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BELKZEN, HOLD OF THE ORC HORDES

50 miles



Broken Shore
 Dretha's cradle
 Raschka-top
 Alcid wastes
 Covenant Rock
 Smokespur
 Tusk Mountains
 Brimstone Haruspex
 wyvernsting
 whisperfall pass
 Dirt Sea
 Tomb of the First Battle
 pillars of kreth
 Deepgate
 keening hills
 whisperfall
 Firewatch Peaks
 Kodar Mountains
 Scarwall
 Cenotaph
 The Foundry
 Battle of Screaming Tree
 Blisterwell
 Gerduhm
 Shadefields
 Blood Plains
 Seraph's Ladder
 Valorfœ
 Urqlin Gap
 Battle of the Burning Child
 The sleeper
 URQIR
 Freedom Town
 Heliu's Folly
 River Esk
 Battle of Last Hope
 Table of Ralock
 Ghostlight Marsh
 Krasnaroth
 Conquered Lands
 Skull Hill
 Mindspin Mountains
 Trunau
 Sech Nevali

The Hold of Belkzen

PATHFINDER CAMPAIGN SETTING

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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 paizo.com/prd.

<i>Advanced Class Guide</i>	ACG	<i>Bestiary 4</i>	B4
<i>Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG	<i>Inner Sea Gods</i>	ISG
<i>Advanced Race Guide</i>	ARG	<i>Mythic Adventures</i>	MA
<i>Bestiary 2</i>	B2	<i>Ultimate Combat</i>	UC
<i>Bestiary 3</i>	B3		

On the Cover



Varisian natives Crowe and Seoni defend their homeland from an orc invasion in this exciting cover by Yu Cheng Hong!



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Belkzen Gazetteer

“There’s an ongoing debate among the veterans down at the Pike and Barrel about which part of the world is the most dangerous. ‘It’s the Darklands!’ claims the one-eyed sergeant. ‘Anything that doesn’t eat you drags you to its home, where you’re tortured and enslaved!’ Another windbag just back from Nerosyan boasts, ‘The Worldwound is the true face of horror. There, reality itself bends to the debauched plots of demons.’ Their tales are truly awful, but my own experiences tell me that those dens of terror don’t hold a candle to what I’ve seen in Belkzen. Creatures elsewhere might want to enslave and corrupt you, but the orcs want just one thing: to fight and die in glorious, unending battle. The only reason we’re all still here is that they’re just as happy killing each other. Let us hope it stays that way.”

—Lieutenant Hygar Morrent, late of Lastwall’s Castle Everstand

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Gazetteer

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Calling the Hold of Belkzen a nation is a misnomer. It has no central authority or unifying structure, no government that enforces laws, not even a central idea of what it means to be “of Belkzen.” Authority rests with the dozens of unaffiliated tribal chieftains who spend most of their time warring with one another. Even though the Empty Hand tribe led by Grask Uldeth is the most powerful in the land and controls the vast city of Urgir, Uldeth’s authority barely extends past the city walls. The orcs who live in Belkzen don’t often call it by that name; if asked where he lives, a Belkzen orc generally just names his tribe. The name “Hold of Belkzen” is a human construct, and refers to the warlord Belkzen, the legendary orc who united the tribes in the area and conquered the Sky Citadel of Koldukar during the Age of Anguish. After his death, the term came to be applied to all the orc-held lands between Varisia and Ustalav, consisting mostly of a dry river valley bordered by the Kodar and Mindspin Mountains to the west and the Tusk Mountains to the east.

Belkzen is a harsh land of little rain, scarce game, and constant peril. The orcs are its biggest threat, but there are many other creatures, hazards, and dire places that spell certain death to all but the most prepared.

Society

The only social unit of any importance to the orcs of Belkzen is the tribe. Tribal members protect one another from the land’s many dangers, particularly from other orc tribes. Because of the difficulty of obtaining food and water, loyalty to one’s tribe is one of the few rules that most orcs follow. That isn’t to say that individual orcs don’t betray their tribe from time to time, but such crimes are surprisingly rare and are always punished harshly.

Although Belkzen does have a small handful of cities in which orcs live year-round, most tribes are seminomadic. Their annual movements can be divided into two distinct periods: the Proving Time and the Flood Truce.

The Proving Time lasts from early fall to early spring, and is marked by almost ceaseless warfare. Orcs love to fight, as it allows them to prove their superiority over others. Most orcs also believe that the only way to truly own anything is to take it from another by force. Tribes raid one another for food, slaves, and weapons, or else launch major wars brought on by feuds that originated centuries or even millennia ago.

When not trying to kill one another, the orcs of Belkzen raid the Shoanti tribes to the west, the castles and settlements of Lastwall to the south, or the cities of Ustalav to the east. Any time not spent fighting is taken up with hunting game, acquiring new arms and armaments, and improving their primitive shelters in their ancestral homelands.

The other major season is called the Flood Truce. Depending on the weather, it falls between late spring and late summer, and coincides with the first flash flood

that turns the Flood Road from a dry arroyo into a river. During it, nearly all the tribes travel the banks of the Flood Road into central Belkzen to hunt the wild aurochs that migrate from the Realm of the Mammoth Lords. Warfare and mass violence are strictly taboo during the Flood Truce, as the aurochs are the orcs’ only reliable source of meat and leather for the entire year. Orcs also spend the Flood Truce finding mates among the other tribes, and occasionally making new tribal alliances—or beginning new feuds.

See page 45 for more information on the Flood Road and the Flood Truce. For a full listing of the best-known tribes of Belkzen, see page 32.

History

The history of the orcs in what is now known as the Hold of Belkzen stretches all the way back to the Age of Legend. Before the impact of Earthfall hid the light of Golarion’s sun for a thousand years, the orcs were a subterranean race, living in the tunnels and caverns of Nar-Voth. Here, they fought the other races of the Darklands for resources and territory, but were a largely savage people without any expertise in magic or metalwork.

Earthfall changed all this by precipitating the dwarves’ Quest for Sky, a crusade to leave their Darklands cities and emigrate to Golarion’s surface. The orcs were caught between the dwarves and their destination, and the resulting conflict between the two races changed the lives of the orcs forever. Not only did they co-opt the dwarves’ skill in metalworking and magic during the decades of fighting, but the advancing dwarves pushed the orcs closer and closer to the surface until a vanguard eventually burst forth and found themselves in a brand new world.

The orcs found that the surface of Golarion was a wasteland—even centuries after the cataclysmic events of Earthfall—with widely dispersed humanoid populations clinging together for protection. These communities offered little resistance against a violent race hardened by decades of warfare, and quickly succumbed to the might of the new arrivals. The orcs’ sensitivity to light wasn’t an issue then, as Golarion’s sun had been blocked by dense cloud cover for centuries. As word spread among the orcs still inhabiting the Darklands that a much safer and easier life of plunder could be had above, they largely abandoned their ancient homes and joined their brethren on the surface. This period, known among orcs as the Sacking, marked their first golden age—a fabled time of dominance over all the other races of the Inner Sea region.

The dwarves finally completed their Quest for Sky in –4987 AR, and emerged into a land under the sway of their ancient enemies, whom the dwarves erroneously believed they had defeated decades earlier. The two races quickly reignited their old hatreds and began fighting. To celebrate the completion of their centuries-long journey, and to properly defend the entrances to the Darklands from which

their people still streamed, the dwarves began constructing the massive fortress-cities known as Sky Citadels. These immense defensive structures quickly became prime targets for the orcs, but despite their overwhelming numbers, the orcs were unable to capture the dwarven strongholds. Eventually the conflict slowed to a standstill, with the dwarves controlling their Sky Citadels and the orcs holding sway over much of the land between them.

This stalemate began to change around –4294 AR, when the impact winter that had blocked out Golarion's sun finally began to clear, raising surface temperatures and ending the planet's permanent twilight. Orc eyes could not handle the increased sunlight, and thus the dwarves turned the tide in the ongoing conflict, gradually pushing the orcs out of the lowlands and into the hills and mountains of the Inner Sea region.

While a few orc tribes retreated back into the Darklands, the rest slowly and painfully adapted to the new conditions on the surface. They built new settlements in surface caves, at the bottom of dark canyons, and in deep forests, where they adopted a nocturnal lifestyle to accommodate their debilitating handicap.



Belkzen

The slow retreat of the orcs finally reversed in the thirty-eighth century before Aroden's ascension, when a mighty orc warlord named Belkzen united the tribes of north-central Avistan and began attacking the dwarven fortifications. After years of fighting, he finally broke through the defenses of the Sky Citadel of Koldukar at the Battle of Nine Stones in –3708 AR, renaming the conquered city “Urgit,” or “first home” in the Orc language. This decisive battle and the subsequent destruction of dwarf society in the region marked the beginning of the second great golden age for the orcs of the region, known as the Reckoning.

The Reckoning was a much briefer golden age than the Sacking. As soon as the war against the dwarves ended, the tribes again began fighting among themselves. Belkzen instituted the Laws of Belkzen, a harsh edict by which any orc who killed another would be sacrificed to Rovagug, along with 10 of his tribemates. Despite these draconian measures, when Belkzen died (or mysteriously disappeared, according to some accounts) in –3698 AR, control of his territory (which had expanded to include much of what today is Varisia, Lastwall, Ustalav, Nirmathas, and Molthune) was divided among his seven subchiefs, who almost immediately went to war with one another in a fight for dominance. By –3470 AR, most of Belkzen's territorial conquests had been lost, and orcs once again controlled only the land known today as the Hold of Belkzen.

Despite the orcs' lack of coordination and their continual infighting, the Hold of Belkzen has remained under their control for the last 8 centuries. Numerous powerful warlords have risen throughout the ages to claim the mantle of Belkzen, but none have been able to recreate his accomplishment of uniting all the orcs under one banner for longer than a few decades at a time.

The first great orc army after Belkzen's death was formed by the Whispering Tyrant, who saw in the orcs a horde of easily swayed soldiers. The orc armies marched alongside legions of undead—many of them risen orcs who'd died in previous battles—against the Shining Crusade. This short-lived orc unity lasted only as long as the Whispering Tyrant's rule, and the savage tribes again fell to infighting upon his defeat at the hands of General Arnisant.

Two centuries later, another warlord would unite the orcs of Belkzen: the blue dragon Kazavon, who lived in the guise of a human at the time. From his fortress of Scarwall, Kazavon demanded the neighboring nations of Lastwall and Ustalav swear fealty to him and his orc army, threatening to begin another age of war just as Tar-Baphon had done twice before. Before he could make good on the threat, the blue dragon was defeated in 4063 AR.

Since then, the orcs have continued their life of constant warfare, uniting occasionally to extend their boundaries, but inevitably falling apart after their short-lived victories. Since the construction of the Sunwall in 3828, the orcs have redefined their borders three times, and it's only a matter of time before they do so again.

Belkzen, Hold of the Orc Hordes



Hold of Belkzen Timeline

The following timeline describes major events in the history of the Hold of Belkzen.

Date	Event
-5102 AR	Orcs first emerge on the surface of Golarion from the Darklands toward the end of the Age of Darkness.
-5088 AR	Giants native to the region unite to drive the orcs back into the Darklands, culminating in the giants' defeat in the First Battle near the orc fortress of Deepgate.
-4213 AR	Dwarven prospectors from Koldukar establish the mining settlement of Jerengoff on the edge of the Kodar Mountains.
-3709 AR	Jerengoff falls to orc invaders, and comes to be known as Blisterwell. Orcs sack the dwarven settlement of Ironhearth Foundry.
-3708 AR	Under the banner of the warlord Belkzen, the orcs of north-central Avistan besiege and conquer the dwarven Sky Citadel of Koldukar, renaming their new city Urgir.
-3698 AR	Belkzen dies or disappears mysteriously (accounts of the time differ). The tribes he once lorded over fall into infighting.
-3470 AR	Much of the territory Belkzen once controlled is lost, reducing the orc tribes' holdings to roughly the region known today as the Hold of Belkzen.
3203 AR	The Whispering Tyrant unites the warring tribes of the Hold of Belkzen, bolstering his undead army with thousands of living orcs who continue to serve on in death.
3827 AR	The Whispering Tyrant is defeated, ending his reign over the orc hordes of Belkzen.
3828 AR	Knights of the Shining Crusade found the nation of Lastwall to Belkzen's southeast.
4043 AR	The blue dragon Kazavon unites the orc tribes of central Belkzen and demands the neighboring human nations swear fealty to him. Kazavon builds Scarwall.
4063 AR	Mandraivus of Lastwall and his allies defeat the warlord Kazavon.
4237 AR	Orc hordes overwhelm the Sunwall and retake Urgir. The fighting culminates in the Battle of Last Hope. General Harchist of Lastwall digs in on the banks of the River Esk, establishing a new border known as Harchist's Blockade. Other notable battles include the Battle of the Burning Child and the Battle of the Bleeding Stones.
4482 AR	Harchist's Blockade falls, leaving a violently contested border between Belkzen and Lastwall that would last for over 30 years.
4515 AR	Lastwall reestablishes its border along the fortifications known as the Hordeline, on the southern banks of the Kestrel River.
4517 AR	The Hordeline falls as orcs swarm across the makeshift barrier. Lastwall's current border is established.
4518 AR	The Broken Spine tribe sacks the Varisian city of Urglin.
4519 AR	Sklar-Quah and Lyrune-Quah Shoanti defeat the orcs of the Broken Spine tribe in the Battle of the Shadefields.
4606 AR	After Aroden's death, warfare erupts for 2 decades in the time later known as the Culling.
4631 AR	The fire giant Orynox Marchelin inherits the crown of Kragaroth from his late father.
4670 AR	Nirmathi explorers discover the Thassilonian ruin of Sech Nevali while traversing the Mindspin Mountains.
4673 AR	Academics from the University of Korvosa and Almas University establish a permanent research outpost in Sech Nevali.
4682 AR	The red dragons Sheblis and Tyrkalis claim the ruins of the ancient Thassilonian fortress of Raschka-Tor, high in the Tusk Mountains.
4692 AR	Grask Uldeth takes control of the powerful Empty Hand tribe and the city of Urgir.
4693 AR	Halgra becomes Chief Defender of Trunau.
4694 AR	Members of the Sharpes Gang—exiled criminals from the civilized nations of Lake Encarthan—found Freedom Town in Whisperfall. Amahlia of Steyr begins her 20-year placement as lone defender of the ruins of Fort Morrine.
4701 AR	The Haskodar tribe invades Blisterwell, beginning an ongoing feud for control of the settlement with the ruling One Eye tribe.
4702 AR	Grask Uldeth implements the first of many reforms as ruler of Urgir, bringing a semblance of civilization to the orc city. In Lastwall, the family and friends of the aasimar Swiftarrow were killed in an orc raid. She forms the Order of the Honored Dead shortly thereafter.
4706 AR	The tactically gifted half-orc Hundux Half-Man usurps leadership of the Murdered Child tribe.
4707 AR	Pathfinder Eando Kline gains entry into the ruins of Koldukar through Urgir. Orville of the Order of the Honored Dead dies.
4708 AR	The duergar in the ruins of Koldukar sign a treaty with the Haskodar tribe in the hope of securing a new source of slaves from the surface.
4709 AR	The Eight Fingers tribe gains control of Deepgate from the ruling Gutspear tribe.
4710 AR	An errant meteorite destroys the Chelish outpost of Skull Hill, unleashing alien horrors into the small fort and surrounding areas. The orcs of Whisperfall begin paying tribute to the dragons of Raschka-Tor at the site known as Covenant Rock.
4715 AR	The present year.

Gazetteer

Adventures in
Belkzen

Bestiary



Blood Plains

Arid Fields of Battle and Death

Alignment: CE

Settlements: Blisterwell (9,750), The Foundry (845)

Notable Inhabitants: Chief Molkk Dwarf-Mangler of the One-Eyes (CE male orc barbarian 10), Chief Tulluk Clovenface of the Haskodars (CE male orc barbarian 8/rogue 3), Master Smith Anok of the Steel Eaters (NE male orc expert 8/fighter 4)

Races and Monsters: Belkzen pumas (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 41), bulettes, hill giants, orcs, Shoanti raiders, wild dogs

Languages: Orc

Resources: Arms and armor, metal ore

The Blood Plains are a geographic region roughly bordered by the southern spur of the Kodar Mountains to the north, the Mindspin Mountains to the south, and the Flood Road to the east. It is a region of near-constant warfare between the tribes, which also frequently travel through the Urglin

Gap to raid the Sklar-Quah and Lyrune-Quah clans of the Shoanti in eastern Varisia. The Shoanti, in turn, occasionally conduct revenge raids or preemptive strikes against the region's orcs. In the late spring, the eastern Blood Plains near the Flood Road become overcrowded with orcs from throughout the region who gather there to take part in the social activities of the Flood Truce.

Though one might expect the economy of the Blood Plains to revolve around the metal ore mined in the caverns below Blisterwell, the anarchy in that city has long prevented this. Because of the orcs' general disorganization, the smiths of the Foundry have had to content themselves with working ore of lesser quality recovered from smaller mines throughout Belkzen.

Battle of Screaming Tree: From 4043 to 4063 AR, central Belkzen was controlled by an Ustalavic mercenary, General Kazavon, who led a successful campaign against the orcs who had been attacking the province of Tamrivena. Instead of returning to Ustalav once the fighting ended,

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Kazavon ordered his troops to construct the immense castle of Scarwall in the easternmost foothills of the Kodar Mountains. Thus fortified, he declared himself leader of this new realm. The shocked rulers of Ustalav and Lastwall sent delegations to the new overlord, hoping to make the best of a bad situation. Kazavon flayed the delegates alive and sent their animated skins back with a simple counteroffer: submit to him or die.

Kazavon's original employer, Count Andachi of Tamrivena, raised a new army of raw recruits and marched them into Belkzen to eliminate the tyrant. The hardened human and orc mercenaries under Kazavon's command met Andachi's forces in battle on the Blood Plains southwest of Scarwall and decimated the untested troops. Kazavon captured 50 of Andachi's officers and impaled them on an enormous thorn tree. Their screams are said to have echoed across the plains for days before they died.

The site is now known as the Battle of Screaming Tree, and is wholly avoided by the orc tribes and the Shoanti who occasionally travel through the Blood Plains on reprisal attacks. Both groups believe it to be haunted, but the truth is a bit stranger. The tremendous suffering of the soldiers attracted the attention of Sugroz, the kyton demagogue known as the Voice in Screams. Inspired by the pain and anguish of the dying soldiers, Sugroz transformed the tree into an irminsul (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 158)—an intelligent plant creature that serves as a portal to another plane. In the case of the Screaming Tree, it links the Material Plane to a demiplane of pain, suffering, and unknowable torment populated by Sugroz's most sadistic servants. Now, even though the tree appears dead, it is very much alive with the wordless screams of countless voices. While the irminsul generally attacks only those who attack it first, legends of the site's haunted nature stem most often from the mysterious disappearance of those who got too close to the tree—and who now suffer for Sugroz's pleasure.

Battle of the Shadefields: On the low rises where the southern foothills of the Kodar Mountains meet the Storval Plateau, a single stone cairn marks the location of the Battle of the Shadefields, one the fiercest clashes ever fought between the orcs of Belkzen and the Shoanti of neighboring Varisia.

In 4518 AR, the Broken Spine orcs decided to push their territory westward into Varisia, encouraged by the Black Sun tribe's success in overrunning the Hordeline of Lastwall. They conquered and assimilated the Goatkillers, a tribe from the northern Mindspin Mountains, and set their sights on the mixed-race city of Urglin. The Shoanti clans dwelling in that area (the Sklar-Quah and Lyrune-Quah) were still regrouping after Korvosa's Chelish forces evicted them from the Varisian lowlands in 4507 AR, and they proved an easy target of opportunity for the orc army as it advanced, losing hundreds to the fighting. The orcs then turned toward Urglin, which could offer little organized resistance and held out for only a few days. The Broken Spines gained

considerable wealth from sacking the slave markets of Urglin's Scabtown district, but had little interest in ruling the city and soon retreated back into Belkzen.

When the Broken Spines returned in 4519 AR, the Sklar-Quah and Lyrune-Quah warriors ambushed the invaders as they passed through the Urglin Gap, trapping them between a seasonal riverbed and a cliff. Even with this advantage, the hugely outnumbered Shoanti fighters realized they would not be able to win by force of arms. Desperate to keep the orcs out of Shoanti lands, the shamans of the Lyrune-Quah sacrificed their lives, along with those of a score of their bravest warriors, in a ceremony that would forever bind their spirits to the land. The orcs surged westward, only to be confronted by an enormous emberstorm filled with angry Shoanti voices that singed the flesh from their bones and forced them to flee back to the east. Since then, no army has been able to pass within 20 miles of the battlefield without awakening the Shoanti spirits.

Blisterwell: The orc settlement of Blisterwell rests atop an ancient dwarven mine in the southeastern foothills of the Kodar Mountains. Founded in -4213 AR by prospectors from Koldukar, the mine of Jerengoff supplied the iron, copper, and lead that helped fuel the early growth of the Sky Citadel. Hundreds of years later, when the orc warlord Belkzen first threatened the local dwarves, Jerengoff became one of his first targets, falling to his forces in -3709 AR. It was renamed Blisterwell, and has been under orc control ever since.

BLISTERWELL

CE small city

Corruption +7; **Crime** +8; **Economy** -3; **Law** -6; **Lore** +1;
Society -3

Qualities notorious, racially intolerant (non-orcs)

Danger +35; **Disadvantages** anarchy, impoverished

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government anarchy

Population 9,750 (8,190 orcs, 680 humans, 490 mongrelmen, 200 half-orcs, 190 others)

Notable NPCs

Chief Molkk Dwarf-Mangler (CE male orc barbarian 10)

Chief Tulluk Clovenface of the Haskodars (CE male orc barbarian 8/rogue 3)

Shaman Ysok Rockcaller (NE male orc druid 12)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 3,200 gp; **Purchase Limit** 25,000 gp;

Spellcasting 6th

Minor Items 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d6; **Major Items** 1d3

Blisterwell was built within seven vertical mine shafts that vary from 120 to 200 feet in depth. The walls between the shafts are littered with hundreds of crisscrossing tunnels and hollowed-out chambers that serve as the living quarters for most of the city's population. The only way in or out of the city is through a series of squat defensive forts (known as gatehouses) located on the surface near the



edge of each of the shafts. Blisterwell's compartmentalized layout makes it easy to defend, as attackers have to fight their way through dozens of small rooms that are easily held by only a few defenders. At the bottom of each shaft, with the exception of Market Bottom, is a large pond containing a mix of groundwater and the runoff of the city's latrines and industrial workshops.

The rooms in the shaft walls are home to the majority of the city's orc population, while the slaves, non-orcs, and other undesirables have to make due with living on the uneven, wet, and polluted shaft floors. The only exceptions are the neighborhoods of Hungrymouth and the Pits, both of which are located at the bottom of pits so deep that natural light rarely reaches them. Because of their dim natural lighting and relative dryness, these locations are more desirable to orcs as living quarters—especially to the Darklands orcs of the Haskodar tribe.

The Haskodars have warred with the One Eye tribe since the Haskodars invaded in 4701 AR, and each controls a portion of the city. Their territory has shifted over the years, but the Haskodars currently control the central shaft and the neighborhoods of Forgetown, Soot Bottom, the Pits, Fort Point, and Hungrymouth while the One Eyes hold the outlying Freshpool, Market Bottom, Highsnout, and Broketooth. The ongoing warfare has left the city in complete ruin, and very little commerce, mining, or actual

industry takes place in Blisterwell anymore. The Haskodars have been on the verge of driving out their rivals a number of times in the last few years, but every time the tenacious One Eyes have managed to push them back.

See page 35 for more information on the Haskodar tribe and page 36 for more on the One Eyes.

The Foundry: At the end of a nondescript valley in the Kodar Mountains lies a small lake whose ice-cold waters are cobalt blue. Next to the lake, a 40-foot-tall stone gate, decorated with simple yet elegant dwarven geometric designs, leads into the mountain and to one of the oldest and largest metalworking complexes in Avistan. Known as the Foundry, the complex is a series of five artificial caverns dotted with dozens of magical forges fueled by superheated gases from the vast, magma-heated pressure chambers beneath them. Each cavern originally focused on a different aspect of traditional dwarven metalworking—armor crafting, blacksmithing, bladesmithing, goldsmithing and silversmithing, and weaponsmithing—but they now have a much darker purpose.

Once known as Ironheart Foundry, the complex was the greatest of the series of forgeholds built by the dwarves during the Age of Anguish, and was thought to be impenetrable until a massive onslaught of orcs under Warlord Belkzen captured it in -3709 AR. Belkzen enslaved and tortured the dwarven smiths, forcing them to reveal

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many of their secrets, and set them to work manufacturing weapons and armor for his horde. When the smiths died, Belkzen simply captured more dwarven artisans and brought them here to continue training his orcs. The descendants of these orcs became the first Steel Eaters, and carry on the metalworking trade to this day.

Even though the Steel Eaters are well-trained metalsmiths, they are still orcs, and their work reflects their innate need to intimidate, destroy, maim, and kill. Their war machines in particular are often outrageously overbuilt contraptions that, while able to deal massive damage, are quite fragile and prone to failure.

For more information on the Steel Eaters, see page 37.

Scarwall: The forbidding, gothic castle of Scarwall sits on an island in the crater lake of an extinct volcano high in the eastern Kodar Mountains. The tyrant Kazavon built it in 4043 AR, and ruled much of central Belkzen for 20 years from behind its walls. The Lastwall hero Mandraivus and his allies defeated Kazavon in 4063 AR, but the small group could not hold the castle, and it was overrun by local Deathwatcher orcs soon thereafter. The orcs were later chased out by terrifying undead—created by a horrific curse that had taken hold within the castle—and the location was quickly declared taboo.

Among the unique undead said to haunt Scarwall are the ghostly apparitions known as danse macabres (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #11 8c) and the bound entities called chained spirits (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #11 78), which cannot stray far from an anchored point within the castle. In addition to Scarwall's wayward spirits, the castle is haunted by a number of shadow creatures, an umbral dragon, and other servitors of Zon-Kuthon and the Plane of Shadow. Their presence stems from the castle's incorporation of a Star Tower, one of the mythic sites created by Dou-bral in the Age of Creation to bind Rovagug in his prison at Golarion's core.

For more information on Scarwall and the Star Tower, see *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #11: *Skeletons of Scarwall* and *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Mythic Realms*.

Seraph's Ladder: On the southern Blood Plains stands a freestanding staircase of solid, gray-and-white marble known as Seraph's Ladder. It ascends to a height of 200 feet in a graceful spiral around a central column, supported by numerous pillars. The stairs simply end in midair, providing a spectacular view of central Belkzen but revealing no hints as to the structure's original use.

Every year on the winter solstice, carved images of elaborately robed humanoids and stranger creatures climbing up the staircase appear on the structure.

Anyone who ascends during this event notices that his or her body becomes younger, while descending (or falling off the staircase) produces the opposite effect. This transformation is not an illusion, and those who ascend too high simply wink out of existence. Despite the effects on the body, the mind of the climber seems to be unaffected by these changes.

Seraph's Ladder is an ancient relic from Gastash, the Thassilonian realm of gluttony, and powerful magic protects the structure, making the stonework of the staircase nearly impervious to mundane or magical means of destruction and to appear unworn by the ages. Any portion of the stair that is broken off or destroyed magically re-forms overnight, leaving no trace of damage.

Because of the remote location of Seraph's Ladder, few scholars have investigated it, and its true purpose remains a mystery. The only known study of the structure is recorded in the *Book of Serpents, Ash, and Acorns: Shadows of What Was and Will Be*, a rare tome made of compacted ash that was recently acquired by the Forae Logos in Absalom. The book notes that the staircase draws its power from the often misunderstood Dimension of Time, and suggests that one of the last runelords of Gastash—either the necromancer Zutha or his predecessor Goparlis—used Seraph's Ladder to prolong his own life or that of a favorite companion.

The Sleeper: Coiled around the peak of one of the northernmost summits in the Mindspin Mountains is a massive monument in the shape of a dragon known as the Sleeper. Its half-opened mouth continuously emits a small stream of smoke, and from a distance it appears almost lifelike. The sculpture is actually a series of chambers that wind around the mountain and eventually lead into its hollow interior. Beneath the Sleeper, deep in the heart of the mountain, lies the lost Thassilonian city of Xin-Gastash—the capital of the realm of gluttony. Now wholly fallen to squabbling undead, the ruined city remains a secret deep in the earth, and if any have found their way to its ancient streets, they have never returned to report on its current state.

For more information on the Sleeper, see page 51.

Urglin Gap: Named for the primarily orc-inhabited city of Urglin on its western edge, the Urglin Gap is a wide, arid plain that connects western Belkzen to the Storval Plateau in neighboring Varisia. Little more than a vast swath of scrubland and desert, the gap makes an ideal field for battle, and many skirmishes have taken place upon its sands over the years. Despite the dangers inherent to the gap, it remains the only consistently passable means of traversing the mountains between Belkzen and Varisia.



Clovenface



Conquered Lands

War-Torn Land of Ever-Shifting Borders

Alignment: CN

Settlement: Trunau (780)

Notable Inhabitants: Chief Defender Halgra of the Blackened Blades (CG female old human ranger 3/barbarian 5), Chief Hakar of the Broken Spine (CE male orc barbarian 9), King Orynox Marchelin of Kragnaroth (LE male fire giant fighter [polearm master^{AP6}] 9)

Races and Monsters: Fire giants, hill giants, humans, marsh giants⁸², merrows, orcs, stone giants

Languages: Common, Giant, Orc

Resources: Farmland, game, water

The Conquered Lands are the most recent additions to the Hold of Belkzen. Once part of Lastwall, these lands were overrun by the orcs in two major waves. The first wave broke through the line of defensive fortifications known as Harchist's Blockade in 4482 AR. The second wave, the Hordeline—the makeshift defensive line established

3 decades after the fall of the Harchist Blockade—fell in 4517 AR. The forces of Lastwall have attempted to reclaim their lost land on numerous occasions, but even when the orcs retreat, they soon return in greater numbers to retake the fertile plains south of the Esk.

Ghostlight Marsh: Ghostlight Marsh is a small wetland area located in the triangle between the mouth of the seasonal Flood Road and the River Esk. The inhabitants of Lastwall believe it to be haunted and carefully avoid it.

For hundreds of years after the defeat of the Whispering Tyrant and his orc armies, the marsh and the rest of the lands north of the River Esk were part of Lastwall. When the orcs broke through the Sunwall in 4237 AR, most of the region's inhabitants fled south, but the druids of the Council of Thorns who protected the wetlands refused to leave and continued defending their land for months after the rest of the region had fallen. When they realized they couldn't hold back the advancing orc tide, the druids sacrificed themselves in a last stand. As their blood flowed

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through the muddy rushes, dozens of will-o'-wisps rose from the ground and attacked, scattering the orc hordes. They have been defending the land ever since. The will-o'-wisps still attack anyone who dares to enter their domain, though it's rumored that those attuned to nature can seek shelter here without being menaced.

For more information on Ghostlight Marsh, see *Pathfinder Adventure Path #92: The Hill Giant's Pledge*.

Harchist's Blockade: In the summer of 4235 AR, Lastwall's General Istore Harchist started building a defensive line of earthen walls and wooden palisades along the southern banks of the River Esk. Her superiors ignored her warnings of an imminent orc invasion, so she disguised the labors of her troops as military exercises. When the orc hordes finally overran the aging line of fortresses known as the Sunwall in 4237 AR, Harchist pulled her forces back to the line she had been building and stopped the invasion, which otherwise could have spelled Lastwall's doom. Leadership in Vigil quickly strengthened the line with a series of forts connected by a low stone wall and named it Harchist's Blockade in the general's honor. Harchist's Blockade marked the southern border of Belkzen for the next 200 years until it too fell to the expanding orc tribes in 4482 AR.

Many of the forts of Harchist's Blockade still stand today, although most lie in ruins. Both the orcs and humans occasionally use them as temporary shelters, but for the most part they sit empty. One of the westernmost fortresses near the River Esk is used by a tribe of Urxehl-worshipping scraggs for ceremonial purposes. Their leader, **Green Barox** (CE male scrag shaman^{ACG} of Urxehl^{ISG} 4), believes that his demonic patron lives underneath the ancient monument to the northwest known as the Sleeper.

Heliu's Folly: Soon after the fall of the Whispering Tyrant in 3827 AR, the men and women of the newly established nation of Lastwall began constructing a series of keeps stretching from the Mindspin Mountains in the west to the Gap of Valballus in the east, where they joined with Ustalav's own defensive line, known as the Bleakwall. Placed at intervals of 15 miles (the distance an armored soldier can travel on foot in a day), the keeps were built to be nearly identical to speed construction and save on costs, and designed to keep a close eye on the orcs and any remaining troops loyal to the lich-king. These fortresses, known collectively as the Sunwall, were a symbol of the enlightened races' stand against the darkness of chaos and evil.

A few centuries later, a mercurial and ambitious captain named Waren Heliu—a summoner of no meager talent—used one of the westernmost of these fortifications as his personal magical laboratory. A specialist in fire magic, Heliu bound a massive thoqqua (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 262), an intelligent, wormlike creature of elemental fire, and kept it hidden in a subbasement of the keep. Heliu overestimated his ability to control the creature, however, and it escaped its wards and began a fire that gutted the

fort. When his actions were uncovered, Heliu was court-martialed and discharged from the Lastwall military, and the ruined fortress became known as Heliu's Folly.

Since the fall of the Sunwall in 4237 AR, several orc tribes have occupied Heliu's Folly, and it is currently the headquarters of the Broken Spine tribe. The thoqqua Heliu summoned returned to the secret subbasement below the fortress several years ago, starting fires that forced the orcs to repair the fortress several times. The thoqqua has gone into a dormant, reproductive state, and will soon produce hundreds of small offspring that will most likely consume the fortress in flames once again.

The Kestrel and Esk Rivers: While the seasonal flow of the Flood Road is fed almost entirely by spring snow melt from the Tusk Mountains and runs dry by the middle of summer, southern Belkzen has two rivers that carry water year-round: the Kestrel and the Esk. Both rivers are quite deep and fast-flowing, and they are therefore tricky to cross without boats. The Esk has a single artificial ford near Rake Island, built by a forgotten orc chief in the 4500s using debris from a ruined fort and bridge destroyed by the desperate Lastwall military during the Battle of Last Hope in 4237 AR. The majority of orcs heading south on raids still cross at Rake Island, as do many human troops who wish to cross the river west of Castle Firrine. The Kestrel is without any natural fords, which made it a useful defensive line for the forces of Lastwall before the Hordeline was overrun in 4517 AR. The water of both rivers comes from the abundant rainfall generated over Lake Encarthan far to the southeast, as well as snowmelt from the Mindspin Mountains. The ample supply of water, together with the increased rainfall, makes this part of Belkzen a much lusher environment than the north.

When the orcs first conquered this fertile land, the Lastwall government in Vigil feared that the orcs would settle there. What they didn't understand was that concepts such as farming and other "civilized" behavior were foreign to the orcs. They preferred their traditional ways, and gathered in large numbers only to follow a great leader. The orcs also placed great worth in their traditional tribal homelands to which they returned every fall after the Flood Truce. Some of the tribes had been returning to the same caves or the same dusty hills for thousands of years, and simply wouldn't relocate.

The plains between the Esk and Kestrel rivers therefore remain largely uninhabited by humans or orcs (with the exception of the human town of Trunau), although they see quite a bit of foot traffic from orc tribes traveling south on raids and the occasional cavalry raid out of Castle Firrine or Castle Everstand. The rivers are an abundant source of fish, but they're inhabited by the occasional tribe of freshwater merrow (*Bestiary* 2 189). These aquatic cousins to the ogre don't get along with anyone, but since they don't claim territory near any important strategic points, most orcs and humans in the area simply avoid them.

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For more information on the Battle of Last Hope, see page 40.

Kragnaroth: After their defeat at the orcs' hands in what came to be known as the First Battle, the giants who had made their homes in the hills and valleys of the Hold of Belkzen largely moved into the mountains, or migrated to neighboring lands to start anew beyond the reach of the Darklands invaders. Among the giants to make such an exodus was a powerful tribe of fire giants who vowed not to move far. They left the volcanic peaks of the Kodars and traversed the Urglin Gap to resettle high in the Mindspin Mountains overlooking the Skittermounds. Their kingdom—called Kragnaroth after the king who led his people to their new home—stands even today.

While many giants remain in and around Belkzen, no giant settlement has stood as long as or grown anywhere near the size of Kragnaroth. Rare is the fire giant in northern Avistan who has not visited Kragnaroth, and many have one or more close relative among its inhabitants. While the giants keep largely to themselves, leaving the orc rabble below to destroy one another in their never-ending wars, Kragnaroth is anything but isolationist. Were the fire giants to unite with others of their kind elsewhere in the Mindspin Mountains, they would represent a threat to orcs and humans alike.

For more information on Kragnaroth, see page 48.

Sech Nevali: Sech Nevali, also known as the Hanging Monastery, is a relic of the ancient Thassilonian realm of Gastash. Tucked into a nearly forgotten high mountain valley in the Mindspin Mountains, the temple complex is built upon a roughly rectangular, 18-inch-thick metal platform that hangs suspended from massive chains attached to three nearby mountain peaks. The stub of a fourth chain that failed centuries ago hangs from one of the platform's corners, making the temple sway disconcertingly in strong winds.

Sech Nevali was built more than 10,000 years ago by the Therassic Order, a Thassilonian society of wizard-monks dedicated to a deity of magic known as the Peacock Spirit. Members of the order were protected by a group of mysterious knights, the Order of the Green Feather, that was devoted to the same deity. The god's followers all perished during Earthfall, leaving details of its faith a mystery and the monastery abandoned for thousands of years.

In 4670 AR, Nirmathi explorers looking for a safe passage to Varisia rediscovered Sech Nevali by accident, and soon adventurous scholars from two of Avistan's top universities braved the dangers of the mountain to unlock its secrets. Those who didn't perish on the approach to the temple quickly discovered that the outer rooms were unoccupied, but the central chambers were barred by complex magical locks and guarded by powerful graveknights (*Pathfinder*

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RPG Bestiary 3 138) clad in the ornate jade-colored armor of the Order of the Green Feather. After numerous grisly deaths, the scholars realized that as long as they didn't try to access the central chambers, the graveknights would not bother them. Even though most were unwilling to put up with the temple's near-constant swaying, its remote location, and the hostile tribes of local orcs, a few brave academics established a small, carefully hidden outpost here in 4673 AR. They converted the outer rooms into study and living quarters, built a small pulley system to transport foodstuffs and personnel to and from the monastery, and even brought up tons of dirt to plant small gardens in a few of the rooms that are open to the sky.

Years of study stretched into decades, and the roughly 40 original academics have dwindled down to a dozen feuding members divided into two camps. The quirky **Milithus of Cassomir** (LE male human arcanist^{ACG} 11) leads the first group, while **Ariannelle** (N female elf wizard 5/lorekeeper 4) anchors the second. Both groups have adopted the dress and name of the monastery's former occupants, the Therassic Order, and have begun to worship the Peacock Spirit based on their research into the faith; neither group has received any answer or proof of the god's continued existence. Their financing institutions, Almas University in Andoran and the University of Korvosa in Varisia, have not heard from them in months and are beginning to worry. Both universities are looking for adventurous types to investigate what has happened to their fellows and offer substantial rewards for their return, or even for the return of their research notes.

Skittermounds: The tall, sandy hills known as the Skittermounds can be found in the long, northeastern curve of the Mindspin Mountains in southwestern Belkzen. All but the bravest or most desperate travelers avoid crossing this region, as it is the nesting ground for tens of thousands of ankhegs. These enormous mantislike creatures spend most of the year underground in enormous burrows that honeycomb the hills, emerging only to hunt for food or make war on one another.

Once each year, the ankhegs are forced aboveground en masse when the spring rains and snowmelt from the Mindspin Mountains fill the arroyos and flood the creatures' subterranean homes. As their tunnels fill with water, thousands of ankhegs swarm to the surface and rush eastward in a giant wave of destruction that obliterates anything within 30 miles of the eastern edge of the Skittermounds before returning to their homes beneath the sand.

The safest time to travel through the Skittermounds is during the dead of winter, when the ankhegs hibernate

deep underground. Those who have explored the region report a low, droning buzz that emanates from the countless entrances to their warrens. Others report dome-like structures of hard mud over 60 feet high in the western hills. The ankhegs build these mud domes themselves at incredible speed in the fall, but their exact purpose remains unknown.

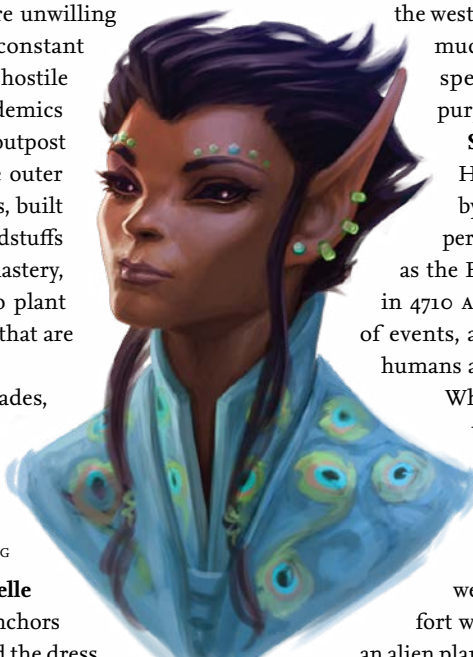
Skull Hill: The ruined fort of Skull Hill was once a secret outpost built by the Empire of Chelax during the period of territorial expansion known as the Everwar. Skull Hill was destroyed in 4710 AR after an unlikely combination of events, and is now avoided by orcs and humans alike.

When the Skittering Ravagers tribe learned that a fort had been hiding in its territory for untold years, it attacked and quickly slaughtered its inhabitants. Just as the invaders were finishing their grisly work, the fort was struck by a meteorite carrying an alien plant creature known as a moonflower (*Bestiary* 2 192). The impact also broke through into a subterranean chamber and activated a powerful magic item, sending waves of necromantic magic through the fort. It killed and reanimated many of the orcs, while somehow strengthening the moonflower, and the remaining orcs quickly fled.

The moonflower has since grown and expanded to cover the ruins of the fort, slowly transforming the landscape to resemble its alien home. Pathfinders who have approached Skull Hill have reported that they have spotted lionlike akatas (*Bestiary* 2 23) as well as void zombies moving through the strange undergrowth, but whether these were also carried by the meteorite or have traveled here from elsewhere is unknown.

Trunau: When the Hordeline fell in 4517 AR, nearly all of the settlers who remained in northwestern Lastwall fled before the advancing orc hordes. The only exceptions were the inhabitants of the small town of Trunau, located on the edge of the eastern foothills of the Mindspin Mountains. They refused to leave their homes, and hastily erected a wooden palisade. Through determination and no shortage of self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of Trunau have been able to hold off the orc invaders for the last 200 years. The current ruler of the small town is the wizened warrior Chief Defender Halgra of the Blackened Blades, who counts many orcs among her past lovers and is mother to numerous half-orc children.

For more information on Trunau, see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Towns of the Inner Sea* and *Pathfinder Adventure Path #91: Battle of Bloodmarch Hill*.



Ariannelle

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Smokespur

Harsh Mountainous Wasteland Hiding Ancient Secrets

Alignment: CE

Settlements: Deepgate (1,072), Wyvernsting (11,320)

Notable Inhabitants: Chief Hundux Half-Man (CE male half-orc barbarian 13), Hurk Skullhacker (CE male orc fighter 13), Swiftarrow (CE female aasimar ranger 6/assassin 5)

Races and Monsters: Cave bears, fire giants, megafauna (aurochs, mastodons, cave lions, mammoths, smilodons), remorhazes, taiga giants⁶², wyverns

Languages: Common, Giant, Hallit, Orc

Resources: Megafauna, timber

The Smokespur region of Belkzen is home to some of the strangest sites in the land. Encompassing the northwestern portion of Belkzen and bounded to the east by the Flood Road, it contains the Hold's second largest city: Wyvernsting. North of Smokespur are the Algid Wastes, home of the ranging megafauna used by nearly all the tribes of Belkzen as war beasts.

Algid Wastes: As one travels far enough on the Flood Road in northern Belkzen, the land slowly rises and grows even more barren. The shriveled bushes and occasional stands of scraggly trees are replaced by a broken landscape of pockmarked hills and uneven ground that seem to stretch on forever beneath cloudless skies. This is the Algid Wastes, the border region between Belkzen and the fierce Realm of the Mammoth Lords.

Covered by a brittle shell of ice and snow during all but the summer months, the Wastes hold one of the largest populations of megafauna in Avistan. These enormous mammals spend the colder months in the steam-heated valleys of the Tusk Mountains to the north, and head into the Algid Wastes in Desnus and Sarenith when the warming sun turns the prairie into a vast mat of green. The orcs of Belkzen, particularly the big game hunters from the city of Wyvernsting, travel into the Wastes during this warmer period to capture bison, aurochs, mastodons, cave lions, mammoths, and smilodons, and bring them south to be

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sold as war beasts. The native Kellid tribes (or “followings,” as they’re known) resent this intrusion and exploitation, but they are few in number here, and can offer little resistance against the orcs’ hit-and-run tactics.

This doesn’t mean capturing these gigantic animals carries no risks, for the Algid Wastes are home to powerful predators that give even the orcs pause: remorhazes (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 233). Called “ghost worms” by the orcs, the remorhazes of the Algid Wastes grow to enormous size by feeding on megafauna—they’re rarely smaller than 35 feet from head to tail, weighing upward of 20,000 pounds. Some foolhardy orcs have attempted to capture remorhazes to use as war beasts, but quickly discovered that when facing capture, ghost worms typically fight to the death. The few beasts that were taken alive grew lethargic in captivity and died soon afterward.

Rumors have begun spreading among the orcs of the region that a frost giant shaman named **Kjerulf** (NE male frost giant druid 5) has somehow organized the remorhazes and plans to use them to launch an attack on the city of Wyvernsting. Believed to be a vassal of the frost giant jarl Gnargorak, ruler of the Tusk Mountains, Kjerulf is said to hope that the glory and treasure gained from the raid will raise his standing enough that he will be called north to become one of Gnargorak’s lieutenants at Bos-Phargrumm.

For more information on Jarl Gnargorak, see page 52 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Mythic Realms*.

Brimstone Haruspex: This temple complex is situated in the caldera of the Eye of the Unmaker: an active stratovolcano located high in the northern Kodar Mountains. A group of orc mystics devoted to the Rough Beast known as the Endseers has lived here for thousands of years. The Endseers breathe in the caustic vapors released by the volcano and offer advice and predictions to anyone willing to pay their exorbitant prices. Even though the mystics’ prophecies have become somewhat vague since the beginning of the Age of Lost Omens, the Belkzen chieftains still consult the Endseers on major decisions.

For more information on the Brimstone Haruspex, see page 41.

Broken Shore: North of the Kodar Mountains, deep in the Algid Wastes stands a mile-wide field of black glass and sand, its still waves progressing outward from a central point like ripples in a pond. The rim of the field’s circular crater is littered with strange statues and idols to mysterious gods, all of which appear to have been blasted by some long-ago cataclysm. Both the Kellids of the Algid Wastes and the orcs of Belkzen shun this place, for those who approach it by moonlight report strange glows and whispers in a forgotten tongue.

For more information on the Broken Shore, see page 42.

Deeppate: The massive orc fortress of Deeppate is located at the end of a scree-choked valley in the Kodar Mountains. Built directly into the side of the massive First Mountain,

the site is a symbol of orc racial pride, as it marks the place from which the largest number of orcs emerged from the Darklands during the Age of Darkness.

For more information on Deeppate, see page 43.

Dirt Sea: Sandwiched between the two northernmost spurs of the Kodar Mountains and fed by vast underground aquifers, the Dirt Sea is a large expanse of extremely fluid quicksand that’s over a hundred miles wide. The quicksand acts almost like water, allowing members of the Murdered Child tribe from nearby Wyvernsting to ply slave barges upon it. These vessels operate regularly during the Flood Truce and ferry anyone willing to pay the orcs’ high tolls.

Regular voyages take passengers between Deeppate, the Brimstone Haruspex, and Wyvernsting, although the barges can also be hired for private expeditions at an even greater cost. During the Proving Time, the barges run much less frequently and are restricted to members of the Murdered Child, Wingripper, or other allied tribes. As the warriors of the Murdered Child consider such work beneath them, their half-orc offspring and slaves commonly operate the barges. Since the quicksand is too viscous for sail propulsion, barrel-chested hill giants use punting poles the size of tree trunks as locomotion. The barges generally follow predetermined routes around the edges of the sea through the shallowest areas of quicksand—which can still reach depths of 50 feet in some places.

The journey across the Dirt Sea isn’t without its risks, as its sandy depths are home to an assortment of dangers, including bulettes (*Bestiary* 39), death worms (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 276), and even an occasional purple worm (*Bestiary* 230). Orcs tell legends of a truly enormous snake- or squidlike creature called Old Hegrith that haunts the center of the Dirt Sea, but don’t give these stories much credence, as the beast hasn’t been spotted in over a century. Their tales refer to a mother of oblivion (*Pathfinder Adventure Path: Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition* 407) who has lived in a large cavern beneath the Dirt Sea since a powerful priestess of Lamashtu summoned her during the Age of Darkness. Having fulfilled her original purpose long ago, the creature now spends most of her time in hibernation, though she occasionally ventures forth when she feels the need to eat or procreate.

Tribes of isolated, primitive ratfolk (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3231) live on the western edge of the Dirt Sea, inhabiting large burrows in a number of solid islands amid the quicksand. The orcs tend to leave them alone, as the ratfolk’s lairs are away from the main travel routes, and the diminutive humanoids make poor slaves. An del Gesseran, a Pathfinder from Molthune, lives among the ratfolk and studies their culture. He’s particularly interested in their myths of the Hollow Rat that supposedly lives deep in the earth.

Dretha’s Cradle: Hidden deep in the Algid Wastes, sinister orcs experiment on captured megafauna, Kellid slaves, and one another in the village-sized laboratory known as

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Key

1. Fort Hundux
2. Fort Hagtooth
3. Logging Camp

Dretha's Cradle. Here beasts are crossbred and transformed into horrible abominations, all in the name of creating a stronger and more intimidating arsenal of living weapons.

For more information on Dretha's Cradle, see page 44.

Keening Hills: Orcs are superstitious by nature and generally avoid anything they don't understand or any problem that can't be solved by a decisive axe blow. Thus, it's unsurprising that even the bravest orc warriors avoid the Keening Hills at all costs, for the verdant hills represent a deadly mystery that no one has solved in 10,000 years.

The green and inviting appearance of the Keening Hills is a startling contrast to the otherwise brown and drab landscape of northern Belkzen. Within a roughly 700-square-mile region of foothills between a craggy spur of the Kodar Mountains to the south and the flat, gently undulating Dirt Sea to the north, the laws of nature seem to have reversed, with vibrant plant life growing in abundance. Those who have observed the area from the air describe dense forests of mixed deciduous and coniferous trees arranged in a roughly circular pattern around a ruined city and lakes filled with black water.

Those brave or reckless few who have traveled into the Keening Hills report the presence of giant, arthropod-like creatures moving among the trees, and eerie singing that draws adventurers away from the path. Those who wander

off quickly succumb to madness or simply disappear, while others claim to have lost all sense of direction and found themselves leaving the forest when they meant to be traveling deeper into it. Anyone who breaks ground here finds the hole quickly filled with a viscous, black substance that smells of rot and adheres to anything it touches. Some have speculated that this substance is the same liquid that fills the lakes at the region's center, but none who have set out to solve this mystery have ever returned.

For more information on the Keening Hills and their mysterious black lakes, see page 49.

Pillars of Kreth: On the plains just west of the Flood Road in northern Belkzen lie the Pillars of Kreth, a series of 11 dolmens—massive vertical standing stones topped with flat lintels. The standing stones of the first 10 dolmens are each between 8 and 9 feet in height, 3 feet wide, and at least 2 feet thick. The lintels are 3 feet thick, overhanging the stones beneath them by at least a foot on all sides. The final, easternmost dolmen is only around 4 feet in height, but just as wide as the others. The stones seem to have been roughly worked by primitive hand tools and are far from smooth, with many holes, protrusions, and other natural shapes left in the rock. The rocks contain numerous symbols and pictograms that correspond to no known language, although some of them are clearly stars, comets, and planets.

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The 11 dolmens forms an irregular tunnel that lines up once a year aligns with the red planet Akiton. During this time, the sky above the site turns strange colors and a vibration that sets observers' teeth on edge can be felt from half a mile away. A torus of churning auroral light rises a mile above the dolmens as the vibrations become deeper and stronger. When the vibrations and light show finally reach a bone-shaking climax, a great pulse of energy rushes underneath the first 10 dolmens with the speed of a crossbow bolt and strikes the lintel atop the final dolmen. Anything on top of the stone at this time disappears, never to be seen again. The orcs named the pillars after Kreth, the first—and last—of their kind to investigate this strange place.

Pathfinders who have studied the dolmens suggest they could be some kind of interplanetary transportation device, similar to the Doorway to the Red Star in the Mwangi Expanse or the Maze of the Open Road in Galt. Others have claimed the pillars send a yearly signal to Akiton or some other far-off planetary object. Venture-Captain Sheila Heidmarch of the Pathfinder Lodge in the Varisian city of Magnimar has offered a reward of 1,000 gp to any group who can brave the dangers of Belkzen and bring her definitive proof as to which theory is correct.

Tomb of the First Battle: Not long after the advent of orcs on the surface of Golarion, the tribes of giants native to Belkzen united to rid their land of the invading hordes. The giants were ultimately defeated, but the orcs allowed them to honor their dead with this cyclopean monument, which is now guarded by foul giant undead.

For more information on this location, see page 52.

Wyvernsting: The city of Wyvernsting is the northernmost settlement in Belkzen, and due to its nearby timber forests and access to the megafauna in the Algid Wastes to the north and the Flood Road to the east, it's second in importance only to Urgir. The city's ruler, Chief Hundux Half-Man of the Murdered Child tribe, is a brilliant half-orc tactician with ambitious plans to lead his tribe to greatness—and perhaps even challenge Grask Uldeth for supremacy.

WYVERNSTING

CE large city

Corruption +6; **Crime** +3; **Economy** +3; **Law** +3; **Lore** +2;

Society +0

Qualities notorious, racially intolerant (all except orcs and half-orcs), strategic location

Danger +20; **Disadvantages** impoverished

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord

Population 11,320 (9,510 orcs, 792 half-orcs, 566 humans, 230 giants, 222 others)

Notable NPCs

Chief Hundux Half-Man of the Murdered Child

(CE male half-orc barbarian 13)

Chief Molog (CE male orc cavalier^{APG} [beast rider^{UC}] 10)

Gren Two-Axe (CE male half-orc barbarian 4/cleric of Rovagug 3)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 7,200 gp; **Purchase Limit**

50,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 7th

Minor Items 2d4; **Medium Items** 1d6;

Major Items 1d4



Delka the Thorn

Wyvernsting is located in the northeastern spur of the Kodar Mountains, near the mouth of Cleftbone Canyon. The walls of the surrounding mountains are so tall and steep that Wyvernsting is cloaked in shadow for most of the day, allowing the light-sensitive orcs to be active even during the daylight hours without any discomfort. Hundreds of chambers and tunnels honeycomb the nearby canyon walls, and are home to the countless wyvern-riders of the Wingripper tribe, close allies of the Murdered Child. Wyvernsting features two small hills surrounded by a double palisade wall, next to the deep and forbidding Darkwater Lake. The inner wall encircles Fort Hundux, a well-built, two-story stone keep that serves as headquarters for the chief and his lieutenants, and Hagtooth Hill, where members of the Murdered Child tribe live and train at the considerably less-comfortable Fort Hagtooth. The outer wall surrounds the rest of the city on the plains below the hills, encompassing the Market, the city's center of trade; Downside, home to the majority of orcs who are not part of the ruling tribe; Backhill, where most of Wyvernsting's non-orcs live; and Stockside, where the megafauna for sale in the Market are kept.

Aside from Hundux himself, the shaman and battle-lord Gren Two-Axe is the most powerful political figure in Wyvernsting. Gren is a warlike cannibal who always eats parts of his defeated foes, and considers himself Hundux's equal—it's rumored that the two are half-brothers. Other important figures in the city include **Chief Delka the Thorn** (CN female taiga giant^{B2} ranger 2), leader of a small band of taiga giant megafauna hunters allied with Chief Hundux, and **Makoa the Gentle** (CE female orc cleric of Lanishra 6), the sadistic master of the Pit, the city's vertical underground fighting arena.

See page 35 for more information on the Murdered Child tribe, and page 37 for more on the Wingripper tribe.



Urgir

Anarchic Orc City Built atop Dwarven Ruins

Alignment: CE

Settlement: Urgir (28,700)

Notable Inhabitants Ardax the White-Hair (NE male middle-aged orc barbarian 5/rogue 11), Grask Uldeth (CE male orc barbarian 17)

Races and Monsters: Ettins, humans, ogres, ogrekin⁸², orcs

Languages Common, Giant, Orc

Resources: Alchemical items, arms and armor, dwarven relics, martial training, poisons

The orc city of Urgir is a city of countless contradictions. It's the largest city in a land inhabited predominantly by nomads. It's an orc city that was built by dwarves. It's the center of commerce for a race that's inherently distrustful of mercantilism. These contradictions define the city and place it at the forefront of a movement that seeks to drag the orcs away from the customs they have followed for millennia, and if not bring them fully into the civilized world, then at least

expose them to the benefits that world offers. These efforts are driven by a single individual: Great Chief Grask Uldeth, ruler of Urgir, head of the Empty Hand tribe, and the greatest military and political figure in Belkzen since Kazavon. His actions have transformed the city physically and culturally, and he hopes he can maintain power long enough to ensure his reforms are not abandoned after his death.

URGIR

CE metropolis

Corruption +8; **Crime** +5; **Economy** +5; **Law** +5; **Lore** +4;

Society +2

Qualities notorious, racially intolerant (all except orcs and half-orcs), tourist attraction

Danger +20; **Disadvantages** impoverished

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord

Population 28,700 (24,100 orcs, 1,430 half-orcs, 1,150 humans, 574 giants, 290 elves, 275 half-elves, 881 others)

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Notable NPCs

Ardax the White-Hair (NE male orc barbarian 5/rogue 11)

Chief Grask Uldeth (CE male orc barbarian 17)

High Priest Nogalt the Unpure (CE male orc cleric of Rovagug 12)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 16,000 gp; **Purchase Limit** 100,000 gp;

Spellcasting 8th

Minor Items all available; **Medium Items** 2d4; **Major Items** 1d6

Geography

The massive fortress-city of Urgir has stood for millennia as a testament to the incredible engineering prowess of the dwarves. Even though the primitive and destructive orcs have occupied the Sky Citadel off and on for thousands of years, many of the city's original stone spires, breathtaking statues, and tall, buttressed buildings still stand, though most have been defaced in some fashion.

The city is built on a small hill on the plains near the Flood Road, and looks like a many-layered cake, with eight concentric tiers rising up to the smallest, innermost level. Each tier is separated by a tall defensive wall designed to protect the Sky Citadel during a siege. The dwarven architects dedicated each level to one of their gods in recognition for their help in completing the century-long Quest for Sky. Every level focuses on a particular god, with many buildings designed to fulfill purposes tied to the concerns of the given deity. In order from lowest to highest, the levels were dedicated to Torag, Folgrit, Angradd, Grundinnar, Dranggvit, Trudd, and Magrim. While the orcs destroyed the structures they understood to have religious meaning to the dwarves, they knew nothing of the levels' significance and so left many of the levels' affiliated buildings standing, though these are seldom used for their original purposes.

At its height in the Age of Darkness, the dwarven Sky Citadel of Koldukar was the most populous city of any race in northwestern Avistan, and boasted nearly 100,000 inhabitants. Renamed Urgir by the orc forces who conquered the city, the settlement now has a total population of less than a third of that amount, meaning that much of the city stands empty. This is particularly true of the upper four levels, which are nearly uninhabited because of the recent increase in earthquake activity has rendered them too structurally unsound (see the Earthquakes in Urgir sidebar on page 21).

The lowest and largest of the city's levels was once dedicated to Torag, the head of the dwarven pantheon and creator of the dwarven race, and holds the four great gates of Urgir. Today it contains the Market District and the Plaza of Sky. This level is the home of almost all of the non-orcs who live in the city, most of whom work in the Market District. It's also the level with the least amount of earthquake damage.

The second level was once dedicated to Folgrit, the wife of Torag and goddess of homes and children. It's the largest residential neighborhood for orcs in the city, and also contains the western edge of the Big Hole, a massive

Visiting Belkzen and Urgir

Belkzen is a dangerous place to visit, especially if you're not an orc or a half-orc. Except for the period of the Flood Truce (usually late spring through late summer), the various orc tribes constantly patrol the region. If outsiders look like they could cause serious trouble, orc scouts run for backup and return within 4 to 8 hours with anywhere from 20 to over 5,000 trained and deadly orc warriors. Orcs are always looking for a fight, and are happy to oblige any foolish pinkskin who wants to prove his mettle. There are, however, several ways of avoiding this.

First, a visitor can seek out one of the personal representatives of the tribes of southern Belkzen, and negotiate the purchase of a tribal token. These representatives can be found in two locations: the Table of Ralock, south of Urgir (see page 25), or the settlement of Freedom Town (see page 25). Depending on the size of the group, the price for these tokens can range anywhere from 50 gp to several thousand gp. Anyone who presents such a token is considered to be under the protection of that tribe, although there are still many individual orcs—and even entire tribes—who don't honor the tokens and attack no matter what. These tokens are good only for the short journey from the southern border of Belkzen to Urgir; anyone caught north of Urgir is considered fair game, whether she has a token or not.

Secondly, adventurers can join a merchant caravan traveling to Urgir, or beyond that, on the Sklarkari caravan route to Varisia or on the Flood Road as it heads north into the Realm of the Mammoth Lords. These large caravans negotiate their own passage with the tribes of Belkzen and are always in need of an extra sword hand. Because of the extreme danger of taking a merchant caravan through Belkzen even at the best of times, the goods being transported generally have a high profit margin and are often illegal in most nations of the Inner Sea.

sinkhole that appeared several years ago and swallowed portions of three city tiers; it is now used as a refuse pit.

The third level, once dedicated to Angradd the Forge-Fire, contains most of the artisans' workshops and other industrial buildings. The orcs of Urgir may not be as skilled at working metals as the Steel Eaters of the Foundry, but the need for arms and armor in Belkzen is almost unlimited. This level also contains the headquarters of the Closed Fist, Grask Uldeth's merciless enforcers.

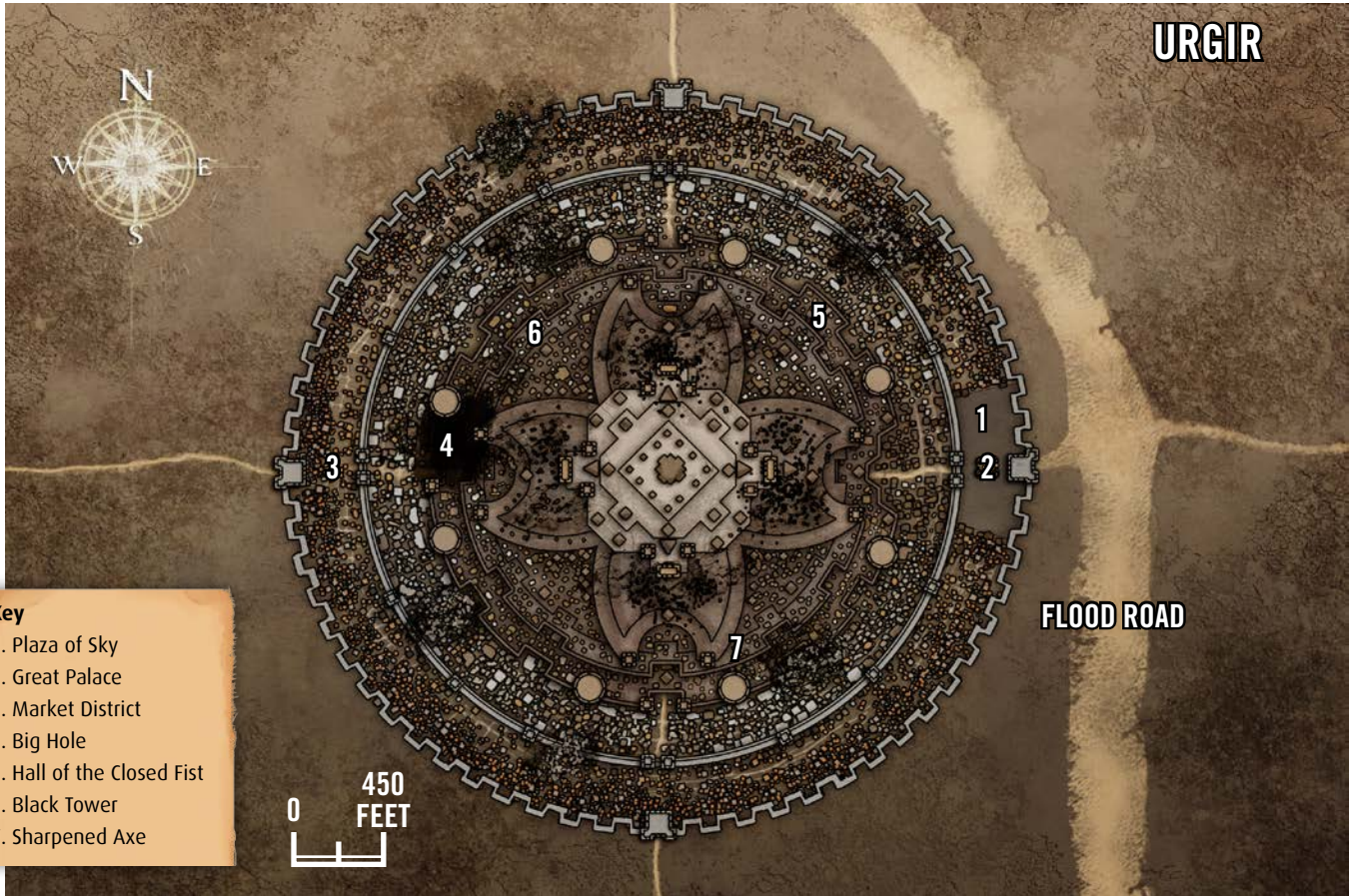
The fourth level, built in tribute to Grundinnar, once held Koldukar's foreign embassies and government buildings, and now is the home of the Sharpened Axe, one of the two fighting academies in the city, and the Black Tower, founded by practitioners of the ancient art of Belkzen war alchemy.

The top four levels have become highly unstable over the last several years, and are now almost empty. Many of

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URGIR

FLOOD ROAD

Key

- 1. Plaza of Sky
- 2. Great Palace
- 3. Market District
- 4. Big Hole
- 5. Hall of the Closed Fist
- 6. Black Tower
- 7. Sharpened Axe

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the buildings, which once housed Koldukar’s ceremonial and religious institutions, have collapsed or are on the verge of doing so. The few young orcs who venture here to prove their bravery report encountering hermits or groups of outcasts avoiding the brutal conditions of the city’s lower levels.

Government

Urgir does not have a government, at least by the standards of the other races of the Inner Sea. Orcs generally do only what they want, and won’t obey a law unless it is enforced by the immediate threat of violence. In Urgir, however, all power rests within the Great Chief Grask Uldeth, who maintains some level of peace via his police force, the Closed Fist.

History

In 4692 AR, Grask Uldeth became leader of the powerful Empty Hand tribe, which had controlled Urgir for many generations. An unusually insightful orc, Uldeth was dissatisfied with the way his people had been living for millennia, and realized that if they couldn’t change, they would continue their slow slide into irrelevance. He looked past Belkzen’s borders and saw the unity and complex economic systems of other races, and wondered what orcs might be able to accomplish with even a fraction of these cultural benefits. He knew he wouldn’t be able to change

orcs’ basic chaotic nature, but believed introducing a more advanced economic infrastructure might create enough stability to forestall his race’s demise.

Uldeth’s first obstacle was his own limited understanding of the outside world. He gathered the half-orcs of his tribe and instructed them to leave Belkzen and bring back several smart-looking non-orcs alive. The kidnappers returned a few months later, and while most of their captives refused to cooperate or had no useful information, an unscrupulous Pathfinder named Belzig was a true boon. Belzig had been on the outs with his bosses in Absalom for some time, and decided he could use the strange orc chieftain to advance his own fortunes.

With the help of the well-informed Pathfinder, Uldeth was able to develop and institute several reforms in Urgir beginning in 4702 AR. First, he opened his city to members of any race, and created the “token” system through which outsiders can pay one of the orc tribes for the privilege of traveling within Belkzen’s borders. This system not only brought much-needed trade into the country, but also began to acclimate orcs to the idea of making money from something other than raiding. Second, he sent out his half-orc “diplomats” to find merchants who might be willing to relocate to Urgir. In exchange, he offered to tax the merchants lightly, and also guaranteed their personal safety within the city. To make good on this second point, Uldeth gathered

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some of his smartest warriors and inducted them into a new, elite unit he called the Closed Fist. These orcs would become a crude type of police force, enforcing Uldeth's new rules and helping to "educate" the greater orc population.

Uldeth's reforms have been largely successful within Urgir, though he knows that many orcs of other tribes look down on the Empty Hand for being soft. He combats this impression by making war on as many of these dissenting tribes as possible during the Proving Time. These battles have largely gone the Empty Hand's way thanks to Uldeth's tactical acumen and the superior armaments he's been able to afford by taxing Urgir's merchants and visitors. He knows, however, that he's approaching middle age, and hopes that he can ingrain his philosophies in his people before his death.

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The following locations are but the most prominent or important sites within the city.

Black Tower: The Black Tower is the home and school of the practitioners of Belkzen war alchemy, an aggressive style of battle alchemy that teaches that you can never have a big enough explosion. Developed thousands of years ago, Belkzen war alchemy was virtually unknown outside of Belkzen until Grask Uldeth strong-armed its masters into moving to Urgir and including non-orcs among its practitioners.

Great Palace: The Great Palace of Urgir stands on the edge of the Plaza of Sky. After Belkzen's orcs renamed the city, they carved the name "Urgir" on the building's front facade in enormous Dwarven letters, and the taunt remains to this day.

The palace is decorated with hundreds of ragged banners and hunting trophies, along with the arms and armor of the foes defeated by the Empty Hand. A throne room dominates its ground floor, and it's here that Grask Uldeth meets visitors. He's always guarded here by at least 50 Closed Fist warriors, along with at least a dozen priests of Rovagug, led by **Nogalt the Unpure** (CE male orc cleric of Rovagug 12). The head of the Closed Fist, the aged Ardax the White-Hair, often acts as Uldeth's steward, dealing personally with any visitors he believes to be unworthy of the chief's attention.

The only entrance to the underground levels of Koldukar and the Darklands below is located beneath the throne room, but it's sealed off and can only be accessed via magic or heavy digging. Uldeth is particular about who is permitted to enter Koldukar, but he's becoming increasingly concerned about the earthquakes in his city, and wonders whether someone might find answers below.

Market District: Inside the great western gate of Urgir sits the Market District, home to the largest concentration of

Earthquakes in Urgir

For the last 60 years, the city of Urgir has experienced earthquakes. These have been growing in strength and frequency, particularly over the last decade, but are confined to the city itself. Small tremors occur two to three times per week, but result in little damage. Once every month or so, however, Urgir is hit by a stronger quake that's powerful enough to cause major structural damage, topple an ancient statue, or open a sinkhole that swallows a building.

These earthquakes are not natural phenomena, but rather the result of a mass infestation of rust monsters that have been eating away at the metal structural supports under the city. The ancient dwarven ruins of Koldukar beneath Urgir were well built, but after thousands of years of neglect, the metal-reinforced support columns stand no chance against the appetites of these Darklands menaces. It's only a matter of time before a major support gives way and triggers a domino effect that collapses the entire city. Having little to no knowledge of what goes on below the city and without training in engineering, the orcs of Urgir are oblivious to the causes of these earthquakes.



Nogalt the Unpure

non-orcs in Belkzen. Most of these are merchants who were approached by one of Grask Uldeth's half-orc diplomats and invited to relocate to Urgir. Many were down on their luck or without other options and moved here out of desperation, though some were well-off business owners who traded in black market goods such as drugs, slaves, and poisons in their homelands, and thought that moving to Urgir would forever put them out of the reach of other lands' laws.

Plaza of Sky: This gigantic, open plaza is one of the most beautiful and well-preserved remnants of the ancient dwarven city. Huge sheets of white marble stretch for hundreds of yards, and slight gradations in color upon the various marble tiles create enormous mosaic pictures depicting scenes from the daily lives and struggles of the dwarves before they began their Quest for Sky. Depictions of domestic life underground stand side by side with scenes of great dwarven battles against the denizens of the deep, including ropers, purple worms, and even armies of orcs. Even though many of the buildings, statues, and streets in Urgir have been defaced, scarred, and even completely destroyed by the orcs, this plaza remains untouched, possibly because Urgir's orcs instinctually identify with the scenes depicted here, seeing in the mosaics their own lost past.

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Whisperfall

Haunted Borderland Ruled by Dragons

Alignment: CE

Settlement: Freedom Town (1,480)

Notable Inhabitants: Captain Josie Morant (LG female human ranger 7), Sheblis (CE female adult red dragon), Voice in Silver Marotis (LE male human cleric of Mammon⁵⁶ 8)

Races and Monsters: Frost giants, lamia-kin, kobolds, ogres, orcs

Languages: Common, Draconic, Orc

Resources: Gems, metal ore

The Whisperfall region of Belkzen consists of the lands east of the Flood Road, including the lofty reaches of the Tusk Mountains. Its greatest distinguishing characteristic is that it's considered the domain of Sheblis and her mate Tyrkalis, two powerful red dragons.

Battle of the Burning Child: Following the fall of the Sunwall in 4237 AR, the forces of Lastwall were in full retreat.

A small company of soldiers stood their ground when they saw a screaming peasant child completely engulfed in flames burst from the center of the orc ranks. After the battle, the troops looked for the child, but could find no trace of him. Travelers to the site still say that on moonless nights they can hear a child crying.

For more information on this battlefield, see page 41. The Burning Child—the undead creature that haunts this land—is further detailed on page 58.

Cenotaph: Near the southern tip of the Tusk Mountains stands a windowless pillar of black stone that rises nearly 140 feet from the edge of a steep cliff. Its sole visible feature is a pair of closed, 50-foot-high doors made of the skymetal noqual and accessible only via a precarious stone bridge. Some legends connect the Cenotaph to the Whispering Tyrant, while others claim it was built by the rulers of Gastash, the ancient Thassilonian realm of Sloth. These theories are hard to verify since no one has been able to access the column and it resists even powerful divination magic.

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For more information on this mausoleum, see page 6 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Mythic Realms*.

Covenant Rock: Anyone following the Flood Road north of the Pillars of Kreth is advised to visit the large, flat alluvial boulder that juts at an angle from the prairie grass. This is Covenant Rock, and it is here that travelers must leave their tribute to the apex predators of northern Belkzen: the mighty red dragons Sheblis and Tyrkalis.

In the shadow of the rock sits a small hut that is the home of **Rzonca the Clever** (CE female half-orc alchemist 9), who acts as the agent of the red dragons, and meets with anyone wishing to pay tribute. Once the correct level of treasure, livestock, or slaves has been paid and left in her care, Rzonca marks the travelers with a special scent she prepares in her hut, to which only she and the dragons know the formula. This scent is detectable from up to a mile downwind by anyone with even a drop of draconic blood, but is almost undetectable by anyone else. The scent naturally dissipates in 4 days time, which is about how long it takes even the slowest caravan to travel through the dragon's domain. Anyone caught by the dragons without the scent is quickly dispatched without warning or mercy.

Two dozen tribeless orcs and half-orcs assist Rzonca in her work. They guard the cattle and slaves left as tribute, keeping them in large pens until one of the dragons picks them up. In normal orc society, Rzonca and the other members of her group would be considered no better than slaves, but because they work for the dragons, they are afforded deference generally reserved only for chiefs or great warriors. This fact is not lost on Rzonca, and she often rubs it in the faces of visiting orcs, safe in the knowledge that they would never risk offending the dragons. It is only a matter of time, however, before a shamed orc champion plots some revenge on both Rzonca and her draconic patrons.

Firewatch Peaks: High in the southern Tusk Mountains, just south of Whisperfall Pass, sit 12 stone bunkers staffed by a unit of Ustalavic scouts. The lookout ports of each structure give an unparalleled view of the surrounding countryside, which the soldiers use to keep an eye on the movements of the Belkzen orcs and the dragons of Raschka-Tor. Should the bunkers come under attack, their roofs are capable of retracting, sealing their inhabitants inside, and making them nearly impervious to mundane or even dragon attacks.

Each of these bunkers is anywhere from a quarter to a half mile from the next. The network is connected via underground tunnels, and the scouts have trained hawks that act as messengers for urgent communications. Judging from the numerous runes found throughout, the bunkers are most likely built by the dwarves during the Age of Anguish.

Only 60 troops are stationed at Firewatch Peaks at any time. All are members of the Ustalavic city of

Tamrivena's Foreguard—border defenders for the county of Canterwall—and are trained to fight in mountainous environments. A heavily armed caravan from Tamrivena supplies them once per month. Captain Josie Morant is their commander, assisted by **Otis the Balding** (LN male wizard 6/aristocrat 2). Otis is secretly a member of the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye, and volunteered for the posting after learning of the Whispering Way's interest in the bone-littered valleys left behind by the mountains' draconic inhabitants.

Orcs from the Skull Eater tribe have lately launched numerous raids against the bunkers. At first they seemed to just be testing the bunkers' defenses, but recently the orcs were able to capture a pair of scouts in a surprise raid before Morant could seal the bunkers. Even though the soldiers were desperate to rescue their comrades, they realized that they didn't have the numbers to succeed at such a mission. Captain Morant now worries that the orcs will torture the prisoners and force them to reveal the secret ways of accessing the other bunkers.

Freedom Town: Freedom Town was founded in 4694 AR by members of the Sharpes Gang, a criminal organization active in Lastwall, Ustalav, Nirmathas, and Molthune. They fled Lastwall after being accused of a massive blackmail and confidence scheme involving the sale of counterfeit magic arms and armor to high-ranking members of the clergy of Iomedae. Having already been run out of all the other neighboring nations, the gang decided to temporarily relocate to the only place where they knew nobody would follow them: the Hold of Belkzen. They nervously settled in a small river valley 2 days' journey north of Vigil, and quickly discovered that there were thousands of acres of rich, untilled farmland for the taking, free from government regulation and taxation. The only problem, of course, was the local orc tribes, but a solution to even this obstacle presented itself not long after the settlement's founding. Grask Uldeth, who had gained control of Urgir only a few years earlier, had been planning on opening up his city and was looking for a way to see whether his people could interact non-violently with non-orcs. When his scouts informed him of the presence of the Sharpes Gang, he saw the perfect opportunity for a trial run, and negotiated an ongoing payment in exchange for non-interference. Although he had to decapitate a few sub-chiefs who balked at the idea of peaceful coexistence with humans, the agreement has held and has allowed Freedom Town to grow from a fortified bandit hideout to a full-fledged settlement.

FREEDOM TOWN

CN small town

Corruption +3; **Crime** +1; **Economy** +0; **Law** +1; **Lore** +1;
Society -2

Qualities notorious

Danger +10; **Disadvantages** impoverished



Key

- 1. First Hall
- 2. Brokenneck Tavern
- 3. The Sauced God
- 4. Sharpes Manor
- 5. Fort Freedom

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government overlord

Population 402 (308 humans, 43 half-orcs, 34 orcs, 17 other)

Notable NPCs

Councilman Garrick Bitune (CN middle-age male human bard 7)

Helmut Drovenge (CE middle-age male human rogue 5/ aristocrat 3)

Marguerite Ollande (CN female human fighter 4/rogue 5)

Voice in Silver Marotis (LE male human cleric of Mammon^{SG} 8)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 800 gp; **Purchase Limit** 5,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 4th
Minor Items 1d6; **Medium Items** 1d3; **Major Items** —

The town consists of a small palisade-encircled wooden fort surrounded by poorly constructed wooden dwellings on the banks of the Esus River, a tributary of the Esk. Its inhabitants are mainly outlaws, exiles, and escaped slaves who wish to be left alone—including a fair number of orcs and half-orcs who have left their tribes. The only three surviving members of the Sharpes Gang make up Freedom Town's governing tribunal. The council's mandate is rather limited and consists of collecting taxes from everyone living or doing business in town in order to pay Grask Uldeth's tribute. Anyone incapable of paying this levy—or

anyone who annoys the tribunal—is offered up as payment instead. The council consists of Garrick Bitune, an aging bard who during his youth used to get by on his good looks; Helmut Drovenge, the black sheep of a prominent Chelish family; and Marguerite Ollande, the only council member who still sees Freedom Town as a shining ideal of entrepreneurial spirit.

The only other major power in town is the Union of the Open Palm, a cult of the archdevil Mammon that is rapidly growing in power. The cult is led by Voice in Silver Marotis, a well-spoken man who moved to town a few years ago offering low-interest loans, but who now has caught a sizable majority of Freedom Town's citizens in a debt-spiral from which they can't escape.

Gap of Valballus: This wide, low mountain pass connects the Hold of Belkzen to Ustalav to the east, and runs between the Tusk and Hungry Mountains. As it provides one of the few easy means of traversing the often impassable terrain that separates the two regions, the gap sees heavy traffic by both raiding orcs sacking the largely undefended Ustalavic settlements in Canterwall, and Varisian caravans and brave merchants heading to and from Urgir or other points beyond Belkzen's borders.

Gerduhm: Though Belkzen is indisputably the realm of their racial foes, the orcs, a number of dwarves still make their home within its chaotic borders. The small, hidden citadel of

Belkzen, Hold of the Orc Hordes

Gerduhm lies buried in the Tusk Mountains just north of the Gap of Valballus, from which point its staunch inhabitants can stand vigil over their conquered city of Koldukar to the southwest. Within its fortified chambers lie some of the most valuable treasures of dwarvenkind dating back to the Quest for Sky and construction of the Sky Citadels. Yet, despite keeping these relics on their enemies' very doorstep, the dwarves of Gerduhm have maintained their treasures' secrets for over 8 millennia.

For more information on Gerduhm, see page 46.

Raschka-Tor: The mention of the name "Raschka-Tor" still sends a chill down the spine of all but the most insane orc, for it reminds him of a time in the not too distant past when the red dragons Sheblis and **Tyrkalis** (CE male adult red dragon) were the terrors of northeastern Belkzen. The mated pair first claimed the ruins of an ancient Thassilonian fortress high in the Tusk Mountains in 4682 AR. Proclaiming themselves the rulers of everything and everyone in Belkzen north of the Cenotaph and east of the Flood Road, they enforced their authority with claws and fire. Their domain became a wasteland as the orc tribes despoiled the land in a vain attempt to scavenge the resources needed to fight such potent foes. Hundreds of orc champions who believed themselves dragon hunters climbed the sheer cliff face and entered the dragons' lair, only to fall victim to ingenious traps or the well-prepared pair of dragons, who had seen the threats coming for miles.

The situation changed drastically in 4710 AR when Sheblis realized that she would be producing three eggs in a year's time. Her first instinct was for the pair to slay every living creature within 100 miles, but Tyrkalis convinced her that there was an easier, more effective solution. He believed that the local orc tribes were sufficiently cowed and would be willing to pay an annual tribute in exchange for not being attacked. They tested his theory by visiting each of the local tribes and proclaiming that everyone who lived in their domain or who wished to travel through it would pay them tribute at Covenant Rock. There were a few mistakes at first, of course, and some who had already paid were eaten. This convinced some of the more volatile tribes that they should all band together and remove the dragons for good. A clever half-orc alchemist named Rzonca—who did not want to see thousands more of her people destroyed—presented the dragons with an alternative. She offered to mark those who had paid with a special scent that would identify them to the dragons. The dragons agreed, and this system has worked quite well for the last several years.

The occasional band of would-be dragon slayers still tests its mettle against Sheblis and Tyrkalis from time to

time, but invariably finds that the dragons are well prepared for their foes' arrival. The few who have escaped with their lives speculate that the two have spies not only in Urgir, but also in the Ustalavic cities of Lepidstadt, Courtaud, and Tamrivena.

Table of Ralock: The Table of Ralock is a large, flat rock that sits on the grass east of the Flood Road and south of the city of Urgir. Thanks to the initiative of Grask Uldeth, at least one or two representatives from each of Belkzen's many tribes can usually be found here with a small guard of warriors. These groups rarely talk to one another, but offer to sell tribal tokens to non-orcs in exchange for a substantial payment. For more information on tribal tokens, see the Visiting Belkzen and Urgir sidebar on page 19.

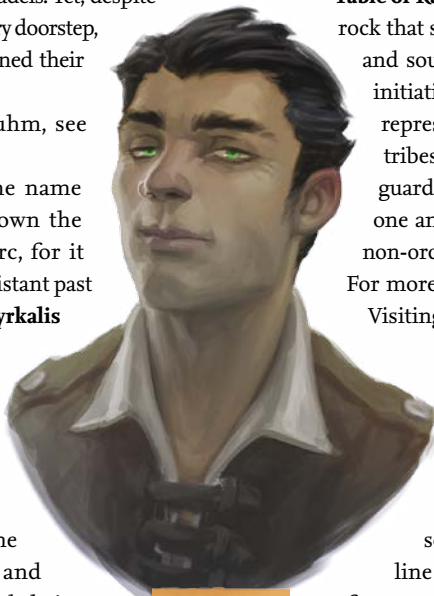
Valorfoe: The line of fortresses known as the Sunwall was among the greatest defensive barriers ever established in Avistan, but against the orc hordes it could only stand so long. When it fell, the well trained soldiers of Lastwall retreated to a second line of defense, while the Ustalavs of the fortress Valorforge held their ground—at the cost of every soul within. Now known as Valorfoe, the abandoned castle is shunned even by the orcs who previously took it, primarily due to the shadowy terrors that lurk within.

For more information on Valorfoe, see page 53.

Whisperfall Pass: The broad path that crosses this low saddle in the Tusk Mountains is the easiest and most direct way to travel between Belkzen and Ustalav north of the Gap of Valballus. Because of this, it is also one of the most contested regions in Whisperfall.

The eastern entrance to Whisperfall Pass is claimed by the Skull Eater tribe—who are known for their extreme cruelty to captured enemies—while its western end is held by the Blood Trail. Though the two tribes are constantly fighting, they are also happy to each charge heavy tolls for any orcs hoping to cross the Tusk Mountains and raid the neighboring Ustalavic county of Canterwall.

While both frost and stone giants are common to the rest of the Tusk Mountains, they are remarkably rare near Whisperfall Pass. This is because high in the pass the trail runs close to the House of Fate, a ruined Thassilonian temple that is dedicated to the goddess Lissala and tended by Sister Justika, a powerful lamia harridan (*Pathfinder Adventure Path: Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition* 404) and by her extended family of lamia matriarchs (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 175) and lamias. Finally, there is the constant danger posed by the red dragons Sheblis and Tyrkalis of Raschka-Tor, who consider all of the Tusk Mountains in Belkzen north of the Cenotaph to be part of their domain, although even they avoid the House of Fate.

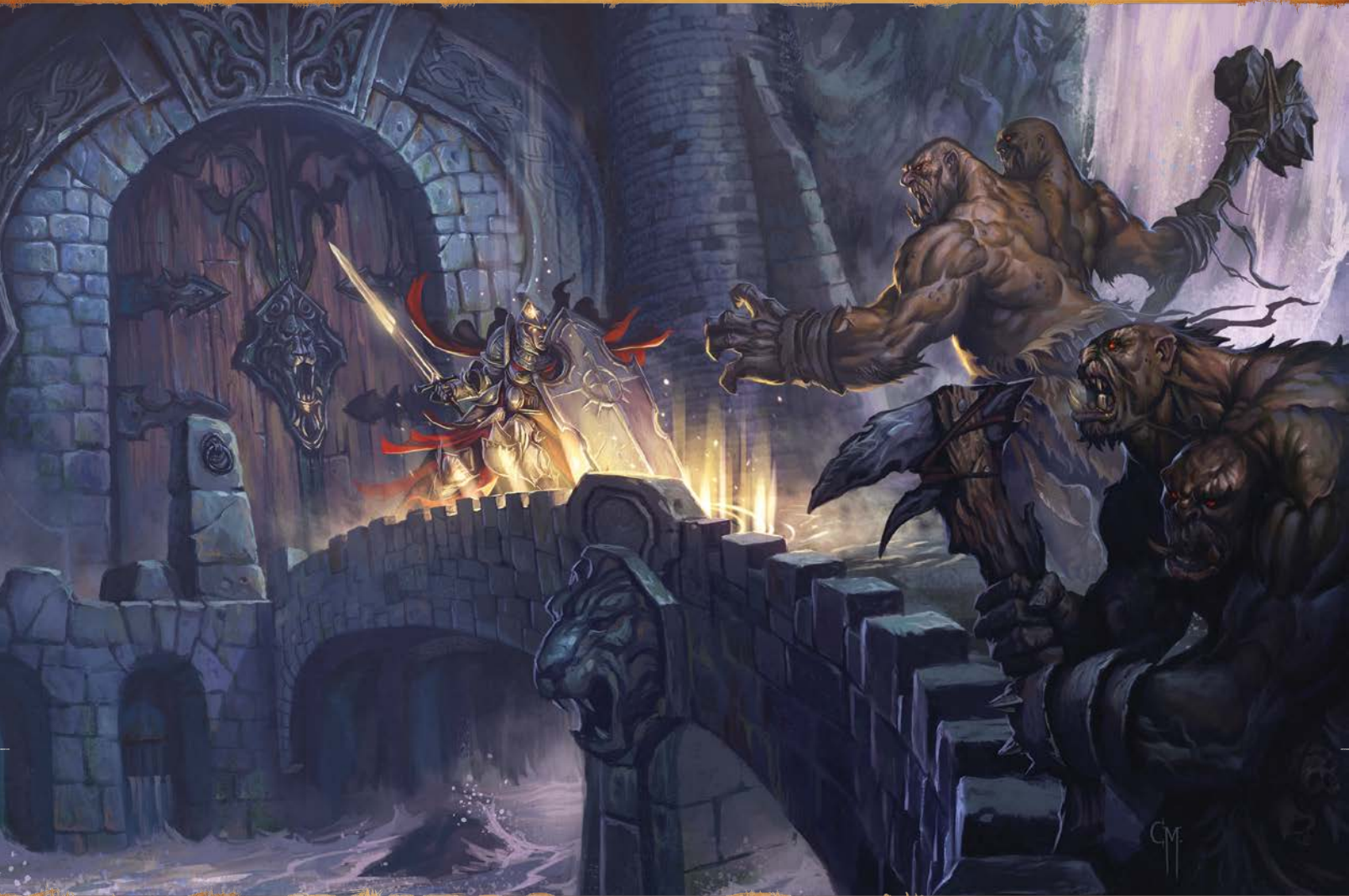


Marotis

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Adventuring in the Hold of Belkzen

Orcs are not known for their discretion, yet in matters of religion, they are surprisingly tight-lipped. When a common orc refers to a god, even his own patron deity, he never uses its name, only one of its titles. The superstitious orcs believe that the names of gods hold power, and to speak a god's name is to draw its attention. Orcs may revere violent gods, not even they wish to see the full manifestation of such deities' destructive power. Only the shamans and witch doctors dare speak these unholy names, and then only in the midst of ecstatic rituals. This reticence on the part of orcs has led many outsiders to the erroneous conclusion that orc gods have no names. Some scholars have even gone so far as to suggest that the orc gods are not even gods at all.

—*A Philosophical Study of Orc Culture*, by Jola Katafarin

Belkzen, Hold of the Orc Hordes



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Few locations in the Inner Sea region are as inhospitable to foreigners as the Hold of Belkzen. Those non-orcs (and many half-orcs) who venture into this harsh land are almost certain to find adventure thrust upon them, either as a result of the environment itself, which poses numerous threats, or at the hands of the many orc tribes inhabiting the wasteland, which can provide appropriate challenges for parties of all levels. Yet unlike the Worldwound or the Mana Wastes, which are universally hostile to visitors, Belkzen offers enough safe havens to permit even neophyte adventurers to brave its dangers. This chapter provides Game Masters with additional tools for running adventures in the hostile Hold of Belkzen.

Beginning on page 28, you'll find an overview of the violent deities of the orc pantheon that provides players and Game Masters alike with glimpses into the nature of orc religion. Venerated throughout the Hold of Belkzen both as a pantheon and as individual tribal patrons, these deities are most likely to be worshiped by enemy orc shamans, clerics, and witch doctors. Orc or half-orc player characters may also worship these deities, but the gods' teachings often make such devotees difficult adventuring companions for non-orcs.

On pages 32–37, many of the most notable or powerful tribes that inhabit the region receive detailed descriptions, covering their leadership, motivations, territories, and other information to bring the varied tribes to life. As most orc tribes are nomadic, they may be used in adventures set nearly anywhere in the region, either as random encounters or central elements of a campaign's Belkzen-based plot.

Many of the region's permanent locations are explored beginning on page 40, including their histories, their secrets, and the current challenges they present. Though too many locations exist in Belkzen to detail all of them here, each of the sites in this section can serve as the location of a single game session or a longer campaign.

Finally, the new rules options for orc warfare—such as orc war machines and war mounts—detailed on pages 38–39 allow GMs to flavor any encounter with an orc army with the deadly and gruesomely innovative implements of war employed by the hordes.

Orc Gods

Orcs are known the world over for their violence, ruthlessness, and dedication to spreading death and destruction wherever they go. Yet despite their lack of general “civilization,” orcs nevertheless have complex social structures, including their religions organizations. They share some of these faiths with members of other races, such as the worship of Gorum, Lamashtu, Rovagug, and Urgathoa. At the same time, many orcs believe that such gods are “human” or “elf” gods unworthy of their veneration. Others depict these gods as orcs, and teach revised, orc-centric tenets that play up decrees of war, conquest, and slavery, while downplaying those elements of the faiths that their kind would interpret as signs of weakness. Only Lamashtu and Rovagug are spared this repurposing, as they are suitably monstrous in their common representations. Even then, orcs don't like to admit they share gods with weaker races.

Far more common than the worship of these familiar gods is the veneration of a pantheon of orc deities—ancient beings said to have created orcs and whose teachings date back to the race's antiquity deep within the Darklands. Generally worshiped as a group rather than individually, the orcs' racial gods are as ruthless and depraved as one would imagine given the nature of their primary followers. Worship of the orc gods is rare outside the Hold of Belkzen, though small cults can be found anywhere that orcs make their homes. Half-orcs living among orcs often venerate the orc pantheon, but those who make their lives among humans, elves, dwarves, and other civilized races generally shy away from the gods of their orc forebears—at least openly. While there are rare exceptions, worship of the orc gods by those lacking orc blood is practically unknown.

Orc priests of these racial deities are most often shamans, oracles, witches, and warpriests, with clerics making up the smallest portion of the clergy. Shamans and clerics are both often referred to as shamans, despite the differences in their abilities, while witches and oracles are frequently called witch doctors. Because the orc gods appear in many different aspects, shamans who worship the same deity could find that they possess vastly different abilities, depending on their tribes' takes on their patron deity.

Orc Deities

Deity	AL	Areas of Concern	Domains	Favored Weapon
Dretha	CE	Birth, fertility, tribes	Chaos, Community, Evil, Protection	Scimitar
Lanishra	CE	Slavery, subjugation, tyranny	Chaos, Evil, Nobility, Strength	Heavy flail
Nulgreth	CE	Anger, rage, strength	Chaos, Evil, Strength, War	Orc double-axe
Rull	CE	Lightning, storms, thunder	Air, Chaos, Evil, Weather	Falchion
Sezelrian	CE	Fire, magic, revenge	Chaos, Evil, Fire, Magic	Heavy mace
Varg	CE	Iron, siege engines, war	Chaos, Earth, Evil, War	Greataxe
Verex	CE	Lust, pillage, plunder	Chaos, Charm, Evil, Trickery	Battleaxe
Zagresh	CE	Death, destruction, disaster	Chaos, Death, Destruction, Evil	Greatclub

Dretha
The Dark Mother

Goddess of birth, fertility, and tribes



Alignment CE

Domains Chaos, Community, Evil, Protection

Subdomains Defense, Demon, Family, Home

Favored Weapon scimitar

Symbol two gauntleted fists

Sacred Animal dire wolf

Lanishra
The Slavelord

God of slavery, subjugation, and tyranny



Alignment CE

Domains Chaos, Evil, Nobility, Strength

Subdomains Demon, Resolve, Slavery^{5G}, Tyranny^{5G}

Favored Weapon heavy flail

Symbol sabre-tooth tiger skull

Sacred Animal dire tiger

Dretha reigns over all aspects of orc domestic life. The Dark Mother is not a goddess of love, but of possessiveness. As the goddess of fertility, she watches over female orcs during pregnancy, birthing, and child rearing. She promotes mating, families, and tribes, not because she is a nurturing deity, but because she believes in strength in numbers and fostering strong warriors. Dretha is the patron of crafts, yet all orc gods are war gods, and Dretha is no different. The Dark Mother blesses those who fight jealously to defend their mates, children, lands, and possessions from enemies who would steal or destroy them.

Dretha is depicted as a heavily pregnant orc. Sculptures of the Dark Mother emphasize her swollen belly and breasts, while leaving her head and limbs small and lacking in detail. Legends describe Dretha as a sullen goddess who rarely speaks. Yet the stories told by true devotees say her melancholy is a cage that holds a burning rage within. Orcs typically claim Dretha is the mate of the male god their tribe holds in highest esteem. Dretha is the most widely revered of the orc gods, and while tribes may come to blows over which orc god is superior, all acknowledge the Dark Mother.

Dretha is primarily worshiped by female orcs, who sacrifice to her to ensure safe childbirth and strong children. But all orcs, regardless of their gender, seek the Dark Mother's aid in matters of defense or procreation. Tales tell of Dretha's ancient conflict with Lamashtu, and rarely do her followers also venerate the demonic Mother of Monsters.



Dretha

Lanishra is the orc god of rulership. He assures orcs of their inherent superiority over all other humanoids, and over most other creatures as well. The Slavelord does not believe in peers, teaching that in all relationships one party is superior to the other. An orc must know his place in the pecking order, but he must never be satisfied unless he's at the top. For a follower of Lanishra, it's better to be feared than loved, for only those who can dominate others deserve to lead.

Lanishra is depicted as an orc chieftain, richly attired (for an orc), but armed for a fight. His favored weapon is the war flail—a mockery of the farmer's tool, unsuitable for threshing grain but ideal for flaying those who disobey him or deign to think themselves his better. Lanishra teaches that a warrior's job is to excel at warfare and that manual labor is beneath him.

The reward for a warrior's work is the free acquisition of the goods produced by those he conquers—both from their past labors and those carried out under his whip.

Lanishra's philosophy is most at odds with those of Nulgreth and Zagresh, who would rather kill than enslave. Yet his fiercest rival is Verex, whose desire for slaves equals the Slavelord's; despite their shared goal, the two rarely get along.

Tribes dedicated to Lanishra are heavily involved in the slave trade, though even tribes devoted to other gods may have priests of the Slavelord to oversee their chattel.

Many orc chieftains promote the worship of Lanishra, as his teachings legitimize their rule and supremacy. Clerics of Lanishra can take the Slavery or Tyranny subdomains, treating Chaos or Evil as the associated domain (instead of Law).

Belkzen, Hold of the Orc Hordes



Nulgreth The Blood God

God of anger, rage, and strength



Alignment CE

Domains Chaos, Evil, Strength, War

Subdomains Blood, Demon, Ferocity, Rage

Favored Weapon orc double axe

Symbol bloody double axe

Sacred Animal wolverine

Rull The Thunderer

God of lightning, storms, and thunder



Alignment CE

Domains Air, Chaos, Evil, Weather

Subdomains Cloud, Demon, Storms, Wind

Favored Weapon falchion

Symbol thunder cloud and lightning

Sacred Animal terror bird^{B3}

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Orcs believe that the essence of a creature is contained in its blood, and for the orc race, that essence is anger. The Blood God is credited with giving orcs their innate ferocity, which when kindled like an ember becomes an uncontrollable inferno of rage. Nulgreth eschews ranged combat, preferring to look his opponents in the eyes and feel their blood splatter on him as he kills them. He makes no complex schemes or long-term plans. He knows only bloodlust, and through his gifts of strength and rage, he impels orcs to wage bloody warfare across Golarion.

Nulgreth is depicted as an orc barbarian with blood-red skin. Indeed, most images of Nulgreth are painted in blood; devotees color themselves so to emulate the Blood God, using red ochre when fresh blood isn't available. Nulgreth is always in the throes of rage. Though none question his prowess in battle, Nulgreth's need for immediate gratification often conflicts with the carefully considered plans of his brothers Lanishra, Sezelrian, and Varg.

All orcs revere Nulgreth as the source of their ferocity, but his worship is especially popular among barbarians. Like their patron, tribes dedicated to the Blood God are excessively violent in battle. Not satisfied merely to kill their enemies, these orcs disembowel the corpses and bathe in the blood. These tribes rarely keep slaves; an enemy who survives combat is soon sacrificed in a bloody ritual. Though Nulgreth does not grant the Destruction domain, his clerics can take the Rage subdomain because of the god's close association with that violent emotion.

Rull is not a god the orcs brought with them from the Darklands, but rather one they discovered soon after they emerged upon Golarion's surface. Having lived all their lives in the consistent climate of caves, the orcs were awed by the turbulence of the open air. The orcs associate the sounds of

thunder and rain with the din of war, and the flash of lightning with the sparking of blade on blade. Orcs are not known for their love of nature, but they find a kindred spirit in the violent and unpredictable Thunderer.

Rull is depicted as an orc with skin the color of storm clouds and a voice that resounds like thunder. Lightning bolts are his weapon of choice; he throws them down from the sky to impale enemies or to revel in random destruction.

The Thunderer is happiest in the midst of noise and turmoil, whether the raging of a storm or the confusion of battle. Orcs thank Rull for the clouds, which block out the painful sun. Clear skies and still air are signs of Rull's disfavor. At these times, the orcs attempt to appease the Thunderer by beating drums and clashing weapons.

Priests of Rull practice ceraunomancy—divination by thunder and lightning—to ascertain the Thunderer's will. Many orc druids revere the Thunderer; some of these show their devotion by taking an axe beak companion (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 311). Many orc bards and skalds view Rull as their patron, and seek to emulate his roaring with their loud, discordant battle songs.



Nulgreth

Sezelrian
The Fire God

God of fire, magic, and revenge



Alignment CE

Domains Chaos, Evil, Fire, Magic

Subdomains Ash, Demon, Divine, Smoke

Favored Weapon heavy mace

Symbol burning boar skull

Sacred Animal dire boar

Varg
The Iron Warrior

God of iron, siege engines, and war



Alignment CE

Domains Chaos, Earth, Evil, War

Subdomains Demon, Fear⁶⁶, Metal, Tactics

Favored Weapon greataxe

Symbol crumbling and smoking tower

Sacred Animal woolly rhinoceros

When they created the orcs, the gods each gave the new race an admirable quality. Sezelrian gave the orcs intelligence, so they could know and worship the gods who made them. Through religion, the orcs learned to channel the power of the gods, and thus the Fire God is also the god of magic. Sezelrian teaches that not everything can be fought with physical strength alone. An orc must be clever to control fire or magic, lest she get burned. Yet Sezelrian is still an orc god, and thus has no patience for knowledge without immediate practical use.

Sezelrian is depicted as an orc witch doctor wielding a mace that continually emits smoke and sparks without burning. Often his true face is hidden behind a mask of a demonic visage wreathed in fire. Sezelrian rarely leads attacks against his fellow orc gods, but often serves as an adviser to one of his brothers against another, usual in conflicts he himself instigated. Sezelrian is least likely to ally with the bestial Nulgreth; he instead favors Zagresh, who at least appreciates the destructive power of fire.

Regardless of which god they hold highest, all orc spellcasters—whether arcane or divine—owe thanks to Sezelrian. They show their respect with fire, integrating bonfires, burnt offerings, candles, and torches into their rituals. Tribes dedicated to the Fire God are generally more accepting of magic-users in their midst. Burns and brands often mark the flesh of those dedicated to Sezelrian.

Varg is the orc god of innovation, tactics, and technology. He taught the orcs how to forge blades and to build complex siege engines. While all orc gods are war gods, the

Iron Warrior is the master of strategy. He disdains battle plans that rely solely on enthusiasm and overwhelming numbers to win the day. Instead, Varg teaches orcs, if not discipline, at least more efficient ways to use their strength. Varg favors weapons that not only deal damage, but also instill fear. The Iron Warrior knows that intimidation can defeat an enemy as quickly as any wound, and he sees no shame in striking from behind at a foe in retreat.

Varg is depicted as an orc general wearing half-plate armor that was assembled from varied sources. He never wears a helm that would hinder his ability to see and hear what is happening on the battlefield. Varg has honed his abilities through countless battles against his brothers and the gods of other pantheons. When not opposing the Iron Warrior, the other orc gods depend on him to equip their armies. Varg is the most inventive and forward thinking of orc gods, but his genius is only for battle. His followers have little interest in using technology to improve other aspects of orc life, and the most devout of his faithful see innovation in other arenas as a blasphemous misuse of Varg's gifts.

All but the most savage orcs make use of metal weapons and armor, and they give thanks to Varg when they craft or steal these items. Tribes dedicated to the Iron Warrior make extensive use of siege weapons, and individual worshipers compete against each other to build the most complex and destructive devices of death.



Sezelrian

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Verex The Despoiler

God of lust, pillage, and plunder



Alignment CE

Domains Chaos, Charm, Evil, Trickery

Subdomains Deception, Demon, Lust, Thievery

Favored Weapon battleaxe

Symbol rat with gold coin

Sacred Animal dire rat

In other cultures, the gods of avarice might lurk in shadows, and their worshipers would do the same, practicing their faith in secret, but not among orcs, for whom greed and lust are practically virtues. Verex is a brazen thief who encourages orcs to take whatever or whomever they desire. He is the patron of plunderers and usurpers who take by force. Yet duplicity and stealth are not beneath Verex, so he is also the god of grifters and thieves. Orcs praise the Despoiler when their raids yield valuable treasures, but they may curse his name when they become the victims of theft or simply misplace an item.

Verex is depicted as an orc rogue wearing studded leather armor, in contrast to the heavy hide and metal favored by his brothers. The Despoiler's irises are the color of gold coins, and it's said he can see the deepest desire of any creature that looks him in the eyes. In his time, Verex has allied with and stolen from all the other orc gods, though he has the least contact with Zagresh, who rarely possesses anything of value and is thus not worth the Despoiler's time.

As raiding is important to their survival, many orcs call upon the Despoiler when looting a village or pillaging a rival tribe, but his most dedicated worshipers are typically rogues. Tribes dedicated to Verex prefer guerrilla warfare to attacking en masse, and use diplomacy to deflect fights they can't win—at least until they can attain a stronger position. For followers of Verex, success is measured in gold, mates, and slaves rather than kills; any orc who can attain goals through guile and deception is valued among Verex's faithful.

Zagresh The Destroyer

God of death, destruction, disaster



Alignment CE

Domains Chaos, Death, Destruction, Evil

Subdomains Catastrophe, Demon, Murder, Undead

Favored Weapon greatclub

Symbol stack of severed heads

Sacred Animal dire bear

The shamans say Zagresh was the first god of the orcs. Indeed, the Destroyer represents the primal nature of orcs, before they learned to use technology or magic. Unlike other orc gods who desire glory and power, Zagresh is a nihilist who fights only for survival, and lives only to destroy. Even orcs who profess a higher purpose revere Zagresh as the god of violent death, a fate to which all orcs aspire (those who die of natural causes are instead relegated to Dretha).

Zagresh is described as a savage orc with monstrous tusks. The hides of large animals serve as his armor and clothing, and his weapon of choice is a spiked greatclub. Though he rarely uses articulate speech, Zagresh is not a quiet god. The Destroyer expresses his every emotion through animalistic growls and howls.

In his joyous destruction, Zagresh's roars echo across the battlefield and strike fear into the hearts of his enemies.

The orc gods don't ally with Zagresh so much as direct him against those they wish to annihilate. The Destroyer cares not for their machinations, only for mayhem, and as long as they provide him enemies to slaughter, he revels in the destruction.

Worship of the Destroyer is more common among subterranean or less civilized and orcs. His followers rarely have much in the way of material wealth. They take joy in destroying the creations of civilized folk (including more organized orcs), and in fits of rage smash even their own possessions. The orc god of the dead is also the race's god of the undead; even among civilized orcs, those who practice necromancy give homage to Zagresh, and those who don't pray that Zagresh will keep their dead from rising.



Zagresh

Orc Tribes

There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of orc tribes within the Hold of Belkzen, some with histories spanning generations, others lasting but a few short years. Just as other races describe themselves as citizens of the cities, nations, or regions in which they live, orcs identify most strongly with their tribes. These small, predominantly nomadic groups are in a constant state of conflict, ever waging war against rival tribes in the region. The following are among the most prominent or populous tribes in the Hold of Belkzen.

Black Sun

The Black Sun tribe is a vast mercenary horde that lays no claim to any land, traveling throughout Belkzen and offering to fight for anyone willing to pay for their aid. **Krun Thuul** (CE male orc fighter 10), the Black Sun's chieftain, has spies in nearly all the major tribes who send word of when they're about to go to war. The Black

Suns then simply arrive at the site of the impending battle, set up camp, and invite the two sides to bid for the Black Sun's support. This has given Thuul the reputation for being something of a kingmaker among the tribes.

More information about Krun Thuul can be found on page 6 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: NPC Guide*.

Blood Trail

Kring the Beautiful (CE female orc barbarian 13) is one of the few female orc chieftains in all of Belkzen, having achieved her position by killing the tribe's former chief in hand-to-hand combat when she was only 14 years old. She holds the honorific "the Beautiful" not for her appearance, but because she embodies the glorious orc virtues of physical strength and ruthlessness. Kring proclaims that she has yet to find a mate worthy to sire her children, and travels throughout Belkzen during the Flood Truce, challenging anyone she thinks might qualify. Even though the warriors of her tribe have accepted Kring as their leader, there are those among them who wait for her to show weakness so they might challenge her for the chieftainship.

The Blood Trails winter in a series of ancient Kellid burial mounds on the western entrance to Whisperfall Pass, where they impose heavy tolls on any orcs wishing to cross the Tusk Mountains to raid Ustalav. This puts them into direct conflict with the Skull Eaters, who control the eastern end of the pass, and the two tribes have clashed numerous times in recent years.

Bloodied Gauntlet

Located near Belkzen's eastern border with Lastwall, the Gorum-worshipping Bloodied Gauntlets are locked in conflict with their human Gorumite counterparts. While the tribe's fierce battles escalate quickly to shocking levels of violence and carnage, the presence of the Bloodied Gauntlets has proven to be an oddly stabilizing force in the area. More concerned with glory and the thrill of battle than cruelty and destruction, the Bloodied Gauntlets possess something their human brethren in faith might call honor. The obviously weak and helpless are ignored in favor of worthy opponents, and defeated foes are ransomed for steel. For the Bloodied Gauntlets, a worthy enemy is something to be cherished, not squandered.

This peculiar relationship has led the orcs of this tribe to be oddly protective of their favored rivals. A few more monstrous tribes have been attacked for daring to encroach upon their battlefield. This conflict is partially driven by their half-orc chieftain, **Aazhg** (CN male half-orc cleric of Gorum 8), and his human brother, **Aaren Gaulder** (CG male human warpriest^{ACG} of Gorum 7). Born on opposite sides of the war, the brothers have set themselves against each other in a hot-blooded but hateless rivalry in the names of their shared father and god.



Kring the Beautiful

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Broken Spine

The Broken Spines have become southern Belkzen's laughingstock after a pinkskin Pathfinder named Eando Kline burned down their winter headquarters in the Lastwall fortress known as Heliu's Folly in 4707 AR. Although the chief at the time, Kroghut, survived the inferno, he fled before he could be executed for incompetence by his own tribe, and has since founded a new tribe near Trunau.

Since enduring this humiliation, the remaining Broken Spines have regrouped and repaired their fortress. They also found a new leader: the bloodthirsty, nearly insane **Hogrot** (CE male orc bloodrager^{ACG} 9), who single-handedly destroyed a platoon of Lastwall soldiers. Hogrot isn't known for his tactical acumen, but after the Eando Kline incident, the Broken Spines are looking to shore up their reputation any way they can.

Given Hogrot's lack of mental faculties, the tribe is now led from behind the scenes by their shaman, **Magra the Mad** (CE old male orc shaman^{ACG} 7). Magra has suspicions that the fire that nearly killed them all was not completely natural and that something unusual might be going on at Heliu's Folly.

For more information on Heliu's Folly, see page 11.

Burning Sun

A remarkably empathetic yet fierce “cross-soul” warrior, **Mahja Firehair** (CG female orc barbarian 4/warrior^{ACG} of Sarenrae 3) has been plagued by visions of a burning angel warning of her race's eventual doom if they remain on the current course. She claimed abused members of her tribe under her protection, and eventually overthrew her chieftain and began gathering outcasts from neighboring tribes under her firm leadership. While Mahja has moved the tribe's culture away from wickedness, orc values such as the weak serving the strong are still deeply entrenched among the Burning Suns—though the strong are expected in turn to provide for and defend the weak.

Burning Sun warriors are composed of men and women in equal measure. They are as savage as their kin in battle, but their reasons for fighting have shifted from the early glories of their crusade to defending their tribe from extinction. Since their zeal has now earned them far more enemies than they can afford, the Burning Suns have sent half-orc scouts abroad to find allies to fight alongside them or, if the tide turns against them, aid the inevitable exodus from Belkzen. Thus far, none of the scouts have returned.

Cleft Head

There is a saying about the Cleft Heads: “They are the last into battle and the first out.” This impression is generally true, as the tribe's chieftains long ago took to heart that those in the vanguard die first. Their solution has been to be aggressive enough not to appear cowardly, and yet to always stand in the shadows and let other tribes take the glory and the lion's share of the risk during raids and warfare.

The tribe's current leader, **K'zaard the Drover** (NE male orc barbarian 7), keeps his warriors supplied with alcohol to boost their morale, and has recently aligned the Cleft Heads with the Empty Hand tribe. The great chief Grask Uldeth commanded them to relocate to the hills north of the pinkskin settlement of Freedom Town, and extort the town's council. Naturally, K'zaard takes a healthy cut of this tax, but it's only a matter of time before Uldeth catches on and executes him.

Dead Eye

The mountain orcs of the Dead Eye tribe are primitive and violent even by orc standards. They inhabit a series of filthy caves and decrepit lean-tos between the Brimstone Haruspex and the Dirt Sea, and survive by making raids against other tribes (and eating their members). The Dead Eyes consider themselves to be the last practitioners of true orc culture and see “civilized” tribes as degenerate.

Under the guidance of **Faceripper** (CE male orc barbarian 14), the Dead Eye tribe worships an ancient one-eyed deity called Brumash, who these orcs believe is the father of Rovagug and the orc race. Brumash might be a gestalt of Verex the Blood God and Zagresh the Destroyer, but this is far from certain. Because the Dead Eyes believe Brumash is the oldest being in creation, they see Rovagug as an upstart and newcomer, and happily oppose his worshipers at every turn. This puts the tribe in conflict with the Endseers of the Brimstone Haruspex, who see the Dead Eyes as a mere annoyance, since they lack the organization and resources to pose a serious challenge. And because the Dead Eye tribe will attack nearly anyone, it has made many enemies over the years, most notably the Gutspears.

Death's Head

The legendary orc hero Makoa founded the Death's Head tribe in the twentieth century AR. The tribe once dwelled in the Hungry Mountains, but was driven out by the forces of the Varisian hero Soividia Ustav, the founder of Ustalav. Defeated but not destroyed, the surviving Death's Head members relocated to Belkzen and reestablished the tribe. They once again lost their territory along the rugged foothills of the southern Tusk Mountains to the Murdered Child tribe during the Culling, the roughly 20-year period of near-constant warfare that followed Aroden's death in 4606 AR. In disgrace, the Death's Heads made their way to Urgir and offered their services to the newly emergent Great Chief of the Empty Hand tribe, Grask Uldeth. Although he would not share the city with them, Uldeth declared that they could control the land immediately surrounding Urgir, and demand heavy tolls from any orcs who tried to enter the city. They eagerly agreed and have since taken on a number of ettin, hill giant, and ogre mercenaries to bolster their ranks. Led by **Ungont Helmsplitter** (CE male orc ranger 12), the tribe is largely based out of a tent city a half-day's journey from Urgir, but at least a dozen warriors and giants can be found crewing each of the city's gates at any time.



Defiled Corpse

Even though they are few in number, the orcs of the Defiled Corpse tribe are among of the most feared and reviled in all of Belkzen. The Defiled Corpses began as a primitive tribe of mountain orcs in the northern Tusk Mountains, but were driven south when the red dragons Sheblis and Tyrkalis relocated there in 4682 AR. While searching for a new territory, the orcs encountered the unholy black tower known as the Cenotaph, and mesmerized, they set up the camp around it. That night, their shaman received a dream supposedly from the orc god Zagresh himself, proclaiming that the Defiled Corpses were his chosen people and that he would lead them to greatness. Since then, the Defiled Corpses have indeed become infamous for their devotion to Zagresh, and for their cruelty, debauchery, and cannibalism.

While in a trance state communicating with his god, the current shaman, **Ungukk Fleshdredge** (LE male oracle^{APG} 14/hierophant^{MA} 3), was able to create a two-headed flesh golem known as the Carcass Man of Belkzen. However, the creature is quite difficult to control in battle—it has killed as many members of the Defiled Corpse tribe as it has slain its enemies. Though he's much more powerful than the current chief, **Bugark Zomash** (CE male orc antipaladin^{APG} of Zagresh 10), Fleshdredge defers to Zomash in all but strictly religious or mystical matters.

Drowning Sand

The Drowning Sand tribe makes its home in Belkzen's dangerous Dirt Sea. As solid ground is scarce amid the quicksand, a Drowning Sand camp is often half on land and half floating on flat-bottomed barges. Though they can survive by "fishing" the Dirt Sea, the Drowning Sand orcs earn more by ferrying other orcs (and sometimes other races) across its treacherous expanse. They take advantage of their mobility on the quicksand when raiding other tribes in and around the Dirt Sea, especially those who refuse to be ferried and instead try to circle round the Sea. The Drowning Sand tribe is mired in a generations-long territorial dispute with the Wingripper tribe, which also claims the Dirt Sea as its territory. As a result, Drowning Sand orcs keep a constant watch on the sky for signs of incoming wyverns.

Once a skilled pilot and nimble fighter, **Gredim** (NE male orc rogue 7) has grown corpulent since usurping the chieftom of the Drowning Sand tribe. He rarely leaves his barge, where food, drink, and companionship are available in abundance. It's only a matter of time before one of Gredim's lieutenants betrays him, and every other tribe member is trying to side with the orc who will eventually take over.

Eight Fingers

In 4709 AR, Chief Bloodhammer of the Gutspear tribe challenged Chief **Hurk Skullhacker** of the Eight Fingers (CE male orc fighter 13) to single combat after the latter

gravely insulted him. Skullhacker accepted the challenge, and the two faced off at the edge of the Dirt Sea with their war hordes looking on. Unbeknownst to Bloodhammer, Skullhacker had intentionally provoked him, hoping to draw Bloodhammer out of his fortress of Deepgate, which the Gutspears had occupied for over 15 years.

Being younger and quicker, Skullhacker bested Bloodhammer easily, and was about to slay him when the Gutspear horde rose up to defend their chief. Having foreseen the need for extra muscle, Skullhacker had hired the Dead Eye tribe and hidden them in the shallow quicksand nearby. On his signal, hundreds of warriors emerged from the quicksand and flanked the Gutspears while Skullhacker led his Eight Fingers against their line. After the Gutspears were routed, Skullhacker force-marched his warriors to lay siege to Deepgate. Since taking the ancient fortress and becoming aware of its many problems, Skullhacker has wondered many times whether he made the right decision.

See page 43 for more information on Deepgate.

Empty Hand

The Empty Hand tribe is by far the largest, most powerful, and most controversial tribe in the Hold of Belkzen. It controls Urgir, the most powerful city in the land, and is led by **Grask Uldeth** (CE male orc barbarian 17), one of the most cunning and forward-thinking orc leaders in generations. Because it heavily taxes Urgir's Market District and has a stake in nearly all the foreign trade that flows through the city, the Empty Hand tribe is also the wealthiest in Belkzen, giving it access to the best weapons, armor, and war machines that money can buy. But despite all of its accolades, the Empty Hand tribe is looked down upon by the majority of Belkzen's tribes for two reasons: it allows non-orcs into the city who aren't slaves, and it makes money from taxes. The first is seen as an implicit rejection of orc racial superiority, while the latter contradicts the fundamentally held belief that anything not taken by force is not worth owning.

See page 20 for more information on Grask Uldeth and the Empty Hand tribe.

Gutspear

Once the masters of the ancient and prestigious orc fortress of Deepgate, the Gutspears were outsmarted by the Eight Fingers tribe in 4709 AR and lost the stronghold. Because of the countless problems of Deepgate—such as gremlin infestations and crumbling infrastructure—this wasn't altogether a bad turn for the tribe. They relocated to a cave complex in the southern Kodar Mountains, and chose a new chief, **Drog Ten-Heads** (CE male orc barbarian 9), to lead them. Drog gets his name from a long chain he always carries with him that is strung with the skulls of foes he has defeated in single combat. This practice is common among prominent orc champions, but few can boast as many heads

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as Drog. Rumors have begun to surface, however, that one of the heads is from a mere half-orc, a point that if true would call his reputation into question, and some orcs have started calling him “Nine-Heads” behind his back.

Haskodar

The Haskodars are one of the rival tribes of Blisterwell, but were virtually unknown before they led a surprise attack against the One Eyes in 4701 AR. Due to their high-quality weapons and armor, the Haskodars were able to quickly conquer three of the seven mine shafts, which they still hold today. After the battle, it became apparent that the Haskodars were Darklands orcs who had been living in the tunnels and caverns of Nar-Voth until the attack.

A canny and disfigured veteran named **Tulluk Clovenface** (CE male orc barbarian 8/rogue 2) leads the tribe, supported by his shaman **Ysok Rockcaller** (NE male orc druid 12). Tulluk has led the Haskodars since before their emergence from the Darklands, and led them on many battles against their primary rivals, the duergar of Fellstrok. This fighting ended when the duergar King Brithuan offered Tulluk a truce and alliance: in exchange for slaves and finely crafted armaments, the Haskodars agreed to conquer Blisterwell, secure its mineral resources, and use it as a base to destabilize Grask Uldeth’s control of Urgir. Because of the One Eyes’ strong resistance, this plan is still a work in progress.

Ice Tooth

Led by the **Kravog Tuskspear** (CN male orc ranger 6), the Ice Tooth tribe ranges the border between the Hold of Belkzen and the Realm of the Mammoth Lords. They travel north to raid the Kellid tribes of the Algid Wastes and to hunt the megafauna that roams there. Other orcs are derisive of the Ice Tooth tribe; dressed in woolly pelts and born with tusks far larger than normal, they are said to resemble the creatures they hunt. Despite their savage appearance, however, the Ice Tooth orcs are canny traders and among the wealthiest of the orc tribes. Only a fraction of the beasts they hunt are carved up for meat and hides. Rather, most are captured and tamed. In the spring, when the Flood Road becomes a river, the Ice Tooth orcs follow it south, and trade the megafauna as war-beasts to other tribes.

The Ice Tooth tribe has a sizable population of half-orcs, the result of years of fighting and trading with the humans to the north. Though some hold their own as hunters and warriors, most are raised to be traders, as their mixed heritage is seen as less threatening by both Kellids and other orc tribes.

Murdered Child

The Murdered Child tribe rules the city of Wyvernsting, the second most important settlement in Belkzen. It is led by **Hundux Half-Man** (CE male half-orc barbarian 13), a cunning half-orc who has ruled since taking over in

4706 AR. Even though the Murdered Child has been the dominant tribe in Wyvernsting for generations, Hundux has done much to improve the tribe’s wealth and prestige in recent years. He forged the tentative alliance with the nearly psychotic Wingripper tribe that ended years of fighting, and also helped establish the ferry service over the Dirt Sea, which has brought in significant revenue in recent years.

The Murdered Child frequently goes to war against Grask Uldeth’s more powerful Empty Hand tribe during the Proving Time. Hundux uses these moments primarily as opportunities to study the Empty Hand tribe’s tactics and hone his own skills as a field commander. He is careful to always minimize his losses and never commits his most powerful warriors, weapons, and war beasts to these clashes. He knows that he doesn’t have the numbers to win the battles, and is waiting until he has acquired enough wealth to bring the Black Sun mercenaries to his side and strike the final blow against the lord of Urgir.



Grask Uldeth

One Eye

The One Eye tribe comprises tunnel fighters who were the sole rulers of the mine-city of Blisterwell until the Haskodars invaded in 4701 AR. They have lost three of the seven mine shafts of the city to their rivals, and now cling tenaciously to their remaining four, refusing to give up a single room. The One Eyes are poorly equipped compared to their opponents, and they were forced to cannibalize their holdings in the city to build sufficient barricades in its defense. This has left their part of Blisterwell almost completely in shambles, although this doesn't seem to bother the One Eyes. Chief **Molkk Dwarf-Mangler** (CE male orc bloodrager^{ACG} 11) has led the tribe since before the outset of the conflict, and has fought off several challenges after the better-equipped Haskodars attacked them from out of nowhere. The horrible scars he has earned in those challenges are to him badges of authority—especially his missing eye, which he considers prophetic, considering his tribe's name.

Open Barrow

The Open Barrow tribe roams the plains north of Urgir and makes frequent raids into Canterwall in Ustalav. To avoid border patrols, the orcs skirt the haunted mountains of Virlych, a practice that many believe has had a morbid influence on the Open Barrow orcs. Though not a spellcaster himself, the tribe's chieftain, **Mazoch Skullface** (CE male orc fighter 9), encourages the practice of necromancy among his followers. When they raid, the Open Barrows take not only food and goods, but also dead bodies. The tribe's necromancers animate the corpses as zombies, which they use as slaves and battle fodder. The sight of victims of previous raids returned from the grave is often enough to deter resistance from the superstitious Ustalavs.

Krezima (NE female orc cleric of Zagresh 8) is Mazoch's mate and chief adviser. Able to command more zombies than anyone else in the tribe, she also serves a role akin to the tribe's slave master. The tribe's necromancers require large supplies of onyx in order to maintain their stock of zombies. The Open Barrows are not miners themselves, so they trade their spoils with other tribes for the precious stones. Unnerved by the Open Barrow tribe, other orcs rarely stay longer than they need to make the exchange.

Skittering Ravager

The Skittering Ravagers were once a tribe like any other, but many of their members have recently undergone a magical transformation that may yet have a profound influence on the future of the Conquered Lands.

The Skittering Ravagers' ancestral homeland is in the hills of the northern Conquered Lands, and they long boasted that they lived closer to the vast swarms of ankhegs in the Skittermounds than any other tribe of Belkzen. In 4710 AR, one of their war parties slaughtered the humans living in the nearby military base of Skull Hill, but the force was in turn all but wiped out when a powerful magic item

released deadly necromantic energies. The few survivors fled the doomed fort, but later found that their bodies had been changed by the magic. Their flesh turned gray and cold, and they now could be damaged by their shaman's healing magic, but seemed virtually immune to fatigue.

Their new chief is **Mukuhn the Reborn** (CE male orc barbarian 10), a survivor of Skull Hill whose newborn son has inherited his recently acquired powers. For more information on Skull Hill, see page 13.

Skull Eater

The Skull Eater tribe controls the eastern slopes of Whisperfall Pass and levies heavy tolls on orcs wishing to cross back into Belkzen after raiding Ustalav. As the Blood Trail tribe does the same on the other side of the pass, many tribes have balked at being double-charged, and have started using more dangerous game trails through the Tusk Mountains, or even tempting encounters with Ustalavic cavalry patrols by crossing through the Gap of Valballus. The dispute has caused numerous arguments and skirmishes between the two tribes, both of which want sole control over the Whisperfall Pass.

Gribrik Gut-Eater (CE male orc barbarian 10/shaman^{ACG} 1), the chief of the tribe, is a massive orc who enjoys disemboweling his enemies and eating their entrails while they look on. This behavior is extreme even by orc standards, and some among the Skull Eaters murmur that Gribrik is trying to make up for fact that when he was a child, he was so small that he was deemed unfit for battle and apprenticed for a short time to the tribe's shaman.

The Skull Eaters frequently raid into the neighboring Ustalavic county of Canterwall, and have begun launching attacks on the well-fortified troops of the Firewatch Peaks as well.

Steel Eater

The Steel Eaters are one of the most highly specialized tribes in Belkzen. While the ancestors of other tribes rampaged and pillaged during the Age of Anguish, the forefathers of the Steel Eater tribe tortured the dwarven smiths they captured to learn their secrets of metalsmithing. This knowledge has been passed down through the generations, and the Steel Eaters are now one of the most influential tribes in Belkzen. Even though they rarely participate in battles, no other tribe dares to attack or even criticize them. This is due to their virtual monopoly on the supplying weapons, armor, and war machines for all the orcs of central Avistan. Any tribe that displeases the Steel Eater tribe finds its costs suddenly triple, or even loses the right to purchase anything from the Steel Eaters altogether.

Master Smith **Anok** (NE male orc expert 8/fighter 4) runs the Foundry, along with dozens of journeymen and hundreds of apprentices. Anok keeps a close eye on the journeymen in particular, and makes sure none of them produce items whose quality could rival that of his own. The

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journeymen are quite aware of this, and fearing for their lives, they often make deliberate mistakes in their work.

Storm-Screamers of Rull

While many tribes embrace their chaotic nature with sacrifices to dark gods and constant war, the Storm-Screamers have a reputation for being relatively peaceful, allowing the wars of other tribes to pass them by as long as they're left unmolested in the low hills near Whisperfall Pass. The tribe is led by **Regnat the Green** (CN male orc druid), who spends most of his time communing with nature, and enforces that all in his tribe respect the natural world. When his tribe is directly challenged, however, Regnat becomes a terrible force of nature, unleashing the fury of the tribe's patron, Rull the Thunderer, through conjured storms and the battle cries of the tribe's many skald warriors. Other tribes have learned (often the hard way) that the Storm-Screamers' peaceful nature should not be mistaken for weakness, as their warriors are no less vicious in battle than those of the more bloodthirsty tribes. They are also well known for the prowess of their rangers and hunters at taking down seemingly impossible-to-kill game, and have been sought out as allies by other tribal leaders planning raids to the north.

Twisted Nail

Sometimes referred to as "highland orcs," the Twisted Nail tribe of the northern Mindspin Mountains has a reputation for savagery and cannibalism that gives most lowland orcs pause. While all orcs eat the flesh of slaves and captives when food is scarce, the orcs of the Twisted Nail prefer the flesh of their own kind to any other meat. Because of their primitive nature and the fact that they see other tribes as food, the Twisted Nails don't often take part in the aurochs hunts and other activities of the Flood Truce in central Belkzen.

Ruled by Chief **Makosh** (CE male orc barbarian 14), Twisted Nail orcs have adapted to fighting in the high, jagged peaks of their mountain home, and prefer using their terrifying howls to demoralize their foes before taking them down using hit-and-run tactics. They seem to have a close alliance with the local mountain ogres and ogrekin, and other tribes have wondered whether they mate with those creatures as well. Judging by the size of some of the Twisted Nail orcs, this may be more than just a rumor.

Wingripper

The Wingrippers are a relatively small tribe that specializes in taming and riding the wyverns of Cleftbone Canyon in northern Smokespur. They founded the town of Wyvernsting centuries ago, but always had to deal with attacks from the native wyverns that give the settlement its name. It was not until the hero Gurukk the Brave broke the first wyvern and taught it to accept him as a rider that the tribe truly took on the character it has today.

Training wyverns is a dangerous business, and even the best-behaved of specimens are still temperamental.

More than half of those aspiring to become riders die during training, either by being thrown off during flight or mauled on the ground, making those who survive a truly elite group. Foremost among the beast riders is the tribe's chief, **Molog** (CE male orc cavalier^{APG} 10), who rides a wizened wyvern nearly twice the size of others of its kind, with a poison far deadlier than the rest of its kin.

Because of their small numbers and dislike of touching the ground, members of the tribe have not participated in the activities of the Flood Truce in central Belkzen for generations. They prefer to stay in their mountain homes hunting mountain goats and ibexes, and take mates from their own tribe. This latter practice has led to inbreeding, which has in turn led to a greatly increased predisposition toward recklessness and thrill-seeking behavior.



Gazetteer

Adventures in
Belkzen

Bestiary

Orc Warfare

What many orc armies lack in discipline, they make up for in bloodlust. Orcs' default strategy is to overwhelm their enemies by sheer numbers. Infantry makes up the bulk of their armies, though specialized divisions may include heavy cavalry, destructive spellcasters, and siege engine operators. Even when gathered en masse, orcs fight as individuals, their formations dissolving once they make contact with the enemy.

War Machines

Orcs love weapons—the bigger the better—so they're naturally drawn to war machines. In addition to the non-firearm sieges engines in *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat*, Belkzen's orcs field many war machines of their own design. The following are some of their noteworthy creations, which use the siege engine rules from *Ultimate Combat*.

Crushing Wheel: The bulk of this weapon is a steel roller nearly 10 feet wide. Handles or a harness project from the axle, allowing four orcs or one Large beast to push the crushing wheel from behind. As a full-round action, its crew can roll the crushing wheel over creatures in front of it. This functions as the trample monster ability except as noted here. Creatures that are overrun fall prone and take 4d6 points of damage. Targets that succeed at a DC 15 Reflex

saving throw take only half damage and avoid falling prone. A crushing wheel has a hardness of 10 and 100 hit points.

Earthmaul: This war machine is fitted with an enormous hammer. When dropped into the horizontal position, it functions like a sideways-mounted catapult, and is capable of clearing wide swaths of enemies. Although it doesn't use ammunition, the earthmaul must effectively be reloaded by winding the torsion. When the earthmaul is activated, creatures on the ground in a 15-foot cone take 6d6 points of damage, are knocked 10 feet in the direction of the swing, and fall prone. A successful DC 20 Reflex saving throw halves the damage and negates the additional effects. An earthmaul has a hardness of 5 and 100 hit points.

Harvester: A variety of scythe-like blades extend from two sides of this wheeled machine. When it's pulled—typically by an aurochs or enslaved giants—the wheels' rotation causes the blades to slash indiscriminately. Each round the harvester moves, it makes a melee attack with a +10 modifier against any adjacent creature it passes; it deals 2d8 points of damage to those it hits. Multiple harvesters can be strung together. The crew required for a train of harvesters is equal to the total crew of the individual machines. Adjacent creatures are attacked by each individual harvester that passes them. A harvester has a hardness of 5 and 50 hit points.

Manticore's Tail: This massive ballista fires a dozen or more bolts at once in a devastating rain of steel that deals 3d8 points of damage. The crew leader makes a separate attack roll with a –2 penalty against each creature and object within a 60-foot cone, ignoring concealment. Confirm any critical threats separately. This weapon has a mishap only if the first attack roll is a mishap. A manticore's tail has a hardness of 5 and 100 hit points. Ammunition for one use of the manticore's tail costs 120 gp and weighs 120 pounds.

Siege Engine Ammunition

Just as orc engineers work constantly to devise more effective siege weapons, orc alchemists strive to improve these weapons' ammunition. In addition to the special ammunition presented in *Ultimate Combat*, alchemists from the Hold of Belkzen have invented the following.

Defoliant Shot: When used as ammunition in a catapult or trebuchet, this ceramic canister releases a mist of defoliant (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 103) on impact. When it hits the target square, it deals 2d6 points of damage to any creature in that space. Plant creatures within 30 feet of the target square take an additional 4d6 points of damage. A successful DC 20 Fortitude saving throw halves this additional damage. Plant creatures within 5 feet of the target space that fail their saving throws also take 1d4 points of Strength damage and 1d4 points of Constitution damage. The defoliant also kills vegetation within 30 feet of the target square as described in *Ultimate Equipment*.



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Orc War Machines

War Machine	Size	Cost	Dmg	Critical	Range	Type	Crew	Aim	Load	Speed
Crushing wheel	Large	500 gp	4d6	—	—	B	4	—	—	15 ft.
Earthmaul	Huge	1,000 gp	6d6	—	—	B	3	—	3	10 ft.
Harvester	Large	800 gp	2d8	×4	—	S	4	—	—	15 ft.
Manticore's tail	Huge	1,000 gp	3d8	19–20/×2	See text	P	3	0	4	10 ft.

On a siege engine mishap, this ammunition explodes before it's launched, dealing its damage to the siege engine and all nearby plant creatures as if one of the spaces of the siege engine (crew leader's choice) were the target square.

Entangling Bolt: When launched from a ballista, this specialized bolt unfurls into a large net. An attack with entangling ammunition is a ranged touch attack, but it's only effective within one range increment. If it hits, the target is entangled, but the attack deals no damage.

An entangled creature can escape with a successful DC 20 Escape Artist check (a full-round action). The net has 5 hit points and can be burst with a successful DC 25 Strength check (also a full-round action). Entangling ammunition is useful only against creatures within one size category of the firing ballista.

Rockwasp Bomb: Usable in catapults and trebuchets, this ammunition consists of a wooden crate packed with wax globes, from which a faint buzzing sound emanates. Visible as a dark shape at the center of each globe is a rat-sized hornet known as a rockwasp. The alchemical wax keeps the wasps immobilized, while tiny air holes allow them to breath. This ammunition deals only half damage, but releases a wasp swarm (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 275)—two wasp swarms if used for a heavy catapult or heavy trebuchet. The wasps attack for 1 minute before dispersing. On a siege engine mishap, the wasps escape before the ammunition is launched.

Ammunition	Cost	Weight
Defoliant Shot	300 gp	20 lbs.
Entangling Bolt	50 gp	25 lbs.
Rockwasp Bomb	2,000 gp	100 lbs.

Mounts and Related Gear

Many orc tribes capture beasts to use as mounts or beasts of burden and construct gear with which to equip them. As with war machines, the bigger and more intimidating, the better.

Howdah: This wooden platform is tied like a saddle to a Huge creature's back. The platform is 10 feet square and enclosed by a low wall and sometimes a roof. The howdah has room for four Medium creatures (usually armed with bows or longswords), or two Medium creatures and a light ballista or light catapult (*Ultimate Combat* 161). Occupants of the howdah have cover against attackers from below and are considered mounted for the purposes of making attacks.

Tusk Blades: These metal caps must be specially fitted to a creature's horns or tusks; a blade reminiscent of a sword or axe head projects from each cap. If the creature makes a gore attack (including as part of a powerful charge), the

attack deals both piercing and slashing damage, and has a critical threat range of 19–20 (this range can be increased by other effects). Tusk blades can be enhanced as melee weapons; the enhancement is applied to the creature's gore attack.

Woolly Mammoth and Woolly Rhinoceros: Poached from the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, these hairy pachyderms are used by the orcs of Belkzen as mounts and living siege engines. As if these mounts weren't intimidating enough, the orcs outfit them with spiked metal barding and tusk blades.

Mounts and Related Gear	Cost	Weight
Howdah	500 gp	250 lbs.
Tusk blades	50 gp	10 lbs.
Woolly mammoth	3,000 gp	6 tons
Woolly mammoth (combat-trained)	4,500 gp	6 tons
Woolly rhinoceros	2,000 gp	3 tons
Woolly rhinoceros (combat-trained)	3,000 gp	3 tons





Adventure Sites

The Hold of Belkzen is a dangerous place, home to savage orc tribes, wild beasts, and harsh environments. Thus, adventurers brave the land's many perils both to earn fame and fortune, and to rid the world of chaos and evil. Yet even those who seek no trouble but merely wish to travel from Lastwall to Varisia, or from Nirmathas to the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, often have adventure thrust upon them. The following locations are some of the most notable adventure sites in the Hold of Belkzen, complete with information on their inhabitants, current master or masters, and distinguishing features, as well as background information on their origins, histories, and other secrets.

Battle of Last Hope

Site of Great Sacrifice

Location: River Esk (Conquered Lands)

Master: Amahlia of Steyr (LG middle-aged female paladin of Iomedae 9)

Inhabitants: Angels, archons, Iomedae pilgrims, nereid⁸²

Features: River rapids, ruined bridge and fortress, steep cliffs

When General Harchist designed the defensive line along the southern banks of the River Esk that would eventually carry her name, she knew the success of her defense would hinge upon how well she fortified the crossing at the Rake Island Bridge, approximately 40 miles northwest of Castle Firrine. Given how deep and fast the Esk flows, the Rake Island Bridge was the only place that soldiers and mounts could easily cross the river. If she could deny an invading orc army that crossing, they would have to travel nearly 70 miles upstream to find another safe place to ford. She therefore ordered the construction of two sturdy keeps, one on each side of the river, and named the conjoined structure Fort Morrine after her mother, who had died in an orc raid when Harchist was a child. She also ordered that the existing narrow wooden bridge be replaced with a stone one, which would make crossing easier and allow for siege machines and wagons to be moved across quickly.

A year later, armies of bloodthirsty orcs pushed through the defensive Sunwall and began marching south, stopping to raid and pillage every farm and hamlet that had sprung up west of the Flood Road since the end of the Shining Crusade. The Lastwall government in Vigil ordered an immediate evacuation of all civilians from the land north of the Esk, and commanded the forces stationed at the Sunwall into the field. The cavalry harassed the enemy flanks, while the infantry assisted in the evacuation of the refugees. Colonel Aberford Richter, who was then overseeing the completion of Fort Morrine, was to hold the crossing at all costs until all the civilians had been evacuated. Thanks to the sacrifice of countless Lastwall

soldiers, most of the civilians reached safety, but many soldiers still remained north of the Esk. They were told to retreat with all possible haste to the river crossing at Fort Morrine, and there to hold the bridge until it could be destroyed.

On the evening of 16 Rova 4237 AR, approximately 500 light infantry troops stood north of the bridge, surrounded by over 10,000 orcs from the Black Sun, Empty Hand, and Grand Axe tribes. Colonel Richter's sappers worked feverishly to properly place the correct alchemical charges to blow up the bridge, but needed a few more hours to make sure they did it correctly and wouldn't leave half a bridge for the orcs to cross. They knew that with a functioning bridge, the Belkzen horde could flood south and quickly overtake the fleeing civilians. Realizing that the troops at the fort needed a little more time, the officers of the troops north of the bridge signaled a charge and threw themselves at the eager orcs, who massacred them to the last soldier; then the orcs advanced on the bridge. Despite the infantry's ultimate sacrifice, the sappers still needed more time, and the few remaining troops at Fort Morrine knew they would not get out alive. They called on Iomedae to help them, and successfully held the crossing through most of the night. In the hour before dawn, a group of four ettins carrying a gigantic battering ram brought down the gates of the northern fort and stormed the bridge. At that moment, the sappers completed their work and brought down the bridge with a tremendous crash, killing themselves, the ettins, and the few remaining soldiers who had stayed behind to defend the doomed bridge. The orcs, denied an easy crossing, returned back toward the north.

The Hand of the Inheritor, the herald of the goddess Iomedae, appeared to one of her paladins a few weeks after the battle, and proclaimed that because of the soldiers' sacrifice, the goddess now considered the crossing a sacred shrine. The paladin, a woman named Berbara of Skelt, spent the rest of her life standing guard over that Sundered River crossing, and passed the duty on to her successor shortly before her death.

This vigil continued uninterrupted until the orcs overwhelmed the defenses on the River Esk in 4482 AR and pushed the border farther south. Now deep behind enemy lines, the paladin of Iomedae guarding the bridge feared that he would be the last of his line. That night, when hundreds of orcs were about to attack in the dark, the sky suddenly burst forth with light and dozens of angels and archons descended from the heavens. The celestial host threw itself at the enemy, aiding the outmatched paladin and once again defending the broken bridge. This same miracle has occurred several times since then, and the orcs now avoid the site completely.

The bridge's current defender is Amahlia of Steyr, who has been stationed there for over 20 years and is ready to begin looking for a worthy replacement.

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Battle of the Burning Child

Haunted Battlefield

Location: Gap of Valballus (Whisperfall)

Master: The False Priest (CE human cleric of Urgathoa 9/rogue 2)

Inhabitants: Burning Child (see page 58), festering spirits^{B4}, wraiths

Features: Haunts, lost relics of past battles

The eastern plains of Belkzen are home to countless battlefields, upon which orc tribes have fought each other for thousands of years, and have battled the human forces of Ustalav and Lastwall since before the rise of the Whispering Tyrant. It's almost impossible to travel over any open ground in this part of the country without stumbling across the bleached bones of the dead or the broken weapons that hastened their demise.

The Battle of the Burning Child is one of the better-known confrontations, and occurred in southeastern Whisperfall, near the border with Ustalav. In the autumn of 4237 AR, as the Lastwall forces beat a hasty retreat south after the fall of the Sunwall, the soldiers suddenly found the courage to make a stand when they saw a screaming human child, completely wreathed in flames, appear among the enemy. Desperate to help the child, the humans rallied and led a charge into the orc ranks, who seemed just as surprised by the flaming apparition. After the humans routed the orcs, they could find no sign of the strange child save for the large ring of scorched grass where he had been standing.

Since this first appearance, the legend of the Burning Child has spread among the humans of Lastwall and Ustalav, as well as the orcs of Belkzen. Visitors to the area have reported hearing a sobbing child or seeing a vaguely human-shaped flame move about the battlefield on moonless nights.

The legend of the child also caught the attention of the False Priest, a cultist of the Whispering Way who left his home in the nearby Ustalavic ruins of Renchurch to investigate the rumors. After months of unsuccessful attempts to track down or contact the Burning Child, the False Priest finally caught the apparition manifesting in the middle of a large battle between two orc tribes. He observed the clash of the forces from afar, and after the fight, was able to commune with the spirit. He learned that the human child had been captured centuries before by members of the now-long-defunct Fire Rain tribe, who had discovered that he had untapped sorcerous powers tied to the elemental Plane of Fire. The witch doctors of the tribe had experimented upon the boy in order to turn him into a weapon, but had unwittingly unleashed his powers in a single fiery burst that had killed both the child and many of his captors. The trauma of his death combined with his inherent elemental powers gave birth to a theretofore-unknown type of undead. The Burning Child was caught in a loop that triggered anytime large numbers of living

creatures massed nearby, causing it to manifest and, if sufficiently agitated, immolate them just as it had burned at its death. Unable to convert the undead to evil, the False Priest instead chose to continue studying it, and to use its legend to lure the curious to their doom.

The False Priest now disguises himself as an itinerant priest and travels into Ustalav, Lastwall, and even as far as Nirmathas to spread the tale of the lost soul of a human child wandering the plains of eastern Whisperfall, seeking a release from its undead condition. Any well-meaning people who are taken in by the False Priest's claims and travel there soon discover their deceiver has become quite adept at triggering the Burning Child's traumatic conflagration. So many unsuspecting marks have met their doom there that the site of the Battle of the Burning Child has become a magnet for other incorporeal undead such as spectres, wraiths, and festering spirits (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 98).

See page 58 for more information on the creature known as the Burning Child.

Brimstone Haruspex

Isolated Volcanic Monastery

Location: Kodar Mountains, Smokespur

Master: Grand Seer Olemak (CE male orc oracle^{APG} 14)

Inhabitants: Fire giants, lava drakes^{B4}, magma oozes^{B2}, oracles^{APG}

Features: High altitude, toxic hallucinogenic steam, volcanic activity

Perched on the edge of an active stratovolcano high in the Kodar Mountains of northwestern Belkzen sits the Brimstone Haruspex. Built during the waning years of the Thassilonian Empire, the Haruspex was once a temple dedicated to an alien entity known as Mhar, the World Thunder, but has been occupied since the Age of Anguish by a group of oracles called the Endseers. Worshipers of Rovagug, the Endseers inhale the hot, caustic gases emitted by the volcano, and believe the resulting hallucinations reveal omens and prophecies directly from the Rough Beast. The incoherent ramblings of the oracles are then recorded and interpreted in the Hall of Omens, a vast cavern within the mountain covered from floor to ceiling with recorded prophecies going back thousands of years. Because the inhalation of these gases burns the skin, vocal chords, and lungs, the Endseers can be identified by their horrific scarring and rough, barely comprehensible speech. The orcs of Belkzen hold these mystics in high regard, often paying the oracles huge amounts of gold, slaves, or other goods to perform a soothsaying on their behalf. Because the inhalation of the gases is extremely painful, however, most Endseers prefer to dangle the tribal representatives over the fumaroles instead and then interpret their babble.

The seismic activity of the volcano generates small but frequent earthquakes, and because the Endseers lack the skill at engineering to maintain their temple, they have

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established an ongoing relationship with a local tribe of fire giants who perform repairs from time to time. The volcano constantly spews smoke, cinders, and lava, and has erupted spectacularly several times over the last few thousand years. Even though these explosions have caused tremendous damage to the surrounding countryside, the Brimstone Haruspex always escapes with only minor damage, as if the volcano itself were protecting the temple from destruction.

The Brimstone Haruspex is a large complex of exterior buildings, natural tunnels and caves, and artificial chambers high in the caldera of the Eye of the Unmaker. Besides the temple and the Hall of Omens, the best-known location is the Tunnel of the Forefathers, an ancient lava tube within the mountain covered in cave paintings depicting the history of the orc race going all the way back to their initial emergence on Golarion's surface. New scenes are added every year as visitors to the complex bring news from across the region.

The entrance to the Brimstone Haruspex is guarded by a pair of massive flesh golems made from the gray-skinned bodies of taiga giants, but with the heads, feet, and claws

of oversized owlbears. The surrounding countryside is the territory of the primitive orcs of the Dead Eye tribe, who raid anyone traveling to and from the temple complex, including other orcs. They are a constant annoyance to the Endseers, who occasionally put bounties on the Dead Eyes' heads.

Deep within the bowels of the volcano lies a secret chamber known only to the Endseers. Floating in a pool of superheated water at the center of the cave sits a massive cyst or chrysalis of some kind, containing what the oracles believe to be an embryonic spawn of Rovagug. Known as the Seed of the End-Singer, it was recovered several centuries ago from a cave on the slopes of Mount Na-Ken in Osirion. Since its arrival here, the oracles have been studying it feverishly and now believe that it contains the dormant offspring of the spawn of Rovagug known as Volnagur. They have been attempting to birth the creature and hide it until it becomes large enough to release, but so far have met with little success. Even though most the oracles feel that their own deaths and those of thousands of other orcs would be a small price to pay for releasing a new spawn of Rovagug into the world, not everyone there agrees. One of their most recent recruits is a young half-orc named **Nerok** (CE male half-orc oracle^{APG 2}), who remains secretly loyal to his former chief, Grask Uldeth. Nerok knows that the potential release of the spawn would

bring his old boss's long-term plans to an abrupt end, and is waiting for the opportunity to send a message to the Great Chief and inform him of the Endseers' world-ending experiments.

Broken Shore

Path of Tragedy and Eternal Death

Location: Algid Wastes

Master: Casshade (N male vanth psychopomp^{B4} summoner^{APG 6})

Inhabitants: Psychopomps^{B4}, unfettered eidolons^{B3}

Features: Expanse of black glass, idols of forgotten deities, temporary portal to the Boneyard

Many desperate travelers find disappointment upon the banks of Broken Shore. From across the badlands, the shimmering ripples of this mile-wide expanse look like nothing so much as a circular lake gripped by sheets of thick ice. Those who come near, though, find not water, but rather a plane of dense, blackened glass. Something terrible happened at Broken Shore, but the only ones who remember are those bound to its silent banks.

In ages past, when the orcs first boiled forth from the Darklands below, they did not find a land uninhabited. Giants dominated the region that is now Belkzen, and to the north Kellid clans hunted the giant beasts of the hills, raised small settlements, and worshiped obscure spirits as gods.



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These rugged humans were a hearty lot with faiths not dissimilar from those of their descendants, who would one day forge the nation of Sarkoris (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lost Kingdoms* 44). True deities, influential demigods, stranger beings, and pure fictions filled the pantheons of these hunters, granting faces to the fears and hopes of their day. When the first orcs came to claim the Kellids' lands, these were the gods to which the people turned.

The orcs descended brutally on the village of Stoneshore. Having quickly gained a taste for the muscly horses and bulls of the cold hills, the merciless strangers swept over the unprepared humans. Those who weren't slaughtered outright took shelter in the village's sturdy temple. There they cowered and pleaded, begging to their gods, repenting to whomever they'd offended. To calm the people, God Caller Casshade summoned the manifestation of his deity, the black-winged eidolon embodiment of a psychopomp usher named Vonymos. Yet Casshade knew it wouldn't be enough. In the face of his eidolon, the supposed avatar of his deity, Casshade called out to the true Vonymos, promising his people's eternal service if the deity would grant a miracle.

Vonymos answered.

The usher tore a rent between Stoneshore and the Boneyard, and allowed his faithful to pass through. Casshade and his eidolon heroically held back the orcs as the villagers escaped, but eventually they were overwhelmed by the invaders. As the orcs burst into the temple, Vonymos sent forth a wave of absolute death. The cold flame annihilated the orcs and destroyed the village, blasting all the land within the settlement's ring of monoliths, turning the earth to blackened glass.

Casshade had promised his eternal service in exchange for salvation, however. At Vonymos's whim, the holy man was restored as a vanth psychopomp and bound to the site of his sacrifice. To this day, the deathless summoner wanders Broken Shore with an eidolon that appears to be a cross between a crow and a knight—a vision of Vonymos himself. Casshade still honors the monuments to his people's other forgotten gods, defending them from defilement by orcs and strangers. Not all of the old deities rest easy, though. Some of the unfettered eidolons of Stoneshore's other lost god callers still linger amid the sand and stones, including embodiments of the supposed gods Onzol the Cold, Shaceve Colt Eater, and Kvantz Demonseed.

Few dare to approach Broken Shore, as it has gained a fearful reputation—especially among the local Ice Tooth tribe. Vonymos's servants aren't lonely, though. With every new moon, the crater at the heart of Broken Shore opens, spilling shadowy mist into the night. This impenetrable dark is the only evidence of the gate to Vonymos's glass willow in the Boneyard. Rarely does a new moon pass without some psychopomp passing through, whether onto Golarion or from it into the lands of the dead.

Deepgate

Contested Orc Fortress in Ruins

Location: Kodar Mountains (Smokespur)

Master: Hurk Skullhacker (CE male orc fighter 13)

Inhabitants: Mongrelmen⁸², oozes, orcs, vexgit gremlins⁸²

In –5102 AR, orcs burst forth upon the surface of a Golarion still shrouded in the Age of Darkness. The largest of these eruptions occurred here, where a system of natural caves in the Kodar Mountains connected to the deeper tunnels of Nar-Voth. In a unique show of cooperation and ingenuity, 14 tribes of orcs banded together to build a massive fortress of stone and metal over the site to control access to and from the Darklands. They knew that the dwarves were close behind them, still intent on the Quest for Sky, and they wanted to cut off dwarven access to this newfound world—not to mention preventing attacks from the numerous tribes of dangerous Darklands creatures they had disturbed during their own migration.

Deepgate was built over the course of 40 years using the knowledge of engineering the orcs had tortured out of the



dwarves during their centuries-long war. Massive blocks of black basalt were mined, dragged into place using orc and giant slave labor, and carefully assembled to create a massive, squat donjon and an outer curtain wall nearly a half-mile in length. The inside of the keep was designed both to keep out intruders and to defend against an attack from below. Finally, two massive iron gates, each 20 feet in height, were forged and placed at the entrance to the donjon as well as the gate into the Darklands.

For thousands of years after it was built, the castle was a shining example of what orcs could achieve when they worked together, but it's now a grim warning about what happens when they don't. The outer curtain wall has largely fallen apart, with holes big enough to drive war machines through, negating any protection the rest of the structure still offers. Its upper battlements are almost completely in ruin, the outer walls of the donjon have fared only slightly better, and nearly two-thirds of the dozens of rooms that once existed inside have collapsed or are otherwise inaccessible. Despite its dilapidated condition, Deepgate remains a symbol of orc racial pride due to its size and history, and because of its connection to the Darklands, it's still a valuable control point for any tribe to hold. Conversely, because of its enormous size and poor condition, it's also difficult for any one orc tribe to defend, and the fortress has fallen to a new tribe once every generation for the past few centuries.

The deterioration of the upper castle has accelerated greatly of late, thanks to an infestation of malicious, destructive gremlins known as vexgits. These Darklands fey, who delight in the destruction of all things mechanical, found their way through the poorly maintained lower gates in 4699 AR, curious to explore the surface world. They found Deepgate a perfect place to settle, as its ruinous state gave these tiny creatures hundreds of small lairs and bolt-holes to hide in. The Gutspear tribe of orcs, who were in charge when the gremlins first invaded, did their best to keep this embarrassing infestation from becoming common knowledge, and Chief Hurk Skullhacker—the leader of the Eight Fingers tribe, which currently occupies Deepgate—has mentioned to his subordinates numerous times that he would not have bothered conquering the place if he'd known about the gremlins. Skullhacker now sponsors monthly “bug hunts,” where he awards prizes of weapons, armor, and extra food rations to whichever orc can kill the most vexgits. Despite these activities, the gremlins are far from being contained.

The vexgits seem particularly interested in orc war machines purchased from the mad Steel Eaters at the Foundry. Chief Skullhacker lost two seasons' worth of these massively overbuilt death dealers before he relocated his subsequent purchases to a cave a day's march away. The vexgits' obsession with all things mechanical is so great, however, that it's only a matter of time before they overhear orcs talking about the new hiding place and venture out to investigate.

While the upper levels of Deepgate are infested with fey saboteurs, the orcs have additional problems in the lower, subterranean levels near the entrance to the Darklands. A tribe of mongrelman slaves escaped from their duergar masters in the Nar-Voth city of Fellstrok in 4704 AR, and settled in a cave near the underground entrance to Deepgate. Finding it in poor repair, they dismantled it and penetrated the castle's deepest levels, but found the access to the upper levels blocked by a recent rockslide that the Gutspear tribe had not taken the time to clear. The mongrelmen relocated and repaired the massive gate, closing it behind them to keep the duergar from ever recapturing them. The rockslide was eventually cleared a few years later by the newly arrived Eight Fingers tribe, who discovered the mongrelman squatters and tried to annihilate them. The mongrelmen, however, had been preparing for this contingency; they had created an easily defensible choke point near the cleared staircase, and successfully repelled the orcs. This tactical situation has not changed significantly in the subsequent years—to the immense frustration of the orcs—and the retaking of the lower levels has become the primary goal of the Eight Fingers.

The mongrelmen are led by **Brother Fungus** (LN male mongrelman^{B2} druid 12), a cave druid whose ability to communicate with the native oozes has given his people a significant tactical advantage in their ongoing skirmishes with the Eight Fingers.

Dretha's Cradle

Birthplace of Abomination

Location: Algid Wastes

Master: Mother Chot (CE venerable female orc alchemist^{AP6} 11)

Inhabitants: Fleshwarps^{B4}, megafauna, necrocrafts^{B4}, orcs, warbeasts (see page 63)

Features: Captive megafauna, enslaved Mammoth Lord tribesfolk, reverse-engineered fleshwarping laboratories

Miserable things squirm in the pits of Dretha's Cradle. Here the orcs of the Mangled Limb tribe drag captives from the north: megafauna and the survivors of vicious raids. These slaves are wretched things—shaved, broken, and abused. They are at least harmless, though, unlike the unnatural creatures that crawl forth from the pits, abominations for which there are few names, misshapen by violence and torturous breeding.

Dretha's Cradle is an abominable conundrum. Serving at once as a fortress, a prison, and breeding yards, these cavernous scars cut deep into the Algid Wastes and serve as the experimentation grounds of beast masters from numerous orc tribes. In this savage factory-farm, the orcs breed warbeasts, half-living war machines, and worse, with resident breeders either claiming the greatest terrors for their personal tribes or else trading them away to the highest bidders.

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The ancient orc flesh-tearer Mother Chot served for decades as a slave of Xilganni Parastric, one of the master fleshwarper of a drow laboratory near Zirnakaynin. The tide finally turned during the escape of numerous explosive fleshwarps, giving Chot her chance at freedom. Chot fled to the surface, but not without a trophy: her former mistress, shattered and in chains. Emerging into the eastern Kodar Mountains, Chot fell in with hunters of the Mangled Limb tribe and managed to secure a place among them, promising their leaders that she'd reveal the mysteries of the shrieking, blue-skinned elf she kept slung upon her back. As the only orc among the Mangled Limbs who spoke Undercommon, Chot tortured the secrets of a crude sort of fleshwarping from Xilganni. Through years of unspeakable experimentation, her efforts bore repulsive fruit: warbeasts the likes of which Belkzen had never seen. The warlords of the Mangled Limbs were eager for more, and soon so were their rivals among other clans. Her infamy spreading, Chot began construction of a workplace of her own, one near the migration routes of the massive beasts and the lands of hardy human stock to the north.

Today, Chot's work continues, though she has grown unthinkable old—nearing her one hundred and tenth year. Dretha's Cradle serves as her perverse playground and boasts the laboratories of dozens of her orc apprentices. It's been more than 30 years since Xilganni Parastric succumbed to abuse, but she's hardly missed. Mother Chot has become a capable fleshwarper, expanding her knowledge of drow science to focus on crossbreeding animal stock. She's also indulged in her own experiments, creating numerous oronci fleshwarps (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Bestiary* 36) and necrocrafts from the spare flesh of failed trials. Her favorite creation, though, incorporates the remains of Xilganni herself. Just as Chot dragged the crippled drow alchemist from the Darklands upon her back, Xilganni now carries her orc mistress, serving as the mummified core of an elaborate flesh golem.

Agents of many orc tribes come to Dretha's Cradle to see what terrible new wonders Mother Chot's apprentices have concocted. Even the most despicable warmongers of the Realm of the Mammoth Lords and stranger, cloaked individuals sometimes appear at the thrice-yearly displays of blasphemous science and magic. While the newest creatures might sell for thousands of gold pieces, Chot's highly competitive apprentices have sometimes accepted rare alchemical components as payment, especially for those who wish to procure common warbeasts or wish to be fleshwarped themselves.

Flood Road

Dried Riverbed Prone to Annual Flooding

Location: Borders between Smokespur, Whisperfall, and the Blood Plains

Master: None in the fall, winter, and early spring, but dozens of orc chieftains during the Flood Truce

Inhabitants: Many aurochs and hundreds of thousands of orcs during the Flood Truce; merchant caravans and roving bands of orc extortionists the rest of the year

Features: Flash floods, floodslain undead (see page 60), rock slides

The Flood Road is one of the most important and recognizable natural landmarks in all of Belkzen. During the fall, winter, and early spring, the Flood Road is a dry arroyo that serves as the region's main method of traveling north or south. In the month of Gozran or Desnus, however, snowmelt from the Tusk Mountains triggers a devastating flash flood that travels at high speeds down the Flood Road and inundates everything in its path. For the next 3 months, the Flood Road becomes a slow-moving river that nourishes the surrounding land, transforming it from a dry wasteland into a fertile prairie teeming with life. The river slowly dries up again in the late summer when the weather turns colder and drier, once again becoming a passable road. This natural cycle also instigates the orcs' most important yearly event: the Flood Truce.

The Hold of Belkzen is one of the harshest and least hospitable lands in Avistan. Surface water in northern and central Belkzen is quite scarce and readily available only during the spring rainy season. The yearly inundation of the Flood Road, along with the increased spring rain, brings much-needed moisture to the central valley, turning the banks of Belkzen's central river into a ribbon of green for a few short months. The new, nutrient-rich grass that sprouts during this time in turn attracts Belkzen's only reliable source of food: the wild aurochs (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 174). Over a million head of aurochs migrate south from their winter homes in the steam-heated valleys of the Tusk Mountains, and follow the new growth south for hundreds of miles, all the way to the wide plains around Urgir.

During this time, which is known as the Flood Truce, nearly all the tribes of Belkzen leave their ancestral winter homelands and travel to the Flood Road to hunt the aurochs. The orcs are so dependent on the aurochs for food and leather that intertribal warfare is strictly forbidden then. It's also a time when warriors search for mates from among the other tribes. Siring offspring with a member of one's own tribe is generally looked down upon, as it's believed to produce weaker offspring. The Flood Truce is such an important cultural event that even the chiefs of Belkzen's three major cities—Blisterwell, Urgir, and Wyvernsting—send out hunting parties to represent them during this period. Occasionally, the chiefs even lead these parties themselves if they need to shore up support among their own tribes, as being Leader of the Hunt (a temporary position) confers great honor upon the holder of that title.

During the Flood Truce, the lands of central Belkzen within roughly 20 miles of the Flood Road are crowded with hundreds of tribal encampments ranging in size from a few dozen tents to thousands of temporary

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shelters. The tribe's standard always stands proudly at the center of each encampment next to the tent of the chief. Even though intertribal warfare is taboo during the Flood Truce, fighting and the occasional death are still common, particularly because so many orcs are crowded into a relatively small area. Since refraining from overt violence can be difficult for orcs, and because there are no laws about killing outsiders during this time, the plains of central Belkzen are extremely hazardous to non-orcs during the Flood Truce.

After spending the late spring and early summer fattening up along the Flood Road, the tribes of Belkzen return to their ancestral winter camps and cities in the late summer to prepare for the months-long fighting season known as the Proving Time. The thinned herds of aurochs return north to their winter pastures, and the Flood Road, no longer fed by snow melt and rain, becomes a dry riverbed until the following spring.

The non-orc merchant caravans of Urgir use the short lull between the Flood Truce and the Proving Time to make the majority of their yearly journeys up the Flood Road to the city of Hillcross in the Realm of the Mammoth Lords. Each caravan sends representatives to the Table of Ralock in order to negotiate for safe passage with the various tribal representatives present (see page 25 for more details), and then makes its way north as quickly as it can. Fighting among the tribes generally begins in Rova and continues until the beginning of the next Flood Truce.

Gerduhm

Hidden Fortress of the Dwarves

Location: Tusk Mountains (Whisperfall)

Master: **High Oathkeeper Daras Moradan** (LN male dwarf cleric of Kols^{SG} 14)

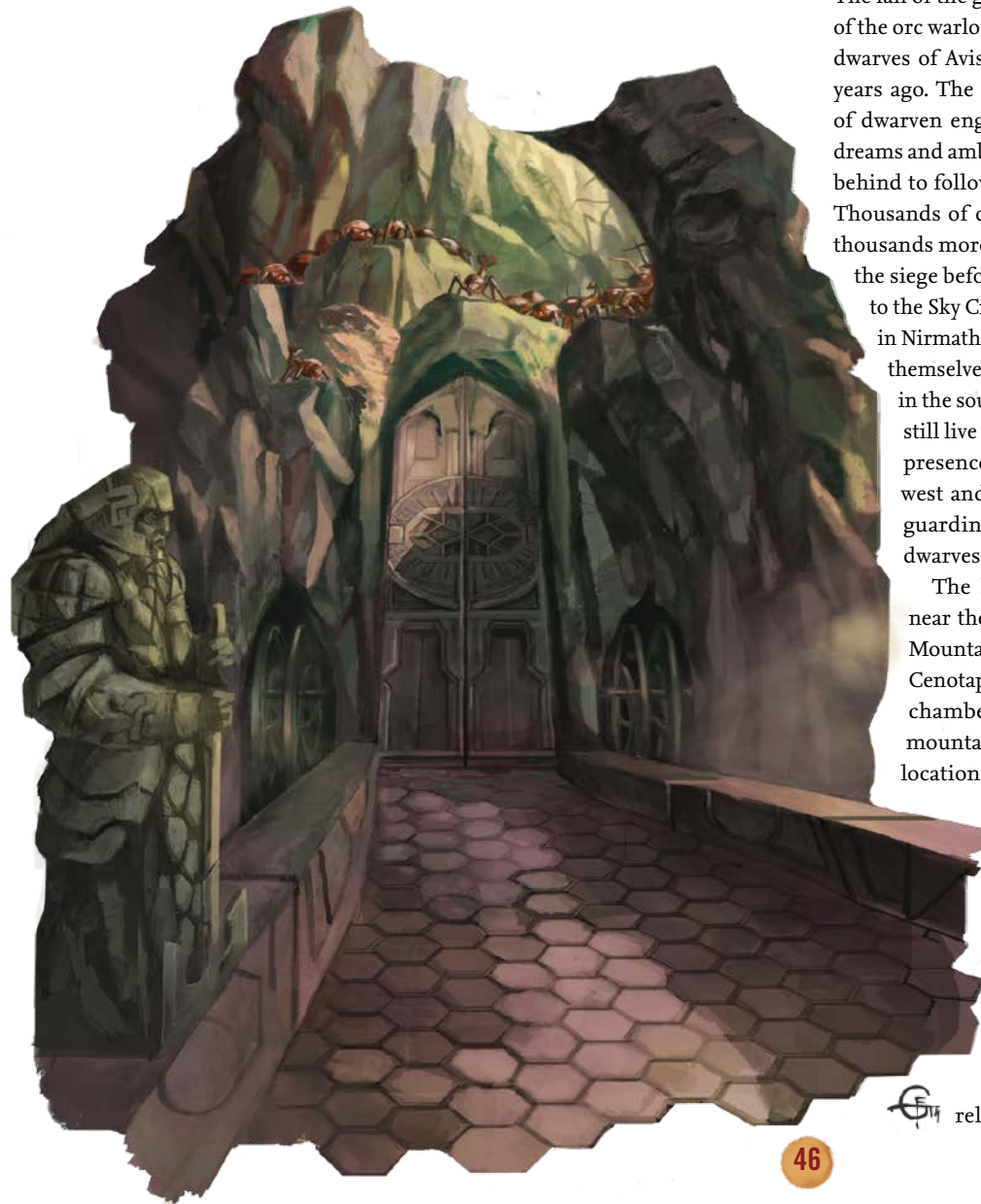
Inhabitants: Dwarves

The fall of the great Sky Citadel of Koldukar to the forces of the orc warlord Belkzen is still a painful memory to the dwarves of Avistan, despite having occurred over 8,000 years ago. The Sky Citadel not only marked the height of dwarven engineering, but represented the collective dreams and ambitions of a people who had left everything behind to follow the divine calling of the Quest for Sky. Thousands of dwarves died in the fall of Koldukar, but thousands more fled through secret tunnels and escaped the siege before the end, quietly making their way west to the Sky Citadel of Janderhoff or south to Kraggodan in Nirmathas. A few stayed behind, however, secluding themselves in the outlying fortress of Gerduhm high in the southern Tusk Mountains. Their descendants still live there today, meticulously concealing their presence from the both the orcs of Belkzen to the west and the humans of Ustalav to the east, and guarding a secret they hope will soon lead the dwarves to a new golden age.

The hidden citadel of Gerduhm is located near the top of a snow-covered peak in the Tusk Mountains approximately 50 miles north of the Cenotaph. A complex of dozens of interconnected chambers and vaults, it's located within the mountain itself; no exterior structure marks its location, and no roads or game trails lead to it.

The only hints of its existence are its small front entrance and a number of ventilation shafts. These are so cleverly disguised to look like natural rock that they fool all but the best-trained eye.

Gerduhm was designed as a hiding place and reliquary for the most important secrets and sacred objects the dwarves brought with them on their Quest for Sky. These included the holy relics of King Taargick, the records of the



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locations of the hidden caches of armaments and magic items scattered about Avistan, and the locations of all the ancient dwarven cities, fortresses, and mines in Nar-Voth and Sekamina they'd left behind. The king of Koldukar gave the clergy of Kols, the god of duty and obligation, command over Gerduhm, entrusting them to keep these secrets and items safe should the dwarven race ever have need of them.

When it was clear that Koldukar was going to fall, the last king of the Sky Citadel, Durlak II, entrusted the dwarves of Gerduhm with a sacred duty: protecting his daughter and the Prophecy of Ascendance. The prophecy states that a distant descendant of King Taargick will one day lead the dwarves on a new mass migration similar to the Quest for Sky that will usher in a second golden age. Durlak's daughter was the last of Taargick's bloodline, and only her descendants could therefore fulfill the prophecy. The priests of Kols accepted this charge and retreated to Gerduhm.

The descendants of these priests live there still, and still keep alive the hope that the prophecy will one day be fulfilled. They call themselves the Oathkeepers and are led by High Oathkeeper Daras Moradan. He stays in magical contact with the other members of his extremely secretive order, who are spread among the clerics of Kols across Avistan and Garund, particularly in Highhelm and among the Pahmet dwarves of Osirion. While Daras handles the administrative aspects of the order, his subordinate **Amlí Faldar** (LN female dwarf warpriest^{ACG} of Kols^{ISG} 4/wizard 3/mystic theurge 4) oversees the day-to-day operation of Gerduhm. This includes maintaining its mundane and magical defenses and disguises, as well as dealing with any personnel issues among the over 100 dwarves that call the fortress home. Amlí is also one of the descendants of King Taargick's daughter, and because of this, has never left the hidden fortress. It's common knowledge among the inhabitants of Gerduhm that she's not the last descendant, although the exact location of the others is a closely guarded secret known only to the other High Oathkeepers throughout Golarion.

A curious goblin named **Igaz** (CE male goblin rogue 2) accidentally fell into one of Gerduhm's ventilation shafts recently, and while desperately trying to climb out, he heard two dwarves having a conversation somewhere far below. He logically concluded that he had discovered a dwarven hideout filled with wonderful treasures, and quickly told his fellow goblins of the Goatslayer tribe. They investigated Igaz's story, but could find nothing conclusive and beat the unlucky goblin for being a liar. Feeling misunderstood and convinced that somebody would pay him for this valuable discovery, Igaz left his tribe and now travels the region searching for a buyer. It's only a matter of time before somebody believes the goblin's story and investigates the rumor of the hidden dwarven treasures.

Koldukar

Ancient, Abandoned Dwarf City

Location: Beneath Urgir

Master: Commander Ellik (LE male duergar fighter 8)

Inhabitants: Darklands orcs, duergar, incorporeal undead, rust monsters

Features: Cave-ins, dwarven treasure, traps

When Grask Uldeth first became ruler of Urgir in 4692 AR, one of his first tasks was to clear the Grand Palace of the trash and rubble that had accumulated there since it was last used centuries before. While digging out the throne room, his workers discovered a long-forgotten, rubble-choked tunnel leading down. They assumed it would lead to some sort of basement, but upon clearing it and sending down scouts, they discovered that it led to a vast underground city below Urgir: the remains of the ancient dwarven city of Koldukar. While orcs had captured and renamed the upper city millennia before, the underground half of the Sky Citadel had been forgotten, and remained largely untouched. Before they could explore much further, however, they discovered that it was infested with hundreds of rust monsters: terrifying Darklands creatures capable of reducing an entire suit of plate mail to worthless rust in seconds. Fearing for the arms and armor of his newly victorious Empty Hand tribe should the creatures escape, Uldeth quickly ordered his clerics of Rovagug to seal the entrance.

In the subsequent years, Chief Uldeth has had little cause to revisit his decision, being wholly occupied with the day-to-day maintenance of the city and his grander plans for the orc race. Even when the small earthquakes that had been common in the area for centuries began increasing in strength and frequency, he mistook them for natural phenomena, and did not attribute them to anything found in the ruins below. This assumption is incorrect, though, and may yet cost Uldeth his throne.

The ancient dwarves of the Kingdom of Tar Taargadth built the chambers, walkways, plazas, houses, temples, and palaces then known as Koldukar. Until they completed their Quest for Sky in -4987 AR, the dwarves had been a wholly subterranean race, so it was only natural that the new Sky Citadels should be a mix of their old way of life and the new. Just as the city above is built in concentric circles, ever-increasing in height, so do the levels of Koldukar decrease in size as one descends.

The only tunnel connecting the ruins of Koldukar to the Darklands was sealed with a massive, magically locked dwarven clockwork door until very recently. Even though the rust monsters had smelled the metal of the door for years, it was located on a ledge overlooking Torag's Gap, a vast canyon splitting Koldukar into two halves, and was therefore inaccessible to them. This changed in 4707 AR, when the Pathfinder Eando Kline convinced Chief Uldeth to grant him access to Koldukar. After nearly falling to his death, Kline discovered the clockwork door on the far

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side of the gap, and managed to activate one of the ancient stone drawbridges that had been raised millennia before by the departing dwarves. Once he had linked the two halves of the city, it was a simple matter to lure one of the rust monsters across to destroy the door. By doing this, Kline unwittingly set in motion a series of events that have yet to fully play out.

Three months after the Pathfinder departed, a party of duergar slave-catchers from the nearby city of Fellstrok discovered the broken door. They also ran into the rust monsters, which had been busy devouring the metal in the half of the city they had never had access to before, and had not advanced farther down the tunnels into the Darklands. The duergar immediately reported the news to their leader, **War-Marshal Brithuan** (LE male duergar fighter 6/rogue 6), who quickly had the connecting tunnel sealed. Brithuan then ordered a contingent of duergar warriors to be outfitted with stoneplate (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 14) and stone weapons and return to Koldukar to establish a beachhead there.

Brithuan has no interest in conquering Urgir or even resettling the ruins of Koldukar. He is more interested in expanding his slave trade, and wishes to install an

orc leader on the throne of Urgir who is in his debt. To this end, he signed an agreement with Chief Tulluk Clovenface of the Haskodar tribe in 4708 AR. In exchange for duergar-made weapons and armor, the Haskodars would conquer the mines of Blisterwell and use it as a springboard to attack and dethrone Grask Uldeth of Urgir. Brithuan grows impatient with Chief Clovenface's slow progress, however, and has commanded his subordinate, **Commander Ellik** (LE male duergar fighter 8), to drive back the remaining rust monsters and shore up the foundations of Urgir, so that the entire city does not come crashing down around them.

The primary inhabitants of Koldukar are still the rust monsters eating away at Urgir's foundations, along with numerous species of Darklands vermin, oozes, and other burrowing creatures whose ancestors tunneled their way into the ruins centuries or millennia ago. Ancient dwarven spectres and ghosts have also risen in the mausoleums of the necropolis. Though they hate all living things, they hate the invading duergar more, and attack them at every opportunity.

Kragnaroth

Kingdom of the Fire Giants

Location: Mindspin Mountains (Conquered Lands)

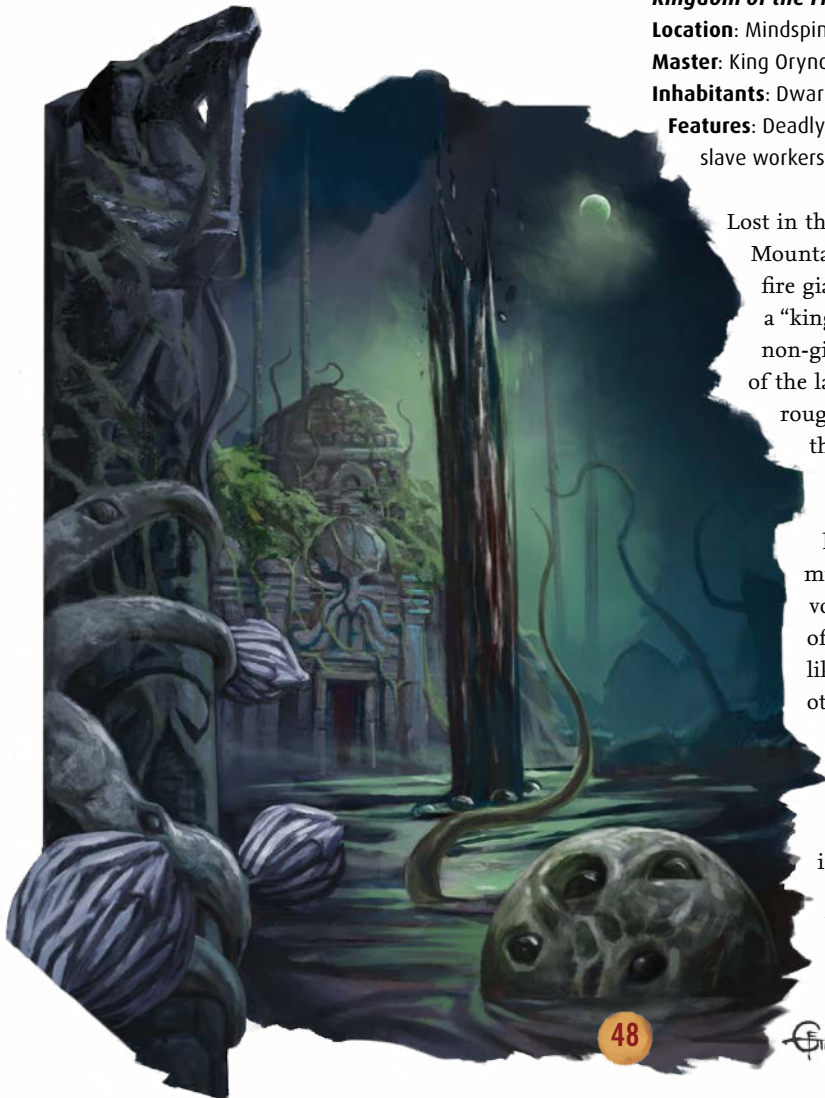
Master: King Orynox Marchelin (LE male fire giant fighter 9)

Inhabitants: Dwarves, fire giants, hell hounds, trolls

Features: Deadly traps, inaccessible mountain fortresses, slave workers

Lost in the high, central peaks of the Mindspin Mountains of southwestern Belkzen lies the fire giant kingdom of Kragnaroth. Calling it a "kingdom" can be somewhat confusing for non-giants, as its total area is less than some of the larger human cities. It spans an area of roughly 15 square miles, and incorporates the mountains of Gorak Lekari, Gorak Shor, and Bukkor Karaba, and the high alpine valleys between them. The area has significant volcanic activity—mostly mudpots and fumaroles—but no active volcanoes. No major trails lead in or out of this secluded area, and the fire giants like it that way, preferring not to deal with other races unless they must.

Kragnaroth is led by King Orynox Marchelin, a tempestuous and moody fire giant noble who inherited the crown from his father in 4631 AR. He is currently married to **Queen Hregana Marchelin** (LE female fire giant barbarian 2/fighter 5), who seems to be a good match for her formidable husband, considering that they have



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been married longer than Orynox was to his previous five wives combined. Orynox rules as an absolute monarch, but is ably assisted in his duties by **Bishop Wrensis Mobillar** (LE male fire giant cleric of Zursvaater^{15G} 7), who also oversees the kingdom's slaves, and **High Forger Sigurox Aesfeld** (LE female fire giant expert 6/fighter 1), who is in charge of all the metalwork. The kingdom includes approximately 250 fire giants, and many human, dwarven, troll, and orc slaves.

The fire giants live in massive towers that each rise from the side of one of the kingdom's three mountains. Each tower is between 150 and 200 feet high, but reaches perhaps double that distance underground, and is approximately 160 feet in diameter. The nobility and their servants, along with most of the upper class of Kragmaroth, live in the Royal Tower, which is also the tallest of the three. It's made of dark gray basalt and decorated with white marble and gold. The Tower of the People houses most of the kingdom's citizens, with the richer ones living underground. Most of the metalworking and other industrial activities happen in the Tower of Hammers, which is located apart from the other two, and is decorated with sharp, angular metal sculptures that resemble wings and fangs.

The slaves of Kragmaroth live in squat, one-story buildings on the valley floor next to the animal pens and the agricultural fields. The giants keep goats, small mountain cows, and sheep, mainly for meat and milk, but also for wool. They have also planted hardy vines, fruit trees, and fields of root vegetables, wheat, and rye. The growing season for these plants is a bit longer than it would normally be this high in the mountains because of the area's volcanic activity. The fields, orchards, and animals are tended by the slaves, most of whom are Shoanti, Varisian, and Chelish humans from Varisia, with a few unhappy mountain explorers from farther abroad thrown in. Most of the dwarven slaves work under the High Forger in the Tower of Hammers during the day, making simple tools for the other slaves. None of the slaves have lived here for more than 5 years, due to their harsh treatment by their giant masters. This is especially true for the dwarven slaves, for whom the giants have an innate hatred, but all the slaves are frequently abused, overworked, and underfed, leading to high rates of sickness and death.

Kragmaroth is on reasonable terms with the other fire giant kingdoms in the region, and King Marchelin is very competitive with his fellow nobility in the Kodar Mountains. He is slowly growing tired of his little valley, and is looking to expand his kingdom, most likely to the south or east, but he has yet to make any serious plans. His dream would be to conquer the destroyed Sky Citadel of Janderhoff to the southwest, but he knows he simply does not yet have a large enough force to conquer and hold such a valuable prize.

Black Water

The substance known as black water is native to Belkzen's Keening Hills, and is the primary source of nourishment for all its plants and creatures. It appears as a coal-black, sticky, and viscous liquid smelling strongly of vegetable rot, and is found in any place in the Keening Hills where one would normally encounter water. This includes coursing through the insides of trees and other large plants (where it replaces sap), and in the ground, where it lies just below the topsoil. It is a magical substance that is a side product of qliptho runestone, and radiates a faint necromantic aura.

Ingesting black water has the druglike effects, as detailed below.

BLACK WATER

Type drug, ingested; **Addiction** major, Fortitude DC 22

Price —

Effects 3 hours; no need to eat or drink, +2d4 temporary hit points, ability to bypass qliptho runestones' *antipathy* effect

Damage 1d4 Wis damage; anytime a user attempts to consume normal food or liquid while under the influence of black water, she must succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude saving throw or become nauseated.

Cure 3 consecutive saves

Mohgan, City of the Lakes

Flooded Ruins of Primal Chaos

Location: Keening Hills (Smokespur)

Master: None

Inhabitants: Demonic vermin (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Worldwound* 52); qliptho (augnagars⁹², chernobues⁹², and cythnigots⁹²); fiendish animals, aquatic creatures, and plants

Features: Ancient magical effects, black water

An undead wizard of unparalleled power named Zutha ruled the Thassilonian nation of Gastash in its final days. Even though he kept his kingdom out of the majority of regional conflicts by maintaining strict neutrality, he was not without ambition, especially when it came to the study of necromancy. While communing with various powers of the Great Beyond, Zutha learned of the existence of qliptho runestones, fragments of an earlier version of the Abyss before it became the domain of the demons. He correctly speculated that these artifacts held tremendous power that, because of its inherently chaotic nature, could be used for any number of purposes. He immediately began scouring the planes for one of these runestones, and after decades of searching, finally tracked down a dormant runestone floating in the Astral Plane.

Zutha brought it back to Golarion, but as a precaution, he kept it at one of his research facilities in the city of Mohgan, far to the north of his capital of Xin-Gastash in what is now referred to as the Keening Hills.

After careful study, the runelord discovered that the fragment was aligned with the Abyssal realm of the qliphoth lord Oaur-Ooung, an aquatic entity that was believed to have given birth to the demon lord Cyth-V'sug. Zutha decided to construct an artifact that he theorized would generate unlimited necromantic energy, powered by the fragment of the qliphoth runestone at its heart. As Zutha's apprentices were completing the artifact, however, something went terribly wrong, and the formerly dormant runestone flared to life. A thick, black liquid began gushing uncontrollably from the unfinished item, quickly filling the room and drowning its inhabitants. Within seconds, it burst the walls of the laboratory and flowed out into the streets, threatening to inundate the entire city. With most of his apprentices dead, Zutha attempted to stop the stone's destruction by shifting it to another plane, but the runestone resisted his magic and began generating a powerful *antipathy* effect. He finally contained it within an

antimagic field and immediately ordered his remaining apprentices to construct a containment device. They built a deep magical well containing numerous antimagic generators and placed the artifact at the bottom. After some observation, Zutha realized that even this solution would be only temporary. Before he could devise a more permanent solution, however, Earthfall struck and ended the Thassilonian Empire, along with any effort to further control the qliphoth runestone.

In the millennia since then, the runestone has worn down most of the barriers that have kept it contained. The liquid it produces, called black water, has slowly trickled out, replacing the local ground water, and transformed the plants, animals, and landscape around it to more closely resemble those of the Abyssal realm of its master, Oaur-Ooung. Despite its origins, the black water is extremely nourishing, and has led to fecund plant and animal growth, but also creates dependence in any organism that ingests it. Over time, the organism becomes addicted to the black water, and is unable to live on normal nutrients; such creatures can't survive beyond a day's journey from Mohgan. While the rest of the region slowly succumbed to increasing desertification, the area around the runestone has remained green and verdant.

Order of the Honored Dead

Merciless Slayers of Orcs

Location: Varies (primarily in Smokespur)

Master: Swiftarrow (CE female aasimar ranger 6/assassin 5)

The vile depredations of the orcs are part of the histories of nearly every intelligent race in the Inner Sea region. Even those individuals lucky enough to survive a violent orc raid often lose what is most dear to them, be it their homes, their families, or even their entire communities. It's therefore unsurprising that a group of like-minded survivors would band together and spend the rest of their lives meting out justified revenge on those who took everything from them.

The Order of the Honored Dead is just such an organization. It was founded by the aasimar Swiftarrow, of Lastwall, after she lost nearly all of her friends and family in an orc raid in 4702 AR. At first, the ranger tried to appeal to the military authorities of Lastwall, offering to lead a counter-raid against the orcs and bring the justice of bow and blade to those who had killed her loved ones. Fearing the plan was too risky, her commanders rebuffed her requests, and even discharged her from the military when she tried to brand them cowards for their unwillingness to take any action.

Undeterred, Swiftarrow took matters into her own hands and founded the Order of the Honored Dead, dedicating the organization to the defense of the helpless, the remembrance of



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those who had fallen, and the killing of orcs. Swiftarrow traveled throughout Lastwall, Varisia, and Ustalav, looking for individuals who had endured similar loss to recruit to her cause.

Her first recruit was a young paladin of Iomedae named Indrek the Valiant, who had taken holy vows after losing his sister. The bleaching gnome **Zarzuket the Silent** (CN female gnome rogue 9) from the Varisian town of Whistledown joined them soon thereafter. Zarzuket's family had died at the hand of orcs from the Fenwall Mountains a few years prior. Their final recruit was **Akrem the Bear** (N male human druid 10), a soft-spoken Shoanti shaman of the Shadde-Quah who did not share the others' history of loss, but who hated orcs with a terrible ferocity.

Now supported by powerful allies, Swiftarrow decided to take the order into the very heart of orc culture in Avistan: the Hold of Belkzen. She relocated to a series of caves in the Kodar Mountains north of the orc city of Deepgate, where the mountains are treacherous, twisted, and filled with tiny hidden valleys: a perfect place to stage ambushes. Akrem used his spells to reshape the cave and cleverly hide it from plain sight, while Zarzuket devised fiendish traps to kill trespassers. Once they had a functioning base, they began launching hit-and-run attacks on orcs traveling to and from Deepgate and the Brimstone Haruspex. The local orcs soon realized that something was hunting them, but thanks to the false clues laid by the order, they were convinced that dangerous beasts were to blame.

At first, the order had high-minded plans to target orc leaders and thereby deprive the enemy of leadership, but they soon realized that most chieftains, war leaders, and shamans were clever enough to surround themselves with enough underlings to avoid just such an ambush. After the death of the paladin Indrek in 4707 AR, the group took a much darker turn. Swiftarrow blamed herself, and started channeling her helpless rage into raids against any orcs within range. She even began targeting orc children, a practice the order had avoided in the beginning, justifying her actions by claiming that no orc is truly innocent.

The order today has devolved into a small cabal of highly trained but joyless killers. Unable to find peace, its members have reconciled themselves to continuing their guerrilla war until each of them is dead at the hand of the enemy. Swiftarrow, in particular, has changed over the years of endless violence, and now takes grim, self-satisfied joy at the death of every orc.

The order has had to move its headquarters a number of times, and now occupies a cave complex southeast of the city of Deepgate. From here, its members attack any orcs and their allies traveling to and from the settlement, as well as those crossing the Dirt Sea. They avoid engaging orcs headed for the Foundry, though, as they assume that most of the war machines manufactured there will be used against other orc tribes. As with their previous headquarters, Akrem has molded the caves to provide better ventilation, defense,

and concealment, and she has even installed a garden in a smaller side caves that's partially open to the sky. While Zarzuket still fills the entrances with traps, she now spends most of her time building complex boulder traps and bear traps, which she leaves strewn about the countryside.

The Sleeper

Lost Thassilonian Capital Hidden beneath the Ground

Location: Mindspin Mountains (Blood Plains)

Masters: Holok (NE female awakened demilich^{B3} necromancer 13), Molus (CE male human nosferatu^{B4} necromancer 16), Xeram (LE male human ghost necromancer 16)

Inhabitants: Chimeras, drakes, lamia-kin, mummies, skeletons, spectres, zombies

Features: Haunts, necromantic traps, rubble-choked corridors and stairs

Deep in the Mindspin Mountains stands a massive, ancient sculpture of a dragon coiled around a rocky peak. Few who live in Belkzen today know that it was once the aboveground entrance to Xin-Gastash, the capital of the realm of the Thassilonian realm of Gluttony. Gastash was an incredibly fertile land and grew wealthy selling its agricultural surplus to the other kingdoms. Most of this wealth went to its ruling class, especially the elite group of wizard apprentices who served the runelords themselves. And while not as opulent as the rival capitals of Xin-Shalast and Xin-Cyrusian, the gluttony on which the people of Gastash thrived was not absent from its capital. Built underground where the harsh light of the sun would not interfere with the necromancy practiced by the runelord and his apprentices, Gastash featured some of Thassilon's greatest bathhouses, drug dens, and feast halls, and was an extravagant tribute to overindulgence.

Most of Gastash's cities and monuments didn't survive the destruction of Earthfall, and the region's climate changed radically from a fecund paradise into a cold, arid desert. Among the few structures that endured into modern times is the great entrance to its capital. Belkzen natives now call the sculpture the Sleeper (the dragon appears so lifelike that its lack of movement is superstitiously attributed to slumber), and only the bravest and most foolhardy of travelers venture onto the mountain's slopes, much less enter its countless interior chambers.

The chambers within the Sleeper are still remarkably intact, although many rooms show signs of both ancient and recent earthquake damage. The local orcs, being naturally superstitious, have largely kept their distance from the Sleeper, and consider it a cursed ruin full of bad magic. Great beasts such as drakes, manticores, and chimeras seem to be attracted to the enormous figure of the dragon; while they are less interested in the treasures found within, these beasts make lairs and nests within the honeycombed chambers in the mountain's hollow interior. Among the wild creatures

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that make their homes here is a small community of lamia-kin. Led by **High Priestess Resvensa** (CE female harridan cleric of Socothbenoth^{ISG} 6; see page 404 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path: Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*), the isolated lamyros society of matriarchs, lamias, and kuchrimas (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition* 411) are so inbred and incestuous that they hardly function as a society. They pose the largest danger to anyone who ventures into the mountain and threaten to unbalance their millennia-old power structure. Because the upper levels of the mountain are so dangerous, few explorers make it to the deeper levels in which Xin-Gastash stands in all its ruined glory. Those who do rarely live to tell the tale; thus, the former Thassilonian capital remains lost.

A cave-in that dates to Earthfall isolates the massive cavern containing Xin-Gastash from those above and below, leaving the city something of a time capsule from the fall of Thassilon, albeit one ruined and twisted by the sprawling millennia. While most of the city's inhabitants died of old age, starvation, disease, or violence in the years immediately following Earthfall, the most powerful and influential retreated into undeath to wait out the years. For centuries, the factions of Xin-Gastash warred with one another, reducing the number of intelligent inhabitants to mere hundreds. Lacking sources of food and spawn, most of the undead were driven to madness by their isolation and constant conflict. Today, three ancient warlords—Hokok, Molus, and Xeram—each cursed with madness and blessed with regenerative abilities keeping them from truly destroying one another, vie for ultimate control of Xin-Gastash. The warlords are locked in an eternal stalemate as none of them has ever dedicated the time or resources to clearing the rockfall that traps them all beneath the earth for fear that the other two would unite as allies when the third warlord's attention was diverted from the struggle. Spectres, wraiths, Thassilonian mummies (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition* 259), skeletal champions, and zombie lords (*Bestiary* 4 286) still haunt the ruined streets and structures of Xin-Gastash, serving one of the three overlords or simply surviving as lone undead amid the ancient rubble.

Tomb of the First Battle

Monument to the Last Giant Army

Location: Near Deepgate (Smokespur)

Master: Guardian Ogon (LE male stone giant graveknight sentinel 7; see page 202 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Gods*)

Inhabitants: Ghosts, spectres, stone golems, taotieh⁸³

Features: Ancient giant treasures, simple traps, Thassilonian relics, undead and construct guardians

On the packed dirt road leading from the Dirt Sea to the fortress of Deepgate, a small, overgrown path leads off into the Kodar Mountains to the south. Numerous fetishes placed

at the head of the trail warn off any orcs who might be curious to follow it, but those who continue past the warning find that the path quickly climbs into the foothills and ends at a large cave. Before the dark entrance to the cave stands a single megalith covered in barely legible Giant runes proclaiming, "This is the last home of the faithful dead. May they rest with the stones of the earth." Few have proceeded farther and fewer yet have returned, but those who have tell of an ancient tomb in which the giants who fought in what the orcs refer to as the First Battle are buried.

Before the orcs were pushed from their Darklands homes, and before Earthfall, the land of Belkzen was ruled by the runelords of Thassilon. Wizards of unmatched power, the runelords built their empire on the backs of slaves, many of whom were giants. They used the giants to build the countless gargantuan monuments and structures that still dot the landscape of Varisia and Belkzen. When the end of that empire came, many giants died along with the humans, but small groups survived in faraway mountain strongholds.

Less than 200 years later, the orcs first emerged on the surface through a series of caves now known as Deepgate. As the few surviving giants looked down from their mountain perches on the new arrivals, they became concerned, fearing that these unknown creatures would try to enslave them, just as they were killing and enslaving the few species who remained in the lowlands. The giants called a grand council in –5088 AR to address this new threat, and each tribe of giants sent its representatives. After heated deliberation, it was decided that the giants would descend from the mountains, wipe out these offending creatures, and seal the hole from which they were streaming.

Represented in this army were well-armed fire giants, boulder-throwing stone giants, magic-wielding cloud giants, and tribal taiga giants. Even the dimwitted hill giants were included, though the other giants largely ignored their comments in the council meeting. All of them had suffered under the runelords and none wished to return to bondage.

The army descended with horn blasts out of the mountains and onto the Plains of Tollik (now known as the Dirt Sea) to confront the orc hordes, who were taken by surprise. The first few skirmishes went greatly in the giants' favor, and they began driving their enemy back toward the rubble-choked valley of Deepgate. There the giants found that the orcs had built a massive fortress over the gate to the Darklands, and immediately laid siege to it. Here the orcs were favored, and they brought down many giants with the massive war machines they had placed on the fortress's enormous curtain wall. The battle continued for several days until a storm giant priest of Gozreh prayed to his god to cleanse the valley of the orc vermin. The god heard the call and opened massive aquifers to drown the orcs, but was opposed by several powerful clerics of Rovagug and Gorum who threw up earthen walls to redirect the flow

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of water toward the giant army. Enough giants drowned in the resulting deluge that the leaders of the giant tribes called for a retreat and asked the orcs to let them collect their dead. The orcs agreed, having lost nearly all of their best warriors in the fighting, and the great battle ended.

In the aftermath, the stone giants expanded a series of caves in the nearby Kodar Mountains to build a tomb for their fallen. Their priests and sorcerers placed numerous wards around the site, and created powerful constructs to guard the tombs. The stone giant champion Ogon, a holy warrior of Minderhal, allowed himself to be transformed into a graveknight (*Bestiary* 3138) and still stands guard over the crumbled remains of his fallen brethren.

Valorfoe

Sunwall Fortress Fallen to Shadow

Location: Ustalavic border (Whisperfall)

Master: Vidods (LE male dark caller^{B4} cleric of Zon-Kuthon 6)

Inhabitants: Dark folk, owb^{B4}, undead

Features: Haunts, ruined fortifications, temple to Zon-Kuthon, underground dark folk settlement

The Sunwall served as the first of the great fortress-barriers that marked the northern border of Lastwall and fenced the orcs in to their savage realm. Not just a defense for the people of Lastwall, the Sunwall also protected much of the westernmost border of Ustalav, serving as a far greater deterrent against the orcs than the Ustalavs' own uneven line of fortresses, Bleakwall. As such, the easterners eagerly contributed to the Sunwall's construction, their greatest contribution being the cathedral-like fortress called Valorforge.

Defended by soldiers of Ustalav's army, Valorforge rose along the Sunwall, nearly 30 miles from Ustalav's border. For years the Ustalavs trained and fought alongside their Lastwall neighbors. Although not as seasoned as Lastwall's veteran defenders, the Ustalavic recruits comported themselves well. But when the orc hordes united to besiege the Sunwall in 4237 AR, the difference between the strategy-minded Lastwall commanders and Ustalav's nobility-based leadership couldn't have been more striking. While the forces of Lastwall abandoned the Sunwall, the Ustalavs held their posts in the face of invincible orc legions, making a fatalistic grasp for glory.

Valorforge fell and all within were slaughtered.

In the years that followed, the armies of Lastwall made numerous strikes from their new border beyond the River Esk. The orcs had claimed the majority of the Sunwall's fortresses, converting them into the thrones of war chiefs and bloody-minded despots. Valorforge, though, stood empty. Aside from the damage from the siege that drove out its defenders, no evidence existed of orc reclamation. A few brave Lastwall scouts dared to enter. Few survived.

Valorforge hadn't fallen to mere orcs. Months before the orcs came, a creature of darkness known as an owb had

infiltrated the castle dungeons. Gradually, it had taken control of the fortress's leaders, whispering subtle orders into their minds by posing as a spirit of glory. The owb convinced them to begin construction on secret basements, where it promised they'd find buried magical treasure to aid the castle's defenders. This additional level was never completed, though, as construction quickly broke through into tunnels connecting to the Darklands. Soon after, the orcs came. Seeing a chance to play the two forces against each other and then claim the fortress once they were dead, the owb insisted the defenders hold their posts.

After the slaughter of the Ustalavic soldiers, the orcs began looting their new fortress, pillaging and feasting on the castle's stores well into the night—they never expected the counterattack that came from below. Dark folk assassins slipped soundlessly from the tunnels in the fortress's depths, slaying most of the invaders within the castle before they ever knew they were being attacked. After its true servants had taken the fortress and barred the gates, the owb invaded the minds of the orcs' leaders, easily convincing them that Valorforge was cursed and their soldiers would find readier spoils elsewhere. The orcs fled the next morning.

Ever since, the dark folk have held Valorforge, the castle that crouches almost directly atop their village, Olvoro. Today, the seemingly abandoned fortress is inhabited only by a contingent of dark creepers, who keep sentry against any who intrude upon their holdings. Several places within the fortress bear the supernatural scars of the hundreds of deaths that occurred here, which manifested as noisy haunts—particularly in the grand hall, solarium, commander's dining room, and north tower. The dark folk know well how to avoid these places, and have numerous tricks to lead trespassers into these dangerous halls.

Beneath the castle lies the dank, spiraling cavern that holds Olvoro, home to more than 300 dark folk residents of varying breeds. At the heart of this sloping whirl of shadowy stone, light-inhibiting magic, and buried private cells rests an amphitheater-like temple of Zon-Kuthon. Called the Quiet Eye, the temple serves as home to the community's ageless owb patron, whom the dark folk refer to as the Chooser. The owb's current favored mouthpiece and community leader is the dark caller Vidods. The dark caller—one of the few in Olvoro—fervently preaches against the terrible evils beyond the community, spreading fear of outside influences and the wicked ones who “carry sun” or “suffer the weakness of light.” He demands all surface-worlders captured by his followers, whether belowground or in the castle above, be delivered to the Quiet Eye so they might join the shadow.

Back above, a half-mile from Valorforge stands an aged trail marker. None can say whether the arrow-shaped sign was defiled by retreating orcs or Lastwall scouts, but two letters have been scratched away. The sign now clearly points the way to “Valorfoe.”



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“Never let your guard down in Bellkzen. When we finally fought through Khar Shauk’s orcs and brought him down, we thought the fight was done—and hard-won at that. We lost many of our best soldiers putting an end to that bastard. As soon as his head was off and the rest of the orcs seemed to lose their nerve, I actually relaxed for a moment.

“But when that unbelievably immense creature burst from the ground beneath us and swallowed everyone who had been standing there? When it just waded right through us, as soldiers and horses fell screaming into its mouth? That’s when I knew we weren’t prepared for this land. And when some of the swallowed came back out with their skin missing—and howling for our blood? That’s when we ran.

“That wasn’t any enemy. It was a storm.”

—Toman Chastwell, former Lastwall soldier

Belkzen, Hold of the Orc Hordes

Random Encounter Tables

The encounter tables presented on this page are not meant to be exhaustive lists of creatures that dwell within the Hold of Belkzen—GMs should feel free to replace monsters on these tables with other options.

Blood Plains

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
01-19	1d3+1 orc warriors plus 1 orc sergeant	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 222, <i>Monster Codex</i> 166
20-33	2 bristle boars	5	See page 56
34-52	2d6 giant ants	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 16
53-64	2 glyptodons	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 186
65-79	2 bulettes	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 39
80-91	2d8 megaloceros	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 187
92-100	1 peluda	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 212

Conquered Lands

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
01-22	2d6 orc warriors	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 222
23-41	1d4 worgs	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 280
42-58	1d4 ankhegs	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 15
59-72	Orc squad	6	<i>Monster Codex</i> 173
73-80	1 bulette	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 39
81-95	Orc demolition crew	8	<i>Monster Codex</i> 173
96-99	1 ankhrav	9	See page 57
100	Juggerloathe	16	See page 62

Stonespur

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
01-26	1d3+1 orc warriors	1	<i>Bestiary</i> 222
27-40	1 cockatrice	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 48
41-54	2d6 formian workers	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 113
55-69	1 basilisk	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 29
70-78	1 orc gorthek rider	6	<i>Monster Codex</i> 169
79-87	1 bulette	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 39
88-100	1d4+2 wyverns	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 282

Urgir

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
01-26	1d3+1 orc warriors	1	<i>Bestiary</i> 222
27-38	1 orc mystic	2	<i>Monster Codex</i> 167
39-46	1d3 darkmantles	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 55
47-59	1 orc war drummer	3	<i>Monster Codex</i> 168
60-68	2 cave fishers	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 41
69-75	1 orc lieutenant	4	<i>Monster Codex</i> 166
76-81	1d3 ogres	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 220
82-87	2 rust monsters	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 238
88-92	1 rock troll	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 272
93-99	1 hill giant	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 150
100	1 orc chieftain	10	<i>Monster Codex</i> 170

Whisperfall

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
01-14	2d6 orc warriors plus 2 orc sergeants	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 222, <i>Monster Codex</i> 166
15-24	2 bristle boars	5	See page 56
25-38	1 bulette	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 39
39-51	3d6 Whisperfall vultures	7	See page 56
52-64	1 bull of Zagresh	7	See page 63
65-71	3d4 giant eagles	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 118
72-79	1 gorgon	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 165
80-86	1 lava drake	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 4 78
87-96	Orc warband	9	<i>Monster Codex</i> 173
97-99	2d3 ettins plus 1d2 grizzly bears	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 31, 130
100	Burning Child	10	See page 58

Animal Companions

The following animal companions represent new creatures presented on the following pages.

Bristle Boar

Starting Statistics: Size Small; Speed 40 ft.; AC +6 natural armor; Attack gore (1d6); Ability Scores Str 15, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 4; SQ low-light vision.

4th-Level Advancement: Size Medium; Attack gore (1d8); Ability Scores Str +4, Dex -2, Con +2; Special Attacks spines.

Spines (Ex): Those hit by a bristle boar's gore attack must succeed at a Reflex saving throw to avoid being speared by the dangerously sharp spines around its head and neck. Failure results in 1d4 points of piercing damage.

Bull of Zagresh

Starting Statistics: Size Medium; Speed 40 ft.; AC +4 natural armor; Attack gore (1d8); Ability Scores Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 4; Special Qualities low-light vision.

4th-Level Advancement: Size Large; AC +3 natural armor; Attack gore (2d6); Ability Scores Str +8, Dex -2, Con +4; Special Attacks trample.

Warcat of Rull

Starting Statistics: Size Medium; Speed 40 ft.; AC +4 natural armor; Attack bite (1d6), 2 claws (1d4); Ability Scores Str 15, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 5; Special Attacks rake (1d4); SQ low-light vision, scent.

7th-Level Advancement: Size Large; AC +2 natural armor; Attack bite (1d8), 2 claws (1d6); Ability Scores Str +8, Dex -2, Con +4; Special Attacks grab, pounce, rake (1d6).

Whisperfall Vulture

Starting Statistics: Size Small; Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC +1 natural armor; Attack bite (1d6); Ability Scores Str 12, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 7; SQ low-light vision.

4th-Level Advancement: Ability Scores Str +2, Con +2.



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Animals of Belkzen

The Hold of Belkzen is a harsh land that breeds animals not found elsewhere on Golarion.

Bristle Boar

The vicious spines surrounding this boar's head are almost as unnerving as the wild look in its eyes.




BRISTLE BOAR	CR 3	  
XP 800		
N Medium animal		
Init +0; Senses low-light vision; Perception +6		
DEFENSE		
AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+6 natural)		
hp 30 (4d8+12)		
Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +2		
Defensive Abilities ferocity		
OFFENSE		
Speed 40 ft.		
Melee gore +7 (1d8+6 plus spines)		
STATISTICS		
Str 19, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 4		
Base Atk +3; CMB +7; CMD 17		
Feats Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack		
Skills Acrobatics +5, Perception +6		
ECOLOGY		
Environment any plains or hills		
Organization solitary or pair		
Treasure none		
SPECIAL ABILITIES		
Spines (Ex) Targets of a bristle boar's successful gore attack must succeed at a DC 16 Reflex saving throw to avoid being speared by the dangerously sharp spines around its head and neck. Failure results in 1d4 points of piercing damage as well as 1 point of bleed damage per round for		

3 rounds. Bleed damage from multiple spines doesn't stack, but the duration is reset by subsequent attacks. Magical healing or a successful DC 15 Heal check ends the bleed effect. The save DC is Strength-based.

Bristle boars are native to the plains and low hills of Belkzen, and are well-known threats to trackers and scouts familiar with the area. The long, hollow spines surrounding their heads are reminiscent of porcupine spines, and make these boars deadlier than their common cousins. Bristle boars are quite lean and aren't considered particularly good to eat—but a desperate adventurer faced with starvation could survive on the meat if necessary.

Whisperfall Vulture

This dark-winged vulture has a wickedly hooked beak stained with bright red blood.

WHISPERFALL VULTURE	CR 1	  
XP 400		
N Small animal		
Init +2; Senses low-light vision; Perception +13		
DEFENSE		
AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)		
hp 13 (2d8+4)		
Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1		
OFFENSE		
Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)		
Melee bite +3 (1d6+1)		
STATISTICS		
Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 7		
Base Atk +1; CMB +1; CMD 13		
Feats Flyby Attack		
Skills Fly +12, Perception +13; Racial Modifiers +8 Perception		
ECOLOGY		
Environment temperate mountains		
Organization solitary, pair, or flock (3–18)		
Treasure none		

This relative of the common vulture is most often found in the region of Whisperfall Pass. Unlike its scavenging cousin, the Whisperfall vulture is a hunter, taking down rabbits and other small game with ease thanks to its speed and surprising agility. Hungry flocks of these birds of prey can even take down a human adult by sheer force of numbers.

Whisperfall vulture eggs are a delicacy, and those who can find and claim them can make a good amount of money selling them to merchants in Urgir.

A mature Whisperfall vulture has an 8-foot-long wingspan and weighs 50 pounds.

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Ankhrav

This giant vermin waves two scything forelegs threateningly as hissing acid drips from its mandibles.

ANKHRAV

CR 9



XP 6,400

N Huge magical beast

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 8, flat-footed 24 (+16 natural, -2 size)

hp 115 (10d10+60)

Fort +13, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., burrow 30 ft.

Melee bite +16 (2d8+8 plus 2d6 acid), 2 claws +16 (1d8+8)

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

Special Attacks spit acid

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 10, **Con** 22, **Int** 1, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 30

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Perception), Snatch, Step Up

Skills Climb +16, Perception +13

ECOLOGY

Environment any hills, plains, or underground

Organization solitary, royal party (1 ankhrav plus 2–12 ankhegs), or army (1–3 ankhravs plus 2–8 ankhegs)

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

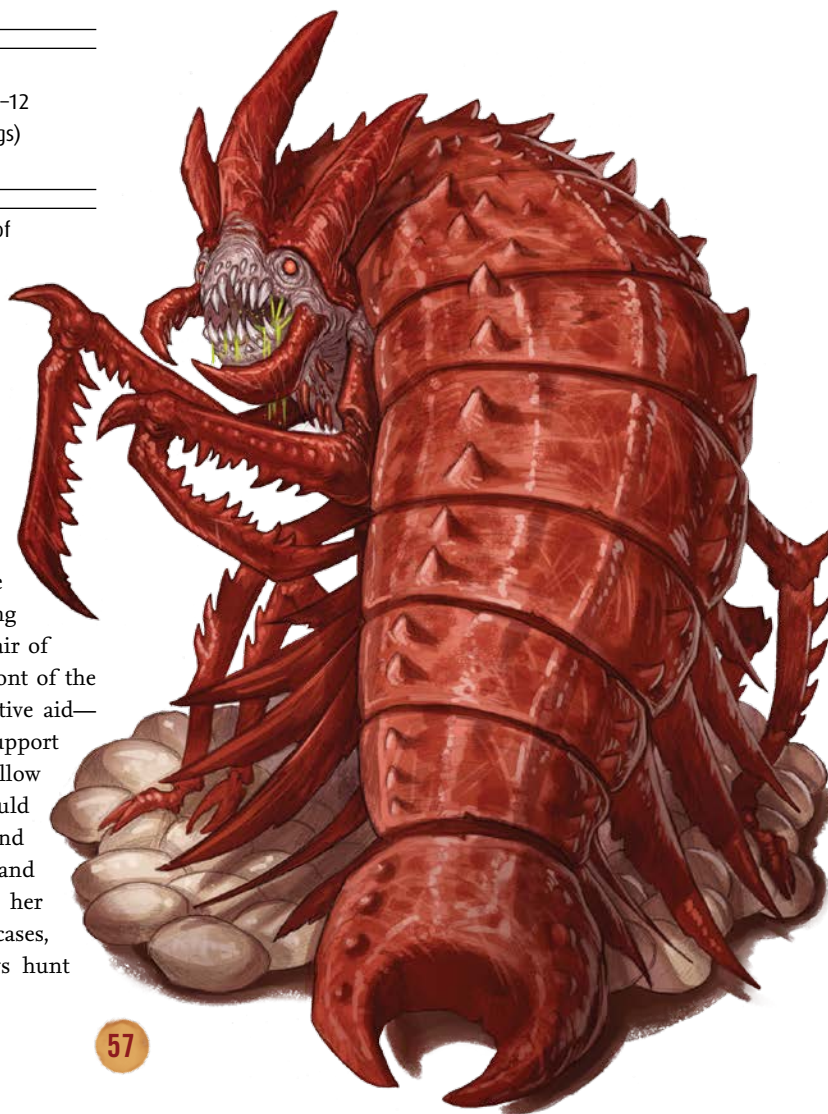
Spit Acid (Ex) An ankhrav can spit a 60-foot line of digestive fluid that deals 7d6 points of acid damage (Reflex DC 21 half). Once an ankhrav uses this ability, the acid damage dealt by the ankhrav's bite attack is reduced by 1d6 for 1 hour. If the ankhrav's bite attack would not deal any acid damage, it cannot spit acid. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Ankhravs, also called “ankheg queens,” are fearsome predators most common near the Skittermounds. These six-legged beasts are larger than regular ankhegs, but the most telling difference between them and drones is the pair of razor-sharp, mantislike arms located at the front of the thorax. While these arms provide no locomotive aid—their scissorlike edges are too delicate to support any weight—these additional appendages allow ankhravs to quickly bring down prey that would take ankheg spawn much longer to swarm and slay. Ankhravs are rarely encountered alone, and then only when a young queen travels from her home nest to establish a new colony. In most cases, when they venture from their lairs, ankhravs hunt accompanied by ankheg drones.

Though a significant danger to locals, ankhravs are also a highly valued resource for local tribes and the humans of Trunau. While they and their spawn wreak havoc on any attempts to build settlements in their territory, their sturdy carapaces and valuable organs can be worth a fortune if sold to the right alchemist or collector. There are always a few scouts and trappers willing to risk the dangers of hunting ankhravs.

Every winter, ankhravs retreat into their hives to give birth to the next generation of ankhegs. During this time, each ankhrav is tended to by ankheg drones as its flared abdomen produces an incubating egg sac nearly the size of its body. Sustaining this sac uses much of the stores claimed by the ankhrav's hunting season, and without ankheg servants most ankhravs would starve to death, drained by the process of birthing the next generation of drones. If an ankhrav has a large hive with scores of drones and plentiful food, it may give birth to one or two young ankhravs, which leave their birthplace to establish their own hives at 2 years of age.

A fully grown ankhrav stretches to a length of 14 feet and can weigh as much as 4,200 pounds.



Burning Child

The smell of scorched flesh accompanies this small child, who appears to be made entirely of dust and smoldering ash.

BURNING CHILD CR 10   

XP 9,600

CN Small undead (fire)

Init +7; **Senses** Perception +17

Aura *elemental aura* (fire, DC 17), frightful presence (60 ft., DC 21)

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 150 (15d8+75)

Fort +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, final embrace;

Immune fire, undead traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee slam +10 (1d4+2 plus burn)

Special Attacks breath weapon (60-ft. cone, 10d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 21 half), burn (2d8, DC 21)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th; concentration +15)

Constant—*elemental aura*^{APG} (fire only; DC 17), *fire trail*^{ARG} (DC 17)

At will—*burning hands* (DC 16), *scorching ray* (DC 16)

3/day—quicken *fireball* (DC 17)

STATISTICS

Str 6, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +7; **CMB** 14; **CMD** 17

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*fireball*), Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Escape Artist +18, Intimidate +19, Perception +17, Sense Motive +17

Languages Common

SQ binary state

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate plains

Organization unique

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Binary State (Su) Most of the time the Burning Child is in a passive state, during which he's incorporeal and invisible, though his soft sobs and the scent of burning flesh allow a creature to pinpoint his location with a successful DC 30 Perception check. If the Burning Child comes across a battle, the chance he enters his active state is equal to 1% per creature fighting (to a maximum of 100%). While active, the Burning Child is corporeal and visible. After 1d4 hours without being attacked or seeing conflict, the Burning Child reenters his passive state.

Breath Weapon (Su) The Burning Child can use his breath weapon only when in his active state, and only once each time he becomes active.

Final Embrace (Ex) If the Burning Child is destroyed, he reforms in 2d4 days. He can be permanently destroyed only when active, by a humanoid embracing and calming him. This requires succeeding at DC 28 Diplomacy checks for 3 consecutive rounds.

Born from the traumatic death of an abducted human child at the hands of orc alchemists seeking to unlock the mysteries of his sorcerous bloodline and convert him into a weapon, the Burning Child has haunted a wide stretch of wasteland in eastern Belkzen for centuries.

First seen during the battle that bears his name, the Burning Child continues to wander in an endless search for his parents, constantly reliving the terrifying experience of his first fiery death. While in his passive state, he's little more than disembodied sobbing and the scent of burning flesh. But when he happens upon the scene of a battle, the memory of his agonizing death pushes him to manifest, and he wanders into the fray crying out for rescue, all the while unintentionally sowing devastation as the uncontrollable energies coursing through him spill out of his unstable form.



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Dahzagan

This winged horror has the upper body of a feral, bloody-mouthed female orc warrior and the lower body of a giant wolf.

DAHZAGAN

CR 6


XP 2,400

CE Large outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *deathwatch*, scent; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch +11, flat-footed +17 (+2 Dex, +7 natural, +1 dodge, -1 size)

hp 76 (8d10+32)

Fort +8, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7

DR 10/good or lawful; **Immune** fire, poison; **Resist** electricity 10; **SR** 16

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee mwk greatsword +13/+8 (2d6+7) and 2 claws +12 (1d4+5)

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

Special Attacks terrifying howl

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +10)
Constant—*deathwatch*

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 7, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 27 (31 vs. trip)

Feats Dodge, Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Fly +8, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (planes) +9, Perception +14

Languages Abyssal, Orc

SQ heart-feaster, undersized weapons

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Abyss)

Organization solitary, trio, or murder (6–8 dahzagans)

Treasure standard (mwk greatsword, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Heart-Feaster (Su) As a full-round action, a dahzagan can rip out and devour the heart of an orc or half-orc who died in battle within the past 24 hours. The strength of the dead warrior empowers her, granting her the effects of *rage* (CL 9th).

Terrifying Howl (Su) A dahzagan can use the terrifying howl barbarian rage power as a standard action (Will DC 19). A creature that succeeds at its save is immune to that dahzagan's terrifying howl for 24 hours.

Undersized Weapons (Ex) Although dahzagans are Large, their upper bodies are those of Medium orcs. As such, they wield weapons as Medium creatures.

Servants of the orc pantheon, dahzagans are colloquially known as “orc valkyries” and are seen by many orcs as the midwives of their gods. These wild, bloodlust-driven warriors possess centaurlike builds with oversized wolf

bodies below the waist and large, batlike wings growing from their lupine backs. When especially strong, brutal, or savage orcs die in battle, dahzagans are sent to the Material Plane to fetch the warriors' souls and bear them to their gods. The warriors are then reincarnated as even greater orcs and returned to the Material Plane to avenge their own deaths.

Completely feral on the field of battle, dahzagans serve their gods loyally, usually taking on aspects of the deities to whom they are sworn. While most dahzagans serve orc gods, there are rumors of a rare few sworn to Gorum.

Dahzagans are also seen as the spiritual mothers of “cross-souls”—female warriors believed to be reincarnations of male orc champions. While male orcs often use the idea to explain the existence of capable female warriors and leaders, many female orcs resent the practice, and instead see dahzagans' gender as a symbol of female orc strength.

The average dahzagan is 8 feet tall and weighs 2,300 pounds or more.



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Floodslain Creature

When snowmelt from the Tusk Mountains floods into Belkzen, it causes flash floods throughout the region. Those who drown in the turbulent waters often rise as floodslain and spread the misery and death that created them.

Floodslain Arsinoitherium

This wild-eyed, rhinolike creature lumbers along with splashing steps, water streaming from its pale, sagging, hide.

FLOODSLAIN ARSINOITHERIUM CR 8



XP 4,800

CE Large undead (augmented animal)

Init -1; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 8, flat-footed 21 (+13 natural, -1 Dex, -1 size)

hp 67 (9d8+27)

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

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

Immune undead traits; **Resist** cold 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee gore +15 (4d8+15)

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

Special Attacks crashing waters, create spawn, drowning touch (DC 16), panic (DC 16), powerful charge (4d8+15), trample (2d8+13, DC 24)

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 8, **Con** —, **Int** 2, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 26 (30 vs. trip)

Feats Diehard, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Overrun, Power Attack, Toughness⁸

Skills Perception +14, Swim +18

SQ flash flood

ECOLOGY

Environment any plains

Organization solitary or pair

Treasure none

Floodslain Orc

This pallid, waterlogged orc corpse stumbles on broken legs, its eyes frozen in shock and fear. Clear water continuously leaks from its wounds to pool on the ground.

FLOODSLAIN ORC

CR 3



XP 1,200

Floodslain orc fighter 3

CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

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

DEFENSE

AC 12, touch 8, flat-footed 12 (+4 armor, -2 Dex)

hp 25 (3d10+9)

Fort +3, **Ref** -1, **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2, ferocity; **DR** 5/magic; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.; swim 30 ft.

Melee mwk spear +11 (1d8+10/x3) or slam +10 (1d6+7)

Special Attacks crashing waters, create spawn, drowning touch (DC 13), panic (DC 13)

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 6, **Con** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 18

Feats Bullying Blow^{ARG}, Furious Focus, Intimidating Prowess, Power Attack, Toughness^B

Skills Intimidate +14

Languages Common, Orc

SQ armor training 1, flash flood

ECOLOGY

Environment any plains or ruins

Organization solitary

Treasure incidental (mwk hide armor, mwk spear)

Collectively known as “the after-storm” by Belkzen natives, floodslain are victims of flash floods that have risen as undead. They’re creatures of panic and despair, driven by anger, fear, and a yearning to drag others into the waters. Long after the floodwaters recede, floodslain continue spreading the miserable death that claimed them.

Floodslain are similar in appearance to their original living forms, and are recognizable even in their waterlogged state. Many were gruesomely damaged by the floods that took their lives, though, their bodies battered and broken by rushing water and debris. The one feature common among all floodslain is wild, panicked eyes—a telltale sign of a death mired in shock and fear. Floodslain tend to drift toward lower ground, as if seeking the very water that transformed them. While this habitual migration makes them a contained threat in some areas, the relatively flat floodplains of Belkzen offer little resistance to the wandering undead. They can be found floating in major rivers, trapped in ravines and valleys, and staggering across flatlands, sometimes in large numbers. Floodslain that come close to living creatures try to drown them, and relentlessly follow those who flee. Targets who escape often draw the attention of yet more floodslain, eventually leading the undead to their homes. In great numbers, floodslain can slaughter small settlements.

While many find the possibility of undead born from purely natural disasters to be disturbing in and of itself, theories from druids and scholars in Lastwall hold even more chilling implications. Given that floodslain are most common in eastern Belkzen yet are little known outside that region, it is suspected that the floodwater itself was cursed even before falling as snow, perhaps by the dark influence of Gallowspire. If the Whispering Tyrant’s insidious reach could extend so far using only passing clouds, the crusaders of Lastwall might be facing a threat even more dire than they realize.

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Creating a Floodslain Creature

“Floodslain” is an acquired template that can be added to any non-aquatic living creature. A floodslain uses the base creature’s stats and abilities except as noted here.

CR: Same as base creature + 1.

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Type: The creature’s type changes to undead (augmented). Do not recalculate class BAB or saves.

Armor Class: Natural armor increases by 2.

Hit Dice: Change all racial Hit Dice to d8s. Class Hit Dice are unaffected. As undead, floodslain creatures use their Charisma modifiers to determine bonus hit points (instead of their Constitution modifiers).

Defensive Abilities: A floodslain creature gains channel resistance +2, DR 5/magic, and cold resistance 10 in addition to other defensive abilities granted by the undead type.

Speed: A floodslain creature gains a swim speed of 30 feet unless it already possesses a swim speed.

Melee: A floodslain creature gains a slam attack based on its size, if the base creature doesn’t have one. Its slam attack also delivers the drowning touch effect (see below). Its natural attacks are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Special Attacks: Floodslain creatures gain several special attacks. The save DCs are equal to 10 + 1/2 the base creature’s HD + its Charisma modifier unless otherwise noted.

Crashing Waters (Su): Once per day, a floodslain creature can instinctively summon a spectral echo of the rushing waters that created it. This mass of phantom water slams the floodslain creature from behind, carrying it forward at up to three times its normal speed and enabling it to charge a single target. These waters also impact all creatures near the end of the floodslain creature’s movement, pushing them back. This acts as a bull rush; the floodslain creature attempts a single combat maneuver check against the CMD of each creature within 10 feet of the end of its charge. This bull rush attempt doesn’t provoke attacks of opportunity.

Create Spawn (Su): Any creature killed by a floodslain creature rises as a floodslain creature if it’s left immersed in water for 24 hours. These spawn aren’t under the control of their creators.

Drowning Touch (Su): The slam attack of a floodslain creature partially fills a living victim’s lungs with water. The victim must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw in order to cough up this water or become fatigued for 1d4 rounds. A fatigued creature that fails this save becomes exhausted instead. An exhausted creature that fails this save is staggered and falls to 0 hp. A creature at 0 hp that fails this save drops to –1 hp and begins dying. A creature killed in this fashion appears to have drowned.

Panic (Su): The dead eyes of a floodslain creature are frozen with shock and fear.

The floodslain creature can induce fear in a living victim as a standard action. Targets must succeed at a Will saving throw or become shaken for 1d6 rounds. A creature can be affected by the same floodslain creature’s panic attack only once every 24 hours.

Special Qualities: A floodslain creature gains the following special quality.

Flash Flood (Su): A floodslain creature is constantly surrounded by an echo of the disaster that originally took its life. Water streams from the floodslain creature’s body, forming a 30-foot-radius pool that renders the ground in that area slick and muddy and increases the DCs of Acrobatics checks made in the area by 5.

Ability Scores: Str +2, Dex –2, Int +0, Wis +2, Cha +2 (minimum 14). Waterlogged and ruined, floodslain creatures are driven to cling to life by maddened fear and confusion. As undead, floodslain creatures have no Constitution scores.

Feats: Floodslain creatures gain Toughness as a bonus feat.



Juggerloathe

This massive spiked creature has smoking black pits for eyes, an enormous maw, and a tail that appears to be an armored cobra.

JUGGERLOATHE

CR 16



XP 76,800

CE Gargantuan magical beast

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent, tremorsense 120 ft.; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 7, flat-footed 31 (+1 Dex, +25 natural, -4 size)

hp 256 (19d10+152)

Fort +19, **Ref** +14, **Will** +12

DR 10/adamantine; **SR** 22

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., burrow 30 ft.

Melee 2 bites +26 (3d8+11), 2 claws +26 (2d8+11)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks devour life, ejection, leaping shockwave, swallow whole (AC 23, hp 30), trample (2d8+11, DC 30)

STATISTICS

Str 32, **Dex** 13, **Con** 26, **Int** 5, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +19; **CMB** +34 (+36 bull rush); **CMD** 45 (47 vs. bull rush, 49 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Lunge, Power Attack, Run, Skill Focus (Perception), Snatch

Skills Acrobatics +17, Perception +16

Languages Orc

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Hold of Belkzen)

Organization unique

Treasure double

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Devour Life (Su) The Juggerloathe's stomach leeches the life force of those trapped within it, rather than digesting them with acids. Any living victims that are swallowed whole and killed while within the Juggerloathe are turned into twisted creatures of undeath and pain. Regardless of their original size or form, those killed within the Juggerloathe become bodaks (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 48), though their appearance may be less humanoid than those of typical bodaks. These undead stop taking damage while within the Juggerloathe, and escape its innards when it next uses its ejection attack. The undead aren't controlled by the Juggerloathe, but they don't attack it and it is immune to their powers.

Ejection (Ex) The Juggerloathe can eject the contents of its stomach in a 60-foot cone that deals 8d6 points of acid damage (Reflex DC 27 half) once every 1d6 rounds. Any creatures swallowed whole by it—still living and undead—land prone at the far end of the cone. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Leaping Shockwave (Ex) The Juggerloathe leaps into combat much like normal bulettes, but lands with an earth-shaking impact. When it charges, it can attempt a DC 25 Acrobatics check to jump into the air and land next to its enemies. If it's successful, all adjacent foes must succeed at a DC 30 Reflex save or be knocked prone. The Juggerloathe ends its charge with two bite attacks and two claw attacks, dividing them up as it sees fit among targets within reach. The save DC is Strength-based.

The seemingly unstoppable spawn of a bulette of massive size and Yethazmari (Lamashtu's herald; see page 99 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Gods*), the Juggerloathe is 50 feet from its nose to the base of its tail, and weighs slightly more than 100 tons. It has been a living legend among the tribes of Belkzen for centuries. Although it's seemingly content to remain hidden in its lair within the Mindspin Mountains, the creature is sometimes driven out onto the plains by hunger. Entire tribes have been known to disappear into its gullet, and it leaves only desolation and fiendishly warped undead in the wake of its rampages.



Belkzen, Hold of the Orc Hordes



Gazetteer

Adventures in Belkzen




Bestiary

War Beasts of Belkzen

Valued for their size and natural aggression, megafauna found in the Hold of Belkzen are often trained by orc tribes as mounts or war beasts.

Bull of Zagresh




This immense bovine has horns reminiscent of a stag, with daggerlike points spreading more than fifteen feet across.

BULL OF ZAGRESH	CR 7	  
XP 3,200		
N Huge animal		
Init +1; Senses low-light vision; Perception +8		
DEFENSE		
AC 20, touch 9, flat-footed 18 (+1 Dex, +11 natural, -2 size)		
hp 85 (9d8+45)		
Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +3		
OFFENSE		
Speed 40 ft.		
Melee gore +14 (2d6+15)		
Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.		
Special Attacks trample (3d8+15, DC 24)		
STATISTICS		
Str 31, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 4		
Base Atk +6; CMB +18; CMD 29		
Feats Diehard, Endurance, Improved Natural Attack (gore), Power Attack, Toughness		
Skills Perception +8, Swim +17		
ECOLOGY		
Environment any hills or plains		
Organization solitary, pair, or herd (10-30)		
Treasure none		

These enormous bovines are 15 feet tall, measure nearly 30 feet from horns to tail, and weigh approximately 16 tons. Bred for war and violence by the Murdered Child orc tribe, they are used in ravine fights—bloodsports in blocked-off gorges or gullies that pit the might and ferocity of orcs against various wild beasts. Aggressive and trained for combat, bulls of Zagresh respond to most threats by charging anything that stands and goring whatever is left. Skilled Murdered Child beast drovers oversee bulls of Zagresh in warfare, driving the mighty cattle into enemy formations to break the front line or crush foot archers and other lightly armored targets.

Warcat of Rull

This massive catlike creature has the lithe grace of a feline despite a shell-like armor of segmented plates.

WARCAT OF RULL	CR 13	  
XP 25,600		
N Huge animal		
Init +4; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +7		

DEFENSE
AC 28, touch 12, flat-footed 24 (+4 Dex, +16 natural, -2 size)
hp 184 (16d8+112)
Fort +17, Ref +14, Will +7
OFFENSE
Speed 50 ft., climb 20 ft.
Melee bite +22 (2d6+12 plus grab), 2 claw +22 (1d8+12/19-20 plus rend)
Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.
Special Attacks pounce, rend (2 claws, 1d8+18), trample (2d8, DC 30)
STATISTICS
Str 35, Dex 18, Con 24, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 5
Base Atk +12; CMB +26; CMD 40
Feats Acrobatic, Cleave, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Critical (claw), Iron Will, Power Attack, Run
Skills Acrobatics +11, Climb +25, Perception +7, Stealth +3, Swim +19
ECOLOGY
Environment cold hills or mountains
Organization solitary or pair
Treasure none

Warcats of Rull are massive creatures with the shapes and habits of great cats but the armored skin of armadillos. Weighing 4,000 pounds and stretching 25 feet from nose to the base of its tail, a warcat of Rull is a dangerous predator with a large territory. Wild warcats of Rull hunt alone or with a single mate, and have been known to take down prey ranging from megafauna to giants and even young dragons. The Ice Tooth orc clan catches warcats of Rull as cubs and trains them to serve the clan. These beasts often act as mounts for the clan's champions, who ride them into battle against warriors from the Realm of the Mammoth Lords.



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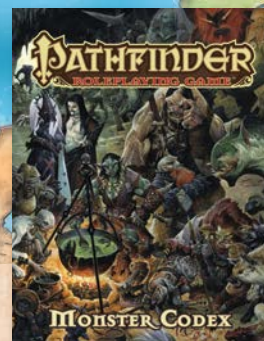
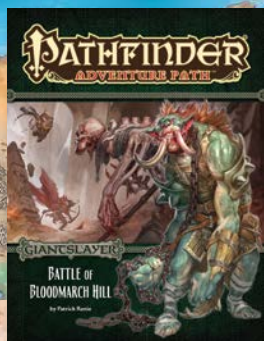
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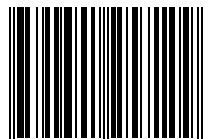
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