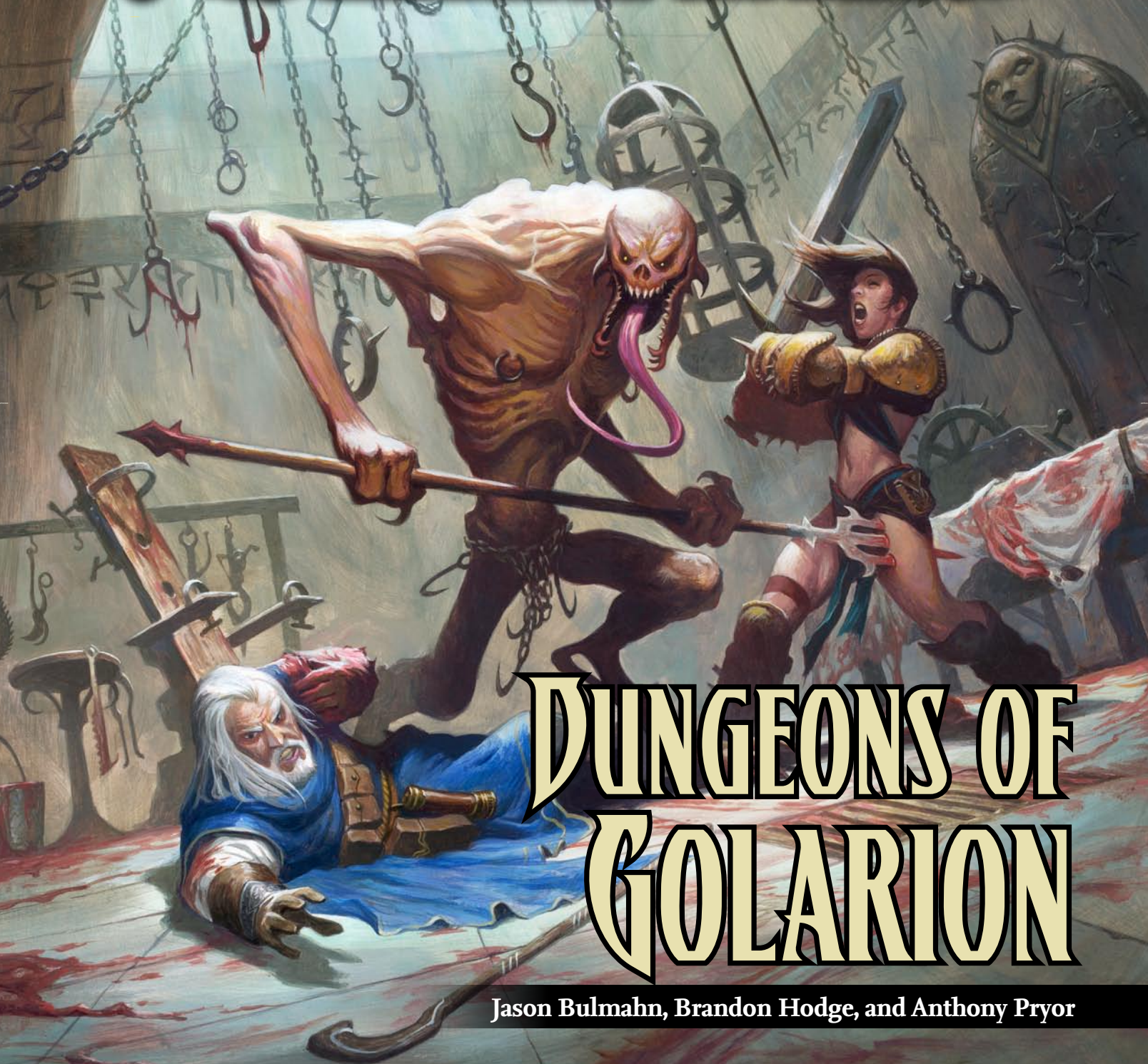


PATHFINDER[®]

CAMPAIGN SETTING[™]



DUNGEONS OF GOLARION

Jason Bulmahn, Brandon Hodge, and Anthony Pryor

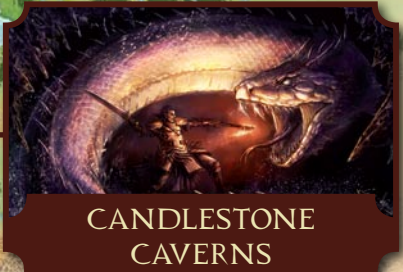
DUNGEONS OF GOLARION



GALLOWSPIRE



HOLLOW MOUNTAIN



CANDLESTONE CAVERNS



RED REDOUBT OF KARAMOSS



ZOLURKET MINES



PYRAMID OF KAMARIA



DUNGEONS OF GOLARION

A Pathfinder Campaign Setting Supplement

This book works best with the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*. Although it is suitable for play in any fantasy world, it is optimized for use in the Pathfinder campaign setting.



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WELCOME TO THE MEGADUNGEON

The concept of a megadungeon might not be particularly realistic, but nevertheless, the immense multilevel compound filled with monsters, traps, and treasure is as old as roleplaying games. Indeed, the very first campaigns were set in megadungeons—compounds that seemed to have little other purpose than to provide eager adventurers with a near endless maze of rooms, hallways, and caverns to explore. Megadungeons can take a variety of forms and appear in numerous styles—the only thing that a megadungeon really requires in order to be called such is to have a large number of distinct interconnected levels associated with the site.

Golarion has its share of megadungeons, but the sheer scope of these vast compounds makes detailing them a daunting task. A single level of a megadungeon can itself constitute the contents of an entire adventure—indeed, we’ve done just that in our Pathfinder Module line more than once with *The Godsmouth Heresy*. With some exceptions (notably the ultra-high-level Gallowspire), megadungeons make ideal adventure sites for all levels of play. They start easy, but the farther you delve into them, the rougher and more dangerous the encounters become. Of course, the deeper you go, the better the treasures you find, so there’s always something to lure adventurers further into peril!

In *Dungeons of Golarion*, we look at six of the most famous and notorious megadungeons in the Inner Sea region, but we make no attempt to provide exhaustive details. Just as we provided in-depth presentations of six cities in *Cities of Golarion* and six ruined adventure sites in *Lost Cities of Golarion*, this book presents similarly detailed overviews six dungeons. In two cases (Candlestone Caverns and the Red Redoubt of Karamoss), we’ve even provided a relatively well-stocked sample level for immediate use as a quick way to start up a campaign set in that dungeon. But in the other four entries in this book, we merely give you the map of the sample level and leave its “stocking” to you. This allows you to develop that level as best fits the needs of your campaign. These levels are quite large and expansive, and can easily be the focus of several sessions of play.

OTHER DUNGEONS

The six megadungeons presented in this volume are by no means the only ones in existence in the Inner Sea region. They aren’t even the largest! Several other megadungeons ripe for exploration found throughout the lands of the Inner Sea are listed below. Each dungeon is

listed alphabetically by name, with the region it is located in indicated in parenthesis—these regions correspond to those presented in *The Inner Sea World Guide*.

Bastardhall (Ustalav): Looming darkly on the eastern border of Ustalav, this sprawling castle is the onetime home of a cursed family. Many of the dungeons below this vast castle are flooded and inhabited by all manner of aquatic horrors, while other subterranean levels doubtless hide secrets of a terrible nature.

Castle Korvosa (Varisia): Built atop an ancient Thassilonian pyramid, the royal castle of Korvosa is the most distinctive feature of that city’s skyline. Yet below the castle, deep dungeons extend, unseen by intruding eyes for thousands of years. Here, amid ancient dungeons filled with forgotten Thassilonian perils, the minions of Sorshen, the Runelord of Lust, still dwell, as mighty as their powerful mistress herself.

Crimson Citadel (Mediogalti Island): This towering structure sits atop a jungle peak on Mediogalti Island. As the headquarters of the Red Mantis, the numerous aboveground levels of this structure contain danger and peril enough, but rumor holds that the many-spined structure was built over extensive underground ruins that date back to the time of Ghol-Gan.

Deepgate (Hold of Belkzen): One of the two known entrances to the Darklands in the orc homeland of Belkzen, Deepgate was the first point at which the dwarves drove the orcs to the surface during the onset of the Quest for Sky.

Earthnavel (Realm of the Mammoth Lords): Connecting the Orvian Vault of Deep Tolguth to the surface world above, this extensive cavern system is inhabited by a vast diversity of enormous, primeval beasts. Rumors of strangely advanced and intelligent troglodytes in certain remote sections of these caves persist.

Eel’s Skull (The Shackles): This rocky island in the Shackles served for many years as the fortress of the notorious smuggler Nalt Tarbrow, one of the most successful pirates in a region noted for its successful pirates. Nalt is said to have stored numerous captured artifacts in the Ghol-Gan dungeons below his island fortress, but since he went mad (some say as a direct result of using one of those artifacts, the so-called *Throne of Nalt*), and destroyed the upper levels of his extensive fortress, an entrance to these supposed dungeons has yet to be rediscovered.

El-Fatar (Katapesh): This sprawling ruined city in northern Katapesh, originally believed to have been a



site of some import in ancient Osirion, recently came to the Pathfinder Society's attention when an entrance to a previously unsuspected branch of catacombs was discovered below.

House of Oblivion (Thuvia): The towering House of Oblivion, said to lie somewhere within the trackless sandy heart of Thuvia. Built over 7,000 years ago by a mad pharaoh to lure the powerful fiend Ahriman to this world, the House of Oblivion's multiple "dungeon levels" exist not below ground, but above it, in the sprawling wings of a vast structure that is unlikely to fully reside in this reality.

Ice Spire (Lands of the Linnorm Kings): This ancient ruin near the southern extent of the Stormspear Hills of the Linnorm Kingdoms is relatively unassuming aboveground, but the frozen dungeons below take on increasingly alien architectural styles the deeper one explores.

Kaer Maga (Varisia): The so-called City of Strangers lies perched atop the Storval Rise in Varisia, a haven to a wide assortment of scoundrels and malcontents. Some of the dungeon levels below Kaer Maga, built by Runelord Karzoug over (it is said) even older chambers, are accessible from the exposed face of the cliff side, but most are hidden well away from the light of day.

Savith's Tomb (Mwangi Expanse): The legendary Azlanti outpost city of Saventh-Yhi, said to lie somewhere in the Mwangi Expanse, has yet to be located. But ancient tales speak of a site within this city called Savith's Tomb, where the city's heroic founder was laid to rest at the bottom of an extensive dungeon filled with traps and strange guardians after her fateful last battle against Ydersius, god of the serpentfolk.

Silver Mount (Numeria): One of the great legends of Avistan is Silver Mount, a massive, scarred edifice that looms over the skyline of Starfall. The countless technological treasures hidden within are well guarded by the Technic League, but even they have just scraped the surface of fully exploring the wondrous and dangerous chambers within this crashed starship.

Sphinx Head (Osirion): Numerous dungeon complexes exist in Osirion—but the chambers said to lie below the Sphinx Head are among the most intriguing, for many of these chambers contain no air at all, making the dungeon particularly dangerous and difficult to explore.

Spire of Nex (Absalom): This impossibly tall tower looms just north of the city of Absalom, a soaring monolith filled with dozens of linked pocket dimensions created by one of the most powerful spellcasters ever to weave magic along the shores of the Inner Sea.

Temple of the Ravenous Moon (The Shackles): This mysterious ziggurat stands high in the peaks of the Terwa Uplands, a structure of bone-white stone marbled with veins of blood red. The Hurricane King himself has sent

two expeditions to explore the extensive dungeon chambers within and below this ancient ziggurat, but to date, none have returned to report what they found within.

Urgir (Hold of Belkzen): This orc city, capital of the Hold of Belkzen, is built over the ruins of one of the dwarven Sky Citadels. The numerous dungeon levels that lie below it connect eventually to the Darklands, and are themselves infested with rust monsters, duergar, and other ravenous creatures.

Well of Lies (Nex): This extensive dungeon complex, thought to have been built by cyclopes, was partially explored by Nex himself. Most scholars agree that the discoveries Nex made while exploring this site played a significant role in his rise to power—what treasures remain here in chambers deep beneath the ground one can only guess at.





CANDLESTONE CAVERNS

THE KOBOLD RAIDERS LEFT NOTHING SAVE DEVASTATION IN THEIR WAKE. SIX OF US WERE SLAIN. FIVE MORE ARE STILL MISSING—THE GODS ONLY KNOW WHAT HAS BECOME OF THEM. SEEKING THE RETURN OF OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS, WE ENGAGED A BAND OF MERCENARIES TO RESCUE THE CAPTIVES. THEY VENTURED INTO THE DEPTHS OF CANDLESTONE TWO WEEKS AGO. WE HAVE NOT HEARD FROM THEM SINCE—IT SEEMS THAT THEY TOO ARE NOW LOST. AND SO IT COMES TO THIS. I SHALL TAKE UP MY OLD ARMS, AND HAVE CALLED BACK TO MY SIDE MY BOON COMPANIONS. WE SHALL SET FORTH AT ONCE TO RESCUE OUR MISSING FRIENDS FROM THE KOBOLDS, AND WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO SUCCEED.

—FINAL PUBLIC ADDRESS OF MAYOR ENDROS MURANE,
MISSING NOW FOR 5 YEARS



The extensive underground complex known as Candlestone Caverns was once largely hidden from surface knowledge, a network of caverns physically accessible only via the Darklands or through well-defended and well-hidden chambers connected to hideouts and mines above. Then, in 4510 AR, an earthquake shook the caverns, causing sections of the terrain to shift violently upward, shearing tunnels and caves, collapsing some into ruin but exposing others to the light of the sun for the first time. Surrounding farms and villages soon learned that the earthquake was but the start of their troubles, for those creatures that dwelt within the caves were eager to explore this new world above. Connecting the surface to the depths of the Darklands, the caverns endlessly unleash perils—raiders, strange beasts, and worse—all potent lures to adventurers in search of treasure and glory.

HISTORY

Distant and isolated, the caverns were once a wild frontier, tread only by dwarven miners and slightly mad explorers. When the dwarven empire of Tar Taargadth fell to an uprising of orcs in 1551, Candlestone Caverns served as a sort of back door to the Five Kings Mountains from the Darklands. A number of undermanned garrisons sat at the entrances to the depths, but when the orcs rose up, they tore through these defenses to join other hordes in the assault on the dwarven homeland, bringing the empire of Tar Taargadth to an end.

With their nation lost, a small group of dwarves sealed the surface entrances to the caverns. Candlestone Caverns lay hidden for centuries, home to kobolds, gremlins, duergar, dark fey and other creatures that crept up from the Darklands below. The complex's surface entrances were well-hidden and rarely used. When the dwarven state of Tar Khadurrm rose in the early 3200s, its rulers sent periodic patrols into the region to keep watch over the sealed entrances, but no further incursions from below occurred.

When Tar Khadurrm collapsed, the caverns faded from memory entirely. They would have stayed that way were it not for the great earthquake of 4510. New openings to the caverns were exposed, unleashing tides of strange subterranean raiders upon the unprepared human settlements that had risen in rural Andoran. After a time, the locals began fighting back, organizing militias and hiring adventurers to protect them from the various kobolds, duergar, and evil fey that periodically assailed them. Despite this, the cavern complex remains wild and dangerous, an enduring draw for explorers and heroes seeking fortune and adventure.

DESCRIPTION

Most of the passages in Candlestone Caverns are twisting tunnels that range wildly in size from a claustrophobic

2 feet across to relatively roomy 15-foot-wide passages. A rare few passages can reach up to 30 feet in width—easier to traverse, these larger tunnels are also popular spots for ambushes and hidden traps. In addition to traps and dangers left by intelligent foes, the caves are subject to rockslides, flash floods, and periodic collapses as the region continues to periodically suffer minor earthquakes or fill with water following torrential rains on the surface.

With a few exceptions in the form of phosphorescent minerals or fungi, the caverns are a place of eternal darkness. Adventurers without means of seeing in the dark are advised to bring their own light sources. Bright lights often attract unwanted attention, so experienced delvers utilize devices or spells that emit red- or blue-tinged light, or even such sources of illumination as *faerie fire* or the glowing glands of fire beetles.

While the caverns may never be fully explored or mapped, their best known regions are listed here.

Level 1. Entrances (CR 2): The entrances created in 4510 remain today, along a vast fault-block raised by the great earthquake.

Level 2. The Hall of Wonders (CR 3): Years ago a dwarven artisan fled the falling empire of Tar Khadurrm to create a safe workshop and gallery where his finest work could be displayed without fear of it being destroyed by rioters or insurgents. This area is detailed in Pathfinder Society Scenario 37: *The Beggar's Pearl*.

Level 3. Mushroom Caves (CR 3): Once a region where deep gnomes cultivated edible fungi, this region has since grown into a wilderness choked with giant mushrooms, puffballs, and other strange growths, including a large number of dangerous growths like violet fungi and yellow mold.

Level 4. The Black Claws (CR 3): A dangerous tribe of kobolds known as the Black Claws live in this well-defended series of caves.

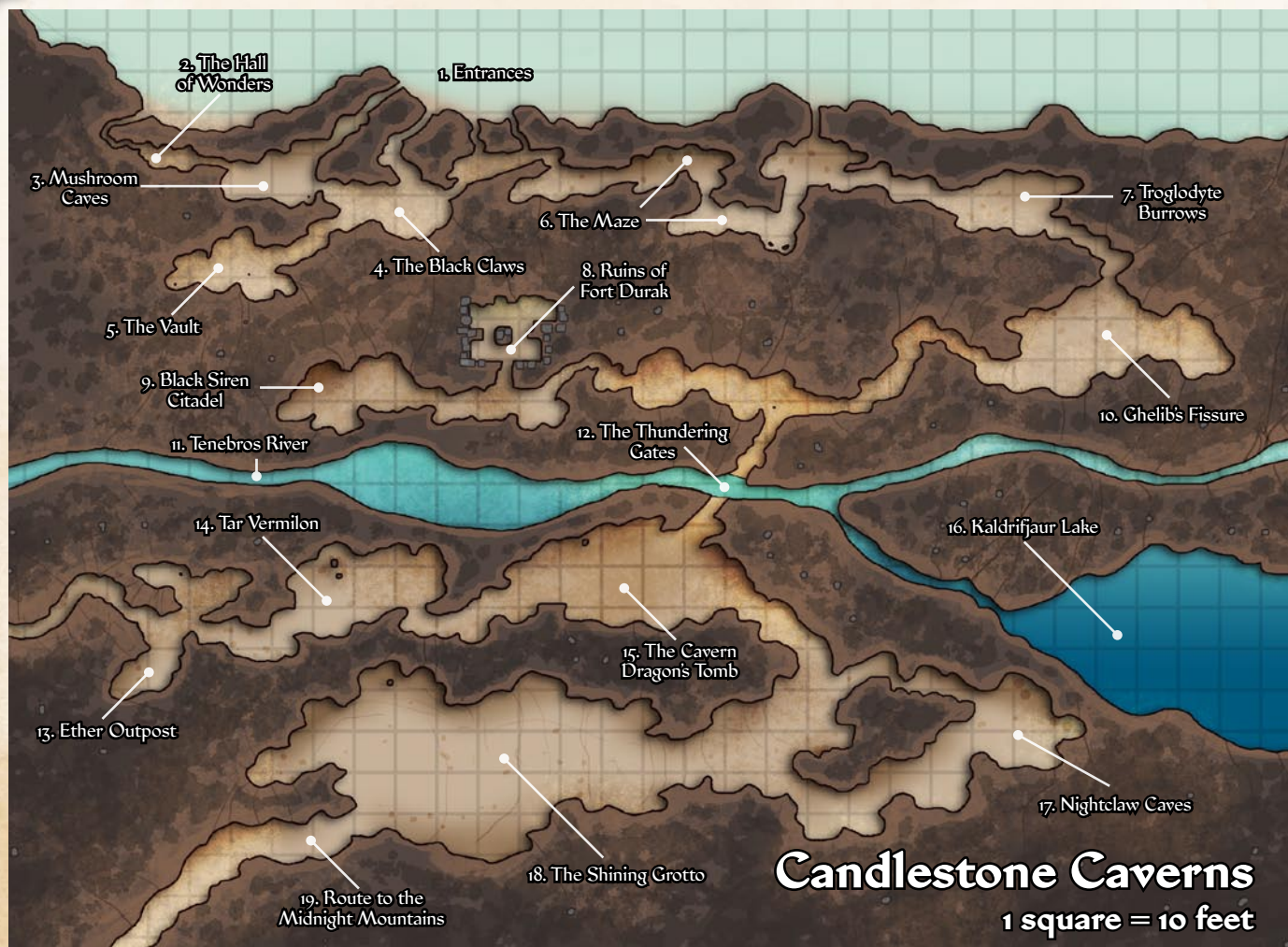
Level 5. The Vault (CR 4): The Black Claws maintain these caves as a prison—captives are kept in deep sinkholes, held for ransom or sale as slaves. See pages 9–13 for more details on this level.

Level 6. The Maze (CR 2): This labyrinth of narrow tunnels, pits, crevices, dead ends, and chasms has drawn many to their deaths over the years, for the tunnels are variously rumored to hide a lost dwarven temple, a secret passage to another plane, or a fortune in gemstones and other riches.

Level 7. Troglodyte Burrows (CR 3): A clan of troglodytes claim this area, a claim disputed by kobolds and duergar, who fight them at every opportunity. Adventurers can sometimes earn rewards by allying with these factions, but many simply end up as dinner. A few isolated tribes of mongrelmen dwell here as well; they may aid adventurers if treated kindly.



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Level 8. Ruins of Fort Durak (CR 6): After the fall of Tar Khadurrm, this hidden dwarven fortress was taken over by various unsavory inhabitants, including duergar, slimes and oozes, and a tribe of insane mongrelmen who worship a petrified drider as a deity.

Level 9. Black Siren Citadel (CR 7): The underground fortress known as Black Siren is said to be haunted by the ghosts of ancient duergar. These tales serve the citadel's new inhabitants well, for it has been taken over as an outpost by the drow, who use it as a staging ground to keep watch on surrounding tunnels and to launch raids to capture slaves from the nearby caverns and lands above.

Level 10. Ghelib's Fissure (CR 5): Named for an intrepid dwarven explorer, these caves are filled with wondrous formations and hidden dangers. They are also home to numerous cave fishers and lurking rays as well as swarms of unusually large, disease-ridden bats.

Level 11. Tenebros River (CR 7): Dark, cold, and swift, the mighty Tenebros River rushes through the region, forming subterranean lakes and pools where Candlestone's various tribes hunt, fish, and invariably skirmish.

Level 12. The Thundering Gates (CR 8): The Tenebros River flows through a narrow passage here, vanishing on a long route that eventually empties into Lake Nirthran in Sekamina deep below. The rushing water resounds deafeningly as it drains into the passage, giving the chamber its name.

Level 13. Ether Outpost (CR 12): Scouts from the mysterious fey city known as the Court of Ether maintain a small outpost here. Evil pixies and a group of magically controlled ogrekin guards keep watch on nearby caverns. The sinister fey have rigged numerous magical traps to injure unwary intruders. Beyond the outpost, a passage leads into the Darklands and eventually to the Court of Ether itself.

Level 14. Tar Vermilon (CR 10): These caves have been expanded into a fortress by a large group of duergar, who patrol the surrounding passages regularly. Captives who are brought to Tar Vermilon rarely survive to tell of the endless toil that is required of captives by mad Duergar soldiers obsessed with perfecting the fortress in order to properly honor Droskar.



Level 15. The Cavern Dragon's Tomb (CR 9): Dwarven legend holds that a particularly sadistic crystal dragon once dwelt in these caves, ruling over Candlestone Caverns as its subterranean empire. It is said that the dwarven hero Gurnus Strongarm slew the dragon but perished in the attempt. Tales say that the dragon's horde remains undiscovered, but also that the ghost of the great dragon still haunts these caves.

Level 16. Kaldrifjaur Lake (CR 11): Formed when the Tenebros River splits hundreds of feet above the lake, Kaldrifjaur ("Cold Heart" in the dwarven tongue) is vast enough to require travel by boat. Duergar and kobolds regularly ply its waters, seeking out the colorless fish and mollusks that dwell there, or traveling to other regions in Sekamina. Other things are said to live here, too—white-skinned sea serpents, a mysterious clan of aquatic gargoyles, and predatory albino fish the size of mighty sharks.

Level 17. Nightclaw Caves (CR 13): A deadly barrier to anyone seeking out the Midnight Mountains below, the Nightclaw Caves are a dark labyrinth said to be the lair of a powerful undead sorcerer who studied under the Whispering Tyrant. This ghoul sorcerer's name has long been forgotten, but his epithet remains: the Skinless King.

Level 18. The Shining Grotto (CR 15): This entrance to the deeper realms of the Darklands is filled with glittering speleothems, bubbling hot springs, gigantic crystals, raw gems, luminescent mineral deposits, and intricate formations. The grotto is also inhabited by creatures from the depths, including ropers, neothelids, and beings that match the description of strangely pallid shoggoths.

Level 19. Route to the Midnight Mountains (CR 10+): A distant spur of the vast and mysterious underground realm known as the Midnight Mountains can be accessed through these caves, which wind down through innumerable dangers and the lairs of nameless beasts to finally reach that realm of madness.

DENIZENS

Subterranean monsters abound in Candlestone, many drawn toward the surface by wily kobolds who lure dangerous predators upward for use in the defense of their own warrens. Creatures such as lurking rays, dangerous molds, cave fishers, and bats of all description are common here. In addition, rarer creatures like gugs, tentamorts, decapuses, and even purple worms or vemereks are sometimes encountered. Despite these deadly creatures, the greatest threat in the caverns comes from its many humanoid inhabitants. The most notable humanoid tribes in Candlestone are detailed here.

Black Claw Kobolds: The most powerful of the many kobold tribes in the region, the Black Claws live in a well-fortified network of caves near the surface. They specialize in traps and poison, and have engineered numerous one-way

tunnels that funnel dangerous creatures from the deeper caverns up to the surface. Black Claw warriors then follow these creatures at a safe distance, finishing off survivors and looting ravaged communities. The Black Claws also deal with unscrupulous surface merchants, trading gems, rare foodstuffs, and poisons for supplies, weapons, and slaves. One distinguishing feature of these kobolds is their black hands—even those who don't normally have black scales have darkened fingers, as the tribe's somewhat dangerous coming of age ritual involves soaking the hands in spider venom. Those kobolds who don't succumb to the effects of these long soaks emerge as full adults of the tribe—and with permanently blackened hands.

BLACK CLAW ELITE

CR 1

XP 400

Kobold warrior 4

LE Small humanoid (reptilian)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

hp 26 (4d10)

Fort +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +6 (1d6/19–20)

Ranged shortbow +6 (1d4/x3)

TACTICS

During Combat Elite warriors are better equipped and trained than their ordinary counterparts. Even when outnumbered, they hold their ground, shooting at foes with poisoned arrows and falling back to cover if attacked. They use stealth to sneak behind or outflank foes, and only engage in melee if they have no other choice.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 10 hit points, they order any remaining kobolds to hold the line while they retreat to safety to drink healing potions. They fight to the death only if cornered, or if they know their boss Zalsus (see page 12) is watching.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 13, **Con** 10, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

Feats Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Craft (trapmaking) +9, Perception +5, Profession (miner) +1, Stealth +12

Languages Draconic

SQ crafty

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (2), Medium spider venom (3 doses); **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork longsword, shortbow with 20 arrows, pouch of 3d6 gp



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Dark Fey: Among the most dangerous denizens of Candlestone Caverns are the evil fey of the Court of Ether and their allies. These sinister creatures include gremlins, evil pixies, quicklings, and redcaps. Under the rule of **Queen Frilogarma** (NE female nymph sorcerer 11), the fey spin vast webs of intrigue and violence, preying on surface folk who are unlucky enough to cross their path, and encouraging surface-dwelling fey to acts of violence at every opportunity. Rumors that the dark fey were in some way responsible for the quake that exposed the caverns to the air are supported by the strange fact that their caverns never seem to suffer from the tremors that plague the region. The Court of Ether is detailed further in *Into the Darklands*.

Drow: Rarely seen, the drow of Candlestone are nevertheless an important presence in the region. The nearby drow city of Blackstrand is the center of drow power in the region, and it is to this deeper city that the dark elves who run the outpost of Black Siren are loyal. Even among the Candlestone tribes, the drow are a mystery.

Duergar: The dwarves' dark cousins maintain a fortress called Tar Vermilon deep in the caverns. Though these duergar do not fully trust the fey of the Court of Ether, they sometimes enter temporary alliances with agents of Queen Frilogarma when they need help in harvesting more slaves for the endless toil of perfecting their carved halls and ever-expanding tunnels.

Mites: A race of debased fey, the mites are ostracized even by their dark cousins in the Court of Ether. Small, weak, and cowardly, the mites lurk in deep tunnels far from the light and other races they fear. If pressed, however, these small tribes can strike back with surprising ferocity, attacking alongside their trained insects and ruthlessly overwhelming any foes with their intimidating numbers.

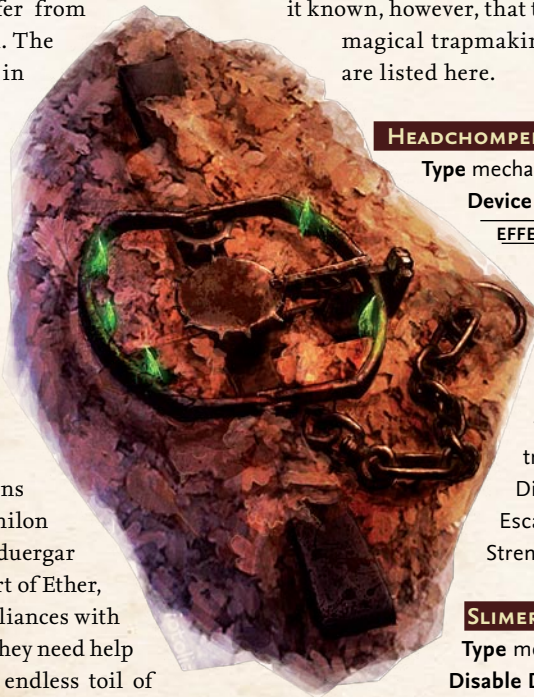
Mongrelmen: Though these creatures are fearsome to behold, they are one of the few Candlestone tribes who are not immediately hostile to surface-dwellers. Living in isolated communities throughout the caverns, mongrelmen prefer to retreat rather than face open battle. If contacted peacefully, they can be persuaded to act as guides, or as sources of valuable information about the other inhabitants of the caverns.

TRAPS

The creatures of Candlestone build traps of varying levels of sophistication. The duergar prefer simple hidden pits,

deadfalls, and entanglements, while kobold traps are far more varied and imaginative, running the gamut from simple arrow traps to more elaborate defenses such as poisoned bear traps that hang on chains and swing down to snap at unsuspecting heads, or cleverly hidden stone gutters that siphon green slime down from above.

As kobolds are not especially skilled in magic, most of their traps are mechanical in nature. Also well-versed in the use of poisons, they have supplemented their arsenal with substances obtained through trade with the surface world and the drow. The Black Claws have made it known, however, that they will pay well for expertise in magical trapmaking. Two typical Black Claw traps are listed here.



HEADCHOMPER CR 3

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 22

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual
Effect Atk +10 melee (2d6+3 plus Small centipede poison); jaws snap shut around the victim and limit mobility to within 15 feet of trap site; the trap can be escaped with a DC 20 Disable Device check, a DC 22 Escape Artist check, or a DC 24 Strength check.

SLIMER CHUTE CR 4

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual
Effect Atk +5 melee touch; creature hit is exposed to green slime (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 416)

TREASURES AND REWARDS

Numerous tales of the great treasures hidden within Candlestone Caverns lure adventurers into this region. One such tale tells the sad story of the dwarf Vald Norgir.

When Tar Taargadth fell, the hero Vald Norgir's entire clan was slain. Enraged at his clan's defeat, Vald created a great warhammer, a mighty intelligent weapon he then used to destroy the orcs and duergar responsible for his clan's destruction. This thirst for vengeance finally claimed Vald as well when he perished in the depths of Candlestone after he used the hammer to bring a cavern down on top of his enemies, accidentally sealing off his only escape. Rumors hold that his hammer and armor have since been reclaimed and are now wielded by one of the duergar leaders of Tar Vermilon.

**NORGIR'S RUIN**LE +2 *dwarf bane warhammer*

Aura strong evocation; CL 15th

Slot —; Price 91,712 gp; Weight 5 lbs.

STATISTICS

Int 12; Wis 5 (originally 14); Cha 16; Ego 13 (17 with restored Wisdom)

Senses 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Communication speech

Languages Dwarven, Undercommon

Powers Knowledge (dungeoneering) +14 (10 ranks), *dispel magic* 1/day, *invisibility purge* 1/dayPurpose defeat dwarves (*Norgir's Ruin* can detect dwarves within 60 feet, and can cast *earthquake* once per day in any area that includes structures built by dwarves)**DESCRIPTION**

Norgir's Ruin is an intelligent +2 *dwarf bane warhammer*. It has spent the past several generations in the possession of the same enemies it was once crafted to defeat. In that time, the weapon has gone somewhat insane, warped to thirst for the death of non-duergar dwarves and eager to please the line of duergar rulers of Tar Vermilon. Restoring it to its original purpose is possible only by seeking out a living descendant of Vald Norgir and securing an *atonement* spell from that dwarf to absolve the magic warhammer of its madness. Doing so re-aligns its special purpose to oppose duergar, changes its alignment to lawful good, and raises its Wisdom score up to 14.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *dispel magic*, *earthquake*, *invisibility purge*, *summon monster I*; **Cost** 46,012 gp

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following adventure hooks can be used to start adventures set in Candlestone Caverns.

Against the Slavers: The amoral merchants who trade with the Black Claw kobolds sometimes deal in slaves. Party members or friends of the adventurers may have been abducted by these merchants, and must be rescued before they are turned over to the duergar, the dark fey, or some other evil denizen of the caverns. In all likelihood the kidnap victims have been taken to the Vault for safekeeping, or perhaps the adventurers must track down the captives as they are being taken deeper underground.

Rescue Emily: A local farmer laments that his beloved Emily has been taken by the Black Claws and offers adventurers a reward for her recovery. If the adventurers fail to fully investigate they will discover that Emily is indeed in the hands of the kobolds, but is actually a prize dairy cow (see area 12 of the Vault).

SAMPLE LEVEL: THE VAULT

Be they sold by slavers from the surface or captured on raids from the caverns themselves, the majority of living captives who are taken to Candlestone end up in the region

ONE-WAY TUNNELS

Where others might have seen a crisis when powerful creatures from deeper caves crept toward the surface, the Black Claw kobolds saw only opportunity. By building clever one-way tunnels, not only could they keep the monsters away from their lairs, but they could use them as de facto allies in their raids upon the surface. Black Claw engineers set to converting some of the new openings to the surface into one-way passages that would force creatures upward. To lure creatures into the tunnels, the kobolds bait them with rotting meat, fungus, and bound captives. Forward-jutting spikes on the one-way hinged doors, walls, and floor encourage creatures that enter these tunnels to climb toward the surface. The kobolds endlessly improve and revise their operation, even going so far as to collapse old tunnels as they are discovered and dig new ones.

Hunters who track the creatures that emerge on the surface can often find their point of entry, providing relatively trap-free access to the caves. If the kobolds have not yet collapsed the tunnels, the hunters can descend into the caverns. The wall and floor spikes are made of wood or chiseled stone; they count as difficult terrain when heading downhill, and require a DC 10 Reflex save each round of descent to avoid lacerations equivalent to those caused by caltrops. Those descending should also be wary in case more creatures are on their way up, drawn by noise, bait, or the light from above.

known as the Vault. This section of the caverns is deep in the territory of the Black Claw kobolds, and serves as a prison for slaves awaiting purchase, either by unscrupulous merchants from above or sinister humanoids from below. The kobolds make no real distinction, as long as the coins are good.

The Vault itself was not originally built by the kobolds—the complex was originally built by dwarves to serve as a treasury, but after the fall of Tar Taargadth, these rooms lay vacant for many centuries until the Black Claw kobolds eventually moved in. The Vault is designed to challenge 4th-level characters.

BLACK CLAW PATROLS

Most of the Black Claw kobolds found in the Vault are typical members of their kind—first-level warriors armed with spears and slings and wearing leather armor. These kobolds are commanded by officers who have dark red or even black scales, and are outfitted with superior equipment and training. Considerable friction exists between the elites and ordinary kobolds, but for the most part, the rank-



PATHFINDER CAMPAIGN SETTING: DUNGEONS OF GOLARION

and-file kobolds keep their grievances to themselves until they see their commanders taken down—once all Black Claw officers are slain, any remaining kobold warriors in the group scatter and flee deeper into the caverns.

A typical Vault patrol is a CR 3 encounter consisting of a single Black Claw elite and 4 standard kobolds.

TRAPS IN THE VAULT

The kobolds have rigged the entire vault with traps of various kinds. Those who patrol the Vault quickly memorize trap locations so that they can be easily avoided. Use the following key to track what trap is located where in the Vault. Statistics for these traps can be found on page 420 of the Pathfinder Core Rules, or earlier in this book on page 8.

VAULT TRAPS

Map Key	Trap	CR
a	Pit Trap	1
b	Javelin Trap	2
c	Spiked Pit Trap	2
d	Camouflaged Pit Trap	3
e	Headchomper	3
f	Slimer Chute	4

1. VAULT BRIDGE (CR 2)

Only one entrance connects the Vault to the rest of Candlestone Caverns. The strength of the entrance's defenses is testimony to the Vault's growing importance to the kobolds. Access to the main gates is via a 5-foot-wide bridge that crosses a deep circular sinkhole—an iron gate is set into the wall at the far end of the ramp.

Trap: The bridge itself is well-defended even when no kobolds watch from the entry hall (area 2), for several places on the wooden bridge are fitted with spring-loaded panels that pop up when something steps on them, knocking victims into the 30-foot-deep pit below. Usually, the kobolds don't have creatures dwelling in the pit, but now and then giant centipedes or a gray ooze or similar creature might find its way into the sinkhole, increasing the danger for anyone who falls into the pit. Clambering up the sinkhole walls is possible with a DC 15 Climb check.

SPRING-LOADED PANEL CR 2

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 22; **Disable Device** DC 22

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** manual

Effect panel flips up and knocks one victim off the bridge into the sinkhole (Reflex DC 15 avoids; 30 foot fall, 3d6 damage)

2. ENTRY HALL (CR 3)

The reinforced iron gate (hardness 10, 60 hp, break DC 30) that bars entrance into the Vault is normally kept

locked from the inside. The locking mechanism is attached to a large lever along the wall 5 feet north of the gate inside this room—a creature with a reach of at least 10 feet can reach around the corner to manually lift the gate, provided the limb it's using can wriggle through the gate's bars (DC 20 Escape Artist check).

This room is where most business transactions between the kobolds and their sinister customers or slave suppliers take place. Non-kobolds and non-slaves are rarely, if ever, allowed further into the Vault than this room.

Creatures: Two Black Claw elites watch over this room from the safety of cleverly hidden alcoves in the ceiling just above the entrance to the room. They can watch anyone approaching the entrance in area 1 via a pair of cleverly hidden peep holes, and as soon as anyone sets foot into area 2, they pull a lever in their hidden alcove that opens a trap door directly above the inside entrance, dropping a large round boulder down into the square below. Any creature in this square takes 5d6 points of damage unless it makes a DC 20 Reflex save to dodge the falling rock. In any event, the round after the boulder lands, it rolls out onto the bridge in area 1, and held in place by the bridge's railing, it careens down the length of the span at 40 feet per round. If the boulder rolls into a square occupied by a creature, the creature takes 3d6 points of damage unless it makes a DC 15 Reflex save to dodge to the side—if this save is successful, the creature must make a second DC 15 Reflex save (or, alternatively, a DC 20 Acrobatics check) to hang on to the outer edge of the bridge's railing and avoid falling into the sinkhole below.

Once the mayhem with the rolling boulder resolves, the two elites drop down into area 2 on short ropes to attack the PCs and raise the alarm—the additional kobolds in area 3 arrive in 1d4+2 rounds to provide support.

BLACK CLAW ELITES (2) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 34 each (see page 7)

3. COMMON ROOM (CR 3)

This large room serves as a barracks for the kobolds stationed at the Vault. They sleep on crude fur beds, but despite this the room is relatively well organized and clean. At any one time, eight standard kobolds can be found here, typically sleeping, gambling, or sparring.

KOBOLDS (8) CR 1/4

XP 100 each

hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 183)

4. GUARD POSTS (CR 3)

Each of these posts is guarded by a team of kobolds—one elite and 4 warriors. There's a 50% chance that these guards



The Vault

1 square = 5 feet



PATHFINDER CAMPAIGN SETTING: DUNGEONS OF GOLARION

on patrol, sneaking through the Vault's halls, in which case this room is empty.

BLACK CLAW ELITE CR 1

XP 400

hp 34 (see page 7)

KOBOLDS (4) CR 1/4

XP 100 each

hp 5 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 183)

5. MESS HALL

The kobolds take their meals in this large chamber. Unlike their savage cousins elsewhere in the Candlestone complex, the Black Claws sit at long tables and are served by slaves or lower-ranking warriors, who also prepare the food and keep the place tidy.

6. SUPPLY ROOM

Sufficient food and staples are kept here to allow the kobolds to withstand a lengthy siege. Supplies include preserved meat (from various species, including humans,

ferro, and goblins), dried mushrooms, tubers, ground roots for porridge, barrels of ale stolen or traded from the surface, wine, and water—there's enough here to keep the kobolds and most of their slaves alive for several months.

7. CAPTAIN'S CHAMBERS (CR 6)

Known for his austerity and his love of combat, Captain Zalsus is also a talented schemer who has survived several attempts on his life by jealous rivals. As a cousin of the current ruler of the Black Claws (King Vexatox), Zalsus could have been a member of the pampered elite among the tribe, yet he chose to shun most of the luxuries reserved for the upper tier of kobold society. The main exceptions are his arms and armor, which are both of the highest quality.

Zalsus spends much of his time here in his quarters eating, sparring with warriors, composing reports to the king, and organizing transfers of slaves to shady customers. The captain also periodically joins patrols of kobolds in their rounds through the Vault. If the alarm is raised, Zalsus does just this—moving toward area 2 in search of intruders to help defeat.

7A. Office: Were it not for the half-sized accommodations, this chamber could be mistaken for the office of a human military commander.

7B. Sparring Room: Zalsus's exercise room contains archery targets and two human-sized practice dummies.

7C. Bedroom: The commander's bedchamber is spartan in the extreme, with only a single chest for his belongings, a straw pallet, and a very clean chamber pot.



ZALSUS CR 6

XP 2,400

Male kobold fighter 7

LE Small humanoid (reptilian)

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural, +1 size)

hp 64 (7d10+21)

Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +2; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +2

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk shortspear +9/+4 (1d4)

Ranged +1 composite longbow +14/+9 (1d6+4/x3)

Special Attacks weapon training (bows +1)

TACTICS

Before Combat Zalsus takes a *potion of barkskin* before a fight.

During Combat Zalsus has little problem firing arrows into melee, and prefers ranged combat over melee overall if given the option.



Morale If Zalsus is reduced to fewer than 15 hp, he flees the Vault, or begs for his life if flight isn't an option.

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 11

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

Feats Deadly Aim, Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Toughness, Weapon Focus (composite longbow), Weapon Specialization (composite longbow)

Skills Craft (trapmaking) +13, Intimidate +10, Perception +1, Stealth +17

Languages Common, Draconic

SQ armor training 2, crafty

Combat Gear *potions of barkskin* +2 (2), *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +1 chain shirt, +1 composite longbow with 20 arrows, masterwork shortspear, *cloak of resistance* +1, key ring containing keys for all locks in the Vault

8. TREASURY GUARDS (CR 5)

The Vault's treasury is accessed through a series of antechambers in the northwestern corner of the vault. This room is always guarded by a squad of four Black Claw elites who never abandon their post, even when the rest of the Vault is under attack. The door leading into area 9 is made of iron and kept locked (hardness 10, hp 60, break DC 28, Disable Device DC 30).

BLACK CLAW ELITES (4)

CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 34 each (see page 7)

9. TRAPPED ROOM (CR 6)

Trap: Both of the iron doors into this room are kept locked. An attempt to bypass the western door without unlocking it triggers several headchomper traps—everyone in the room is targeted by one of these traps if the master trigger on the door isn't disabled or bypassed by using the key.

10. VAULT INTERIOR (CR 6)

Creatures: The vault contains three cages, each holding a single giant black widow spider. All three cages are connected to timed-release latches—unless a master key is used to turn off the release mechanism near the entrance to this room (or it's otherwise disabled with a DC 35 Disable Device check) within 1 round of the door being opened, all three cages open, letting the three ravenous vermin out to attack the intruders.

GIANT BLACK WIDOW SPIDERS (3)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 37 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 256)

Treasure: Spread among the various chests, crates, and sacks in this room are 8,213 cp, 2,490 sp, 991 gp, 23

low-quality gems worth 5 gp each, 9 semi-precious gems worth 50 gp each, 2 amethysts worth 100 gp each, a suit of masterwork half-plate, a +1 *heavy wooden shield*, and a *pearl of power* (2nd level spell).

II. PRISON ENTRANCES

The unworked maze of caves that makes up the southern portion of the Vault is patrolled by two groups of Black Claws—there's a cumulative 5% chance per minute spent here that one of these patrols happens by. At each area 11 location, a locked circular wooden trap door lies on the ground. A 40-foot coil of knotted rope sits in an alcove next to every trap door, for under the trap door is a 20-foot-deep pit that leads down to a large cavern below.

12. PRISON CAVERN (CR 6)

This large cavern has a claustrophobic feel, for despite its size, it is only 7 feet high. The cavern floor is pocked with iron gates covering oubliettes in the ground—each of these lies directly under one of the prison entrances in area 11 above. Chains and runners allow these gratings to be slid horizontally aside to grant access to the 20-foot-deep, 7-foot-diameter pits below. It is in these horrible oubliettes that captives are kept between their capture and sale as slaves. When the kobolds wish to lower or extract a new prisoner, they open a trap door at the far side of the cave and drop several juicy chunks of meat in to distract the cavern's denizens (see *Creatures* below), then send several kobolds down to open the desired oubliette. Prisoners are lowered and raised via ropes as needed. Food and water are generally just dropped from area 11 above, with the prisoners forced to scrounge from whatever actually makes it through the bars to splatter on the floor of the oubliette for sustenance. Prisoners don't normally last for long in these conditions, so the kobolds try to cycle through their stock relatively quickly.

You should place appropriate prisoners in these oubliettes, including surface dwellers such as merchants, farmers and soldiers, and even Darklands inhabitants such as duergar, drow, or dark fey. The unfortunate Emily the Cow may be placed down here as well, providing a significant challenge to PCs who wish to rescue her. The methods the kobolds used to get the panicked cow down into the pit are best left to the imagination.

Creatures: The kobolds keep a small nest of 4 giant ants in the cavern. The constantly hungry insects feed mostly on the fungus growing between the oubliettes, but quickly move to feed on fresher meat the kobolds drop down to distract the ants when they need to transfer prisoners.

GIANT ANTS (4)

CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 18 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 16)





GALLOWSPIRE

NO ONE HAS VENTURED INSIDE THAT ROTTING TOWER SINCE ARNISANT CAST DOWN THE LICH—RISKING BOTH LIFE AND SOUL TO LOCK HIM IN THOSE LIGHTLESS DUNGEONS BELOW. BUT SOMETHING STIRS WITHIN. THE DEAD FLOCK TO THIS PLACE IN EVER GREATER NUMBERS, AS IF THEY KNOW THE TIME OF THE TYRANT AGAIN GROWS NEAR, AS IF FROM HIS BLACK PRISON THE KING OF THE DEAD WHISPERS HIS VOICELESS DECREE AND HIS HORDES GATHER TO OBEY ONCE MORE.

SO WE WATCH, AND WAIT. THAT IS OUR OATH. WE WILL BE THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE SHOULD THE PRISON OF GALLOWSPIRE FALL. SO WE HAVE SERVED BEFORE, AND IF IT COMES TO IT, WE SHALL DO THIS DUTY AGAIN UNTIL EVEN THE LEGENDS OF THE WHISPERING TYRANT ARE FORGOTTEN.

—TESTAMENT OF THE LASTWALL GUARDIAN

Located in the Hungry Mountains in southwestern Ustalav, the tower of Gallowspire stands as a crumbling testament to the power of the immortal lich Tar-Baphon, known as the Whispering Tyrant. Built atop a vast series of dungeons, the tower and its subterranean levels are rumored to be one source of the lich's immense power. Those who wish to visit this dungeon have a long and dangerous trek ahead of them. The dungeon been sealed for nearly 1,000 years, and is guarded both by those attempting to keep Tar-Baphon sealed within this accursed place, and by Tar-Baphon's followers, who are eager to defend their lord against intruders seeking his final demise. With few settlements nearby, the journey to this dungeon is a perilous one at the very least, even before one considers the powers of the nearly godlike lich who still lives within.

HISTORY

Few threats to the Inner Sea region, and to the entirety of Golarion, have been as great as that posed by the immortal lich known to many as the Whispering Tyrant. For centuries, the lich ruled over much of central Avistan from his seat of power, the tower of Gallowspire amid the dead city of Adorak.

Once a center of trade and industry boldly standing against the dangers of the Hungry Mountains, Adorak was the primary source of gems in Ustalav, and the wealth from its mines filled the coffers of counts and kings. The coming of the Whispering Tyrant halted the river of riches that had long flowed through the city, unleashing instead a bounty of bones. Those who survived the invasion of orcs and the undead were swiftly forced into slavery and sent back into the depths. Yet instead of coaxing gems and tin from the deep, now came stubborn metals and dark stone, infused with the strange radiations of the vast depths. The mines grew, cutting into the earth to depths never dared by the miners of Adorak. That which was dragged from the mines didn't travel far, for nearly atop the mines rose the scaffolding for a terrible structure, a tower that would be both a throne for the Whispering Tyrant and a monument to his dark power. When the terrible obelisk was completed, the mines below were sealed, the living locked away with their undying taskmasters to scream and die in the dark, only to arise once more as immortal slaves of the Tyrant.

From his new citadel, the Whispering Tyrant ruled over an ever-expanding realm of the dead. The cruel lich often ordered defeated enemies impaled on gigantic hooks and hung from Gallowspire's walls, securing its grisly name. Those unfortunate enough to avoid such a swift and final fate were dragged into the extensive dungeons beneath the tower to meet even more horrible ends. As the years passed and the Whispering Tyrant's influence

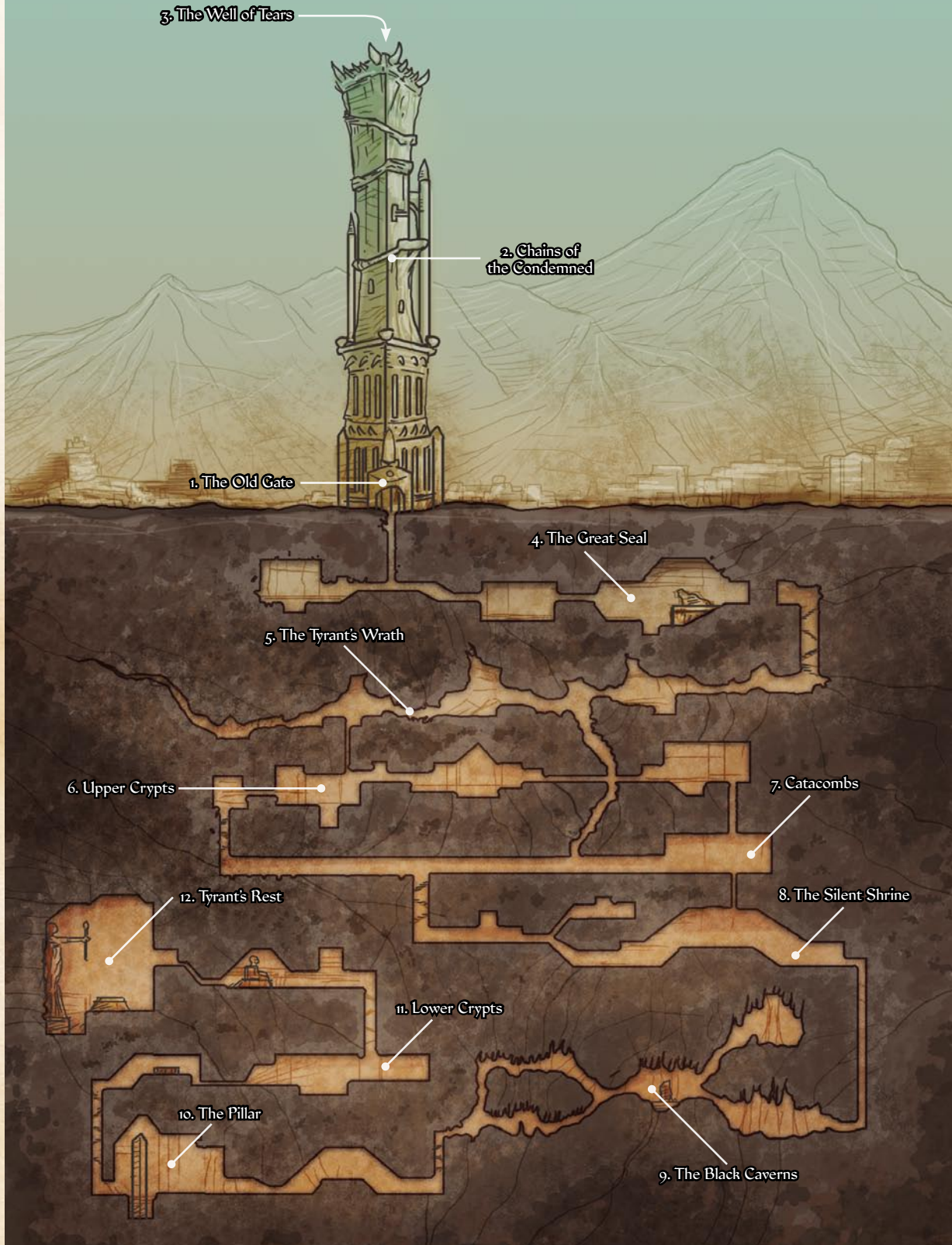
grew, a great crusade formed to oppose him. Forged of an alliance between three powerful groups—the empire of Taldor, the dwarf-lords of Kraggodan, and the Knights of Ozem—the crusaders spent years in battles that raged across Lake Encarthan and its surrounding nations. Eventually, the alliance established a forward stronghold on the northern banks of Lake Encarthan. From this bulwark, they pushed inland toward the seat of the lich's power, his capital of Gallowspire.

As the crusade against the Whispering Tyrant wore on, the battles became all the more desperate. Finally, in the year 3827 AR the alliance finally reached the doors of Gallowspire itself. The leader of the crusade, General Arnisant, met the lich in battle, bearing with him the legendary *Shield of Aroden*. During the battle, the Whispering Tyrant used a *wish* to attempt to pull the general's still-beating heart from his chest into his waiting claws, but the *Shield of Aroden* intervened, saving Arnisant. Yet so great was the Whispering Tyrant's power that when his magic smote the shield, it shattered into many pieces. One shard pierced Tar-Baphon's hand, destroying his body with holy fire.

But the crusaders knew that a lich could not be so easily defeated—they knew Tar-Baphon had but retreated to his phylactery, somewhere deep within Gallowspire. But their triumph had shattered the last remnants of the Whispering Tyrant's army, and while the lich recovered deep below, the crusaders set to work above, sealing his dungeons with powerful magic and transforming his throne into his tomb. The alliance broke soon thereafter, but on peaceable terms, with the Knights of Ozem remaining and gradually transforming the crusaders' nearest fortress into the nearby city of Vigil. They founded the nation of Lastwall there and have watched over the Hungry Mountains ever since, constantly on the lookout for signs of the Whispering Tyrant's return.

In the time since, the dungeon below Gallowspire has remained largely undisturbed, due in large part to the cunning and powerful seal that prevents anyone from entering or, more importantly, leaving. Each branch of the alliance that helped defeat the Whispering Tyrant was entrusted with guarding one of three lesser seals located elsewhere on Golarion, each of which helped to focus the power of the greater seal within Gallowspire that kept the deeper dungeon levels shut. For the Whispering Tyrant to find freedom, all three of these seals would have to be broken before the final *Great Seal* within the dungeon could be breached. Much of the dungeon is as it was nearly 1,000 years ago when it was sealed, while other parts have radically changed because of age or the Tyrant's rage. No one outside the tower knows the true state of the dungeons within, for none have dared to venture inside since the dying general Arnisant ordered the place sealed forever.

Gallowspire



DESCRIPTION

Located at the heart of the ruins of Adorak, the dungeon of Gallowspire is marked by the massive tower that stands above it. Made of dark gray basalt, the tower is festooned with hundreds of chains that end in massive hooks. The Whispering Tyrant used these same hooks to impale and display the bodies of his enemies, and many of these bodies remain so impaled today, hideously preserved by the tower's fell magic.

Those who wish to reach Gallowspire must first pass through the dead city. Once home to many of the marshaled forces of the Whispering Tyrant, much of Adorak was completely razed during the final battles. It has not been rebuilt, and has fallen into complete ruin over the past 1,000 years. Hordes of undead lurk amid these ruins, drawn to the power of the imprisoned lich. While most are simple, mindless husks (like skeletons or zombies), some are intelligent, ever seeking a way to release their master.

The tower itself is a formidable structure. As with the dungeons below, the ground-level entrances to Gallowspire are sealed. The only conventional entrance to the tower's interior can be found at its peak, but reaching this height is dangerous in and of itself. Flight is perilous, for a vortex of wind and incorporeal undead constantly circles the tower, such that the numerous walkways, balconies, and crumbling stairways that decorate the tower's sides present the safest method of ascent—although even this route is warded by traps and guardians.

Inside Gallowspire, the tower's central shaft is warded with variable gravity, powerful guardians, and deadly traps running throughout its length. These obstacles were set by the Knights of Ozem to prevent others from attempting to free the Whispering Tyrant. The first level of the dungeons below is stocked with a host of additional guardians and traps designed to both repel intruders and hinder the lich should he attempt to escape. All of these stand outside the *Great Seal* at the end of the dungeon's first level. To this day, the seal is the only thing preventing Tar-Baphon from resuming his conquest of Golarion.

The deeper dungeons of Gallowspire are dark and grim, their walls and ceilings made of a dull gray stone veined with black metal. Bones litter the floor, in some cases piled so high as to make the floor difficult to traverse. The Whispering Tyrant rules supreme here, and his power has infused the place, giving it a number of unique characteristics. These qualities begin beyond the *Great Seal* and are present throughout the rest of the dungeon.

Echoes and Cries: Anyone venturing through the dungeons of Gallowspire cannot help but hear the tortured murmurs and cries of the countless souls who met their ends locked within the mines under Adorak, as well as the innumerable fools who displeased the Tyrant during his rule. While faint, these distant sounds make it

THE UNDEAD STORM

Gallowspire is surrounded by a storm of incorporeal undead. These creatures are drawn to the tower, yet dare not touch the tower itself or creatures that clamber up and down its sides, as if they fear to draw that close to their imprisoned lord. While anyone attempting to fly through this storm is sure to encounter numerous undead creatures, such as ghosts (most of whom are at least 10th-level spellcasters), greater shadows, and dread wraiths, but the storm itself poses an even more sinister effect. Those flying toward the tower gain 2 negative levels every round they remain within the storm. The storm extends 500 feet in every direction from the tower, although the lower 50 feet, closest to the ground, remain safe. Creatures approaching on the ground are thus ignored, as are those climbing the tower using its many walkways and crumbling stairs.

difficult to hear anything outside a character's immediate surroundings. The DC for any Perception skill check that relies on hearing increases by +10.

Oppressive Gloom: The illumination throughout the dungeon is dim light. Nonmagical light sources cannot increase the light level, and magic ones have their areas reduced by half. No light source, no matter its origin, can increase the light level to bright light. The save DC of any spell that has the light descriptor is reduced by 2.

Rising Dead: Those who die within Gallowspire's dungeon (but not in the tower itself) rise as undead in 24 hours unless their bodies are sanctified (by casting *bless* or *consecrate* upon the body). The type of undead depends on the total Hit Dice of the dead creature. If the creature had 7 or fewer HD, it returns as a zombie. If it had 8 to 15 HD, it returns as a ghost. If it had more than 15 HD, it rises as a vampire.

Taint of the Unliving: Negative energy flows through the very stones of Gallowspire in dull, black veins. This negative energy is so strong that it affects all sources of negative and positive energy within the dungeon. Any spell or effect that heals damage to living creatures heals only half the normal amount. If such an effect damages undead creatures, it deals only half the normal amount of damage. Any spell or effect that uses negative energy to harm living creatures deals half again as much damage (+50%). If such a spell or effect restores hit points to undead creatures, it restores half again as many hit points (+50%). All undead in Gallowspire receive channel resistance +2. This stacks with any channel resistance they might already possess. The taint of the unliving can be temporarily purged by a *consecrate* effect.

BEYOND 20TH LEVEL

Several of the dungeon levels found below Gallowspire contain threats beyond those normally presented in Pathfinder products. Since the exact rules for how to build and run encounters of this magnitude have yet to be solidified for the Pathfinder RPG, the denizens of levels 9 through 12 are presented in even relatively vague terms, so that if you run games using variant rules for such ultra-high-level play, you can develop the encounters and dangers here to match your needs more easily.

Indestructible: While the contents of the dungeon itself can be destroyed normally, the external walls of the dungeon are protected by the power of the *Great Seal*. As long as this seal remains in place in the highest dungeon level, the external boundaries of Gallowspire's dungeons cannot be harmed or altered by physical means or mortal magic. This effect also prevents planar travel or teleportation as a means of exiting the prison—such effects function normally when the departure and arrival points are both within areas of the dungeon behind the *Great Seal* itself, but do not allow travel beyond those boundaries. Conjuration effects that call or summon creatures function normally within the dungeon, save that creatures called into the dungeon cannot then leave—a surprise that most outsiders greet with rage, often directed at their conjurer once they become freed of their obligations to the spellcaster.

Gallowspire's levels are unusual in that they don't begin at the top of an underground complex—instead, they begin outside of the tower, ascend its heights, and then descend from the top down to the underground chambers below. And unlike the other dungeons presented in this book, even the least dangerous levels of Gallowspire are not to be entered lightly—this dungeon is truly only for the bravest and most powerful of heroes to explore.

Level 1. The Old Gate (CR 14): A great gateway that once served as entrance to the tower itself lies at ground level outside the tower. These gigantic adamantine doors open and close with the aid of a pair of huge animated skeletal arms built into the structure. When the lich was finally defeated, this gateway was sealed to make the tower more secure. While the main gate still functions, it now leads only to a series of narrow chambers that climb the edge of the tower before emerging some 60 feet above the ground below. Cunning traps protect these chambers, as do a variety of undead that lurk in these forgotten passageways.

Level 2. Chains of the Condemned (CR 15): A veritable cloud of spectres, ghosts, shadows, wraiths, and other restless spirits swirls around Gallowspire. Anyone wishing

to ascend the tower must scale the maze of crumbling stairs and shattered platforms that wraps around the outside of the tower. Many of the poor souls who still hang from the tower's walls are now powerful undead creatures as well—they wait until the living draw close before suddenly moving in to strike.

Level 3. The Well of Tears (CR 15): Those who reach the top of the tower must next breach a mithral door to gain access to the tower itself. Within, a vast shaft runs down the length of the tower to the dungeon entrance below. Gravity within the tower is radically altered—"down" is toward the outer walls of the tower, effectively transforming the tower into what seems to be a vast, circular passage. A number of small chambers along the tower's inner length house several powerful guardians and wards meant to keep intruders from reaching the prison of the Whispering Tyrant.

Level 4. The Great Seal (CR 15): The first true level of Gallowspire's dungeon, this level's entire purpose has been revised by the Knights of Ozem and other powerful guardians to protect the *Great Seal* from intruders. It features a number of powerful traps and guardians designed to keep the Whispering Tyrant's allies from breaking in to free their imprisoned master. Few creatures have made it this far, and none have yet been able to overcome the power of the *Great Seal*.

Of particular note on this level is a trio of tombs that hold the remains of three nameless soldiers, each representing one of the three groups who worked to defeat the Whispering Tyrant nearly 1,000 years ago. Over the years, the foul powers of Gallowspire have corrupted these corpses, animating them as ghosts (each a 14th-level cavalier) who now prowl this level, hungry for the living. Should they be returned to their eternal rest, the spirits of the three shamed knights manifest momentarily, willing to answer questions about their ancient struggle. While few living creatures have made it to this level of the dungeon, one loyal servant to the Whispering Tyrant can be found here. Her name is **Iliamaniss** (NE elf vampire druid 14)—she has been scheming for nearly 100 years, trying to find a way to undo the *Great Seal*, and she's claimed several rooms in the dungeon as her workshops and chambers for powerful elemental and undead minions.

The final guardian on this level stands before the *Great Seal* itself—an ancient and powerful sphinx named **Shadnusaptera** (LN sphinx oracle 12), placed here by the surviving generals of the crusade and tasked with destroying anyone who might approach the seal. Shadnusaptera's health is maintained by the power of the *Great Seal*—as long as it remains unbroken, she remains young and need not eat or drink, but if the *Great Seal* is breached, the years immediately catch up to the powerful oracle and she crumbles to dust. Only those who bear the shattered remnants the *Shield of Aroden* are not attacked

on sight, but since these fragments are carefully guarded, fulfilling this requirement seems difficult at best.

Level 5. The Tyrant's Wrath (CR 17): After recovering from the destruction of his body, the Whispering Tyrant found himself locked inside his own dungeons, unable to escape through his powerful magic. Early in his imprisonment, after he exhausted attempts to use planar travel or teleportation to leave his tomb, Tar-Baphon resorted to physical methods and tried to tunnel his way to freedom. The magic placed over the dungeon blocked even these methods, however. His frustration eventually got the better of his reasoning, as the current state of this dungeon level testifies. In his wrath, the lich very nearly tore this level of the dungeon apart, leaving it in ruins. What once served as the barracks for his most powerful living servants is now haunted by ghosts and other powerful undead. One such denizen, a powerful ghoul calling himself the **Prince of Fangs** (CE male ghoul wizard 17), has turned against his former master and might actually be of assistance to the PCs if they can find a way to sate his gruesome desires.

Level 6. Upper Crypts (CR 18): This level of the dungeon was used as a sort of storage for many of the minor undead minions the Whispering Tyrant kept on hand for various purposes. Throughout the level lie hundreds of undead, mostly lesser types such as ghouls and zombies, but they are all cleverly hidden among the literally thousands of corpses that line the walls in niches and ancient vaults. In the center of the level is a grand chamber with a statue of the Whispering Tyrant. If explorers do not make proper sacrifices to honor the lich, the undead rise up and move to destroy the intruders in one gigantic tide, meshing together into hideous undead amalgamations of bodies and necromantic power. In this level lies the court of the Whispering Tyrant's former seneschal **Gildais** (NE male winter wight rogue 5), a notorious sadist still spoken of in fearful histories and legends recording the lich's rule. Strangely, though the winter wight was said to have been present during the siege of Gallowspire and then fled into the depths, none within have seen him since the Tyrant's fall. What happened to the vicious seneschal, whether he managed to flee, and, if so, how number among the most baffling mysteries tormenting Gallowspire's residents.

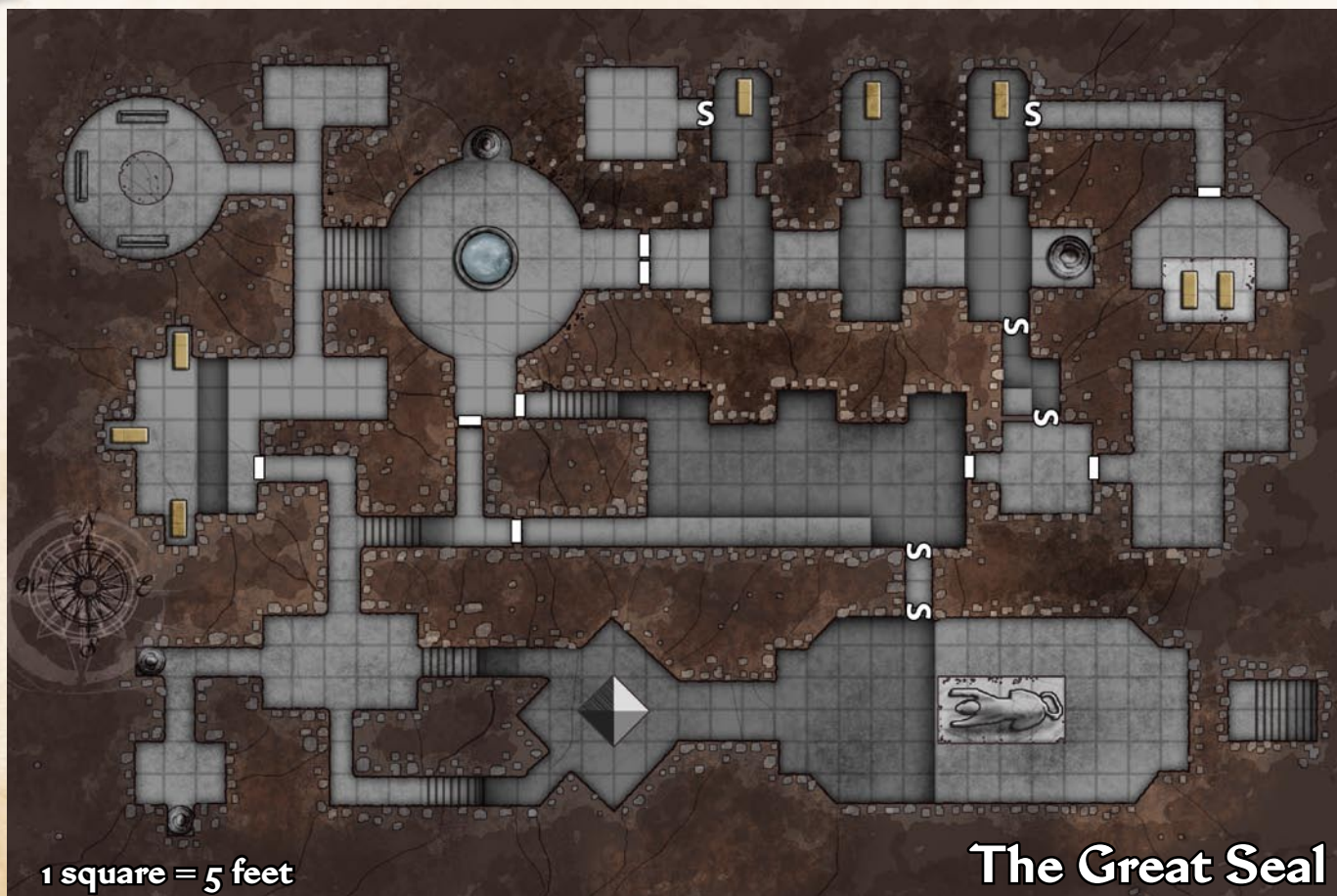
Level 7. Catacombs (CR 19): This vast layer is a maze of corridors and chambers, but its most distinguishing

feature is the layer of bones that covers nearly the entire floor of this level, sometimes to a depth of several feet. Hordes of animated skeletons (several of whom are actually quite high-level skeletal champions—18th-level fighters and rogues, for the most part) lie hidden in these piles, as well as a number of powerful unique undead made entirely of bones. The undead remains of a powerful draconic "pet," once adored but now largely forgotten by the Whispering Tyrant, claims several of the chambers of this dungeon as her own as well. This skeletal creature, a raven named **Istravek** (LE male ancient black dragon raven; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 230), is enraged with grief over its abandonment. But even this powerful undead dragon isn't the most dangerous foe here, for many of the Whispering Tyrant's failed apprentices, themselves once liches, dwell here still. They exist now as demiliches—dangerous undead whose bodies have crumbled to dust, save for their gem-encrusted skulls. While many of these former students of the Tyrant have made the transition from lich to demilich over the centuries since the tower was sealed, many were transformed at the hands of the undead king himself. While some believe Tar-Baphon favored the powers and versatility of demiliches, others believe forcing his apprentices to divest themselves of their bodies crippled them enough that few would dare try to usurp him. Regardless of the Tyrant's motives for creating these horrors, they remain capable of draining the souls of living creatures and endlessly scheme and vie for ways to regain their master's favor.

Level 8. The Silent Shrine (CR 20): The Whispering Way is a philosophy that believes undeath to be the true state of being. It should come as no surprise that Tar-Baphon was an ardent follower of this philosophy and worked to spread its tenets. Sound on this level is magically dampened, so that every noise is muted, every word a sinister whisper. While the constant cries and echoes of lost souls on this level are similarly dampened, the muffling effect serves to maintain the +10 adjustment to the DC of any Perception check made based on sound.

Many of the Whispering Way's secrets are hidden within this dungeon's libraries and laboratories. Tar-Baphon's favored apprentices used the resources on this level to become liches or other forms of undead. Shrines





1 square = 5 feet

The Great Seal

to undead-related cults like those of Urgathoa, Kabriri, Orcus, and Charon can be found here as well—although the Whispering Tyrant does not worship any of these deities, he maintained advisors and often entertained visitors associated with such cults, and by maintaining shrines to these deities here, he made such important guests comfortable. These shrines are guarded still by powerful outsiders and undead priests. The entire level is a nexus of negative energy, so powerful that undead found on this level are immune to the harmful effects of positive energy. Not surprisingly, there are a number of formidable undead guardians on this level, including a trio of mummy lords known as the **Crying Kings** (NE mummy wizard 19) who serve as the Silent Shrine's caretakers and librarians.

Level 9. The Black Caverns (CR 21): This level of the dungeon consists of a series of natural caverns, although the floors have been worked, smoothed down, and made easy to traverse—in some areas, actual worked-stone chambers expand the original chambers significantly. A small underground lake dominates this level's central cavern; a large black crystal rises from its depths to nearly reach the ceiling. This crystal and the surrounding

caverns are a primary source of the necromantic power found in these caverns—the crystal itself is an extension of the Negative Material Plane protruding into the natural world, and its existence here is in large part the reason the Whispering Tyrant chose this site for Gallowspire. Nightshades are the least of the creatures dwelling in this level.

Level 10. The Pillar (CR 22): Leaving the caves behind, this small level culminates in a large room containing a gigantic obelisk carved from a single piece of strange metal. Inscribed on the surface of this monolith are hundreds, if not thousands, of spells, composing much of the Whispering Tyrant's vast pool of arcane knowledge. Those hoping to glean knowledge from the pillar must also deal with a large number of traps and runes designed to kill or incapacitate. This level is populated primarily by powerful spellcasters, including a number of the Whispering Tyrant's lich apprentices and several powerful visiting outsiders who were trapped within the dungeon when the place was sealed.

Level 11. Lower Crypts (CR 23): The bodies of the greatest of the Whispering Tyrant's generals, bodyguards, and the few strange beings he considered his consorts

are interred here. All are powerful unique undead beings, but over the years, they have set aside their petty bickering for Tar-Baphon's favor and have fallen into dormancy—the removal of the *Great Seal* quickly wakens them, however, and they resume their competition with each other immediately, each seeking to be the one that the Whispering Tyrant first calls back to service. Being some of Tar-Baphon's most powerful minions, any one of these villains is a grave danger on its own, to say nothing of them working together as a group. Of special note, this level is the home of a false tyrant, a powerful simulacrum of the Whispering Tyrant meant to vex foes and test their mettle. Sitting on a gilded throne piled high with treasure, this duplicate lich-king is more than willing to give his unlife to protect the ruse—if slain, his body does not revert to ice and snow (as is the case of most simulacrums) but instead explodes into a storm of powerful vampiric spirits.

Level 12. Tyrant's Rest (CR 24+): This final level of the dungeon is the resting place of Tar-Baphon, the Whispering Tyrant. This is where the lich holds court, waiting for the day when he will once again be free to take on the world above, spreading across the world the gift of unlife. Here he plans and schemes, uses magic to spy on the surface and send vague dreams and instructions to his remaining followers there. He knows that those of his minions still active in the world lack the power to free him at this time, but he hopes to continue manipulating events as best he can to orchestrate his eventual release. The magic of the prison prevents him from leaving and directly communicating with his minions, but there is still much he can influence them from afar. Those reaching this level of the dungeon must deal with the lich's personal guards and attendants, not to mention the power and might of the most powerful lich the world of Golarion has ever seen. Tar-Baphon's exact level is left for you to customize for your own campaign, but at the very least he has the abilities of a 20th-level necromancer.

DENIZENS

While the upper levels of Gallowspire are populated by constructs and outsiders meant to keep intruders out of the dungeon, undead are by far the most commonly encountered foes. From simple skeletons to mighty vampires and liches, all of these creatures pay homage to the master of Gallowspire, the Whispering Tyrant, who waits and broods in the lowest levels of the complex. Many of the undead possess class levels, such as the cunning ghast who calls himself the **Starving Lord** (LE male ghast monk 7/wizard 13). Once one of Tar-Baphon's apprentices, this ghast now avoids his former master, hoping only to escape.

Tar-Baphon has crafted numerous constructs during his long imprisonment, ranging from typical animated

menaces to special golems that guard important areas. Of note are a group of unique bone golems that hide among the skeletons in the Catacombs and a trio of special iron golems made to look like large versions of the Whispering Tyrant himself. These golems are said to possess the ability to emit a keening that works like *wail of the banshee* instead of the usual iron golem breath weapon.

The Whispering Tyrant often associates with numerous powerful fiends as well, particularly demons and daemons. Powerful unique outsiders can be found in the lower levels, such as a large group of enormous vrock that dwell in the Black Caverns and are led by a brutal warlord named **Blood Talon** (CE female vrock ranger 12).

Although by far the most powerful lich in the Inner Sea region, Tar-Baphon often associated with other liches, and indeed, he demanded his apprentices eventually transform into those undead horrors. Many of these apprentices were destroyed during the final war against the crusaders and exist on now as demiliches, but a fair number of Tar-Baphon's more powerful proteges exist still in the deeper dungeons.

Gallowdead: Although nearly every variety of undead can be found within Gallowspire, a number of unique creatures, such as the gallowdead, can be found here as well. These undead are made from the corpses of those left to hang and rot on the tower's outer walls. Their proximity to the Whispering Tyrant and his incomprehensible power grants foul unlife and eldritch power. Similar in appearance to ordinary skeletons, gallowdead are marked by the large hook that pierces the chest of each, attached to a long chain that drags behind. These undead creatures can be found wandering both outside the dungeon and within, totally subservient to the Whispering Tyrant's foul will.

A more powerful variant of the skeletal champion template, gallowdead were powerful humanoids in life, and retain much of the power they possessed as mortals in undeath. In addition to the standard bonuses and abilities granted by the skeletal champion template, a gallowdead has the following features.

CR: A gallowdead's CR is +2 higher than that of a normal skeleton with the same HD.

Hit Dice: Add 4 racial Hit Dice to the total number of Hit Dice possessed by the base creature, instead of 2.

Defensive Abilities: A gallowdead gains DR 10/bludgeoning and magic instead of DR 5/bludgeoning. Other defensive abilities are unchanged.

Special Attacks: Gallowdead receive the following special attacks. Where applicable, the save DC against these attacks is equal to 10 + 1/2 the gallowdead's HD + the gallowdead's Charisma modifier.

Chain of the Dead (Su): As a standard action, a gallowdead can use its chain to attack its enemies. This acts as a ranged

PATHFINDER CAMPAIGN SETTING: DUNGEONS OF GOLARION

touch attack against any foe within 20 feet. If the attack hits, the target takes 1d6 points of damage for every 2 Hit Dice possessed by the gallowdead, to a maximum of 10d6. In addition, if the attack hits, the gallowdead can make a free combat maneuver check against its target with a +4 racial bonus. If the check succeeds, the target becomes grappled, but the gallowdead does not gain the grappled condition in this case. The gallowdead can make a free combat maneuver check each round to maintain its grip on the victim, but cannot take any of the special grapple actions against the victim if the check is a success.

Whispers (Ex): A gallowdead constantly whispers vile secrets and blasphemous chants. Any creature within 30 feet of a whispering gallowdead must make a Will save or become sickened for 1d4 rounds. Shaken creatures that fail this saving throw become nauseated by the secrets revealed. Each round, an affected creature may make a new Will save to recover from the effect—once a creature recovers from a gallowdead's whispers, it is immune to this ability for 24 hours. Each additional overlapping whisper aura from additional gallowdead increases the save DC by +2.

SAMPLE GALLOWDEAD

CR 14

XP 38,400

Male human gallowdead fighter 13

CE Medium undead (human)

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

Perception +19

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 13, flat-footed 29

(+12 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge,

+2 natural, +5 shield)

hp 170 (17 HD; 4d8+13d10+81)**Fort** +12, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8; +3 vs. fear**Defensive Abilities** bravery +3,channel resistance +6, **DR**10/bludgeoning; **Immune**

cold, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** +3 longsword

+24/+19/+14/+9

(1d8+23/17–20)

Special Attacks weapon

training (heavy blades +3,

bows +2, pole arms +1)

TACTICS

During Combat These gallowdead were created from the bodies of powerful fallen generals from both sides of the

battle. They fight with a single-minded purpose, focusing their attacks against one foe at a time before moving on to the next target. In combat, they always use Power Attack to bolster their damage.

Morale Gallowdead fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 16**Base Atk** +16; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 34**Feats** Bleeding Critical, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Critical

Focus, Dodge, Greater Shield Focus, Greater Weapon Focus

(longsword), Greater Weapon Focus (longsword), Improved

Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Shield

Focus, Stand Still, Step Up, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon

Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Skills Intimidate +19, Perception +19, Sense Motive +16**Languages** Common**SQ** armor training 3**Gear** +3 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, +3 longsword

TRAPS

Gallowspire is heavily trapped both within and without. Traps on the outside are primarily magical creations, with blasts of fire, cold, and electricity set to deter intruders from getting anywhere near the *Great Seal* on the first level of the dungeon. Other traps are simply meant to slow down or stop intruders entirely by putting up *walls of stone* or even *walls of force* to block progress.

Additional traps exist beyond the *Great Seal*, although many of these are ancient and in various states of disrepair. The Whispering Tyrant's minions occasionally repair them (especially those along passageways that lead to deeper parts of the dungeon), but just as many lie in ruins, their cutting blades and gaping pits more of an obstacle than a serious peril to high level characters. These traps vary wildly from simple falling blocks to deadlier *symbol* spells. *Symbols* spells are common in the deepest parts of the dungeon since the Whispering Tyrant and his more potent minions are immune to many of the effects created by these spell traps.



Two traps that appear multiple times throughout the dungeon are presented below—at the core, these traps are built upon relatively simple ideas, but they have been enhanced to deadly extremes.

DEATHFALL PIT CR 14

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 30

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** manual

Effect 60-ft.-deep pit (6d6 falling damage; DC 20 Reflex avoids); ghoulish arms erupt from the walls of the pit to attack all creatures within the pit (Atk +20 melee, 2 attacks per target for 1d6+13 damage plus paralysis for 1d4+1 rounds [Fort DC 20 negates paralysis], claws attack each round); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area)

SKULL BLAST CR 14

Type magic; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 30

EFFECTS

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

Effect blast of negative energy (20d6 negative energy damage to all living creatures, DC 20 Fort save for half damage, undead creatures are healed 20d6 points of damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 30-ft. burst)

TREASURES AND REWARDS

With all of the dangers inherent to entering Gallowspire, from the hordes of undead to the vast power of the Whispering Tyrant himself, one might think that there would be no reward great enough to risk entering this ancient dungeon, but this is not the case. The riches that lie in wait within the tomb are vast—not only the gold and magic items, but also the countless invaluable historical relics. It is even said that Tar-Baphon has in his possession more than one mighty artifact, waiting to be plundered by someone powerful and brave enough to enter his haunted realm.

One such powerful magic item is the Whispering Tyrant's helm. Fashioned by Tar-Baphon himself from ore extracted from the Shadow Plane, the helm itself was created from the skull and horns of a venerable black dragon named Naraga.

HORNS OF NARAGA (MAJOR ARTIFACT)

Aura overwhelming varied; **CL** 22nd

Slot head; **Price** —; **Weight** 8 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

The *Horns of Naraga* was constructed by the Whispering Tyrant not long after he first became a lich. In the centuries since, he has further expanded its power. When worn by an undead creature, the *Horns of Naraga* reduce all damage taken from positive energy by half. In addition, whenever the wearer touches a living creature while wearing this helm (even

if the touch is part of casting a spell or another touch attack), the touch deals an additional 5d6 points of negative energy damage and the wearer gains these hit points, just as if he had cast *vampiric touch*. The wearer of the helm is immune to acid and can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, even that created by magic. Once per day, on command, the helm can be ordered to transform into an ancient black dragon that obeys the creature that summoned it unquestioningly for 1 hour before reverting to a helm. Slaying the dragon does not destroy the helm, but it does prevent this ability from being used for 1 week. While the helm is in dragon form, the helm's owner does not receive any of the helm's other benefits.

DESTRUCTION

The helm can be destroyed by crushing it between the jaws of an ancient black dragon's skull in the middle of a desert with the sun at its zenith.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following adventure hooks might spur characters to enter Gallowspire. GMs can also find more on Gallowspire, maps of its exterior, and adventures there as part of the Carrion Crown Adventure Path in *Pathfinder Adventure #48: Shadows of Gallowspire*.

Archaeology: The Pathfinders are desperate to recover an ancient sword dating back to the time of the Whispering Tyrant. After extensive research, they have learned that the relic hides within Gallowspire, in the tomb of one of the soldiers of the crusade buried just outside of the *Great Seal*. An expedition into this level does not require that the *Great Seal* be breached, but will require heroes of the highest order to survive the dangers presented even in this uppermost level.

Final Battle: The Knights of Ozem have feared for many years that the power of the *Great Seal* is waning, and that the Whispering Tyrant might soon be free. Instead of waiting for the seal to fail, they have decided to send a group of heroes inside Gallowspire itself to attempt to find the lich's phylactery and destroy it before he can escape. Using a fragment of the *Shield of Aroden*, the Knights can transport the PCs into the dungeon just beyond the *Great Seal*. Destroying the phylactery requires the use of another fragment of the *Shield of Aroden*, at which point the magic that sent the PCs into the dungeon will “rebound” and return them to their starting point. Attempting this heroic task is something that even the most powerful heroes should think twice about.

Return of the Tyrant: A group of cultists dedicated to the Whispering Tyrant have done the unthinkable and destroyed the lesser seals holding the Whispering Tyrant inside Gallowspire. With the *Great Seal* failing, the characters must brave the dungeon, find the Whispering Tyrant, and put an end to his evil machinations once and for all!





HOLLOW MOUNTAIN

“HOLLOW MOUNTAIN? HOLLOW MOUNTAIN??

“THE FIRST VARISIAN SNEAK-THIEVES AND SHOANTI PRIMITIVES TO COME ACROSS THIS INCREDIBLE FIND MUST HAVE STARED SLACK-JAWED AT THE MAJESTIC SCENE BEFORE THEM. THE STEEP MOUNTAIN CARVED WITH THE MONUMENTAL FACE OF A LONG-DEAD QUEEN MUST HAVE SEEMED IMPOSSIBLY LARGE TO THEM.

“A BEAUTEOUS WOMAN, HER FEATURES INCENSED WITH ANGRY PASSION. CRACKS RUNNING DOWN HER STONY FEATURES, AS IF SHE WERE REMOVING A MASK AND ONE COULD SEE INTO HER DARK AND MYSTERIOUS THOUGHTS WITHIN. AND THE BEST NAME THEIR SIMPLISTIC, UNCIVILIZED MINDS COULD COME UP WITH FOR THIS WONDROUS LOCATION WAS ‘HOLLOW MOUNTAIN’? PREPOSTEROUS!”

—LORD NARSES URESTUS CHAUNTNEY,
CHELISH ARCHAEOLOGIST AND HUMBLE SERVANT OF HER MAJESTRIX

Hollow Mountain is the largest peak on Rivenrake Island, which lies at the northwestern edge of the Varisian Gulf. In the distant past, this site was the capital of Bakrakhan, an ancient Thassilonian empire ruled by Alaznist, the Runelord of Wrath. A monumental carving of Alaznist's face graces the mountain's southern peak. Rent by some ancient catastrophe, fractures along the mountain's face have exposed entrances to subterranean ruins and passages that lead down to the remains of the crumbling city of Xin-Bakrakhan on the mountain slopes below, and continue deep into Darklands far below Varisia. Adventurers sailing to Hollow Mountain are advised to be well provisioned, as the closest friendly ports are Magnimar and Riddleport, both over 150 miles away.

HISTORY

Five thousand years before Aroden pulled Absalom up from the depths of the Inner Sea, ancient Thassilon was the most powerful nation in all of Avistan. Split into seven smaller nations, each led by a powerful wizard who specialized in the magic of a specific sin, this empire flourished for untold ages before it collapsed during the fall of Azlant and the devastation wrought by Earthfall.

The westernmost domain of Thassilon was Bakrakhan, the Domain of Wrath, whose capital, Xin-Bakrakhan, was located high in the mountains along the western coastline. Bakrakhan went through a large number of runelords during Thassilon's existence, for wrath ensured numerous and swift uprisings among the nobility. Bakrakhan's final runelord, and arguably the nation's most powerful, was Alaznist, a flame-haired woman of great beauty and stormy magnetism. Focused on spells of the Thassilonian arcane school of wrath—a school known today as evocation—Alaznist also dabbled in all manners of dangerous alchemy and demonology. Her war with her neighboring domains—particularly her conflicts with Shalast and its runelord, Karzoug—constantly put her nation in danger, yet she maintained her hold on rule despite numerous attempted coups and failed assassinations.

Alaznist encouraged her followers to worship demons, both for power and as an inspiration for pure destructiveness; Alaznist saw the purity of destruction desired by the demonic races as something beautiful. She created many hideous monsters as well, using combinations of forbidden alchemy and fleshwarping magic, the greatest of her creations being the sinspawn, mutant monsters infused with wrath. So successful were these creations that the other runelords paid dearly for the secrets of creating sinspawn focused on their own favored sins.

The truth behind Alaznist's power, the source of her sinspawn, and the reason for her ability to survive so many attempts by her own government to oust her from power lay not entirely with her own magic, but in an alliance she

forged with the nascent demon lord Yamasoth. Thought by certain scholars of all things demonic to be linked in some foul way to the birth of the demon race, Yamasoth taught much to Alaznist in return for ceding the deep caverns below her fortress to the him to use as he willed.

During her rule, Alaznist greatly expanded the excavations under Xin-Bakrakhan far beyond those created by previous runelords. Extensive levels of dungeons, including her personal chambers, were built behind the monumental stone face. It's unclear from historic records whether Runelord Alaznist or one of her predecessors built the colossal bridge structure known as the Irespan, but she made good use of it as a swift highway from her capital to her nation's borders.

The catastrophic disaster that brought an end to the Thassilonian Empire caused much of Bakrakhan to sink under the sea, forming what is known today as the Varisian Gulf. Only Bakrakhan's highest peaks remained above water. Among these surviving reaches of dry land was the island that would come to be known as Rivenrake. It was only recently, when explorers first began to discover the extensive dungeons carved out of the mountain isle itself, that the place has come to be known as Hollow Mountain.

DESCRIPTION

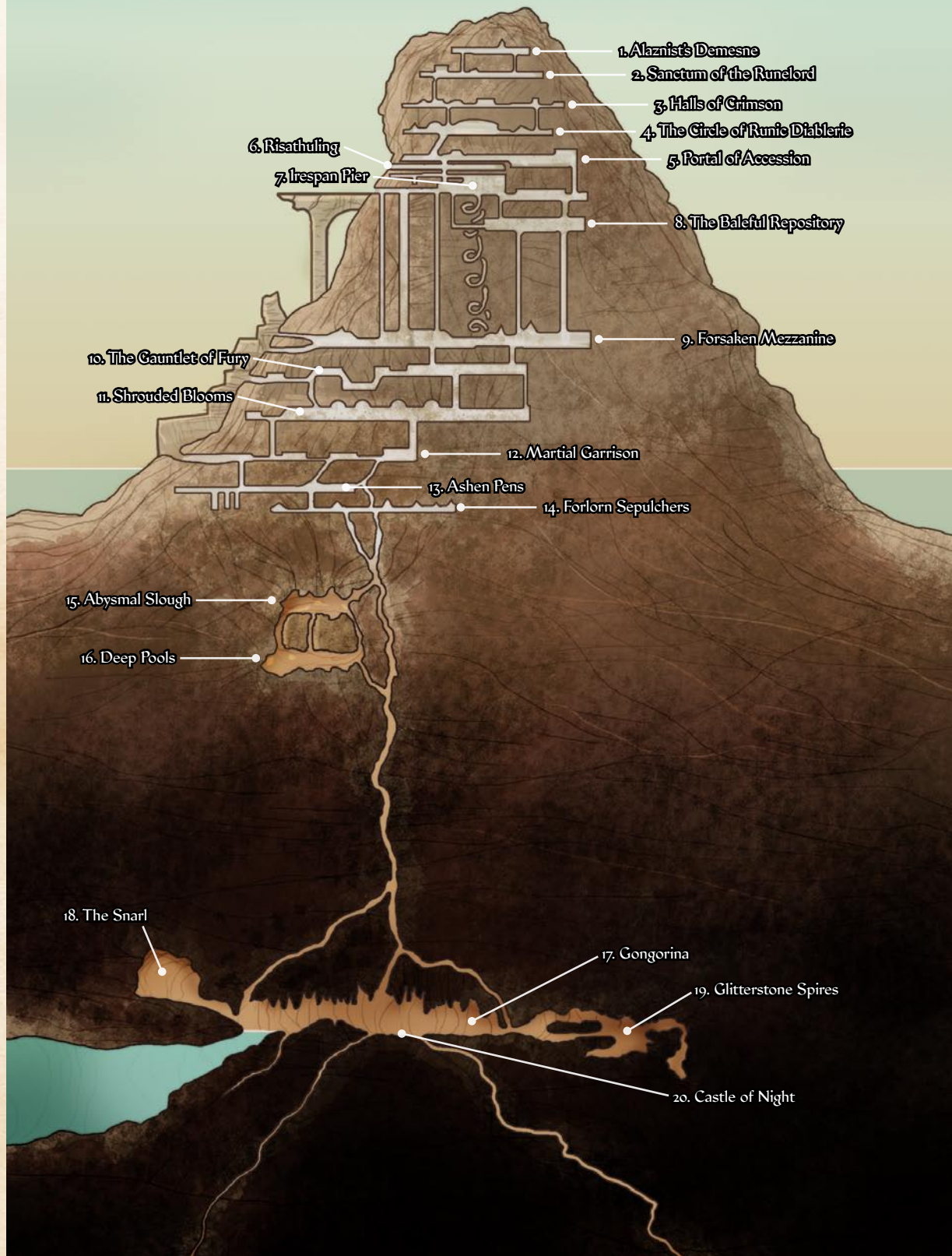
The approach to Hollow Mountain is impressive; the crumbling ruins of an ancient city sit on the mountain's lower slopes, partially flooded by the advancing tides, while above, the shattered remains of the Irespan abut the steep mountainside just under the immense countenance of a woman carved into the peak, the cracks in her face revealing ruins within. Each fissure offers a possible way into the depths of Hollow Mountain.

The dungeons inside Hollow Mountain are split into five grouped areas: the Upper Mountain levels (built behind the megalithic carving of Runelord Alaznist's angry visage), the Irespan levels (situated at the northern end of this once nation-spanning bridge), the City levels (cut from the mountain behind the capital city at the foot of the mountain), the Grotto levels (natural caverns located 1,000 feet below the surface), and the deep realm of Gongorina (once the domain of the nascent demon lord Yamasoth).

The upper parts of Hollow Mountain (the Upper Mountain, Irespan, and the City levels) all have a sense of lost grandeur. Designed by the architects of ancient Thassilon and built by the nation's enslaved caste of giant laborers, there are many chambers and areas built to a scale that seems outlandishly large by modern standards. The very rock of the place feels profoundly ancient where it is visible; in many areas the perfectly smooth masonry is obscured by the grime of ages. Spiky Thassilonian runes are carved into archways and at intersections, with the lightning bolt blazon of Wrath and the seven-pointed



Hollow Mountain



star known as the Sihedron Rune—the ancient symbol of Thassilon itself—are both frequently used. Statues of Alaznist are common—impressive sculptures carved from red marble or another crimson stone.

The lower regions (the Grotto levels and Gongorina) predate even Thassilon. Some are naturally formed caverns, but just as many are artificial constructions. Some of these are expansions made by various creatures in the 10,000 years since Earthfall, but others were built by races far older and stranger than humanity. In many places, fungal growths obscure the dank walls, and the droppings of the bizarre vermin that subsist here cover the floors.

Level 1. Alaznist's Demesne (CR 19): Long ago, this level held the personal chambers, research areas, and study rooms of the Runelord Alaznist. While much of this level suffered extensive structural damage in the cataclysm that destroyed Thassilon, and was partially looted by those few of Alaznist's apprentices who survived, this place still holds many powerful secrets. Alaznist wove powerful incantations throughout this level to maintain her privacy and punish any of her underlings who might have thought to steal from her. Her personal treasury is hidden here; ingeniously concealed and exquisitely trapped, it remains untouched since the time of her rule. Perhaps the most important things to be found here are fragmentary notes and clues that hint at the steps the Runelord took to protect herself in case of a massive disaster like that which befell Thassilon. This level has few inhabitants; only rarely do denizens of the lower levels venture here. However, there are dangerous guardian constructs as well as demons and other extraplanar creatures still bound here by the Runelord's command.

Level 2. Sanctum of the Runelord (CR 17): This floor contains libraries, work areas, and training halls, where Alaznist not only studied the sin magic of Wrath with her apprentices, but also planned and drew up strategies for war with her generals. Deadly traps still protect several areas containing top secret records and plans, even though the information stored here either has crumbled to dust, or is so outdated that it could only be of interest to historians.

Located deep inside this level is Alaznist's private battlefield, a round magical gateway shaped like a funnel that leads to a stagelike chamber. The gateway shrinks any who pass through it to a tiny fraction of their normal size, allowing the Runelord and her guests to sit in comfort and watch entire miniature armies battle each other to the death. Adventurers passing through the portal find that it only works in one direction until they return with the Pennant of Victory, which lies fallen on the perilous battlefield.

Level 3. Halls of Crimson (CR 16): Sheets of a strange reddish metal, frequently engraved with sharp Thassilonian runes, cover the walls of this entire level. In places, the metallic walls intermittently spark and ripple

DANGER ABOVE AND BELOW

Unlike the classic megadungeon layout, the uppermost levels of Hollow Mountain are not the least dangerous. Rather, the farther one travels from sea level in either direction (either up toward Alaznist's Demesne or down into Gongorina), the more dangerous the peril. Those levels of Hollow Mountain directly accessed by the ruined city are the safest for first exploration—although even these levels are likely too dangerous for lower-level parties to safely explore. The numbering scheme for the levels, though, starts at the uppermost level, in order to maintain continuity of presentation between the chapters of this book.

with silent black lightning, hinting at the antediluvian power that still exists here. These halls and rooms once served as quarters for the Runelord's personal guards, apprentices, and favored servants. Somewhere within this level is the Chamber of Transfiguration, where disloyal giants were magically tortured, ritually branded, and transformed into rune slaves.

After the ocean swallowed the land of Bakrakhan, the few apprentices who still lived turned on each other in a murderous frenzy to become the new ruler. They set traps and ambushed each other in an attempt to eliminate any other possible contender. In the end, none survived the hysteria of bloodshed and treachery, but many of their ancient traps and defenses remain. One of the deadliest traps utilizes the horrific power of a hellstorm flume to incinerate and cremate any who fall prey to it. Many of the apprentices and guards that perished here now roam these passages as powerful undead, each falling under the command of one of several liches that once served Alaznist but in their madness have spent the last 10,000 years accomplishing very little with their time.

Level 4. The Circle of Runic Diablerie (CR 15): The layout of this place has many areas radiating outward from a huge chamber that holds the Prime Runewell of Bakrakhan. The passages surrounding the runewell hold abandoned shrines to numerous demon lords, as well as deserted laboratories and fleshvats. In Thassilonian times, the vats were used to discover new methods in the transmutative sciences of life-shaping and fleshwarping, and to create more aggressive and powerful mutations for the armies of the Runelord. Hidden away in a secret storage area are many bulky, translucent receptacles over 20 feet tall, each completely sealed and preserved by magic, at least one of which contains a large glob of gray, fleshlike liquid. If extracted into a nearby containment tank, the glob restores itself to form a crippled rune giant, its long storage resulting in unusual physical deformities that,

while they make the rune giant insane and less dangerous than others of its ilk, by no means render it helpless.

There are other creeping things that prowl here—things that still remain trapped in holding cells, things that formed and grew from the experiments long ago, mutated shapeless things that slither and crawl in an endless search for sustenance (of which the sizeable colony of unusually large gibbering mouthers that subsists on this level is the least dangerous threat).

Level 5. Portal of Accession (CR 14): This level was where those who sought an audience with the Runelord were required to submit themselves to various magical and mundane searches, interrogations, and other tests before receiving permission to traverse the thousands of large steps to the Runelord's audience chambers. Those wishing to expedite this process could complete challenges of physical or magical prowess to display their worthiness, or gain precedence by fighting duels with those ahead of them in line. There are long series of rooms here for applicants to pass through, as well as guard stations and housing for servants.

The Runelord's most fanatical guardian sentries were posted here, willingly bound by ancient rune magic. The deathless spirits of a number of these guards are still here, yet to be relieved of their posts. These disembodied ghosts seem unaware that the empire they served is gone, and still insist that any who wish to ascend the huge stairs to the levels above complete the appropriate formal procedures. The giants who reside below regard this area as taboo and have sealed most of the stairwells to this level, although there are human-sized tunnels leading downward that the giants are unaware of.

Level 6. Risathuling (CR 13): Much of this level once served as a barracks and guard hall for a division of taiga giants stationed here as defenders of Xin-Bakrakhan. The descendants of those giants still reside here; generations of their kind have inhabited this level and the one below. They call this place *Risathuling*, which means "Ancestral Home" in Giant. Over the many centuries since Bakrakhan's fall, the giants have long forgotten that they were slaves serving in the Runelord's armies, and live a simple existence as hunter-gatherers, sometimes traveling out of the dungeon to hunt rocs and wyverns on Rivenrake's heights. Isolated from others of their kind, these giants have come to regard the gigantic face carved into the mountain as a representation of their goddess. They have turned the main entrance hall with its huge statue of Alaznist into a temple, and worship her as a warlike aspect of the giant god Fandarra.

Level 7. Irespan Pier (CR 11): This level opens out to the south onto the enormous bridge structure known today as the Irespan. Its broken remains still tower over the landscape of Rivenrake Island. The bridge extends

only 400 yards to the south of the enormous main entry into this level before falling away—the massive arches and supports have crumbled, leaving a gap of about a mile to the next unbroken section. Inside the main entrance is a huge cavernous area once used as a loading dock. The main shaft was used for the transport of goods, troops, or plunder to and from the city of Xin-Bakrakhan, but it collapsed in the catastrophe that overtook Bakrakhan.

Level 8. The Baleful Repository (CR 9): This place contains barracks, smithies, storerooms holding stockpiles of supplies, and arsenals of weapons for use if the stronghold ever came under siege. A large amount of the plunder that Alaznist's armies looted was also stored here. Much of what was gathered has deteriorated to uselessness or moldered away through the passing of time. However, there are still things of value that have survived. Mithral ore raided from the lands of Shalast to the east lies piled next to forges that have remained unlit for centuries. Caches of enchanted weapons with spells of preservation cast over them lie buried under the debris of the ages. There are even fragmentary clues that lead to secret collections of antique magical paraphernalia, magically merged into the solid stone of walls or floors.

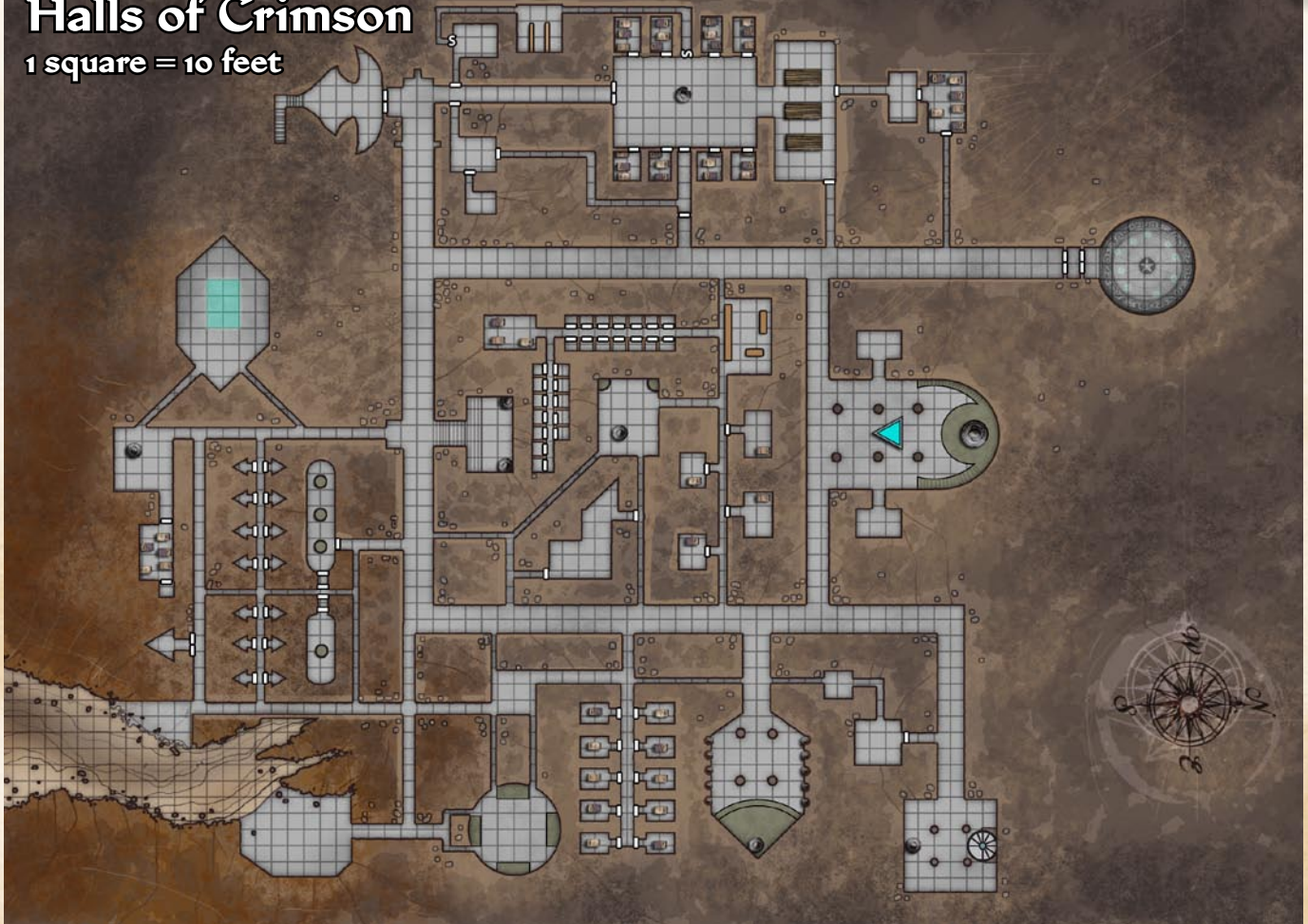
Those who spend time walking the long silent corridors or attempt to search thoroughly through the dark dusty halls sense that things are watching them. Swarms of furtive shadows spy on those who linger here; they strike with their chilling caress while intruders are distracted, and then slip rapidly away. The shadows' actions are unusually well coordinated, as if an unseen alien intellect directed them all.

Level 9. Forsaken Mezzanine (CR 7): This place is a series of deserted offices, administration centers, and records storage areas, long abandoned by the bureaucrats, ministers, and other senior servants that Alaznist placed in charge of her city. When Hollow Mountain shuddered at the fall of Bakrakhan, the citizens working here trampled each other in terror trying to get outside, but when they saw the huge waves sweeping over the land below, they tore one another apart in their panic to get back in. The dust is thick here; malignant spirits that formed from the dust of their own mortal remains haunt the southern passages. The dust reenacts scenes of the disaster and then tries to slay living creatures by engulfing them and choking their lungs.

Level 10. The Gauntlet of Fury (CR 6): Part of this area holds a series of ordeals known to those who once lived in Xin-Bakrakhan as the Gauntlet of Fury. Used as a testing ground for those who sought the Runelord's favor, or a punishment for those who disappointed her, the Gauntlet of Fury was a trial only the strongest and most cunning ever survived. The rooms and chambers surrounding the Gauntlet may have once stored the creatures, traps, and other materials used in the Gauntlet's challenges, but

Halls of Crimson

1 square = 10 feet



are now overrun by hordes of spiderlike creatures that the Thassilonians called the shriezyx. Whether these creatures possess some natural affinity to this place, or simply prefer its close proximity to the food supply of the level below is unknown. A multitude of skittering shriezyx assail any foreign interloper. The only areas not inhabited by hives of shriezyx are the most dangerous parts of the Gauntlet, whose deadly magical challenges function with ruthless efficiency even after all this time.

Level 11. Shrouded Blooms (Pharmaceutical Terrarium) (CR 5): The original purpose of this place was once the growth and manufacture of herbs and drugs designed to inspire battle rage and fearlessness in the Runelord's armies. Here, gardeners tended and harvested toxic and sometimes actively dangerous vegetation in a controlled environment. The centuries have led to plants, mold, and fungus growing wild and creating a bizarre underground jungle. A miasma of rot and decomposition overwhelms the senses. Many of the magical lighting tiles used to stimulate plant growth have faded, creating a dim, claustrophobic forest where access to even the smallest amount of light

is fiercely contested. The ages have transformed many of the plants into lethal predators, hazardous to intruders as well as to other plant life. Those willing to hack their way through poisonous vines and acidic sap could find sealed laboratories containing valuable notes and preserved samples of plant species now long extinct.

Level 12. Martial Garrison (CR 4): This extensive area contains dueling and training arenas, barracks, and armories, as well as slave and beast pens. There is a minor runewell here, designed to harness the ambient wrath of the soldiers, servants, and slaves stationed nearby. Sinspawn have recently taken over this level and militarized it to train, house, and arm themselves. One of Xin-Bakrakhan's larger treasuries is also buried here, along with a nearby minting facility that is virtually untouched by the sinspawn, as they can see little use for it in the forging of weapons.

Level 13. Ashen Pens (CR 3): At Thassilon's height, this series of chambers served as jail cells, torture chambers, and holding enclosures. These prisons vary from open compounds large enough to hold scores of prisoners, to narrow oubliettes plunging deeply into the ground. While

almost all the cells are long deserted, those imprisoned having perished centuries ago, there are still a few highly inaccessible secure areas and magically shielded cages that hold creatures captive.

A thick, dark dust carpets the floors here; this ashlike dust is the flaky leavings of the inhabitants of this place, a tribe of wingless gargoyles. The sinspawn from the level above have explored here and attempted to exterminate the gargoyles. However, the gargoyles use their camouflaging stonelike skin and their uncanny ability to climb sheer surfaces to hide from these infrequent sinspawn hunting expeditions. The sinspawn believe that the prison level is a dead end, with no exits to the surface, and find hunting down the last remaining gargoyles a frustrating task. The gargoyles themselves aren't nearly as vindictive as typical winged gargoyles, and are happy to speak with strangers that don't attack them on sight. The gargoyles are somewhat deranged, however; one gargoyle insists on confirming every detail it is told by talking to nearby rocky pillars, while another pantomimes everything it wants to say even though it can speak perfectly well. Those who persist in their questioning find that the gargoyles know the layout of this level extraordinarily well, including the secret passages and hidden stairways.

Level 14. Forlorn Sepulchers (CR 4): Here lie the crypts and vaults of ancient Xin-Bakrakhan. These were already old in Alaznist's time and infrequently used even then. Any sound echoes eerily down the long empty halls, and the faint dry smell of things long sealed away hangs in the air. The rows of burial niches, sealed tombs, and crumbling mausoleums all add to the hushed feeling of great age in this place. There are still things entombed here from olden times, whose spirits lie in an unquiet languor, capable of rising up should their remains be disturbed. The most numerous creatures here are tiny pallid scorpions, most only as long as a thumbnail, but with a painful sting that causes a throbbing swelling around the wound. Great numbers of ghouls and ghosts, many of them spellcasters, dwell here as well.

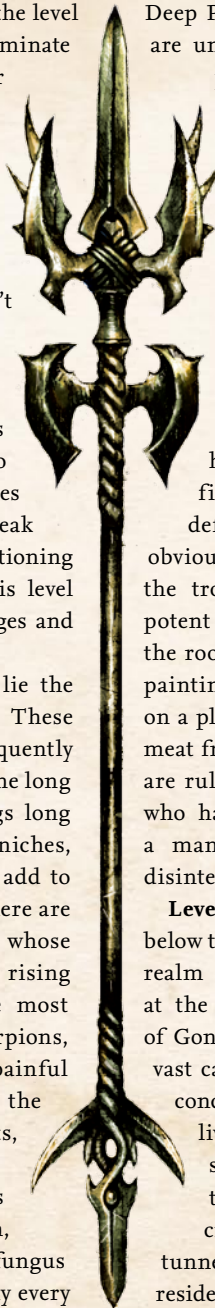
Level 15. Abysmal Slough (CR 7): Dampness saturates every part of these rough, uneven, muddy caves. Countless varieties of mold and fungus flourish here, and in some places they coat nearly every surface. Some are harmless and even nutritious enough to eat. Others provide a dim luminescence, but these often grow next to varieties with deadly spores or the ability to dissolve flesh. There is even a colony of sentient algal agglomerations in one of the larger waterlogged caves. The cavern floors are a slick morass of mud and clay, in

some parts forming muddy pools of quicksand that can easily drag down the unwary. Larger creatures also live in this boggy miasma. From pale cave crocodiles to weird mutant beasts originally created in Gongorina below, these swampy caverns contain a wide array of dangerous creatures to fall prey to. Troglodytes from the nearby Deep Pools often hunt here for food—these troglodytes are universally powerful barbarians led by even more powerful clerics of Yamasoth, and they view the task of guarding the ancient entrances to Gongorina as their divine task.

Level 16. Deep Pools (CR 9): Several small underground streams feed the humid pools that form throughout this smooth domed cavern complex. The Deep Pools are home to a large tribe of mutant troglodytes. Used as test subjects for magical experimentation for generations by those who dwell below in Gongorina, these troglodytes are prone to birth anomalies. There is also a strong demonic taint in the troglodytes' heritage, leading to a high rate of fiendish or semi-fiendish troglodytes. They ignore each others' deformities for the most part; only newborns with obvious flaws or serious defects become sacrifices to the troglodytes' stygian gods. Those with useful or potent mutations often become tribe leaders. Many of the roofs of the troglodyte caves have extensive rock art paintings smeared upon them. The troglodytes survive on a plentiful diet of fungus and fish, supplemented by meat from creatures of the Abysmal Slough above. They are ruled by a mighty hezrou demon named Balravvus who has, for many generations, presented himself as a manifestation of Yamasoth, despite his personal disinterest in that nascent demon lord.

Level 17. Gongorina (CR 15): Located around 8,000 feet below the surface, Gongorina is an untamed underground realm cut off from the rest of the Darklands. Located at the border between Sekamina and Orv, the realm of Gongorina is one of the highest and smallest of the vast cavern vaults. Long ago, the demon lord Yamasoth conducted experiments here into the modification of living beings and the mysteries of flesh, taking test subjects from nearby Darklands locations, including the troglodyte caverns of Kuvhoshik and the drow city of UMBERWEB, and from the surface via the tunnels leading to Xin-Bakrakhan. Yamasoth no longer resides here, having long since returned to his realm on the Abyss, but his minions, stranded demonic soldiers, and horrific transmuted legacies live on.

In this immense central cavern, many glowing stalactites cast a green-tinged twilight luminance. At the southern end of the cavern, a jagged stony beach marks the edge of a still, subterranean sea, enclosed on all sides by rock. To



the southwest, the cavern floor rises and becomes hilly. There are signs of disorganized attempts at mining here, and the bedrock yields unusual metallic ores unknown on the surface. A large forest of gray mushrooms sprouts in the northwestern region, providing sustenance to the huge vermin and other warped horrors that populate the area. Demonic monstrosities prey on these creatures, mostly for malicious sport.

Level 18. The Snarl (CR 17): This twisting labyrinth of winding, mazelike tunnels flows in all three dimensions. The featureless oval tunnels intertwine in a convoluted manner that has no sane pattern, and some strange deviance from normality causes spatial disorientation for those within, making it difficult to avoid becoming lost. At the core of this warren of tunnels is a central cavern containing the hivelike nest of a small group of neothelids. Originally from the great vault of Denebrum in Orv, these ageless worms have been here since before Earthfall. Whether they came at the behest of the demon lord Yamasoth or for their own inscrutable reasons is unknown, but the other creatures that dwell in Gongorina avoid the neothelids and their numerous seugathi minions.

Level 19. Glitterstone Spires (CR 18): This succession of natural caverns glistens with the sparkle of crystals and moisture. A multitude of stalactites hang from the high ceilings, reaching down to touch the stalagmites that cover the uneven stone below. There are intricate stone draperies and many other geological wonders formed over centuries by the drip of water on stone. The caverns are unworked by humanoid hand, and they rise up to impressive heights in places, but there are areas where adventurers need to crawl and squeeze through tiny gaps or scale wide overhangs to explore them fully. A clan of powerful cloaker fanatics of Yog-Sothoth nests in aeries at the top of the caverns, fluttering between stalactites in search of food.

Level 20. Castle of Night (CR 20): At the center of Gongorina looms a towering, eldritch fortress—a nightmare keep built eons ago by the nascent demon lord Yamasoth. Himself far from humanoid, Yamasoth took great delight in building his fortress as a mockery of Azlant's architecture. From this Castle of Night, the spawn of Yamasoth—stocky crablike creatures with a tri-jawed maw and three eyes, rule over the realm of Gongorina. The spawn of Yamasoth, who call themselves “gongorinas” in honor of their ancient home, worship their creator and strive to ensure that his realm is always ready should he ever return. Apart from the spawn of Yamasoth, a regiment of demons and powerful metamorphic brutes also occupies the castle. Below the castle is a series of dungeons and passages that continues even deeper underground; long-forgotten legends whisper that Yamasoth's only weakness lies hidden at the bottom of these depths.

DENIZENS

Many strange monsters and creatures dwell in Hollow Mountain—but some bear additional discussion beyond the brief mentions earlier in this chapter.

Shriezyx: These man-sized, spiderlike creatures were made in Xin-Bakrakhan's fleshvats by one of Alaznist's predecessors, but Alaznist made extensive improvements to the crude originals. Her greatest gift to the shriezyx was fertility—before she gave them the ability to breed, their numbers were regulated by the commanding runelord. Created to be an instinctive killing organism, these creatures often served as skirmishers in wars in which the sinspawn themselves served as infantry. Encased in thick, armorlike chitin, shriezyx are tenacious and hard to kill. They only have one built-in weakness: a fear of fire. This was an intentional flaw that allowed the creatures' handlers, who were masters of manipulating magical flames, a way to control them. The creatures were set as a defensive mechanism against incursions into key locations in Bakrakhan; handlers could release the creatures and drive them toward intruders.

SHRIEZYX

CR 4

XP 1,200

CE Medium aberration

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.;

Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 38 (7d8+7); regeneration 3 (fire)

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

Defensive Abilities ferocity; **Immune** mind-affecting effects

Weaknesses fear of fire, vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee bite +8 (1d6+1 plus poison), 4 claws +8 (1d4+1)

Special Attacks slowing toxin, web (+8 ranged, DC 14, 7 hp)

TACTICS

During Combat A shriezyx focuses its attacks on smaller foes, relying upon its webs to slow or distract larger creatures while it finishes off smaller victims. It never attacks a foe that is using fire unless it is cornered or has no other obvious target.

Morale Unless confronted by fire, a shriezyx fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 3, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19 (31 vs. trip)

Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Step Up, Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +15, **Perception** +12; **Racial Modifiers** +4

Perception

Languages Thassilonian

PATHFINDER CAMPAIGN SETTING: DUNGEONS OF GOLARION

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary, pair, or hive (3–12)

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fear of Fire (Ex) A shriezyx within 30 feet of a fire the size of a torch or larger becomes shaken as long as it remains within that range. If damaged by fire, a shriezyx must make a Will save (DC equals the amount of fire damage dealt) or become frightened for 1 round.

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 14; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Str; *cure* 1 save.

Slowing Toxin (Su) A shriezyx's web is coated with a supernatural toxin that numbs and deadens the nerves on contact. Any creature struck by a shriezyx's web must make a DC 14 Fortitude save or become slowed (as per the spell) for 1 minute. Each round, a victim may attempt a new DC 14 Fortitude save to end the effect early. This toxin fades quickly from spun webs—it can only affect targets on the round the web is spun. Existing webs, while they remain sticky and tangled, do not have this slowing effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Sinspawn: At the height of Alaznist's power, near the fall of Thassilon, the murderous creatures known as sinspawn made up the bulk of her infantry. Since Earthfall, the sinspawn have been forced to fend for themselves; without a clear commander to issue them orders, they have

developed their own abilities for strategic planning as well as a leadership hierarchy. The sinspawn have a despotic chain of command based on personal prowess, with the ruling sinspawn known only as "the First," despite the growing list of previous "Firsts" slain by upstarts or assassins. The sinspawn make frequent raids and attacks on other denizens of Hollow Mountain to test tactics and gather information about their enemies.

Skulks: Furtive and insular, these pale deformed humanoids live in small family groups on the lower levels—many of them dwell in the aboveground ruins of Xin-Bakrakhan and only venture into the dungeons of Hollow Mountain as parts of brutal initiation rituals. A few of the stronger skulk tribes maintain enclaves inside Hollow Mountain as well.

Taiga Giants: Maintaining a loose-knit, feudal warrior culture, these giants drive off any humanoids who seek to disturb the upper slopes of their mountain. Uraimira, the giants' current high chief, is a proud, respected leader, and an expert in the use of her huge ranseur.

Troglodytes: The troglodytes are divided into over a dozen tribes spread across the many caverns, perpetually feuding and raiding with one another. Currently only the presence of a strong overchieftain (a ruthless four-armed fiendish troglodyte named Migorgolok), prevents another all-out civil war.

TRAPS

Deadly traps are prevalent throughout Hollow Mountain. Both Runelord Alaznist and her apprentices created an assortment of arcane traps in the Upper Mountain levels to increase security, but nowhere else in Hollow Mountain



is as infested with traps as the level known as the Gauntlet of Fury. All of the traps here are extremely lethal, but as they were part of an elaborate testing ground designed to destroy the unworthy, most of the traps on this level have complicated or cryptic ways to temporarily deactivate or bypass them. One of the more common security traps that appears in the Upper Mountain levels (particularly in the Halls of Crimson) is the notorious “prison of blades.” This trap has numerous variants throughout the complex that do less damage (less powerful versions of the trap were easier to construct), making it the most common trap type encountered in Hollow Mountain.

PRISON OF BLADES**CR 16****Type** magic; **Perception** DC 35; **Disable Device** DC 35**EFFECTS****Trigger** visual (*true seeing*); **Reset** automatic (5 minutes)**Effect** spell effects (*forcecage*, windowless cell, DC 20 Reflex save or be trapped inside for 13 rounds), two *mage's sword* spells shaped to look like raneurs attack anyone inside the cage for 13 rounds (Atk +19 melee [4d6+3/19–20]); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. cube)**TREASURES AND REWARDS**

There are many wonders to find in the depths of Hollow Mountain. Alaznist's armies raided the surrounding lands and brought back much plunder, and in the deeper corners of the dungeon, these ancient, often magical, treasures can still be found. Under Alaznist's rule, the Bakrakhani crafted many weapons and other military materials to fuel her drive for conquest. Enchanted weapons with the *wounding* or *vicious* properties were popular during the bygone days of Alaznist's rule.

Yet perhaps even more compelling than mere magical trinkets or dangerous weapons is the promise of strange, forgotten spells created by one of Thassilon's most creative and most violent runelords. Now and then, adventurers discover new spells and carry them back to civilization—unlike magic items, knowledge of new spells can spread and grow. The latest, and perhaps most infamous, of these ancient magics yet unearthed is a relatively low-level but brutal spell called *battering blast*—a spell that has led many scholars to believe that Alaznist may have been the first to craft *rings of the ram*.

BATTERING BLAST**School** evocation (force); **Level** sorcerer/wizard 3**Casting Time** 1 standard action**Components** V, S**Range** close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)**Target** one creature or unattended object**Duration** instantaneous**Saving Throw** Reflex partial (see text); **Spell Resistance** yes**WHERE IS ALAZNIST?**

As with the other Runelords, when the end of Thassilon came, Alaznist retreated to a place of safety accessed via her runewell located in her Demesne at the top of Hollow Mountain. Yet the realm into which Alaznist retreated is not physically present within Hollow Mountain. None have found her retreat to date, but logic holds that the dangers and treasure to be found within this realm are greater than any found within Hollow Mountain itself.

You hurl a fist-sized ball of force resembling a sphere of spikes to ram a designated creature or object. You must succeed on a ranged touch attack to strike your target. On a successful hit, you deal 1d6 points of force damage per two caster levels (maximum 5d6). For every 5 caster levels you possess beyond 5th, you gain a second ball of force. A creature struck by any of these is subject to a bull rush attempt. The force has a Strength modifier equal to your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier (whichever is highest). The CMB for the force's bull rush uses your caster level as its base attack bonus, adding the force's Strength modifier and a +10 bonus for each additional blast directed against the same target. Each sphere of force makes its own separate bull rush attempt—if multiple spheres strike one target, you make multiple CMB checks but only take the highest result to determine success. If the bull rush succeeds, the force pushes the creature away from you in a straight line, and the creature must make a Reflex save or fall prone. This spell pushes an unattended object struck by it 20 feet away from you, provided it weighs no more than 25 pounds per level (maximum 250 pounds). This spell cannot move creatures or objects beyond your range. Used on a door or other obstacle, the spell attempts a Strength check to destroy it if the sheer damage inflicted by the spell doesn't do the job.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following adventure hook can be used to start adventures set in Hollow Mountain.

Mutant Pirates: A ship crewed by strange creatures have attacked several Magnimarian merchant ships of late. Survivors report that the “pirates” were not human at all, but strange beasts with sideways-opening mouths that fought alongside humanoids who seemed to be able to become invisible at will. In truth, this is a ship helmed by a small group of sinspawn allied with several skulk rogues—when the PCs confront the ship, they find clues that indicate the ship's eerie crew hailed from somewhere deep in Hollow Mountain, and that it was to this site that the pirates have been sending their stolen treasures.





PYRAMID OF KAMARIA

AND IN THE TENTH YEAR OF HER REIGN DID THE PHARAOH KAMARIA COMMAND THE PEOPLE OF AN: “BUILD FOR ME A MONUMENT BEFITTING MY MAJESTY SO THAT THROUGH THE AGES MY GLORY MIGHT BE REMEMBERED.” BUT IN THE PLACE OF THEIR ENDEAVOR, THE WORKERS FOUND DARKNESS, AND WHAT LAY IN THAT DARKNESS FILLED THEM WITH TERROR. SO KAMARIA DID DESCEND INTO THAT PIT, ACCOMPANIED BY SEVENTY MIGHTY WARRIORS; THERE SHE HOPED TO COMMUNE WITH THE POWERS THAT LAY HIDDEN AND LEARN WISDOM, OR SLAY THE HORRORS LURKING THEREIN. SIX DAYS LATER DID THE PHARAOH EMERGE, HER BODY BATHED IN BLOOD, HER EYES SPARKLING WITH MADNESS, HER HEART A RAVENOUS MAW. FOR WISDOM DID NOT LIVE IN THE PIT—ONLY AN UNHOLY DESIRE TO DEVOUR THE UNIVERSE.

—FROM THE NHESSET CODEX OF PHARAOKHS

The Pyramid of Kamaria, which dominates the southern skyline of the Osirian city of An, has long been regarded as no more than the burial vault of the pharaoh of that same name. Dedicated to the only ruler of the ancient kingdom to openly venerate the god Rovagug, Kamaria's pyramid also served as a base for that vile cult, a place where they might freely worship their rapacious deity and engage in acts not fit for the light of day. Known to few outside the pharaoh's inner circle, the vast complex of dungeons and caverns that existed beneath the monument (and in many cases, existed well before the pyramid's construction) connected to the Darklands as well as to forbidden and unnatural dimensions beyond this world. Kamaria established a virtual city beneath the monument with but a single goal: to seek the eventual release of Rovagug from his god-forged prison.

HISTORY

Through sorcery and cunning, Kamaria the Brazen reigned for more than three human lifetimes, an era notorious for its oppression and suffering. Her pyramid is the only structure that still bears her name, for subsequent rulers worked hard to blot out her influence in all other places, thinking it better that her dark depravities be forgotten. Yet the sheer size of Kamaria's final monument made such revisionist histories a futile effort. While most regarded the pyramid as Kamaria's tomb, a select few (mostly Kamaria's cult and her closest allies) knew the monument capped an entryway to the Darklands. Further, they knew the pharaoh used the extensive chambers and caves within and beneath the structure as a vast lab and foundry for developing the means to unleash the dread god Rovagug on Golarion and beyond. With a talent for organization alien to most devotees of the Rough Beast, Kamaria assembled a host of debauched sorcerers and wizards, wicked alchemists, unscrupulous engineers and philosophers, mad prophets, wily priests, and other unsavory minds and set them to work on this great unholy task.

It will never be known if Kamaria would have succeeded in her mad plan to free the Rough Beast from his prison. To the relief of every oppressed Osirian, several of Kamaria's increasingly horrified children engaged in a great conspiracy to assassinate their evil mother. For 22 years following Kamaria's removal from power, Gebesek IX (known from that time on as the Healer) reigned as pharaoh, devoting his rule to binding the great wounds suffered by Osirion. His first major task was to deal with Kamaria's pyramid itself. Fearing that to do otherwise with his mother's mortal remains would only ensure her rise as an undead monstrosity, Gebesek had his despised mother buried in the pyramid with all ceremony, outfitting false

burial crypts to foil grave robbers and endowing her actual tomb with great wealth and comfort. Next, every Rovagug cultist within the pyramid complex and the entire population of the city of An were swiftly put to the sword. However, rather than risk dealing directly with the vast panoply of evil established beneath the pyramid's crypt chambers, Gebesek had the sublevels sealed off with potent magics and wards, thinking the despicable brood would set upon one another and exterminate themselves within a single generation.

Lacking Kamaria's charismatic leadership, the malevolent denizens of the subpyramid levels did indeed fall on one another with ferocious abandon, engaging in bloody internecine wars that resulted in the deserved destruction of many. But Gebesek and his advisors were ignorant of the entrance to the Darklands, and through these hidden domains some villains escaped annihilation. Still others managed to survive the brutal conflicts within the subpyramid vaults and caves, and through the generations these groups developed into bizarre and vulgar cultures, their purposes and allegiances mutating over the millennia. Thousands of years later alien cultures thrive still, the massive pyramid above masking their festering wickedness. The chambers below had passed from the rule of Rovagug's cult into the hands of adherents of several equally wicked but less powerful vile religions.

Several hundred years ago, a number of the false crypts highest up in Kamaria's pyramid were explored by adventurers and ransacked of all valuables. Soon afterward, skulking Rovagug cultists noted that many of the artifacts stolen from the pyramid represented recurring themes of their faith, and they secretly came to the ancient tomb and reestablished a temple within. Pharaoh Remeses IV gave the cult a brutal thrashing, but then set forth a policy allowing the sect to remain in their foul temple, thinking it better to know where their evil lurked so that he might contain it. This strategy was continued afterward by Remeses's successors, including foreign Katapeshi overlords and the present restored dynasty of Ruby Prince Khemet III. The Rovagug cult in residence today is a dim shadow of its former self, a feeble affair that appears to be easily kept in check by Khemet's diligent agents. However, some worry that this is a pleasant fiction, fearing that Kamaria and her creation are not done wreaking havoc on Osirion.

DESCRIPTION

Access to Kamaria's pyramid was never hidden. A broad stairway ascends the structure to its singular entrance, a grand arched opening halfway up the pyramid's southeast face, constructed to suggest a great mouth lined with hungry fangs. Two narrower stairways flank



PATHFINDER CAMPAIGN SETTING: DUNGEONS OF GOLARION



The Hidden Vault of Kamaria

1 square = 5 feet



this entryway, continuing up to the summit. For those wishing to ascend to the top, a toll of 1 platinum piece is collected by An's Guild of Soothsayers, Seers, and Psychics, a representative of which sits perched in a tall chair on the stair just above the entrance 24 hours a day.

Within the pyramid are echoes of the classic features of most pharaohs' burial monuments: walls covered floor to ceiling with paintings and carvings depicting aspects of Osirian life, hieroglyphs telling the stories of Kamaria's conquests, laws and achievements, and vibrantly painted animal-headed statues standing vigilant in corridors and chambers. But woven into this rich tableau are scenes and sculptures of shocking depravity and horror that leave no question about where one stands: human sacrifice and acts of cannibalism, torture of alarming inventiveness, and unspeakable acts of debauchery, along with wildly varying portrayals of the insatiable Rovagug, consuming, annihilating all.

Level 1. The Dread Entry (CR 1): Once an expansive series of false tombs and traps, this level was scoured of all real valuables long ago. It has been converted into something of a lurid tourist attraction run by a colorful group of con artists who call themselves Rovagug's Minions. Designed with an eye for the theatrical and sensational, the place is intended mostly for the idle rich of Golarion who love to brag that while in Osirion they walked the burial crypt of Kamaria the Brazen herself. Less well-heeled visitors save their coppers for many months to view the outrageous displays within—wax figures engaged in terrible acts, voluptuous virgins being ravished by animal-masked cultists, hideous beasts stalking hapless victims. A few Minions are costumed as mummies and jump out at unsuspecting visitors at opportune moments—a tour guide then proceeds to “drive the foul things back to their crypts” with melodramatic curses and a wave of a holy symbol. No effort has been made to maintain any semblance of historical accuracy, and anyone with even a modest understanding of ancient Osirian culture sees this gaudy place for what it is: a means of separating people from their coinage. This is accomplished through the hefty entry fee of 10 gp a head, by selling outrageously priced souvenirs and false charms alleged to protect from vengeful spirits within the tomb, and occasionally lifting visitors' purses. Now and again, the Minions orchestrate more elaborate cons on particularly wealthy fools.

The group's leader is a Katapeshi con man named **Bahram Melesu** (NE human rogue 3), who manages to maintain his operation without enraging the government or other religions (particularly the church of Pharasma) by cultivating a veneer of semi-legitimacy supported, in secret, by regular bribes to key corrupt individuals. This, combined with the fact that few living have anything invested in maintaining the “honor” of such a notorious

ruin, has permitted Rovagug's Minions to continue their somewhat blasphemous trade for many years. Bahram's right-hand man is **Poshment the Sour** (CN gnome rogue 2), a gnarled gnome suffering early signs of the Bleaching. No one in the group is a true devotee of Rovagug. Rather, the group is made up of opportunists manipulated by the Rovagug cult that secretly dwells on the second level of the dungeon. In the past few months, the cult has begun kidnapping visitors unlikely to be missed—unimportant locals or solitary foreigners with more cash than sense. The group's leaders are aware of the practice and even assist in identifying likely targets who won't be missed. This is the greatest danger for those visiting the Dread Entry, notwithstanding desert vermin and a few long-ago triggered pit traps poorly cordoned off, one filled with venomous snakes tended by the Minions.

Level 2. The Cult of Rovagug Made Visible (CR 2): This level actually consists of two interconnected levels of chambers above the first level. These long-ago-ransacked crypts have been converted into living quarters and ceremonial halls by the Cult of Rovagug Made Visible, a rather pathetic crew of some 18 members drawn from An's seedier districts. While the authorities know of the existence of this cult, the fact that the cultists seem to be relatively harmless, preying only on undesirables filtered in via Rovagug's Minions on the level below, they have not yet bothered to openly oppose them.

The high priest of this cult is **Eshemel Bhalloc** (CE male human cleric of Rovagug 5), while his close assistants are the twins **Ungul** (CE male half-orc fighter 3) and **Angul Hashessef** (CE female half-orc wizard 2/cleric of Rovagug 2). They keep their unpleasant rabble in line with pain and threats and the occasional frenzied worship ceremony held in the main temple—the uppermost chamber in the structure, wrongly thought by most scholars to be the true crypt of Kamaria. These rooms and corridors are strewn with filth and debris, the rotting remains of past sacrifices (mostly wild animals, but the bodies of a few not-soon-to-be-missed criminals and arrogant fools lie among them), and ruined shards of pottery and works of art destroyed in foul rituals. The smell of putrefaction pervades these halls, the scent growing viler the deeper one proceeds. Feral cats and foul vermin also wander the halls, as likely to become bloody sacrifices to Rovagug as they are to prey upon one another.

Aware that his cult is under surveillance by An authorities, Bhalloc has lately discovered and imprisoned a royal undercover agent who was posing as a cultist, one **Besemmen Robugh** (LN human male monk 2). He and a number of other unfortunates are being held for future ceremonial evisceration in makeshift prison cells close to the temple chamber. Should someone be able to liberate Robugh and the others, they will have earned a lifelong



A WORD ABOUT THE PIT

The yawning shaft that sinks down into the darkness at the heart of the Halls of the Laboring Dead is approximately 100 feet in diameter. A gentle yet howling wind blows from below, carrying the stench of decay and vague, disconcerting whispers. A permanent *deeper darkness* effect (CL 20th) fills the Pit—anyone descending disappears as though sinking into a vast sea of tar. The Pit's sides are rough and charred, as though those who tunneled deep did so by burning through the very rock. At a depth of 60 feet, a shimmering field of force blocks further passage through the Pit—this magical barrier was created by Gebessek IX ages ago to seal the deeper denizens into the depths. This barrier functions as a horizontal *prismatic wall* sandwiched between two horizontal *walls of force* (all three effects function at CL 20th). While stubborn force and powerful magic might eventually suffice to breach this shimmering barrier, the *Sword and Breastplate of Khafirum* are uniquely suited to removing it (see page 43). None of the creatures below have tried to breach the barrier, but this is due mostly to the fact that they actually value the barrier, for it prevents much interruption from the upper world.

friend in the agent as well as the trust of other locals who may prove advantageous contacts in the future.

Level 3. The Hidden Vault of Kamaria (CR 3): These previously untouched vaults hold the burial crypts of many of Kamaria's circle as a reward for their service or otherwise. Included in this dubious pantheon of villains are several of the dread pharaoh's bound male and female concubines, several cousins and other relatives who died before her, as well as members of her elite bodyguard. Perhaps the most precious item contained in these chambers, in addition to the gold, gems, and artwork coveted by any adventuring treasure-seeker, is the *Sword of Khafirum*, the weapon of a beloved captain of the bodyguard. This and its matching breastplate (itself hidden in the fourth level—see page 43) are specially designed to aid the wearer against undead, and may prove essential to surviving the deeper crypts within the pyramid.

Level 4. The Trials of Yemhotep (CR 4): A gauntlet of traps, tricks, and monsters designed to prevent deeper penetration into the pyramid, this untouched level is guarded by an extraordinary sphinx named **Yemhotep** (CE female divine guardian sphinx), who prevents anyone from venturing farther unless he is able to solve a riddle. Her current favorite is, "Two sons and two fathers take a boat out on the River Sphinx to catch fish for their evening meal. After but a short time they have caught

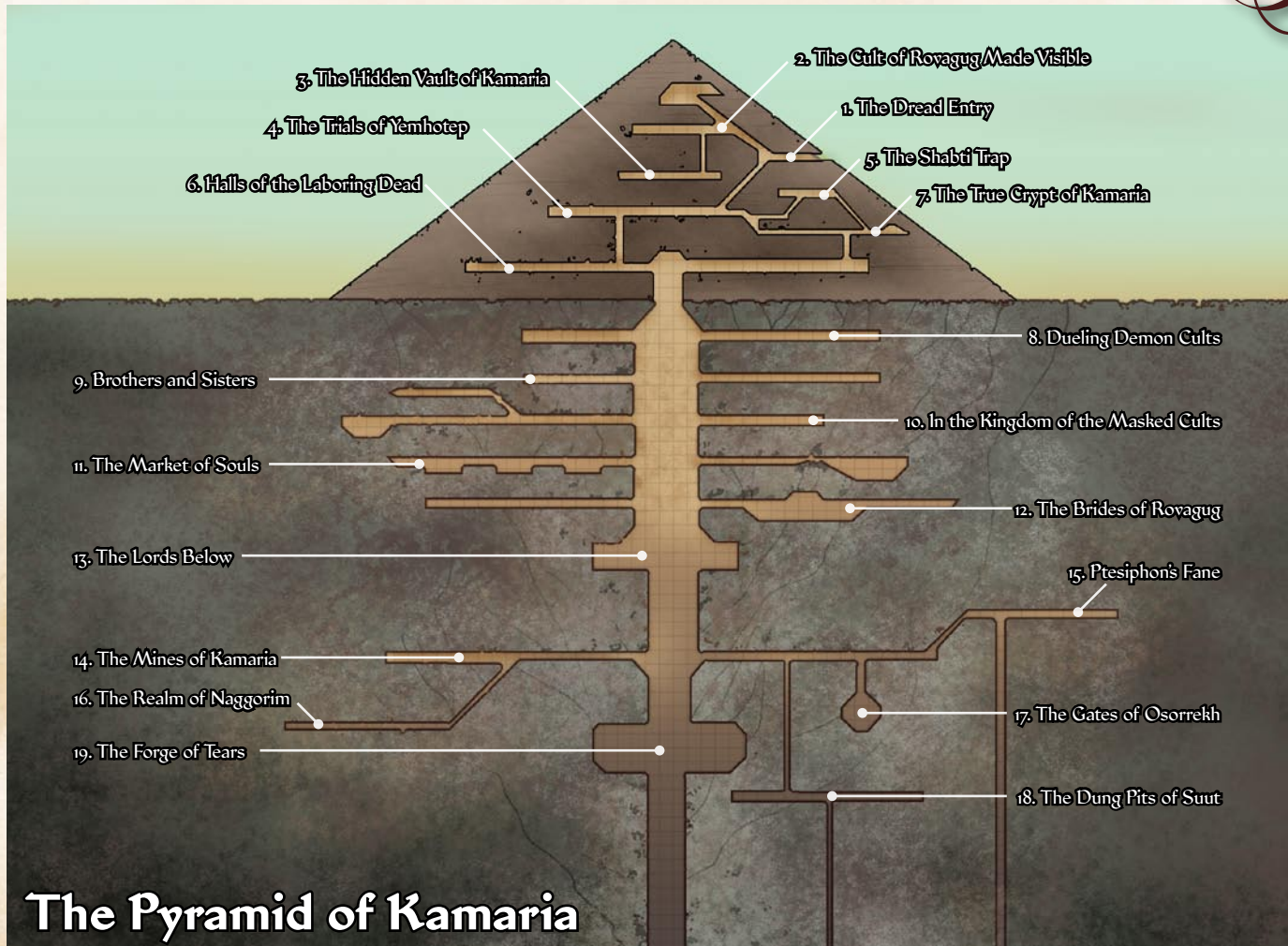
three fat fish and the eldest says, 'Now that each of us has one fish, we can make our way back home.' How can this be true?" Successfully answering this riddle ("The two sons and two fathers consist of a grandfather, a father, and a son") earns passage deeper into the level. She allows any number of guesses, and only attacks the intruders if they attempt to bypass her without answering the riddle correctly—as a CR 9 monster, this could be a devastating end for lower-level adventurers. At least one secret passage that is itself heavily trapped provides a dangerous alternative route past the deadly guardian. The divine guardian template can be found on pages 60–62 of Green Ronin's *Advanced Bestiary*.

Level 5. The Shabti Trap (CR 5): Accessed by cleverly hidden secret doors that none of the pyramid's upper denizens even suspect exists, this small level ends at a single large burial chamber, bare but for the lonely elaborate sarcophagus at its center containing Sethmose, the last bound male concubine of Kamaria, now an angry mummy who seeks to kill any who disturb his rest. Grasped in his left hand is a finely carved hawk-headed shabti of ivory. Shabti are common funerary trappings, animal-headed humanoid figurines found in great numbers within Osirian crypts, often ensorcelled. Replicas of varying craftsmanship are sold as keepsakes and charms in the local markets (those of a decidedly cheap variety by Rovagug's Minions). This one, however, imbues the one who first touches it after vanquishing Sethmose with a powerful *geas*: the victim is bound to take the mummy's remains to forgotten burial caves southeast of An at a shunned place in the Salt Hills called the Oasis of Bones.

Sethmose, a scribe who caught Kamaria's fancy, was actually forced to forsake his beloved bride, Nasamaria, to become the pharaoh's concubine, forbidden to ever see or speak to his wife again. When Kamaria discovered the two had united for one brief encounter, she flew into a jealous rage and had Nasamaria afflicted with a dreadful wasting disease. Powerless to save her, Sethmose was forced to watch his adored wife slowly perish. Kamaria had her corpse entombed in the remote caves, guarded for all eternity by a vicious, deathless lamia to prevent Sethmose from ever being reuniting with his beloved. The *geas* compels one to do just that: face the dangers of the caves and slay the lamia so that the long-dead lovers may be reunited.

Level 6. Halls of the Laboring Dead (CR 6): The Pyramid of Kamaria and its subterranean vaults took decades to complete despite the fact that armies of work gangs labored on it ceaselessly. Few workers who toiled on the monument ever left. While it is true that some were killed in accidents or were literally worked to death, others were simply slain as a means of preserving the structure's many deadly secrets. The remains of each





The Pyramid of Kamaria

unfortunate were placed on this level. This seemingly endless labyrinth of corridors and chambers is a virtual gauntlet of angry, restless undead. Very little in the way of treasure lies here, but there is no shortage of danger. At the center of this level lies the entrance to the Pit—a central shaft that drops all the way down to Sekamina and passes through most of the pyramid's underground levels. Access into the Pit from above is difficult (see the “A Word About the Pit” sidebar).

Level 7. The True Crypt of Kamaria (CR 7): This tightly packed series of corridors and chambers is outfitted with all manner of traps and deadly guardians designed to protect the intended resting place of Kamaria the Brazen. The final chamber, which holds the Pharaoh's triple-layered sarcophagus, is guarded by two bow-wielding undead driders. Should a party defeat these guardians, they discover that Kamaria's body is no longer in the final coffin. How her body was stolen away without triggering any of the traps or disturbing the tomb's sentinels is a mystery, but the solution lies far lower in the complex (down on level 12).

Level 8. Dueling Demon Cults (CR 8): With Kamaria's assassination and the bloody chaos that followed, culminating in the sealing of the Pit between this level and the one above, the surviving cultists of Rovagug flew into a panic. Some took their own lives or launched foolish expeditions into the deeper regions below, into realms they were hardly qualified to handle, but most of them, feeling abandoned by their god, sought out new patrons. At the same time, they fought and scabbled for territories in this expansive uppermost level. At one point, over a dozen different demon cults flourished here, but after hundreds of years of open warfare, that number was whittled down to four and an uneasy balance resulted, though treacherous scheming between these four cults remains a fact of existence. The surviving cultists have split into four factions, and in most cases, the passage of centuries has seen these human cultists transform physically as well. Only one cult, composed of worshipers of Nurgal (who hope someday to walk under the relentless heat of the long-promised sun), remains wholly human—although they are prone to albinism

after all the years spent underground. The other three cults now exist as Mazmezz- or Yhidothrus-worshipping morlocks or Kabriri-worshipping ghouls. Additional details on these four demon lords can be found in *Lords of Chaos, Book of the Damned, Vol. 2*. Acts of double-dealing and slaughter, impulsive power plays, and petty rivalries occupy the sordid lives of these depraved residents, though their numbers are regularly augmented by those vainly seeking escape from the levels below.

Level 9. Brothers and Sisters (CR 9): Whereas the cultists who populate the level above have degenerated in both faith and form, those who persist on this level have remained loyal to Rovagug—after a fashion. An ancient schism has split the cultists on this level along gender lines, and the two groups have viciously vied for supremacy on this level for hundreds of years. The Brotherhood of Pestilence is devoted to chaos and decay, and consists of exclusively male cultists who hide pockmarked visages beneath filthy, hooded robes. They wield rusty cleavers and other ill-kept blades, spreading their pollution with every breath in their continuing service to Rovagug. The Sisters of Purity appear angelic, all radiantly young and beautiful, clad in their pure white silk, with fine, doll-like hair dyed to soft pastel colors. They walk with an unearthly grace and are faultlessly charming. However, their appearance masks their true nature and intent: wielding keenly sharp poisoned stilettos, their idea of “purity” is a world devoid of life, providing Rovagug with an unsullied canvas on which to spew his gorge, remaking the universe in its own image.

Level 10. In the Kingdom of the Masked Cults

(CR 10): This level is where the largest number of Rovagug cultists continue their work without the distraction of demons or petty schisms. The cult itself consists of three different branches—each of which carries on their own strange methods of venerating the Rough Beast but maintaining a relatively stable level of peace between them, provided no individual cultist violates the esoteric rules of each territory. Those who do are usually exiled up to the upper levels. Only two

of these branches dwell upon this level—the third, the Dream Eaters, rules the level below. Members of the Cult of Birds attire themselves in crude, beaked masks; filthy, feathered coats with mock wings; and rusty, sharpened claws fixed in handheld pommels. The Gladiators of Rovagug wear masks depicting boars, predatory cats, bears, and warhogs. These two cults do nothing but train for and engage in pointless, vicious combat in several outfitted chambers and a main arena where the fight is always to the death.

Level 11. The Market of Souls (CR 11): Perhaps the most stable realm beneath the pyramid, this level holds the sprawling Neferbah Markets. Here rules the third branch of the Rovagug cult, the Dream Eaters, its members less than human thanks to the corrupting influence of an artifact called the *Gem of Dreams* (see page 43). Also known as the Gatekeepers, these cultists guard a number of portals to alternate worlds through which strange travelers sometimes visit. Many such travelers come through these gates intent on challenging the Gladiators, but they cannot do so before paying the Dream Eaters’ toll. Clad in layer upon layer of filthy robes and rags festooned with hanging bones and other morbid objects, their toll is a taste of the essence of sentient beings, which they consume with their ever-hungering avarice.

Merchants from the Darklands, outsiders, and extraplanar denizens wishing to trade commodities both rare and dreadful also frequent this level. Deception is common here and unseen peril lurks in almost every transaction, though order is maintained by the Dream Eaters. Gambling dens are also rife, and anyone can try his luck at the myriad tables. However, players may discover too late that their wagers are for more than the coins exchanged, for the only true currency of value here is the loser’s eternal soul.

Level 12. The Brides of Rovagug (CR 12): Centuries ago, this foul coven of malevolent witches devoted to the Rough Beast secreted away the mummified corpse of Kamaria from her sarcophagus, using teleportation to travel to and





from the upper levels. They are now committed to the preservation of pharaoh's memory. However, Kamaria is fully sentient and the Brides have unwittingly imprisoned the pharaoh with their rituals. Adventurers may inadvertently unleash Kamaria the Brazen (CE female lich cleric of Rovagug 14) upon her foolish captors, only to have the undead pharaoh turn her wrath on them.

Level 13. The Lords Below (CR 13): This level breaks with the worked stone and hieroglyph-carved walls above, marking the final transition between the chambers built or expanded upon by Kamaria's slaves and existing chambers connecting to the Darklands below. While the cult of Rovagug once controlled all of the pyramid's levels, they no longer have direct sway over this level or those below—these are now held by denizens of the Darklands themselves. This uppermost cavern is infested with troglodytes, ghouls, and morlocks, but a cabal of powerful ghoulish spellcasters called the Lords Below represents the true danger. Agents placed by the ghoulish city of Nemret Noktoria deeper below Osirion, the Lords Below ensure easy access to the Market of Souls and the various world portals found therein by maintaining diplomatic relations with the cult of Rovagug. A portal leading to one of Nemret Noktoria's largest ziggurats lies deep within this level, providing a convenient way for the Lords Below to return home as needed, or to send back the product of the deeper mines their agents control.

Level 14. The Mines of Kamaria (CR 14): Still in operation after millennia, these mines are staffed by enslaved morlocks and other humanoid workers, their cruel ghoulish overseers unafraid to apply the whip or worse. The rare stones, precious metals, and gems extracted by these slaves are then sent on to Nemret Noktoria's vaults. But the miners now draw very close to unearthing a long-hidden evil that may spell disaster for all: an imprisoned wendigo of exceptional malice sealed in a magical tomb deep under the scorching sands thousands of years ago.

Level 15. Ptesiphon's Fane (CR 15): A unique demon of alarming power and ambition, Ptesiphon the Unquenchable gathers strength and worshipers here, plotting his eventual assault on an Abyssal realm he wishes to rule. In time, this demon may well achieve the vaunted status of nascent demon lord, but over the past several hundred years, the creature's power has been building far more slowly than he hoped.

Level 16. The Realm of Naggorim (CR 15): The noble efreeti **Naggorim** (LE male noble efreeti sorcerer 13) was once chief of Kamaria's extensive mining operations, but as the pharaoh's minions fell upon one another, this vain and cunning elemental acted to carve out a kingdom for himself from the rock beneath the pyramid. Any brave party that seeks to explore this level must first overcome the outsider's bizarre menagerie and bodyguards, the

most dangerous and devious of which populate his extensive harem.

Level 17. The Gates of Osorrekh (CR 16–17): Kamaria's most accomplished and dreadful sorcerer, Osorrekh the Fearless, created a large number of permanent gateways to several other planes so that trade of rare goods might be conducted in service of Rovagug's release. These portals served as a sort of "rough draft" to those that appear on level 11 above, but unlike those portals (which are limited to areas spread throughout Golarion and a few of the closer planets in the solar system), these spanned entire planes. Most of these gates have collapsed, but not before alien creatures of astounding pollution crept into this world. Where the remaining functional gates lead can only be discovered by direct investigation of the worlds that lie beyond—but in at least two cases, the portal at the receiving end is damaged and does not provide a route back.

Level 18. The Dung Pits of Suut (CR 18): This foul-smelling realm of filth is said to be a corner of the polluted mind of the demon lord Jubilex. These dripping caverns contain an alchemist's dream (or perhaps his nightmare): countless extraordinarily rare and dangerous substances bubble and steam in stinking craters, glowing lichens of alien origin cling to rock surfaces, strange subterranean growths pulsate with menace in the phosphorescent illumination—all these materials ripe for employment in heretofore undiscovered formulae. But these revolting pits and caverns are inhabited by slimes, jellies, sentient plants, and other deadly creatures that lurk in the dark, including a large number of particularly large and dangerous omox demons, and the air itself is a virulent poison.

Level 19. The Forge of Tears (CR 19): Supplied by the mines and labs above, it was here in this deepest of chambers that Kamaria's assortment of alchemists, wizards, and priests constructed a Great Machine designed to release Rovagug from his prison. With the loss of the pharaoh's leadership, the foremen of this dreadful project altered their aims—they now seek to release as many of the Spawn of Rovagug as possible upon an unsuspecting Golarion, beginning with the resurrection of Ulunat, whose massive corpse still lies at the heart of Sothis. Now the cultists have become trapped by their creation, which has achieved a kind of sentience. The Great Machine itself consists of nearly half this level—and in order to prevent it from activating, heroes must explore the metallic maze of tunnels, tubes, and chambers within to find and destroy the imprisoned azatas that give the Forge of Tears its power. Unfortunately, the more blood spilled by the deaths of good souls within these chambers, the faster the machine awakens—and any hopeful heroes who get in over their heads could well be the final catalyst for the forge's activation.



DENIZENS

An endless variety of beings exist within and below the Pyramid of Kamaria. Among the most unique denizens of the pyramid, however, are the dream eaters. Created by the *Gem of Dreams* (see page 43), these onetime humans have been warped by nightmares into deformed creatures. The Rovagug cultists themselves have built a strange mythology for themselves around this practice—they believe the *Gem of Dreams* to be a gift sent them by their god. According to their myths, once the Rough Beast emerges from the Dead Vault and destroys Golarion, the corpse world left behind would be populated only by those Rovagug has chosen for survival. It is through this magical gem's capacity to transform dreamers into monsters that they believe they are being so selected.

"Dream Eater" is an acquired template that can be added to any living intelligent creature through contact with the artifact known as the *Gem of Dreams*—but once a creature becomes a dream eater, it cannot gain this template again.

CR: Same as base creature +2.

Alignment: Chaotic evil—most dream eaters become worshipers of Rovagug, demon lords, or other chaotic evil deities.

Senses: The base creature gains darkvision 60 ft.; if the base creature already possesses darkvision, the range of that ability increases by 60 ft.

Immunity: The base creature becomes immune to mind-affecting effects.

Special Attacks: A dream eater gains two special attacks, as detailed below. Both of these special attacks have save DCs equal to 10 + 1/2 the dream eater's Hit Dice + the dream eater's Charisma modifier.

Dream Eating (Su): As a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity, a dream eater can consume a creature's subconscious dreams if the victim fails to resist with a Will save. A sleeping victim takes a –2 penalty on saving throws against this ability, but automatically awakens if the save is successful. On a failed save, the victim takes 1d4 points of Charisma damage, and the dream eater gains a number of psychic points equal to the Charisma drained, to a maximum amount of psychic points equal to the dream eater's Hit Dice.

Psychic Assault (Su): As a swift action, a dream eater can imbue any melee attack he makes with a psychic assault, infusing the mind of the creature struck with hideous nightmare visions and hallucinations. The magnitude of the effect depends on how many psychic points the dream eater spends in the assault. By expending 1 point, the dream eater can cause the victim to become dazzled for 1d6 rounds. By expending 3 points, he can make a victim become staggered for 1d6 rounds. By expending 5 points, he can make the victim nauseated for 1d6 rounds. By expending 7 points, he can make the victim confused for

1d6 rounds. And by expending 9 points, he can stun the victim for 1d6 rounds. The victim can resist the psychic assault entirely by making a Will saving throw.

Special Abilities: A dream eater gains telepathy with other dream eaters to a range of 30 feet.

Ability Scores: Str +6, Dex +2, Con +4, Int +2, Wis +2, Cha +4.

Skills: A dream eater gains a +4 racial bonus on Perception and Stealth checks. He also gains a +8 racial bonus on Knowledge (religion) and Knowledge (planes) checks, and these two skills are now always considered class skills for the creature.

TRAPS

Many of the traps within the pyramid are of a mechanical nature, employing fulcrums, counterweights, collapsing walls, descending ceilings, and tumbling blocks of stone. Pits abound, as do various devious devices for launching projectiles that carry disease or poison along with their barbed edges. Deeper below the pyramid, where the cults have a stronger presence, spell traps like *glyphs of warding* are common, as are magical traps. Portable magical traps are particularly popular on levels where conflict between different sects or religions results in a constant reworking of borders, for it's much easier to reposition portable traps than those that are built into the structure. Golden eggs are a relatively common variety of these portable traps. The size of a human head, these traps appear to be egg-shaped decorations covered with intricate hieroglyphs, but when jostled, they explode like bombs. They can be used to "mine" areas, for any who approach them either too closely or too quickly set them off. To safely transport a golden egg, one must first disable the trap before picking it up. A golden egg can be bypassed with a Stealth check, but otherwise is triggered as soon as anything larger than a Tiny creature comes within 15 feet, or as soon as it takes any damage or is moved in any way. Cultists typically hide golden eggs from view by placing them in curtained alcoves, or even burying them just under a layer of dirt or sand.

GOLDEN EGG

CR 8

Type magical; **Perception** automatic, or DC 20 if hidden;

Disable Device DC 30

EFFECT

Trigger proximity (15 feet); **Reset** none; **Bypass** Stealth DC 30
Effect spell effect (*fireball*, 5d6 fire damage, DC 14 Reflex half; some golden eggs instead inflict acid, cold, or electricity damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft. burst)

TREASURES AND REWARDS

Legends abound regarding the undiscovered gems, gold, and works of art allegedly buried within the Pyramid of Kamaria, hinting at wealth beyond the dreams of the

greediest treasure hunters. However, in addition to the great monetary rewards, the large number of spellcasting creatures that dwell within the ruins ensures a wealth of magic items to be won in the form of gear looted from fallen enemies.

Numerous unique or unusual magic items lie within the pyramid's dungeons as well, special treasures once owned by the individuals buried within. Of particular note for their role in providing a method of lowering the shimmering barrier that bars entry into the deeper levels are the *Sword and Breastplate of Khafirum*. Individually, these items are already potent weapons—the sword is a +2 *undead bane ghost touch khopesh* (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 177), while the armor is a +1 *ghost touch breastplate*. When used simultaneously by a single wearer, however, the matched set grants a +4 bonus on all saving throws against spells or effects generated by undead foes. The sword gains the keen weapon property and the armor's enhancement bonus increases to +3 as well. Outside of the Pyramid of Kamaria, the sword and breastplate become nonmagical (but masterwork) items. If the wearer of the *Breastplate of Khafirum* strikes the shimmering barrier blocking the Pit leading down to level 8 of the dungeon with the *Sword of Khafirum*, the barrier is immediately destroyed, along with the sword and breastplate. Of course, characters who effect this event while standing upon the barrier might just drop themselves into a several-thousand-foot fall into the Darklands if they're not careful.

One of the most notorious artifacts reputed to be hidden within the dungeon is, of course, the *Gem of Dreams*. Said to be the source of Kamaria's long life, this sinister artifact is also the source of a hideous race of minions that served her as assassins—the Dream Eaters.

GEM OF DREAMS

Aura strong necromancy; **CL** 20th

Slot none; **Weight** 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

No record of where Kamaria found this potent artifact exists, although many believe she discovered it while exploring a remote corner of the nightmare realm of Leng. The *Gem of Dreams* can be used once per month to absorb the dreaming mind of any sleeping creature it is in contact with—this ability must be activated as a full-round action. The sleeping creature can resist this doom by making a DC 20 Will save—with a success, he is afflicted by a *nightmare* spell (CL 20th) but is otherwise unharmed. If he fails the save, his dreaming mind is stolen, warped, and then siphoned back into his body in the

space of an hour. If the victim is awakened before this process completes, his body twists and transforms into a creature known as a dream eater (see above), at which point only *wish* or *miracle* (or the destruction of the *Gem of Dreams*) can restore him to his true form. At the point the transformation occurs, the creature that activated the gem's power ceases to age for a month. By using the gem every month (and creating more and more dream eaters), a person can effectively become immortal in this manner. While this is technically nothing more than a beneficial side effect, it is this power that has generated the majority of the gem's legendary fame.

DESTRUCTION

The gem must absorb the dreams of a slumbering Spawn of Rovagug, whereupon it shatters into dust and releases a particularly powerful animate dream (*Pathfinder RPG*

Bestiary 2 29); the power of this animate dream is left to you, but it should be advanced in Hit Dice to a point where its CR is equal to 3 points above the party's average level. Needless to say, the animate dream immediately attacks—if not slain, it reforms as a new *Gem of Dreams* after 24 hours.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following hooks can be used to start adventures set in the Pyramid of Kamaria.

The Gem of Dreams: Tales of the unplumbed depths and secreted treasures of the Pyramid of Kamaria abound in legend-rich Osirion. The most persistent involves the *Gem of Dreams*—an artifact believed to be the source of Kamaria's power and long life. It was not found by earlier adventurers who plundered the burial crypts and this fact has fed rumors that many undiscovered chambers still exist within the monument. Whoever recovers this great glowing jewel would certainly garner enduring worldwide renown.

Rovagug's Minions: Of course, less glorious matters may initially draw a party in. One cannot wander the streets of An for long without noticing the Pyramid of Kamaria, or without hearing stories of the spurious "guides" who lead the curious on tours through the structure's chambers. The PCs could win tickets to the Dread Entry in a card game, or find them in the pockets of a group of would-be muggers. Using these tickets puts the PCs directly into the clutches of Rovagug's Minions, and even if they don't choose to lead the PCs into the hands of the actual cult deeper in the dungeon, they might just invite further conflict with the PCs by picking the wrong pocket during a tour.



RED REDOUBT OF KARAMOSS

“ON THE TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF THE SIEGE, EVENTS TRANSPIRED THAT MADE THE INTENTIONS OF THIS MYSTERIOUS KARAMOSS CREATURE ABUNDANTLY CLEAR—HIS HOBGOBLINS WERE ONLY THE VANGUARD OF SOMETHING EVEN MORE TERRIFYING. FOR ON THAT DAY, THE GATES OF THE RED REDOUBT OPENED TO DISGORGE A HORDE OF MECHANICAL WARRIORS—NIGHTMARISH CLOCKWORK THINGS WITH NO MINDS TO INFLUENCE, NO MORALE TO DESTROY. LIKE A WAVE OF STEEL, THEY CRASHED AGAINST ABSALOM’S WALLS, CLAMBERING UP WITHOUT THE NEED FOR LADDERS OR SIEGE ENGINES, OR DIGGING AWAY AT THE FOUNDATIONS WITH STRANGE TOOLS. YET IN THE END, EVEN THESE HORRORS FAILED TO BREACH THE CITY, FOR WHAT USE IS A MECHANICAL MINION AGAINST THE MAGIC OF THE SHADED OF GREEN RIDGE, WHO CAN REPEL ALL METAL WITH A MERE WAVE OF THE HAND?”

—SHALDAN FORIZEN, DRUID OF THE SHADED OF ABSALOM

A thousand years ago, the city of Absalom faced one of its most exotic foes. In the space of a single night, the mysterious wizard Karamoss (known to some as the “machine mage”) constructed a massive siege-fortress and assailed the city, first with hordes of hobgoblins and charmed monsters, and finally with regimented armies of automatons—soulless metal creatures that marched through the neighborhood of Copperwood and reached the northeastern city wall before the druids of the Shaded rose to the city’s defense and repulsed the metal men with a combination of *repel metal or stone*, *reverse gravity*, *transmute metal to wood*, and other powerful spells. Though his army was ultimately defeated, Karamoss himself was never found, and the ruins of his Red Redoubt still stand outside Absalom, bearing mute witness to the ferocity of the struggle.

Beneath those ruins lies a vast complex of tunnels carved out by Karamoss’s minions. Adventurers have explored many of the complex’s upper levels, but the vast bulk of the dungeon remains hidden and untouched, the subject of many dark rumors. It is known that many creatures have since taken up residence in the complex, and even today, a thousand years after the siege, explorers still brave its depths, searching for the lost levels and the riches therein.

HISTORY

The creature known to the world as Karamoss was born a man in Numeria, yet a life spent obsessing over the strange treasures found in that savage land’s mysterious metal caverns ensured that he would not die a man. Karamoss was particularly fascinated with the strange automatons and clockwork constructs common in this region, and in time a strange madness took root in his mind. He came to believe that organic life should give way to the lawful perfection of the machine—that by rebuilding life in the form of machinery, one could conquer disease, hunger, and aging at once. He spent a decade preparing himself for what would be his first and only foray into the legendary Star Mount just northwest of Numeria’s capital city of Starfall. He snuck into the mysterious ruin alone, and for three more decades remained within.

When Karamoss finally reappeared, he was no longer entirely human, and his quest for perfection had transformed into a hunger for conquest. Now something neither quite living nor completely mechanical, the partially transformed wizard had learned much in his exploration of the Star Mount—not least of which was that an even stranger sending from the cosmos lay far to the south at the heart of the city of Absalom. In the *Starstone*, Karamoss saw not a chance at divinity but an unlimited source of power for a new race of mechanical beings.

On a stormy night in the fall of 3637 AR, a great metal citadel appeared just outside of Absalom, rising from the rocky ground like a red metallic growth. Within hours, a

SUPER-SCIENCE IN YOUR GAME

As presented in this section, the machine mage Karamoss is a product of the strange land of Numeria, where the line between science fiction and fantasy vanishes. If this type of combination doesn’t appeal to you, you may want to avoid setting your adventures in the Red Redoubt of Karamoss, for within, robots and technology are the rule. Alternatively, you can simply convert the robots into typical constructs for your game (removing the robot type and its associated traits is all you need to do—and suddenly those machine soldiers become normal animated objects), and replace the technological items with similar magic items.

If you do wish to explore the dungeons of the Red Redoubt in your campaign, this chapter gives you several tools to build technological threats and treasures in this chapter. This advice can be found in the Robots! sidebar on page 49, and among the various technological wonders awaiting discovery in the sample dungeon level at the end of the chapter. Additional advice for incorporating technological items into your game can be found on page 257 of *The Inner Sea World Guide*.

horde of hobgoblins emerged from the fortress and laid siege to the city. The city repulsed this initial attack after 3 weeks, only to learn that the hobgoblins had been little more than a distraction while the true army prepared within the Red Redoubt. When next the doors to that strange fortress opened, what emerged was far worse than hobgoblins—legions of metal warriors equipped with deadly weapons and guided by malign intelligence strode forth.

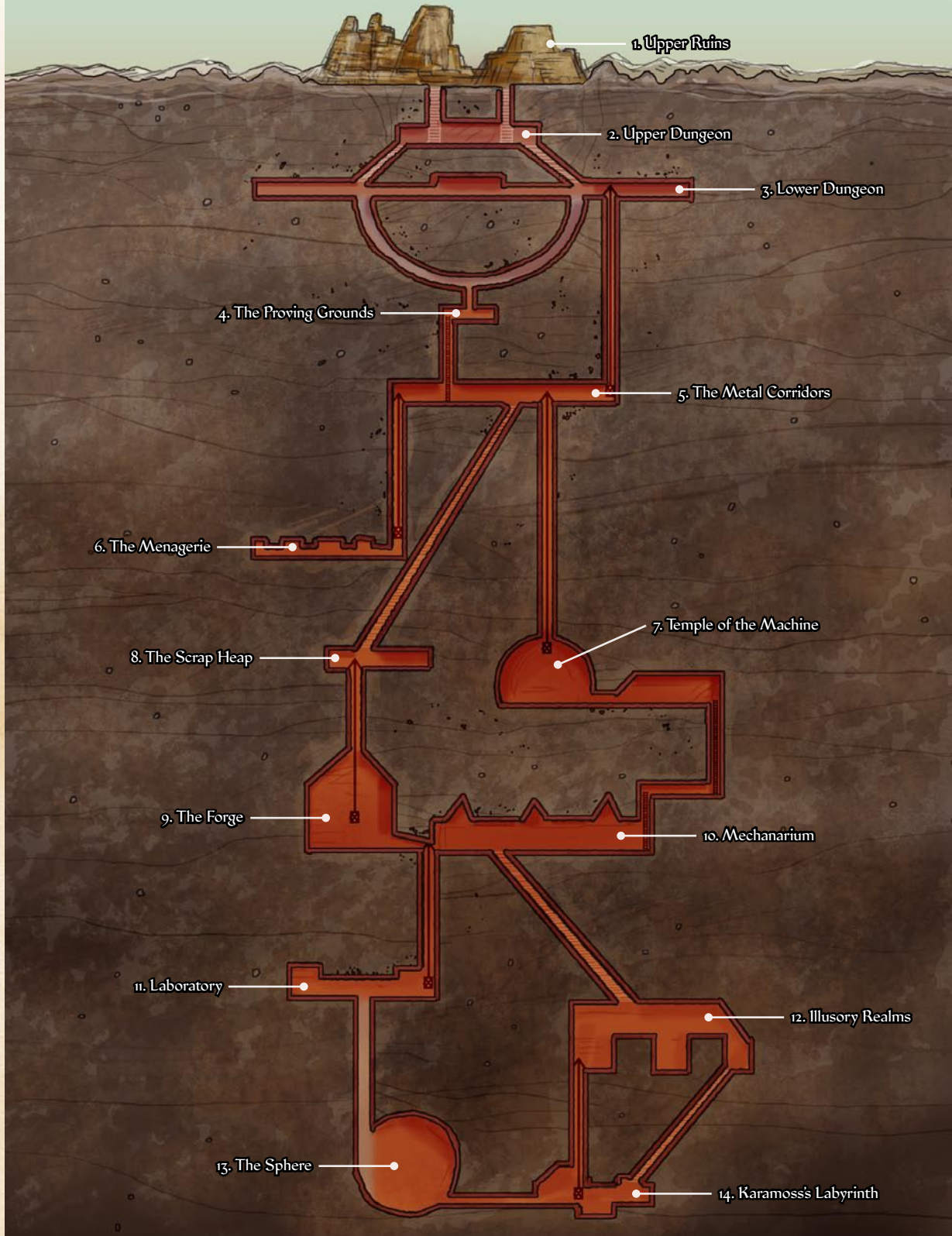
The metal minions devastated the outlying district of Copperwood, then marched upon the walls of Absalom themselves, using their destructive tools to burrow into the defenses or simply to scale its sheer walls as a fly might clamber up a pane of glass. It was then that the leaders of the city’s druidic order came to the defense, using their powerful magic to do what the other defenses could not—turn back the tide of metal monsters.

After that initial assault, the metal men never again made it to the city’s walls, but they remained a danger in outlying regions for 2 years, always retreating to the Red Redoubt when faced with overwhelming odds. As the months wore on, Karamoss, now hopelessly mad after being so close to his goal and yet so far, urged his dwindling numbers of living minions to build more clockwork warriors, constantly refining and improving their design, testing their deadly weapons on unfortunate captives.

At last, a final counterattack brought Absalom’s army to the walls of the Red Redoubt. In the carnage that followed, the upper floors of Karamoss’s citadel were destroyed,



The Red Redoubt of Karamoss



along with thousands of his automatons. Of the mysterious wizard-artificer, however, nothing was found, and rumors continue to circulate that Karamoss lives on in the deepest unexplored levels below his ruined redoubt, still seeking a way to reach the *Starstone* and use its power to grant his machines true life.

DESCRIPTION

The Red Redoubt was constructed by a combination of Karamoss's mechanical minions, powerful magic, and Numerian technology. Very little of the upper structure remains, but beneath lies a vast complex of metal-lined dungeon corridors and vexing mechanical dangers.

When the dungeons of the Red Redoubt were first constructed, the corridors were uniformly 10 feet wide and 10 feet tall, with walls, floors, and ceilings sheathed in red, be it burnished metal or polished stone of such hues. The underground complex has deteriorated somewhat over the centuries, losing much of its old mathematical perfection as new inhabitants moved in, dug tunnels, and hollowed out living spaces. The upper levels are scarcely recognizable, and are inhabited primarily by bandits, kobolds, troglodytes, and other social scavengers. These levels have been thoroughly explored and are usually visited only to clear out troublesome occupants. Few explorers have ventured farther below these upper levels. Here the old geometric stone-and-metal corridors are the rule, along with heavily bound iron doors or carved stone portals. Many of the deeper levels remain artificially lit via a mixture of technological and magical light sources. Cunning technological traps and mechanical creatures can still be found, some in perfect and deadly working order.

Transportation between levels is by stair, chute, or mechanical lift, as noted on the map. The mechanical lifts between levels operate by means of elaborate hydraulic systems that function either sporadically or not at all. The few explorers who have ventured deeper into the dungeon complex have had to traverse the long lift shafts using ropes or magic.

The primary metal used to line and reinforce the tunnels of the Red Redoubt is a unique alloy invented by Karamoss—iron mixed with traces of the liquid skymetal called djezet, or “quickiron.” Liquid at all temperatures, the rust-red quickiron amplifies magical effects that involve it (see page 51). Karamoss had a large supply of the substance, and incorporated much of it into the construction of his machine soldiers, but retained enough of it to mix with iron to create an alloy he called djezeteel. Only a small amount of djezet is required to craft djezeteel, but getting the liquid metal to bond with iron is a complex process. The resulting metal is not only a striking shade of red, but when used in such great amounts, as in the construction of the Red Redoubt, the stuff makes the casting of spells

a bit easier. In a location completely plated like the Red Redoubt, the djezeteel grants a +2 circumstance bonus on all concentration checks and all caster level checks.

Level 1. Upper Ruins (CR 1): The broken walls of the Red Redoubt's upper structure remain only as ugly and jagged ruins, caked with rust and filth. These ruins are a popular hideout for gangs of bandits, and since fierce competition over this territory tends to keep the bandits distracted from actual banditry, little has been done by Absalom to discourage the use of these ruins in this manner.

Level 2. Upper Dungeon (CR 2): Explored and mapped most recently by the Pathfinder Venture-Captain Shevala, the two top levels of the Redoubt's dungeons are only rarely visited these days, save for expeditions to root out hostile humanoids or criminals. They are considered largely pacified, to such an extent that the Pathfinder Society sometimes brings young recruits here for training exercises.

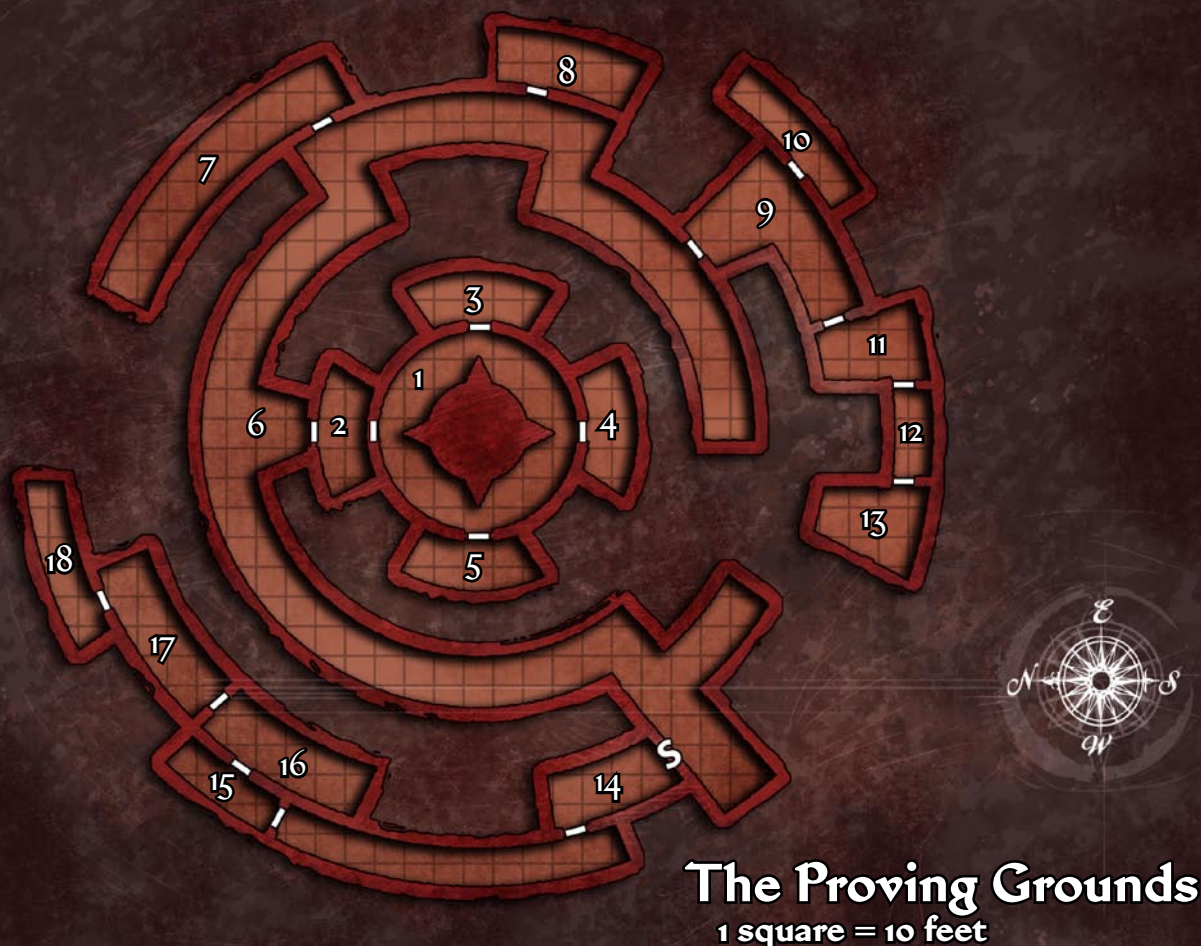
Level 3. Lower Dungeon (CR 3): This level once housed cells containing Karamoss's prisoners, but today is home primarily to monstrous vermin and the occasional troglodyte tribe.

Level 4. The Proving Grounds (CR 4): Shevala did not discover every secret of the upper levels, for this deadly area, where Karamoss tested his mechanical designs with the lives of prisoners, remains relatively active—see the end of this chapter for details on this level of the Red Redoubt.

Level 5. The Metal Corridors (CR 5): Karamoss's living minions, primarily hobgoblins, dwelt on this level. Long abandoned, the Metal Corridors are home to various subterranean creatures, including ankhegs, cave fishers, chokers, and otyughs.

Level 6. The Menagerie (CR 6): As he continued to lose touch with his humanity, Karamoss sought to understand how living things functioned. On this level, he kept a collection of living creatures, periodically studying them and pitting them against each other to help him grasp animals' survival instincts. While most of the creatures have long since perished, a few creatures remain, magically preserved and ready to be awakened. Unfortunately, the malfunctioning stasis chambers are about to fail entirely, and a sudden surge of power (such as would doubtless occur if any of the sealed doors to this level were forced open) would see these creatures released from stasis. In time, the enormous akatas, bulettes, moonflowers, and stranger monsters found within this level would likely hunt each other to extinction, but the first explorers to enter this war-zone-to-be will need to contend with them.

Level 7. Temple of the Machine (CR 7): Though thoroughly mad and obsessed with technology, Karamoss was also a man of not inconsiderable faith. Although he was once a worshiper of Nethys, by the time he decided to



lay siege to Absalom, his faith had become warped as well. As his madness grew, the machine-mage created his own pantheon of perfect machine-gods and crafted elaborate ceremonies to placate them. The temple level is filled with his offerings to these strange deities, as well as still-active automatons ready to defend the place from attack.

Level 8. The Scrap Heap (CR 7): When brought back to the citadel, damaged mechanical warriors were dropped down disposal chutes that led to this vast scrap pile. They were then taken from the heap to the forge below, where they were melted down and rebuilt. The heap is full of fragments of old automatons, and also infested with giant insects, slimes, and oozes. Some automatons have reassembled themselves from discarded parts and over the years have gained rudimentary intelligence, forming a strange cult that hates living creatures and reveres the man-machine who built them.

Level 9. The Forge (CR 8): Karamoss needed access to the elemental Plane of Fire in order to create the massive temperatures needed to forge his mechanical army. Here, furnaces were connected to the elemental planes through

elaborate arcane gateways. When the machine mage was finally defeated, he attempted to use the portals to the Plane of Fire to activate a volcano in an attempt to destroy the Red Redoubt and thus hide his secrets, but all he managed to do was destroy the portals themselves, stranding a fair number of outsiders and elementals from the Plane of Fire within. Today, these creatures remain the masters of this realm.

Level 10. Mechanarium (CR 9): Magical alloys and technological components from the Forge were used here to craft and build new forms of mechanical monstrosities to be tested and repaired by Karamoss's living minions. This level is like a large assembly line, with piles of raw material, tools, and partially assembled automatons, some of which are still functional. A number of bound creatures were never freed and have survived on this level, still prevented from leaving by Karamoss's spells. These include devils of various strengths as well as undead creatures—the remains of mortals worked to death by Karamoss. Rumor has it that one of his apprentices, now a powerful lich wizard, rules this level today.

Level 11. Laboratory (CR 10): Karamoss's old laboratory is full of traps and pitfalls, including decayed arcane substances with potentially deadly effects, experiments that are still working or have malfunctioned, a few lurching automatons, and even a tribe of nearly immortal mutants—the result of Karamoss fusing living and nonliving tissue.

Level 12. Illusory Realms (CR 11): Karamoss created a level even more elaborate than the Proving Grounds where he could use illusion and creation spells to simulate a variety of alternate realms in order to observe both his mechanical creatures and his prisoners in different conditions. The level was never fully implemented, but the spells remain, and today it is a maze of different environments, from mountain peaks to deserts, and from swamps to ocean depths, all with mechanical or artificially created creatures and perils.

Level 13. The Sphere (CR 12): This entire spherical level was magically altered to allow Karamoss to test his flying designs. Gravity is weaker here because of enchanted stones placed in the walls, and a number of Karamoss's aerial automatons are stored here, ready to reactivate if anyone enters.

Level 14. Karamoss's Labyrinth (CR 13): The mad machine mage himself lived in these chambers, which he expanded in ever more elaborate patterns during the siege. In the end, even as his citadel was being systematically destroyed above, he continued to experiment, hoping to find the ultimate new body in which he would survive forever. This level is believed to house some of Karamoss's greatest treasures—valuable construction materials, plans for new types of automatons, journals, experimental reports, and Karamoss's own living quarters. Some claim that Karamoss's experiments were a success, and that he still lurks here, far from the prying eyes of fleshly creatures, his partially mechanical body sustaining his utterly mad and evil mind as he seeks a way to conquer the world of living things.

DENIZENS

The Red Redoubt has a wide range of creatures dwelling within its underground reaches, but few are as notorious as Karamoss's strange automatons. Fundamentally similar to the recently discovered gearsmen of Numeria, Karamoss's machine soldiers formed the backbone of his true siege against Absalom. The vast majority of these constructed soldiers were destroyed by the end of the siege, yet many still function in the deeper levels of the dungeon.

Karamoss's machine soldiers are essentially 1st-level fighter animated objects made of a collection of metal gears, pistons, and parts, all powered by strange magical replicas of the more technological power sources the machine mage grew familiar with during his decades-long exploration of the Star Mount. While there exist numerous types and shapes of machine soldiers, the most common

ROBOTS!

Although the people of Golarion call them things like “automatons,” “metal men,” or the like, these technological creations are all robots, and as such, they share similar traits. Robots share some features with clockwork constructs (see page 256 of *The Inner Sea World Guide*), and as with clockworks, you can simply remove the robot subtype from a robot (along with its attendant traits) to transform it into a typical construct animated by magic. Likewise, you can add the robot subtype (and traits) to any existing construct to transform it into something created by technology. Adding the robot subtype to a construct does not affect its CR. A single construct cannot possess both the robot and the clockwork subtype. All robots gain the following traits.

- The construct gains the “robot” subtype.
- *Intelligent:* Robots are intelligent, and thus have skills and feats as appropriate for their Hit Dice. Unless otherwise indicated for a specific robot, all robots have Intelligence scores of 10. The following are class skills for robots: Climb, Disable Device, Fly, Knowledge (all), Linguistics, Perception, and Sense Motive.
- *Vulnerable to Critical Hits:* Whenever a robot takes extra damage from a critical hit, it must make a DC 15 Fortitude save to avoid being stunned for 1 round. If it makes the saving throw, it is instead staggered for 1 round.
- *Vulnerable to Electricity:* Robots take 150% as much damage as normal from electricity attacks, unless they are immune to electricity via other special defenses.
- *Difficult to Create:* Increase the time and gp cost required to create a robot by 50% over normal for a construct, unless the creator has access to a significant amount of technological resources (such as can be found on some of the lower levels of the Red Redoubt, or in certain metal dungeons found in Numeria).

were those modeled to look like humans. Yet despite their almost assembly-line method of production, the machine mage viewed each of his machine soldiers as a unique individual, and made sure that his minions crafted each one a unique “face” made of metal, stone, and crystal.

As animated objects, all of the Red Redoubt's machine soldiers have Construction Points. The baseline model spends both of its points to be made of metal, but many higher-CR machine soldiers spend an additional 2 or even 4 points to gain additional abilities. Larger machine soldiers built to resemble giants, dragons, and other monsters exist as well—these larger machine soldiers must spend 2 points to be made of metal, but how they spend their other points depends on their design.



PATHFINDER CAMPAIGN SETTING: DUNGEONS OF GOLARION

MACHINE SOLDIER

CR 4

XP 1,200

Animated object fighter 1

N Medium construct (robot)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 natural)**hp** 42 (4d10+21)**Fort** +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** -3**Defensive Abilities** hardness 10; **Immune** construct traits**Weaknesses** vulnerable to critical hits and electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** mwk longsword +8

(1d8+4/19-20), mwk short sword +7 (1d6+2/19-20)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +8 (1d8/19-20)

TACTICS

During Combat A machine soldier moves to engage the enemy in melee, resorting to its crossbow only when faced with enemies capable of remaining out of close combat.

Morale A machine soldier fights until it is destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 3, **Cha** 1**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20**Feats** Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword)**Skills** Climb +11, Perception +3, Sense Motive +3**Languages** Common, Goblin**SQ** Construction Points (metal)**Gear** masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, masterwork longsword, masterwork short sword

TRAPS

As his human mind descended into madness, Karamoss became increasingly obsessed with security. Accordingly he set traps of increasing cunning and deadliness, particularly in the lower levels, where his precious automatons were researched, built, and repaired. The majority of these traps feature a cunning mix of technology and magic. The shocksaw trap detailed below is a typical example of the kind of traps one can expect to find on upper levels—the traps get worse and worse the deeper one delves.

SHOCKSAW TRAP

CR 4

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

EFFECTS

Trigger sight (*true seeing*); **Reset** automatic

Effect whirling electrified circular saw blade on an articulated metal arm reaches out of a slot in a wall to strike at a target within a 15-foot reach (+10 melee, 2d6+3/19-20 damage plus 3d6 electricity damage)

TREASURES AND REWARDS

Karamoss's constructs required large quantities of rare materials—gold, silver, gems, and even platinum were all used extensively in their manufacture, and significant stores of these substances are believed to be found throughout the dungeon complex, particularly on the lower levels. Even more exotic substances—alchemical compounds, rare spell components, powders, herbs, tinctures and alloys, and skymetals like djezet can be found here, some worth many times their weight in gold.

Even greater prizes have nothing to do with metal or gems—Karamoss's workshops and laboratory are thought to contain volumes of priceless information,



including the secrets of creating the man-machine's mechanical warriors. Technological treasures from Numeria are thought to be hidden throughout the dungeon, although such treasures are not in great supply on the uppermost levels. Some sample technological treasures are included in the example dungeon level at the end of this chapter—see page 257 of *The Inner Sea World Guide* for advice on creating additional technological prizes.

Djezet: One of the strangest of the seven known types of skymetal, the rust-red djezet is liquid at all temperatures. This makes the metal relatively useless for crafting metal objects (although many gifted metallurgists, such as Karamoss, have had some success creating djezet alloys), but most who seek out this metal intend to use it instead as an additional material component for spellcasting, for its capacity to enhance magic. Used as an additional material component, a dose of djezet increases the effective level of a spell by +1, as if it were being modified by *Heighten Spell*. In order to function as an additional material component, the spellcaster must use a number of doses of djezet equal to the spell's level—additional djezet beyond this amount is useless. Djezet costs 200 gp per dose.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The following adventure hooks can be used to start adventures set in the Red Redoubt.

Training Day: The most direct way for PCs to become acquainted with the dungeons of the Red Redoubt is by accident. The Pathfinder Society sometimes brings new members here to train them in dungeoneering techniques or to aid in simple missions. Unfortunately for some trainees, it's possible to accidentally "discover" the chute down which prisoners were delivered to the Proving Grounds, and those who do are forced to fight for their lives against the creatures that inhabit the level as well as the still-functioning automatons.

The Technic League: Now that more attention is being paid to the Red Redoubt, the Black Sovereign and his Technic League grow fearful that others will learn the secrets of technology or gain access to strange sciences. Adventurers may be hired by the Sovereign to retrieve Karamoss's secrets, or might be engaged to stop others from doing so. In either case, the result is a race to the dungeon's lower levels, where Karamoss's secrets are likely to be found, possibly along with Karamoss himself and new, even deadlier creations.

THE PROVING GROUNDS

Though most believe that the upper levels of the Red Redoubt's dungeon complex have been thoroughly explored and mapped, unexplored areas of peril remain. One of these is the level called the Proving Grounds. Here, in a circular network of labyrinthine passages, Karamoss observed

prisoners as they faced his machine soldiers and other creations, using what he learned of their tactics for fighting against his monstrosities to improve his creations.

The rooms and corridors of the Proving Grounds are lined with djezeteel. Ceilings are uniformly 10 feet high, and the floor is textured with a regular grid to provide traction. Doors are made of heavy, riveted metal, also free from rust or wear (hardness 10, hp 60, Break DC 28, DC 30 Disable Device to open)—they slide open into the nearby wall on runners rather than swinging open on hinges. They close automatically 1 round after they're opened. The corridors and rooms are normally dark but small magical crystals are set throughout the level that may—at the GM's discretion—become active, providing dim illumination.

The easiest way into the Proving Grounds is via one of the hidden trapdoors and chutes that lead to this level. Those who stumble into these chutes are deposited in area 1. Regardless of when and how the PCs come to this level, they have been preceded by a tribe of curious goblins.

The Proving Grounds are designed to challenge 4th-level characters.

1. ENTRY

Four chutes spaced evenly around this room's central column deposit new arrivals on the floor. Once the victims have left the chute, a sliding door slams down, blocking the opening. These metal doors (hardness 10, hp 60, Break DC 28) can be opened with a DC 30 Disable Device check, but clambering back up the chute itself is difficult without magic (DC 30 Climb check). Furthermore, any attempt to damage the doors activates the machine soldiers in areas 3 and 5, which quickly emerge to pacify the vandals.

2. NONSENSE ROOM

This chamber contains alcoves on the east and west walls, but both are empty. The room's walls are inscribed with letters from a number of different alphabets in a seemingly random pattern. Every round, 1d8 random letters flash with bluish light. With several hours of study and a successful DC 20 Linguistics check, an observer can decipher some of the messages—you can use these to give the PCs clues on how to reach other levels or to tantalize them with hints of the strange treasures that await them there.

3. CENTRAL GUARDIAN (CR 4)

If the door to this room is opened, the door to area 5 also opens, activating the machine soldier in each room. Unlike the soldier in area 5, the one stationed here functions perfectly well.

MACHINE SOLDIER

CR 4

XP 1,200

hp 42 (see page 50)



4. PUZZLING EVIDENCE

This room contains three alcoves for machine soldiers, but each alcove is full of junk—the machine soldiers that were once stationed here malfunctioned long ago and tore each other apart.

5. BROKEN SOLDIER (CR 2)

If the door to this room is opened, the door to area 3 also opens, activating the machine soldier in each room. Unlike the denizen of room 3, however, this room's soldier is damaged. In addition to having fewer hit points, it functions as if it were confused (despite the fact that, as a construct, it's normally immune to such effects).

BROKEN MACHINE SOLDIER

CR 2

XP 600

hp 15 (see page 50)

6. DAMAGED DØØR

This door is initially jammed shut—it must be forced open (DC 20 Disable Device or DC 20 Strength check). If three attempts to open the door fail, the door suddenly opens just as a fourth attempt begins, falling forward off of its track toward the creature that was attempting to open the door. This creature takes 2d6 points of damage from the falling door (Reflex DC 14 negates).

7. THE GAUNTLET (CR 6)

Karamoss used this room to test individual weapons on living creatures. The end of the room was baited with something the prisoners needed—food, healing supplies, water, weapons, treasure—and he watched as they made their way past the weapons being tested toward the bait. Few actually reached the goal.

A metal chest sits at the far end of the room, surrounded by piles of silver and gold coins. Between the door and the treasure are two shocksaw traps, ready to lash out at anyone who proceeds into the hallway.

The loot at the end of the room is 300 sp, 160 gp, four *potions of cure moderate wounds*, and two *potions of haste*.

The chest is crafted entirely of metal and is locked (DC 30 Disable Device). Inside are three more *potions of cure moderate wounds* along with a longsword of unusual design. The blade is very straight and finely crafted, and the sword has a small dome-shaped crystal embedded in the blade near the hilt and an open socket at the base of the grip. This is an uncharged *sonic sword*—a technological artifact from Numeria. Without a power source, the weapon functions as a masterwork longsword, but if it is recharged with a battery (such as those found in area 15), the sword hums as it begins to vibrate slightly—at this point, it functions as a *+1 thundering longsword*. Once charged, the weapon retains these properties for 10 days before deactivating

and needing a new charge. The weapon is technological, and functions fine in an area of antimagic, but since it requires periodic recharges, its price remains unchanged from that of a typical *+1 thundering longsword* (although few merchants would agree to pay that much for the sword if it weren't currently charged).

The chest also contains a velvet bag of 10 gems (worth 10 gp each) and a small metal cylinder on a necklace chain. The cylinder is about 2 inches long and is inscribed with an intricate pattern. This cylinder serves as the key to the escape hatch in area 18.

8. THE IMPERFECT ØNES (CR 4)

This room once served as temporary storage for machine soldiers that were damaged or destroyed during testing. If anyone comes within 5 feet of the door, it slides open automatically as a scrying crystal in the ceiling activates, providing dim light. The door gets stuck halfway open, then closes and attempts to open again, repeating this at a rate of several attempts per round until it is destroyed. Anyone who attempts to pass through the door must make a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid being struck by the door as it slides closed and taking 1d6 points of damage. The malfunctioning door provides partial cover against missile fire. In any event, the two partially functional machine soldiers inside the room activate and move to attack at once.

BROKEN MACHINE SOLDIERS (2)

CR 2

XP 600 each

hp 15 each (see page 50)

9. BATTLEFIELD

This room is filled with debris from a recent fight between the Lipripper goblins and a single mechanical soldier. The destroyed soldier lies on the ground, along with the bodies of nine dead goblins.

10. MECHANICAL SNAKES (CR 4)

Inside this room are two still-functional prototypes of one of Karamoss's creations—a pair of gleaming metal vipers. Both are essentially iron cobras with the robot subtype, and swiftly move to attack any intruders.

MECHANICAL VIPERS

CR 2

XP 600 each

Robot iron cobra (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 182)

hp 18 (1d10+13)

Feats Toughness

Skills Perception +4

11. FLIMSÝ BARRICADE (CR 1)

A group of four Lipripper goblins have chosen this room as a place to hide out and recover from their wounds. The

goblins are completely overwhelmed and horrified by the robotic monsters they've faced over the past few days, and are hungry to boot. Crazed with stomach pangs and fear, they shriek and abandon the flimsy barricade they've erected in the middle of this room upon first sighting the PCs, retreating to area 12 in a panic.

GOBLINS (4)**CR 1/3****XP 135 each**hp 6 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)**12. GOBLIN DEN (CR 1/2)**

The remaining two goblin survivors of the Lipripper tribe occupy this room, sprawled on uncomfortable-looking "beds" made out of junk. Each of these goblins is wounded, but they won't flee to area 13 because of the fear that room has instilled in them. If confronted here, the goblins (plus any who fled here from area 11) fight until at least two of them have been slain, at which point they miserably beg for their lives, offering to help the party in any way they can. If the party accepts this offer, the goblins abandon the party at the first opportunity they have to escape.

WOUNDED GOBLINS (2)**CR 1/3****XP 135 each**hp 3 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 156)**13. THE WAY DOWN**

This chamber contains what was once a well-hidden secret trap door in the floor, but over time, the door has broken and now hangs obviously open. The 5-foot-square shaft within is fitted with a ladder and leads nearly 200 feet down to the Metal Corridors below, where Karamoss's living servants had their quarters. The goblins are terrified of going any deeper into this dungeon, and fear even setting foot in this room.

14. METAL WHIRLWIND

The secret door in the hallway can be discovered with a DC 20 Perception check. To protect the valuable rooms beyond, Karamoss placed a security device in this chamber. The device resembles a 2-foot-diameter metal pillar that begins to spin when the secret door is opened. As it spins, chains attached to its sides whirl out, blocking passage through the room. Anyone who attempts to move through the room must make a DC 14 Reflex save each round to avoid being struck by some of these chains, which whip around the room, glancing off the metal walls and creating a horrific din. A failed save indicates 2d4+3 points of damage from the chains.

15. MACHINE SHOP

This room was originally used for repairs and adjustments. It contains a workbench with various tools such as hammers, magnifiers, awls, scrapers, polishing cloth, drivers, wrenches, and similar devices. The tools themselves are all of masterwork quality, and are worth 400 gp in all. Two spherical crystals with strange metal prongs protruding from one surface can be found as well—these are batteries that can be used to power the *sonic sword* from area 7 or the *nightvision goggles* in area 17. Each of the batteries is worth 10 gp as a curiosity, but to someone who knows their true value, the batteries are worth 100 gp apiece.

16. WEAPONS MASTER (CR 5)

This room was the level's armory, where weapons were installed, removed, and replaced. An enhanced machine soldier stands guard in this room, and it swiftly activates and attacks any intruders.

A search of the room reveals three masterwork longswords, four masterwork short swords, two masterwork light crossbows, and 120 crossbow bolts.

**MACHINE CAPTAIN****CR5****XP 1,600**

Advanced machine soldier

hp 50 (see page 50)

17. SPARE PARTS

Miscellaneous parts were stored in this chamber. Various gears, cogs, pulleys, pistons, armor plates, articulated sections of arms, and other items can be found here, organized into a series of sealed containers. A search of the room reveals interesting curiosities worth 250 gp, a metal box containing five 1-dose vials of djezet, a *wand of make whole* with 43 charges, and a pair of rubbery black goggles with a socket on the right side. These are *nightvision goggles*—if charged with a battery (such as those found in area 15), they function as *goggles of night* for 10 days before the charge is depleted.

18. THE WAY OUT

This room contains the rotted remains of clothing and several wooden chairs. In the ceiling at the far end is a circular hatch with a brass handle. The hatch is locked (DC 30 Disable Device to open), but can be unlocked with the cylindrical key from area 7. Once open, the hatch reveals a long ladder that leads up to the Lower Dungeon level above. It emerges in a small, unexplored chamber hidden behind a secret door and a pile of rubble that have kept it undiscovered for decades.



ZOLURKET MINES

TWENTY-SEVEN STOUT DWARVES DIED IN THE MINE COLLAPSE. THE SOUNDS OF DISTANT RESCUE GAVE US HOPE, BUT WE FOUND MAGGOTS IN THE FOOD STORES. WE EXECUTED BROLIN ON THE 21ST DAY FOR THE CRIME OF CANNIBALISM—WE HAD ALREADY TAKEN VOWS TO STARVE IN THE FACE OF SUCH UNTENABLE OPTIONS. THE HUNGER CONSUMED US ALL, AND BY THE 23RD DAY WE'D CAUGHT THREE OTHERS FEEDING ON THE CORPSES LIKE RATS. THOUGH WE EXECUTED THEM TOO, SOMETHING IN THE ROCK CORRUPTED THEIR BODIES, AND THEY ROSE AGAIN AND ATTACKED.

I'VE CONCEALED MY FESTERING WOUNDS, BUT MUST ANSWER THE COLD, GNAWING HUNGER. THE PAIN IN MY BELLY IS WORSE THAN BEFORE. THE CORPSES OF MY BRETHREN ARE ALL THAT REMAIN.

—CAVE SCRIPT, COLLAPSED MARROWSTONE SHAFT NUMBER 6

Nestled within the high peaks of the Barrier Wall mountain range, several days of rough travel from Katapesh, sits the cursed dwarven platinum mines known today as Zolurket. Few adventurers brave exploration of these dangerous mines, the remote location and rumors of the innumerable walking dead offsetting the promise of rich treasures left behind. Further, the protective carapace of an imposing dwarven fortress carved from the mountain's solid bedrock has prevented gnoll raiders from plundering the mines' riches. But the dwarves never fortified themselves against decay from within, and the presence of a foul necrotic ore corrupted miners delving deep within the mountain's roots, creating hordes of voracious undead who finally wrested the halls from their living brethren. Now, the mines are overrun with evil creatures, the once staggering beauty of the deeps tarnished by the filth of undeath and unholy desecrations of foul gods. But great are the treasures left behind by the dwarven exodus, and after centuries of hesitation, the brave and the foolish again cast envious eyes upon the ruins, and marvel at the risks and rewards that await.

HISTORY

Founded over 2,000 years ago by dwarven prospectors, centuries before Katapesh itself formally became a nation, the Zolurket Mines were once known as Tar-Urkatha and considered among the most prosperous halls in all of northern Garund, a jewel in the crown of dwarven architecture. What began as a small mining camp teasing reluctant platinum from the peak's hard stone exploded in 2652 AR when miners discovered a massive vein of the precious metal. As the dwarves plunged steadily downward extracting ore, they expanded the played-out shafts and beautiful natural caverns above into grand, sweeping halls that became the envy of rulers both dwarven and otherwise. Other precious metals and gems revealed themselves to miner's picks, and fueled by greed, greater and greater numbers of workers were brought in to help—soon resulting in an unanticipated shortage of skilled dwarven miners in the region. The numerous foremen of the mines decided to recruit fewer and fewer experienced miners, confident that they could maintain the mines' integrity by spreading out their engineers and planning the excavations in stages. For many centuries, the innovative system worked, and Tar-Urkatha made many lucky dwarves rich.

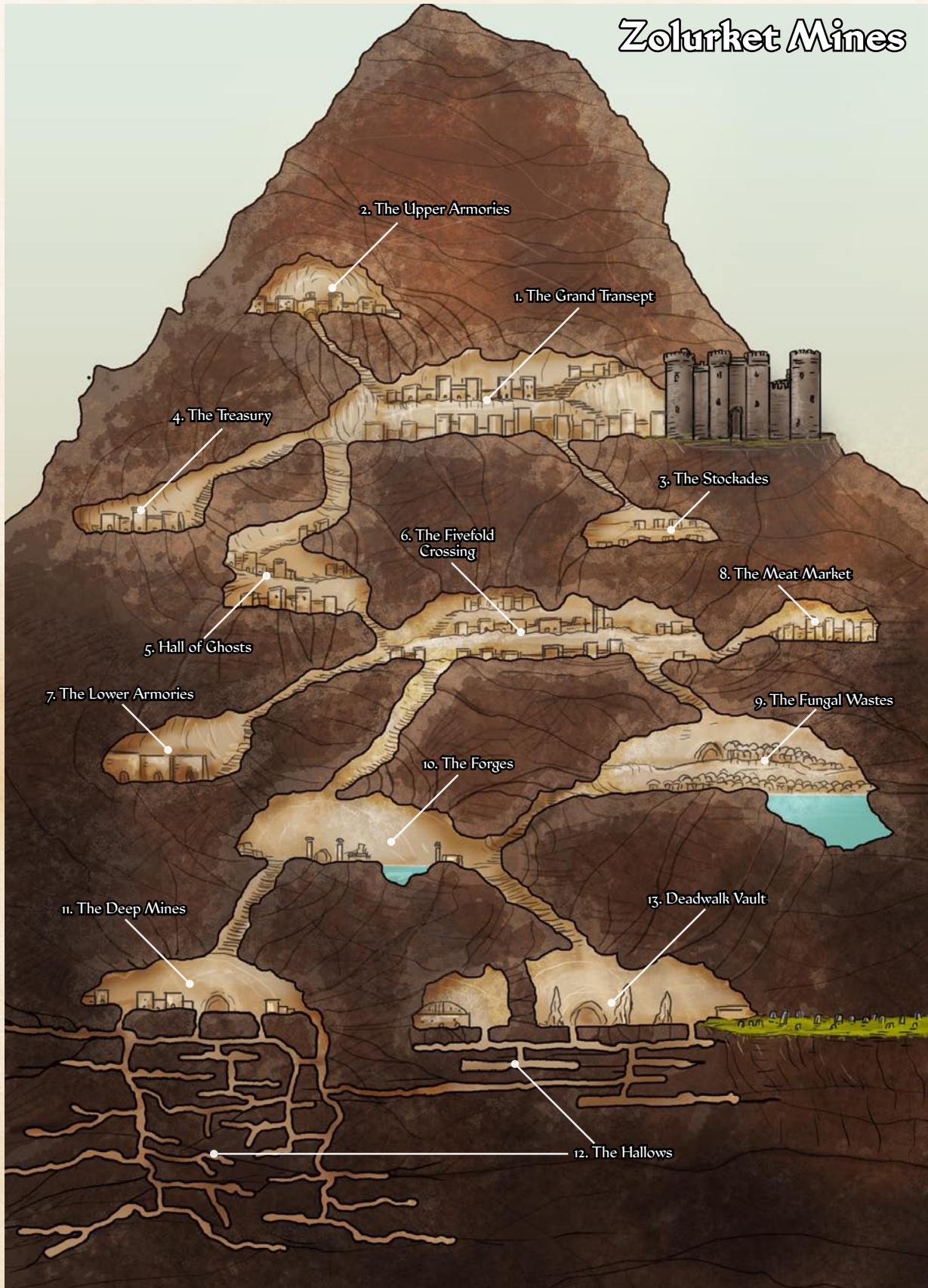
But then disaster struck. In the deeper pits of Tar-Urkatha—uncomfortable places traditionally left for the least experienced diggers to toil with the understanding that, upon producing enough ore, they would be promoted to easier tasks above—the novice miners found that the deepest veins of precious metal led through soft, chalky black rock that crumbled like old bone. So easy was the

excavating that miners were known to abandon their picks to wildly dig out platinum with their bare hands, unaware of the fact that their greed had led them deep into a vast deposit of lazurite—a dangerous necromantically infused material known also as “marrowstone.”

Overcome with greed, the inexperienced dwarven miners hid the discovery from their foremen. By scooping out vast quantities of platinum and gold and even mithral, they could easily meet their daily quotas, handing over the expected amount of ore while holding back on the “extra,” stashing the material in hidden corners of the deep mines for later. Yet with their greed came carelessness, and with carelessness came an unprecedented disaster as a hastily dug shaft collapsed, trapping a large mining team deep under untold volumes of rock. For weeks, the dwarves labored to escape, but hunger, thirst, and hopelessness set in as they realized rescue might never come. Several dwarves committed perhaps the most heinous of blasphemies, consuming the flesh of their fallen brethren to stave off starvation, and these unfortunates were immediately put to death by their fellow prisoners for their desperate act of cannibalism. Soon, however, the lazurite deposits that surrounded their corpses infused their flesh and worked upon their bodies, raising them as unusually powerful ghouls that set upon the living survivors, who in turn rose as ghouls themselves. When the frantic rescue team finally managed to bore an escape shaft into the blocked section, they found no living dwarves to rescue but plenty of hungry dead. The dwarven ghouls swiftly overpowered and slaughtered the rescue team, and thus a hideously swift process of decay began.

The ghoul plague rose from the deepest pits like waters flooding a cave. The dwarves were caught off guard by the ferocious assault, and by 4121 AR, the dwindling survivors in the upper reaches realized they were losing the Ghoulwar, for with each loss they suffered, the enemy grew in number. When the dwarves finally discovered that exposure to the marrowstone deposits was somehow trapping the spirits of the deceased within the halls, they fled the mines in a mass exodus, locking their shame behind them. Although they agreed to tell the world that they had simply depleted the mines, none could ignore the fact that so few dwarves had emerged from the mines when so many had been traveling there to seek their fortunes. Word soon spread of the mines' haunted condition, and the halls became known as “Zolurket,” a Keleshite word meaning “dark death.” Robbed of easy flesh and unwilling to strike out into the burning bright above, the dwarven ghouls retreated into the depths of the mine, leaving the upper levels open for scavengers, predators, and monsters to move in while they slowly grew older and more powerful in the deep shafts below.

Zolurket Mines



DESCRIPTION

Carved from the heart of the mountain, the stained granite walls of the fortress protecting the mine's entrances loom imposingly over a thin smear of a road leading to the mines, creating an oppressive gloom born of the decaying glory of the once proud edifice. The gates are now sundered, and sections of the upper fortress have caved in over the years. The crumbling facades of carved bedrock homes and fantastic communal structures riddle the floors of the largest chambers, and everywhere lie broken statues of dwarven lords. The expansive upper halls soon give way to the deeper chambers through spiraling stairs or claustrophobic passages, with a maze of side corridors echoing with the distant scraping of long claws or the nearby gnashing of sharp teeth. Well past cold forges, dusty smelters, and empty warehouses, the foreboding mineshafts themselves beckon, riddling the lowest recesses of the mountain in a confusing maze. Graffiti marks these passages everywhere with warnings both old and new, and the already chilly passages are dotted with cold spots that betray the presence of supernatural haunts. No chamber is free from the smell of old rot and death, and the low-lying mist carrying the stench pervades the lower levels, seeping forth from the mines and only stubbornly parting as adventurers and would-be ghost hunters invade the ruined sanctity of the site.

Although the majority of the original dwarven ghouls are now relatively powerful monsters that dwell on the lowest levels of Zolurket, they and their hideous leader, a powerful ghastr named Feast-o'-Marrow (see page 60), are known to most of the mines' denizens. It won't take long for any expedition to come across the ghastr's name, for many of Zolurket's lesser undead think of Feast-o'-Marrow as their lord.

Level 1. The Grand Transept (CR 2): This impressive upper fortress once guarded the hidden mine entrances. The Grand Transept is the most commonly explored level of Zolurket, plundered and picked over countless times in the 600 years since the mines' fall. Currently home to a tribe of ragtag transient gnoll bandits—disorganized outcasts from several tribes—the upper reaches are a threadbare wasteland of gnawed bones, shattered coffers, and vandalized dwarven sculptures. The gnolls rarely venture below this level or pursue those sneaking past to the levels beyond, not even to chase the ghouls who constantly raid their slave pens for fresh meat.

Level 2. The Upper Armories (CR 3): These halls were the heart of the dwarven defense and a storehouse of weaponry both magical and mundane until strange poltergeists overtook them, the weapons animating and attacking intruders on sight. Rumors attest to the valuable weapons found within, and whether the spirits animating the arms are the remnants of the hall's fallen defenders or perhaps something more sinister is unknown. The

western wing of the armories has become the lair of a large tribe of wererats who have learned to coexist with the haunts and make their burrows there in and among partially collapsed ventilation shafts.

Level 3. The Stockades (CR 4): This level encompasses an old dwarven prison, although the cells are now home to a large tribe of treacherous dark folk. These creatures are expert guides through the mines' dark recesses, able to pass unnoticed by most of the dungeon's other denizens, but are just as likely to double-cross and strand adventurers who employ them when hungry creatures from the deep offer rich rewards for their treachery.

Level 4. The Treasury (CR 5): Once the storehouse for the fortress's greatest treasures, these vaults now lie broken with much of their wealth long since dispersed among the dungeon's inhabitants. Only three sturdy doors remain intact, their magical wards repulsing all attempts at trespass to date. The decayed bodies of adventurers litter the ground before them as testament to their power. Many traps line these halls, and some claim that powerful artifacts—intelligent magical weapons and fantastic armors—await beyond, while others claim they protect only bedrock, a ruse to fool the ignorant and unwary.

Level 5. Hall of Ghosts (CR 6): The spirits of those who die within Zolurket do not find quiet rest, and many dwarven shades still haunt these halls. This level in particular is lousy with the accumulated souls of the restless dead. A constant state of spiritual warfare exists here, with the north end of the hall held by the incorporeal dead of the dungeon's evil denizens, with allips, shadows, spectres, and wraiths being common, while the south end of the hall is dominated by more dangerous ghosts of the overrun defenders who perished heroically in the war, their souls trapped here and somehow unable to find true death. These ghosts tend to be xenophobic, but some, such as the ghost of the dwarven explorer Tib, have motivations all their own, and means of assisting enterprising PCs who agree to help the souls find rest.

Level 6. The Fivefold Crossing (CR 7): The crumbling facades of squat dwarven buildings carved from the mountain's stone line this wide boulevard—the primary crossroads connecting the five main caverns of Zolurket. This dangerous no-man's-land is controlled by undead one week and gnoll raiders the next, the balance of power constantly shifting. Many side passages, vaults, and chambers sprout from the main corridor, and the entire crossing is thick with traps, deadfalls, and clever ambushes set by the mines' warring denizens. Two dozen trolls currently control the eastern fork between the markets and the Fungal Wastes, bullying wayfarers into paying exorbitant fees to pass without harassment.

Level 7. The Lower Armories (CR 11): Whereas the Upper Armories have been mostly looted, the Lower Armories



Deadwalk Vault

1 square = 5 feet

remain relatively intact. When disaster came to the mines, a large number of dwarves fled to this bunkerlike level, sealing the doors and hoping to wait out the undead uprising until they could be rescued. Unfortunately, the dead are crafty, and where the physical undead could find no way into this level, the restless spirits found a way to possess and haunt the numerous constructs that watched here. The dwarves seeking refuge were attacked by their own animate statues and other guardians, and slaughtered before they could escape. Today, the haunted constructs and undead dwarves present a formidable challenge to any who would attempt to plunder this level's riches.

Level 8. The Meat Market (CR 8): No commodity is more valuable in this isolated dungeon than fresh meat, and so precious is sustenance to the mines' occupants that Feast-o'-Marrow declared a special neutral territory for its trade in the old dwarven marketplace. Here, gnoll raiders from the upper reaches bring their dead to trade for valuable items plundered from the depths, and ghoulish packs roam the streets bartering for adventurers captured by the

Fivefold Crossing trolls. Even the most ravenous ghouls will stay their hunger on this neutral ground, and it is here that adventurers have the best chance of trading plunder or finding shelter for as long as they need, although the hungry denizens who wait just beyond the hall's borders are bound by no such laws against waylaying those leaving the market's protected confines.

Level 9. The Fungal Wastes (CR 9): These once beautiful underground gardens and farms were the heart of dwarven society, but this level has long since been taken over by giant mushrooms, dangerous plant creatures, and deadly fungi. A brave and powerful gnoll cult of Cyth-V'sug, their bodies riddled with mange and fungal infections, command much of this level along with its plant and undead denizens—the most horrific of which is a giant undead flytrap known as Rotmaw, a hideously intelligent monster that developed necrotic abilities from feasting on undead flesh.

Level 10. The Forges (CR 10): Most of their fires long extinguished, the Zolurket forges once burned bright enough to smelt platinum and other metals teased from

the surrounding mines. The most powerful of these fires blazed with magical flames, but with the mines' fall, many of the fire elementals and other burning outsiders bound into the forges have escaped. Two forges remain lit, but the ghouls are repulsed by close proximity to them, and so keep several dozen maimed and broken dwarven slaves to work them—aging descendants of the mines' founders maintained as breeding stock, miraculously uneaten after the long centuries. A lake of befouled water stands here, once used as a quenching pool and now home to pale, blind reefclaws of prodigious size, as well as even more dangerous aquatic monstrosities.

Level 11. The Deep Mines (CR 12): Abandoning the artistry of the upper corridors, the crisscrossing shafts and tunnels of the Deep Mines are a strictly commercial affair interspersed with barracks and guard posts. Travel in these rough tunnels is dangerous; low ceilings, cramped passages, and rusted rails impede movement for most creatures, and broken ore carts block many of the mines. Explorers in these dark reaches usually find themselves hopelessly lost, a fact that the hungry denizens of these deep places are all too eager to exploit. Black puddings hide in the darkness of these shafts, as well as numerous powerful ghosts and high-level ghouls and ghastrs who have been cast out from the primary ghoul society in the Deadwalk Vault.

Level 12. The Hallows (CR 13): A honeycomb of tunnels web their way around and below the Deadwalk Vault—the final resting place of the lowest castes of dwarven miners, where their bodies were quickly embalmed and interred in stacked alcoves and cramped tunnels below the proper crypts of the necropolis. Now, wretched hives of outcast ghouls and disloyal ghastrs who refuse to bow to Feast-o'-Marrow's rule lurk here in dangerous corridors, embroiled in perpetual gang warfare. The deepest of these tunnels connect to obscure and rarely traveled portions of the Darklands, from which many of these lower levels' more dangerous denizens hail.

Level 13. Deadwalk Vault (CR 14): Far below the fortress ruins lies the cemetery where thousands of dwarves who died over the mines' hard-toiled centuries once rested peacefully. This area is now a scarred landscape of broken sarcophagi and scattered bones, roamed by packs of ghouls seeking out one last scrap of dried flesh on which to chew. Many of the skeletons have risen in undeath themselves due to the corrupting presence of the ghouls, and animate in jumbled piles of gnawed bones to attack trespassers—ghouls and living alike. This high-ceilinged necropolis is now the center of the ghoul kingdom's society, led by his ancient rotting highness, Feast-o'-Marrow.

Sunlight pervades the upper reaches of Zolurket far too often for the comfort of the ghoul hordes, who instead wander the lower reaches and caverns. Their society

DEATH IN ZOLURKET

The presence of so much lazurite and marrowstone within the halls of Zolurket creates a barrier that the souls of the dead have difficulty crossing, denying a quiet afterlife to those slain within the mines. Whenever a creature dies within these halls, there's a flat 5% chance they rise as some form of undead within 48 hours. Many simply rise as corporeal undead due to the effects of ghoul fever, but those whose physical bodies resist animation but succumb to that 5% chance of unholy resurrection return as ghosts, allips, shadows, specters, or wraiths. Spells such as *raise dead*, *reincarnation*, and *resurrection* function poorly in Zolurket, forcing the spellcaster to make a DC 25 caster level check when casting the spell. Make this check in secret, for failure means that the victim brought back from death secretly suffers from some form of insanity (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 250) or is in fact possessed by a malevolent spirit—in this case, the victim's soul becomes a ghost in 24 hours who may be able to reestablish contact with his former companions if he's lucky... presuming the new spirit inhabiting the body hasn't already led its "friends" to some hideous doom.

concentrates in the cavernous cemeteries housing the bodies of millennia's worth of miners who struggled to uncover the riches deep within the earth. As the dwarven graveyard was the nearest source of food once the Ghoulwar was over, Feast-o'-Marrow settled his people here permanently. Many adventurers mistakenly enter this level first due to its position lower on the peak and its visible entrance off the main road. Naive explorers often leave the winding road and climb treacherous cliffs to reach the graveyard and the nearby entrance it protects, thinking they have found a shortcut or secret entrance, unaware that the dungeon's most dangerous inhabitants rest only a few chambers away.

The horrifying Deadwalk Vault is a veritable cornucopia of ravenous ghouls, their undead servants, wandering mummies, and deadly incorporeal spirits, most risen from the sad remains of the dwarven kingdom. A fair number of daemons prowl these levels as well, guardians conjured by the Deadwalk Vault's numerous clerics of Urgathoa. Technically the high priest and leader of this church, Feast-o'-Marrow has a difficult time retaining control over the numerous undead that dwell in the vault, for several other powerful undead (such as the lich Corpsebloat, the vampire interloper Galgash, or his greatest rival, the ghast oracle Boneshroud) contest his rule with varying levels of success.

DENIZENS

The Zolurket Mines' upper levels are in a constant state of warfare, with gnolls and wererats continuously vying with the undead for control of the mines' ruins. Many of the region's most dangerous inhabitants dwell in the Deadwalk Vault. Notable denizens of this level include the mines' most powerful ghoul, Feast-o'-Marrow (detailed below); a human vampire named **Galgash** (CE human vampire fighter 11) who dwells in a region of the Dead Vault called the Blood Pit and arrays his small army of vampire minions against the ghouls; a ghost oracle named **Boneshroud** (CE female ghost oracle 12) who claims to be in mental contact with Urgathoa and has been contesting Feast-o'-Marrow for control of the ghouls; a powerful leukodaemon named **Zzorex** conjured into the mines by Feast-o'-Marrow as a guardian; and a warped and depraved dwarven lich called **Corpsebloat** (CE male dwarf lich wizard 12) who welcomed the undead plague and used it to aid his transformation into a lich.

In addition to these powerful denizens of the Deadwalk Vault, though, other strange creatures dwell within the mines. Some of these variant creatures represent merely cosmetic changes with additional Hit Dice, or monsters grown unnaturally large, such as the albino reefclaws that lurk in the deep pools of the forges. Others, however, are unique variants of existing creatures, as detailed here.

Lazurite Elemental (variant earth elemental): Ghoul arcanists learned to summon earth elementals in pockets of lazurite, creating a foul variant that bolsters ghoul warriors in combat. These black, crusty earth elementals exude a profane aura that acts as a *desecrate* spell in a 30-foot radius (CL equals the elemental's CR)—the elemental counts as a shrine for the effects of this spell. The presence of the elemental not only bolsters the packs of roving ghouls that follow it into combat, but also enhances the Hit Dice of new undead created near it, with its lazurite composition ensuring that any corpses rising as ghouls retain the abilities they had in life.

Lazurite Ghoul (variant ghoul): The proliferation of lazurite ore in Zolurket has an unusual effect, particularly upon ghouls—creatures that succumb to ghoul fever within areas infused with so much of this eldritch ore retain any abilities possessed in life. As a result, the majority of the ghouls encountered within Zolurket were once dwarves with at least a few levels of expert or warrior—most of them, though, are even more powerful, possessing levels of cleric, fighter, ranger, or sorcerer.

Marrowstone Golem (variant clay golem, CR 9): Since the fall of Zolurket, ghoulish spellcasters have experimented with using marrowstone to create golems. Unfortunately, marrowstone is not a very strong material, and thus it isn't well suited toward the creation of constructs. Marrowstone golems function as normal clay

golems, save that their damage reduction is reduced to 10/bludgeoning—weapons made of any type of material function well against marrowstone golems, provided the weapon deals bludgeoning damage. Marrowstone golems also lack the *haste* special attack possessed by most clay golems. Marrowstone golems are CR 9 as a result of these additional weaknesses, but are also somewhat easier to craft—they do not require *resurrection* as part of their creation process, and cost only 15,500 gp to create.

The Lord of Zolurket: Although there are many deadly creatures within the mines, none are as powerful as the ghost cleric known today as Feast-o'-Marrow. Feast-o'-Marrow was once a dwarven miner named Glain Stonebrow—the leader of the ill-fated party who sought to rescue the trapped dwarven miners deep in the collapsed tunnels. When they released the ghouls, Glain fought valiantly against the undead, using many of his clerical gifts granted by Torag in an attempt to defeat his onetime kin, but in the end, his faith failed him and he succumbed. When he rose from death, he did so as a ghost and quickly found spiritual support in Urgathoa's welcoming arms. Assuming the mantle of leadership during that dreadful time, the ghost took a new name, and as Feast-o'-Marrow led his growing ghoul army on a staggeringly swift assault against the unsuspecting dwarves above. He rules to this day from the deepest pits of Zolurket, although his rule is often contested by other undead creatures who have risen to power in the years since Tar-Urkatha's fall.

FEAST-O'-MALLOW

CR 14

XP 38,400

Male ghast cleric of Urgathoa 13

CE Medium undead

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +25**Aura** stench (10 ft., DC 18, 1d6+4 minutes)

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 16, flat-footed 25 (+9 armor, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)**hp** 200 (15d8+133)**Fort** +17, **Ref** +11, **Will** +20**Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** +3 *unholy scythe* +17/+12 (2d4+9/19–20/x4), bite +9 (1d6+2 plus disease and paralysis)**Special Attacks** channel negative energy 12/day (DC 23, 7d6), disease (ghoul fever, DC 18), paralysis (DC 18), scythe of evil (6 rounds, 2/day)**Domain Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th; concentration +20)

10/day—bleeding touch (6 rounds)

10/day—touch of evil (6 rounds)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 13th; concentration +20)

- 7th—*blasphemy* (DC 24)^D, *destruction* (DC 24), *summon monster VII*
- 6th—*antilife shell*, *create undead*^D, *harm* (DC 23), *planar ally*
- 5th—*commune*, *flame strike* (DC 22), *extended greater magic weapon*, *slay living* (DC 22)^D, *spell resistance*
- 4th—*air walk*, *freedom of movement*, *lesser planar ally*, *extended magic vestment*, *poison* (DC 21), *unholy blight* (DC 21)^D
- 3rd—*animate dead*^D, *bestow curse* (DC 20), *contagion* (DC 20), *dispel magic* (2), *meld into stone*, *prayer*
- 2nd—*augury*, *bull's strength*, *darkness*, *death knell* (DC 19)^D, *desecrate*, *spiritual weapon*, *sound burst* (DC 19)
- 1st—*bane* (DC 18), *bless*, *command* (DC 18), *divine favor*, *protection from good*^D, *shield of faith*, *sanctuary* (DC 18)
- o (at will)—*bleed* (DC 17), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *read magic*
- D** Domain spell; **Domains** Death, Evil

TACTICS

Before Combat Feast-o'-Marrow casts *extended greater magic weapon* and *extended magic vestment* on himself every day.

During Combat Feast-o'-Marrow prefers to let his minions engage in melee combat at the start of a fight, giving him a chance to cast *antilife shell* and then the luxury of casting other spells to bolster his own strengths or to attack the PCs at range. Before entering melee combat, he takes the time to cast *freedom of movement*, *prayer*, *bull's strength*, *divine favor*, and *shield of faith* if he has the chance.

Morale Feast-o'-Marrow fights until destroyed, confident until the last possible moment that Urgathoa will keep him safe.

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 16, **Wis** 24, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 30

Feats Combat Casting, Command Undead, Dodge, Extend Spell, Extra Channel, Improved Critical (scythe), Toughness, Vital Strike

Skills Diplomacy +20, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (engineering) +8, Knowledge (religion) +21, Perception +25, Spellcraft +15, Stealth +17

Languages Common, Dwarven, Necril, Terran, Undercommon
SQ death's embrace

Gear +1 mithral breastplate, +1 unholy scythe, amulet of natural armor +2, cloak of resistance +2

TRAPS

The Zolurket Mines present numerous dangers to the intrepid explorer over and above their violent denizens. Ancient traps built by the dwarves to aid in protecting their mines still lie in wait in some areas, while the ghouls themselves have proven quite adept at building new traps of their own. In other areas, the unquiet spirits of the dead have formed haunts that infuse the sites of particularly grisly battles (haunts are presented in full detail on pages 242–243 of the *GameMastery Guide*). Hazards like yellow mold and green slime, along with isolated patches of ghost mold (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Into the Darklands* 13) or lazurite (*Into the Darklands* 14) can be found as well. Many unique haunts, hazards, and traps lie within the mines as well—an example of each is given below.

Deathless Defenders (CR 7 haunt): The discovery of lazurite within Zolurket and its subsequent removal of marrowstone ore had unfortunate consequences far beyond the corruption of corpses into ghouls. The spirits of those dying within the halls are unable to find rest, and



PATHFINDER CAMPAIGN SETTING: DUNGEONS OF ZOLURKET

while many of these spirits are true undead, some of them instead persist as baleful apparitions.

DEATHLESS DEFENDERS

CR 7

XP 2,400

CE haunt (30-ft. radius)

Caster Level 7th

Notice Perception DC 20 (to see spectral image of decayed dwarven regiment)

hp 14; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 minute

Weaknesses tricked by *hide from undead*

Effect Spirits consumed by hatred due to their souls' inability to find rest or solace in the mines that imprison their ectoplasmic forms, deathless defenders lash out at the living in jealous outbursts of ethereal horror. Appearing as regiments of spectral dwarven warriors with decayed flesh, these haunts charge toward intruders bearing rusting arms and ancient armor. While the attacks are physically futile, the sight of these horrific, tortured souls strikes witnesses with the effects of *eyebite* (save DC 19).

Destruction As long as marrowstone and lazurite remain in the halls of Zolurket, these haunts are doomed to forever roam them. Only an extensive campaign that either extracts all of the cursed stone from the mines, or an equally extensive campaign to seal away the tainted portions of the mines, will put these spirits to rest.

Maggot Gas (CR 5 hazard): This roiling gas has the sickly gray color of putrefied flesh and smells no better, rotting flesh and organic material on contact. Thick and cloying, the gas leaves a sticky, disgusting film on surfaces exposed to the miasma, polluting all areas it pervades and making such surfaces deadly to the living and undead alike. The gray gas obscures sight as the *obscuring mist* spell, and the highly acidic vapors deal 2d6 points of acid damage to all creatures and organic material within the roiling cloud as flesh rots and sloughs off in greasy sheets. In addition, the fumes are poisonous to living creatures, who must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save each round they are exposed or be nauseated for as long as they remain in the cloud plus an additional 1d4 rounds after leaving the cloud.

Bone Box (CR 4 trap): Cobbled together by ghouls from gnawed bones and dried sinew, these small bone boxes at first appear to hold treasure or other valuables, but are powerfully spring-loaded and explode when touched in a shower of sharp bone splinters that carry virulent disease.

BONE BOX

CR 4

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

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** repair

Effect Atk +15 ranged (bone splinters, 2d6+4 plus red ache); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. radius)

TREASURES AND REWARDS

While the treasures of Zolurket were once great, many are lost, buried deep within collapsed mines or hidden vaults, while others are held deep within ghoulish territory where mortals can only expect to be meals. With the scourge of undead in the mines, safe harbor is perhaps a greater reward to desperate adventurers than a king's ransom, and the pure light of the forges, the neutral ground of the meat market, and the sunlit upper halls have given some brief respite from the dungeon's horrors in the years since its fall.

But another category of treasure exists in the Zolurket Mines—magic and spells that the desperate dwarves created in an attempt to bolster their defenses against the undead invasion. Items like *undead bane weapons*, *ghost touch weapons*, *ghost touch armor*, *wands of searing light*, and other anti-undead devices are common in the dungeon, as are scrolls of *restoration* and other resources used to recover from clashes with undead. New items and spells exist as well, the desperate creations of a settlement besieged from within. Unusual treasures like *deadflesh waraxes* or *raven bracers* can also be found within the ruined mines, as can scrolls of obscure spells like *undeath ward*. These three sample treasures are detailed below.

DEADFLESH WARAXE

Aura strong conjuration and transmutation; **CL** 12th

Slot none; **Weight** 8 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

These +1 *mithral ghost touch undead bane dwarven waraxes* were crafted hurriedly to combat the rising undead threat, but the rush to craft these weapons and cut corners in their creation resulted in a dangerous flaw—whenever an undead creature is slain with a *deadflesh waraxe*, the axe allows a portion of the destroyed undead's necromantic energy to flow through the axe and into the wielder's body, causing the wielder to become shaken for 1 minute if he fails a DC 15 Will save. These effects stack with each other—the second time the victim succumbs, he becomes frightened. The third time, he is panicked and drops the *deadflesh waraxe* in his attempt to flee. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. This flaw is relatively subtle—in order to notice it when identifying the item, the examiner must exceed the DC 27 Spellcraft check by 10 points or more. In the hands of a soldier ready to deal with this imperfection, a *deadflesh waraxe* can be a powerful tool against the undead, but many of the dwarven defenders of the mines weren't made aware of the flaw until it was too late.

CREATION

Magic Items +1 *mithral ghost touch undead bane dwarven waraxe*

RAVEN BRACERS

Aura moderate divination and transmutation; **CL** 9th

Slot hands; **Price** 16,600 gp; **Weight** 4 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This pair of magnificent dark metal bracers is forged to depict the shape of a raven stretched over the wearer's forearm. Once prized by the last king of Zolurket, several additional *raven bracers* were created in the mines' final days to aid the king's bodyguards in defending him and maintaining communications throughout the mine.

While worn, these bracers can be used as a swift action to grant the *throwing* and *returning* magic weapon qualities to any held melee weapon; these qualities persist for 1 round. This ability can be used three times a day.

In addition, the bracers may be removed and tossed into the air as a standard action, where they transform into a pair of identical black metallic ravens similar to *silver raven figurines of wondrous power*. Like those items, these ravens obey the wearer, and may each bear a message as if affected by the *animal messenger* spell. The ravens can only take this shape once per week, retaining the form continuously for up to 24 hours.

Once both of these ravens have delivered their messages (or once the 24-hour limit is reached), they both vanish in a cloud of smoke and return unerringly to the owner's hands via teleportation. If the item's owner is no longer on the same plane as the bracers when this event occurs, they merely revert to bracer form and fall to the ground, awaiting a new owner to find and claim them for their own use.

**CONSTRUCTION**

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item; *animal messenger*, *animate object*, *teleport object*, *telekinesis*; **Cost** 8,300 gp

UNDEATH WARD

School abjuration; **Level** cleric 5, inquisitor 4, sorcerer/wizard 6, witch 6

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M/DF (powdered silver)

Range 10 ft.

Area 10-ft.-radius emanation, centered on you

Duration 1 minute/level (D)

Saving Throw none or Will negates (see text); **Spell**

Resistance yes

You create a pale silver barrier that repels undead. Mindless undead and intelligent undead with fewer Hit Dice than your caster level cannot enter the area or penetrate the barrier. Undead of Hit Dice equal to or greater than your caster level can pass through this barrier by making a successful Will save against the spell, but as they do so, they take 3d6 points of damage. Once an undead creature makes its save against

this spell and takes this damage, it can come and go without further penalty. This spell may only be used defensively, not aggressively. Forcing an undead ward against creatures that the spell keeps at bay collapses the barrier.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Exploring Zolurket is a harrowing prospect for adventurers of all levels. At low levels, most groups should avoid the temptation of entering at the mountain's base and instead climb the road further up the mountain toward the Grand Transept to face the disorganized gnoll raiders who dwell there, giving the group a safe base of operations for further exploration—GMs may need to reinforce this tactic through

NPC suggestion. The ghost of the dwarven prospector Tibbler "Tib"

Rocksledge is a constant presence in the upper levels and often guides adventurers, although the ghost is motivated only by a lust for revenge against his still-living partners (see page 5 of *Dark Markets: A Guide to Katapesh* for further details).

Below are several adventure hooks to lure unsuspecting PCs into the horrors of the Zolurket Mines.

Our Brothers in Chains: When the mines fell, the ghouls captured many dwarven blacksmiths alive, motivating them with torture to work the fires of the Forges to provide raw materials for decadent jewelry and trade with the rare Darklands visitors. Now their maimed descendants, mute and maddened, continue to work the mines' cursed platinum, making ever-greater artifacts for their ghoul masters. A survivor of a recent expedition described these unfortunate slaves to a rich dwarven merchant, who is convinced they are the descendants of his clan. The merchant contracts the PCs to enter the mines and extract the enslaved blacksmiths. Unfortunately, the shattered minds of the workers may be more dangerous than the ravenous ghouls that imprison them.

The Poison Plug: An ancient dwarven manuscript reveals a secret long concealed by the outcast ghoul packs of the catacombs below the Deadwalk Vault—the presence of the Gashold Door, the opening of which could spell doom for the undead kingdom that dominates the mines. If released, the massive maggot gas pocket held in check by the door would flood the entirety of both the Hallows and the Deadwalk Vault, consuming the flesh of all within and literally opening the door for the mines' reclamation. Adventurers undertaking this potentially suicidal quest can expect to be immortalized in dwarven song—provided they succeed.

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