

PATHFINDER®

ADVENTURE PATH™



TYRANT'S GRASP

EULOGY FOR ROSLAR'S COFFER

By Jason Keeley



The Gravelands

GALLOWSPIRE

Virlych

RENCHURCH

CASNORIVA

VAISHAU

VIGIL

CASTLE FIRRINE

CASTLE EVERSTAND

HAMMER ROCK

HALLEIN TOWN

DORTROT RANCH

GALIPHAS

Ustalav

Lastwall

Northern Fangwood

SARENITE TEMPLE

ROSLAR'S COFFER

THE WIZARD-KING'S PIT

FORT LANDING

The Isle of Terror

60 MILES

0

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ON THE COVER



Artist Igor Grechanyi shows Imrijka and Kess facing some wildlife gone very wrong, as well as depicting a desperate ranger and potential ally named Jando Parr.



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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>Occult Adventures</i>	OA
<i>Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG	<i>Pathfinder Unchained</i>	PU
<i>Bestiary 2</i>	B2	<i>Ultimate Equipment</i>	UE
<i>Bestiary 4</i>	B4	<i>Ultimate Magic</i>	UM
<i>Horror Adventures</i>	HA		

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TYRANT'S GRASP



Eulogy for Roslar's Coffin

PART 1: A TOWN TRANSFORMED 4

The heroes return to the Material Plane and the town of Roslar's Coffin only to find it destroyed, overrun by twisted beasts and undead horrors, and surrounded by a poisonous fog. With the help of a half-orc ranger named Jando Parr, the heroes might discover a way out.

PART 2: RESTLESS ARE THE DEAD18

The only escape from the town is through Roslar's Tomb, the genuine version of the tomb complex the heroes previously explored while in the Boneyard. The tomb's lowest level contains a secret passage through the deadly fog.

PART 3: THE UNCLEAR LIGHT 28

A secret passage in Roslar's Tomb leads to a fortified Sarenite temple in the middle of the fog bank, but cultists of the Whispering Way control the defiled temple. By defeating the cultists, the heroes can disperse the fog and finally leave Roslar's Coffin.

Advancement Track

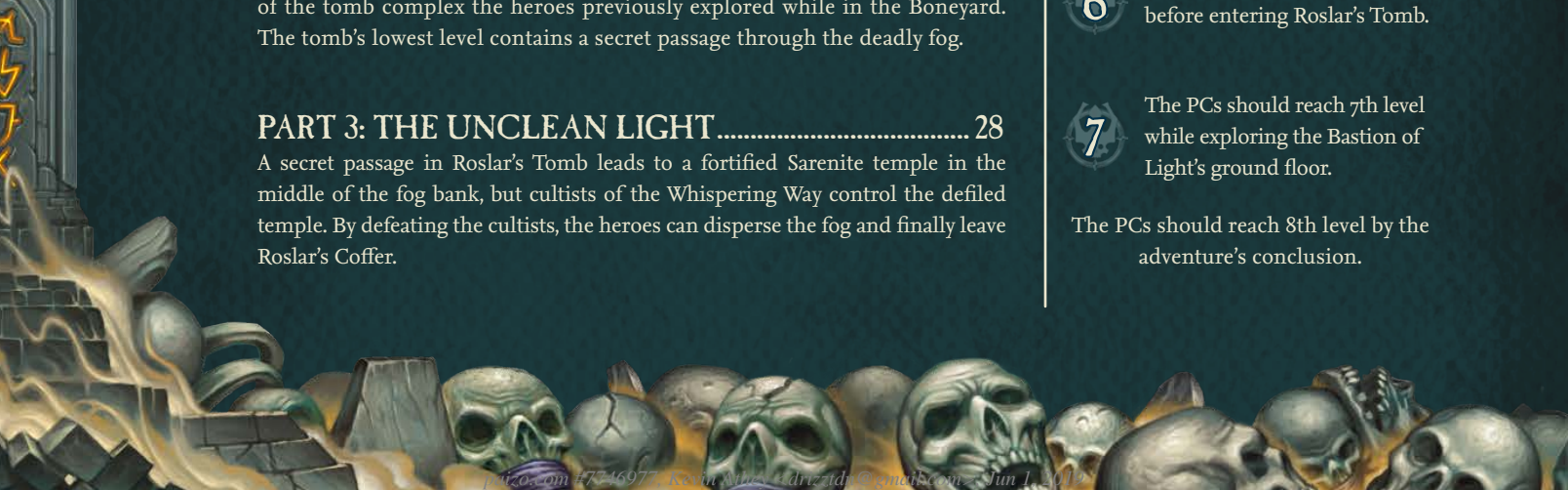
"Eulogy for Roslar's Coffin" is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

5 The PCs begin this adventure at 5th level.

6 The PCs should be 6th level before entering Roslar's Tomb.

7 The PCs should reach 7th level while exploring the Bastion of Light's ground floor.

The PCs should reach 8th level by the adventure's conclusion.



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

During the Shining Crusade a thousand years ago, the powerful lich wizard Tar-Baphon—known as the Whispering Tyrant—engineered an aggressive conquest of central Avistan. The knights and paladins of the Shining Crusade ground the Whispering Tyrant's advances to a halt. Before his tower-fortress of Gallowspire, the Whispering Tyrant faced General Arnisant, a hero who bore the legendary *Shield of Aroden*. When the Whispering Tyrant attempted to slay Arnisant, the shield shattered, and a piece of it lodged in the lich's hand. The Whispering Tyrant fled beneath Gallowspire, where the forces of good imprisoned him.

During his long years of imprisonment, Tar-Baphon studied the shield fragment in his hand, and he recently unlocked a way to use it as a powerful weapon he calls the *Radiant Fire*. The Whispering Tyrant's agents—members of a death cult called the Whispering Way—helped the lich calibrate and test the *Radiant Fire* on the remote town of Roslar's Coffe, as the lich couldn't leave his prison to perform the test in person. The devastation was remarkable, obliterating the town in a surge of negative energy and leaving behind a strange, mutating vitality. The Whispering Way established a presence in the town shortly after its destruction to measure and report on the *Radiant Fire*'s effects.

Neither Tar-Baphon nor the Whispering Way yet realize that this test of the *Radiant Fire* had an unintended side effect. Fragments of the shattered shield lodged within and empowered certain heroes, thrusting them bodily into the Boneyard along with all the doomed souls of Roslar's Coffe. In *Pathfinder Adventure Path #139: The Dead Roads*, the PCs awoke in the Boneyard and, through several harrowing trials, discovered a path back to Golarion. Devastation and danger await them in the ruins of Roslar's Coffe, but so too do clues to the Whispering Way's broader plan.

ROSLAR'S COFFER

Roslar's Coffe is a small town in southwestern Lastwall on the border of Nirmathas. Situated between the Tourondel River and the Northern Fangwood, it was constructed less than a mile from a fortified cathedral devoted to Sarenrae known as the Bastion of Light. The potential for logging in the Fangwood, the abundance of nearby fertile farmland, and the proximity of the Sarenite knights and priests—who could keep the burgeoning town safe from the nearby Belkzen orcs and provide spiritual guidance when needed—made the town's location ideal, and it attracted many settlers from across the Inner Sea Region who were eager to help create the new nation of Lastwall.

The Obols, Companions, and New PCs

The *obols* lodged in the PCs' hearts, introduced and explained in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #139: The Dead Roads*, are an important part of the Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path. The PCs might not yet understand the powers granted by the solid shards of positive energy inside of them, but they will certainly benefit from the defenses provided by the *obols* in this adventure. As a reminder, an *obol* gives a PC resistance to negative energy equal to twice her character level, spell resistance equal to 11 plus her Hit Dice against all necromancy spells, and the ability for her natural weapons and melee weapons to bypass the cold iron, magic, and silver damage reduction of undead creatures. The *obols* cannot be removed.

Some PCs have animal companions, mounts, or other class features that didn't accompany them into the Boneyard. Now that the PCs are returning to Roslar's Coffe, the GM should work with these PCs to provide replacement companions as soon as possible. Although the PCs' original companion creatures probably died from the *Radiant Fire*, new creatures from the forest or plains outside of Roslar's Coffe—but still under the dome of poisonous fog created by the *fetoring maw*—make good choices.

As suggested by the end of "The Dead Roads," there may be other people with *obols* stitching their souls and flesh together. These people were close to the blast that destroyed Roslar's Coffe but appeared in the Boneyard far from the PCs. If any of your players need to make a new PC—whether to replace a fallen hero or to introduce a new player—you should assume that this new PC is one of these victims, guided to a location near the PCs by the psychopomps of the Boneyard. This way, any newly introduced PCs also possess *obols*, which will be important as the Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path unfolds.

Roslar's Coffe was named in honor of Ervin Roslar, a hero of the Shining Crusade. The knight was in his twilight years as ground was broken on the town, and it was decided that he would be buried there when he passed away. The aged Ervin requested that a tomb be built for him in the cemetery, and when the town leaders acquiesced, the knight provided detailed plans for the layout and decoration of his tomb. Some of his requests seemed unusual to the builders, but they didn't want to deny the vaunted hero his last wishes, and they built the crypt to his specifications, including many frescoes and bas-reliefs depicting his obsession with Arazni, the former herald of Aroden. However, soon after the tomb was completed, rumors surfaced that Ervin had mistakenly provided information to the Whispering Tyrant about the Knights of Ozem. After Ervin died in

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battle attempting to regain his fallen honor, his body was buried elsewhere. His tomb sat neglected, and the town continued to grow around it. The Sarenite faith prospered after this scandal, as the townspeople prayed that the Dawnflower's redemptive grace would help their former hero find his proper place in the afterlife and keep their own souls from straying from a righteous path. As a reminder against such mortal foibles, the priests counseled the town's leaders to keep the original name of the settlement.

Roslar's Coffin remained mostly quiet for centuries, but in 4707 AR, a massive force of orcs streamed out of the Hold of Belkzen and massacred the Sarenite paladins and townsfolk. The orcs remained for nearly a year, only to be driven off by Lastwall cavalry in the same bloody give-and-take that has plagued the country nearly since its inception. However, this wasn't a complete victory for Lastwall. When people started moving back into Roslar's Coffin, they learned that a fearsome territorial beast known as a red reaver (*Pathfinder Adventure Path: Curse of the Crimson Throne* 476) had settled within the Bastion of Light. The red reaver killed anyone who attempted to retake the temple, but it didn't harass anyone in the town, so after several failed attempts to slay the beast, it was left alone. Occasionally Belkzen druids snuck into the temple to try to tame the red reaver, but they met the same fate as all others who approached it.

Last year, worried that the orcs might one day be successful in their endeavors to make the red reaver their ally and thus endanger the citizens of Roslar's Coffin, Vigil's commanders agreed to take action. Several paladins made a tactical strike against the Bastion of Light, but it was finally agents of the Pathfinder Society, who had come to the cathedral seeking a powerful relic, who killed the red reaver. The grateful townspeople buried the corpse in a nearby field. Efforts to reconsecrate the cathedral were planned, but not yet begun.

It seemed as though things were finally settling down in Roslar's Coffin, but once again, fate had other plans. Tar-Baphon made the small town the first target of his *Radiant Fire*. Late one night, a massive explosion of terrible energies tore Roslar's Coffin apart, killing everyone. Any living creatures in the town's vicinity that weren't outright destroyed were instead warped into hideous abominations and undead horrors, and the Whispering Way's agents, led by a witch named Valthazar Quietus, established themselves within the Bastion of Light. There, Valthazar and his allies raised the corpse of the red reaver as a zombie sentinel and created a dome of poisonous fog around the town to deter any nosy patrols. Now, Valthazar's agents scour the ruins of Roslar's Coffin while the witch himself remains in the Bastion of Light, safely surrounded by the deadly fog. The Whispering Way

doesn't expect any resistance in the devastated town, but they remain alert for survivors they can eliminate.

This is perhaps the final death of Roslar's Coffin.

PART I: A TOWN TRANSFORMED

At the conclusion of the previous adventure, the PCs began walking the Dead Roads connecting the Boneyard to Golarion. On this journey, they encountered a powerful psychopomp usher, Barzakh the Passage, who sped their journey home. The PCs' travel is one-way, and they cannot return to the Boneyard.

At the start of this adventure, the PCs witness the first beams of morning sunlight and feel renewed and refreshed, as though awakening from a long and peaceful slumber, though they return to a world far from what they might expect. The sunlight, an eerie yellowish-green color, illuminates the interior of a mundane wooden stable. PCs from Roslar's Coffin recognize the building as Freemark's Livery, located on the outskirts of town, but it is in remarkable disrepair.

Use the map on page 6 while the PCs are exploring Roslar's Coffin. There are several encounter areas in town, as marked on the map; the PCs begin in area A, inside of Freemark's Livery. Although the PCs are free to explore the town in whatever manner they'd like, they soon realize that the town is little more than a devastated ruin surrounded by a dome of poisonous fog (the fog dome is described in area A, and the PCs catch sight of it as soon as they exit Freemark's Livery).

The PCs might want to stop and check on their homes or the homes of friends and loved ones as they travel through town, but few buildings are still standing and no one is left alive. The PCs might spot a few ghostly shapes among the ruins or find charred remains of cherished items (such as the scorched cover of a favorite book or broken remnants of a childhood toy), but the scope of such tragic encounters is best left for the GM to create so as to personalize the impact on the PCs.

Specific clues for the PCs to find are set forth in the indicated encounter areas. The elk stampede in area B and the Whispering Way attack in area H can occur anywhere in town, although the former should be used shortly after the PCs begin exploring the town, and the latter makes the most sense when the PCs are returning to the loci spirit in the cemetery (area D).

A. FREEMARK'S LIVERY (CR 6)

The smell of rotting hay—and strangely, decomposing fish—lingers among a handful of stalls, their wood splintered in

many places. Several discarded saddles and harnesses lie scattered beneath broken pegs and shelves. The large double door that would be the livery's entrance hangs limply on hinges barely affixed to cracked wood.

As it stood nearer the edge of town, Freemark's Livery was spared some of the destruction that was wrought on the rest of Roslar's Coffe. It is relatively intact, and the corpses of those steeds kept here when the *Radiant Fire* struck have been consumed by passing undead or wild animals. It's obvious that the stable has been abandoned and then thoroughly ransacked. Although the large double door and smaller single door to the stable's front yard appear precarious, they are still serviceable.

Use the map of Freemark's Livery provided on page 6 for this encounter.

Creatures: Thanks to the mutating positive energy of the *Radiant Fire* blast, the flora and fauna in and around Roslar's Coffe has changed drastically. The PCs will learn much more about this lingering side effect of the catastrophe that sent them to the Boneyard, but they receive the first inkling of its existence when they step out of the stable. Four weedwhips—animate plants that are the source of the fishy smell—grow among the weeds in the stable's yard. The weedwhips' large central bulbs are buried in the ground, providing them with partial cover but leaving them unable to move unless they uproot themselves. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check notices the weedwhips camouflaged among the other weeds growing outside the stable; a PC who is trained in Knowledge (nature) or Survival can use either of those skills instead of Perception to notice the plants. The weedwhips lash out at any creatures that enter the stable's yard and fight until destroyed, although they don't leave the area in front of the stable. PCs who spot the plants can avoid them entirely by climbing out or pushing through the splintered rear of the stable (taking 2d6 points of piercing damage unless the PC succeeds at a DC 15 Climb or Strength check, respectively).

WEEDWHIPS (4)

CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 16 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4 276*)

THE FOG DOME

As the PCs emerge from Freemark's Livery and take a look around, read or paraphrase the following.

What remains of Roslar's Coffe lies before you, but familiar buildings lie in ruins and plants grow wild, as if hundreds of years have passed. Shapes flit by the windows of many homes, and a white glow emanates from the direction of the cemetery on the southeast edge of town. Stranger than all

that, however, is the yellowish-green cloud that surrounds the entirety of Roslar's Coffe, arching into the sky and making the sunlight feeble and dim. The withered corpses of several birds and rabbits are visible on the ground just within this greenish fog.

The Whispering Way created this massive dome of magical fog using a gem-like artifact called the *fetoring maw* (see area L1). The effects of the deadly fog are described below, and this fog is the PCs' most direct impediment to leaving Roslar's Coffe. The area of breathable air under the dome is a mile across; the map of the town on page 6 lies entirely within the dome. The Bastion of Light, outside of town, is situated deep within the fog and cannot be seen from the town. The poisonous dome arches high above Roslar's Coffe, covering it completely; sunlight can penetrate it, but only weakly.

The PCs can approach within a few feet of the dome of poisonous fog without suffering any ill effects other than a harsh, stomach-churning odor. The dome is actually part of a sphere permeating the earth beneath the town and the water of the nearby Tourondel River; the river water isn't poisonous, but it's filled with dead fish that swam through the dome of fog and perished. A PC who examines the fog with *detect magic* can see that the fog has a strong aura of conjuration magic, and a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check surmises that the effect has been produced by a very powerful magic item, possibly a minor artifact.

The sphere of fog obscures all sight beyond 5 feet, much like the spell *fog cloud*, and carries two additional effects: a deadly poison and a mind-affecting misdirection.

Poisonous Vapors: The fog automatically kills living creatures with 3 or fewer Hit Dice (no save). Living creatures with 4 or more Hit Dice take 1d4 points of Constitution damage (Fortitude DC 28 half) each round they remain in the fog. The cloying fog forces its way into a creature's lungs and seeps through the skin, so even a creature holding its breath is exposed to the fog's poison. This is a poison effect.

Bewildering Mist: The fog magically clouds the senses, making it easy for a creature fully immersed within the fog to get turned around. A creature that starts its movement within the fog must succeed at a DC 25 Survival check or its movement is in a random direction (use the method for determining the misdirection of a missed thrown splash weapon on page 202 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*). A creature that exits the fog via this movement immediately understands that it was misdirected by the bewildering fog. This is a mind-affecting effect.

Undead are immune to poison and mind-affecting effects, and can move through the fog without harm (although the fog still blocks their vision). In addition,

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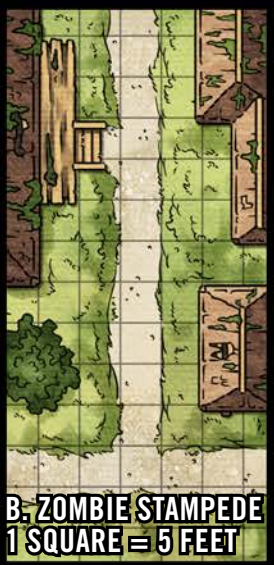
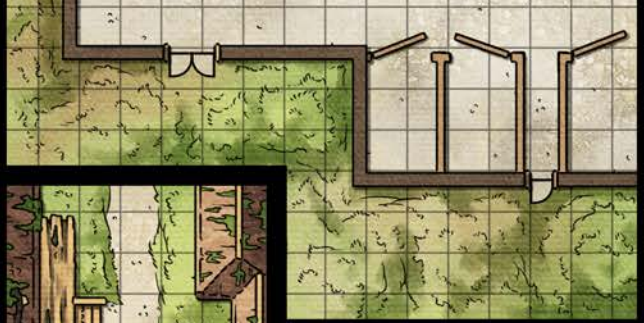
ROSLAR'S COFFER

C



A. FREEMARK'S LIVERY

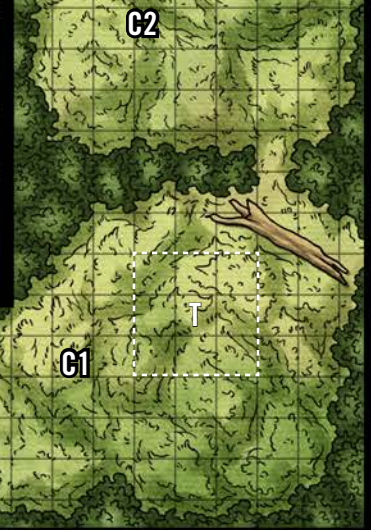
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



B. ZOMBIE STAMPEDE
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

C. RANGER'S RUSE

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



E. SCHOOLHOUSE

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



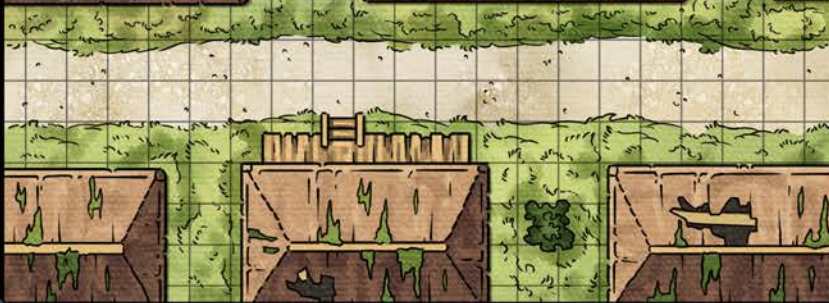
F. TOWN SQUARE

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



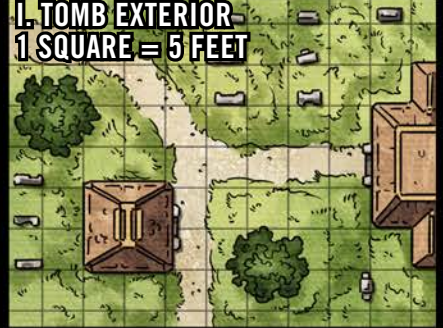
H. WHISPERING WAY PATROL

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



G. JEWELER'S SHOP

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



I. TOMB EXTERIOR

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

Valthazar Quietus has used the *fetoring maw* to brand agents of the Whispering Way on the palm, rendering them immune to both the fog's poisonous vapors and its bewildering mists. Whispering Way agents can therefore come and go freely from the Bastion of Light within the fog bank to Roslar's Coffe, but the PCs must find another path.

B. ZOMBIE STAMPEDE (CR 6)

As the PCs begin to explore Roslar's Coffe, they can see many buildings are destroyed or burned out, as if a massive fire has raged through the town. Many roofs bear gaping holes, while others have completely collapsed. Most structures look barely safe enough to enter, like a strong gust of wind might knock them over. Other areas are completely overgrown with ivy and weeds, and a few freestanding walls look like this overgrowth is the only thing keeping them from falling over. No signs of life remain in the town.

While in the middle of this initial survey of the town, the PCs learn firsthand that the town's animals have also been affected by the strange calamity as the slow, dragging thud of hoofbeats sounds from a nearby street.

This attack can occur regardless of the direction the PCs take from Freemark's Livery; use the Zombie Stampede map on page 6 for this encounter.

Creatures: Four elk caught within the blast of the *Radiant Fire* were instantly killed but immediately rose as undead. With nothing but their undead instincts to guide them, these elk lumber toward the PCs, seeking to tear at their flesh.

ZOMBIE ELK (4) CR 2 XP 600 each

Advanced elk zombie (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 288; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 147)

NE Medium undead

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 16 each (3d8+3)

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

DR 5/slashing; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee gore +7 (1d6+5) or
slam +7 (1d6+7)

TACTICS

During Combat The zombie elk alternate between slamming into their foes with their powerful frames and goring their enemies with their horns. Lacking any sense of tactics, they simply attack the nearest living creature.

Morale The zombie elk fight until destroyed.

Shopping Problems

In the first two adventures of the Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path, the PCs are unable to sell loot or purchase custom magic items. There simply aren't large markets or trade-oriented NPCs for them to encounter. In part, this is by design—the action in these first two adventures flows quickly, and the PCs are supposed to feel a little out of their depth, scrambling to make do with whatever equipment is at hand. At the same time, you don't want the PCs to feel frustrated or wholly underprepared. If your PCs are clamoring for a specific item, feel free to adjust the treasure in this adventure to give them what they need. You might also assure them that, once they're able to leave Roslar's Coffe, they will finally be able to trade in some of the treasures they've amassed. They can do this in *Vigil* at the beginning of the next adventure, *Pathfinder Adventure Path #141: Last Watch*, or you might consider an encounter with one of the itinerant traders presented in the "Merchants of the Road" article beginning on page 62.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 21 (25 vs. trip)

Feats Toughness^b

Skills Acrobatics +4 (+12 when jumping)

SQ staggered

Development: The ranger Jando Parr (see page 58) has been following the zombie elk and watches them attack the PCs. At some point during the fight (or immediately after it is over), the PCs can attempt a DC 20 Perception check to catch a glimpse of a humanoid figure on the roof of a building two blocks away. A PC who succeeds at this check by 5 or more identifies the figure as a male half-orc wearing leather armor. Jando slips out of sight for a moment and then makes for the tree line just north of town (but within the breathable air under the dome). Any PC who succeeded at the Perception check to spot Jando automatically notices him moving away; other PCs may attempt a DC 20 Perception check to spot him fleeing as well. If the PCs call out to Jando or make it clear they see him, he ignores them and hurries back into the trees.

In fact, Jando hopes the PCs notice him and follow him into the forest, where he can lure them into his pit trap (area C) and question them. He suspects the PCs are agents of the Whispering Way, but their battle against the zombie elk has left him in doubt. Jando wants to get the upper hand and find out why they've come to Roslar's Coffe, but his plan doesn't quite work as he intends, and he gets into trouble of his own in the forest. See area C for more information.

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If none of the PCs spot Jando, or if they don't follow him, he circles back to shadow them further. He makes himself seen to at least one or two of the PCs, hoping they take his bait and follow him into the forest. If the PCs refuse to do so, he continues to watch them; after their fight against known Whispering Way agents (area G or area H), he concludes they must not be affiliated with the Whispering Way and approaches them openly to ask about their purpose in town, as described in Jando's Blind on page 9.

C. RANGER'S RUSE

Although the PCs most likely discover this area in the forest just north of Roslar's Coffin by following the ranger Jando Parr, they might instead discover the trail to this location by exploring the edge of the forest and succeeding at a DC 18 Perception or Survival check.

Use the Ranger's Ruse map on page 6 for this encounter.

C1. Forest Pit (CR 5)

In stark contrast to the ruin and decay of the town, this clearing teems with strange life. Gray, bulbous fruit hangs from the trees, and brightly colored flowers bloom on the forest floor, giving off a sickly sweet odor. A rotted log lies in front of a narrow opening in the foliage to the north. The plants here all wave slightly, as if in a breeze, but the air is completely still.

Jando Parr leads the PCs to this clearing and then disappears through the gap in the trees to the north, planning to return only after one or more PCs have fallen into the pit. This, he hopes, will even the odds and allow him to discover the PCs' reasons for being in the ruins of Roslar's Coffin.

Jando has been trapped in the town for over a week and has seen Whispering Way cultists come and go as they please, performing odd tasks. He suspects the PCs might be part of the cult; while he could simply ask them questions, the weird events he has recently experienced have made him overly cautious. He figures he can more easily interrogate the PCs when he has one or more of them trapped in a pit.

Trap: Jando dug this wide pit trap to protect his treetop blind. He lures nearby undead to this spot, since they don't notice the large fronds that cover the pit; those trapped in the pit make easier targets for his bow. Jando recently added a few sharpened wooden stakes to the bottom, wounding creatures that fall in.

JANDO'S PIT TRAP CR 5

XP 1,600

Type mechanical; Perception DC 24; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect 20-ft.-deep pit (2d6 falling damage); sharpened wooden stakes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 stakes per target for 1d4+2 damage each; Reflex DC 20 negates); multiple targets (all targets in a 15-ft.-square area)

Development: When the PCs trigger or avoid the pit trap, they hear a cry for help coming from the northeast, followed by a bestial bellow and the sound of a falling tree. A mutated beast known as a yaoguai is attacking Jando Parr in the clearing to the north (area C2). If the PCs don't intervene, the yaoguai in that area knocks Jando unconscious then comes hunting for the PCs.

C2. Jando in Danger (CR 7)

The soil here is oddly spongy, as if after a light rainfall, but the forest floor is dry. The trees that surround this clearing are sick and grayish.

An opening in the foliage to the south leads to area C1. Trees to the north shelter a makeshift blind 30 feet above the ground. This is where Jando sleeps, as he considers it one of the few safe places under the poisonous dome. Spotting the blind from the forest floor requires a successful DC 28 Perception check.

Creatures: While Jando waited for the PCs to fall into his pit trap, a yaoguai created by the *Radiant Fire* discovered him and attacked. An amalgamation of several animals fused together, this yaoguai has the body of a bear and the face and claws of a mountain lion. A single, greasy tentacle grows out of its long tail.

As the yaoguai attacked, its thrashing tentacle struck a nearby tree, which fell onto Jando and pinned him to the ground. The yaoguai knows it has the ranger trapped and is toying with him. Once it notices the PCs, the beast turns and attacks them, as it knows Jando isn't going anywhere and can return to him later. A PC can lift the tree to free Jando with a successful DC 15 Strength check; due to the tree's placement, Jando can't easily lift it on his own. If the PCs free Jando, he joins the fight on their side. Whether or not the PCs free the ranger, he shouts in encouragement, providing tactical advice to PCs fighting the yaoguai.

JANDO PARR CR 5

XP 1,600

hp 49 (currently 14; see page 58)

YAOGUAI CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 84 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4 284*)



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OFFENSE

Special Attacks pounce, rake (2 claws +14, 1d8+7)

TACTICS

During Combat The yaoguai uses its pounce and rake abilities as much as possible, breaking off combat from one PC if necessary to pounce on another.

Morale The yaoguai fights until reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, at which point it attempts to flee into the forest.

STATISTICS

SQ maker's gift (pounce and rake)

Development: If the PCs don't free Jando during the fight, he calls out for their aid after the yaoguai has been killed or driven off. He promises them a place where they can take shelter and agrees to answer their questions once he is out from under the log.

JANDO'S BLIND

Once the PCs have rescued Jando, read or paraphrase the following.

The half-orc brushes dirt from his armor and gingerly touches a massive bruise already beginning to form on his left cheek. "Close call, there. I'd be beast food if it weren't for you. My name's Jando Parr." He extends his hand in greeting. "I'm starting to guess you aren't with the Whispering Way; you aren't raving fanatics or undead abominations. Right now, that's good enough for me. Come along, I can show you a place that's relatively safe."

Jando leads you to the north side of the clearing where several trees grow close together. Near the base of one tree, the branches have been partially cut away to make a series of subtle handholds. The half-orc begins climbing but pauses a few feet off the ground. "Sorry about that whole pit trap thing. The area has been a very dangerous place since the explosion and the... whatever that is... appeared around the town." He gestures vaguely toward the dome of fog that is barely visible through the trees. "And then you lot show up out of nowhere. I couldn't be sure whose side you were on."

Jando motions for the PCs to accompany him up the tree. The ranger has tied together several logs to form a makeshift platform about 30 feet from the ground. The natural canopy of the trees protects the

blind from above and it is hidden from below with several camouflaging branches. The entire platform is 20 feet long by 15 feet wide. A well-used bedroll lies in one corner. Jando tells the PCs to make themselves comfortable and says they can rest here for as long as they want. If they ask, he can also tell them what he knows about the situation in the town.

What happened to Roslar's Coffers? "You mean you don't know? I assumed that was why you're here. A few days ago, when I was patrolling along the river to the southeast, I saw this massive flash of light coming from the town. I rushed over, only to find many of the buildings in ruins and everyone... dead." Jando is still shocked by the huge loss of life. "It seemed as though most of the



Yaoguai

bodies were turned to ash, but lots of them were terribly mangled somehow, their limbs twisted in all directions and their flesh turned to goo. It was horrible, but it got worse when some of the mangled corpses began to move on their own." He grimaces. "I hate the undead."

What about the poisonous cloud? "That sprang up about a day later while I was picking through the rubble, trying to find some explanation for what happened. It just appeared, rolling in like the worst bank of fog ever. I tried to make a break for it through the mist once, but I barely made it back out alive. I wouldn't recommend it. It surrounds the entire town—I've been trapped here inside it ever since."

The plants and animals are strange. "You noticed that, did you?" Jando wraps a bandage around one of his more grievous injuries. "I don't have a good explanation, or even any explanation at all. I figure it must be related to whatever magic destroyed the town. And I'm pretty certain it was magic. We don't have much use for fireworks in Lastwall, but I've seen a few set off in my time. None of them produced light that bright or in such a huge area."

Who is the Whispering Way? "You've heard of Tar-Baphon, the Whispering Tyrant? He's a powerful lich who ruled Ustalav for centuries but was defeated by the Shining Crusade and then locked away in Gallowspire. Well, the Whispering Way is a cult that wants to free that undead bastard and turn everyone on Golarion into zombies and skeletons." Jando can barely hide his disgust. "My guess is they're behind all this. I've seen a few of them skulking through the streets, but I don't know if they have a way through the fog or a secret hideaway in town."

Have you seen the glow coming from the cemetery? "Yeah, I've seen it. It even spoke to me... I think. On one of my supply runs through the town, I came close to the cemetery and heard a voice—in my head, I think—claiming to be the spirit of the land. Since then, I haven't gone anywhere near it. It might be a Whispering Way trick, or it could be something else altogether. I'm just trying to stay alive here; I gave up on trying to solve the mysteries of this place the minute that toxic fog appeared."

We were just in the Boneyard! If the PCs tell Jando their story, he listens intently and then shakes his head in disbelief. "Now I've heard just about everything! I suppose next we'll find out that Aroden has come back to life and is selling camels in Osirion!"

Jando allows the PCs to rest in his blind whenever they'd like. He also offers his help against undead and agents of the Whispering Way in town. If the GM prefers not to add the complication of an NPC traveling with the PCs as they explore Roslar's Coffin, Jando instead offers his services as the PCs' scout or advisor rather than as their comrade-in-arms.

If the PCs don't rescue Jando (or if they decide they don't trust the half-orc and either kill him or drive him off), they can still use his blind as a safe place to rest if they find it. A PC must succeed at a DC 28 Perception check to locate the hidden blind.

Treasure: For saving him, Jando gives the PCs his two *potions of cure light wounds*.

D. CEMETERY GATE (CR 9)

From nearly anywhere in town, the PCs can see a light shining from the cemetery on the southeast edge of Roslar's Coffin. This light comes from a loci spirit that guards the cemetery's entrance from the evil forces that beset the town. When the PCs approach the cemetery, read or paraphrase the following.

A shimmering white light emanates from the wrought iron fence at the cemetery's gate. The light coalesces into an androgynous humanoid figure clad in white robes with hair of flame and large, feathery wings. Though their eyes burn with a fiery intensity, the being appears kind and benevolent.

The figure hovers 10 feet from the ground and speaks telepathically to the PCs.

"Greetings, travelers from beyond the veil. We are Roslar's Coffin, the collected thoughts and prayers of its people, the sweat and blood they have poured into its construction and defense, the beating heart and vital spirit of the town. But we are broken and fragmented from the foul attack that has slaughtered our residents. We would help you, if you help us. Find our missing pieces—in the schoolhouse, the town square, and the jeweler's shop—and we will allow you access to the tomb of the false hero. From there, you might find a way to free what is left of this town."

Loci Spirit: A loci spirit is an apparition created from a saturation of positive emotional resonance and excess psychic energy, akin to a benevolent haunt. The full rules for loci spirits can be found on pages 226–228 of *Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures*, but the basic rules for this loci spirit are presented here. A PC can recall information about loci spirits with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion) check.

The loci spirit of Roslar's Coffin was created by the *Radiant Fire*, but it is fractured due to the fallout of positive energy. Bits of the loci spirit have broken away and are taking on the forms of townsfolk who were killed in the attack. Each piece believes itself to be a townsfolk with unfinished business (similar to a ghost) keeping it separate from the loci spirit. Once a fragment's business is addressed, it disappears and its essence returns to the loci spirit. The three fragments can be found in areas E, F,



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and **G** in town; the PCs might have already dealt with one or more of these fragments as they explored the ruins of Roslar's Coffe.

So long as any fragment is separate from the loci spirit, it cannot provide its ceremonial effect and provides only its corruption effect (*forceful hand*) to push away those who attempt to enter the cemetery. This effect manifests as the angelic figure pushing the intruder back, rather than as a disembodied hand. Although the loci spirit normally stands at the entrance to the cemetery, its effects can manifest anywhere around the cemetery's perimeter; that is, the PCs cannot bypass the loci spirit by simply climbing the cemetery's wrought iron fence at some point away from the gate. The angelic figure appears before trespassing PCs to repel them, and it can even manifest in multiple places at once.

Despite being limited to its corruption effect, the loci spirit still has a good alignment and answers questions the PCs put to it from outside the cemetery gate. The loci spirit knows little about why the town was attacked or even the exact nature of the attack. It has no information about the Whispering Way, though it is aware that "foul creatures of negative energy" sometimes prowl the streets and have risen within the tomb itself.

Once all three fragments have been returned, the loci spirit is restored. When the PCs return to the cemetery after doing so (which is a good time to run the encounter described in area **H**), read or paraphrase the following.

"Thank you, travelers of the Dead Roads, we are whole once again. You have proven yourselves to be friends of Roslar's Coffe, and so you can step inside to honor its dead. We must warn you, though: the dead are restless within our cemetery. They have congregated within the edifice known as Roslar's Tomb. Perhaps they somehow know of the hidden passage between the tomb and the Bastion of Light and seek to assault that noble edifice."

PCs from Roslar's Coffe know that the Bastion of Light is an abandoned fortified temple to Sarenrae outside of Roslar's town. The PCs can't reach it directly, as it isn't under the dome of poisonous fog (as the PCs may learn, it actually lies inside the fog surrounding the town). Other PCs can recall this information with a successful DC 15 Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (religion) check. The loci spirit is unaware that agents of the Whispering Way have overtaken the temple. If asked, the loci spirit doesn't know how to access the hidden passage to the Bastion of Light, but mysteriously says, "We believe you are already familiar with that tomb."

In addition to allowing the PCs to pass, the loci spirit invites the PCs to participate as celebrants in its ceremony. This requires one or two PCs to succeed at the two skill

checks indicated below, in order; once they do so, they receive the benefits of the loci spirit's effect. The first time the PCs attempt this ceremony, the loci spirit aids their performance, reducing the DC of the skill checks from 29 to 25. Regardless of whether the PCs succeed at or fail the skill checks, the loci spirit cannot manifest its ceremonial effect again until 24 hours have passed.

Whether or not the PCs successfully perform the ceremony, the cemetery is infused with the loci spirit's sacred nature: undead creatures in the cemetery take a -1 penalty on attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws. This effect doesn't extend into Roslar's Tomb (area **J**), but the bone golem in area **I** takes these penalties as though it were an undead creature, due to the unusual circumstances of its formation.

SOULS OF ROSLAR'S COFFER CR 9

XP 6,400

Sacred boon loci spirit (area within 15 ft. of the perimeter of Roslar Coffe's cemetery)

Caster Level 9th

hp 18; **Ceremony** Knowledge (local) DC 29, Knowledge (religion) DC 29

Effect Invoking the ceremony requires a celebrant to recite a list of the dead from Roslar's Coffe, which doesn't need to be complete but must be made as a heartfelt effort. Another celebrant must request that the dead rest easily and travel well to the afterlife that awaits them. If the ceremony is successful, the angelic figure smiles and disperses throughout the cemetery. Each living creature in the cemetery gains the ability to cast *greater heroism* (CL 9th) on itself as an immediate action once during the next 24 hours.

Corruption Effect *Greater heroism* becomes *forceful hand* (CMB +18)

Story Award: The first time the PCs successfully perform the ceremony, award them 6,400 XP, as though they had defeated the loci spirit.

E. SCHOOLHOUSE (CR 7)

A one-room schoolhouse stands on the northeastern edge of Roslar's Coffe and, unlike many of the other buildings in town, remains standing and in reasonable condition. As the PCs approach, they can see a glow from within, emanating from a dozen frolicking child-like figures.

Use the Schoolhouse map on page 6 for this encounter.

When the PCs enter the schoolhouse or otherwise look inside it, read or paraphrase the following.

Four rows of four small desks each fill most of this chamber, with a single large, wooden desk near the only door. Broken writing tablets and dozens of pieces of chalk litter the dirty



floor. Several grimy windows around the room look out onto the ruined town.

The interior of the schoolhouse is brightly lit, regardless of the time of day, due to the glow of the capering childlike spirits within. When the PCs enter the schoolhouse, the ghostly children address them as “teachers,” but continue to jump around the room and climb up on the desks. They refuse to settle down, saying that they are having too much fun playing with their new fairy friends. If asked about these “fairy friends,” the children merely laugh and say, “Don’t you see them?”



Spectral Schoolgirl

The ghostly children fill the room, but pose no impediment to movement or line of sight; the PCs cannot physically interact with them at all. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Perform check as a standard action can convince a child to sit down (though a PC who attempts an Intimidate check takes a penalty on later checks to teach the children; see Class in Session below). For every 5 by which a PC’s result surpasses this DC, that PC can affect an additional child. Alternatively, casting a flashy, harmless spell such as *dancing lights* or *prestidigitation* automatically impresses a single child into sitting down. Each child that sits down causes the light in the room to lower a bit, and if the PCs can get six or more children to sit, the light level in the room becomes normal light rather than bright light.

Creatures: Two malevolent fey creatures called lurkers in light, attracted to Roslar’s Coffin by the bright flash that devastated the town, hide in plain sight among the bright ghosts. Thanks to their blend with light ability, the lurkers in light are invisible as long as the room contains bright light. If the PCs start making the children sit down, or if they start looking around for the “fairy friends,” the lurkers in light attack the PCs. They prefer to use their sneak attack when possible; if invisible, they attack separate PCs, but if they can be seen, they work to flank a PC instead. They focus their attacks on PCs that seem the most effective at getting the children to sit down. A lurker in light reduced to fewer than 10 hit points attempts to flee.

LURKERS IN LIGHT (2) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 44 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 180)

Treasure: Tucked away in a drawer in the large desk is a *feather token* (bird) that the town’s schoolteacher confiscated from a student a few weeks before the *Radiant Fire* struck. A PC can discover this item with a successful DC 15 Perception check.

CLASS IN SESSION

As soon as both lurkers in light are defeated or flee, the ghostly children calm down, take their seats, and look expectantly up at the PCs. One of the children says, “What are going to learn today, teachers?” A PC can attempt a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion) check to realize that the day’s lessons are a piece of unfinished business tethering these spirits to this location. The PCs need to complete the lessons to return this fragment to the loci spirit in the cemetery (area D).

To teach the children, the PCs must collectively attempt six DC 22 Knowledge checks,

although related skills such as Linguistics or Profession (tutor) can be used instead, at the GM's option. Any PC who attempted to intimidate the children earlier takes a -2 penalty on all teaching checks, as the children think that PC is mean. The children bore easily, and subsequent uses of the same skill, even if made by a different PC, take a -5 penalty.

As the PCs accrue successes, the children become more attentive and interested; if the PCs fail multiple checks, the children are instead distracted and disrespectful. Either way, after six attempted checks, the faint echo of a bell rings in the distance. The children stand from their desks and begin walking toward the schoolhouse door, dissipating into wisps of light as they move. If the PCs succeeded at four or more of the skill checks to teach the children, one child briefly remains behind to thank the PCs. Read or paraphrase the following; if any PC bears a symbol of Pharasma, the child points to that symbol as she speaks.

"Thanks for takin' the time to teach us. I don't think there's going to be many more classes. Some of us wanted to say you should be careful of the yelly purple lady with the pointed ears. She's mean! She smashed up all the spiral god's signs in town, and the spiral god must make her so mad she can't think straight."

This is a clue to one of the weaknesses of Chatar Esuri, one of the Whispering Way's chief agents in town. A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check realizes the "spiral god" must be Pharasma, and the child is speaking about the woman destroying Pharasma's holy symbol.

Story Award: For attempting to teach the ghostly children, award the PCs 1,200 XP; if they succeeded at four or more skill checks to teach the children, increase this award to 2,400 XP.

F. TOWN SQUARE (CR 7)

As the PCs approach the town square of Roslar's Coffe, they spot a glow coming from a wide porch on one of the buildings adjacent to the square. The glow emanates from a pair of translucent figures that resemble an elderly couple. Their forms are indistinct, so it is difficult to tell their races and genders, but the figures are holding hands as they sit in ancient rocking chairs on

the porch and look out onto the square. The figures rock slowly back and forth, and the squeak of their old wooden chairs echoes eerily.

Use the Town Square map on page 6 for this encounter.

An old stone pool stands in the center of the square, its water stagnant and murky with dirt and rotting vegetation. Next to the pool is an oddly overgrown flower bed filled with strange, squirming flora surrounding an enormous pitcher plant.

Like the children in the schoolhouse, these figures are insubstantial and cannot physically interact with the PCs at all. However, they are shaking their heads and making sad clucks with their tongues. If addressed, the couple loudly laments the state of the town square, claiming that the fountain and the flower bed used to be "so beautiful we could just sit here for hours looking at it." "What I wouldn't give to see the place cleaned up again," says the other. The head shaking resumes. A PC can attempt a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion) check to realize that the flower bed's sad state is a piece of unfinished business tethering these spirits to this location. The PCs need to restore the beauty of the flower bed and nearby pool to return this fragment of the loci spirit in the cemetery (area D).

Creature: A dangerous crypt flower grows within the overgrown flower bed, impeding restoration attempts. A PC who succeeds at a DC 27 Knowledge (nature) check recognizes the pitcher plant as a hungry crypt flower.



Crypt Flower

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The crypt flower doesn't attack the PCs until they approach the flower bed or attack it, but it does pursue them if they flee the square after riling it up. Voracious and hungry, the crypt flower fights until slain.

CRYPT FLOWER

CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 78 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6 67*)

CLEANING UP

Once the crypt flower has been defeated, the PCs can begin cleaning up the town square in earnest. Tearing up the roots of the crypt flower and removing the other weeds in the flower bed takes a total of 8 hours of work (meaning four PCs working together can do it in 2 hours). A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Knowledge (nature) check can reduce the total amount of time needed to only 4 hours. Finding suitable flowers to replace the weeds requires a successful DC 26 Knowledge (nature) or Survival check; each attempt takes 1 hour and the PCs can aid one another in this task. Jando can provide a +2 circumstance bonus on these checks if asked, as he knows where to look to find flowers that haven't been mutated by the *Radiant Fire*. Bringing the flowers to the town square and replanting them in the flower bed takes 1 additional hour. Certain spells, such as *diminish plants* or *plant growth*, might be able to expedite this work, at the GM's discretion.

Cleaning up the pool requires 4 hours of work. A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Knowledge (engineering) check can reduce the total amount of time needed to only 2 hours. However, the water carries a dangerous disease; each PC who participates in this work must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save or contract slimy doom (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook 557*). It takes another hour to draw up enough fresh water from the town's well to refill the pool once it is clean.

Instead of doing all this manual labor, the PCs might attempt to fool the spirits with illusions. The effect must be at least as powerful as *major image* and include an olfactory component, otherwise the ghostly couple definitely won't be fooled. Attempt only a single Will saving throw (Will +5) for the couple; if the crypt flower is still alive, the couple is skeptical and gains a +4 bonus on their Will save. If the spirits are fooled by the illusion, the PCs achieve the same results as if they had finished the work in fewer than 8 hours.

At the end of the PCs' work, the ghostly couple assesses their performance. If the PCs took more than 8 hours to clean up the town square, the old couple is happy to see the alterations, though one of them grumbles that the PCs "took long enough" before they slowly fade away. If the PCs took 8 hours or less, the couple is delighted, commenting cheerfully about every minute detail of the

restoration, and share a clue before fading away. Read or paraphrase the following.

One of the indistinct ghostly watchers speaks, "Ah, we can rest easily with that good work done. It's reassuring to know there are still helpful people here. We knew we wouldn't get any help from that strange purple woman with the long tongue. All she ever did is come by and pick through the ruins with a sour look on her face."

The other spirit interjects as they both start to fade away, "Except when she saw the corpse of that cat; she tore into that like she hadn't eaten in months. So very desperate. Always hungry and distracted by an easy meal, I'd wager. Thanks again, friends!"

This is a clue to one of the weaknesses of Chatar Esuri, one of the Whispering Way's chief agents in town. A PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Knowledge (religion) checks recalls that some ghouls have purplish skin and they eat humanoid corpses, turning to other sources of meat only when particularly hungry or desperate.

Treasure: When the PCs finish cleaning up the town square, no matter how long it took them, the figures of the old couple vanish and two matching silver rings drop to the porch between the two rocking chairs with a tinkling sound. One of these is a *ring of protection +1*; the other is a *ring of feather falling*.

Story Award: For cleaning up the town square, award the PCs 1,200 XP; if they did so in less than 8 hours, increase this award to 2,400 XP.

G. JEWELER'S SHOP (CR 7)

When the PCs approach the jeweler's shop on the west side of Roslar's Coffin, they can see the faint glow of a translucent humanoid figure inside through the shop's main window. The front door issues a loud squeal as it is opened, though the ghostly occupant doesn't react to the noise.

Use the Jeweler's Shop map on page 6 for this encounter.

This once-elegant small shop is in ruins. Broken display cases line the far wall, their shattered glass littering the floor. Several velvet cushions, fabric torn and stuffing pulled out, lie scattered everywhere. A small table, standing behind a counter, is covered in a mess of broken jewelry-making tools, bits of tarnished silver, and slivers of gemstones.

The fragment of the loci spirit found here takes the form of a young man in fine clothes. He is running his hands through his wavy hair as he stands over one of the shop's counters, muttering to himself, "No, that isn't it. Which one, which one?" The PCs can see that he is staring at five hazy pieces of jewelry, their exact



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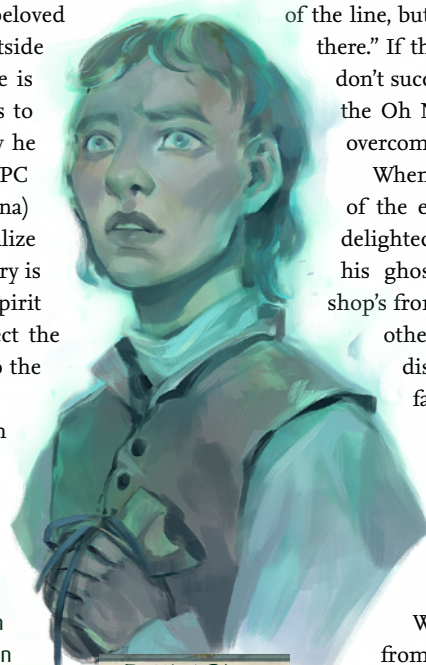
forms impossible to determine. When asked, the young man explains that he was in the shop quite late to purchase a last-minute gift for his beloved when there was a white flash of light outside that did something to his memory. He is certain that he had made a decision as to which piece of jewelry to buy, but now he can only remember scattered facts. A PC can attempt a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion) check to realize that identifying the right piece of jewelry is the unfinished business tethering the spirit to this location. The PCs need to select the correct piece to return this fragment to the loci spirit in the cemetery (area D).

The spirit has some information for PCs willing to help him. Read or paraphrase the following.

"I remember that there were five different pieces of jewelry here in a single row." The ghostly young man gestures at the five shimmering forms on the counter. "Each piece of jewelry contains a different gemstone, and I had decided on the emerald piece—it will bring out the green in my beloved's eyes—but now I can't remember which one that is! I'm sure the necklace and the ring are on the two ends. I remember that the bracelet is to the immediate right of the ruby piece of jewelry (which isn't the necklace) and to the immediate left of the earrings. And I know the brooch (which doesn't contain an amethyst or ruby) is to the immediate right of the diamond piece of jewelry and to the immediate left of the sapphire piece of jewelry."

With the information given, the PCs can puzzle out which piece of jewelry is where: from left to right, they are a ruby ring, an amethyst bracelet, a pair of diamond earrings, an emerald brooch, and a sapphire necklace. To aid the players, when they begin to piece together the facts, the haziness begins to recede from the line of jewelry. For instance, when they determine the diamond earrings must be in the middle position, that piece of jewelry comes into focus, confirming their assumption and making the rest of the puzzle easier to solve.

If the players are struggling with deducing which piece of jewelry is where, they can search the shop or ask the young man for more information. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check when searching the shop discovers a faded ledger. The only legible information within is a receipt for a sapphire necklace. The PCs can coax forth a little more of the ghostly young man's memories with a few minutes of conversation and a successful DC 18



Baffled Ghost

Diplomacy check. He says, "I'm certain neither the bracelet nor the brooch was the piece of jewelry in the middle of the line, but I don't remember which piece was there." If the players still need a little help (or don't succeed at these checks), consider using the Oh No, a Puzzle! sidebar on page 16 to overcome this problem.

When the PCs point out the location of the emerald brooch, the young man is delighted. He grabs up the brooch with his ghostly hand and moves toward the shop's front door, fading away as he goes. The other phantom pieces of jewelry also disappear as the ghostly young man fades away.

Creatures: At some point while the PCs are attempting to determine which piece of jewelry has an emerald set in it (or directly afterward, if they figure it out quickly), four Whispering Way cultists enter the shop. Sent from the Bastion of Light by Valthazar Quietus to investigate reports of a glowing

figure in the jeweler's shop, these cultists are surprised to see the PCs but quickly decide to attack; they plan to incapacitate the PCs, tie them up, and ask either Chatar Esuri or Valthazar what to do about them. These cultists can come and go through the poisonous fog because Valthazar Quietus marked them with the *fetoring maw* to grant them immunity to the fog's effects. The PCs might notice burn marks on the cultists' palms that vaguely resemble skulls, but they aren't likely to realize what these marks mean unless they capture and interrogate one of the cultists.

WHISPERING WAY CULTISTS (4) CR 3
XP 800 each
hp 32 each (see page 78)

Treasure: A loose floorboard conceals a silk pouch with a dozen finely cut emeralds worth 150 gp each. Discovering this cache requires a successful DC 30 Perception check, but if the PCs determined the location of the emerald brooch without any hints, the ghostly young man points at the loose floorboard before leaving and says, "Thank you for your help. I wish I could reward you with more than this."

Development: If the PCs capture any of the Whispering Way cultists, they might want to question their captives about the cult's activities here in Roslar's Coffin. The cultists are loyal but not strong-willed. A captured cultist refuses to speak unless a PC succeeds



Oh No, a Puzzle!

The logic puzzle presented in this encounter may not be for all groups. To simplify the encounter and remove the puzzle element, the GM might allow each PC to attempt a DC 17 Appraise check to identify one random piece of jewelry that isn't the emerald brooch; if the result exceeds a DC of 22, the PC instead knows which piece of jewelry is the emerald brooch.

at a DC 13 Intimidate check. A cowed cultist reveals that they are in town to study the aftereffects of the blast that devastated the area. This particular cultist doesn't know the specifics of Tar-Baphon's machinations, only that he was ordered here by his cell's leader, a vampire named Valthazar Quietus (note that these cultists all mistakenly

believe that Valthazar is a true vampire, not a dhampir). According to the cultist, Valthazar has a magical gem he used to create the poisonous, mind-altering fog around the town to keep out any "nosy travelers." This item also allows a select few chosen by Valthazar to pass unharmed through the miasma; the cultist proudly shows off the skull-shaped scarring on his palm. He goes on to say that the undead don't need the same markings, as the fog doesn't affect them, and that a ghoul named Chatar Esuri led him and his comrades into town this morning to follow up on reports of a ghost in the jeweler's shop. The PCs may have heard of a purple-skinned woman with a long tongue from one of the other fragments of the loci spirit in town; if asked, a cultist can confirm that this describes Chatar. If the PCs express any concern about this information, the cultist scoffs, saying, "You had best worry. Chatar's out of control. She overheard one of my fellows suggest that being undead perhaps wasn't the pinnacle of enlightenment, and she nearly tore his head off in a rage!"

Story Award: For helping the spirit identify the emerald brooch, award the PCs 1,200 XP. If they were able to do so without relying on skill checks (such as to find the ledger or to appraise the jewelry), increase this award to 2,400 XP.

H. WHISPERING WAY PATROL (CR 8)

At some point when the PCs are traveling through the southern half of Roslar's Coffer, they encounter a group of Whispering Way cultists seeking information and corpses for Valthazar Quietus. This encounter works best when the PCs have restored all three of the spirit fragments of the town's loci spirit and are returning to the cemetery. Ordinarily, the cultists don't expect any other living creatures to be in the town and aren't attempting to hide their presence; the PCs can notice the patrol approaching before being seen if any PC succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check. However, if it's been more than a day since the PCs defeated the cultists in the jeweler's shop (area G), this patrol is suspicious and careful; the Perception DC to spot them early increases to 23. If the PCs spot the patrol first, they have an opportunity to place themselves in advantageous positions and possibly



Whispering Way Cultist

ambush the patrol. The PCs might flee or hide but since the patrol is active in town, it's only a matter of time before the PCs encounter them again.

Wherever this encounter occurs in town, you can use the Whispering Way Patrol map on page 6.

Creatures: The patrol consists of a pair of cultists led by Chatar Esuri, a ghoul inquisitor of Urgathoa. Valthazar has branded the human cultists with the *fetoring maw* to grant them immunity to the poisonous fog's effects, allowing them to come and go from the Bastion of Light (see page 28). As she is undead and therefore immune to the fog, Chatar doesn't bear the brand. When she spots the PCs, Chatar orders her cultist allies to slaughter them. The PCs are an unknown quantity in the equation, and Chatar doesn't know of any way to deal with such variables except for violence.

The PCs may have learned of a few of Chatar's weaknesses as they worked to reunite the fragments of the loci spirit, and they can use these against her in a fight. First, Chatar despises Pharasma, and any iconography of Pharasma drives her into a rage. If a PC takes a standard action to present a holy symbol of Pharasma (or an item that looks like such a symbol), Chatar focuses her attacks exclusively on that PC for 1d4+2 rounds and takes a -4 penalty on attacks against any other creature during this time. Second, Chatar works hard to keep her ghoulish hunger in check, but her hunger sometimes overwhelms her. In the presence of at least a few pounds of fresh meat—including the corpse of a PC or a cultist slain during this encounter—Chatar must attempt a DC 22 Will save at the start of each of her turns; on a failure, she is staggered for 1 round while she works to keep her cravings in check. Finally, she harbors a burning hatred for all living creatures, even her own allies. If a PC denounces the benefits of undeath or extols the virtues of mortality, her hatred rises to the fore. For the rest of the encounter, Chatar doesn't consider the living cultists to be her allies (meaning she doesn't provide a flanking bonus for them, she considers them an enemy for the purposes of her *bane* spell, and so on), although she doesn't directly attack them. Canny PCs can trigger all of Chatar's weaknesses, turning the tide of battle in their favor.

WHISPERING WAY CULTISTS (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 32 each (see page 78)

CHATAR ESURI

CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 56 (see page 56)

Development: The PCs can spot markings on these cultists' palms similar to those found upon the cultists

who attacked in the jeweler's shop (area G). If the PCs capture either or both of these cultists, they can learn the same information provided by the cultists in area G.

I. TOMB EXTERIOR (CR 8)

The loci spirit at the cemetery's entrance is likely to stop the PCs from entering the cemetery without first restoring its fragments, as described in area D, but determined PCs might simply push past the loci spirit or find another way in. PCs able to move more than 15 feet into the cemetery pass the area of the loci spirit, and they can explore the rest of the cemetery unhindered.

Regardless of how they enter Roslar's Coffin's cemetery, the PCs find that many of the tombstones are toppled and shattered, and more than a few older graves are now empty, their earth broken open from underneath as though the graves' occupants dug their way free. The powerful magic of the *Radiant Fire* caused a massive uprising of undead. Though the Whispering Way would love to study this reanimation phenomenon up close, the power of the loci spirit has kept the undead trapped in the cemetery and the cultists barred from entry. Most of the undead eventually retreated into Roslar's Tomb in the center of the cemetery, drawn to the psychic stain of sadness and betrayal that lingers within.

No matter the time of day, a faint mist clings to the ground and swirls around the PCs' feet. Roslar's Tomb is unmistakable: it stands in the center of the cemetery and is by far the cemetery's largest structure.

The tomb has only a single entrance. Use the Tomb Exterior map on page 6 for this encounter.

Creature: In addition to several undead, the fallout from the blast animated the bones from several dozen skeletons, turning them into a terrifying bone golem. This creature appears to be nothing more than a macabre pile of bones and sinew heaped near the tomb's entrance. But as soon as the PCs approach within 20 feet or otherwise attempt to disturb the creature, it rises up to its full height and goes on a rampage. It hurls its bone prison at the closest PC and moves into combat with the others. Once roused, the bone golem fights until destroyed.

BONE GOLEM

CR 8

XP 4,800

hp 90 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 133)

Development: A large, metal double door forms the entrance to Roslar's Tomb. The door bears the beginning of a carving, but one that was never finished. Time, vandalism, and weather have worn away any trace of what the carving was supposed to depict, leaving the door's surface strangely lumpy. The door opens with a loud scraping noise.

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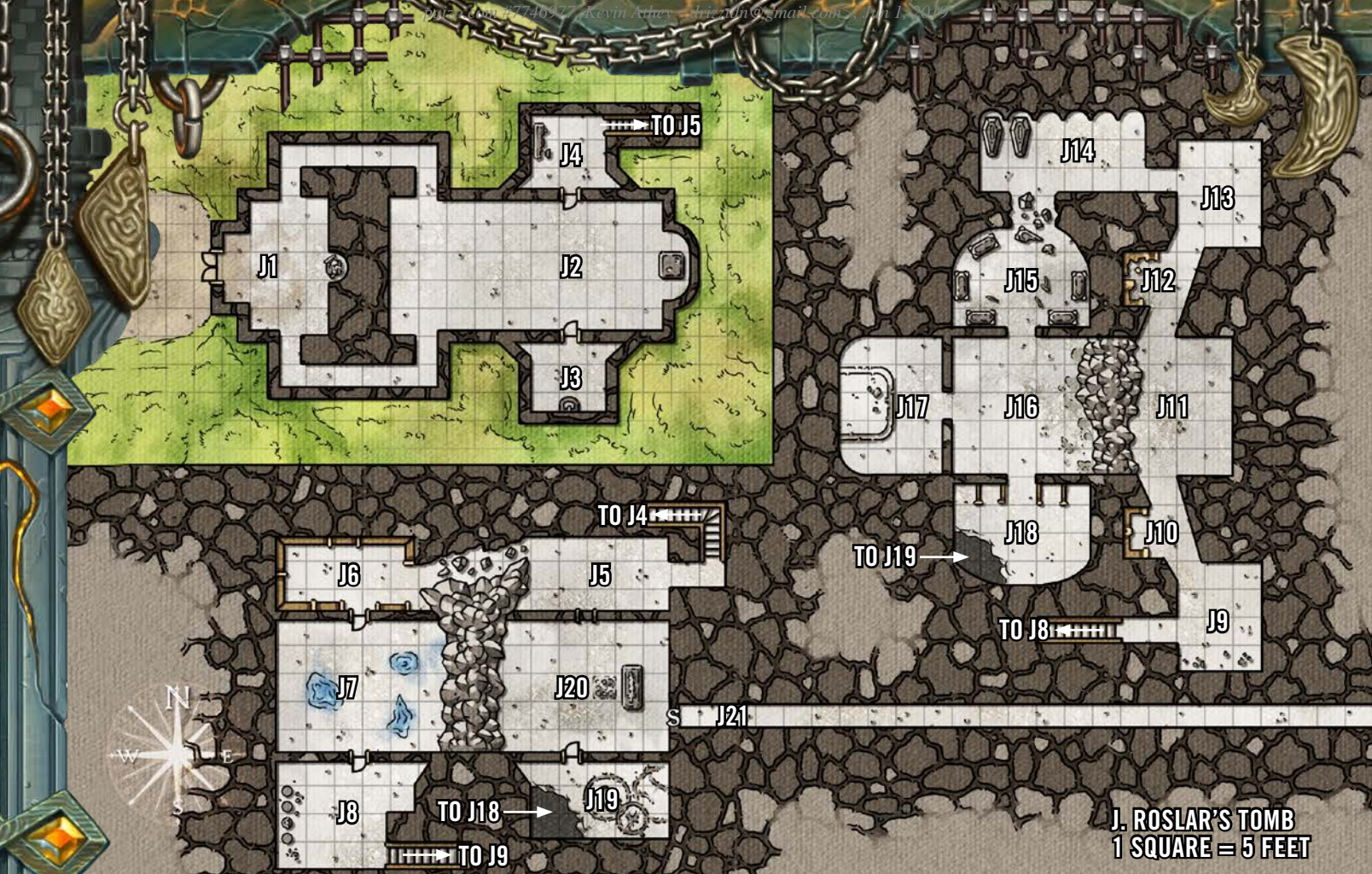
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PART 2: RESTLESS ARE THE DEAD

To find the secret passage that leads to the Bastion of Light and discover the source of the poisonous fog covering Roslar's Coffin, the PCs must navigate their way through a tomb populated with undead and other evil creatures that wish them harm.

J. ROSLAR'S TOMB

In "The Dead Roads," the PCs found themselves in a cleaner, more idealized version of the true Roslar's Tomb. The real structure was left neglected centuries ago when the truth about Roslar came to light. While the tomb is mostly finished, the interior of the underground tomb complex is full of debris, and portions of the floors and ceilings have completely collapsed, making entire sections impassable.

The exterior walls of the aboveground portion of Roslar's Tomb are made of 2-foot-thick cut stone, while the interior walls throughout are 1 foot thick. The ceiling in each room is 12 feet high, while the ceilings in the corridors are 8 feet high. The tomb is unlit. The interior doors are made of stone with iron bands; none are locked, with the exception of the secret door in area J20. Some

doors bear defaced carvings of a long-haired man with a wide mustache and wearing heavy armor; this is Ervin Roslar, the fallen hero of the Shining Crusade.

J1. Entry (CR 7)

Streaks of mud stain the floor of this antechamber. A short pedestal bearing a metal plaque occupies a small alcove in the east wall, and atop it stands a statue of an armored man with flowing hair and a grand mustache. The knight carries a shield on his left arm, and his right arm is broken off at the elbow. A metal double door exits to the west. Identical corridors lead north and south, both turning to the east.

The plaque on the pedestal reads, "Ervin Roslar: Paladin, Hero, Martyr," but the last three words have been crudely scratched out and the word "Traitor" has been carved into the metal above them.

Trap: When the undead that now inhabit the tomb realized the loci spirit outside wouldn't allow them to leave the graveyard, they infused a portion of their essence into this chamber to deter the living and heal the dead. Any creature that steps within 5 feet of either the north or south passages or the broken statue triggers the trap, which floods the area with negative energy.

NEGATIVE ENERGY TRAP

CR 7

XP 3,200

Type magic; Perception DC 31; Disable Device DC 31

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset 1 minute

Effect spell effect (*mass inflict moderate wounds*, 2d8+11 damage, Will DC 19 half); multiple targets (all targets in area J1)

J2. Grand Hall (CR 8)

PCs approaching this room can hear the distinct sound of bickering voices. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check can identify three different voices participating in the argument: one is punctuated by the chattering of teeth, a second voice is deep and gravelly, and the third is a rough whisper.

Faded and chipped murals line the walls of this long hall, their exact portrayals now impossible to discern. A wide alcove in the eastern end of the room contains the base of a large statue, but nothing of the statue remains except two stone stumps that resemble horse's hooves. The floor is uneven and sags near the middle of the room. Two hallways in the western half of the room lead north and south, but both immediately bend to the west. A large stone door exits to the north, opposite a smaller stone door to the south.

The murals in this chamber once depicted the heroic acts of Roslar the knight, but time and vandalism have destroyed all the images. Similarly, the statue in the alcove depicted the former hero astride his rearing warhorse, but it was smashed to bits long ago, the pieces of marble carted off and put to other uses.

The stone floor of this room is noticeably uneven, but not enough to count as difficult terrain, and is still safe to walk on. This is evidence of the collapse in the chambers below, which a PC can identify with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) check.

The hallways lead to the entry (area J1), the south door leads to the dusty font (area J3), and the north door leads to the landing (area J4).

Creatures: In life, Cythriel the elf, a human named Kadraz, and Trondus the dwarf were part of a group of bandits who lived in the nearby Fangwood. Tired of being pushed around by the bandits' irascible leader, they came to Roslar's Coffin to start a "gang" of their own. The "Coffin Crew," as the three eventually dubbed themselves,

lacked the connections and the initiative to undertake any serious crimes, and they were considered only a minor nuisance. Most of the townsfolk shook their heads sadly as the three miscreants loitered in front of the tavern and harassed passersby with rude comments. If any of the PCs grew up in Roslar's Coffin, they remember the trio but probably don't think highly of them, considering the Coffin Crew to be somewhere between spineless blowhards and shiftless troublemakers.

The Coffin Crew's reputation changed about a year ago, when members of the trio's former gang came to town looking to rob and bully anyone they could. Seeking revenge for past slights, Cythriel, Kadraz, and Trondus ambushed and attacked their former confederates, leading to a running battle through the streets. The townspeople thought the three ne'er-do-wells had turned over a new leaf to become protectors of the town and cheered them on. When the fight was over, the robbers had fled and all the Coffin Crew were dead or dying. All three were buried in the cemetery with honor and an outpouring of sympathy that would have surprised them.

The Coffin Crew's souls harbored a lingering, petty resentment toward the town. After the *Radiant Fire* struck, Cythriel, Kadraz, and Trondus arose as undead, each with a different form that befitted their personalities. The indecisive Cythriel arose as an animus shade, gloomy Kadraz as a skeletal champion, and stubborn Trondus a zombie lord. Like many of the other undead in the cemetery hemmed in by the loci spirit, they have taken refuge within Roslar's Tomb, although they didn't get very far before stopping to plan their next move. The Coffin Crew wants to escape the cemetery and rampage through the town, indulging in the looting and troublemaking they never dared to do in life; they believe they'll finally earn the town's fear and respect now that they're undead. None of them realize that the inhabitants of Roslar's Coffin are all dead.

The three are too busy bickering about their next move to notice the arrival of the PCs. However, once they're aware of the PCs, they are briefly taken aback by the presence of living creatures and want to get some information. They demand to know how the PCs got into the crypt, asking specific questions about whether the loci spirit is still present. They are full of bravado, demanding



Cythriel

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Eerie Differences

The tomb presented here is intentionally different from that presented in "The Dead Roads." The differences aren't just in the creatures inhabiting the tomb, but in the tomb's layout as well: rooms are swapped in orientation, stairways lead to different areas, and so on. As the tomb the PCs explored in the Boneyard is only a reflection of the real tomb presented here, the PCs should find this tomb to be increasingly eerie—it seems initially similar, but the differences soon thwart their assumptions and expectations. This tomb is both less finished and substantially more deteriorated than the version in the Boneyard, which should amplify the unnerving atmosphere of this location.

answers to their own questions but refusing to answer any questions from the PCs. They threaten the PCs with flaying, evisceration, and worse with every sentence. In the past, their threats used to be so much bluster, but with their new undead forms, the Coffin Crew is much more likely to back up their threats with violence if the PCs aren't forthcoming with information.

If the PCs tell the Coffin Crew the loci spirit allowed them to pass, or that the spirit is otherwise quiescent, the undead realize that their obstacle to returning to town has been removed; they attempt to push past them to get out of the cemetery. Otherwise, they eventually grow tired of trying to force answers out of the PCs and try to make them the first victims on their murder spree.

CYTHRIEL

CR 5

XP 1,600

Female elf animus shade sorcerer 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 10)

NE Medium undead (elf, humanoid, incorporeal)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +16

Aura mental static (30 ft., DC 15)

DEFENSE

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

hp 40 (4d6+24)

Fort +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, incorporeal, mental schism; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee incorporeal touch +5 (animus insinuation, DC 15)

Ranged rend psyche +5 touch (2d4 plus 1d6 Charisma damage, DC 15)

Special Attacks animus insinuation, corrupt intent, rend psyche

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +9) 8/day—elemental ray (1d6+2 cold)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 4th; concentration +9) 2nd (4/day)—*spectral hand*

1st (8/day)—*burning hands* (cold, DC 16), *chill touch* (DC 16), *color spray* (DC 16), *magic missile*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *flare* (DC 15), *ghost sound* (DC 15), *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *resistance*

Bloodline elemental (water)

TACTICS

During Combat Cythriel closes with the PCs to cast *burning hands* and use her incorporeal touch. If reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, she backs up and casts *spectral hand* to deliver her other touch spells.

Morale A white-hot ball of rage, Cythriel doesn't break off from combat. She fights until she is destroyed, spitting hateful curses all the while.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 21

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials

Skills Fly +16, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcana, planes) +6, Perception +16, Stealth +8, Use Magic Device +10; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Intimidate, +10 Perception, +2 Spellcraft to identify magic item properties

Languages Common, Elven

SQ bloodline arcana (change energy damage spells to cold), elven magic

KADRAZ

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male human skeletal champion fighter 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 252)

NE Medium undead

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +5 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 68 (8 HD; 2d8+6d10+22)

Fort +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7 (+2 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **DR** 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** cold, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +4 (1d4+1)

Ranged +1 longbow +15/+10 (1d8+4/+3)

Special Attacks weapon training (bows +1)

TACTICS

During Combat Kadraz stays near the rear of the chamber and chooses a lightly armored target, preferably a spellcaster. He fires as many arrows at that PC as possible, hoping to kill that PC before choosing another target.

Morale Kadraz tries to flee out of the crypt's entrance if reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, not remembering that

if the loci spirit is still blocking the cemetery entrance, he won't get far.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 21, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 24

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Dazzling Display, Improved Initiative, Manyshot, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialization (longbow)

Skills Climb +13, Intimidate +12, Perception +13, Stealth +10

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1

Gear mwk studded leather, +1 longbow with 60 arrows, 90 gp

TRONDUS CR 5

XP 1,600

Male dwarf zombie lord monk 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 286)

LE Medium undead

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +3 (+5 to notice unusual stonework)

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 19, flat-footed 17 (+1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 monk, +2 natural, +3 Wis)

hp 47 (7d8+12)

Fort +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +10; +2 vs. spells and spell-like abilities

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, defensive training, evasion; **DR** 5/slashing; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +7 (1d8+3) or unarmed strike flurry of blows +7/+7/+2 (1d8+3) or slam +7 (1d6+4)

Special Attacks flurry of blows, hatred, stunning fist (5/day, DC 16)

TACTICS

During Combat Trondus steps up to the largest PC and uses flurry of blows.

Morale Looking to test his skills against worthy opponents, Trondus fights until he is destroyed.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 26 (30 vs. bull rush, 30 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Unarmed Strike, Nimble Moves, Power Attack, Step Up, Stunning Fist, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +13 (+18 when jumping), Appraise +0 (+2 to assess nonmagical metals or gemstones), Climb +13, Intimidate +10, Perception +3 (+5 to notice unusual



Trondus

stonework), Stealth +13; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Appraise to assess nonmagical metals or gemstones, +2 Perception to notice unusual stonework

Languages Common, Dwarven

SQ fast movement, high jump, ki pool (5 points, magic), maneuver training, slow fall 20 ft.

Gear ring of protection +1

J3. Dusty Font

A small basin, filled nearly to the brim with dust, protrudes from the southern wall below a few smudges of faded paint. A narrow stone door leads north.

This room doesn't appear to hold very much, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check or who deliberately searches the thick layer of dust in the font discovers a stone tile several inches across. The tile bears a carving of a stylized pair of feathery

wings. The PCs may remember a floor tile puzzle in Roslar's Tomb in "The Dead Roads," and this tile looks like one of the floor tiles from that puzzle. This is one of three tiles needed to open the secret door in area J2o.

Treasure: In addition to the tile, a PC who succeeds at the Perception check or searches the dust in the basin finds a *pearl of power* (2nd level).

J4. Landing

Several wires hang loosely from the ceiling, and the remains of a broken stone bench are heaped against the western wall. A door exits to the south and a set of filthy stairs leads down to the east.

The PCs may recall that the wires hanging in this landing held pieces of a gorgon's hide in the Boneyard version of this tomb. Here, that particular decoration was never actually completed before the truth of Roslar's actions came to light, so the wires don't contain anything but spider webs.

The door to the south leads to the grand hall (area J2) and the stairs descend to the weapon murals room (area J5).

J5. Weapon Murals (CR 8)

Discolored paintings along the northern wall depict a few types of weapons, including several rapiers and lances. Indentations in the wall hold plaques under each illustration, but the plaques are all blank. A short hallway to the east

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leads to a set of stairs going up, and a rough passage in the stone leads west. The south wall contains the frame for a doorway, but it is blocked with solid stone.

Years ago, an explorer sealed the opening that once led south with *wall of stone* to escape pursuing creatures; it is now as solid as any other wall in the tomb. However, this isn't the only other passage leading out of this chamber; the ceiling collapse that separated area J7 from area J20 opened a passage here that wasn't part of the tomb's original design. This particular tunnel is about 5 feet tall and lined with chunks of crumbled stone. Although it may seem unstable due to its uneven appearance, the passage is stable enough to pass through.

The crumbled stone passage leads to the display room (area J6) and the stairs in the hallway to the east lead back up to the landing (area J4).

Creature: The fallout from the *Radiant Fire* blast produced a wide variety of undead, including some very unusual creatures. Before the cataclysm, a human-sized predatory insect known as a xenopterid laired near the tomb. It ducked into a patch of mushrooms to avoid the blast, but the mushrooms had already been mutated to produce necromantic spores. The fungus quickly overwhelmed the xenopterid and animated it as a spore zombie. As with many undead in the cemetery, the spore zombie took refuge in the tomb to avoid the loci spirit.

The xenopterid spore zombie crouches in the southwestern corner of this room, draped in a tattered cloak and making noises that sound like desperate sobbing. A PC must succeed at a Perception check opposed by the zombie's Disguise check to realize it isn't a humanoid. It doesn't respond to prompting, other than to make a weak "come closer" gesture with a limb that looks surprisingly like a human hand in a tattered glove. If a creature gets within 5 feet, the zombie uses its spore burst

ability and attacks; otherwise, it waits to strike until the PCs attack it or leave the room.

XENOPTERID SPORE ZOMBIE

CR 8

XP 4,800

Xenopterid spore zombie (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 283, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6* 287)

CE Medium undead (augmented vermin)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., lifestense; Perception +21

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural)

hp 123 (13d8+65)

Fort +10, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities ferocity; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft., fly 20 ft. (clumsy)

Melee bite +16 (1d6+7 plus poison), 2 claws +16 (1d8+7/19–20 plus grab)

Special Attacks blood drain (1d2 Con), poison, spore burst (DC 20)

TACTICS

During Combat After using its spore burst ability, the xenopterid spore zombie bites and claws at the nearest PC it can reach. The zombie attempts to grapple that PC and use its blood drain ability. It drags a grappled PC into a corner if it can, to protect itself from attacks from other PCs while it feeds.

Morale The bloodthirsty zombie fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +16 (+20 grapple); **CMD** 30 (38 vs. trip)

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Toughness⁹

Skills Acrobatics +3 (+7 when jumping), Climb +31, Disguise +28 (+36 when disguised as a humanoid), Fly –5, Perception +21, Sense Motive +3, Stealth +27; **Racial**

Modifiers +8 Disguise (+16 when disguised as a humanoid), +8 Stealth

Languages Abyssal (can't speak)
SQ entangling slime

Xenopterid Spore Zombie



J6. Display Room

Empty shelves and display cases line the walls of this room. A tunnel opens in the wall to the east and a stone door leads south.

Designed to display the medals and other awards given to Roslar during his life, this chamber held only a few trophies, and most of those were stolen or destroyed. The shelves are covered with dust and many of the cases are broken.

The tunnel winds back to the weapon display room (area J5) and the door opens into the crumbled chamber (area J7).

Treasure: While many of the shelves are empty, a single statuette sits on the highest shelf, its sheen barely noticeable through a thick coating of grime. This *figurine of wondrous power* (bronze griffon) functions normally once it is cleaned off a bit.

J7. Crumbled Chamber (CR 6)

The eastern half of this large hall has collapsed, creating an impassable heap of stone and masonry. Water drips slowly from several cracks in the cavernous ceiling, forming small pools on the floor. The air here is dank, and patches of mold grow on bas-relief carvings of armored knights on the western wall. Identical stone doors lead north and south.

What used to be a long hall dedicated to Roslar's unhealthy obsession with Arazni has been bisected by a large collapse. It would take several dozen hours of backbreaking work to remove enough of the rubble to be able to slip through to the other half of the hall, and these efforts might cause another collapse, at the GM's discretion (see page 415 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*). A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) check realizes the amount of labor needed and recognizes that it could be dangerous to attempt it. The seepage here originates from groundwater entering the chamber through cracks in the ceiling where the collapse occurred.

The north door leads to the display room (area J6). The south door leads to the family gallery (area J8).

Creatures: In addition to undead, the *Radiant Fire* blast attracted several other monstrosities. Three vampiric mists trickled into this chamber through tiny gaps left by the collapse, but they can't figure out how to get out again. They currently lurk in cracks in the damaged ceiling. Although they prefer to wait until unsuspecting prey is exiting the room, attacking from behind with surprise,

they can't contain their hunger and immediately descend if an injured creature enters the room. The vampiric mists fight until destroyed.



Scattered Tiles

VAMPIRIC MISTS (3) CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 30 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 277)

J8. Family Gallery

Four narrow stone pillars stand against the western wall here. One holds a marble bust of a haughty human woman, while the others are surrounded by dozens of large chunks of broken statuary. A set of stone stairs descends to the east, while a simple stone door exits to the north.

This chamber used to hold busts of Ervin Roslar and his immediate family, but three of them have been smashed. The only one that remains is of Roslar's mother, Emmillisa. Tarnished metal plaques at the top of each pillar once stated the names of the Roslar family, but they have long since been scratched out. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (nobility) check recognizes the subject of the intact bust; a PC who examined these busts in "The Dead Roads" gains a +4 circumstance bonus on this check.

A PC who pokes through the marble chunks finds a stone tile several inches across with a stylized heart carved into one side. Like the tile in area J3, this tile looks like a piece from the floor puzzle in Roslar's Tomb in the Boneyard. This is one of three tiles needed to open the secret door in area J20.

The door to the north leads to the crumbled chamber (area J7) and the stairs descend to the room with several defaced carvings (area J9).

J9. Defaced Carving

This rectangular room lies at the bottom of a staircase to the west and at the end of hallway that leads northwest. The south wall hosts the remnants of an elaborate carving, much of which has been chipped away. The only parts still discernable are an arm holding a thin sword, and a metal boot. In addition, a few words above the image read, "... the Red Crusader," but what comes before is unreadable.

This carving once depicted Ervin Roslar kissing the hand of an angelic Arazni; it was indicative of the knight's obsession with the herald of Aroden. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (religion) check recognizes the title of "Red Crusader" as being

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attributed to Arazni before she was killed, stolen away, and turned into a lich to become the de facto ruler of the nation of Geb.

The staircase leads up to the family gallery (area J8), and the hallway passes the south alcove (area J10) before reaching the blocked chamber (area J11).

J10. South Alcove

A small alcove in the western wall interrupts this hallway as it runs from northwest to southeast. Several stone shelves line the walls of the nook, holding moldering sacks and boxes.

This alcove was used to store cleaning supplies, such as brushes, rags, and buckets, but they have all disintegrated over the many years. Only a strange, lingering odor of cleaning supplies hints at the alcove's former contents.

The hallway extends south to the room with the defaced carving (area J9) and north to the vibrant carving (area J11).

J11. Vibrant Carving (CR 8)

Two corridors lead out of this marble-walled chamber to the north and south. A colorful image of an armored knight riding a horse into battle against a throng of undead creatures is carved into the eastern wall. Time has not affected this bas-relief, which looks as vibrant as the day it was made. A massive pile of rubble blocks off the remainder of the chamber to the west.

This area is another large hall that has been cut in half by a collapsed ceiling. As with the collapse in area J7, a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) check can tell that attempting to remove any of the rubble would require a great deal of work and could cause the rest of the ceiling to collapse.

The image of Roslar on the eastern wall should be quite familiar to the PCs by this point, but if necessary, a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (nobility) check recognizes the subject of the bas-relief. This particular image has been spared the ravages of time thanks to a minor enchantment placed on it by a wizard hired by the tomb's builders. It was one of the first murals created in the crypt; the other carvings were supposed to receive the same enchantment, but when Roslar was disgraced, the architects didn't have the wizard return.

The corridors from this room lead south to the room with the defaced carving (area J9) and north to the burial recesses (area J13).

Creature: A guecubu hides in the pile of rubble. Risen from the remains of a condemned criminal,

the creature has been in this chamber for only a short time. It has no interest in the vibrant carving except as a potential distraction to prey; it plans to slip silently out of the rubble and take the PCs by surprise while they are examining the carving. The guecubu first casts *transmute rock to mud* on the ground where the PCs are standing and then approaches as many PCs as possible before using its Whirlwind Attack feat. The guecubu fights ferociously until it is destroyed.

GUECUBU

CR 8

XP 4,800

hp 104 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 145)

J12. North Alcove

Broken stone shelves and half-open cabinets line the walls of a small alcove in the western wall. The hallway here runs southwest to northeast.

This area was designed to store dozens of candles and candelabras that could be placed around the tomb. It was never fully stocked before the truth of Roslar's betrayal came to light, so there is very little here.

Treasure: Though most of the cabinets are empty, one holds a shiny golden candle and a small rectangular block of incense that smells of jasmine. These items are a *candle of truth* and a brick of *incense of meditation*, respectively.

J13. Burial Recesses

Niches line the northern and eastern walls of this chamber, empty save for a few ancient rags and a discarded boot. Hallways exit the chamber to the west and the southwest.

The room was intended to be the final resting place of the tomb's builders, but when Roslar fell from grace, many of those workers declined the "honor." Many died in obscurity elsewhere in Lastwall, not wanting their names connected with the paladin's tarnished legacy. The leather boot in one of the recesses appears to be dozens of years old and is sized for a child or a Small humanoid.

The corridor to the south leads to the vibrant carving (area J11), while the west corridor leads to the sarcophagus nooks (area J14).

Treasure: The discarded boot has a dark-blue gem stuffed down in the toe; this is a *dark blue rhomboid ioun stone* with a tiny letter "W" carved on it.

J14. Sarcophagus Nooks (CR 8)

Half a dozen alcoves run along the northern wall here; stone sarcophagi occupy the two furthest alcoves to the west. Faint

carvings of humanoid figures can be seen within each alcove. A corridor exits to the east, and part of the southern wall has collapsed to reveal a passage to another chamber.

Roslar had many heroic allies during the Shining Crusade, but few were as loyal to him as the Red Shrikes, the group that was briefly interred here after the tomb was built. They perished before the end of the crusade and their names have been lost to time, as many of their surviving families had their bodies moved from the tomb after Roslar's misdeeds came to light. Only two simple stone sarcophagi remain. The PCs can open the heavy lid (hardness 8, hp 40) of a sarcophagus with a successful DC 13 Strength check.

The PCs might recognize these sarcophagi as the place where they awakened in the Boneyard at the beginning of "The Dead Roads." The carvings are faint but, if you want to enhance the eerie resonance of this tomb, they bear faint similarities to the PCs' likenesses.

The corridor to the east leads to the burial recesses (area J13), while the collapsed passage south leads to the servants' crypts (area J15).

Trap: The western sarcophagus was rigged with a magical trap to deter looters. When the sarcophagus is opened, the trap unleashes a burst of sonic energy that sounds like a blood-curdling scream. When it is set off, the venedaemons in area J15 are alerted to the presence of intruders in the tomb.

SCREAMING SARCOPHAGUS TRAP CR 8

XP 4,800

Type magic; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger touch (opening the sarcophagus); **Reset** none

Effect explosion of sound (7d8 sonic damage and deafened for 1d4 hours, Fortitude DC 18 for half damage and negate deafness); multiple targets (all targets within 20 feet)

Treasure: The eastern sarcophagus contains a few old bones, tattered burial wraps, a rusty bastard sword, and a +1 *bashing heavy steel shield*. The remains in the western sarcophagus are in slightly better condition. The PCs find a fully charged *staff of courage*^{UE} lying next to the mummified corpse of a human man.

J15. Servants' Crypts (CR 7)

Several thick stone slabs, each with metal-tipped corners, ring the edges of this room at several elevations. Rubble

and pieces of bone are scattered across the uneven floor. An archway exits to the south, and a gaping hole in the northern wall behind the fragments of a broken slab opens into another chamber.

More than a few of Roslar's loyal retainers, squires, and servants were laid to rest here, each on a slab carved with the person's name and position, but time and erosion have rendered the names illegible. A few decades ago,



Venedaemon

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part of the northern wall collapsed, spilling a few of these servants' remains onto the floor.

The hole in the north wall leads to the sarcophagus nooks (area J14), while the archway south leads to the marble hall (area J16).

Creatures: Drawn by the sheer amount of death caused by the *Radiant Fire*, a pair of venedaemons traveled to Roslar's Coffin. Not finding much of interest in the town above, the two teleported down into this tomb and have started searching through the corpses interred here. The hooded figures float near the ceiling, their many tentacles probing the skeletons of servants and squires. They are distracted and normally take a -4 penalty on their Perception checks to notice the PCs, but if they are aware the PCs are present (such as if the PCs set off the trap in area J14), they each attempt to summon a cacodaemon for defense. The venedaemons prefer to use their spells in a fight. If a venedaemon is reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, it uses *dimension door* to escape the tomb and eventually returns to Abaddon.

VENEDAEMONS (2)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 51 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 678)

J16. Marble Hall

The eastern section of this marble-walled hall is blocked off by several tons of stone. Parts of the polished floor have been gouged by falling rock near the collapse. Archways exit this chamber to the north, west, and south. Messages are carved into the stone above each archway, but only a few words are still readable.

The words "Peace for Years" are visible above the northern archway to the servants' crypts (area J15). The words "din at His Well" can still be seen above the western archway to the empty crypt (area J17). The phrase "Support Thy Master" remains above the southern archway to the stone stable (area J18). All the other writing that once adorned the archways is now illegible.

The western archway is narrower than the opening in the Boneyard version of Roslar's Tomb, which a PC can note with a successful DC 20 Perception check. This is the first sign that something unusual is occurring in area J17, and a PC who succeeds at this check—or who has the unusual discrepancy pointed out to him—gains a +4 circumstance bonus to spot the living walls lurking there.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) check can tell that attempting to remove any of the rubble blocking the eastern half of the chamber would require a great deal of work and could cause the rest of the ceiling to collapse.

J17. Empty Crypt (CR 6)

A large stone dais occupies the western end of this room, and the stone of the curved wall behind it has been carved to resemble hanging draperies. The dais is bare, save for a few pieces of stray rubble. An archway leads out to the east.

This space was reserved for Roslar's sarcophagus. It was to be a place of honor, visited by those who adored his tales and longed to pay homage to the dead hero. However, shortly before the paladin's body was to be interred here, the terrible facts of the final years of his life and his role in the defeat of the Shining Crusade surfaced, and Roslar was buried in a pauper's grave elsewhere in Lastwall. This chamber has therefore always been empty.

A PC who picks through the rubble on the dais easily finds a stone tile several inches across. The image of a thin blade, similar to a rapier, is carved into one side of the tile. This is another floor tile puzzle piece and is one of three tiles needed to open the secret door in area J20.

Creatures: Animated by the fallout from the *Radiant Fire*, a pair of living walls stands in the northeast and northwest corners of the room. These constructs disguise the flesh and bones that make up their bodies by using slabs of stone to form an external shell. To the PCs, they appear to be crumbling walls, but bits of bone protrude from within the creatures's interiors, and flesh is visible between the stones that make up their skin. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check realizes the thick walls are in fact creatures. The living walls attempt to crush any PC approaching the dais, then fight until destroyed.

LIVING WALLS (2)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

hp 46 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 182)

J18. Stone Stable

This unusual room is decorated to look like a stable, with the image of a large window overlooking a grassy meadow carved into the eastern wall. Another carving along the southern wall depicts most of a sturdy horse, though the beast's head has been chipped away. A message above the carving reads "No Greater Friend," but the rest of the words are missing. An archway exits to the north, and a gaping hole in the ceiling appears to open onto another chamber.

During the Shining Crusade, Roslar lost his favorite horse—a swift, lean stallion named Abdell—in a fierce battle with Tar-Baphon's undead. Despondent over his mount's death, the paladin had the horse's remains cremated, and Roslar kept the ashes near his side for several more years before he perished. The architects of

the tomb knew of Roslar's adoration for his horse, and so they constructed this mausoleum specifically for the animal. Abdell's ashes weren't ever here and have since been lost.

The archway to the north leads into the marble hall (area **J16**). The hole in the ceiling leads up 15 feet into the chamber of sigils (area **J19**). A PC can climb the stone walls in the southwest corner of this room with a successful DC 15 Climb check; climbing through the hole is the only way to reach area **J19**.

J19. Chamber of Sigils (CR 7)

Unusual circular sigils are carved into the walls of this chamber. A four-foot-high pillar lies toppled in the center of the room, cracked into several pieces. Near the fallen pillar is a human skeleton. A small stone door exits to the north, and there is a large hole in the floor.

An eerie trophy of Roslar's conquests was once stored here on the stone pedestal: a small black crystal that contained a malicious spectre. The crystal is long gone, likely stolen by looters shortly after the tomb was abandoned. A PC who examines the carvings and succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check recognizes the sigils as intended to strengthen binding rituals performed in this space; they do nothing on their own.

The stone door leads to the altar room (area **J20**). The hole in the floor drops 15 feet to the stone stable (area **J18**).

Creature: Several rot grubs infesting the corpses in the cemetery above were granted surprising fecundity from the *Radiant Fire*. Hundreds of their offspring have squirmed their way into the tomb through dozens of tiny cracks. Though this swarm has already feasted on the rotting flesh of a zombie that recently arose in this room, leaving behind only its skeleton, it still hungers for fresh meat. The swarm attacks the first creature that climbs up out of the hole and fights until it is destroyed.

ROT GRUB SWARM

CR 7

XP 3,200

hp 85 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 215)

J20. Bare Altar

The ceiling of this chamber is cracked and crumbling, explaining the massive amount of rubble that blocks the western portion of the room. A single stone door exits to the south. A marble altar, marked with the symbol of a fiery winged sword, is set a few feet from the eastern wall. The floor to the immediate west of the altar is divided into a three-by-three grid of tiles, though many of these tiles are broken and a few appear to be missing.

This altar demonstrates Roslar's strange obsession with Arazni. The icon of a glowing winged sword was her holy symbol when she was Aroden's herald, a fact a PC recognizes with a successful DC 18 Knowledge (religion) check. The architects of the tomb included this altar (and other Araznite imagery found throughout the structure) at Roslar's behest.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (engineering) check can tell that attempting to remove any of the rubble blocking the western half of the chamber would require a great deal of work and could cause the ceiling to collapse (see page 415 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*).

The grid of tiles on the floor in front of the altar are part of a mechanism to open a secret door in the eastern wall. The PCs might remember this floor tile puzzle; in the Boneyard version of the tomb the PCs explored in "The Dead Roads," solving the puzzle opened a secret panel to a cache of treasure. In this tomb, the panel instead conceals the secret passage (area **J21**) to the Bastion of Light.

A PC who examines the tiles notices that three of the nine tiles are missing—the same three tiles that open the secret door. These tiles are located in areas **J3**, **J8**, and **J17** of the tomb; if the PCs didn't find all three during their exploration, they'll need to backtrack to collect them. Once the three missing tiles are placed in the grid's open spaces (the exact order doesn't matter), the secret door to the east unlocks and opens with a soft click.

Alternatively, a PC can discover the existence of the secret door with a successful DC 35 Perception check; PCs that opened the cache in "The Dead Roads" gain no bonus on this check, as the secret door's configuration is different in this tomb. Once the secret door is found, a successful DC 30 Disable Device check is required to open the lock. If the PC's result exceeds 15 but doesn't open the lock, the PC learns that the mechanism for opening the door isn't located around the door's edge but is instead connected to the tile grid. If the PCs would rather bash their way through, the secret door has hardness 8, 60 hit points, and a break DC 28.

Story Award: When the PCs discover the secret passage that leads to the Bastion of Light, award them 2,400 XP.

J21. Long Passage

This dusty, 5-foot-wide corridor clearly hasn't been used for decades. Thick cobwebs hang from the ceiling. The passage turns several times and has a few steps here and there, but it never branches. Made from reinforced stone, the well-built passage guides the PCs safely under the dome of poisonous fog created by the *fetoring maw*.

After just over half a mile, the tunnel ends at the back of an obvious secret stone door, which opens with a slight push to reveal a small stone cellar. This is area **K1** in the Bastion of Light, deep within the deadly fog bank.

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PART 3: THE UNCLEAN LIGHT

Once a home to Sarenite priests and paladins, the Bastion of Light was constructed during the Shining Crusade. Many similar structures were erected during this time to protect the area that would become Lastwall from orc hordes and undead. Though the Bastion of Light was far from the northern front, it proved to be an important training ground for Sarenite crusaders, and it provided a supply point to reinforce embattled forward regions.

Far from the hotter climates where the Sarenite faith thrives, the priests of the Bastion of Light focused more on the deity's interests in healing and honesty than in the sun. In addition to swordplay, knights were given training in medicine, and the ability to channel positive energy was seen as Sarenrae's greatest blessing. Squires and acolytes were trained to never utter a falsehood—or even lie by omission—and were given hours of cleaning duty if they were ever caught doing so. The Bastion of Light also features a very large cathedral space, where services to Sarenrae were performed on a weekly basis. Citizens from the surrounding countryside were encouraged to attend and could expect free healing after the ceremony, if needed.

Unfortunately, all this preparation was ultimately for naught when the orcs of the Broken Nail tribe overran the Bastion of Light and the nearby town of Roslar's Coffer. The orcs slaughtered most of the cathedral's knights and priests. Those who survived helped refugees from the town escape the rampaging tribe. But despite the ferocity of their attack, the orcs didn't remain in the area for very long. Shortly after they moved on, a territorial simian beast called a red reaver took the cathedral as its lair. Over the next few years, as Roslar's Coffer was being repopulated, many attempts were made to oust the beast; fortunately for the returning citizens, the red reaver didn't range far from its lair in the Bastion of Light. Ultimately, a Pathfinder Society team seeking relics from the temple slew the creature. Relieved townspeople buried the red reaver's remains in a field behind the cathedral.

The church of Sarenrae had not yet committed a new contingent of priests and knights to the Bastion of Light when the *Radiant Fire* struck Roslar's Coffer. The Bastion of Light made a perfect staging ground for the cultists of the Whispering Way who arrived to study the blast. They raised the red reaver as a zombie guardian, established necromantic labs within the building's side rooms, and used the *fetoring maw* to erect the dome of poisonous fog around the city. The Bastion of Light stands inside the

toxic cloud, and its sturdy walls protect the inhabitants from the miasma's ill effects (even though many of them are immune to it, either by virtue of being undead or after being branded by the *fetoring maw*). The dhampir Valthazar Quietus leads this cell of the Whispering Way, along with his second-in-command, the pukwudgie cleric Kalamuk. They occupy the upper floor of the cathedral, direct the necromancers in their experiments and investigations, and control the *fetoring maw*.

K. BASTION OF LIGHT GROUND FLOOR

The Bastion of Light was constructed primarily for defense. Its exterior walls are 5 feet thick, and its ground floor has no windows and only two entrances. Unless otherwise noted, ceilings on the ground floor are 20 feet high. The orc invaders and the red reaver demolished most of the original interior doors on the first floor during their occupation. After Pathfinders slew the red reaver, carpenters and masons began cleanup operations, but they did little more than clear out some of the rubble and hang temporary interior doors. These doors are strong wood (hardness 5, hp 20) but do not have locks. The two exterior doors are original and have been repaired: they are stone reinforced with iron bars (hardness 8, hp 60, break DC 30). Enchanted sconces in every room provide bright light throughout the ground floor, though the Whispering Way cultists have smashed a few of the sconces to reduce the light level to dim or normal light, where indicated.

K1. Cellar Stairwell

This wide spiral staircase leads down to a landing 15 feet below ground level. This cellar area was used to store provisions that had to be kept cool and dry. The cellar is empty and the Whispering Way cultists have therefore ignored it. However, it conceals the secret passage to Roslar's Tomb. A PC must succeed at a DC 35 Perception check to find the secret door from the cellar side. This makes the passage a good place for the PCs to hide out and rest, as the Whispering Way cultists are unlikely to find the passage when the secret door is closed.

K2. Cathedral (CR 9)

The ceiling in this wide chamber is supported by two rows of sturdy stone pillars and slopes downward from the south to the north. A sun depicted over the large stone double door to the south emits rays along the ceiling to a raised wooden dais at the north end of the chamber. Many of the walls have been painted with murals made to resemble stained-glass windows, each depicting a different armored knight aiding the downtrodden and slaying foul undead in the service of Sarenrae. A few of these depictions have been grotesquely defaced, with skulls painted over the figure's heads and



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terrifying creatures swooping down from above. Rows of broken wooden pews occupy the center of the chamber, with many heaped into a jumble in the middle of the chamber, creating a large empty space. Simple wooden doors exit this room in every direction.

This large cathedral could easily seat over 100 people and was often crammed with twice that number during weekly services and special ceremonies. The ceiling in the southern half of the room rises to over 40 feet, sloping downward to a height of 20 feet above the altar. If the PCs don't already know it, a PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check realizes that this is a temple of Sarenrae.

The wooden dais at the north end of the room contains an altar and two wooden cabinets. These cabinets formerly contained priestly accoutrements (such as aspergillums and sticks of incense) for weekly services, but they were plundered long ago and are now empty.

The jumble of pews is difficult terrain, although anyone in the jumble has cover from attacks.

Creatures: When it was alive, the red reaver made its lair in this massive chamber. Although it pulled off and destroyed all the doors here (except for the large stone

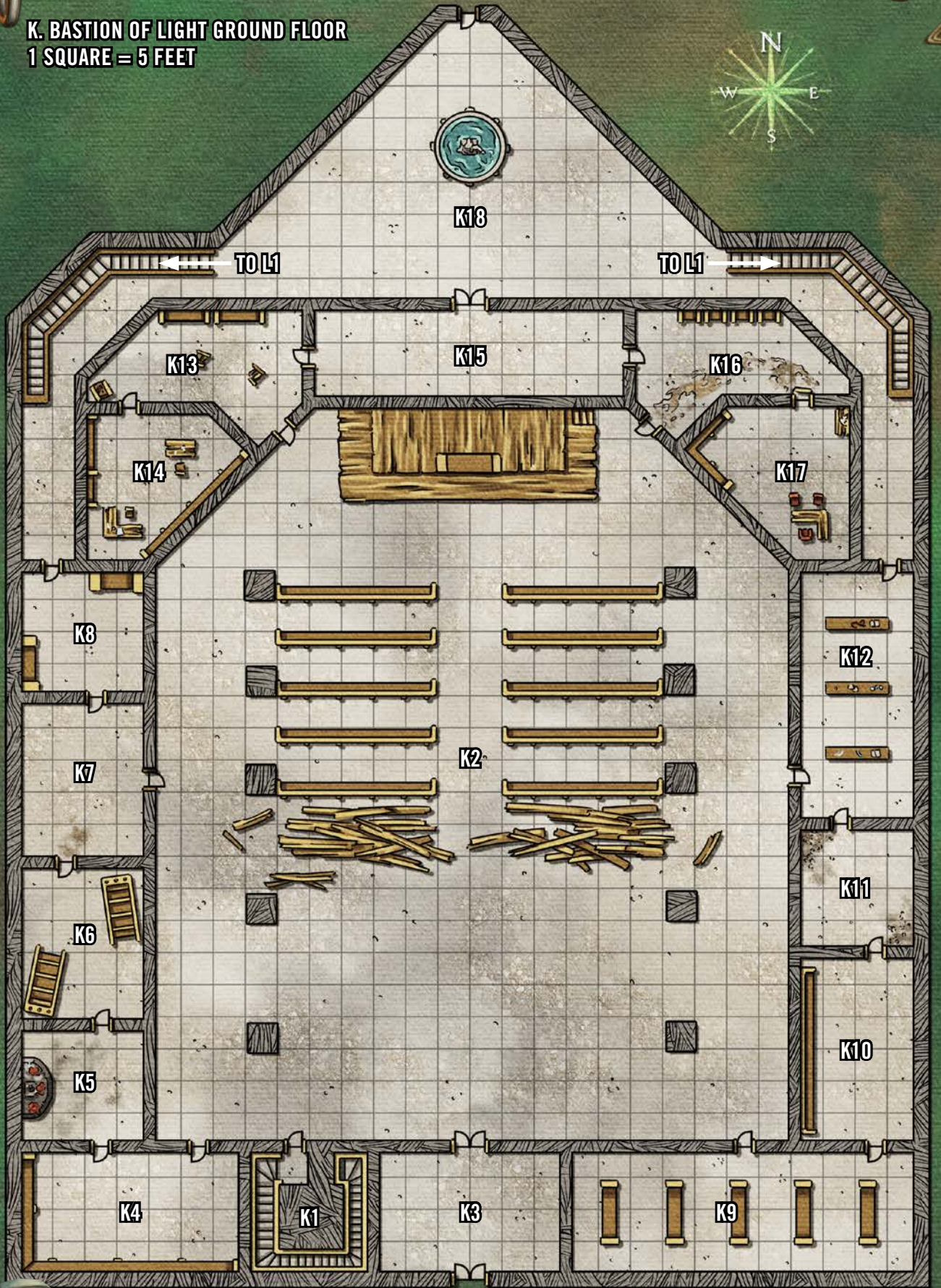
double door leading out of the cathedral, which was too heavy for it to destroy), it found squeezing into the adjoining chambers too difficult and therefore stayed primarily in this room. The newly arisen zombie red reaver—called a gray reaver—has an instinctual affinity for this chamber, and the Whispering Way cultists are content to leave it here. Three cultists were assigned to watch over the large zombie, but because they wasted their time defacing murals and playing dice on the dais, Chatar murdered one as an example and stationed a loyal wight to curtail further shirking. The wight is one of the researchers from area **K12**, and he resents being pulled away from his research there.

The cultists and the researcher remain vigilant, even though they don't expect any intruders. The gray reaver paces the room constantly and attacks any creatures that aren't undead or wearing Whispering Way robes.

If this group detects intruders, the cultists and the deathless researcher move into the jumble of pews to gain cover, then attack with thrown daggers or spells. The cultists won't flee as long as the researcher is standing; if the researcher is defeated, any surviving cultists head for the nearest door and make their way upstairs to warn their leaders.



K. BASTION OF LIGHT GROUND FLOOR
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



WHISPERING WAY CULTISTS (2)**CR 3****XP 800 each****hp** 32 each (see page 78)**DEATHLESS RESEARCHER****CR 6****XP 2,400**Wight sorcerer 5 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 276)

LE Medium undead

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *deathwatch*; Perception +12**DEFENSE****AC** 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +4 natural)**hp** 95 (9 HD; 5d6+4d8+60)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +3, **Will** +10**Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 5**Weaknesses** resurrection vulnerability**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** slam +8 (1d4+3 plus energy drain)**Special Attacks** create spawn, energy drain (1 level, DC 17)**Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5th; concentration +10)
8/day—grave touch (2 rounds)**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 5th; concentration +10)2nd (5/day)—*false life*, *spectral hand*, *touch of idiocy*1st (8/day)—*chill touch* (DC 16), *ear-piercing scream*^{UM}(DC 16), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *protection from good*0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *bleed* (DC 15), *dancing lights*, *daze*(DC 15), *detect magic*, *disrupt undead***Bloodline** undead**TACTICS****Before Combat** A deathless researcher casts *mage armor* and *false life*.**During Combat** A deathless researcher takes cover and attacks from a distance with spells such as *spectral hand*, *touch of idiocy*, or *magic missile*. If pressed into melee, a researcher resorts to slam attacks. As the researchers are academically curious about the potency of the traps and undead experiments elsewhere within the Bastion of Light, a researcher attempts to injure or debilitate as many PCs as possible rather than eliminate the PCs one at a time.**Morale** A deathless researcher fights until destroyed. If the PCs flee into another part of the Bastion of Light, a researcher doesn't pursue, but waits to see whether the other dangers in the cathedral overwhelm the PCs.**Base Statistics** Without *mage armor* and *false life*, the deathless researcher's statistics are **AC** 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; **hp** 85.**STATISTICS****Str** 14, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 15, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 20**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18**Feats** Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (slam)**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Craft (leather) +9, Heal +8, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (religion) +14, Perception +12, Stealth +16; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth**Languages** Aklo, Common, Necril**SQ** bloodline arcana (corporeal undead affected by humanoid-affecting spells)**Combat Gear** brooch of shielding, *potion of inflict serious wounds*; **Other Gear** *deathwatch eyes*^{UE}**Deathless Researcher****EULOGY FOR ROSLAR'S COFFER**Part 1:
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Machinations of the Whispering Way

Bestiary

GRAY REAVER**CR 6****XP 2,400**Red reaver zombie (*Pathfinder Adventure Path: Curse of the Crimson Throne* 476, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 288)

NE Large undead

Init -3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0**DEFENSE****AC** 9, touch 6, flat-footed 9 (-3 Dex, +3 natural, -1 size)**hp** 99 (18d8+18)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +3, **Will** +11**DR** 5/slashing; **Immune** undead traits**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft., fly 20 ft. (clumsy)**Melee** bite +22 (2d6+10), 2 claws +22 (1d8+10) or slam +22 (1d8+15)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**TACTICS**

During Combat The gray reaver rushes into melee with the largest opponent. It generally ignores opponents among the pews, as it doesn't like the uneven footing there, although it wades into the jumble of pews if there are no other targets in easier-to-reach areas.

Morale The gray reaver fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS**Str** 30, **Dex** 4, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +24; **CMD** 31**Feats** Toughness⁸**Skills** Fly -13**Languages** Giant (cannot speak)**SQ** staggered**K3. Vestibule**

Two tapestries hang on the western and eastern walls of this rectangular chamber, both shredded into long strips. They appear to have once depicted the same angelic winged figure with the sun behind her head. Two stone double doors open out of this chamber, one to the north and another to the south. A slate has been hung on the northern wall just to the west of the doors; a skull with a gag in its mouth has been drawn on it.

Two tapestries depicting the Dawnflower once greeted visitors and congregants in this vestibule to the Bastion of Light. The slate by the northern double door was intended to promote community events and upcoming celebrations, but the Whispering Way has drawn their symbol on it, as if their presence in the building wasn't obvious enough.

The northern door opens into the cathedral (area **K2**). The south door opens directly onto the roiling miasma that surrounds Roslar's Coffin. A thin membrane of magic keeps the poison from seeping into the building, but

anyone stepping outside the Bastion of Light is subject to its effects; information about the dome of poisonous fog appears on page 5.

K4. Community Room

A long, low bookshelf runs along the western and southern walls of this room. The shelf is currently empty save for a few scraps of burnt paper. The center of the stone floor bears the scorch marks of an old bonfire. Two wooden doors stand in the northern wall.

The priests of the temple allowed members of the community to use this room for various purposes: sewing circles, children's parties, and game nights for those who didn't want to gather in a tavern. The bookshelf once held dozens of texts about the Sarenite faith written for laypeople as well as popular works of wholesome fiction and poetry that the community could borrow and read as they pleased. The orcs took all of those books, not to mention the tables and chairs that were once here, and burned them up in a large indoor bonfire. The scorch marks on the floor are all that remain.

One of the doors in the north wall leads to the cathedral (area **K2**). The other leads to the private shrine (area **K5**).

K5. Private Shrine (CR 9)

A stone dais against the western wall holds a small shrine featuring a carved pair of hands clasped together in prayer in front of a blazing sun. Several dried puddles of wax decorate the dais, with red gemstones scattered among the puddles. The floor in front of the shrine is scarred with charred markings. Doors exit to the north and south.

This area was used by those who wished to worship privately and in peace, usually lighting prayer candles for the sick and unfortunate members of their families. The orcs that came to occupy this room left it alone after one of them saw the carving of the sun flare when she stepped close. The effect was only a coincidental reflection, but the orcs assumed the shrine was trapped and didn't disturb it. The charred markings read "Trap!" in Orc and are obviously quite old.

The door to the south leads to the community room (area **K4**), while the north door leads to the south storage room (area **K6**). A broken sign next to the door to the north reads "SUPPL."

Trap: The Whispering Way agents were surprised to find a relatively intact shrine and, knowing that the faithful were likely to return here at some point in the future, set a deadly trap. They also placed a small pile of gems on the shrine to entice any would-be victims

(see Treasure below). The cultists didn't realize what the markings in front of the shrine were, and therefore unknowingly gave truth to the warning in Orc. If the shrine is touched, a billowing cloud of poisonous vapors issues forth. These vapors strongly resemble the deadly fog surrounding the Bastion of Light, as the cultists used a portion of the *fetoring maw's* magic to create this trap.

CLOUDKILL TRAP

CR 9

XP 6,400

Type magic; Perception DC 33; Disable Device DC 33

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset none

Effect spell effect (heightened *cloudkill*, Fortitude DC 22 partial); multiple targets (all targets within area K5)

Treasure: Ten small red rubies rest on the shrine, each worth 75 gp.

K6. South Storage (CR 7)

A thin layer of dirt covers the floor here, giving this room a musty, earthy smell. Square wooden cabinets lie on their backs atop the dirt in the northeast and southwest corners. Doors lead out of this room to the north and south.

This storage area once held furniture (such as tables and chairs) for the other rooms in the Bastion of Light when extra seating was needed. Most of that furniture was destroyed by orcs, while the Whispering Way cultists repurposed the rest. The door to the north leads to a bare room (area K7), while the door to the south leads to the private shrine (area K5).

Creatures: As part of their experimentation on the corpses of the citizens of Roslar's Coffin, the Whispering Way necromancers wanted to find out whether the undead guardians known as crypt things could be tied to a location other than an actual crypt. Here, they created two crypt things from the dead of Roslar's Coffin and brought several wheelbarrows full of dirt from the small graveyard behind the cathedral. The cultists pushed the tall cabinets over on their sides, laying the crypt things within as though they were coffins.

The Whispering Way's experiment worked, after a fashion; the crypt things consider this room to be their domain, and they don't let living creatures pass through. They lurk inside the cabinets, listening carefully for movement in the room. If they detect intruders, they use *dimension door* to emerge from their cabinets and attack. For the purpose of the crypt thing's teleporting burst power, the fog bank outside the Bastion of Light isn't considered "open space;" therefore, any creature teleported by this ability appears somewhere else on the

ground floor of the Bastion of Light. You can determine a random location by rolling 1d20 and placing the creature in the corresponding room (1 for area K1, 2 for area K2, 3 for area K3, and so on, with a roll of 19 or 20 also indicating area K2). Note that the crypt things aren't immune to each other's teleporting burst power, although a crypt thing that's teleported away returns as soon as possible using *dimension door*. The crypt things fight until destroyed or until no more intruders remain in this room.

CRYPT THINGS (2)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 52 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 60)

K7. Bare Chamber

This rectangular room is devoid of any furnishings or decorations, but the stone floor, walls, and ceiling have been recently scrubbed clean except for a small smear of dirt on the floor in front of the southern door. Other doors exit to the north and east.

This area was used mainly as a passageway between the main cathedral and the storage rooms to the north and south. However, during important ceremonies (such as weddings), participants sometimes waited in this room until the guests arrived and took their seats. The north and south doors lead to storage rooms, while the east door leads to the main cathedral (area K2).

The necromancers of the Whispering Way cleaned this room, thinking they would use it to conduct magical experiments, but they quickly realized other rooms in the cathedral offered more space and less traffic. The dirt on the floor is left over from the mounds of earth hauled into the south storage room for the crypt things there.

K8. North Storage

Two large cabinets stand against the western and eastern walls in opposite corners of this room. Doors exit to the north and south.

The cabinets here held dozens of prayer candles for the private shrine (area K5), as well as cleaning supplies for the rest of the cathedral. The cabinets are empty now, except for a rag-filled bucket in the eastern cabinet.

The south door leads to a bare room (area K7) while the north door leads to a hallway containing stairs to the upper floor.

Treasure: What appears to be a black rag stuffed into a rusty iron bucket is actually a silken cloak embroidered with a weblike pattern. A PC can discover this *cloak of arachnida* with a successful DC 20 Perception check.

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K9. Public Gallery (CR 8)

The door leading to this room from the cathedral (area K2) was shoddily mounted and is stuck closed. A PC can open it with a successful DC 18 Strength check. The door from the meditation room (area K10) opens normally.

Five display cases occupy the majority of this room, their glass fronts shattered and their contents missing. Several empty frames hang on the western and southern walls, their canvases either shredded or simply torn away. Two doors exit to the north.

This room was used to display Sarenite artwork (usually paintings of the goddess and her heralds), as well as trophies Sarenite paladins brought back from the Shining Crusade. Like much of the rest of the cathedral, this room was looted first by the orcs and again by cultists of the Whispering Way.

This room's occupant smashed several of the sconces in this room, casting the room into dim light. The doors to the north lead to the cathedral (area K2) and the meditation room (area K10).

Creature: The blast of the *Radiant Fire* killed Norreth Albo, a halfling priest of Sarenrae visiting Roslar's Coffin to speak with the residents about establishing a schedule for the Sarenites to reoccupy the Bastion of Light. The blast transformed Norreth into a bodak, and he was instinctively drawn back here. When the cultists of the Whispering Way discovered Norreth, they decided to leave him alone in this room, unofficially adopting him as a mascot of the undead transformation they hope to inflict on the entire world. Although Norreth doesn't consider himself allied with the Whispering Way, he lurks in the gallery, whispering foul blasphemies to himself. Norreth has a round face and a childlike appearance, although his tattered priestly garb and smoking eye sockets indicate his true nature.

If Norreth is aware of anyone attempting to enter this room—such as by forcing open the stuck door from the cathedral—he hides behind the display cases to ambush the intruders. His constant muttering

might give him away, however, as his whispering gives the PCs a +4 circumstance bonus on Perception checks to locate him.

NORRETH ALBO CR 8

XP 4,800

Male variant bodak (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 48)

CE Small undead (extraplanar)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural, +1 size)

hp 85 (10d8+40)

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

DR 10/cold iron; **Immune** electricity, undead traits; **Resist** acid 10, fire 10

Weaknesses vulnerability to sunlight

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee 2 slams +9 (1d8)

Special Attacks death gaze

TACTICS

During Combat If he's able to ambush a PC in this room, Norreth leaps out to strike with his slam. He thereafter relies on his death gaze, using it against any PC who looks like an obvious priest or who poses him the greatest danger.

Morale Norreth fights until he is destroyed, crying out a prayer of thanks to Sarenrae when he is sent to his final release.

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 6, **Wis** 13,

Cha 16

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 20

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Toughness, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Intimidate +11, Perception +14, Stealth +15

Languages Common

Gear *phylactery of the shepherd*^{UE}, scorched silver holy symbol of Sarenrae

Treasure: A PC can find a secret compartment in the base of one of the display cases with a successful DC 25 Perception check. Inside is a small ivory box with ruby inlay, worth 400 gp. The box



Norreth Albo

contains an exquisitely painted set of 34 3-inch-square portraits that function as a *deck of illusions* weighing 2 pounds. Each image has been lovingly crafted with oil paints and has bright and sunny backgrounds. Even the evil creatures depicted on these cards, such as the glabrezu and the lich, bear halos of light behind their heads, making them look saintly. The cards' corresponding illusions look similarly beatific. A worshipper of Sarenrae using this deck can draw two random cards, rather than one, and choose which to throw to the ground (the other returns to the deck).

K10. Meditation Room

A wide bench runs along the western wall of this room, facing a mural painted to look like a stained-glass window depicting a sunny landscape of rolling hills. Warmth and the smell of fresh wildflowers seem to emanate from the painting. Doors exit to the north and south.

The Sarenite priests believed that feelings of calmness and well-being were important parts of the healing process, and so constructed this chamber to aid those recuperating from illness. The mural on the eastern wall has a powerful enchantment that provides light, mild heat, and a pleasant smell. The mural slowly repairs any damage inflicted to it. Despite all their efforts, the orcs and cultists of the Whispering Way were unable to dispel this enchantment, and now they just avoid this room.

The door to the south leads to the gallery (area K9), while the door to the north leads to the office (area K11).

K11. Former Office

Refuse is piled in the corners of this simple chamber, which is otherwise empty. Doors exit to the north and south.

The healers of the Bastion of Light used this chamber to perform examinations and consultations with congregants who wished to speak in private. The furniture and medical texts that were in this room have long since been destroyed or moved elsewhere, and the Whispering Way has yet to find any use for this chamber.

The south door leads to the meditation room (area K10); the north door leads to the laboratory (area K12).

K12. Necromancy Laboratory (CR 9)

This room contains three long tables heaped with alchemical equipment, tattered tomes, and rotting body parts. The smell of decomposing flesh mixes with the pungent odors of various reagents to produce a nauseating atmosphere. Doors exit to the north, south, and west.

Formerly an infirmary used by the Bastion of Light's healers, the Whispering Way has reclaimed this space as a laboratory for necromancers studying the effects of the *Radiant Fire* on Roslar's Coffer. The three tables hold several alchemy labs' worth of equipment, as well as recipes for necromantic rituals and hunks of flesh brought in from the ruins of the city. Several pages of notes scattered around the room, written in Necril, detail how fallout from the *Radiant Fire* has corrupted the surrounding countryside and caused the spontaneous creation of various undead and undead-related creatures. Creatures that the PCs have already encountered, such as the zombie elk and the loci spirit in the cemetery, are described in these notes (and you can therefore use this opportunity to fill in the PCs on anything they may have missed regarding these creatures).

The notes are inconclusive about why the *Radiant Fire* had this effect, as the cultists don't know themselves, though the notes are clear that the effect is unprecedented. Unfortunately, they don't include any information about the source of the *Radiant Fire*, although a detailed examination of the notes gives the strong impression that the blast was deliberate, not accidental.

The researchers working here broke a couple of the sconces on the walls of this room to reduce the lighting to normal light. The door to the south opens into the empty office (area K11), the door to the west leads to the large cathedral (area K2), and the door to the north opens into the hall and stairway to the Bastion of Light's upper level.

Creatures: Three of the Whispering Way's undead researchers conduct the bulk of their experiments here. Chatar Esuri and her minions bring samples and subjects to this room for study, and many are thereafter relocated to other areas of the Bastion of Light for further study or to serve as guardians (as were, for example, the crypt things in area K6). If the researchers detect the sounds of battle elsewhere in the Bastion of Light, they don't interfere, but instead prepare for a fight and wait for intruders to come to them—they don't want to leave their ongoing experiments unattended.

DEATHLESS RESEARCHERS (3) **CR 6**
XP 2,400 each
hp 95 each (see page 31)

Treasure: A *robe of bones*^{UE} hangs on a hook on the northern wall. Valthazar Quietus gave it to the researchers so they could use the undead it contains as a source of necromantic parts, but the bounty Chatar has brought them means they haven't had to use it. The researchers have also argued about who gets the privilege of wearing it. With no consensus yet reached, the robe is left hanging on the wall, with all its original patches remaining.

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A small wooden chest contains 24 empty crystal vials worth 2 gp each. Although these vials aren't of particularly great value, the PCs might find them useful to collect holy water from the fountain in area **K18** in order to destroy the *fetoring maw*.

K13. West Vestry

Tattered priestly vestments hang in a series of wardrobe-sized cubicles on the northern wall of this room. Most of the floor space is occupied by several rumpled pallets. Scraps of food have been tossed into a wooden crate in the corner of the room, which buzzes with flies.

This space was used by the cathedral's priests to store their holy garments for routine services. Those clothes were destroyed by the orcs years ago. Chatar Esuri's minions relax here before or after their trips into town to collect information and samples. Because the cultists aren't here often, they don't bother to keep the area very clean or pick up their trash.

The door to the south is the only entrance to the scriptorium (area **K14**). The door to the southeast leads into the cathedral (area **K2**), and the door to the east leads into the back hall (area **K15**).

K14. Scriptorium Shelves for dozens of scrolls stand against the western and southeastern walls of this irregularly shaped room, but they are empty. Two sturdy wooden tables stand between them, each with a high-backed wooden chair. Each table holds several dry inkpots, broken quills, and torn scraps of vellum.

The acolytes of the Bastion of Light were assigned to copy important scrolls and books in this room, sometimes spending several weeks on a single project. All the inkpots are now empty, but it is clear they once held many different colors of inks. The scrolls and other texts were destroyed during the orc raid on the cathedral more than a decade ago.

The ghoulish inquisitor Chatar Esuri claimed this space as her personal chamber. Although she doesn't need to sleep and has little need for personal privacy, Chatar wanted to make clear to her living minions that she occupies a higher station and took particular joy insisting on her own room. Chatar would have preferred to take one of the actual sleeping chambers upstairs, but those were already taken by her superiors and Valthazar's favorites.

Although the shelves in the room contain none of their original scrolls, Chatar keeps a few religious supplies of her own on one of the shelves. This includes a large black velvet cloth wrapped around a blood-stained wooden plate and a copy of *Serving Your Hunger*, Urgathoa's horrid

holy text and cookbook. None of these accoutrements have any particular value.

Treasure: A PC searching the room and who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check notices a scroll that fell behind the northwestern shelf long ago. This is a *scroll of neutralize poison*.

K15. Back Hall

This long hallway has doors to the east and west, as well as a large double door in the northern wall. The walls are painted with murals of doves in flight, with an especially large dove illustrated above the double door, its eyes and beak recently smeared with red. Flakes of paint litter the floor where it seems like someone tried to scrape away the murals, but without much success.

The priests of the Bastion of Light used this passageway to enter the vestries from their rooms upstairs without having to pass through the cathedral. The images of Sarenrae's holy animal, the dove, were meant to remind the priests of their duty to peace. The Whispering Way cultists have attempted to deface these murals but gave up after it proved to be too much work, and instead just used actual blood to make the largest dove look sinister.

The double door leads to the befouled fountain (area **K18**) and the other doors lead to the vestries (areas **K13** and **K16**).

K16. East Vestry

This room has several open cubicles against the northern wall, but all bear deep gouges and scratches, and most of the interior partitions have been smashed to splinters. Smears of mud on the floor form a trail between the southwestern door and the door in the southern wall, which has a wooden bar hastily nailed across it. Another door exits to the west.

The Sarenite priests stored garments for special religious ceremonies in this room, similar to their use of the other vestry (area **K13**). The destruction of the wardrobe cubicles and the mud on the floor are recent and occurred when, at the request of the researchers, the cultists moved a dire bear they captured near the town into area **K17**. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception or Survival check notes that this damage is all very recent; if this result equals or exceeds a DC of 25, the PC notices a few splashes of dried blood mixed in with the mud and realizes there was some bloody violence that accompanied this destruction.

The west door leads to the back hall (area **K15**), while a trail leads from the door in the southwest (which opens into area **K2**, the cathedral), to the door in the south

(which leads to area **K17**, the sanctum). A PC who listens at the door to area **K17** can hear an unusual snuffling sound that can be recognized, with a successful DC 16 Knowledge (nature) check, as coming from some kind of wild animal. A PC whose result exceeds the DC by 5 or more can tell that it is a large animal, and probably some kind of bear.

K17. Sanctum (CR 8)

A wooden bar is nailed across this door from the north side, preventing it from opening from the inside without a successful DC 30 Strength check. The bar can be easily removed from the east vestry (area **K16**) with only a few moments of work.

A low, L-shaped bookcase occupies the western corner of this room, and a small end table next to the room's only door bears a broken clay sundial. An oaken desk occupies the southern portion of the chamber, with a high-backed chair behind it and two cushioned chairs in front. The desk is covered in claw marks and the stuffing has been ripped out of the cushioned chairs.

This private room was set aside as a place where congregants could speak privately with a Sarenite priest. The priests shared this desk and bookshelf, as the cathedral's deacon had a separate office upstairs. The broken sundial was a gift from fellow Sarenite priests who visited from Qadira over a decade ago. A maker's mark on the bottom of the sundial identifies it as having been purchased in Katheer's Great Market.

Creature: Several days ago, Chatar and her minions came across a dire bear mutated by the effects of the *Radiant Fire*. It was blundering about in the dome of fog, immune to the poison but not to the befuddling effect of the mist. Chatar figured Valthazar would want to study how the *Radiant Fire* affected creatures that survived the blast, so she charged into combat with the bear and soon paralyzed it. Her minions dragged it back to the cathedral and were hauling it through the east vestry when it shook off the paralysis and went berserk. The cultists forced it into this room and then nailed a thick board across the door. Valthazar hasn't yet gotten around to studying the animal.

The dire bear has grown increasingly hungry the past few days, gnawing at the furniture and occasionally throwing itself against the walls and door. When the PCs encounter the bear, it looks gaunt and its fur is coming off in large

patches. It attacks the PCs without a second thought, looking to devour them. A PC with wild empathy might be able to calm the aggressive beast, but only if someone first throws it something to eat.

MUTATED BEAR CR 8

XP 4,800

Mutant dire bear (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 180, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 31)

N Large aberration (augmented animal)

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 85 (10d8+40); fast healing 5

Fort +11, **Ref** +10, **Will** +6

Immune poison

Weaknesses spasms



Mutated Bear

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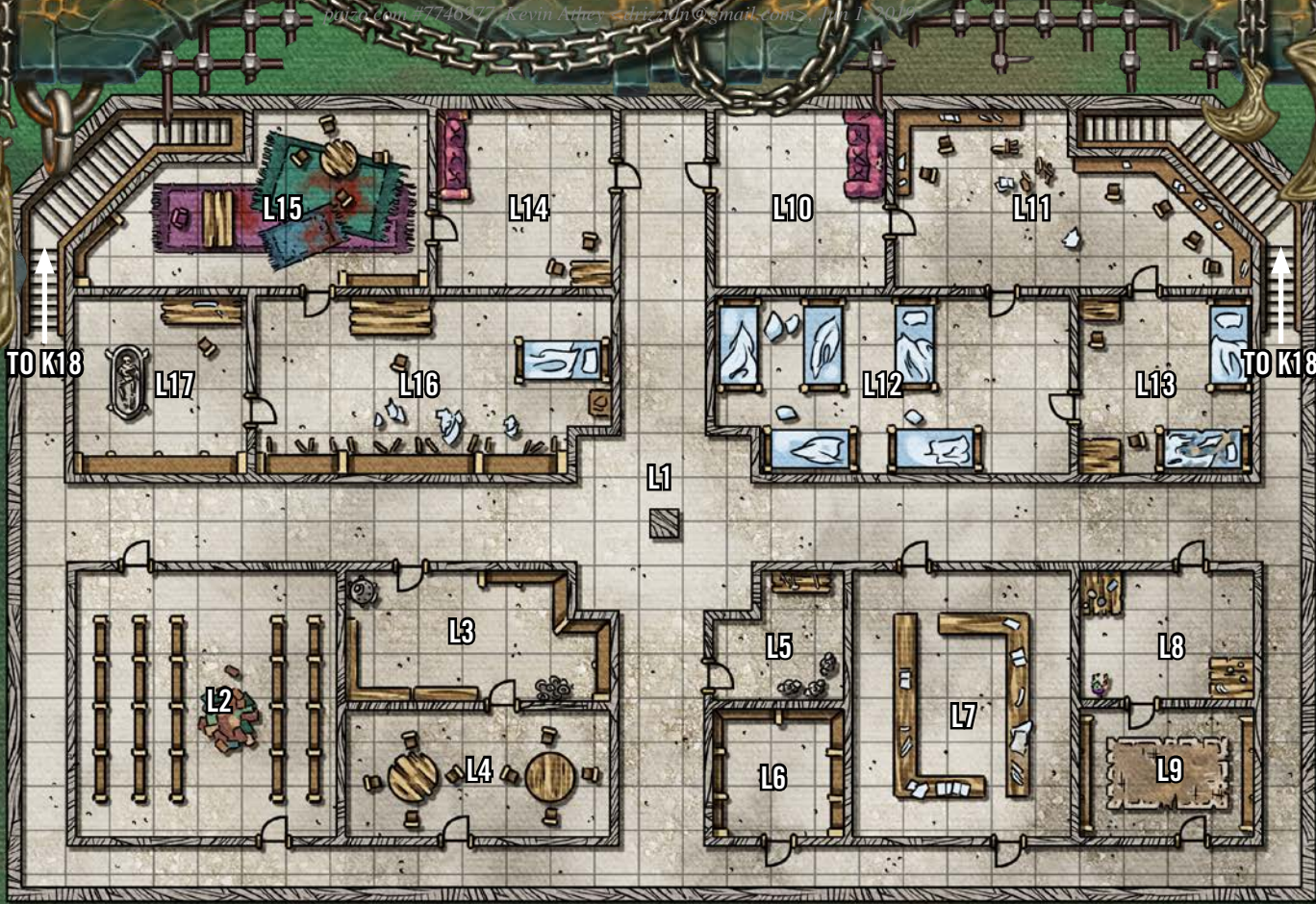
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L. BASTION OF LIGHT UPPER FLOOR

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.
Melee 2 claws +13 (1d8+7 plus grab), bite +13 (2d6+7)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

TACTICS

During Combat The mutant bear is a straightforward combatant and attempts to maul the closest enemy to death before moving on to the next. If a PC takes an action that triggers its spasm deformity, it attacks that PC instead.
Morale If reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, the mutant bear attempts to flee the cathedral, squeezing through any doors the PCs left open and attempting to batter down any closed doors.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 17, **Con** 19, **Int** 2, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 8
Base Atk +7; **CMB** +15 (+19 grapple); **CMD** 28 (32 vs. trip)
Feats Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Run, Skill Focus (Perception)
Skills Perception +14, Swim +19; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Swim
SQ deformities (spasms), mutations (fast healing, feral, poison immunity)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Spasms (Ex) When the mutant dire bear fails a Reflex save, for 1 round it can't take attacks of opportunity or immediate actions and loses its Dexterity bonus to AC, Dexterity-based ability checks, and Dexterity skill checks.

K18. Befouled Fountain (CR 8)

A large marble fountain stands in the center of this triangular chamber. The statue in the center of the fountain depicts a beautiful woman clad in white armor. Her long hair is carved to look like flames, and she holds a scimitar aloft in her right hand. Her left hand extends outward in a gesture of blessing, from which water trickles down into the basin below. The fountain's water is discolored and smells faintly of rot and mud. A small wooden door exits to the north, and a double door exits to the south. Two stone staircases lead up near hallways leading to the east and west.

The fountain here was blessed daily by Sarenite priests to be a constant source of holy water. Crusaders who believed they might encounter the undead took bottles with them, and the priests refilled the basin with water from a nearby well. The water is now foul; although it isn't poisonous, it sickens any creature that drinks from it unless the drinker succeeds at a DC 14 Fortitude saving throw. The fountain can be cleansed, but only after the polong that currently inhabits it is defeated (see Development on page 39).

The stairs lead up to the corridors of the upper floor, and the northern door leads to the outdoor training areas and a small graveyard behind the cathedral. Of course,



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if the *fetoring maw* is still active, the door opens out onto the deadly miasma that surrounds Roslar's Coffe. A thin membrane of magic keeps the poison from seeping into the building, but anyone stepping outside the Bastion of Light is subject to its effects; information about the dome of poisonous fog is on page 5.

Creature: Valthazar Quietus brought a polong to the Bastion of Light as one of his undead "pets." The polong's bottle lies in the fountain, and this is the source of its putrid taint. A successful DC 30 Perception check is required to spot the bottle within the discolored water. Commanded to guard this area from intruders, the polong hides within the statue; anyone approaching within 30 feet of the statue feels a seething aura of malicious violence emanating from it. The polong attacks anyone within this aura that it doesn't recognize, emerging with a screech and muttering "for the master" over and over again as it fights. It fights until destroyed, but it doesn't pursue foes out of this area.

POLONG

CR 8

XP 4,800

hp 95 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 196)

Development: Once the PCs defeat the polong, they can clean up the fountain. A *purify food and drink* spell purifies the fountain immediately; otherwise, the fountain slowly purges the taint over the next 24 hours. Once the fountain is purged, the water glitters as though reflecting sunlight. The PCs can recover up to 10 vials of holy water from the fountain each week, which may prove useful in destroying the *fetoring maw*. If the PCs lack containers to transport the holy water, the crystal vials in area K12 serve this purpose well.

L. BASTION OF LIGHT UPPER FLOOR

The upper floor of the Bastion of Light housed the cathedral's priests, as well as any visiting paladins of Sarenrae. It features a small library, living quarters, and a map room where the priests and knights could plan maneuvers. The furnishings throughout the upper floor are in much better condition than those on the ground floor, as the orc occupiers didn't spend much time on the upper floor and its rooms were too small for the red reaver to enter.

When the Whispering Way occupied the cathedral, Valthazar Quietus took over the deacon's expansive quarters, turning the office into his own personal laboratory. Valthazar now rarely leaves these chambers, as his underlings bring him reports about the fate of Roslar's Coffe and

his bound festering spirit (see area L1) informs him of any movement around the upper floor. Valthazar's second-in-command Kalamuk shares the priests' quarters with the researchers and overseers. Other creatures loyal to the Whispering Way roam the halls and other rooms.

Like the ground floor, the exterior walls on the upper floor are 5-foot-thick stone. The ceilings rise to a height of 12 feet. The doors are made of strong wood (hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 25) and are unlocked. The enchanted sconces in every room provide bright light, but those in the sleeping quarters can be turned off and on again by tapping the sconces.



Polong



L1. Intersection (CR 9)

Four hallways intersect here in the four cardinal directions. A three-foot-high square marble pillar stands in the center of the junction, a sickly green gem the size of a human fist sitting on top of it. A black mist swirls within the gem.

This gem is the *fetoring maw*, the artifact empowering the dome of poisonous fog around Roslar's Coffin. It has been set here in this public hallway to flaunt the cult's power, though Valthazar has erected a ward around it to prevent his minions from tampering with it. A PC who tries to touch the *fetoring maw* encounters an invisible shell of force. The field is indestructible, and a PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Spellcraft check can identify it as an effect similar to that produced by *wall of force*. Also similar to *wall of force*, this shield blocks most spell effects, including spells such as *detect magic*—although the PCs should be able to realize that the *fetoring maw* is a powerful item regardless. More information about the *fetoring maw* can be found below, and the cathedral's library (area L2) holds useful information about how to destroy the artifact. For how the PCs can do this, see Destroying the Fetoring Maw (page 41).

Creature: In addition to the ward, the *fetoring maw* is guarded by a festering spirit named Elliot that waits within the ceiling. Valthazar keeps the festering spirit's former body in the bathtub in the deacon's chambers (area L17).

When the PCs approach the pillar containing the *fetoring maw*, the festering spirit emerges from the ceiling, appearing initially as dripping globs of sludge. Elliot appears as the slimy ghost of a large man that starved to death, his flesh hanging in loose folds. In combat, the festering spirit bumbles about the PCs, describing them and their tactics as much as its limited intellect allows. This may seem an errant quirk of behavior, but as the corpse in the bathtub repeats everything the festering spirit says, this babbling informs Valthazar about the PCs' arrival, the way they fight, and any special resistances or other defenses that the festering spirit notes that they have.

ELLOT

CR 9

XP 6,400

Variant advanced festering spirit (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 288, 98)

CE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +15

Aura stench (DC 16, 10 rounds)

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 22, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 76 (9d8+36)

Fort +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2, incorporeal;

Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee incorporeal touch +13 (1d4 Con damage plus slime)

Special Attacks create spawn, slime (DC 18), trample (1 Con damage plus slime, DC 18)

TACTICS

During Combat The festering spirit attempts to trample as many of the PCs as possible. If a PC is particularly effective against the festering spirit, it ceases its trampling and instead focuses on that PC with its incorporeal touch attacks.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, the festering spirit retreats back into the ceiling to sulk and moan about how badly the PCs hurt it.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 24, **Con** —, **Int** 6, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 28

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Mobility

Skills Fly +11, Perception +15, Stealth +19

SQ ghost touch

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Distracting Babble (Su) As a swift action, Elliot can mutter in a manner other creatures find distracting. All creatures within 30 feet must succeed at a DC 18 Will save or take a –2 penalty to AC for 1 round. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by Elliot's distracting babble for 24 hours. This is a sonic, mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

FETORING MAW

The Whispering Way owns several of these minor artifacts, which some believe were created by Tar-Baphon centuries ago. The cult grants its agents the use of a *fetoring maw* only in special circumstances, as its effects are more overt than the cult generally prefers.

FETORING MAW

MINOR
ARTIFACT

SLOT none

CL 18th

WEIGHT 1 lb.

AURA strong necromancy



By holding this fist-sized, sickly green gem and concentrating for 1 hour, the bearer can create a sphere of poisonous fog centered in a location the bearer has seen that is within 1 mile of his current position. It must be centered on a geographical point, so it can't target a specific person, but it can surround that person if she is in the area the bearer targets. The sphere must be created around an area of



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normal, safe air, of a size selected by the user when the sphere is created, between 100 feet and 1 mile in diameter. This thickness of the fog is always one-tenth the diameter of the safe area inside it, so a safe area 5,000 feet across is surrounded by a poisonous fog 500 feet thick. The sphere of fog seeps through earth and liquids, but it does not penetrate worked stone. No amount of wind can disperse the poisonous fog. The fetoring maw must remain within 10 miles of the center of the sphere, or the fog dissipates harmlessly.

The *fetoring maw* can create only one sphere of poisonous fog at a time, and once a sphere is created, the *fetoring maw* must recharge for 3 months before it can create another one. The creature that created a sphere can dismiss it as a move action while holding the gem, but the sphere otherwise lasts for 3 months or until the *fetoring maw* is destroyed, whichever comes first.

Any creature can pass through the poisonous fog of the sphere's walls, though it obscures vision as per *fog cloud*. The fog also includes poisonous vapors and bewildering mists, as described in The Fog Dome on page 5. The creature that created the sphere can touch the *fetoring maw* to the palm of a willing creature as a standard action, marking that target with a skull-shaped brand that renders it immune to the *fetoring maw's* poison and mind-affecting effects. A *fetoring maw* can mark up to 13 creatures in this manner every three months.

DESTRUCTION

A *fetoring maw* can be destroyed by first immersing it in a mixture of holy water blessed by a priest of a deity with the Healing domain and antitoxin, in equal parts. For 1 minute after being immersed, the *fetoring maw* is weakened; if dealt at least 10 points of damage in a single blow with a bludgeoning magic weapon, the artifact shatters and any fog sphere it has created dissipates harmlessly.

Destroying the Fetoring Maw (CR 6)

To lift the dome of poisonous fog and finally be free of Roslar's Coffers, the PCs must destroy the *fetoring maw*. Unfortunately, the *fetoring maw* is shielded by Valthazar's invisible aegis occult ritual, and the PCs can't interact with the *fetoring maw* while this ritual is in effect. The usual methods of destroying a *wall of force*—such as the *disintegrate* spell—can also destroy the invisible aegis, but such effects are probably out of the PCs' reach. The PCs can bypass and even remove the invisible aegis with the iron key that's currently in Valthazar's possession (see area L15), but they probably have to defeat Valthazar and study his journal before understanding the key's significance. Despite its ominous appearance, the *fetoring maw* is safe to touch.

Removing the shield around the *fetoring maw* is only the first step; destroying it is a more complicated endeavor, and the PCs initially lack any information about how to

do so. The answer lies in the Bastion of Light's library (area L2), which holds significant information about the Shining Crusade and the Whispering Way. If the PCs don't think to examine that trove of knowledge on their own, you can easily point them back to it. The easiest way is to remind PCs who have already explored the library that they discovered information about the *fetoring maw* there, and the library might contain further clues. Alternatively, a Whispering Way captive might let slip the suggestion, or a friendly NPC (such as Jando or even the loci spirit in the cemetery) might suggest doing some research there.

More information about performing research appears in *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Intrigue* starting on page 148, but the following rules explain the research needed for this adventure.

For research purposes, every library has two primary statistics: a Complexity rating, which reflects the intricacy or confusing nature of the library's contents, and knowledge points (abbreviated kp), which are an abstract representation of the sum of the library's collected information.

To research a specific topic or question within a library, a character must attempt a Research check using one of the skills listed in the library's stat block (these are normally Knowledge checks, and some libraries are so extensive that one or more Knowledge checks can be attempted untrained, where indicated). A library's Complexity rating serves as the DC for Research checks as PCs attempt to unravel that library's clues. Some libraries grant a bonus on the Research check due to their quality or thoroughness of subject matter.

Attempting a Research check requires an uninterrupted 8-hour period of research, and a character cannot take 10 or 20 on a Research check. Each 8-hour period of research grants a cumulative +1 bonus on Research checks. If a researcher stops researching at the same library for a month or more, she loses any cumulative bonuses gained for that library thus far as the relevant information fades from her recollection. Up to two additional characters can use the aid another action to assist a primary researcher.

Succeeding at a Research check reduces a library's knowledge points, similar to the way dealing damage reduces a creature's hit points. As a library's knowledge points decrease, it reveals its secrets. Characters learn information when a library's knowledge points reach various thresholds, as detailed in a library's stat block. The number of knowledge points reduced on a successful Research check depends on the primary researcher's training in the skill she used for the Research check and the type of library. A primary researcher reduces a library's kp by a number of points equal to 1d12 + her Intelligence modifier if she has 10 ranks in the skill used for the Research check, Skill



If the PCs Are Stumped

If all else fails and the PCs can't get at the *fetoring maw* or figure out how to destroy it, time is on their side. Without Valthazar on hand to renew the invisible aegis occult ritual, the invisible aegis disappears after a month; his journal in area **L15** specifies the occult ritual's duration, so the PCs can plan to just wait it out. At that time, anyone can handle the *fetoring maw* freely, and if the PCs already researched the method of destroying it, they can employ it at that time.

The PCs don't need to destroy the *fetoring maw*, however, as the dome of deadly fog it creates lasts for only 3 months—or about 10 weeks after the PCs first arrive in Roslar's Coffin. The Whispering Way agents know of this duration, as they were told before they started their mission that the dome would last 3 months. The cultists might only know the dome lasts "a few months," while more significant captives (such as the overseers or Valthazar himself) know the fog dome's remaining duration with greater specificity.

Waiting out these effects, however, isn't easy. Any remaining Whispering Way forces in the area are likely to make life difficult for the PCs during this time, so the PCs must defeat or drive away all of the enemies in the Bastion of Light. The PCs should also keep in mind that very little of the food or water inside the fog dome is safe to eat, although the rations in area **L3** and the magic available to PCs at their level make sustenance fairly easy to come by. If all else fails, the ranger Jando can help the PCs find food. A delay here can be costly, however, as the PCs have some time pressure in the next adventure in the Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path, "Last Watch."

Focus in the skill, or both 5 ranks in the skill and the skill as a class skill. She reduces a library's kp by a number of points equal to $1d8 +$ her Intelligence modifier if she has 5 ranks in the skill or the skill is a class skill for her (but not both). Otherwise, she reduces a library's kp by a number of points equal to $1d4 +$ her Intelligence modifier.

In addition to these base amounts, for every 5 by which a Research check result exceeds the library's Complexity rating, the library's knowledge points are reduced by 1 additional point. Rolling a natural 20 on a Research check acts like a critical threat. If the researcher confirms the critical hit by succeeding at a second Research check with all the same modifiers (this takes no additional time), the resulting knowledge point reduction is doubled. Conversely, rolling a natural 1 on a Research check automatically results in failure, and the library's knowledge points increase by one-quarter of the library's maximum knowledge points as the library's multiple

sources cause the researcher to pursue an irrelevant avenue of investigation.

When a library's knowledge points are reduced to 0, the characters have learned everything they can from that library, and they gain experience points according to the library's CR.

BASTION OF LIGHT LIBRARY

CR 6

XP 2,400

Complexity 16 (easy)

Languages Common

Research Check Knowledge (history), Knowledge (planes), Knowledge (religion, untrained); Knowledge Bonus +2

kp 20

RESEARCH THRESHOLDS

kp 15 A military report from a crusader lieutenant during the Shining Crusade details the effects of a *fetoring maw*. One of Tar-Baphon's generals used just such an artifact to cut her battalion off from the rest of the army. The crusaders defeated the evil necromancer bearing the artifact but remained trapped within the dome of poisonous fog. Luckily, one of her comrades was a poison expert who concocted enough antitoxin to get the surviving members of the battalion through the toxic cloud. To avoid the misdirecting effect of the mists, the members of the battalion tied themselves together and agreed to follow their most dedicated champion. The author took the *fetoring maw* to Sarenite clerics for study, who concluded that a combination of antitoxin and holy water weakened the artifact.

kp 10 An annotated map of the Bastion of Faith notes that the fountain at the north end of the lower floor magically produces holy water that crusaders take into battle. A commenter notes the amazing recuperative powers of the fountain itself; even when an enemy spy infiltrated the Bastion of Faith and poisoned the fountain, within a day its waters were again clean. (This is a clue that the PCs should defeat the polong in area **K18**, and if they have already done so, that they need only wait a day for the fountain to once again produce holy water.)

kp 5 A biography describes a valiant crusader who, after suffering a debilitating war wound, retired to his home village to serve as a blacksmith. This crusader-smith was famed for his skill with his magic hammer, which he claimed to have used to shatter evil relics used by Lastwall's enemies. He boasted that he had worked with the church of Sarenrae to destroy a "vile gem of poisonous mists" employed by the Whispering Way.

kp 0 The PCs piece together the precise method to destroy the *fetoring maw*, as provided in the artifact's entry.

With this knowledge, the PCs have the information they need to destroy the *fetoring maw* and need only collect



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the components. The solution to bathe the *fetoring maw* requires at least 2 vials of holy water mixed with 2 vials of antitoxin. If the PCs don't have these, they can acquire holy water from the purified fountain (area **K18**) and recover antitoxin from the teaching apothecary (area **L8**). The PCs might even repurpose some of the containers they've seen in the Bastion of Light, such as the cooking pot from the kitchen (area **L3**), to mix the ingredients. Once the *fetoring maw* is freed from the invisible aegis and submerged in the mixture, the gem fades in color and the swirling mists inside cease churning. Tiny cracks appear along the gem's surface for the next minute, indicating its weakened state. Even if they didn't bring any magic bludgeoning weapons with them, the PCs might use the +2 *warhammer* hidden in the armory (area **L6**), Kalamuk's +1 *heavy mace*, or an *oil of magic weapon* from any of the Whispering Way cultists.

Once the weakened *fetoring maw* takes at least 10 points of bludgeoning damage in a single blow, it shatters into hundreds of pieces. A tiny wisp of green smoke emerges from the fragments, forms the shape of a skull, and then vanishes. The dome of fog vanishes harmlessly, as if blown away by a strong wind, and the air outside is cleansed of its toxic effects.

Story Award: If the PCs lift the fog dome by destroying the *fetoring maw*, award them 2,400 XP.

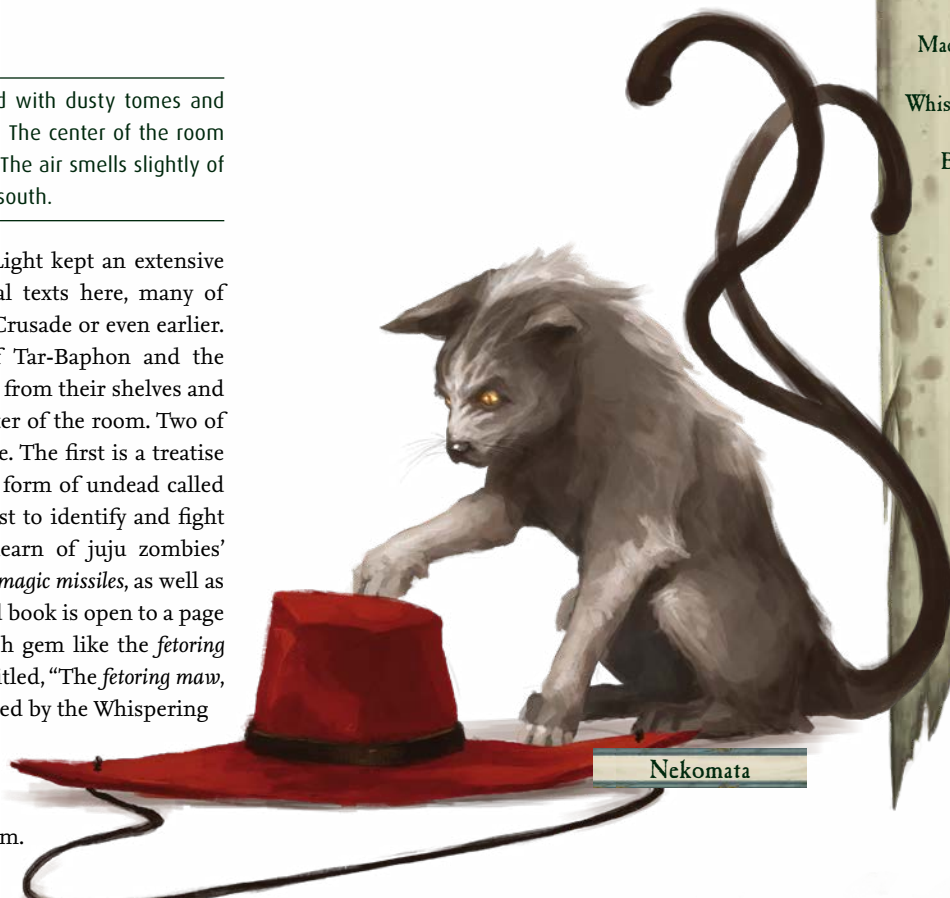
L2. Library (CR 8)

Five long bookshelves, each stuffed with dusty tomes and scrolls, reach up to the ceiling here. The center of the room contains a haphazard pile of books. The air smells slightly of wet fur. Doors exit to the north and south.

The priests of the Bastion of Light kept an extensive library of religious and historical texts here, many of them dating back to the Shining Crusade or even earlier. The books about the history of Tar-Baphon and the Whispering Way have been pulled from their shelves and lie in a haphazard pile in the center of the room. Two of these books are open atop the pile. The first is a treatise about an intelligent and cunning form of undead called a juju zombie and details how best to identify and fight them; PCs perusing this book learn of juju zombies' immunity to cold, electricity, and *magic missiles*, as well as their resistance to fire. The second book is open to a page with an image of a sickly greenish gem like the *fetoring maw* in area **L1**. The image is subtitled, "The *fetoring maw*, an artifact of malignant poison used by the Whispering Way." The book is a catalog of several evil relics—some real but most merely rumored—and means of identifying them.

This particular book doesn't have any additional information about the *fetoring maw*, but other books in the library contain clues about how to destroy the artifact. If the PCs start investigating here, refer to the research rules in Destroying the Fetoring Maw on page 41.

Creatures: Several years ago, Valthazar was instructed to investigate a small town in Ustalav, where people reported seeing undead wearing the faces of people who were still alive. He discovered the cause was a pair of nekomatas—large, malicious cats who can change their shapes. The nekomatas had been killing townsfolk for weeks, turning them into zombies and then taking their places. Valthazar marveled at the nekomatas' power but thought the Whispering Way could direct the cats' mischief to more effective and subtle ends. Valthazar offered the nekomatas an alliance with the Whispering Way and took them out of town just before inquisitors of Pharasma showed up to cleanse the area. The nekomatas were grateful to Valthazar and eagerly joined the Whispering Way; Valthazar has worked with the evil felines many times since, and he specifically asked for their aid in his investigation of Roslar's Coffers. Although the nekomatas are wicked troublemakers by nature, they obey Valthazar and don't mind that some cultists consider them to be his pets. They sometimes help Valthazar with his research related to the *Radiant Fire*, and the books pulled off the shelf are



Nekomata

the relevant texts they've found. The nekomatas were responsible for raising the PCs' corpses as juju zombies (see area L15), so the beasts are particularly curious if they spot the PCs in the Bastion of Light.

The nekomatas have taken to roaming the cathedral's upper floor, but they consider the library their personal den and don't allow anyone other than Valthazar to enter freely. They generally rest on the west side of the room, out of sight of both doors but listening carefully for intruders. If the nekomatas become aware of the PCs, their first instinct is to toy with them. One nekomata tries to bite a PC and run away, perhaps first disguising itself as a small kitten. The nekomata then uses its perfect copy ability to appear as that PC, attempting to sow confusion within the party and "finding" another cat—the other nekomata—that attempts to bite a different PC and continue the charade.

The nekomatas cause as much chaos as they can before growing bored. Once they decide the PCs aren't any fun, they revert to their true forms and attack. A nekomata reduced to fewer than 20 hit points flees toward the Whispering Way overseers, Kalamuk, or Valthazar, whomever is closest.

NEKOMATAS (2)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 68 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 201)

Treasure: A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check while browsing the shelves discovers a tome bound in a cover of platinum and gold. This *blessed book* has the holy symbol of Sarenrae emblazoned on the cover. The PCs find this item automatically if they reduce the library's knowledge points to 0.

L3. Kitchen

Wooden counters and cupboards ring this rectangular room, stocked with cooking implements, utensils, and dishes. Most of the metal accoutrements sport patches of rust, and dirty wooden bowls are piled haphazardly in one area. An iron potbellied stove is adjacent to the northern door, while another door exits to the south.

The mortal cult members began using this kitchen after they grew bored of eating trail rations. Unfortunately, the food stores here had long ago spoiled or been plundered by orcs. A few days ago, one of the more enterprising cultists collected enough ingredients to make a vegetable stew; although the cultists are suspicious of plant life that may be corrupted by the *Radiant Fire*, the stew was both tasty and harmless. The cultists have talked about catching animals in the area to add meat to their stew,

but none are yet brave enough to risk eating a mutated animal. The remnants of the last batch of vegetable stew remain in a tarnished metal pot on the stove.

The northern door leads out to the hall near the intersection (area L1), while the south door leads to the dining room (area L4).

Treasure: The cultists stashed a *bag of holding* (type I) containing 80 days of trail rations in a cupboard, hoping they won't have to resort to eating trail rations again.

L4. Dining Room

Two round tables, each with four simple wooden chairs, fill this small room. Deep gouges mar the surface of the western table, which is otherwise clean. The other table is slightly dusty, as if someone made only a half-hearted effort to clean it. Heavy tapestries are firmly affixed to the walls, each depicting proud knights smiting foul-looking creatures. Doors exit to the north and south.

The original priests of this temple took their meals here in shifts. The cultists of the Whispering Way dined here once or twice but found the tapestries too sanctimonious and too well secured to remove, and began eating their rations elsewhere. The claw marks in the western table are from one of the nekomatas from the library (area L2) alleviating its boredom.

L5. Workshop

A worktable against the northern wall is cluttered with various tools and metal shavings. Three rusty suits of armor hang on armor stands in the southwest corner.

Sarenites used this workshop to make minor repairs to weapons and armor, or to craft other useful metal items. For serious repair jobs that required heating metal, the priests used a freestanding forge behind the cathedral. The suits of armor appear far too rusted and damaged to be of any use.

Treasure: Although the armor appears to be useless scrap, the rusted mesh and wedges of metal on the middle armor stand conceal an adamantite breastplate—a PC spots this carefully concealed treasure with a successful DC 18 Perception check. Additionally, amid the tools on the worktable is a small glass flask that contains 1 ounce of *sovereign glue*.

L6. Armory

Three walls of this room support tall racks that were built to hold suits of armor and weapons. The racks are mostly empty save for a few broken blades and rusted armor plates.

The Sarenites grabbed most of the weapons and armor from this armory to defend the cathedral against the orc raid, and the orcs took everything else after they defeated the priests. The cultists of the Whispering Way peeked in here briefly looking for valuables, found nothing of interest, and haven't been back here since.

Treasure: A PC who succeeds at a DC 16 Perception check while searching this room discovers a +2 *warhammer* with the symbol of Sarenrae emblazoned on the head tucked behind a broken tower shield.

L7. Map Room (CR 9)

Two L-shaped mahogany tables stand between the northern and southern exits of this rectangular room. Atlases lie open on the tables next to rolls of parchment. Several cloth maps hang on the walls, showing the surrounding area, the whole of Lastwall, the southern border of Ustalav, and the southeastern border of the Hold of Belkzen. Many of the maps have tiny flags pinned to them. Most of the maps bear thin films of dust; only the map showing the area around Roslar's Coffin is clean.

Sarenite knights used this room to keep track of the war effort, tracking the movements of undead armies, orcs, and other crusaders as best they could. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (history) check recognizes that while the maps themselves are relatively accurate, the position of the flags reveals information that is badly out of date.

When they seized the cathedral, the Whispering Way started using this room for essentially the same purpose, though they care only about Roslar's Coffin and the surrounding area; they haven't touched the other maps. The atlases, which were pulled from the library (area L2), show the most recent surveys of southern Lastwall. In addition, the Whispering Way overseers (see Creatures below) have been comparing the approximate population of Roslar's Coffin provided by the notes here with information brought back to them by Chatar Esuri and her minions. The overseers' notes are particularly extensive, although they are scattered untidily across the tables. If a PC searches through these notes and succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check, she finds a listing of several corpses that match the PCs' own descriptions. The record states that "VQ" has collected those particular bodies for special examinations, though it doesn't go into specifics. "VQ" is, of course, Valthazar Quietus, and this entry provides the PCs with a bit of foreshadowing if they haven't yet encountered him in the deacon's office with the zombies that resemble the PCs (area L15).

Creatures: Two senior cultists named Oradi and Savenna perform critical research here. Second only

to Valthazar and Kalamuk, these half-elven sisters orchestrate the activities of other lesser cultists in the area. Oradi and Savenna joined the Whispering Way when they turned 18, looking for a drastic way to reject their tradition-bound family. The sisters look nearly identical; each is tall with red hair and freckles. They even prefer to dress similarly, wearing matching *robes of bones*^{UE}. One of the pair wears small, round spectacles, which is the only way some of the cultists can tell them apart. The overseers know all the Whispering Way cultists in the Bastion of Light, as they speak to the cultists almost daily to receive reports or pass along orders.

When the overseers spot the PCs, they know them to be intruders but attempt to lure them into conversation with leading questions like, "Ah, so you're the new recruits?" If the PCs are willing to talk, the overseers give downright false information or simply refuse to answer questions, while they press the PCs on how they passed through the dome of poisonous fog and what they know about Roslar's Coffin. If the PCs don't take the bait, or once the overseers tire of extracting information from the PCs, they attack. If one overseer is slain, the other attempts to reach Kalamuk in the reading room (area L11) and makes a final stand alongside her there.

ORADI AND SAVENNA CR 7
XP 3,200 each
Whispering Way devotees (see page 78)
hp 66 each

L8. Teaching Apothecary

Two square wooden tables, each holding a handful of bandages, bottles, and tin canisters, occupy the northwest and southeast corners of this room. A human skeleton stands attached to an upright pole in the southwest corner, and several of its bones have been painted one color or another. Doors exit to the north and south.

The Sarenite priests strove to remain informed about the latest advances in medicine to better aid troops injured while defending the nation. This room functioned as a kind of classroom, where those with more knowledge about anatomy and biology could instruct others in identifying symptoms of poison and disease, tending wounds, setting broken bones, and performing other medical techniques. The human skeleton (which was donated by a devoted Sarenite who died over a century ago) was used to teach students the functions of the various bones, some of which have been painted different colors to aid in instruction.

The Whispering Way cultists deemed this room too small for their own necromantic experiments but

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pillaged nearly everything they thought would be useful. One necromancer joked that they should animate the skeleton but leave it attached to the pole as a trap, but the other necromancers determined that would be a waste of their resources.

The north door leads out to the hall, while the south door leads to the sparring chamber (area L9); more than once, a knight or priest injured while sparring was brought into this room for hands-on education in treating injuries.

Treasure: While most of the chemicals and reagents once stored here have either spoiled or been plundered, 10 vials of antitoxin are packed in a large tin canister on a table.

L9. Sparring Chamber (CR 8)

A tattered, woven mat covers the floor here, flanked by two low wooden benches. Doors exit to the north and south.

For strenuous training—such as running in heavy armor, swinging large weapons, or fighting from horseback—the crusaders used a training field located behind the cathedral. However, for close training such as wrestling, or when inclement weather made outdoor training hazardous, crusaders sparred in this room instead. These were friendly matches, meant only for exercise, and sometimes the more martial-oriented priests of the cathedral would join in to test themselves against the crusaders. The woven mat cushioned most falls, but it has deteriorated over the years and is now threadbare. Any PC moving the mat exposes the symbol beneath it (see Trap below).

The Whispering Way cultists have yet to decide on a purpose for this room; more muscular cultists want to use it for its original purpose, while the researchers have petitioned to use it to store corpses.

The north door leads to the teaching apothecary (area L8), while the south door leads to the halls ringing the cathedral's upper floor.

Trap: Until the cult decides what to do with this room, Kalamuk has been practicing setting magical traps. She used a scroll to draw a *symbol of weakness* beneath the woven mat, delighting in the irony of creating a trap that weakens its victims in a space that was once used to tone and strengthen muscles. She hasn't told any of her fellow cultists (or even Valthazar) that she has trapped this room, hoping to catch one or more of them with the symbol as a prank.

SYMBOL OF WEAKNESS TRAP CR 8

XP 4,800

Type magic; Perception DC 32; Disable Device DC 32

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity; **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*symbol of weakness*, 3d6 Strength damage, Fortitude DC 20 negates); multiple targets (all targets in area L9)

L10. Lounge

A well-worn couch sits against the eastern wall, its upholstery frayed at the seams and bits of stuffing poking out. A pair of tapestries on the northern and southern walls depict pastoral landscapes drenched in sunlight. Doors lead to the east and west.

The regular priests of the cathedral used this room to relax and chat with one another when not busy with other tasks. The tapestries were meant to provide pleasant views in the absence of any windows here and are dusty with age. This room once held a few chairs as well, but they've been moved into the reading room (area L11).

The Whispering Way cultists don't have much use for this room, except to pass through on their way to the bunks in area L12. Once or twice, cultists have been so worn out by their long hours that they have collapsed to sleep on the couch here before getting to their bunks. Kalamuk delights in waking these napping cultists with her quills—an experience no cultist wants to endure more than once—so no one has used the couch in the last few days.

The door in the west wall leads out to the hall, while the door in the east wall leads to Kalamuk's reading room (area L11).

L11. Reading Room (CR 9)

Long tables run the length of the northern and eastern walls here. Several low-backed wooden chairs are pushed up to the tables, with one knocked onto its side at the end of the northern table. Scrolls and parchments haphazardly cover the two tables and even spill onto the floor. Many small sconces emanating light are situated at regular intervals above the tables, providing ample light to read by. There are two doors in the southern wall and one in the western wall.

Used as a quiet spot to read and pray, this room saw frequent use by the cathedral's priests. The many sconces can be turned on and off individually if a visitor needs more light to read by or prefers less light in order to meditate. The papers strewn about the tables are personal letters and other writings, which Kalamuk discovered in the priests' trunks in area L12. She has been going through them over the past couple of days, delighted to learn the personal information of these long-dead priests. She feels



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like she has gained insight into the habits of clerics of Sarenrae and can't wait to use the information to taunt and belittle any Sarenites she encounters.

The door to the west leads to the lounge (area L10), while the doors to the south lead to the priests' dormitory (area L12) and the guest room (area L13).

Creature: The pukwudgie Kalamuk is Valthazar's second-in-command. She has been a member of the Whispering Way for many years, joining the cult after a chance encounter. Kalamuk had just stolen a fat baby from a farm in Canterwall when the infant's cries alerted his parents. Luckily for the pukwudgie, the Whispering Way had selected that farmyard for a ritual on that very night due to its proximity to a thin spot between the Material Plane and the Negative Energy Plane. The Whispering Way cultists slaughtered the frantic adults before they could intervene in the ritual. In the course of killing the farmers, the cultists also caught Kalamuk feasting on her prey. However, one of the cultists recognized Kalamuk as a pukwudgie and, familiar with the creature's necromantic powers, defused the situation with a rare bit of diplomacy. The Whispering Way's ritual ultimately failed, but the cult gained a stalwart ally that night.

The cultists invited Kalamuk to join the Whispering Way and put her poison to use turning innocents into mindless undead. Having no other pressing plans, Kalamuk agreed. She soon met a priest of Urgathoa, who introduced the pukwudgie to the goddess of gluttony and undeath—two things Kalamuk very much appreciates. Kalamuk has been a fervent devotee of the Pallid Princess ever since, and openly and loudly scoffs at other religions. She studies these "inferior" faiths, learning what she can in order to mock and deride their followers. She and the ghoulish inquisitor Chatar Esuri see eye to eye on matters of religion and the deliciousness of human flesh, though Kalamuk thinks the ghoulish can be a bit overzealous and Chatar thinks Kalamuk's dark humor dilutes her zeal. Chatar is probably correct, as Kalamuk prefers to humiliate her foes with well-placed jibes and insults before jabbing them with her poison-tipped quills instead of simply tearing them to shreds with her blades and claws.

Unless Kalamuk is aware of the PCs' approach, she is reading the dead priests' missives and diaries, cackling with glee at their pious turns of phrase and naive hopes for the future. Once she's aware of the intrusion, however, Kalamuk attacks.

During a fight, Kalamuk heaps derision on any PC openly wearing a holy symbol of a deity or

displaying aptitude with divine magic. The pukwudgie has a vast breadth of religious knowledge and can cut right to the heart of a particular religion's perceived flaws, whether true or not. For instance, she refers to Cayden Cailean as "the drunk idiot who got lucky," claims that followers of Pharsasma "let more people die than they actually save," and lambasts Iomedae as "a jumped-up pretender to Aroden's throne." She hurls these insults nearly every round, so you should prepare a handful of them in advance for your PCs' religious patrons. These jibes aren't likely to discourage any religious PCs from their faith, but serve to present Kalamuk as both knowledgeable and mean-spirited.



KALAMUK**CR 9****XP 6,400**Female pukwudgie cleric of Urgathoa 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 223)

NE Small monstrous humanoid (shapechanger)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *deathwatch*, *detect good*, *detect magic*; Perception +15**DEFENSE****AC** 25, touch 16, flat-footed 20 (+5 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural, +1 size)**hp** 123 (13 HD; 4d8+9d10+56)**Fort** +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +14**Immune** poison**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +1 *heavy mace* +16/+11/+6 (1d6+3) or 2 claws +12 (1d4+1 plus poison)**Ranged** 2 quills +13 (1d4+1 plus poison)**Special Attacks** channel negative energy 8/day (DC 17, 2d6), poison, sneak attack +3d6, spawn undead**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th; concentration +15)Constant—*deathwatch*, *detect good*, *detect magic* At will—*command undead* (DC 17), *produce flame*3/day—*animate dead*, *death knell* (DC 17), *invisibility*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16), *scare* (DC 17)1/day—*non-detection***Domain Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 4th; concentration +6)

5/day—bleeding touch (2 rounds), touch of evil (2 rounds)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +6)2nd—*death knell*^P (DC 14), *desecrate*, *spiritual weapon*, *summon monster II*1st—*bane* (DC 13), *divine favor*, *obscuring mist*, *protection from good*^P, *sanctuary* (DC 13)0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 12), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *resistance***D** domain spell; **Domains** Death, Evil**TACTICS****Before Combat** If Kalamuk knows the PCs are coming, she casts *summon monster II* to conjure a Small fire elemental.**During Combat** Kalamuk casts *spiritual weapon* on the first round of combat and then moves to flank with the elemental if it is present. If reduced to fewer than 70 hit points, she casts *sanctuary*, followed by *divine favor*. She then drinks a potion of *cure moderate wounds* before resuming the fight.**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, Kalamuk flees and abandons the Bastion of Light entirely.**STATISTICS****Str** 14, **Dex** 18, **Con** 19, **Int** 15, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 20**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 28**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Skill Focus (Knowledge [religion]), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (quill)**Skills** Bluff +15, Heal +15, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (religion) +24, Perception +15, Spellcraft +18, Stealth +15**Languages** Common, Draconic, Infernal**SQ** change shape (porcupine; *beast shape II*), quills**Combat Gear** *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2);**Other Gear** +1 *chain shirt*, +1 *heavy mace*, unholy symbol of Urgathoa

Treasure: If the PCs spend at least an hour organizing the papers here, the resulting documentation provides a detailed glimpse into these priests' lives before the cathedral was overwhelmed. The right historian or religious scholar might be very interested in such a collection and will pay 500 gp for it. Alternatively, returning these papers to a church of Sarenrae in a major city is sure to garner gratitude and a future favor.

Development: A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check while glancing through the papers discovers a priest's diary entry that states concern over "Sister Fillimann's fascination for poisons and venoms." The journal goes on to worry that, "If the purple worm venom she recently acquired from a passing trader were to spill, one of us might be in serious jeopardy!" If the PCs take the time to organize these papers, they find this note automatically. (This note can aid PCs searching for treasure in area L12.)

L12. Priests' Dormitory

Five bunk beds fill this rectangular chamber, many of their sheets messily rumpled and their pillows tossed to the ground. Two small chests can be seen under each bunk bed. Doors exit to the east and north.

The priests of Sarenrae originally slept here. Though there is room for 10 occupants, there were usually only five or six resident clerics, while the rest of the beds were used by a rotating group of crusaders, some of whom spent weeks here training while others returned from the front to recuperate from minor wounds. Those crusaders who needed the most medical attention stayed in the infirmary (area K12) on the ground floor. Each priest and visiting knight were given use of a small trunk to hold their personal belongings. These trunks do not have locks, as these people were very trusting and trustworthy.

The living Whispering Way cultists, including the two overseers, have taken these beds as their own. They haven't treated the furniture very well, and they keep their personal possessions with them rather than use the chests. The pukwudgie Kalamuk recently decided to paw through the chests and spread much of what she found in the reading room next door.

The door to the north leads to the reading room (area L11), while the door to the east leads to the guest room (area L13).

Treasure: Among many small personal effects, such as a rusting iron locket shaped like a sphere, a tiny silver spoon, and a sketchbook filled with drawings of local flora, a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check can find a hidden vial of purple worm poison (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 560). The vial contains 3 doses of the poison. If the PCs discovered the note about the poison in area L11 and are specifically looking for the poison, they find it automatically after 1 minute of searching.

L13. Guest Room

Two small writing desks are pushed up against the western wall here, while two matching beds occupy the eastern half of the room. One of the beds is neatly made, but the other's covers are torn and shredded. Doors exit to the west and north.

The cathedral priests kept this room for important visiting guests, such as high-ranking members of the church and highly decorated veterans. The two beds are stuffed with down and wool, making them more comfortable than the mattresses found elsewhere in the building. The bed frames are made from sturdy oak, as are the two writing desks and accompanying chairs. The cathedral had no guests the fateful day it was attacked by orcs, so both desks are currently bare.

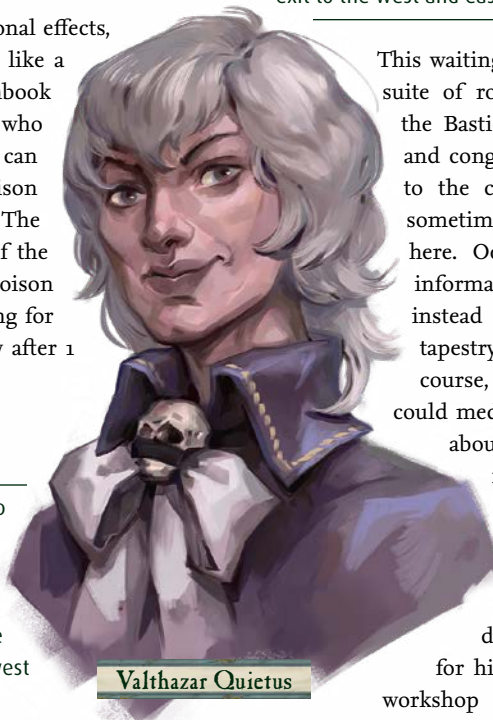
Kalamuk claimed this room when the Whispering Way occupied the cathedral. Even though there are two beds in here, she has forbid any other cultists from occupying the room with her. The tattered covers on one bed are the result of her quills, and Kalamuk knows she will eventually shred them into oblivion, at which point she plans to simply move to the other bed. Kalamuk has considered turning one of the writing desks into a shrine to Urgathoa but has yet to get around to doing that.

The door to the north leads to the reading room (area L11), while the door to the west leads to the guest room (area L12).

L14. Waiting Room

A comfortable-looking overstuffed couch, upholstered in red and gold, sits against the western wall of this square room. A small table flanked by two wooden chairs occupies the

southeastern corner under a large tapestry of a fiery-haired winged woman wielding a scimitar encased in flame. Doors exit to the west and east.



Valthazar Quietus

This waiting room is the entrance to the suite of rooms previously occupied by the Bastion of Light's deacon. Priests and congregants who wanted to speak to the cathedral's deacon in private sometimes had to wait for the deacon here. Occasionally, the deacon held informal meetings in this room instead of the office next door. The tapestry here depicts Sarenrae, of course, so that anyone waiting here could meditate on the image and think about the Dawnflower's tenets of forgiveness and honesty.

Once the Whispering Way occupied the cathedral, the group's leader, Valthazar Quietus, deemed the deacon's quarters sufficient for his station and set up his own workshop in the next room. Kalamuk wants to tear down the tapestry, but Valthazar insists it remain up, as he finds it amusing to "make Sarenrae watch" as he parades corpses and undead creatures through here as part of his experiments.

The door to the east leads out into the hall, while the door to the west exits into the deacon's office (area L15).

L15. Deacon's Office (CR 10)

The western half of this room contains a large mahogany desk, its sides covered with intricate carvings of paladins striking down fiendish foes and undead beasts. The detail of the etchings is incredibly intricate, showing detailed patterns on each knight's armor. Two sets of shelves, each filled with texts and holy icons, stand against the western and southern walls. Ornate rugs cover the floor, many bearing large, dark bloodstains. A round, wooden table surrounded by several chairs stands opposite a door to the south. Another exit leads to the east.

The deacon in charge of the cathedral spent much time here, going through the church's account books, writing sermons, and speaking with subordinates and congregants. The last deacon of the cathedral took up a blade and shield against the orc raiders when the structure was attacked, but she was killed in the ensuing melee. As the mission to slay the red reaver that took up residence on the ground floor occurred only last year,

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Personalizing the Zombies

If you want to make this encounter particularly memorable, you can adjust the statistics of the juju zombies to more closely match those of your PCs. The most straightforward change is to use the juju zombie warrior statistics presented here but customize the armor and weapons of the zombies to match those the PCs had at the beginning of the Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path. The juju zombies shouldn't have any items the PCs have obtained since that time. For a spellcaster PC, give the juju zombie a few signature 1st-level spells the PC had at character creation, usable as spell-like abilities.

The juju zombies should use spells and tactics that the PCs themselves used earlier in their adventuring careers, even if they aren't the most tactically sound choice to make during the fight—it's more important to give the PCs the impression they are fighting undead copies of themselves in service to the Whispering Way.

that final deacon's personal effects still decorate this office, including various small statues depicting Sarenrae from around the world. The round table holds a chess set, though the pieces have been scattered.

Although many of the items around the room belonged to the last deacon, the desk shows the gruesome practices of the room's current occupant, Valthazar Quietus. A small ledger contains his personal notes. In addition, several medical implements, including scalpels, forceps, a small mirror, and a trepanning auger are neatly arranged on the desk, along with a few stained rags Valthazar uses to keep them clean. He hasn't been as successful in keeping blood out of the rugs.

The south wall near the desk bears a fist-sized hole in the wall leading to the deacon's washroom (area L17). Valthazar had one of his minions punch this hole in the wall shortly after he arrived, allowing him to hear any sounds muttered from the skeleton in the bathtub of that room.

The door to the east leads to the waiting room (area L14), while the door to the south leads to the deacon's bedroom (area L16).

Creatures: The leader of the Whispering Way agents in Roslar's Coffin, Valthazar Quietus is a dhampir witch who seeks to understand undeath in all its forms so he can eventually embrace it. Valthazar requested his current assignment in Roslar's Coffin to better understand the interplay between negative and positive energy on living creatures in the aftermath of the *Radiant Fire's* blast. Although diligently compiling a complete report for his superiors in the Whispering Way, Valthazar also hopes to unlock secrets he can use to pass from his half-life to undeath. He has commandeered this office as his personal research laboratory.

When the PCs enter the office, they find Valthazar accompanied by several undead creatures that might surprise them. A few days ago, the ghoulish inquisitor Chatar Esuri found the PCs' dead bodies in Roslar's Coffin and sensed something strange about them. She delivered them to Valthazar, who had the nekوماتas (see area L2) lick the corpses, transforming them into juju zombies. While these juju zombies are free-willed, they are unusually pliable; the juju zombies know nothing about who they once were, a fact Valthazar finds both unexpected and fascinating. (This effect is because of the *obols* embedded within them, but Valthazar and the juju zombies have no way of knowing this.) Valthazar has been questioning the juju zombies for hours at a time about their recollections, while indoctrinating them into the beliefs of Whispering Way. The juju zombies are now eager to follow his every order.

If the PCs encountered the festering spirit in area L1, Valthazar already knows that living creatures matching the description of his strange collection of corpses have infiltrated the Bastion of Light. This makes him all the more curious to speak with the PCs, in the hopes they can shed some light on his mystery. He's aware they won't likely do so willingly, however, and is prepared to fight them.

When the PCs arrive, the juju zombies are seated at the table and Valthazar is at his desk. Valthazar has his feet up and the chair tilted slightly back. He holds a thumb-sized chunk of gray flesh in one hand and a magnifying glass in the other but drops them both to the floor in surprise when he sees PCs identical to the undead sitting around the table. Read or paraphrase the following.

A slender man with white hair sitting behind the desk seems genuinely surprised at the two matching groups in the room. "Well, isn't this a turn? There's far too many of you to be a trick of those oversized house cats." He stands. "Do come in, and perhaps we can solve the mystery of how you can be in two places at once, both alive and dead!"

A raven on the bookshelf behind the desk flaps its wings and lets loose a screech. "Quiet, Midnight," the pale man says. "We have fascinating visitors. Be polite, or I'll roast you on a spit and eat your beak dipped in honey."

The PCs are free to attack Valthazar and his undead minions right away, but it's likely curiosity will get the better of them about this strange meeting. Some questions the PCs might have and Valthazar's answers to them appear below.

Who are you? The pale man smiles. "My name is Valthazar Quietus, and I am in charge of the little band of miscreants you must have already encountered. More to

the point, who might you be?" The PCs are free to answer Valthazar as they wish or just ignore his question.

What are you doing here? "I should be asking you the same, but in the interest of sharing information, I will go first. We are combing through the ruins of the nearby town looking for... items of interest for my superiors." Without looking down, Valthazar flips a small ledger on the desk closed.

Are those zombies us? "It does look that way, does it not? We found these corpses in that quaint little town and they spoke to me. Not literally, of course. Well, not until I had them reanimated, anyway!" He chuckles at his own turns of phrase. "But who are they? Are you several sets of identical twins? Perhaps you or they are simulacra given life of their own? This is quite vexing."

You turned them into zombies?! "Certainly! An improvement from what I'm seeing in front of me now, to be honest." Valthazar turns to look at the collected undead. "I suspect they would say the same thing." At this, all of the juju zombies nod in eerie unison.

Are you members of the Whispering Way? "That's a rude question, as we're a *secret* society, but considering the openness with which we're working here, my agreement would merely confirm your suspicion. So, yes. The time is coming when we will no longer need to remain hidden and can advance our agendas more directly. My work here supports that."

What do you know about the explosion that destroyed Roslar's Coffers? At such a question, Valthazar simply smirks and shakes his head. If the PCs press him on this topic, he says, "Now, now, don't get testy. The undead versions of you have much better manners."

What is the Whispering Way's plan/Is the Whispering Way behind the explosion? "Your question matches mine! Alas, even highly regarded field agents such as myself are given information only on a need-to-know basis. But I'm no fool. I've realized the destruction of this insignificant community was merely a test, and likely a harbinger of greater things to come."

What about the wall of poisonous fog? "That, I admit, is my doing. It was a necessary precaution to prevent curious travelers from interrupting my work. But you somehow made it through? Or have you been in town all along? I would have thought Chatar would have discovered you long before now. Strange."

We died. We were in the Boneyard! If the PCs describe their recent experiences in the Boneyard, Valthazar's eyes grow wide and the raven caws once more. "That can't be right, can it? Yet it would explain the peculiar... emptiness... of your corpses, if your spirits in the Great Beyond somehow acquired new bodies of flesh and blood. That would require some powerful and unusual magic, though. This definitely requires further study."

Eventually, if the PCs haven't already initiated a fight with the dhampir, Valthazar tires of questions. He proposes to work with the PCs to discover the true reason behind their duplicated physical bodies. If the PCs agree, he says, "This will, of course, necessitate me cutting you open to see what makes you tick," and he commands his juju zombies to attack.

Regardless of how the combat with Valthazar begins, he commands the juju zombies to attack the PCs with a wave of his hand, and he attempts to support them from a distance.

This encounter is simplest with the juju zombie warriors below; use a number of Small zombies equal to the number of Small PCs and a number of Medium zombies equal to the number of Medium PCs. You should customize the appearance of the zombies to match the PCs (describing one of the Medium zombies as an elf to match an elf PC, for example), but you don't need to change the statistics for an exact match. Alternatively, you can provide a closer match with some ideas in the Personalizing the Zombies sidebar on page 50.

MEDIUM JUJU ZOMBIES (UP TO 1 PER PC) CR 3

XP 800 each

Human juju zombie warrior 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 291)

NE Medium undead

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 34 each (4d10+12)

Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **DR** 5/magic and slashing; **Immune** cold, electricity, *magic missile*, undead traits; **Resist** fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +11 (1d8+6/19-20) or slam +5 (1d6+3)

TACTICS

During Combat The zombies advance toward the PCs, positioning themselves to guard Valthazar and use attacks of opportunity and the Stand Still feat to punish PCs who attempt to move past them.

Morale The zombies fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 24

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative^B, Toughness^B, Power Attack, Stand Still

Skills Climb +20, Intimidate +8, Perception +5; **Racial**

Modifiers +8 Climb

Languages Common

Gear mwk chain shirt, mwk longsword

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Invisible Aegis Occult Ritual

The invisible aegis occult ritual is one of the simpler occult rituals to learn and perform. It produces a small, unbreakable barrier of force that protects a single item. Refer to pages 208–209 of *Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* for more information on how to use occult rituals.

INVISIBLE AEGIS

School abjuration; **Level** 4

Casting Time 40 minutes

Components V, M (a clear glass marble), F (an iron key)

Skill Checks Knowledge (arcana) DC 30, 2 successes; Spellcraft DC 30, 1 success; Use Magic Device DC 30, 1 success

Range touch

Target one object no larger than 1 cubic foot in size

Duration 1 month

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless, object); **SR** yes (harmless, object)

Backlash The caster takes 4d6 points of damage.

Failure The caster can't touch or use the target object for 24 hours.

EFFECT

The caster begins by rolling the marble around the target object, tracing complex occult patterns. The caster then touches the iron key to the target object four times. The caster repeats the process of rolling the marble and touching the key to the target object three more times, though with each iteration, the marble becomes harder and harder to move, as if it were being pushed through thickening cement. Upon successful completion of the ritual, the marble disappears, and a small, invisible sphere of force surrounds the target object. Any creature holding the iron key used as the focus can pick up and move the target object. Any other creature attempting to touch the target object meets a solid, immovable surface similar to a *wall of force*. The protective sphere dissipates after 1 month, but it ends immediately if a creature holding the iron key taps it to the object four times in quick succession.

SMALL JUJU ZOMBIES (UP TO 1 PER PC)

CR 3

XP 800 each

Halfling juju zombie warrior 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 291)

NE Small undead

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 16 (+2 armor, +5 Dex, +3 natural, +1 size)

hp 38 each (4d10+16)

Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **DR** 5/magic and

slashing; **Immune** cold, electricity, *magic missile*, undead traits; **Resist** fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +11 (1d3+3/19–20) or slam +5 (1d4+1)

Ranged mwk dagger +11 (1d3+3/19–20)

TACTICS

During Combat The zombies move to flank opponents that threaten Valthazar.

Morale The zombies fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 21

Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative^B, Toughness^B, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +7 (+3 when jumping), Climb +20, Perception +5, Stealth +11; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Acrobatics, +10 Climb, +2 Perception

Languages Common, Gnome, Halfling

Gear mwk leather armor, mwk daggers (4)

VALTHAZAR QUIETUS

CR 9

XP 6,400

hp 57 (see page 60)

Development: The iron key in Valthazar's possession has occult significance, as it was used in his invisible aegis occult ritual. It isn't magical, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Spellcraft check while examining the item or who can otherwise identify an occult item (such as with *detect psychic significance*^{OA} or the psychometry occult skill unlock^{OA}) realizes the key is important. Anyone holding this key can bypass the shield around the *fetoring maw* in area L1 as if it weren't there and can even remove the shield entirely by tapping the key to the *fetoring maw* four times in quick succession.

VALTHAZAR'S JOURNAL

The journal Valthazar keeps on his desk is easy to find. It contains three important clues.

First, the journal contains substantially the same information that Valthazar imparts to the PCs in conversation, which is particularly useful for PCs who didn't speak with him. Of particular note, Valthazar's journal speculates that the explosion in Roslar's Coffin was, in fact, orchestrated by the Whispering Way. He has heard rumors of a powerful device or spell called the "Radiant Fire," and he believes that Roslar's Coffin was merely a test of its power.

Second, Valthazar's journal also contains a draft of his report to his superior in the Whispering Way, who is only identified as the letter G (the PCs are unlikely to learn the



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truth, but this is the winterwight Gildais, who has a larger role to play in the rest of the Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path). Valthazar's report is a thorough yet dry retelling of the destruction, mutations, and undead around Roslar's Coffers, and he particularly notes the discovery of the PCs' corpses. He opines that the undead created from these corpses seem somehow "lacking" when compared to other juju zombies, but he doesn't have any indication of why this might be the case unless it has something to do with the explosion. It's clear that Valthazar was still perplexed by this issue, and it's why he hasn't been able to finish and send the report yet.

Finally, the journal contains information about the invisible aegis occult ritual, which forms the shield around the *fetoring maw*. Valthazar is proud of this ritual, and it's set forth in enough detail for the PCs to learn it (see the Invisible Aegis Occult Ritual sidebar on page 52). Even if the PCs don't want to learn the ritual, they can identify that the key used as the ritual's focus can bypass the ward. This should clue them in to the significance of Valthazar's iron key.

L16. Deacon's Bedroom

This wide room features a simple writing desk, a bed, a nightstand, and several attached wardrobes along the southern wall. The doors of the wardrobes hang open, and several articles of clothing have been pulled out and piled on the floor. Doors lead north and west.

The deacon's private bedroom might seem expansive and decadent for the head of a cathedral whose main purpose is to train crusaders and protect nearby townsfolk, but none of the Sarenite priests who held the position ever used church funds to lavishly decorate this room. Most of the furniture here dates back to the cathedral's original construction, with only the bed's mattress having been replaced over the years. Though it looks plush, upon closer inspection, the PCs realize the mattress is stuffed with coarse straw and probably isn't very comfortable.

Valthazar attempted to sleep in the bed the first few nights after he claimed these quarters as his own, but he couldn't get comfortable. He has since removed all the unused clothes from the smallest wardrobe and dozes within it, standing upright, imagining it to be a coffin.

The writing desk holds the previous deacon's final personal correspondence, which includes a friendly letter to a paladin in Vigil ending with a notation for a chess move. Valthazar has idly scribbled a few alternative, superior chess moves on this letter.

The door in the north wall leads to the deacon's office (area L15). The door in the west wall leads to the deacon's washroom (area L17).

L17. Deacon's Washroom

Wooden cabinets line the southern wall of this room, and a vanity with a round mirror and a single chair stands against the northern wall. A fist-sized hole in the wall next to the mirror seems recent. A steel tub, rust beginning to form along its bottom, occupies the center of the room, holding a crumbling skeleton.

This washroom was constructed to allow the cathedral's deacon to bathe in private. Most of the Bastion of Light's deacons offered the use of this washroom to any who requested it, especially visiting crusaders back from the front, often volunteering to heat up and carry the water for the honored guest. The cabinets formerly contained a variety of fragrances and unguents, but the last deacon never restocked them and the shelves inside are thick with dust.

When Valthazar commandeered these quarters, he decided to use this washroom as the resting place for the bones of Elliot, his "pet" festering spirit, who now guards the upper intersection (area L1). Valthazar has created a special link between the festering spirit and this skeleton; when Valthazar speaks to this skull, the festering spirit hears his words no matter how far away it is. Similarly, whenever the festering spirit speaks, the skull speaks the same words—in this way, the festering spirit can alert Valthazar of anyone tampering with the *fetoring maw*.

The door in the east wall leads to the deacon's bedroom (area L16).

Story Award: If the PCs bury the skeleton in consecrated ground, the festering spirit is put to its final rest and is destroyed. If the PCs didn't already defeat the festering spirit in area L1, award them 4,800 XP.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

When the PCs finally leave the area encompassed by the dome of fog from the *fetoring maw*, they encounter a woman wearing a heavy, dark-red cloak. A strange but not unpleasant aroma of spices accompanies her. The woman holds up her hands to show that she isn't armed and addresses the PCs. Read or paraphrase the following.

"Hold now!" A steady feminine voice issues forth from beneath the dark crimson hood. Her accent is clipped and strange. "I mean you no harm! I am just as caught up in these events as you. But perhaps we can help one another? Wouldn't you like to learn more about what caused all this?" She gestures in the direction of Roslar's Coffers. "And why the undead and malicious fanatics seem to be drawn to its



aftermath?" The woman speaks firmly and quickly, without awaiting a response to her questions. "You certainly seem capable of handling yourselves, so I propose an alliance. I can offer you a respite from your wounds, and resources to replenish your supplies." The stranger points to a sturdy wagon positioned on the road not far away, hitched to a pair of grumpy-looking donkeys. "In return, I ask that you travel to Vigil and warn the Knights of Ozem that the destruction wrought here has every chance of happening in Lastwall's capital. While you are there, be watchful for a foul creature named Gildais or, at the very least, evidence of his misdeeds within the city. Gildais was once Tar-Baphon's seneschal, and I fear he has escaped Gallowspire and caused this disaster as part of a larger plan to free the Whispering Tyrant."

This woman is **Arazni** (NE female human lich wizard 20/marshal 8), the object of Roslar's adoration and the subject of murals and statuary in both this tomb and the version of it the PCs escaped in the Boneyard. Now a powerful lich, she is enmeshed in the events of Roslar's Coffin due to her psychic connection to Tar-Baphon. Once a herald of Aroden and patron saint of the Knights of Ozem, she was summoned to battle Tar-Baphon during the Shining Crusade, a battle she ultimately lost. The Whispering Tyrant tried to demoralize his enemies by hurling her body back at them, but the crusaders eventually won the day and took Arazni's body to their new citadel of Vigil to grant her a proper, dignified burial. Her story didn't end there, however, as her corpse was stolen in retaliation for the Knights of Ozem's attack against the ghost-king Geb. Geb transformed Arazni into a lich and forced her to be his queen. When Geb disappeared from public view, Arazni took over the day-to-day affairs of his country, despite her hatred for the ghost-king. Arazni is a queen and a lich, but she is neither of these willingly.

Ever since Arazni's rebirth into undeath, she has heard Tar-Baphon's psychic whisperings attempting to coax her into his service. Arazni is in no way tempted to join her murderer, but through this psychic link she has discovered a bit about his recent plans, including his efforts to transform the fragments of the *Shattered Shield of Arnisant* into the devastating weapon he calls the *Radiant Fire*. To learn more, Arazni traveled to Roslar's Coffin, arriving just before the catastrophe. (Mayor Grive of Roslar's Coffin saw Arazni the evening before the blast;

in "The Dead Roads," she might have told the PCs about a masked woman with a strange accent who smelled of spices.) Arazni was obliterated in the blast, but so too were the graveknights that follow her whenever she leaves Geb. Arazni's body re-formed in Geb, but she hurried back to Lastwall in time to witness the PCs' victory over the forces of the Whispering Way. Arazni knows that the

PCs are survivors of the terrible explosion and is certain their destiny is bound with hers, but she can't explain why and she doesn't know about the *obols* lodged within the PCs.

While Arazni wouldn't shed any tears if Tar-Baphon used the *Radiant Fire* to destroy the Knights of Ozem, she also doesn't want her killer to escape his imprisonment. She believes that, with the aid of the PCs who inexplicably survived the *Radiant Fire*, she can both stop Tar-Baphon and break the shackles that chain her to Geb. Making allies of the PCs is her first step to those ends.

Regardless of whether the PCs speak with Arazni, she leaves the wagon for their use. In addition to being a mode of transport the PCs can use to get to Vigil, the wagon contains a wealth of treasure for the PCs. The wagon contains 2 weeks' worth of trail rations, a barrel of fresh water, six skins of ale, and a matching +1 *composite longbow* (+3 Str) and +1 *defending longsword*, each wrapped in oilcloth. A slender crate contains a masterwork short sword and a masterwork rapier, each with a red leather hilt. Another, larger crate contains a suit of +1 *studded leather* and a suit of masterwork chainmail; both suits of armor have decorations that resemble feathery wings. A *handy haversack* contains a *potion of eagle's splendor*, a *potion of fox's cunning*, a *potion of owl's wisdom*, and a *ring of protection* +2. A velvet bag on the wagon's seat contains two wands: a *wand of cure moderate wounds* with 33 charges remaining and a *wand of lesser restoration* with 13 charges remaining. Finally, a leather bag tucked beneath the wagon's seat contains 310 pp.

If the PCs agree to speak with Arazni, she can fill the PCs in on any part of the Shining Crusade's history and Tar-Baphon's defeat that they might not know, but her information about the Whispering Tyrant's current plans is incomplete. She explains (or confirms) that Tar-Baphon has crafted a weapon called the *Radiant Fire*, and that this weapon is somehow tied to the *Shattered Shield of Arnisant*



Arazni



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that is enshrined in Vigil, save for a single missing splinter that is lodged in Tar-Baphon's hand. She shares this information with the PCs, and she is impressed if they have already pieced some of this together from speaking with Valthazar Quietus or reviewing his journal.

Arazni's key requests are those she's already made: she wants them to go to the city of Vigil to warn the Knights of Ozem about the fate of Roslar's Coffers and to alert them that the catastrophe could happen again. She also wants them to keep an eye out for the Whispering Tyrant's seneschal, Gildais, who she believes is currently in Vigil or recently left it. Arazni knows Gildais is important to the Whispering Tyrant's plans, but not how. She dismisses any suggestion of arranging a future meeting with the PCs; she says she'll be checking back in with them to see what they've discovered in good time.

Despite her candor, there is much Arazni doesn't yet share with the PCs. She refuses to tell them her name or even let them see her face clearly, keeping her features concealed within her cloak. She prefers to remain at least 30 feet away from the PCs, but even at a distance, the PCs can see that her skin has a gray pallor. If the PCs bring this up, Arazni tells them honestly that she could have disguised herself, but thought it was more important to

be honest. She doesn't hide her undead nature if the PCs press her on it, but she won't reveal that she's a lich—she suspects that fact would erode any trust she's building with the PCs. Like all liches, Arazni has an aura of fear, but she has suppressed it for this meeting with the PCs. Finally, although Arazni is free with her information, she doesn't explain how she obtained it—and she certainly doesn't explain her role in historical events or her psychic connection to Tar-Baphon.

The PCs might not be willing to speak with Arazni and might even try to attack her; if so, she sadly intones, "I, too, have difficulty trusting people," and flees by casting a quickened *dimension door*. It shouldn't be necessary for this encounter, but Arazni's full stat block appears in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #142: Gardens of Gallowspire*.

If the PCs still need a reason to travel to Vigil for the next adventure, Jando Parr can suggest meeting with the Knights of Ozem to discuss what to do about the threat of the Whispering Way. In any event, the half-orc ranger is happy to see the dome of fog gone and is willing to travel north with the PCs for a time. The PCs begin the long journey to Vigil and warn the Knights of Ozem of the dangers to come in the next installment of the Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path, "Last Watch."



Chatar Esuri

This ghoul sees all mortal life as nothing more than a filthy stain on the world that Urgathoa and the Whispering Way have given her the power to wipe clean. She fights with terrifying grace and gives no quarter to her enemies.

CHATAR ESURI CR 6

XP 3,200

Female ghoul inquisitor of Urgathoa 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 38)
NE Medium undead

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (+6 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

hp 56 (9d8+16)

Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2;

Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee +1 scythe +12/+7 (2d4+9/19–20/×4) or bite +5 (1d6+2 plus paralysis and disease), 2 claws +5 (1d6+2 plus paralysis)

Special Attacks bane (7 rounds/day), judgment 3/day, paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, elves are immune, DC 12)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +10) 6/day—*bleeding touch* (3 rounds)

Inquisitor Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +10) At will—*detect alignment*, *discern lies* (7 rounds/day)

Inquisitor Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +10) 3rd (2/day)—*fester*^{APG} (DC 16), *keen edge*
2nd (4/day)—*castigate*^{APG} (DC 15), *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 15), *see invisibility*, *weapon of awe*^{APG} (DC 15)
1st (5/day)—*bane* (DC 14), *curse water* (DC 14), *protection from good*, *true strike*, *wrath*^{APG}

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *bleed* (DC 13), *brand*^{APG} (DC 13), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *resistance*

Domain Death

TACTICS

Before Combat If Chatar believes she will get into a fight within the next few minutes, she casts *keen edge* and *weapon of awe* on her scythe and drinks her potion of *blur*.

During Combat On the first round of combat, Chatar pronounces a judgment of protection, gaining a +2 profane bonus to Armor Class, and casts *castigate* on the nearest foe. She waits for her enemies to come to her, activating her

bane ability to gain a bonus on damage rolls against that creature type. She resorts to using her claws only if she has to. If she starts taking damage, she pronounces a judgment of healing and casts *inflict moderate wounds* on herself.

Morale A fanatic devotee to the cause, Chatar Esuri fights until she is destroyed.

Base Statistics Without *keen edge* and *weapon of awe*, Chatar's statistics are **Melee** +1 scythe +12/+7 (2d4+7/×4).

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 15, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 25

Feats Dodge, Furious Focus^{APG}, Power Attack, Precise Strike^{APG}, Swap Places^{APG}, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (scythe)

Skills Acrobatics +6 (+2 when jumping), Climb +10, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (nature) +10, Knowledge (religion) +12, Perception +15, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +12, Swim +6

Languages Common, Elven, Necril

SQ monster lore +3, solo tactics, stern gaze +3, track +3

Combat Gear *potion of blur*; **Other Gear** +1 *scale mail*, +1 *scythe*, *ring of protection +1*, iron unholy symbol of Urgathoa, 177 gp

Chatar Esuri remembers nothing of her life before she became a ghoul and a chosen inquisitor of Urgathoa. As far as she is concerned, the person she was before she rose as undead was a completely different entity that provided only the general shape of the skin she now inhabits. Anything that person might have done, said, or thought has rotted away, like the flesh from a months-old corpse.

The first thing Chatar Esuri saw upon rising as a ghoul, after clawing her way out of the earth, was a cloud of black flies that swarmed over the putrescent corpse of the cemetery's gravedigger. That corpse was her first meal, and as she moved to gorge herself, the insects flew away to briefly form the shape of Urgathoa's holy symbol before scattering. Chatar immediately felt the call of the Pallid Princess, thanked Urgathoa for the feast, and has fervently worshipped the goddess of undeath since.

In the following decades, Chatar roamed the Inner Sea region, devouring those living creatures she slaughtered in



Urgathoa's name. Over time, she developed a burning hatred for all living creatures and a small amount of self-loathing for her appetite for their flesh. For a time, she attempted to fast and sustain her body with magic instead, but she lasted for only a month before the hunger became too strong to ignore. That night, she killed the entire staff and all the patrons of a small roadside inn and devoured most of the bodies. A few hours later, when Chatar stumbled from the building, she saw another thick cloud of flies. This time, the insects buzzed and crawled over a scythe wedged into a nearby tree trunk. Knowing this was a gift from Urgathoa, Chatar pried the blade free and has carried it ever since.

Several years ago, Chatar ventured into the western reaches of Ustalav and was approached by a sect of the Whispering Way; its members had heard of her depredations and wanted to recruit her. Even better, this sect consisted of ghouls who felt her same hatred of the living and disgust at hungering for them. Chatar surprised herself by joining almost immediately, not realizing she had been longing for someone to commiserate with for many years. This camaraderie lasted only a short amount of time, as weeks later, a group of Pharasmins local to Ustalav raided the sect, destroying many of her newfound friends.

Chatar escaped and made her way to Ghasterhall, where she had been told the Whispering Way held its headquarters. While she was thrilled to see many different types of undead creatures, she was concerned to discover that the secret society also included living members. She complained to others that such mortal filth should not be allowed, but was rebuked by a few who explained that the cult required access to areas that typically frown on the undead, and that members of the Whispering Way would often rise as undead after death.

Mollified for a time, Chatar continued to support the Whispering Way. The ghoul inquisitor isn't pleased with her current assignment, serving under the dhampir Valthazar Quietus and working with living necromancers to scour Roslar's Coffers. However, she has faith that Urgathoa has led her to this point and that if Tar-Baphon's plan is successful, she and the others will be one step closer to the undead utopia that she has longed for.

Tall and strong, Chatar has tight, purplish skin the color of an old bruise. Her jagged teeth overflow her mouth, giving her a gruesome, slaving appearance.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Chatar Esuri is the Whispering Way's main enforcer in the town of Roslar's Coffers, venturing into the destroyed

town to collect information and specimens for Valthazar Quietus and his necromancers to study. She considers this assignment to be drudgery and longs for an opportunity to test her skills against living enemies—such as the PCs. She fights with every ounce of her strength to slay her foes and does nothing but spit expletives if captured.



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Jando Parr

Jando Parr is a reclusive ranger who roams Lastwall, hunting cultists of the Whispering Way. While investigating the blast that destroyed Roslar's Coffin, he became trapped by the wall of poisonous fog that now surrounds the town.

JANDO PARR

CR 5

XP 1,600

Male half-orc ranger 6

LN Medium humanoid (human, orc)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 49 (6d10+12)

Fort +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities orc ferocity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee broken longsword +5/+0 (1d8-1)

Ranged +1 longbow +12/+7 (1d8+1/+3)

Special Attacks combat style (archery), favored enemies (humans +2, undead +4)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

1st—*endure elements*, *pass without trace*

TACTICS

Before Combat Jando begins every day by casting *endure elements* on himself. If he believes he might be tracked by any animals (or other creatures with scent), he casts *pass without trace* on himself before beginning his daily patrol of Roslar's Coffin.

During Combat If he holds an elevated position over his foes, Jando makes full attacks with his longbow. Otherwise, he attempts to stay on the move each round.

Morale The half-orc ranger isn't foolhardy enough to throw his life away in a fight. If reduced to fewer than 20 hit points, he attempts to flee, taking to the trees if possible. If he is fighting undead or cultists of the Whispering Way, he doesn't retreat until reduced to fewer than 10 hit points.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 22

Feats Dodge, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow)

Skills Climb +10, Heal +11, Intimidate +1, Knowledge (nature) +9, Perception +11, Stealth +13, Survival +11; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Intimidate

Languages Common, Orc

SQ favored terrain (forest +2), hunter's bond (companions), orc blood, track +3, wild empathy +5

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, +1 longbow, broken longsword, *cloak of resistance* +1

The orcs of the Hold of Belkzen have menaced the western border of Lastwall for hundreds of years, and this constant threat of attack has left many of the latter nation's citizens with prejudices against orcs and their kin. Even orcs and half-orcs who have joined Lastwall's scouts and cavalry to protect the country face discrimination from some closed-minded citizens. Grolgun Ziskil was one such orc, defecting from her birth nation to become an accomplished rider and archer for the Lastwall cavalry after witnessing too many atrocities perpetrated by a cruel orc warlord. Though her loyalty to her new home never wavered, her allegiance was constantly in question, and Grolgun was accused of delivering troop information to the orc horde no fewer than five times during her military career. Yet, her sterling record was never tarnished.

Eventually, these constant attacks on her character wore down her will to fight, and she declined to sign up for another tour of duty. She retired to a farm on the northern border of the Fangwood but still faced prejudice on a daily basis. Some of her neighbors treated her with disdain and suspicion, she found it difficult to find buyers for her wares, and when she had a child with a human farmhand named Martain Parr, local thugs burned down her barn. Martain died rescuing several of the farm's horses from the blaze. Grolgun was not cowed, however. She raised her boy Jando, giving him his father's surname to honor the man, and taught him the hard truths of the world.

Jando grew to be as skilled with the bow as his mother, but sadly, he also experienced the same types of prejudice. He spent much of his time alone in the woods, learning the ways of nature. One cloudless evening, Jando found himself in an area of the Fangwood he had never seen before. A cold mist rolled in through the trees and, by the light of the moon, the half-orc watched as the fog began to swirl over the remains of a buck felled recently by predators. To



Jando's surprise, the buck's corpse staggered to its hooves, its eyes alight with cold fire, and suddenly charged at him. Jando leapt out of the way just in time, suffering only a graze from the remains of the buck's antlers, and ran. He slipped quickly through the trees as his instincts guided him safely home, but Jando's nightmares were plagued by visions of the creature for months after.

When Jando came of age, he briefly considered enrolling in the Crusader War College in Vigil, but he didn't feel like putting himself through the chore of justifying his heritage on a daily basis. He still felt a duty to his country, however, and started shadowing the many patrols that guarded Lastwall's borders with the Hold of Belkzen and Ustalav. Without the soldiers ever knowing, Jando studied their habits to improve his knowledge of outdoor survival and combat. Over the years, he became aware of the threat of the Whispering Way, whose cultists venerate undeath and looked to free Tar-Baphon from his prison of Gallowspire. At last, Jando had an enemy he could fight.

Jando has now spent almost a decade ranging across Lastwall on his own, hunting down undead threats, rescuing lost travelers, and occasionally returning home to visit his aging mother. Though he prefers to work alone, he occasionally teams up with like-minded patrols, traveling with them for a day or two before disappearing back into the night. He has made a few acquaintances during these times but never lingers long enough to form friendships, as years of isolation have slightly hardened his heart.

Recently, Jando was patrolling near Lastwall's southern border when he witnessed the town of Roslar's Coffe being consumed by the *Radiant Fire*; even at his distance, the concussive blast was enough to blow him off his feet and knock him unconscious. Though he couldn't explain what he saw when he woke, he was certain the cultists of the Whispering Way were behind the catastrophe. Ignoring all common sense, he rushed toward the aftermath, soon finding himself among the ruins of the town and dozens of charred, twisted forms. Moments later, the Whispering Way activated the *fetoring maw*, sealing Roslar's Coffe within a dome of poisonous fog.

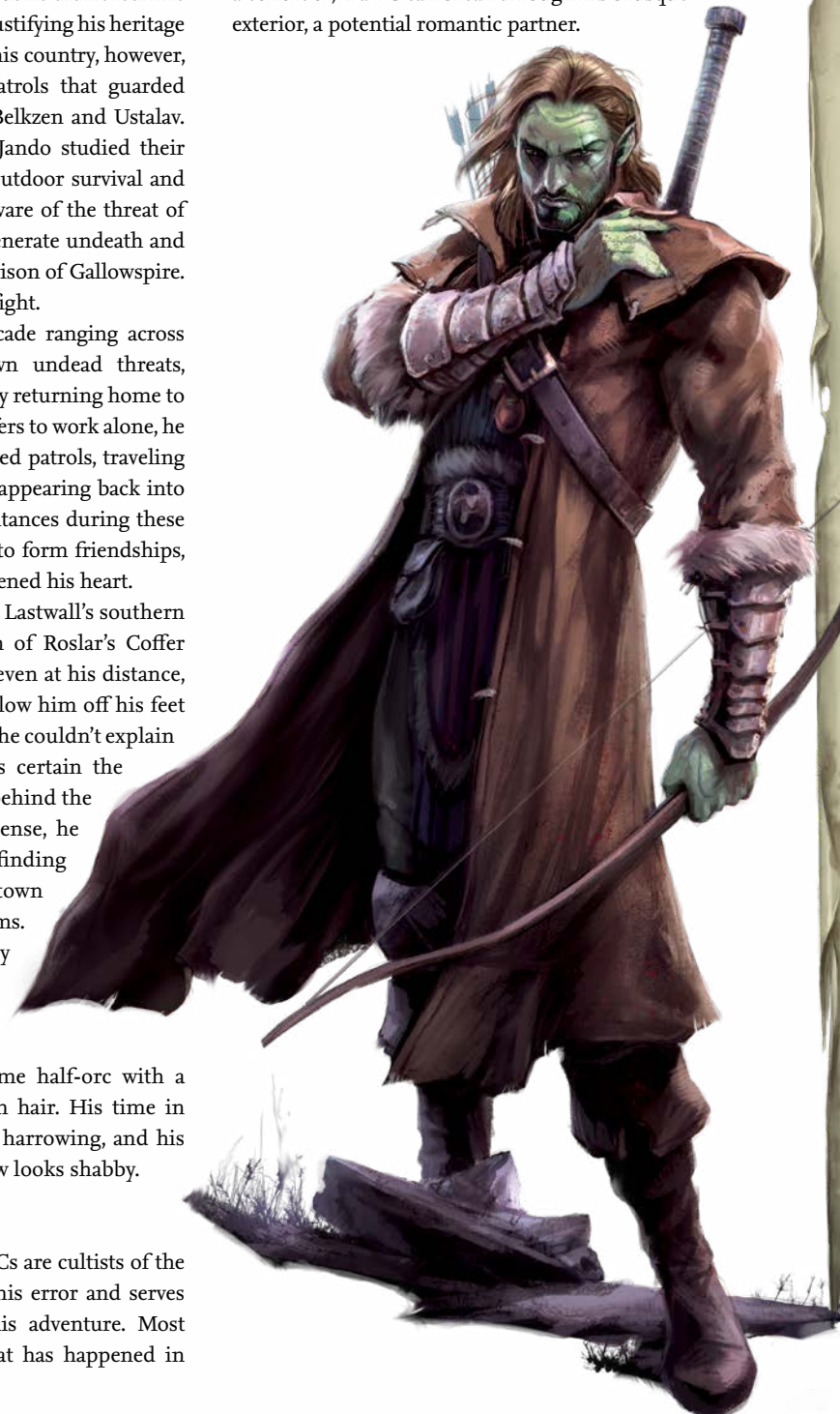
Jando is a muscular and handsome half-orc with a close-cropped beard and long brown hair. His time in Roslar's Coffe has been particularly harrowing, and his well-worn leather armor and gear now looks shabby.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Though Jando initially suspects the PCs are cultists of the Whispering Way, he quickly realizes his error and serves to ease them into the events of this adventure. Most importantly, he fills them in on what has happened in

Roslar's Coffe since their "death" from the *Radiant Fire* and explains that the Whispering Way is involved.

While Jando doesn't officially return in the Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path, he could become a recurring ally or even a replacement PC—in the latter case, the GM can determine that Jando's proximity to the destruction of Roslar's Coffe was enough to embed one of the *obols* within his flesh. He also makes an excellent candidate for a cohort or, if a PC can break through his brusque exterior, a potential romantic partner.



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Valthazar Quietus

Pale and slender, Valthazar Quietus commands the Whispering Way sect sent to analyze the aftermath of the *Radiant Fire* explosion in Roslar's Coffin. Though he already has close ties to the unliving, his eventual goal is to fully embrace undeath.

VALTHAZAR QUIETUS

CR 9

XP 6,400

Male dhampir witch 10 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 89, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 65)

NE Medium humanoid (dhampir)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+2 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)

hp 57 (10d6+20)

Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7; +2 vs. disease and mind-affecting effects

Defensive Abilities negative energy affinity;

Resist undead resistance

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +5 (1d4-1/19-20)

Special Attacks hexes (agony, blight, cackle, evil eye, misfortune, retribution)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +14)
3/day—*detect undead*

Witch Spells Prepared (CL 10th; concentration +14)
5th—*inflict critical wounds* (DC 20), *suffocation*^{APG} (DC 20)
4th—*dimension door*, *sickening inflict moderate wounds* (DC 17), *inflict serious wounds* (DC 19), *phantasmal killer* (DC 18)
3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 18), *sickening inflict light wounds* (DC 16), *lightning bolt* (DC 17), *vampiric touch*
2nd—*burning gaze*^{APG} (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 16), *inflict moderate wounds* (2, DC 17), *spectral hand*
1st—*cause fear* (DC 16), *inflict light wounds* (2, DC 16), *obscuring mist*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16)
0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *message*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 15)

Patron death^{UM}

TACTICS

During Combat Valthazar uses his agony hex on a spellcaster, the retribution hex on an obvious melee combatant, and the misfortune hex on a third PC. He uses cackle to extend this hex for as long as he can and in the meantime casts

spectral hand to deliver inflict spells at range. When it becomes clear that the PCs are protected from negative energy, he falls back on spells like *phantasmal killer*, *lightning bolt*, and *burning gaze*.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, Valthazar casts *dimension door* to escape to the lower floor of the temple. He uses any remaining inflict spells to heal himself and then seeks out the PCs again, casting any damaging spells he hasn't already used. This time he fights to the death, secretly hoping the hate in his heart will cause him to eventually rise again as some form of undead.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 19

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Sickening Spell^{APG}, Spell Focus (necromancy), Toughness

Skills Bluff +5, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (planes) +12, Knowledge (religion) +14, Perception +7, Spellcraft +17, Use Magic Device +16;

Racial Modifiers +2 Bluff, +2 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Infernal, Necril

SQ resist level drain, witch's familiar (raven named Midnight)

Combat Gear *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** mwk dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *bracers of armor* +2, *headband of vast intelligence* +2, *ring of protection* +1, iron key (connected to the ward protecting the *fetoring maw* in area L1), noble's outfit, signet ring, 68 gp

Valthazar's father, Matthiasu Rand, was a bookkeeper for several popular restaurants in Caliphast until he ran afoul of a vampire in the dark streets one night. The vampire drank Matthiasu's blood but did not kill him; instead, over the next few months, he turned the accountant into one of his spawn, eventually granting Matthiasu the full gift of vampirism. All the while, Matthiasu maintained his normal life, hiding his dark secret from his friends and his wife Delphina with the help of his vampire master.

Much to Matthiasu's surprise, Delphina became pregnant, but the trauma of giving birth to a half-undead child put too much strain on her body and she perished. Despite being a vampire, Matthiasu had still



loved his wife, and her death nearly broke his undead heart. He raised Valthazar as normally as he could, but it quickly became evident that the boy was not quite human. Matthiasu tried to convince his son that they each suffered from a rare disease that meant they had to stay out of the sun and away from others, so Valthazar grew up with no real friends.

At the age of 10, Valthazar came upon a dying rat with a broken neck in a trap in his home's attic. Before he knew what was happening, he found himself tearing into the rodent's flesh and drinking its blood. At first, he hid these newfound cravings from his father, until the day Matthiasu caught his son squeezing the vital fluids from an alley cat.

Matthiasu explained the truth to Valthazar, who experienced a sudden revelation: all the pain and sadness and darkness he had felt growing up wasn't his fault, as it was part of his flesh and blood. Valthazar then chose not to fight his nature, embracing his bloodthirsty urges, natural charm, and innate malice. He became as cruel as any true vampire, gathering thuggish minions to his side and running a small gang in Caliphaz. He soon ran afoul of another street gang and was severely wounded in the skirmish that followed. Glimpsing the face of his mortality, Valthazar stumbled back home to demand that his father turn him into a vampire. Matthiasu refused, not wanting to kill the only living memory of his beloved wife. Infuriated that his father would be so selfish, Valthazar grabbed a nearby chair, smashed it to pieces, and drove a makeshift stake through Matthiasu's heart.

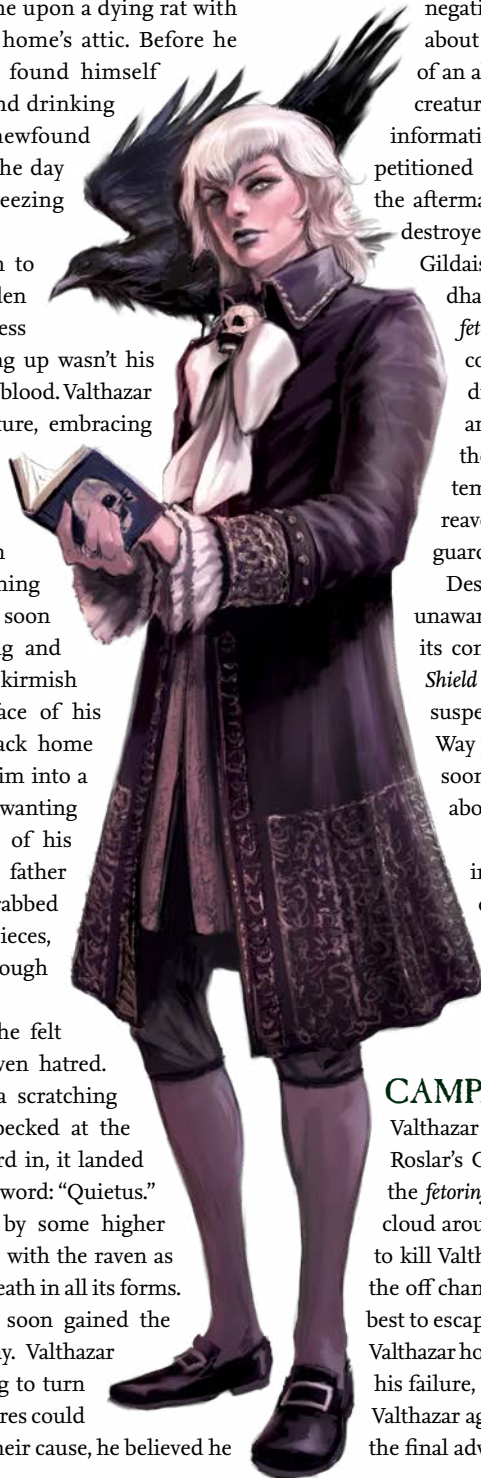
Afterward, Valthazar realized he felt nothing—no loss, sadness, or even hatred. A few minutes later, he heard a scratching at the window where a raven pecked at the panes. When Valthazar let the bird in, it landed on his shoulder and croaked one word: "Quietus." Believing he had been chosen by some higher power, the dhampir left Caliphaz with the raven as his familiar in a quest to master death in all its forms. He changed his last name and soon gained the attention of the Whispering Way. Valthazar realized the cult's goal of wanting to turn all of Golarion into undead creatures could benefit him as well. If he joined their cause, he believed he

would be given the chance to become an undead creature more powerful than a vampire and fulfill the destiny his father denied him.

Thanks to his ruthlessness and natural curiosity, Valthazar was eventually given control over his own cell within the cult. When he heard about the devastating superweapon called the *Radiant Fire* that produced both negative and positive energy, he eagerly set about learning all he could about the effects of an abundance of positive energy on living creatures. Believing that nothing is more informative than direct observation, Valthazar petitioned his superiors to be allowed to study the aftermath of the *Radiant Fire* explosion that destroyed Roslar's Coffin. The winterwright Gildais granted this request and loaned the dhampir a rare magical jewel known as a *fetoring maw* that would help Valthazar conduct his research without being disturbed by inquisitive locals. Valthazar and his Whispering Way accomplices then set up camp within the Sarenite temple outside of town, raising the red reaver that once lived there to serve as a guardian, and began their investigations.

Despite Valthazar's studies, he remains unaware of the origins of the *Radiant Fire* or its connection to the piece of the *Shattered Shield of Arisant* in Tar-Baphon's hand. He suspects his superiors in the Whispering Way plan to use the *Radiant Fire* again, and soon. He wants to make certain his notes about the weapon's test are complete.

Valthazar is an aristocratic figure, insisting on wearing fine clothing despite the environs of his current mission. He is pale and slender, with narrow features and an imperious gaze. His hair is blond, but so pale as to be nearly white.



CAMPAIGN ROLE

Valthazar is the main villain of "Eulogy for Roslar's Coffin" and the creature in control of the *fetoring maw*, which sustains the poisonous cloud around the town. The PCs will likely have to kill Valthazar to escape Roslar's Coffin, but on the off chance they capture him alive, he does his best to escape their grasp and head to Gallowspire. Valthazar hopes to beg Tar-Baphon's forgiveness for his failure, and the PCs could possibly encounter Valthazar again at the Whispering Tyrant's side in the final adventure, "Midwives to Death."

EULOGY FOR ROSLAR'S COFFIN

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Merchants of the Road

Arazni, the Red Queen

Machinations of the Whispering Way

Bestiary





Merchants of the Road

“Now, because I can tell you are a discerning customer, miss, I can tell that a horse just won’t do. Any old stuffy noble can ride a horse anywhere. And don’t get me started on camels. Nasty beasts, unsanitary. Spit everywhere, those camels. No, what a woman of your high class needs is a triceratops! Don’t tell me you’re not charmed. That graceful beak, the elegant ivory curve of his horns! You’ll be the talk of the town, I can guarantee you that! Imagine yourself striding into the city square in a gleaming, jeweled saddle on the back of your very own triceratops, crushing any carriages that try to jostle you! I’m telling you, you won’t regret this. And while we’re here, can I interest you in any of these fluffy velociraptor chicks? Purebred, with a fantastic pedigree. I have the papers right here!”

—Vallero Halucine, a somewhat unusual animal merchant



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Many campaigns require the player characters to travel to dangerous areas where friendly contact with the locals isn't assured, or places where regular shopping is otherwise unavailable. For GMs and players who wish to roleplay aspects of crafting and scavenging with limited resources, this may be fine, but some groups may wish to play as desperate fugitives or traveling adventurers without the added bookkeeping of equipment shortages. The following article provides five itinerant merchant groups that are active within the Lake Encarthan region and beyond, which the GM can use during the Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path—or during any other campaigns—to provide opportunities for the PCs to buy and sell gear as needed. These caravans also provide plot hooks that can be used to generate adventures of their own, either as side quests during the Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path or as plot seeds for GMs who are making their own campaigns.

THE BARAMASCO

The Varisian merchant caravan known as the Baramasco has good reason to be especially devout in its worship of Desna, as its travels can be more treacherous than most. The caravan wanders Varisia for half of the year, but during the other 6 months it partakes in a long, treacherous trading circuit that takes it from the Lands of the Linnorm Kings through Nirmathas, Lastwall, Ustalav, Kyonin, and other countries, all the way down to the nation of Taldor. Though the Baramasco trades in many of the same goods as other merchant companies in the Inner Sea, it is also known for bringing goods from Tian Xia to other parts of Avistan, buying the merchandise from caravans that cross the Crown of the World and taking it to shops in Kyonin and Taldor. Bricks of high-quality tea and carefully preserved sweet oranges can fetch a high price from the right buyer, and living Tian plants, herbs, and trees are in great demand in the elven lands of Kyonin. The less expensive Tian wares are bought by Tian families around the Inner Sea region. Some Tian immigrants have even joined the Baramasco caravan.

The Baramasco also does a good business in food—not just basic ingredients or Tian delicacies, but also hot dishes prepared and served fresh by the caravan members themselves. The caravan head, **Luciana Baramasco** (CG female human cleric of Desna 5), has a particular fondness for cooking, especially with ingredients from the lands that the Baramasco visits. The caravan often seeks out famous chefs or kitchens to either learn from or challenge, and the Varisian merchants will even divert from their normal route if they catch wind of such a cooking opportunity. Luciana is also willing to pay a good price or barter goods in exchange for rare new

spices, herbs, vegetables, or meat that she can use in her dishes, though adventurers who bring her the bodies of sapient monstrous creatures to cook are likely to receive a cuff to the side of the head instead of any coin. The caravan has also been willing to accept livestock in exchange for goods, so long as the animals are suitable to keep up with the caravan's grueling travel schedule; as a result, the Baramasco sometimes has truly unusual creatures up for sale, from the colorful silk moths that they raise in honor of Desna to baby water orms kept fresh in tanks.

The Baramasco is usually on the lookout for adventurers to hire, as its typical trade route takes it through many dangerous locales. Though the Desnan merchants' religious fervor provides some protection against the undead horrors of Ustalav, additional protection is always welcomed. Bandits are a common plague in the River Kingdoms, and while the orcs of Belkzen can usually be bribed to leave the caravan alone, a strong show of force helps a great deal in such negotiations. Ironically, the biggest danger the Baramasco faces usually comes from the nation of Molthune. Since the Baramasco's route travels through Nirmathas, and the caravan does business with whomever it meets along the way, it provides the Nirmathi militia with a source of valuable supplies and weapons in the war against Molthune's army. In an effort to starve out the Nirmathi resistance, Molthune occasionally hires bandits or organizes military operations to harass or destroy anyone who trades with Nirmathas, placing the Baramasco directly in its sights.

The Great Race: In spring, when the ice around the Crown of the World thaws enough to let caravans through from Tian Xia, a number of merchant companies begin a great race across the lands of northern Avistan. The goal: to be the first merchants to buy out the Tian caravans and then reach the nation of Taldor with imported tea, fruits, food, and other luxuries. With the decadent Taldan teahouses, restaurants, and shops hungry for rare merchandise to serve their wealthy clientele, the first caravan to reach Taldor with such goods can sell them for almost 10 times the normal price. Due to these high stakes, the race is incredibly dangerous, with caravans suffering terrible losses or even being obliterated every year; not only do the merchants take incredible risks in the name of speed, but bandits are well aware of the race and lie in wait to ambush these caravans. Worse yet, unscrupulous merchants often attempt to sabotage their rivals, with the Aspis Consortium being a notable offender. The Baramasco looks for adventurers each year to help it survive the trials of the upcoming race on its path to Taldor—but only if those adventurers can keep up.



THE CLOCKWORK CARAVAN

This colorful parade of automated wagons, mechanical behemoths, and talking bipedal animals is considered more of a spectacle than a shopping venue, and most people who stumble upon the Clockwork Caravan think it nothing more than a delightful sideshow. Though the caravan usually sticks to unsettled areas and never ventures into towns, accidental visitors quickly spread tales of its towering clockwork paraceratherium and fire-breathing metal dragon-horse, drawing curious crowds from local villages. Guests who are more familiar with either magic or engineering, however, find that there is far more substance than style to the Clockwork Caravan—the lifelike animals, easily dismissed by the unaware as simply magical beasts or constructs, are actually sophisticated and autonomous machines created with technology far beyond anything that is common knowledge on Golarion. Travelers who recognize the caravan's secret can attempt to purchase some of this fantastical technology from the caravan, along with other magical and mechanical goods, assuming they can win the caravan leader's trust.

Unfortunately, the caravan leader, **Sihn Siphandon** (CG male human wizard 10), has a long list of reasons to be paranoid. The aspiring inventor was originally an obsessive experimenter from Ustalav, but his life drastically changed when he managed to acquire a cache of artifacts from the Silver Mount in Numeria. Sihns sharp mind was able to reverse-engineer some of the Numerian technology, which he combined with his own research to create self-aware constructed life that was difficult to discern from an organic creature. This made him a high-profile target of the Technic League, who have made multiple assassination attempts against him out of a desire to keep their technological secrets completely to themselves. Sihns has suffered many injuries that have forced him to replace some of his own body with mechanical parts, but he has so far managed to survive via preparation, sheer luck, and the assistance of his clockwork creations, which often create and pilot mechanical decoys of Sihns to draw the attention of any would-be murderers. These decoys have proven so successful that some of the Technic League has begun to refer to Sihns as “the invincible man” or whisper among themselves that Sihns

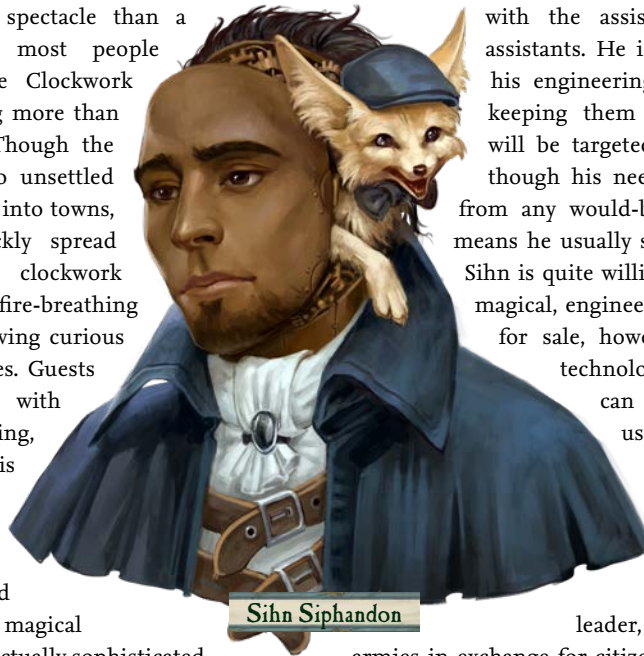
died years ago and is constantly replaced with mechanical duplicates built by his constructs.

Sihn now lives on the run, constantly moving with the assistance of his clockwork assistants. He is torn between spreading his engineering secrets out of spite or keeping them hidden so no one else will be targeted by the Technic League, though his need to hide his knowledge from any would-be assassins seeking him means he usually sticks to the latter option. Sihns is quite willing to offer more standard magical, engineering, and crafting services for sale, however, and even the most technologically inept adventurer can likely find something useful to purchase.

A Case of Unmistaken Identity:

A scandal recently has struck the nation of Molthune. An up-and-coming military leader, serving in Molthune's armies in exchange for citizenship rights, was recently killed in a skirmish with the forces of Nirmathas—only for her underlings to discover that her body was filled not with viscera and bone, but gears and copper wires. The body was returned to Molthune to dismiss any claims that this was a prank or a hallucination by panicked officers, but this irrefutable proof has caused a low-grade hysteria to spread throughout Molthune's government. Some of the nation's General Lords have become convinced that this is an attempt by Nirmathas to infiltrate Molthune's army by replacing important targets with clockwork doppelgangers and that there is no way to tell how many of Molthune's soldiers have already been compromised. This belief has become so prevalent that even some of the militia in Nirmathas has come to believe it, and a number of disparate Nirmathi groups have begun searching for the Nirmathi person responsible to recruit them.

The true “culprit” is Sihns Siphandon, who is completely unaware of the trouble he has inadvertently caused. The deceased military leader was simply a construct he created and then encouraged to find her own path in the world. However, with her death triggering divisions among the Molthuni army, a flare-up of the conflict between Molthune and Nirmathas, and increased scrutiny from members of the Technic League, it's only a matter of time before Sihns is dragged into a situation that is impossible to navigate, and one that he will need far more help than his clockwork assistants can provide for him to survive.



Sihn Siphandon

PALANQUIN TRADING

A Kalistocrat-controlled trading corps headquartered in Druma, Palanquin Trading specializes in delivering goods to distant and dangerous locales. Where most caravans would balk at shipments to unstable nations in the River Kingdoms or remote villages in Ustalav, Palanquin Trading regularly sends well-guarded caravans out to bring requested merchandise to its clientele while also selling to any targets of opportunity along the way. Exiled nobles, reclusive wizards, wilderness outposts, and traveling adventurers alike can receive all the selection and comforts of a market from major city, delivered to their doorsteps—assuming they pay the exorbitant prices that Palanquin Trading charges for the convenience. With little in the way of reliable competition, especially in the market of luxury goods, Palanquin Trading is usually the best (if not only) option for the customers who make use of its services.

Due to Palanquin Trading's constant readiness for dangerous travel, the trading company is also often the first well-supplied organization to arrive on the scene whenever disaster strikes, whether that disaster is natural or caused by other sapient beings, the result of a storm, an earthquake, a war, or a rampaging dragon. Regardless, the trading company is quick to bring crucial supplies to mitigate the devastation—though there are no discounts for the needy. The Kalistocrat merchants can quickly extract land rights and repayment contracts from disaster victims in lieu of payment from unfortunates who have nothing left to bargain with. Much like Palanquin Trading's regular clients, these desperate customers often have no other option than to accept whatever terms the merchants demand, lest they go without emergency aid entirely. While the Kalistocrat merchants don't engage in price gouging and have never gone so far as to engineer a disaster in order to turn a profit (as the occasional rumor goes), many good-aligned organizations despise the trading company for its predatory practices. The head of Palanquin Trading, **Hyaxia** (LE female tiefling swashbuckler^{ACG} 5), simply considers these emergency shipments a necessary service that charges a fair price for both the danger and the demand, as most caravans don't have the preparation and resources to mobilize a mass excursion into dangerous areas quickly. Indeed, many of the same organizations that hate Hyaxia for her methods sometimes find they have no other choice but to hire her, as her caravans are often the only merchants equipped,



Hyaxia

trained, and able to deliver life-saving aid to particularly remote disaster areas in time.

Most Kalistocrats scoff at Hyaxia and her followers for taking such risks when there are richer and easier markets to be had, but Hyaxia keeps her eyes firmly fixed on the long-term. Hyaxia knows she has no chance of joining the upper echelons of the Kalistocrats without significant leverage, as she has many enemies in the faith for reasons both in and out of her control. The enterprising tiefling is thus seeking out controlling influence in places that the Kalistocrats have yet to penetrate, in the hope that one of them will turn profitable enough that it will force the Kalistocrats to deal with Palanquin Trading in order to capitalize on the opportunity.

A Fistful of Gold Coins: The nation of Gralton in the River Kingdoms is filled with con artists, though most of them limit themselves to preying on the desperation of the deposed nobles from Galt. **Krenia Tydonis** (CN female human rogue 6) set her sights higher, however; the enterprising huckster stole and copied the coin-minting machines from nearby River Kingdoms and had been using her copied mints to create debased counterfeit currency with far less gold or silver in it than the face value promises. By hiring fraudulent money-changers to visit other statelets and swindle the locals—using their positions to quietly exchange counterfeit coins for genuine money—Krenia managed to pillage the wealth of the River Kingdoms with no one the wiser. Krenia managed to flee before anyone discovered her deception, but she was caught in a flash flood and forced to trade all of her ill-gotten coins to Palanquin Trading in exchange for her own survival.

Hyaxia likely would have pocketed the coins and thought nothing more of it until she realized that other refugees from the same flood were using bad currency. After some investigation, Hyaxia discovered that she was sitting on a secret that could destroy the economy of several River Kingdoms if revealed, not to mention the means to save those kingdoms from that same disaster as well. Hyaxia has no intention of letting this opportunity to profit slip her by, but she might need to hire extra help to deal with the situation, as the multiple nations involved would resort to violence or their own hired adventurers—including the assassins of Daggermark—in order to get their money back.

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THE REDCLOVER TRIBE

While kobolds within the Inner Sea region are often viewed as either genuine menaces or as cowardly pests, the merchant kobolds who make up the Redclover tribe do their best to act in contrast to these stereotypes.

The Redclover kobolds dress in finely tailored clothing reminiscent of halfling fashion, favoring distinguished waistcoats and puff-sleeved shirts. Their signature attire, though, is a cloth kobold mask, painted with rosy cheeks and a sweet smile, and affixed with light-blocking lenses that give the appearance of button-black eyes. The Redclovers also often pursue musical training and deliberately develop pleasant mannerisms, cultivating charming personas to match their endearing appearances. Armed with such disarming demeanors, the Redclover kobolds use tunnels within the Darklands to travel throughout the Inner Sea region, venturing aboveground to trade with whatever villages or encampments they might find.

Charisma does not always undo lifelong prejudice, of course, nor does it provide safety from opportunistic creatures that would happily slaughter a group of kobolds to take their goods. As a result, the Redclovers have a specific plan of operations when venturing into a new area. The weakest kobolds of the tribe are sent to scout first, equipped with basic wares to test how locals might react to the presence of kobolds—and how the locals react to the temptation of merchants who can be stolen from without social or legal repercussions. Communities that kill or rob these scouts receive no further business from the Redclovers, though such villages are likely to find their fields and forests filled with traps as a parting retort. Villages and travelers who seem more amiable to the kobolds are cautiously approached by trading groups with more valuable items (and more dangerous guards), who are willing to offer their curious goods in exchange for magical equipment and materials. This strategy offers both defensive and offensive benefits: sending scouts ahead limits the Redclovers' losses in the event of hostilities, while initial contact with the tribe's most inept kobolds means that most villagers underestimate the Redclovers when it comes to haggling.

The Redclovers' odd predilection toward diplomacy and trade arose from its current leader, **Rasak the Cursed** (N female kobold oracle^{APG} 7), a violet-scaled

kobold who came by her epithet honestly. Before she was grudgingly allowed to join the Redclover tribe, Rasak had barely escaped the complete destruction of not one, but two previous tribes. Though this terrible misfortune left Rasak jaded and ostracized—as most kobolds (including Rasak herself) considered her unlucky—it also gave her the independence to gain leadership of the Redclovers when their original ruler, the green dragon Ovanath, met a gruesome end at the claws of the great wurm Zedoran within Fangwood Forest: while the other kobolds panicked or lost themselves in denial, Rasak took the opportunity to grab some of the most potent artifacts from Ovanath's hoard and then seize control of the directionless tribe, ordering the Redclovers to move the late dragon's treasure underground. From there, Rasak has forged a kobold stronghold, selling choice magic items that are of no use to the tribe in order to buy sufficient gear to equip an army and materials to construct a fortress. Though Rasak's original goal was to build up the Redclovers' strength so that she would never lose her tribe again, their success has been wildly beyond her expectations, and her thoughts have begun to turn from survival to ambition. Rasak dreams of creating a kobold nation beneath Fangwood to rival the kingdoms of humans on the surface of the Golarion.

The Ultimate Sin: The Redclovers' mercantile wealth has attracted the attention of the envious and the avaricious alike, but so far the grandest creature to take note of the kobold tribe is the black dragon Cytharoil. Though the dragon has yet to make any overtures toward the Redclovers, he has been seen carefully observing their operations on several occasions, and most of the kobolds consider it only a matter of time before the dragon moves to subjugate the kobold tribe. Though many of the Redclover kobolds are gleeful at the thought of a new draconic patron, Rasak is not one of them—life has removed from her any reverence for demagogues or higher powers, and she has little trust that the dragon will not simply drain the Redclovers' coffers dry and use the kobolds as disposable minions. Rasak deeply resents the thought of all of her hard work being snatched out from under her, after spending years scrabbling for every scrap of power and respect she has garnered. These thoughts have caused Rasak to begin considering the absolutely unthinkable: hiring a group of dragonslayers to deal with Cytharoil before the dragon can make himself into a major problem for her.



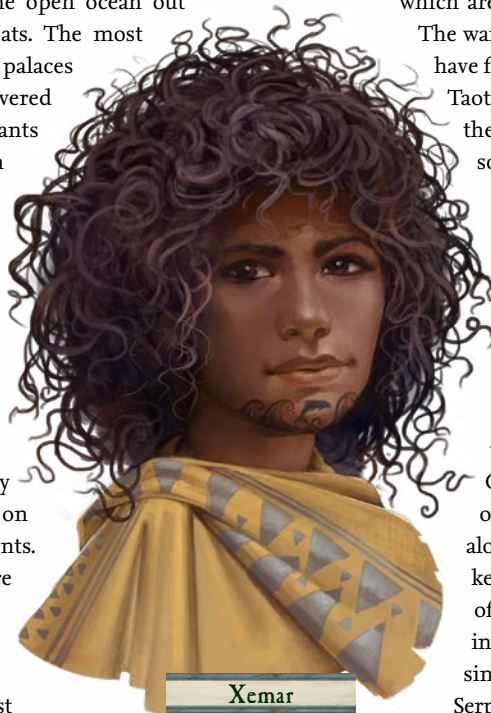
Rasak



THE TAOTAKE

The Taotake people call no land or island home, instead forming their own cities on the open ocean out of flotillas of thousands of boats. The most massive of these boats serve as palaces or farms in their own right, covered in flowers or fruit trees from plants that have been expertly grown in scavenged earth. Though the appearance of the Taotake's nation-flotilla in the Inner Sea area is usually a once-in-a-lifetime experience, smaller Taotake expeditions sometimes appear along the coasts or in the rivers of Inner Sea nations. To the Taotake, exploration is the highest of virtues, and they record every new locale visited on a whirling map of ocean currents. Though conventional maps are used as well, almost all Taotake choose to tattoo this map on their body in black pigments that can be easily read against their dark skin. A Taotake is not considered to have found her true name until she discovers and names something no other living Taotake has found, and so bands of younger Taotake periodically sail through Inner Sea waterways in search of new experiences, relying on trade to fund their excursions.

These impromptu Taotake merchants both buy and sell an eclectic variety of merchandise. The Taotake themselves are interested in any provisions or goods that might aid them in their journeys, such as foods that are slow to spoil, plants that can withstand tempestuous weather and shallow soil, and all manner of magical and mundane gear to defend against both the elements and any dangerous creatures that might lurk in the shallows. They also seek knowledge of all kinds, from books to maps to tales, in the hope of discovering something entirely new to bring back home with them. Beyond these basic requests, the Taotake are usually interested in regional crafts, cultural artifacts, and trade goods, as these can be sold along their journeys for profit or else simply brought back as mementos of an individual Taotake's travels. The wares that the Taotake sell consist mostly of these regional specialties, and the sheer number of obscure countries and islands the Taotake visit means they often have truly unusual items for sale. On the more mundane side, a Taotake merchant might offer an Arcadian guava sapling for purchase in the markets of Absalom, along with the tools required to keep the tropical tree alive in



a foreign climate; on the more mystical side, the Taotake have been found to possess many lost relics or keys, which are kept or sold as simple curiosities.

The wares that any particular Taotake ships have for sale are as varied as the individual Taotake sailors who pilot them, but these traders are almost certain to have something of interest.

Relics from Lost Times: Many of the wares that the Taotake bring are attractive simply by virtue of being foreign, but occasionally the sailors arrive with something of extreme significance to Inner Sea scholars. A scroll written on new parchment with handwriting resembling that of Old-Mage Jatembe has been among one of the more benign items for sale, along with a chunk of floating earth kept aloft with magic similar to that of the Shory; the more sinister items include miniature obelisks that bear a sinister resemblance to those from the Serpentfolk Empire. Whether these items

hold a genuine connection to past empires is difficult to determine, and while the Taotake happily give directions to lands they have visited, these lands are invariably an extremely long journey away, and even then, it is difficult if not impossible to trace the path of a given item.

Supply and Demand: The Eastbrand Trade Company has made a lucrative business of selling onyx in the Druma region, but its success was not simply a matter of good business sense. The head of the company, **Xemar** (LN male human aristocrat 2/psychic^{OA} 3), sacrificed a great deal of time, money, and resources to push favorable legislation through Druma's government, using his tailor-made law to crush his competition and become the foremost provider of onyx in the nation. Yet despite his aptitude for psychic insight, Xemar did not foresee a Taotake ship heavily laden with Mwangi onyx finding its way to Lake Encarthan. When the Taotake sailors flooded nearby nations with the gems, the value of local onyx crashed, along with Xemar's profits. Facing censure from other Kalistocrats, who view Xemar's unbelievable misfortune as a sign that the company leader somehow failed in his observances of the prophecies, Xemar has turned to desperate measures—selling the valuable gems to spellcasters at outrageously low prices, thus emboldening a number of evil spellcasters throughout the region. In exchange, Xemar asks them to use any means necessary to drive the Taotake out of the area and prevent them from ever coming back.

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Arazni, the Red Queen

Abandoned by her god, failed by her crusaders, and censured for the abuses heaped upon her by those who once fought by her side, Arazni remains an inconvenient shame to a land that would eagerly sweep her under the rug. As the queen of Geb, her influence and power allow her to refuse to be forgotten, no matter what others might wish. She rules her nation with a skillful hand even though her rule invites further insult and she is hailed by citizens as “the Harlot Queen,” as if she were complicit in her own imprisonment. Arazni bears every indignity with a strength born of contempt, picking herself up after each humiliation and refusing to let anyone know they had the power to hurt her. No matter what is done to her or what she is forced to become, she still owns her anger—the one piece of her that can never be corrupted or stolen.

Most see Arazni as a victim and speak only of what has been done to her over hundreds of years: a beloved god's herald summoned by the heroes of the Shining Crusade to stand against Tar-Baphon, she was subsequently captured, tortured, humiliated, and eventually killed at the hands of the Whispering Tyrant. The Knights of Ozem recovered her broken body and interred her in Vigil, but their audacious provocation of the necromancer Geb resulted in the theft of her body from its shrine in Lastwall. The knights now bemoan the loss of their relic and their own members who were slain and reanimated in the conflict, the shame that was Arazni's transformation into a lich at Geb's hands, the scandal as she then became Geb's bride, and her betrayal as she commanded graveknight bodyguards created from Knights of Ozem who had bravely sought to liberate her remains.

Largely forgotten are her days as Aroden's friend and later his herald, the Red Crusader, defender of humankind and paragon of nobility and leadership. Few ever consider what Arazni herself might think of what has been done to her and what she has become. Her own desires and ambitions are considerations that even those who once held her dear rarely contemplate. Those who do, however, might glimpse the ironclad determination that lies beneath the veneer of abuse and torment that others have painted over her, a history summed up so neatly by the name most used to describe her: the Harlot Queen.

Those few souls who see past the disgrace and tragedy of Arazni's past, who see elements in her story that resonate with their own experiences, find something worth admiring: a core of stubborn resilience and bitter self-reliance. Whether this admiration manifests as outright worship or a reserved emulation depends a great deal on an individual's location and social context. In the land of Geb, many see Arazni as a figurehead of undead nobility and leadership, while in Lastwall, a few still uphold the Red Crusader's teachings of defense and protection. In other lands, she is sometimes

seen as a symbol of those who strive to uphold a sense of self when all control over their surroundings and circumstances has been taken away from them. For them,

Arazni's experiences provide an example of how disempowered and abused victims find the means to guard themselves and project an air of confidence and control in the face of abhorrent treatment.

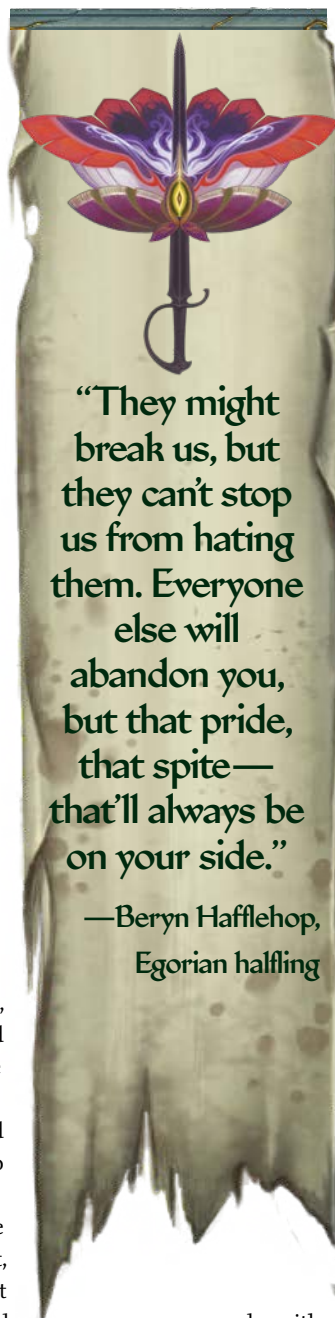
PERSONIFICATION AND REALM

Unlike many divinities, Arazni has a single, fixed form and a finite realm on the Material Plane. Due to the transformations Geb wrought upon her corpse, she is bound into the form of a lich. She has become a gaunt and emaciated figure due to the torments she endured from Tar-Baphon, the theft of her organs—now the powerful but lost artifacts known as the *bloodstones of Arazni*—and the decay of her flesh. Unlike most liches, she remains ignorant of the nature and location of her phylactery, an intentional strategy to keep her trapped under Geb's control. Despite it all, she maintains a formidable force of will, and few find themselves able to stand their ground when her wrath is kindled. Common rumor tells that Arazni has embraced her role as Geb's Harlot Queen, taking the graveknights who stole her body as champions and making an undead harem of the reanimated knights sent to liberate her remains. Interestingly enough, those rumors are spoken most boldly not in Geb, but in Lastwall and in the remnants of the Taldan empire where she was first known as a crusader.

Arazni's realm is the nation of Geb, which she rules as the head of state from the Cinerarium, her great obsidian pyramid-palace in Mechitar. She serves as the face of Geb to the outside world and manages the political administration of the realm with a steady, dispassionate hand; most in the region credit the stability of the nation over the past 800 years to her leadership.

DOGMA AND WORSHIPPERS

Veneration of Arazni takes two different forms depending primarily on geography. Those within Geb, who follow Arazni in matters of the spirit as well as the law, grant her the respect due a divine ruler, while those elsewhere



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practice a silent and solitary faith. This latter practice is most often found among those who, like their idol, lack agency or control over their lives and circumstances. In Taldor, adherents of Arazni are often women or disillusioned commoners, while Cheliaz sees more halflings and tieflings taking up her teachings. In Sargava, some Mwangi have come to embrace her strength and fortitude, while those in Lastwall who still revere the Red Crusader view her as a dead goddess not so different from Aroden. Intelligent undead who resent their existence but lack the autonomy to end it see Arazni as a role model and kindred spirit.

Arazni holds little regard for her worshippers, as she maintains a bitter resentment toward anyone who venerates what she has become. At the same time, she finds a spark of vicarious fulfillment in having followers, and so she tolerates them. She values her privacy above all, however, and any cleric who would use his powers to divine her or her secrets will find himself swiftly and utterly cut off from her power. Likewise, she detests the epithet “Harlot Queen,” and use of the appellation is an equally swift path to excommunication; her worshippers instead refer to her as the Red Queen or, especially among those outside of Geb, the Unyielding.

Though the Evil domain is a relatively new addition to Arazni’s portfolio, the remainder is held over from her time as a crusader and Aroden’s herald, though these other domains have twisted and changed. Nobility has become a matter of control, the ability to project a commanding outward appearance no matter what horrors one has experienced. Protection and defense consist of guarding oneself, building an inwardly focused resolve to shield a soul from the world’s torments, establishing one’s own boundaries, and upholding them relentlessly.

TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Geb is the only place with formal temples to Arazni, and even there they are few, as most Gebbites consider her more a head of state than a deity. These structures are elegant and austere, such as the white-columned Asza Atarazem near the Cinerarium in Mechitar, and their purpose is to acknowledge the divine nature of the state’s governess. Nevertheless, worshippers congregate here, some of them sincere enough in their devotion to access Arazni’s profane power.

The only other place on Golarion with an established shrine to Arazni is Vigil, where her slain body was interred before its theft by the necromancer Geb. Most of the Knights of Ozem prefer not to dwell on that failure and desecration, but the shrine in which she was once laid to rest is maintained to this day, perhaps out of some faint hope that she may yet find a permanent home there, and a few pay quiet homage to her and her memory.





Beyond these, no shrines or sacred spaces stand to Arazni that are not abandoned, forgotten, or adopted for some other use. Devotees might tie a scrap of red-and-gray fabric over a doorframe, pause before a blooming lotus, or keep a scarab beetle carapace in a nook as an offering to their patron. These small symbols and reminders are often the most Arazni's followers can do within the constraints of their daily lives.

A PRIEST'S ROLE

A few Gebbite undead hold formal titles as priests of Arazni; these are less conduits for her divinity and more like bureaucrats who hold a political office to maintain and operate the state-sponsored temples to the nation's queen. Only a few hold genuine faith in her as a deity, and the extended existence of undead creatures means that turnover in these comfortable positions is rare, leaving few opportunities for the faithful to reach positions of particular power. As divine magic is not generally expected of Arazni's church (that expectation falling more to Urgathoa's priests), the rarity of spellcasting ability among Araznites is not viewed as a failing or shortcoming.

As Arazni has no organized following elsewhere, she has no priests in any formal sense outside of Geb. The closest analogues are those older or more experienced worshippers who occasionally serve as mentors. These are not kind or benevolent counselors: they practice a harsh and unyielding discipline intended to cause an abundance of emotional and psychological turmoil. These lessons take the form of painful truths, subtle insinuations, and similar denials of a follower's agency, which over time train the follower to harden her resolve, build up her mental defenses, and create a refuge against the unrelenting cruelty of the world. Few Araznites practice physical violence as part of this mentorship, however, as most understand that a person is more than mere flesh and that strength of will can endure even when the physical form fails.

HOLIDAYS

Like many things related to Arazni, the holidays observed in her name vary widely based on geography.

Coronation Day: In Geb, Arazni is honored each year on the anniversary of her coronation; Abadius 11 is a state holiday celebrated with feasts featuring freshly slain humanoid chattel. Unsurprisingly, this tradition does not extend beyond Geb's borders.

Mourningfell: In many realms descended from Taldor—especially Lastwall—those who remember Arazni solemnly reflect upon and mourn her on the day she was slain at the hands of Tar-Baphon. One of the strongest advocates of this holiday is the church of Iomedae, though they uphold it as only a minor holiday.

Arazni's worshippers recognize this day as the start of many terrible things to come for their patron and often follow the holiday with a day or week of fasting.

APHORISMS

Many followers of Arazni adopt their own mantras or catchphrases to remind themselves of the lessons they've learned. A few of these apothegms have gained wider traction among her followers.

Hold the Line: Often shouted by crusaders fighting the undead legions of the Whispering Tyrant (and spoken before then in other wars), this phrase has now taken on a much deeper meaning. A worshipper might utter this phrase as a litany when facing physical ignominies, reminding herself of mental and emotional boundaries that she can—and must—maintain regardless of the mortification she might endure.

Trust Only the Worthy: A follower of Arazni knows that in a world where anyone might turn against him, placing trust in another person only gives that person a tool to harm him later. Instead, followers of the Unyielding place their trust only within themselves, bolstering their resilience and emotional fortitude to face the outside world with confidence and control, no matter what comes their way.

HOLY TEXT

Arazni has no formal holy text. In Geb, she is simply the ruler, and her laws governing the realm are what passes for a formal doctrine. Elsewhere, her worshippers compile what collections they can, cobbling together historical and holy texts that concern her as a herald and champion, now carefully reinterpreted in light of events that have since taken place. Most collections also contain apocryphal notes unique to each text, contemplating or highlighting those elements of Arazni's faith that persist from her past through to her present circumstances, focusing on concepts such as confidence, emotional and mental endurance, and self-reliance.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER FAITHS

Most divinities fail to consider Arazni at all, and those who do feel only pity for her. Those she knew in her time as Aroden's herald—such as Sunlord Thalachos, the herald of Sarenrae—consider her changed form blasphemous, tragic, or both, and no longer associate with her. For her part, Arazni dismisses most divinities as callous and contemptible, especially her former patron Aroden for leaving her to face Tar-Baphon and his torments alone despite the fact that it was Aroden's actions that ultimately spurred the Whispering Tyrant to his undead form.

Nevertheless, Arazni and her followers share some values that overlap with other divinities' portfolios.

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Gyronna epitomizes the resentment and hatred born of abuse and cruelty with which Arazni is so familiar. Some of Arazni's followers see Lamashtu as a model for how a less powerful creature can kick, claw, and bite a path to power and prestige. Some also see shared values with Erecura, Queen of Dis, as both queens rule realms that are not quite their own. In any case, these similarities are more a matter of compatible views and occasional cooperation between

followers; even in areas of shared concern, Arazni keeps to herself and other divinities pay her little heed.

The most complex relationship is that between Arazni and Iomedae. The Red Queen bears a great deal of resentment toward her own onetime paladin for having had such a relatively easy and successful path to divinity. The Inheritor saw success in the Shining Crusade even as Arazni was crushed, and Iomedae then took the Red Crusader's place as Aroden's herald after passing the Test of the *Starstone*. And yet, even amid her resentment, Arazni recognizes that no one ought to be subjected to the trials she has faced, and so beneath the hatred and spite, a small part of her takes comfort and even pride in Iomedae's achievements.

SPELLCASTING

Clerics of Arazni can cast *anticipate peril*^{UM} as a 1st-level spell, *detect scrying* as a 4th-level spell, and *mind blank* as an 8th-level spell. Her antipaladins can cast *blood armor*^{ACG} as a 2nd-level spell and *detect scrying* as a 3rd-level spell. Her followers also gain access to the following new spells, developed in secret by worshippers across Avistan.

BLOODSTONE MIRROR

School abjuration; **Level** cleric 7, occultist 5, witch 7

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a red bloodstone worth 500 gp)

Range personal

Target you

Duration 1 hour/level

Developed due to Arazni's fear that her stolen organs might be used to control her, this spell reflects any attempts to steal your free will. Whenever you are exposed to a mind-affecting effect or a spell that would otherwise give another creature control of your actions (such as *control undead*), you can dispel this effect as an immediate action to redirect the spell to a creature within 30 feet. The affected creature must attempt a save against the original DC of the triggering effect. On a failure, it is subject to the effects of the triggering spell, with the exception that you are treated as the original caster (statistics determined by caster level are still calculated according to its original caster). The target creature applies any spell resistance or immunities it has normally. You can have only one instance of this spell active at a time.

LITANY OF THE RED CRUSADER

School necromancy; **Level** antipaladin 1, inquisitor 2, paladin 1

Casting Time 1 swift action

Components V, S, DF

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target one creature

Duration 1 round

Saving Throw Fortitude negates; **Spell Resistance** yes
 Followers of Arazni have made use of this litany since her days as a crusader and herald. Each time the target creature takes piercing or slashing damage, it takes 1 point of bleed damage; this bleed damage stacks with itself. While subject to this spell, the target cannot be the target of another spell that has the word “litany” in the title.

UNSPOKEN NAME

School divination; **Level** cleric 3, inquisitor 3, sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 3

Casting Time 1 minute

Components V, S

Range personal

Target you

Duration 24 hours or until discharged

Prized among those who seek to monitor the attention paid to them, this spell is said to be used by Arazni to identify those followers who dare refer to her as “the Harlot Queen” so she might summarily dismiss them. When you cast this spell, designate a word, phrase, or name. If a creature within 1 mile of you uses that word, phrase, or name to refer to you, you immediately learn that creature’s name, appearance, and location. This discharges the spell.

OBEDIENCE

The following describes the daily rite Arazni’s followers must perform to take full advantage of the Deific Obedience feat, as well as the boons for the prestige classes found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Gods*.

OBEDIENCE (ARAZNI)

Spend an hour reliving or imagining terrible things that happened to you. This process is mentally strenuous, dealing 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. You cannot allow anyone else to know of your struggles: speaking of them, showing distress while considering them, or even asking for assistance in healing the nonlethal damage negates the benefits of this obedience. When you fail a saving throw against a creature’s spell or spell-like ability, you gain a +4 profane bonus on saving throws against any of that creature’s abilities for 1 minute.

EVANGELIST BOONS

1: Hidden Resolve (Sp) *disguise self* 3/day, *obscure object* 2/day, or *bestow curse* 1/day

2: Unheralded Retribution (Su) You punish those foes who would use the arcane arts to infringe upon your autonomy and well-being. Whenever you succeed at a saving throw against a spell or spell-like ability cast or used by a creature, that creature becomes flat-footed against your attacks until the end of your next turn. In addition, your attacks against that creature while it is flat-footed deal 1 additional point of bleed damage; this bleed damage stacks with itself.

Customized Summon List

Arazni’s clerics can use their *summon monster* spells to summon the following creatures in addition to the normal creatures listed in the spell’s description.

Summon Monster III

Augur kyton (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 171)

Summon Monster VI

Fiendish giant scarab (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 288, 221)

Summon Monster VIII

Interlocutor kyton (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 174)

3: Sovereign Constancy (Su) Much like Arazni herself, you prize the sanctuary of your own thoughts, and you have built defenses and protections lest others try to take away or taint this refuge. Once per day as an immediate action whenever you are affected by a mind-affecting effect, you can use *break enchantment* on yourself as a spell-like ability, with a caster level equal to your Hit Dice.

EXALTED BOONS

1: Unyielding (Sp) *remove fear* 3/day, *false life* 2/day, or *nonetection* 1/day

2: Strength in Bloodshed (Su) The Red Crusader knew well the value of fighting alongside allies—and the price to be paid when those allies fail. Rather than relying upon the assistance of fickle and fallible mortals, you can bring forth a construct gathered from the blood spilled by Arazni and her followers. Once per day as a standard action, you can summon a blood golem⁸⁴ to aid you. You gain telepathy with the golem to a range of 100 feet. The golem follows your commands perfectly for a number of minutes equal to your number of Hit Dice before vanishing back to its home.

3: Shield of Scars (Sp) When you heal yourself with a cure or inflict spell (as appropriate depending upon your physiology), scars form over your body. You gain a profane bonus to Armor Class equal to the spell’s level for 1 minute.

SENTINEL BOONS

1: Red Queen’s Rapier (Sp) *divine favor* 3/day, *blood armor*^{AC6} 2/day, or *rage* 1/day

2: Subliminal Intransigence (Su) Through ceaseless conditioning, you have constructed insurmountable mental defenses that deny others the ability to sway your thoughts, whether for good or for ill. You gain immunity to charm and compulsion effects and a +4 bonus on saving throws against fear effects.

3: Fallen Crusader’s Retaliation (Su) The Red Queen’s life is a painful example of the danger of falling prey to the arcane arts, and you have learned from this lesson. Ever wary of those who wield magic in battle, you hone your reflexes to strike when least expected. Creatures you threaten that fail their checks to cast spells defensively provoke attacks of opportunity from you.

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“There is no need for suffering. Pain and sorrow are merely the symptoms of life. And what is life but a disease whose only cure is death? How many times have you heard the ill wailing in agony over festering sores that won’t heal, or watched a child stand crying at his parents’ grave, or passed an old woman in rags reaching out a bony hand for a bit of bread to sustain her a little longer? I have seen these things time and time again. Existence need not be so crude. It can be far more dignified, far more peaceful. Won’t you let me show you the relief we can offer the world?”

—Dr. Lavinia Penrose, physician and Whispering Way practitioner



INTRODUCTION

Deep in the shadows of the Age of Darkness, the Whispering Way emerged into the hearts and minds of sentient beings. No one is sure who first spoke its principles or where it first found its voice, but its philosophy spread across Golarion through the generations that followed and infested itself into every corner of the world. It originally started from a morbid notion that the extinction of all life is necessary for a superior existence. In the misery of the Age of Darkness and the Age of Anguish that followed, such a belief found a natural following among many hopeless sufferers looking to find a reason for their torment, and the philosophy spread quickly in those bleak, difficult years. As time passed, its ideas lingered and took hold of nihilists and psychopaths throughout history, evolving from person to person, all chasing their own individual pursuits and all having their own reasons for following the Way. Most followers maintain a coldly detached belief that a dead world is the most peaceful form of existence and thus frame themselves, in their own narratives, as benevolent champions. Though the specific details of their practices may vary, all agents are bound together by the Way's central mission.

Among their goals, most agents seek to transform themselves into a state of undeath, particularly through transformation into a lich. The details of the complex process are broken up and scattered among many followers, making it necessary for agents to seek out one another and exchange knowledge. To protect their secrets, adherents of the Way keep what they learn in their memory and pass along that knowledge exclusively through private, whispered conversations to one another.

Due to the lack of an official hierarchy, most who join the Way first discover the group through established members or from cryptic mentions within esoteric texts. Unlike other secret cabals, membership comes with no fanfare or secret entrance rituals, but rather a slow process as the Way's teachings steadily entwine into the person's very body and soul. Prolonged exposure to this dark lore is what truly defines the group's membership, and those who attempt to abandon the path usually crumble into ash and dust. Consequently, the group doesn't need to worry about traitors in their ranks.

From well-intended nurses to sociopathic assassins, adherents of the Whispering Way are as varied as they are obscure. Though most remain hidden in society, several have risen to notoriety. The most prominent member of the organization is none other than Tar-Baphon, the Whispering Tyrant. As the most remarkable of the Way's followers, he is emulated and served by many agents, while other followers jealously scheme to surpass his fame and might.

WHISPERS ACROSS GOLARION

Though Gallowspire in Ustalav is considered the spiritual hub of the Whispering Way, it contains a mere fraction of the organization's total members. In fact, the group relies on adherents from various locations and backgrounds to build up its influence and its trove of knowledge. Members insinuate themselves into positions of authority in their communities, working hard to craft credible reputations that are unblemished by scandal or suspicion. Teachers, politicians, celebrities, and physicians all make promising covers for adherents of the Way, and these professions offer plenty of leverage, though they are certainly not the only fields the Whispering Way has infiltrated. But no matter what specific roles agents have chosen for themselves, their revered status in their respective communities makes members difficult to detect or challenge—something that makes the group dangerously efficient. More often than not, the most serious threats to the Whispering Way are internal rivalries between agents, as they vie for power and clamber to rise above their peers.

Below are some noteworthy examples of various Whispering Way cells operating throughout Golarion.

Circle of Despair (Minkai): Within the Sakakabe Province of Minkai, a disaffected youth named **Takakazu Ikeda** (NE male dhampir^{B2} mesmerist^{OA} [cult master^{OA}] 10) secretly incites a growing rash of suicides. To the outside world, Takakazu is little more than a charming socialite and the son of an influential samurai, but his true nature is far more insidious. As a heretical follower of Naderi, his deep-seated nihilism steered him into the Way's path. He fully embraces the notion of a dead world, believing it to be the epitome of beauty, purity, and tranquility. To help achieve this goal, Takakazu preys on depressed and impressionable youths, luring them into his confidence and inviting them to clandestine gatherings where he preaches Naderi's teachings and reads melancholy passages. Through his oration, the handsome young man twists his listeners' hearts and gently urges them to end their suffering through suicide. Those who succumb to Takakazu's grim suggestions frequently carve an image of a delicate, stylized swan on their skin before ending their lives.

As his success increases and body count climbs, Takakazu plans to travel across Minkai to continue his work and spread his poisoned words as far as he can. Though some local authorities have grown suspicious of Takakazu's involvement in recent tragedies, the young man's status as the son of a powerful samurai keeps the law from interfering—something Takakazu is well aware of and happily uses to his advantage.

Frozen Fury (Lands of the Linnorm Kings): Along the eastern border of the Land of the Linnorm Kings, reports of missing raiders have spread among the locals.

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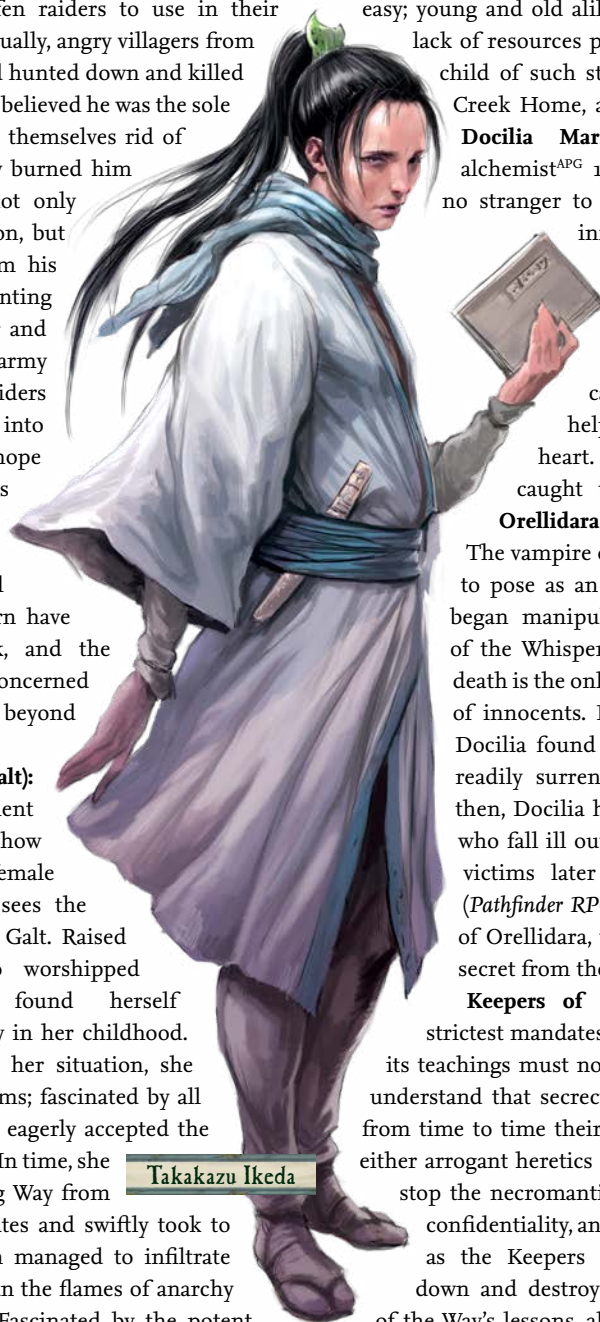
Unbeknownst to these townsfolk, these disappearances are the work of the Jadwiga warlock **Izydor Velikas** (NE male human witch^{APG} 14) and his undead twin brother, **Eligiusz Velikas** (CE male witchfire^{B2}). As men in the matriarchal society of Irrisen, the brothers were expected to become soldiers, but they rejected tradition in favor of pursuing their interest in arcana, as their sisters had. This decision earned them the ire of their family and turned them into outcasts within Irriseni society. The brothers set out to forge their own path to power and became adherents of the Whispering Way. They roamed the western border of Irrisen, kidnaping Ulfen raiders to use in their necromantic rituals. Eventually, angry villagers from Whiterook took action and hunted down and killed Eligiusz—but the villagers believed he was the sole murderer, and so thought themselves rid of his wickedness when they burned him at the stake. However, not only did Izydor escape detection, but Eligiusz secretly rose from his grave to continue tormenting the land. Together, Izydor and Eligiusz work to amass an army of undead, sacrificing raiders and transforming them into undead creatures in the hope of rising above the prowess and prestige of Tar-Baphon. But as more raiders go missing, fearful rumors of Eligiusz's return have spread across Whiterook, and the villagers grow rightfully concerned over his vengeance from beyond the grave.

Hidden by Masks (Galt): Chaos makes for an excellent cover—at least, that's how **Adaltrude Harcourt** (NE female human inquisitor^{APG} 12) sees the ever-churning turmoil of Galt. Raised by a cruel uncle who worshipped Norgorber, Adaltrude found herself surrounded by death early in her childhood. Rather than shrink from her situation, she welcomed it with open arms; fascinated by all manner of morbidity, she eagerly accepted the invitation to indulge in it. In time, she learned of the Whispering Way from one of her uncle's associates and swiftly took to its teachings. The woman managed to infiltrate the Gray Gardeners and fan the flames of anarchy throughout the country. Fascinated by the potent

necromantic capability of the *final blades*, she hopes to learn more of their construction so she can use them for the Way's goals. She has already indoctrinated two fellow Gray Gardeners into the Way, and hopes to gather more. The small cabal works closely with a necromancer by the name of **Folcard Tulois** (NE male human wizard 12) to unlock the secrets of the notorious artifacts and harness their power. Recently, however, tension has been rising between Adaltrude and Folcard, with each viewing themselves as the team's leader and trying to call the shots.

House of Lost Souls (Isger): Life in rural Isger isn't easy; young and old alike suffer in silence due to the lack of resources provided to them by Cheliaz. A child of such strife might end up in Mallow Creek Home, an orphanage run by mistress **Docilia Marinder** (NE female human alchemist^{APG} 10). The morose proprietor is no stranger to heartbreak, having lost three infant children and her husband within the span of 4 short years. To cope with her grief, Docilia founded the orphanage in the hopes that caring for those in need would help to heal the wounds of her heart. Unfortunately, the orphanage caught the attention of the wicked **Orellidara** (LE female vampire wizard 6). The vampire child used her frail appearance to pose as an orphan and she immediately began manipulating Docilia onto the path of the Whispering Way, convincing her that death is the only way to truly end the suffering of innocents. Deeply mired in her anguish, Docilia found comfort in this solution and readily surrendered to the ideology. Since then, Docilia has discreetly put any orphans who fall ill out of their misery. These young victims later emerge as attic whisperers (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 34) under the sway of Orellidara, who keeps her ultimate goal a secret from the grieving mistress.

Keepers of Silence (Nidal): One of the strictest mandates of the Whispering Way is that its teachings must not be recorded. Most adherents understand that secrecy's best ally is silence, though from time to time their knowledge is documented by either arrogant heretics or virtuous scholars hoping to stop the necromantic cult. To fight this breach of confidentiality, an elite group of followers known as the Keepers of Silence relentlessly hunts down and destroys all recorded documentation of the Way's lessons, along with whoever dared write



Takakazu Ikeda



the teachings down. Only the most connected of Way adherents know of this team's existence, and those who do sometimes use it to their advantage by framing their rivals as tome-bearing heretics. Victims of the Keepers' reckoning are marked by the group's signature calling card—the tongue of the corpse cut out and left to the side, tied with a black ribbon.

Led by diviner **Suleima Nezeriael** (NE female fetchling^{B2} oracle^{APG} 16) from the group's headquarters in Nidal, the Keepers are primarily assassins who roam throughout Golarion to carry out Suleima's commands. Captain **Vandrex Randulescu** (CE male human slayer^{ACG} 15) is Suleima's right hand, directing the team while hunting abroad. Suleima's proclamations that she envisioned Vandrex inheriting a legacy of greatness should he dedicate himself to the Way keep the ruthless man under her control, though only time will tell if the portents are truth or lies. For the time being, Vandrex remains steadfast and loyal to Suleima and the Whispering Way.

The Scholar's Venture (Thuvia): The field of necromancy is an equal balance of the studies of life and of death, and **Caspara Ghonshipour** (LE female human arcanist^{ACG} [twilight sage; *Pathfinder Player Companion: Advanced Class Origins* 6] 14) carefully analyzes the workings of both in her quest to becoming a true master of the art. Caspara is an esteemed professor at an illustrious academy in Pashow, and her reputation is considered impeccable by Thuvian society, which remains unaware of her allegiance to the Whispering Way. One of her ongoing projects is the study and application of her homeland's most prized resource, the *sun orchid elixir*, and how it may be used to carry out the Way's goals. At present, Caspara has a few drops of the *elixir* at her disposal, as well as four sun orchids that she meticulously maintains in a small, hidden greenhouse. In addition to researching the elixir, Caspara also targets pupils she feels have the potential to be guided to the Way. She attempts to bring them into the fold under the guise of an offer of entry into an exclusive research society, and once they've been inducted, she slowly feeds them the Way's lessons. Caspara is secretly a heretic among the Way: she values documentation and keeps a covert collection of written records on the Way and her studies, which she shares only with her most loyal of students.

Stitched in Flesh (Geb): Already crawling with undead, the necropolis kingdom of Geb is a favored home to many members of the Whispering Way. One such member, **Pesabnet Zoheri** (NE male ghastr cleric 13), is the head of a Yled-based temple dedicated to Urgathoa. Through tireless experimentations, Pesabnet seeks to improve Geb's stock of undead labor for his own profit. He fully believes the entire world will eventually become dead, and so he directs his efforts toward securing his

position at the top of the hierarchy. Through his study of *ioun stones*, he has discovered a way to fuse the gems with his subjects to bolster their efficiency and resilience. While at first, Pesabnet began his experiments on undead servants, he soon learned that implanting the stones in living flesh created a superior product. Once the stones have had the chance to properly integrate into the host's body, Pesabnet ritualistically sacrifices the living creature to his goddess before raising the body as one of his robust undead servants. The wailing of his victims resounds from the catacombs of the bone-carved temple, the loudest among them echoing from Pesabnet's favorite experiment, **Khalahm Faidar** (LG male ifrit^{B2} paladin 10). A sworn enemy of the Whispering Way, Khalahm endeavors to escape Pesabnet's prison and continue his goal of annihilating the Way's members and philosophy from the face of Golarion.

A Vile Spectacle (River Kingdoms): The bustling city of Pitax in the River Kingdoms is renowned far and wide for its artistic merits. Celebrated among the talented artists there is **Lanya Tagendorff** (NE female half-elf bard 15), a musical virtuoso and composer. Lanya fell under the sway of the Whispering Way early in her career when a cryptic patron introduced the ambitious artist to the Way's teachings. Before long, she became obsessed with the philosophy and started subtly weaving its message into her dirges. She now regularly presents her macabre operas to a fascinated public, who revere these performances as intense and utterly thrilling. Those who fall under the Way's influence during these shows return frequently, hoping to attain more grisly wisdom from new stories and songs.

Lanya's corruption hasn't gone unnoticed, however, and detective **Bralvyn Ashbrand** (LN female dwarf investigator^{ACG} 12) has been tailing Lanya for several months. Over the past few years, several locals mysteriously dissolved into dust, with the only link between cases that each person was either a performer in one of Lanya's shows or one of her enthusiastic fans. Unbeknownst to Bralvyn, Lanya is aware of the officer's suspicion and enjoys toying with the investigator from afar to study her. She plans to use the inquisitive dwarf's fascination with forensics as a catalyst to lure the officer to the Way's side.

AGENTS OF THE WAY

The Whispering Way consists of agents from all walks of life (or undeath, as the case may be). While those with arcane inclinations account for a large swath of the group's population, agents come from a variety of backgrounds. The Way depends on a network of talented individuals of different skills to carry out its work. Below are three examples of agents whom might be encountered throughout Golarion.

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WHISPERING WAY CULTIST**CR 3****XP 800**Human fighter 1/rogue (knife master) 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 72)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +8; **Senses** Perception +6**DEFENSE****AC** 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +4 Dex)**hp** 32 (4 HD; 3d8+1d10+9)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2**Defensive Abilities** blade sense +1, evasion**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +1 dagger +7 (1d4+1/19–20), mwk dagger +7 (1d4/19–20) or +1 dagger +9 (1d4+1/19–20)**Ranged** +1 dagger +9 (1d4+1/19–20)**Special Attacks** sneak attack +2d4 (+2d8 with dagger)**TACTICS****Before Combat** The cultist applies his *oil of magic weapon* and attempts to ambush his foes, drinking his *potion of invisibility* if simply hiding isn't an option.**During Combat** The cultist attempts to flank with other cultists to throw foes off balance, feinting if necessary.**Morale** The cultist believes he will be raised as an undead creature if slain and so fights to the death.**STATISTICS****Str** 10, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 17**Feats** Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (dagger)**Skills** Acrobatics +11, Bluff +8, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +8, Intimidate +8, Perception +6, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +10 (+11 to conceal a light blade), Stealth +11, Use Magic Device +6**Languages** Common, Necril**SQ** hidden blade, rogue talent (finesse rogue)**Combat Gear** *oil of magic weapon* (2), *potions of invisibility* (2), *potion of spider climb*; **Other Gear** +1 dagger, mwk studded leather, mwk daggers (4), 17 gp**WHISPERING WAY DEVOTEE****CR 7****XP 3,200**

Female half-elf necromancer 8

NE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +1; **Senses** life sight (10 feet, 8 rounds/day), low-light vision; Perception +10**DEFENSE****AC** 17, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 natural)**hp** 66 (8d6+36)**Fort** +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7; +2 vs. enchantments**Immune** sleep**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** mwk dagger +4 (1d4–1/19–20)**Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +12) 7/day—grave touch (4 rounds)**Necromancer Spells Prepared** (CL 8th; concentration +12)4th—*animate dead*, *bestow curse* (DC 20), *contagion* (DC 20), *enervation*3rd—*dispel magic*, *gaseous form*, *ray of exhaustion* (DC 19), *symbol of exsanguination*^{HA} (DC 19), *vampiric touch*2nd—*blindness/deafness* (3, DC 18), *command undead* (DC 18), *false life*1st—*grasping corpse*^{HA}, *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement* (3, DC 17)0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 16), *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 16)**Opposition Schools** conjuration, enchantment**TACTICS****Before Combat** The devotee casts *animate dead* on any available corpses. If she believes intruders are present, she casts *mage armor* and *false life*.**During Combat** The devotee uses her *robe of bones* to create undead to assist her. She casts *ray of enfeeblement* and *bestow curse* to weaken her foes before casting *contagion*.**Morale** If all of the devotee's allies and undead minions are slain, she attempts to flee using *gaseous form*.**STATISTICS****Str** 8, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 19, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15**Feats** Command Undead, Contagious Spell, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Bluff), Spell Focus (necromancy), Toughness, Undead Master^{UM}**Skills** Bluff +13, Diplomacy +10, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (planes) +15, Knowledge (religion) +15, Perception +10; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Draconic, Elven, Necril**SQ** arcane bond (*ring of protection* +1), elf blood, power over undead**Combat Gear** *robe of bones*; **Other Gear** mwk dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, spellbook, 98 gp**WHISPERING WAY PHILOSOPHER****CR 11****XP 12,800**Female old human oracle 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 42)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init –1; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2**DEFENSE****AC** 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+8 armor, +1 deflection, –1 Dex)**hp** 87 (12d8+24)



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Fort +7, **Ref** +4, **Will** +11 (+2 vs. mind-affecting effects); +4 vs. death effects, diseases, mind-affecting, poison, sleep, and stunning

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee dagger of venom +8/+3 (1d4-1/19-20)

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

6th (3/day)—*circle of death* (DC 22), *create undead*, *mass inflict moderate wounds* (DC 22)

5th (5/day)—*mass inflict light wounds* (DC 21), *scrying* (DC 19), *slay living* (DC 21), *wall of blindness/deafness*^{ACG} (DC 21)

4th (7/day)—*bloatbomb*^{ACG} (DC 20), *fear* (DC 20), *inflict critical wounds* (DC 20), *poison* (DC 20), *speak with haunt*^{ACG} (DC 20)

3rd (7/day)—*animate dead*, *blindness/deafness* (DC 19), *borrow fortune*^{APG}, *cure serious wounds*, *inflict serious wounds* (DC 19), *remove disease*

2nd (7/day)—*cure moderate wounds*, *false life*, *ghostbane dirge*^{APG} (DC 16), *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 18), *oracle's burden*^{APG} (DC 18), *remove paralysis*, *silence* (DC 16)

1st (7/day)—*cause fear* (DC 17), *cure light wounds*, *deathwatch*, *doom* (DC 17), *hide from undead* (DC 15), *inflict light wounds* (DC 17), *remove fear*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 16), *create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *purify food and drink* (DC 14), *resistance*, *stabilize*, *virtue*

Mystery bones

TACTICS

Before Combat The philosopher tries to avoid physical confrontations, but if she suspects combat is possible, she casts *false life*.

During Combat The philosopher casts *wall of blindness/deafness* first to cover her escape or to disorient a group. If she has been discovered, she tries to kill all witnesses with *slay living*, *poison*, and other lethal effects, saving *circle of death* for emergencies.

Morale The philosopher tries to flee if she has a good chance of maintaining her facade; if not, she fights to the death to preserve her secrets.

STATISTICS

Str 7, **Dex** 8, **Con** 10, **Int** 16,

Wis 15, **Cha** 18

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

CMD 15

Feats Deceitful, Great

Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Persuasive, Spell Focus (necromancy), Steadfast Personality^{ACG}, Toughness

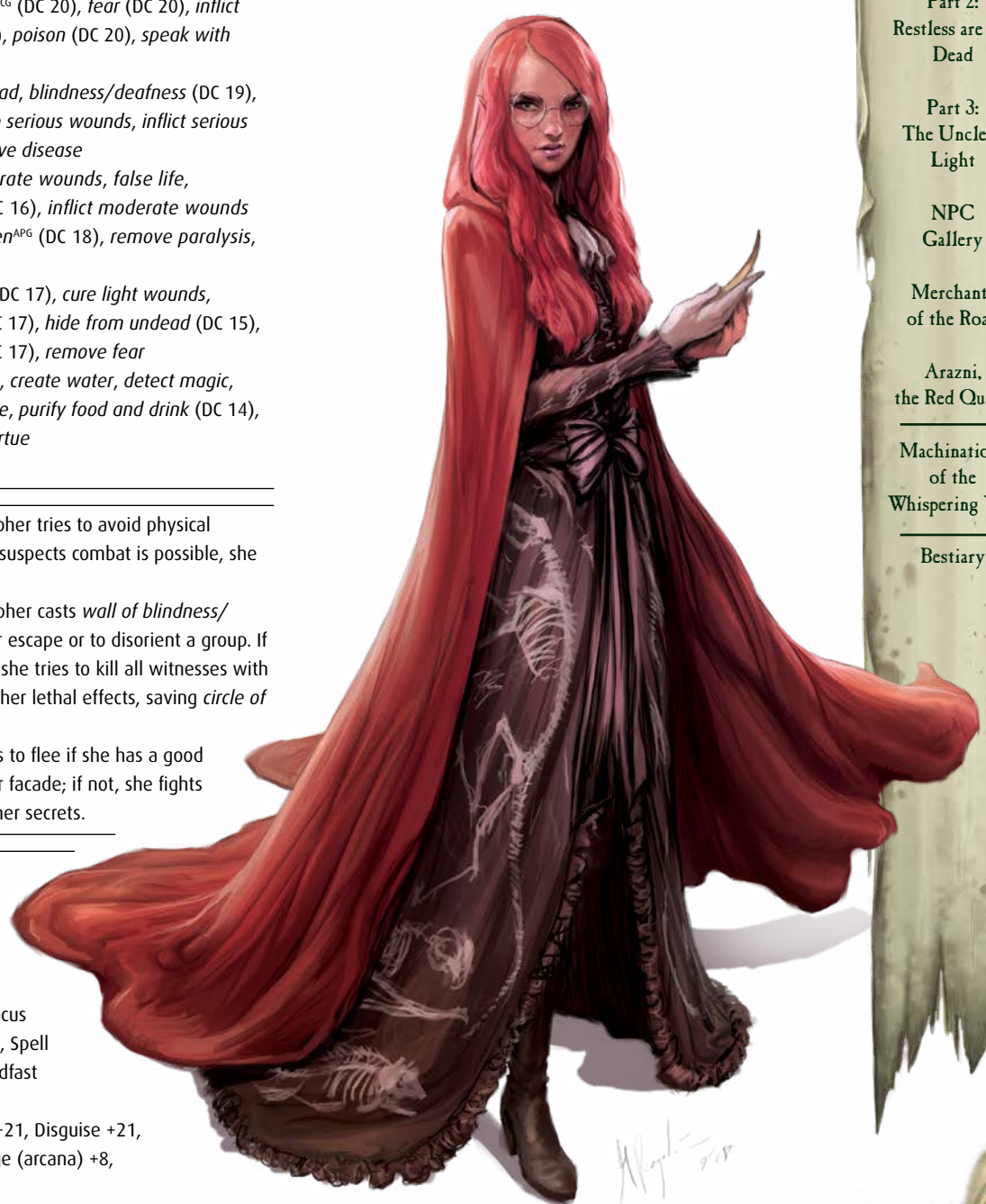
Skills Bluff +21, Diplomacy +21, Disguise +21, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (arcana) +8,

Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (planes) +16, Knowledge (religion) +18, Linguistics +7, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +11

Languages Aklo, Common, Cyclops, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Necril, Wayang

SQ oracle's curse (clouded vision), revelations (near death, soul siphon, spirit walk, voice of the grave)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of delay poison*, *potion of remove blindness/deafness*, *robe of bones*, *wand of false life* (18 charges); **Other Gear** +2 chainmail, dagger of venom, cloak of resistance +1, ring of protection +1, 28 gp





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“I heard the sobbing some distance away and I ran to help. It grew louder and louder and I worried about what disaster could have occurred around the corner. Even so, I was unprepared for what I saw. The faces of the people I knew so well, each grief-stricken and frozen in anguish. I couldn’t help them. I knew this. It filled my heart with sorrow, and I began to weep, too. For a moment, I understood and we cried together. And then, I heard a splatter, like a piece of meat thrown onto a table. I looked at them again, resting at my feet, and I panicked. As I ran, I saw them chasing after me, always sobbing. Once I got away, I fell to my knees and cried. I had escaped them, but I couldn’t help. I can still hear them, always sobbing in misery.”

—Uldros Firmari, former priest



This volume of the Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path contains two new couatls that travel throughout the world to help others, a new humanoid cursed with the touch of undeath, an undead created from the sudden loss of life in great tragedies, and an invasive carnivorous plant that rapidly overtakes territories and teleports its foes away.

RUINS OF A FORMER HOME

In "Eulogy for Roslar's Coffin," the PCs return only to find that things are significantly worse than when they left. The *Radiant Fire* has destroyed countless lives and raised many unfortunate souls as undead, but the mystic energy has also warped and mutated plants in the area.

The Roslar's Coffin Encounters table presented here features challenges the PCs might face as they traverse the ruins of the city. The PCs have a 20% chance of a random encounter every 4 hours they spend traveling through the ruins during the day, and a 40% chance of a random encounter each time they stop for a lengthy rest. The PCs should not have more than three 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 level or 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.

The Clanless Spirit (CR 8): Among the various souls slain in Roslar's Coffin was that of Jonar Wavebreaker, a Shoanti barbarian who fell in love with an adventurer from Roslar's Coffin and moved to the town when they married. Although he was very much in love, the feelings of isolation from being the only Shoanti in the area weighed heavy on Jonar. When the *Radiant Fire* destroyed his body, his soul was overwhelmed by this loneliness, as he perished clanless and alone. The bubbling resentment from this terrible death twisted his sorrow into anger, causing Jonar to rise as an advanced spectre. Jonar now roams the ruins of Roslar's Coffin in a delirious haze of fury, attacking any travelers who seem to share a sense of camaraderie with their fellows. PCs who search the town may find signs of Jonar's life and could use the portrait of his spouse or the Shoanti relics from Jonar's home to pacify the angered spirit.

King of the Ghouls (CR 6): As the energies of the *Radiant Fire* destroyed the town, it twisted and reanimated several of the town's citizens into undead horrors. Among these was a local thug by the name of Arminos Eversteel. The exiled son of a smithy from Kassen, Arminos was always a bully, even into his adult life. He would travel the town

Roslar's Coffin Encounters

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1-8	1 attic whisperer	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 34
9-13	1 ascomoid	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 20
14-18	1 basidironid	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 28
19-22	1 blightspawn	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 5 43
23-26	1 melacage	5	See page 88
27-32	1 wraith	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 281
33-37	1d4 carrion golems	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 136
38-41	1 deathweb	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 65
42-47	King of the Ghouls	6	See below
48-52	1 tendriculos	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 259
53-58	1 ghost	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 144
59-63	1 hangman tree	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 152
64-68	The Woken Worm	7	See below
69-72	1 totenmaske	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 269
73-77	1 hivemind rat swarm	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 6 156
78-81	1 mohrg	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 208
82-87	1 quickwood	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 228
88-92	The Clanless Spirit	8	See below
93-96	1 baykok	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 35
97-100	1 caller in the darkness	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 5 48

with his three lackeys, Jardim, Trensil, and "Black Eye" Brenner, roughing up locals and being general hooligans. When the three of them were reborn as ghouls, they were more than happy to use their newfound abilities to continue their antics, though the pool of available victims has been greatly diminished. Arminos is a ghoul with the giant template and now sees himself as the king of the ruins of Roslar's Coffin, though he is quick to backpedal on this claim whenever he encounters any of the more powerful undead that have risen in the aftermath of the catastrophe. He leads his gang around the ruins, hoping to recruit more undead to their numbers and kill anyone who opposes his new rule.

The Woken Worm (CR 7): The *Radiant Fire's* energies rippled across the land and pierced deep into the earth beneath Roslar's Coffin. This energy reached the dead buried in the town's graveyard and attempted to reanimate these long-deceased individuals. As many of these were already mostly decayed, this process failed, and the leftover energy instead found its way into the various grubs and worms among these graves. The energy caused these vermin to gain great power and coalesce into a worm that walks. As this creature was not born of any one spellcaster, it created its own shattered personality from fragments of the various dead in the graveyard. This being calls itself Roslar, as this was the only name shared among all fragments. Roslar uses the statistics for an awakened voice (*Pathfinder RPG Villain Codex* 72) with the worm that walks template (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 286).

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Couatl, Auwaz

This winged serpent is covered with bright blue-and-green feathers that are reminiscent of ocean waters.

AUWAZ COUATL

CR 6



XP 2,400

CG Large outsider (native)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect chaos/evil/good/law*; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+4 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 84 (8d10+40)

Fort +5, **Ref** +10, **Will** +8

OFFENSE

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

Melee bite +12 (1d8+4 plus grab and poison)

Special Attacks constrict (1d8+4), poison

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

Constant—*detect chaos, detect evil, detect good, detect law, know direction*

At will—*create water, detect thoughts* (DC 15), *invisibility, plane shift* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only)

3/day—*hydraulic push*^{MPG} (DC 14), *obscuring mist, touch of the sea*^{MPG}, *water breathing*

1/day—*call lightning* (DC 16), *gust of wind* (DC 15), *hydraulic torrent*^{MPG} (DC 16)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 18, **Con** 17, **Int** 15, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +11 (+15 grapple); **CMD** 25 (can't be tripped)

Feats Alertness, Eschew Materials^B, Hover, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Fly +19, Knowledge (geography) +13, Knowledge (local) +13, Perception +15, Sense Motive +15, Survival +13

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ gift of the sea

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Gifts of the Sea (Ex) Once per day as a full-round action, an auwaz couatl can bestow a creature within 120 feet with either its blessing or its curse. A blessed creature knows the location to either its final destination or the nearest port city, whichever is closer, as *find the path*. In addition, the blessed creature always has favorable winds, which grant the benefits of *endure elements* and allow any ship the creature travels on to move at its fastest speed. A cursed creature takes a –6 penalty on Profession (sailor) and Survival checks, and it always has strong unfavorable winds that blow in the opposite direction of the cursed creature's

final destination. A creature affected by this ability remains affected for 12 hours. A creature can attempt a DC 16 Will save to resist this effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Ex) Injury—bite; *save* Fortitude DC 17; *frequency* 1/minute for 10 minutes; *effect* 1d2 Dex damage; *cure* 1 save. The DC is Constitution-based.

Auwaz couatls are a variety of couatl known for helping those who are lost find their way back to safety. They are particularly known for traveling around the oceans of Golarion to help sailors and other travelers lost at sea. Many sailors claim that they owe their lives to an auwaz couatl, though these same sailors warn that living a particularly vile life will instead draw an auwaz couatl's ire. An auwaz couatl often prefers that evil beings remain lost, and it actively works to ensure such creatures remain lost for as long as possible. A typical auwaz couatl is 8 feet long with a wingspan of 12 feet, and weighs 800 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Auwaz couatls are the most commonly known couatls across Golarion, at least among those people who live near coasts. An auwaz couatl's scales are a light gray with subtle light blue and green markings. Their feathers are typically blue and green, with hints of light yellow reminiscent of the sun. The coloring resembles the waters of the oceans, and the exact coloring of an auwaz couatl tends to vary depending on which body of water the couatl frequents—each major sea and ocean seems to have its own distinct auwaz markings and colorations. The sound of an auwaz couatl's wings resembles that of a gentle ocean breeze. This makes it hard to detect their approach, and many sailors tend to utter short blessings whenever they encounter a calm, compliant breeze, just in case an auwaz couatl is nearby.

Each auwaz couatl knows the location of every settlement on the edge of its waters and is happy to share this knowledge with those it views favorably. Those who draw an auwaz couatl's suspicion sometimes receive inaccurate knowledge, ending up at a settlement a few hundred miles away from their intended destination. An auwaz couatl usually gives this misinformation to allow it time to follow the travelers and determine whether they are dangerous, correcting its original directions only if the travelers appear to be good-hearted. When dealing with evil travelers, an auwaz couatl usually points them toward subtle dangers such as troubled waters, reefs, and other oceanic dangers. The creature won't follow these travelers and is content with letting the ocean determine their fates.

Auwaz couatls have moderate control over the weather, calling forth winds and storms as they feel necessary. They use this power to aid the travel of those they are guiding home, summoning strong winds to make the



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journeys of sailing ships shorter. Similarly, if an auwaz couatl encounters a sinking ship, it uses its powers to grant survivors the ability to breathe water and personally guides these victims to safety. This power also allows an auwaz couatl to work against evil travelers, making their journeys difficult and even calling on lightning storms to strike ships when necessary.

Auwaz couatls have the shortest lives of all couatls, living only about a century at most, and most have life spans equivalent to those of humans. Due to their flighty nature, they rarely take the time to meet with others of their kind, though they do gather once every few years to reproduce, laying several eggs each. Its uncertain how auwaz couatls know the exact time to gather, though many believe they read a message in the stars left behind by their cousins, the mix couatls (see page 84).

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Auwaz couatls live roving, independent lives that allow them to travel all across Golarion. Although most auwaz couatls live near the seas and oceans of Golarion, some prefer to stay inland and help those lost in forests or mountains. An auwaz couatl typically sticks to its home in its younger years, but it eventually travels the world through its adult life before returning. Auwaz couatls tend to avoid each other and keep out of each other's affairs, except in times of peril. In these cases, an auwaz couatl uses a particular call, perceptible only to other couatls, to warn of danger. During these fraught times, auwaz couatls travel in packs, especially to protect the younger members of their kind.

As they are generally good-natured and curious, many auwaz couatls take time to speak with any travelers they find, often flying above ships and conversing with those on board. These conversations usually involve current events, as auwaz couatls prefer to keep updated so as to not send travelers to dangerous locales, but they can also include artistic and philosophical discussions. Some auwaz couatls are quite fond of humorous stories and like to spend hours telling such tales, especially if there are children among the travelers. The sight of an auwaz couatl above a ship serves as a signal to others that the ship is protected, so many ships fly kites in the shape of auwaz couatls in hopes of giving marauders pause.

Auwaz couatls are particularly fond of children, as they find kinship in their innocence.

They are more than happy to comfort distressed children and guide them home. In particularly dire situations, or ones where a child may be too far from home to safely travel, an auwaz couatl will carry the child on its back and fly it to safety. An auwaz couatl typically has a different approach with children who have run away from home; the auwaz couatl takes time to speak with the child and learn her reasons for running away. In some cases, the child seeks to escape a troubled life and the auwaz couatl helps guide the child to a new home. In other cases, the auwaz couatl convinces the child to return home but encourages her to cultivate the wanderlust in her heart. Such children tend to grow into adventurers and travel the world years later.



Couatl, Mix

Dark scales marked with shining spots resembling stars cover this winged serpent. Faint red stripes span the length of its body.

MIX COUATL

CR 8



XP 4,800

CG Large outsider (native)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect chaos/evil/good/law*, see in darkness; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+4 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 95 (10d10+40)

Fort +7, **Ref** +11, **Will** +12

OFFENSE

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

Melee bite +14 (1d8+6 plus grab and poison)

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

Special Attacks breath weapon (15-ft. cone, 8d6 fire, Reflex DC 19 half, usable every 1d6 rounds), constrict (1d8+6), poison

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +13)

Constant—*detect chaos*, *detect evil*, *detect good*, *detect law*

At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 15), *invisibility*, *plane shift*

(self plus 50 lbs. of objects only)

1/day—*modify memory* (DC 17)

Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +10)

4th—*flame strike* (DC 18), *summon nature's ally IV*

3rd—*cure moderate wounds*, *protection from energy*, *speak with plants*

2nd—*bear's endurance*, *flaming sphere* (DC 15), *lesser restoration*, *resist energy*

1st—*endure elements*, *faerie fire* (DC 14), *pass without trace*, *produce flame*, *speak with animals*

0 (at will)—*flare* (DC 13), *guidance*, *stabilize*, *virtue*

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 19, **Con** 18, **Int** 15, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +15 (+19 grapple); **CMD** 29 (can't be tripped)

Feats Alertness, Eschew Materials⁸, Hover, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Diplomacy +16, Fly +19, Knowledge (geography) +15, Knowledge (nature) +15, Perception +20, Sense Motive +20, Stealth +0 (+20 in the night sky)

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ gift of knowledge, star child

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or flight (3–4)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Gift of Knowledge (Ex) When a mix couatl uses its *modify memory* ability, it can implant a memory of up to 1 hour in length. In addition to its normal modifications, it can

use *modify memory* to grant the knowledge of a particular skill to a creature. When using the ability in this way, the mix couatl chooses one of the following skills: Craft (any), Handle Animal, Heal, Knowledge (engineering), Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (nature), Profession (any), Ride, Spellcraft, Survival, or Use Magic Device. The target of the spell automatically gains a number of ranks in that skill equal to its Hit Dice (maximum 5 ranks) and treats that skill as a class skill. The target creature retains the skill ranks for up to 1 month, after which the creature loses the skill ranks but still treats the chosen skill as a class skill. A creature can receive the gift of skills in this way only once; it can never receive this gift again, even from a different mix couatl.

Poison (Ex) Injury—bite; *save* Fortitude DC 19; *frequency* 1/minute for 10 minutes; *effect* 1d3 Wis damage; *cure* 1 save. The DC is Constitution-based.

Spells A mix couatl casts spells as a 7th-level druid. Druid spells are considered arcane spells for a mix couatl, meaning that it doesn't need a divine focus to cast them.

Star Child (Ex) A mix couatl gains power from the night sky, granting it a +20 bonus on Stealth checks to hide against the darkness of the sky. In addition, its fly speed increases to 80 feet (perfect) at night.

Mix (pronounced “meesh”) couatls are a variety of couatl known for their ability to grant guidance and knowledge to fledgling societies. They seek out less established tribes and villages and offer their knowledge to help such settlements flourish. A mix couatl can offer a variety of knowledge depending on the nature of the settlement and its people. To some, they offer knowledge of new farming and hunting techniques, while others are taught more esoteric knowledge, like the arcane arts. While nurturing a settlement, a mix couatl typically acts as its protector, keeping at bay any foes that would disrupt the growth of the people. A typical mix couatl is 12 feet long with a wingspan of 15 feet and weighs 1,500 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Mix couatls are among the most common couatls known across Golarion, alongside their auwaz couatl cousins (see page 82). The scales of a mix couatl are dotted with small white and light gray spots that resemble the stars in the sky and red stripes that resemble the final rays of a setting sun. Their feathers range in color from dark blues to deep violets to blacks darker than the night. This coloring resembles the colors of the twilight and helps a mix couatl hide among the stars at night. The flapping of their wings as they fly through the skies is said to resemble the sounds of distant thunder. Many who know of mix couatls or recognize this sound claim that the noise is very calming, as it is both a reminder of relaxing summer rains and of the couatls' protection.



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Each mix couatl is gifted with the knowledge of the rest of its brothers and sisters, though it does not have access to this knowledge on an individual basis. Instead, a mix couatl can call upon bits of knowledge to share with others, much as one might pluck a star from the night sky. The mix couatl can bless an individual with this knowledge, even though the couatl itself may not know the full details of the gift it grants. This shared knowledge allows mix couatls to work together and aid each other even if they never meet face to face, a lesson that they also teach to others. Individual mix couatls may have different skills from those listed above, depending on their own experience and expertise.

Mix couatls are among the couatls with the longest life spans. Though they don't live as long as xiuh couatls (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #106* 86), their legacy can live on for centuries thanks to the knowledge they share with others. When a mix couatl reaches the final years of its life, it lays a small clutch of eggs, which typically hatch up to half a dozen couatls.

Although they are more than capable hunters on their own, many mix couatls have grown accustomed to receiving gifts of fruit, vegetables, and livestock from the first harvests of a settlement. As such, many stories state that earning a mix couatl's favor requires a single sweet fruit.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Mix couatls find their own kind somewhat abrasive. Every mix couatl has its own belief as to what a settlement requires, and many mix couatls find themselves disagreeing with their kin on such matters. They each mark the settlements they are aiding by marking them with starlike beacons, and keep away from each others' territory to avoid bickering.

When assisting a settlement, a mix couatl tends to share knowledge about the natural world to assist with farming and hunting methods. Thanks to this knowledge, many see mix couatls as demigods of the hunt. Some claim that mix couatls were present during the early days of Golarion to help guide humanity by providing knowledge of fire and magic. With this knowledge, the first humans were able to learn how to make war, so some humans also consider mix couatls to be demigods of war—a reputation mix couatls have worked hard to escape in the millennia since.

Although they are altruistic as a whole, mix couatls are known for having fun with their duties, often sharing less relevant or

risky knowledge to shake up the growth of a settlement. Many tales tell of mix couatls teaching small children about magic or places that then cause trouble for a settlement. In the end, most settlements find that these challenges teach great lessons and use this valuable knowledge to improve their settlements in unexpected ways.

Mix couatls commonly return to the sites of settlements they have helped nurture over the span of multiple generations—each new generation hears tales of beautiful flying serpents made of stars and considers it a great blessing to see this creature once more. Only on rare occasions does a mix couatl abandon a settlement. This usually happens when the mix couatl recognizes that its attempts to improve the settlement may actually be harmful, whether due to a potential loss of important traditions or when the possibility of growth could expose the settlement to great dangers from the outside world.



Gurgist

This woman's clothing is a jumbled quilt of fine fabrics and elegant stitching, topped with a magnificent mask of painted wood and feathers. Bruises and sores cover her skin.

GURGIST MORTIC

CR 6



XP 2,400

N Medium humanoid (human, mortic; see *Pathfinder Adventure Path #139: The Dead Roads 72*)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2

DEFENSE

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

hp 76 (9d8+36); fast healing 5

Fort +10, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities death gasp, negative energy affinity; **Immune** pain

Weaknesses rotting flesh, vulnerable to consecration

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +10/+5 (1d4+4/19-20), mwk dagger +10/+5 (1d4+2/19-20) or mwk dagger +12/+7 (1d4+4/19-20)

Ranged mwk longbow +10/+5 (1d8/×3)

Special Attacks ferocious rush, sneak attack +3d6

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 17, **Con** 18, **Int** 17, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 23

Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Quick Draw, Skill Focus^B (Craft [leatherworking]), Signature Skill^{B, PU} (Craft [leatherworking]), Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (dagger)

Skills Craft (leatherworking) +18, Disguise +7, Knowledge (nature) +12, Stealth +15, Survival +14

Languages Common

SQ obsession skill, unliving nature

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, hunting party (3-5) or patrol (7-9 gurgists with 1-2 trained animals or magical beasts such as ankhegs or griffons)

Treasure standard (studded leather armor, two mwk daggers, mwk longbow, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ferocious Rush (Ex) Once per day, a gurgist can push herself to act in a single, ferocious burst of energy. As a full-round action, the gurgist moves up to twice her speed and can make a single melee attack at the end of this movement. If the gurgist ends her movement adjacent to an enemy, that enemy is flat-footed against the gurgist until the beginning of the gurgist's next turn.

Obsession Skill (Ex) Every gurgist has some hobby or activity or skill she uses to keep the hunger away, and which she

swiftly masters. A gurgist selects one of the following skills: Appraise, Climb, Craft, Disable Device, Disguise, Handle Animal, Heal, Knowledge (any), Linguistics, Perform, Profession, Ride, Sleight of Hand, Spellcraft, Stealth, Survival, Swim, or Use Magic Device. That skill is a class skill for the gurgist. She gains Skill Focus and Signature Skill (*Pathfinder RPG Pathfinder Unchained 82*) as bonus feats for this chosen skill, and she can reroll a failed check with her obsession skill once per day. This gurgist has chosen Craft (leatherworking) as her obsession skill.

Rotting Flesh (Su) Gurgists are forever slowly rotting, their flesh growing soft and discolored and eventually sloughing off in rancid slabs. The only way a gurgist can arrest this decay is to consume raw meat. A gurgist begins to rot if she goes more than 1 week without eating roughly 10% of her body weight in raw meat. After 1 week, she takes 1 point of Constitution damage and 1 point of Charisma damage each day until she can feed. This damage cannot be healed until the gurgist has fed. A *gentle repose* spell extends the amount of time a gurgist can go without feeding for the duration of the spell.

A gurgist mortic is a keen mind trapped within a rotting, hungering body. Gurgists can feel the decay of their flesh, just as they can feel the urgings of their gullet to rend and consume meat until they bloat with it. But unlike zombies and other carnivorous undead, mortics still have their wits about them and use their minds to find solutions to their nature. They hunt and herd to keep the rot at bay, they obsess over crafts or skills to distract from the hunger, and they wear extravagant masks and colorful garments to hide their hideousness.

Gurgists are the same size as humans, averaging 5-1/2 to 6 feet tall, and weighing about 160 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Gurgists are among the more common mortics, created whenever a human being is afflicted with a little too much negative energy. A zombie's bite will do the trick, but so too will a mummy's curse or a necromancer's enchantment, giving rise to a metaphysical anomaly that causes the gurgist's body to think itself dead and free to rot. The body first grows pale, and then develops purple-red splotches on its skin as the blood stills and stagnates. If the gurgist isn't careful, her flesh then grows gray or waxy and begins to rot, with hideous sores opening. A gurgist who allows this to persist will eventually see large parts of her body liquefy, which usually proves fatal to the gurgist in question.

The only way for a gurgist to stop the process is to eat raw meat—the more, the better. Through some occult means, the gurgist's half-dead biology then repairs itself and can even reverse smaller changes. A recently fed gurgist can mostly pass for a human, albeit a pale and

sickly one, and gurgists who deal with the living are scrupulous in maintaining a daily feeding schedule.

As part of their cursed biology, gurgists suffer from a powerful hunger for meat, preferably fresh raw meat or offal. This hunger is a constant, gnawing sensation at the back of a gurgist's mind, and while it doesn't drive her to madness, it certainly drives her to distraction. Luckily for all involved, gurgists have at best a very mild preference for human flesh, and so most subsist on enormous quantities of raw beef, pork, or wild game.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Few gurgists can pass for long in mortal society. Their unceasing rot marks them, and their dietary needs limit them. Instead, most live in small villages out on the outskirts of civilization, in wild lands where law breaks down and a community of masked half-dead can live, if not unnoticed, then at least unmolested.

Gurgist villages devote great effort to dealing with the twin problems of rot and hunger. Gurgists ensure there is always plenty of meat around, and so they often become herders and hunters. Many extend their animal-tending skills to other beasts as well. Gurgists are infinitely creative when it comes to taming the local wildlife, and their half-dead hardiness means they can risk dealing with creatures that other people would avoid, such as ankhegs, chimeras, griffons, and mammoths. Gurgists also think of weaker undead as just one more type of beast to train, though no gurgist willingly deals with zombies of any stripe—the similarities are simply too close for comfort.

Dealing with the hunger is harder. Most gurgist communities use distraction to keep themselves sane. Gurgists find a hobby or activity and focus all their will and drive on that one thing, until it becomes greater in their minds than their hunger. Gurgists might become master animal trainers or leatherworkers, painters, carvers, poets, or anything else that keeps the edge of hunger at bay. In some gurgist villages, all residents choose the same mania, elevating it to something akin to a religion. More often, they each pursue their own private obsessions, placing their skills in the service of their communities.

Masks and clothing are vital parts of gurgist culture. While there are exceptions, most gurgists find their slow rot no more pleasing to the eye than outsiders do. They instead make beautiful and colorful garb, with particular emphasis placed on unique and eye-catching masks. Gurgists wear their masks constantly, tying them with leather bands or in extreme cases even sewing them to their half-rotted flesh, and many gurgists consider their masks to be their true faces. Gurgist masks also often say something about the gurgists' roles in their community.

Hunters or warriors have small, elegant masks, while artisans have more extravagant masks adorned with symbols of their trade.

Gurgist communities tend to be standoffish but not actively hostile to others in the area. In wilder areas, such as in the depths of the Mwangi Expanse or near the Crown of the World, gurgists are sometimes even accepted as neighbors by local human communities—not necessarily comfortable or friendly, but as allies against more dangerous forces.



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Melacage

This ethereal ball of faces hovers in the middle of the air. Tears stream from every one of the faces' eyes, but the drops fade to nothing before they reach the ground.

MELACAGE

CR 5



XP 1,600

NE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +11

Aura life-draining aura (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 18, flat-footed 13 (+3 deflection, +5 Dex)

hp 52 (7d8+21)

Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities incorporeal, rejuvenation; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (while corporeal), fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee incorporeal touch +10 (4d6 plus despair) or
2 bites +10 (1d10+5 plus despair) (while corporeal)

Special Attacks despair

STATISTICS

Str — (20 while corporeal), **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 11, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 23 (25 while corporeal)

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Step Up

Skills Fly +23, Intimidate +13, Perception +11, Stealth +15

Languages Common

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, village (2-5), or city (10-20)

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Despair (Su) A creature hit by a melacage's natural attacks must succeed at a DC 16 Will save or be overwhelmed by sadness for 1d6 rounds. Affected creatures take a -2 penalty on ability checks, saving throws, attack and weapon damage rolls, and skill checks. This is an emotion and mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Life-Draining Aura (Su) At the start of a melacage's turn, each creature within 30 feet that is affected by the melacage's despair ability takes 1d4 points of negative energy damage, and the melacage becomes corporeal for 1 round. It loses the incorporeal subtype and gains a Strength score of 20. Its deflection bonus to AC becomes a natural armor bonus, and its incorporeal touch attack is replaced with two bite attacks. It loses its fly speed and gains a base speed of 30 feet. A creature within the melacage's aura at the start of the melacage's turn can allow itself to be affected by the melacage's despair ability (as if it had failed the Will save) in order to trigger this ability.

Rejuvenation (Su) A melacage exists because it is not aware of how it died. Explaining to a melacage how it died destroys it permanently. If the melacage is destroyed but it still does not know the circumstances of its death, it rejuvenates fully in 1d10 days.

In a world with powerful spells, silent monsters, and a long history that can often affect the present in unexpected ways, death—even mass death—can sometimes come as a surprise. While souls may move on, the sudden feelings of loss and confusion can be left in the world as psychic imprints, and if enough of those feelings exist in one place, they can combine into a melacage. A melacage stays near the place where it formed, trying to transfer its crippling depression to a living creature so that it can become corporeal and investigate the cause of its death.

An average melacage is around 2 feet in diameter, with four to five humanoid faces on the outside of its body.

ECOLOGY

Melacages are usually created in the aftermath of a great, tragic event. This could be anything from the collateral damage of a wizard's duel to a group of subterranean monsters causing lethal tremors and a sudden sinkhole. Whatever that event, it often has these two qualities: it affected a large group of people at once, and that group of people had little to no warning that it was coming.

Because a melacage is created by lingering emotions and not souls, the number of deaths that it takes to create one of these creatures can vary from one melacage to another. Sometimes the psychic imprint of an entire village will come together to form one melacage, while other times it takes only two or three sudden deaths. A major factor in the creation of melacages comes from the victims' outlook on life while they were alive; a group of happy-go-lucky, optimistic people might be devastated by their sudden deaths and form many melacages, whereas a group of down-on-their-luck folk who were barely scraping by might barely form one. Gnomes in particular are vulnerable to forming melacages, as their whimsical nature and vivacious lifestyles can make their unexpected deaths all the more traumatic, though gnomes who have survived the Bleaching almost never form part of a melacage.

The fact that melacages are formed from lingering emotions and not souls also causes trouble for necromancers who try to create them. Since most spells focus on a corpse or a soul, it is hard to find a spell that targets the essences required to create a melacage; while it can be hard to covertly find the appropriate corpses necessary for casting *animate dead*, it can be even harder to quietly kill a large number of people in an unexpected and sudden way. These circumstances mean that academic



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work on creating melacages is severely lacking and advanced only by unscrupulous professors' side projects.

The faces of a melacage reflect those who provided the emotions that formed it, although in the case of a melacage created by the confusion and sorrow of a large number of people, the faces are often amalgams of the originals. Bits and pieces of the original creatures' memories remain, mostly having to do with what the creatures were doing when they died. When accessing an individual person's memories, the melacage rotates so this particular face is showing, which can lead to a dizzying discussion if the melacage tries to access multiple different memories at once.

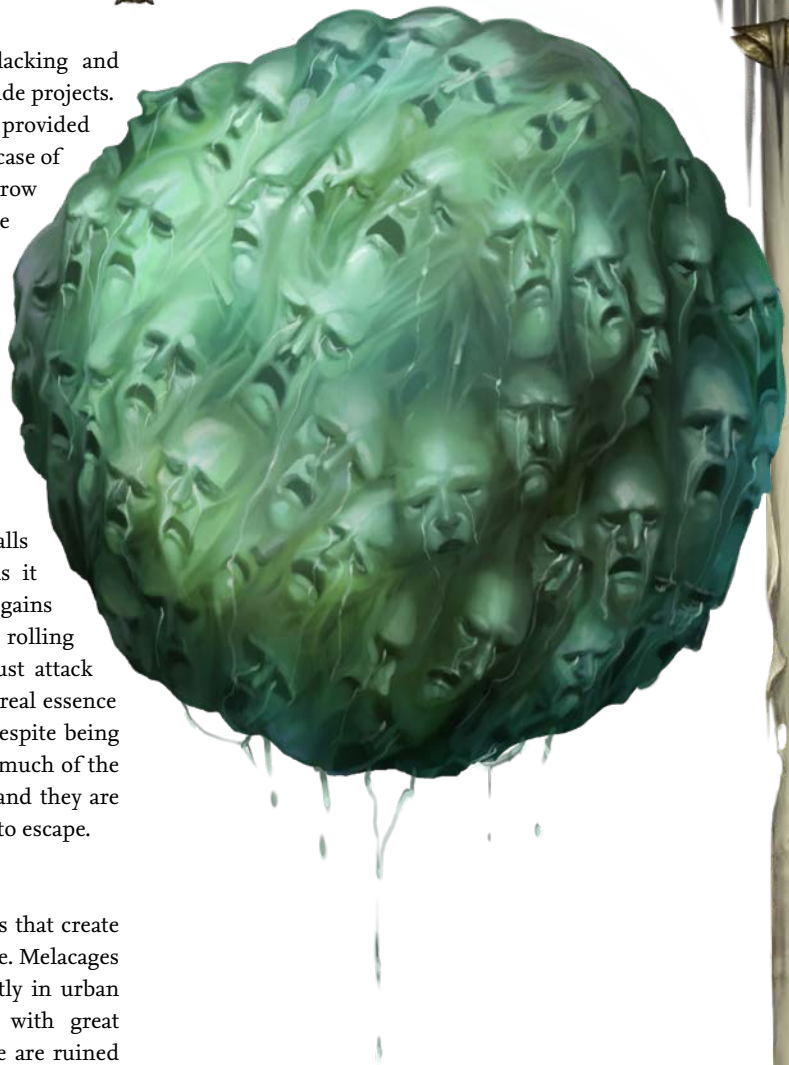
A melacage that becomes corporeal falls onto the ground with a sickening splat as it simultaneously loses the ability to fly and gains real skin. Such a melacage is reduced to rolling around on the ground to move, and it must attack with its mouths instead of using its incorporeal essence to drain the vitality from other creatures. Despite being brought to the ground, melacages maintain much of the speed they had in their incorporeal forms, and they are able to quickly roll after any victims who try to escape.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Melacages are only as common as the events that create them, which means they tend to be fairly rare. Melacages can show up anywhere, but they form mostly in urban environments. Due to their connections with great tragedies, often the places where they reside are ruined and abandoned.

Melacages cannot recall the events that lead to their creation, and they cannot rest until they know the reason for their being, yet they are often prevented from investigating their deaths by their own melancholy and despair. This means that their first priority is to find something or someone else to host their overpowering emotions. This has the dual benefits of allowing them to mentally focus on their investigations and allowing them to become corporeal and therefore able to move physical objects in their quests. However, the necessary proximity to the new host of their depression and the damage their emotions inflict upon that creature can lead to misunderstandings of the melacage's intentions, so such attempts often end in violence.

While a melacage doesn't mind working with people who are investigating its death, its tumultuous and misery-stricken mind can often cause it to become confused as to who is actually helping and who is causing it harm. If a melacage is able to transfer its misery to someone else, the melacage usually becomes easier to



reason with. Removing a melacage's anguish can also help people who have figured out the cause of its deaths and are trying to convince it they have discovered the truth, as the emotional shock of discovery makes it difficult for the melacage to make sense of what anyone tells it, and it often denies that such stories could possibly be true.

Due to their tendency to live in isolated areas, melacages are only rarely reported, usually after adventurers have already removed them. There have been some strange rumors coming out of Nirmathas, however, of a village where melacages seem to be forming for no reason. Given the villagers' preparations for Molthuni aggression, they've so far been able to take care of the melacages with minimal harm to themselves, but they remain flummoxed as to why the undead creatures are being created in the first place. The village is offering a sizable reward for anyone who can figure out the cause and deal with the situation permanently. Current theories point to an underground city that befell tragedy, but no one has been able to locate it.



Pixie Circle

Heart-shaped leaves and drooping clusters of purple and pink flowers emitting a faint scent of honey and fruit drape over the bone-white trees of a dead grove buried under heavy vines.

PIXIE CIRCLE

CR 7



XP 3,200

N Huge plant

Init -2; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 6, flat-footed 21 (-2 Dex, +15 natural, -2 size)

hp 85 (10d8+40)

Fort +11, **Ref** +1, **Will** +7

Immune plant traits

Resist cold 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft.

Ranged 4 vines +11 touch (1d6+5 plus withering)

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

Special Attacks hostile teleport

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 7, **Con** 18, **Int** 6, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 22 (can't be tripped)

Feats Diehard, Endurance, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Stealth),
Weapon Focus (vine)

Skills Perception +10, Stealth +1 (+21 in forests and jungles);

Racial Modifiers +20 Stealth in forests and jungles

Languages Sylvan (can't speak)

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests and jungles

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Hostile Teleport (Sp) As a standard action, a pixie circle can attempt to teleport a creature within 60 feet that has taken at least 1 point of Constitution damage from the pixie circle's withering ability. The target creature is instantly transported to the location of another random pixie circle within 1,000 miles. If there is no eligible pixie circle within range, the effect fails. A creature can resist being teleported with a successful DC 15 Will save. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Withering (Ex) A creature damaged by a pixie circle's vines must succeed at a DC 19 Fortitude save or take 1 point of Constitution damage. A creature's speed is reduced by 5 feet for every 2 points of Constitution damage it takes in this way, to a minimum speed of 5 feet. Curing any of this Constitution damage restores a creature's movement to its full speed. This is a poison effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

The pixie circle is an aggressive invasive species that opportunistically drains energy from nearby plant and

animal life to fuel its teleporting abilities. It uses these abilities to remove potential threats from its habitat, typically teleporting creatures away when it is threatened or hurt. These sturdy vines are resistant to heat, cold, and drought conditions, and an infestation is notoriously difficult to root out once it has taken hold. A mature pixie circle measures 20 feet in diameter and is always in flower regardless of the season.

ECOLOGY

While it shares a passing resemblance to wisteria or honeysuckle, pixie circle behaves like mistletoe and parasitically attaches itself to larger plants and trees while it establishes itself. Smaller infestations do not flower and can be difficult to detect, as the pixie circle tends to blend in with its host foliage. Once the plant is mature enough to put out flowers, it is large enough to attack and teleport victims, and continues to grow at an astonishing rate.

The flowers of a pixie circle resemble the multicolored wings of pixies when seen from a distance, making them a clear signal for people aware of the plant to keep their distance. Its growths can easily dominate large trees and can cover small cottages in a single season. Left unchecked, the plant can overwhelm groves or entire sections of woodlands, burying everything living beneath the pretty green and purple vines and leaving wide patches of dead forest in its wake.

The plant is opportunistic in nature and initially prefers to absorb energy from host trees before progressing to insects, small birds, and eventually the larger animal life that wanders into range. As a result, most humanoids encounter the vine only when it is large enough to be a threat. Because of its growth pattern, a pixie circle tends to form a ring around an open meadow, creating a natural lure for large herbivores and adventurers seeking a safe place to camp. Adventurers with sharp eyes and knowledge of the natural world can recognize these meadows by their odd circular pattern and the unnatural silence within them. The vines of well-established patches typically hide the bones of previous victims, animal and humanoid alike. The belongings of the deceased are often in excellent condition, as scavengers tend to avoid these remains.

Pixie circles spread underground using offshoots strong enough to punch through clay and rocky soils. Solid rock or a brick wall can contain the runners within a garden, but such barriers must extend at least 6 feet belowground. Clippings and small pieces will take root within a week if left in contact with fertile soil. Pixie circles are also self-pollinating, and their seeds are light enough to carry on wind. This makes containment of the plant extremely difficult, as these seeds can cover several miles of distance with a slight breeze.



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Once a pixie circle reaches its full size, it secretes a unique toxin from all of its vines. This toxin dries out cells and causes a pixie circle's victims to grow weak, making it difficult for prey to escape. In addition to its predatory applications, this toxin is also laced with arcane energies. Once the toxin is flowing through a victim's veins, the pixie circle can attempt to harness the arcane energy to transport the creature to another pixie circle elsewhere.

Scholars disagree as to the exact details of a pixie circle's teleportation abilities. Some believe that the pixie circle developed these abilities to keep its particular habitat clear of any predators or competition for food. Others claim that this ability allows them to propagate much more easily as a species, as it allows pixie circles to share prey with each other. This becomes especially useful for pixie circles attempting to establish footholds in new territories.

Some adventurers risk intentionally provoking these plants to benefit from their teleportation abilities. Those who have studied pixie circles know that they are more intelligent than they let on. By speaking with a pixie circle, these insightful adventurers can convince it to teleport a target without the need for combat. The pixie circle will send willing targets to another pixie circle of their choice, though this process still requires exposure to a pixie circle's toxin. While painful, this is a somewhat reliable process, and bold druids and rangers make use of it.

Given its rate of growth and tolerance of a wide range of environments, many believe that the pixie circle is not a naturally occurring plant; signs seem to point to an origin associated with fey. Whether it was created through magical experimentation or intentional breeding is unclear, and it remains an open question whether the first pixie circles escaped to the outside world of their own accord or through deliberate release.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Pixie circles grow in nearly any environment, from snowy taiga to humid jungles, so long as there are suitable creatures in the area to serve as prey. The plant is rare in sandy deserts and other barren environments, and underwater and underground growths are unheard of. Regardless of its environment, a pixie circle adopts the appearance and coloration of local flora to better hide.

Although pixie circles are highly invasive and difficult to clear, civilizations do their best to contain or remove these plants when they grow nearby. Several workers can clear a patch of young pixie circles within a few days, but

even the smallest scrap of root or branch left behind can allow them to reestablish themselves, requiring repeated efforts to keep them under control.

In rural Avistani communities, parents warn children to avoid pixie circles should they encounter them, lest the children be stolen away by the fey—a reasonable concern given the plants' ability to teleport victims. Alternatively, some tell stories of a stranger staggering out of the circle speaking a language none in the village recognize or wearing clothes that are hundreds of years out of style. A few lucky survivors return with stories of adventures in the First World or Nithveil.



NEXT MONTH

LAST WATCH

By Larry Wilhelm

Having learned that the undead-obsessed Whispering Way was behind the attack on the remote village of Roslar's Coffin, the heroes head to the city of Vigil to alert the goodly Knights of Ozem. The heroes must prove that the threat posed by the Whispering Tyrant's agents is all too real, then confront the troubles facing Vigil to avert another disaster.

INTO THE VOID

By Patchen Mortimer

The Negative Energy Plane is the antithesis of existence, opposed to anything that bears even the faintest glimmer of life. Glimpse into a darkness that devours stars, snuffs out worlds, and swallows those desperate enough to visit.

RELICS OF THE SHINING CRUSADE

By Alexander Augunas

The victory of the Shining Crusade came at great cost, as many heroes and powerful artifacts were destroyed

in the efforts to halt the Whispering Tyrant's advance. The precious treasures that remain represent a sacred memento of those who were lost—and a glimmer of hope to those who seek to fight Tar-Baphon once more!

THE SEALBREAKERS

By Greg Vaughan

The Sealbreakers have sought to free Tar-Baphon ever since he was imprisoned by the Shining Crusade, but their plans do not originate or end with the Whispering Tyrant. Uncover the ancient plots of a group that seeks to unbind that which should remain bound, from the Great Seal of Gallowspire to older seals placed by the gods.

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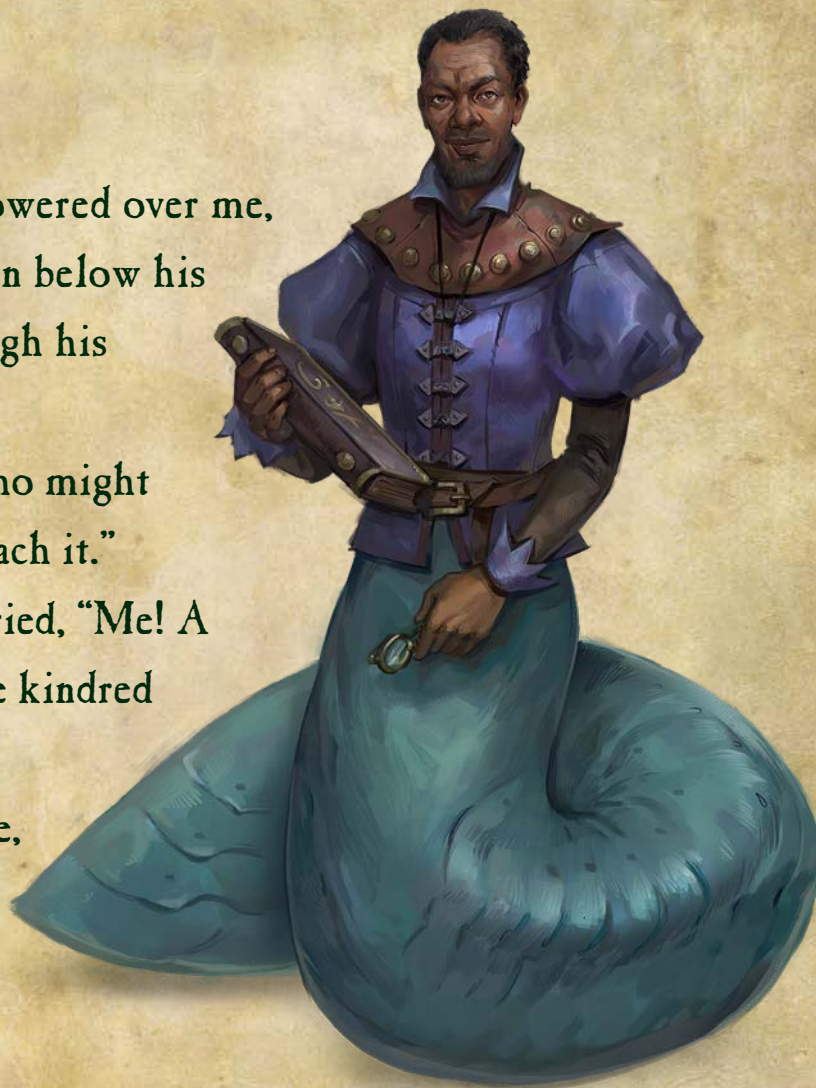
Viduus

The scholar of the Boneyard towered over me, spectacles in hand. The cocoon below his waist twitched in irritation, although his face was impassive.

“We simply cannot allow those who might impede the River of Souls to approach it.”

“Surely you do not mean me!” I cried, “Me! A fellow scholar of the planes! We are kindred beings, you and I!”

His only response was a stern glare, as though I should know better.



Esobok

I knew one did not simply pat the crocodilian head of a guardian hound of the Boneyard. I knew *I* had nothing to fear; my intentions were purely academic, not malevolent. Nevertheless, I approached it with caution.

When I was only five paces away, the beast suddenly lunged. It shan't surprise you that I started with shock! Worse, however, was the shadowy presence inside me that I felt recoil even further. I was not alone in my skin, I suddenly knew, and the esobok knew it as well.



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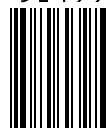
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