suits of armor are alike, neither are all phantom armors. Horrific tales tell of ghastly knights floating through haunted corridors, their helmet visors revealing only blackness within. The animating spirit of a phantom armor is typically invisible, the armored shell appearing to be the entirety of the creature. Casting spells like *see invisibility* or *detect undead* reveals the vague shape of a spirit seemingly wearing the armor.

## CREATING PHANTOM ARMOR

Phantom armors of varying types can be created using the spell *create undead*, as detailed below. In addition to

requiring a corpse for it to be cast upon, the spell requires that body must be wearing a suit of heavy armor. The corpse dissolves into the armor at the conclusion of the spell's casting.

Caster Level	Phantom Armor Created
11th or lower	Hollow helm
12th–13th	Guardian phantom armor
14th	Floating phantom armor
15th	Giant phantom armor
16th	Phantom lancer



## Carion Crown

### PSYCHOPOMP, NOSOI

*Perched awkwardly, this strange songbird stares with a glint of intellect in its empty eyes. A stylish plaster mask conceals its face, while two pairs of wings ruffle over its body's somber shades.*

**Nosoi**

**CR 2**



**XP 600**

N Tiny outsider (extraplanar, psychopomp)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, spirtsense; Perception +9

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 size)

**hp** 19 (3d10+3)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4

**DR** 5/adamantine; **Immune** death effects, disease, poison,

**Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)

**Melee** bite +4 (1d3–1)

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

At will—*invisibility* (self only)

1/day—*hide from undead*, *sound burst* (DC 15)

3/day—*speak with dead* (6 questions, CL 12th)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 11, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 13

**Feats** Alertness, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Fly +17, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (planes) +6,

Perception +9, Profession (scribe) +7, Sense Motive +3,

Stealth +17

**Languages** Abyssal, Celestial, Infernal

**SQ** change shape (raven or songbird [same stats]; *beast shape I*), haunting melody, scribe

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Boneyard)

**Organization** solitary, pair, or group (3–15)

**Treasure** standard

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Haunting Melody (Su)** A nosoi's song has the power to grip the spirits of those that hear it. All living and undead creatures within a 60-foot spread must make a DC 14 Will saving throw or be fascinated. A creature that successfully saves is not subject to the same nosoi's song for 24 hours. This effect continues for as long as the nosoi sings and for 1 round thereafter. A nosoi can sing for a number of rounds per day equal to twice its Hit Dice. This is a sonic mind-affecting charm effect. This ability can affect undead creatures, even though the undead subtype makes such creatures immune to mind-affecting effects (though undead creatures with immunity to mind-affecting effects from a source other than their creature type are still immune). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Nosois eagerly fill the roles of clerks, scribes, and messengers in the bureaucracy of the hereafter. Flitting through the winding halls of Pharasma's realm, they record the circumstances of each mortal's death, any judgments for and against its soul, and its final destination along the Outer Planes. Their efforts alone maintain the immense Catalogue of Last Days—the Boneyard's infinite library of precedent. But unlike more tireless, mechanical outsiders, nosois are also prone to powerful whims, boasting contests, and petty theft.

Mortals recognize nosois in their roles as messengers, counselors of troubled or disbelieving dead, and guides along the River of Souls, and some ancient texts refer to them as scribe psychopomps, death's messengers, and yanakeion. Many large and well-tended graveyards or catacombs play host to a nosoi who tends to the newly passed and keeps a watchful eye out for the looming taint of undeath.

Nosois' bodies take the form of mortal songbirds—usually crows, sparrows, and especially whippoorwills—though like all other psychopomps they wear graceful, elegant funerary masks that accentuate their sharp beaks and empty eyes. Many also craft decorative artificial tails from small bric-a-brac that trail behind them as they soar through the Boneyard.

Nosois are typically measure about 1 foot in length, though their tails may double or triple that length. They are deceptively heavy, weighing between 10 and 15 pounds.

### ECOLOGY

Nosois serve within the libraries and scriptoriums of Pharasma's realm, tirelessly scribbling away without rest. Being social creatures, however, they frequently chatter with one another—boasting of past deeds, arguing over notation, and exchanging gossip from the far corners of creation. The immortal creatures toil for centuries before ascending to become higher psychopomps or, more likely, reincarnating on the mortal world.

Though outsiders have no need to eat, nosois consider doing so a rare treat. Their frequent sojourns to the Material Plane and many Outer Planes involve frequent snacks and tastings. Being dutiful but not unwavering, nosois sometimes succumb to bribes and share the information they possess, and mortal treats loosen their secrets far faster than gold or magic.

Nosois exist primarily atop Pharasma's Spire, in and around the Palace of Death, but they travel more frequently than other psychopomps. While on the Material Plane, they either use their natural invisibility to hide, or else assume the forms of songbirds (most commonly whippoorwills), which they exploit to gather their favorite treats: breads and sweets. Many false superstitions claim that a captured nosoi can be forced to restore a fallen lover to life, and the outsiders remain wary of the living as a result.



## BESTIARY

### HABITAT & SOCIETY

The primary duty of nosois is to record happenings within Pharasma's realm in meticulous detail, as well as to conduct souls to and from their appointed destinations. Many also serve as assistants to more powerful psychopomps or even to mortals with particularly morbid concerns or fates that the goddess of death wishes to keep watch on. Despite being the smallest and least influential of their breed, nosois take pride in knowing that their trivial tasks aid in keeping one of the multiverse's most important aspects functioning with general reliability.

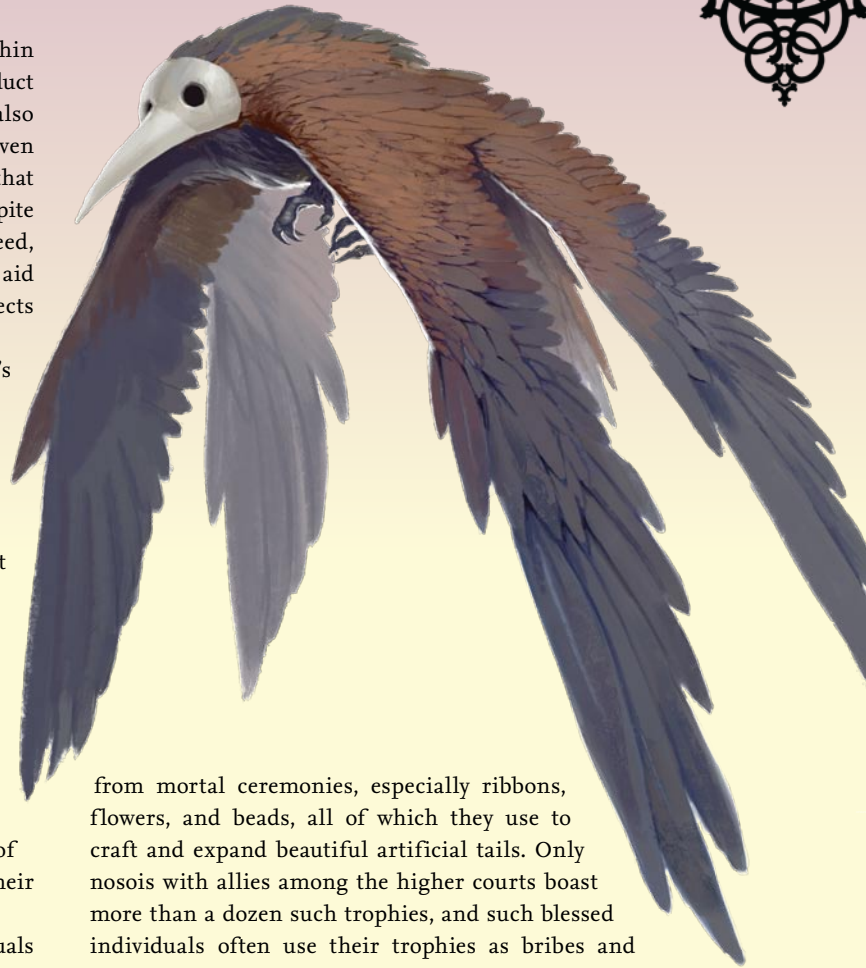
Nosois also serve as the bureaucracy of death's messengers to the other Outer Planes, carrying missives from the depths of the Abyss to the summit of Heaven—wherever other outsiders argue over the fate of mortal souls. The Boneyard's abundant portals eliminate any need for dimension-hopping magic, and with the exception of some fiends, most outsiders respect the couriers' neutrality and allow them safe passage.

Typical nosois are gregarious, eager to please, and hardworking, though easily distracted and prone to taking frequent breaks. Perhaps because of their frequent contact with the newly dead, nosois are easier for humanoids to relate to than are other kinds of psychopomps. Like humanoids, they maintain their neutrality not through an obsessive adherence to balance, but rather through a combination of dedication to their duty playing against interest in their own aims.

History and mythology are rife with stories of individuals who have exploited such personal interests. Most cultures on Golarion tell tall tales of mortals cheating death at games of cards or in other contests with nosois. While in actuality nosois lack the power to restore the dead to life, desperate petitioners occasionally slip away from the scribe psychopomps, or else win days of freedom in games of chance, allowing the petitioners to briefly visit loved ones or complete important tasks. Each nosoi varies in its willingness to play with its charges or gamble away its secrets, but most will concede to a few hours' distraction, with or without a prize.

Bizarrely musical, nosois provide a requiem that echoes through many sites in the Boneyard, lending a comforting presence to the otherwise grandiose and imposing structure. Their steady quill scratching sets a constant beat, their competing, haunting songs fill out the musical score, and their tittering gossip punctuates every corner. To those who frequent the Boneyard, the tone of the courts can be quickly and easily gauged by the quality of this ambient music.

Journeying to the Material Plane to counsel or escort the dead is considered an honor, and a nosoi's confidence and position among its peers revolve around these monotony-breaking assignments. They regularly filch grave goods



from mortal ceremonies, especially ribbons, flowers, and beads, all of which they use to craft and expand beautiful artificial tails. Only nosois with allies among the higher courts boast more than a dozen such trophies, and such blessed individuals often use their trophies as bribes and rewards among those with whom they have dealings. Some even believe mortals share their sense of value, and most promises of great rewards from nosois culminate in little more than useless trash.

### NOSOI FAMILIARS

Nosois sometimes depart from their service to the bureaucracy of death to act as familiars to spellcasters with a special connection to or interest in death. Most relish the opportunity, and make useful assistants to spellcasters who keep extensive libraries or prefer meticulous records. They can be troublesome, though, given their natural curiosity and tendency to steal small objects. Any neutral caster of 7th level or higher and who has the Improved Familiar feat may summon a nosoi.

Nosois often use their skill as scribes to aid their mortal masters. Despite their size and apparent lack of hands, they may use medium-sized drawing and writing tools without penalty. They grant their masters a +2 bonus on skill checks made to scribe scrolls.

Like all psychopomps, nosois loathe the undead. They immediately leave the service of any master who creates or permanently becomes such an abomination.

# Carion Crown



## PSYCHOPOMP, VANTH

This looming black skeleton wraps itself in the wings of a giant black raven, and a vulturelike mask of polished ceramic gazes balefully from where its skull should be. Without a gesture, a wickedly curved scythe appears in its elongated fingers.

### VANTH

CR 7



XP 3,200

N Medium outsider (extraplanar, psychopomp)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, spiritsense; Perception +16

**Aura** fear (30-ft. radius, DC 18)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 23, touch 13, flat-footed 20 (+3 Dex, +7 natural, +3 shield)

**hp** 76 (9d10+27)

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +6, **Will** +10

**DR** 10/adamantine; **Immune** death effects, disease, poison;

**Resist** cold 10, electricity 10; **SR** 18

### OFFENSE

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

**Melee** +1 adamantine scythe +14/+9 (2d4+7/x4) or  
2 claws +13 (1d6+4)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th; concentration +11)

At will—*death watch*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *invisibility* (self only)

3/day—*bestow curse* (DC 16), *locate creature*, *searing light* (DC 16)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 16, **Con** 17, **Int** 13, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 26

**Feats** Cleave, Great Fortitude, Hover, Power Attack, Vital Strike

**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Fly +13, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (planes) +12, Knowledge (religion) +8, Perception +16, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +12

**Languages** Abyssal, Celestial, Infernal

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Boneyard)

**Organization** solitary, pair, or flock (2–12)

**Treasure** standard

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Fear Aura (Su)** When within a 30-foot radius of a vanth, any creature with fewer than 10 Hit Dice that looks at the psychopomp must succeed on a DC 18 Will save or become shaken. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same vanth's aura for 24 hours. A vanth can activate or deactivate its fear aura as a free action. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Wisdom-based.

**Reaper's Scythe (Su)** Every vanth carries a distinctive +1 adamantine scythe as both a weapon and symbol of its duty. As a free action, a vanth can summon this weapon from a personal demiplane or any other location and have it appear in its hands instantly. It can also dismiss its scythe back to its personal demiplane as a free action. If a vanth's scythe is destroyed, it can summon a new one in 24 hours.

Stern, silent, and cloaked in ragged wings, unsettling images of vanths haunt mortal depictions of death. Known as reapers, angels of death, or amzranei in some texts, members of this class of psychopomps serve as guardians of the Boneyard and watchers along the routes of the dead. They provide security atop Pharasma's Spire and along the River of Souls, protecting the departed from those who see mortal souls as currency or delectable morsels. They also serve as death's foot soldiers against whatever would disrupt the natural cycle of mortality, be it a plague of undeath or a good-aligned temple that dispenses resurrections too freely. In times of great suffering and loss, Pharasma relies on the steely resolve and tireless nature of vanths to harvest the tormented souls of the dead before their agony transforms every battleground or plague quarter into a pit of undeath.



## BESTIARY

Vanths appear as black skeletons with crowlike wings and masks resembling the heads of vultures, crows, and other carrion birds—creatures that clear the mortal planes of corpses. Occasionally they cover themselves in ceremonial brass armor and tabards in funerary shades. Like all psychopomps, a vanth wears a funerary mask crafted from ceramic or polished stone in place of a face.

Thanks to their slumped posture, vanths can look most adult humanoids in the eye, despite standing 8 feet tall when erect. They weigh approximately 400 pounds.

### ECOLOGY

Few understand the origins of vanths. While most psychopomps graduate over the span of unfathomable ages from mortal souls and lesser psychopomps, vanths seem altogether distant and alien. Some stories claim they have always guarded the Spire, even before Pharasma came and crafted new servants in their image. Others whisper that all the vanths that ever were or will be ascended from the souls of a distant world of death-worshiping soldiers who spent every moment in life preparing themselves for the end and delighted in their planet's final demise.

### HABITAT & SOCIETY

With an infinite flux of souls through the Bonelands, there's an equally infinite number of these spirits who attempt to flee, rage against their assigned fate, or merely lash out in madness, only to be laid low by the tattered wings and flashing scythes of vanths. Pharasma's reapers serve as fearsome guardians of the dead and death's assets—sacred coves, forgotten cemeteries, and untended mausoleums. Being inherently disturbing to the mortal psyche, vanths are rarely called on directly by churches in need of aid.

Among the planes, most outsiders look upon vanths with scorn. They embody an unflinching dedication to duty, without interest in the strict letter of law or what is right, nor any great amount of self-determination. They do because they must, working out of a personal and obsessive sense of duty, not because they're ordered to do so. Their stalwart adherence to their cosmic role makes them far too lawful for chaotic outsiders to appreciate, while their cantankerous methods make lawful outsiders balk. Most insultingly, the suspicious reapers eye any and all who enter the Boneyard as potential threats. They follow visiting demons and angels alike, looming from the courts' gothic eaves and parapets, casting silent aspersions on even the best-behaved travelers.

Unlike most psychopomps, vanths show few mortal proclivities. They rarely speak, even to one another; when they do, their hollow voices carry farther than expected or is socially appropriate. They communicate among one another with slow, deliberate gestures plain enough for most creatures to understand—a strange blend of elaborate human gestures and birdlike head bobs. Most show no

### PSYCHOPOMP TRAITS

The gears of the multiverse turn through the constant motion of mortal souls. Although Pharasma is the ultimate judge over the dead, a grand bureaucracy serves her and overflows with able record-keepers, prosecutors, investigators, and guardians. They are psychopomps, the right hand of death.

Psychopomps, also known as reapers in some circles, are neutral outsiders who serve death and ensure the steady flow of souls into the cosmic cycle. Few care for the concept of balance so much as for duty and the rightful progression of life to death and beyond by any and all means necessary. As enforcers of mortality and the cosmic cycle, psychopomps universally loathe the undead.

Although they vary widely in appearance, all psychopomps bear an elaborate funerary mask as a mark of their place in the cycle of life and death. The best known are catrinas, giltines, keres, memitims, morrignas, mors, vanths, and the ferocious yamarajes.

**Psychopomp Traits:** A psychopomp possesses the following traits.

- Darkvision 60 feet and low-light vision.
- Immunity to death effects, disease, and poison.
- Resistance to cold 10 and electricity 10
- Except where otherwise noted, psychopomps speak Abyssal, Celestial, and Infernal.
- A psychopomp's natural weapons, as well as any weapon it wields, are treated as though they had the *ghost touch* weapon special ability.

*Spiritsense (Su)* A psychopomp notices, locates, and can distinguish between living and undead creatures within 60 feet, just as if it possessed the blindsight ability.

interests beyond their immortal role. Even basic emotional reactions seem beyond vanths; they rarely display emotions of their own, and righteous anger or talk of love elicits little more than a confused cock of the head.

A vanth's scythe is a proud badge of its station, featuring otherwise unknown symbols that mirror the ancient writing found on many of the Boneyard's forgotten tombs. Their scythes reflect their role as harvesters of souls in times of great death, but more practically, they inflict bitter wounds and can sever the silver threads of unwanted astral visitors.

Unsurprisingly, vanths loathe astradaemons and descend on the great predators in large numbers. Thanks to the daemons' plane-shifting abilities, these melees occasionally spill over into other planes, dragging countless outsiders into chaotic three- or four-way battles.

# Carion Crown

## WAX GOLEM

*This eerily expressionless man has a glistening quality about him, as though he were completely covered in an oily sheen. His clothes' colors are unsaturated and bland, his skin slightly gray, and his features and lines unnaturally soft.*

### WAX GOLEM

CR 3



XP 800

N Medium construct

Init -1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

#### DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15 (-1 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 42 (4d10+20)

Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +1

Immune construct traits, magic

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +6 (1d6+3)

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1

Base Atk +4; CMB +6; CMD 15

SQ conditional sentience

#### ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary or gang (2-4)

Treasure none

#### SPECIAL ATTACKS

**Conditional Sentience (Su)** A wax golem constructed to look like a humanoid (whether a particular individual or not) has a small chance of gaining sentience, genuinely believing it is actually a living creature. Each week, such a wax golem has a cumulative 1% chance of becoming sentient (so the second week the chance is 2%, the third week 3%, and so on, to a maximum of 5%). If this occurs, the golem gains an Intelligence score of 10, retroactive skill points, feats dependent on its Hit Dice, and 1 class level with the potential to gain more. It also gains a +10 racial bonus on Disguise checks made to impersonate the specific individual it was crafted to appear as. A sentient wax golem ventures into the world and tries to live a life similar to that of the person (or type of person) it resembles. However, if the sentient wax golem ever encounters the person it is modeled after, it attempts to stealthily kill that person and take his place. The only way for a sentient wax golem to lose its sentience is either to take an amount of fire damage equal to half its hit points (which melts its features away) or to be destroyed.

**Immunity to Magic (Ex)** A wax golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance, with the exception of spells and spell-like abilities that have the fire descriptor. In addition, certain spells and effects function

differently against the creature, as noted below.

- A magical attack that deals fire damage slows a wax golem (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds (no save). In addition, for 3 rounds after being afflicted with fire damage, every time a wax golem uses its slam attack, it deals an additional 1d4 points of fire damage due to the molten wax.
- A magical attack that deals cold damage breaks any *slow* effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for each 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. A wax golem gets no saving throw against cold effects.

### SENTIENT WAX GOLEM

CR 4



XP 1,200

Commoner 1

N Medium construct

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +6

#### DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15 (-1 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 47 (5 HD; 4d10+1d6+21)

Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1

Immune construct traits, magic

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +6 (1d6+3)

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 9, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 1

Base Atk +4; CMB +6; CMD 15

Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Appraise +6, Craft (carpentry) +7, Disguise +7 (+17 to appear as the individual it was crafted to resemble), Perception +6;

Racial Modifiers +12 Disguise

Languages Common

SQ conditional sentience

#### ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure none

A wax golem is an exact replica of a particular person, composed completely of wax. While skilled artists pride themselves on their ability to make wax sculptures look lifelike, builders of wax golems go one step further and actually bring their art to life. Though eerily silent and unblinking, well-built wax golems bear such striking similarity to the subjects they are modeled after that some golems begin to think they are in fact that person.

A wax golem can be constructed to resemble any person or creature, though they typically look like human subjects, standing at the same height and weighing about three times as much.



## BESTIARY

## ECOLOGY

Wax golems are often constructed by artistic spellcasters who fancy making their work a little more authentic-looking. Though these golems can look like anything from faceless, colorless drones to finely detailed reconstructions, they all share the commonality of being formed purely from hard wax. Most wax golem crafters choose to create these lifelike statues not for aesthetic purposes, however, but to undertake devious chores such as infiltration, espionage, or assassination.

## HABITAT &amp; SOCIETY

Wax golems possess the mysterious ability of possibly gaining self-awareness, an attribute almost exclusively reserved for humanoid creatures born of natural means. By resembling a subject so greatly, wax golems have a small chance of gaining conscious thought and higher-level thinking, effectively manifesting their own sentience.

This extraordinary ability has no logical explanation, though some constructors of these beings who have witnessed this transformation theorize that wax golems obtain self-awareness by watching humanoids over an extended period of time. Wax golems that spend a significant amount of time around people who mistake them for the subjects they resemble (such as golems sent to perform espionage) have an even greater chance of gaining sentience.

Oddly, wax golems that gain sentience also develop the genuine belief that they *are* who they are modeled after. This notion is so strong that if such a wax golem were to encounter the individual it is modeled after, it would go to great lengths to exterminate the person and take his or her place in society, even adopting a code of morals and principles similar to those of the murdered subject. In this way, wax golems stealthily inject themselves into roles as diplomats, leaders, and authority figures, often to the detriment of people close to the usurped individual.

So meticulously designed are wax golems, however, that few can identify a wax golem as a fraud, even when in close proximity. Along with sentience, wax golems achieve

moderate intelligence, as well as the ability to communicate and speak. In order to mask the glossy sheen associated with their wax bodies, deceptive golems take special care to garb themselves in clothes that hide their peculiar complexions. They still do not eat, sleep, or breathe, but crafty golems easily avoid the complications associated with these trivialities. The only definitive clue a well-built wax golem cannot easily hide is the distinct texture of its skin, which, even to the most unobservant individual, does not feel anything like flesh. Because of this, wax golems tend to be aloof and secretive, never allowing any one person to get too close, a trait that does not go unnoticed by those well-acquainted with the original individual, who tend to pick up on the rather sudden shift in demeanor.

Environmental hazards such as heat from the sun or cold precipitation have little effect on wax golems, though constant exposure to temperatures over 100 degrees for more than an hour does produce a rather odd sheen, and spending longer than a day in such weather begins to take its toll on the golem, dealing 1d4 points of fire damage every hour spent in the elements after the first.

## CONSTRUCTION

The construction of a wax golem requires a block of solid wax the size of whatever individual it is to be molded after, typically weighing over 1,000 pounds.

The wax is treated with dyes and magical unguents worth at least 500 gp. The simplest wax golems require the creator to make a Craft (sculptures) check, with wax golems resembling specific races or individuals requiring higher DCs. While wax golems that look like living creatures possess greater versatility, they also have the potential of gaining a strange sort of sentience.

## WAX GOLEM

CL 9th; Price 14,000 gp

## CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Construct, *animate objects, geas/quest, limited wish, silent image*, creator must be caster level 9th; **Skill** Craft (sculptures) DC 18 (DC 25 if the creator wants the golem to look like a member of a particular race; DC 30 if the creator wants the golem to look like a specific individual); **Cost** 7,000 gp



## NEXT MONTH

## SHADOWS OF GALLOWSPIRE

By Brandon Hodge

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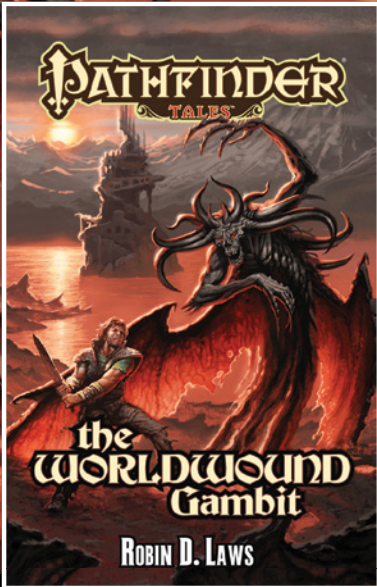


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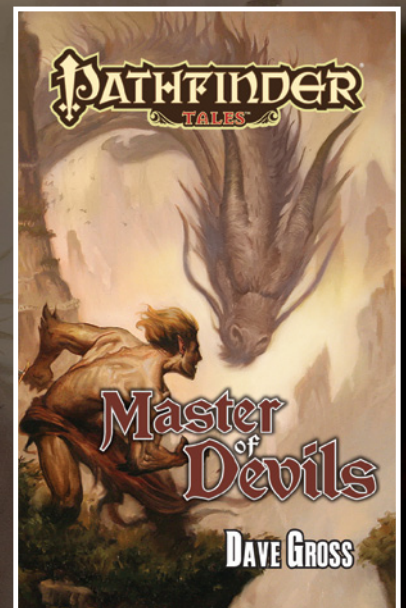
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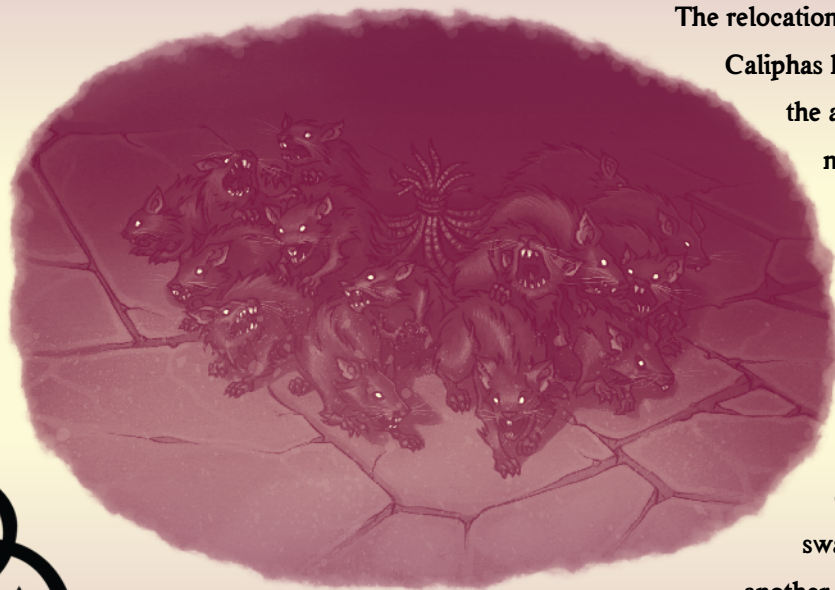






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