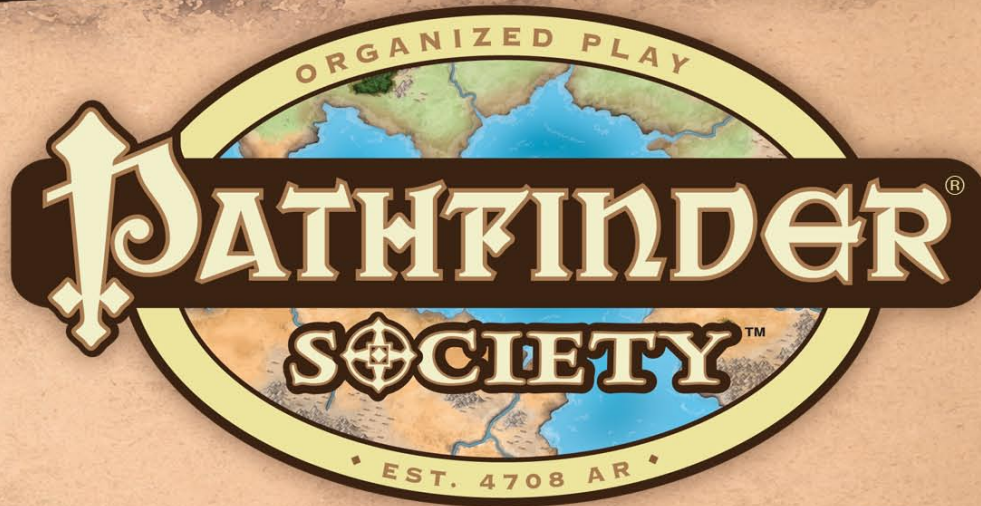
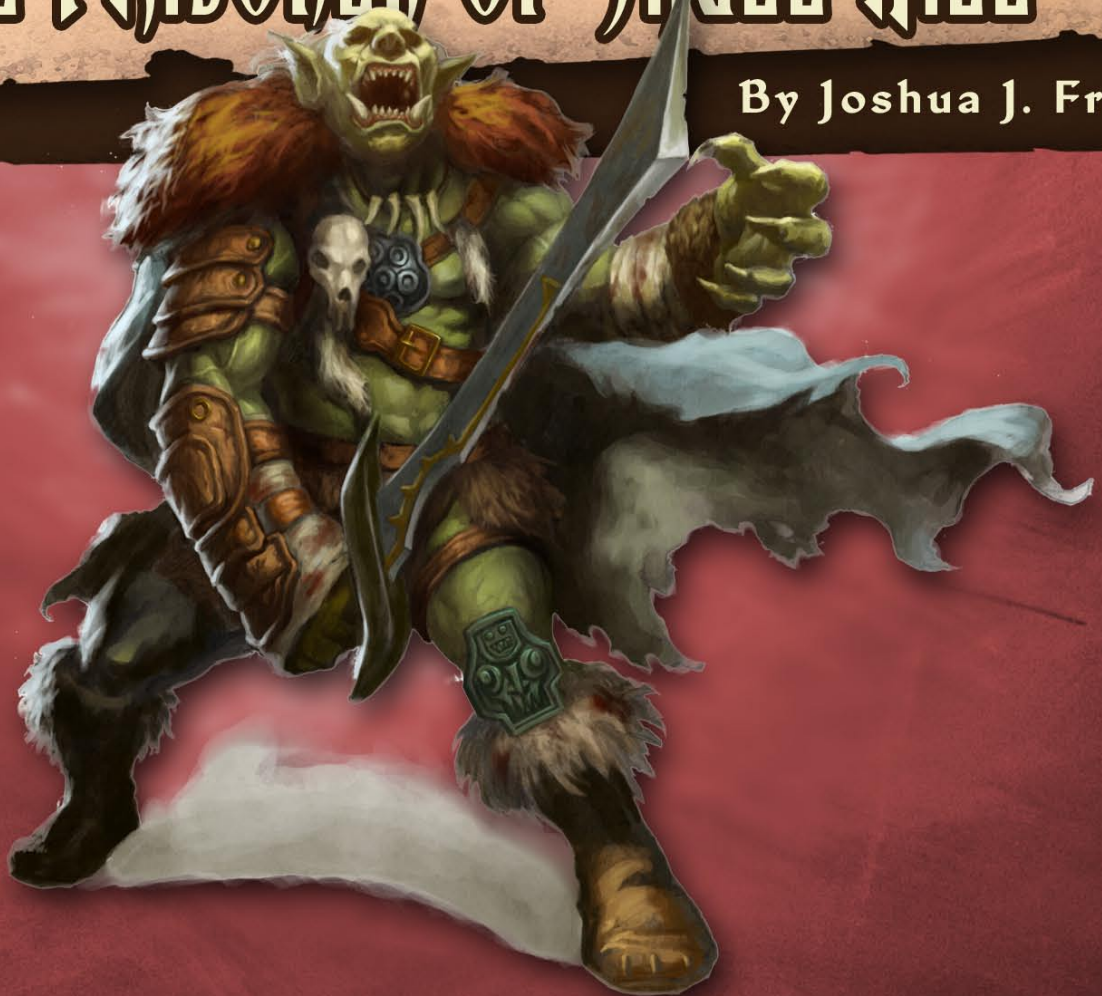


A PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO



# ECHOES OF THE EVERWAR PART I: THE PRISONER OF SKULL HILL™

By Joshua J. Frost



# ECHOES OF THE EVERWAR PART I: THE PRISONER OF SKULL HILL™

PATHFINDER SOCIETY SCENARIO 36

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The OGL can be found on page 19 of this product.

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# ECHOES OF THE EVERWAR PART I: THE PRISONER OF SKULL HILL™

BY JOSHUA J. FROST

A clan of orcs known as the Skittering Ravagers recently discovered and conquered a hidden Chelish fort deep within their territory in the Hold of Belkzen. Though the clan didn't stop to ask why the Chelaxians were there, the fort, known as Skull Hill, was a forward operating base that dated back to the infamous Chelish Everwar that ended in 4410 AR when the Cheliox government broke and ceded all of the nearby land to the Hold of Belkzen. The Chelish spies and soldiers that called Skull Hill home used it to study and watch the orc tribes lest they march south and catch Cheliox and its servitor state, Nidal, unawares.

Shortly after the Ravagers put the last Chelish citizen to the sword (and, unknown to them, a Pathfinder delver named Heralt as well), the entire fort shook in three quick, jolting movements. The quake was hard enough to knock most off their feet. Immediately after, the Ravagers looked skyward and watched as a single fiery object descended rapidly from the heavens, broke into three pieces, and smashed into the conquered fort. Its final piece struck the top of the fort's motte and collapsed a portion of the timber tower. When it hit, it punched straight through the hill and crashed into a series of caverns sealed for more than 300 years. Several orcs from the tribe climbed the motte and descended the crater to look inside the cavern—among them was the clan's shaman and chief, Krug. As the orcs looked into the cavern below, they watched as the still smoldering rock that fell from above cracked open and birthed an enormous, sickly-red plant creature.

Krug ordered his orcs to destroy the thing and watched as his clansmen were, one-by-one, grabbed and eaten. Krug dropped into the cavern and slung spells of death and destruction at the plant—but it wasn't enough. Krug fell to the plant's whipping tendrils and mighty jaws. As the plant's mouth sealed around him and he slid into the creature's belly, a black energy erupted into the cavern from another further below and Krug felt terror like he'd never known before. The creature around him screeched in pain and then Krug knew no more.

Outside, the black energy swirled among the orcs of the Skittering Ravager tribe. It twisted them, changed them,

and left behind skeletal shells of their once-brutal selves. A few orcs survived this onslaught by locking themselves in the fort's inn, but the rest either died or rose again as undead monsters bearing a fell intelligence.

Krug awoke a day later to find himself in the midst of a dozen plants. Though his flesh had hardened slightly and knotty tendrils of plant matter crawled beneath his skin, Krug was still alive and still an orc. His clansmen, it seemed, had been turned into spawn of the plant—he could see approximations of their faces and their bodies in the plants that stood around him. Then they touched his mind. The dark energy that came from the cavern below protected Krug from the worst of his transformation, but it opened his mind to the alien consciousness that powered the plants standing around him. His mind recoiled from their touch, but it was too late—their alien desires, thoughts, questions, and orders consumed his mind and Krug was no more. What remained was a twisted servant of the plant creatures—and he had work to do.

## Echoes of the Everwar

*The Prisoner of Skull Hill* is the first of a four-part Pathfinder Society series called Echoes of the Everwar. All four parts of Echoes of the Everwar are designed for Tier 7–11. Parts I, II, and III are designed to be played in any order and Part IV is designed to only be played once the first three parts have been completed.

In 4305 AR, as Cheliox began the conquest later to be called the Everwar, an enterprising wealthy Osirion man named Khalfani Zuberi, who'd made his money buying and selling everything from slaves to weapons for Osirion's conquerors (the Qadiri), decided that the Everwar presented for him another opportunity for great wealth. He gave his three most trusted concubines rings that fused to their fingers and allowed him to track their status and general direction and sent them to three locations across the new Chelish frontier to manipulate markets surrounding the Everwar and bring him even greater wealth. The rings were part of a ritual he'd paid tens of thousands of gold for—he was not about to send his best and brightest into the world with his

wealth and not be able to know at any time where they were and what they were doing.

In 4307 AR, Zuberi drank his first *sun orchid elixir*, the life-giving potion of which only a few are sold every year in Thuvia. Meanwhile, Akila, his sorcerer concubine, established a foothold in the Skittering Mounds in what was then Lastwall (now Belkzen) in a hidden motte-and-bailey fortress known as Skull Hill. Akila used this outpost to build a small army of Chelish mercenaries and made money for her patron by selling them to whoever paid her the most. She also did brisk trade in weapons and other supplies for every side involved in the Everwar.

This setup continued for nearly 50 years when, in 4350 AR, Zuberi met his living end on the road to Thuvia to drink his second *sun orchid elixir*. A cleric of an Osirian death cult and his hired thugs assaulted Zuberi's caravan and murdered his servants, slaves, and soldiers. They left Zuberi alive and imparted on him a terrible curse. The curse complete, Zuberi felt the power of his concubine's rings wink out, his connection to them severed. His limbs grew tired, his bones made brittle, and his muscles went weak. In essence, he was once more feeling his age. The cleric of the death cult declared that Zuberi had been cursed for his obsession with living, a heresy to most Osirians, and since Zuberi wanted life so badly he could have it—forever. But he'd never again be able to drink the *sun orchid elixir*—instead he'd spend eternity as an old man. Little did Zuberi know that severing the connection caused the immediate and untimely deaths of his concubines.

Part of the curse was an overwhelming compulsion for Zuberi to return to Sothis. The curse made it impossible for him to leave the city and as a result he collapsed his wealthy empire inward, sold off his holdings, and stored all of his wealth in an underground tomb in the Necropolis of the Faithful in Sothis. He faked his death and retreated to his tomb of treasure where he's resided since.

Fifty years ago, he was strangely able to sense the rings of his concubines again. He spent his money as fast as he could and consulted every shaman, priest, wizard, or cleric that would listen to him: could he use the connection to the rings to lift his curse? It was an old wizard, a scribe and servant of the Ruby Prince, that provided the answer: if he could bring the three rings together once more, the old scribe could perform an ancient Osirian ritual that would lift the curse. Unfortunately, Zuberi wasn't sure where the rings were—so he asked for a second ritual: he wanted the connection's power increased so he could know exactly where the bodies of his concubines lay. The old scribe said it was possible but warned that increasing

the connection could have unforeseen consequences wherever the rings were stored. Zuberi did not care and offered tens of thousands of gold pieces if only the scribe would do it. And so he did.

The locations of his concubines confirmed, it now fell to Zuberi to concoct a plan to find them and bring them back to him in Sothis so that the old scribe could lift the curse. It took him years to make the right connections, through blackmail, sabotage, and assassinations, but finally, in 4709 AR, Zuberi found the right person to help him recover his concubines and their rings: Venture-Captain Norden Balentiir of the Sothis Pathfinder Lodge.

## SUMMARY

The scenario begins with the PCs ordered by Venture-Captain Norden Balentiir to travel to a remote outpost in the Hold of Belkzen known as Skull Hill. The PCs are sent to find two things: the whereabouts of a Pathfinder delver named Heralt who was last seen there and has not been heard from since, and the truth or falsehood of a claim in an old *Pathfinder Chronicle* that describes a hidden tomb beneath Skull Hill—a tomb that's said to hold the body of a famous Osirian sorceress and her powerful magic ring.

The PCs spend a month aboard a ship that takes them across the Inner Sea, up the Sellen River, across stormy Lake Encarthan, up the Path, and finally to Vigil, the walled capital of Lastwall. From there, they travel overland to the hidden valley in which Skull Hill is said to rest. Arriving there, they find Skull Hill destroyed, clearly by an orcish assault. Though all of the Chelish citizens that resided there are dead, the PCs find orcs twisted into strange skeletal creatures as well as terrified orc survivors who attack the PCs on sight, sure that the strangers are responsible for the events that befell Skull Hill.

The PCs then have two choices: they can either investigate the timber tower atop the fort's motte, where they'll find an alien orc sorcerer named Krug who can either be a terrible foe or a helpful ally, as well as the corpse of Heralt, or they can investigate the caverns beneath Skull Hill, where they'll find a hideous orc-shaped moonflower and the final resting place of Akila, Zuberi's sorceress concubine, and the source of the evil magics that turned the orcs of Skull Hill into undead monsters.

## GETTING STARTED

Read the following to get the adventure underway:

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Six weeks ago, you were roused from your quarters in the

Sothis Pathfinder Lodge in Osirion and ordered to travel far to the north into the decidedly unfriendly Hold of Belkzen. Venture-Captain Norden Balentiir gave you two missions: first, to uncover the whereabouts of a Pathfinder delver named Heralt who was last seen working out of a hidden Chelish fort called Skull Hill, and second, to investigate claims in a long-ago published volume of the *Pathfinder Chronicles* that a lost tomb rests beneath the fort's timber tower—a tomb that holds the body of Akila, a legendary Osirian sorceress and her magic ring that was said to have brought death to Skull Hill the day Akila was laid to rest.

After weeks aboard a smelly Katapeshi galley crossing the Inner Sea, winding up the Sellen River, bravely traversing stormy Lake Encarthan, slipping up The Path, and finally docking in Vigil, you and your companions then crossed the Belkzen frontier into a region the orcs call the Skittering Mounds, carefully avoiding orcish patrols. Now you stand atop a ridge overlooking a low river valley and stare down at the fort called Skull Hill.

Since the PCs traveled for weeks to Skull Hill, making many stops in large populated cities along the way (including Absalom, Cassomir, and Vigil) give them every opportunity to acquire any supplies they might need at any of those stops. The PCs can also use those stops as opportunities to ask about Skull Hill, Heralt, or the famed Osiriani sorceress Akila. Consult the skill check sections below for the results of those inquiries. If the PCs ask around about Heralt, Skull Hill, or Akila in Vigil, give them a +5 bonus to their check due to Vigil's closer proximity to the Chelish fort.

## Diplomacy (gather information)—Heralt

**10+:** Heralt is a Pathfinder delver, known for his many explorations of regions that don't look favorably on Pathfinders—regions such as the Hold of Belkzen, Druma, and the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. He was last seen in Vigil, preparing to travel to the incredibly dangerous region of Belkzen called the Skittering Mounds.

**15+:** Heralt was traveling to the Skittering Mounds to seek out a hidden Chelish fort called Skull Hill. He was said to be posing as an explorer from a minor noble house of Cheliox, and was there seeking a lost tomb for the Pathfinder Society.

**25+:** Heralt's last report from Skull Hill was that he'd confirmed the existence of the tomb of the famed Osirian sorceress Akila, but that access to it was blocked and it was going to take some time to get inside. He promised to report again in a week and it's been months since he was last heard from.

## Diplomacy (gather information)—Skull Hill

**10+:** Skull Hill was a strategic Chelish fort in modern day Belkzen that the nation of Cheliox used for mercenary recruitment and weapons trading during the Everwar. It was destroyed when Cheliox ceded those lands to Belkzen.

**15+:** Skull Hill still exists. The Chelish government has kept it secret for centuries and they use the hidden fort to keep tabs on the Belkzen orc tribes.

**25+:** Skull Hill is part of a complex spy network that Cheliox uses to keep tabs on Belkzen, Lastwall, Varisia, Nidal, and Nirmathas. No one has heard anything from Skull Hill in months.

## Knowledge (history)—Akila

**10+:** Akila was an Osirian sorceress who died somewhere in the Chelish frontier during the Everwar.

**15+:** Akila was the mistress of Skull Hill during the Everwar and used the fort to build a mercenary army that she sold to whoever paid the most—she was not loyal to Cheliox and spoke often of her patron in Sothis. One day she dropped dead of seemingly nothing and as she was laid to rest, the magic ring she always wore on her left hand emitted a horrifying necromantic energy that nearly killed everyone in the fort.

**25+:** Akila was buried in caverns deep beneath Skull Hill's timber tower lest someone find her ring and figure out how to activate its power. A Pathfinder once resided in Skull Hill a hundred or so years ago and reported Akila's cavern as a rumor in one of his reports back to Absalom.

## ACT I: EXPLORING THE BAILEY

The scenario begins as the PCs arrive at Skull Hill. From atop the ridge, they can see the entirety of the fort, a motte-and-bailey resting on the shores of a small, shallow waterway called the Skittering River. The front gates to both the motte and the bailey appear smashed in, there are scorch marks all along the palisade, and there are three craters—two in the bailey and one at the base of the timber tower atop the motte. There appears to be no sign of movement from the ridge, though the PCs can see a thin wisp of smoke rising from the timber tower's chimney.

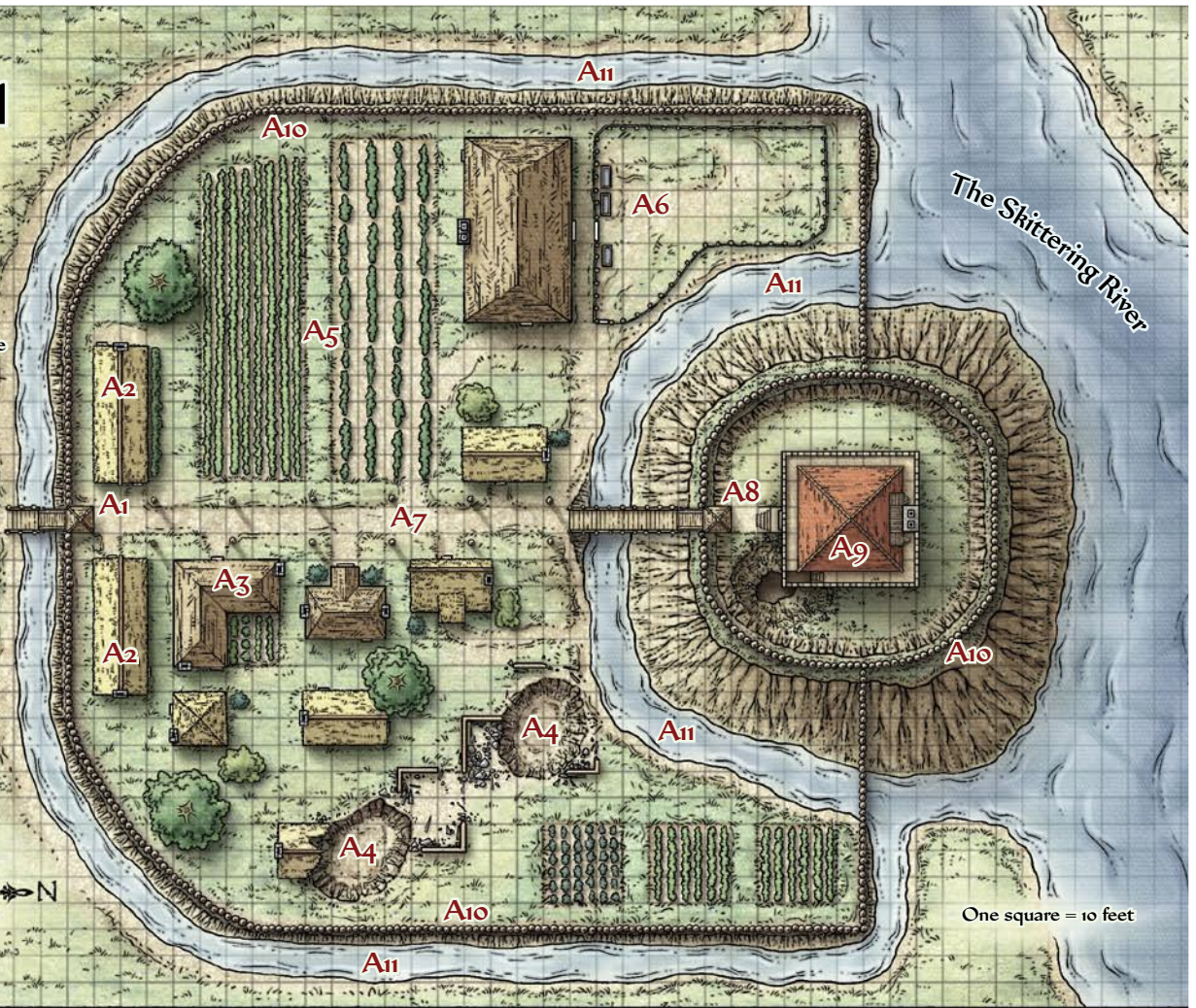
**Mission Note:** PCs from the Andoran faction should begin mapping the motte-and-bailey and be able to provide Captain Colson Maldriss with directions to the fort from Vigil in order to accomplish their first mission.

## Skull Hill Bailey

Skull Hill's bailey was built and maintained by Chelish workers and recently occupied by Chelish soldiers, spies,

# Skull Hill

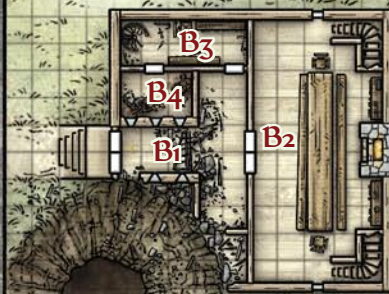
- A1 Gatehouse
- A2 Barracks
- A3 Grinning Inn
- A4 Craters
- A5 Cornfields
- A6 Barn and Pasture
- A7 Skull Road
- A8 Motte Gate
- A9 Wooden Tower
- A10 Palisade
- A11 Moat



## Caverns



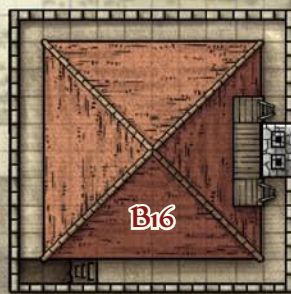
### 1st Floor



### 2nd Floor



### Roof



### 3rd Floor



One square = 5 feet

and farmers. After the Skittering Ravagers captured Skull Hill, they put the fort's populace to the sword, slaughtered the livestock, and were about to set fire to the buildings when the rock fell from the heavens and the events described above were put in motion. Below are additional details about Skull Hill's Bailey.

## A1. Gatehouse (CR 7 or CR 10)

Skull Hill's double gate lies open, one half broken off its hinges. A small watchtower sits above the gate, forming a short ten foot tunnel as one enters the bailey—scorch marks mar the gate and the tower. The drawbridge is down and appears to be in good condition.

The orcs broke through the gatehouse with a ram they set on fire. The ram, a giant scorched log, is discarded in the nearby moat.

**Traps:** The few orcs that survived the blast wave of necromantic energy (who are hiding in area A3) trapped this gate to prevent the undead orcs from escaping (see area A5) and to keep out the nonexistent strangers who they believe caused the transformation of the tribe. The entire floor of the watchtower is rigged to drop into the tunnel once someone steps through the broken gate.

## Tier 7–8 (CR 7)

### FALLING BLOCK TRAP CR 7

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

#### EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset manual

Effect Atk +15 melee (6d6); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. square)

## Tier 10–11 (CR 10)

### FALLING BLOCK TRAP CR 10

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

#### EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset manual

Effect Atk +20 melee (10d6); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. square)

**Development:** If the trap is triggered, the entire tower above collapses, forming a rubble pile in the ten-foot-by-ten-foot square of the gate. This rubble pile counts as difficult terrain and must be climbed to enter the bailey (DC 10 Climb check). If the trap is disabled, the PCs can find a ladder on the east face of the tower that leads up to the watchtower.

## A2. Barracks

Both of the barracks in the bailey are laid out the same: doors facing in toward the road, windows along the north and south walls, and two-dozen bunks inside each barracks. Both barracks have been ransacked, however, and there are signs of violence: blood smears on the floor as if a body (or bodies) were drug outside, smashed windows, broken furniture, and so on.

## A3. The Grinning Inn (CR 7 or CR 10)

A small, two-story inn sits beside the main road that runs north-south through the bailey. All of the windows on the second floor are broken, their tattered curtains blowing through the openings. The windows on the first floor are intact, but it appears that someone nailed boards over the inside of those windows. The front door appears to have once been smashed off its hinges and then shoddily replaced. There are scorch marks and blood smears on the front porch of the inn. A sign swings on one broken chain in the wind—on it is an enormous human smile full of cartoonish teeth. Beneath the teeth it reads, "The Grinning Inn."

All of the original residents of the Grinning Inn were dragged from their beds, hauled out into the corn field, and slaughtered. When the necromantic event happened, two orc barbarians were ransacking the inn's basement food stores and were not turned into skeletal creatures like many of their clansmen. Once their skeletal clansmen began killing all the other orcs that had not turned, these two barbarians nailed boards over the windows and replaced the door and barricaded it with a huge table. They've lived in the inn for a month, occasionally running out to destroy one of their undead clansmen who wander the nearby cornfield, and have eaten every corpse in the building along with the entirety of the food stores in the basement.

The inn has a very basic layout: the first floor is a bar/restaurant combination with a small kitchen in the southwest corner. The kitchen has a door leading north to a small outside garden that was dug up and hacked to pieces. Most of the food there is spoiled and rotten. A set of stairs along the north wall of the bar leads to the second floor which contains several small rooms each with a cot or single bed inside. Every room is ransacked and the room farthest from the stairs has the remains of a dozen or half-eaten human corpses.

**Creatures:** The two orc barbarians sit in the inn's bar and watch for any of the skeletal creatures that wander the corn field. When they see the PCs, the orcs assume that the PCs are the cause of the necromantic event, come

now to see their handiwork. As the PCs approach the inn, they hear the scraping of wood on wood as the orcs remove the heavy table from the door. A moment later, the door bursts open and the two orcs charge out raging and screaming, “You did this!” over and over again in orcish. They cannot be reasoned with. Depending on the time of day the PCs begin exploring the bailey, the orcs may or may not be affected by light sensitivity.

## Tier 7–8 (CR 7)

### SKULL HILL BRUTE (2)

CR 5

Male orc barbarian 6

CE Medium humanoid (orc)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 10, flat-footed 13 (+5 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge, –2 rage)

**hp** 69 (6d12+30)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6

**Defensive Abilities** ferocity, trap sense +2, improved uncanny dodge; **Weaknesses** light sensitivity

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** +1 *falchion* +14/+9 (2d4+11/18–20)

**Ranged** javelin +7/+2 (1d6+7)

**Special Attacks** rage (16 rounds per day), rage powers (powerful blow +2, strength surge +6, superstition +3)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Both orcs rage—this is figured into their stats.

**During Combat** The orcs attack whoever is closest and focus on that target until he or she has been knocked unconscious. Then they switch to the next closest and so on.

**Morale** The orcs fight to the death.

**Base Statistics** **AC** 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge); **hp** 57 (6d12+18); **Will** +4; **Melee** +1 *falchion* +12 (2d4+8/18–20); **Ranged** javelin +7 (1d6+5); **Str** 20, **Con** 14; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 23

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 24, **Dex** 13, **Con** 18, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +6/+1; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 25

**Feats** Dodge, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (*falchion*)

**Skills** Acrobatics +9, Climb +10, Intimidate +7, Perception +4, Survival +4, Swim +8

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potions of cure light wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +1 *chain shirt*, +1 *falchion*, javelins (3), 200 gp

## Tier 10–11 (CR 10)

### SKULL HILL RAGER (2)

CR 8

Male orc barbarian 9

CE Medium humanoid (orc)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+6 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, –2 rage)

**hp** 103 (9d12+45)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8

**Defensive Abilities** ferocity, trap sense +3, improved uncanny dodge; **DR** 1/—; **Weaknesses** light sensitivity

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** +1 *falchion* +18/+13 (2d4+11/18–20 plus Vital Strike)

**Ranged** javelin +11/+6 (1d6+7)

**Special Attacks** rage (22 rounds per day), rage powers (powerful blow +3, roused anger, strength surge +9, superstition +4)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Both orcs rage—this is figured into their stats.

**During Combat** The orcs attack whoever is closest and focus on that target until he or she has been knocked unconscious. Then they switch to the next closest and so on.

**Morale** The orcs fight to the death.

**Base Statistics** **AC** 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge); **hp** 85 (9d12+27); **Will** +6; **Melee** +1 *falchion* +16 (2d4+8/18–20 plus Vital Strike); **Ranged** javelin +11 (1d6+5); **Str** 20, **Con** 14; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 28

#### STATISTICS





**Str** 22, **Dex** 16, **Con** 18, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +9/+4; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 30

**Feats** Dodge, Iron Will, Step Up, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (falchion)

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Climb +10, Intimidate +10, Perception +5, Survival +5, Swim +9

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Combat Gear** *potions of cure serious wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +2 chain shirt, cloak of resistance +1, +1 falchion, javelins (3), 220 pp

**Rewards:** If the PCs defeat the orcs, reward each tier thusly:

**Tier 7–8:**

Give each player 738 gp.

**Tier 10–11:**

Give each player 2,250 gp.

## A4. Craters

The first two craters (inside the bailey) were formed when two of the three pieces of the rock that tumbled from the sky crashed into several farm houses and other structures that used to stand here. Debris, mud, rocks, and dirt are strewn in a northwesterly direction from the craters. Both of those craters are about 20 feet deep with steep, muddy slopes down to the bottom.

The rock that hit the bailey smashed through part of all three floors of the timber tower and then punched into a cavern below. The crater in the bailey is about 20 feet deep, but ends in a big hole that drops 15 feet down into area **S1**. The crater's slope is rocky and sloped at about 45 degrees, making it a small challenge to descend (DC 10 Climb check). Anyone who falls slides quickly toward the hole at the bottom and can make one DC 15 Reflex save to stop his descent. If the save fails, that PC tumbles into the cave taking 1d6 damage from falling.

## A5. Cornfield (CR 7 or CR 10)

Two large cornfields lie off to the west of the bailey's main road. The corn stalks appear ready to harvest and are large, green, and choked with corn.

The corn field is ready to harvest and as such provides soft cover for ranged attacks greater than 10 feet and partial cover for any attacks within 10 feet. The exception to this is anyone standing in the same corn row as someone else—neither of those creatures would have cover against the other. The corn rows are difficult to traverse due to the overgrown stalks and rough, uneven soil. Any movement inside is considered to be through difficult terrain.

**Creatures:** Several skeletal champions, once the orcs of the Skittering Ravagers, lurk inside the corn. They've accumulated a small collection of corpses (both orc and

human) and wander the corn field seeking more victims. If the PCs enter the cornfield, there's a 20% each round that they're in the corn that they'll run into the entire group of skeletal champions. If the PCs pass by the corn on the road to the east of the field, the skeletal champions lurk 20 feet into the cornfield and move toward the PCs once they cross in front of the champions.

## Tier 7–8 (CR 7)

### SKETAL CHAMPION BRUTES (2) CR 5

Orc skeletal champion barbarian 6

CE Medium undead

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

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, –2 rage)

**hp** 48 (6d12+2d8)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, trap sense +2, improved uncanny dodge; **DR** 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** cold, undead traits

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +14 (1d4+12)

**Special Attacks** rage (14 rounds per day), rage powers (powerful blow +2, strength surge +6, superstition +3)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Once they spot the PCs, the skeletal champions rage. Rage has already been figured into their stats.

**During Combat** The skeletal champions possess great intelligence (for undead) and use it to flank the PCs and tactically retreat and strike again when they can. If a cleric uses his channel positive energy ability against the skeletal champions, they immediately focus all of their rage on that PC.

**Morale** The skeletal champions fight until destroyed.

**Base Statistics** **AC** 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural); **Will** +6; **Melee** 2 claws +12 (1d4+9); **Ranged** javelin +8/+3 (1d6+6); **Str** 22; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 25

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 26, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +6/+1; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 27

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (falchion)

**Skills** Acrobatics +10, Climb +12, Intimidate +9, Perception +6, Survival +4, Swim +8

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Gear** +1 chain shirt, 200 gp

## Tier 10–11 (CR 10)

### SKETAL CHAMPION RAGERS (4) CR 6

Orc skeletal champion barbarian 9

CE Medium undead

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

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**DEFENSE**

**AC** 21, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, -2 rage)

**hp** 67 (9d12+2d8)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, trap sense +3, improved uncanny dodge; **DR** 1/—, 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** cold, undead traits

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**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +16 (1d4+11)

**Special Attacks** rage (20 rounds per day), rage powers (powerful blow +3, roused anger, strength surge +9, superstition +4)

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**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Once they spot the PCs, the skeletal champions rage. Rage has already been figured into their stats.

**During Combat** The skeletal champions possess great intelligence (for undead) and use it to flank the PCs and tactically retreat and strike again when they can. If a cleric uses his channel positive energy ability against the skeletal champions, they immediately focus all of their rage on that PC.

**Morale** The skeletal champions fight until destroyed.

**Base Statistics** **AC** 23, touch 15, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural); **Will** +8; **Melee** 2 claws +14 (1d4+9); **Str** 22; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 29

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**STATISTICS**

**Str** 26, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +8/+3; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 31

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Step Up, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (falchion)

**Skills** Acrobatics +14, Climb +12, Intimidate +12, Perception +7, Survival +5, Swim +9

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Gear** +2 chain shirt, cloak of resistance +1

**Development:** Scattered about the corn fields are the corpses of most of the Chelish citizens who lived here when the orcs attacked. Another dozen or so orc bodies can be found at various spots around the corn field as well. None of the corpses possess anything of value and all appear to have died by sword strikes (DC 10 Heal check).

**Mission Notes:** In this and all other instances where the PCs face the skeletal champions, PCs of the Cheliox faction can attempt once per instance to make a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check to determine that these undead were likely created by magical energies from an unknown source.

**Rewards:** If the PCs defeat the skeletal champions, reward each tier thusly:

**Tier 7–8:**

Give each player 275 gp.

**Tier 10–11:**

Give each player 1,608 gp.

## A6. Barn and Pasture

The pasture in the northwest corner of the bailey is filled with the corpses of a variety of cattle. The stench is unbearable (Fortitude DC 15 or nauseated for 1d6 rounds) and the field is coated in swarms of flies and other insects. Inside the barn isn't much better—there are two dozen slaughtered horses there (same DC for nausea) and it looks like someone tried to set fire to the barn but it sputtered out before it could catch the hay. The bodies of two stable hands, both human teenage boys, are just inside the doors to the barn which face east into the bailey. The animals and the stable hands appear to have all been slain by sword strikes (DC 10 Heal check).

## A7. The Road of Skulls

The main road that runs from the bailey gate to the motte gate is made of well-packed earth with two well-worn, foot-deep cart tracks. At 15-foot intervals on both the west and east sides of the road, spears are driven into the ground, and atop them rest the heads of some of the Chelish soldiers who lived here and guarded the fort.

## A8. Motte Gate

A sturdy wooden platform runs up from the base of the bailey's road at a 45 degree angle to the motte gate above. The platform is crossed with thick boards at even intervals to provide a kind of step for climbing up. The motte gate is blasted open, both of its doors lying on the motte's hillside nearby. The motte's drawbridge is down.

The orcs climbed the motte and scaled the palisade at the top to gain access to the motte gate. They cut down the guards, whose corpses are scattered about the motte yard, arms and armor broken or rended, and smashed open the gate from the inside.

**Traps:** The damage to this gate has worn over the intervening months and the gate is now about ready to collapse. Anyone not careful when walking through the gate can trigger the collapse of the entire guard tower.

## Tier 7–8 (CR 6)

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**ROOF COLLAPSE TRAP**

**CR 6**

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

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**EFFECTS**

**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** Atk +20 melee (6d6); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. square)

## Tier 10–11 (CR 9)

### ROOF COLLAPSE TRAP

**CR 9**

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 20

#### EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset manual

Effect Atk +20 melee (10d6); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. square)

**Development:** If the trap is triggered, the entire tower above collapses, forming a rubble pile in the 10-foot-by-10-foot square of the gate. This rubble pile counts as difficult terrain and must be climbed to enter the bailey (DC 10 Climb check). Even if the trap is disabled, the tower is still at risk of collapsing and anyone pushing it or chopping away at its rickety supports risks bringing the tower down on himself.

## A9. Timber Tower

A large, three-story timber tower rises from the center of the motte and ends at a pointed roof above, ringed by wooden crenelations. A gaping hole in the motte appears to have collapsed the outside wall of the southeast corner of the tower exposing several rooms across all three floors. The steep front stairs that lead up to the timber tower's door are covered in blood stains and the front door of the tower has been smashed in from the outside. A thin tendril of smokes wisps its way skyward from the tower's chimney.

The tower's first floor is 6 feet off the ground with a crawl space beneath that's walled off by the tower's construction. See the map on page 6 to see the damage wrought to each floor by the rocks that fell from the heavens.

## A10. Palisade

A 10-foot-tall palisade (wooden log wall) rings the entire motte-and-bailey with a separate palisade surrounding the motte to wall it off from the bailey below. At several points along the wall, specifically in the southeast corner of the bailey and along the southern palisade of the motte, crude ladders lean against the palisade that provide easy climbing access to the other side.

## A11. Moat

A 20-foot-deep moat, fed by the nearby Skittering River, surrounds the fort on all sides. The Skittering River itself is rather shallow, no more than 5 feet deep at any given point.

## ACT 2: SKULL HILL'S MOTTE

Skull Hill's motte was carved from a previously existing hillside that the original workers didn't know housed a series of caverns. Until recently, it was occupied by Chelish soldiers, servants, and the lord of Skull Hill. After the Skittering Ravagers broke into the motte, they put everyone to the sword and were ransacking the timber tower when the events described in the introduction happened. Below are additional details about Skull Hill's motte.

## The Timber Tower of Skull Hill

The timber tower is constructed primarily of enormous treated logs sandwiched together with tar. The roof is constructed of wooden shakes and is surrounded by a 5-foot-wide crenellated walkway. A large, brick chimney sits inside the north wall and rises up above the tower another 10 feet or so. A steep stairway leads up to the entrance to the timber tower which is 6 feet off the ground.

## B1. Ruined Entryway

This is all that remains of the timber tower's defensible entryway. Arrow slits line the west and east walls and a portcullis lies ruined on the floor. Part of the east wall has collapsed, spilling rubble into the nearby crater that caused the collapse. The room is littered with rubble and the floors are stained with blood at periodic intervals.

## B2. Main Hall (CR 5 or CR 8)

This is the main hall of the timber tower. It contains a large table made of an enormous tree cut in half lengthwise and laid down on the floor. It's framed by two long wooden benches along the side and two stylish wooden chairs at each end. A fireplace stands against the north wall and two sets of stairs frame the fireplace and rise up to the second floor. There are a dozen or so corpses here, most of which are seated at the table, and all of which are missing their heads. Atop the fireplace is draped a large flag of Chelifax.

**Creatures:** A skeletal champion (or two for Tier 10–11) sits among the corpses at the table, head down and waiting for the PCs. When they enter the room, give them a moment to look around and then give them a DC 15 Perception check. Anyone who fails that check doesn't get to act in the surprise round when the champion leaps up and attacks.

## Tier 7–8 (CR 5)

### SKELETAL CHAMPION BRUTE

**CR 5**

hp 48 (see A5, Tier 7–8)

## Tier 10–11 (CR 8)

### SKELETAL CHAMPION RAGERS (2) CR 6

hp 67 (see A5, Tier 10–11)

**Development:** All of the bodies here were stripped of their wealth and some show evidence of having been partially eaten. Allow the PCs to make a DC 20 Perception check once the battle is over. Anyone who succeeds hears shuffling footsteps coming from the floor above.

**Mission Notes:** PCs from the Cheliox faction will want to collect the flag over the hearth.

**Rewards:** If the PCs defeat the skeletal champions, reward each tier thusly:

**Tier 7–8:**

Give each player 138 gp.

**Tier 10–11:**

Give each player 875 gp.

## B3. Armory

This room was housed the timber tower's weapons, but most are missing now, the empty weapon racks and shelves bare of armor exhibiting evidence of the orc's thievery. Several broken bits of armor and weapons as well as a dozen or so broken crates litter the floor. There is nothing of value here.

## B4. Murder Holes

This room once served to house archers who protected the entrance to the timber tower. The room is currently empty except for two orc corpses stripped of their weapons and gear.

## B5. Kitchen (CR 6 or CR 9)

Before the PCs reach the kitchen, they smell something awful—something akin to bad body odor but much, much worse. As they get closer to the room (either by climbing the stairs from B2 or accessing the building from the hallway), the tower gets a lot warmer and much more humid.

When they enter, they find a typical kitchen with three tables for food prep, shelves, and a large fireplace. The smell is coming from three large cauldrons sitting over an open fire in the fireplace, boiling and covered in a white froth and containing what appear to be human heads.

**Creatures:** Standing in front of the cauldrons is Krug, the once-mighty shaman and clan chief of the Skittering Ravagers, now a manipulated shell of an orc, controlled by the alien whims of the moonflower in area S1. Krug is boiling the heads of the slain Chelish men from area B2 because he thinks the moonflower (which he calls Master) told him to. Krug is not immediately

hostile toward the PCs—in fact, he's quite friendly. He babbles mostly nonsense about plants from the sky but offers tidbits about how his clan destroyed the Chelish rabble who were here and were then, in turn, destroyed by a wave of necromantic energy that washed up from the caverns after the rocks hit. Krug only attacks the PCs if they attack him or attempt to restrain him in any way—or, if they've already faced the moonflower in S1, killed it, and tell Krug that they've killed it. Krug has no interest in leaving the motte-and-bailey and his demeanor will change quite dramatically to that of a fearsome, angry orc if the PCs even suggest it. If the PCs kill Krug, they can take his gear and move on. If they don't and decide to leave him alone, Krug offers a hidden chest of treasure to the PCs, claiming he has no use for coins (see treasure below).

## Tier 7–8 (CR 6)

### KRUG, MOONFLOWER SHAMAN CR 6

Male orc sorcerer 7

N Medium humanoid (orc)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1

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#### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +4 shield)

**hp** 31 (7d6+7)

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

**Defensive Abilities** ferocity; **DR** 5/— (nonlethal); **Resist** cold 5;

**Weaknesses** light sensitivity

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#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** touch +4 (by spell) or

mwk longspear +5 (1d8+1/x3 plus Arcane Strike)

**Ranged** touch +5 (by spell)

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

**Special Attacks** cantrips, grave touch (5/day, 3 rounds)

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 7th)

3rd (4)—*halt undead*, *lightning bolt* (DC 17), *vampiric touch* (DC 19)

2nd (6)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 18), *false life*, *ghoul touch* (DC 18), *scorching ray*

1st (6)—*chill touch* (DC 17), *detect undead*, *hold portal*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 17), *shield*

0—*bleed* (DC 16), *daze* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 16)

**Bloodline** undead

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#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** When Krug hears the PCs approach, he drinks a *potion of eagle's splendor* and casts *mage armor* and *shield* on himself, in case the PCs are hostile.

**During Combat** Should the PCs fight Krug, he's a fearsome ally. He starts with his highest level spells (*lightning bolt* if has range or *vampiric touch* if he's close) and flees from melee attacks, making his way down to the first floor and out into the motte.

If any melee PCs get close, he targets them with *blindness/deafness* and *ghoul touch*.

**Morale** Krug surrenders if brought below 5 hit points and begs the PCs to allow him to serve his Master (the moonflower in **S1**).

**Base Statistics** AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex); reduce all spell DCs by 2; **Cha** 14; Bluff +7, Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +14, Use Magic Device +7

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#### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 11, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16

**Feats** Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Persuasive, Spell Focus (necromancy)

**Skills** Appraise +5, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Perception +1, Spellcraft +5 (+9 defensive casting), Use Magic Device +9

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds*, *potions of eagle's splendor* (2), *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** *metamagic rod of lesser silent*, masterwork long spear, *ring of protection* +1

## Tier 10–11 (CR 9)

### KRUG, MOONFLOWER SHAMAN

CR 9

Male orc sorcerer 10

N Medium humanoid (orc)

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

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#### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +4 shield)

**hp** 45 (10d6+10)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8

**Defensive Abilities** ferocity; **DR** 10/— (nonlethal); **Resist** cold 10;

**Weaknesses** light sensitivity

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#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** touch +6 (by spell) or

mwk longspear +7 (1d8+1/x3 plus Arcane Strike)

**Ranged** ray +7 (by spell)

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

**Special Attacks** cantrips, grasp of the dead (1/day, 20-ft.-radius burst, 10d6 damage, Reflex DC 17), grave touch (5/day, 5 rounds)

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 10th)

5th (3)—*blight* (DC 20)

4th (5)—*animate dead*, *fear* (DC 19), *ice storm*

3rd (6)—*halt undead*, *hold person* (DC 16), *lightning bolt* (DC 16), *vampiric touch* (DC 18)

2nd (7)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *false life*, *ghoul touch* (DC 17), *scorching ray*, *web* (DC 15)

1st (6)—*chill touch* (DC 16), *detect undead*, *hold portal*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16), *shield*

0 (all)—*bleed* (DC 15), *daze* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *disrupt undead*, *message*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 15)

**Bloodline** undead

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#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** When Krug hears the PCs approach, he casts *mage armor* and *shield* on himself, in case the PCs are hostile.

**During Combat** Should the PCs fight Krug, he's a fearsome ally.

He starts with his highest level spells (*ice storm* if has range or *fear* if he's close) and flees from melee attacks, making his way down to the first floor and out into the motte. If any melee PCs get close, he targets them with *blindness/deafness* and *hold person*.

**Morale** Krug surrenders if brought below 5 hit points and begs the PCs to allow him to serve his Master (the moonflower in **S1**).

**Base Statistics** AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex); reduce all spell DCs by 1; **Cha** 15; Bluff +8, Intimidate +19, Use Magic Device +8

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#### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 11, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18

**Feats** Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Iron Will, Persuasive, Spell Focus (necromancy)

**Skills** Appraise +5, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +7, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Perception +2, Spellcraft +6 (+10 defensive casting), Use Magic Device +8

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** *headband of alluring charisma* +2, *metamagic rod of lesser silent*, masterwork long spear, *ring of protection* +1, *wand of expeditious retreat*, 100 gp

**Development:** The PCs can learn the entire backstory to this adventure (minus the history of Akila) from Krug. If they let him live, it's possible they may see him again before this series is over.

**Treasure:** If the PCs allow Krug to live, he pulls a small chest out of one of the pots of boiling water and drops it on the floor, declaring that he has no need for coins. Inside (once the chest has cooled), the PCs find 3,500 gp for Tier 7–8 and 5,500 gp for Tier 7–11. The PCs cannot gain both rewards (gold and Krug's gear).

**Mission Notes:** PCs from the Qadira faction need two pieces of information from Krug. Both can be had with two successful DC 14 Diplomacy checks. One, they need Krug to admit that the falchions wielded by his orcs were provided by Chelish arms dealers operating out of Skull Hill. Two, they need Krug to admit that he ordered his clan to attack Skull Hill when they failed to receive a second promised shipment of armor and weapons.

**Rewards:** If the PCs defeat Krug in combat, reward each tier thusly:

**Tier 7–8:**

Give each player 521 gp.

**Tier 10–11:**

Give each player 909 gp.

**Rewards:** If the PCs decide to let Krug live, reward each tier thusly:

**Tier 7–8:**

Give each player 583 gp.

**Tier 10–11:**

Give each player 917 gp.

## B6. Lord's Stairs

This empty room contains only a tattered rug and stairs leading down to **B2** and up to **B11**.

## B7. Hallway

This hallway is empty except for a rug that stretches the length of the hall. The rug is scorched and tattered in places and has a few blood stains, as if someone were slain and the blood drained away into the rug.

## B8. Food Stores

This lightless room is slightly cooler than the rest of the tower; it contains sacks of flower, grain, and sugar and is lined with shelves full of preserved food and racks hanging with dried meat. The center of the room is occupied by water barrels.

## B9. Servant's Quarters

This room once served as servant's quarters, as evidenced by the shoddy state of the beds and bedding. There are several small chests here, all opened and empty, and the room is covered in scattered clothing and miscellaneous garbage. A set of stairs in the southwest corner of the room lead down to **B3** and up to **B15**.

## B10. Partially Ruined Chambers

These chambers were once filled with very expensive furniture and rugs, all now smashed or weathered. Most of the eastern half of this room lies open to the elements and the entire floor tilts slightly toward the opening.

## B11. Lord's Chambers (CR 5 or CR 8)

Once the lord of Skull Hill's chambers, this room is still well appointed despite some damage to the southeastern wall and what appears to be a thorough ransacking of the room. Most of the furniture is damaged, either slashed or smashed, and anything of value was long ago taken away. A body lies discarded near the fireplace—though it's decayed somewhat, a DC 12 Perception check reveals that this is the body of Heral, the missing Pathfinder delver. A further DC 15 Heal check reveals that he was strangled to death. A set of stairs in the northwest corner of the room leads down to **B6**.

**Optional Encounter:** Assuming the players have more than 2 hours remaining, they also find some of Skull Hill's undead denizens here, though these champions lack weapons and armor.

## Tier 7–8 (CR 5)

### SKELETAL CHAMPION BRUTE CR 5

Orc skeletal champion barbarian 6

CE Medium undead

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

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 12, touch 10, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, –2 rage)

**hp** 48 (6d12+2d8)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, trap sense +2, improved uncanny dodge; **DR** 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** cold, undead traits

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +14 (1d4+12)

**Special Attacks** rage (14 rounds per day), rage powers (powerful blow +2, strength surge +6, superstition +3)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Once they spot the PCs, the skeletal champions rage. Rage has already been figured into their stats.

**During Combat** The skeletal champions possess great intelligence (for undead) and use it to flank the PCs and tactically retreat and strike again when they can. If a cleric uses his channel positive energy ability against the skeletal champions, they immediately focus all of their rage on that PC.

**Morale** The skeletal champions fight until destroyed.

**Base Statistics** **AC** 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural); **Will** +6; **Melee** 2 claws +12 (1d4+9); **Ranged** javelin +8/+3 (1d6+6); **Str** 22; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 25

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 26, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +6/+1; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 27

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (falchion)

**Skills** Acrobatics +10, Climb +12, Intimidate +9, Perception +6, Survival +4, Swim +8

**Languages** Common, Orc

## Tier 10–11 (CR 8)

### SKELETAL CHAMPION RAGERS (2) CR 6

Orc skeletal champion barbarian 9

CE Medium undead

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 13, flat-footed 10 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, –2 rage)

**hp** 67 (9d12+2d8)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, trap sense +3, improved uncanny dodge; **DR** 1/—, 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** cold, undead traits

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#### OFFENSE

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**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +16 (1d4+11)

**Special Attacks** rage (20 rounds per day), rage powers (powerful blow +3, roused anger, strength surge +9, superstition +4)

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#### TACTICS

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**Before Combat** Once they spot the PCs, the skeletal champions rage. Rage has already been figured into their stats.

**During Combat** The skeletal champions possess great intelligence (for undead) and use it to flank the PCs and tactically retreat and strike again when they can. If a cleric uses his channel positive energy ability against the skeletal champions, they immediately focus all of their rage on that PC.

**Morale** The skeletal champions fight until destroyed.

**Base Statistics** **AC** 23, touch 15, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural); **Will** +8; **Melee** 2 claws +14 (1d4+9); **Str** 22; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 29

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#### STATISTICS

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**Str** 26, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +8/+3; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 31

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Step Up, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (falchion)

**Skills** Acrobatics +14, Climb +12, Intimidate +12, Perception +7, Survival +5, Swim +9

**Languages** Common, Orc

**Development:** Heralt has a hastily scribbled note hidden in a false pocket in his jacket (Perception DC 20 to find). It reads, “Chelish know I’m not one of them. I’m to be murdered soon.”

**Mission Notes:** The note Heralt carries is enough for PCs of the Taldor faction to be able to report what happened to Heralt. PCs of the Andoran faction need to secretly make another Perception check (DC 20) to search Heralt for Captain Maldriss’s letter of mark. Specifically, PCs of the Taldor faction cannot see PCs from the Andoran faction recover the letter of mark.

## B12. Stairway

This room is empty save for stairs leading down to **B5**.

## B13. Damaged Chambers

It’s unclear what this room once held as all of it appears to have slid out the opening to the south and tumbled into the crater below. The floor here is steeply sloped (DC 10 Climb check) and any fall from this room to the crate below would be 5d6 falling damage. A set of damaged stairs begins about 5 feet above open space to the crater

below and leads to the roof (area **B16**). Two orc corpses, stripped of armor and weapons, lie against the east wall.

## B14. Butler’s Quarters

This well-appointed room contains a rug, bed, chest, table, and chair. The chest has been opened and ransacked and the rest of the room is a shambles.

## B15. Maid’s Quarters

This room contains several bunk beds and chests. The chests are all open and empty and the bunks have been tossed. A set of stairs in the southwest corner leads down to area **B9**.

## B16. Roof

The roof is surrounded by a walkway protected by wood crenellations. The roof itself rises another 15 feet to a sharp point above the tower. A set of stairs in the southeast corner leads down to **B13** but ends in destruction, hanging out over empty space to the crater below. Anyone on the roof can see the entirety of the motte-and-bailey and the low river valley beyond.

# ACT 3: THE PRISONER

When the rock carrying the seed of the moonflower struck Skull Hill, it punched inside and revealed a long-forgotten series of caverns and, more importantly, the lost burial chambers of the Osirian sorceress Akila. Below are additional details of the chambers beneath Skull Hill.

## S1. Moonflower Cave (CR 8 or CR 11)

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This 50-foot-by-55-foot cavern stands fifteen feet tall, littered with stalagmites and stalactites, that make the entire room very difficult to traverse. The only light comes from the hole above. A large rock, about 7-1/2 feet in diameter, rests against the north wall of the cavern, evidence clearly indicating that it punched the hole in the ceiling above. The rock itself is black as night but from it stretch hideous, bulbous vines one to two feet in circumference that stretch all about the cavern, grow up out of the hole above, and wind down into the other cavern below.

---

The moonflower’s seed was traveling within this rock when Zuberi activated Akila’s ring and brought the rock down from the heavens. The vines are slowly growing into an enormous moonflower that, if allowed to grow, will one day form into a gargantuan plant that will plague the countryside for years to come. All the PCs need to do to destroy it is hack the vines up, severing their connection to the rock. If they do this, the rock shudders and is still.

**Creatures:** All of the original moonflowers are dead—since they have such a short lifespan. This moonflower was created from an unfortunate orc survivor that Krug recently caught and fed to the last living moonflower. As such, it has decidedly creepy orc features, such as a caricature of an orc face complete with open mouth and pointy teeth, right in the middle of the moonflower's main stalk. For Tier 10–11, there are three moonflowers here—two appear to have orc features and the third (with a DC 13 Knowledge [nature] check) appears to have ankheg features. All of the moonflowers stand near the rock.

## Tier 7–8 (CR 8)

### MOONFLOWER CR 8

hp 102 (see Appendix)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Moonflowers possess some intelligence, but still just attack whoever is closest.

**Morale** Moonflowers fight until they are destroyed.

## Tier 10–11 (CR 11)

### MOONFLOWER (3) CR 8

hp 102 (see Appendix)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Moonflowers possess some intelligence, but still just attack whoever is closest.

**Morale** Moonflowers fight until they are destroyed.

**Development:** An 8-foot-wide tunnel exits area **S1** from the south and winds down to area **S2** below.

**Mission Notes:** PCs from the Osirion faction must return a perfect, undamaged sample of a moonflower to Amenopheus. In order to do so, they must make a successful DC 20 Heal check on the pod on the rock from which the vines are growing. (A much easier DC 10 Heal check tells them to sample the pod instead of the vines.) PCs from the Taldor faction must make a successful DC 15 Craft (stonemasonry) check to recover a perfectly smooth sample of the rock. They get two chances as there are only two spots on the stone that match the description Baron Dalsine provided in his letter.

## S2. Akila's Tomb

The tunnel descends a few turns and then enters a large cavern glittering with the light of phosphorescent algae growing on the eastern wall. A small lake, fed by an underground stream that flows south through the cavern, occupies most of the west side of the room. The vines from above stretch across the cavern and wrap around an enormous stone coffin, solidly perched atop a well-carved stone dais.

This is the final resting place of Akila, concubine of Zuberi and unfortunate victim of his curse. A DC 18 Strength check is required to lift the lid from the tomb. Inside are the skeletal remains of Akila, still clad in a brilliantly colored red-and-orange robe. A solid, simple, silver ring adorns her left hand's ring finger and she holds what appears to be a wand in her right hand. The silver ring cannot be removed, no matter what the PCs try. In order to get the ring out of the cavern, they'll have to take the skeletal remains of Akila (or, at least, her hand). The "wand" she's holding is not magical but will be of some great significance during part IV of this series. Note on the chronicle sheet who gathers the wand (and for the sake of Pathfinder Society, if one party member takes the wand, all of them do on their chronicle sheet).

**Treasure:** Akila was buried with several of her possessions (see above), along with any evidence that Osirion was dealing in weapons and mercenaries here (Osirian trade bars). In her coffin, the PCs find (for both tiers) a *pearl of power* (2nd), and a *hand of glory* with a *ring of counterspells* on it. The ring currently has *dispel magic* cast into it. For Tier 7–8, she was also buried with 8,000 gp in Osirian trade bars. For Tier 7–11, she was buried with 4,000 gp in Osirian trade bars.

**Mission Notes:** PCs from the Osirion faction must return Akila's body to Sothis, preferably intact. PCs from the Qadira faction must return a single trade bar to the Pasha. Assume they take her one from their split of the gold and that she repays the PCs for the sample.

**Rewards:** If the PCs find Akila's treasure, reward each tier thusly:

#### Tier 7–8:

Give each player 2,667 gp.

#### Tier 10–11:

Give each player 2,000 gp.

## CONCLUSION

Though it's a long journey home, the PCs can easily return to Sothis with the ring and maybe even Akila's body. When they arrive, Venture-Captain Balentiir immediately sends them out on another similar mission, this time to distant Varisia (see part II).



## Appendix: Updated Monster

### MOONFLOWER

CR 8



XP 4800

N Huge plant

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +10

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 8, flat-footed 21 (+13 natural, -2 size)**hp** 102 (12d8+48); fast healing 5**Fort** +12, **Ref** +4, **Will** +5**DR** 10/slashing; **Immune** electricity, plant traits; **Resist** cold 10**Weaknesses** vulnerability to fire

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.**Melee** bite +16 (2d6+9 plus grab), 2 tentacles +11 (1d8+4)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.**Special Attacks** light pulse, pod prison

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 28, **Dex** 10, **Con** 18, **Int** 5, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 17**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 30**Feats** Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth), Stealthy**Skills** Escape Artist +0, Perception +10, Stealth +6 (+22 in thick vegetation); **Racial Modifiers** +16 Stealth in thick vegetation**Languages** telepathy (other moonflowers only)**SQ** pod prison, pod spawn

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any**Organization** solitary or cluster (2-10)**Treasure** standard

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Light Pulse (Su)** As a standard action, a moonflower can release a pulse of bright light from its numerous blossoms every 1d6 rounds up to 3 times a day. All sighted creatures within 50 feet (save other moonflowers) with line of sight to the moonflower must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or be blinded for 1d4 rounds. This save is Constitution-based.

**Pod Prison (Ex)** Once every 1d4 rounds, a moonflower can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of a size smaller than itself by making a successful combat maneuver check. A swallowed creature is swiftly cocooned in a tight, fibrous mass and forced out of the moonflower's space into an adjacent square of the plant's choice. Once expelled, the creature remains cocooned and takes 2d8+8 points of bludgeoning damage and 8 points of acid damage per round from the living cocoon's pulsing, acid-filled innards. A cocooned creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the cocoon's insides (AC 15). Others can aid a cocooned creature by attacking with slashing or piercing weapons, but in addition to the damage dealt to the cocoon, the creature inside takes half the damage of an attack. Once the creature exits, the cocoon deflates and

### MOONFLOWER UPDATE

The Moonflower originally appeared in the Pathfinder Adventure Path volume #14 bestiary (page 82). This version has been updated for the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game.

is destroyed. Other swallowed opponents are cocooned in their own pods.

**Pod Spawn (Ex)** Should a moonflower's pod prison be allowed to kill and digest a Small or larger creature, 1d4 hours later it transforms into an adult moonflower with full hit points. The newly formed moonflower has its own consciousness, but some aspect of its trunk or blossoms resembles the creature that died within. The dead creature's equipment remains inside the new moonflower and can only be retrieved by killing the alien plant.



A fully-grown moonflower stands easily 20 feet tall with a massive trunk that is frequently 4 feet or more in diameter. The roots extend away from the base and into the soil, making the plant seem well anchored, but the roots themselves possess an agility that belies the great size of the plant and allows the moonflower to uproot itself and move with surprising speed. The tendrils of the plant are independently prehensile and writhe around the large flytrap-like “head” that crowns the stem. Bulbous growths and budding protuberances pulse and quiver along the alien plant’s trunk and thrum with cosmic light.

Moonflowers have never been known to communicate with the natives of Golarion, even druids and others who regularly converse with plants. The plants do possess some manner of strange telepathy, though, being in constant communication with their nearby brethren at all times. Those who manage to intrude upon the creatures’ alien thoughts face an assault of horrible visions of terrifying worlds covered by jungles ancient, sentient, and malign.

## FACTION MISSIONS

**Andoran Faction:** PCs from the Andoran faction who map the motte-and-bailey and its location in the Hold of Belkzen earn 1 Prestige Award. PCs from the Andoran faction who also find the additional hidden letter of mark on Heralt’s body in area **B11** earn 1 bonus Prestige Award.

**Cheliox Faction:** PCs from the Cheliox faction who return the Chelish flag in area **B2** to Zarta earn 1 Prestige Award. PCs from the Cheliox faction who also successfully determine the origins of the skeletal champions at Skull Hill earn 1 bonus Prestige Award.

**Osirion Faction:** PCs from the Osirion faction who return Akila’s intact body to Sothis earn 1 Prestige Award. PCs from the Osirion faction who also bring a perfect sample from a moonflower back to Sothis earn 1 bonus Prestige Award.

**Qadira Faction:** PCs from the Qadira faction who can prove that Osirian gold was once involved in the mysteries of Skull Hill earn 1 Prestige Award. PCs from the Qadira faction who also successfully get Krug to admit that his clan’s weapons were provided by Chelish arms dealers and that his assault on Skull Hill was retribution for a shoddy delivery earn 1 bonus Prestige Award.

**Taldor Faction:** PCs from the Taldor faction who bring back word of how Heralt died earn 1 Prestige Award. PCs from the Taldor faction who also successfully return a perfectly solid piece of the rock in area **S1** to Dalsine earn 1 bonus Prestige Award.

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## Andoran Faction Handout

### Defender of Freedom,

I've learned your travels take you north into the bestial lands of the orcs, the Hold of Belkzen. Mind your step there—humans are not welcome and Andorens are welcome less. While you're there, map this alleged fort the Chelish have there. We'd be interested to know where it is exactly and what sorts of defenses the Chelish have in place there.

That missing Pathfinder, Heralt, is a Taldan man we've had in our employ for years. If you find him, he's bearing a letter of march from me with my signature and seal on it. Without any of your other companions seeing, either ask him for it or take it from his body. 'Twould be embarrassing should Taldor uncover his association with our noble endeavor.

*Capt. Colson Maldris*

Sincerely,

Captain Colson Maldris



## Cheliox Faction Handout

### Exquisite Flesh Morsel,

I'm not sure what angers me more—the fact that our secret fort in Belkzen is silent or that I must order you there instead of keeping you in my villa for the week. Life is bitter sweet. While you're at Skull Hill, if you happen to find any rather large and visible proof that Cheliox was involved in that place, please remove it and return it to me. Also, we've heard strange tidings of a rock that fell from the sky and some alleged necromantic properties it may have had—if you see undead there, use your extensive and impressively large Pathfinder knowledge to determine the origin of those undead. I'm curious and you will sate my curiosity.

Or you won't. And I'll have you killed...

*Zarta Draldeen*

Paracountess Zarta Draldeen

## Osirion Faction Handout

### Loyal Servant of the Ruby Prince,

You have an opportunity to return a great hero once more to our lands. Should the rumors in your Pathfinder Chronicles of the tomb of Akila resting beneath Skull Hill be true, find her body and return it—intact—to me here in Sothis. We shall give her the honored burial she deserved all those hundreds of years ago.

My divinations of the fort tell me that strange plant creatures are to blame for its mysterious silence. Should these creatures be what I think they are, they are rare on Golarion and quite difficult to find. Use your skills to return to me a perfect sample of one, so that I might study it and learn its weaknesses.



In Honor of the Ancestors,

*Amenopheus*

Amenopheus, The Sapphire Sage

## Qadiran Faction Handout

*Servant of the Satrap,*

*Skull Hill fortunately represents an embarrassment for our Osirion competition. Were you able to prove that Osirian gold flowed through Skull Hill during the Everwar, why that might give us just the sort of leverage we need in the Lake Encarthan region against our pharaoh-worshipping competition there. Bring me any proof of Osiriani gold at Skull Hill.*

*It's likely that the reason Skull Hill went silent was due to a clan of orcs near there known as the Skittering Ravagers. Led by a beast named Krug, they've terrorized the southern half of Belkzen like no other orc clan could. If you find this Krug, get him to admit that his clan's weapons were all provided by the Chelish at Skull Hill. If he has assaulted the fort, get him to admit why he did so. Be sure all of your companions hear the reasons—particularly those from Chelixa.*

*Kind Regards,*

*Pasha Muhlia Al-Jakri x*



## Taldor Faction Handout

*Agent of Our Glorious Empire,*

*Brother in arms, our glorious agent of the empire, Heralt, is missing in that vile, dirty, backwoods little orc country. I see that you are traveling there—finding Heralt should be your number one priority as the Emperor is saddened by Heralt's possible death. Should he live, tell him to return to Oppara at once. Should he the opposite, find out how he died and tell me on your return. It would bring comfort to the Emperor to find closure in this matter.*



*My spies in that cow Zarta Dralneen's inner circle tell me that she believes Skull Hill went silent after a rock fell from the sky and hit her little Chelish children right on the head. So sad. If this is true, though, I'd like a piece of the rock that made her little fort die—bring me a perfectly flawless one, no cracks or crevasses, so that I might have a statue of the Paragoatess carved, and send it to her with a note.*

*For Taldor!*

*BARON JACQUO*  
Baron Jacquo Dalsine



# SCENARIO 36: ECHOES OF THE EVERWAR PART I: THE PRISONER OF SKULL HILL

This Chronicle Certifies That \_\_\_\_\_

Player Name	A.K.A.	Character Name	Pathfinder Society #	Faction
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\_\_\_\_\_ Has Completed This Scenario.

Scenario Chronicle # \_\_\_\_\_

TIER	7-8	▶	4,401	MAX GOLD
TIER	10-11	▶	7,797	
TIER		▶		
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### EXPERIENCE

Starting XP
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Final XP Total

### Prestige Award

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### GOLD

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Subtotal		

### Items Found During This Scenario

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|------|-----|---|
| TIER | 7-8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Hand of glory</i> (8,000 gp)</li> <li><i>Metamagic rod of lesser silent</i> (3,000 gp)</li> <li><i>Pearl of power</i> (2nd) (4,000 gp)</li> <li><i>Potion of cure moderate wounds</i> (300 gp)</li> <li><i>Potion of eagle's splendor</i> (300 gp)</li> <li><i>Potion of invisibility</i> (300 gp)</li> <li><i>Ring of counterspells</i> (4,000 gp)</li> <li><i>Ring of protection +1</i> (2,000 gp)</li> </ul> |
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| TIER | 10-11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+2 <i>chain shirt</i> (4,250 gp)</li> <li><i>Cloak of resistance +1</i> (1,000 gp)</li> <li><i>Headband of alluring charisma +2</i> (4,000 gp)</li> <li><i>Potion of cure serious wounds</i> (750 gp)</li> <li><i>Wand of expeditious retreat</i> (750 gp)</li> </ul> |
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| TIER | All | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Check this box if your PC recovered Akila's wand</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Check this box if your PC recovered Akila's ring</li> </ul> <p>(Line through any items that were not recovered)</p> |
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