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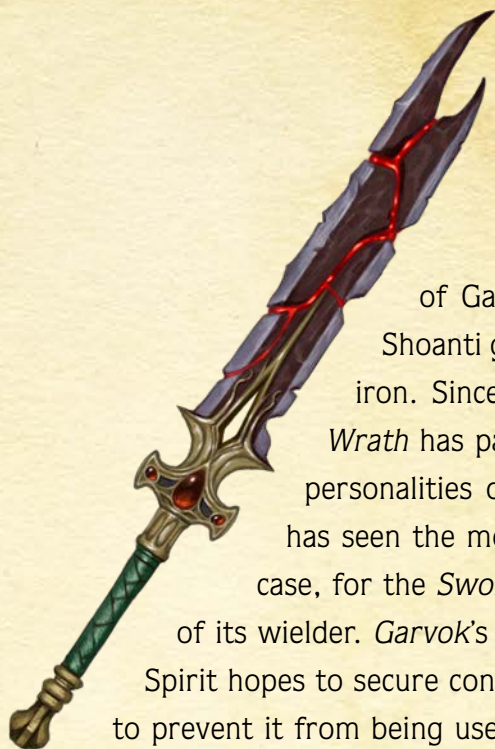
ADVENTURE PATH[™]



RETURN OF THE RUNELORDS

SECRETS OF RODERIC'S COVE

by Adam Daigle

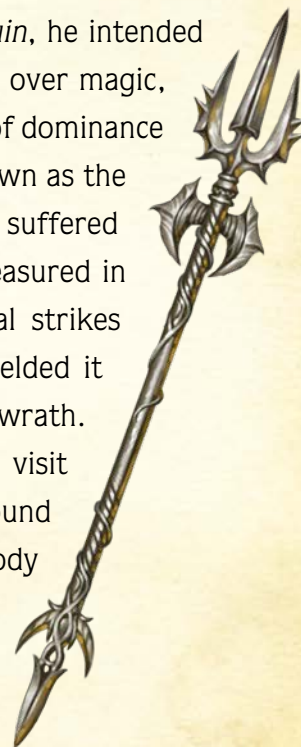


GARVOK—SWORD OF WRATH

Garvok was the first wielder of the *Sword of Wrath*, and the first to be incinerated by the blade. Before this, the sword's intellect and will were unfocused, but with the consumption of Garvok's flesh and mind, the *Sword of Wrath* awoke. Rivulets of the Shoanti gladiator's blood still shine on the blade, glowing like threads of molten iron. Since absorbing and claiming Garvok's name and persona, the *Sword of Wrath* has passed through countless hands, yet it has never chosen to absorb the personalities of these successive carriers. Of all the *Seven Swords of Sin*, *Garvok* has seen the most owners—although perhaps “victims” is the more apt term in this case, for the *Sword of Wrath* invariably brings about the fiery destruction or gory ruin of its wielder. *Garvok's* current whereabouts are unknown, although the Cult of the Peacock Spirit hopes to secure control of Alaznist's weapon soon, if only to lay claim to an enemy's relic to prevent it from being used against them. Alas, the *Sword of Wrath's* current whereabouts are unknown, and the cult has no idea of where to begin searching for the blade.

ALAZNIST'S HATEFUL RANSEUR

When Emperor Xin forged the seven polearms called the *Alara'quin*, he intended them to serve only as icons to represent his runelords' mastery over magic, but after his assassination, the runelords used them as symbols of dominance as well. One originally known as the *Evoker's Ranseur* soon came to be known as the *Hateful Ranseur*, for it was carried by the runelords of wrath, and those who suffered its blows carried wretched scars for the rest of their lives—lives often measured in minutes, as the weapon left bleeding wounds and tended to land critical strikes against foes. Today it is known as *Alaznist's Hateful Ranseur*, for she wielded it for nearly twice as long as the most long-lived of the other runelords of wrath. When she used the weapon to impale Runelord Alderpash's skull, after a visit to the deposed runelord's prison in Baphomet's realm in the Abyss (a wound Alderpash “survived” only thanks to his ability, as a lich, to re-form his body after destruction), the ranseur is said to have gained additional powers allowing it to wound the spirit and mind as deeply as the flesh.



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ON THE COVER



Ekaterina Burmak presents the primary antagonist of the Return of the Runelords campaign, Runelord Alaznist. She's ready for your PCs to try to stop her. Good luck!



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REFERENCE

This book refers to several other Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products using the following abbreviations, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Pathfinder RPG hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at pfrd.info.

<i>Advanced Class Guide</i>	ACG	<i>The Inner Sea World Guide</i>	ISWG
<i>Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG	<i>Occult Adventures</i>	OA
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While the heroes are relaxing in Roderic's Cove, a brawl breaks out between rival gangs. As the PCs learn more about the town, it seems that there's tension brewing behind every door.

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The PCs visit the crumbling remains of the home that belonged to the founder of Roderic's Cove to see if they can put his spirit to rest.

PART 3: INTO THE CHURLWOOD 23

The PCs investigate a kidnapping and find evidence of an ancient Thassilonian vault caught in a cold war between two opposing sides.

PART 4: HUMBLING PRIDE 39

After learning that the eccentric sage Corstela Rostrata is behind some of the town's troubles, the PCs explore Peacock Manor to get to the bottom of things.

PART 5: CALMING WRATH..... 51

The discovery of a gang's secret hideout beneath Roderic's Cove leads the PCs to a confrontation with a monster from ancient Thassilon and the discovery that the runelords are awakening!

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"The Secret of Roderic's Cove" is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

- 1** The PCs begin this adventure at 1st level.
- 2** The PCs should be 2nd level before they venture into the Churlwood.
- 3** The PCs should be 3rd level before they start to explore Alaznist's Armory.
- 4** The PCs should be 4th level before they investigate Peacock Manor or the Underflume.

The PCs should be well into 5th level by adventure's end.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

As her power grew during the final centuries of the ancient empire of Thassilon, Runelord Alaznist created a line of defensive towers along her nation's border with Runelord Karzoug's realm. However, most of these Hellstorm Flumes were destroyed when Earthfall destroyed Thassilon and sank much of Alaznist's nation into the sea. Today, the aboveground portion of one of these flumes is nothing more than a faint ring of mostly overgrown foundation stones, around which the port town of Roderic's Cove was founded.

After Sir Aurek Roderic founded Roderic's Cove, he left much of the town planning to his advisors so that he could explore the surrounding regions in search of lost treasure and adventure. He found both in an ancient Thassilonian ruin southeast of town, where he discovered a potent magical sword he would keep hidden until his dying days. He never learned that this weapon was, in fact, *Baraket*, the legendary *Sword of Pride*.

It was not adventuring that finally ended Sir Roderic's life, but pirates from Riddleport. Yet Roderic's Cove endured the loss of its founder, and peace in the town would last until 4708 AR, when Jess Gildersleeves, port-governor at the time, was discovered to have secret connections to Riddleport pirates. Shamed and threatened with arrest, Jess fled town with her 9-year-old daughter, Jana. Mother and daughter went to Riddleport and lived under the protection of the same syndicate that had been exploiting Roderic's Cove, safe from reprisal but forced to live away from the only home they'd ever known. Jana never forgave her mother for forcing her to leave her hometown, and as she grew up in Riddleport, Jana subtly worked against the same criminals that her mother continued to rely upon for protection. Jana wanted to escape Riddleport, so making money was always at the forefront of her mind; as a consequence, she earned the nickname "Gold" from the other unsavory folks she ran with.

Over the years since Jess was forced out of town, things settled down back in Roderic's cove. Leadership changed a few times, and bandits and goblins continued to periodically bother travelers only to be put down again and again by groups of adventurers passing through town. It was just such a town that Corstela Rostrata, a scholar both eccentric and quite rich, discovered when she arrived in search of new clues about the region's ancient history. The construction of her home, Peacock Manor, brought many rumors to the lips of the citizens, but no one could deny that the money and jobs Corstela brought with her were a welcome boost to Roderic's Cove's economy. Her interest in history also sparked

the imaginations of several of the town's residents as well, and by the time Corstela had finished construction on her manor just north of town, she'd recruited many locals into a group of like-minded scholars known as the Order of Resplendence. When Corstela heard a rumor from one of her followers that the town's founder had himself explored an old Thassilonian ruin, Corstela was intrigued. Later that night, a clandestine trip to Sir Roderic's abandoned home rewarded her with something beyond her wildest dreams—the *Sword of Pride*!

Back in Riddleport, Jana Gildersleeves' mother Jess perished in an unfortunate accident on the docks. Jana didn't mourn her mother's death, nor did she stick around to investigate her passing or seek vengeance. Instead, she gathered her savings and 10 years of notes and intelligence on the criminal elements her mother had allied with and stowed away on a boat to Roderic's Cove, eager to return to her hometown. Her savings were not enough to purchase a house, and Jana was forced to stay in Roderic's Cove's only inn, Creekside. One day, after sleeping off a bender in the storeroom of the Creekside Tavern, she discovered a secret door in the tavern's magical cold storage room that led to a tunnel connected to an underground complex that no one in town had yet discovered. Intrigued, Jana made a deal with Galeena, the tavern's owner, to pay 15 gold a month to let her use the storeroom as her home—no questions asked.

Now armed with a secret hideout, Jana set to the task of building up followers. Her time in Riddleport made it easy for her to spot those who'd become frustrated by the system and struggled to make ends meet, and it was these folks she recruited to join her gang. Inspired by the repetition of the Thassilonian symbol for wrath that was emblazoned throughout the Underflume, she called her gang the Horned Fangs and they took the ancient symbol as their sign. Things were fine until a few months ago when the sinspawn Mozamer arrived in the Underflume via a portal from distant Hollow Mountain. The sinspawn seized control over Jana's ragtag gang, offering to teach them new fighting techniques and promising to make them powerful and dangerous once they had a seat at Alaznist's side. Jana herself was less than thrilled that a monster had taken control of her gang, but her dedication to Roderic's Cove prevented her from protesting too much until she could figure out what to do.

When Corstela noticed Jana and her crew wearing the Thassilonian rune of wrath on their clothing, she sought Jana out and badgered her to learn what she knew of the symbol and where she'd seen it. Afraid of having her secret hideout exposed, Jana kept tight-lipped about what she knew. Hostilities only increased between the Horned Fangs and the Order of Resplendence in the following

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months, and eventually the growing tension boiled over and compelled the two groups to meet in the Circle one night to have it out.

As the gangs squared with one another, Corstela felt a sudden overwhelming pride fill her soul, a pride that could not stand the idea of any other group daring to encroach on her territory—especially one that wore the rune of wrath so brazenly! She wasn't aware that she'd drawn the invisible-bladed *Sword of Pride*, nor did she realize she was attacking the nearest Horned Fang. Her blow struck true, and as the rapier pierced the man's throat, a surge of potent power erupted from the awakened artifact. A flash of ghostly gray light rose up around all of the Horned Fangs, and shadowy images of beasts and nightmarish creatures attacked the hapless gang members. A moment later, five more Horned Fangs had dropped dead from fright. When the *Sword of Pride* returned to slumber a few moments later, Corstela was aghast to see the slaughter. She and her five followers fled, leaving the bodies of six dead Horned Fangs behind.

Only later did Corstela begin to theorize as to what had happened. She now believes that Xanderghul, the runelord of pride, must have awoken, if only for a moment, to empower *Baraket* with his pride. Since then, she's grown more and more concerned as the urge to carry the *Sword of Pride* nags at her like an unfulfilled addiction. If she's confronted again, she simply doesn't trust herself to not use *Baraket* to defend herself—and what if that's the one thing needed to fully awaken Runelord Xanderghul?

PART 1: BUBBLING TENSIONS

The events of the Return of the Runelords Adventure Path begin in Roderic's Cove, at a time when the settlement's normally quiet nature is threatened by an escalating conflict between rival gangs. One deadly confrontation has already occurred, and locals fear (rightfully so) that the current calm is just a prelude before more violence spills out into the streets.

As "Secrets of Roderic's Cove" begins, the PCs should already be in town. Whether they're locals who were born in Roderic's Cove, new blood moved here from a neighboring city, or travelers looking for work, they should not only be eager to embark on careers as adventurers, but should also either have personal and significant reasons to want things in Roderic's Cove to remain peaceful and safe, or have ties to one of the area's important NPCs. When things go from bad to worse in Roderic's Cove, no one is there to ask the PCs to step in to help—they'll need to decide to take the town's well-being

into their own hands by themselves. In addition, the PCs should start the game already knowing each other. They don't all have to be best friends, but there should be something they all share that brings them together, be it extended family, a shared religion, a common hometown, or membership in the same organization.

The *Return of the Runelords Player's Guide* will help the players build characters with these values while simultaneously preparing them for the Adventure Path's overall themes. Ideally, their desire to protect Roderic's Cove should transition fairly quickly into a desire to protect all of Varisia. With a few notable exceptions, Return of the Runelords doesn't have a lot of "quest giver" NPCs handing tasks to the PCs to get the ball rolling. Of course, if your players prefer this sort of direction, you should absolutely adjust the game for your table—in "Secrets of Roderic's Cove," the character Audrahni is an excellent candidate for this role of adventurer's patron.

While the players should have worked together to build their reasons for being an established group before the adventure begins, you may wish to give them some time in game to explore Roderic's Cove, to roleplay with each other or NPCs in town, to do some last-minute shopping, or even get a head start on doing some preliminary investigations into the nature of the devastating gang fight that took place only a few days prior to this adventure's start. The town of Roderic's Cove is located at the northernmost end of Varisia's Lost Coast, at the mouth of the Chavali River. A gazetteer of the town appears on page 68 of this volume.

EVENT 1. CLASH AT CIRCLE MARKET

The inaugural encounter of "Secrets of Roderic's Cove" takes place in Roderic's Cove's Circle, where numerous locals gather in the heart of town to display surplus food and supplies for sale and barter. If you need a reason to lure the PCs to the Circle, the possibility of finding a bargain piece of equipment for sale at a low price could do the trick. If you're using the *Return of the Runelords Player's Guide*, now is an excellent time to let each player roll on the "Circle Market Bargain Hunting" table to see if they stumble across something that they or one of their companions might be able to both use and afford.

Local coddger Bimmer "Possum" Coots is at the Circle Market, of course, as he is every week, selling cups of "possum punch" from his wooden cart not far from the old well at the circle's eastern side. As the afternoon winds down, a group of five men and women converge on Possum's stand to drink punch and talk with each other. As you mention this to the PCs, have them attempt Perception and Sense Motive checks. On a successful DC 15 Perception check, a PC can overhear some of the conversation (they're commiserating over the loss of several friends who

perished in the slaughter the previous week) and notice at least one crude patch on a bit of clothing bearing what appears to be a mouth with jagged fangs descending from it. A PC can recognize this as the sign of the Horned Fangs gang with a successful DC 10 Knowledge (local) check—or as the Thassilonian rune of wrath with a successful DC 20 Knowledge [arcana or history] check.) With a successful DC 15 Sense Motive check, a PC notices a group of five other shady types winding their way through the crowd toward Possum's cart, their expressions intent. None of them appear to be armed, but they certainly don't look friendly.

When word of last week's late-night clash between the Horned Fangs and the Order of Resplendence spread, a gang of bandits who call themselves the Roadkeepers took note. At the subtle and secret urging of one of their members, Lullaby Vancaskerkin, five of the younger, more headstrong Roadkeepers have come into town to cause trouble. They hope to take advantage of the Horned Fangs' losses to further establish their own dominance, but they have underestimated the rival gang's resolve.

If any of the PCs have taken note of the situation, allow them to roll initiative. Roll a few d20s yourself, as if you're determining initiative counts as well, then start asking the players in their initiative order what they want to do. If the PCs attempt to defuse the fight before it begins, they can try to talk the gangs down using Diplomacy or Intimidate. It requires a successful DC 20 Diplomacy or Intimidate check to convince the gangs to pause for a bit. This is a full-round action, and only one PC may make the primary check (but other PCs can attempt to aid another using their own actions and the same skill). At some point, one of the thugs hurls a threat at the Horned Fangs and the PCs alike—"Us Roadkeepers were here first, and we'll be here last!"

Regardless of the PCs' actions, a fight isn't destined to begin here, for Sir Roderic's ghost has taken note of the town's growing levels of violence. Just before the first person (be it a PC or a gang member) throws the first punch, the ghost manifests in the middle of town between the gang members and the PCs. Roderic appears indistinct and hazy, a glowing and transparent humanoid form viewed as if through a haze of murky water. In a booming voice that sounds like it's gurgling out of the throat of a drowning man, the ghost cries out, "NO! MY COVE! NO!" before unleashing his frightful moan. Each PC can attempt a DC 19 Will save to avoid becoming panicked for 2d4 rounds. You can assume all of the gang members fail this save (along with most of those standing by) and flee screaming from the Circle. Regardless of whether the PCs fail or succeed, Sir Roderic's ghost fades away a moment later, having expended his energy for the time being by manifesting so far from his home.

Representatives of the town guard arrive on scene within a few minutes to try to sort things out, but

remember that the point of "Secrets of Roderic's Cove" is not to put the PCs into conflict with the law. Instead, it should give them a chance to help save the town, so rather than accosting the heroes, any guards on the scene should be eager to thank the PCs trying to stop things from escalating.

Story Award: If the PCs manage to defuse the fight before it begins, award them 400 XP.

EVENT 2: RECRUITED BY AUDRAHNI

Immediately after Sir Roderic's appearance, possibly even before the guards arrive, the PCs are approached by Audrahni, a morose elf and former cleric of Ashava. Audrahni's pre-existing relationship with the PCs depends on which campaign traits the players chose for their characters. If none of the PCs are already acquainted with her as a result of a campaign trait, then anyone who succeeds at DC 10 Knowledge (local) check recognizes the unusually dour-looking elf as Roderic's Cove's cemetery groundskeeper.

Audrahni was on her way to the Circle Market when the adventure begins, and she's startled but not surprised to hear of Sir Roderic's appearance. If she already knows at least one of the PCs, she approaches the group and asks them to recount what happened. If she doesn't yet know the PCs, she nonetheless recognizes them as potential help and approaches to introduce herself. In either case, she offers to buy the PCs dinner at the nearby Creekside Tavern and Inn. Audrahni waits until after dinner to speak more about what's been concerning her. Feel free to use the dinner itself to give the PCs time to roleplay and to talk to Audrahni about other topics if you wish.

Once dinner is done and the group is relaxing with post-meal drinks, Audrahni broaches the subject of Roderic's Cove's recent troubles.

"Thank you again for taking the time to chat with me. You seem like capable sorts—certainly not the type who'd be content to live out lives of comfort in a small town like Roderic's Cove. I don't mean that as an insult—far from it. I've been in town for several years and I think the Cove needs people like you: heroes. The stink of violence is in the air. The near-confrontation you were just involved in isn't the first we've had recently... surely you've heard of the slaughter that took place last week? Something strange is going on here in Roderic's Cove, and someone needs to do some investigating to figure out what that is. I'm hoping you'll be up to that challenge."

This adventure assumes that while none of the PCs were present at the slaughter the previous week, they've all heard of it—the *Return of the Runelords Player's Guide* gives a brief background of these events, in any case. Audrahni knows that there was a big fight between

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SIR RODERIC'S REST

Audrahni's end goals are to bring peace to Roderic's Cove and to put Sir Roderic's ghost to rest. The exact order in which the PCs set about making Roderic's Cove a safer place to live is up to them, but as they accomplish goals, they'll earn Victory Points. In order to put Sir Roderic to rest, they'll need to accumulate at least 20 Victory Points and secure control of the *Sword of Sin* (currently owned by Corstela in Peacock Manor).

two groups in town that left six people dead from mysterious and supernatural causes. Audrahni's main concern, however, is the appearance of Sir Roderic himself. She recalls that the last time Sir Roderic's ghost made appearances in the Cove was during events 10 years ago that culminated in a minor uprising. Roderic's Cove's previous port-Governor, Jess Gildersleeves, was run out of town after she was found to be undermining Roderic's Cove by diverting funds meant for the small town to shady interests in Riddleport.

Audrahni believes that Sir Roderic grows restless when his beloved cove is in danger, not that he is the cause of those dangers himself. She now suspects that, in order to give the town's founder the rest he finally deserves, Roderic's Cove must be made safe for its citizens, but that requires first determining what sort of peril is building in the town's shadows. She's done a little bit of work looking around town for clues, but she's the first to admit that she's not the best at getting people to talk or noticing subtleties, and suggests perhaps the PCs will have better luck than she did in finding out more.

As for Roderic's ghost, Audrahni mentions that an investigation of his old home, an abandoned building outside of town called Roderic's Wreck, would be a logical step, but she warns that the old building is dangerous and that the PCs should be careful and deliberate in their investigation of the building.

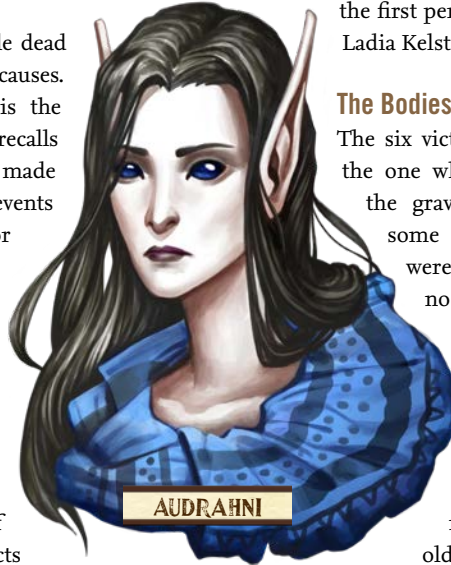
When the conversation's winding down, Audrahni reiterates her hope that the PCs will become heroes for Roderic's Cove. She's certain that something dire, in need of a group of heroes' attention, is building within the town, and also that the ghost can be put to rest if the town is saved.

AUDRAHNI

CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 36 (see page 62)



INVESTIGATIONS

Although everyone saw the aftermath of the clash between the Horned Fangs and the Order of Resplendence a few weeks ago (it was hard to ignore the sight of a half-dozen bodies strewn about the Circle), only Corstela knows that the *Sword of Pride* was the cause of the slaughter. Audrahni wants the PCs to investigate the massacre, to ask around and gather intelligence about the event to determine if there's something more dangerous at work behind the scenes. She can give the PCs two leads—information about the six dead victims, and the name of the first person on the scene of the massacre: Ladia Kelstrop.

The Bodies

The six victims have all been buried, but as the one who gathered the bodies and dug the graves, Audrahni can give the PCs some information about them. All six were human, locals who left behind no immediate family. Of the six, two worked as trappers, one as a fisher, and three were unemployed. One thing tied them together apart from their shared deaths: all six wore the same rune on their clothing, a rune Audrahni recognized as the old Thassilonian rune of wrath. This marking identified the dead as belonging to one of the new gangs in Roderic's Cove: a group called the Horned Fangs.

One of the bodies bore an obvious sign of death—a deep puncture wound to the throat from a stabbing weapon (Audrahni suspects a rapier or short sword), but the other five bore no physical wounds at all. The expressions frozen on their dead faces suggested a singular cause of death to Audrahni. She believes they all died of fright.

Involving the Authorities

It's possible that the PCs decide to visit with the town's leadership while looking into the recent turmoil. In this case, they're directed to Cove Hall to talk with Port-Governor **Larenza Thort** (NG female human expert 5) at City Hall. Larenza is friendly, but she's very busy and only takes an appointment if she feels it's worth her time. She is extremely knowledgeable about the town's history and knows that something is troubling Roderic's Cove. While she cares deeply for the town, her schedule prevents her from taking a more active role in the investigation. She notes that some town guards went missing recently in the Churlwood while searching for a pair of dwarves who were supposedly kidnapped by goblins, and with increasing tensions in town,

she's not eager to send more guards out into dangerous woodlands or haunted houses. Depending on how the PCs comport themselves, she may encourage them to investigate further—you can use her as an additional motivation for the group if you wish, and she might offer a reward of your own design if the PCs manage to figure out what's going on.

Asking Around Town

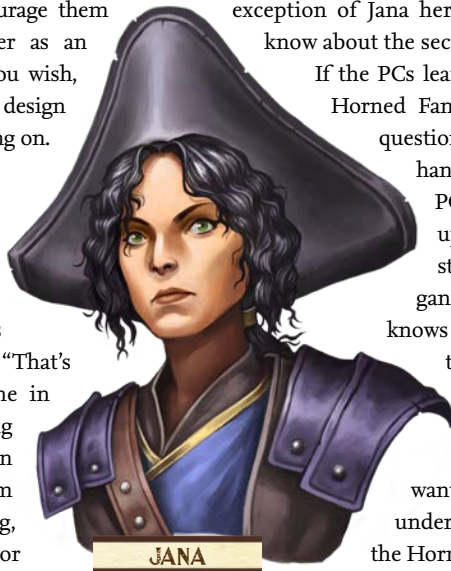
Everyone knows that the six dead men from the slaughter last week were members of the Horned Gang, and while the older generation of Roderic's Cove cluck their tongues and mutter, "That's what you get for being uppity," no one in town really thinks of the Horned Gang as particularly violent. The common belief is that a group of murderers from Riddleport ambushed the Horned Gang, and many are calling for port-governor Thort to confront Riddleport and demand the names of those responsible for the atrocity.

Others believe something a bit more supernatural is going on—that the ghost of "Old Sir Roderic" has risen from his grave once again and he's displeased with the town for some reason. These people point to the rumor that the Horned Gang victims supposedly died of fright as proof that a ghost killed them, and wonder if perhaps members of the gang may have desecrated Roderic's Wreck in some way. And of course, the ghost's manifestation at the start of this adventure only gives further credence to these worries.

The Horned Fangs

The Horned Fangs are no secret in town, and the PCs should start the game knowing of the gang's existence. A successful DC 12 Knowledge (local) check is enough to know that members of the Horned Fangs are frustrated workers and struggling individuals from the lower classes who hope to make a better place for themselves in Roderic's Cove—a sort of informal and rough-around-the-edges laborer's guild, more or less. With a result of 22 or higher, the character also knows that Jana "Gold" Gildersleeves is the gang's leader. None of the Horned Fangs know the real meaning of their shared gang sign other than that it's something their boss picked up from old carvings.

Now that they've been involved in two incidents in town, the Horned Fangs have been ordered by Jana to lie low. She knows that more fighting will just bring more attention, and would rather see the focus shift to one of the other gangs that have been harassing her group. For now, members of the Horned Fangs don't display their



signs publicly and deny knowledge of the group if asked. None of those the PCs are likely to encounter (with the exception of Jana herself) are of the inner circle or know about the secret hideout below town.

If the PCs learn that Jana is the leader of the Horned Fangs, they can seek her out and question her. Jana can normally be found hanging out at Creekside. When the PCs confront her, she sizes them up, thinking that she could use strong people like them in her gang, but she's hesitant because she knows that Mozamer will just claim them for himself and not give her any credit. Already resentful of Mozamer, she's also grown to fear the sinspawn and doesn't want to reveal what's been going on underneath the town. If asked about the Horned Fangs, she claims that they've done nothing to warrant the violence that's

been brought against them.

If the PCs press her for information, Jana tries to use the PCs' eagerness to fight a gang to her advantage, suggesting that they seek out the Roadkeepers, identifying them as the gang that "started the trouble earlier in the Circle that ended with Sir Roderic's appearance." Eventually, Jana might even ask the PCs to investigate the Order of Resplendence. Jana promises each PC a payment of 10 gp a week if they agree to seek out and confront the rival gangs for her. This, she hopes, will keep the PCs off her back and direct the scrutiny of the adventurers to one of her enemies. If she ends up trusting the PCs, she might even ask them to work with her against Mozamer (see Part 5 for more details).

The Order of Resplendence

As with the Horned Fangs, the Order of Resplendence is no secret, and while the PCs should start the campaign knowing about the group's existence, there shouldn't be any initial evidence suggesting their involvement. A successful DC 12 Knowledge (local) check is enough to know that the order is based in Peacock Manor, just north of town, and that they're a group of scholars who share an interest in Varisian history. The order has never been openly associated with violence, and their official stance on the slaughter is that troublemakers from Riddleport or the Churlwood must be responsible. At this point, members of the order have retreated to Peacock Manor at this point for its safety and security, hoping the streets of Roderic's Cove's will soon be once again safe to walk.

Corstela Rostrata is known as the owner of Peacock Manor and the founder of the order, but as with her

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followers, she's been staying in her home lately. Most of the townsfolk consider the order to be strange and eccentric but largely harmless. See Chapter 4 for more information about Peacock Manor and any attempts to investigate the strange building.

The Roadkeepers

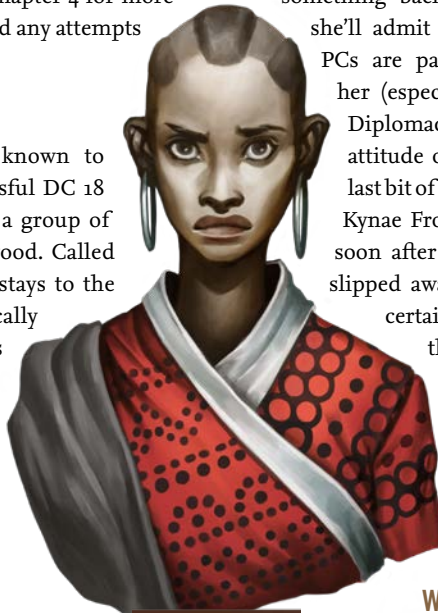
If a PC asks about other gangs known to operate in the region, with a successful DC 18 Knowledge (local) check she recalls a group of bandits said to dwell in the Churlwood. Called the Roadkeepers, the group largely stays to the Churlwood and is known to periodically charge "road taxes" for travelers using the path. They've long been a thorn in the side of merchants and travelers alike, but traditionally they've given Roderic's Cove a wide berth. Their appearance in town earlier is unusual indeed.

Witness: Ladia Kelstrop

While many people in Roderic's Cove aren't eager to spread rumors, one person in town isn't reluctant to hide what she knows. However, **Ladia Kelstrop** (NG female human commoner 3) witnessed only the deadly aftermath of the slaughter. The PCs are directed to Ladia by Audrahni, who can tell them she's most likely to be found at her place of business—"Kelstrop Meats."

The PCs can visit Ladia in her smokehouse during the early morning, midday, and later afternoon as she monitors the temperature of her fires and directs her staff in rotating the meats or tending coals. She's quite willing to talk about the event, can identify each of the people killed during the event, and can give details as to their appearances (revealing nothing more than Audrahni revealed if the PCs asked about the bodies), but she doesn't know what prompted the conflict.

As she eagerly tells her tale, she rose late at night, as she does most nights, to tend to her smokehouse fires. On her way there, she saw a number of people fleeing north from the Circle. Rushing to the scene of the fight and shouting at those fleeing to stop, Ladia stumbled upon the grisly aftermath. Six bodies were sprawled out on the ground dead. She immediately started shouting for her neighbors to wake up and help and to keep an eye out for the varlets who'd committed the crime. Ladia mourns that it was too dark for her to recognize any of the people fleeing the scene, but she notes that they were headed north. For this reason, she suspects they weren't thugs from Riddleport, reasoning that pirates would have fled south to board their ship at the docks.



LADIA

As the PCs talk to Ladia, they can attempt a DC 15 Sense Motive check to notice that she might be holding something back, and if the PCs press for more, she'll admit one more thing. Alternately, if the PCs are particularly respectful or friendly to her (especially if they succeed at the DC 12 Diplomacy check needed to shift her initial attitude of friendly to helpful), she'll reveal a last bit of information: she noticed a young boy, Kynae Fromperton, lurking around the scene soon after she started yelling for help. Kynae slipped away before more help arrived—Ladia certainly doesn't think he was involved in the actual deed, since he's just a kid, and she doesn't want to see him get in trouble, but there's a chance he might have seen something more.

Story Award: If the PCs get Ladia to tell them about Kynae, award them 600 XP.

Witness: Kynae Fromperton

Young **Kynae Fromperton** (CG young human male commoner 1), son of the town drunk, is the key witness to the events that played out a week ago, but discovering this fact may take time and a bit of legwork. The PCs can learn from Ladia that Kynae was present if they impress her as being trustworthy, but otherwise they'll likely not learn about Kynae's role until they're approached by Kolton (see Event 5: The Charming Vagabond on page 10). At your option, if the PCs are particularly diligent investigating others in town, you can reward them by having someone else send them Kynae's way.

Kynae may come from unfortunate parentage, but he is extremely clever for his age, and he spends much of his time reading at Blackberry's Bakery, the proprietor of which is only too happy to host the precocious child. On the night of the slaughter, Kynae was sneaking out to avoid the abusive elements in his household, as he often did when his father came home drunk, but what he saw that night in the Circle made him wish he'd stayed home after all.

A rail-thin boy with dirty smudges on his face and ragged hand-me-down clothes, Kynae can be found throughout town—he rarely spends time at home. Many locals have started their day only to find Kynae sleeping in their shed or barn, or found that the young child has snatched some food from their home. People in town wish that Kynae's father wasn't even part of Roderic's Cove, but feel they can't just ask him to leave because he'd doubtless take Kynae with him, and then who would show the child any kindness at all? In any event, the PCs are likely sent to Blackberry's Bakery to find Kynae.

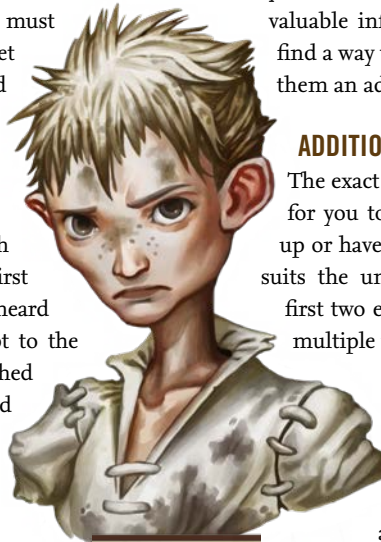
When first encountered, Kynae's attitude is indifferent. Getting him to talk to the PCs about what he saw that night counts as "dangerous aid" since Kynae is afraid of repercussions, be they from his father or the "ghosts" he saw kill the Horned Fangs. He has a Charisma modifier of +0, so if approached directly, a PC must succeed at a DC 25 Diplomacy check to get him talking about the subject—PCs should probably work at befriending him first.

Once they gain his trust, Kynae tells the PCs that he was out late that night to get some night fishing done (in fact, he was looking for a place to finish sleeping through the night after he was roused from his first choice by a surly dockworker) when he heard talking coming from the Circle. He crept to the edge, but hid behind a rain barrel as he watched two groups of people arguing. He recognized them as members of the Horned Fangs and the Order of Resplendence, but it was too foggy to recognize individuals. One of the order people, a woman, was accusing the Horned Fangs that, "You are 'properating a runelord's rune' or something like that, and she seemed enraged by it. The Horned Fang said something naughty back to the woman, and she sputtered and then, all of a sudden, things went real weird.

Kynae thinks the woman drew a rapier, although it looked broken to the child—there was no blade, only a fancy basket hilt. But as the woman jabbed it toward the Horned Fang, suddenly his throat opened up and blood went everywhere. But that wasn't the worst, Kynae says, his eyes big. "Things came out of the fog. Ghosts. Monsters. Worse. They all started swirling through the air, and one after another the Horned Fangs just dropped dead! When I saw one of the ghosts turn my way, when I thought that maybe it looked a bit too much like my old man, well, I took off.

"Please don't tell him!" he adds nervously.

Although the figures Kynae saw attacking the Horned Fangs were real, the child is mistaken to think they are ghosts. These images were instead manifestations of the *Sword of Pride's* ability to inflict *weird* on foes. Watching safely from his vantage point at the edge of the Circle, Kynae was well out of the spell's area of effect, but his detailed description of the attack and its effects allows a PC to attempt a DC 24 Spellcraft check to recognize the effects as those of a *weird* spell. Likewise, the description of the bladeless rapier can be identified as *Baraket* with a successful DC 25 Knowledge (arcana or history) check. Although it's unlikely that the PCs will be able to succeed at these checks on their own, they might encounter others or resources later in the adventure that could help.



KYNAE

Development: If for any reason during the course of this adventure Kynae's father is no longer in his life, the boy can find no fewer than a dozen people in town willing to take him in and raise him as their own.

Story Award: If the PCs befriend Kynae and learn his valuable information, they earn 1,200 XP. If they find a way to improve the child's home life, award them an additional 600 XP.

ADDITIONAL EVENTS

The exact timing and order of these events is left for you to decide upon. Feel free to mix things up or have these events occur dynamically as best suits the unfolding narrative of your game. The first two events below (**Events 3 and 4**) can occur multiple times, as needed.

Event 3: Haunted Town (CR varies)

These haunts are an extension of Sir Roderic's unsettled psyche and manifest in random places at random times in Roderic's Cove.

If the PCs talk to people in town and ask them about the recent stories, many of them tell of their experiences with these haunts. This event can be a one-time occurrence, or it can happen throughout the course of the adventure. When using this event, choose one of the following haunts, as appropriate to the PCs' level and for maximum entertainment value for the game.

COLD SPOT CR 1

XP 400

hp 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Horror Adventures* 175)

This haunt represents Sir Roderic and his family's death in the cold waters of the Varisian Gulf. When a PC experiences this haunt, he feels as if he were momentarily plunged into frigid waters, yet his body does not become wet.

SPECTRAL SCREAMS CR 2

XP 600

hp 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Horror Adventures* 175)

This haunt recreates the terrorized cries of Sir Roderic's family as they drowned, along with his own sobs and moans as he was helpless to save them.

FOREBODING MIST CR 3

XP 800

hp 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Horror Adventures* 175)

Fog is common in this part of Varisia, but since Sir Roderic's ghost has been active, it's become dangerous. Foreboding mist manifests in Roderic's Cove in shapes that can be recognized with a successful DC 15 Knowledge (history) check as similar to a ghostly version of Sir Roderic himself.

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BELATED ARRIVAL

CR 5

XP 1,600

hp 22 (*Pathfinder RPG Horror Adventures* 176)

This haunt represents Sir Roderic's inability to save his family and the guilt he felt at bringing them sailing out on the water that dreadful day. The forms that manifest can be identified with a successful DC 15 Knowledge (history) check as ghostly versions of Sir Roderic's wife and children.

Event 4: Street Monsters (CR varies)

This event can take place at any point during the adventure, as many times as you feel it's warranted (this is a great way to inject some sudden fighting and action into the investigation-heavy portion of Part 1), but the first encounter with these creatures should take place before the PCs decide to go check out Roderic's Wreck. This event foreshadows the threats Mozamer is calling forth in the Underflume.

This event can take place anywhere in town, but it should only occur at night or just as dawn crests. As with the haunts, this event also can occur multiple times during the adventure.

Creatures: One evening while the PCs are awake and moving about town, they encounter one or more horrific mutated monstrosities—fleshdregs. The monsters aren't particularly bright, and have only come up to the surface via the well on the east side of the Circle to cause trouble, something Mozamer is not yet aware of.

As the PCs gain levels, they should encounter larger groups of fleshdregs—a pair of them is a CR 3 encounter, while three is a CR 4 encounter. If you want to lure the PCs down into the Underflume via the underwater entrance later in the adventure, feel free to have them witness a group of fleshdregs clamber out of the well to attack them.

FLESHDREG OF WRATH

CR 1

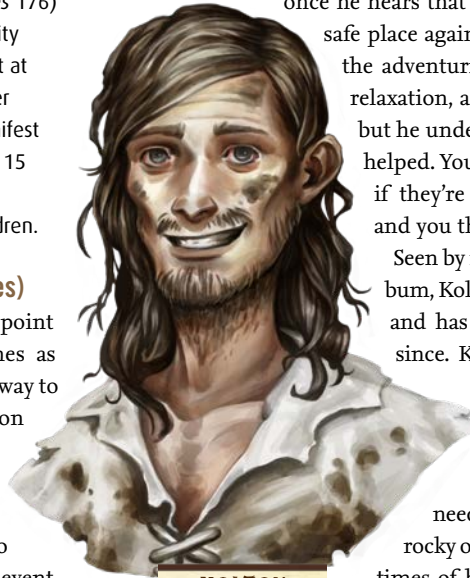
XP 400 each

hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 100)

Story Award: Each time the PCs defeat a fleshdreg encounter, the PCs earn 1 Victory Point, to a maximum of 3 Victory Points.

Event 5: The Charming Vagabond

It should only be a matter of time before the PCs catch the attention of one the more colorful locals of Roderic's Cove—a strangely charming vagabond named **Kolton**



KOLTON

Harrismore Lovekin (CG male human ranger 1/rogue 3). It's likely that Kolton seeks the PCs out at some point once he hears that they're trying to make the town a safe place again—the man himself has sworn off the adventuring lifestyle for one of peace and relaxation, and he abhors violence these days, but he understands that sometimes it can't be helped. You can have Kolton seek the PCs out if they're floundering in the investigation and you think they could use a bit of help.

Seen by most in town as a worthless flayleaf bum, Kolton wandered into town 5 years ago and has been part of Roderic's Cove ever since. Kolton enjoys being homeless and considers the land his true home, frequently telling people, "How can I be homeless when I have Varisia?" He says the only roof he needs is the boughs of a mighty fir or a rocky outcropping and bed of moss, but in times of harsh weather the youth has spent nights in sheds and barns throughout town. He still refuses to sleep beneath the roof of anyone's house.

If you're introducing Kolton to give the PCs a few hints, he'll admit he's heard they were asking around about the fight and reveals he saw some of it go down. During the deadly fight a couple of weeks ago, Kolton saw the Order of Resplendence "cultists" (as he calls them) fleeing north, and heard Ladia shouting for them to come back. He also saw Kynae slinking away from the site and can point the PCs toward the youth, but only if they promise to be kind to him.

Recently, Kolton picked up a new cause. The vagrant quickly brings up the missing dwarves (see Event 6: Kidnapped!). While Kolton knows how easy it is to get lost in this region, he also knows better than most that monsters lurk in the Churlwood and prey upon those who travel the Chavali River. Kolton knows that he can get away with asking people up-front questions about themselves, because he's aware that most just think he's crazy or high on flayleaf. He talks with the PCs only long enough to size them up before asking them to help find the missing dwarves.

Event 6: Kidnapped!

This event occurs after the PCs have been publicly seen helping others in town. Kolton, Audrahni, or a local weapon purveyor all might ask the PCs to get involved, and many people in town are aware of this issue. You shouldn't point the PCs to this adventure until they're at least 2nd level, though, as it will lead them into a dangerous locale.

A few days ago, four dwarves from the Iron Peaks headed west to Roderic's Cove to deliver a shipment of armor and weapons to Lyndwyn Suvasa. Their path took them west from the mountains, crossing the Lampblack

River at Ravenmoor before skirting the Churlwood to the southern banks of the Chavali River. While they'd had problems a few times before with the bandits known as the Roadkeepers, the dwarves viewed this as merely a form of "road tax" and, as before, simply paid the relatively small fine the bandits demanded. Never before had they had problems with goblins.

Two of them arrived in town harrowed and worried. One was **Galdsbredtha Morgmon** (LN female dwarf expert 3), a skilled weaponsmith who always accompanies her shipments, partially out of honor, but mostly because she enjoys the company of Lyndwyn when she visits every few weeks. The other was her personal valet, **Fordren Kulsoth** (LN male dwarf expert 1). Normally strong of nerve, the pair ended up having to abandon their wagon, walking through the night and most of the next day to Roderic's Cove, after a group of particularly ferocious goblins attacked the camp and made off with their driver and his wife, carrying them off into the woods.

The two are very worried about the abducted dwarves. They approached the town militia for help, and Larenza Thort recognized the description of the goblins (who all wore distinctive lip piercings) as members of the Bramblemouth tribe—a group that has caused minor problems before but has never done anything as brazen as a roadside abduction. Thort sent a group of guards into the Churlwood with orders to confront the goblins, but that was 2 days ago, and the guards have yet to return (they fell victim to the trailgaunt at area C). With Thort hesitant to send more guards into the woods, the two dwarves grow ever more concerned. They've sent a message home asking for help, but know it will be over a week before reinforcements arrive. Increasingly desperate, the pair of dwarves have been trying to enlist the help of anyone who will hear their pleas. Kolton has heard their call and promised that he'll keep an eye out for anything out of the ordinary. If the PCs met Kolton before meeting Galdsbredtha and Fordren, he asks the PCs about the situation, which might be the first time they hear of it.

If the PCs agree to help, Kolton can confirm the location of the Bramblemouth tribe's den on the western slope of a forested hill in the Churlwood (area D), but grows pale if the PCs imply that he could accompany them—Kolton wants nothing more to do with goblins. Ever.

Event 7: An Evening With Mister Retch (CR 4)

This encounter can occur at any point when the PCs are moving about town, but it would be ideal if the PCs encounter Mister Retch after hearing about him or after they've been in town for at least a few days. As Mister Retch can get away from a fight fairly easily, he could become a recurring nuisance throughout this adventure. He should

be presented as a pest more than a significant threat—he prefers to annoy his victims rather than actually hurt them, after all!

Creature: Mister Retch, also known as Rim Retchlock, is a grimple gremlin that's been an annoyance to everyone in town for a few months now—despite several attempts, no one has been able to get rid of this pest. He taunts kids who play too close to his hiding spots, which are usually up high somewhere like in the boughs of trees, the nooks near chimneys, or under broad eaves. When kids get close after he lures them over, he retches on them, sending the children screaming. Children aren't the only victims of Mister Retch. He taunts people as they stroll the streets of Roderic's Cove and frequently breaks into the Creekside Tavern's storeroom to steal bottles of ale and booze, gorging on their contents and leaving the discarded bottles strewn throughout town after guzzling down their contents. He's even more antagonistic after one of these benders.

Dirty gray fur covers the small creature in a haphazard mishmash of long, thick tufts and bare, bald spots where his flaky, pink skin is visible. Crusted vomit clumps in his fur in places, especially around his mouth. His round belly protrudes past a ratty leather vest, and a few occult talismans and other trinkets hang on cords around his neck. He wears a braided length of rope around his waist like a belt, from which hangs a bag of rocks and a set of thieves' tools.

Even if they don't seek him out on their own, at some point the PCs will attract the attention of Mister Retch. He can strike anywhere in town, but he mostly hangs out near places that sell or serve food and beverages, as the gremlin subsists off scraps and table refuse when he can't steal something. Unless he holds a special grudge, Mister Retch doesn't attack unprovoked. He usually insults his victims first, screeching out vulgar and slanderous insults about the PCs' appearances, their apparent lack of social stature, their sexual prowess, or how their parents and family think poorly of them—anything to incite retribution. Once he provokes someone to attack, Mister Retch either vomits on them or pitches a rock at their head, sometimes both. He then tries to scurry away and hide if anyone comes close to him, but since he's often climbing, he's usually safe for a few rounds.

Mister Retch can be dangerous when cornered, but he most often just wants to antagonize and embarrass people. If confronted, he tries to run, and he hides if he thinks opponents can get to him. He is a constant annoyance more than a direct combatant. Although Mister Retch can only deal significant damage with a successful sneak attack, he is difficult to hit and has a fair amount of hit points, making him a greater challenge to 1st-level characters. You could use Mister Retch in a

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number of short encounters to frustrate the PCs, which would make finally dealing with the gremlin much more satisfying. They could even defeat Mister Retch for good later in the adventure—or just leave him as a problem for the town to deal with on its own.

MISTER RETCH **CR 4**

XP 1,200

Male grimple rogue 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 142)

CN Tiny fey

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 12 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 size)

hp 30 (6 HD; 1d6+5d8+5)

Fort +1, **Ref** +10, **Will** +4

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

DR 2/cold iron

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft., fly 20 ft. (clumsy)

Melee bite +9 (1d3-4)

Ranged rock +10 (1d2-4)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks putrid vomit, sneak attack +3d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; concentration +1)

At will—*prestidigitation*

3/day—*grease, mage hand, open/close* (DC 10)

STATISTICS

Str 3, **Dex** 18, **Con** 10, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 12

Feats Ability Focus (putrid vomit), Dodge, Point-Blank Shot,

Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Finesse^B, Weapon Focus (rock)

Skills Acrobatics +13 (+9 when jumping), Bluff +9, Climb +16,

Diplomacy +9, Disable Device +17, Fly +4, Knowledge

(local) +5, Perception +10, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of

Hand +13, Stealth +24, Swim +8

Languages Common, Undercommon

SQ gremlin lice, rogue talents (combat trick, weapon training),

trapfinding +2

Gear *lesser talisman of beneficial winds*^{OA}, *lesser talisman*

of freedom^{OA}, *lesser talisman of warrior's courage*^{OA}, belt

pouch, masterwork thieves' tools, sack of rocks (17)

Story Award: For defeating Mister Retch, the PCs earn 2 Victory Points.

**PART 2:
RODERIC'S WRECK**

When Sir Aurek Roderic first arrived at this cove as he was exploring the upper reaches of the Lost Coast, he fell in love with the cool river threading through the lush evergreen forest. After founding Roderic's Cove and deciding where its docks would reach out into the river, Sir Roderic chose to build his own home slightly outside of town around a small bend, where the river actually met the Varisian Gulf. His chosen location was one that was easy to cast off from, yet hard to spot from open waters.

He employed several of the first settlers to Roderic's Cove to build this home, and they completed the project well ahead of schedule, all while building other structures in the town proper.

Once enough families were established and it looked like they would make it through the winter, Roderic became obsessed with protecting the village that was his namesake. He set out every day at dawn to patrol the waters where the Chavali River met the Varisian Gulf, showing an active threat to any who might exploit the people who chose to follow him to this remote location. During this time, Riddleport flourished, and Roderic's Cove feared that they would be outshone by the rough-and-tumble port.



Roderic died at sea, a fate that meets many sailors, yet few shared Roderic's tragic doom, for his boat sank with his entire family on board. While returning to town after a day out sailing, Sir Roderic and his family were attacked by a group of Riddleport pirates whom Roderic had greatly inconvenienced the previous year. While he could have saved himself, he sacrificed his life to try—unsuccessfully—to rescue his family. He ultimately failed, and his body, along with those of his family, washed up on shore, ironically amid the pilings of the small private pier attached to his home. Ever since, his unquiet spirit lingers in the region, seeking ever to protect the town that's become his namesake, if not always the citizens who dwell within!

AUDRAHNI'S REQUEST

At some point early in this adventure, Audrahn asks the PCs if they might be willing to help with a specific task that has vexed and eluded her for years. She tells the PCs about the former home of the town's founder, now called Roderic's Wreck by the locals, since the place has been abandoned and rotting away for years now. It's quite likely that some sort of clue within the Wreck could reveal why Roderic's ghost has lingered for so many years, but the building's reputation for being haunted, combined with respect for the town's owner, has resulted in very few visitors from Roderic's Cove over the years.

Audrahn is hesitant to reveal that, while she's visited the Wreck a few times, she's never actually entered it. Her lost faith has left her particularly fragile when it comes to confronting unquiet spirits, and her shame at having consigned one of her enemies in Magnimar to just such a fate has gnawed at her soul for many years. She wants to see Roderic's spirit put to rest and hopes that helping in whatever way she can will bring her a bit of peace, but she worries that the ghost will sense her lack of faith and use her hesitance and lack of confidence against her. For the moment, she'll claim to be nothing more than a simple graveyard caretaker, ill-equipped to handle a ghost. Yet she also says she inherited a few potent items from the previous caretaker, which she gives to the PCs once they agree to investigate Roderic's Wreck. These items are her own *wand of cure light wounds* (13 charges) and a silk pouch containing 6 vials of holy water. She warns the PCs that if Roderic is indeed haunting his home, he may be very dangerous, and she points out that the wand can harm his undead spirit as surely as the heroes can use it to heal themselves. She'll also remind the PCs that they should focus on exploring the Wreck and looking for clues as to how to put the ghost to rest, rather than directly confronting him, and to not hesitate to flee the building if things get too dicey—better to flee, regroup, and try again than to die!

A. RODERIC'S WRECK

Designed by a carpenter and architect who accompanied Sir Roderic from Magnimar, this two-story structure was built from local pine. While it was originally a magnificent example of the hard work and ingenuity the people of Roderic's Cove are known for, time and neglect have settled into the house's bones, and the structure now sags into the water. Moss grows over the roof and clings in patches to its walls. A light haze of black mold and thin bubbles of moisture creep across both sides of the house's windows, obscuring anything that might reside within.

Today, most people in town have lost any concern for the place, save for when strange things occur in town that the people of Roderic's Cove blame on haunting by Sir Roderic. It has, however, become an enticing place for the local youths to prove their mettle. There's a long-running dare in Roderic's Cove to go into Roderic's Wreck and take something out of the house as proof of bravery. Numerous kids in Roderic's Cove have snuck into the aging house and nabbed a tarnished fork, molded book, or rotten rug to prove that they set foot in the presumably haunted house as a rite of passage. However, Roderic is only active when something threatens Roderic's Cove, so many of the youths who've dared to set foot in Roderic's Wreck never saw anything malevolent aside from the pervasive vermin that often inhabit the place.

The wooden structure stands on pylons driven deep into the earth. However, after the founding of Roderic's Cove, the river has shifted slightly due to seasonal floods, and its banks have inched their way beneath the building's foundation. Since its owner's absence, the home has become a breeding ground for vermin and other opportunistic creatures, but the most dangerous inhabitant of Roderic's Wreck is the ghost of Sir Roderic himself. Roderic can't rest because he feels a dedication to the town, and when emotional events in the cove well up, his restless spirit returns.

A1. Outside the Wreck (CR 1)

Approaching the house, it is immediately apparent that Roderic's Wreck is indeed a wreck. The house slumps visibly toward the water, one corner edging dangerously into the river. Boards in the house's walls have warped and popped free from their nails, peeling back like bark from an old tree. The front door hangs slightly ajar. The sound of buzzing insects, creaking tree branches, and the river flowing by hangs in the moist air.

Creatures: All manner of small bugs flit about and crawl through the tall grass; however, the biggest threat outside of Roderic's Wreck are a pair of stirges that have nested beneath the front porch (area A2). Once the hungry creatures hear or scent the PCs, they fly from beneath the porch and attack. Each stirge attacks a different enemy,

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1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

ravenously plunging its proboscis into a PC's body to siphon their warm blood. The creatures attack until killed or sated.

STIRGES (2) **CR 1/2**
XP 200 each
hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 260*)

Treasure: Near the front porch's first step, a silver locket (worth 50 gp) fell to the ground when a youth fled the building after he failed an attempt to prove his bravery. This locket contains the picture of a young woman and belongs to Captain Julit Freson (see page 26). He took the dare to spend the night in Roderic's Wreck when he was a teenager but was frightened out of the home when exploring the family room (area A9).

Story Award: A successful DC 15 Knowledge (local) identifies the woman in the locket as Caralee Freson, a woman who has since passed away but whose son, Julit Freson, now serves as militia commander in Roderic's Cove. If the PCs return the locket, Captain Freson thanks them profusely and offers to have them over for dinner soon. Award the PCs 400 XP for returning the locket.

A2. Front Porch (CR 1/4)

The moss-covered planks that make up the front porch are swollen and half rotten. The front door hangs slightly open.

Hazard: The sagging porch boards creak ominously with each step a PC takes across them, squeaking as the wood pulls on the nails that struggle to hold them down. Any Medium PC who traverses the porch must succeed at a DC 11 Reflex save or break through one of the rotten boards. The plank breaks at an awkward angle, and as it breaks, a PC who fails the Reflex save finds her foot and ankle painfully twisted as she drops through the 2-foot-high porch to the ground beneath. An affected character takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and her speed is reduced by 5 feet for the next hour or until she receives magical healing. The danger can be spotted beforehand if the PCs take a moment to examine the boards and succeed at a DC 20 Perception check, after which the PCs can take care to step only on those boards that will support their weight.

Story Award: The PCs earn 100 XP the first time they deal with this minor hazard.

A3. Main Hall

A dank smell pervades this five-foot wide hallway. A set of stairs rises to the next floor, and the hallway turns sharply to the north past the staircase.

This hallway stretches from the front door and curves at a right angle to the north before ending. The set of rickety stairs ascends to the house's second story. Collapsed shelves and soiled, rotting linens fill the small closet (area **A3a**).

A4. Living Room (CR 1)

Doors along the northern and eastern sides of this moldy room provide exits. The floor droops toward the south so the lowest corner of the room brushes the river as it flows by. The ceiling in the northern and eastern sides of the room is torn. The remains of a small desk lean into the northwestern corner of the room, its slim drawer hanging out.

Roderic spent time with his family here, but he also used the room for business. He kept many of his records on his desk in here, but kept his most important files upstairs in his map room (area **A17**).

Creatures: A dozen giant cockroaches live among the stilts under the house. As the PCs move through the house, their actions disturb the cockroaches. The hole in the floor here provides the cockroaches access to the house, but they prefer the dark and dank cover beneath. As the PCs enter the room, a pair of cockroaches the size of small dogs scurry up from the hole to attack. The mindless insects are ravenous and attack the PCs until killed.

GIANT COCKROACHES (2) **CR 1/2**
XP 200 each
hp 8 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 58*)

Treasure: The drawer hanging out of the slumped over desk is empty aside from a dried-out jar of ink and a few split pen nibs. However, a piece of paper is stuck to the bottom of the drawer by a film of mold. It's jagged around the edges, as if the rest of the sheet was ripped from the remnants. The stuck and moldering page shows an "X" in the middle of some woods, and the letters "St. Hs.," shorthand for "Stonehouse." A PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Knowledge (geography) check recognizes the woods as the nearby Churlwood. The PCs can also have others in town identify the location marked on the map. This location is detailed further in Part 3.

Development: If the PCs leave this area for 30 minutes or longer and then return, another pair of cockroaches comes out of the hole to attack. A total of a dozen giant cockroaches live in the moist and dark confines of the

underside of the house, and they will keep emerging until they are all killed. You can have them attack in any number, but they are skittish creatures and typically venture out in pairs.

A5. Dining Room (CR 1)

Two doors stand along the north wall of the room, and one stands along the western wall. A masterfully built table stands against the mold-covered windows in the room's southeastern wall. Aside from a layer of mold and a few patches of moss, the dining set looks to be in immaculate condition compared to the rest of the house's furnishings.

The Roderic family took their meals in this room. Their table sat against the double windows that looked out over the river. Roderic would sit at one end of the table while his wife, Andella, sat at the other end. Their three children, Jevon, Markela, and Teshen sat on a long bench.

Roderic commissioned the table from a skilled woodworker who came with Roderic and the others from Magnimar. Due to its masterful construction, the dining set has withstood the neglect that wracks the rest of the house. A fine but degraded cabinet sits in the corner. It is lying on its doors, but the back of the cabinet can be pried off with a simple successful DC 10 Strength check, or it can be flipped over by anyone who can lift 80 pounds.

Creature: As the PCs enter the room, hundreds of swarming spiders emerge from the broken floorboards and attack any living creatures nearby.

SPIDER SWARM **CR 1**
XP 400
hp 9 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 258*)

Treasure: Most of the earthenware and porcelain dishes inside the cabinet shattered when it tipped over, but any PCs inspecting the interior of the cabinet find a silver serving set worth 70 gp, a silver decanter worth 35 gp, and a set of six copper mugs worth 15 gp altogether.

A6. Back Hall (CR 2)

A door that opens to the space beneath the stairs is boarded over. The doorknob is broken off and a steel spike has been driven into what used to be a lock.

The door to the closet (area **A6a**) has been boarded over and the lock sabotaged. However, the wood is partially rotten, making it easier than normal to break through (hardness 3, hp 6, break DC 13).

Haunt: This haunt spawned the first time Sir Roderic's ghost manifested here. It represents the

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family drowning in the cold Varisian Gulf. After nearly drowning some teenagers who came out to dare the Wreck, a group of people from town came to Sir Roderic's old home and boarded over the door to the closet to prevent another mishap.

DROWNING FAMILY CR 2

XP 600

CE chained^{OA} persistent slow haunt (5-ft.-by-5-ft. closet)

Caster Level 2nd

Notice Perception DC 15 (to hear water churn behind the door)

hp 9; **Trigger** special (see below); **Reset** 1 day

Effect When a creature breaks through the door to the closet, they trigger this haunt. What first appears to be a closet completely full of water animates and rushes out, rolling over any creatures in front of the closet, manifesting as an *aqueous orb*^{APG} spell that persists for 2 rounds. Creatures can avoid this effect with a successful DC 14 Reflex save.

Destruction Sending Sir Roderic's restless spirit to the afterlife destroys this haunt.

Treasure: As the haunt triggers, the rush of water sweeps old debris from the closet. Among the refuse is a pair of *feather step slippers*^{UE}.

A7. Back Deck (CR 3)

This ruined deck clings to the side of the house and hangs at an angle four feet above the ground. Boards are missing, and though the deck once led to a place to dock a boat, now nothing but pilings and scattered boards remain.

Walking on the deck is dangerous for Medium or larger creatures. The deck is also set at an angle, as it has pulled free from the house. A creature walking on the deck must move at half its speed or risk falling through unless it succeeds at a DC 11 Reflex save. Those on the south end of the deck risk falling into the river.

Creatures: A pair of reefclaws lurk beneath the deck. More intelligent than simple animals, the reefclaws listen for movement on the deck. Once a creature is above the river, the reefclaws shove a rotten piling to collapse the deck into the river so they can feed. The fall isn't enough to deal damage, and a creature on the deck when it collapses can attempt a DC 12 Reflex save to leap to a safe place as the deck falls.

The water is only chest-deep here, but the reefclaws grab onto PCs' legs and try to drag them underwater.

REEFCLAWS (2) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 234)

A8. Kitchen (CR 2)

A sickeningly sweet scent hangs in this room's otherwise stale air. Mold and fungus grow up the side of the northern walls, and what was once a table lies decayed and slumped to the floor at an angle. A door and a stone hearth occupy the west wall of the room, the oven's door slightly ajar.

Creatures: A garden ooze recently slithered into this room, drawn by the banquet of vermin that recently dwelt here. When the PCs enter, the fibrous mass is difficult to detect before it attacks, blending in amid the other fungi and mold growing along the north side of the room.

GARDEN OOZE CR 2

XP 600

hp 19 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 122)

A9. Family Room (CR 3)

A moldering sofa sits along the south wall of this room, and once-comfortable chairs sit in front of mold-covered windows.

Haunt: Roderic adored his family and spent as much time with them as he could. They often spent time in this room reading and playing simple games. When winter came, they'd cuddle together under quilts on the sofa while telling stories.

SPECTRAL FAMILY CR 3

XP 800

NE haunt (15-ft. radius)

Caster Level 3rd

Notice Perception DC 18 (to hear children giggling)

hp 6; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 hour

Effect The PCs receive a vision of Roderic's family. One child sits upon Roderic's knee while the other two sit on the floor around him, listening to him read. Roderic's wife, Andella, sits next to him on a chair doing needlepoint. When the haunt is triggered, this pleasant scene turns to horror as the family suddenly shifts, their skin sloughs away in wisps of shadows to reveal skeletal faces. Roderic turns to the PCs, points accusingly, and demands they leave, saying, "Get out!" in a long, gasping shout. All creatures in the area are affected by *cause fear* (Will DC 12).

Destruction This haunt remains in place as long as Sir Roderic remains a ghost.

A10. Upper Hall

Two sets of stairs descend to the lower floor of the home. Two doors stand along the north, west, and south walls, while a single door stands partially open along the east wall.

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A11. Master Bedroom (CR 9)

A moldering mattress lies amid a bowed wooden frame, flanked on either side by ruined tables. A dresser in the northwest corner of the room has seen most of its drawers pulled out and discarded on the floor. Remnants of moldy and animal-gnawed clothes spill from them. A hole has been hacked into the floor, near a long, slender wooden case that is open and tipped over on the floor.

This was once Roderic and Andella's bedroom. Now, animals have torn out most of the bedding, leaving a scattered tangle of cloth remnants and soiled and shredded stuffing. Aside from the couples' garments, little of interest can be found among the scavenged dresser. Most items of interest that resided within have long since been scooped up by those who took the dare to spend the night in Roderic's Wreck. The most recent visitor to the home was Corstela Rostrata, who discovered the most powerful item Roderic had: the dormant *Sword of Pride*.

Creature: The first time the PCs enter this room, Sir Roderic manifests before them. See Event 8 on page 19 for more details.

Treasure: The wooden case discarded on the floor once contained the sword. The case is of masterwork quality, and a thin sheeting of lead lines its interior. Etched into a plaque in ornate lettering on the case's side is the word "Baraket." Two small but complex locks (Disable Device DC 30) line the edge of the case; they automatically lock if the lid is closed. While Corstela found the case buried beneath the floorboards in Roderic's bedroom and struggled with the complex locks, her discovery of *Baraket* overwhelmed her so much that she immediately cast the case aside and didn't notice that a wad of adhesive gum held a pair of keys tacked to the lid of the case. These keys were duplicates of ones Roderic kept, and they can lock and unlock the case. If sold, the case could fetch at least 350 gp. A PC who succeeds at DC 25 Knowledge (history) check recalls that "Baraket" was the name of the legendary *Sword of Pride*.

A12. Child's Room (CR 4)

The remains of a wicker cradle slumps against the wall between two cracked windows. A small wicker table in similar condition sits in the corner of the room.

This was the room of the youngest of Roderic's and Andella's children. Like the rest of the house, it has remained empty since the family's death.

Creature: As Roderic's spirit haunts the house and the town of Roderic's Cove, other undead creatures have been attracted to this site due to the strength of Roderic's grief and unquiet nature. One of these undead who ended up in Roderic's Wreck is an attic whisperer. This creature didn't spawn from the death of one of Roderic's children, as all of them were well loved and provided for, but instead wandered to the Wreck from town mere months after the family's death.

The attic whisperer wears the tattered remains of a rabbit costume, its canine skull protruding from the hood-like head of the destroyed outfit. A necklace of lettered, wooden blocks hangs around its neck, and the unsettling creature drags a wheeled wooden duck by a soiled and knotted string.

The attic whisperer hides among the rotting wicker cradle before the PCs enter the room. It stays hidden until they approach the cradle before attacking. It activates its aura of sobs ability and then attempts to use its steal breath ability on the same target to incapacitate the enemy. It playfully fights until destroyed, but does not pursue foes from this room.

ATTIC WHISPERER **CR 4**

XP 1,200

hp 45 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 34*)

A13. Study (CR 2)

A simple desk sits along the north wall of this room. A few of the boards in the wall have come loose and fallen to the ground below. A moldy puddle fills the middle of the floor, and a wet stain spreads from a crack in the ceiling.

Creatures: When some of the giant cockroaches that infested this house died, they rose again as undead creatures called exoskeletons. Three of these creatures cling to the walls here, and they attack as the PCs enter the room.

EXOSKELETON GIANT COCKROACHES (3) **CR 1/2**

XP 200 each

hp 12 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6 124*)

A14. Child's Room (CR 2)

A set of bunk beds has fallen apart and crumpled against the south wall of this room. A wooden chest of toys is turned on its side, spilling moldy stuffed animals, wooden blocks, and neglected toys across the floor.

This was the bedroom of Roderic's two older children.

Creatures: Like the undead cockroaches in area **A13**, some of the giant centipedes living in Roderic's Wreck were animated into undead creatures after their deaths. These exoskeleton centipedes are wound through the remains of the bunk beds, and when the PCs enter, they thread their long bodies through the rubble to attack the intruders.

EXOSKELETON CENTIPEDES (3) **CR 1/2**

XP 200 each

Giant centipede exoskeletons (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 43, Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6 124*)

NE Medium undead

Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 11 each (2d8+3)

Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +3

DR 5/bludgeoning; Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

Melee bite +1 (1d6)

STATISTICS

Str 11, Dex 15, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 10

Base Atk +1; CMB +1; CMD 13 (can't be tripped)

Feats Toughness^B

Skills Climb +8

SQ burst (DC 11)

A15. Lounge (CR 2)

The leather of the room's two large chairs seems mostly intact, but stuffing covers the ground beneath them and has been strewn about. Broken glass glitters on the floor, and a low table lays on its side, the drawers from a small cabinet on the ground beside it. A draft from a broken window stirs the moldy drapes, and a crooked painting of a sailing ship at sea bears a lengthy rip through the canvas.

Roderic relaxed in this room when not working or looking after his family. He would have a drink and sit in one of the chairs looking out the windows to watch the river flow by, or admire the artwork on the walls and dream of another life where he might be the captain of an armada or an admiral in a powerful nation's navy. Roderic also periodically received visitors in this room to discuss important matters. He felt that he thought clearer in this room, and often spent time just sitting in his welcoming leather chair thinking problems through.

Creature: Many who take the dare to spend the night in Roderic's Wreck have mistaken this room's inhabitant for Roderic's ghost. A poltergeist found itself, like the attic

whisperer, drawn to this site, and while it can roam the entire house, it typically keeps to this room. It doesn't attack immediately, preferring to inspect those who poke around the house for a bit and allowing them to relax and grow complacent. The poltergeist feels oddly protective of this room and attacks anyone who spends more than 5 minutes in here or anyone who sits on one of the leather chairs. When it attacks, it first uses its frightener ability to drive people from the room. If unsuccessful, it flings debris around the room, such as the broken table, bits from the broken glasses and decanter, or the painting on the wall. If a PC weighs less than 75 pounds, the poltergeist attempts to fling that character out the window to the ground 12 feet below. Creatures thrown through the glass window take 1d4 points of piercing damage in addition to 1d6 points of falling damage.

POLTERGEIST **CR 2**

XP 600

hp 16 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 211*)

Treasure: Roderic had a fine crystal decanter he kept whiskey and rum in, but it was destroyed by the poltergeist when it first came to the Wreck. The decanter's crystal stopper survived, though, after it rolled beneath one of the leather chairs. A PC can find the stopper, which is worth 95 gp, with a successful DC 20 Perception check.

A16. Sewing Room (CR 3)

Sagging shelves, one of which has partially pulled free from the wall, line the walls of this room, set with spools of thread, boxes of needles, moldy scraps of cloth, bolts of decaying fabric, and various types of shears. A round box of soiled yarn rests on a worktable along the north wall, and a dress form lays propped in the corner.

Roderic's wife was an avid seamstress, well known throughout the region for her designs and the durability of her wares. She would spend hours in this room working on clothes that she sold in town and beyond. When holidays drew near, Andella worked double time to keep up with the requests for festival gowns and fine suits. In the early days of the settlement, everyone had at least one piece of clothing lovingly made by Andella.

Haunt: Whether due to her hard work and dedication, or through frustration from having departed the land of the living, a sliver of Andella's spirit haunts the room that was once a place of pride in her life.

TEMPESTUOUS SEAMSTRESS **CR 3**

XP 800

CE persistent haunt (20-ft. radius)

Caster Level 4th

Notice Perception DC 15 (to hear a quiet weeping and see items in the room begin to vibrate)

hp 18; Trigger proximity; **Reset 1 day**

Effect When this haunt is triggered, the items in the room come to life and chaotically fly through the air, slashing at and tangling everyone in the area. Flurries of needles fly about like straw caught in a dust devil, while scissors and shears flap dangerously through the area. Strips of cloth wrap around people's heads, and spools of thread and yarn spread like ever-shifting webs. Creatures in the area take 2d4 points of piercing and slashing damage for 4 rounds as long as they are in the area of effect. In addition, all creatures in the area must succeed at a DC 16 Reflex save or be either entangled or blinded (determine randomly, 50% chance for either) as cloth, threads, and unraveling balls of yarn swirl around them.

Destruction When Roderic's spirit finds its final rest, this haunt fades from Roderic's Wreck.

Treasure: In the round box containing the moldering yarn is a concealed space that requires a successful DC 20 Perception check to locate; inside are nine bars of gold, each worth 200 gp.

A17. Map Room (CR 9)

Off-color rectangles on the moldering walls show that there were once many frames hanging on the walls of this room. A selection of pens and brushes, as well as a silver-capped ink jar, lie on the floor amid the remains of a desk.

In addition to being a courageous man who led others to a new settlement, and a privateer who patrolled the Varisian Gulf to keep it free from pirates, Roderic was also an accomplished cartographer. He created numerous maps of the gulf and the rivers he explored that fed into it.

If the PCs are looking for "Roderic's map," they'll find nothing here, for shortly after the report of Roderic's and his family's death, the port-governor came out to the home to retrieve what everyone knew were the best maps of the cove and its surrounding environs. These maps now reside in city hall in the town's archives, as a PC knows with a successful DC 15 Knowledge (history or local) check (or upon consultation with Audrahni).

Creature: Sir Roderic's ghost manifests the first time the PCs enter this room. See Event 8 below for more details.

Event 8: Encountering Sir Roderic (CR 9)

Sir Roderic's ghost, which only becomes active when the town is threatened, wants people of sufficient power to know that the artifact *Baraket* is free from its Thassilonian vault in the Churlwood and may influence

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those who took it to do harm, that the town is being threatened by evil forces from Hollow Mountain, and that these influences are driving three separate gangs toward a violent conflict in the streets. While the ghost of Sir Roderic can manifest anywhere in Roderic's Wreck, he typically remains dormant, nestled incorporeally in the mud and water beneath the rotten pier where his body came to rest long ago. Since Roderic's ghost spends so much time dormant and his restless spirit is so stuck in his own past, he doesn't truly understand how much time has passed since his death, and as a result, he remains stuck in a loop of tragedy and loss.

Note that while Sir Roderic's ghost is a powerful foe, he doesn't seek to kill those who intrude upon his home. Although his restless spirit is extremely emotional, it's not evil or terribly violent. When annoyed or frustrated by those who come to the home, the ghost usually just tries to scare them off rather than actually hurt them, unless the trespassers disrespect his family's home or seem to be there for selfish or evil reasons. In these cases, the ghost of Sir Roderic is relentless, though even then he is unlikely to kill his aggressors.

The PCs should encounter Sir Roderic at least twice as they explore his home. He's most likely to manifest when the PCs enter the master bedroom (area **A11**) and when they enter the map room (area **A17**), but you can adjust these encounters as needed.

First Encounter: The first time the PCs encounter Sir Roderic, the restless spirit is still confused and angered that people are once again poking through his home. To him, he's just trying to live his life, playing with his imagined children and sharing sweet stories with his imagined wife. Intrusions into these delusions upset Roderic's frail mental state, and he lashes out to quiet the voices and render helpless those who shatter his perceived reality.

Appearing drenched and bloated, Roderic drains up from the floorboards into the room in eerie mockery of gravity, then speaks in a hollow voice.

"The cove. The stone house in the wood. The gauntlet. Save them. My map. The key."

If the PCs question him, Roderic initially responds as if nonplussed. Even if questioned about what he means about the Cove and Varisia, he keeps repeating the same words with only a slight inflection of frustration and anger each time. In this first manifestation, Roderic is completely unreasonable, and after a few rounds he vanishes by draining away.

Second Encounter: The second time the PCs encounter Sir Roderic, his mind has sorted itself out somewhat and the ghost has realized that the PCs may be here to help

the Cove. When he manifests, he says the following in a tired, labored voice.

"My map. They took my map. It holds the key. To the vault. Baraket will control them. It will control you! I should have taken the gauntlets, but I fled. I was a coward. You must be brave. You must endure where I did not. The vault. It lies still in the vault. You must save my Cove. Save. My. Cove."

Sir Roderic doesn't attempt to frighten the PCs off or harm them in any way when he manifests this time, but he defends himself if attacked. Sir Roderic repeats himself a number of times, and calls the PCs "heroes of the Cove" at least once before slipping down through the floor. At your option, the ghost remains long enough to engage the PCs and answer a few of their questions as best he can. Unfortunately, his answers are either confused, cryptic, or simply too short to convey exacting details, but the answers should encourage the PCs to seek out his map and look for a "stone house in the woods."

Sir Roderic's words, though cryptic and confused, refer to a great threat to Roderic's Cove and to Varisia as a whole. The mention of "The stone house in the wood" refers to the Churlwood, the Stonehouse, and Alaznist's armory below, while the mention of "My map" is a plea to the PCs that they need the clues on the map in the town archives to enter the vault. Telling Audrahni about this reminds the somber elf that Roderic was a skilled cartographer and charted the region on several maps that now reside in Cove Hall (alternately, a PC can recall this lore with a successful DC 15 Knowledge [history or local] check).

If the PCs visit Cove Hall to inspect Roderic's map, they find on it a small seven-pointed star—the Sihedron rune—inscribed on a ridge in the Churlwood a few miles southeast of Roderic's Cove. This "X marks the spot" shows the exact location of the vault in which Roderic discovered the *Sword of Pride*. He also recorded the combination of runes required to open the vault door itself (see area **F14**), placing these runes at each of the seven points of the Sihedron. These runes are associated with the seven sins, as a Thassilonian scholar might suspect, but their orientation is unusual, each one rotated in a different and unusual direction. Matching these orientations on the vault door at area **F14** opens the door. While the PCs won't be allowed to take this map with them, they can make a copy of the combination easily enough for later reference.

Additional Encounters: If the PCs aren't able to decipher the clues, have Sir Roderic be a bit more coherent in subsequent encounters. The point is that after encountering the ghost a few times, the PCs should be motivated to seek out the Thassilonian vault in the Churlwood for further answers. You can have Audrahni put these pieces together for the PCs if needed.

SIR RODERIC **CR 9**

XP 6,400

Human ghost ranger 3/rogue 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 144)
CN Medium undead (augmented humanoid, human, incorporeal)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +19

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 19, flat-footed 15 (+5 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 94 (8 HD; 5d8+3d10+51)

Fort +9, **Ref** +10, **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, evasion, incorporeal, rejuvenation, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge;
Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee corrupting touch +9 (9d6)

Special Attacks combat style (two-weapon combat), favored enemy (humans +2), frightful moan (DC 19), sneak attack +3d6

TACTICS

During Combat If the PCs attack Roderic, he uses his last gasp ability on the PC who appears the largest and strongest or who has exhibited the most aggressive behavior since being in the Wreck. After affecting the first PC with last gasp, Roderic targets other members of the party with this ability until at least one PC falls unconscious. If the PCs seem resistant to this attack or manage to hurt him significantly, he'll use his frightful moan to try to force them to flee. Once a PC is unconscious or they flee, Sir Roderic drains back through the floor into the mud beneath the house until he stirs once again, hoping that the intruders flee after his attack. Roderic has no urge to hurt anyone and doesn't use his corrupting touch ability against the PCs, even if they do damage him.

Morale Roderic wants only to recruit the PCs' help in protecting the Cove, as detailed above.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 25

Feats Dodge, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Disable Device), Skill Focus (Profession [sailor]), Toughness, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +16, Climb +14, Craft (mapmaking) +11, Diplomacy +16, Disable Device +17, Fly +11, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Perception +19, Profession (sailor) +14, Sense Motive +7, Stealth +11, Survival +6, Swim +9

Languages Common, Elven, Varisian

SQ favored terrain (water +2), rogue talents (finesse rogue, weapon training), track +1, trapfinding +2, wild empathy +8

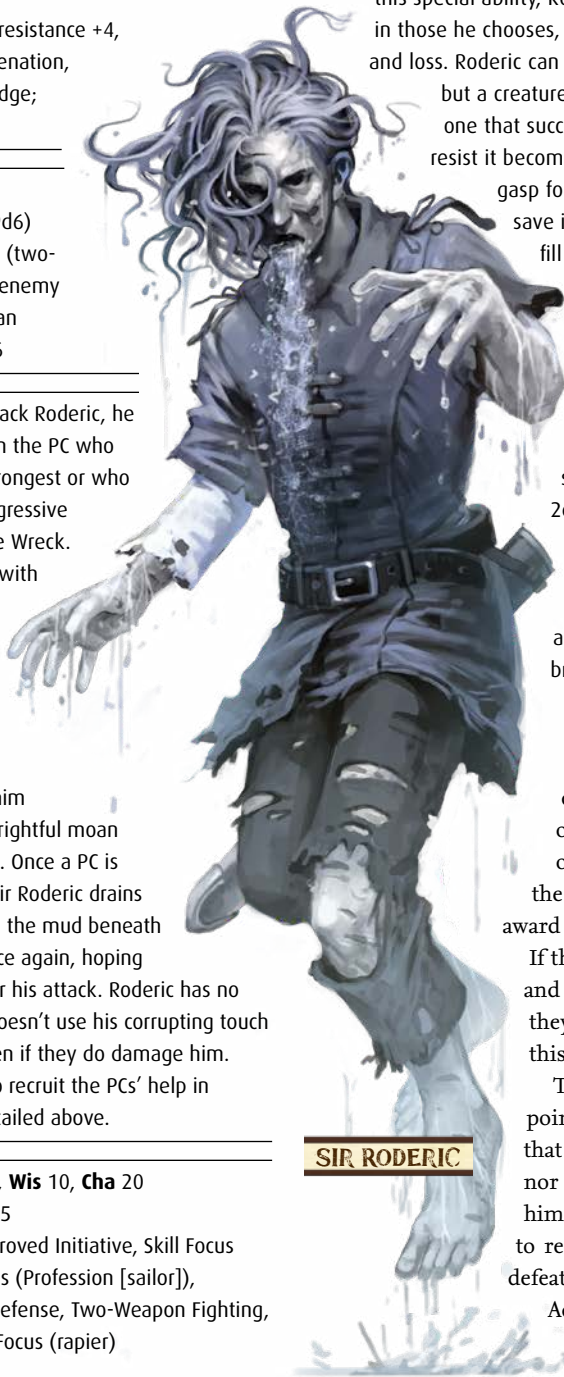
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Last Gasp (Su) Roderic drowned in the Varisian Gulf. Using this special ability, Roderic can replicate his own demise in those he chooses, forcing them to experience his pain and loss. Roderic can target any creature within 30 feet, but a creature already affected by this ability or one that succeeds at a DC 16 Fortitude save to resist it becomes immune to the effects of last gasp for 24 hours. A target that fails the save is staggered for 1 round as its lungs fill with water. The following round, the target must attempt another Fortitude save at the same DC; on a failure, it can take only a single move action for 1 round. On the third round, the target must succeed at a third Fortitude save or fall unconscious and take 2d6 points of damage. This damage can never reduce the target below 0 hit points. This ability affects only living creatures that must breathe air, and it is impossible to hold one's breath to counter this effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Story Award: Once the PCs discover the existence and location of the Thassilonian ruins hidden out in the Churlwood and decipher the code to unlock the vault door, award them 1,600 XP.

If the PCs accept the ghost's challenge and let Sir Roderic know they'll help, they earn 2 Victory Points for making this promise to him.

The PCs don't earn experience points as normal in the unlikely event that they can defeat Roderic's ghost, nor if they flee or are overwhelmed by him. Only once they can put the ghost to rest can they earn the 6,400 XP for defeating him. See "Concluding the Adventure" for more details on how this can be accomplished.



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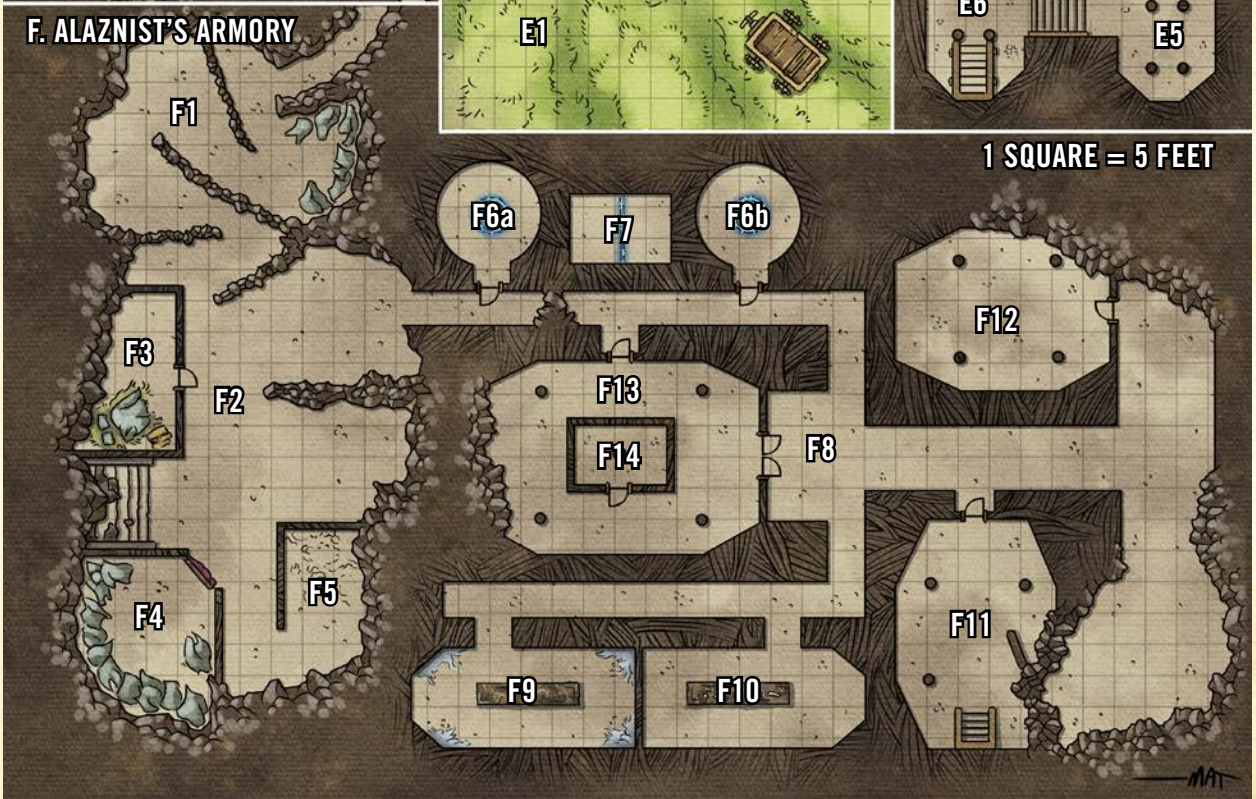
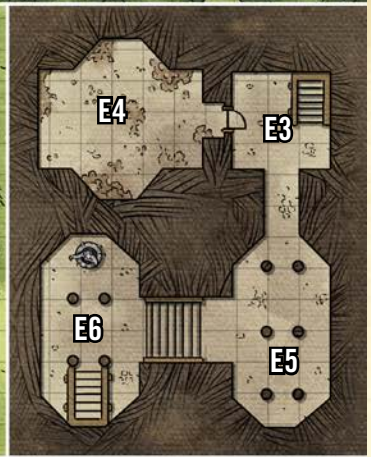
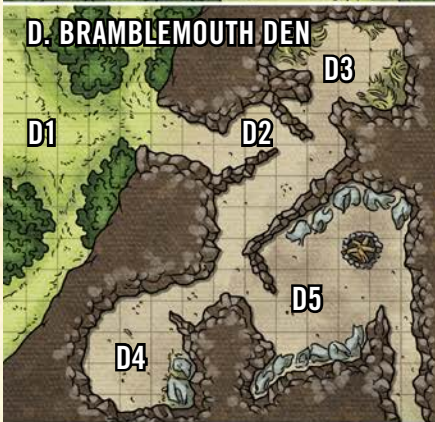
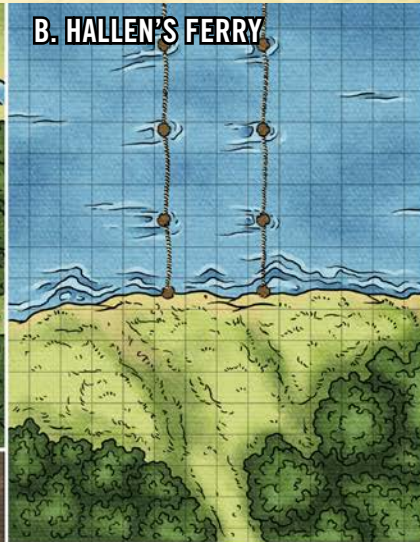
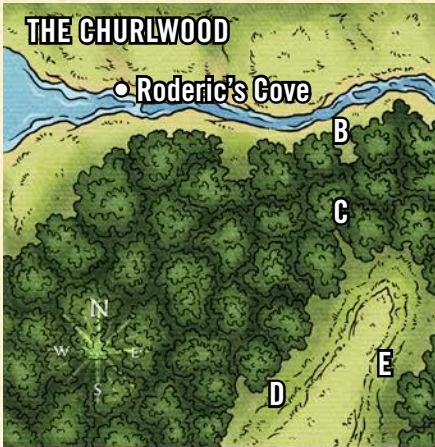
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PART 3: INTO THE CHURLWOOD

Sir Roderic's ghost has difficulty speaking to the living, but the PCs should learn after exploring Roderic's Wreck that the ghost wants only to protect Roderic's Cove. Something about current events has wracked the unquiet spirit, and the best lead the PCs have points them south into the Churlwood. Whether it's discovering Sir Roderic's map of the Thassilonian vault or hearing about kidnapped dwarves, the PCs should be properly motivated to hike into the Churlwood to get to the bottom of things. Alaznist's vault is the main focus of this part of the adventure, but the PCs will face other dangers while they make their way to the vault.

Roderic's Cove sits on the northern bank of the Chavali River, and the Churlwood borders the river's southern bank. The Chavali averages a thousand feet wide in this area, so swimming across is not the best option. The PCs can charter a boat to ferry them across the river to the Churlwood at a cost of 2 gp for a one-way trip, or they could walk about a mile up the Chavali River to a spot where a bridge has been started and a Cove resident ferries people across for just a few coppers. If they take this less-expensive route, proceed with encounter **B**.

SEEKING THE VAULT

Roderic discovered one of Alaznist's many hidden vaults when he first came to this area and began to explore the hinterlands of Roderic's Cove. Though he visited only once, it was here that he discovered the *Sword of Pride*.

Through dedication and blind luck, Roderic discerned the method to access the vault. Later, he recorded the vault's location, adding his findings to the back of a map he designed of the region, a map which now sits in the town archives in city hall. Now, Roderic's ghost needs people to be aware that the ancient Thassilonian ruins beneath the town are threatening Roderic's Cove, and all of Varisia!

There are two ways to get into the Thassilonian vault: one and from within the warrens of the Bramblemouth goblin tribe's lair (area **D**), and the other through a remaining portion of the ruin jutting above the forest floor used by the Roadkeepers as a campsite (area **E**). Either route is a viable entry into the vault—which one the PCs choose depends on them.

B. Hallen's Ferry

Almost 5 miles upriver from Roderic's Cove, where the Chavali River grows shallow for a short stretch, twin rows of mismatched wooden pilings protrude from the water. This was originally intended to be the site of a bridge that

would cross the river and continue the road south along the edge of the Churlwood, but plans for its construction fell apart after the pilings were driven into the river. Yet the Covers are tenacious, and rather than abandon this handy link to the south side of the river, a resident of the cove took it upon herself to set up a ferry service that uses a barge attached to a set of ropes hung between the pilings.

Creatures: A resident of Roderic's Cove, **Hallen Rosker** (N old female human commoner 4), has been providing ferrying services along this incomplete bridge for the last couple of years. She grew up doing strong labor on a nearby farm, and while her advanced age has made walking quite difficult for her, the old woman has plenty of upper body strength to pull her small barge along the ropes she's attached to the pilings. The ropes are attached to iron rings driven into the pilings, allowing them to be dropped to the riverbed so they don't snag passing vessels when not in use.

Hallen Rosker charges 4 cp for each trip across the river, a pittance in any case, but she doesn't need much to live on. If the PCs make it apparent they're heading across the river to look for the missing dwarves or the missing town guards, she'll waive the fee entirely. She lives in a small home on the north bank, and it takes her nearly half an hour to get to her post near the incomplete bridge. If the PCs arrive at this site between dawn and dusk, they can find Hallen sitting in a comfortable chair that Kolton happily brought from town for her. Her small barge sits tethered to a small dock.

Hallen is chatty and talks a lot as she ferries the PCs over. She's naturally inquisitive, and while there's nothing sinister about her, she's quite the gossip. Unless told not to say anything, she freely shares her stories with her friends in town, so how the PCs deal with this situation might come back to haunt them depending on whom they've befriended.

Despite her constant banter, the PCs can get some interesting information from her. If she knows they're looking for the kidnapped dwarves, she'll talk about how there are bandits, goblins, and monsters in the Churlwood, "You pick which one is worse. Though, most of the time the bandits at least leave people alive. Goblins you never know, and monsters... well, that can go all kinds of ways."

EVENT 9. MEETING THE ROADKEEPERS (CR 5)

Although it takes half an hour for Hallen to make her way to the ferry from her home, it's a brisk 10 minutes to cross the river. As the barge nears the southern shore, Hallen curses under her breath; two smiling men and a tall, lanky woman casually flipping a coin in one hand step out of the woods. "Roadkeepers," Hallen says under her breath. "Just give them what they ask for and they'll

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let you on your way. That one who's flipping the coin is Lullaby Vancaskerkin. She's a piece of work—you'd best not be giving her a reason to get angry."

Creatures: The three Roadkeepers present consist of two bandits led by a canny criminal named Lullaby Vancaskerkin. She changed her name from an unpleasant birth name she never talks about, after she left home when her parents split up as her mother abandoned her father for her uncle. Although she's not the leader of the Roadkeepers, Lullaby is eagerly looking forward to the day she gets to be in charge. The current leader is an elderly oracle named Nightthrush, and while Lullaby covets the role, she's not a murderer at heart. Still, her wait for the older Roadkeeper to pass away from natural causes has been going on for years, and Lullaby's getting impatient. She was the one who gave the order, against Nightthrush's wishes, to go stir up trouble in Roderic's Cove, and she's also seeking to increase the take on these roadside "highway taxation" expeditions. Rather than outwait Nightthrush, Lullaby now hopes to build up a large enough nest egg for herself that she can simply buy the loyalty of the other Roadkeepers and relocate directly into Roderic's Cove to form a "dishonest-to-goodness" thieves' guild. Eventually, after she manages to build up enough resources and power, she intends to turn her attention to Riddleport, where her uncle Saul Vancaskerkin still lives (albeit in disgrace after losing his fortune to a group of heroes he sought to betray). Although she's technically the daughter of Saul's brother, Lullaby has coveted Saul's place in Riddleport more than her birth father's equally shady legacy, especially now that her birth father moved on to a small town somewhere on the Isle of Kortos. Now that Saul has lost it all, Lullaby hopes to rebuild the Vancaskerkin empire from her family's ruins. Of course, she's still quite a way from making her first move, but hopes the PCs will help her by "lending" her some of the money she seeks.

As the PCs land, Lullaby steps up with a grin and a swagger and gives Hallen a nod; the old woman replies with a scowl and a rude gesture, but she's already paid her monthly dues. As she prepares the ferry for the return trip across the river, leaving the PCs to deal with the Roadkeepers, she repeats her warning to the PCs: "Just pay up and there won't be trouble."

Lullaby greets the PCs as if they were old friends, welcoming them to "the scenic Churlwood" before bemoaning the fact that it costs money to patrol the dangerous forest and to keep its trails nicely pruned and free from clutter. As her smirking companions step forward between her and the PCs, Lullaby says that although it pains her to ask for "charity," she'd appreciate a "donation" of 10 gp from each of the PCs. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (local) check knows that while this might

seem like a small amount to adventurers, it's 20 times the amount the Roadkeepers typically charge. Hallen's gasp of surprise at the amount (she says nothing else other than to speed along her retreat before Lullaby asks her for gold as well) should only drive home this unexpected inflation.

If the PCs refuse to pay, Lullaby gives her thugs a nod and they step up to take the gold by force. If they do pay, she thanks them and asks their business in the Churlwood. If the PCs don't tell her, she shrugs and tells them of a "good campsite" in a clearing just to the south (hoping to lure the PCs into the trailgaunt's clutches). If the PCs say they're here looking for the Stonehouse, she'll give directions to the goblin lair instead.

LULLABY VANCASKERKIN

CR 4

XP 1,200

Female human bard 5

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 41 (5d8+15)

Fort +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee rapier +5 (1d6/18-20)

Ranged dagger +5 (1d4/19-20)

Special Attacks bardic performance 15 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate [DC 15], inspire competence +2, inspire courage +2)

Bard Spells Known (CL 5th; concentration +8)

2nd (3/day)—*daze monster* (DC 15), *invisibility*, *sound burst* (DC 15)

1st (5/day)—*cure light wounds*, *disguise self*, *grease*, *sleep* (DC 14)

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 13), *ghost sound* (DC 13), *lullaby* (DC 13), *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*

TACTICS

During Combat Lullaby starts combat with a bardic performance to inspire courage in herself and her allies, then hangs back to support them with spells, starting with *daze monster*. If possible, she saves *sleep* for occasions where the PCs are in a group. If engaged in combat, she does her best to flank with allies, but she prefers to stay at range and rely on her magic. If she and the Roadkeepers defeat the PCs, they rob them of all their coins and jewelry but leave them alive; in this case, Hallen crosses back over the river to help them get back on their feet.

Morale If the PCs defeat her Roadkeepers or reduce Lullaby to less than 20 hit points, she realizes she's in over her head. She cries out, "Oh! Sorry... here, have my magic coin and leave me alone!" as she tosses the copper piece she was

flipping to the ground. The coin is not magic—she’s just trying to buy a few more precious seconds’ head start as she runs away. She casts *invisibility* on herself as she flees if she can.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 16

Feats Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Lingering Performance^{APG}, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +10, Knowledge (engineering) +7, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (nature) +7, Knowledge (nobility) +7, Perception +7, Perform (sing) +11, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +10, Swim +5

Languages Common, Varisian

SQ bardic knowledge +2, lore master 1/day, versatile performance (sing)

Gear +1 leather armor, daggers (4), rapier, lucky blue hat (*buffering cap*^{UE}), belt pouch, pearls (5, worth 50 gp each), 32 gp, 1 cp

ROADKEEPERS (2) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Pickpockets (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 264)

hp 5 each

TACTICS

During Combat These

Roadkeepers know that they’re going against the gang’s laws by helping Lullaby in this way, but they’re also convinced she’s going to be the new leader soon.

Traditionally, they don’t seek to kill their marks, since they know leaving dead bodies around is a sure way to increase local law enforcement efforts to stop them.

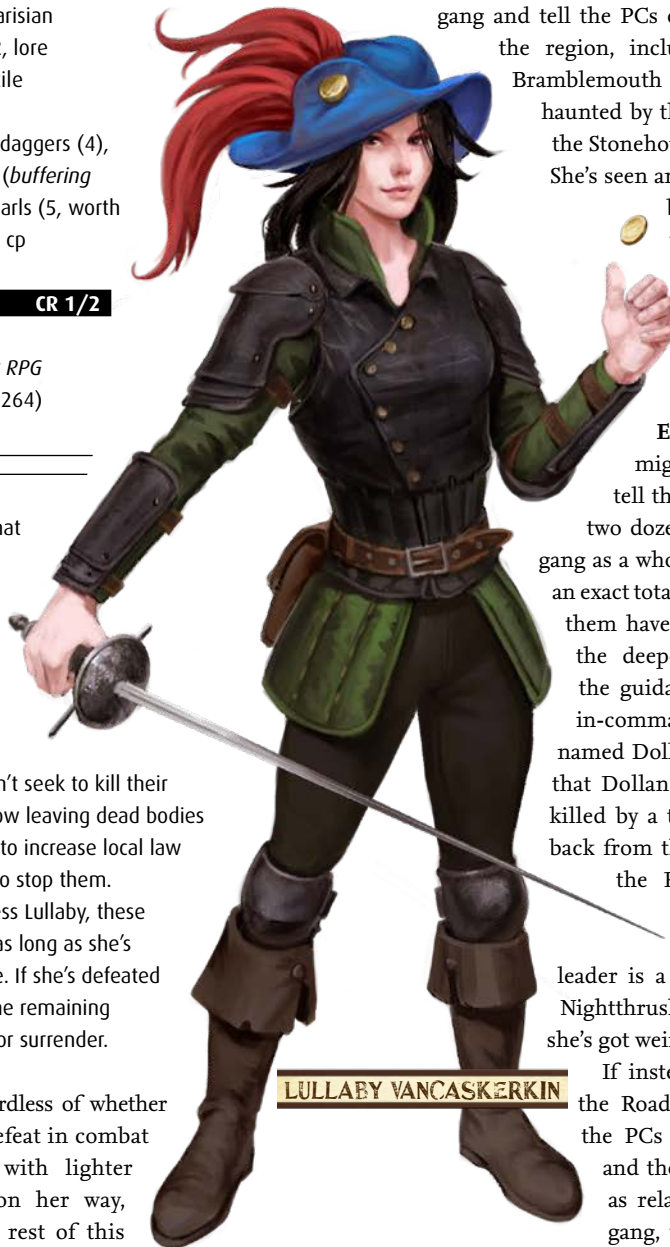
Morale Hoping to impress Lullaby, these thugs do not retreat as long as she’s alive and at their side. If she’s defeated or abandons them, the remaining Roadkeepers scatter or surrender.

Development: Regardless of whether she escapes from a defeat in combat or leaves the PCs with lighter pouches and goes on her way, Lullaby’s role in the rest of this

adventure is not scripted. In either event, she does not return immediately to the Stonehouse to join the Roadkeepers there. If she fled combat, she instead cuts back to hide out in Roderic’s Cove to nurse a grudge against the PCs. If the PCs paid her, she gives each of the Roadkeepers 2 gp apiece for their quiet and promises to cut them in again in future robberies, then doubles back to Roderic’s Cove to stash her gold in a spot of your choice. Lullaby could become a recurring foil for the PCs if you wish, following along in their shadow as their fame and story grows, hoping to scavenge from the results of their heroics along the way.

If, on the other hand, the PCs manage to capture Lullaby alive but grant her mercy, she’ll give up on her gang and tell the PCs everything she knows about the region, including the location of the Bramlemouth cave, the dangerous clearing haunted by the trailgaunt, and details on the Stonehouse’s above-ground defenses. She’s seen areas E3–E6 of the vault itself, but finds those chambers to be unsettling and hasn’t spent much time in there as a result. She can warn the PCs of the invisible monster barricaded in area E4 and of the glyph in area E6, but she is unsure what might lie deeper below. She can tell the PCs that there aren’t quite two dozen Roadkeepers in all in the gang as a whole (she’s actually not sure of an exact total these days), but that most of them have been focused on exploring the deeper chambers below, under the guidance of the group’s second-in-command, a dwarven alchemist named Dolland. She can also tell them that Dolland’s apprentice Sharlise was killed by a trap a while back but came back from the dead and still runs with the Roadkeepers as some sort of creepy “ghostie.” Finally, she warns the PCs that the leader is a spooky old woman named Nighthtrush, and that while she’s old, she’s got weird mystical powers.

If instead the PCs capture any of the Roadkeepers alive, they can tell the PCs about Mother Nighthtrush and the aboveground defenses, but as relatively new additions to the gang, they haven’t yet been down



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below into the vault itself and have only heard of Dolland by name (including rumors that his apprentice is a ghost).

C. The Vindictive Traveler (CR 4)

Making their way through the footpaths and trails through the Churlwood, the PCs find themselves following a network of trails that aren't quite roads. If they head straight south from the ferry, as Roderic's map suggests, chances are good they'll stumble into a large clearing within which a single dead oak tree looms. They may also be directed to this location by Lullaby.

The borders of this clearing are unusual in that they are well-tended, clear of brush, and strewn with gravel to form a circular road of sorts. A single dead oak tree looms at the center of the clearing, and something silver sparkles from one of the lower branches—what appears to be an amulet hangs there. The mutilated bodies of three recently slain people wearing the armor of the town watch from Roderic's Cove lie near the tree's roots.

Creature: This clearing is the haunt of an undead monster—one of the very first victims of the Roadkeepers and one reason their leader, Mother Nighthrush, has forbidden them from murder in their shakedowns. This creature is a trailgaunt, and it doesn't travel far from this location where it eventually perished a few years back after fleeing with a mortal wound into the woods from one of the first Roadkeeper robberies. No one learned the poor soul's name, and today the Roadkeepers merely call it the "vindictive traveler." They maintain the simple road around the clearing to keep the trailgaunt trapped inside, but under Mother Nighthrush's orders have never attempted to kill it. Their leader wants the thing kept around as a constant reminder to the Roadkeepers of the repercussions of murder.

The vindictive traveler cannot pursue foes across the road, but as soon as anyone steps across the barrier, the monster lurches up from the old oak's roots and shambles forward to attack. It fights until it is destroyed or there are no targets left to attack.

THE VINDICTIVE TRAVELER

CR 3

XP 800

Trailgaunt (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6* 264)

hp 25

Treasure: The silver amulet hanging from the branch once belonged to the vindictive traveler. Under Mother Nighthrush's orders, the Roadkeepers left it draped over a branch as an offering to the trailgaunt. The amulet itself is a *mind sentinel medallion*^{UE} that also functions as a holy symbol of Desna (even if it should ever lose its magic).

The bodies are indeed all that remains of the three guards who were sent into the Churlwood to seek the abducted dwarves, and were slain by the trailgaunt (their weapons all but unable to penetrate the monster's damage reduction). Each body still wears its chain shirt, carries a short sword, a light steel shield, and a shortbow with 10 arrows, along with a pouch of 5 gp. Returning these three bodies to Roderic's Cove earns the tearful thanks of Captain Julit Freson, who rewards the party for their kind service with 300 gp.

Development: Normally, those slain by a trailgaunt rise as trailgaunts themselves, but as the guards' bodies remained in sight of the road that encircles the clearing, they've remained quiet. Even if the PCs move quickly, though, it's likely that if they bring the bodies back to Roderic's Cove, the corpses won't be buried before the next sunset. At your discretion, if the bodies remain unburied and out of sight of a road, they will rise as trailgaunts. A character who succeeds at a DC 18 Knowledge (religion) check realizes this potential danger. Remember to roll a check for Audrahni once she learns of the bodies, as she is familiar with many forms of undead.

Story Award: If the PCs return the bodies to town, they earn 1,200 XP and 2 Victory Points.

D. BRAMBLEMOUTH DEN

So named for their tradition of wearing tangled lip piercings that usually don't get *too* infected, the Bramblemouth goblins have held this series of caves for generations. Until their brave and glorious new leader, Chief Cheektooth, took over (the previous chieftain was killed in a misunderstanding involving a hungry giant snake), the Bramblemouth goblins viewed the eerie caverns deeper below their own as taboo. Chief Cheektooth is nothing if not a jealous goblin, though, and when his goblins reported that a group of longshanks had moved in across the hill and were poking around in the old building, he grew envious of the glorious treasures the Roadkeepers were no doubt discovering.

He lifted the tribe's taboo (a process that first involved beating up quite a few frightened goblins) and ordered them to start clearing the rubble. The Bramblemouths make poor miners, though, and after collapses crushed a few skulls, Chief Cheektooth was forced to adjust his plans. He knew dwarves were great miners, and he knew that a small group of them regularly traveled the road along Churlwood's border, so he sent some goblins out to collect. The goblin chief thought his tribe could capture the dwarves and enslave them to assist in getting through the collapsed rocks that block their access to the vault, but as luck would have it, these particular captured dwarves are not much better at mining than goblins—a startling

development that has thrown Chief Cheektooth's plans into chaos. For the past several days, the Bramblemouths have been bickering and fighting as the chief's hold over the tribe begins to slip. Unfortunately for the PCs, nothing brings a goblin tribe together like the chance to defend their home against treasure-carrying adventurers!

The entrance to the Bramblemouth cave opens on the western slopes of the same low ridge in the Churlwood that the Stonehouse is located on. Lush and prickly blackberry vines creep across every surface and obscure the dark mouth of the cave if viewed from a long distance, but the stale smell of goblin sweat and the sight of smoke drifting up from the cave entrance makes locating area **D1** relatively easy.

Inside, the caves are dark except in area **D5**, where the goblins maintain their constantly burning (and constantly smoky) cook fire. Debris is scattered across the floor of the cave, though most of it has been swept against the damp walls. The clammy air inside the cave smells of animals, dung, sweat, and food in varying levels of spoilage.

D1. Entrance (CR 1/2)

Thick blackberry vines grow from the ground here and sneak up the walls of a ridge. Among the thorny vines, curls of smoke waft up from a cave entrance.

Creatures: The Bramblemouth goblins don't keep guards posted here at all times. A pair of goblins occupy the bramble blinds for a few hours at dawn and dusk, but outside of dawn and dusk hours, there's only a 30% chance that any guards are posted here. If they are, they hide in the bushes to either side of the entrance and wait until the PCs are in range and not obstructed by the forest's trees and brambles before firing. If reduced to half their hit points, the goblins flee into the cave to warn the others.

GOBLINS (2) CR 1/3

XP 135 each

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

hp 6 each

D2. Defensive Entry (CR 3)

The ceiling of this cave is awkwardly low, barely more than four feet in height. A pair of walls two feet high made from piles of rocks and broken masonry divide this larger cave into smaller areas. The air stinks of smoke, sweat, and worse.

The low ceiling of the cave entrance benefits the goblins and creatures of similar size. Medium or larger

creatures must hunker down in this room and are treated as if squeezing. The low stone walls in this room and elsewhere are used by the goblins for cover. Any attempt to clamber over one of these walls requires a successful DC 10 Climb check—failing it by 5 or more indicates that the wall has toppled. In this case, that square becomes difficult terrain and the climber falls prone while taking 1d3 points of damage.

Creatures: Two goblin guards are stationed here at all times. If they are overwhelmed and reduced to 7 or fewer hit points, they give out shrill whistles that call the goblin dogs from area **D3** to bound into the room to attack, likely covering the goblins' retreat deeper into the caves.

GOBLIN SNEAKS (2) CR 1

XP 400 each

Goblin rogue 2 (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 107)

hp 16 each

D3. Goblin Dog Pen (CR 3)

Stale air that stinks of animal fills this dark, rocky cave.

Creatures: Trained and bred by Nighteye, the tribe's most accomplished animal wrangler, the Bramblemouth's two goblin dogs lair in this cave. Pine straw and tattered remnants of cloth form beds for the creatures, which are well trained; they attack only when commanded, or if they see any non-goblins intruding in their den.

GOBLIN DOGS (2) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 9 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 157)

D4. Nighteye's Cave (CR 3)

This cave is roughly fifteen feet wide. A passage to the north leads into a larger chamber, and a low defensive wall partially blocks egress into this cave. Piles of dirty rags and pine straw form a large bed against the south wall.

Creatures: Although most of the Bramblemouth goblins have moved deeper into the cave system, the goblin animal trainer Nighteye claimed this chamber for herself to be closer to the surface and the goblin dogs. She shares this space with her wolf companion, Silver. Nighteye is a master of the Churlwood and knows the forest well. Her mother was the first goblin in the Bramblemouth tribe to befriend and train goblin dogs, and she took over the practice after her mother's death at the hands of a local harpy. Nighteye claims that her eerie blue eye can see twice as far at night than at day—a lie, but one that the other Bramblemouths believe.

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While Nighteye isn't powerful enough yet to have her own goblin dog companion, she hopes to achieve that glory some day soon.

NIGHTEYE **CR 3**

XP 800

Female goblin ranger 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)
NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +3 Dex, +1 size)

hp 30 (4d10+4)

Fort +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft.

Melee dogslicer +5 (1d4/19-20)

Ranged mwk longbow +11 (1d6/x3)

Special Attacks combat style (archery), favored enemy (humans +2)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +3)

1st—*gravity bow*^{APG}



TACTICS

During Combat Nighteye casts *gravity bow* on the first round of combat, then snipes at enemies from behind the cover of a low stone wall.

Morale Nighteye is obsessively protective of her goblin dogs and fights to the death in a frenzy if she witnesses any of the PCs hurting one of them. Otherwise, she'll stand her ground only long enough for other goblins to flee down to area **D5**, at which point she whistles to have the goblin dogs follow her down to the deeper caves as well.

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 20, **Con** 10, **Int** 8, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 18

Feats Endurance, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot

Skills Handle Animal +7, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +3, Knowledge (nature) +3, Perception +14, Ride +12, Spellcraft +3, Stealth +13, Survival +9

Languages Goblin

SQ favored terrain (forest +2), track +2, wild empathy +4

Gear breastplate, dogslicer^{ARG}, mwk longbow with 20 arrows, *eyes of the eagle*, bag of cracked gems worth 46 gp total

D5. Guard Camp (CR 3)

A small fire casts a flickering glow across this oblong cave, illuminating a haze of smoke that hangs in the ceiling. A low wall of rocks and broken masonry partially blocks the opening on the west side of the cave, and a tunnel in the east wall heads south. A number of piles of rags lie along the walls.

The tunnel to the east winds down to the south for about 100 feet before opening to area **F1**.

Creatures: Goblins assigned to guard duty and those who don't have a place to sleep in the large cave below spend their time here. This is also where most of the cooking for the tribe takes place, and half a dozen metal skewers sit propped against the rocks that ring the cook fire. It's also, by decree of the chief, the last stand—goblins quartered up here are expected to fight to the death to defend the lair. Currently, two goblins relax here, awaiting their shift in area **D2**, while four more sleep on filthy pallets of rags unless they've been woken by fights.

GOBLINS (6) **CR 1/3**

XP 135 each

Goblin warrior 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

hp 6 each

E. THE STONEHOUSE CAMP

Nestled under a forested hill in the Churlwood just southeast of Roderic's Cove is a hidden remnant of ancient Thassilon, one of several remote armories Runelord Alaznist maintained along her nation's borders. While

most of the complex lies buried, a single structure remains standing above ground on the hill's eastern slopes. This squat stone structure was once part of a cluster of buildings that stood atop Alaznist's hidden bunker. Though hidden in the thick wood, the camp isn't difficult to find if people are looking for it. A few worn wagon ruts in the forest floor show where the bandits have made their way to the camp.

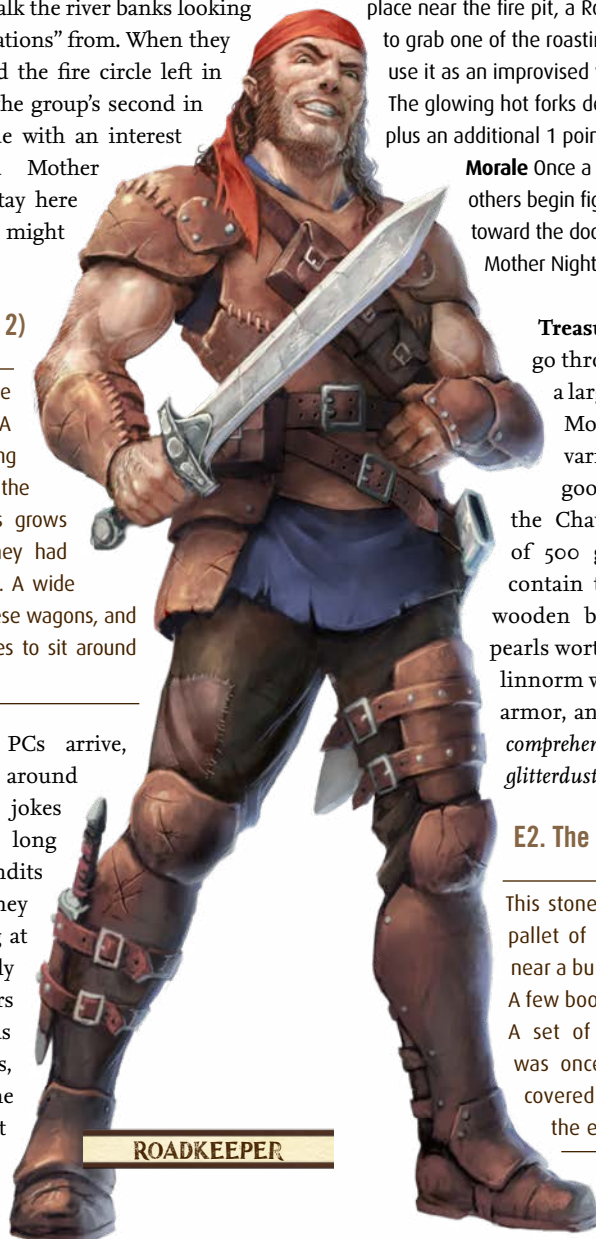
The place has attracted dozens of different opportunistic squatters over the years, but for the past few months it has served as a camp for the Roadkeepers. Led by an aged matriarch known as Mother Nightthrush, the bandits prey on those passing through the Churlwood and down the Chavali River.

The number of Roadkeepers in the camp varies, as they roam the Churlwood and walk the river banks looking for travelers to "collect donations" from. When they came upon these ruins and the fire circle left in place by previous bandits, the group's second in command, a dwarven rogue with an interest in Thassilon, convinced Mother Nightthrush to let them stay here for a season so that they might explore the ruins below.

E1. Roadkeeper Camp (CR 2)

A campsite spreads on a gentle slope in this hillside clearing. A single, ancient stone building and four old wagons give the place some shape. Tall grass grows around the wagons, as if they had been in place for a long time. A wide fire pit sits in the middle of these wagons, and a few thick logs provide places to sit around the fire.

Creatures: When the PCs arrive, three bandits are lounging around the campfire, telling jokes and roasting rabbits on long metal forks. Once the bandits notice the PCs, though, they immediately stop laughing at the story and grow deadly serious. The Roadkeepers rise to their feet, hands ready to draw their weapons, demanding to know who the PCs are and why they're at "our camp." No matter the PCs' reply, the bandits demand they leave the



ROADKEEPER

area "unless you want your throats slit." If the PCs don't back away into the woods, the toughs advance on them, one slow step at a time. If the PCs still hesitate, the toughs attack immediately once two of them are flanking a PC—their rule against murder suspended when it comes to defending their home.

ROADKEEPERS (3) CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Cutpurse (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 144)

hp 10 each

TACTICS

During Combat The Roadkeepers try to maneuver in such a way as to set themselves up for flanking. If the combat takes place near the fire pit, a Roadkeeper can take a move action to grab one of the roasting forks out of the hot coals and use it as an improvised weapon to attack one of the PCs. The glowing hot forks deal 1d6 points of piercing damage plus an additional 1 point of fire damage.

Morale Once a Roadkeeper falls in combat, the others begin fighting defensively as they back toward the doors to the Stonehouse, calling out to Mother Nightthrush for aid.

Treasure: If the PCs take the time to go through the wagons, they can find a large collection of valuable items. Most of them hold clothing, various items, and common trade goods, stolen from traders along the Chavali River and worth a total of 500 gp. In addition, the wagons contain the following items: a carved wooden box containing 24 freshwater pearls worth 10 gp each, a gold statue of a linnorm worth 120 gp, a suit of full plate armor, an *oil of magic weapon*, a *scroll of comprehend languages*, and a *wand of glitterdust* (9 charges).

E2. The Stonehouse (CR 3)

This stone room is bare except for a small pallet of blankets nestled into the corner near a burning candle set in a silver holder. A few books are stacked next to the candle. A set of crumbled stairs leads to what was once the second story, its opening covered by a thatched roof to keep out the elements.

The titular Stonehouse has stood here for over

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10,000 years. It was once buried under the earth with only a secret entrance protruding above ground, but thousands of years of erosion have exposed the upper reaches of the structure to the air. The secret door in the northeastern corner of the room requires a successful DC 20 Perception check to notice, and it opens to a stairway leading down into darkness. A lantern (normally kept unlit) hangs on a hook just inside the secret door.

Creature: If she was oblivious to the combat in the camp, Mother Nightthrush is laying down on her blankets reading a book by candlelight. She has her own wagon outside, but prefers the safety of the Stonehouse and stays here to protect the secret entrance to the complex below. But chances are high that she hears the PCs fighting the Roadkeepers outside, in which case she prepares by casting her spells and then waits just inside the door for the PCs to investigate the building.

If the PCs manage to get Nightthrush to talk, she is reluctant at first and offers no valid information. If threatened with death, she tells the PCs what she thinks they want to hear, but never mentions the secret door or the complex below. If the PCs came here looking for the kidnapped dwarves, she truthfully tells the PCs that she doesn't know anything about that. If they came here looking for something to put Roderic's unquiet spirit to rest, she becomes slightly nervous, suspecting that they are aware of the Vault. In this case, she tries to lie to the PCs, telling them that she heard that there was a cave along a ridge to the south that supposedly opens into an underground chamber. This is false, but she hopes that it encourages the PCs to spare her life and leave the camp. If asked about whether Corstela visited this camp, she feigns ignorance of who the PCs are talking about until they spend considerable time describing the woman, and only then does Mother Nightthrush admit to having met and spoken with her. The old woman adds that Corstela did come to the camp a few weeks ago but was turned away, adding, "That woman had more sense than you."

MOTHER NIGHTTHRUSH **CR 3**

XP 800

Female venerable human oracle 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 42)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init -2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +2 deflection, -2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 31 (5d8+5)

Fort +0, **Ref** -1, **Will** +7

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk cold iron dagger +1 (1d4-3/19-20)

Oracle Spells Known (CL 5th; concentration +9)

2nd (5/day)—*cure moderate wounds*, *hold person* (DC 17), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 17), *sound burst* (DC 16)

1st (7/day)—*bless*, *color spray* (DC 16), *cure light wounds*, *entropic shield*, *sanctuary* (DC 15), *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *read magic*, *stabilize*

Mystery heavens

TACTICS

Before Combat Mother Nightthrush casts *entropic shield* and *shield of faith*.

During Combat Mother Nightthrush casts *color spray* as soon as she has two or more PCs in the spell's area, uses *sound burst* to damage and deafen the PCs, and tries to shut down dangerous-looking PCs with *hold person*. If the Roadkeepers outside retreat and call for help, she cracks the door slightly and casts *bless* to aid her allies before stepping out to assist them.

Morale If cornered and near death, she casts *sanctuary* and attempts to flee down the stairs to meet up with the others in the complex below. Having already made peace with her long life, Mother Nightthrush fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 4, **Dex** 7, **Con** 9, **Int** 11, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 8

Feats Combat Casting, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Focus (illusion), Toughness

Skills Diplomacy +11, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (planes) +4, Knowledge (religion) +4, Perception +11, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +8

Languages Common

SQ oracle's curse (clouded vision), revelations (awesome display, interstellar void)

Combat Gear *wand of cure light wounds* (29 charges); **Other Gear** chain shirt, mwk cold iron dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +1, spell component pouch, 60 pp, 6 gp

Treasure: The silver candlestick is a little tarnished, but with some simple cleaning it could be presentable enough to fetch 15 gp. Stacked near this candle are three books. The first is a collection of Varisian fables with a ratty cover and a nearly nonexistent binding. The second, bound in red leather, is a guide with illustrations of various plants with medicinal benefits and recipes for poultices, salves, tinctures, and teas that can be made from the plants. Referencing this book just before attempting a Heal check grants a +1 bonus on the check. The third book is a thick volume with a thin wooden cover and red silk covering the binding. Inside, two dozen bawdy stories play out for the reader's delight, complete with woodcuts illustrating the acts mentioned in the stories. All three books are worth a total of 50 gp.

E3. Landing

A single lantern sits in the center of the floor. A door to the west is boarded up with six sturdy pine planks secured into the stone doorframe with iron spikes. An empty silver saucer sits in front of the door, accompanied by a few bread crumbs, and an arched opening leads to the south.

The stairs leading from area E2 lead down nearly 80 feet as the stairs switch back from landing to landing before arriving here.

E4. Barricaded Room (CR 2)

The PCs can pry the planks off the door (Strength DC 11) to gain access to this room.

The ceiling of this room has partially caved in, and a crack splits through the northwest corner of the ceiling and reaches up toward the surface.

Creature: When the Roadkeepers found the vault level below the Stonehouse, they came across this room and its invisible inhabitant. After a couple of the curious and cautious bandits fell to its powerful bite, the others fled. While the invisible creature fed within, they boarded up the door and vowed to never again go inside.

The invisible monster still dwells within, a phantom fungus that has grown so much over the years that it can't climb back up through the crack in the ceiling. Forced to subsist on vermin that drop down through the crack above, it hungrily lunges at anyone who enters the room. Lack of nourishment has left the fungus in a weakened state, so it takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, and damage rolls, and it has fewer hit points than normal.

STARVING PHANTOM FUNGUS CR 2

XP 600

hp 20 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 219)

Treasure: In the corner of the room, a small coffer is affected by a permanent *invisibility* effect and a *magic aura* spell to prevent it from radiating magic. In addition, the chest is locked (Disable Device DC 20; DC 35 if invisible) and the key has long since been lost, though the PCs can smash the coffer (hardness 5, hp 8, break DC 14). The coffer contains the following items: a *lesser empower metamagic rod*, five bags of diamond dust (worth 500 gp each), seven slim ingots of platinum worth 1,000 each, and a curled series of scrolls containing the spells *daylight*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *glitterdust*, *lightning bolt*, *mage armor*, *pyrotechnics*, *scorching ray*, *shatter*, *shout*, and *unseen servant*.

E5. Colonnade

This thirty-foot-long colonnade has seen better days but is in surprisingly good condition. A few cracks mar the marble floors and walls, yet the six smooth columns that hold the ceiling up are in immaculate condition.

Development: Normally this room is empty, but if the PCs made a lot of noise banging on the boards to area E4 or fighting the phantom fungus there, a pair of Roadkeepers from area E6 hide behind pillars in this room, ready to ambush the PCs when they move through the room into area E6.

E6. Descent Into the Ruin (CR 3)

A lantern sits near a set of stairs leading down into darkness. Near the north wall of this chamber, opposite the stairs, is a statue carved from red stone that depicts a woman with wild hair and her face set in a sneer, holding a clenched fist out in front of her. Four smooth columns hold the cracked ceiling aloft.



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This room contains a set of stairs that leads down to area **F12**. The statue of the angry woman is a depiction of Alaznist, the runelord of wrath. It can be identified as such with a successful DC 25 Knowledge (history) check. Once, Alaznist could animate this statue from afar to observe those coming and going from the vault, but she has long since lost interest in this location. The statue still radiates faint divination magic, and a PC who succeeds on a DC 20 Spellcraft check determines that the statue likely once served as a remote observation device.

Creatures: A group of four Roadkeepers stand guard in this room, playing cards for small wagers to pass the time on their shifts since their guardian services are rarely called for. If they hear noises in area **E3**, though, two of them prepare an ambush in area **E5** while the others stand guard before the stairs leading down.

ROADKEEPERS (4)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

Cutpurse (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 144)

hp 10 each

Treasure: Near the lantern is a deck of cards and a few small piles of copper coins (138 cp in all).

F. ALAZNIST'S ARMORY

Buried deep beneath the Churlwood, this complex was once part of an armory for Alaznist's border watch. Most of the structure was broken after Earthfall, and the ravages of time have left most of the underground structure in ruins. The cave ceilings in the west part of the cave system are 15 feet high, and the air seems cooler this far down. Natural cavern walls are interrupted by ancient masonry that stretches through the ceiling. Although this is essentially a single cavern, the following encounters have been broken into separate areas. Unless the PCs are exceptionally stealthy or find a way to approach this situation with diplomacy, there is a strong chance that they might end up facing multiple waves of angry goblins.

F1. The Gauntlet (CR 3)

The tunnel opens into a much larger cave, the ceiling of which arches to a height of fifteen feet overhead. The air here is cool and less pungent. Several long, low walls of broken stone transform the cave into something of a maze, while what appear to be ruined buildings built into the cave walls stand further to the south.

Creatures: Six goblins stand guard here. In addition to their normal weapons, the goblins are also armed with vials of alchemist's fire that they're eager to use.

GOBLINS (6)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

hp 6 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

Combat Gear alchemist's fire (3)

F2. Central Chamber (CR 4)

This large chamber is the center of the Bramblemouth goblins' push into Alaznist's armory. They've only recently managed to remove much of the rubble choking the tunnels into the vault and have yet to make any progress beyond area **F6a**.

Creatures: The goblin snake Ssesseleck, who serves as Chief Cheektooth's advisor, keeps her nest on the stairs to on the west side of the chamber, where she keeps an eye on the working goblins and the prisoners in area **F5**. If the PCs make it to this area, she slinks around near the walls, hiding from the PCs until a good chance to strike provides itself. Otherwise, she stays hidden until the PCs get close to the imprisoned dwarves in area **F5**.

SSESSELECK

CR 4

XP 1,200

Female goblin snake sorcerer 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 132)

CE Small aberration

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+4 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

hp 39 (6 HD; 4d6+2d8+16)

Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +9

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 5 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee bite +6 (1d4+3)

Special Attacks goblin breath, serpent's fangs

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +8)

At will—serpentfriend

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 4th; concentration +8)

2nd (4/day)—*scorching ray*

1st (7/day)—*charm person* (DC 15), *hypnotism* (DC 15), *mage armor*, *magic missile*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *mage hand*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*

Bloodline serpentine

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 19, **Con** 14, **Int** 11, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18 (can't be tripped)

Feats Ability Focus (goblin breath), Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Lunge, Skill Focus (Bluff)

Skills Bluff +12, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +7,

Knowledge (local) +4, Perception +9, Stealth +15, Swim +10

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ wild empathy +10

Gear *pale blue rhomboid ioun stone*

F3. Chieftain's Den (CR 4)

Formed by ancient walls on three sides, this chamber serves as the home of Chief Cheektooth, leader of the Bramblemouth goblins. Chief Cheektooth meets here in privacy with his two most trusted lieutenants, the goblin snake Sesseleck and the goblin Crumble.

Creatures: Cheektooth, the new chieftain of the Bramblemouth goblin tribe, wears a pair of dog fangs pushed through his lips like tusks, proud trophies he harvested not long before he took the tribe's throne. Unless alerted to invasion, Chief Cheektooth is relaxing in his room eating some roasted banana slugs. He leaps to combat to defend his tribe and to retain his "valuable" captives.

CHIEF CHEEKTOOTH

CR 4

XP 1,200

Male goblin cleric of Zarongel 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)
NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

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

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +1 size)

hp 41 (5d8+15)

Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft. (30 ft. in armor)

Melee +1 flaming dogslicer +8 (1d4+2/19–20 plus 1d6 fire)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 2/day (DC 11, 3d6)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +8)
6/day—fire bolt (1d6+2 fire)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +8)

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 16), *dispel magic*, *fireball*^P (DC 16)

2nd—*cure moderate wounds*, *cure moderate wounds*,
produce flame^P, *spiritual weapon*

1st—*burning hands*^P (DC 14), *command* (DC 14), *divine favor*,
protection from good, *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *resistance*

D domain spell; **Domains** Fire, Travel

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 13, **Int** 8, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 16

Feats Combat Casting, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +3, Knowledge (religion) +3,
Perception +3, Ride +3, Spellcraft +4, Stealth +11

Languages Goblin

SQ agile feet (6/day)

Gear mwk chainmail, +1 flaming dogslicer^{ARG}, iron holy symbol of Zarongel, spell component pouch

Treasure: Cheektooth keeps his tribe's treasure in a battered, moldy coffer that sits unlocked near where he sleeps. The coffer contains three gold bars, each weighing 1 pound and worth 50 gp. Scattered among the

DEFEATING THE ROADKEEPERS

Of the three gangs in this adventure, the Roadkeepers are the most diverse in their leadership. If the PCs can capture, redeem, or kill all three of their leaders (Lullaby Vancaskerkin, Mother Nightthrush, and Dolland Reggelore), the remaining Roadkeepers swiftly disband. In this event, the PCs earn a reward of 1,200 XP and 4 Victory Points.

gold bars are dozens of precious stones worth a total of 496 gp.

Story Award: If the PCs defeat Chief Cheektooth, the Bramblemouth goblins soon disband, and the PCs earn 2 Victory Points.



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F4. Resting Chamber

Dozens of moldy and lice-ridden blankets and hides lie along the walls of this chamber; a shabby curtain separates this area from the central chamber.

This is where many members of the Bramblemouth tribe sleep, particularly those who guide the actions of the tribe. If the PCs manage to get into the cave quietly, they'll find most of the goblins posted down here asleep in their nests, otherwise this filthy room is empty.

F5. Detention (CR 4)

Crumbling walls stand out among the rocky cave walls here. Manacles are driven into the wall with a sturdy metal spike.

Creatures: A pair of haggard dwarves, the missing teamsters the PCs may have been looking for, sit slumped against the wall, their arms stretched above their heads and shackled in manacles.

Chief Cheektooth trusts very few of his Bramblemouth goblins, but one he does implicitly trust in is Crumble—

though this is mostly because he's afraid of her. Crumble, whose snagged teeth are rotting away, is a clever (if somewhat disillusioned) goblin. Despite being able to trace her lineage in the Bramblemouth tribe for generations, she's been ostracized by most of the other goblins for eschewing cultural taboos. Many Bramblemouth goblins distrust her and think she might be "curse poisoned" or other such nonsense, but they recognize that Chief Cheektooth values the strange goblin. Currently, Crumble has been tasked with guarding the captive dwarves, and since she can speak Common, she's been further charged with extracting information out of them in regards to engineering and mining, a frustrating task as the teamsters have no knowledge of such skills.

CRUMBLE

CR 5

XP 1,600

Goblin frog-talker (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 110)

hp 36

Development: The dwarves are malnourished and terrified, but otherwise unharmed. Kaggie Shalestep and her husband Toagus are thankful for any help the PCs can

provide them. Both are 1st-level warriors; use the stats for recruits on page 266 of the *Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* for them if needed (although neither has any armor, weapons, or gear other than the tattered clothes they wear).

Story Award: If the PCs rescue the dwarves and return them safely to Roderic's Cove, the PCs earn 1,200 XP and 2 Victory Points.

F6. Ambassador Entrances

A five-foot-diameter space, ringed by arcane runes, sits on the floor at this room's center.

When the goblins first uncovered area **F6a**, they were nervous about the circle of writing on the floor. It took them days to muster up the courage to bully one of their own into stepping into the ring, whereupon she vanished immediately. The goblins assume that the words ate her, and none have set foot within the ring of runes since.

The runes are a teleportation system that transports users into the western half of area **F7**. Area **F6b** is similar to this room, save that those who step into its ring of runes are teleported into the eastern half of area **F7**.

F7. Safe Meeting Chamber (CR 1/3)

White marble lines the walls of this rectangular room. A circle of runes adorns both the east and west walls.

This meeting chamber allowed two disputing parties to safely meet and discuss resolution without a risk of physical attacks. One person would go into each portal room to the east and west, then use the circle of runes to transport themselves into this chamber. The empty room space is separated by a *wall of force* (CL 20th). Any words spoken by an occupant of this room are repeated on the other side, whereupon they are also translated into the native tongue of anyone who happens to be listening. The wall of force was once permanent, but the thousands of years of magical decay throughout the complex has weakened the wall—it has only hardness 4 and 20 hit points as a result—any attack that penetrates its hardness causes the wall to shudder and flicker, obviously on the verge of destruction.

The chamber only allows up to four people inside at a time, two on each side. If two people already occupy one of the spaces, the portal doesn't operate until one of the people leaves the space or is dead. While in the space, creatures are under the effects of *zone of truth* and *protection from chaos*. There is always breathable air, but creatures inside still need to sleep and eat and drink.

To exit the chamber, characters need only touch the circle of runes, at which point they are transported back

to the corresponding entrance (the west runes lead to **F6a**, while the east runes to **F6b**).

Creature: A lone goblin named Munkle sits forlornly in the western side of this room after she was bullied into the ring of runes. Her terror of writing has only intensified since her journey, and she's afraid to touch the runes on the wall as a result. This, combined with her inability to break through even a defective *wall of force*, has left her trapped within the room for days. Nearly starved to death, Munkle drops to her knees to beg for her life and for food (preferably pickles) if anyone enters either side of the room—she's tried this tactic to no avail on the few times Roadkeepers have appeared in the other side of the room. She's seen them leave by touching the ring of runes (and can tell the PCs this to perhaps give them a hint on how they can escape themselves), but hasn't tried touching the ring on her side for fear that it'll just send her somewhere worse.

GOBLIN **CR 1/3**
XP 135
hp 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)

F8. Guard Post (CR 3)

A double door stands on the western end of this wide hallway. Halls leave this area to the north, east, and south.

Creatures: A group of four Roadkeepers loiter in this wide hall near the double door, tasked with ensuring that Dolland isn't bothered while he works on getting into the vault within. If they hear the sound of battle or a call for help nearby, one hammers a code on the door in order to alert Dolland to potential trouble before all four guards move to investigate.

ROADKEEPERS (4) **CR 1/2**
XP 200 each
Cutpurse (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 144)
hp 10 each

F9. Trapped Meeting Room (CR 5)

A marble table rises from the floor, and a small crate sits in the southeastern corner of this rectangular chamber. Cobwebs stretch across parts of the room, and debris and dust litters the floor.

Traps: This room contains a trio of traps created by the gearthost Sharlise (see area **F12**). The traps haven't been disabled by Dolland yet since the Roadkeepers never go into this room. The poisoned dart trap is triggered when a creature steps into the first square into the room. The wall scythe trap is triggered when a creature steps into

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the southeast corner to inspect the crate, and the burning hands trap is triggered when a creature steps into the southwestern corner of the room. The crate itself once contained treasure, but it was looted and moved to area **F10** by the Roadkeepers some time ago.

POISONED DART TRAP **CR 1**

XP 400

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** none

Effect Atk +10 ranged (1d3 plus greenblood oil)

BURNING HANDS TRAP **CR 2**

XP 600

Type magic; **Perception** DC 26; **Disable Device** DC 26

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (alarm); **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*burning hands*, 2d4 fire damage, DC 11 Reflex half); multiple targets (all targets in a 15-ft. cone)

WALL SCYTHE TRAP **CR 3**

XP 800

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 15; **Disable Device** DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic reset

Effect Atk +20 melee (2d4+6/×4)

F10. Dolland's Lab

A marble table stands in the middle of this room, its surface strewn with alchemical equipment, sheets of paper, a few potions, and an ancient-looking suit of splint mail armor. A bedroll lies in the eastern alcove.

Dolland has taken to sleeping in this room lately, and has been using the table to not only work on his alchemical creations but also to track his attempts at both cracking the code to the vault and understanding the trapsetting patterns of his ex-apprentice. A brief perusal of these notes reveals the nature of his relationship with the gearghost (see area **F12**) and lists the traps in area **F9**.

Treasure: Dolland has completed a number of potions during his time down here. Each of the following potions sitting on the table is labeled: *potion of barkskin*, *potion of bull's strength*, *potion of cat's grace*, *potion of darkvision*, *potion of fire breath*, *potion of invisibility*, *potion of protection from arrows*, and *potion of reduce person*. The suit of armor on the table is +1 *splint mail* armor. This armor, a *scroll of protection from evil*, and a masterwork cestus are all treasures Dolland looted from the crate in area **F9** (as also indicated in his notes on the table).

F11. Stonehouse Entrance (CR 3)

Three marble columns still support the roof of this room, but a fourth column has toppled into an ancient-looking collapse in the southeast corner of this roughly octagonal room, leaving a heap of rubble partially blocking a cave-like chamber to the east. A flight of stairs leads upward to the south.

The stairs lead up nearly 80 feet to area **E6**, switching back from landing to landing twice along the way.

Creatures: A group of four Roadkeepers lounge around this room, partially paying attention as they chat. They take a -4 penalty on Perception checks to notice stealthy PCs approaching unless the alarm's been raised.

ROADKEEPERS (4) **CR 1/2**

XP 200 each

Cutpurse (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 144)

hp 10 each

F12. Sharlise's Grave (CR 5)

The north wall of this room seems to have suffered a recent collapse, leaving open bedrock where a northern wall once was. Four thick columns stretch up to support the ceiling fifteen feet above, likely preventing the collapse from being even larger.

The collapse itself occurred soon after the Roadkeepers first started exploring the place, and it claimed the life of Dolland's apprentice Sharlise. Her body remains buried under the rubble in the middle of the room.

Creature: One of the Roadkeepers' more unpredictable allies is the gearghost Sharlise. Once Dolland's apprentice, she was the first of the Roadkeepers to perish in the vault after she triggered a trap that collapsed a portion of this room. When she rose from death as a gearghost, she continued to treat the Roadkeepers as allies, but for a time her trapsetting antics caused problems. Dolland took it upon himself to disable the unwanted traps, but he has left a few active or else Sharlise gets angry and plays pranks—sometimes deadly pranks—on them. Dolland maintains an interesting relationship with the gearghost and is the only one here who communicates with the unfortunate thief. Her stories of her time among the living are disjointed and incongruent, as if all her memories have been muddled. Dolland believes that if he was able to lessen her confusion and tendency towards anger and violence, he might be able to learn how to access the vault, something that would win him greater prestige among the clan than just being the most skilled at disabling traps.

SHARLISE

CR 5

XP 1,600

Gearghost (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 123)

hp 52

Treasure: For now, the Roadkeepers have left Sharlise's remains buried, but the magical items she carried can give her body's presence away if *detect magic* is used. Digging her remains out takes a half-hour of work, and while her other gear has been destroyed, her *ring of feather falling* and her *boots of elvenkind* remain intact, as do the 44 gp in her belt pouch.

Story Award: To put Sharlise to rest permanently, all of her traps in this complex must be deactivated and her remains must be anointed with holy water in an area that has been blessed by a *hallow* spell. Doing so is likely beyond the PCs' capabilities, but if they find a way to do so now or later, award them an additional 1,600 XP for the good deed.

F13. Vault Room (CR 4)

This room appears to be nothing more than a hallway surrounding a 15-foot-by-10-foot room. A double door exits the room to the east and a single door allows passage to the north. The western reaches are choked with rubble. A large stone door on the south side of the central section bears a carving of a seven-pointed star. Seven round knobs, each etched with their own runes, each protrude from a point of this central star-shaped carving.

The 3-foot-thick hewn stone walls of the central structure are made of magically treated reinforced masonry, and the door into the central chamber is a magically treated stone door (hardness 16, hp 120, break DC 48, *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* page 411) with a complex combination lock. In order to unlock the door, one must rotate each of the seven runes for the seven schools of Thassilonian magic to the correct rotation, at which point the door opens silently—once opened, the door closes and locks automatically after an hour has passed. While seven consecutive successful DC 34 Disable Device checks can unlock this complex lock over the course of seven consecutive minutes of work, such a feat is just beyond Dolland's skill (and likely beyond the PCs' capabilities as well, though it was not *quite* beyond Roderic's skill).

Dolland has instead taken to the frustratingly slow process of systematically trying every possible combination, but since each of the seven runes has five different positions, there are a staggering number of possible combinations to attempt (78,125, to be precise). Even in a scenario where Dolland can manage to get

12 hours of solid work done trying combinations in sequence, it'll take him well over 3 months of work to go through them all. Of course, he's hoping that he'll hit the right combination to open the door well before he has to try all 78,125 possible combinations, but he hasn't yet and his frustration is only growing.

If the PCs have the combination to this lock from Roderic's map (see page 20), one of them can open the lock in 4 rounds (since manipulating a dial to the correct position is a move action).

Creatures: Dolland Reggelore shares the role of sub-commander of the Roadkeepers with Lullaby Vancaskerkin, but the two don't really get along well, and as such they've unofficially split their roles. While Dolland remains focused on the work down here, Lullaby turns her attentions outward to their more traditional roles as highway robbers.

Although the Roadkeepers haven't found much in the way of loot in this area, Dolland was heartened by evidence that, at one point, this complex was stocked with many more treasures, and he's banking on the fact that the central vault here could still be filled with wealth. The door is particularly vexing, though, and even though he's been keeping meticulous notes on his attempts to break the combination, so far he's met only frustration in his attempts to justify his theories about hidden treasuries. He ignores warnings and alarms throughout the facility to continue working on the door's lock, but if he's interrupted here, he abandons his work to attack in a rage.

What none of the other Roadkeepers know about Dolland is that he's something of a double agent. In his investigation of Thassilonian relics over the past several years, Dolland became intrigued by fragments of lore and information about a mysterious ancient sect—the Peacock Spirit. While his interest in the ancient religion never quite blossomed into faith, Dolland kept his knowledge a secret until a recent trip to Roderic's Cove to secure a new set of masterwork thieves' tools to aid in his vault-breaking attempts (a purchase that would ultimately end up not helping in the long run), where he noticed a member of the Order of Resplendence and recognized elements of the Peacock Spirit in her apparel.

Dolland was intrigued and, taking a risk, contacted the order's leader. Corstela was delighted to receive him, and when she learned the Roadkeepers were investigating a Thassilonian vault, she welcomed Dolland into the order as a double agent. In return for his promise to smuggle out to her anything of interest discovered in the vault, Corstela has promised Dolland a place in Peacock Manor once he fills the *bag of holding* she's given him to help sneak out the vault's most valuable and portable contents.

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DOLLAND REGGELORE

CR 4

XP 1,200

Male dwarf alchemist 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 26)

NE Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 46 (5d8+20)

Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1; +2 vs. poison, spells, and spell-like abilities, +4 vs. poison

Defensive Abilities defensive training

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

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

Ranged acid bomb +5 (3d6+3 acid) or bomb +5 (3d6+3 fire)

Special Attacks bomb 8/day (3d6+3 fire, DC 15), hatred

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +8)

2nd—*cure moderate wounds*, *fire breath*^{APG} (DC 15), *invisibility*

1st—*bomber's eye*^{APG}, *cure light wounds* (3), *shield*

TACTICS

During Combat Dolland fights defensively, drinking a *shield extract* on the first round of combat and then using *fire breath* on the second round while trying to make his way to allies. If reduced to 15 hit points or less, he drinks an extract of *invisibility* and then attempts to retreat, heal, and regroup after gathering allies. If no allies remain to be found, he'll cut his losses entirely and flee the area to join Corstela at Peacock Manor.

Morale If reduced to 7 or fewer hit points, Dolland drops his weapon and begs for mercy, promising to tell the PCs what they need to know if they let him live. He tries to escape as soon as he can, though, fleeing to Peacock Manor if he gets away.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15 (19 vs. bull rush or trip)

Feats Brew Potion, Throw Anything, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Craft (alchemy) +11 (+16 to create alchemical items), Disable Device +11, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +4, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (local) +4, Perception +8, Sense Motive +1, Sleight of Hand +9, Spellcraft +11, Use Magic Device +9

Languages Common, Dwarven, Giant, Thassilonian, Varisian

SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +5), discoveries (acid bomb, precise bombs [3 squares]), mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural armor, 50 minutes), poison use, swift alchemy

Combat Gear acid (3), antitoxin (2), blue whinnis (3), terinav root (2); **Other Gear** +1 *studded leather*, mwk short sword, formula book, masterwork thieves' tools, *bag of holding* type I (contains a brief note [see Handout #1 on page 40] from Corstela and a bejeweled silver holy symbol of the Peacock Spirit worth 150 gp), 35 gp

F14. Alaznist's Vault

When the door to this area is opened, the PCs are presented with an opaque screen of dark fog in the opening (courtesy of the permanent *mage's private sanctum* within), which may give the PCs pause before stepping through into the vault.

Smooth white marble lines the walls of this chamber, its faces carved with spiraling lines of softly glowing runes. The chamber's floor and ceiling are likewise adorned with these ominous glowing runes. An elegant but empty sword display made of redwood stands in the center of the room, while an iron chest sits against the wall to the west. Everything in the chamber is covered in a fine layer of ash.

DOLLAND REGGELORE

As Thassilon's end drew near, Alaznist executed several daring plans to give herself an advantage when she later emerged from the Eye of Fury in Hollow Mountain. Among these was an attempt to collect the other runelords' *Swords of Sin* and hide them away, but she managed to secure only one before she was forced to retreat from Earthfall. This was the *Sword of Pride*. Leaving a clever imposter in its place, Alaznist hid *Baraket* away in this vault, the walls of which were infused with potent magic to ensure that the sword could not be magically located. When Roderic managed the impressive stunt of breaking into the vault, he had no idea of the treasure that awaited him within, but as soon as he plucked *Baraket* from its stand, the vault's trap activated, filling the chamber with fire. Though Roderic evaded the worst of the fire, the explosion nearly slew him, and he fled the vault with *Baraket* in hand. Roderic suffered nightmares for weeks afterwards due to his near-death experience and never returned to the vault as a result.

Since Alaznist couldn't cast abjuration spells, she was forced to rely upon a *wish* to create the *mage's private sanctum* effect (CL 20th), which she then made permanent in this room. Although the runes and layers of ash look ominous, they are largely harmless now, as the trap that once warded this room has not been reset. A character who studies the runes and succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check recognizes them as elements of a fiery explosion trap that must be repaired before it is reset (which would render the runes once again invisible).

An investigation of the sword display case reveals a single plaque at its base, bearing a single word written in Thassilonian: "Baraket."

Treasure: Although *Baraket* has been taken from this chamber, one more valuable treasure remains within, held within the iron chest. This chest is unlocked and untrapped, and within, on the rotted remains of a once-fine red velvet cushion, lies a set of ornate gauntlets made from noqual (a rare skymetal that has potent antimagic qualities) and strips of leather. The metal and leather bear hundreds of softly glowing Thassilonian runes. This is a set of *runeward*ed gauntlets, a minor artifact Alaznist stole in her early years as ruler from Runelord Zarve (a prior runelord of envy) that allows for the handling of dangerous intelligent weapons like *Baraket* without allowing their willful intellects to manipulate the carrier.

RUNEWARD GAUNTLETS		MINOR ARTIFACT
SLOT hands	CL 20th	WEIGHT 2 lbs.
AURA strong abjuration		

A set of *runeward*ed gauntlets helps to protect the wearer from the influence of intelligent magic items, an effect that immediately becomes apparent to a wearer when the

gauntlets are first put on. While worn, the gauntlets suppress all magical qualities of a single intelligent weapon carried. They have no effect on nonintelligent magic weapons or nonweapon intelligent magic items. *Runeward*ed gauntlets make spellcasting more difficult when worn, imparting a 10% spell failure chance to all spells cast while worn (not just arcane spells). This spell failure chance does not stack with spell failure chances from other worn items.

DESTRUCTION

If a creature wears a set of *runeward*ed gauntlets and then plunges his hands into the runeforge pool, where the gauntlets were created ages ago, any blow struck against the submerged gauntlets by a character currently controlled by an intelligent weapon of a different alignment than the wearer of the gauntlets destroys the gauntlets (and the wearer's hands). Missing hands can be restored via *regenerate* or similar effects.

PART 4: HUMBLING PRIDE

When Corstela first started building Peacock Manor and gathering the interested parties into what would become the Order of Resplendence, she hosted informal, private gatherings where small groups of people in Roderic's Cove could talk among themselves and debate topics of philosophy, history, and the arts. It was these meetings that first birthed the idea of the Order of Resplendence, and some of the first regulars to Corstela's salons are among the highest-ranking in the order.

As some point in the adventure, the PCs should learn that the order is responsible for the deaths of the members of the Horned Fangs who died when *Baraket* flared to life. They may also suspect that Corstela obtained the weapon and has dangerous plans. It's possible the PCs might learn of this information very early in the adventure if they manage to track down and befriend young Kynae sooner than expected, in which case the PCs might first approach Peacock Manor at a level where they'll be too underpowered to face the challenges within. If the PCs pick a fight at Peacock Manor before they're at least 3rd level (the adventure expects them to be 4th level if they adopt a violent approach), the Order of Resplendence is unlikely to take them seriously, and if the PCs flee the manor, the order's members will call out insults as the heroes run away but won't pursue them after a first failed attack.

G. PEACOCK MANOR

Three separate houses once stood where Peacock Manor stands now, but after Corstela bought all three during

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Dolland,

I look forward to your return, and to the wonders you've gathered for me from the vault. Again, you need not fear reprisals from your fellow Roadkeepers once you return, for the defenses here at Peacock Manor will protect you well. The magic bag is yours to keep, my gift to you. Best of luck on cracking the code on that door-in the meantime; I'll continue to seek alternate methods among my contacts in Magnimar for magical solutions. And I've a line on an adamantine pick that will help, if my contact in Riddleport can follow through on her promises. In any event, we shall talk again soon, I pray!

-C.

HANDOUT #1

her first year in town, she hired builders and laborers to connect the three houses into one sprawling manor. The building that resulted has a confusing layout, and those who expect a more traditional design may find it difficult to navigate. This can lead to dynamic fights in which combatants come from multiple directions or break off from the fight only to circle around to a more advantageous location. Chasing someone through this house should be a complex ordeal.

During the day, the rooms within Peacock Manor are illuminated with natural light. Those studying or needing extra light use one of the plentiful oil lamps set about the manor. At night, these lamps are placed on holders along the walls of the manor. The ceilings inside the manor are a spacious 12 feet in height. The inhabitants keep to normal hours for the most part, meaning that activity is high during the day, but there are few people awake late at night.

Due to the bustling nature of having dozens of people living under one roof, the inhabitants of Peacock Manor are hardly static. Provided in the encounter areas in this part of the adventure are approximations of where the PCs might encounter members of the order in ideal conditions. You can maintain this dynamic by tracking where various cult members might be at any point in the day, or keep it simple and throw challenges at the PCs at any point during their investigation, based on what feels right for the narrative.

Internal doors within Peacock Manor cannot be locked unless otherwise noted. All external doors can be locked, but are left unlocked during the day unless otherwise noted. A locked door can be unlocked with a successful DC 30 Disable Device check or with a manor key, copies of which are carried by all order philosophers and other NPCs as indicated.

REPERCUSSIONS OF VIOLENCE

Fights against the more violent Horned Fangs in their secret hideout in the Underflume are unlikely to be noticed by the citizens of Roderic's Cove. Even if the fights are witnessed somehow, most folks will assume the Horned Fangs brought the violence upon themselves. This is not the case for the Order of Resplendence. While the locals view the order as eccentric and even a bit spooky, it has never publicly been involved in mayhem, and the locals think of its members as mostly harmless.

As a result, if word gets out that the PCs have been laying siege to the Manor, the people of Roderic's Cove will start to worry that their so-called "heroes" are just another gang of violent thugs. If the PCs accomplish their goal in Peacock Manor secretly, or in one fell swoop without needing to make multiple (likely increasingly obvious) forays into the building, this violence will probably not impact their reputation. If word starts to spread, at your discretion, that the PCs are attacking a harmless (if strange) "cult of weird scholars," then their effective Victory Point total is halved. The PCs can remove this penalty by proving that the Order of Resplendence had nefarious plans all along, such as by revealing Corstela's association with the cambion Kantulin or her involvement in the Horned Fangs' slaughter.

ORDER HIERARCHY

The Order of Resplendence has three tiers within its organization. At the lowest tier are its initiates, newcomers to the cult who are little more than scholars curious to investigate their shared history and acquire some of the order's wisdom. Initiates serve as the order's students and are here to learn, but they ironically have not yet learned the order's true goal or purpose. There are 18 initiates at Peacock Manor in all.

ORDER INITIATE

CR 1

XP 400 each

Female or male human commoner 2/expert 1
LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 13 each (3 HD; 2d6+1d8+2)

Fort +0, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +2 (1d3+1)

TACTICS

During Combat Initiates try to avoid combat if possible, and generally only attack if ordered to fight by a philosopher or leader in the group. Otherwise, when confronted with violence, they cower and try to hide or flee.

Morale An initiate runs away from combat if reduced to fewer than 4 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 13, **Con** 11, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Improved Unarmed Strike

Skills Bluff +5, Craft (any one) +2, Diplomacy +5, Heal +3, Perception +6, Profession (any one) +3, Sense Motive +3, Stealth +3

Languages Common

The second tier in the order are its philosophers. These individuals have been fully inducted into the order—they know Corstela's goals and have bought into them completely, but don't know about her cambion advisor. The philosophers serve as the order's teachers, researchers, and enforcers. They are charged with guiding the initiates' studies, poring over various books, scrolls, and journals Corstela has collected over the years to look for more clues about Thassilon's legacy and scribing copies of valuable works for safekeeping, and serve as the manor's guards and defenders. Unlike the initiates, the philosophers do not hesitate to fight the PCs if combat is needed. There are eight philosophers at Peacock Manor in all.

ORDER PHILOSOPHER

CR 3

XP 800

Female or male human monk 4
LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 monk, +2 Wis)

hp 29 (4d8+8)

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6; +2 vs. enchantments

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +6 (1d8+3) or
unarmed strike flurry of blows +5/+5 (1d8+3)

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

TACTICS

During Combat If possible, a philosopher's first attack is a stunning fist, as she seeks to incapacitate her enemy swiftly rather than allow a fight to be drawn out. The philosophers do not seek to slay intruders unless they are given no other choice, and they do not pursue foes off the manor grounds.

Morale Philosophers fight to the death when defending Peacock Manor.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 8

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

Feats Ability Focus (stunning fist), Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Stunning Fist

Skills Acrobatics +9 (+13 when jumping), Diplomacy +3, Intimidate +6, Perception +9, Stealth +9

Languages Common

SQ fast movement, ki pool (4 points, magic), maneuver training, slow fall 20 ft.

Gear *lesser talisman of arrow protection*^{0A}, *lesser talisman of freedom*^{0A}, *lesser talisman of warrior's courage*^{0A}

The order's third tier is also the smallest, consisting of only the order's three leaders: the cambion advisor Kantulin, Headmaster Alden Tilaresk, and Corstela herself. Kantulin remains in area **G22** at all times unless Corstela retreats upstairs, in which case she calls him to her side to protect her in area **G23**. Headmaster Tilaresk likewise rarely leaves his quarters and is likely to be in area **G15** obsessing over his project even if the alarm is raised, unless he's taking part in a lecture or ritual in area **G9**.

Of the three, Corstela is the most mobile. If the PCs arrive when a lecture is underway in area **G9**, she'll be located there. At most other times during the day, she's either in area **G10** speaking to a few philosophers or in area **G22**. At night, she retreats to her private quarters (area **G23**) to study or sleep, but once she's aware that the PCs are on to her or seek to claim *Baraket* for their own, she throws propriety and routine out the window. While she ultimately seeks self-preservation, Corstela feels a sting of pride at the intrusion and dedicates herself to eradicating the pesky invaders who have forced their way into her home. If violence breaks out in Peacock Manor and Corstela is aware of it, she retreats to her room to obtain her gear and then stalks through the manor after the PCs, *Baraket* in hand.

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SEEKING THE SWORD OF PRIDE

Of all the members of the order, only two know that Corstela wields the *Sword of Pride*—her cambion assistant Kantulin and Headmaster Tilaresk.

Beyond the order's leaders, five Order of Resplendence philosophers who were with Corstela during the slaughter before this adventure began know that she owns a strange, invisible-bladed sword capable of "releasing angry ghosts," but they are unaware of the rapier's true nature. Word of the event spread quickly among the order, and today, even the philosophers who weren't at the fight know what happened. Most of them have agreed to keep silent about the incident, and even though a few are nervous about Corstela's true motives, they say nothing if asked about *Baraket*, the slaughter, or a magic rapier with an invisible blade unless they're magically compelled to reveal the truth or their attitude shifts to helpful and they can be convinced to give dangerous aid (in which case they'll admit that the event took place but insist it was self-defense, a weak argument if ever there was one).

If the PCs interrogate any initiates about the *Sword of Pride*, the low-ranking members are clueless. Though they've heard of the slaughter as news of it has circulated throughout town, they remain blissfully unaware of the fact that Corstela was directly responsible.

G1. Southern Quarters (CR 4)

This small outbuilding is connected to the house via the decking that rings the structure. Dark, thorny vines have grown all over to cover the exterior.

When building Peacock Manor, this building was added last as Corstela realized that she'd need more space to house those who flocked to her growing cult. This building housed three initiates at one point, but tragedy struck and now the shack's only inhabitant haunts the grounds of the manor.

Two lovers, Cornena and Lavera, came to Peacock Manor to study with Corstela in the early days. But after being assigned to this outbuilding with a third initiate named Alvah, Lavera grew fond of Alvah and the relationship between Cornena and Lavera fell apart. When Cornena discovered the affair, she spiraled into dangerous self-loathing and eventually killed herself in this room. When news of the suicide spread, the other initiates refused to live here. Corstela was frustrated at first, but since there are still enough rooms for everyone else, she's left this building vacant—or so she thinks.

Creature: A bitter and self-loathing undead monster tore itself free from Cornena's body, dug its way out of her grave, and crawled all the way back here to lurk in

the room where she took her life. This grisly creature is a *lovelorn*. It normally keeps to itself, nestled in the dark and tangled confines of these abandoned quarters. When not in a despondent state, the *lovelorn* sometimes wanders the manor, climbing up the sides of the building to the acolyte and student rooms, where it torments the cultists. So far, those few cultists who've spotted the thing have had a hard time convincing the others that a "creepy, gory spider the size of a cat" has been lurking about the place. The *lovelorn's* attachment to this area is fierce, and the undead ferociously defends the room if anyone steps into it, fighting until destroyed.

LOVELORN CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 37 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 182)

G2. Initiates' Quarters (CR varies)

Small beds, nothing more than simple cots, line the walls of this room. Each bed has a small, simple footlocker shoved below.

Creatures: During evening hours, the order's initiates sleep here, one to a bed. During the day, the initiates are attending to their duties elsewhere in the manor and these rooms are vacant. The footlockers contain only personal items of little value.

ORDER INITIATES (2 OR 3) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 13 each (see page 41)

G3. Entrance Hall (CR 3)

Varisian landscapes hang on the walls of this wide hall. Double doors on the north and south ends of the hall allow access to this space, and a number of other doors lead to other places in the manor. A set of varnished wooden stairs rises to the second level of the manor.

A wide set of darkly varnished stairs climbs up and to the right, leading to the second-story dormitories (area **G14b**). The closet under the stairs contains buckets, brooms, rags, and other cleaning supplies for tending to the manor.

Creature: An Order of Resplendence philosopher sits attentively on a chair just inside the southern doors here at all times, except when patrolling this hall once every half hour by pacing from the front doors to the back. The guard isn't interested in visitors but doesn't immediately resort to violence or aggression unless someone breaks into the manor with force or refuses to leave if turned away. A character can convince the initially

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indifferent guard to take a message to Corstela or to ask if she's interested in granting the PCs an audience with a successful DC 19 Diplomacy check. In this case, the guard asks the PCs to wait in the receiving room (area **G5**) while he seeks out Corstela. Whether or not she agrees to meet with the PCs is up to you; see area **G5** for more details.

ORDER PHILOSOPHER

CR 3
XP 800
hp 29 (see page 41)

G4. Salon (CR 5 or 3)

Comfortable chairs and low tables sit scattered throughout this lush parlor. A few bookcases line the walls.

Corstela and Alden use this room to conduct informal meetings where those invited engage in discourse over philosophy, history, and art. This often involves people from town not yet inducted into the order. During these talks, Corstela serves fine foods, wines, and spirits, many of which are typically unseen in such a small town. She hopes that by showing the townsfolk that education can lead to the finer things in life, she can gather more people to her philosophy of Varisians rising to their rightful place of power.

Creatures: When the PCs arrive, two initiates and a philosopher occupy this room, discussing theories of what lies within Crystilan, a Thassilonian ruin of an ancient city encapsulated within a crystal dome. If the PCs are uninvited, they'll raise the alarm, and the philosopher attacks and orders the two initiates to aid him in the fight.

In the event that the PCs enter this room at night, only a single philosopher is found reading by candlelight, which may be visible beneath the door from outside. If the philosopher in area **G3** calls out for assistance, the philosophers in this room are the first to respond.

ORDER PHILOSOPHER

CR 3
XP 800
hp 29 (see page 41)

ORDER INITIATES (2)

CR 1
XP 400 each
hp 13 each (see page 41)

G5. Receiving Room

In the southwestern corner of this room is an elegant table and several chairs, one of which is far more elaborate and comfortable than the others. Another pair of common chairs have been tucked against the northern wall.

Unless a meeting is on the agenda, this room is unoccupied. When unoccupied, the door leading to area **G7** is locked with a simple lock (Disable Device DC 20; any manor key can open the lock).

Development: If Corstela agrees to meet with the PCs here, they'll need to wait 2d6 minutes before she arrives. If she refuses, another philosopher arrives in her place to tell the PCs their audience has not been granted and they are to leave the building at once.

Corstela arrives with two philosophers as guards and uses this opportunity to size the PCs up and hopefully to deflect their interests away from the order and onto the Horned Fangs. She explains that the Order of Resplendence is a peaceful philosophical society, and that the Horned Fangs are bullies who enjoy antagonizing their intellectual superiors. She encourages the PCs to seek out the Horned Fangs wherever they are hiding and confront them directly, and she can direct them to Creekside since she knows their leader Jana frequents the place. During the talk, she also asks the PCs about their accomplishments, feigning interest when in fact she's trying to gauge their tactics, strengths, and weaknesses. She'll dismiss the PCs after she grows tired of the conversation or once she fears they've learned too much. Mentioning *Baraket* startles her, but she quickly replies, "Weaponry doesn't interest us, but those Hooked Fang thugs are a different story!" If the PCs refuse to leave or grow belligerent, she retreats back to area **G9** and lets the philosophers do their best to escort the PCs out by force.

G6. Kitchen (CR 3)

Delicious smells, full of spice and seasoning, waft from the manor's kitchen. Its cupboards and food preparation tables are laden with ingredients and utensils.

Creatures: During the day, two initiates work in the kitchen (area **G6a**) preparing food, while at night, there is only a 15% chance of anyone being in the kitchen, though the initiate responsible for baking the day's bread fires up the oven and begins preparing dough 2 hours before dawn.

If confronted here and pressed into combat, an initiate can use a number of nearby items as improvised weapons. Cleavers and knives lie on countertops, and hefty pans and skillets sit nearby, some on a hot stove! The initiate can also throw heavy earthenware canisters, or use the dirty trick combat maneuver to blind an intruder with flour or spices. Edged culinary tools deal 1d4 points of slashing or piercing damage, while hefty items like skillets and jars deal 1d4 points of bludgeoning damage. A pan or skillet on the stove deals an additional 1d4 points of fire damage on a successful hit.

ORDER INITIATES (2)**CR 1****XP 400 each****hp** 13 each (see page 41)

Treasure: If the PCs sort through the more mundane sundries stored in the pantry (area **G6a**), with a successful DC 15 Perception check they find the following valuable culinary delights: 3 bottles of Wolf's Ear whiskey (worth 20 gp each), a silver canister of saffron stamped with a label in Vudrani (worth 25 gp), various rare spices and dried herbs (worth 75 gp in all), 12 bottles of fine Chelish wine (worth 15 gp each), a paper bag of rare dried mushrooms found only in a particular part of the Ashwood (worth 30 gp), and a jug of a milky fermented spirit distilled by the Shoanti of the Storval Plateau (worth 20 gp).

G7. Scriptorium (CR 5)

Dark wood paneling covers the walls of this large library. Three long tables surrounded by plenty of chairs fill most of the central part of the room, while two round tables sit in the north end of the library, where windows fill all of the exterior walls and allow plenty of reading light during daytime hours. A balcony looking down from the upper level affords a clear view of this part of the library.

This large library is where the initiates study the lore Corstela has collected, or else work to transcribe older, more fragile tomes for preservation of the knowledge within. While there are some bookshelves in this room, most of the books themselves are stored in the smaller libraries (areas **G8a** and **G8b**) to the northwest.

Creatures: During the day, four initiates study in the scriptorium. In the evening, there is a 20% chance that there are 1d3 initiates studying into the dark hours of the night. These initiates are bolstered by their numbers and demand intruders leave at once. They'll attack if they're ignored, but as soon as one is killed, knocked out, or otherwise incapacitated, the others flee or surrender.

ORDER INITIATES (4)**CR 1****XP 400 each****hp** 13 each (see page 41)**G8. Library (CR 4)**

The same paneling that covers the walls of the larger library extends here. Hundreds of books and curios fill the shelves that line this room, broken only by two windows on the western wall. A fine rug covers the floor.

Most of the books used by those living in Peacock Manor are kept in the outer library (area **G8a**). There are

many books covering a wide range of topics. A small cabinet by the windows contains a complete catalog of the books stored in this room, plus a ledger recording books that were allowed outside of the library, who borrowed them, the date they are due back, and a space for a check mark when the book is returned. The cabinet also holds plenty of paper and writing materials.

The door to the inner stacks (area **G8b**) is kept locked (Disable Device DC 30). The smaller room beyond holds Corstela's most prized repositories of Varisian lore. A desk against the north wall is covered in scrolls, papers, and stacks of books, many with page markers and others left open. Varisian and Thassilonian lore fills most of these tomes and papers, some complete with maps of mysterious ruins and ancient landmarks. Some marked references discuss the *Swords of Sin*, particularly *Baraket*, *Sword of Pride*.

Trap: Corstela paid for a piece of parchment to be warded with a *sepia snake sigil* spell, then placed it in a closed folder of sensational ancient history and salacious sketches of Varisian dancers, hoping that those topics would draw the eye of an inexperienced researcher. Anyone captured by the trap is imprisoned in the manor and guarded by Her Pridebound Assistant (see area **G22**).

FALSE NOTES**CR 4****XP 1,200****Type** magic; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 28**EFFECTS****Trigger** spell (*sepia snake sigil*); **Reset** none**Effect** spell effect (*sepia snake sigil*, CL 6th); single target(anyone reading the false notes); **Reflex** DC 14 negates**G9. Lecture Hall (CR varies)**

Stacks of benches and stools stand against the north wall of this spacious room. A quarter-circle stage stands three feet off the ground in the southeastern corner of the room, and a multicolored curtain hangs above it. A set of double doors stand in the south wall, and three other doors to the west offer egress. A curved set of darkly varnished wooden stairs climbs to the floor above. Within the curve of the stairs stands a pedestal holding a statuette.

The Order of Resplendence meets here often for group meetings, lectures, and ritual ceremonies. These ceremonies mainly consist of Corstela or other higher-ranking cultists reading from tomes about ancient lore, rallying speeches about how Varisians must claim their rightful heritage, and once every now and then discussing (but not actually performing) an occult ritual.

The curving staircase leads up to area **G14a**.

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Creatures: This room is typically empty at night. During the day, there's a 25% chance that either Headmaster Tilaresk or Corstela herself is giving a lecture to a group of two philosophers and eight initiates, and a 75% chance that the room is empty.

At night the room is always empty, save for on certain days each month when the Order of Resplendence holds "mock rituals" in which they act out the casting of ancient occult rituals associated with Thassilon. Whether or not such a mock ritual is taking place when the PCs arrive during the night is up to you, but if so, the room is packed with Corstela, Alden, and all eight of the order's philosophers (initiates are not allowed to attend mock rituals). In such a case, even though the mock ritual is nonfunctional (since Corstela has discovered only a few fragments and had to improvise and estimate the missing portions), any PC who observes the ritual and succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft check recognizes it to be some form of swift travel ritual intended to grant a target the ability to teleport a number of times. According to Corstela's research, the name of this particular ritual is the *viridian path* (the actual name of the ritual is the *viridian transcendence*, and in time, once the PCs reach the third and fourth adventures in *Return of the Runelords*, they'll be much more familiar with how the cultists of the Peacock Spirit use the *viridian transcendence* to travel swiftly).

How the members of the order react to an intrusion into a lecture or mock ritual depends on the PCs. Their initial outrage and shock at an interruption results in the leader (either Corstela or Alden) angrily ordering the PCs to leave at once. If the PCs don't leave, the leader has any present philosophers take actions to forcibly escort the PCs out. If the PCs still resist, combat is inevitable, in which case any initiates present run for cover.

If a fight breaks out, Corstela, if not present at the outset, arrives before the end of the fight, bearing *Baraket*. A brawl that begins here has a high chance of spilling into adjacent rooms, and could swiftly overwhelm PCs who are low level or simply unprepared. If the PCs decide to retreat, the order calls insults at them as they flee but does not pursue on the first attack; if the PCs return and attack again, the order won't stop fighting until the PCs leave the manor grounds.

**CORSTELA ROSTRATA****CR 5****XP 1,600**

hp 41 (see page 64)

ALDEN TILARESCK**CR 2****XP 1,200**

hp 31 (see page 47)

ORDER PHILOSOPHERS (2 OR 8)**CR 3****XP 800 each**

hp 29 each (see page 41)

ORDER INITIATES (8)**CR 1****XP 400 each**

hp 13 each (see page 41)

Treasure: The stone statuette on the pedestal is decorated with gold and precious stones; it is elegantly carved depiction of a winged humanoid figure dressed in a robe made of peacock feathers. The figurine is masculine but its face is featureless. A successful DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check identifies this as a representation of the Peacock Spirit, but also that no two texts seem to agree on exactly what or who the Peacock Spirit was—the religion has been dead since the fall of Thassilon thousands of years ago. In any event, the statuette is worth 2,500 gp.

G10. Lounge (CR 5)

Dark wood paneling covers the walls in this room, and a soft rug covers the entire floor. A number of stuffed leather chairs and low tables are placed about the room, and an L-shaped counter holds a few bottles of wine and spirits, along with plenty of glasses and other accoutrements.

The leadership of the Order of Resplendence meets in this room prior to ceremonies and group addresses to discuss strategy, but otherwise this room serves as a lounge for those of high status in the organization.

Creatures: During daytime hours, when no lectures are underway in area **G9**, a pair of philosophers relax in this room. This area is considered off-limits to initiates, and as such the

philosophers here object to any intrusion. Once they recognize that the PCs certainly don't belong here, they leap to defend their organization's secrets.

In the 2 hours after sunset, there's a 25% chance that 1d4+1 philosophers are relaxing here, along with either Corstela or Headmaster Tilaresk.

ORDER PHILOSOPHERS (2) CR 3

XP 800 each
hp 29 (see page 41)

G11. Dining Hall

Two long dining tables fill most of the space in this room. Several lanterns hang from hooks in the walls, ensuring the place is well lit during meal time.

Development: The Order of Resplendence doesn't hold rigid meal hours, so its initiates and philosophers are left to take their meals as they wish. During the day, there's a 25% chance that 1d4 initiates and 1d3-1 philosophers are present in this room, talking quietly and enjoying breakfast, lunch, or dinner. The dining hall is empty at night.

G12. Philosophers' Quarters (CR 4)

This room contains two beds and a small dresser. A footlocker is tucked under each bed.

Creatures: At night, the two philosophers that occupy each of these rooms can be found sleeping. During the day, they are attending to their duties. The footlockers contain only personal items of little value.

ORDER PHILOSOPHERS (2) CR 3

XP 800 each
hp 29 (see page 41)

G13. Initiates' Suite (CR 6)

A number of chairs and low tables fill this room. A half dozen paintings and sketches of ancient and fantastic monuments cover the room's walls.

This suite of four rooms gives order initiates a place to congregate and socialize among themselves. Area **G13a** is a lounge for group discussion, the walls of which are decorated with paintings of Thassilonian monuments. Area **G13b** is a smaller room set up more for debates. Area **G13c** is a smaller study for quiet conversation, while area **G13d** is a washroom and restroom.



Creatures: During the day, six initiates are spread out through these rooms. There's no reason for anyone other than initiates to be here, and if they spot intruders, they demand they leave. A show of force sends the initiates scurrying for the nearest philosopher.

ORDER INITIATES (6) CR 1

XP 400 each
hp 13 each (see page 41)

G14. Upper Hall

This central hallway connects the initiate quarters and the headmaster's room. Stairs in the corner of area **G14a** lead down to area **G9**, while the stairs in area **G14b** lead down to area **G3**. Area **G14c** is a large storeroom for linens, tools, and cleaning supplies.

G15. Headmaster's Room (CR 4)

Simply appointed, this room contains a bed and a small dresser.

Creature: The most senior student in the Order of Resplendence, Alden Tilaresk, serves as headmaster and is responsible for the philosophers and initiates. While he wasn't present during the slaughter, Corstela has brought Alden in on the events and has his full support.

During the evening, Headmaster Alden Tilaresk can be found in this room. If the PCs are sneaking into Peacock Manor at night and move through the hallways connecting to the acolyte and initiate rooms, the headmaster is likely to think one of the junior members of the order is out of their room after curfew and come investigate. During the day, the headmaster is leading studies or attending to duties in the manor.

ALDEN TILARESK CR 4

XP 1,200
Male half-elf rogue 1/sorcerer 4
NE Medium humanoid (elf, human)
Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge)
hp 31 (5 HD; 4d6+1d8+10)

Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3; +2 vs. enchantments
Defensive Abilities fated (+1); **Immune** sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee mwk dagger +3 (1d4/19-20)
Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6
Sorcerer Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +7)
6/day—touch of destiny (+2)

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Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 4th; concentration +7)

2nd (4/day)—*mirror image*

1st (7/day)—*alarm, identify, magic missile, shield*

0 (at will)—*arcane mark, detect magic, light, mage hand, message, read magic*

Bloodline destined

TACTICS

Before Combat If he has a chance before a fight, Alden uses his *wand of mage armor* on himself.

During Combat Alden casts *mirror image* on the first round of combat, followed by *shield* on the second. Thereafter he remains mobile and attacks with *magic missile*, recasting

mirror image whenever he's down to only one image left.

Morale Alden has wholeheartedly embraced the order's tenets, and he is too proud to back down from a fight.

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 16

Base Atk +2; CMB +2; CMD 15

Feats Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Skill Focus (Intimidate)

Skills Bluff +7, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (history) +10, Perception +9, Spellcraft +10

Languages Common, Elven, Thassilonian, Varisian

SQ bloodline arcana (gain luck bonus on saves when casting personal-range spells), elf blood, trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *cloak of the hedge wizard* (illusion)^{UE}, *wand of mage armor* (40 charges); **Other Gear** mwk dagger, spell component pouch, silver holy symbol of the Peacock Spirit worth 25 gp, 4 pp, 9 gp



ALDEN TILARESKE

G16. Roof Walk

This outdoor wooden walkway connects the upper floor of the southeastern section of the house with that of the northeastern one. Wrought iron railing runs along each side of the walkway to prevent falls.

G17. Eastern Upper Hall

This hall connects to the rooms where the initiates and philosophers stay. The stairs lead down to the northern patio, while the small rooms to the north and east are privies.

G18. Western Upper Hall (CR 5)

This open hall looks out over the scriptorium below, the edge decorated with an elegantly carved wooden railing.

Creatures: Two philosophers are stationed in this hall at all times to watch over Corstela's quarters and the scriptorium below. No one should be intruding here without being escorted by Corstela, so the philosophers raise the alarm immediately if they spot the PCs.

ORDER PHILOSOPHERS (2) CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 29 each (see page 41)

G19. Private Dining Room

An oval table ringed by wooden chairs fills this diamond-shaped room.

Corstela, members of the upper ranks of the Order of Resplendence, and important guests sometimes take their meals here in private to discuss matters.

Treasure: A cabinet in the southern closet contains an elegant and expensive set of silverware worth 350 gp.

G20. Empty Guest Room

This room contains a pair of unused beds and nightstands.

Currently, no guests are staying at Peacock Manor.

Development: This is the room that Corstela gives over to Dolland if he manages to escape the PCs and join her at Peacock Manor.

G21. Secure Storage (CR 5 and CR 4)

The door to this room is stronger and more durable than others in Peacock Manor (hardness 8, hp 30, break DC 28). It appears to be a stout wooden door, but it has been reinforced with steel on the back and lined with a thin layer of lead. A sturdy lock (Disable Device DC 30) keeps this door held tight. A *glyph of warding* has also been placed on the door (see Traps below). Beyond the door, the room is empty save for a single case, which is also trapped.

Traps: A *glyph of warding* protects the door. Only Corstela or Kantulin can pass through this door without setting off this trap. Headmaster Tilaresk and all of the philosophers are aware of the trap and avoid this room, though they all remain curious as to what it holds.

The weapon case against the southern wall of the room is also trapped to emit a blast of force against anyone opening the case without first uttering the passphrase “Highest Glory” in Thassilonian. Only Corstela and Kantulin know this passphrase.

GLYPH OF WARDING CR 5

XP 1,600

Type magic; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28

EFFECTS

Trigger spell; Reset none

Effect spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast glyph], 3d8 sonic damage, Reflex DC 17 half); multiple targets (all creatures within 5 feet)

FORCE BLAST TRAP CR 4

XP 1,200

Type magic; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset none; Bypass passphrase

Effect spell effect (6d6 force damage, Reflex DC 14 half); multiple targets (all creatures in a 10-foot radius burst)

Treasure: Corstela is horrified by what happened when *Baraket* flared to life, so she’s kept it in this area to limit its influence on her, something that displeases

the flamboyant weapon. *Baraket* is stored in a lead-lined case secured with a strong lock (hardness 10, hp 60, break DC 28, Disable Device DC 35). Corstela carries the key to this case. The lead lining keeps anyone from casually detecting the magic of the item stored within. See page 51 for details on *Baraket, Sword of Pride*.

G22. Secret Assistant’s Suite (CR 5)

Hidden from casual view, this room serves as the quarters for Corstela’s most secret assistant. Area **G22a** is a lounge and **G22b** is a bedroom.

Creature: Known also as “Her Pridebound Assistant,” the cambion Kantulin feeds Corstela hints about legends and lore and encourages her to explore the wonders of illusion magic. He lives in this room and tries to stay out of the way unless he travels the halls of Peacock Manor in disguise. Many of the cultists have no idea that an outsider shares their home.

The two met long ago, and hit it off over discussions of history and the magical arts. During the early months of their friendship, Corstela had no idea that her new friend was a cambion. The reveal was a bit shocking at first, but Corstela maintained her composure and over time became more comfortable with the idea that one of her most trusted confidants was a creature of the Abyss—a choice that, in time, will likely see Corstela’s alignment shifting to chaotic evil as her “friend” continues to manipulate and influence her.

KANTULIN, HER PRIDEBOUND ASSISTANT CR 5

XP 1,600

Male cambion illusionist 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 75)

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+2 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 55 (7 HD; 4d6+3d10+25)

Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +8

Defensive Abilities Immune electricity, poison; Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; SR 13

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 longsword +7 (1d8+2/17–20), claw +1 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks sadistic strike, sinfrenzy (pride)

Cambion Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +6) 3/day—*command* (DC 14)

1/day—*charm person* (DC 14), *death knell* (DC 15), *enthrall* (DC 15)

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +8)

7/day—*blinding ray*

Illusionist Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +8)

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2nd—*glitterdust* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *minor image* (DC 17), *mirror image*

1st—*mage armor*, *protection from good*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*, *silent image* (DC 16)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *prestidigitation*

Opposition Schools divination, necromancy

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 17, **Con** 16, **Int** 18, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 21

Feats Combat Casting, Deceitful, Power Attack, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (illusion)

Skills Acrobatics +9, Bluff +11, Disguise +11, Intimidate +9,

Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (planes) +12, Knowledge (religion) +10, Perception +11, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +12

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Infernal, Thassilonian; telepathy 30 ft.

SQ arcane bond (*ring of protection* +2), extended illusions (2 rounds)

Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +1 longsword, *ring of protection* +2, spellbook

G23. Corstela's Suite

The door to this room is locked (Disable Device DC 20); Corstela holds the only key to this room.

This room is lushly appointed with dark-stained wood furniture upholstered in plum velvet. A long desk stretches from the north wall, behind which sits a high-backed chair. A table built into the southeast corner of the room holds crystal decanters of wine and spirits along with a collection of delicate goblets.

The door to the northwest is slightly ajar and opens into a private commode. The door to area **G23b** is kept locked (Disable Device DC 20); Corstela holds the only key to this room, which contains a large bed neatly made with plush bedclothes, a dark wooden armoire, and a small cushioned sofa.

During the evening, Corstela can be found sleeping in her bed or relaxing in her lounge. If Peacock Manor is on alert and Corstela is elsewhere in the house, she might return to this area to retrieve important items to help her fight back against the PCs' invasion of her home and base of operations.

Treasure: The armoire contains the following: an obsidian statue of a long-legged elephant worth 200 gp, *eyes of the eagle*, a *scroll of summon monster III*, a cold iron longsword lacquered an iridescent violet and wrapped in a velvet tapestry, an encrusted jewelry box containing 2,100 gp worth of fine jewelry, and dozens of fine gowns and accessories worth 1,300 in total.

BARAKET, THE SWORD OF PRIDE

Corstela discovered *Baraket, Sword of Pride* and wielded it just as Xanderghul was restored to life, accidentally activating its deadly illusion-based special ability on a lucky strike. For that one moment, the sword overwhelmed her mind and urged her to defend her pride. More information about the *Swords of Sin* can be found on page 50 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Artifacts and Legends*.



KANTULIN

SWORD OF PRIDE, BARAKET		MAJOR ARTIFACT
SLOT none	CL 16th	WEIGHT 2 lbs.
Alignment LE; Ego 25		
Senses 30 ft. (vision and hearing)		
Int 18	Wis 10	Cha 10
Communication speech/telepathy (Common, Thassilonian)		
Powers If the sword is active (see below), it can cast <i>create food and water</i> , <i>endure elements</i> , and <i>cure serious wounds</i> 3 times per day each.		

Although known as the *Sword of Pride*, *Baraket* appears to be nothing more than an elegant basket hilt made of glass or highly polished crystal with no blade, as the deadly length of this +5 *spell storing speed rapier* is invisible. *Baraket* grants its wielder a +5 bonus on Bluff checks made to feint, so long as his opponent cannot see invisible items. Additionally, on a critical hit, the sword casts *weird* upon the target and all of that creature's allies within 30 feet.

The *Swords of Sin* were crafted to serve the runelords of Thassilon. In modern times, however, these runelords lie dead or dormant. With no lords to serve, the weapons of their champions lie dormant as well, reducing each to a +2 weapon that retains any special abilities detailed on page 469 of the *Core Rulebook*, but no other properties. The only way to awaken one of the blades is to restore its runelord master to active life or have some other legitimate ruler take up its master's mantle (the weapon determines what is considered legitimate). The swords can detect such restorations and flare to full power immediately, demanding their wielder seek out the restored runelord and swear eternal fealty.

Baraket woke for a few brief moments along with its master, then returned to dormancy as Xanderghul was murdered. Although Xanderghul was immediately reborn in a specially prepared simulacrum in the Temple of the Peacock Spirit, much of his power and presence was diminished by the trauma of death and rebirth. As a result, though Xanderghul is now technically active, *Baraket* remains dormant. Its link to Xanderghul exists, but only in a form akin to a hazy, partially remembered dream. If a character handles *Baraket*, the sword functions as dormant, but the character nonetheless has a distinct feeling of being watched from afar. In this adventure, handling the *Sword of Sin* without using the *runewarded gauntlets* should be unsettling but relatively safe. This does not remain the case in the next adventure, as Xanderghul's influence over the sword slowly grows.

DESTRUCTION

Each of the *Swords of Sin* can be destroyed merely by being commanded to break. That command, however, must come from the rightful runelord of the nation and school of magic associated with the blade.

A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION?

Awarding experience points for this portion of the adventure can be tricky, since if the PCs fight and defeat numerous initiates, they would in theory earn much more XP than if they adopt a more peaceful or stealthy approach to securing *Baraket* for themselves. To offset this complication, when the PCs gain control of the *Sword of Pride*, they should earn a story award of 1,600 XP. This story award should be reduced by 400 points for every Order of Resplendence initiate they had to kill along the way, to a minimum award of 0 XP if the PCs kill more than four initiates. In addition, the PCs should not earn XP for killing more than four initiates during this adventure.

In any event, securing control of *Baraket* earns the PCs 6 Victory Points.

PART 5: CALMING WRATH

The complex known as the Underflume lies beneath the foundation of the Hellstorm Flume, over whose ruins Roderic's Cove was built. While the aboveground tower itself and those portions of the complex that extended beyond its foundations were destroyed long ago by the ravages of time and Earthfall alike, protective magic and fate have left much of the Underflume itself in fine order.

The sinspawn Mozamer is the ruler of the Underflume today, having wrestled control of the Horned Fangs from Jana. Frightened of the sinspawn, Jana might well hire the PCs to "invade" the Underflume and take out the sinspawn. In this case, she can supply the PCs with information about the complex's layout and asks them to spare as many of the Horned Fangs as they can.

But this adventure assumes that the PCs have taken matters into their own hands, since as long as Mozamer exists, he presents a threat to Roderic's Cove. While the sinspawn hasn't found a way to get back through the portal to Hollow Mountain, he has discovered a method to attract the attention of creatures on the far side of the other portals deep within the Underflume. This has allowed him to call forth a sizable number of fleshdregs and even a hydraggon qliphoth, all of whom he's put into his service, though he remains disappointed that he has managed to lure only one other sinspawn to his service—so far!

Until he can raise an army suitable to impress his master Alaznist, Mozamer lurks beneath the city, working to recruit others to his cause and wooing them with promises of the power they'll enjoy when Alaznist comes back to restore Thassilon to its rightful place in the world!

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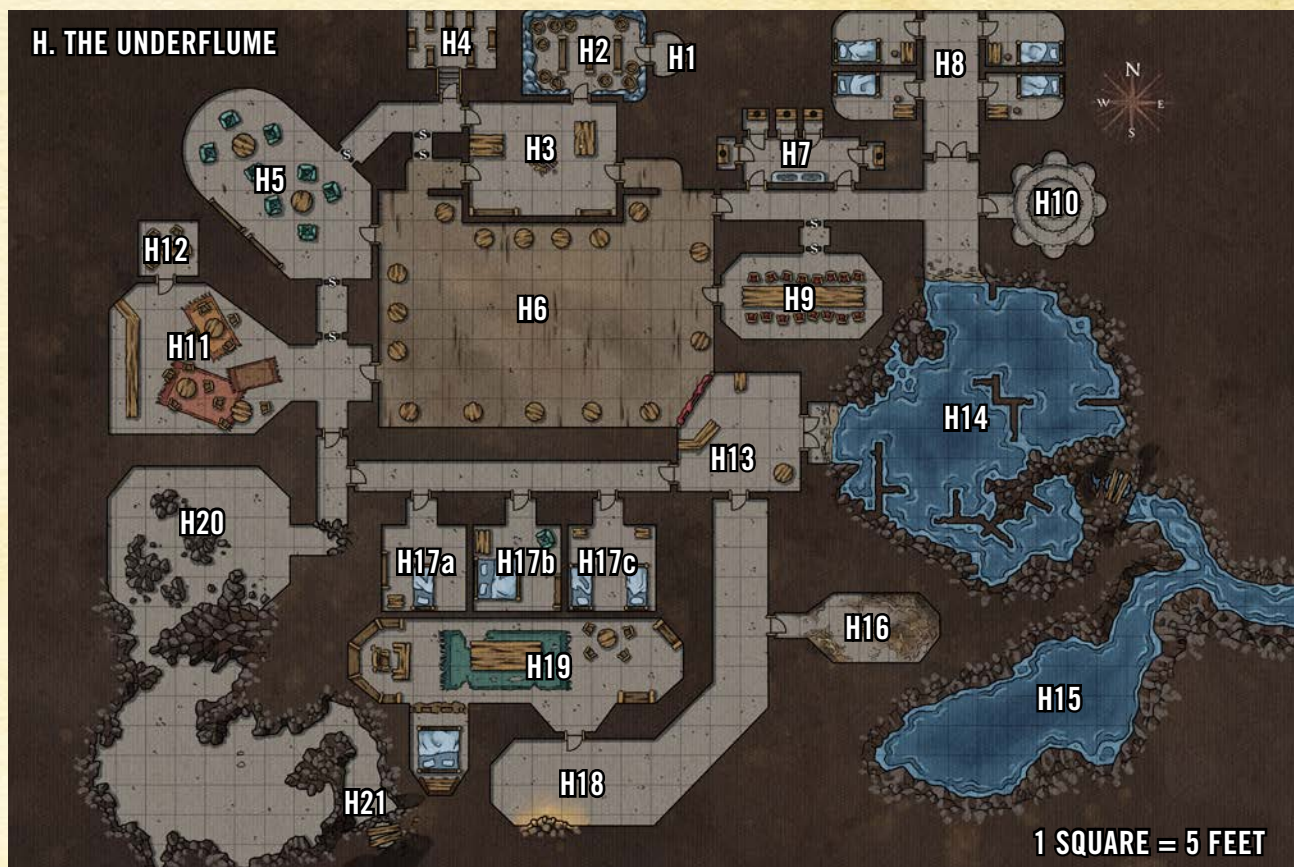
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H. THE UNDERFLUME

Much of this facility has been preserved by ancient magic and remains relatively untouched by time, but the Thassilonian magic does not account for dust, mold, and filth, and thus cleaning and similar maintenance must be attended to by residents. The Horned Fangs spent the effort to clean only those areas they were immediately using, and even then the quality of their work was less than ideal. Dirt and vermin feces cling in the corners of elaborate rooms clad in white marble. In undisturbed places, inches of dust cover perfectly potable wines and foods, easily cleaned with a light rinse or puff of air.

This complex used to serve as an ambassador's retreat and a place for Alaznist's generals to meet and discuss military objectives in private. The complex was originally linked to other Hellstorm Flumes and Hollow Mountain itself, but the portals that provided this instantaneous travel are malfunctioning or destroyed.

The most likely way the PCs access the Underflume is through the secret door beneath the storage shed connected to the Creekside Tavern, the main access used by the Horned Fang gang—this leads to area **H1**. A cellar in Town Hall has a bricked-over passage that leads

down into area **H21**. Finally, creatures climbing down the well on the east side of the Circle find themselves in area **H14**.

Unless otherwise noted, a successful DC 20 Perception check is required to notice any of the secret doors in the Underflume complex.

H1. The Chute

Found in the storage shed of the Creekside Tavern, this chute connects the tavern above with its cold cellar. The tavern is known for having cold beverages, but most don't know how Garleena manages it, other than suspecting the use of minor magic. Little do they know that the magic used is thousands of years old. This chute has a dumbwaiter on a pulley that can go down to the bottom, but it also has a ladder that runs down the eastern wall of the shaft. Winches at the top and bottom of the chute control the dumbwaiter. The door on the bottom of the western wall of the chute that leads to area **H2** is cold to the touch.

This chute originally serviced the upper reaches of the Hellstorm Flume, as the kitchen below would send food up to the soldiers who maintained the weapon.

H2. Cold Cellar

Frosty kegs sit among three wooden shelves covered in a thin sheen of ice. Bottles, jars, and packages of perishable food sit in organized rows on the shelves.

This is the cold cellar for the Creekside Tavern. Garleena accidentally broke into this supernaturally cold room when she was digging a cellar. She found it fortunate because she had been looking for ways to store her provisions a bit longer in the warm summer months, but she wasn't expecting to find an entire room that maintained a constant 40 degrees, a permanent magical effect dating back to when the Hellstorm Flume was fully operational.

When Jana discovered the secret door in the south wall, she paid Garleena well to "rent" the room, no questions asked. Nonetheless, Garleena has grown curious about what Jana's been up to, especially after she noticed a few things missing from her shelves. Garleena suspects that the Horned Fangs are just using her basement as a place to store contraband, but she's completely unaware that an entire ancient complex—an opulent relic preserved from Thassilon's past—lies just beyond her cold storage.

The secret door itself is easier to see now that the gang's been using it so much. A PC can notice it with a DC 15 Perception check.

H3. Underflume Kitchen

Three doors exit this room beyond the door to the cooler, two to the west and one to the east. All three doors here swing freely and have no latches or locking mechanisms. Several ancient-looking tables, counters, and stoves reveal the room's original purpose as a kitchen.

This was the complex's original kitchen, where experienced chefs prepared exquisite meals for the visiting dignitaries and solid fare for the soldiers and officers who occupied the tower above.

While the magic that once powered the stoves here and allowed them to heat and cool on command has faded, one curious magical aura remains. This magical effect covers this room and the hallway to the west, dampening sound within so that servants could move about with carts of dishes and not disturb guests. All sound-based Perception checks to hear creatures or objects in this area take a –20 penalty.

H4. Dry Storage

Numerous well-preserved and stocked wooden shelves extend from the walls of this small storage room. Grains fill

some of the jars, while fruit, bread, and cheese can be found in baskets and other storage containers here.

These food supplies have been stored here by the Horned Fangs. There's a 20% chance the first time the PCs enter this room of a single Horned Fang gangster (see area **H6**) being present.

H5. Private Lounge (CR 5)

A couple of finely crafted tables, each circled with plush leather chairs, adorn this posh, wood-paneled lounge.

Visiting dignitaries and other high-profile guests of the Hellstorm Flume would use this room for comfortable private meetings, receiving food and drink service from staff who accessed this room quietly from the service hallway leading to the kitchen (area **H3**).

Creatures: A pair of Horned Fang bruisers hang out in this lounge. They're supposed to be planning some big moves for the gang, but they're far more interested in gossiping and having a few drinks.

When the PCs enter the room, the bruisers immediately leap to their feet and grab their weapons, demanding to know who the intruders are and what they're doing down here. If the PCs aren't completely convincing, the bruisers leap to attack.

HORNED FANG BRUISERS (2) CR 3 XP 800 each

Female and male human barbarian 1/rogue 3

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 34 (4 HD; 3d8+1d12+9)

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

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee mwk ranseur +7 (2d4+4/×3)

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

Special Attacks rage (6 rounds/day), sneak attack +2d6 plus 2 bleed

TACTICS

During Combat These two bruisers fight in a coordinated way. One spends a turn to draw a *potion of invisibility* and drink it, while the other immediately engages the PCs with her ranseur. Once invisible, the invisible bruiser attempts to move into a flanking position with the first bruiser, targeting the most dangerous-looking PC. The invisible bruiser then attacks from invisibility to take advantage of a sneak attack just before the other bruiser can take

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advantage of the flanking. Both use the reach of their weapons to their advantage and move about the room to keep their attackers on their toes.

Morale If a bruiser is defeated, the remaining one retreats to area **H6** to join forces with the creatures there. If that room is empty, the bruiser flees for area **H1** to escape into town.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

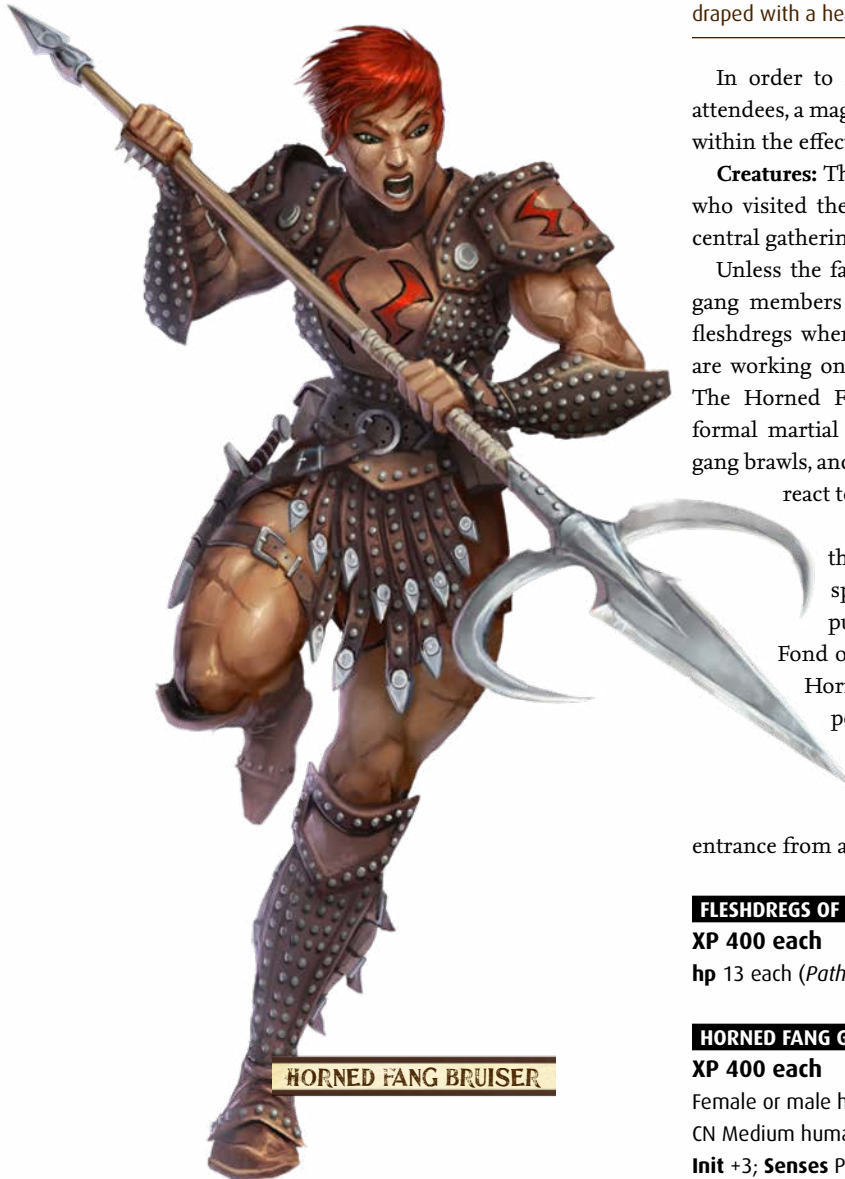
Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19

Feats Cleave, Dodge, Power Attack

Skills Acrobatics +9, Bluff +5, Climb +8, Disable Device +8, Intimidate +7, Perception +8, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +9, Swim +8

Languages Common

SQ fast movement, rogue talent (bleeding attack +2), trapfinding +1



HORNED FANG BRUISER

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of invisibility, potion of shield of faith +2*; **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, mwk ranseur, thieves' tools, 28 gp

Treasure: A crystal decanter worth 200 gp sits on one of the tables, half full of a cheap local whiskey.

H6. Ballroom (CR 5)

Tall round tables line the walls of this spacious ballroom. Dark wood paneling and crimson curtains cover the walls, and crystal chandeliers shine their twinkling light throughout the space. Two doors exit from each of the east and west walls, and a pair of arched openings allow exit to the north. The southernmost door on the west wall is swung open, and the southern door on the east wall hangs ajar. The southeastern corner of the room is draped with a heavy red velvet curtain.

In order to facilitate conversations between various attendees, a magical aura in this room grants all creatures within the effects of a *tongues* spell.

Creatures: This ballroom hosted grand galas for those who visited the Hellstorm Flume. Today, it serves as a central gathering area for the Horned Fangs.

Unless the facility is on alert, a pair of Horned Fang gang members spar in the ballroom against a pair of fleshdregs when the PCs enter. Both types of creatures are working on their training under Mozamer's orders. The Horned Fangs are receiving more rigorous and formal martial training than they would get from just gang brawls, and the fleshdregs are learning how humans react to their tactics.

As the PCs enter, both the fleshdregs and the humans, sweaty and energized by their sparring, turn on the PCs in the hope of putting some of their training to good use. Fond of surrounding tactics, the fleshdregs and Horned Fangs work their way into flanking positions as much as possible.

If the facility is on alert, dozens of defenders could potentially be waiting just outside this room to defend the entrance from above.

FLESHDREGS OF WRATH (2) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 100)

HORNED FANG GANGSTERS (2) CR 1

XP 400 each

Female or male human rogue 1/warrior 1

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

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

hp 16 each (2 HD; 1d8+1d10+3)

Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee club +1 (1d6+2), cestus +2 (1d4+1/19-20) or

club +3 (1d6+2) or

cestus +4 (1d4+2/19-20)

Ranged dagger +4 (1d4+2/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 16, **Con** 13, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 16

Feats Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +7, Bluff +4, Climb +6, Disable Device +10,

Intimidate +4, Perception +5, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of

Hand +7, Stealth +7, Swim +6

Languages Common

SQ trapfinding +1

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

leather armor, cestus^{APG}, club, dagger, masterwork thieves'

tools, 22 gp

Development: If the PCs aren't careful, there's a good chance they could alert the entire facility to their presence. In this case, other Underflume inhabitants are likely to come to the ballroom to fight back against invasion. This could lead to a chaotic and dynamic battle as the PCs face new enemies streaming in every round from a multitude of directions. The PCs could defend their position by backing into the kitchen and protecting their escape up the chute, but if this goes on too long, Horned Fangs will make their way up to the surface, coming back around and down the chute to pinch the PCs and cut off their escape.

At the least, combat longer than 4 rounds attracts at least one adjacent encounter. If the PCs hold this location long enough, Mozamer might come personally, flanked by his fleshdregs (see area **H19**), to see what the problem is.

H7. The Facilities

A single long sheet of marble is set into the south wall of this room, with two shallow depressions carved into it. Doors flank this counter, and metal tubes rise from the wall over the two receptacles. The room is tiled in marble on both the floor and walls, and five wooden doors line the remainder of the room.

This was originally built as a washroom and restroom for the Underflume's guests, and the magical enchantments that once provided flowing water still function to this day.

The five wooden doors lead to individual stalls that each have a marble toilet; a pull chain activates the water flow to flush the contents of the marble basins. The metal tubes on the south wall provide fresh and cool flowing water at the turn of a knob.

H8. Guest Rooms (CR 5)

Each of these rooms contains a bed and a small chest of drawers. These quarters were originally designed for attendants who accompanied the ambassadors visiting the Hellstorm Flume.

Creatures: Recently, members of the Horned Fangs have claimed these rooms for themselves instead of staying in their homes on the surface. If the Underflume isn't on alert, the PCs can find at least four gang members sleeping or relaxing in one or more of these rooms.

HORNED FANG GANGSTERS (4) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 16 each (see page 54)

H9. Dining Hall (CR 5)

A twenty-foot-long red marble table, with stained silk tablecloths slipping to the floor, stretches the length of this room, lined on each side with wooden chairs outfitted with comfortable crimson cushions. The haunting smell of old food hangs in the air; refuse covers the table, chairs, and floor.

Important dignitaries and other guests took their formal meals in this dining hall. The red marble table, shaped by magic, was once set with silk tablecloths and exquisite dining sets of porcelain, crystal, and silver. Today, this room looks as if it hasn't been straightened up after a dozen wild parties. Stains cover the tablecloths and the place reeks of old food, discarded to one end of the table and not yet cleaned up.

Creatures: Four fleshdregs scavenge the remains of the last big feast the Horned Fangs threw in here. As the PCs enter, the fleshdregs spend a moment to ascertain that the PCs are not members of the Horned Fangs, then decide they'll serve as food and attack.

FLESHDREGS OF WRATH (4) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 100)

H10. Bathhouse

This octagonal room is completely covered in smooth white tiles. The center of the room contains a circular pool that dips down in two tiers to a depth of six feet in the center. Seven alcoves surrounding the room each contain a wooden bench.

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This area served as a bathhouse when the facility was in operation. Most of the magical functionality is intact. It still provides warm water to the central basin, where it flows out a drain in the bottom. The surrounding alcoves serve as saunas; once the slatted wooden screen inside is drawn down, the chamber fills with steam. As it is preserved by Thassilonian magic, the entire area is cleaner than most of the rest of the facility.

H11. Open Lounge (CR 5)

Darkly stained wood paneling lines the walls of this comfortable lounge. A long bar stretches the length of the western end of this room. Three tables ringed with chairs fill the rest of the space. A heavy wooden door hangs open on the east end of this area, and a small alcove just to the south of this open door contains a simple door. In the open lounge, an elegant door stands partially open to the north.

The door to this room is open to the ballroom (area H6). As opposed to the private lounge (area H5), this lounge was available for use by any Underflume guest. The door along the north wall of the lounge itself stands about 8 inches open, allowing a slight view of a large table and some chairs that fill the private room. (See area H12 for details on how the panel near the north doors functions.)

As in area H6, this room bears an ancient magical aura that affects all within with a *tongues* effect, ensuring guests could communicate.

Creatures: Unless a ruckus in an adjacent room disrupted their camaraderie, a sinspawn named Gezrevan is tending bar here for a trio of Horned Fangs. Able to communicate thanks to the room's *tongues* effect, the sinspawn is fascinated by the gang members' simplistic tales of aggression and ceding power to other forces. She constantly chides them for being weak and not taking all that they can from others, understanding nothing of the complex social situations in the world above.

If they engage the PCs, the gangsters swarm the heroes, hoping to get a chance to use their sneak attack ability. Gezrevan spends her first move action to pick up her ranseur, and then wades into the melee to provide ample flanking to her allies with her reach weapon.

GEZREVAN CR 2

XP 600

Female sinspawn (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 246)

hp 19

HORNED FANG GANGSTERS (3) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 16 each (see page 54)

H12. Private Room

Like many rooms here, this space is opulently appointed, but it has seen neglect in recent months. A circular table ringed with chairs fills most of this room; dirty dishes, half-drunk cups, and refuse has been swept to one side of the table to make room for a spread of fresh food.

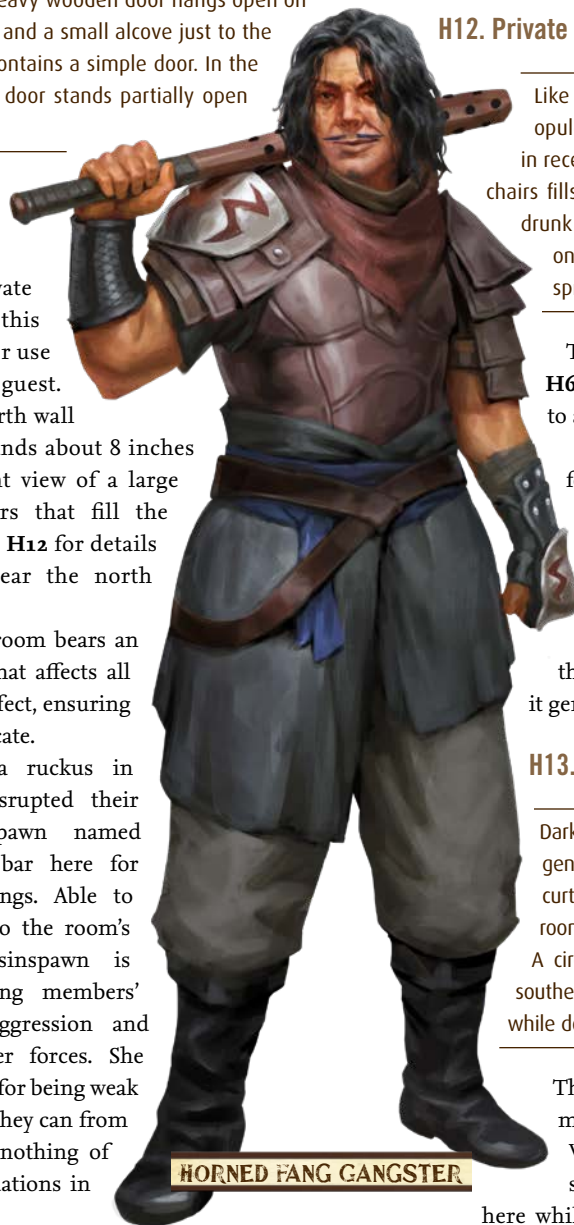
This room bears an aura like areas H6 and H11 that grants a *tongues* effect to all within.

Treasure: This room was reserved for private meetings; to aid in providing comfort, the table generates a tasty meal for four once per day on command. The table functions similarly to a *sustaining spoon* in this way, save that it weighs 30 pounds and the food it generates is much more delicious.

H13. Foyer

Dark wood and red velvet constitute the general theme of this room. A heavy crimson curtain hangs in the northwest corner of the room, just behind a low, curving counter. A circular table and a few stools sit in the southeast corner. Double doors open to the east, while doors also lead west and south.

This foyer is where people would mingle before events in the ballroom. When this facility was operational, security guards reviewed guest lists here while the servants checked coats here.



HORNED FANG GANGSTER

A tall wooden box along the north wall appears to be a small closet with a rod spanning the space, holding half a dozen hangers. This closet is in fact an extradimensional space that can hold thousands of coats, cloaks, and capes, among other items checked in over the years.

Treasure: Opening the magical closet is tricky, as the command words to do so have been lost to time. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Spellcraft check to identify the closet gathers its purpose and realizes that the Use Magic Device skill may be the only way to utilize it today. With a successful DC 20 Use Magic Device check, a character can cause the closet to reveal one of the many ancient frocks stored within. Each time a PC succeeds at this check, roll 1d20. On a result of 1–14, the item revealed is an ancient but mundane piece of clothing worth 1d4 gp. On a result of 15–17, the item revealed is an exquisite outfit worth 1d6 × 100 gp. On a result of 18–19, the item revealed is a *cloak of resistance* +1. On a result of 20, the item revealed is a *cloak of fiery vanishing*^{VE}. Up to three exquisite outfits and two *cloaks of resistance* +1 can be extracted from the closet in this way. There's only one *cloak of fiery vanishing* in there. If a die roll indicates an item that is no longer stored in the closet, treat the roll instead as a result of 1–14 (a mundane piece of ancient clothing).

If the result of a Use Magic Device check to operate this closet is a natural 1, the closet implodes, crushing in on itself with a dramatic but harmless pop, scattering its contents into the Astral Plane. Only articles of clothing can be stored in the closet, but doing so requires a successful DC 20 Use Magic Device check.

H14. Ruined Guest Rooms (CR 5)

Partial walls still stand amid heaps of crumbled stone, the lower portions of which are obscured by dark, murky water. A particularly large collapse against the eastern wall seems to have a hole just above it.

When Earthfall struck Golarion, this facility stood strong; however, small fissures resulting from the onslaught permeated the magically reinforced walls of the fortification. Over time, erosion took over, and some of the cracks weakened this part of the complex. Hundreds of years ago, an earthquake provided the catalyst for a full collapse of what once was a series of guest rooms.

The flooding is a result not of ground water seeping up from below or surface water sinking, but rather it is part of the system that provided fresh water to the Underflume. These magical pipes ruptured centuries ago, but they haven't managed to flood this level and instead provide fresh, clean water to any who drink from this pool.

The circular hole to the east leads up to town, where it emerges as the well on the eastern edge of the Circle.

Creatures can climb down the well into this area using the ample handholds with a successful DC 10 Climb check. Past the hole in the ceiling, an underwater channel leads westward to area H15 and a completely submerged exit to the river beyond.

Any amount of noise here, including the sound of splashing made from wading in the water, attracts the attention of the qlipthoth in area H15, who comes to investigate in 1d6 rounds.

H15. Flooded Cavern (CR 4)

This entire cavern is filled almost entirely with water, the ceiling a mere three inches from the water surface.

Creature: The water in this room is 10 feet deep, and for the past several weeks it has served as the lair of an advanced hydraggon qlipthoth called into the Underflume by Mozamer's experiments. The sinspawn has allowed the qlipthoth complete run of this room and area H14. Fortunately for the citizens of Roderic's Cove, the qlipthoth finds the Material Plane unsettling and, so far, hasn't been too interested in exploring outside, but if the PCs are taking their time finding the Underflume, you can have this curious monster slither out and attack a citizen to attract the PC's attention.

ADVANCED HYDRAGGON CR 4
XP 1,200
hp 42 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 288, 229)

Treasure: The hydraggon has scavenged a few items of value from the rubble in area H14 and has stacked them in the southernmost portion of this room: a pearl-and-jade necklace worth 120 gp, a +1 *mithral punching dagger*, and a *wand of fireball* (7 charges).

H16. Meeting Room (CR 5)

When this facility was fully operational, diplomats would meet in this room and negotiate trade deals and other treaties. Today, all the furniture that was in this room has been removed. Mozamer uses this room as a "barracks" for the fleshdregs that have arrived in the Underflume. Locked in here, the grotesque creatures don't cause any trouble unsupervised.

Creatures: Half a dozen fleshdregs occupy this room, full of wrath and eager to fight. When the PCs open the door to this room, the fleshdregs mob the door and immediately attack.

FLESHDREGS OF WRATH (4) CR 1
XP 400 each
hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 100)

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H17. Luxury Guest Quarters (CR 5 or 7)

Important visitors to the Underflume once stayed in these similar chambers, but now, the upper crust of the Horned Fangs reside in these rooms. Each room contains one or two beds and a footlocker for each. Area **H17a** is currently empty, but the other rooms are occupied.

Creatures: Area **H17b** has more extravagant furnishings than the rooms to the left and right—a large double bed, a washbasin, and a lockable cabinet. This is where Jana “Gold” Gildersleeves, the leader of the Horned Fangs (before Mozamer took over), keeps her quarters. After losing control to Mozamer, Jana ceded the larger room (area **H19**) to the frightening sinspawn, but was allowed these quarters as a consolation for her gang being co-opted into the sinspawn’s cause. Mozamer likes Jana and sees great potential in her (even though the sinspawn knows the admiration isn’t entirely reciprocated), hoping that one day she’ll acquiesce and enthusiastically join his burgeoning “army.” If not out on the town, Jana can be found in this room. She could also be found in any part of the Underflume, potentially responding to the PCs’ invasion.

A pair of Horned Fang bruisers share room **H17c**; they respond quickly if they hear sounds of conflict next door in Jana’s room.

JANA “GOLD” GILDERSLEEVES CR 5

XP 1,600

Female human fighter 6

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 14, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural, +1 shield)

hp 61 (6d10+24)

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3 (+2 vs. fear)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1/+1 quarterstaff +11/+6 (1d6+7) or
+1/+1 quarterstaff +9/+4 (1d6+6), +1/+1 quarterstaff
+9/+4 (1d6+5)

Special Attacks weapon training (monk +1)

TACTICS

During Combat Jana isn’t eager to add murder to her slowly growing list of crimes, but self-defense is another matter. She does her best to move into combat so she can take full advantage of her two-weapon fighting style, but she uses Power Attack only when she’s desperate.

Morale Jana is in no hurry to die, and she either surrenders or flees combat if reduced below 15 hit points.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 22

Feats Dodge, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Power Attack, Toughness, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff), Weapon Specialization (quarterstaff)

Skills Intimidate +7, Perception +5, Stealth +7

Languages Common, Varisian

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), alchemist’s fire (2), thunderstones (2); **Other Gear** +2 *armored coat*^{APG}, +1/+1 *quarterstaff*, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *ioun torch*^{APG}, *flayleaf* (3), key to her cabinet

HORNED FANG BRUISERS (2) CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 34 each (see page 53)

Treasure: The locked cabinet in area **H17b** can be opened with a successful DC 25 Disable Device check or the key carried by Jana. It contains her life savings: 120 pp and 43 gp. In addition, a leather satchel holds notes detailing a list of shady movers and shakers in Riddleport that have connections to Roderic’s Cove. There is also a journal explaining her side of the story of her mother’s betrayal of the town and Jana’s life in Riddleport after she and her mother were run out of Roderic’s Cove. Upon her return to town, Jana planned to get the town on her side to confront these powerful criminals and eventually free Roderic’s Cove from the yoke of Riddleport influence and exploitation.

Story Award: Turning the list of Riddleport agents to the port-governor of Roderic’s Cove earns the PCs 3 Victory Points.

H18. Underflume Portal

The walls of this wide hall are carved with dense inscriptions. A door opens in the north wall, but to the south, the inscriptions converge into a spiraling pattern that periodically flashes with pulsations of glowing orange energy.

Anyone who can read Thassilonian can decipher the runes on the walls here as words of adoration and submission to Runelord Alaznist, as well as indications that a Hellstorm Flume once existed above the complex.

The spiraling runes in the southern wall surround what was once a portal that linked Underflume with Hollow Mountain, but the portal is currently malfunctioning—it only works in one direction, and when it does work, it requires days to rebuild its energy to function again. It is through this portal that Mozamer arrived in the Underflume, and it is via this portal that the sinspawn has been periodically calling in fleshdregs and, more recently, the sinspawn and the hydraggon qlipthoth from Hollow Mountain.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana or planes) or Spellcraft check while studying the wall determines that the spiraling runes are part of a magical portal that currently only functions one-way. Creatures can arrive here from somewhere else, but they can't use the portal to exit the area. The character also determines that while this portal cannot be destroyed or closed from this side without powerful magic (antimagic will close the portal from this side, as will an effect like *mage's disjunction*, *miracle*, or *wish*), that its malfunctioning nature suggests that the hub at the far side is damaged and likely susceptible to destruction. Destroying the hub within Hollow Mountain will almost certainly prevent other creatures from using this portal to infest Roderic's Cove. A character who can read Thassilonian further notes that the runes reveal the portal connects to a region in Hollow Mountain known as the "Forges of Wrath".

The process of conjuring fleshdregs or other allies from the malfunctioning portal requires a ritual of many hours. It's not something that Mozamer can do during a battle or while the PCs are invading the Underflume, but if the PCs retreat to regroup over a day or two, Mozamer can certainly bring in reinforcements, "restocking" 1d4 fleshdregs.

Story Award: Discovering and correctly identifying the portal's nature and then reporting it to the port-governor earns the PCs 1,200 XP and 2 Victory Points. While the portal cannot be closed here, the port-governor can post guards to keep an eye on it and be prepared for any problems it might cause. She also asks the PCs to seek out a way to sever the unstable link to Hollow Mountain if they can.

H19. Mozamer's Suite (CR 8)

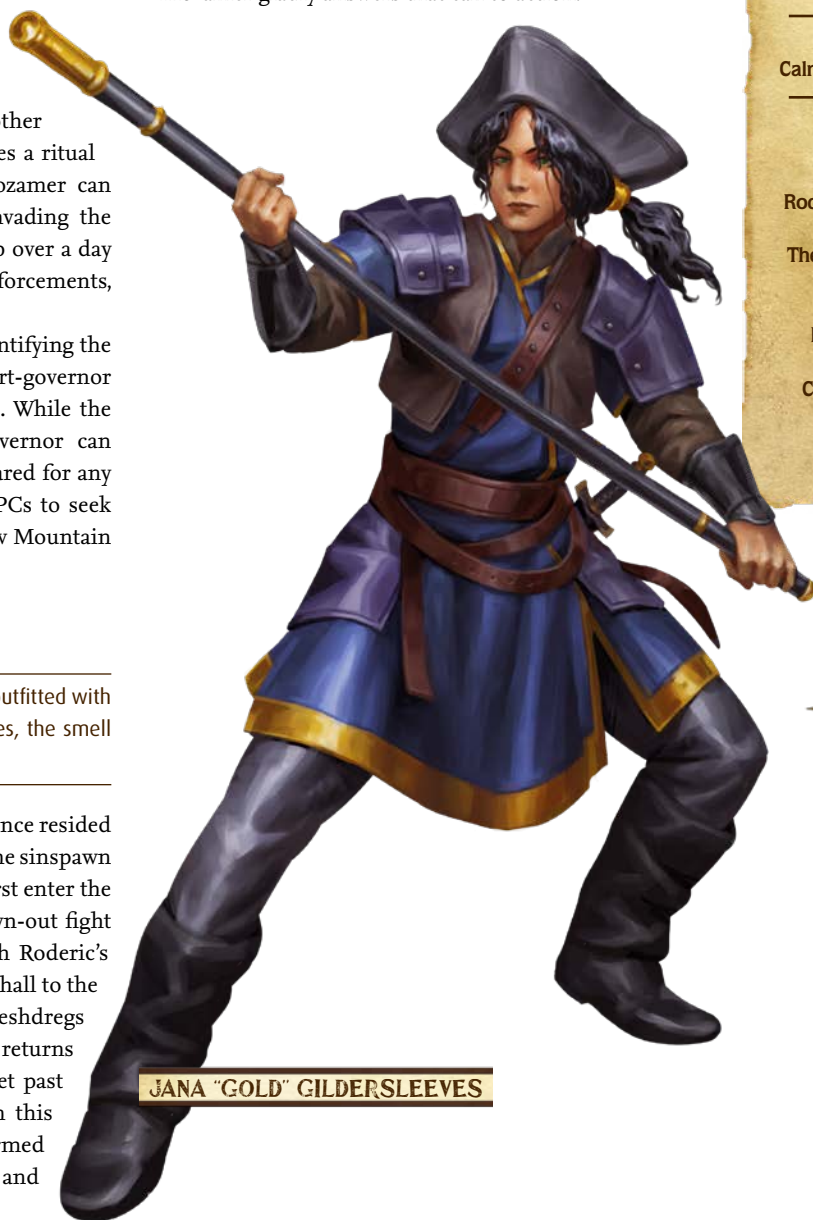
This luxurious suite has seen better days. Though outfitted with draping curtains and tapestries of immense battles, the smell of spoiled food and animal musk fouls the air.

Creatures: The Underflume's commander once resided here, but today the suite has been claimed by the sinspawn Mozamer. He is in this room when the PCs first enter the Underflume, and remains here unless a drawn-out fight occurs in the ballroom or elsewhere beneath Roderic's Cove. He might leave this room and cross the hall to the malfunctioning portal in order to call more fleshdregs to his side to defend the Underflume, but he returns to this room to ambush any invaders that get past his defenses. A pair of fleshdregs remain in this chamber at all times, regardless—these deformed monsters are completely loyal to Mozamer and fight to the death to protect him.

When Mozamer sees the PCs, he appreciates their tenacity and decides to invite them to join the army he is raising for Alaznist. Gathering as much sincerity as he can, Mozamer addresses the PCs in Varisian the first time he encounters them.

"On your way down here to stop me, you ended up killing dozens. You show your wrath well. Perhaps you have a place at my Lady's side? Join me, and we'll take this town in a direction those other fools would never have been capable of. Alaznist will be pleased to see you help me raise an army before she takes back what she has lost."

If the PCs refuse his offer and threaten violence, Mozamer gladly answers that call to action.



JANA "GOLD" GILDERSLEEVES

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MOZAMER**CR 8****XP 4,800****hp** 98 (see page 66)**FLESHDREGS (2)****CR 1****XP 400 each****hp** 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 100)

Treasure: One of the desks in the suite contains several crumpled sheets of paper on which Mozamer has been keeping notes of his work to reactivate the portal at area **H18**. With a successful DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft check, a PC confirms that the intellectual problem of repairing the portal is posing difficulty for Mozamer, but nonetheless he's had some success drawing in several fleshdregs, a hydraggon qliploth, and even a sinspawn from various locations under Hollow Mountain. One particularly worrisome note indicates that if the source portal "in the Forges of Wrath" could be infused with more magical power before it succumbs entirely to decay, then Mozamer could potentially rebuild a larger network of portals throughout western Varisia.

Story Award: Slaying Mozamer releases the Horned Fangs from his control and allows Jana to regain command of the group, but seeing the violence Mozamer brought to the gang has softened Jana's intentions. Going forward, she intends to keep her gang under control and seeks a more peaceful way to be welcomed back into Roderic's Cove. In any event, defeating both sinspawn, all of the fleshdregs in the complex, and the hydraggon in area **H15** earns the PCs 6 Victory Points.

H20. War Room (CR 6)

The north side of this room is mostly intact, but piles of rubble lie on the ground, and the entire southern end of the room has been destroyed, with a large and cavernous opening leading to another area.

This used to be a war room for the Hellstorm Flume, where Alaznist's generals planned attacks against neighboring Shalast. The chamber remained intact for centuries until almost 100 years ago, long before the founding of Roderic's Cove, when its degrading magical effects finally gave out. The resulting explosion wrecked this part of the facility.

The Horned Fangs discovered this dangerous area and barricaded the hallway. This barricade can be moved with a full-round action and a successful DC 15 Strength check, or characters can remove the barricade over the course of 5 minutes without needing to attempt a check.

Haunt: Unstable magic caused an unusual haunt to manifest in the former war room. This "haunt" is

a magical scar (see *Pathfinder RPG Horror Adventures 174*) fueled not by undead energy but by raw wrath and evocation magic, and it has grown more powerful since Alaznist's awakening. She's unaware of this haunt, even as it reacts across vast distances to pulse with her moods.

When this haunt activates, it manifests a shimmering, ghostly image of Alaznist who shrieks, in Thassilonian, "Your ashes will form the foundation of my New Thassilon!" and other such threats. These are echoes of Alaznist's rage and frustration over how long she's been away and how far from glory her nation has fallen. The real Alaznist won't notice if the PCs interact with or destroy this haunt, but it (along with other clues in the Underflume) should suggest to the PCs that Alaznist herself may have awoken in Hollow Mountain.

ARCANE STORM HAUNT**CR 6****XP 2,400****hp** 27 (*Pathfinder RPG Horror Adventures 174*)**H21. Exit Cavern**

While this cavern appears to be completely natural, it once was a vault in the Underflume. As Earthfall struck, a magical device stored in this vault self-destructed and exploded, bringing down the ceiling and walls of the vault. Over time, this destroyed area eroded and now appears to be a natural cavern.

A small tunnel exits the cavern to the east, ending in a rocky tunnel that leads up to the cellar of Cove Hall. The opening to the tunnel was bricked over during the town's foundation and has long since been forgotten.

**CONCLUDING
THE ADVENTURE**

Two things should happen before the PCs are ready to move on from "Secrets of Roderic's Cove" to begin the next adventure, "It Came From Hollow Mountain". They should secure control of *Baraket*, and they should put Sir Roderic's ghost to rest. In truth, the PCs could move on to the next adventure without putting Sir Roderic to rest, but doing so leaves this adventure's story without closure and makes it difficult for Audrahni to accompany the PCs into Magnimar.

To put Sir Roderic's ghost to rest, the PCs must prove to the ghost that they've taken action to make his town safe. The metric by which you can track this progress is Victory Points. The PCs can earn a total of 34 Victory Points if they take every possible step to aid Roderic's Cove, but they have to accumulate only 20 in order to prove to the ghost that they've made Roderic's Cove a safer place.

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Once the PCs accumulate 20 Victory Points and have secured control of *Baraket*, Sir Roderic's ghost manifests before them at some point within the next 8 hours—preferably at a time when the PCs are all together and not distracted by combat or other events, and hopefully when Audrahni is present so she can offer her immediate advice. When he appears, the ghost appears almost calm in demeanor and appearance. His message to the PCs is brief but precise.

"And so my Cove is safe once again. Safer than it has been in years. You have done me a service, heroes, and by claiming this Sword of Sin you have removed an unsightly legacy from my home and my Cove. If you but take this cursed weapon away from the Cove, I will at last be able to rest, knowing my legacy will endure. Thank you, heroes, for bringing peace to an old man..."

With this, the ghost fades away, Sir Roderic's spirit at last departing for his long-delayed reward in the afterlife. If she's present or asked, Audrahni suggests that the PCs take *Baraket* to Magnimar, for that city's Sihedron Council is made of the region's foremost experts in dealing with dangerous Thassilonian elements. In addition,

the council should be made aware of the existence of the portal network that Mozamer was attempting to rebuild—such a danger should be addressed soon. She volunteers to accompany them as well, revealing that she spent much of her youth in Magnimar and that the PCs' actions have inspired her to face her personal demons (see the next adventure and Audrahni's entry on page 62 for more details).

In any event, the PCs should earn 6,400 XP for finally putting Sir Roderic to rest. (For every Victory Point the PCs earn beyond the minimum 20, they should be awarded an additional 200 XP, for a maximum additional bonus of 2,800 XP if they earn all 34 Victory Points.)

The PCs don't need to leave Roderic's Cove immediately, and can they take as much time as they wish to complete unfinished tasks in the region (and perhaps continue to earn experience points so they reach 5th level and are ready for the challenges that await them in the next adventure), but they should begin laying their plans. With Roderic's Cove restored to a quiet seaside town, the PCs should be able to move on to greater dangers and greater glories. For there are indeed perils afoot—the runelords are awakening, and it won't be long before all of Varisia will be plunged into danger!

AUDRAHNI

Despite the long life afforded by her race, Audrahni dedicated herself to the dead. After a crisis of faith, this Forlorn elf wandered Varisia in hopes of restoring her faith and redeeming herself in the eyes of her deity.

AUDRAHNI

CR 4

XP 1,200

Female elf ex-cleric of Ashava 5

CG Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +0; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor)

hp 36 (5d8+10)

Fort +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +6; +2 vs. enchantments

Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *bladed scarf* +7 (1d6+4)

TACTICS

During Combat Audrahni does her best to avoid combat, but if pressed she whips out her bladed scarf and fights defensively as she retreats, disarming enemies when possible to ensure her safety. Despite this caution, she does not abandon those she has befriended, and fights by their side to the death if necessary (although she advises retreat before death becomes an inevitability).

Morale Audrahni flees as best she can after taking any damage or being seriously threatened.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 10, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5 (+7 disarm); **CMD** 15 (17 vs. disarm)

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Weapon Focus (bladed scarf)

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (history, religion) +10, Perception +4, Perform (dance) +3, Spellcraft +10 (+12 to identify magic item properties)

Languages Celestial, Common, Elven, Varisian

SQ elven magic

Combat Gear *wand of cure light wounds* (12 charges), holy water (6); **Other Gear** mithral chain shirt, +1 *bladed scarf*^{PSWG}, 23 gp

Audrahni was born almost 30 years before Alcaydian Indros “discovered” the Irespan, and she and her family often visited the site that would one day become Magnimar. On one fateful trip, her family was ambushed

as they left the Irespan, slain by a warband of boggards. Audrahni fled and survived. After making a home in the wild, she survived alone for the next few years until pilgrims from Korvosa arrived. Tired of living on her own, Audrahni was drawn by their bustle and sense of purpose. She fell in love with humanity, but a few decades later realized that the people she was growing attached to would be in her life for only about as long as a beloved cat or dog might be in the life of a human.

Though she grew increasingly melancholy as her friends died off, Audrahni clung to her life in Magnimar among the varied and industrious humans. Audrahni attended countless funerals during Magnimar’s history, and this constant exposure to the cycle of life eventually led her to fall in with a mystery cult that revered Ashava, empyreal lord of dancers, lonely spirits, and moonlight. To Audrahni, acceptance into the mystery cult was a blessing. She’d spent much of her life in Magnimar and had grown familiar with the region’s ghosts, hauntings, and spirits. She felt that with her long lifespan, she could help usher her shorter-lived companions to the afterlife and ease any pain that loved ones might experience.

As her skill grew, her influence in the cult expanded as well, but when she decided to pursue the creation of a monument in Magnimar to one of the cult’s great heroines, Saint Sazzleru, Audrahni unwittingly set into motion a series of events that would haunt her to this day. After interviewing dozens of potential sculptors, she settled on a talented fellow Forlorn elf named Ilsynor. Unknown to Audrahni at the time, Ilsynor was a member of a sinister secret cult of Norgorber called the Brothers of the Seven. When Audrahni discovered the truth, she went to the Magnimarian justices to report her suspicions and present her evidence. But among those she spoke to was one Justice Ironbriar, himself the hidden leader of the Brothers of the Seven. Not only did he stymie Audrahni’s attempts to have Ilsynor arrested, but he attempted to silence all of the Ashavan cultists. Brotherhood assassins murdered all but Audrahni, who managed to escape only because the assassins were busy slaying her friends. Overcome with resentment that Ashava hadn’t protected her friends,

disillusionment with Magnimar's justice system, and grief for her companions, Audrahni took her vengeance that very night. She engineered the collapse of the partially built scaffolding that Ilsynor's work crew had been building to support the Saint Sazzleru project, burying Ilsynor under the rubble as he slept and consigning him to an unblest grave—an act anathema to the teachings of her goddess.

Audrahni didn't linger in Magnimar. She knew that Justice Ironbriar would swiftly learn she'd engineered the death of one of his favored cultists, and even if he didn't, she'd still likely be arrested for causing the collapse. She left the city and traveled north along the Lost Coast Road, eager to be alone with her lost faith and depression.

During the next dozen years, she split her time between living in the wilds and slumming in small towns throughout western Varisia such as Sandpoint, Galduria, and Wolf's Ear. Although she did her best to perform minor good deeds and aid those she met along the way, the rekindling of her faith ever eluded her. Even when she learned that a group of heroes had exposed Justice Ironbriar and destroyed the Brotherhood of the Seven, she took only bitter solace—the news was too late to restore her faith or save her friends.

In time, Audrahni's travels brought her to Roderic's Cove, where she's stayed for the past year. There, she befriended Desil Marphan, the local priest of Pharama. Sensing a soul in need, Desil put the elf up in a small house owned by the church just outside of the graveyard, and in return Audrahni agreed to serve as the cemetery's groundskeeper. Over the last year, Audrahni has found that life in the quiet town suits her, and this and her growing friendship with Desil have begun helped to slowly rebuild her faith in humanity.

Audrahni wasn't present when the Horned Gang and the Order of Resplendence clashed in the middle of town—when the *Sword of Pride* momentarily awoke, unleashed its *weird* upon those involved, and slew them—but she was one of the first on site after the dust settled. Called in by the town guard, she and Desil were tasked with investigating the scene to determine what might have caused the supernatural murders. The event has woken

old fears in Audrahni, and she worries that the gangs might have hidden ties to more dangerous cults—but for the moment she's at a loss as to how to proceed.

Many see elves as paragons of grace, but Audrahni's rangy frame is looming and awkward. She lacks the elegance of other elves and tends to slump her shoulders and hang her head low. Despite growing up on the Lost Coast, she doesn't enjoy the cold and damp and tends to cover herself in layers of clothing year-round. Though she is averse to combat, she keeps the bladed scarf given to her by her first mentor wrapped somewhere on her body at all times when out in public—an element of her previous faith she's held onto as a memento of her all-too-brief happy times in Magnimar.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

The recent mayhem in town has reawakened Audrahni's depression, as she had grown used to the relaxing way of life in Roderic's Cove and now worries that malevolent forces may have followed her from Magnimar to her new home. When she notices the PCs actively working to make things better, she is reinvigorated and approaches them both to help and to be helped.

Audrahni serves as the PCs' first significant ally in Return of the Runelords, but she's also a strange and somber character that some PCs might feel reluctant to befriend. Likewise, Audrahni is reluctant to let the PCs know too much about her murder of Ilsynor and other elements of her shameful past—even if they might not grasp the gravity of her spiritual depression.

Audrahni knows that she can't help Sir Roderic's ghost alone, and hopes the PCs can aid her.

Audrahni also serves as the NPC to provide the PCs with guidance on what they should do once they discover *Baraket* and learn that Alaznist—and possibly Xanderghul—has awakened and has plans for Varisia. At the end of the adventure, it is Audrahni that directs the PCs to the Sihedron Council in Magnimar, and if she accompanies the PCs to the city in the next adventure, she might have the opportunity to finally find redemption when she and the PCs confront Ilsynor's shade.



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CORSTELA ROSTRATA

This self-taught Varisian scholar is convinced that her people will once again rise to prominence and claim their lands for themselves, although her mistaken impression that early Thassilon was a Varisian paradise is very much in error.

CORSTELA ROSTRATA

CR 5

XP 1,600

Female middle-aged human arcanist 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 8)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +4 shield)

hp 41 (6d6+18)

Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee horacalcum light mace +8 (1d6–2) or *Baraket* +4/+4 (1d6/18–20)

Special Attacks arcane reservoir (3/12), arcanist exploits (counterspell, dimensional slide, spell disruption), consume spells

Arcanist Spells Prepared (CL 6th; concentration +10)

3rd (3/day)—*invisibility sphere*

2nd (5/day)—*cat's grace*, *mirror image*

1st (5/day)—*color spray* (DC 15), *mage armor*, *shield*, *vanish*^{APG} (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*

TACTICS

Before Combat Corstela casts *mage armor* the moment she suspects danger in Peacock Manor, and she casts *shield* and *cat's grace* just before confronting foes.

During Combat Corstela surrounds herself with any able members of the Order of Resplendence (preferably students who can make good use of their sneak attacks) and casts *invisibility sphere* as combat begins. She casts *mirror image* on the following round, then attacks the PCs with *color spray* before using her *wand of shocking grasp* against anyone unaffected.

Morale Corstela has no desire to die, but she is overcome with pride and feels like she is on the cusp of true greatness, so she fights with vigor and hopes that her order will defend both her and the manor. If reduced to fewer than 8 hit points, Corstela uses her dimensional slide arcanist exploit in an effort to escape.

STATISTICS

Str 7, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 18, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 14

Feats Extra Reservoir^{ACG}, Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +8, Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (arcana) +10,

Knowledge (history) +13, Knowledge (local) +10,

Knowledge (planes) +10, Perception +5, Sense Motive +3,

Spellcraft +13, Use Magic Device +6

Languages Abyssal, Common, Hallit, Shoanti, Thassilonian, Varisian

Combat Gear *wand of shocking grasp* (43 charges);

Other Gear *Baraket*, horacalcum light mace, *cloak of*

resistance +1, spellbook (contains all spells known plus

4 additional 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-level spells of your choice),

spell component pouch, 95 gp

Corstela Rostrata is a brilliant scholar, but her overwhelming pride may well be her downfall. Born in Riddleport, Corstela was raised in the shadow of the Thassilonian monument known as the Cyphergate. She knew from an early age that Varisia held many ancient and mysterious sites such as these, and even as a child she was determined to visit as many as she could. She knew in her heart that these majestic monuments were tied to her people's origins, and she longed for a stronger connection to her home and ancestors.

As a youth, Corstela was a devoted student of Varisian history. In those days, before the rediscovery of Xin-Shalast, lore about Thassilon was difficult to come by, and what did exist was muddled and confused by thousands of years of myth and legend. Frustrated with contradictory reports and a lack of truly scholarly studies of the region's monuments, Corstela set off to visit as many of the ancient ruins as she could. Though she hoped to learn more about the ancient Varisians and how they fit into Thassilon, she was often forced to flee from the deadly creatures that often dwelled within these locations.

Yet as she spoke to knowledgeable Varisian elders, she came across a disturbing myth, a story of a group of her ancestors who, in their despair deep in the Age of Anguish, turned to the worship of demons. These ancient

Varisians fell under the rule of a powerful demon named Uvaglor, who subjugated and abused them. The desperate Varisians called out to Lamashtu for aid, but only fell further into corruption. Ultimately, only the actions of a powerful priestess of Ashava named Sazzleru were able to save them.

Inspired by this fragmentary tale, Corstela sought out members of the priesthood of Ashava, a quest that eventually led her to Magnimar and to the elven cleric Audrahni. Corstela discovered that the elf was one of the most knowledgeable scholars on Saint Sazzleru, but Audrahni didn't trust Corstela and shared only a base level of information with the Varisian woman. Frustrated by Audrahni's refusal to cooperate, Corstela continued to investigate this demonic connection to the Varisians after Earthfall. Through this line of inquiry, combined with an urge for more power, Corstela began to learn how to consort with demons herself. It was through these endeavors that Corstela eventually met the cambion she refers to as Her Pridebound Assistant, a source that answered many of her questions. When she moved to Roderic's Cove and built Peacock Manor, she brought the cambion with her.

When the discovery of sites like the Therassic Library below Jorgenfist and the lost city of Xin-Shalast made lore of ancient Thassilon more readily available, Corstela fell upon the sudden increase of reports and journals from more accomplished adventurers, only to grow increasingly aghast at what she learned. Her illusions about the runelords shattered when she learned that the Thassilonians, who were supposedly better and more progressive than the Azlanti, in fact subjugated her people during the height of their empire. Corstela thinks that if Varisians can learn from this past, they can overcome it in the current day, seize what was once Thassilon, and gain the power that was built on the backs of their ancestors.

Some of the reports she read revealed the possibility of Thassilonian ruins not far from Roderic's Cove. While Corstela never realized that

the town itself was built around the ruins of one of Alaznist's Hellstorm Flumes, she did learn of rumors of another ruin supposedly hidden within the Churlwood to the south. In particular, she was intrigued by hints that Sir Roderic himself, the town's founder, had explored one of these locations. After this discovery, Corstela made her way to his long-abandoned home, Roderic's Wreck, to see if there she could learn anything from the site. Not expecting to find anything of value, since the place was a favored hangout for wayward teens, she was astounded when she discovered a treasure beyond her wildest dreams: an invisible blade set into a jeweled hilt.

She recalled a book that spoke of the *Swords of Sin*, powerful weapons carried by the champions of the runelords, and she knew that this had to be *Baraket, Sword of Pride*. Though she had no training with such weapons, Corstela found the magical blade effortless and light, but her real reason for treasuring the weapon was its ancient significance.

Corstela is a serious woman in her late thirties with straight black hair that runs past her shoulders. Her green eyes stand out against her tanned complexion, and she rarely smiles unless she means to. She dresses in traditional Varisian fashion, incorporating historical embellishments into her wardrobe as she discovers them in the obscure lore she has picked up during her travels.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

While haughty and self-absorbed, Corstela is less a villain and more an accomplice in this adventure. Her pride, inflamed by *Baraket*, has pushed her to uncover things she wasn't ready to face and has prompted her to make decisions with increasingly dreadful repercussions for the citizens of Roderic's Cove. The PCs can certainly choose to confront Corstela in a classic fight to the death, but she is not irredeemable. Open-minded adventurers may be able to appeal to her pride in a less deadly way, and it's not too late for Corstela to be guided onto a less destructive path.



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MOZAMER

Born from a *minor runewell of wrath* in Hollow Mountain, this sinspawn split his devotion between Runelord Alaznist and the qliploth lord Yamasoth. He now hopes to raise an army to reclaim Bakrakhan for both.

MOZAMER

CR 8
XP 4,800

 Male wrathspawn cleric of Yamasoth 5/rogue 3 (*Pathfinder*
RPG Bestiary 2 246)

NE Medium aberration

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent, sin-scent; Perception +18

DEFENSE

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

hp 98 (11d8+49)

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

Defensive Abilities trap sense +1; **Immune** mind-affecting effects; **SR** 13

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft. (30 ft. in armor)

Melee +2 *halberd* +13/+8 (1d10+6/×3), bite +5 (1d6+1) or bite +10 (1d6+3), 2 claws +10 (1d4+3)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 5/day (DC 16, 3d6), sinful bite, sneak attack +2d6 plus 2 bleed

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +9)

 At will—*mending*

 7/day—*artificer's touch* (1d6+2, bypasses DR and hardness 5), *touch of evil* (2 rounds)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +9)

 3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *magic circle against good*^o, *prayer*

 2nd—*align weapon*^o (evil only), *bull's strength*, *silence* (DC 16), *spiritual weapon*

 1st—*command*^o (DC 15), *cure light wounds* (2), *divine favor*, *shield of faith*

 0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *mending*
D domain spell; **Domains** Evil, Toil^{APG}

TACTICS

During Combat Mozamer doesn't care about the fleshdregs he fights with and uses them as a tactical advantage as much as he can, letting them distract the PCs so he can cast *bull's strength*, *shield of faith*, and *magic circle against good* in that order (he casts these three spells before combat begins if possible). Once this is done, he fights with his halberd and his bite, saving his spells for when they are tactically advantageous. If facing foes on his own, he uses his channel energy ability liberally against enemies.

Morale Mozamer fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 12, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 21

Feats Improved Channel, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (halberd)

Skills Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (planes) +4, Knowledge (religion) +4, Linguistics +5, Perception +18, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +11, Survival +10

Languages Aklo, Thassilonian, Varisian

SQ rogue talent (bleeding attack +2), trapfinding +1

Combat Gear *pearl of power* (2nd level); **Other Gear**

 +2 *chainmail*, +2 *halberd*, iron unholy symbol of Yamasoth, spell component pouch

Like many of his sinspawn brethren, Mozamer lived a long life in the sprawling dungeons of Hollow Mountain. While exploring a section of Hollow Mountain his kind had long avoided out of fearful tradition, Mozamer came across a small shrine to Yamasoth and a curious archway that seemed to serve as a magical window into another place. Through this window, Mozamer could look out into a different dungeon complex. Mozamer could sense great power within, and after spending weeks studying and meditating before the window, he realized what he was observing—a control complex located below one of Runelord Alaznist's legendary Hellstorm Flumes!

Astounded, Mozamer began to scheme about how he could use the power of a Hellstorm Flume, yet he grew frustrated as the view from the magic window taunted him. He began exploring other reaches of Hollow Mountain and discovered something astonishing—the window he'd discovered was originally part of a linked network of portals that allowed swift travel between all of the Hellstorm Flumes. Over the course of several years, Mozamer studied the magic of the malfunctioning network. He couldn't understand why the portals were no longer working (a result of the fact that all the Hellstorm Flumes had long been destroyed—a fact unknown to Mozamer at that time), but he felt he was close to repairing the damage.

Then, against all odds, Mozamer succeeded in his task and woke the portal from its ages-long sleep. He threw caution to the wind and leapt through the portal into the Underflume, only to realize too late that his portal had activated only one way. He couldn't return to Hollow Mountain, and the tools he'd used to repair the portal now lay out of reach, much as the Underflume itself had for so long.

Hoping to make the best of the situation, Mozamer explored the Underflume and eventually, under cover of night, crept up from the depths into the storeroom of the Creekside Tavern via a secret door that even the tavern owner didn't know about. Within the storeroom, Mozamer first met Jana, the leader of the freshly formed Horned Fangs gang. She was drunk and high on flayleaf, so she took an abomination creeping up from the storeroom's cellar in stride. Mozamer sized up the human, wondering whether to kill her or ignore her, when he noticed a familiar mark tattooed on her left pectoral near the collarbone—the Thassilonian symbol for wrath.

Mozamer was intrigued that a human would wear this symbol. Whispering to the inebriated human in Thassilonian garnered no response, so Mozamer switched to Aklo. As he saw Jana's face contort into an exaggerated performance of confusion, he cleared his throat and addressed her in the only other language he knew—Varisian—and Jana understood.

"It appears this place is quiet for the night. Would you like another drink?" he asked, opening the hatch to the cellar and gesturing for Jana to follow.

He brought her down to the former ambassador's section of the ancient Thassilonian facility. In the magically preserved lounge, Mozamer plied Jana for details about the town above and the current state of the world. Frustrated when he learned the Hellstorm Flume he had seen had been destroyed, Mozamer quickly refocused his plans, working with what he felt Jana could bring to his grand plan. He quizzed her on her organization, asking how many Horned Fangs swore to her and sussing out any potential struggles he might face if he were too aggressive in taking over the town above. He swiftly found that he could shape Jana's simmering wrath into a tool that would help his cause. Under his leadership, Jana would crush those who opposed her and rise to take over the town and bend it to his will—or so he hoped.

Mozamer is more a schemer than a soldier, but he is violent and harsh with his subjects. He puts a lot of

trust into his lieutenants and allows them to perform their duties as they see fit, but he's not entirely happy with the lot he's gathered. He's working with fleshdregs and thugs for the most part, but he'll take what he can get until he can raise a large enough army for Alaznist and find a way back through the portal to Hollow Mountain.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Mozamer's arrival in Roderic's Cove wasn't the start of the town's troubles, but it stoked smoldering embers. Mozamer's command of the Horned Fangs has transformed the group from a bunch of petty toughs and drug abusers into a violent force that approaches matters with aggression instead of their usual flippant antagonism.

Mozamer can indirectly confirm Alaznist's awakening for the PCs when he tries to recruit them into what he claims is a growing army that will overtake all of Varisia and usher in a New Thassilon. If the PCs are utterly terrible people, they might align with the sinspawn—though such an outcome is beyond the scope of this adventure.



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RODERIC'S COVE

Varisia hosts dozens of settlements, most of which are small villages and towns, often found near plentiful sources of fresh water. Many more settlements similar to these have grown up and then vanished over the years, sometimes due to poor planning or difficult conditions, other times to the predations of the monsters that inhabit Varisia's woods and vales. Over the last century, as people from across the Inner Sea have begun to explore the frontier of Varisia, settlements have become more plentiful. Encouraged by bountiful lands and the chance to have a place of their own, settlers have sought to tame the woods and rivers for their own benefit and profit. Though the indigenous Varisians are traveling people, this does not mean they are fully content with foreign settlers claiming the lands that they have held as their own since the times of Thassilon.

—Excerpt from a travelogue of Varisia

Nestled in the northeastern corner of the Varisian Gulf at the mouth of the Chavali River, the small community of Roderic's Cove was built atop a traditional Varisian gathering site. Constant struggles keep the small and insular town from developing into something more, and gossip and superstition both bolster and restrict the community. As often as the town has resisted corrupt rule, its people have exhibited voluntary ignorance when choosing what to accept due to family or tradition, resulting in a tightly knit community of people resistant to outside influence.

HISTORY

Roughly 80 years ago, the privateer Sir Roderic led a group of emigrants from Magnimar to found the town of Roderic's Cove. Arriving at the mouth of the Chavali River, the settlers discovered a fine natural harbor and a clearing around a circular stone foundation, a remnant of ancient times. Since then, the town has provided well for itself, but has never grown beyond its original size. Throughout its existence, Roderic's Cove has struggled under Riddleport's influence, and it has even come to provide an alternative port for those ship captains and merchants unwilling to do business with the notorious pirates and cutthroats of that city.

In the years after the town's founding, Sir Roderic protected the town, fighting against the predations of Riddleport's pirates. He sailed the Varisian Gulf, thwarting raiders, and these actions earned him Riddleport's ire. Ten years after the founding of Roderic's Cove, a group of Riddleport pirates finally caught Sir Roderic out sailing with his family and sank his ship in full view of the Cove's populace. The town shook with fear and sorrow, having lost its trusted founder and greatest protector in one fateful blow.

Despite this loss, the people of Roderic's Cove continued to stand against Riddleport's influence until 4698 AR, when the Cove finally succumbed and fell under the control of Riddleport's unsavory leaders. In the following years, though, Roderic's Cove finally began to flourish as the pirates spared the town the worst of their activities.

In 4708, troubles found Roderic's Cove again as ships began sinking in the waters offshore. Some feared that pirates from Riddleport were responsible for the losses, despite the fact that Roderic's Cove, in theory, remained under Riddleport's protection. Others claimed the culprit was the ghost of Sir Roderic himself, rising up from the cove's depths to "protect" the town from the approach of any ship—friend or foe. Neither theory was enough to placate the frightened townsfolk. Roderic's Cove's leaders grew worried about the unrest, as prominent citizens threatened to abandon the Cove or found a new settlement further down the coast.

RODERIC'S COVE

N small town

Corruption +0; **Crime** +0; **Economy** +0; **Law** +1; **Lore** +1; **Society** +0

Qualities independent, tightly knit

Danger +0

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government autocracy (port-governor)

Population 1,100 (960 humans, 51 half-elves, 39 halflings, 28 elves, 19 gnomes, 3 tieflings)

NOTABLE NPCs

Desil Marphan, keeper of the Lady's Chapel (N male human cleric of Pharasma 7)

Larenza Thort, port-governor (LG female human investigator^{ACG} 5)

Julit Freson, militia captain (LG middle-aged female human fighter 5)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 1,000 gp; **Purchase Limit** 5,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 4th

Minor Items 3d4; **Medium Items** 1d6; **Major Items** —

QUALITIES

Independent Roderic's Cove's citizens aren't ones to be put upon by outside influence and tend to stand up for themselves. (*Society +1, Law +1*)

Tightly Knit The people of Roderic's Cove gossip and know many things going about in other people's households, but they're guarded on what they share—especially with non-locals. Townsfolk also tend to protect each other from such visitors and obfuscate what they know about other residents. (*Society -1, Lore -1*)

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It was during this time of simmering rebellion that Roderic's Cove's then port-governor, one Captain Jess Gildersleeve, was caught skimming gold from the protection money the town paid to Riddleport. A number of concerned citizens—many of whom held crucial positions in the town—stood up against the captain's intimidation and refused to do business with those who supported the port-governor until things were set right. It wasn't long before a mob of enraged citizens ran Jess Gildersleeve out of town. The former port-governor fled with her daughter to the only place she felt safe—her hometown of Riddleport.

In the decade since that event, Roderic's Cove's leadership has changed only twice. While the political situation has stabilized, sightings of Sir Roderic's ghost continue to occur on a semi-annual basis—and these sightings invariably herald new trouble for the struggling town.

RODERIC'S COVE



1 Square = 15 Feet

CHAVALI RIVER

OVERVIEW

Roderic's Cove is a simple town, and even its most affluent residents don't walk around with flashy clothes and items. Most homes and buildings are made from timber, though some of the older homes have a stone-walled ground floor. Gravel made from shells (mostly from oysters) paves the streets throughout town, and a small creek powers a mill and provides fresh water.

People in Roderic's Cove eat well from smoked salmon, preserved reefclaw, hearty crabs, rockfish, and a wide array of oysters. Farms and ranches outside of town supplement the town's food supply beyond the bounty of the sea, and several of these farms are known for their delicious apple cider and blackberry preserves.

The town's leader bears the title of port-governor, but it is not a completely autocratic role. A small council of merchants and prominent citizens provides advice and support to the person holding the office.

While Roderic's Cove is filled with mostly good and down-to-earth folk, a seedy element has increased in the town over the past decade. No major crimes have troubled the town in years, as just about everyone—on either side of the law—has enough to get by, and most just want to get along.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Roderic's Cove has a wealth of notable locations.

1. THE LADY'S CHAPEL

While fewer than half of the townsfolk actively worship Pharasma, nearly everyone who dies or gives birth has visited the Lady's Chapel or had a visit from its priests. **Desil Marphan** (N male human cleric of Pharasma 7) oversees a staff of four, not counting the seven local children who take part in the regular services as candle lighters and choir members. A wrought iron fence stretches from the church and surrounds the town's graveyard. Near the edge of the graveyard is a small home currently occupied by a newcomer to the town, Audrahni (see page 62). Desil is sympathetic to the elf and allows her to stay free of charge as she seeks to help Sir Roderic's ghost pass on to the afterlife.

2. PEACOCK MANOR

An iron fence surrounds this haphazard house. A dozen of the manor's namesakes roam the lush gardens ringing the building, their mournful cries often heard throughout town. Home of Corstela Rostrata (see page 64), this property was once three separate houses. The Varisian sage bought one at a time, gradually adding to each until they made a single sprawling and confusing manor. This location is detailed fully in the adventure beginning on page 39.

3. BLACKBERRY'S BAKERY

Run by a halfling woman named **Blackberry** (CG female halfling commoner 2), this bakery's specialties are the plentiful blackberries found in and around Roderic's Cove. The proprietor uses the tart berry in breads, confections, jams, jellies, muffins, pastries, and, if you ask nicely, a fine blackberry brandy.

4. LANKMEER'S MILL

Olivia Creek provides just enough power to turn the wheel at Lankmeer's Mill. The Lankmeer family receives grain from upriver in the Curchain Hills and processes it for the people of Roderic's Cove. Any remaining stores are then sold to smaller communities along the coast.

5. BROGAN'S APOTHECARY

The proprietor of this apothecary, **Jarb Brogan** (NG male halfling adept 1/expert 5), spends most of his time outside his shop in the surrounding wilderness hunting for herbs and minerals that he blends into poultices, balms, and other remedies. In addition to crafting these concoctions, Jarb serves as the town's barber. He has different stools for customers of varying heights and keeps stackable boxes to stand on when cutting hair.

6. HUDSTEN'S KENNEL

Wild dogs roam the woods around the Cove, and for several generations the Hudsten family has been capturing, training, and selectively breeding the finest of them. Excellent at treeing prey and prized by fur traders, these so-called "covehounds" are a breed unique to the area. **Svaci Hudsten** (NG female human ranger 2) has a big heart and truly cares for her animals.

Covehounds, often called Roderic ridgebacks (due to the ridge of tufted hair that runs down their spine) are popular throughout this part of Varisia, and some people come from as far as Korvosa to buy Hudsten Kennel puppies. A fully-grown covehound is a dog with the advanced creature simple template.

7. COVE GUARDHOUSE

Though Roderic's Cove doesn't see much danger, the town maintains a town guard and a volunteer militia for larger emergencies whose members are ready to assist their fellow citizens should the need arise. Captain **Julit Freson** (LG middle-aged female human fighter 5) is a gruff, no-nonsense woman who runs the guardhouse and trains anyone in town who wants to volunteer for the guard or militia. She dispenses good advice, whether people want to hear it or not, and always encourages people to do their best, especially the town children who look up to her. A few years ago, Freson recruited an unexpected second-in-command. After investigating reports of

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raids in the Churlwood, she captured **Keela Macrosh** (NG female human fighter 1/rogue 3) and locked her up in the guardhouse's jail cell. Over long conversations, Keela seemed to truly repent her ways and showed an interest in turning her life around. Though skeptical at first, Captain Freson agreed to mentor the former bandit.

8. CREEKSIDE TAVERN AND INN

This two-story building, often referred to simply as "Creekside," was built by one of the first settlers to arrive in the region with Sir Roderic. Now, **Garleena Knodston** (N female human expert 2) and her brother **Thevin** (N male human expert 2) run the tavern, as they have since they were orphaned as adolescents.

9. THE CIRCLE

Roderic's Cove town square is anything but, being located atop the remnants of an ancient circular stone foundation. The Cove's settlers decided this would be a prosperous place to build their town, and they set up their tents and temporary structures around the stone's circumference. It wasn't long before the settlers all referred to the fledgling colony's central meeting point as the Circle.

Most people in Roderic's Cove grow their own food, but once a week, dozens of citizens gather in the Circle. This weekly "Circle Market" allows households access to a more diverse range of food than what they've grown in their own gardens. Some vendors from farms in the surrounding hinterlands come into Roderic's Cove on market days to ply their wares. **Halder Makrosh** (NG middle-aged male human fighter 4/rogue 2), an older man who talks like he's seen it all, runs the market.

The Circle also features a pop-up drinking spot. Each afternoon, an old man named **Bimmer "Possum" Coots** (CG old male human expert 2) wheels a wooden cart out and sells cups of "possum punch" to any who stop by.

10. COVE HALL

This building was one of the first built in Roderic's Cove and served as communal housing in those early days as the rest of the town was being built. Every law penned governing Roderic's Cove is preserved in this building, as are Sir Roderic's cartographic efforts depicting the region.

Port-governor **Larenza Thort** (LG female human investigator^{ACG} 5) keeps her office in this building, as has every port-governor since the town's founding. The serving port-governor has the option of living in an on-site master suite, though most who hold the office keep their own homes in town.

11. KELSTROP MEATS

A haze of smoke hangs in the air around this location, bringing with it the mouthwatering smell

of smoked meats. **Ladia Kelstrop** (NG female human commoner 3) runs the best smokehouse in town. She primarily smokes salmon caught in the Chavali River, but also smokes beef, clams, oysters, and pork. Ladia works in close conjunction with Malford Pelson, the town's butcher and fishmonger.

12. PERICK'S SMITHY

Perick Lonson (LG male halfling expert 4) can be found in his shop during the day. He's known throughout the region for making excellent pots, pans, and other cookware. He has a good relationship with Unli Jevers at the Rampant Reefclaw (see area 16), and Perick's cookware designs enable some of the establishment's more popular dishes. As a skilled metalsmith, Perick can also make armor and weapons, but he does so only if commissioned, leaving most of the market for arms and armor to Lyndwyn Suvasa (see area 18).

13. PELSON'S CUTS

Running the business his grandparents started when they arrived in Roderic's Cove, **Malford Pelson** (N male human commoner 4) provides the town with a wide selection of meats, ranging from beef and pork sourced from outlying farms and ranches to fish brought in by the steady stream of fishing boats docking at Roderic's Cove each day.

14. CONREL'S GENERAL STORE

Since its original owner (a robustly rotund man named Conrel) passed away, **Varna Rigsten** (LG female human commoner 3) has been running the town's expansive general store. In addition to typical sundries, Varna also supplies animal feed. Recently, she's become concerned with reports from her teamsters that goblins in the nearby Churlwood have been growing bolder and have been spotted at the edge of the woods, hurling taunts, insults, and the occasional bit of rotten food.

15. TEMPLE OF THE STARS AND ROADS

While this chapel is primarily dedicated to Desna, the building also houses a half-dozen additional shrines to various empyreal lords. This chapel was established directly after the town's founding, as the Magnimarian emigrants brought the worship of these beings with them to their new home. **Miesalo Salen** (CG male half-elf bard 5) has served as the chapel's priest since the previous priest up and left town nearly a decade ago.

The temple hosts musical celebrations on holidays, and musicians in town often stop by after the workday to play music with Miesalo. Fenril, the town's luthier, promptly closes his fiddle shop each day to head down to the Temple of the Stars and Roads to draw a bow across some strings.

16. THE RAMPANT REEFCLAW

A bit of a standout in such a small town, this extravagant establishment serves refined cuisine the likes of which are typically found only in larger cities in the Inner Sea region. **Unli Jevvers** (NG male human expert 5) is easily the best cook in town. In recent years, as news of the Rampant Reefclaw's delicacies has spread, people from the length of the Lost Coast have visited Roderic's Cove specifically to sample Unli's work. Many of these visitors come from Riddleport, and given the tensions between that city and Roderic's Cove, some locals claim that the Rampant Reefclaw and its cook are attracting more attention than they should.

17. BOATYARD

This boatyard primarily performs repair work, but **Elbrena Skodgers** (NG female human expert 4) also constructs new vessels. She's been in the trade only for 8 years, but her work is amazing, if a bit slow. Her assistant, **Skati Wolson** (CG male human commoner 3) is a jovial man who loves being out on the water. He offers to take people fishing at the drop of a hat just to be out on the gulf.

18. COVE ARMORY

Distrusted by some in Roderic's Cove, **Lyndwyn Suvasa** (N female human expert 7) runs a small shop that provides weapons and armor to those in need. She gets many of her wares by special order from Riddleport, prompting some people in town to think that she has shady connections to that city. In truth, she gets her best pieces from a traveling dwarven weaponsmith who visits at least once a month to sell her new pieces and to spend some quality time with Lyndwyn. Lyndwyn doesn't pay the town's attitude much mind, and is very open with newcomers, warning them of the gossiping nature of Roderic's Cove.

19. THE DOCKS

While the town is small, its docks see sporadic activity from just before dawn to shortly after dusk, as fishing boats head out and merchant vessels arrive at the tiny port. The traffic isn't so high that the town has need of a dedicated harbormaster, so that duty is traditionally held by the town's port-governor. Merchants in town work with Larenza Thort to find agreeable times to conduct business with barges coming down the Chavali River

laden with goods bound for the Varisian Gulf, as well as with those seagoing ships small enough to dock at the Cove that will trade goods to ports beyond.

Many of these merchants maintain warehouses along the docks. As trade has increased, many are eager to see new warehouses built further down the shore. The grandson of the foreman responsible for building the first permanent structures in Roderic's Cove has begun clearing space east of town and laying foundations for new warehouses and docks.

OUTSIDE OF TOWN

Just south of Roderic's Cove sprawls the expansive tangles of the Churlwood. Those traveling the Chavali River down to the Varisian Gulf have reported bandits and goblins as the most common aggressors in this wooded reach, but thankfully the river provides a buffer, keeping Roderic's Cove protected from all but the most dedicated threats. In the time in which the town has existed, few significant dangers from the

Churlwood have directly affected the people of Roderic's Cove, though many townsfolk who explore or work the forest have met with deadly fates when they venture into the forest alone.

HALLEN'S FERRY

A dispute about the height of a planned bridge a few miles outside of town resulted in two rows of pilings being driven into the riverbed with not a plank laid between them. **Hallen Rosker** (N old female human commoner 7) made the best of this—he ran a line between the two and now provides a ferry service for those looking to cross the river just north of the Churlwood for anyone willing to pay 4 copper pieces for each trip across. More information about this location can be found on page 23.

MEIR'S SAWMILL

This logging yard and sawmill stand a mile out of town, on the way to Roderic's Wreck. Run by the Meir family, the sawmill was one of the first industries built when Roderic's Cove was founded. Most of the buildings in town are constructed from timber processed here.

RODERIC'S WRECK

People in town generally avoid the home of the town's founder, believing it to be haunted. Locals are in no hurry to stir up the rumored ghost of Sir Roderic. This location is detailed on page 12.



LARENZA THORT

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THE RUNELORD LEGACY

In the very first Pathfinder Adventure Path campaign, we wanted to showcase not a fiendish monster or a marauding god but a human wizard as the campaign's primary villain. The result was Runelord Karzoug, ruler of an ancient nation that was part of a long-lost empire called Thassilon. But in building his backstory, we revealed additional information about the runelords who ruled Thassilon's other nations. Since the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path, we've teased bits and pieces of the other runelords, and fully detailed a few in the course of other storylines. It was all leading to this, though—the final installment of a trilogy of campaigns. In Return of the Runelords, you'll get a chance to learn more than ever before about Thassilon and its rulers.

When the runelords learned of the impending doom of Earthfall, they each sought means of surviving the end of their world. This article explores the means the seven runelords took to escape Earthfall, reveals the methods of their return, and presents an exhaustive timeline of events from the foundation of Thassilon to the current year.

ALAZNIST

Alaznist was one of three runelords to use a *runewell* to create a sheltered demiplane (in her case, the Eye of Fury) to escape Earthfall. She first stirred from her slumber when Karzoug's *runewell* flared to life in 4702 AR, but Alaznist lacked the external focus needed to fill her *runewell* with the energy she needed to emerge. She was thus forced to rely upon ambient, regional wrath to slowly fill her *runewell*. The final dose was provided when her castellan, a demon she left in charge of Hollow Mountain's defenses, was slain by adventurers. With this final infusion, she emerged from the Eye of Fury in 4716 AR.

Alaznist took a year researching the world she found herself in, during which time she learned that Karzoug, Krune, and Zutha had each already failed in their attempts to return. She suspected that Sorshen has woken and knew that Belimarius was trapped, but her primary fear was that Xanderghul, her greatest rival and enemy now that Karzoug was dead, would awaken soon.

Alaznist traveled to the ruins of Xin-Cyrusian, intent on murdering Xanderghul before he woke. It took her several months to explore the ruined city, only to become stymied when she discovered Xanderghul had fled into a sanctuary outside of time and space. She gathered what lore she could from Xanderghul's surviving notes on temporal manipulation in the hope of finding an unguarded route into his time-locked fortress. In doing so, she learned that Xanderghul had grown obsessed with discovering the whereabouts of a powerful artifact known as the *Scepter of Ages*. With this artifact, Xanderghul hoped to escape Earthfall by simply traveling forward in time, bringing his most powerful allies with him to a future Golarion. Xanderghul ironically ran out of time and was forced into his sanctuary before he could recover the lost artifact.

Using Xanderghul's notes and research, Alaznist took only a few months to complete his work and discover the artifact's location. A few weeks before this campaign begins, Alaznist recovered the *Scepter of Ages*. She used it to unlock Xanderghul's refuge, whereupon the runelord of pride woke from his suspended animation but perished before Alaznist's magic (it was during the few short moments before Xanderghul is slain that the *Sword of Pride* flares briefly to life in Roderic's Cove). Incorrectly assuming Xanderghul to be dead and gone, Alaznist then used the *Scepter of Ages* to open portals in

time, traveling back to ancient Thassilon seven times to manipulate events and absorb mythic power. She also arranged for the Oliphaunt of Jandelay to travel forward in time to threaten modern Varisia, and she began to set other events in motion that would ensure she rules northern Avistan as New Thassilon.

These plans were compromised when the heroes of previous Adventure Paths (heroes referred to in this campaign as the Sihedron Heroes), armed with the artifact known as the *Sihedron*, disrupted her manipulation of temporal power by using time-locked energy harvested from Runelord Belimarius's prison of Crystilan. Alaznist used the *Scepter of Ages* to shunt the heroes out of reality and trap them within Crystilan, but in the process the *Scepter of Ages* hurtled forward in time, out of Alaznist's grasp.

The Inner Sea region is now threatened with great danger, as Alaznist recovers from her battle with the Sihedron Heroes, begins making her claim on the powerful resources found in Xin-Cyrusian, and prepares to found a New Thassilon. Although she no longer has the *Scepter of Time*, the damage she's done to the timeline continues to build toward devastating events in the near future. Once the Oliphaunt of Jandelay arrives (an event that will happen near the end of the sixth adventure in this campaign), she plans to make her play against the world. Only by traveling through time can the PCs undo the temporal damage Alaznist has created and, in so doing, strip her of much of her stolen mythic power; otherwise, they won't stand a chance at defeating her in the campaign's final encounter.

BELIMARIUS

When Belimarius failed to create a *runewell*, she turned to Karzoug for aid. He appeared only too eager to help, but he betrayed Belimarius by providing faulty advice. When she activated her flawed *runewell* in an attempt to create the Eye of Jealousy, the *runewell* instead self-destructed, trapping Belimarius, the heart of her city, Xin-Edasseril, and many of her most trusted and powerful allies in a sphere outside of time. Those trapped within this sphere live the final week before Earthfall over and over, forever trapped in a temporal loop. They never age, but neither can they retain any knowledge of what they learned in that final, harrowing, ever-repeating week.

The time-trapped heart of Xin-Edasseril exists today as a sphere of crystal encasing a mysterious city—modern Varisians call the site Crystilan. For thousands of years, the occupants of the City outside of Time have endured, but it wasn't until the current year that the time loop in Crystilan was disrupted. When Alaznist used the *Scepter of Ages* to trap her foes in Crystilan, energies unleashed by the artifact broke the cycle of temporal repetition. But as

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GLUTTONY

- 1: KALIPHESTA –6480 AR to –6258 AR (female, 222 years)
- 2: ATHAREND –6258 AR to –6150 AR (male, 108 years)
- 3: AETHUSA –6150 AR to –5822 AR (female, 328 years)
- 4: GOPARLIS –5822 AR to –5642 AR (male, 180 years)
- 5: ZUTHA –5642 AR to –5293 AR (male, 349 years)

WRATH

- 1: ALDERPASH –6480 AR to –6266 AR (male, 214 years)
- 2: ANGOTHANE –6266 AR to –6150 AR (male, 116 years)
- 3: XIREN –6150 AR to –5905 AR (female, 245 years)
- 4: THYBIDOS –5905 AR to –5779 AR (male, 126 years)
- 5: ALAZNIST –5779 AR to –5293 AR (female, 486 years)

PRIDE

- 1: XANDERGHUL –6480 AR to –5293 AR (male, 1187 years)

GREED

- 1: KALADURNAE –6480 AR to –6448 AR (male, 32 years)
- 2: FETHRYR –6448 AR to –6318 AR (female, 130 years)
- 3: GIMMEL –6318 AR to –6192 AR (male, 126 years)
- 4: LIGNIYA –6192 AR to –6040 AR (female, 152 years)
- 5: MAZMIRANNA –6040 AR to –5997 AR (female, 43 years)
- 6: AETHUSA –5997 AR to –5862 AR (female, 135 years)
- 7: HAPHRAMA –5862 AR to –5759 AR (male, 103 years)
- 8: KARZOUG: –5759 AR to –5293 AR (male, 466 years)

SLOTH

- 1: XIRIE –6480 AR to –6150 AR (female, 330 years)
- 2: ILTHYRIUS –6150 AR to –6105 AR (male, 45 years)
- 3: AZERADNI –6105 AR to –6008 AR (female, 97 years)
- 4: ZALELET –6008 AR to –5847 AR (female, 161 years)
- 5: KRENLITH –5847 AR to –5752 AR (male, 95 years)
- 6: IVARINNA –5752 AR to –5525 AR (female, 227 years)
- 7: KRUNE –5525 AR to –5293 AR (232 years)

ENVY

- 1: NAAFT –6480 AR to –6442 AR (female, 38 years)
- 2: TANNARIS –6442 AR to –6360 AR (male, 82 years)
- 3: IVAMURA –6360 AR to –6301 AR (female, 59 years)
- 4: JURAH –6301 AR to –6150 AR (male, 151 years)
- 5: CHALSARDRA –6150 AR to –5966 AR (female, 184 years)
- 6: ESEDREA –5966 AR to –5796 AR (female, 170 years)
- 7: ZARVE –5796 AR to –5696 AR (male, 100 years)
- 8: DESAMELIA –5696 AR to –5489 AR (female, 207 years)
- 9: PHIRANDI –5489 AR to –5402 AR (male, 87 years)
- 10: BELIMARIUS –5402 AR to –5293 AR (female, 109 years)

LUST

- 1: SORSHEN –6480 AR to –5293 AR (female, 1187 years)

the truth of the situation became known to Crystilan's prisoners, Belimarius's control over the city diminished. She spends this entire Adventure Path trapped in the time-lost city until the PCs arrive to rescue the Sihedron Heroes, reclaim the *Sihedron*, and learn how to defeat Alaznist. Whether the PCs fight and defeat Belimarius, rescue her, or leave her trapped in her city is up to them.

KARZOUG

Like his rival Alaznist, Karzoug used a *runewell* to create a demiplane, the Eye of Avarice, to escape Thassilon's fall. Thousands of years later, in 4702 AR, an ambitious stone giant wizard named Mokmurian accidentally triggered Karzoug's *runewell* and woke the runelord within. This sent ripples to the other *runewells*, causing the runelords who used them to escape Earthfall to stir, but not yet awaken.

The story of Karzoug's rise and fall is told in the Rise of the Runelords Adventure Path. Return of the Runelords assumes he is dead and that his soul now resides in the Boneyard. Pharasma knows Karzoug is destined to be of use to the heroes, and so she has temporarily delayed his judgment, but this delayed judgment doesn't grant his soul any additional protection, and a runelord's soul is a great treasure. In the sixth volume of Return of the Runelords, the PCs must rescue Karzoug's soul so they

can interrogate him, learn how to use the Cyphergate to travel to the Dimension of Time, and thus undo the temporal damage Alaznist has wrought.

KRUNE

Krune's plan to outlive Earthfall involved trapping his body and soul in a gem that the cult of Lissala would later free him from once the effects of the apocalypse had ended—a plan that collapsed when the cult of Lissala was all but destroyed by Earthfall.

By 4713 AR, the cult of Lissala had recovered enough to try to release Krune, only to have a group of Pathfinder Society agents defeat them and slay Krune. In the third volume of Return of the Runelords, the PCs hopefully prevent the cult of Yamasoth from resurrecting Runelord Krune to extract potent conjuration secrets from his mind.

SORSHEN

It was Sorshen, after studying and reverse-engineering a mysterious artifact known as the *Everdawn Pool*, who created the first of the *runewells*. She shared this discovery with the other runelords in an era before they had fallen into bickering and feuding—a choice she would live to regret. Sorshen eventually created the Eye of Desire to hide away from Earthfall.

She first stirred in 4702 AR as Karzoug's *runewell* was activated, but it was not until Queen Ileosa of Korvosa discovered the *Everdawn Pool* and began using it to bolster her power that Sorshen emerged from the Eye of Desire. Sorshen had grown dissatisfied with, and even exhausted by, the bickering among the other runelords during her long period of reflection—a period of time that also magnified her caution and softened her cruelty. After watching from afar as three other rising runelords (Karzoug, Krune, and Zutha) were defeated, her conviction solidified. She would emerge quietly, instead of exploding onto the scene by raising an army of giants, awakening a cult, or meddling with the flow of time. The runelord of lust spent years waiting, watching, and observing. When she realized Alaznist is meddling with time, though, she knew that she needed to act—she relocated the *Everdawn Pool* out of the Sunken Queen and into the Eye of Desire and then created blood simulacra of herself to serve as her eyes and ears in the world, thus seeking out methods of opposing Alaznist without putting herself at undue risk.

Sorshen's goal is to rule New Thassilon, but in a way that it can exist peacefully in the new world and not invite war with all neighbors. In the third volume of *Return of the Runelords*, the PCs encounter one of Sorshen's blood simulacra and, if they entertain the decadent creature, can gain a valuable ally, ensuring that New Thassilon's lasting mark on the Inner Sea region is not one of destruction.

XANDERGHUL

Although Xanderghul created a *runewell*, his pride prevented him from escaping Earthfall by relying on something invented and used by another. Instead, he drew upon his mythic power to create his own demiplane sanctum, and then he began searching for the *Scepter of Ages*, a mythical artifact he hoped would allow him to travel into the future, along with his armies, avoiding Earthfall entirely. Ironically, he ran out of time and was forced to retreat into his sanctum on Earthfall's eve. Rather than rely upon agents to wake him, Xanderghul devised his sanctum so it kept him in suspended animation for a mere 100 years—time enough, he calculated, for the effects of the apocalypse to fade. What he didn't anticipate was that a significant number of Belimarius's agents would be left trapped in the world when her own *runewell* backfired. When these envious followers survived Earthfall only to realize they couldn't free Runelord Belimarius, they traveled to the next-closest runelord domain: Xanderghul's Cyrusian. There, in an attempt to salvage Xanderghul's *runewell* and repurpose it to repair Belimarius's own, they triggered a devastating trap that slew them all and destroyed the timer Xanderghul had set for his own awakening. As a result of his own pride, the most powerful of the runelords had doomed himself.

With no link between his sanctum and his own *runewell*, Xanderghul did not stir when Karzoug's *runewell* activated. This gave Alaznist the opportunity she needed to ambush Xanderghul as he slumbered. He woke swiftly when she managed, finally, to invade his sanctum, but he lived only long enough to be murdered.

When Alaznist killed Xanderghul, his spirit did not enter the River of Souls. Instead, powerful illusion magics activated, and Xanderghul was reborn in the body of a simulacrum in the inner sanctum of the Temple of the Peacock Spirit. That Xanderghul and the Peacock Spirit were one and the same is a secret he managed to keep to the modern day—and that secret saved him from death at Alaznist's hands.

Yet Alaznist had still dealt him a tremendous defeat. For this Adventure Path, Xanderghul remains hidden deep within the powerful defenses of the Temple of the Peacock Spirit, working his will via the swiftly reawakening Cult of the Peacock Spirit. The PCs are fated to confront this cult over and over again in the first few adventures and will finally track the cult to its source in the fourth volume of *Return of the Runelords*. There, the PCs have a chance to not only finish the job Alaznist started and defeat the runelord of pride but also learn much of Alaznist's plans.

ZUTHA

Zutha had the least need for a method of escaping death, for he had become a lich long before Earthfall. As long as his phylactery (an artifact called the *Gluttonous Tome*) was safe, Zutha could recover from any doom. To ensure that the tome would survive, he split it into three lesser works and entrusted these artifacts to his three most powerful minions, instructing them to bring the books back together once the danger of Earthfall had passed. Yet Earthfall proved more devastating than Zutha could anticipate, and his followers were destroyed. For centuries, the three portions of the *Gluttonous Tome* remained apart. The tome was finally rebuilt in 4715 AR by Varian Jeggare, but his companions freed him from Zutha's influence. Varian and his allies then managed to defeat the risen Zutha before he could properly rebuild his lich body.

In the third volume of *Return of the Runelords*, the PCs learn from a blood simulacrum of Sorshen that there is a way to destroy Zutha's phylactery (and thus forever prevent Zutha's return) but that it requires a visit to the one-time heart of Thassilon's empire—the city of Xin. Now risen above the waves (as a result of Shattered Star's climax), this city is more accessible than in times past. If the PCs can recover one of the three parts of Zutha's phylactery in Kaer Maga, they can bring the tome to Xin and force Zutha to manifest for a short time as a forsaken lich. If the PCs can swiftly slay Zutha, his phylactery will also be destroyed and yet another runelord will be put to rest.

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RETURN OF THE RUNELORDS TIMELINE

Key events leading up to the start of Return of the Runelords are listed below.

Date Event

-6533 AR	Xin and his followers are exiled from Azlant.	-6310 AR	Runelord Alderpash creates the first inverted giant.
-6530 AR	Xin and his followers arrive in Avistan.	-6308 AR	Runelord Xanderghul creates his <i>runewell</i> .
-6501 AR	Xin develops Thassilonian rune magic to match the seven virtues of rule.	-6301 AR	Tensions between Azlant and Thassilon finally come to a head with an invasion of Thassilon by Azlanti armies. The conflict lasts several months after Azlant wreaks havoc on Edasseril, where they manage the capture and execution of that realm's leader, Runelord Ivamura. This public conquest and execution galvanizes the other runelords, but it's not until later in the year that the ruler of Shalast, Runelord Gimmel, conjures the Oliphant of Jandelay to lay waste to the Azlanti army. The Oliphant wreaks havoc on Thassilon as well, and before it returns to whence it came, it devastates several Thassilonian legions.
-6498 AR	Xin creates the <i>Sihedron</i> as a symbol of his mastery over rune magic and over Thassilon.	-6267 AR	Alderpash approaches Baphomet for aid in becoming mythic to keep pace with Sorshen and Xanderghul, promising Sorshen as a sacrifice.
-6480 AR	Xin appoints the first runelords to take care of the day-to-day drudgery of rule.	-6266 AR	Alderpash betrays Sorshen to Baphomet, but the plan backfires and Baphomet imprisons Alderpash in the Ivory Labyrinth in the Abyss.
-6479 AR	Runelord Sorshen discovers the <i>Everdawn Pool</i> .	-6236 AR	Alderpash becomes a lich but remains Baphomet's prisoner in the Ivory Labyrinth.
-6478 AR	Runelord Kaladurnae discovers the strange hexagonal structure known as Kaer Maga.	-6196 AR	The secret of transmuting lead into gold is discovered by transmuters in Shalast.
-6475 AR	Runelord Naaft renames her land Edasseril, taking the name from the loveliest Mierani elf.	-6158 AR	Transmuters in Runeforge create a golden champion named Chellan.
-6470 AR	Runelord Kaladurnae begins using Kaer Maga as a prison colony.	-6155 AR	A full 180 years after construction began, the temple of Sech Nevali is completed. For a few short years, the so-called Hanging Monastery becomes the most famous and audacious structure devoted to the Peacock Spirit. Enraged that the greatest temple to the Peacock Spirit is not located in his empire and that he did not build it, Xanderghul begins construction of an even greater project—the Castle of the Green Feather.
-6466 AR	Xanderghul becomes mythic.	-6153 AR	Chellan's magical energies fade and the statue becomes inert; her powers remain in the <i>Sword of Greed</i> .
-6453 AR	Sorshen becomes mythic.	-6152 AR	The Castle of the Green Feather is constructed.
-6452 AR	Runelord Sorshen reverse-engineers the <i>Everdawn Pool</i> and builds the first <i>runewell</i> .	-6150 AR	The enmity between the seven runelords builds to a violent schism that nearly leads to civil war.
-6448 AR	Xanderghul secretly gains a divine source and establishes the Cult of the Peacock Spirit.	-6143 AR	The brutal Shoanti Garvok is the first to be cremated by the <i>Sword of Wrath</i> in the arena of Xin-Bakrakhan, after which the sword's explosion devastates the surrounding area.
-6421 AR	The runelords create the first rune giants, and using them, seize control of Thassilon's giants.	-6120 AR	The <i>Sword of Sloth</i> is created in Runeforge. Runelord Ilthyrius is disappointed and murders its creators.
-6420 AR	The runelords send a rune giant to assassinate Xin, who retaliates by using the <i>Sihedron's</i> retributive strike to destroy the rune giant and much of his palace. The runelords seize control of Thassilon.	-6060 AR	Runelord Sorshen commissions the creation of the Lady's Light as a show of power and wealth.
-6410 AR	Worried about the unrest in Thassilon and the rise in power of its new ruling runelords, Azlanti diplomats travel to Thassilon and attempt to forge a treaty. They are threatened and turned away by the runelords.	-5836 AR	Karzoug is born in the city of Malistoke during Runelord Haphrama's rule.
-6401 AR	Runelord Xanderghul, with the aid of the other six runelords, completes the Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit in the Kodar Mountains. Worshipers from all of Thassilon's nations are welcome. Xanderghul establishes the Therassic Order as the cult's religious and scholastic core and the Order of the Green Feather as its militaristic champions, all while hiding the fact that he is the Peacock Spirit.		
-6360 AR	Runelord Tannaris and his son fight to the death; all that remains afterward is the <i>Sword of Envy</i> .		
-6355 AR	Runeforge is created.		
-6347 AR	Sorshen creates <i>Asheia</i> , <i>Sword of Lust</i> .		
-6344 AR	Xanderghul completes <i>Baraket</i> , <i>Sword of Pride</i> .		
-6335 AR	Runelord Xirie begins construction of Sech Nevali in eastern Haruka, intending it to be the greatest of all the temples to the Peacock Spirit.		
-6328 AR	Xanderghul secures the linnorm Fafnheir as advisor.		

- 5824 AR The ensorcelled azata princess Baraket is slain by agents of the empyreal lord Chadali, and her essence infuses the *Sword of Pride*.
- 5809 AR Karzoug escapes slavery from his master Zinlun and apprentices to the demon binder Thurbel.
- 5802 AR Karzoug betrays Thurbel and uses stolen magic to secure an apprenticeship to Runelord Haphrama.
- 5786 AR Alaznist secures alliance with the qlipthoth lord Yamasoth and gains knowledge of fleshwarping.
- 5784 AR Alaznist creates the first reefclaws.
- 5782 AR Alaznist creates the first sinspawn; fleshwarping lore soon spreads to other runelords.
- 5779 AR Alaznist travels to the Ivory Labyrinth to consult with Alderpash in her quest to become the new runelord of wrath; the negotiations go badly and the lich assaults her, but she destroys him and claims his skull as a trophy before returning to Thassilon to successfully complete her plans. Alderpash reforms from his phylactery in his prison, angrier than ever but still imprisoned.
- 5759 AR With the aid of allies from Leng, Karzoug overthrows Runelord Haphrama and becomes runelord of greed.
- 5758 AR Karzoug razes the city of Malistoke in an attempt to erase from history all evidence of his humiliating origins as a slave. He destroys the lair of his first and most-hated master, the lich Zinlun, but fails to completely destroy Zinlun himself. He quarries the stone for miles around to build new monuments; the Storval Deep is the result.
- 5720 AR Alaznist creates the first of several Hellstorm Flumes along the Rasp, at a location that would eventually become Sandpoint.
- 5701 AR Ungarato, a red-haired barbarian and master of dragons, attacks an envoy of necromancers en route to Runeforge, and steals the *Sword of Gluttony* for himself.
- 5658 AR Ungarato dies but rises as a graveknight; he continues to wield the *Sword of Gluttony*.
- 5642 AR Runelord Goparlis, distracted by failures to reclaim the *Sword of Gluttony*, is betrayed by Zutha, who then becomes the new runelord of gluttony.
- 5620 AR Karzoug builds the Cyphergate.
- 5530 AR Krune becomes the last high-priest of Lissala.
- 5525 AR Krune becomes runelord of sloth.
- 5418 AR Zutha creates the *Gluttonous Tome*.
- 5410 AR Runelord Alaznist creates her *runewell*.
- 5402 AR Belimarius imprisons the Runelord of Envy Phirandi in a transparent coffin of force and replaces him, installing Phirandi as a trophy in Xin-Edasseril.
- 5353 AR Karzoug establishes Guiltspur as a sort of "embassy" between Shalast and Leng.
- 5319 AR Runelord Karzoug steals the *Shard of Gluttony*.
- 5294 AR Alaznist becomes mythic.
- 5293 AR Earthfall. Thassilon is destroyed.
- 5180 AR Karzoug's old nemesis, Zinlun, returns to Golarion after spending many years traveling the planes, only to find Thassilon destroyed and his city of Malistoke gone. He builds a new laboratory in flooded chambers beneath the Storval Deep and lapses into centuries of obsession over Karzoug, eventually transforming into a demilich.
- 4109 AR A priest of Lissala named Mesmalatu and allies from Leng repair the bridge between Leng and the Material Plane at Guiltspur.
- 880 AR The Whispering Tyrant travels to the Cenotaph and gains mythic power by defiling Zutha's remains.
- 4662 AR Lissalan vampires establish the Feasters in Palin's Cove to rebuild the faith of their forgotten goddess.
- 4702 AR The blue dragon Cadrilkasta discovers the *Shard of Wrath* in Belkzen; it leads her to the ruins of Guiltspur in search of another *Sihedron Shard*. Mokmurian awakens Karzoug in Xin-Shalast.
- 4703 AR Cadrilkasta begins excavating Guiltspur.
- 4707 AR Karzoug is defeated by heroes.
- 4708 AR Queen Ileosa's tampering with the *Everdawn Pool* quickens Sorshen's awakening under Castle Korvosa.
- 4712 AR Natayla Vancaskerkin discovers the *Shard of Pride* in Crow's Piling in the Irespan of Magnimar and triggers the quest for the *Shattered Star*. The *Runecarved Key* is found in Magnimar's harbor and auctioned to the highest bidder, who later that year uses it to unlock a false Krune crypt.
- 4713 AR Heroes rebuild and restore the *Shattered Star*; Xin rises from the sea and a tsunami strikes Magnimar. Pathfinders uncover the secret location and method of entering Runelord Krune's sanctum and then defeat Krune when he escapes from his *soul trap*.
- 4715 AR Runelord Zutha nearly awakens as his phylactery, the *Gluttonous Tome*, is momentarily rebuilt. His return is defeated by the heroes Radovan, Varian Jeggare, and Eando Klein and others. The *Gluttonous Tome* is split apart again.
- 4716 AR Alaznist emerges from the Eye of Fury. Sorshen secretly draws the *Everdawn Pool* into the Eye of Desire to consolidate power; she creates blood simulacra to send out into the world as agents.
- 4717 AR Agents of the Whispering Way invade the Shrine of the Seal under Kaer Maga, destroy the seal within, and recover one part of the *Gluttonous Tome*.
- 4718 AR Current year. The Return of the Runelords Adventure Path begins. Alaznist travels to Xin-Cyrusian to assassinate Xanderghul and then discovers the location of the *Scepter of Ages*.

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“When I saw that little pond, I was delighted. I thought maybe I could catch a frog and keep it in my pocket for luck, like I used to do when I was little. It struck me that there were more animal tracks going toward the pond than away from it, but before this could worry me, I caught sight of my reflection. I watched myself reaching into the pond and picking up a cute, fat frog. Before I knew what I was doing, I was leaning over the pool and reaching into it in actuality. In my reflection, a frog swam up and bit my finger with a mouthful of jagged teeth. I felt pain in my hand, but it was more like a burn than a bite. I saw more frogs swimming up toward me through that pool. I fell backward, scrambled to my feet, and ran hard. But now I see frogs lurking just out of sight, all the time, and they all have teeth.”

—Enocha Quickfoot, halfling trapper

This exciting debut of the Return of the Runelords Adventure Path is set in and around the port town of Roderic's Cove on the Varisian coast. The creatures presented in this bestiary are native to Varisia and include a magic-infused seagull, a skulking fey monster, a goblin warped by ancient magic, and an ooze that masquerades as an enticing pool.

ADDITIONAL ENCOUNTERS

"Secrets of Roderic's Cove" has the PCs exploring the port town and the region around it. Although deemed settled by most, numerous foes lurk in and around Roderic's Cove.

The Roderic's Cove Encounters table presented here features challenges the PCs might face beyond those in the adventure. Each hour the PCs spend traveling around Roderic's Cove during the day, they have a 30% chance of a random encounter; at night, this chance increases to 40%. If a random encounter occurs, roll d% and run the encounter listed for that result. The PCs should have at most two random encounters in a 24-hour period.

Since this adventure spans a range of character levels, some random encounters might be too trivial or too difficult for the PCs, depending on their current strength. In these cases, roll again on the table or choose a different encounter. Additionally, if the result rolled is inappropriate for the terrain the PCs are traversing or doesn't make sense in the context of where the PCs might be, roll again or choose a different encounter.

Con Artists (CR 3): A common swindler (*Pathfinder RPG Villain Codex* 118) and a shoddy artisan (*Villain Codex* 119) see the PCs as likely marks. They carry three daggers and two warhammers in addition to their listed gear. These weapons look very well made but are not masterwork, although the con artists attempt to pawn them off as such. If the PCs see through this ruse, the duo instead shows their genuine masterwork weapons and offers to sell them to the PCs, but the swindler attempts to switch them out for the non-masterwork versions before handing them over. This pair would rather deceive the PCs than fight them, but if the PCs look like easy targets, the con artists attempt to later ambush the PCs.

Desperate Smugglers (CR 1): A cutpurse (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 144) and a brigand (*NPC Codex* 266) hid a cache of stolen goods in the area a week ago, but now they can't find it. As the PCs arrive, the smugglers are searching the area with increasing desperation, certain that someone has taken their loot. The smugglers assume the PCs are to blame, and they lash out with violence. In fact, the cache is long gone; a group of kobolds discovered it and made off with the goods 2 days ago.

Plea for Help (CR 4): A doppelganger (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 89) pretends to be a badly wounded traveler stuck

RODERIC'S COVE ENCOUNTERS

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1-3	Desperate Smugglers	1	See below
4-7	1 goblin snake	1	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 132
8-11	1d3 stirges	1	<i>Bestiary</i> 260
12-14	1 giant ant	2	<i>Bestiary</i> 16
15-19	1d6 giant centipedes	2	<i>Bestiary</i> 43
20-24	1 giant crab	2	<i>Bestiary</i> 50
25-30	1 warpglass ooze	2	See page 88
31-35	Con Artists	3	See below
36-42	2d6 goblins	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 156
43-48	1 nochlean	3	See page 84
49-53	Vengeful Pirates	3	See below
54-59	2 boars	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 36
60-65	1d3 cyphergulls	4	See page 82
66-71	1 owlbear	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 224
72-76	Plea for Help	4	See below
77-81	1d3 ettercaps	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 129
82-87	2 ogres	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 220
88-92	1 runewarped goblin	5	See page 86
93-97	Reeking Arsonists	5	See below
98-100	1 wyvern	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 282

under a fallen log, crying for aid. Anyone who comes to its aid triggers a swinging axe trap (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 420) set by the doppelganger. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check not only finds the trap but also realizes that the fallen log is supported by rocks and isn't really pinning down the pleading traveler. If its trap activates or passersby detect its ruse, the doppelganger leaps up and attacks.

Reeking Arsonists (CR 5): A small gang of goblins skulks around the fringes of Roderic's Cove, looking to start fires and cause mayhem. The gang includes a goblin firestarter (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 107) and three goblins (*Bestiary* 136). They recently burned down a small farm shed only to find that it contained manure and compost. The goblins are now covered in the stink, but they've resolved to continue their spree. The strong smell gives the goblins a -4 penalty on Stealth checks, but they nevertheless attempt to ambush the PCs.

Vengeful Pirates (CR 3): A pirate ship called the *Kingfisher's Folly* recently returned from a lucrative voyage. After selling off their stolen goods, the ship's boatswain was supposed to return to divide the spoils; however, she slipped away with the pay instead. Four angry shipmates (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 294) found the boatswain and murdered her, but she didn't have the money on her. Frustrated and violent, the pirates attack anyone they think the boatswain might have passed the loot to, and they mistake the PCs for the boatswain's allies.

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CYPHERGULL

The eyes of this large gull glow eerily blue. Gray feathers cover much of its robust body, and its long, black-tipped wings are marked with enigmatic symbols. The bird's yellow bill is heavy and hooked, and its webbed feet bear sharp talons.

CYPHERGULL

CR 2

XP 600

N Tiny magical beast

Init +3; **Senses** *arcane sight*, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +5

DEFENSE

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

hp 19 (3d10+3)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., fly 50 ft. (good), swim 10 ft.

Melee bite +3 (1d4-1), 2 talons +3 (1d3-1)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks *arcane attacks*, natural thief

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +2)

 Constant—*arcane sight*, *read magic*

 At will—*arcane mark*

STATISTICS

Str 6, **Dex** 17, **Con** 13, **Int** 6, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 12

Feats Flyby Attack, Iron Will

Skills Acrobatics +15, Fly +15, Perception +5, Swim +11;

Racial Modifiers +8 Acrobatics

Languages Common (can't speak)

SQ cypher synergy, devour scroll

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate coasts

Organization solitary, pair, flock (3-11), or colony (12-36)

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Arcane Attacks (Su) A cyphergull's natural weapons have a +1 bonus to damage and are treated as magic for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. For every 5 Hit Dice the cyphergull has, this bonus increases by 1.

Cypher Synergy (Ex) If the master of a cyphergull familiar is a cyphermage (*Pathfinder RPG Adventurer's Guide* 57), the cyphergull gains the following cypher lore discoveries if its master has them: analyze scroll, bypass symbol, defensive scrollcaster, and glyph finder. Defensive scrollcaster affects spells the cyphergull casts using its devour scroll ability.

Devour Scroll (Su) When a cyphergull eats a scroll (a full-round action), the spells in the scroll are stored in the gull's body. Thereafter, it can cast the spells as though it were a wizard of a level equal to half the cyphergull's Hit Dice casting spells from a scroll. The cyphergull intuitively understands how the spells function and counts as having

the requisite ability score for casting the spell. A cyphergull can store a maximum number of spell levels equal to its Hit Dice.

Natural Thief (Ex) If a cyphergull succeeds at an Acrobatics check to move through a threatened square without provoking an attack of opportunity from an enemy, the cyphergull also doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity when performing a steal combat maneuver (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 322) against that enemy on the same turn.

The noisy, enigmatic cyphergulls are a common sight in the coastal city of Riddleport, where they often circle above the ancient rune-carved Cyphergate as if they own it. Their appearance and behavior greatly resembles those of their mundane cousins—seagulls—but they are far more intelligent, and their connection to Riddleport's ancient Thassilonian stone arch grants them many magical abilities.

A cyphergull is a little over 2 feet long, has a wingspan of up to 5 feet, and weighs 3 pounds.

ECOLOGY

The records of an esoteric order known as the Cyphermages indicate that a few times in the history of Riddleport, seagulls have suddenly gathered in large numbers near the Cyphergate, forming an immense spiral of feathers and flesh before crashing into the giant stone arch. Each time, the birds die by the hundreds, but the few that survive transform into something more than mere seagulls. While they retain many physical characteristics of seagulls, they are generally more robust and intelligent than their common cousins.

Two cyphergull parents always produce cyphergull offspring, but interbreeding with ordinary gulls also occurs when suitable cyphergull mates are not available. The chicks of such mixed pairs are usually ordinary gulls, but mating occasionally results in a clutch of cyphergulls. Cyphergull eggs exude a soft blue glow and bear dark splotches that sometimes form patterns reminiscent of runes. After 3 or 4 weeks of incubation, loud, blue-eyed chicks hatch from the eggs. Over the first 4 years of a cyphergull's life, different runic patterns appear on its plumage until the creature reaches adulthood and the runes settle to a permanent pattern. Cyphergulls live up to 50 years in the wild and can live even longer in captivity.

Cyphergulls are excellent fliers, but are also able swimmers and remarkably daring. With their mobility and intelligence, cyphergulls exhibit an exceptional variety of hunting strategies. Using their unhinging jaws, they can quickly gulp down many different kinds of prey, including crabs, fish, frogs, rodents, and even smaller birds. Cyphergulls are particularly inventive creatures,

especially when it comes to finding food. For example, they sometimes use earthworms as bait to catch fish or set simple deadfall traps. When cyphergulls steal from humanoids, they often work in pairs; one of the birds creates a diversion while the other snatches the prize.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Versatile feeders, cyphergulls prefer coastal areas and islands, where they can hunt on land, on water, and in the air. The largest cyphergull populations exist in and around Riddleport, particularly on the slopes of the rocky ridges that surround the city and on the rooftops of the Wharf District and the Windward District. Several smaller populations of cyphergulls exist along the shores of the Varisian Gulf, most frequently near human settlements. In Magnimar, a careful observer may notice that some of the birds circling above the Irespan are in fact blue-eyed cyphergulls. Cyphergulls winter in southwestern Cheliaz and along Rahadoum's northern coast.

In late spring, cyphergulls assemble into noisy, densely packed colonies, usually returning to the same spot as the previous year. The breeding season begins a few weeks later when warm summer breezes start coming in from the Varisian Gulf. The birds build their nests on the ground, using leaves, twigs, and other plant matter as building materials. Cyphergulls are almost irrationally fond of paper and parchment, and they sometimes go to great lengths to obtain scrolls and books to use as nest-building materials.

Cyphergull colonies have rigid hierarchies, where mated pairs of lower standing build their nests to form a ring around the nests of higher-ranking cyphergulls, protecting them against attacks. Cyphergulls mate for life and are very protective of their nests and the colony; if a predator isn't deterred by the gulls' warning calls, the birds cooperatively attack and harass the intruder, using their numbers against bigger creatures. The birds employ surprisingly elaborate defensive tactics, such as feint attacks and false retreats to lead enemies into ambushes.

While food finding and nest building are the birds' first priorities during the breeding season, cyphergulls exhibit a range of personalities comparable to that of humans whenever survival is not at stake. For example, some are tricksters or collectors who like to annoy others or steal items just to stave off boredom, and most have favorite foods that they seek out. A surprisingly large number of cyphergulls, and nearly always the highest-ranked gulls in a colony, are philosophers who study the world around them, perform simple experiments, and understand the rudiments of logic and the scientific method. Some cyphergulls practice something akin to religious rituals, placing food and other objects on the ground to form

runes and remaining motionless above them for hours at a time. Scholars speculate that the birds have a unique ability to interpret the secrets of the Cyphergate, and that studying the birds' runic writing could reveal ancient knowledge. Cyphermages in particular study cyphergulls in the wild, but clinging to guano-spattered rocks and rooftops to look at birds doesn't improve their reputation as obsessive eccentrics.

Cyphergulls are curious about humanoids, often observing how they speak, what they eat, and how they live. A common superstition among the peoples of the Varisian Gulf states that killing a cyphergull brings bad luck, so the birds get away with thefts or irritations that would doom other birds. Cyphergulls are intelligent enough to learn languages that humanoid creatures speak, but they lack any speech-producing organs. Their communication sounds like the harsh wailing calls of ordinary gulls, but their system of shrieks is far more complex, and they are capable of communicating even abstract ideas like "ambush," "deal," "future," or "payment" with their calls. This allows them to devise elaborate defensive and offensive tactics, or to negotiate trade deals.

A 7th-level spellcaster with the Improved Familiar feat and an alignment within one step of neutral can gain a cyphergull as a familiar.



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NOCHLEAN

This gaunt, clawed faerie creature wears simple, homespun clothing and a malicious grin. Its oversized ears stick out from the sides of its head, and it wears its long earlobes like a scarf.

NOCHLEAN

CR 3



XP 800

CE Medium fey

Init +8; **Senses** child-scent, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 11 (+4 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 27 (5d6+10)

Fort +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

DR 5/cold iron

Weaknesses music susceptibility, vulnerable to sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +6 (2d6 plus grab)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; concentration +7)

At will—*mage hand*, *open/close*

3/day—*sleep* (DC 13), *spider climb* (self only),

ventriloquism (DC 13)

1/day—*dimension door*

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 19, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +6 (+10 grapple); **CMD** 16

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +10, Disable Device +9, Disguise +10, Perception +13, Sense Motive +9, Stealth +12, Survival +6;

Racial Modifiers +4 Perception

Languages Common, Gnome, Sylvan

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Child-Scent (Ex) A nochlean has the scent ability, but only with respect to humanoid children and immature animals. Thus, the nochlean could sniff out a child's hiding place or a den of wolf pups, but it could not sniff out the child's parents or the den mother.

Music Susceptibility (Su) A nochlean is sensitive to music of all kinds, and different styles of music affect the nochlean in different ways. A creature within 20 feet of a nochlean can attempt to affect the creature with a Perform (keyboard, percussion, sing, string, or wind) check made as a standard action or when used to initiate another effect, such as a bardic performance. The nochlean must succeed at a Will saving throw with a DC equal to the result of the Perform check or become affected by the music for as long as the music persists. The nochlean is sickened by keyboard

instruments, shaken by percussion instruments, enraged (per the *rage* spell) by singing, staggered by string instruments, and confused by wind instruments. The nochlean can be affected by only one type of music at a time; if it fails its saving throw against multiple types of music, only that with the highest Perform check result applies.

Predatory fey that delight in vandalizing homes, murdering pets, and stealing children, nochleans resemble incredibly thin, gangly humanoids with coarse black hair, large yellow eyes, and wickedly sharp claws. Their most recognizable features, however, are their extraordinary large ears. A nochlean's earlobes are several feet long, and it usually keeps them wrapped around its neck like a scarf or draped over its hands to conceal its claws from casual notice.

Nochleans enjoy their wicked activities, frequently tittering from the shadows as they plan to raid a home, murder livestock, or lure away a lonely child. Nochleans are bold and crafty schemers who attack only when they feel like they have the advantage. A nochlean's careful plans evaporate in the presence of music, however, as the notes echoing around in their large ears affect them in erratic ways. Most nochleans flee from any source of music, and many tales tell of lone travelers unknowingly repelling the lurking creatures with casual whistling.

A nochlean stands 5-1/2 feet tall and weighs 50 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Nochleans have lived at the edges of humanoid societies for millennia, their predations serving as a warning to children of all races and creeds to stay with their protectors and be wary of strangers. Nochleans are aware that humanoids use tales of their presence to frighten others, and they revel in the role thrust upon them and the depth of fear it can instill.

Nochleans are gaunt and eerily slinky, as though perfectly built to hug shadowed corners, slither through windows, or extend a gangly arm from under a bed. They rely on stealth, suspense, and their alien appearance to frighten foes, as their build is narrow and hardly imposing. Still, to a child, nochleans stand frightfully tall. Nochleans usually wear simple clothes stolen from humans, but they generally have little use for propriety or modesty. Their long ears twitch frequently, particularly in response to sudden noises. When tracking by scent, a nochlean bends low to the ground, its dragging ears funneling odors toward its sniffing nose. A nochlean's claws are long and sharp, although its hands have a supernaturally narrow appearance. Their claws are remarkably agile despite their size, and nochleans use them to pry up windows, undo locks, or curl delicately around sleeping infants.

Every few centuries, a nochlean develops a large cyst on its back, forcing it to give up its hunting for about a week as it sits hunched and uncommonly ponderous. The cyst grows quickly, soon becoming nearly as large as the nochlean itself. After a week, the cyst ruptures, and a fully formed duplicate of the “parent” nochlean emerges. This new nochlean understands how to hunt and how to speak Sylvan, although it picks up other languages it hears (usually, languages spoken in nearby humanoid communities) very quickly. The older nochlean typically drives the duplicate out of its hunting grounds to cut down competition, as nochleans are unwilling to work together even if they are copies of one other.

Nochleans make their homes in small, rotten groves, which they fill with decaying plant matter, strung-up animal carcasses, and bedding that consists of soft but putrefying materials. A nochlean desires little else by way of physical comforts and eats very little. A nochlean might stay away from its lair for days at a time as it stalks a nearby settlement, returning to its putrefying bed to consume a rotting animal carcass and sleep for a few scant hours before leaving again. Although nochleans are unquestionably evil, many forest guardians who simply wish to see the forest thrive rarely trouble a nochlean or its lair. Despite their putrescent beds, nochleans subsist on decay; as they amass rotted vegetation and animal remains, they do actually beautify and aid the forest as a whole.

Nochleans have an exceptionally long lifespan, although measuring a single nochlean’s age is difficult when younger and nearly identical duplicates inhabit nearby lairs and might overlap in hunting areas. Most nochleans die at the hands of angry parents or forest guardians before reaching old age, but a nochlean surviving more than 500 years finds its black claws slowly whitening—the only indication of its advanced age.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

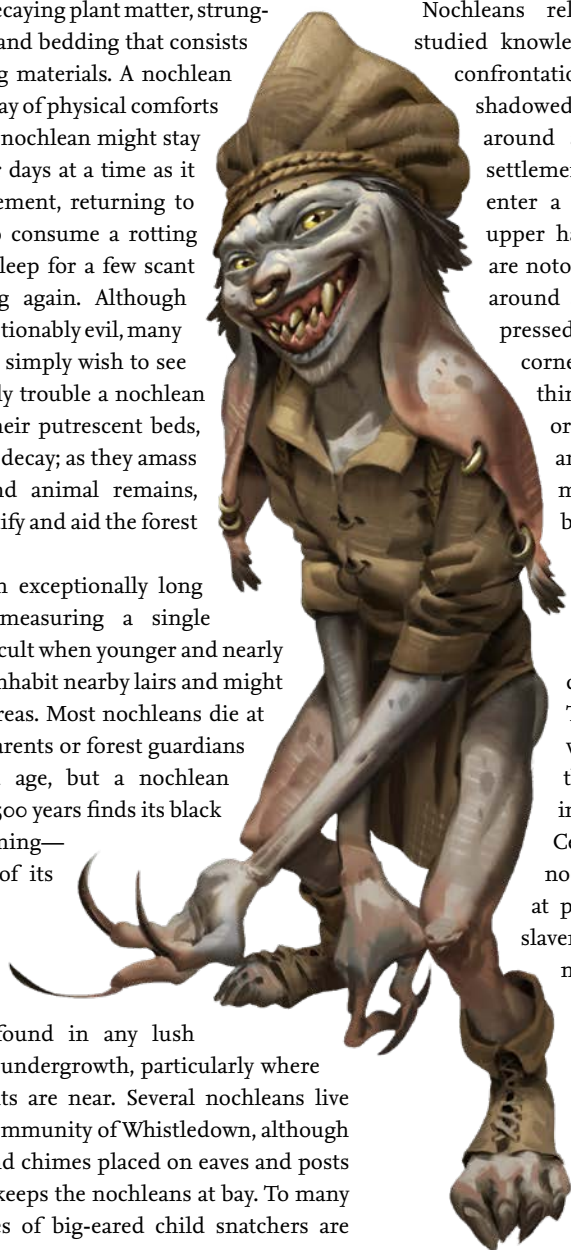
Nochleans can be found in any lush forest with plenty of undergrowth, particularly where humanoid settlements are near. Several nochleans live around the gnome community of Whistledown, although the cacophony of wind chimes placed on eaves and posts in that town usually keeps the nochleans at bay. To many in Whistledown, tales of big-eared child snatchers are

mere fancy, as they don’t realize how much their custom of hanging chimes to ward away “evil spirits” legitimately protects them from these evil fey.

Nochleans lead solitary lives, aware that too many of their kind hunting in the same area would draw undue attention. Nochleans know they are safest when they are unnoticed by anyone other than their targets, and when frustrated farmers or grieving parents don’t know whether to blame accident or malice for mysterious disappearances. No nochlean has a proper name; instead, each of them answers to the name “Nochlean,” although a few revel in epithets such as “Snatcher” or “Shadowman” bestowed upon them by frightened settlements where they hunt.

Nochleans rely on subterfuge and a carefully studied knowledge of terrain to run or hide from confrontations, and some nochleans know the shadowed corners and overlooked hiding places around a settlement much better than the settlement’s inhabitants do. Nochleans rarely enter a fight unless they feel they have the upper hand. In any confrontation, nochleans are notoriously difficult to pin down; they dart around attackers rather than stay put and, if pressed, teleport away from attackers that corner them. An endangered nochlean thinks nothing of abandoning its home or a fruitful hunting ground to find another, and the most fortunate hunters might find a kidnapped child trussed up but alive inside a lair a nochlean elected to abandon out of self-preservation.

When they need to interact with humans in ways other than terrorizing or attacking them, nochleans prefer to disguise their distinctive appearance. They pull their common caps low, wrapping their distinctive ears around them like a scarf or a cloak, and remain in shadow to conceal their facial features. Certain unsavory traders strike deals with nochleans, as the fey monsters are skilled at procuring children useful for ransom, slavery, or darker purposes. Although nochleans like magic items that can aid them in their dark endeavors, they prefer to trade in favors, which they greedily hoard. A nochlean finds the mere presence of a musical instrument to be an unforgivable offense, and a prospective negotiator might provoke a nochlean into a blind fury simply by failing to conceal a flute or fiddle.



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RUNEWARPED CREATURE

This pale, emaciated goblin has a ravenous look on its face. Its thin limbs are unusually long and bend in an unsettling manner.

RUNEWARPED GOBLIN

CR 5



XP 1,600

Runewarped goblin rogue 5

NE Small aberration (augmented humanoid)

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

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+2 armor, +5 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 46 (5d8+20)

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

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; **DR** 5/magic; **SR** 11

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk short sword +10 (1d4+2/19–20), bite +4 (1d6+1 plus consume magic) or bite +9 (1d6+3 plus consume magic)

Ranged mwk composite shortbow +10 (1d4+2/×3)

Special Attacks consume magic (DC 13), sneak attack +3d6

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 20, **Con** 16, **Int** 4, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

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

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +13, Climb +10, Disable Device +12, Escape Artist +13, Perception +9, Ride +9, Stealth +21, Swim +8;

Racial Modifiers +4 Ride, +4 Stealth

Languages Goblin

SQ rogue talents (finesse rogue, surprise attack), trapfinding +2

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or gang (3–9)

Treasure NPC gear (masterwork leather armor, masterwork short sword, masterwork composite shortbow with 20 arrows, other treasure)

Before Alaznist created the first sinspawn (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 246) through the use of her *runewell*, she experimented with several techniques to create sin-twisted servants. One foundation of the complex magical technique used to create sinspawn was known as runewarping. Through the use of runewarping, Alaznist and other powerful mages created horribly twisted creatures from their slaves and prisoners. These creators valued ability over aesthetics, so runewarped creatures were transformed

by powerful magic into horrid mockeries of their previous forms. Runewarped creatures seek out sources of magic to consume, trying in vain to complete their transformation. Although a runewarped creature is recognizable as the creature it once was, the creature bears altered or additional limb joints, elongated fingers, and a massive jaw capable of delivering a powerful bite.

ECOLOGY

Runewarped creatures are not tied to a particular sin. They cannot detect any specific emanations of sin, but they instead sniff out magic and magical abilities. A runewarped creature constantly searches for magical energy in hopes of completing its unfinished transformation—a futile effort due to the incomplete nature of runewarping. When a runewarped creature locates a source of magic, such as a magic item or a spellcaster, it attempts to consume it. Runewarped creatures gnaw on magical items, worrying at them until they are wholly destroyed. A runewarped creature's bite siphons away the magical abilities of creatures capable of casting spells or using spell-like abilities. If a runewarped creature kills such a creature, it often drags the body away to consume it entirely.

No matter how much it gluts itself on magic, a runewarped creature can never sate its hunger. The unstable magic resonating through the runewarped creature disrupts any consumed magic and dissipates it without any benefit to the runewarped creature.

A runewarped creature is not immortal and must still eat and drink as normal, but runewarping grants an incredibly long lifespan—a few runewarped creatures from the days of ancient Thassilon still lurk in isolated subterranean dungeons. When exposed to ongoing sources of rune magic, such as an active *runewell*, these extraordinarily old runewarped creatures sometimes transform into something more twisted and powerful, able to expend their consumed energy as spell-like abilities. Known as sinwarped (see page 87), these creatures are living embodiments of sin magic.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Although the exact means of creating runewarped creatures was lost to Earthfall, creatures still occasionally find themselves twisted by runewarping magic. Creatures exposed to aberrant energies in Alaznist's ancient laboratories, or who spend prolonged periods near residual echoes of such energies, find their flesh twisting and their minds wracked with the magical hunger that runewarping creates. Hidden chambers within Hollow Mountain have warped many unaware explorers in this way. Runewarped creatures created in this manner tend to adopt the source of their affliction as their home, exhibiting a fierce territoriality.

Runewarped creatures might work together to share resources, set traps, or plan thefts, although their constant hunger usually makes such alliances short lived. Some runewarped creatures subjugate groups of lesser creatures, such as morlocks or goblins, sending them out to kidnap spellcasters to feed their magical hunger.

CREATING A RUNEWARPED CREATURE

“Runewarped creature” is an acquired template that can be added to any animal, humanoid, or monstrous humanoid (referred to hereafter as the base creature). A runewarped creature uses the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Challenge Rating: Base creature’s CR + 1.

Alignment: Any evil.

Type: The creature’s type changes to aberration. Do not recalculate its base attack bonus, saves, or skill ranks.

Senses: The creature gains darkvision with a range of 60 feet, low-light vision, and magic-scent.

Magic-Scent (Su): Runewarped creatures have scent that detects only creatures with the ability to cast spells. This scent allows the runewarped creature to know the location and power of all magic auras within range of its scent. Magic-scent always detects magic auras in a range of 60 feet and is not affected by wind.

Armor Class: Natural armor bonus increases by 2.

Hit Dice: Change all the creature’s racial Hit Dice to d8s. Hit Dice derived from class levels remain unchanged.

Defensive Abilities: A runewarped creature with 5 Hit Dice or more gains DR 5/magic (or DR 10/magic if it has 11 Hit Dice or more) and SR equal to its new CR + 6 (or SR equal to its new CR + 11 if it has 11 Hit Dice or more).

Melee: A runewarped creature gains a bite attack that deals damage based on the runewarped creature’s size but as if it were one size category larger than its actual size. If the runewarped creature already has a bite attack, the bite’s damage increases by one step, as if it had increased one size category.

Special Attacks: A runewarped creature loses any spells or spell-like abilities, but it retains all other special attacks and abilities of the base creature. A runewarped creature gains the following special attack.

Consume Magic (Su): A runewarped creature’s bite drains magical ability from creatures capable of casting spells or using spell-like abilities. The struck creature loses its highest-level prepared spell, spell slot, or spell-like ability unless it succeeds at a Will save to negate the effect. A creature can be affected by this ability only once per round, even if attacked multiple times or by multiple runewarped creatures. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Ability Scores: Str +4, Con +2, Int –4 (minimum 1), Cha –2.

SINWARPED CREATURES

Runewarped creatures subjected to prolonged direct exposure to a *runewell* or sin magic gain additional powers related to a specific sin, seeking out magic and spellcasters associated with that sin.

Sinwarped creatures are runewarped creatures with the advanced creature simple template, magic-scent with a range of 120 feet, and spell-like abilities determined by the creature’s affinity to a particular school of sin magic: envy (*resist energy* and *shield*), gluttony (*chill touch* and *false life*), greed (*barkskin* and *expeditious retreat*), lust (*hold person* and *hypnotism*), pride (*blur* and *color spray*), sloth (*cure moderate wounds* and *grease*), or wrath (*burning hands* and *darkness*). Each spell-like ability is usable once per day. When a target loses a prepared spell, spell slot, or spell-like ability that is at least 3rd level to a sinwarped creature’s consume magic ability, the sinwarped creature regains all of these spell-like abilities it has used.



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WARPGLOSS OOZE

This watery puddle reflects a distorted image of its surroundings, as though it were a window to another reality.

WARPGLOSS OOZE

CR 2


XP 600

N Medium ooze

Init +1; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; Perception +4

DEFENSE

AC 7, touch 7, flat-footed 7 (-3 Dex)

hp 25 (3d8+12)

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

Defensive Abilities acidic; **DR** 5/bludgeoning or slashing;

Immune acid, ooze traits

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee 2 slams +4 (1d4+2 plus 1d4 acid)

Special Attacks compelling reflection

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 5, **Con** 19, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 11 (can't be tripped)

Feats Improved Initiative, Vital Strike

Skills Perception +4

SQ buoyant, compression, freeze

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or pool (3-8)

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Acidic (Su) Any creature that touches a warpglass ooze or strikes it with a natural attack or unarmed strike takes 1d4 points of acid damage unless it succeeds at a DC 15 Reflex save. A creature that strikes a warpglass ooze with a melee weapon must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save, or that weapon takes 1d4 points of acid damage. Ammunition that strikes a warpglass ooze is automatically destroyed after it inflicts its damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Buoyant (Ex) A warpglass ooze can move on the surface of water-based liquids as if using *water walk*.

Compelling Reflection (Su) A warpglass ooze displays supernaturally captivating images of nearby creatures. A creature within 30 feet of a warpglass ooze must succeed at a DC 13 Will save at the beginning of its turn or be compelled to move toward the ooze and take no other actions for 1 round, avoiding any other dangers along its path (including any movement that would provoke attacks of opportunity). A creature can avoid the need to make the saving throw by not looking at the warpglass ooze, as with a gaze attack. If an affected creature ends its turn adjacent to the ooze, it touches the ooze and takes a -1 penalty on all Wisdom- and Charisma-based checks from the harrowing images it sees. This penalty stacks, up to a

total of -4. The penalty is a curse effect that slowly fades with time, reducing the penalty by 1 every 24 hours until it reaches 0. A creature that successfully saves against this effect can't be affected again by the same warpglass ooze's compelling reflection for 24 hours. Sightless creatures can't be affected by this ability, nor can creatures that cast no reflection (such as vampires). This is a mind-affecting compulsion effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

A menace featured in Varisian folk tales, warpglass oozes lurk in marshes and forests, masquerading as a simple puddle or stretching across the surface of a larger body of water. Tales say that a traveler can indeed see her future in the reflections of a warpglass ooze... if she can survive the creature's enchanting magic and acidic caress. In fact, creatures that look upon these ambush predators do see a warped reflection of themselves—possibly dressed as a regal knight, weeping over an open grave, or holding aloft a valuable bauble—though there is no evidence the images are founded in reality.

Warpglass oozes aren't particularly intelligent, but they are patient, favoring subtlety over brute combat. The oozes enthrall their prey with fanciful images, compelling their victims to touch its acidic surface so the ooze can break down and digest the victim's flesh. A warpglass ooze's images might be whimsical or terrifying, but they always feature the viewing creature reflected in the ooze's surface. Creatures that shake off the ooze's compulsion find their minds lingering on the distorted reflections as they attempt to meet—or avoid—the fate they witnessed. If attacked, warpglass oozes extrude knots of protoplasm to bludgeon foes, but they often retreat in the face of powerful opposition. Warpglass oozes typically don't pursue escaping prey as long as other food sources remain available, but if hungry enough, an ooze may follow a solitary creature.

A typical warpglass ooze is about 4 feet in diameter and a few inches thick, and it weighs about 250 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Barely sentient, warpglass oozes primarily concern themselves with the basics of survival. A warpglass ooze seeks out a spot where it can hide in plain sight, but with sufficient traffic to keep them sated. Warpglass oozes can subsist on nearly any sort of organic material, but they strongly prefer fresh meat to vegetation or carrion. As their preferred prey are animals and humanoids, both of whom are affected by their compelling reflection, warpglass oozes are usually found in well-used watering holes, ditches alongside well-traveled trails, and ponds near busy settlements. They generally avoid lairs near swift-moving water, as they aren't skilled swimmers and can mimic only still water. Warpglass oozes remain in

their selected location as long as food remains plentiful, moving on only if prey becomes scarce or if they are harassed or threatened.

Warpglass oozes reproduce asexually, splitting into two separate oozes after gaining sufficient mass through feeding (an ooze preparing to split might have the giant creature simple template). A pool of several warpglass oozes may form in particularly favorable areas where enough food allows them to frequently split.

Sages disagree on the origins of these strange oozes. Varisians circulate an old parable of a young fortune-teller who fell victim to her own vanity. Unwaveringly certain of her abilities, she left her caravan to commune with nature spirits, ignoring repeated warning omens from Desna. When the fortune teller drowned in a flash flood, her essence mingled with the water to form the first warpglass ooze. Other folk tales posit that warpglass oozes are innocent victims of cruel fey creatures such as bog nixies (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 201) or rusalkas (*Bestiary 3* 232) that murder charmed mortals by forcing them to stare at their own distorted image in a puddle until thirst or the elements take their inevitable toll. Academics point out that warpglass oozes are virtually unknown outside of Varisia and that Varisia's ancient history is filled with powerful wizards who mastered potent enchantments and fleshwarping magic. These scholars disagree as to whether these wizards created warpglass oozes as a weapon, as a punishment, or merely for callous amusement. Some attribute their creation specifically to Xanderghul, the runelord of pride, as every ooze's reflection is fundamentally self-centered.

Most survivors who viewed their reflections in a warpglass ooze maintain that the images never came true. Furthermore, victims of multiple warpglass oozes report that the images seen in each ooze are different and sometimes mutually inconsistent (such as a victim seeing himself freezing to death in a cave and later envisioning himself being roasted alive). Sages therefore agree that warpglass oozes don't actually provide any genuine foresight, but the question remains of where the oozes obtain the substance of their alluring reflections. Reflections are always dramatic—featuring benevolent heroics or nightmarish tortures, for example—which bolsters a theory that warpglass oozes somehow show glimpses of the infinite variations a victim's life might have taken.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Though warpglass oozes thrive in nearly any environment, they frequently drift toward rural, stony areas where standing water is common. They are not unheard of in urban areas, but they rarely survive long

there; larger cities don't provide the time and privacy the oozes need to lure, slay, and digest prey, while smaller villages become alarmed more quickly at missing residents and seek out threats. Warpglass oozes can survive in arctic or desert climates, although they grow sluggish in such conditions. In cold environments, warpglass oozes learn to stiffen their surface to more closely resemble a sheet of ice. Desert denizens are frequently protective of watering holes and suspicious of small, clear puddles, so warpglass oozes often lurk under stony overhangs or amid enticing hot springs.

Warpglass oozes aren't intelligent enough to form true societies, although pools of oozes sometimes work together. These pools often position one or two warpglass oozes to draw in prey, while the others slowly slink around behind their victims to cut off escape.

Few creatures have much use for the dangerous oozes except as near-mindless guardians. Nevertheless, some reclusive families of cliff giants (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 126) atop the Storval Plateau keep and breed warpglass oozes. Able to safely handle the oozes due to their careful, patient training and resistance to the oozes' acid, these giants believe they can divine a person's fate by interpreting the reflected images and matching them with omens in the natural world.



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RETURN OF THE RUNELORDS

Spoiler Alert! On these pages you'll find the background and outline for the Return of the Runelords Adventure Path. If you intend to play in this campaign, be warned! These pages spoil the plot for the upcoming adventures.

When Runelord Karzoug stirred in the depths of his *runewell*, it took a powerful group of heroes to stand against his rise and defend the land of Varisia from the tyrannical wizard's rebirth. Armies of giants, fire-breathing dragons, aliens from nightmare realms, and the seven deadly sins themselves were but samples of the ordeals the heroes faced, but in the end, Karzoug was slain. Yet Karzoug was just one of seven runelords, and since his near return, others have stirred from their slumber. Some, like Runelord Sorshen, were wise and subtle in their ways and remained quietly observant for years after their awakening. Others, such as Runelord Krune and Runelord Zutha, woke too soon and acted too quickly, and they were defeated before they had the chance to regain their full powers.

But now, what remains of ancient Thassilon's ruling caste are waking as one, led by Alaznist, Runelord of Wrath. Alaznist's murder of Xanderghul, the most powerful runelord, sets into motion a series of potentially devastating events that will reveal Karzoug's rise to be nothing more than a preamble—a briefest hint of the true power wielded by these ancient wizards. To oppose the runelords' return, a new group of heroes must step up to the challenge!

A short summary of the six adventures in Return of the Runelords appears on page 91, and a much more detailed exploration of the events leading up to this campaign are presented in "The Runelord Legacy" beginning on page 74.

WHAT HAS COME BEFORE

One unusual aspect of the Return of the Runelords Adventure Path is that, unlike most Paizo Adventure Paths, it assumes the events of certain previous stories have already taken place, as summarized below.

RISE OF THE RUNELORDS

A group of heroes discovered the lost city of Xin-Shalast, confronted Karzoug, and slew him. If Karzoug still lives in your game, then Alaznist murders him before moving on to ambush Xanderghul.

CURSE OF THE CRIMSON THRONE

Queen Ileosa's rule over Korvosa has come and gone. Although the aftermath left it reeling, Korvosa has since stabilized. Neolandus Kalepopolis has returned to his old post as seneschal of Castle Korvosa. Ileosa designated no heirs before she was defeated, and so the appointment of Korvosa's new ruler fell to the seneschal and was embroiled in red tape, but in the end, the commander of the Korvosan Guard, Cressida Kroft, was named Korvosa's new Queen. The monarch of Korvosa plays no significant role in this Adventure Path, though, so if in your game a different character now rules Korvosa, that works just as well.

SHATTERED STAR

The rise of the isle of Xin shook the Lost Coast of Varisia with a tsunami, with Magnimar suffering the majority of the damage it dealt. Using powerful magic, the heroes of that Adventure Path helped to repair and restore Magnimar, but the city of Magnimar is only now finishing the task of rebuilding and repairing the remainder of the damage the disaster caused. The mysterious ruins of Xin remain mostly unexplored, avoided by sailors who fear the strange creatures sighted in the waters surrounding the mysterious new isle.

PATHFINDER TALES: LORD OF RUNES

The events of this novel, in which Runelord Zutha was briefly awoken, have taken place, and Zutha's phylactery has been split apart once again.

PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO #4–26: THE WAKING RUNE

Runelord Krune was rescued from his soul trap by the cult of Lissala only to be defeated by a group of Pathfinder Society heroes. When the Return of the Runelords Adventure Path begins, Krune is thus already dead, but the cult of Yamasoth hopes to secure a *scroll of true resurrection* to bring him back to life to extract from him (either as payment for the service of restoring him to life or by more grisly methods of forceful "persuasion")

conjunction secrets to aid their plan to spread the supernatural disease known as the polymorph plague throughout Varisia.

PREVIOUS PCs

Return of the Runelords focuses on a brand-new group of heroes but doesn't discount the fact that previous heroes are still quite active in the region. Some of these prior PCs are assumed to be retired, passed away, or adventuring elsewhere on Golarion or out in the Great Beyond, but some of them remain active in the region—these characters are referred to in this Adventure Path as the “Sihedron Heroes.” Work with your players to determine who these heroes are if you've run Return of the Runelords or Shattered Star—advice for making these decisions appears both in the *Return of the Runelords Player's Guide* and in the second adventure, *It Came from Hollow Mountain*.

SECRETS OF RODERIC'S COVE

By Adam Daigle

Pathfinder Adventure Path #133, Levels 1–4

When two rival gangs clash on the streets of Roderic's Cove, a new band of heroes is caught up in local events. Allying with a troubled priestess of the empyreal lord Ashava, the heroes discover that the events that sparked these bickering gangs' fight are tied to something much more startling—the runelords are awakening, and their influence is already growing in the land!

IT CAME FROM HOLLOW MOUNTAIN

By Mike Shel

Pathfinder Adventure Path #134, Levels 5–7

Armed with one of the *Seven Swords of Sin*, the PCs travel south to Magnimar to warn the Sihedron Council—the city's experts on Thassilon—that the runelords are awakening. The council already knows but is worried because the previous group of powerful heroes they secretly sent to investigate has vanished. Hoping to forestall panic, the council asks the PCs to stay quiet about these events, travel to Hollow Mountain, and discover what's really going on. Are the runelords truly awakening?

RUNEPLAGUE

By Richard Pett

Pathfinder Adventure Path #135, Levels 8–11

Armed with proof of the return of the runelords, the PCs race against time to oppose several dangerous groups that aim to wreak havoc throughout Varisia. In this adventure, the PCs must travel to Varisia's four largest cities—Magnimar, Riddleport, Kaer Maga, and Korvosa—to defeat agents of Xanderghul (the Cult of

the Peacock Spirit), Alaznist (cultists of the qlipphoth lord Yamasoth), and Zutha (the Whispering Way and other agents eager to see Zutha's phylactery, the *Gluttonous Tome*, rebuilt).

TEMPLE OF THE PEACOCK SPIRIT

By Jason Keeley

Pathfinder Adventure Path #136, Levels 12–14

The PCs learned from Runelord Sorshen that Runelord Xanderghul, once the most powerful of the runelords, has diminished in power for unknown reasons after he woke from slumber. The PCs must discover Xanderghul's whereabouts and finish the job Alaznist started. Eventually, they track him down to a remote temple in the Kodar Mountains and learn that Xanderghul is more than just a runelord—he is the Peacock Spirit itself, and by facing him in combat, they face a fallen god.

THE CITY OUTSIDE OF TIME

By Amanda Hamon Kunz

Pathfinder Adventure Path #137, Levels 15–17

With Xanderghul defeated, the PCs learn the truth: Alaznist is the instigator of the recent strife, and she's rebuilding Thassilon in the region between Varisia and the nations to the north. Worse, she's used an artifact, the *Scepter of Ages*, to damage the past, gaining additional power by redirecting magic from significant events in Thassilon's history into her *runewell*. To repair the damage to history and defeat Alaznist, the heroes need the *Sihedron* (from Shattered Star), which has been trapped in the city of Crystilan's crystal dome. Using a potent ritual and sneaking into the time-trapped city via a “back door” through the Shadow Plane, the PCs must locate the *Sihedron*, rescue other heroes who have become trapped in the city, and decide whether Runelord Belimarius can be trusted as a potential ally or she should be slain.

RISE OF NEW THASSILON

By Greg A. Vaughan

Pathfinder Adventure Path #138, Levels 18–20

Armed with the *Sihedron*, the PCs are ready to travel through the Cyphergate to repair the past, but first they must secure the aid of Karzoug's spirit in the Boneyard to learn how to activate the Cyphergate in the first place. Once they've learned these secrets, the PCs travel to the city of Stethelos in the Dimension of Time, from where they can send duplicates of themselves back to ancient Thassilon to repair the temporal damage Alaznist caused. With this done and Alaznist weakened, the PCs can return to Hollow Mountain to defeat her once and for all.

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NEXT MONTH

IT CAME FROM HOLLOW MOUNTAIN

By Mike Shel

The Return of the Runelords Adventure Path continues as the heroes travel south to the city of Magnimar with disturbing news: the ancient runelords of Thassilon are awakening! With Varisia's greatest heroes on a secret mission, the task of following up on these rumors falls to a new generation of champions who must brave the dangers of Hollow Mountain, one of Varisia's most notorious ruins. What secrets await discovery within this sprawling dungeon complex, and is it already too late to halt the runelords' return?

ECOLOGY OF THE SINSPAWN

By Patchen Mortimer

Sinspawn are formed of warped flesh and raw sin, and were bred as soldiers and trackers by the ancient runelords. Gifted with cunning, ambition, and unnaturally long life spans, sinspawn still lurk in the ruins of fallen Thassilon. Learn how the sinspawn were first formed, how they organize themselves with their masters long gone, and the

mystical connection magical *runewells* play in their lives and deaths. This article presents new varieties of horrid sinspawn, ready to plague unsuspecting heroes.

ASHAVA

By Jason Keeley

The empyreal lord Ashava is the patron of dancers, lost souls, and moonlight. Learn how Ashava brings hope and safety to wandering mortals and restless spirits, explore her glorious and mysterious realm of Sparkling Fens, and master the rites and magic she provides to her faithful followers. Let the True Spark guide your steps and pierce the oppressive darkness of night.

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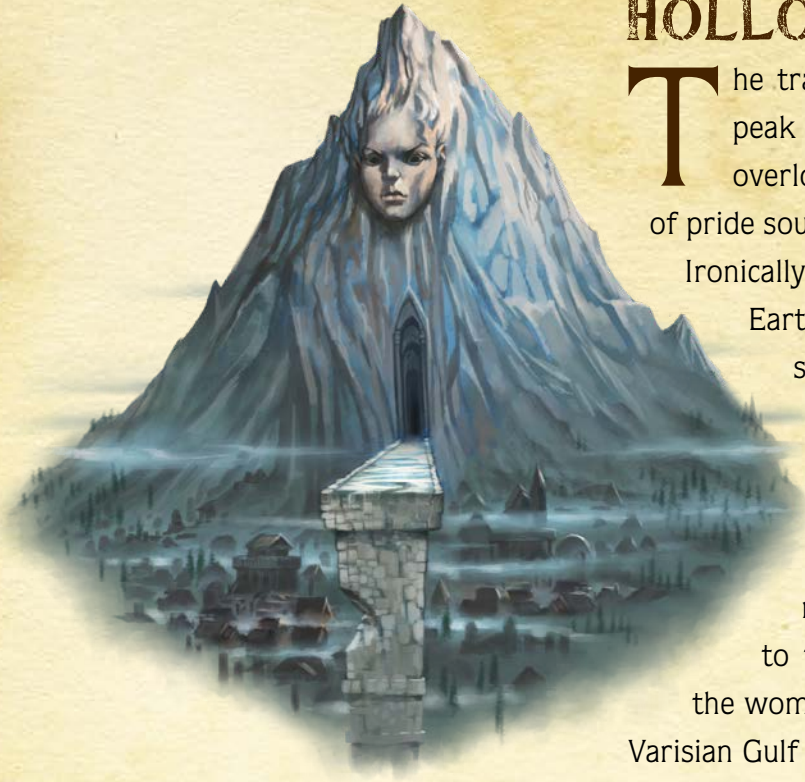
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HOLLOW MOUNTAIN



The tradition of a runelord decorating a mountain peak with their own face began at the mountain overlooking the city of Xin-Cyrusian, as the runelord of pride sought an overwhelming symbol of his presence.

Ironically, the peak of this mountain was struck during Earthfall. While other similarly adorned mountains survived, including Karzoug's Mhar Massif overlooking Xin-Shalast, the face atop Hollow Mountain is the one that has become best known. Even though Alaznist's name was forgotten for hundreds of years (until recent events brought Thassilon's legacy back to the proverbial spotlight), none could ignore the woman's imperious gaze as it looked out over the Varisian Gulf from the highest peak atop Rivenrake Island.

When explorers discovered a network of dungeons riddling the depths below, the infamous landmark came to be known as Hollow Mountain.

YAMASOTH

Known as the Polymorph Plague, the qliploth lord Yamasoth rules a cavern realm called the Kingdom of New Flesh located in the Abyssal layer of Sekatar-Seraktis. For many centuries, Yamasoth dwelled on the Material Plane in the deepest caverns below Hollow Mountain, within the walls of the Castle of Night in the sprawling Darklands cavern of Gongorina. Some whispered that he dwelled here not on his own accord, but as a servant of Alaznist, and that an ancient artifact buried deeper still below Hollow Mountain, controlled by the runelord of wrath, kept him as her own personal qliploth lord "pet." The cult of Yamasoth refutes these rumors, instead believing their inhuman patron used Alaznist as a proxy and pawn to establish his own realm on the Material Plane—a realm the cult hopes to someday restore to power.



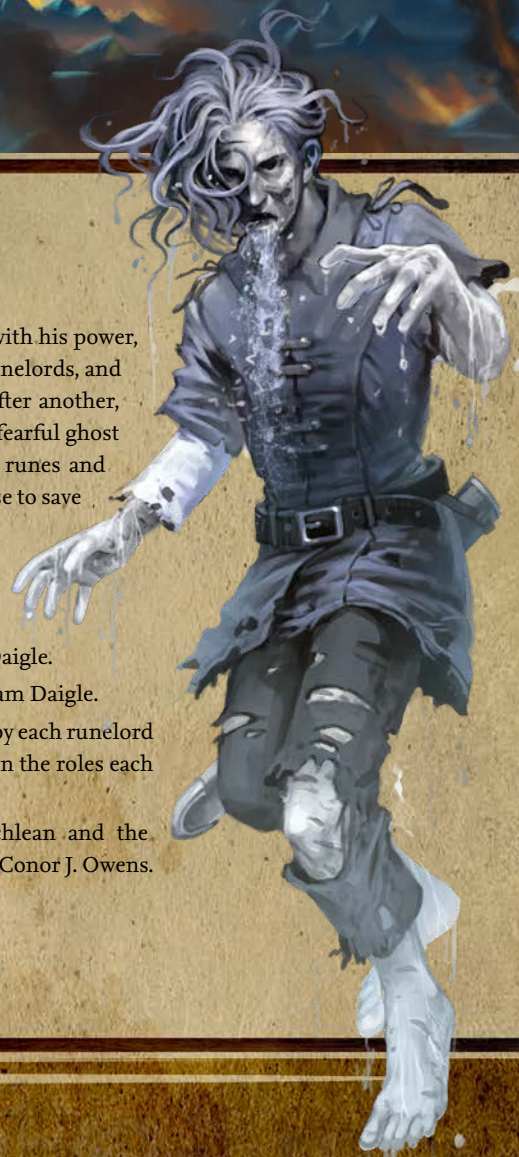


WRATH SHALL REIGN!

When one runelord rose from his slumber, the frontier nation of Varisia shook with his power, and it took a band of heroes to save the world. Yet there remained six other runelords, and now the most wrathful of them all has woken! As the runelords waken one after another, the dangers and perils faced by past heroes pale in comparison. When a mysterious and fearful ghost manifests on the streets of Roderic's Cove at the same time the town's gangs use the runes and legacies of ancient Thassilonian tyrants for their own ends, a new band of heroes must rise to save Varisia, and perhaps the world, from the return of the runelords!

This volume of Pathfinder Adventure Path begins the Return of the Runelords Adventure Path and includes:

- "Secrets of Roderic's Cove," a Pathfinder adventure for 1st-level characters, by Adam Daigle.
- An exploration and gazetteer of the town of Roderic's Cove and its inhabitants, by Adam Daigle.
- An extensive timeline of the history of Thassilon, revelations about the methods used by each runelord to avoid destruction during the apocalypse of Earthfall, and notes for Game Masters on the roles each runelord plays in this Adventure Path, by James Jacobs.
- A bestiary of monsters lurking around Varisia, including the child-stealing nochlean and the innocuous-looking warpglass ooze, by Mikko Kallio, Luis Loza, Jacob W. Michaels, and Conor J. Owens.



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