

NATALYA VANCASKERKIN

Twice a betrayer, Natalya Vancaskerkin has turned against both her Sczarni kin and her fellow Pathfinder Society agents. She alone holds the key to one of the greatest discoveries of ancient Thassilon, but it has cursed her with madness.

NATALYA VANCASKERKIN

CR 2

XP 600

Female human rogue (acrobat) 1/sorcerer 2 (*Pathfinder RPG**Advanced Player's Guide* 132)

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +4 shield)**hp** 20 (3 HD; 1d8+2d6+5)**Fort** +1, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2; +2 vs. illusions

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** mwk mithral short sword +5 (1d6+1/19–20)**Ranged** light crossbow +4 (1d8/19–20)**Special Attacks** sneak attack +1d6**Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 2nd; concentration +4)

5/day—touch of destiny

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 2nd; concentration +4)1st (5/day)—*charm person* (DC 14), *grease* (DC 13)0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 13),
prestidigitation, *read magic***Bloodline** destined

TACTICS

Before Combat Once Natalya knows combat is nearing (likely after she hears the PCs fighting elsewhere in her hideout), she uses her *wand of mage armor*. She uses a *scroll of shield* as soon as she can once she fears combat will begin.

During Combat Natalya uses *charm person* on non-spellcasters, and *grease* on beams or ladders leading to her position to prevent anyone from reaching her in melee. She prefers fighting at range with her crossbow and *acid splash*, but if forced into melee combat relies on her magically increased AC to protect her as she moves around to try to get into positions where she can use sneak attack. If she's confronted by two or more foes in melee, or if she's reduced to 10 or fewer hit points, she uses the *Shard of Pride* to create a *major image* of her shooting flames out of the shard to light the room on fire—she takes care to not put any PC directly in the flames, but puts up illusory fire between herself and any enemies.

Morale Natalya's megalomania prevents her from fleeing or surrendering. If the PCs wish to take her alive, they'll need to keep that in mind and use appropriate tactics on her.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 13, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15**Feats** Alertness, Eschew Materials, Skill Focus (Perception),
Weapon Finesse**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Climb +13, Disable Device +13,
Perception +12, Sense Motive +1, Stealth +13**Languages** Common**SQ** bloodline arcana (gain luck bonus on saves when casting
personal-range spells), expert acrobat**Combat Gear** *scrolls of shield* (2), *wand of mage armor*(11 charges), smokestick, tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear**masterwork mithral short sword, *cat burglar's boots* (seepage 64), *Shard of Pride* (see page 69), climbers' kit, second-

story harness (see page 65), masterwork thieves' tools, 55 gp

Natalya Vancaskerkin is the daughter of one of Riddleport's most notorious figures—Saul Vancaskerkin. Half-Varisian, Natalya was born of Saul's first wife, a beautiful Varisian harrower from Magnimar named Adreea Valitrosa. Unfortunately for the star-crossed lovers, the Sczarni to whom Adreea belonged did not approve of this relationship, and a month after Natalya was born, the gang attempted to “reclaim” the babe as payment for Adreea choosing Saul over the Sczarni. Saul's criminal contacts warned him in time, and he and his family fled to Riddleport to escape, but not before Adreea took a poisoned bolt to the back. She died soon thereafter, leaving Natalya entirely under her father's care.

Saul mourned, but eventually remarried—a marriage that produced Natalya's half-brothers. Eventually, they left home for their own reasons, leaving Natalya alone with her father and his third wife, Bertrida—a woman who despised Natalya. Feeling neglected by her father and persecuted by her stepmother, Natalya sought solace with some of Riddleport's Sczarni, who happened to be bitter rivals of her father's own criminal enterprises. When Bertrida discovered Natalya's activities and then gleefully revealed them to her father, Saul was outraged. At Bertrida's urgings, he disowned Natalya, turning his daughter out into the street with orders to never return. Saul never saw his daughter again.

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And so Natalya returned to Magnimar. As she began to build her new life, the only thing she retained from her time in Riddleport was her father's name—something she kept out of a mixture of guilt and shame. She resigned herself to what would likely be a short life working with the Tower Girls, one of Magnimar's more notorious gangs.

But Natalya was impatient. She wanted to be the one in charge—the one who was making the most money and drawing the most respect. In the Sczarni, she grew increasingly frustrated at how much of each take got kicked up to her superiors. When the Pathfinders entered an alliance with the Sczarni in Magnimar, Natalya saw a chance to pad her pocket and, just perhaps, build her reputation in another group as well. She approached Sheila Heidmarch in secrecy, and Sheila recognized Natalya's potential and hired her as an informant on the spot. Still part of the gang of second-story burglars known as the Tower Girls, Natalya used the skills and knowledge acquired in each organization to benefit the other as well.

Recently, the Tower Girls fell out of favor with the Wreckwash Blades, another Sczarni gang. Forced to relocate their hideout, the Tower Girls spent a few miserable days squatting in Underbridge at Fenster's warehouse. This changed when Natalya found a hidden sanctuary for the gang within an Irespan piling locally called the Crow for its signature exterior carvings. The Crow contained undiscovered chambers within it, and Natalya led the exploration of the chambers within the upper levels that then became the Tower Girls' current hideout. When exploration of their new hideout led to the discovery of a shard from an ancient Thassilonian artifact, it was Natalya who took possession of it. She intended to return to Sheila Heidmarch at that point, hoping for a big payday, but hadn't planned for the artifact's curse. She soon fell victim to the full influence of the *Shard of Pride*.

Now fully under the *Shard of Pride's* spell, Natalya's set her sights even higher. No longer is she content with the idea of running a Sczarni gang. That's just a stepping stone now—a stepping stone to progressively greater positions of power. If she can rule her own gang, why not all the Sczarni gangs in Magnimar? And if Magnimar's Sczarni... why not Magnimar itself?

CAMPAIGN ROLE

If rescued from the *Shard of Pride's* influence, Natalya spends some time being both depressed and ashamed at the mess she's made of her life. If you think the PCs could use the help, she might join with them in an attempt to explore the Crow or to wipe out the Tower Girls.

Beyond this adventure, Natalya can serve the PCs as an informant (use her to give the PCs clues that they might otherwise have missed), a cohort, or a romantic interest.

SIDE QUEST

If the PCs rescue Natalya and befriend her, she asks them to defeat her ex-boss, Ayala Javeski, the current leader of the Tower Girls. Ayala is located somewhere in the Crow—by defeating her, the PCs throw the Tower Girls into chaos. The Sczarni gang might or might not recover, but even if they do regroup, they don't seek revenge against Natalya for her acts without Ayala leading them.

Reward: 800 XP. Natalya gives the party her *cat burglar's boots* in thanks.



SHEILA HEIDMARCH

The Pathfinder Society's expansion into the frontier of Varisia is a fairly recent development, but the Society is confident that its interests are in competent hands—those of Venture-Captain Sheila Heidmarch of the Heidmarch Manor lodge in Magnimar.

SHEILA HEIDMARCH

CR 7

XP 3,200

Female human fighter (tactician) 3/monk (weapon adept) 4
(*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 114, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 47)

LN Medium humanoid

Init +8; Senses Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 16 (+1 *defending quarterstaff*, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 monk, +3 Wis)

hp 64 (7 HD; 3d10+4d8+25)

Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +10; +2 vs. enchantment

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 *merciful defending quarterstaff* +8/+3 (1d6+2 plus 1d6 nonlethal) or
+1 *merciful defending quarterstaff* +7/+2 (1d6+2 plus 1d6 nonlethal) and unarmed strike +7 (1d8+1)

Special Attacks flurry of blows, stunning fist (4/day, DC 16)

TACTICS

During Combat Sheila drinks a *potion of haste* on the first round of combat. She always fights with the +1 bonus from her quarterstaff allocated to her Armor Class (these modifiers are built into the stats above). Sheila also uses Combat Expertise to further increase her AC by +2, at the cost of a –2 penalty on attack rolls. Note that since her quarterstaff always deals nonlethal damage, she can make an Intimidate check to demoralize a target as a free action when she damages a foe in that way, thanks to her Enforcer feat.

Morale Sheila never flees combat if allies remain in danger. Otherwise, if reduced to fewer than 15 hit points she makes a fighting retreat or flees.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +6; CMB +8; CMD 26

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Enforcer^{APG}, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Perfect Strike^{APG} (4/day), Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff)

Skills Acrobatics +13, Diplomacy +7, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (nobility) +9, Linguistics +6, Perception +13

Languages Common, Shoanti, Thassilonian, Varisian

SQ armor training 1, destined for greatness, fast movement, ki pool (5 points, magic), maneuver training, slow fall 20 ft., still mind, strategic training, tactical awareness

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

Other Gear +1 *merciful defending quarterstaff*, *headband of inspired wisdom* +2, *ring of protection* +1, *wayfinder*, 23 pp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Destined for Greatness (Ex) Sheila Heidmarch's ability scores use a 20-point build, and she has the wealth of a PC rather than an NPC. These advantages increase her CR by 1.

^{APG} See the *Advanced Player's Guide*.

Sheila Heidmarch cuts an imposing figure among Magnimar's elite. With her unusually low and sultry voice, she both turns heads at high society events and commands respect from Pathfinder field agents.

Born the daughter of a Thuvian merchant and a minor Chelish aristocrat of Korvosa, Sheila Astimar is knew from an early age that she was destined to spend her life exploring the wild Varisian frontiers that stretched beyond her city's walls, so fascinated was she by both the tactics of battle and ancient stories of Varisian legends. When she later met the well-known adventurer and successful Pathfinder Sir Canayven Heidmarch of Magnimar at a ball while visiting her distant kin in Chelias, she knew she had found her match and lifemate.

Sheila lamented that the Pathfinder Society wasn't well known in her homeland of Varisia, and soon arranged with her doting father and mother for a visit to Absalom under the pretense of gaining exposure for some of her father's business interests. Once there, she quickly found her way to the Grand Lodge and secured admission as an initiate, soon receiving her commission as a Pathfinder field agent. She longed to journey back to the trackless reaches of her homeland, but the Pathfinder Society was more focused on central Avistan and Garund at the time, and thus she found her options limited. Not experienced enough to go it alone, she instead joined in with a Pathfinder expedition heading to her father's native Thuvia. Their adventures eventually took them into the Barrier Wall mountain range, where she encountered an awakened mountain

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gorilla who became a boon companion to her and her comrades, and something of a personal protector to her. He called himself Mandali, and Sheila declared that he must be a prince among his kind for his bravery and wisdom—a declaration that won Mandali's loyalty more than anything else Sheila had done to that point.

When Sheila learned that Sir Canayven Heidmarch was going to be a part of a Mwangi expedition to the ruins of Jah, she planned her own field assignment accordingly, manipulating her own team to head in that direction as well. Soon enough, her team “accidentally” met up with Sir Canayven's, and they joined forces to expedite their exploration of the ruins. Though the expedition proved to be only a qualified success, the headstrong and decisive Sheila accomplished her actual mission—catching Sir Canayven's attention.

The two grew increasingly close thereafter, and soon departed from their respective teams and began their own missions of exploration and adventure, accompanied only by Sheila's stalwart ape guardian Mandali. At some point along the way, the two quietly got engaged, and soon thereafter were married. The Heidmarches grew increasingly homesick for their homeland, and increasingly intrigued by the fact that the Pathfinders seemed not to realize the potential Varisia held for exploration. Indeed, it was viewed by most in the society as a backwater wilderness with little to offer but giants and goblins.

Sheila petitioned the Decemvirate to open a Pathfinder lodge in Magnimar, and was soon granted that honor. She and her husband returned to his manor in the city, and Sheila became Varisia's first venture-captain, immersing herself in all the frontier wonders that had so enthralled her in her youth. Now she is seen as the Society's steady hand in the North, bringing ever more fresh recruits to her lodge to plumb the secrets of ancient Thassilon.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Sheila Heidmarch serves as the Shattered Star's core NPC—she's the one who gets the PCs started on their quest for the artifact, and she serves as the primary point of contact between the PCs and the Pathfinder Society. By keeping Sheila as the PCs' main patron and informant, you can simplify their interactions between adventures if you wish to downplay the role the Pathfinder Society plays.

SIDE QUEST

Sheila asks the PCs to provide a relatively accurate map of the interior of the Crow and the chambers below. The players don't need to physically create this map, nor does the map need

to be particularly artistic. Once the PCs have explored the Crow, taking a few days to organize their notes is enough to earn them a reward from Sheila.

Reward: 1,200 XP. Sheila gives each PC a *wayfinder* (or 500 gp to a PC who already owns a *wayfinder*), an item detailed on page 299 of *The Inner Sea World Guide*. If you're using the Pathfinder Society faction from the *Shattered Star Player's Guide*, completing this mission also earns each PC 1 point of Fame and 1 Prestige Point.



SHATTERED STAR TREASURES

The following unique treasures can be found in “Shards of Sin.” Player-appropriate handouts appear in the GameMastery Shattered Star item card set.

CAT BURGLAR'S BOOTS

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 3rd
Slot feet; **Price** 2,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

These soft-soled boots provide their wearer with a +2 competence bonus on Acrobatics, Climb, and Stealth checks. Once per day as an immediate action, the wearer of *cat burglar's boots* can reroll any one failed Acrobatics, Climb, or Stealth check, taking the result of that check in place of the first failed check (even if the second result is worse). In addition, a secret pocket in the boots is built to hold a fully functional set of masterwork thieves' tools. A DC 22 Perception check is required to notice this pocket. Any other object in the pocket causes it to bulge and become obvious to even casual observation.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *cat's grace*; **Cost** 1,000 gp

CYTILLESH EXTRACT

Brewed from the spores of the glowing blue fungus called cytillesh (or “brain mold”), this extract is often used by derros to cloud minds and instill amnesia in their victims.

Cytillesh Extract: poison—ingested; *save* Fortitude DC 18; *frequency* 1/hour for 8 hours; *effect* victim loses all memory of events that took place in the previous hour and cannot form new memories as long as he remains poisoned—after he recovers, the time spent poisoned (plus the hour before his poisoning) is simply missing from memory (these missing memories might return later as dreams, and can be returned with a *restoration* or *heal* spell); *cure* 2 saves; *cost* 800 gp.

EXTRACTION SCARIFICATOR

Aura faint conjuration and transmutation; **CL** 3rd
Slot none; **Price** 2,500 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

An *extraction scarificator* is a horrid variant of the more common bloodletting device used by healers and doctors. An *extraction scarificator* can be used only on a willing or helpless target. When placed against exposed flesh, the *extraction scarificator's* blades deal 1d4 points of damage plus 1d4 bleed.

Once per day, an *extraction scarificator* can be used to extract and concentrate one of the four bodily humors from its target as well. The humor to be extracted can be adjusted as needed, and must be immediately poured into a potion

vial or the extracted humor is lost. Extracting a humor takes a variable number of rounds—as soon as the victim has taken a total of 6 points of damage in all from the bleed effect, the extraction is complete. For 24 hours after extraction, this purified humor has an additional effect, functioning as one of four potions as listed below (all function at caster level 3rd).

Black Bile: *potion of lesser restoration*

Blood: *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Phlegm: *potion of calm emotions*

Yellow Bile: *potion of rage*

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *bleed*, *calm emotions*, *cure moderate wounds*, *lesser restoration*, *rage*; **Cost** 1,250 gp

FROSTPORE

This blend of brown mold spores in a pale blue solution feels cool to the touch.

Frostspore: poison—ingested or injury; *save* Fortitude DC 13; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d6 cold damage plus staggered for 1 round; *cure* 2 saves; *cost* 100 gp.

INJECTION SPEAR

This exotic two-handed weapon allows the user to inject targets with liquid on a hit. The spear's reservoir can hold up to 5 doses of a single fluid—a single dose is automatically injected when the spear hits a target. A non-proficient user can wield an injection spear as a standard spear but cannot trigger the injection. An injection spear is otherwise identical to a normal spear, save that it cannot be thrown, weighs 8 pounds, cannot be used to brace, and costs 60 gp.

PARADOX BOX

Aura moderate abjuration and conjuration; **CL** 9th
Slot none; **Price** 5,000 gp; **Weight** 30 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

A *paradox box* resembles a small stone chest of ornate design that measures approximately 1-1/2 feet by 1-1/2 feet by 1 foot. Closer inspection reveals the *paradox box* to be a solid piece of stone that's been carved to resemble a box—it has no seam for a lid or hinges to allow opening. It is a secure storage device that can be accessed only by use of the proper command word or combination. Until the command word is intoned or the combination is correctly entered (the box's creator decides

SHATTERED STAR TREASURES



Paradox
Box



Pendant of
the Souk

Second-Story Harness



Cat Burglar's
Boots

Extraction
Scarificator



which method of opening works for the box—most boxes have combination locks that function similarly to the one detailed on page 9), the box is effectively a solid piece of stone with no lid or aperture or even an interior, and as such, attempts to open the box by bypassing a lock (with *Disable Device* or *knock*) do not work. Some creators also build magical traps into *paradox boxes* (*summon monster* traps are particularly popular), but these traps are not included in the standard model.

Once the proper command is given, a seam appears around the chest, and nested hinges within allow this lid to open, revealing an extradimensional space 1 cubic foot in size. Anything that will fit completely within that space (regardless of weight) can be successfully stored within, and the chest can be sealed again simply by closing it. The contents of the storage space do not change the weight of the chest, since they actually stay in an otherwise inaccessible extradimensional space. If the chest is destroyed (hardness 8, hp 90), the extradimensional space collapses and any contents are jettisoned randomly into the Ethereal Plane.

Paradox boxes were especially popular in Thassilon for their relative inexpensiveness as well as their superior security and durability. Many Thassilonian creators, burdened with arrogance and hubris, constructed their *paradox boxes* such that their surfaces were decorated with elaborate and carefully constructed riddles or wordplays that gave clues to their command words. These items are prize finds for organizations such as the Pathfinder Society, because a particularly clever investigator can often still open them, revealing their time-lost secrets even though the command word might have been lost millennia ago.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *arcane lock*, *secret chest*;
Cost 2,500 gp

PENDANT OF THE SOUK

Aura faint divination; **CL** 3rd

Slot neck; **Price** 4,000 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This golden pendant is of Qadiran make. Crafted from gold beaten into the image of a lanner falcon and suspended upon a gold chain, it's the traditional badge of office for the Prince or Princess of the Market in Magnimar's Bazaar of Sails—although they are often given as rewards to those who are particularly helpful or well-liked by the Prince or Princess.

The wearer of a *pendant of the souk* gains a +5 competence bonus on Appraise checks. By holding the pendant to her brow, the wearer can gain the effects of an *identify* spell once per day. Finally, the pendant grows warm in the presence of illusions, granting a +2 insight bonus on saving throws made to disbelieve existing illusion effects.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *identify*; **Cost** 2,000 gp

SECOND-STORY HARNESS

A second-story harness is a series of straps, trusses, and buckles that can be worn over clothing or armor. A second-story harness allows the wearer to, as a move action, secure herself in place on a vertical surface so that both her hands are free. The wearer can remain in this position without needing to make additional Climb checks, and does not lose her Dexterity bonus to AC as long as she remains anchored. As long as the wearer is anchored in this way, she cannot move and gains a +5 circumstance bonus on Climb checks made to avoid falling whenever she takes damage. The wearer can release herself to start moving again as a move action. A second-story harness costs 55 gp and weighs 3 pounds.