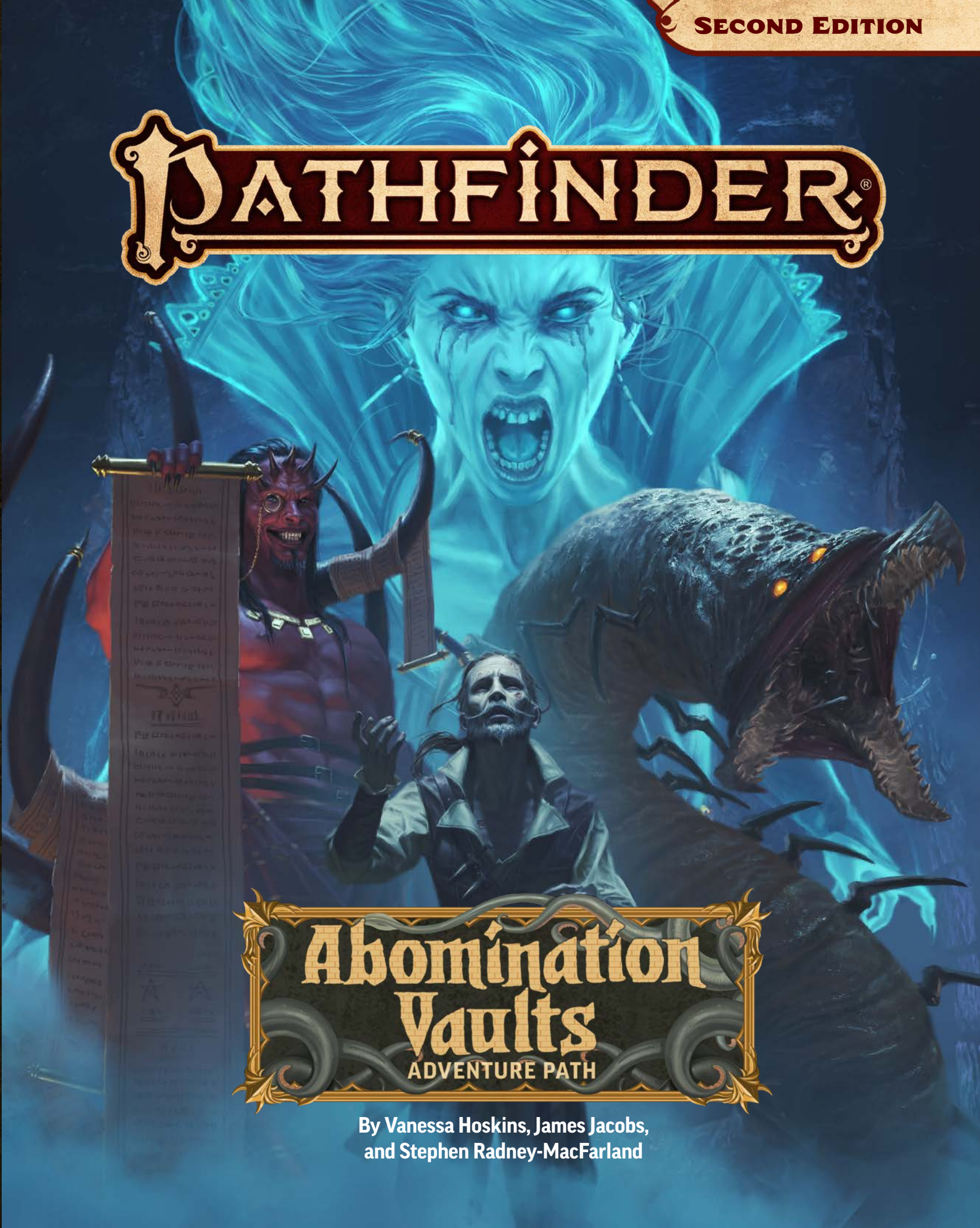


SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER[®]



Abomination Vaults

ADVENTURE PATH

By Vanessa Hoskins, James Jacobs,
and Stephen Radney-MacFarland

PATHFINDER®

Abomination Vaults

ADVENTURE PATH

PATHFINDER

AUTHOR

James Jacobs, Vanessa Hoskins,
and Stephen Radney-MacFarland,
with Ron Lundeen

DEVELOPER

Ron Lundeen

DESIGN LEADS

Lyz Liddell and Mark Seifter

EDITING LEADS

Judy Bauer, Ianara Natividad, and Solomon St. John

EDITORS

Leo Glass, BJ Hensley, Patrick Hurley, Avi Kool,
Ianara Natividad, Kieran Newton, Eric Prister, and
Solomon St. John

COVER ARTIST

Setiawan Lee

INTERIOR ARTISTS

Emanuele Desiati, João Fiuza, Vlada Hladkova,
Robert Lazzaretti, Artur Nakhodkin,
Christoph Peters, Sandra Posada, Maurice Risulmi,
and Luis Salas Lastra

ART DIRECTION

Sonja Morris and Sarah E. Robinson

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Sonja Morris

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

James Jacobs

PUBLISHER

Erik Mona



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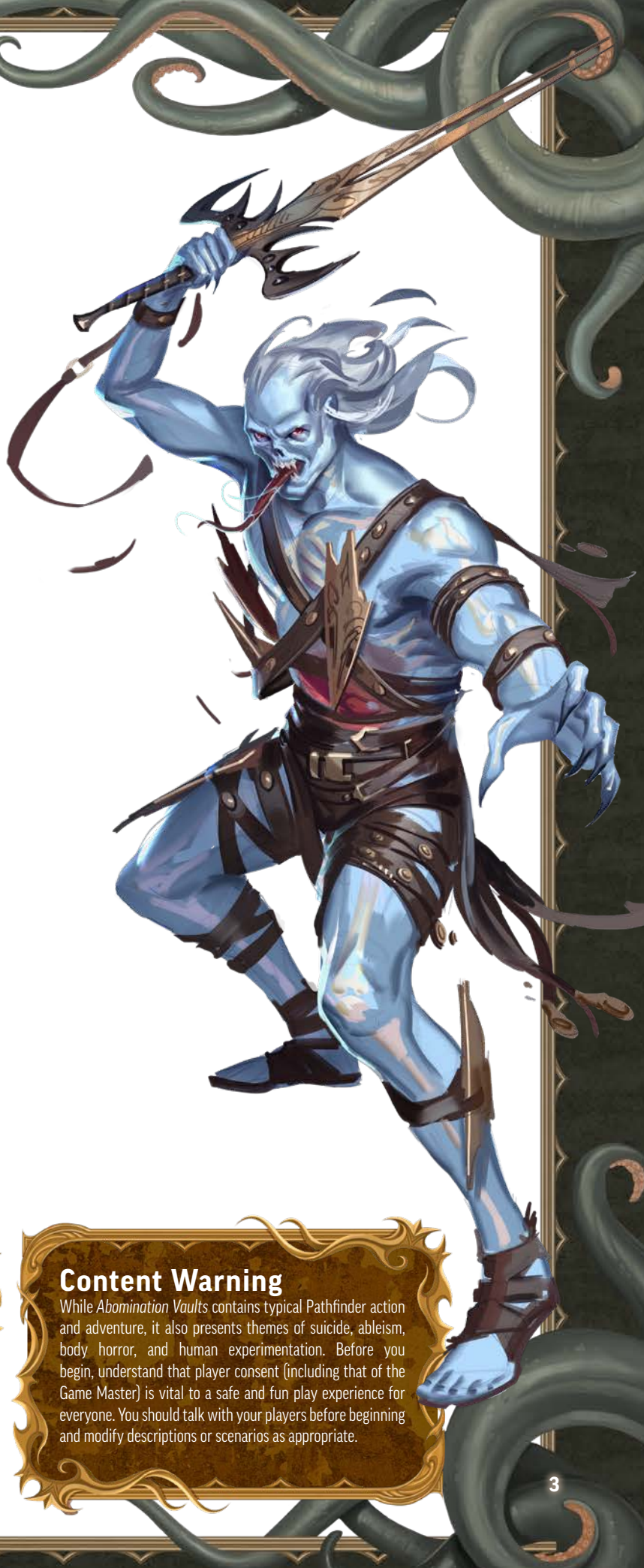
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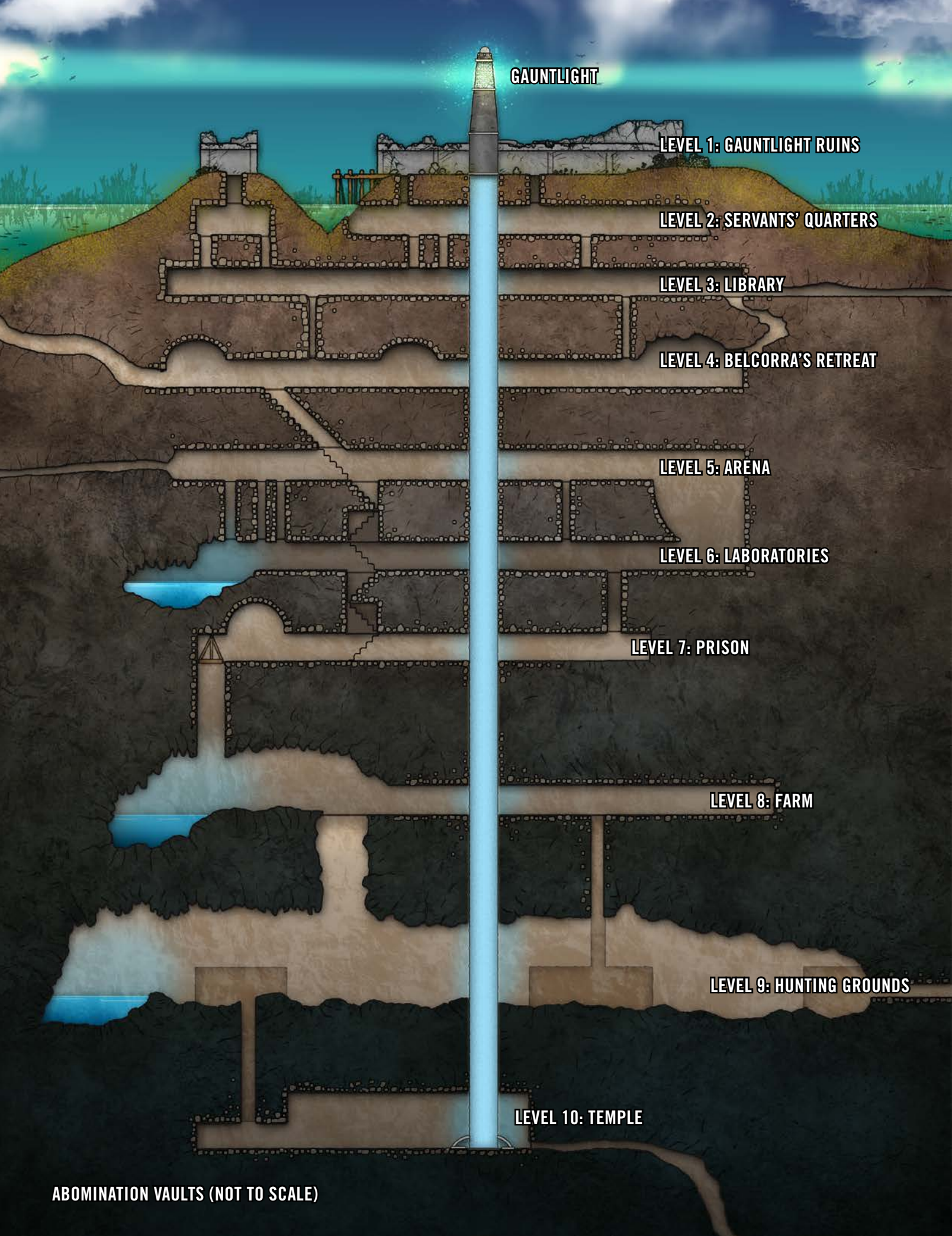


From the Beginner Box

If you started the heroes' careers with the *Pathfinder Beginner Box* and the adventure "Menace Under Otari," your heroes already know about Otari. They're also already 2nd level! You don't need to make any adjustments to this adventure, as 2nd level characters can begin it without any trouble. Don't allow them to level up to 3rd level until they've substantially cleared the dangers in both of the upper two dungeon levels.

Content Warning

While *Abomination Vaults* contains typical Pathfinder action and adventure, it also presents themes of suicide, ableism, body horror, and human experimentation. Before you begin, understand that player consent (including that of the Game Master) is vital to a safe and fun play experience for everyone. You should talk with your players before beginning and modify descriptions or scenarios as appropriate.



GAUNTLIGHT

LEVEL 1: GAUNTLIGHT RUINS

LEVEL 2: SERVANTS' QUARTERS

LEVEL 3: LIBRARY

LEVEL 4: BELCORRA'S RETREAT

LEVEL 5: ARENA

LEVEL 6: LABORATORIES

LEVEL 7: PRISON

LEVEL 8: FARM

LEVEL 9: HUNTING GROUNDS

LEVEL 10: TEMPLE

ABOMINATION VAULTS (NOT TO SCALE)

CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

The ghost sorcerer Belcorra Haruvex is the primary villain of the Abomination Vaults Adventure Path. The story behind her spiteful rage is one of exile and loss.

Belcorra's History

The Haruvex family tree both sprawls and surges with sorcery. The family's strongest bloodlines have an aberrant strain, which provides family prestige as well as sorcerous power. Generations of Haruvexes married within the family to strengthen this lineage, and the most powerful Haruvexes lived in Absalom 500 years ago. These Absalom Haruvexes made secret obeisance to the Outer Gods for great wealth and greater power. But none in the family approached the power of their youngest scion, Belcorra Haruvex. Belcorra had been told, every day for as long as she could remember, that she was the harbinger of Nhimbaloth, the Empty Death, and that she was her family's greatest hope for power and prosperity.

The Haruvexes enacted abhorrent rites in their worship, including bloody sacrifices, and the authorities eventually caught wind of their crimes. The Haruvexes were finally driven from the Isle of Kortos in 4219 AR, forced to leave their estates and luxuries behind. Belcorra was only 6 years old at the time, but as she grew, her rage at losing her home solidified into an overwhelming hatred of Absalom and everyone in it.

Most of the exiled Haruvexes died in poverty, but Belcorra grew strong and proud. At 17, she interpreted visions from Nhimbaloth that led her back to the Isle of Kortos to plan her revenge. Far above a subterranean shrine to Nhimbaloth called the Empty Vault, in a lonely stretch of wooded coast a few dozen miles from Absalom, Belcorra erected a magical lighthouse and called it *Gauntlight*. She dug deep beneath it to reach the shrine she had seen in her visions, and while she worked, she began to plan her revenge. She would draw subterranean monsters and

violent beasts into her secret dungeons—which she called the Abomination Vaults—and use *Gauntlight*'s magic to send them into Absalom to wreak havoc. She enacted the first part of her plan, expanding the Abomination Vaults and raising a defensible keep around the lighthouse. She leveraged family acquaintances to acquire powerful retainers and champions to lead her monstrous forces.

Belcorra was still stocking her Abomination Vaults with aberrations when rumors of her villainy reached Absalom. The Roseguard, a group of heroes headquartered in Absalom, set out from the city to confront and vanquish her. The Roseguard faced Belcorra within Gauntlight Keep and killed her there. One of the four members of the Roseguard, a rogue named Otari Ilvashti, died in this fight. Grieving their lost friend, the Roseguard left, sealed up the keep, founded what would become the town of Otari, and retired there. They never knew of the keep's lower levels or the many creatures still remaining within them.

A DUNGEON FULL OF MONSTERS

The horrors trapped in the Abomination Vaults developed some measure of ecosystem in the following centuries. While many monsters beneath the citadel died, others have prospered, and now several communities of morlocks, urdefhans, ghouls, and stranger creatures call the dungeons home. Only the longest-lived remember any life other than the dungeons. Belcorra had bound several devils to serve her as overseers and administrators, and many of these still maintain order. Apart from the regions maintained by these devils and a drow outpost in one of the lowest levels, the Abomination Vaults are lawless and dangerous.

The Abomination Vaults consist of 10 levels, including the ruins around *Gauntlight* on the surface. They're, from top to bottom, the ruins of Gauntlight Keep, the servant's quarters, the library, Belcorra's former living chambers, the arena, the laboratories, the

Abomination Vaults

Campaign Overview

Otari

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Nhimbaloth

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prison, the farm caverns, the hunting cavern, and the temple level, which holds the Empty Vault. Each level has its own character, and the levels are progressively more dangerous the deeper the heroes venture.

BELCORRA'S RISE

Belcorra's spirit didn't rest peacefully. Consumed by rage and empowered by Nhimbalo, she arose as a powerful ghost 500 years after her family's exile from Absalom, the event that so dramatically altered her life. Belcorra now lurks in the deepest levels of the Abomination Vaults, plotting her revenge

against Absalom and the heroes who vanquished her. The Roseguard are long dead, but the town they founded remains, and the icons representing their adventuring careers (page 217) now have the power to penetrate Belcorra's protections.

At first, no one in Otari realizes the danger Belcorra poses. Her machinations and her monsters are well out of sight. But before she moves against Absalom, she intends to use her *Gauntlight* against Otari—the town built by the adventurers who killed her five centuries before. Only Otari's newest heroes can prevent Belcorra's vengeance and put her spirit to rest.

Campaign Timeline

The following is a rough history of significant events relevant to this Adventure Path.

Date	Event
Age of Darkness	Serpentfolk construct the Empty Vault, a shrine to Nhimbalo far beneath the surface of Golarion. When Aroden raises the Starstone Isles from the Inner Sea, the Empty Vault ascends with it, ending up several hundred feet below the Isle of Kortos.
Unknown	The neutral drow of a subterranean city construct an outpost closer to the surface called Yldaris. These drow are unconsciously drawn to the Empty Vault but don't know of its presence.
4213 AR	Belcorra Haruvex is born to the wealthy Haruvex family in Absalom. Unknown to anyone outside the family, the Haruvexes have a strong aberrant bloodline and a familial devotion to the Outer God Nhimbalo.
4219 AR	The Haruvex family is ejected from Absalom when their secret sacrifices are discovered. They flee to Andoran, where they live in poverty. This is particularly hard on 6-year-old Belcorra, the family's youngest scion. The Haruvexes instill in Belcorra a hatred of Absalom and impress upon the child her role as Nhimbalo's chosen one.
4230 AR	Belcorra, the last exiled Haruvex, has become a powerful sorcerer. She secretly relocates to the Isle of Kortos, where she begins work on a magical lighthouse called <i>Gauntlight</i> , situated directly above the Empty Vault. She magically opens passages through the earth to reach the shrine and begins to collect an army of aberrations to attack Absalom.
4234 AR	Belcorra completes <i>Gauntlight</i> and begins work on its dungeons, the Abomination Vaults. She uses will-o'-wisps and bound devils to enforce her will on the rapidly expanding hordes within. She meets the drow and urdefhans who dwell in the area and demands their fealty in exchange for their lives.
4244 AR	One of Absalom's "hunting lodges" (a sanctioned group of adventurers) called the Roseguard hear of Belcorra's presence and come to investigate her lighthouse. They kill her but never learn of the existence of the expansive Abomination Vaults beneath <i>Gauntlight</i> ; Belcorra kills the rogue Otari Ilvashti in this battle. The victorious Roseguard construct a small port community and retire there, naming it Otari after their fallen friend.
4290 AR	The last Roseguard passes away, and Otari begins to fall into decline.
4294 AR	Otari is abandoned.
4300 AR	Stonescale kobolds colonize Otari.
4310 AR	Yarlaip seals his tribe's fate by luring ships to their doom; the Stonescale kobolds are soon thereafter defeated by adventurers. Maklanni Menhemes leads the resettlement of Otari.
4323 AR	Construction of the Otari Mill and log flume is completed.
4719 AR	Belcorra awakens as a ghost and begins work to reactivate <i>Gauntlight</i> . Its dungeons have been populated with generations of infighting creatures since her death, and she seeks to bring them under her control once more.
4721 AR	The current year. <i>Gauntlight</i> becomes infested with a band of mitflits, who are displaced by morlocks pushing upwards at the urging of their "ghost queen." <i>Gauntlight</i> is ready for a test to demonstrate its power.

Gamemaster Advice

While each level of the Abomination Vaults is built with the assumption of a group of heroes at a particular character level, each has more than enough encounters for a party to level up. Part of the joy of a large dungeon crawl is the exploration of every nook and cranny, and a party who faces every encounter might gain enough experience points to reach higher levels well before the end of this Adventure Path—and that's fine! Some later encounters challenge a high-level party well enough, even if the heroes have to retreat, rest, and recover less often.

The dungeon provides lots of freedom to explore, particularly in the middle levels. Let the players gauge whether their characters are in over their heads and retreat (or flee!) if the situation demands it. When the heroes face harder-than-expected challenges for their current level, they earn more XP, and when they face easier-than-expected ones, they earn less. This keeps their progression on roughly the same track. That said,

if you want a slower-paced game, Abomination Vaults works well with a slow Advancement Speed (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 509).

Story-based progression can be tricky for a giant dungeon crawl since the heroes can move between levels through multiple routes. If you prefer story-based progression, rather than automatically allowing the heroes to level up simply because they quickly reached a lower dungeon level, consider requiring them to complete specific milestones to level up, as detailed in the Advancement Track.

The final three levels are where the story of the Abomination Vaults comes to its head. It's critical that the heroes discover the three *fulcrum lenses* in the lower levels and learn how they work—specifically, how they can permanently destroy Belcorra. Yet Belcorra has more freedom to harry the heroes throughout these lower levels, and by the time the heroes face her in the Empty Vault, they've earned her ire. With luck, the heroes can defeat Belcorra and topple *Gauntlight*.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

The Abomination Vaults Adventure Path is designed for four characters, with each dungeon level's encounters keyed to a specific character level.

- 1** The heroes begin at 1st level (or at 2nd level if they've played the *Pathfinder Beginner Box* adventure).
Milestone: The heroes advance to 2nd level (or remain 2nd level) after clearing out most of the Gauntlight Ruins, including the lighthouse's cupola.
- 2** The heroes should be 2nd level before the "Deadtide for Otari" event.
Milestone: The heroes advance to 3rd level after defeating the Ghost Queen morlocks.
- 3** The heroes should be 3rd level upon entering the library.
Milestone: The heroes advance to 4th level after defeating the Cult of the Canker.
- 4** The heroes should be 4th level upon entering Belcorra's Retreat.
Milestone: The heroes advance to 5th level after speaking with Otari's ghost.
- 5** The heroes should be 5th level before addressing the theft and dream-possession in town.
Milestone: The heroes advance to 6th level after clearing out most of the Arena level.
- 6** The heroes should be 6th level upon entering the Laboratories level.
Milestone: The heroes advance to 7th level after defeating Jafaki and the seugathis.
- 7** The heroes should be 7th level upon entering the Prison level.
Milestone: The heroes advance to 8th level after dealing with Urevian.
- 8** The heroes should be 8th level upon entering the Farm level.
Milestone: The heroes advance to 9th level after clearing out most of the Farm level.
- 9** The heroes should be 9th level upon entering the Hunting Grounds level.
Milestone: The heroes advance to 10th level upon entering the Gate of Nhimbaloth.
- 10** The heroes should be 10th level upon entering the Temple level.
Milestone: The heroes advance to 11th level after (or, perhaps, just before) defeating Belcorra.

The heroes should reach 11th level by the end of the Adventure Path.

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Chapter 10:
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Baleful Glare

Nhimbaloth

Adventure
Toolbox

GAUNTLIGHT KEEP

OTARI

400 Feet

FOGFEN

1. The Giant's Wheel
2. Loading Flume
3. Menhemes Manor
4. Wrin's Wonders
5. Gallentine Deliveries
6. Blades for Glades
7. Odd Stories
8. Otari Garrison
9. Farmer's Guild
10. Crow's Casks
11. Crook's Nook
12. Otari Market
13. Otari Fishery
14. Ruins of the Thirsty Alpaca
15. Inkleholtz Manor
16. Chertel Manor
17. The Rowdy Rockfish
18. Dawnflower Library
19. Stone Ring Pond
20. Otari Graveyard

TO ABSALOM

TO FARMLANDS



OTARI

Though the immense metropolis of Absalom has long dominated the urban scene on Starstone Isle, civilization has always thrived across the island. Otari's beginning is relatively recent and involved a few false starts along the way. When Belcorra Haruvex arrived in the region in 4230 AR, drawn by a series of sinister visions, the coastal region was practically uninhabited. Here, she built *Gauntlight*, the keep surrounding the area, and the sprawling dungeons below the structure—without attracting notice. A group of adventurers known as the Roseguard eventually learned of Belcorra's villainy and slew her, but at the cost of one of their own: a rogue named Otari Ilvashti.

Having lost both their friend and their taste for adventuring, the three surviving members of the Roseguard decided to retire. They spent much of their savings constructing several buildings and a sizable pier in a sheltered cove south of the site of their final battle. Since their lost friend's fondest dream had been to settle down in a small seaside village, they named this new village after him.

For some decades, Otari prospered as a fishing village, though its population never grew beyond a hundred or so. The three surviving Roseguard adventurers lived to a ripe old age, ultimately passing away from natural causes—an accomplishment many adventurers never achieve.

With the passing of the last Roseguard, Aesephna Menhemes, in 4290 AR, Otari's fortunes began to dwindle. Within the span of a few years, its citizens had all drifted elsewhere. Otari lay abandoned for decades before a group of kobolds called the Stonescales moved in. When the kobolds started luring in passing ships during bad weather to ambush their crews and steal their cargo, it didn't take long for new adventurers to arrive and vanquish them.

While the adventurers moved on soon thereafter, their backer, Maklanni Menhemes, remained behind. Maklanni, Aesephna's granddaughter, conceived a plan

to revitalize Otari as a lumber town. It already contained dozens of buildings that only needed to be restored, after all, and the Osprey River remained ideal for a mill and lumberyard. However, one setback complicated Maklanni's plan—the steep slopes and cliffs surrounding Otari made transporting timber to the ocean difficult.

Maklanni's solution was ingenious—she constructed a wooden flume that allowed for the easy transport of lumber from the woods to her mill and, from there, down an astounding loading ramp that extended from the top of the 200-foot-tall cliff to the harbor below. The mill and flume made Maklanni wealthy and revitalized Otari, although it made her an enemy of the Kortos Consortium, which had a stranglehold on the island's lumber industry. Two other small lumber companies broke from the Kortos Consortium and settled in Otari as well, each paying for use of Maklanni's invention.

Today, Otari is a thriving settlement—the largest on the coast between Absalom and Diobel. Maklanni is long dead, but her descendant Oseph carries on the family trade and also serves as the town's mayor. Unsavory representatives of the Kortos Consortium have secretly infiltrated Otari and seek to undermine the town's security. However, a far greater threat looms over the city: Belcorra has returned and is preparing to light the baleful fires of *Gauntlight* once again!

Otari at a Glance

Otari is nestled in a coastal valley between two looming cliffs. To the west, the cliffside rises to meet a well-cared-for graveyard. To the east, a fantastic feat of engineering draws the eye—the trestle supporting a wooden loading chute extends down from the cliff top to a loading platform built into the harbor. This ingenious construction swiftly delivers lumber processed further inland at the mill to waiting ships below.

The people of Otari are friendly and welcoming for the most part, although they tend to react with

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Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox

OTARI

SETTLEMENT 4

N TOWN

Diverse lumber town and trade port with a storied past and its fair share of sinister secrets.

Government Mayor (elected leader)

Population 1,240 (60% humans, 8% halflings, 7% half-elves, 6% elves, 5% dwarves, 5% gnomes, 3% half-orcs, 2% goblins, 4% other)

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Halfling

Religions Cayden Cailan, Erastil, Gozreh, Sarenrae

Threats aberrant horrors, eerie hauntings, kobolds, smugglers

Trinket Trade Otari has a long tradition of catering to adventurers, and consumable items of up to level 10 are available for sale in its shops.

Lardus Longsaddle (CN male human soldier 4) foul-mouthed and short-tempered captain of the town guard

Oseph Menhemes (N male human mayor 4) current mayor and patriarch of one of three local lumber companies

Vandy Banderdash (NG female halfling cleric of Sarenrae 5) chatty priestess of Sarenrae and unusually knowledgeable town historian

Wrin Sivinxi (CG female tiefling elf oddities merchant 5) eccentric occult items dealer, artisan, and collector of stories and rumors

reticence toward those they suspect hail from Absalom. Trade with Absalom is important, but the townsfolk are proud and feel no need to accommodate visiting “city folk.” People in Otari typically subsist on fish along with vegetables from local farms (primarily potatoes, carrots, and other root vegetables), but more unusual fare isn’t hard to get from Absalom. Coffee is a mainstay and a favorite drink of the hardworking and early-rising residents.

Exploring Otari

Significant locations in Otari are detailed on the following pages and correspond to the numbers on the map on page 8. Unlabeled buildings are wooden homes whose inhabitants work for nearby businesses or for one of the town’s three lumber concerns.

Many significant locations end with a stat block that summarizes the site’s name, general function, and level (for the purpose of determining any necessary values associated with it, such as the highest level task

available to Earn Income). This stat block also notes the site’s address, wares and services for sale there (such as spellcasting services), and information about the most significant NPC who lives or works at the establishment. The NPC’s initial attitude condition to the heroes is also listed, along with DCs most likely to be useful when interacting with the NPC.

LOCATION SUPPORT

If a hero adjusts an NPC’s attitude condition to helpful (which might require completion of a listed task but usually requires successful Diplomacy checks to Make an Impression), that NPC’s location supports the party in certain exploration and downtime activities. The specific benefits are based on the location’s traits and are listed below. This support generally lasts throughout the campaign, although you might decide certain actions lose a location’s support. The heroes can be supported by multiple locations in town, so long as they make enough friends!

Church: Faithful characters whose beliefs align with those of the church’s NPC (at your discretion) are permitted to use the location’s resources to retrain more efficiently. Retraining that would normally require a week takes only 5 days at this location, retraining that would normally require a month takes only 3 weeks, and retraining is generally free. Checks to Identify Magic, Treat Wounds, or Treat Disease on site gain a +1 circumstance bonus.

Discount: The location provides a 10% discount on its wares.

Employer: The location offers tasks up to its level to Earn Income with a specified skill.

Garrison: Martial inclined characters can retrain more efficiently here (as Church). Checks to Gather Information or Treat Wounds on site gain a +1 circumstance bonus.

Housing: The location offers accommodations at a comfortable cost of living for no charge.

Library: Scholarly characters, as well as arcane and occult spellcasters, can retrain more efficiently here (as Church). Checks to Create Forgery, Decipher Writing, or Learn a Spell on site gain a +1 circumstance bonus.

Lodge: Primal spellcasters can retrain more efficiently here (as Church). Checks to Identify Magic or Subsist on site gain a +1 circumstance bonus.

Parlor: Socially inclined characters can retrain more efficiently here (as Church). Checks to Gather Information or Earn Income with Performance gain a +1 circumstance bonus.

Workshop: Heroes can use the location’s resources to Craft items associated with its purpose and gain a +1 item bonus to associated Crafting checks.

1. THE GIANT'S WHEEL

The Otari Mill is known locally as the Giant's Wheel, as its towering, 30-foot-diameter waterwheel is truly a sight to behold. The wheel's immense size is needed to generate enough torque to power the mechanized treadmill loading logs into the flume and keep the saws running within the mill. Much of the lumberyard's income comes from the town's two larger lumber families, who pay to have their lumber processed here. The mill is a noisy place, with the constant grinding and churning of the wheel itself competing with the whine of the saws and the clatter of the loading ramp.

The Menhemes family leaves the day-to-day administration of the mill to a heavily scarred half-orc foreman named Klorte Hengus. In his youth, Klorte made a name for himself in Absalom's gladiatorial arena, the Irorium, by fighting with paired hatchets and picked up the moniker "the Lumberjacker." Klorte has put that violent past behind him and fails to see any ironic humor in the fact that he's now employed by honest-to-goodness lumberjacks.

THE GIANT'S WHEEL

LUMBER MILL 5

EMPLOYER

Address 10 Miller's Road

Klorte Hengus (LN male half-orc foreman 5, Indifferent, Perception DC 20, Will DC 20). If the heroes earn the support of the Giant's Wheel, Klorte allows them to Earn Income using Survival by patrolling the flume's length. If you choose, encounters with local wildlife might liven up a shift of flume-walking. If Klorte warms to the heroes, he might even gift them one of his old +1 hatchets.

2. LOADING FLUME

A mechanized treadmill runs from Otari Mill into a wooden flume filled with water from the Osprey River. The treadmill and chute transport timber from the Giant's Wheel hundreds of feet south to a loading chute, which itself descends to the harbor so the timber can easily be loaded onto ships. The loading flume has long been a draw to local youths who enjoy "riding the chute," but after a few unfortunate accidents, Klorte keeps a wary eye out for such foolishness.

3. MENHEMES MANOR

Mayor Oseph Menhemes lives in the family estate with his wife Emnala, their five children, and a small army of servants. One of the town's oldest structures, the cross-shaped building is a sprawling affair that's larger than the Menhemes clan needs. The entire west wing of the manor has been closed for two generations, while the eastern wing has been converted into a publicly accessible museum of Otari's history.

THE ROSEGUARD

An adventuring party who made their name in Absalom, the Roseguard defeated the villainous Belcorra Haruvex and founded what's now the logging town of Otari. Today, the people of Otari honor them on founders' day, 3 Desnus. The Roseguard consisted of the following heroes.

Aeseephna Menhemes: Aeseephna was the party's healer. She was a cleric of Erastil who was always more comfortable in smaller towns than big cities.

Otari Ilvashti: Otari, the group's rogue, was an optimist who kept the others hopeful with his charm and humor, even during their darkest hours.

Vol Rajani: Vol was the party's fighter, a capable and no-nonsense swordswoman who claimed to be exiled royalty from Nidal.

Zarmavdian: The group's wizard was a well-educated diviner who pursued outlandish conspiracy theories and occult lore.

Oseph does his best to keep his roles as businessman and politician separate, devoting the mornings to work as a public figure and the afternoons to managing his company, Otari Lumber. The heroes are likely to have much more interaction with the Menhemes family, particularly Oseph's oldest daughter, Dorianna, in Chapter 5.

MENHEMES MANOR

MANOR 4

EMPLOYER

Address 10 Highside Road

Oseph Menhemes (N male human mayor 4, Indifferent, Perception DC 19, Will DC 19). If the heroes earn the Menhemes' support, they can Earn Income using Society to tutor the family's children and prepare them to fit into Absalom's social scene.

4. WRIN'S WONDERS

This curio shop bears no sign, but locals know it as Wrin's Wonders: a place to marvel at whatever strange new trinkets and offerings its equally strange owner might have come across. The structure consists of a ring of what appear to be standing stones arranged in a 60-foot-diameter circle surrounding a 15-foot-high dome of wooden beams covered with triangular pieces of canvas. Closer inspection of the standing "stones" reveals that they're also made of wood frames and canvas, cleverly painted to resemble granite. The area

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between the central dome and the surrounding circle is a collection of other dome-shaped tents used to store the shop's wares. When it's not raining, the fabric of these domes is pulled aside so shoppers can admire what's for sale in the light of the sun—or the moon, for that matter, as Wrin's Wonders is always open.

Wrin Sivinx has what she regards as a very good reason for the curio shop's strange arrangement—she sees safety in curves and menace in angles and suffers from a touch of claustrophobia. The central dome is her domicile, and she's painted the interior surfaces to resemble a night sky featuring all the constellations of the Cosmic Caravan, so that even on overcast nights she can fall asleep under the stars. More information about Wrin appears on page 18.



Morlibint

WRIN'S WONDERS

SHOP 5

DISCOUNT LIBRARY LODGE

Address 60 Osprey Street

Wares adventuring gear, eclectic bric-a-brac, magic items (non-ammunition consumable items, held items, staves, wands, worn items)

Fortune Telling Wrin performs an astrological fortune telling (using her Read the Stars ability) for anyone who provides her with an unusual item or story.

Spellcasting Wrin's spellcasting services are available, but she's limited to the spells listed in her stat block (page 19).

Wrin Sivinx (CG female tiefling elf oddities merchant 5, Friendly, Perception DC 22, Will DC 22). Wrin's Wonders supports the heroes as long as Wrin's convinced they're making genuine efforts to explore *Gauntlight*'s mysteries. When Wrin's Wonders supports the heroes, Wrin Reads the Stars for them for free as often as they'd like.

5. GALLENTINE DELIVERIES

A large sign depicting a man riding at breakneck speed on horseback as he balances a stack of packages in one hand stands out in front of this large building. Owned and operated by Oloria Gallentine, a retired Immenwood ranger, Gallentine Deliveries handles Otari's post, both within town limits and beyond.

GALLENTINE DELIVERIES

COURIER 4

EMPLOYER GARRISON

Address 120 Roseguard Road

Wares stabling, transportation (caravan or carriage)

Deliveries Local deliveries cost 1 cp per Bulk and are

generally delivered within 24 hours. Deliveries to Absalom or Diobel (or for points beyond) cost 5 cp per Bulk and are delivered weekly; for 1 gp per Bulk, a delivery can be expedited to arrive in 2 days.

Oloria Gallentine (LN female human ranger 4, Indifferent, Perception DC 21, Will DC 19). If the heroes earn the support of Gallentine Deliveries, they can make local deliveries, allowing them to Earn Income using Society.

6. BLADES FOR GLADES

Otari's primary smithy specializes in the construction of saws, axes, and other tools used in the lumber trade. The current owner of

Blades for Glades is a bitter man named Carman Rajani, who boasts of being descended from one of Otari's founders, Vol

Rajani. He hopes to supplant Oseph

Menhemes as the town's mayor someday, but after losing four mayoral elections in a row despite his pedigree, Carman is planning other ways to seize his birthright. He makes his move when the heroes open the deeper levels at the start of Chapter 5.

BLADES FOR GLADES

SHOP 5

DISCOUNT EMPLOYER WORKSHOP

Address 50 Ilvashti Street

Wares metal adventuring gear, metal weapons, metal shields, metal armor

Carman Rajani (LE male human scoundrel 6, Unfriendly, Perception DC 22, Will DC 20). If the heroes gain the support of Blades for Glades, Carman might take them on as part-time apprentices—provided the heroes don't strike Carman as being too nosy or law-abiding. A hero whom Carman doesn't regard as a potential snitch can Earn Income using Crafting.

7. ODD STORIES

A three-story stone tower rises from the back half of this one-floor wooden bookstore. A sign above the front door depicts a stack of open books with lines of magical energy rising from the pages. While the shop's owner is indeed a wizard, Morlibint had the sign commissioned in an attempt to portray the power of imagination within the fanciful fiction works and anthologies that are his specialty. Morlibint sells other texts as well, although he leaves the nonfiction curation to his husband Carlthe, whose expertise makes Odd Stories the primary source of textbooks and teaching tools for Inkleholtz's educational pursuits (see Inkleholtz Manor on page 15). Morlibint has bright red hair that he keeps

closely cut to his scalp. Despite his perpetual scowl, he warms quickly to the presence of other scholars and wizards, for he's always excited to "talk shop."

ODD STORIES

SHOP 4

DISCOUNT LIBRARY

Address 100 Roseguard Road

Wares books, formulas, arcane and occult scrolls

Spellcasting Morlibint typically has the following arcane spells available for paying customers: **2nd** *comprehend languages*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*; **1st** *ant haul*, *mending*. Other spells can be available at your discretion, if arranged a day in advance.

Morlibint (LN male human wizard 4, Indifferent, Perception DC 17, Will DC 19). Odd Stories automatically supports heroes seeking books on Morlibint's behalf (see Side Quest in area **C11** on page 58).

8. OTARI GARRISON

This squat stone building houses Otari's civic guards, who keep the peace and patrol the Roseguard Road, which leads off toward Absalom, to ensure it stays clear of banditry and trouble. Clad in distinctive green and white uniforms, the Otari Guard also serve as firefighters and barristers, switching predominantly to the latter role when they reach the age of 40. The head of the guard is Captain Longsaddle. This elderly but hale man was a veteran of Absalom's city guard who "retired" to Otari a decade ago. He took up the mantle of leader after its previous captain, Trusk Hanely, drowned in an unfortunate misadventure involving a bit too much raspberry mead and an ill-advised boast regarding how long he could hold his breath. Those among the guard who remember Trusk do so fondly, for Longsaddle is short-tempered, foul-mouthed, and much stricter than his dwarven predecessor. The town's jail is in the basement of the building, but its cells are rarely used to hold any criminals other than petty crooks or drunkards.

OTARI GARRISON

BARRACKS 4

EMPLOYER GARRISON

Address 20 Drake Street

Wares armor, shields, weapons, ammunition, talismans, runes

Lardus Longsaddle (CN male human fighter 4, Unfriendly, Perception DC 19, Will DC 21). If the heroes earn the support of the Otari Garrison, the guards express a strong need for equipment upkeep and maintenance; the heroes can Earn Income using Crafting.

9. FARMER'S GUILD

This building and its nearby yards provide stables, auction houses, livestock pens, butcher shops, and

a guildhall for the region's farmers. Otari's Farmer's Guild handles the distribution of goods from the various nearby farms and ranches, ensuring that the members are paid well for their toil while saving them the trouble of having to spend too much time on deliveries of goods in town. The guildhall maintains a dozen rooms that are free of charge to visiting farmers, but available for rent to others. The current guildhead is a business-minded halfling woman named Jala Highstepper who maintains a shrine to Erastil in the side yard. She isn't a cleric herself, and hopes someday to convince a visiting priest of Erastil to settle in Otari and take up the mantle of representing the regional farmers, despite the fact that she has done an admirable job of it herself so far.

FARMER'S GUILD

GUILDHALL 2

EMPLOYER HOUSING

Address 70 Roseguard Road

Wares lodging, animals

Jala Highstepper (N female halfling guildhead 2, Indifferent, Perception DC 16, Will DC 16). If the Farmer's Guild supports the heroes, they can work as inspectors for incoming shipments. This allows the heroes to Earn Income using Nature to successfully weed out foodstuffs that are rotten, infested, or otherwise not fit for public consumption.

10. CROW'S CASKS

A sign over the door to this two-story stone building depicts a group of drunk crows perched on a leaky cask. Crow's Casks is more than just a popular tavern and brewery—it's a shrine to Cayden Cailean. Its proprietor, a tengu alchemist named Magiloy, gives the establishment its name.

If Magiloy's misspent youth aboard a half dozen pirate ships in the Shackles gave her anything, it was a fondness for unusual alcohol. Now well into her twilight years, Magiloy likes tending bar and inventing new drinks for locals and visitors to enjoy. The two most popular drinks currently are a spiced pumpkin rum and a sour blackberry ale. Of last month's somewhat disastrous attempt to brew a goblinpepper stout, Magiloy prefers never to speak.

CROW'S CASKS

TAVERN 4

CHURCH DISCOUNT EMPLOYER PARLOR

Address 10 Shrike Street

Wares beverages, meals, alchemical items, potions, oils, divine scrolls

Magiloy (CG female tengu brewer 4, Indifferent, Perception DC 21, Will DC 17). If Crow's Casks supports the heroes, Magiloy might hire them as taste testers—a job that's

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quite a bit more harrowing than one might expect. A taste tester can Earn Income using Fortitude saves, but on a critical failure, something they've tasted sits poorly, and the hero becomes stupefied 1 for 24 hours.

11. CROOK'S NOOK

Any town with a successful economy inevitably generates its own homegrown band of thieves and scoundrels, and Otari is no exception. Crook's Nook serves several purposes: it's a public bridge over the Osprey River, a tavern known for serving the best seafood in town, and a cheap place to stay for the night. Its attic serves as the guildhall for Otari's thieves' guild, the Osprey Club—a function that's perhaps the town's worst-kept secret, as evidenced by the edifice's very name.

The owner of Crook's Nook is a lanky woman named Yinyasmera. While she has never run for mayor, her influence in town remains as strong as that of any publicly elected official. Yinyasmera keeps her illicit operations from overly inconveniencing Otari's citizens, so Captain Longsaddle turns a blind eye.

CROOK'S NOOK

INN/TAVERN 5

DISCOUNT EMPLOYER HOUSING PARLOR

Address 10 Wisp Street

Wares beverages, meals, lodging, illicit goods, thieves' gear

Yinyasmera (CN female human smuggler 5, Indifferent, Perception DC 22, Will DC 20). If the heroes return Yinyasmera's missing "employees" (see area **A17's** Side Quest on page 32), Crook's Nook supports them as long as they keep quiet about the Osprey Club. If Crook's Nook supports the heroes and they express interest in illicit work, Yinyasmera suggests minor crimes against visitors (pickpocketing, petty burglary, con games, and the like). This allows the heroes to Earn Income using Thievery, but on a critical failure, their actions are spotted, and Yinyasmera cuts them off from future jobs. Further legal woes might arise for the heroes as well, at your discretion.

12. OTARI MARKET

One part open-air farmer's market, one part log-cabin trading post, the Otari Market is a gathering place for locals and a one-stop shop for all manner of

general goods. Tended by a dour, humorless man named Keeleno Lathenar, Otari Market is open every day from dawn to dusk, with one exception: Keeleno closes the market down on every Gozran 5th in honor of his dear departed wife, Ayla, who was mauled to death 30 years ago. The killer turned out to be a werewolf druid named Jaul Mezmin, whom Keeleno believes remains at large to this day. Keeleno remains bitter and fearful toward druids, particularly those who worship at Stone Ring Pond.

OTARI MARKET

SHOP 2

DISCOUNT EMPLOYER

Address 80 Menhemes Street

Wares food, adventuring gear, simple weapons, light armor

Keeleno Lathenar (N male human market owner 2, Indifferent, Perception DC 14, Will DC 14).

The Otari Market won't support the heroes if any of them are known to be (or profess to be) druids. The Otari Market otherwise automatically supports heroes who return Ayla's necklace to Keeleno along with evidence of Jaul's death (see area **D14's** Side Quest on page 79). If the Otari Market supports the heroes, they can stand guard over the market and Earn Income using Intimidation. At your discretion, a minor encounter with a cutpurse or other petty crook might take place during a work shift.

13. OTARI FISHERY

Family Tanderveil turned her back on what could've been a lucrative position as a captain among the Gray Corsairs to retire to a safer job here in Otari—the loss of a leg during a raid on a pirate ship having convinced her that serving as a harbor warden would be a wiser decision for her longevity. The jolly and irreverent Family maintains a growing collection of peg legs for various occasions that she regularly swaps out. Every night, from an hour before sundown to an hour before midnight, Family opens the fishery's ground floor to sailors, laborers, and travelers for games, snacks, and entertainment.

OTARI FISHERY

GUILDHALL 3

EMPLOYER PARLOR

Address 10 Fisher Street

Wares beverages, meals, transportation (sailing ship)

Family Tanderveil (NG female human harbor warden 3, Friendly, Perception DC 18, Will DC 16). Once the heroes earn the support of the Otari Fishery, they can



help keep the town's pier in repair or work aboard a fishing vessel. They can Earn Income using Crafting, Nature, or Sailing Lore.

14. RUINS OF THE THIRSTY ALPACA

The Thirsty Alpaca was once the largest tavern in Otari, but in a recent disaster, excavations by a small band of overeager kobolds attempting to expand some of the old Stonescale warrens below the building caused the structure's dramatic collapse. Several employees and a few visitors from out of town perished in the accident, and the tavern's owner has gone missing. Today, the locals avoid the ruins, for strange lights and eerie sounds there have given the place a reputation of being haunted. In truth, a few kobold sappers survived the collapse and are keeping the townsfolk away from their lair with spooky tricks.

15. INKLEHOLTZ MANOR

Whistledown Cutters is a successful lumber company thanks to the cunning business sense of its owner, Aymora Inkleholtz. She invested funds to bolster Otari's educational services, a shrewd move that has made her admired by Otari's parents. Many have been pushing Aymora to run for mayor the next time elections come along, but for now, the half-elf is happy raising her family and building her business's legacy.

INKLEHOLTZ MANOR

EMPLOYER

Address 75 Wisp Street

Aymora Inkleholtz (NG half-elf lumber magnate 4, Friendly, Perception DC 17, Will DC 19). If Inkleholtz Manor supports the heroes, Aymora offers them work in a classroom she maintains in town. This allows the heroes to Earn Income using Lore associated with one of the four disciplines that the Inkleholtzes hope to foster in the local children: literature, mathematics, science, and history.

16. CHERTEL MANOR

Wrab Chertel is the current patriarch of one of Otari's three lumber concerns, Chertel Timber. The Chertels are struggling with a combination of poor management, labor disputes in distant lumber camps, and difficulties with financing. Wrab suspects the other companies of meddling in his business and sabotaging

THE STONESCALE WARRENS

When the Stonescale kobolds took over Otari, they used the buildings above as a sort of camouflage, living in an extensive network of tunnels that connected many of the buildings below ground. Today, this network is a complicated tangle of flooded or collapsed tunnels. Thieves and smugglers from the Osprey Club use some, while others have become the dens of monsters. One tunnel leads all the way to the Abomination Vaults; see area C2 on page 54.



Brela Venkervale

both lumberjack morale and equipment alike; in truth, the Kortos Consortium is behind Wrab's woes. By forcing Chertel into desperate straits and hasty hiring, the Kortos Consortium has managed to place an increasing number of its own agents in Otari's lumber industry.

CHERTEL MANOR

MANOR 4

EMPLOYER

Address 5 Zarmavdian Street

Wrab Chertel (N human lumber magnate 4, Unfriendly, Perception DC 19, Will DC 17). If Chertel Manor supports the heroes, Wrab offers extra money for keeping an eye on his competition—the Menhemes and the Inkleholtzes—as well as his own workers. The heroes can Earn Income using Perception, but on a critical failure, word of their spying gets out, and Chertel no longer offers the job.

17. THE ROWDY ROCKFISH

Despite its name, The Rowdy Rockfish is the quietest and quaintest of Otari's taverns. A sign depicting a rockfish with his fins up in a boxing pose hangs above the door of this two-story wooden structure, but within, the calm demeanor of its patrons leads some to wonder if this might be the one tavern in the Inner Sea to never host a barroom brawl. The Rockfish's current proprietor is a matronly dwarf named Brela Venkervale, a stoic but shrewd businesswoman who took over the bar after her son Lasda, the previous owner, vanished without a trace. A few locals saw the red-bearded Lasda walking out of town with a hooded stranger carrying a lantern. Over a year has passed, and Brela suspects that her son is gone for good.

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ROWDY ROCKFISH

INN/TAVERN 3

HOUSING PARLOR

Address 50 Zarmavdian Street

Wares beverages, meals, lodging

Brelida Venkervale (LG female dwarf innkeeper 3, Indifferent, Perception DC 16, Will DC 20). The Rowdy Rockfish automatically supports the heroes if they bring Lasda home (see area D9's Side Quest on page 75).

18. DAWNFLOWER LIBRARY

Otari's largest temple stands at the town's westernmost edge, atop an upraised shelf that juts out far below the clifftop. The library is constructed in the Qadiran style of Sarenite temples, with two smaller minarets flanking a golden dome. The building's position allows it to catch the rays of the rising sun, which transforms the dome into a brilliantly glowing testament to the sun goddess—at least, on days that aren't fogged in or overcast.

A dozen acolytes of various faiths attend to Dawnflower Library. Shrines to Cayden Cailean, Erastil, and Gozreh can be found in the western portion of the building, while the primary shrine to Sarenrae takes up the eastern portion. The rest of the building contains the stacks. Dawnflower Library has a wide range of books ranging from fiction to history, satire to textbook, and even includes a sizable collection of (mostly) tasteful erotica. The current head priestess of the library is a chatty halfling woman named Vandy Banderdash, a devotee of Sarenrae. Always eager to greet newcomers regardless of their faith or vocation—with the exception of thieves, whom she can't abide—Vandy has a strange knack for recommending literature tailored to the tastes of people she only just met.

DAWNFLOWER LIBRARY

TEMPLE 5

CHURCH DISCOUNT LIBRARY

Address 10 Dawnflower Street

Wares healing magic, religious items (including +1 versions of the favored weapons of Otari's most prominent religions: rapiers, longbows, tridents, and scimitars), divine scrolls

Spellcasting Divine spells are available for purchase from Vandy or her acolytes. *Heal*, *remove disease*, and *restoration* are always available, with other spells available at your discretion.

Vandy Banderdash (NG female halfling cleric of Sarenrae 5, Friendly, Perception DC 20, Will DC 22).



Vandy Banderdash

19. STONE RING POND

Two dozen standing stones, each exactly 12 feet high, stand sentinel around the shores of this shallow pond. These stones were raised generations ago by the church of Gozreh soon after Otari was retaken from the Stonescale kobolds and have remained a place of worship for druids, rangers, and naturalists ever since. The waters of the pond are unusually reflective but, despite whispered rumors, aren't magical.

A small cabal of nomadic clerics and druids faithful to Gozreh include Stone Ring Pond in their peregrinations, and there's always a few temporarily camping nearby. For the most part, these travelers have avoided contact with Otari for 30 years, ever since one of their number, Jaul Mezmin, soured their relationship with the town. A werewolf who had kept his nature from even the other priests, Jaul lost control one night and slaughtered a half dozen locals before he was driven over the cliffside into the ocean below. His body was never recovered.

About five years after Jaul's disappearance, an idealistic gnome druid named Worliwynn heard of Jaul's rampage and came to Otari specifically to repair the damage the werewolf had done to the Gozrens' reputation and guide locals interested in living in greater harmony with the land. A generation later, Worliwynn has been largely successful, with the significant exception of still-grieving Keeleno Lathenar.

Worliwynn shares more than grief with Keeleno. She also suspects that Jaul survived his fall from the cliff. She patrols the Otari hinterlands nightly, vigilant for any sign that Jaul might have returned to his old hunting grounds.

STONE RING POND

TEMPLE 4

CHURCH LODGE

Wares druid equipment, nature-themed magic items, primal scrolls

Spellcasting Divine and primal spells are available for purchase from Worliwynn or the Gozrens. *Dispel magic*, *heal*, *purify food and drink*, and *restore senses* are always available, with other spells available at your discretion.

Worliwynn (NG female gnome druid 4, Friendly, Perception DC 19, Will DC 21). Stone Ring Pond automatically supports the heroes if they deliver justice to Jaul Mezmin (see area D14's Side Quest on page 79), whether by killing or capturing him.

20. OTARI GRAVEYARD

Looming over the western cliffside and crowned by a grove of scraggly trees that no living person in town can remember ever having borne living leaves, the Otari Graveyard is tended by the Dawnflower Library acolytes. A wooden stairway ascends the cliff face from the library below, but most priests prefer to take the half-hour walk through town and up the easier roads to tend the graves.

Cremations and burials at sea have become more popular in Otari, so burials in the graveyard tend to be the province of older families who value tradition. While the graveyard itself is spooky and unsettling, it doesn't have any undead problems within its boundaries—at least, not until the *Gauntlight* shines upon it again during Chapter 2!

Otari Backgrounds

The following backgrounds are particularly suitable to characters in the Abomination Vaults Adventure Path, although heroes can select any background they choose and need not confine their selection to those provided below. People come from all walks of life to seek their fortunes, after all. Among the backgrounds presented in the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*, the best choices are acolyte, bounty hunter, farmhand, field medic, guard, hunter, martial disciple, miner, nomad, or scout.

BIBLIOPHILE

BACKGROUND

You love few things more than a good book, and as a result, Odd Stories is your favorite shop in Otari. The bookseller Morlibint supplies you with fiction, anthologies, and other delightful reads, and he's always eager to discuss his latest finds with you. You know that imagination is the greatest magic, but a working knowledge of actual magic helps, too.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Arcana skill and the Library Lore skill. You gain the Arcane Sense skill feat.

ELDRITCH ANATOMIST

BACKGROUND

You're a trained physician who can ably tend wounds of many kinds. But more than a practitioner, you're a scholar. Some cultures shape flesh to extreme degrees, creating aberrations from humanoid forms. The fleshforges of distant Nex practice this fleshwarping, as do certain subterranean societies you hope to one day study—preferably from a safe and clinical distance.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Medicine skill and the Fleshwarp Lore skill. You gain the Assurance skill feat with Medicine.

FOGFEN TALE-TELLER

BACKGROUND

You know there are monstrous things out in the swamp known as Fogfen; you've seen these things through the mist, gliding through the murky water and heaving themselves over sodden bits of land. No one in Otari believes your tales of swamp monsters from the depths, even when you embellish the creatures of your stories with fangs, wings, or tentacles. You'll just have to prove to them that there are truly monsters out there, and that they were wrong to doubt you.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in Athletics and the Swamp Lore skill. You gain the Titan Wrestler skill feat.

MARKET RUNNER

BACKGROUND

Keeleno Lathenar, the proprietor of Otari Market, is a grim and bitter man. A werewolf named Jaul Mezmin mauled his wife, Ayla, to death 30 years ago. Keeleno has never forgotten nor forgiven this attack, and he believes against all odds that Jaul has evaded justice and is alive and well. Running errands for Keeleno around town, you've gotten to know him almost as well as you know Otari. Keeleno's suspicions have rubbed off on you a bit, so you keep a wary eye on other people—particularly around the full moon.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Diplomacy skill and the Otari Lore skill. You gain the Hobnobber skill feat.

RUIN DELVER

BACKGROUND

You've looked through some of the smaller ruins in the Otari hinterlands but have never quite built up the courage to check out the creepy lighthouse called Gauntlight. You've heard that these ruins are pretty well picked over, and mostly collapsed, but you always planned to some day explore them and perhaps find some bauble left behind from the centuries-old battle where the Roseguard slew an evil sorcerer. You know that the crumbled stone of old ruins has a tendency to shift, so you'd better step lightly if you get the chance to explore Gauntlight.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in Acrobatics and the Roseguard Lore skill. You gain the Cat Fall skill feat.

STARWATCHER

BACKGROUND

You're one of Wrin Sivinxi's closest confidantes. You've spent many long nights with her under the stars, learning the tales associated with the Cosmic Caravan and how the heavens can predict the future. You know that Wrin has paralyzing claustrophobia; she sees menace in angles and

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danger in confined spaces, which is why her shop is an all domed canvas that opens to the sky. If Wrin thinks there's trouble, you'll be the first to offer to help.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Occultism skill and the Astrology Lore skill. You gain the Dubious Knowledge skill feat.

WITCHLIGHT FOLLOWER

BACKGROUND

While in a dismal forest or remote swamp, you caught sight of a string of lights bobbing through the trees. You stepped forward for a closer look, and then still further when the lights retreated a few paces. Then you remembered the rumors. Will-o'-wisps, rushlights, corpse lanterns—whatever they're called—such evil creatures lead people to their doom. With a supreme effort of will, you broke free from the alluring enchantment, and you've resolved to never let the strange lights of remote wildernesses claim you again.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in Survival and the Wisp Lore skill. You gain the Terrain Expertise skill feat with both swamp terrain and subterranean bodies of water.

Wrin Sivinxí

Wrin Sivinxí grew up in the small village of Glitterbough in Kyonin, but a traveler wouldn't find her hometown if they were to visit that nation today, for Glitterbough was destroyed 10 years ago by demons in the service of Treerazer. Despite the loss of her hometown, Wrin feels no sadness or despair about the event, for none perished in Glitterbough's fall. In the days before the demon army's attack, Wrin had a vision of the disaster. She warned her parents and neighbors, and their trust in her visions gave the town the time it needed to relocate everyone in the village to safety. When the demons came, they found Glitterbough deserted, and when they burned it in frustration, they suffered greatly from the magical traps the elves had left behind to greet them.

When she came of age a few years later, Wrin left her parents and friends, eager to find her own place in the world. As she traveled, she trusted in her visions and her unusual faith in a pantheon of deities associated with space and time she refers to as the Cosmic Caravan, looking to the nightly stars to make decisions for tomorrow. Her knack for finding lost things and gathering strange treasures made establishing her own curio shop an obvious choice, and it wasn't by chance that she decided to set up that shop in Otari—it was simply the port she'd arrived at when her capacity to carry her collection finally outweighed its portability.

She opened her shop, Wrin's Wonders, four years ago. In that time, she has become part of the community, even if many of its citizens regard her as a good-natured eccentric. Sales of the strange and bizarre aren't brisk in the small town, but that's no matter to Wrin—she's patient and has enjoyed her time in Otari so far. One day, she hopes to make enough money to fund a trip west, for she has heard tell of an abandoned observatory in the small town of Crookcove on Ravounel's southwestern coast that she hopes to purchase and transform into a temple devoted to the Cosmic Caravan. But for the time being, she's content to stay in Otari and sleep under the stars.

Wrin's tiefling ancestry is impossible to miss, and it's something she long ago decided to embrace. Eyes devoid of pupils, small ram horns curling around her elven ears, a thin tail, and fingertips that sparkle with motes of glittering lights leave no doubt that she's touched by supernatural forces. Yet, her quick smile and welcoming attitude have always helped her to secure friendships during her travels.

CAMPAIGN USE

Wrin's primary purpose is to motivate the heroes' initial explorations and to give them a focal point to gather around. The Abomination Vaults Adventure Path assumes that Wrin is a contact the heroes share in common, so when she notices a strange buildup of eerie light atop distant *Gauntlight*, it's natural for her to confide her fears in the heroes.

As the campaign progresses, Wrin can help the heroes in other ways, such as by performing astrology readings for the heroes to aid them in their explorations. While she won't give her store's wares away for free, her establishment is the best place to buy and sell the odd magical treasures heroes tend to find and crave. Wrin can also introduce the heroes to the wonders of the spirit world—her tutelage unlocks the ghost hunter archetype (page 230). Despite the claustrophobia she suffers, if the heroes find themselves in over their head in the Abomination Vaults, you can have Wrin face her fears to brave the dungeon and mount a rescue. Of course, you shouldn't use Wrin in this capacity except as a last resort to keep the campaign from reaching an untimely end!

WRIN SIVINXI

CREATURE 5

UNIQUE CG MEDIUM ELF HUMANOID TIEFLING

Female tiefling elf oddities merchant (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 262)

Perception +12; low-light vision, spirit sight (precise) 30 feet

Languages Aklo, Common, Elven, Sylvan, Varisian

Skills Acrobatics +12, Astrology Lore +12, Nature +12, Occultism +12, Performance +10, Religion +13, Spirit Lore +16

Str +0, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

Claustrophobia Wrin becomes overwhelmed when she's underground, or when she's in an indoor space that's smaller than 10 feet in diameter. At these times, she is sickened 2 and can't reduce her sickened condition until she's outside of the enclosed area.

Spirit Sight Wrin can see creatures with the spirit trait within 30 feet, regardless of whether they are visible to the naked eye. This ability sometimes allows Wrin to notice other supernatural auras, such as the buildup of spiritual energy atop *Gauntlight*.

Items harrow fortune-telling deck, silver religious symbol, +1 *starknife*, violin

AC 20; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +15, **Will** +12

HP 75

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *starknife* +12 (agile, deadly d6, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4 piercing

Melee ♦ tail +10 (agile, finesse, unarmed), **Damage** 1d4 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ *starknife* +12 (agile, deadly d6, magical, thrown 20 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4 piercing

Primal Spontaneous Spells DC 22, attack +14; **3rd** (3 slots) *enthrall*, *heal*, *remove disease*; **2nd** (4 slots) *glitterdust*, *hideous laughter*, *restoration*, *web*; **1st** (4 slots) *charm*, *feather fall*, *gust of wind*, *pest form*; **Cantrips (3rd)** *dancing lights*, *disrupt undead*, *ghost sound*, *ray of frost*, *stabilize*

Bloodline Spells 1 Focus Point, DC 22; **3rd** *faerie dust* (*Core Rulebook* 404)

Blood Magic When Wrin casts *charm*, *enthrall*, *faerie dust*, *ghost sound*, or *hideous laughter*, fey glammers dance around Wrin or one target of the spell, causing them to be concealed for 1 round. Such obvious concealment can't be used to Hide.

Read the Stars (divination, exploration, prediction, primal)
Frequency once per day; **Effect** Wrin attempts to read the future in the stars by spending an hour studying the night sky—she can't use this ability during the day, on an overcast night, or when she can't otherwise study the stars. Although Wrin usually performs this reading for an individual person or to answer a pressing question she has, for the purposes of this campaign she reads the stars for the party as a whole. She attempts an Astrology Lore check, using the DC appropriate for the heroes' current level (see Table 10-5: DCs by Level, *Core Rulebook* 503).

Critical Success The results of Wrin's astrological readings have the effects of *read omens*, and the

heroes gain a +1 circumstance bonus to saving throws for 24 hours.

Success The results of Wrin's astrological readings have the effects of *augury* but can predict results up to 24 hours into the future.

Failure No reading.

Critical Failure Wrin brushes against hostile spiritual forces and can't Read the Stars for 1 week.



Wrin Sivinxí

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Glammers

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Chapter 10:
To Draw the
Baleful Glamour

Nhimbaloth

Adventure
Toolbox

LEVEL 1: GAUNTLIGHT RUINS
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET





CHAPTER 1: A Light in the Fog

*When the fog is creeping,
And the moon is low;
When the town is sleeping,
Gauntlight starts to glow!*

*That's when she arises
For her midnight lunch.
Naughty kids are prizes
For her teeth to crunch.*

*But if you obey me,
And obey the rules;
You're safe from Belcorra;
She just eats the fools!*

So warns a popular nursery rhyme among the parents in the town of Otari, as they often sing the melodious but unsettling poem to their children at night to encourage good behavior. As a result, everyone who grows up in Otari has a healthy mix of fear, respect, and curiosity for the old ruins out in Fogfen and the strange lighthouse that stands at the swamp's heart.

As they grow older, townsfolk learn what's more often accepted as truth: that the heroic founders of Otari had slain the wicked sorcerer Belcorra many years ago. For a time, thrill-seekers explored the ruins around the lighthouse called *Gauntlight*, but today, common knowledge holds that the place has become a haven for pests—no longer a source of active danger or significant treasure after being completely picked over. Nearly 500 years has passed since Belcorra's defeat after all, and in that time, she has only posed a menace to Otari through sinister rhymes.

Or so the citizens of Otari believe.

While many old legends about Belcorra are true (she did practice cannibalism, for example, but didn't limit her diet to foolish children), the belief that she's no longer a danger is false. Two years ago, on the 500th anniversary of the most significant event of her life—her family's exile from Absalom for abhorrent rites—Belcorra's spiteful ghost awoke deep beneath Gauntlight Keep. The lighthouse and surrounding ruins presented only the highest level of a vast complex Belcorra had stocked with malicious and malignant creatures: her

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BEYOND GAUNTLIGHT

The ruins of Gauntlight Keep aren't far out of town—just a 20-minute walk from Otari to the ruins. The Abomination Vaults Adventure Path focuses almost entirely on the dungeon itself, and you can gloss over the details of trips between the dungeon and town as you see fit. If your players express interest in mixing things up, you can use some of the encounters or short adventures in the standalone *Pathfinder Adventure: Troubles in Otari*. That adventure presents additional content in the Otari hinterlands suitable for 2nd- to 4th-level characters and provides great ways to prepare heroes who need a bit of extra XP before they delve into the deeper, more dangerous levels of the Abomination Vaults.

Abomination Vaults. Belcorra's spite has festered in the intervening centuries, and she hungers for revenge, not only against Absalom for destroying her family, but also the town of Otari and its founders—the heroes who killed her. Belcorra bides her time while she rebuilds, reenergizing the dread *Gauntlight* and reasserting her dominance over the feral and forgotten monsters of the Abomination Vaults!

Getting Started

The Abomination Vaults Adventure Path focuses primarily on the sprawling dungeon complex, and this campaign begins as the heroes approach the aboveground ruins for the first time. Their mutual friend, Wrin Sivinxi, has already briefed them about her sighting of a strange glow atop the ruin's towering lighthouse. From Otari, no one other than Wrin can make out this glow, but if the heroes look up at night from the immediate environs, they can confirm what Wrin's supernaturally acute eyes picked out from town—the top of the lighthouse does indeed glow a faint, eerie blue after dark.

Of course, you don't have to start this campaign on the literal front porch of the dungeon—if you wish, you can ease the heroes by roleplaying their initial encounter with Wrin (perhaps as she gives them an astrology reading), or after the heroes spend time in town involving some last-minute shopping or a trip to a tavern. In this case, consult the Otari gazetteer on starting on page 9 or Wrin's entry on page 18, but the fun doesn't truly begin until the heroes head up the Gaunt Trail to the foreboding ruins in Fogfen!

Gauntlight Ruins Features

As the heroes approach the ruins of Gauntlight Keep for the first time, read or paraphrase the following.

The sound of frogs and mosquitoes mixes with water sloshing against muddy shores, all muffled by the ever-present mists that linger in the aptly named Fogfen. As the mists clear, a shadow looms from the cloying swamp vapors—a sprawling ruin of stone and wood squats atop an island in the soggy marsh. The upper floors have largely collapsed, leaving only the stone walls of the ground floor intact. Above these ruins towers an out-of-place monument—a colossal lighthouse whose painted walls and iron-cased crown have resisted the corrosive effects of the surrounding swamp.

While the overgrown trail leads right to area **A1**, the heroes can access the ruins through other entrances. Along the southern side, waters surrounding the ruins are relatively shallow, but on other sides, the depth ranges from 10 to 15 feet, requiring a boat or swimming to navigate.

With the exception of *Gauntlight* (area **A25**), the upper levels of Gauntlight Keep collapsed long ago, even falling to the ground floor in places. Areas denoted as rubble on the map of Gauntlight Keep are open to the sky above and considered difficult terrain. Where the roof hasn't caved in, ceilings are 10 feet high unless otherwise noted. The only illumination comes from whatever sunlight filters in through the constant fog. The doors on this level are all cracked and rotten except where indicated; handling them with any amount of force causes them to split or simply fall off their hinges with a wet splintering sound.

Gauntlight is magically protected from damage, as described on page 215. This protection has bled into the surrounding ruins somewhat, slowing the usual rate of decay over the past 500 years. Nevertheless, time is inexorable, and the rest of the ruins have suffered in the passage of centuries.

The main faction active in the ruins is what's left of a small gang of mitflit gremlins who call themselves the Mudlickers. Led by a large, bearded gremlin named Boss Skrawng, the Mudlickers believe they once dwelt in "glory" underground. However, the arrival of the much larger and meaner Ghost Queen morlocks forced them out of their homes, and they've struggled to regain their footing ever since. Boss Skrawng has thus far formed the inkling of a plan to raise an army of giant insects to take over Otari. He has already exuberantly guaranteed the restoration of Mudlicker glory through this scheme, so the gang

loyally follows Boss Skrawng, working hard to keep intruders—like the heroes—out of “their” ruins.

As a reminder, you should take note of what the players have their characters generally do as they explore. You can have them choose from the list of exploration activities in the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*, or you can ask each player to describe what their character does and decide which exploration activity best fits their description. Certain effects are listed in the rooms based on whether a hero is Investigating, Searching, or performing another exploration activity.

The map for this level appears on page 20.

A1. DAMP ENTRANCE

LOW 1

Swaths of mildew and mold cover the damp surfaces of this watchtower, appearing as green and black smears on the dull stone walls. The door frames in the walls to the north and south rotted long ago, while a few collapsed chairs lie on the floor amid small heaps of foul-smelling gray lumps. Thick sheets of dusty cobwebs hang from above, obscuring any view of the ceiling.

Once the primary entrance to Gauntlight Keep, this one-story outbuilding is constructed of sturdy stone. The opaque sheets of dusty cobwebs function as a drop ceiling at a height of 7 feet, leaving a 3-foot space between the cobwebs and the stone ceiling above. The Mudlicker mitflits have rigged a slipshod network of soggy ropes and planks in the space above the cobwebs to clamber around on; a successful DC 12 Perception check can spot this feature through the webbing, and a critical success also reveals a 3-foot-diameter hole in the roof in the northwest corner, which the gremlins use to come and go. A successful DC 15 Nature check to Recall Knowledge identifies the deposits of gray material as mitflit dung. Apparently the mitflits use this room as a latrine as well as an advance guard station.

Creatures: Three mitflits lurk above the cobwebs but can’t resist a chance to torment and trick the heroes once they enter the room below. By crouching down on the planks and vines and peering through the cobwebs, the three mitflits wait until at least two heroes have entered the room below before calling out in their best imitation of high-pitched pixie voices. They welcome the heroes into their parlor, warn them about the mean bugs that live in the nearby keep, and suggest the visitors partake of the “magic pixie mud” on the floor. Of course, the fact that the mitflits lack any skill at Lying (they have a –1 Deception modifier) and can only speak in Undercommon means that they have slim chances of success, but if they do, they’re overcome with guffaws of laughter and can’t help but reveal their presence.

If confronted (either the heroes spot them or fail to fall for their tricks), the mitflits shriek in anger and fear. One of them clambers up through the hole in the roof and tries to climb across the vine stretching from area A1 to A9 to warn his boss in area A10, while the other two throw darts at the heroes. As soon as any mitflit takes damage, they shriek in fear, cast *bane*, and then flee to area A9. The mitflits keep a nasty-smelling chunk of giant maggot meat handy for a snack, but if forced to flee, one tosses the maggot steak onto the shore of the pool in area A3, hoping to cover their retreating by luring the slurk living there onto shore to attack the heroes.

CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

The upper level of the Abomination Vaults—and the only level aboveground—is the ruin of a large structure called Gauntlight Keep. Although the upper levels of the keep have collapsed into the lower level (filling many of the remaining rooms with rubble), one prominent structure remains: *Gauntlight*, a massive lighthouse placed incongruously in the middle of a large swamp called the Fogfen. Here, the heroes can encounter hapless but vicious mitflits, dangers left from Belcorra’s day, and evidence that *Gauntlight* draws upon power from somewhere deep below.

Environmental Cues: crude graffiti, evidence of prior squatters, mounds of rubble, overgrowth of mold and creeping plants, puddles of standing water, scuttling vermin, splashing water, swampy odors.

CHAPTER 1 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 1 are as follows.

- +1 morningstar
- +1 rapier
- 1st-level wand of heal
- black adder venom
- caltrop snare
- channel protection amulet
- lesser comprehension elixir
- lesser darkvision elixir
- lesser skeptic’s elixir (page 214)
- minor elixir of life
- minor healing potion
- scroll of restore senses
- spear frog poison
- spike snare
- wolf fang

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Adventure Toolbox

WANDERING MONSTERS

While this book doesn't present wandering monster tables for Abomination Vaults, the dungeon's denizens still occasionally leave their homes! You can make the dungeon feel more dynamic by familiarizing yourself with each level's denizens and then having them react to the party's progression and presence. For example, if the heroes noisily explore an area, creatures in nearby rooms could come to investigate or perhaps set up an ambush. If the heroes decide to camp out in the dungeon rather than return to the safety of town, nearby creatures might visit or even attack their campsite while they rest. If the heroes clear out the denizens of a level and then return weeks later, they might find that new monsters have moved in. By keeping the inhabitants of the Abomination Vaults active, you can make the location feel all the more dangerous and unpredictable to your players.

MITFLITS (3)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 192

Initiative Stealth +5

Treasure: Searching the room reveals a peridot bead (one of the mitflits thought it was candy) worth 2 gp, along with a chipped mitflit tooth in one of the little dung piles.

A2. DECREPIT DRAWBRIDGE

A wooden drawbridge, its timbers gray with age and decay, spans the twenty-foot gap between the outbuilding and sprawling ruin on the island. Rusty iron chains hang from the ruin's northern wall to the drawbridge's southern side. The chains look ready to fall apart, giving the drawbridge's structural integrity an extra layer of dubiousness.

True to appearances, the drawbridge isn't safe to cross, especially now that the mitflits have further weakened the structure with some clever undercutting to its supports. The heroes can spot the sabotage with a successful DC 5 Perception check. A Small or smaller creature can cross the bridge safely, but Medium creatures must cross one at a time or the bridge collapses with a groaning crash, which dumps everyone on the bridge into the 4-foot-deep water. A creature near the ends of the drawbridge when it collapses can

Grab an Edge (DC 10 Reflex save) to avoid falling in. Once the bridge has collapsed, a character can attempt a DC 10 Athletics check to Climb up to area **A1** or **A4** on either side. Of course, once the bridge collapses, the slurk in area **A3** quickly comes to investigate.

A3. SLURK POND

LOW 1

Tangles of reeds grow in thick clusters around the edge of this muddy pond. The water appears murky with algae, and the half-decayed body of a three-foot-tall scaly humanoid lies on the pool's northern bank, half-buried in mud and leaves.

The water of this pond is only 4 feet deep, but an extra few feet of mud below make it greater difficult terrain to wade through.

Vines and creepers festoon the ruins, but any hero Investigating this area who succeeds at a DC 12 Nature check to Recall Knowledge identifies an unusually long vine that seems out of place. This vine stretches from the top of the watchtower (area **A1**) to the north end of the walkway to the northeast (area **A9**). The mitflits strung up this vine so they could avoid the ground if they wanted to; it won't support any creature larger than Small in size.

Creatures: A single slurk, the former guardian and only surviving remnant of the Stonescale kobolds who recently dwelt in the ruins, still lives in this pond. The mitflits enjoy playing "dodge the squirt": they taunt the slurk into spitting slime at them while they dash across the vine. The slurk prefers to sleep in the center of the pond with its snout above the water during the day, then flops out at night to hunt. Loud noises (such as a collapsing drawbridge), the scent of sudden free food (such as a tossed maggot steak), or anyone splashing around on the pool's edge will rouse the slurk from its slumber. Once woken the monster eagerly attacks any creatures nearby, but it doesn't leave sight of its pond. The creature fights to the death.

SLURK

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 301

Initiative Perception +6

Treasure: The corpse of a dead kobold lies on the pond's north bank. The slurk avoided eating the carcass out of lingering loyalty to the recently slaughtered tribe, and the slurk's presence kept the mitflits from looting it—but not from eyeing it covetously from afar. The gear on the kobold's body is mostly ruined with the exception of 4 gp in one rotten belt pouch and a spike snare bundled securely in a little backpack.

A4. MAGGOT TRAINING HALL

MODERATE 1

Piles of rotting timbers and loose stones lie in heaps throughout this large, L-shaped hall. Clumps of moss and tangled vines spill down from gaps in the wooden ceiling above each pile of rubble. Several doors lead out to all sides, most barely clinging to their hinges and frames. Debris completely blocks a wooden stairwell that leads up to a large hole in the ceiling. Here and there, the stone walls bear the scars of fire or damage from an ancient battle.

Many years ago, the Roseguard confronted Belcorra in this vast room. The fight spilled from here into the servants' lounge, now a sinkhole (area A8), and caused some of the keep's collapse. A hero Investigating this room who succeeds at a DC 15 check to Recall Knowledge using any skill associated with magic confirms that powerful, destructive spells caused some of the damage centuries ago.

Most of the doors in this room are easy enough to access, with a couple exceptions. The door to area A11 requires a successful DC 18 Athletics check to Force Open, and rubble has mostly buried the door to area A14. Characters can try to clamber over the pile of rubble, through a hole in the roof, and down into the room beyond with a successful DC 10 Athletics check.

A secret door opens into a small hidden alcove to the northwest; a hero Searching this room who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check finds a section of the stone wall that slides aside to access it. The alcove beyond the door has several grooves in the stone, caused by what looks like determined scraping. This chamber used to contain a *teleportation circle* (*Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide* 244) to area C5a, but fortune hunters found this hidden alcove centuries ago and gouged out all the silver in the magic runes. The extensive damage drained away the magic and permanently destroyed the *teleportation circle*. A hero who succeeds at a DC 18 Arcana or Occultism check to Recall Knowledge realizes the original purpose of this room and the permanent damage done. This room foreshadows the many other *teleportation circles* in the Abomination Vaults that the heroes will be able to reactivate and use.

Creatures: When the mitflits dwelled in the dungeons below, they numbered in the dozens, but their violent eviction by the morlocks, attrition from games of "dodge the squirt," and misjudged vermin empathy have diminished the group.

Originally, all the Mudlickers lived in this large room; now, only three mitflits remain here.

The Mudlicker leader, Boss Skrawng, has an audacious plan. After discovering the giant maggots in area A5 and the giant fly in area A6, he ordered his mitflits to start training and breeding more maggots. Once the insects have fully grown, he intends on leading his entire group, mounted on trained giant fly war steeds, down to Otari to raid and rule. Three mitflits are currently engaged in training their first maggot, hoping the pallid creature retains its training after it matures into a giant fly. None of the gremlins know how long it takes for a maggot to grow up big and strong, but upon sighting the heroes, they immediately order their "pet" forward to attack. After all, giant-fly war steeds need to develop a taste for people to grow up nice and mean.

MITFLITS (3)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 192

Initiative Perception +4

MUDLICHER MAGGOT

CREATURE 0

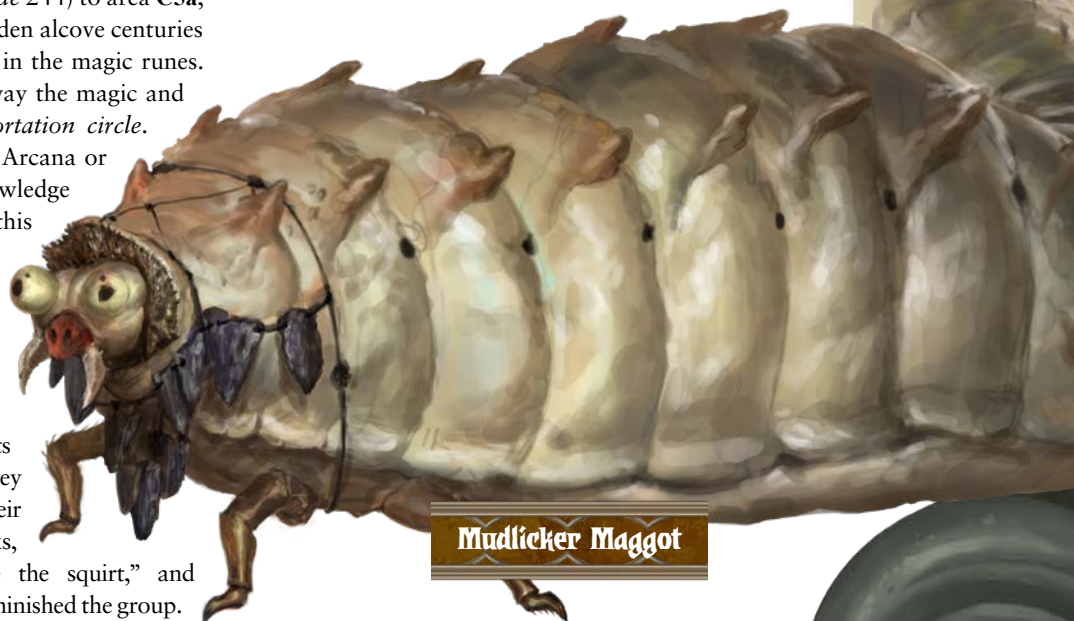
Giant maggot (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 120)

Initiative Perception +3

A5. MAGGOT STABLE

LOW 1

A collapsed wooden staircase in the northeastern corner of this room winds up to a moss-shrouded hole. The expanse of the Fogfen is visible through a total collapse in a stone wall to the west. A dead frog the size of a horse lies sprawled in this collapse, its back legs bitten off at the hips.



Mudlicker Maggot

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This massive frog was attacked by Freznelkesh, the river drake who lairs in area **B19**. The drake decided she had no interest in the frog's foul toxic skin after gnawing off its legs. The carcass lies in the rubble on the western wall.

Creatures: While the river drake didn't find the frog's flavor appetizing, the giant maggots deposited in the carcass by the giant fly in area **A6** aren't so discerning. If any creature approaches within 10 feet of the frog's body, two giant maggots burst suddenly from the carcass to attack. They pursue fresh food relentlessly and fight to the death.

MUDLICHER MAGGOTS (2)

CREATURE 0

Giant maggots (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 120)

Initiative Perception +3

Examining the Frog: A hero who Investigates the frog carcass and succeeds at a DC 18 Arcana or Nature check to Recall Knowledge can tell that a draconic creature ate the frog's legs. On a critical success, the hero recognizes the caustic mucus around the bite as belonging to a river drake.

A6. FLY PEN

MODERATE 1

The interior of this watch post still has a wooden ceiling high above, but a thick mound of filth and animal carcasses heaped on the floor make the room anything but inviting.

This room's ceiling is 15 feet high and has a trapdoor leading onto a small parapet that survived the manor's collapse. A hero who succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check can spot the trapdoor, which can't easily be seen. With the ladder gone, a character must succeed at a DC 15 Athletics check to Climb to the trapdoor.

Under Boss Skrawng's orders, the mitflits captured the cornerstone of their plan to rule Otari—a magnificent, green-and-blue fly the size of a pony that the gremlins call Buzzybuzz. They keep it here believing that the fly can't escape this room; the mitflits don't know about the trapdoor, but their fly prisoner found it right away. Buzzybuzz can leave whenever it wants, but the food in this area keeps it satisfied here.

In fact, this room is slightly too convenient, as a second giant fly with brown and blue coloration sometimes comes in, too. The two giant flies get along with one another since they both have plenty of food. However, the mitflits have never seen both in the room at the same time, so Boss Skrawng and his followers believe there's only one giant fly. (They don't understand why Buzzybuzz seems to change color from time to time.)

Creatures: The heroes first encounter the green-and-blue giant fly when they enter this room. It lunges at the heroes, assuming they're more food. One round later, the brown-and-blue giant fly darts into the room through the trapdoor and joins in the attack. Any mitflits who see both flies at the same time become visibly confused, but their surprise turns to horror when they see the giant flies fight to the death.

GIANT FLIES (2)

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 120

Initiative Perception +8

A7. DINING ROOM

LOW 1

The collapsed ceiling at the middle of this room has left a ragged hole in the wooden roof. Rotten tapestries, their designs completely obscured by mold, hang in tatters on the walls between arrow slits and ruined side tables. The remains of a fancy dining table lie mostly pulverized by the fallen ceiling.

Hazard: Not all the haunts plaguing *Gauntlight* are direct echoes of Belcorra's legacy. This room served as the communal hall for the Stonescale kobolds before a violent coup tore the group apart. The kobold spirits linger here to this day.

This might be the first haunt the heroes face in the Abomination Vaults Adventure Path, so you should do your best to describe the ghostly kobolds that rise from the rubble not as monsters to be fought in a traditional manner, but as a spectral phenomenon that must be dealt with another way. You might try to lead the heroes into trying the skills most likely to quell the haunt: Intimidation to scare away the kobold ghosts or Religion to put the spirits back to rest. This is a good opportunity to get the players in the mindset that haunts are often more like a puzzle to be solved than a foe to be vanquished, and getting the heroes into the mindset of understanding why a haunt is here in the first place. Understanding how a haunt came to be is the best way to discover how to put it to rest.

STONESCALE SPIRITS

HAZARD 2

COMPLEX **HAUNT**

Stealth +11 (trained)

Description A half-dozen ghostly kobolds rise from the rubble in a howling vortex.

Disable DC 18 Intimidation (trained) to frighten the spirits with a threatening display, or DC 21 Religion (trained) to exorcise the spirits

Confusing Confrontation ☞ (emotion, enchantment, fear, mental) **Trigger** A creature enters a square either fully

or partially filled with rubble in the middle of the room; **Effect** Six ghostly kobolds surge out of the rubble with eerie yowls. Each creature in area **A7** must attempt a DC 18 Will save with the following results. The haunt then rolls initiative.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected, is temporarily immune to Confusing Confrontation for 24 hours and realizes that a display of intimidating dominance might quell the ghostly kobolds' assault.

Success The creature is frightened 1.

Failure The creature is confused for 1 round and is frightened 2.

Critical Failure The creature is confused for 2 rounds and is frightened 3.

Routine (1 action) The spirits swoop together toward one creature in area **A7** who's frightened, instilling feelings of betrayal and confusion. The target takes 1d10+4 mental damage (DC 18 basic Will save).

Reset The haunt deactivates if there are no frightened creatures in area **A7** at the start of its turn. The ghostly kobolds return to the rubble pile. The haunt can't activate again for 1 hour.

Treasure: With a successful DC 20 Perception check, heroes Searching this room find many tiny bones scattered in the rubble. Thirty minutes of work can uncover six kobold skeletons. Destroying the bones or removing them all from this room permanently disables the haunt. A hero who's trained in Religion or who succeeds at a DC 15 Religion check realizes the connection between the bones and the haunt and understands that destroying the bones or removing them all from the rubble pile is necessary to ensure the spectral kobolds won't ever rise again.

If the heroes discover the kobold bones, they also find several jumbled treasures: 3 gp, 20 sp, a box with components for a caltrop snare, a *wolf fang*, and a vial of black adder venom with the word "YUM" clumsily written on it.

A8. SINKHOLE

MODERATE 1

Roll a secret DC 10 Perception check for each hero before they enter this room to hear the sound of high-pitched squeals and shrieks from within. Any hero who specifically listens before entering hears these sounds automatically. The four mitflits goofing off in this room are the source of the noise.

Almost the entire ceiling of this room has collapsed, while below, the floor has crumbled into a ten-foot-deep sinkhole filled with rubble, mud, and glistening patches of fungus. Evidence of ancient damage—burn scars and acid scorch marks—decorate the walls and much of the rubble.

The ancient battle between the Roseguard and Belcorra came to its destructive end in this room when Belcorra used a last-ditch explosion to try to defeat the adventurers. The resulting collapse swallowed the group's rogue, Otari Ilvashti, and trapped him in the dungeon below. Belcorra fled to the lighthouse (area **A11**) after this failed gambit. As in area **A4**, a hero Investigating this room who succeeds at a DC 15 check to Recall Knowledge using any skill associated with magic confirms that a devastating magical battle occurred here long ago.

A character must attempt a DC 12 Athletics check to Climb to navigate the sinkhole's steep slopes. A hero who Searches the rubble and succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check spies a buried spiral staircase leading downward. Clearing the rubble away can take many days, but if the heroes persist, they open the way down to area **B8** below.

Creatures: Four Mudlicker mitflits clamber and scurry around amid the rubble in the sinkhole. They're supposed to be gathering mushrooms and grubs but are currently wrestling over who gets to snack on a particularly bright blue grub. The mitflits take a –2 penalty to Perception checks rolled for initiative as a result of their distraction unless the heroes take pains to announce themselves before attacking. The mitflits hurl darts at the heroes from below, but a mitflit who runs out of darts or takes any damage focuses on Climbing out of the pit and then running away to warn Boss Skrawng in area **A10**.

MITFLITS (4)

CREATURE –1

Pathfinder Bestiary 192

Initiative Perception +2 (+4 if not distracted)

A9. WALKWAY

A fifteen-foot stone walkway spans a narrow stretch of swamp water, connecting the ruined keep to a large stone outbuilding. Double doors block each end of the walkway. Standing before the southeast door is a seven-foot-tall skeleton dressed in armor made of gnarled roots, bones, and rusted metal. The skeleton clenches a morningstar in one weathered hand with the weapon's heavy, spiked tip resting on the walkway at the skeleton's feet.

The skeletal "guard" is nothing more than a statue built by the Mudlickers. It looks frightening but poses no danger; anyone examining the statue who succeeds at a DC 12 Perception check notices the wooden struts and crude lashings that keep it together. Any damage dealt to the skeleton causes it to clatter apart loudly, alerting the occupants of area **A10**.

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Treasure: The mitflits found the morningstar and are delighted with how well it keeps the skeleton propped up. They don't know it's a +1 *morningstar*.

A10. MUDLICHER THRONE ROOM

SEVERE 1

Splintered framing in the ceiling and floor hint that thin wooden walls once divided this stone building's interior. With those walls demolished, only a single, large chamber remains. Rubble, swamp vegetation, and mud pile in heaps like foul nests, while a larger stack of rubble, sticks, and bones looks almost, but not quite, like a throne. A flattened mound of sand with a few dozen bits of wood and stone stuck into it covers the floor before the throne.

The mitflits chose these old barracks for their commander, Boss Skrawng, to use as a throne hall. Boss Skrawng's fragile throne requires constant

upkeep, a task two mitflits perform when they aren't sleeping in the filthy nests here.

Any hero looking at the sand mound in front of the throne can attempt a DC 10 Society check to realize it represents a crude map of Otari. On a critical success, the hero notes several arrows that indicate plans of attack from the direction of Fogfen.

Creatures: Boss Skrawng is always here, splitting his time between berating other Mudlickers within earshot, playing with his pet giant solifugid Bite Bite, sleeping on his throne, or planning attacks on Otari in his sand pile. If Boss Skrawng knows about the heroes in the vicinity, he sits on his throne at attention with Bite Bite at his side, ready to address them.

Boss Skrawng knew that it was just a matter of time before heroes from Otari challenged him in his domain, but he seems surprised that it happened before he actually did anything to the town.

Unlike the other mitflits, Boss Skrawng speaks Common, and he imperiously demands to know why the heroes have come to bother him *before* he attacked Otari. If he realizes the heroes didn't come to confront him, he pathetically backpedals, insisting that he has no plans to attack and that he's harmless and friendly.

He punctuates this reversal by using his trident to scatter the map of Otari at his feet. Canny heroes who can Lie to Boss Skrawng about their reasons for being here can talk to him and perhaps find out some of what he knows about Gauntlight Keep (page 29), but it doesn't take long before Boss Skrawng's negligible bravery and greater impatience prompt him to begin his assault on Otari by attacking the heroes.

If combat breaks out, Boss Skrawng orders his minions into melee, but he hangs back to use his blowgun from behind the cover of his throne. At the end of each of Boss Skrawng's turns, the throne shakes and shudders dangerously. It doesn't collapse unless a hero damages it (the throne has AC 10, Hardness 2, and 3 HP). If the throne collapses, Boss Skrawng becomes flustered. He immediately falls prone and must spend at least 1 action during each of his next 3 turns sputtering and cursing in Undercommon. Boss Skrawng gives up and begs for mercy if he's reduced to 5 or fewer Hit Points, but his followers fight to the death to demonstrate their devotion to Boss Skrawng while he lives.



Boss Skrawng

BITE BITE

CREATURE 1

Giant solifugid (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 246)

Initiative Perception +7

BOSS SKRAWNG

CREATURE 1

UNIQUE LE SMALL FEY GREMLIN

Male mitflit gang boss (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 192)

Perception +7; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Common, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +7, Diplomacy +4 (+10 vs. arthropods),

Nature +5, Stealth +7, Thievery +7

Str +1, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

Self-Loathing (emotion, mental) Boss Skrawng's self-loathing makes him easy to influence. He takes a -4 penalty to his Will DC against checks to Coerce, Demoralize, Make an Impression, and Request.

Vermin Empathy Boss Skrawng can use Diplomacy to Make an Impression on and Request things of arthropods (insects, spiders, scorpions, crabs, and similar invertebrate animals). Most arthropods have a starting attitude of indifferent to mitflits.

Items blowgun (10 darts, 2 with spear frog poison), mud and bug crown, trident

AC 16; **Fort** +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +8

HP 24; **Weaknesses** cold iron 3

Speed 20 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ trident +6, **Damage** 1d8+1 piercing

Ranged ♦ blowgun +9 (agile, nonlethal, range increment 20 feet), **Damage** 1 piercing plus spear frog poison

Ranged ♦ trident +9 (thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d8+1 piercing

Primal Innate Spells DC 17; **2nd** *spek with animals* (at will; arthropods only); **1st** *bane*; **Cantrips (1st)** *prestidigitation*

Spear Frog Poison (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 15 Fortitude;

Maximum Duration 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d4 poison damage (1 round); **Stage 2** 1d6 poison damage and enfeebled 1 (1 round)

Vengeful Anger (emotion, mental) As long as he isn't frightened, Boss Skrawng gains a +2 status bonus to damage rolls against a creature that has previously damaged or tormented him.

MITFLITS (2)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 192

Initiative Perception +4

What Boss Skrawng Knows: If the heroes can get Boss Skrawng to talk, he has useful information. He knows about all the dangers in areas **A1** to **A10**, the giant scorpion in **A14**, and the "swamp dragon" that lives under the boathouse (area **A16**). He also knows about the "bogeys" in the keep, warning the heroes about the haunts in area **A7** and the glowing "ghosts" in area **A15**. He never visited the outbuilding on the island to the northwest, but mentions that a boat full of people (whom he can describe as "big and sneaky-looking") came to visit it a week ago. The visitors went into the

SIDE QUESTS

Some of the locations in the Abomination Vaults list side quests the heroes can pick up, usually after interacting with an NPC or discovering a clue. If the heroes complete a side quest, they earn an XP award for a moderate accomplishment (30 XP) in addition to any rewards the side quest grants, such as treasure or useful information.

swamp dragon's cave while the dragon was out, but the dragon returned soon thereafter; Boss Skrawng assumes the people got eaten.

If asked about *Gauntlight's* eerie glow, Boss Skrawng's eyes get big, and he shakes his head, warning the heroes that the light is the creepiest haunting of them all. He confirms that every night, the light glows, and he worries that there might be a big ghost up there.

Boss Skrawng also confirms that the Mudlickers used to live in a dungeon level beneath Gauntlight Keep, but that a bunch of "mushroom-eyed people" (morlocks, although the mitflits don't know them by that name) chased them up here many nights ago.

Boss Skrawng can provide a crude map of the first level and a partial map of the second if the heroes can successfully Request or Coerce the favor from him and supply him with the means to write out a map. A bribe of at least 2 gp automatically gets Boss Skrawng feeling helpful enough to provide these maps. His map of the first level omits areas **A12** to **A13**, areas **A19** to **A23**, area **A25**, and all of the secret doors. His map of the second level is obviously much less complete. It only shows the areas once dwelt in by the Mudlickers: areas **B8** to **B14** and areas **B16** to **B19** (although he warns the heroes that a big swamp dragon lives in the cave at area **B19**).

Side Quest: Boss Skrawng hates the "mushroom-eyed people" and promises the heroes a big pile of shiny gems if they go downstairs, kill them all, and defeat their king. He describes the king as a "magic priest mushroom-eyed guy who can hurt your brain just by looking at you." Boss Skrawng doesn't actually have any shiny gems, and if the heroes do his quest and return with proof, he realizes that the heroes are tougher than the morlocks and that he made a terrible mistake in promising them treasure he doesn't have. He instead throws himself at their mercy and agrees to abandon his plots against Otari forever.

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A11. GAUNTLIGHT BASE

MODERATE 1

The heroes find the southern door to this room stuck, but a character can attempt a DC 18 Athletics check to Force it Open. Once opened, it falls to sodden pieces. The western door has a 1-foot-square window set with iron bars, and it opens normally.

The smooth walls of this circular room are painted a light gray with no indication of seams between blocks of stone. A set of iron stairs winds upward along the curved walls before terminating at a trap door in the ceiling nearly a hundred feet above. A red bloodstain glistens on the floor at the room's center, as though a human-sized creature bled to death on the floor very recently, despite there being no body in sight.

The Roseguard finally defeated Belcorra in this room nearly five centuries ago. As she died, Belcorra's spirit was drawn down into the depths of the Abomination Vaults through *Gauntlight*, but the bloodstain she left on the floor remains as fresh as the day she died.

During daylight hours, the fresh blood ripples occasionally; its slick, red surface appears like the top of a deep pool, but it's harmless despite this eerie movement. At night, the bloodstain acts as the hazard described below.

The iron stairs creak and sway alarmingly but are quite sound. As part of *Gauntlight's* structure, the stairs can't take damage as long as Belcorra's ghost remains active. The stairs wind up 90 feet to a locked bronze trap door leading to the cupola in area **A25**. A hero can Pick the Lock and open the trap door with four successful DC 25 Thievery check or can use the key hidden in area **A13**.

Hazard: This haunt can activate only at night. A hero who has seen a depiction of Belcorra elsewhere in the Abomination Vaults can recognize the haunt's appearance; otherwise, a successful DC 20 Society check confirms her identity.

BLOOD OF BELCORRA

HAZARD 3

COMPLEX HAUNT

Stealth +13 (expert)

Description A bloody image of Belcorra arises, emits a soul-draining light, then inhales blood from living creatures in the room.

Disable DC 22 Thievery (trained) to wipe away enough of the bloodstain to disrupt the haunt's necromantic energies, or DC 20 Religion (trained) to exorcise the haunt

AC 19; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +12

HP 50; **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage; **Weaknesses** positive 5; **Resistances** physical 5 (except *ghost touch*)

Gauntlight Beam ↻ (light, necromancy) **Trigger** A living creature ends its turn in area **A11** at night; **Effect** A ghastly image of Belcorra, seemingly composed of fresh blood, rises from the bloodstain on the floor and rotates in place like a lighthouse. Beams of cold blue light shine from Belcorra's eyes and open mouth, causing blisters and decay to spread across flesh. Living creatures within a 30-foot burst from the center of area **A11** must attempt a DC 20 Fortitude save. The haunt then rolls initiative.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 1d8 negative damage.

Failure The creature takes 1d8+6 negative damage and is dazzled for 1 round.

Critical Failure The creature takes 2d8+6 negative damage and is blinded for 1 round then dazzled for 1 round.

Routine (1 action) The bloody image opens its mouth and appears to inhale, drawing blood from the body of one creature in its line of sight within 90 feet from the center of area **A11**. The creature targeted must attempt a DC 20 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 1d10 persistent bleed damage.

Failure The creature takes 1d10+6 persistent bleed damage.

Critical Failure The creature takes 2d10+6 persistent bleed damage and is enfeebled 2 as long as it's bleeding.

Reset If the haunt is disabled or destroyed through damage, the bloody phantom of Belcorra sprays upward in a spiral, dousing the trap door leading to area **A25** before draining upward through the keyhole, which reduces the Thievery DC to Pick the Lock to 20. At the next sunrise, the blood drains back down to this room and the haunt resets. The haunt is destroyed permanently once Lasda Venkervale is rescued from area **D9**.

A12. BELCORRA'S OFFICE

The ceiling has collapsed in the southwest corner of this room. The walls bear several shelves, but the books and papers once kept here have rotted to ruin long ago due to exposure to the elements, as have the wooden desk and chair in an alcove to the northeast.

A hero Searching this room who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check locates the secret door in the east wall, where a rotating shelf functions as the door's handle. Beyond, a flight of stairs leads down to area **B6**.

Treasure: A hero Searching the desk automatically notes a hidden drawer that has fallen partially open, revealing a few still-potent alchemical elixirs Belcorra stashed here: a lesser comprehension elixir, a minor elixir of life, and a lesser skeptic's elixir (page 214).

A13. BELCORRA'S SANCTUM

This triangular room might have once seemed comfortable, but after years of rain and exposure to the elements through the two arrow slits in the northwestern wall, the room's divan, armoire, and tapestries have fallen to decay.

Belcorra maintained this private room to relax and constructed a secret entrance to the shrine to easily access it. A rusted ring of keys sits under the divan, and any hero Searching this room finds it. Rust has ruined six of its iron keys, but two bronze keys remain usable: the one decorated with a lighthouse unlocks the trap door to *Gauntlight's* cupola (area A25), and the other decorated with a book unlocks the door to Belcorra's private reading room (area C27).

A tapestry formerly concealed a secret door, but it rotted and fell long ago, so the door has become slightly easier to find. A hero Searching this room who succeeds at a DC 16 Perception check locates the secret door that leads into a small area that connects to the shrine. Characters can obviously spot the second, partly ajar secret door within this space, as described in area A15.

A14. SCORPION KENNEL

MODERATE 1

The ceiling of this room has fallen in two places. A smaller collapse destroyed a flight of stairs that once led up to the now-ruined upper floor. A larger collapse mostly buried the southern double door, leaving a hole in the roof partially blocked with several crossed timbers. A second double door to the north has a stone face carved with skulls caked with tangles of moss.

This room serves as a kennel for the Mudlickers' first significant acquisition—a giant scorpion. The mitflits lured the monster into this room with minimal loss, then collapsed several timbers in the rubble to keep it penned in. A Medium or smaller creature can clamber through this tangle, but unless it's significantly tormented, the giant scorpion won't think to smash through the timbers to leave the room.

Although the tangles of moss growing on the skull carvings seem like part of the overgrowth prevalent throughout the ruin, they belong to the original design. The mossy skull is the religious symbol of the Nhimbalothe, the Outer God of ghosts, despair, swamps, and will-o'-wisps, whom Belcorra reveres as her patron. Nhimbalothe's lore is rare and hidden, however, so a hero must succeed at a DC 25 Religion check to Recall Knowledge to identify the mossy skull as Nhimbalothe's symbol. Although fledgling heroes

might not recognize evidence of Nhimbalothe, Wrin Sivinx in town knows of the sinister Outer God and can enlighten the heroes if they report their findings to her.

Creatures: The mitflits keep the giant scorpion well fed and content, but it attacks other creatures at once. It can skitter easily over the rubble in this room and doesn't treat it as difficult terrain. The scorpion can climb the rubble to the south and Force Open a path to pursue heroes with a successful DC 18 Athletics check if necessary, but it's unlikely to do so unless attackers are harrying it from the other side of the rubble.

The scorpion is a particularly dangerous foe for 1st-level characters, so you might encourage the heroes to retreat if they're having a hard time with it and have the scorpion retreat back to this room rather than pursue fleeing heroes very far.

GIANT SCORPION

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 285

Initiative Perception +9

A15. NHIMBALOTH SHRINE

SEVERE 1

The air in this large chapel feels colder and damper than elsewhere in the ruins. Condensed beads on the walls run in rivulets across the countless skulls carved into the stone. A moldering human corpse lies slumped against a wall, his hands wedged into a crack as if he died trying to pry a brick loose. Three short flights of steps lead upward to a wider chamber to the north, where a semicircular dais supports an altar of white stone. Beyond the altar loom four stained-glass windows, each twenty feet tall and depicting four haunting scenes of ghosts rising from overgrown graveyards toward a four-pointed orange star high above.

Belcorra made no secret of her faith in Nhimbalothe, and she maintained this sizable shrine to the sinister entity both as a place of worship and an intimidating setting to meet visitors. The shrine has an ominous atmosphere, as if something immense and distant watches through the stained glass windows. A hero can identify this room as a shrine to Nhimbalothe with a successful DC 25 Religion check to Recall Knowledge.

The corpse to the south lies slumped next to the secret door leading to area A13. Once a human man, this thief snuck into the temple through the secret doors from area A13 months ago in search of a treasure, only to find himself outclassed by the corpselights lurking in this room. He perished just before could reopen the secret door to escape from them. The thief left the door slightly ajar with the rotating skull that opens it

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still slightly turned, so the heroes can easily spot this secret door.

Creatures: Two long-dead acolytes of Nhimbalothe have decomposed into little more than mossy skeletons sprawled along the eastern edge of the large chamber to the north, initially out of sight of anyone entering from the south. They're far from harmless, however, as they harbor eerie creatures called corpselights. The corpselights rise when the heroes approach the northern chamber. They fight until destroyed but don't pursue heroes who flee. The first corpselight to fall and be reduced to its wisp form animates the corpse of the dead thief at the secret door if it's still available—or in an even darker turn, a dead hero!

CORPSELIGHTS (2)

CREATURE 2

Page 232

Initiative Perception +7

Treasure: The thief's corpse has several items of value, including a +1 *rapier*, four daggers, a silver ring worth 5 gp, a *minor healing potion*, and a lesser darkvision elixir. The acolyte skeletons have little remaining that hasn't rotted or rusted away to uselessness with two exceptions: one of them has a gold tooth worth 4 gp still in its jaw, while the other acolyte wears a *channel protection amulet* around its bony neck.

A hero Searching the altar who succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check finds a secret panel on its northern side, which has a shallow nook that contains a *scroll of restore senses* and a 1st-level *wand of heal*.

A16. RUINED BOATHOUSE

A hero who takes a close look at the doors to this boathouse notices that one of them has been forced open and then carefully closed again within the past couple of weeks.

The southern portion of this stonewalled building has collapsed into rubble, exposing what remains of a boathouse to the elements. The shelves and boats within have decayed into heaps of rot and moss. The remains of a relatively fresh campfire smolder faintly.

The campfire's remnants hint at the presence of a group of thieves from Otari—a band from Crook's Nook (page 14) who came here several days ago after hearing rumors of treasure stashed in a cavern under the island. They entered area B19 below only to get in over their heads when they were trapped in the dungeon and imprisoned by some of the Ghost Queen morlocks there.

A17. RUINED PIER

Much of this wooden pier has collapsed into the swamp, leaving about ten feet of moldy, soggy boards slumped against ancient wood pilings. A rowboat tied to a piling looks much more recently built.

The rowboat, left here by the Crook's Nook thieves, is in good condition. The heroes can use it to navigate the waters around the ruins, and heroes Searching the rowboat find two things. The first is a stash of pastries—smoked salmon in a fish-shaped doughy exterior; a hero who succeeds at a DC 12 Society check recognizes the “fishcakes” as those sold at the Crook's Nook in Otari. The second is a carving of a flying bird decorating the inside of the boat near the bow. A hero who succeeds at a DC 16 Society check recognizes that this mark belongs to the Osprey Club, Otari's thieves' guild (a critical success confirms that the Osprey Club uses Crook's Nook as a headquarters and that guild members bear the mark of the flying bird as a tattoo).

If the heroes come here after dark, the flickerwisp at area A24 flickers in an attempt to lure them closer.

An opening under the pier leads to area B19. At your discretion, the river drake Freznelkesh might venture out to hunt in the Fogfen and spot the heroes while they're nearby. Freznelkesh is a difficult foe for a party of 1st-level characters, so you should have the river drake take off to pursue larger, safer prey in the swamp if the heroes are having a tough time dealing with her.

Side Quest: Should the heroes visit Crook's Nook and ask about the boat, Yinyasmera admits that four of her “employees” went missing several days ago. She promises a 50 gp reward if the heroes can find out what happened to them and bring them back. One thief died (area B14), and the morlocks have kept the other three as prisoners (area B24).

A18. APPRENTICE ISLAND

A low wooden bridge spans a watery gap between the larger island and a smaller one. A single-story building sits amid the thick reeds growing on the smaller island.

The building on this islet originally served as the home of Belcorra's apprentice, a drow named Volluk Azrinae. Volluk no longer lives here, but he still serves Belcorra in the chambers deep below, having transcended from the limitations of his humanoid form to become a worm that walks (he now resides in area D8).

A19. SPOOKYWISP

TRIVIAL 1

The exterior door to this room is stuck, requiring a successful DC 15 Athletics check to Force Open.

This study features several bookshelves, a desk, and two chairs. The books and objects here lie in disarray with torn pages strewn haphazardly across the room.

Volluk once pursued his studies and met with Belcorra for lessons in this room.

Creatures: Today, a mischievous brownie named Tangletop—a puckish fey whose eponymous blonde hair stays in a constant state of frizzy disarray on his head—occupies this chamber. Despite his comical appearance, Tangletop fancies himself something of a spooky sort of fey. As soon as he notices the heroes approaching, such as if they try to Force Open the door but don't succeed at doing so right away, he quickly slips into hiding under the desk before using *ventriloquism* to call out in a deep voice. He claims to be a dangerous “wispy-ghost” named “Spookywisp.” He then uses *dancing lights* to create what he hopes the heroes believe is a will-o'-wisp, floating the light up in the air and using *ventriloquism* to cast his voice from the light.

Tangletop arrived here only a few days ago, but he made short work ripping through the room's contents before finding nothing of interest to him. He moved on toward area A23; there, the shiny spyglass entranced him before the soulbound doll that guards it chased him off. Faced with an actually scary creature, Tangletop retreated to this room to plot methods of securing the “shiny” for himself. The heroes give him that method—see the Side Quest below.

If the heroes attack or confront him with violence, Tangletop shrieks in fear and flees toward area A23, hoping to lure the heroes into that room so that they inadvertently end up destroying the soulbound doll. If they do, he tries to steal the “shiny” therein before fleeing the area forever.

TANGLETOP

CREATURE 1

Male brownie (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 44)

Initiative Stealth +9



Tangletop

Side Quest: If the heroes speak to Tangletop, either in person or via his persona as Spookywisp, the brownie explains to them that he wants the “shiny” in the room to the southwest. He warns the heroes that a mean, beak-faced doll will try to stop them from getting the “shiny,” but he promises that he'll tell the heroes three secrets he has learned about the area if they bring him the “shiny.” Asked to describe the “shiny,” Tangletop frustratingly says, “It's shiny! You'll know it when you see it!” Pressed further, he rolls his eyes and describes it as a “sparkling glowing tube that I want, want, want!”

The “shiny” refers to the bejeweled spyglass kept on display in area A23. If the heroes retrieve and hand it over, the brownie reveals what he recently learned from the books here as well as from reviewing the paintings in the hallway between here and the room where he spotted the spyglass.

First, this building used to belong to someone named Volluk Azrinae. Second, Volluk was an apprentice to someone else named Belcorra, and even though this Volluk person seemed like someone who was mean and dangerous, Belcorra seemed much worse! Finally, the spooky magic lighthouse can do more than just shine an eerie light; it can also shoot a beam full of ghosts (this last description is based on Tangletop's interpretation of the lighthouse painting in area A22, but it isn't far from the truth).

A20. REPAIR STORAGE

Shelves laden with tools, lumber, and planks line the walls of this ten-foot-square room.

These supplies were used for upkeep throughout the upper works of Gauntlight Keep. Volluk formerly functioned as a head groundskeeper and managed repairs. Considering such mundane tasks beneath his skills, he often called upon Belcorra's other servants as needed for these jobs.

Treasure: Heroes Searching this room discover a large silver key worth 10 gp. This key unlocks the door to area B2.

A21. STAIRWELL

Moss and fungus coats these tightly spiraling stairs, which lead down to area B1. From the state of the growth, it's obvious that no one has gone this way for a long time.

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Nhimbaloth

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A22. HALL OF PORTRAITS

A series of four paintings hang on the northwestern wall of this hallway, although layers of mold and decay have severely damaged them.

The paintings along the wall have sustained irrevocable damage over time and due to moisture dripping down from leaks in the roof.

The first painting is enormous, nearly 7 feet tall and almost as wide. It's a landscape painting that depicts the city of Absalom in flames with ghosts rising from the city streets between the burning buildings. The picture's lower frame bears a bronze plaque that reads, "So Shall the Fools Suffer."

The second painting is nearly as large as the Absalom painting and is in the same style, though its subject is different. This second painting depicts Gauntlight Keep as it appeared before its upper floors collapsed. The lighthouse rises above the stately keep into the night sky, with its beacon emitting a pale blue light in which ghostly faces sneer and grimace. Its bronze plaque reads, "Let the Light Shine Forever."

The third picture is a portrait that once depicted Volluk but is now totally shredded. Volluk destroyed it after becoming a worm that walks. Its plaque reads, "The Artist at Work."

The fourth and final portrait is smaller and circular. It depicts a smirking woman dressed in a red gown with a high collar—an image of Belcorra herself. Its plaque reads, "The Lady of the Light." Long ago, Volluk scratched the following sentences, written in Aklo, into the stone next to this last painting: "I serve you still! You shall be avenged!"



The Lady of the Light

Volluk caused most of this destruction. After Belcorra's death, he hid in the swamp while he waited for the Roseguard to leave. When he returned, he was filled with such guilt over his cowardice that he destroyed this workshop in a fit of fury.

The layer of broken glass and shattered materials covering the floor makes it uneven ground (*Core Rulebook* 476) with an Acrobatics DC of 11. A creature who falls prone while in this room takes 1 piercing damage.

Creatures: Volluk created several constructs to aid him and his mistress in their day-to-day jobs, but the raven-headed, raven-winged soulbound doll he called Mister Beak was his favorite. Neither the

most powerful nor the most helpful, Mister Beak held the soul of his devoted servant, a goblin named Borbo, a fact that ensured the construct's place at Volluk's side. Today, Mister Beak remains abandoned here, waiting forever for a creator who moved on to other tasks and an entirely new body. Mister Beak hasn't lost hope, and when the heroes enter the room, he stands up from the slumped mound in the room's center and asks in a warbling voice, "Is Master Azrinae coming back?" Regardless of the heroes' answer, Mister Beak realizes none of them are its creator; it then leaps into the air on flapping wings to attack in a frustrated fury, fighting until destroyed.

Mister Beak is a unique variant of a soulbound doll with ungainly wings that he can nevertheless use to fly. He can therefore easily avoid the uneven ground in this room.

MISTER BEAK

CREATURE 3

UNIQUE CE TINY CONSTRUCT SOULBOUND

Variant soulbound doll (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 304)

Perception +10; darkvision

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +10, Occultism +6, Stealth +10

Str -2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

Personality Fragments Mister Beak shares fragments of the soul of its donor, the goblin Borbo, but none of Borbo's memories.

AC 22; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +8

HP 38; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious

A23. LENS WORKSHOP

MODERATE 1

This once elegant workshop has fallen into shambles. Soggy strings of dripping moss hang through cracks in the wooden domed roof above. Below it, a carpet of broken glass glitters dangerously. Workbenches and shelves, armatures and displays—all formerly used in crafting or repairing immense lenses for a lighthouse—lie in ruins. Only a bejeweled spyglass sitting on a display rack near the southern wall has survived the devastation.

Speed 20 feet, fly 20 feet

Melee ♦ fist +12 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 1d6+4 bludgeoning

Occult Innate Spells DC 20; **3rd** *levitate*, *phantom pain*; **Cantrips (1st)** *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

Treasure: The bejeweled spyglass was Volluk's finest creation apart from the lenses for *Gauntlight*. Even in his self-loathing rage, Volluk couldn't bring himself to smash this treasure. The spyglass is the "shiny" that Tangletop seeks. If the heroes decide to keep it, the spyglass has a value of 20 gp.

Mister Beak's soul focus gem is located on his back, nestled between his wings. The gem is worth 5 gp but might prove more valuable as a potential source of information if the heroes place it in the partially completed soulbound doll in area **B2**.

A24. OLD PIER

LOW 1

This old wooden pier has partially collapsed into the swamp, and the portion remaining above water looks ready to follow the rest at the slightest touch.

The pier is just as dangerous as it looks; anyone stepping onto it causes the entire pier to give way and fall into the 3 feet of water beneath it. The sucking mud beneath it is greater difficult terrain.

Creatures: A single flickerwisp dwells amid the rotting ruins of this old pier. When it notices the heroes, it begins to glow and writhe, appearing alternately as a string of flickering fireflies or a rippling ribbon of light just above the gaping hole in the pier. Anyone who steps onto this section of the pier runs the risk of falling through, and the flickerwisp quickly attacks a victim who gets stuck in the mud. The flickerwisp is eager to sup on frustration and confusion; it doesn't retreat once a fight begins, even if it's outmatched.

FLICKERWISP

CREATURE 2

Page 250

Initiative Perception +9

A25. GAUNTLIGHT CUPOLA

MODERATE 1

Rows of black metal bars encase this circular chamber like a cage. Shimmering waves of force flicker between the bars and gives the illusion that softly glowing glass encases this entire area. The floor to the north has an iron trapdoor; otherwise, this room appears empty save for a human-sized encasement of glass and iron that flickers and glows with an unsettling, almost nauseating pale blue shimmer—Gauntlight's lantern!

The locked trap door in the floor of this room leads down to area **A11**, marked with an "F" on the map.

Creatures: If the heroes enter this area after defeating the blood of Belcorra haunt in area **A11** below, that blood has slithered and flowed over *Gauntlight*'s lantern. As the heroes enter the chamber, it slides off the lantern and transforms into a ravenous blood-drinking vampiric mist which attacks at once, fighting to the death.

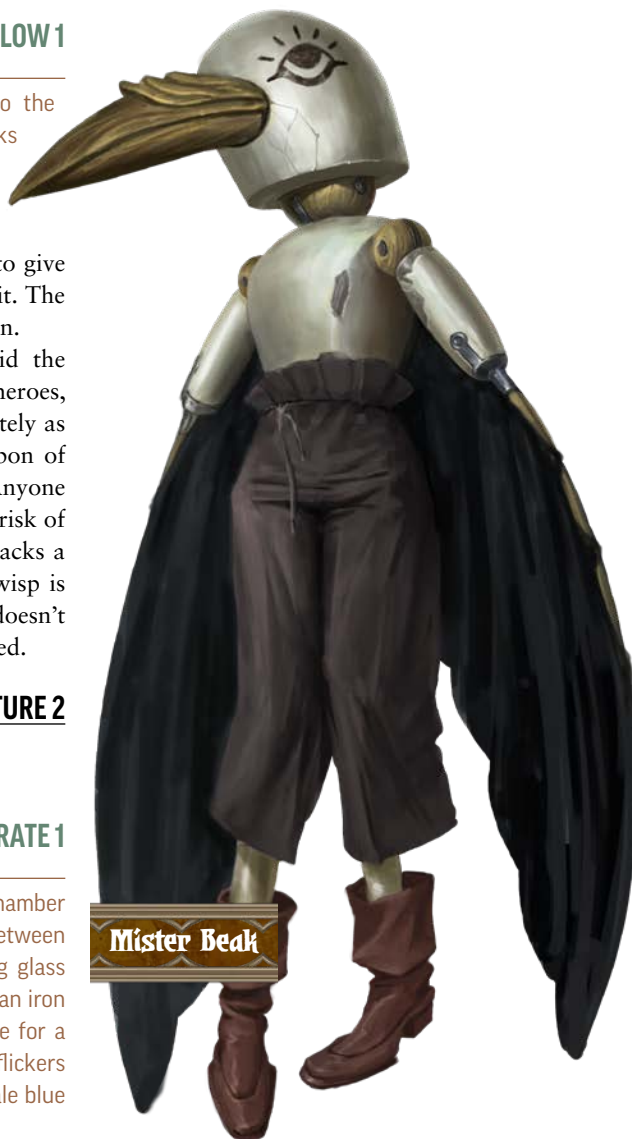
This encounter can repeat as often as the heroes continue to trigger and defeat the haunt in area **A11** below, but it doesn't occur more than once per night.

VAMPIRIC MIST

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 278

Initiative Stealth +10



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1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

T = TRAP





CHAPTER 2: The Forgotten Dungeon

While the heroes are free to enter the dungeon below the keep as soon as they discover any of its entrances, an important event should take place before they dive too deeply into the Abomination Vaults. It's best if this event takes place at night while the heroes have line of sight to *Gauntlight's* cupola, such as when they retreat to rest or perhaps even right after they've defeated the vampiric mist in area **A25**. In any case, the heroes should be 2nd level for this event. When the timing is right, begin Deadtide for Otari.

Deadtide for Otari

Gauntlight isn't yet fully functional, but enough of its magical power has been restored that Belcorra activates it as a test firing before proceeding with the more-involved process of restoring the artifact to full use. She targets Otari's graveyard, animating the dead within it. The ghost then watches through *Gauntlight's* lens, but she can't do much beyond observe, limited as she is to the site of her haunting deep in the Abomination Vaults. Read or paraphrase the following to begin this event.

Gauntlight shudders and its light suddenly blazes with a sickly, pale-blue illumination. This beam arcs south, falling not directly on Otari, but onto the sprawling graveyard located at Otari's western edge.

The light remains fixed on the graveyard and is visible all the way from *Gauntlight* to the town. There isn't any way for the heroes to impede the beam, as it emanates magically from *Gauntlight* and can't be stopped from its origin point except by Belcorra's will.

As the dead are buried, it takes most of them some time to dig free. Although the heroes might hurry directly to the graveyard given the sinister implications of the eerie light, you can still run these events as written if the heroes first take some time to tend to their wounds or otherwise delay. If the heroes take more than a couple of hours to arrive, town guards have already erected a barrier around the cemetery but are afraid to enter the grounds for fear of the occasional shuffling corpse that pulled itself free sooner than the others. Dealing with the undead should fall to the heroes; if they aren't self-motivated to enter the

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graveyard and act the part of heroes, feel free to have an official like Captain Longsaddle, Mayor Oseph Menhemes, or Vandy Banderdash ask them to deal with the situation. If the heroes continue to hesitate, the undead might become a bigger problem.

OTARI GRAVEYARD

SEVERE 2

The soil of Otari's graveyard roils and churns in the eerie blue light. Dozens of skeletons and shambling corpses haul themselves free from the ground and rush to the south. Without any hesitation, the walking dead plummet over the cliff's edge to rain down upon the domes of the Dawnflower Library below.

Most of the undead raised by *Gauntlight's* beam plummet to their grisly destruction over the cliffs, though a few remain in the graveyard. Yet the damage is done—Otari's citizens are horrified and panicked. If the heroes step into the graveyard to take on the few remaining undead, the fight is an important symbolic stand—this is the heroes' first real step toward being recognized as Otari's saviors.

Creatures: A total of five skeleton guards and three zombie shamblers remain active in the graveyard. These foes technically constitute a severe encounter for 2nd-level characters, but canny heroes have a number of advantages. The undead are scattered throughout the graveyard with no undead within 30 feet of any other, although they quickly move toward any fight or distraction. Stealth and ranged tactics could well thin the opposition before they close in. With the undead being scattered, the heroes won't need to deal with large numbers all at once if they're quick and efficient.

The four nearby town guards are horrified by the situation and are unlikely to be of much help—they flee if attacked. At your discretion, and particularly if a hero manages to make a Request of the guards or Coerce their aid, some of them might fight. Guards can also drag a fallen hero to safety. In the event you need statistics for the guards, use the statistics for a guard on page 232 of the *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*, but treat the guards as frightened 3 at the start of any fight they join.

SKELETON GUARDS (5)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 298

Initiative Perception +2

Unarmed These unarmed skeletons fight with their claws.

ZOMBIE SHAMBLERS (3)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 340

Initiative Perception +0

ABOMINATION'S ARRIVAL

MODERATE 2

Belcorra watches with amusement from afar as the heroes deal with the undead. As soon as that fight ends, though, she decides it's time to test *Gauntlight's* primary function: teleporting monsters in among her enemies. Belcorra takes a moment to order her apprentice Volluk to bring one of the scalathraxes from area **D10** into area **D9**. This delay grants the heroes a few minutes to recover from their previous fight. She then focuses *Gauntlight's* beam upon the heroes' location to transport the creature there. The illumination raises gooseflesh on those it touches and scatters any remaining guards in a panic.

Creatures: An instant after *Gauntlight's* beam shines upon the heroes, a spiderlike scalathrax manifests in their midst—and, just as quickly, *Gauntlight* goes dark. The aberration uses Stealth to determine its initiative and immediately attacks, fighting to the death. Any hero who witnesses the creature's sudden arrival and succeeds at a DC 20 Arcana or Occultism check (either during or after the fight) realizes that the creature was teleported into the area via the beam.

SCALATHRAX

CREATURE 4

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Initiative Stealth +13

DYING LIGHT

Once *Gauntlight* has delivered the scalathrax and gone dark, it will be at least a month before the artifact can return to a point where Belcorra can activate it again. She might do so to animate more undead or teleport another monster into town, either to attack the heroes directly or to simply spread panic.

Of course, the townsfolk have no idea about this schedule, and the fear that *Gauntlight* could shine again at any moment has the citizens terrified. People fear to go outside after dark, and rumors about Belcorra's return run rampant. Assuming the heroes played a key and visible role in defeating the undead and the scalathrax, they're soon contacted by mayor Oseph Menhemes, who asks them to do what they can to find out what caused this event and, if possible, prevent it from occurring again. Feel free to have other town notables be present at this time—give the heroes the chance to rise to the occasion. In any event, Oseph promises a reward of 50 gp per hero from the town treasury if they return to Gauntlight Keep and see to it that *Gauntlight* never shines on Otari again.

Servants' Quarters Features

The first underground level of the Abomination Vaults once served as the quarters for Belcorra's servants. Here, the workers lived and toiled out of sight from

those in Gauntlight Keep above. When Belcorra was killed, the servants here panicked. Some fled, others hid in their rooms, and still others became food for the cannibal librarians the next floor down. Today, the servants' quarters are largely in ruins.

Areas are unlit unless otherwise noted, and the ceiling heights are typically 8 feet in hallways and 10 feet in rooms. The doors are sturdy wood, swollen shut with moisture. A hero trained in Athletics can open doors on this level with a single Interact action, as normal; characters who aren't trained in Athletics must spend 2 Interact actions to open a door.

The largest faction presently active in the Servant's Quarters is a group of morlocks who call themselves the Children of the Ghost Queen. These morlocks once dwelt deep below this level in caverns adjacent to the Abomination Vaults. When Belcorra awakened, they clambered into the higher levels to prepare the way for her, enduring a devastating clash with the Cult of the Canker ghouls and later driving out the Mudlicker mitflits. Belcorra always considered morlocks to be pests (and still does, even as a ghost), but the morlocks' leader, Graulgust, hopes to change her mind by building her a temple. But, just as Belcorra's eldritch patron Nhimbalothe cares little about how she's honored, the morlocks' Ghost Queen doesn't care whether these devout morlocks live or die.

The Servant's Quarters map appears on page 36.

B1. STAIRS UP

These tightly spiraling stairs lead up to area **A21**.

B2. VOLLUK'S WORKSHOP

The door to this room is locked. A hero without the key from area **A20** can Force Open the door with a successful DC 20 Athletics check or Pick the Lock with three successful DC 20 Thievery checks.

Seven square alcoves, each containing strange magical apparatuses or alchemical sets of tools, ring this damp stone chamber. The alcove to the north contains a large glass tank filled with liquid. A goblin's corpse, clad in outdated servant's clothing, floats inside it. A semicircular worktable covered with tools, moldy papers, and a large open book stands in front of the tank.

Volluk Azrinae once used this chamber as his personal workshop. The worktable in front of the tank holds the bulk of Volluk's notes. A hero Investigating these notes who succeeds at a DC 12 Arcana or Occultism check to Recall Knowledge learns that the workshop is devoted to both construct construction and necromancy. A critical success on this check also reveals the workshop's emphasis is transferring mortal souls, including into a construct or a swarm of vermin.

The goblin in the tank is the preserved corpse of Borbo, once Volluk's devoted servant. Borbo volunteered his body and soul for a technique that Volluk promised would grant immortality, though being turned into the soulbound doll named Mister Beak wasn't exactly the immortality that Borbo had in mind. Still, Borbo, as Mister Beak, has thus far remained loyal to Volluk. The corpse is well-preserved in the tank; even if removed, it takes months to decay.

A search of the other alcoves reveals little of interest, with two exceptions: a secret door in the southwestern alcove and an incomplete soulbound doll in the northwestern alcove.

CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

The Abomination Vaults' second level—its highest underground level—harbors several old traps and fiercely independent denizens who hunt on the surface. It also contains a small group of morlocks pushed up from below. Before the heroes get too far into exploring this level, though, Belcorra activates *Gauntlight* in a devastating test as she refines the artifact's power.

Environmental Cues: broken low-quality furniture and tools, cobwebs, distant banging noises, moisture beading on the walls, smells of mold, unpleasant dampness.

CHAPTER 2 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 2 are as follows.

- +1 warhammer
- +1 weapon potency rune
- 1st-level wand of magic missiles
- fear gem
- lesser healing potion
- low-grade silver sword cane (Advanced Player's Guide 248)
- mesmerizing opal
- retribution axe
- shining sling bullet
- slick armor rune
- type I necklace of fireballs
- wayfinder

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Secret Door: The southwestern alcove contains a secret door leading down to area **C10** and, from there, back up to area **B32**. A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check while Searching this alcove identifies a toolbox bolted to the wall. When the tools within it are pulled, the attached secret door opens.

Incomplete Doll: The northwest alcove contains a soulbound doll resembling an armless, legless goblin. It has an indentation in its back the same size as Mister Beak's soul focus gem (area **A23**). Inserting this gem activates the soulbound doll, allowing it to speak but not attack, move, or cast spells until its construction is complete. A hero can complete it with enough work and expense, but Borbo remains erratic and violent.

If Borbo is "returned" to this body, he awakens quickly and begins to sob, lamenting in Goblin that his master betrayed him. He remains inconsolable until a hero can either calm him with a successful DC 16 Diplomacy check to Make an Impression or scare him with a DC 16 Intimidate check to Coerce him, or until someone places him in a position where he can see his former body in the north alcove. In any of these cases, Borbo finally goes silent and the heroes can speak to him in Common, Elven, or Goblin. Borbo has little useful to say and is prone to fits of self-pity and vitriol toward Volluk, but if the heroes ask the right questions, they can get four key pieces of information from him.

- The location of the secret door in this room.
- That there's a secret treasure stash behind a loose brick in his old room (area **B4**).
- Master Volluk was a "powerful mastermind drow occultist artist craftsman" who had a relationship with a "book lady down below" and who worked for "Mistress Belcorra, who is very frightening and absolutely none of my business."
- Master Volluk is vain as well as cruel. If the heroes present a nice image of Volluk (such as a painting) to him and then threaten to destroy it, Volluk will lose his composure and likely make a tactical error the heroes can use. Unfortunately, the only painting of Volluk Borbo knows about is the one in area **A22**, and it's destroyed. In fact, only one image of Volluk remains in the Abomination Vaults; it's in area **C36**.

Once the heroes have learned all of his information, Borbo pitifully asks to be released. If the heroes smash the soul focus gem, Borbo's soul is freed. For this act of compassion, Pharasma grants the hero who destroyed

the gem a favor in the form of a momentary, prophetic glimpse of their fate. This allows that hero to gain a +2 status bonus to a single check, which they can apply even after they determine the check's result. The hero has 1 month to use this boon.

B3. VOLLUK'S CHAMBERS

This room shares features of both a bedroom and a study, although the decor is devoid of any personal items or items of sentimental value.

Volluk once dwelt here but relocated downstairs to area **D8** after becoming a worm that walks. A search of the room turns up a scrap of paper listing the book titles *What The Worm Knows*, *Grave Feasts*, and *Secrets of the Skull*, along with a note at the bottom indicating that "Transcription will take months, but I'll try to have these books back to you as soon as possible, my love!"

B4. BORBO'S ROOM

This small room has a long-abandoned straw bed, a dresser with open drawers revealing a jumble of out-of-date servant's clothing, and a large barrel with a ladle atop it.

This room once belonged to Volluk's goblin servant Borbo, but it has been abandoned since the goblin gave up his life to become Mister Beak. The clothing matches that worn by Borbo's corpse in area **B2**. The barrel once held dozens of pickles, but the brine inside evaporated long ago and the pickles have rotted away.

Treasure: A hero Searching this room who succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check finds a loose brick concealing Borbo's small treasure stash: a jade shard worth 15 gp, a silver statuette of two succubi worth 35 gp, and an oily-looking *slick* armor rune. The heroes might hear about this stash from Borbo in area **B2**.

B5. VOLLUK'S MACHINE

MODERATE 2

A large metal table fitted with leather straps and iron bands sits in the center of this room. A strange contraption that seems to be part spyglass and part mechanical drill sits near the head of the table. A sparkling black gemstone glitters in a metal framework built into this machine's side.



Incomplete Doll

The machine in this room is a sadistic device Volluk crafted ages ago. With a successful DC 20 Occultism or Religion check to Recall Knowledge, a hero determines that the device aids in casting the *create undead* ritual (this doesn't provide knowledge of that ritual). The drilling device penetrates the skull of a restrained victim, while the scope focuses the ritual's necromantic energies. Using this machine grants a +2 item bonus to skill checks to cast *create undead*.

The stairs to the south lead down to area C7.

Creatures: One of Volluk's last creations remains here, a horrific undead guardian created from a giant leech. Volluk called the creature the "bloodsiphon" and was amused at how shriveled the thing became. The bloodsiphon appears to be a giant log of desiccated flesh until anyone disturbs or approaches it, at which point it lurches forth and attacks. It pursues foes into areas B1 to B4 but not beyond.

BLOODSIPHON

CREATURE 4

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM AMPHIBIOUS UNDEAD

Perception +10; tremorsense 30 feet

Languages Aklo (cannot speak any language)

Skills Athletics +12

Str +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** -2

AC 19; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +7, **Will** +11

HP 80, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weakness** slashing 5

Death Burst (aura, necromancy, occult) When the bloodsiphon dies, its body explodes in a cloudy red burst of necrotic dried blood in a 20-foot area. Creatures in range must attempt a DC 21 Reflex save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 2d6 negative damage.

Failure The creature takes 4d6 negative damage.

Critical Failure The creature takes 6d6 negative damage and is enfeebled 2 for 1 hour.

Speed 10 feet, swim 20 feet

Melee ♦ mouth +14, **Damage** 2d8+6 piercing plus Grab

Ranged ♦ spittle +11 (range 30 feet), **Damage** 3d6 negative

Blood Drain ♦ **Requirements** The bloodsiphon has a creature grabbed or restrained; **Effect** The bloodsiphon drains blood from the creature it has grabbed. This deals 4d4 damage, and the bloodsiphon grows temporarily moist and slimy as it regains 8 Hit Points, gaining any excess as temporary Hit Points that last for 1 minute. A creature that has its blood drained by the bloodsiphon is drained 1 until it receives any type of healing.

Treasure: The black onyx gemstone in the machine can be pried out easily enough. Doing so renders the device useless, but the gem is worth 25 gp.

B6. ABANDONED GUARD POST

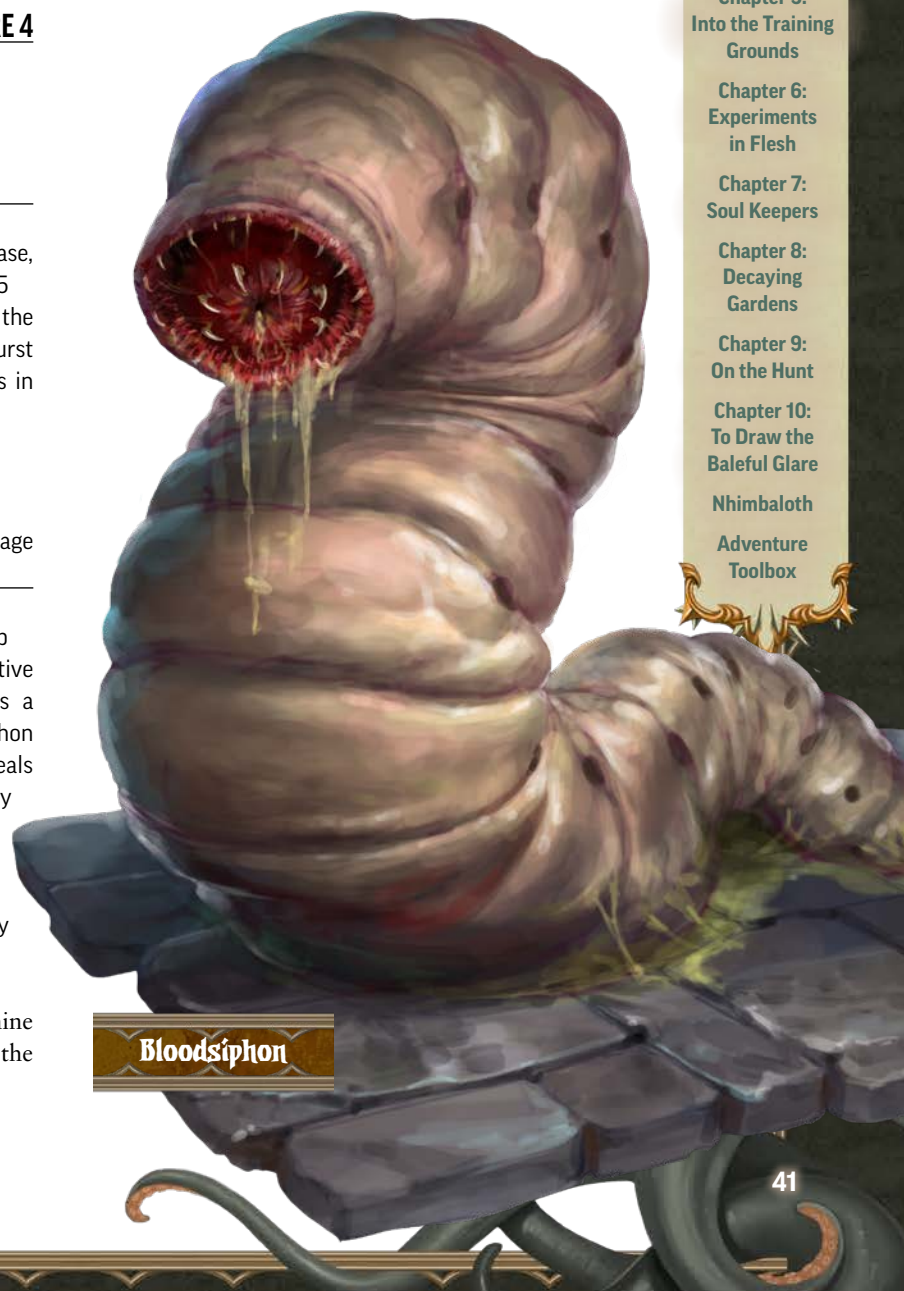
Three plain wooden chairs sit along the east wall of this otherwise empty room.

Belcorra's lackeys once waited here to perform any tasks she might need. The secret door to the east that leads to area B21 is easy to discover from this side of the room, as the middle chair leans against a section of the wall that pivots slightly outward. The heroes can discover this secret door by succeeding at a DC 12 Perception check or by moving the middle chair.

Stairs beyond the north door lead up to area A12.

B7. MEETING ROOM

A long wooden table sits in the center of this room, surrounded by several wooden chairs. Only the chair to the



Bloodsiphon

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north seems particularly comfortable, although its cracked leather padding is mostly decayed.

Belcorra addressed her serving staff here. No one has been in this room in decades, though; neither the mitflits nor the morlocks know about it. This room (and area B6) thus serves as a safe place to hide or rest.

The secret door leading to area B8 is obvious from the north side; anyone approaching this secret door from the north automatically spots it.

B8. SERVANTS' ROOMS

SEVERE 2

This large open area is a filthy mess, even beyond the collapse to the south that clogs part of the room with rubble. Half-eaten fish, cat-sized beetles, and bits of waterfowl lie strewn about in a tangle amid gnawed bones of larger creatures.

This large room once served as a common area for servants to relax and take their meals. The southern half of the room (along with the servants' toilets and bathing facilities) were buried under rubble long ago. The collapsed stairwell to the south once led to area A8 above. The eight unmarked rooms connecting to this area are ruined bedrooms with nothing of interest.

A hero Searching this area can discover the secret door leading north to area B7 with a successful DC 28 Perception check. Pulling an old wall sconce causes the door to open. None of the morlocks have yet noticed it.

Creatures: The Ghost Queen morlocks lair here. The first time the heroes enter this area, four morlock scavengers are present, fiddling with a partially ruined ballista that they dragged, in pieces, from area B21 (where it once served as a trap). The morlocks snarl and hiss if they're interrupted, fighting until only one of them is left standing. The surviving morlock then tries to flee to area B12 to warn their king, Graulgust.

MORLOCK SCAVENGERS (4)

CREATURE 1

Page 240

Initiative Perception +6

B9. OLD OFFICE

MODERATE 2

A desk with a chair sits in the middle of this room, while three empty picture frames hang on the walls.

Belcorra's majordomo once worked here. The frames used to hold detailed maps of the upper dungeon levels. Volluk took them long ago.

Creatures: Graulgust commanded a pair of Ghost Queen morlocks to guard this room, but they're more

interested in tinkering with the broken clockwork assistant the majordomo left behind. Their distraction gives them a -2 penalty to initiative checks. They fight any intruders, flanking foes when possible.

If a morlock scavenger fleeing from area B8 runs through the room, these morlocks relocate to area B10 to mount a defense.

MORLOCKS (2)

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 174

Initiative Perception +5 (+7 while not distracted)

Treasure: The morlocks have exposed the clockwork assistant's inner workings, which include an intricate gear worth 40 gp. Removing the gear while preserving its value requires a successful DC 16 Crafting check. On a failure, the gear is worth only 20 gp; on a critical failure, the gear breaks and is worth nothing.

B10. TRAPPED HALL

The north and south walls of this hall have been decorated with a bewildering array of timbers, metal parts, gears, bits of broken weapons, and trash.

Belcorra's majordomo used this room for planning and meetings, but the morlocks have dismantled the furniture here, along with several other scavenged items and devices, to build a gauntlet of traps to defend the approach to their king's throne room.

Hazards: Four spike launcher traps have been hidden in the walls of this room, activated by nearly invisible trip lines stretching across the room 1 foot off the ground. Morlocks can move through the room without triggering the spike launchers, as they know where the trip lines are. One cord crosses each pair of north-to-south squares.

SPIKE LAUNCHERS (4)

HAZARD 0

MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 19

Description A jagged spike of metal shoots from a hidden launcher.

Disable DC 16 Thievery to disable one of the four launchers or DC 12 Acrobatics to step over a trip line (this doesn't disarm the trap, but avoids triggering it)

AC 16; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +3

Hardness 3; **HP** 16 (BT 8); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Spike **Trigger** A creature crosses one of the trip lines;

Effect A spike launches along the trip line's path against the triggering creature, making a ranged Strike.

Ranged spike +11 (range 20 feet), **Damage** 2d6+3 piercing

B11. WASHROOM

One wall of this washroom has been gouged out by sharp claws, revealing a rough-hewn tunnel leading west.

This once served as the majordomo's washroom. The tunnel to area **B13** began as an eroding crack, then was widened by the morlocks.

B12. GRAULGUST'S THRONE ROOM SEVERE 2

A sofa-like throne made of an old mattress, several pieces of reconstructed furniture, and dozens of bones sprawls along the northern side of this room. A narrow rivulet of muddy water trickles from a narrow tunnel to the south and forms a puddle in the room's center.

Creatures: Graulgust, the self-styled king of the Ghost Queen morlocks, has chosen the majordomo's old bedroom as his throne room. He has rebuilt the older furniture in this area into an immense throne of sorts, and he's attended at all times by a morlock servant tasked with sharpening Graulgust's fingernails and toenails, rubbing his feet, feeding him worms, or whatever else Graulgust demands. Now and then, Graulgust leaves his throne room to patrol the Ghost Queen's domain and to check up on the Ghost Queen's shrine (area **B14**), but the first time the heroes visit the dungeon, they encounter him here.

Graulgust fancies himself something of a worldly diplomat, but since he speaks only Aklo and Undercommon, communication with the heroes might be difficult. If he can't establish communication, Graulgust grows annoyed and sends his morlock servant to fight the heroes. Graulgust steps into the fight only once his servant is slain or if he's attacked directly. If he's reduced to 30 Hit Points, he spends an action to howl for his pet grothlut in area **B13**. If the slithering monster still lives, it comes to its master's aid as soon as it can through the tunnel to the southwest.

Any morlocks present when Graulgust is slain gain the fleeing condition for 1 round and are frightened 3.

GRAULGUST CREATURE 4

Male morlock cultist (page 241)

Initiative Perception +11

MORLOCK CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 174

Initiative Perception +7

Side Quest: If he can communicate with the heroes, Graulgust congratulates them for their bravery in

seeking him out and gives them a choice—they can become sacrifices for the Ghost Queen (in which case he directs his morlock servants to kill them), or they can prove their worth to the Ghost Queen by slaying the “water monster” that dwells nearby in area **B19** and bringing back her head. If the heroes agree, Graulgust allows them to leave the room only via the tunnel to area **B18**, and if they don't have the river drake's head with them as proof of their deed the next time they encounter Graulgust, he attacks the heroes at once for their failure. If the heroes return with the river drake's head, Graulgust is delighted that the morlocks now have an easy way out of the dungeon to go foraging. He rewards the heroes by giving them the title of “lackeys of the Ghost Queen” and leads them on a stroll through Ghost Queen territory (through areas **B10**, **B9**, **B8**, **B14**, **B21**, and **B22**). Once he and the heroes reach **B22**, he offers them a new choice—surrender their gear and become true slaves of the Ghost Queen (and be imprisoned in area **B24**) or begin a crusade for him against the Cult of the Canker—a group of “heretic ghouls” who must be slaughtered for the glory of the Ghost Queen. If the heroes agree to this, Graulgust sends them downstairs through area **B16** with a command to not return until all of the ghouls are slain. If the heroes do so, Graulgust realizes they're too powerful to simply dispose of; he names them “missionaries of the Ghost Queen” and commands them to leave the morlock areas and never return.

During this time, the heroes can speak to Graulgust and learn a bit more about the Abomination Vaults. The morlocks haven't explored the northern part of this level, but he can inform the heroes of the secret door to area **B15** and provide a scribbled map of level three (including areas **C1**, **C6**, **C10**, **C11**, **C15**, and **C33**). If asked about deeper levels, Graulgust grows silent, saying “You are of the surface and do not deserve to know of our homeland.” At your discretion, if the heroes use mind control or other coercive methods, they might force Graulgust to divulge more information about deeper levels of the Abomination Vaults, but note that the morlocks left them a while ago and much has changed since Belcorra's return.

Graulgust never speaks the Ghost Queen's name aloud, and if the heroes speak the name “Belcorra” in his presence, he shrieks in anger and warns the heroes never to say her name again. If they do so, he attacks.

Once the heroes have secured Graulgust's trust, the morlock occultist is shocked if they suddenly turn against him. If the heroes attack Graulgust at any point after he believes they're working for him, he's slowed 1 for 2 rounds, as he grapples with the fact that he no longer commands obedience.

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B13. GROTHLUT DEN

LOW 2

Water drips down the walls of this cavern, particularly along a jumble of dangling pallid roots to the south. Beneath them is a large, soggy nest of mud and bones.

Creatures: This cavern is the result of years of erosion, and its damp, earthy environs make it a perfect home for the morlocks' recently acquired pet, a grothlut fleshwarp. Graulgust rescued the grothlut

from a cage deeper in the Abomination Vaults, and the aberration dotes on the morlock the way a loyal dog adores its master. It attacks anyone who enters this cave other than Graulgust, fighting to the death.

GROTHLUT

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 158

Initiative Perception +5

B14. SHRINE OF THE GHOST QUEEN

While it's apparent that this large room was originally a kitchen, the furnishings have been rebuilt and repositioned to create an improvised shrine. The western end of the hall, where a large fireplace for cooking food once stood, now serves as an altar of sorts. Looming over a human corpse is a towering statue in a feminine shape made of bones, covered in sheets of moldering cloth and hanging moss. A bare spot on the room's north wall has been decorated with mud and blood to depict the same feminine form as the statue.

The Ghost Queen morlocks erected this shrine to honor Belcorra, but as the morlocks fear the ghost as much as they revere her, they only rarely enter to provide periodic sacrifices—the latest of which was one of the thieves from Crook's Nook. The body is that of a human man with a bird tattoo on his right shoulder that marks him as a member of the Osprey Club (with a successful DC 16 Society check to Recall Knowledge, a hero identifies the mark as signifying membership in the thieves' guild).

A hero who succeeds at a DC 15 Religion check when Investigating this shrine surmises that the "divinity" worshipped here isn't a well-known goddess, but that the bloody scrawl on the wall over the secret door is likely meant to illustrate someone of importance to the cult. If the heroes have seen an image of Belcorra, such as the painting in area A22, they recognize the statue as a crude depiction of the same woman.

The secret door in the northern wall is easier to find than most of those in the area, and it takes only a successful DC 18 Perception check for a hero examining the crudely painted decoration to notice it. The morlocks discovered this door shortly after they arrived, but the one time they opened it to look inside, they were scared off by the shadow within. They believe this secret door leads to a place sacred to the Ghost Queen. They decorated the wall where the secret door is located to placate their patron and haven't opened it since.

Treasure: While the dead thief has no treasure on him, the morlocks have left a few valuable offerings strewn



Graulgust

around the base of the statue, including a bloodstone worth 10 gp, a softly glowing +1 *weapon potency rune*, and a sickly green *fear gem*.

B15. CRYPT

MODERATE 2

This five-foot-wide hallway features three alcoves along each side. Stone sarcophagi stand upright within each.

Belcorra planned to inter her favorite followers in this small crypt. Due to her high standards and hard-to-please nature, only one servant ever had the honor of being buried here—her first majordomo.

Creatures: Today, the majordomo exists as a shadow-like undead who retains her appearance from life but otherwise functions as a standard shadow. Her soul is bound by her loyalty to Belcorra and *Gauntlight's* necromantic energies. The majordomo emerges from the central sarcophagus on the west wall to attack anyone entering this crypt, but it doesn't pursue foes beyond area B15.

MAJORDOMO CREATURE 4

Shadow (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 289)

Initiative Stealth +14

B16. PANTRY

Only a few fragments of the shelving that once lined the walls of this pantry remain today.

The morlocks first entered the dungeon's second level through this room. Most of the gear and shelving once stored here has been scavenged for other projects (most notably Graulgust's throne).

The stairs beyond the northeastern door lead down to area C1.

B17. LEVEL TWO PORTAL CHAMBER

The door to this room is locked, and its key is long lost. A hero can Force it Open with a successful DC 20 Athletics check or Pick the Lock with three successful DC 20 Thievery checks.

The walls of this octagonal chamber are adorned with swirling runes carved into the stone and then filled with dull, silvery metal. The floor is polished smooth, as is the ceiling ten feet above.

Belcorra installed several *teleportation circles* in the Abomination Vaults for swift movement between levels, but over time, their magic has faded. Smaller *teleportation circles*, like those at areas A4 and C5, link to only one area each, but this transit chamber was linked to several others; by tracing specific patterns on the wall runes, someone could transport everyone in this room to one of nine other portal chambers in the Abomination Vaults.

The *awaken portal* ritual required to reactivate this *teleportation circle* is recorded in a folio in area C35. Each linked *teleportation circle* must each be individually reactivated with this ritual, though, before they can be used—the heroes must therefore physically travel to each portal chamber they want to



Majordomo

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connect to the network. Other portal chambers in the Abomination Vaults are located in areas **C16**, **D5**, **E18**, **F13**, **G2**, **H33**, **I59**, and **J5**.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for reactivating this portal.

B18. RUINED BOAT LAUNCH

At the north end of this small cave, the mouth of a swampy, flooded cavern yawns. A few ruined rowboats lie in heaps on the floor of this cavern, strewn next to tangled coils of rope. Remnants of a pulley system hang from the ceiling.

When Belcorra's servants lived, they used this area to move supplies from the boathouse (area **A16**) using a pulley system to ferry a floating platform between here and the pier, but that setup fell into disrepair long ago.

Several swaths of disturbed earth litter the muddy floor between this cavern and the flooded cavern to the north, as though left by the movement of a large, serpentine creature. A hero who Investigates the tracks and succeeds at a DC 18 Arcana check to Recall Knowledge realizes they were left by a drake (on a critical success, the hero knows it's a river drake).

B19. FLOODED CAVERN

LOW 2

Tangles of roots hang from the low ceiling of this flooded cavern, the roof of which is a mere three feet above the murky water.

During the day, muted sunlight filters into this cavern from an exit to the northwest, but even on rare sunny days, the overhanging pier at area **A17** and dangling roots keep this room dim. The water in the cavern is, on average, 10 feet deep.

Creatures: A river drake named Freznelkesh has dwelt in this cavern for nearly two years. She's careful to limit her hunting to Fogfen, so no one in Otari knows she exists. She was out hunting when the Crook's Nook thieves came through, but she returned soon after and cut off their easy escape route (leading to their eventual capture by the morlocks).

Freznelkesh is likely to be sleeping in the water in the middle of the cavern, and she swiftly wakes up if she hears the splashing of potential food swimming above. If reduced to fewer than 10 Hit Points, she flees and doesn't return for a few days. She pursues foes that flee into area **B18** or out into the swamp, but she learned the hard way about the dangerous mold at area **B20** and won't pursue potential prey there.

FREZNELKESH

CREATURE 3

River drake (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 131)

Initiative Stealth +9



Freznelkesh

Treasure: The river drake stashes what treasure she has gathered in a sea chest amid a tangle of roots in the southwestern cul-de-sac. A successful DC 16 Perception check while Searching finds the chest amid the roots. The drake's treasure consists of 36 gp, a *retribution axe*, a *wand of magic missile* (1st), and a *wayfinder*.

B20. MOLDY BEACH

A thick knot of roots hangs from the cavern roof over a muddy beach. Stone stairs lead up from the beach to the north.

Hazard: The square just south of the bottom of the stairs, marked with a dotted white box on the map, appears to contain only moldy roots but is brown mold.

BROWN MOLD

Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide 77
Stealth DC 21 (trained)

HAZARD 2

B21. PROCESSIONAL

This long, ten-foot-wide hallway has a vaulted ceiling arching to a dozen feet high. Three broken metal brackets hang from the ceiling; one to the south, one to the north, and one in the middle, although what the frames once held is unclear. The floor is strewn with pieces of rotten wood and twisted metal. To the north, pale green light shimmers around a closed door's frame.

The empty frames used to house small, swiveling ballistas on the ceiling that functioned as traps, but morlocks have scavenged the components. Only detritus the morlocks deemed worthless remains.

The secret door leading to area B6 is exceptionally well hidden from this side, its seams all but invisible cracks in the stone. A hero who succeeds at a DC 28 Perception check while Searching this hall spots it.

The green light shining through the door frame to area B28 is evidence of Otari's unquiet spirit. The morlocks don't approach this light, as they believe it to be a sign of the Ghost Queen's wrath.

B22. WORKSHOP

SEVERE 2

Roll a secret DC 10 Perception check for each hero before they enter this room to hear the sound of metal clanging and wood splintering. A hero who specifically listens before entering automatically hears the sound.

This long room smells of rust and grime. Stacks of splintered furniture, pieces of weapons and armor, frayed coils of rope, jagged shards of metal, and other bits of trash lie in heaps along the walls of the room. A cold, unlit forge

sits in an alcove to the west. To the north, several heavy timbers are wedged up against a door to keep it shut.

Removing the timbers from blocking the door to area B24 is a simple-enough 3-round activity.

Creatures: Two Ghost Queen morlock engineers toil at assembling a pair of broken ballistas. While the morlocks have the skill to rebuild the devices, they keep incorporating dubious improvements that require restarting their repairs. The engineers quickly realize they can present intruders to mollify Graulgust's frustration at their slow pace. They prefer to use their junk launchers from a distance for as long as they can.

The morlocks do their best to capture the heroes alive; if they do, they confiscate the heroes' gear and throw the heroes in with the thieves in area B24 until Graulgust tells the morlocks what to do with them. Graulgust's offer to the heroes is described in area B12.

MORLOCK ENGINEERS (2)

CREATURE 3

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Initiative Perception +8

B23. WELL

The air here is cool and moist. A low stone well sits to the east. Armor, weapons, and tools lie in heaps in the north.

This well drops 40 feet down to a large pool of water in a natural reservoir in area C40 below. Anyone who leans over the well can attempt a DC 15 Perception check to hear a strange sound drifting up from below—splashing combined with what sounds like a small crowd. These noises come from the gibbering moulder that lives below, but it remains out of sight of anyone peering down the well. The rope and bucket once used to draw water up from below are long gone, but the metal bracket in the ceiling is sufficiently strong to anchor a rope supporting the heroes.

Treasure: The heap of gear belongs to the prisoners in area B24. It consists of three suits of studded leather armor, two rapiers, one broken rapier, three sets of thieves' tools, a *lesser healing potion*, and 13 gp.

B24. PRISON

Alcoves along the walls might once have been storerooms, but the stone shelves are all empty. The room smells foul.

The foul odor is due to the room's use as a prison. Of the four thieves who stole into the dungeon from Crook's Nook, only three survive—Gorul Vettors, Shad Nunder, and Ziskilly Theed. (If you need statistics,

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use the prisoner on page 215 of the *Gamemastery Guide*.) All three are clad in rags and are suffering from malnutrition and fear. Each bears a bird tattoo on the right shoulder that indicates membership in the Osprey Club (with a successful DC 16 Society check to Recall Knowledge, a hero identifies the tattoo's significance).

The thieves recount their harrowing time as the prisoners of the morlocks if asked and are eager to be led out of the dungeon. They thankfully accept their gear (from area **B23**) if offered but really only want to return to Otari. If the heroes lead them up to

the surface, the thieves can safely return to Otari on their own; otherwise, chances are good that a dire fate meets them. On the other hand, Yinyasmera pays well for their rescue; see the Side Quest in area **A17** on page 32 for details.

B25. CLEANING SUPPLIES

Shelves line the walls of this room, each filled with tools used for cleaning or repair work. A silver-headed cane lies amid a tangle of mops, brooms, and buckets.

The devil in area **B27** investigates any noise here.

Treasure: None of these tools are particularly valuable, but even a brief glance is enough to note that they're all clean and in good condition. The cane hides a silver blade; it's a low-grade silver sword cane (*Advanced Player's Guide* 248). Any attempt to move it without a successful DC 16 Thievery check causes the other tools to clatter noisily to the floor in a heap.

B26. CLOCKWORK STORAGE

A pair of hulking humanoid objects stands quietly in this chamber, each covered in a thick layer of dust.

These two clockwork assistants once helped maintain this level, but both are now broken beyond any hope of repair.

Treasure: With a successful DC 18 Crafting or Perception check, a hero identifies eight gemstones worth 5 gp each used as bearings in the clockworks.

B27. ZOZZLARIN'S ROOM

LOW 2

The walls of this room have been painted, crudely and almost childishly, to depict a horrific Hellscape of burning mountains, rusting cities, and tormented souls.

Creatures: Belcorra used several bound devils as minions and guardians, mostly in lower levels of the Abomination Vaults. The lesser of the two devils she assigned to the upper levels is a hapless zebub named Zozzlarin. A chubby, fly-bodied devil, Zozzlarin is bound to this level as an eternal janitor. Zozzlarin is contractually required to spend 18 hours each day in this room, and he has done his best to paint the walls to remind him of home. For the other 6 hours each day, he's compelled to buzz out into the surrounding complex to clean and dust. Thanks to Belcorra's cruel sense of humor, Zozzlarin is required to spend at least 3 of those hours cleaning the dusty walls and floors of the dungeon with his tongue, but to the hopeless zebub, this



Zozzlarin

indignity is nothing compared to the fact that he has been forced to live here on the Material Plane for much longer than his bargain originally required.

The frustrated Zozzlarin is quick to attack the heroes as a result; the conditions of his imprisonment allow him to defend the dungeon from above-ground intruders. If reduced to 10 or fewer Hit Points, though, the devil begs for his life, offering to share a “special memory” as a reward.

If the heroes agree, the zebub uses his Infernal Eye ability to reveal a significant event he witnessed many years ago: Otari’s flight through the dungeon to hide out in area **B28**. Zozzlarin doesn’t know this memory’s significance, but it’s the most recent memory he has of other surface dwellers, so he assumes the heroes are interested. A successful DC 16 Society or relevant Lore check is enough for a hero to recognize the famous adventurer, who was thought to have been killed long ago in the clash against Belcorra.

ZOZZLARIN

CREATURE 3

Male zebub (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 72)

Initiative Perception +12

B28. HAUNTED WASHROOM

This ten-foot-square washroom features an iron bathing tub to the north and a commode to the southwest. The northern wall glows and shimmers with rippling ribbons of eerie green light.

When Otari Ilvashti became trapped in the Abomination Vaults, he did his best to find an escape route. Unfortunately, at that time, many of Belcorra’s dangerous minions still guarded much of this level. He made it to this room only to collapse from his wounds. Fortunately, Belcorra’s death had thrown the dungeon into chaos, and he wasn’t discovered. When Otari woke some time later, no longer on the edge of death from his ordeal, he crept out of the room and made his way west through area **B31** and eventually to **B20**, only to be confronted by an angry and oversized chuul. He discovered the secret door in area **B32** and fled deeper instead.

When Otari finally died in area **D18**, his soul remained as a ghost, and the three locations where he hid during his final days became infused with desperate echoes of his spirit. These echoes provide a trail to his remains.

The ghostly energies react to the presence of the heroes. The first time the heroes see the glowing energy, it slithers into letters to read, “I was Otari... save me from below!” A moment later, the words

slide off the wall and form a green ribbon of light that slithers across the floor like a serpent with a speed of 20 feet. The heroes can follow this ribbon, which lasts for only minutes, to area **B32**, where it slips under the secret door and fades away. The next clue of Otari’s path is in area **C3**.

This spectral manifestation can appear once per day.

B29. HALL OF HATRED

LOW 2

Several wide alcoves adorn the walls of this L-shaped hallway. Each alcove contains a small diorama of the same city facing different perils—a massive fire, a devastating tsunami, a thunderous earthquake, an attack by an enormous tentacled monster, and an invasion of an army of undead.

Each of the scenes in the alcoves depict the city of Absalom in a different fanciful doom from Belcorra’s imagination. The stone dioramas are enhanced with minor illusions; flames flicker, water ripples, and so on. A tiny *Gauntlight*, as though miles distant, sits at the edge of each scene. A hero who succeeds at a DC 16 Religion check while studying the last diorama notes that the undead are rising from Absalom’s graves as *Gauntlight*’s beam shines upon them.

Hazards: In addition to displaying some of her fantasies about Absalom’s destruction, Belcorra had Volluk rig several traps in the hall to punish intruders. One trap is linked to each diorama (see the map on page 36).

DOOMS OF TOMORROW (5)

HAZARD 3

MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 20 (expert)

Description The sounds of devastation rise from the diorama, and a beam of shimmering energy lances outward from the tiny model of *Gauntlight*.

Disable DC 20 Thievery (trained) to quickly deactivate the model of *Gauntlight* before it triggers, or DC 23 Stealth (trained) to creep by a trap without triggering it

AC 21; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +8

Hardness 8; **HP** 56 (BT 28); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Apocalypse Beam **Trigger** A creature steps within 10 feet of the back of a diorama alcove; **Effect** The trap fires an apocalypse beam at that creature.

Ranged **Damage** **apocalypse beam** +16; **Damage** 2d10+13 damage (fire damage from the burning city [a], bludgeoning damage from the tsunami [b], sonic damage from the earthquake [c], mental damage from the monster [d], and negative damage from the undead uprising [e])

Reset Each trap resets automatically after 1 hour.

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B30. WAR ROOM

SEVERE 2

This large, low-ceiling room has a cross-shaped table at its center. Ten chairs stand around the table. The walls, floors, and ceilings of the chamber are completely covered with thick layers of webbing.

Belcorra once held meetings with her most valued advisors, minions, and conjured allies in this room, usually to plan out her never-realized but oft-imagined assaults on Absalom. The table in the center displays an illusory map of the city of Absalom as it appeared

hundreds of years ago, during Belcorra's life, to aid in her plans, but the spiderwebs in this room obscure this illusion.

Creatures: Several years ago, a web lurker named Mimmivix came to this room after entering the dungeon from the swamp. He found the illusory city a delight and fancied himself the "King of the Ghost City," making the room his lair. After being damaged by a trap in the outer hall, Mimmivix has taken to clambering along the upper reaches of the hall to avoid stepping in front of the traps as he comes and goes on hunting trips, timing them for the hours the river drake is out of her lair at area B19.

When the heroes first arrive, the web lurker is squatting atop the table, delighting in yet another examination of his web-caked city. He rises up to full height upon spotting the heroes and, in Aklo, greets them by commanding, "Bow down before the King of the Ghost City and present your offerings!" Mimmivix's inflated ego leaves him expecting any visitors to be potential supplicants bearing gifts, and if the heroes don't offer him gifts (of any sort), he hisses in frustration and attacks. If the heroes actually do so, Mimmivix is so startled by his own authority that he's momentarily silent. He makes further demands of the heroes to give more offerings, polish his claws, and so forth until he tires of their obsequiousness and simply attacks them. He calls his hidden dream spider minions out to ambush the heroes and does his best to lure the heroes into one of his two web traps. Mimmivix fights to the death.

MIMMIVIX

CREATURE 3

Male web lurker (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 325)

Initiative Perception +10

DREAM SPIDERS (2)

CREATURE 0

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 249

Initiative Stealth +7

Hazards: Mimmivix has placed two web lurker nooses in the room, as indicated by "T" on the map.

WEB LURKER NOOSES (2)

HAZARD 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 325

Stealth DC 22

Treasure: The web lurker has gathered a fairly large stash of "treasure" that he keeps in a bundle of webbing affixed under the table. Most of these valuables are worthless trinkets that appealed to his strange sense of aesthetics, like rusty arrowheads,



Mimmivix

shiny rocks, bits of glass worn smooth by the surf, or neat seashells. Among the clutter is a *mesmerizing opal*, five *shining sling bullets*, and a *type I necklace of fireballs*. The cache is visible to anyone who looks under the table, as the magic sling bullets glow faintly through the webbing holding them in place.

B31. RECEPTION ROOM

LOW 2

A ruined table and several destroyed chairs lie in a heap in the middle of this room, along with several large bones.

If the heroes are following the ghostly trail left by Otari from area B28, they'll see this trail dance and flicker around the center of the room where a minotaur's skeleton is entangled with the ruined furniture. Otari encountered the guardian here and killed it before moving on. Unfortunately, the necromantic influence of *Gauntlight* has animated these remains.

Creatures: As the heroes enter the room, the bones shudder and pull together. This takes 1 round, so swift characters can exit the room before the bones assemble, at which time they fall back into place. If the minotaur skeleton completely rebuilds itself, it pulls its rusty glaive from the wreckage and fights until destroyed—but it doesn't pursue foes from this room.

SKELETAL GIANT

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 299

Initiative Perception +7

B32. SECRET STAIRS

The heroes can spot the secret door at the top of these stairs with a successful DC 18 Perception check. The secret door opens when the rise on the top step is pushed a certain way. The stairs beyond the secret door lead down to area C10.

B33. PUNISHMENT ROOM

Broken-down torture instruments lie in half-collapsed heaps on the floor here. To the north slumps a ruined stretching rack, while to the south a pillory lies fallen on the floor. Rusty tongs and chains, frayed and rotten whips, and other implements lie on tottering shelves.

Belcorra used this room to punish insolent servants or when she was bored and needed something to distract her. Little of use remains here, but a hero Searching this room who succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check finds the secret door to the south, which opens when a rusted ring on the wall is pulled down sharply.

B34. ELEVATOR DOWN

A hero Searching this dead end spots the secret door with a successful DC 18 Perception check. Two wall stones, pushed in unison, cause it to swing open.

This plain, circular room is empty. A single image of a moss-caked skull adorns the eastern wall.

The floor of this room is a magical elevator that links to area C22 below. If a creature touches the image of the mossy skull—Nhimbalo's symbol—while the secret door is closed, the floor slowly descends 30 feet with a grinding noise. Doors slide up into view to the north and south.

If the secret door is opened while the elevator is in area C22, this room is a 30-foot-deep pit.

B35. GAUNTLIGHT BASEMENT

If the heroes manage to enter this room before *Gauntlight* activates at the beginning of this chapter, then the artifact is already empowered; no ribbon of ghostly energy is currently present, and you should amend the following read-aloud text accordingly. After *Gauntlight* activates, it needs to recharge, so the ribbon of energy returns.

The walls of this circular room are smooth and gray. A ribbon of pale blue light coils and slithers through the air, connecting the floor at the center of the room to the ceiling fifteen feet above. The points where this light touches the stone above and below seethe and writhe, as if the stone itself were suffering from an infection. The desiccated remains of an enormous worm lie slumped around the ribbon, forming a crescent of shriveled and tattered purple flesh.

One of Belcorra's favorite pets dwelt in this room, a purple worm she transported into the chamber from the Darklands. For all the creature's bestial power, it was entirely dependent on Belcorra for sustenance, as the keep's walls are indestructible. After Belcorra's death, the worm starved to death.

The ribbon of ghostly light is a manifestation of *Gauntlight*'s mounting power. This eerie light churns in a 5-foot-diameter burst at the room's center. Any living creature ending its turn within it takes 2d6 negative damage (DC 16 basic Reflex save), and undead creatures regain HP of the same amount.

As long as *Gauntlight* remains at its low-level activation, the light keeps churning, but if the heroes rescue Lasda Venkervale from area D9, it winks out.

Treasure: A hero who digs into the dried worm's carcass finds the remains of its last meal: a duergar skeleton still clutching a +1 *warhammer* that didn't help him cut his way out of the worm's gut.

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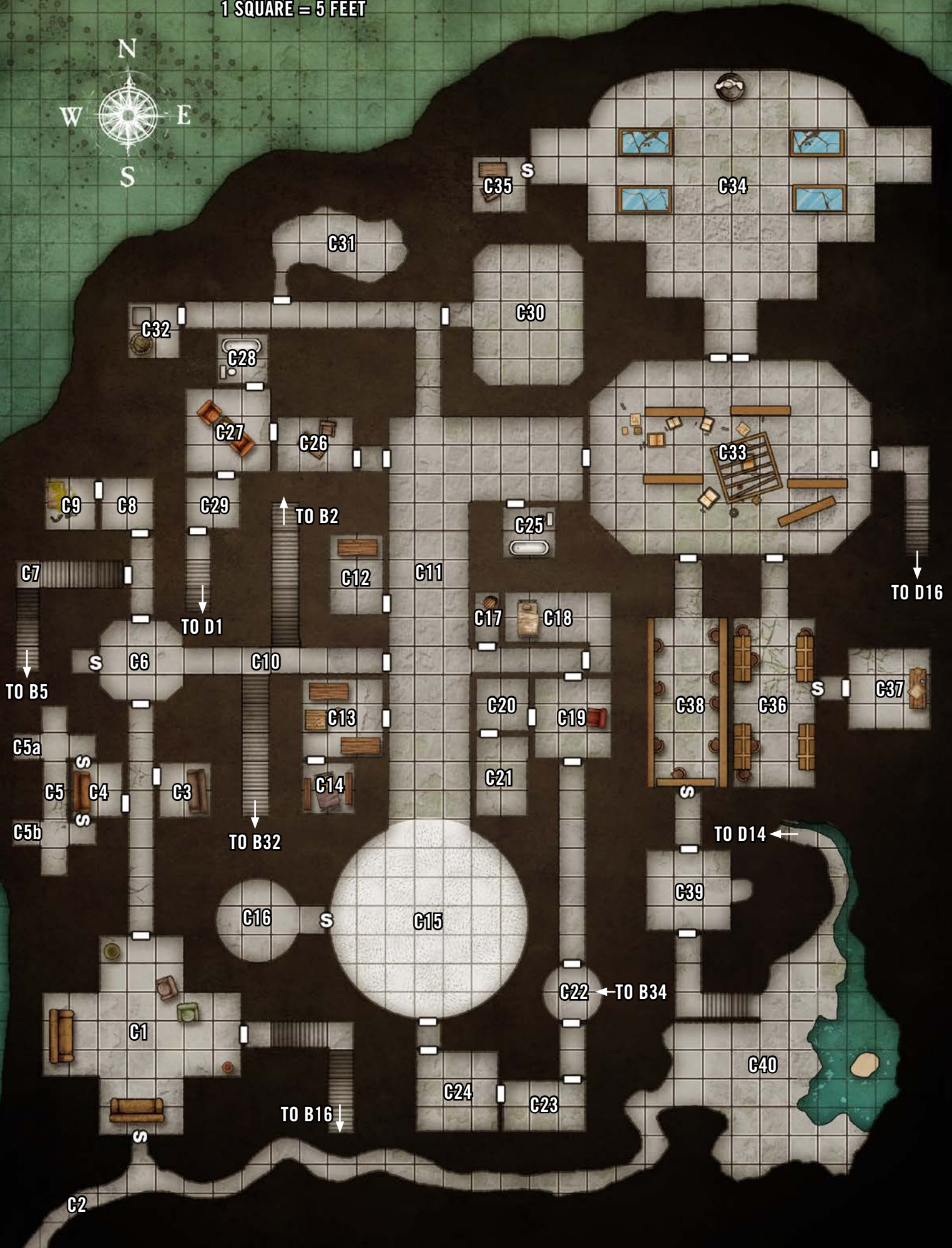
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Nhimbalo

Adventure
Toolbox

LEVEL 3: LIBRARY
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET





CHAPTER 3: Cult of the Canker

The third level of the Abomination Vaults once served as Belcorra's sprawling library and rooms related to research. The servants and librarians once employed here have become dangerous undead creatures.

Library Features

Belcorra's library is unlit except where otherwise noted. Ceilings are 8 feet high in halls and 10 feet high in rooms, although the largest rooms and halls have vaulted ceilings that rise to 12 feet high. Doors are made of wood, and many are marked with signs (described in area C11) to help scholars find their way.

The Cult of the Canker is the most widespread faction active in the library. Originally a collection of librarians, caretakers, and scribes, this loyal staff stubbornly kept working after Belcorra died, focusing their research on finding a way to restore their leader to life. When food stores ran low, rather than risk alerting the Roseguard by making potentially public forays to the surface, the researchers turned to cannibalism. There were plenty of other servants to eat, after all, in the conveniently nearby servants' quarters. The onset

of ghoul fever tore quickly through their ranks, but the researchers were so obsessed that they barely noticed. The scholars' research now has a distinctly ghoulish bent: they work to gather enough "cankorous flesh" to fuel Belcorra's full resurrection. The fact that the ghouls' hunger often compels them to feed on the flesh they're trying to collect has certainly slowed their progress, but it hasn't slowed their zeal.

The map of the library level appears on page 54.

C1. VISITOR'S READING ROOM

TRIVIAL 3

This large, cross-shaped chamber contains several long couches, the leather cushions that once adorned them cracked with age. Dead plants lie slumped in planter boxes along the walls, and a long-dry fountain depicting a lighthouse stands in the middle of the room.

Belcorra didn't allow visitors into her library except in this room and the reading rooms to the north. A librarian would fetch texts for visitors to peruse in comfort. The fountain and plants here have long since dried up.

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Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox

The stairs beyond the east door lead up to area B16. Heroes can discover the secret door to the south with a successful DC 27 Perception check. It's concealed behind a heavy sofa.

Creatures: A unique undead creature dwells here. Augrael is a morlock ghoul exiled by his living kin among the Ghost Queen morlocks above, just as he's reviled by the ghouls of the Cult of the Canker who occupy this level. As he hasn't been steeped in the maliciousness or fervor of either group, Augrael is quite calm and collected. When the heroes arrive, he greets them cordially but cautiously.

Augrael wants only to dwell within these dungeons, reading and feeding on undead flesh—he has little taste for flesh that was merely once living. He has hazy recollections of how he and the other Ghost Queen morlocks came up from below and fought the ghouls, as the ghoul fever he contracted fragmented his memories. He knows the rough layout of areas C1, C6, C10, C11, C15, and C33, as his memories of these rooms are freshest.

Augrael's initial attitude to the heroes is indifferent, but it becomes friendly if the heroes prove that Augrael's chief rival among the morlocks, Graulgust, is dead. The heroes can convince Augrael to accompany them with a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check to Request his aid (for 1 day on a success; 1 week on a critical success) or with a successful DC 20 Intimidation check to Coerce him (for 1 day on a success; he attacks in a rage on a critical failure). He won't leave this level under any circumstances. Augrael's propensity to glut himself on ghouls the heroes defeat is both off-putting and macabre.

AUGRAEL

CREATURE 3

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM GHOUL UNDEAD

Male morlock ghoul exile (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 174, *Pathfinder Bestiary* 168)

Perception +8; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Necril, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +9 (+12 to Climb), Crafting +9 (Repair only), Occultism +10, Stealth +10

Str +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1

Light Blindness

AC 18; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10

HP 48, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious



Augrael

Speed 30 feet, burrow 5 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +12, **Damage** 1d8+7 piercing plus ghoul fever and paralysis

Melee ♦ claw +12 (agile), **Damage** 1d6+7 slashing plus paralysis

Consume Flesh ♦ (manipulate)

Requirements Augrael is adjacent to the corpse of an undead creature that was destroyed within the last hour; **Effect** Augrael devours a chunk of the destroyed undead creature and regains 2d6 Hit Points. He can regain Hit Points from any given corpse only once.

Ghoul Fever (disease) **Saving Throw** DC 20 Fortitude; **Stage 1** carrier with no ill effects (1 day); **Stage 2** 2d6 negative damage and regains half as many Hit Points from all healing (1 day); **Stage 3** as stage 2 (1 day); **Stage 4** 2d6 negative damage and gains no benefit from healing (1 day); **Stage 5** as stage 4 (1 day); **Stage 6** dead, and rises as a ghoul the next midnight

Paralysis (incapacitation, occult, necromancy)

Any living, non-elf creature hit by a ghoul's attack must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or become paralyzed. It can attempt a new save at the end of each of its turns, and the DC cumulatively decreases by 1 on each save.

Sneak Attack Augrael deals an additional 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Swift Leap ♦ Augrael jumps up to half his Speed. This movement doesn't trigger reactions.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for gaining Augrael as an ally.

C2. TUNNEL TO OTARI

Belcorra's pet purple worm dug this long tunnel for visitors who didn't want to travel overland. The passage leads under the Fogfen to the Stonescale kobold warrens beneath Otari (which connect to other Darklands passages). If you've run the "Menace Under Otari" adventure in the *Pathfinder Beginner Box*, this passage connects to area 15 beneath the Otari Fishery.

The secret door to area C1 is easier to find from this side—it's a smooth section of a natural passage. A hero identifies it with a successful DC 16 Perception check.

C3. HAUNTED READING ROOM

The cracks around the edge of this door glow faintly with greenish light, like the door to area B28.

An ancient, tattered sofa sits against the east wall of this room. The south wall shimmers with strange green light.

This private reading room was the second room in which Otari Ilvashti sought shelter in his desperate final days. As in area **B28**, his ghost's energy lingers here. When the heroes enter this room, the green light forms the message, "Belcorra fell to the Roseguard, but we never knew of these vaults below..."

A moment later, the words slide off the wall and slither away. If the heroes follow, the ribbon creeps back up to area **C6** and then past the stairs at area **C10**. Here, the ribbon hesitantly climbs the northern stair only to turn around and quickly slither further east. The ghostly light enters area **C11**, curls onward to **C33**, and then through the eastern door and down the stairs before fading. The heroes can pick up the final clue of Otari's path in area **D16**.

This spectral manifestation can appear once per day.

C4. NOT-SO-PRIVATE READING ROOM

LOW 3

An ancient sofa with its covering torn open and its stuffing and springs revealed sits against the west wall of this room.

This reading room contains much more than meets the eye. Secret doors in the north and south walls (either of which can be found with a successful DC 23 Perception check) open into a hidden hall around the room (area **C5**). A search of the wall above the couch (and another successful DC 23 Perception check) reveals a hidden peephole into this room. If Belcorra deemed a visitor too dangerous, her forces would ambush the visitor and bring them through a *teleportation circle* in area **C5b** to be imprisoned in area **D11**.

Hazard: The final victim of this room, a spy from Absalom whose intelligence had already brought Belcorra's activities to the attention of the Roseguard, met his end here. When he put up a fight and Belcorra tried to subdue him, she accidentally killed him instead. The spirit of the paranoid spy lingers on.

WATCHING WALL

HAZARD 4

COMPLEX HAUNT

Stealth +12 (expert)

Description An overwhelming feeling of being watched wells up in the minds of those in the room, an instant before an eerie red eye opens in the western wall.

Disable DC 22 Deception (trained) to appear uninteresting to the watching eye (and thus be ignored by it) or DC 22 Religion (trained) to ward against being seen by or affected by the eye

AC 21; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8

Hardness 12; **HP** 50 (BT 25); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage; **Weaknesses** positive 5

Someone is Watching ⤿ (emotion, enchantment, fear, mental) **Trigger** A living creature remains in area **C4** for at least 1 round; **Effect** An overwhelming wave of paranoia fills area **C4**. Each creature in the room must attempt a DC 25 Will save, with the following results. An eerie red eye then opens in the center of the western wall, looking about the room, and the haunt rolls initiative.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature becomes frightened 1 and feels like someone or something is watching them for as long as they remain frightened.

CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

Belcorra's sprawling library has been transformed from a store of necromantic knowledge into a stronghold for a cult of ghouls. The heroes can not only eliminate this vile cult but also uncover significant information about Belcorra's interests and plans.

Environmental Cues: books in untidy stacks, dust, looming shelves, musty mold, ruined tools and furniture, sounds of flipping pages, stink as of something rotting in a hidden corner, stuffy air.

CHAPTER 3 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 3 are as follows.

- +1 chain shirt
- +1 low-grade silver hatchet
- +1 striking pick
- barkskin potion
- crafters' eyepiece
- everburning torch
- lesser bravo's brew
- lesser healing potion
- moderate skeptic's elixir (page 214)
- scroll of hypercognition
- scroll of mending
- staff of necromancy
- The Whispering Reeds (page 216)
- ventriloquist's ring
- wand of quench (Advanced Player's Guide 223)

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Failure The creature becomes frightened 2 and treats no one as an ally as long as they remain frightened.

Critical Failure The creature becomes frightened 3 and is confused as long as they remain frightened.

Routine (1 action) The eye glances about, and those it can see (whether in area **C4** or outside of it) take 4d6 mental damage (DC 21 basic Will save) as fears of being watched impart ripples of pain. A creature that takes mental damage from this effect doesn't reduce their frightened value at the end of their next turn.

Reset The haunt becomes inert at the end of any round in which there are no frightened creatures it can see. It stays dormant for 1 hour, after which point it resets.

C5. SPYING HALL

This plain, angled hall has four alcoves. Each western alcove has a silvery circle of runes inlaid on the floor. A peephole in the eastern wall allows observation of the room beyond.

In addition to once giving Belcorra a place to spy upon visitors in area **C4**, the western alcoves formed a limited teleportation hub independent of the portal chambers. Neither alcove is currently active.

The northwestern alcove (area **C5a**) once teleported anyone entering it to the hidden alcove in area **A4**, and vice-versa. Since that room was scoured clean of its silver and defaced long ago by a determined treasure-hunter, it can't be restored. The southwestern alcove (area **C5b**) once teleported anyone entering it to the silver-lined cage in area **D11**. This was a one-way teleportation used to capture prisoners. This *teleportation circle* can be reactivated by the *awaken portal* ritual found in area **C35**, so long as that ritual is performed at both ends (that is, here and in area **D11**).

Both secret doors are obvious from this side.

C6. GUARD ROOM

LOW 3

Thick clouds of white mist fill this room entirely, making it difficult to discern any details.

The creature dwelling here generates this mist. The secret door in the west wall can be discovered with a successful DC 18 Perception check.

Creatures: Belcorra originally bound a trio of eerie, octopean water elementals called mist stalkers into this room to serve as guardians. Otari killed two of them years ago, but one remains. The monster can see through the mist it generates with ease, and as soon as it identifies intruders, it solidifies the mist and then moves to attack, fighting until destroyed. It pursues foes that flee, but it doesn't leave sight of this room.

MIST STALKER

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 114

Initiative Perception +13

Treasure: The secret alcove to the west once served as an emergency cache of supplies for the guards on this floor. Most of the supplies were raided during the chaos following Belcorra's death, but a few items of use remain, including two lesser bravo's brews, two *lesser healing potions*, a moderate skeptic's elixir (page 214), and a *barkskin potion*.

C7. STAIRS UP

These stairs ascend to area **B5**.

C8. KORLOK'S POST

MODERATE 3

The walls of this empty room are decorated with hundreds upon hundreds of tiny little hash marks, as if someone had been counting days for ages. To the northwest, an iron door with a barred window sits in the wall, a large but open padlock hanging from the door's latch.

Creatures: The second of the two devils Belcorra stationed on the upper levels of the Abomination Vaults stands guard here. The barbazu Korlok takes his post literally, and without any new orders from Belcorra over the past several centuries, he's remained here patiently under her final command to "wait here and let no one out until I come for you."

She never did.

This isn't the longest posting that Korlok has served, but it's already starting to grate on his patience. If the heroes enter the room, he stands at attention and in a slightly bored voice informs them that, as intruders, they are under arrest and should hand over their gear before stepping into the adjoining prison. He fights to the death if attacked or if any hero attempts to leave (this gives him an excuse to leave the room).

KORLOK

CREATURE 5

Male barbazu (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 88)

Initiative Perception +13

Side Quest: The devil is patient and willing to speak to the heroes for a few minutes if they wish. His initial attitude to the heroes is indifferent, but if they can improve this attitude (most likely with a successful DC 21 Diplomacy check to Make an Impression, but you might decide that other checks—such as a Deception check to Impersonate or to Lie—also appease Korlok), Korlok admits his frustration. He knows Belcorra is dead, but without access to his contract, he can't study

it for a loophole. He suggests a trade—he'll let the heroes go just this once, but the next time they return, he'll arrest them if they don't present him with his contract. He isn't sure where the paper is stored but suspects it's hidden somewhere in the library.

If the heroes present the contract, Korlok studies it and discovers that his service was meant to end if 99 weeks and 99 days passed without a new order from Belcorra. Before he vanishes back to Hell, the thankful devil explains that he knows of other devils in the Abomination Vaults: a zebub janitor on the level above and a contract devil named Urevian on a lower level (page 134). Korlok has nothing but scorn for the zebub, but he says that Urevian is shrewd but well-known for keeping his word.

C9. PRISON

An overturned chamber pot lies next to a rectangular patch of fungus that might have once been a mattress in the corner of this room. A skeleton is just visible within the fungus.

The skeleton is all that remains of Belcorra's first chef, a hapless man who had the misfortune of over-spicing a meal. Perhaps due to some lingering effect of the fastidious chef's spirit, the fungus here is not only edible but rather tasty.

C10. TWIN STAIRWELLS

This hallway is a landing for two staircases: one leading up to area **B2** in the north and one leading up to area **B32** in the south. Splintered, rotten wood lies scattered around this hall, left over during the morlocks' flight from this level.

C11. MAIN LIBRARY

MODERATE 3

Hundreds of stone shelves are carved into the walls of this fifteen-foot-wide hallway. While there are many gaps in the collection, a staggering number of books, scrolls, and folios remain. Signs hang above several doors off of this hall. A faint, blue glow flickers beneath a sign to the south.

The books kept here cover a wide range of subjects, and the Cult of the Canker keep the stacks organized. A hero with the luxury of pursuing these tomes for 8 hours learns the library's organization and gains a +1 item bonus to checks to Recall Knowledge on regional history, arcane topics, or occult topics when using the Investigate exploration activity here.

The signs here are all in Undercommon. The one above area **C15** to the south reads, "Reading Room." The ones over the smaller doors are labeled as follows: area **C12** is "Repair Storage," area **C13** is "Workroom,"



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area **C17** is “Safety” with a carving of leaping flames, area **C18** is “Personal Quarters,” area **C19** is “Scrivener’s Office,” area **C26** is “Belcorra’s Office,” the hallway leading to areas **C30** to **C32** is “North Wing,” and area **C33** is “Restricted Collection.”

Creatures: Four ghouls all dressed in long, pale-blue robes work here, both to stand guard and to select or retrieve books for the scribes or cult leaders to use or repair as needed. They don’t immediately attack the heroes but do lick their lips in anticipation as they size up their fleshy bits. One ghoul asks the party if they’re here to “donate flesh for the Canker,” hoping to find out if the heroes are willing to offer body parts to the work in area **C34**. A hero foolish enough to agree is expected to lop off an appendage (a finger, toe, or ear suffices) for the ghouls, who scurry off to area **C34** with the donation. Any other attempt to interact with the ghouls quickly makes them impatient and they attack. These ghouls fight until destroyed.

If a fight here last more than 4 rounds or is unusually loud, the ghouls in area **C15** come to investigate.

GHOULS (4)

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary 169

Initiative Perception +7

Side Quest: A hero who knows Morlibint of Odd Stories in Otari (or any hero who makes a successful DC 14 Society check to Recall Knowledge when seeing these books) realizes that Morlibint would likely be interested in this collection. If a hero tells Morlibint about the library here, the wizard eagerly provides a long list of specific titles, publishers, and general themes to seek in the shelves. In this area’s Treasure section, along with those of other book-filled rooms nearby, the number of books that can be salvaged and collected for Morlibint are given a Bulk rating. A hero searching for books in one of these rooms can attempt a DC 18 Perception check to sort through the books and, on a success, secure 1 Bulk from the room’s total available book Bulk (or 2 Bulk on a critical success). Morlibint pays 5 gp per Bulk delivered to him in this way.

Treasure: The books kept here are of general knowledge and thus little interest to Morlibint; there are only 2 Bulk of books here to gather for him.

XP Award: If the heroes deliver at least 12 Bulk of books to Morlibint, they complete the side quest. They can still sell him more books, if they find any.

C12. REPAIR MATERIALS

Shelves on the wall here contain iron sorting racks, jars, and all manner of bookbinding tools.

Treasure: This room contains repair materials for the upkeep of books. All are too old to be useful. A hero Searching this room discovers two 2nd-level *scrolls of mending* and a *scroll of hypercognition*.

C13. LIBRARIAN’S WORKROOM

MODERATE 3

The door to this room from area **C11** is locked, and its key is inside the room. A hero can Pick the Lock with three successful DC 20 Thievery checks or Force it Open with a successful DC 20 Athletics check, but a failed Athletics check alerts the ghost in the room.

Three worktables line the walls of this room with a single stool near one of the tables. A skeleton wearing a light blue librarian’s robe lies in a heap beside the stool.

Three specialized benches here are outfitted to bind books, repair pages, and prepare parchment, respectively. The tables and tools are old and useless.

Creatures: The ghost of the librarian Jarelle Kaldrian still haunts this workroom. Jarelle couldn’t escape the other scholars’ increasingly gruesome schemes, so she retreated into this room, locked the door, and drank a jar of arsenic (used to work with book bindings) rather than be eaten alive. She died quickly and in agony, only to rise soon thereafter as a ghost. Jarelle spends her time pantomiming the act of repairing books.

Jarelle is suspicious of the heroes but not immediately hostile unless they show aggression, though she becomes irate and attacks if they speak ill of Belcorra. If the heroes choose to talk to her rather than fight, they can see that she seems drawn to her tools and equipment, as if by a compulsion to reenact her life’s work.

JARELLE KALDRIAN

CREATURE 5

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM GHOST INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Female human ghost librarian (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 166)

Perception +12; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Necril, Undercommon

Skills Library Lore +15, Stealth +14

Str –5, **Dex** +5, **Con** +0, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

Site Bound (area **C13**)

AC 21; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +14, **Will** +12

HP 48, negative healing, rejuvenation; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious;

Resistance all damage 5 (except force, ghost touch, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Rejuvenation (divine, necromancy) Removing this room’s tables and tools allows Jarelle to move on to the afterlife.

Speed fly 25 feet

Melee ♦ ghostly hand +14 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 3d8 negative

Malevolent Possession ♦♦ (divine, incapacitation, mental, necromancy, possession) Jarelle attempts to possess an adjacent corporeal creature. This has the same effect as the *possession* spell (with a spell DC of 22), except since Jarelle doesn't have a physical body, she's unaffected by that restriction of the spell.

Poisoned Breath ♦♦ (divine, necromancy, poison) Jarelle exhales a 15-foot cone of toxic mist that deals 5d6 poison damage (DC 22 basic Fortitude save; on a critical failure, the target is also enfeebled 1 for 24 hours). She then can't use Poisoned Breath again for 1d4 rounds.

XP Award: If the heroes put Jarelle's spirit to rest without fighting her, award them XP as if they'd defeated her in combat.

Treasure: A search of Jarelle's remains turns up the key to the door to area C11, a gold paperweight worth 10 gp, and a *crafter's eyepiece*.

C14. LIBRARIAN'S BEDROOM

A small, cramped bed is wedged awkwardly into this room, as the walls are lined with sagging bookshelves.

Jarelle once lived here before she took her life in area C13. The books she kept here were mostly duplicates of others found elsewhere in the library, but she viewed them as her private collection.

Treasure: There are 2 Bulk of books here to gather for Morlibint.

C15. GAUNTLIGHT READING ROOM MODERATE 3

This chamber's smooth stone walls glisten with moisture despite the air being dry and somewhat stuffy. Several low divans are arranged in a circle and interspersed with low tables stacked with a few books and rotting morsels of decayed flesh. A twisting ribbon of pale blue light stretches between the bare floor at the room's center and the ceiling above, its points of contact sending creepers of what looks like infected tissue out in a distorted spiral for a few feet.

As in area B35, the ribbon of sickly light is a manifestation of *Gauntlight's* growing power. This room once served as a reading room for library staff, as well as a place where they could directly evaluate *Gauntlight's* energies. This eerie light churns in a 5-foot-diameter burst at the room's center. Any living creature ending its turn in it takes 4d6 negative damage (DC 18 basic Reflex save), and undead creatures regain the same amount in Hit Points. As long as *Gauntlight* remains at its low-level activation, the ribbon of light continues to churn, but if the heroes

rescue Lasda Venkervale from his captivity area D9, the ribbon winks out.

A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check while Searching this room spots the secret door to area C16 in the curved western wall.

Creatures: Today, Cult of the Canker ghouls relax here with books and snacks. Ripened morlock flesh has been a staple of their diets lately, but the ghouls and the cultist who commands them decide to add adventurer flesh to the menu once they spot the heroes. As they fight, any ghoul brought below half its Hit Points moves into the ribbon of light to gain some necromantic healing, Shoving a rival ghoul out of the way if necessary.

CANKER CULTIST

CREATURE 3

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM GHOUL UNDEAD

Ghoul zealot (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 168)

Perception +11; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Necril, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +9, Athletics +10, Intimidation +10, Occultism +8, Religion +8, Stealth +9

Str +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +3

Items 2 lumps of decayed flesh strung on a necklace

AC 19; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +12

HP 45, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

Speed 30 feet, burrow 5 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +12, **Damage** 1d8+6 piercing plus ghoul fever and paralysis

Melee ♦ claw +12 (agile), **Damage** 1d4+6 slashing plus paralysis

Occult Prepared Spells DC 20, attack +12; **2nd** *harm*, *phantom pain*; **1st** *command*, *grim tendrils*, *ray of enfeeblement*; **Cantrips (2nd)** *chill touch*, *daze*, *mage hand*, *telekinetic projectile*

Consume Flesh ♦ (manipulate) **Requirements** The Canker cultist is adjacent to the corpse of a creature that died within the last hour, or is carrying a specially prepared lump of decaying flesh; **Effect** The Canker cultist devours a chunk of the corpse or the lump of decaying flesh and regains Hit Points. They regain 1d6 Hit Points from consuming the flesh of a creature that died within the last hour, and 2d6 Hit Points from the lump. The cultist can regain Hit Points from any given corpse only once.

Ghoul Fever (disease) **Saving Throw** DC 20 Fortitude; **Stage 1** carrier with no ill effects (1 day); **Stage 2** 2d6 negative damage and regains half as many Hit Points from all healing (1 day); **Stage 3** as stage 2 (1 day); **Stage 4** 2d6 negative damage and gains no benefit from healing (1 day); **Stage 5** as stage 4 (1 day); **Stage 6** dead, and rises as a ghoul the next midnight

Paralysis (incapacitation, occult, necromancy) Any living, non-elf creature hit by a Canker cultist's attack must

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succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or become paralyzed. It can attempt a new save at the end of each of its turns, and the DC cumulatively decreases by 1 on each save.

Swift Leap ♦ The cultist jumps up to half its Speed. This movement doesn't trigger reactions.

GHOULS (2)

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary 169

Initiative Perception +7



Canker Cultist

C16. LEVEL THREE PORTAL CHAMBER

The walls of this circular chamber are decorated with intricate, intertwining runes and shapes carved into deep into the stone and filled with dull, silvery metal. The floor and ceiling are polished to a reflective sheen.

This room contains an inert *teleportation circle* like the one in area **B17**. Just as with that room, this *teleportation circle* must be reactivated with the *awaken portal* ritual in area **C35** before it can be used.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for activating this portal.

C17. FIREFIGHTING SUPPLIES

Several buckets of sand and a number of large barrels crowd this cramped storeroom. A simple wooden case with a closed lid is attached to the back of the door.

The supplies kept here are available to extinguish fires, a significant threat in any library. The barrels once held water but now contain only mildew.

Treasure: The case on the door is latched and holds a *wand of quench* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 223).

C18. TEMPORARY BUNKS

LOW 3

Three plain beds have been awkwardly stacked against the west wall of this room, leaving room for a single low table heaped with foul-smelling chunks of flesh and bone.

While most servants who toiled in the library kept quarters aboveground, some needed rest during long stretches of research. The ghouls don't need the beds and simply stacked them out of the way.

Creatures: This room now serves as a dining room for three ghouls who are feasting on the remains of a morlock. They attack the heroes on sight, but the first one injured tries to flee to area **C19** to recruit Aller Rosk's aid.

GHOULS (3)

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary 169

Initiative Perception +7

C19. SCRIVENER'S WORKSHOP

MODERATE 3

While this room might have once served as a writing studio, today its condition has been all but obliterated by dozens

of tiny swatches of skinned flesh marked with tattoos. Judging by the workspace on the table in the middle of the room, these tattoos have been placed postmortem, with a swath of pale skin stretched over the desk sporting a half-completed image of a sinister woman.

Creatures: Aller Rosk served as a notary and scribe for Belcorra when he lived, but after he died and became a ghoul, his nature and interests shifted, if only slightly. He's developed a unique taste for tattooed flesh. The idea of writing something down and then eating it appeals to the twisted ghoul, and when he isn't preparing a less-than-fresh morlock for distribution to the other ghouls, he's here, preparing his latest work on a swath of morlock skin. His current project is a depiction of Belcorra. While he doesn't intend to eat this one, some part of him knows that this work of art, once complete, won't have a fate any different than the numerous others he's created over the years.

Aller is focused on his work and takes a -2 penalty to initiative checks. If interrupted, he seethes and curses, wasting an action each round for the first 2 rounds voicing his displeasure and informing the heroes about the blasphemous limericks and humiliating odes he'll be tattooing onto their corpses once he's defeated them. Single-minded to a fault, Aller Rosk pursues foes relentlessly once a fight begins and fights until he is destroyed.

ALLER ROSK CREATURE 5

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM GHoul UNDEAD
Male ghoul tattoo artist (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 168)

Perception +15; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Necril, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +13, Athletics +14, Crafting +13, Occultism +11, Stealth +11

Str +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2

AC 22; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10

HP 75, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

Speed 30 feet, burrow 5 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +15, **Damage** 2d8+7 piercing plus ghoul fever and paralysis



Aller Rosk

Melee ♦ claw +15 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+7 slashing plus paralysis

Consume Tattooed Flesh ♦ (manipulate) **Requirements** Aller is adjacent to a tattooed scrap of flesh or to the corpse of a creature that died within the last hour; **Effect** Aller devours a bite of flesh and regains 4d6 Hit Points. If the piece of flesh was tattooed, he is also quickened 1 and can use this extra action to make a jaws Strike. Aller then can't Consume Flesh for 1d4 rounds. He has one piece of tattooed flesh on his person.

Ghoul Fever (disease) As Canker cultist (page 59), but DC 22.

Paralysis (incapacitation, occult, necromancy) As Canker cultist (page 59), but DC 22.

Swift Leap ♦ As Canker cultist (page 59).

Treasure: This room contains 2 Bulk of books about tattoo artistry and historical tattoos of interest to Morlibint.

C20. SCRIVENER'S OFFICE

The desk in this office has been repurposed into a messy butcher's block. A shiny silver hatchet is wedged in the top of the desk, and bits of decaying pale flesh lie strewn about the room.

Aller has repurposed this office into a makeshift butcher's shop. Of course, there's little artistry that goes into the preparation of a morlock body for ghouls to eat, other than a few quick and brutal hacks with a hatchet.

Treasure: The hatchet is a +1 low-grade silver hatchet.

C21. FOOD STORAGE

The heaps of slowly decaying bodies hung and stacked here reveal this former bedroom's current use as a meat locker.

Five dead morlocks are stored here, their flesh decomposing (aging, to the ghoul palate) somewhat slowly in the chilly room. There's nothing of interest in here, but the filthy conditions expose any hero who Searches the room to blueblisters, a disease arising from an uncommon flesh-eating bacteria. Ghouls find flesh infected with blueblisters to be quite savory. A hero who succeeds at a DC 18 Medicine or Nature check realizes the danger these infected bodies pose before Searching the room.

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BLUEBLISTERS

DISEASE 3

DISEASE **VIRULENT**

This flesh-eating disease causes prominent and painful blue blisters on the skin and gums. You can't reduce your sickened condition while afflicted with blueblisters.

Saving Throw DC 17 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 day; **Stage 1** sickened 1 (1 day); **Stage 2** sickened 1 and drained 1 (1 day); **Stage 3** sickened 2 and drained 1 (1 week); **Stage 4** sickened 2 and drained 2 (1 week)

C22. ELEVATOR UP

The doors to this room open onto solid stone if the magical elevator beyond is still up at area **B34**.

This plain, circular room is empty. An image of a moss-caked skull adorns the eastern wall.

The floor of this room is a magical elevator that links to area **B34** above. If a creature touches Nhimbalo's symbol, the floor gradually ascends 30 feet. (If the heroes aren't aware of the secret door in area **B34**, they might not realize this dead end leads anywhere.) It isn't possible to crush anything in the elevator shaft; if anything gets in the way of the elevator's ascent, such as an item stuck in the doorway to the north or south, the elevator simply descends again.

C23. GHOUL GARDEN

LOW 3

A large mound of dark-gray soil lies heaped in the southern half of this room.

The ghouls have converted this office into a garden by hauling in mounds of swampy soil from the surface.

Creatures: The ghouls have cultivated a pair of violet fungi here, both as a method to "flash season" flesh and to serve as guardians. The fungi aren't yet fully grown but are still dangerous to non-ghouls (the fungi have been trained to a rudimentary degree, and they don't lash out at their undead gardeners).

WEAK VIOLET FUNGI (2)

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 6, 286

Initiative Perception +6

C24. CANKER SHRINE

MODERATE 3

Whatever this room's original use, today it serves as a horrific shrine. A rotting heap of fleshy material that seems to be composed of equal parts eyes, mouths, and skin lies in a stinking mound in the middle of the room, surrounded by two dozen tiny humanoid effigies crafted out of small bones and tangles of knotted hair.

The mound of flesh is a slowly decaying gibbering moulder—a creature the ghouls revere as "pure flesh." The effigies arranged around it are representations of each ghoul in the cult. The smell in this room is particularly foul. A living creature must succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude save when it starts its turn in the room or become sickened 1. On a success, the creature is temporarily immune to the smell here for 24 hours.

Creatures: Two cultists of the Canker are worshiping here, and they become irate if their veneration is interrupted. A hero identifies the cultists' reverence for the dead gibbering moulder on any successful DC 20 Religion check to identify them, in addition to any other information gained. Any attack against the dead gibbering moulder—intentional or otherwise—shocks the cultists, causing them to become slowed 1 for 1 round, but it also causes them to focus all their attacks on the blasphemer. They fight until destroyed.

CANKER CULTISTS (2)

CREATURE 3

Page 59

Initiative Perception +11

C25. WASHROOM

This bathroom's commode and tub are caked with dust.

It's perhaps a blessing that the ghouls have no use for this room. In fact, they rarely ever look in here, so stealthy heroes might use it to hide out in the middle of the ghouls' territory.

C26. BELCORRA'S OFFICE

This office is brightly lit by several glowing lights in a chandelier hanging above a desk and chair. Mirrors hang on the north and south wall, although both of them are badly cracked.

The light in this chamber isn't particularly harmful to ghouls, but the cult of the Canker doesn't find the lighting pleasant—further, they view this area and the rooms beyond as the private domain of their patron, Belcorra, and out of respect for her on the day of her return, they've left this room and those beyond it untouched. If they discover the heroes have entered the area, though, the surviving ghouls pursue them in here with a righteous fury—as long as any heroes are in here, Cult of the Canker ghouls gain a +1 circumstance bonus to attack rolls against them.

The western door is locked, and the lock plate is engraved with a stylized open book. This decoration matches the image on one of the keys in area **A13**.

The keyhole is large enough to look through, but it's impossible to see anything in the room other than to identify that the room is also brightly lit.

Treasure: The chandelier's bright light comes from an *everburning torch* socketed into its center. When socketed, it reflects through many pretty (but valueless) chunks of glass.

C27. BELCORRA'S READING ROOM MODERATE 3

The door to this room from area C26 is locked with an oversized lock; its key is on the key ring in area A13. A hero can Pick the Lock with three successful DC 18 Thievery checks or Force it Open with a successful DC 22 Athletics check, but a failed Athletics check alerts the fey reading here to the presence of intruders.

This room looks exceptionally comfortable with a thick carpet, bright light from a glowing chandelier, and soothing incense. Two overstuffed chairs sit opposite a low table stacked with books, while more books sit on a set of shelves to the west. A softly gurgling fountain carved to resemble a mossy skull leaking water sits in the northwest corner.

This room once served as a private and comfortable place for Belcorra to relax and read, with minor magical trappings like the scent of incense, the bubbling of the fountain, and the bright light working together to afford a pleasant reading experience.

Most of the books here concern topics of sacrifice, incorporeal undead, and extinguishing living bodies and souls to create powerful magic items. Other books are tales (often fictionalized) of famous hauntings throughout the Inner Sea region. The books are quite old but are well preserved. They can be used just like the books in area C11 to aid in Investigation on these topics, providing a +1 item bonus.

Heroes Searching this room discover an iron key bearing a defaced symbol of Aroden between two chair cushions. The key unlocks the door to area C30.

Creatures: The room's comforts are wasted on the current occupant, a lurker in light named Shimmergrin who recently slipped into the brightly lit room to satisfy their own curiosity. The creature sits awkwardly in one of the oversized (for them) chairs in the room as they focus on balancing a book a little bit too large for them to handle. They periodically cackle and titter over the book as they annotate its text with a colorful quill. They've become distracted by the grisly descriptions of ritual sacrifice in an illustrated copy of a text called *Pathways of the Worm* and angrily attack if interrupted. If brought below 20 Hit Points, the fey uses *dimension door* to flee to area C26 (although they can't do so if the

heroes have doused that room's illumination) and flit away. They plot revenge against the heroes, most likely by allying with the ghouls in area C33.

LURKER IN LIGHT

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 169

Initiative Perception +13

Treasure: As in area C26, the chandelier incorporates a removable *everburning torch*.

A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check while perusing this collection turns up a slender volume called *Ineffable Hauntings* tucked inside of a larger book about ghosts. This volume contains the formula for the *create undead* ritual to create poltergeists. It also contains a detailed, academic analysis of the *ghostly weapon* spell. A character who can cast 3rd-level arcane or occult spells can use these notes to retrain a 3rd-level spell they know into *ghostly weapon* with only 1 day of downtime. A wizard can simply transcribe this spell into their spellbook. This book is worth 20 gp.

Among these tomes are enough texts to present 1 Bulk of books to Morlibint.

C28. PRIVATE WASHROOM

The bathtub and commode in this room are surprisingly clean.

Although a minor enchantment to keep this room clean still operates, there's little of interest here.

C29. ABANDONED GUARD POST

This now-empty room was once a guard post. Nothing remains other than a broken iron stool and a well-used whetstone. The stairs beyond the door to the south lead down to area D1.

C30. SIEGE CASTLE HISTORY

SEVERE 3

This room is locked. The heroes can unlock it with the key from area C27 or with four successful DC 25 Thievery checks. Alternatively, they can Force it Open with a successful DC 22 Athletics check.

Shelves line the walls, while what appears to be a partially completed—or perhaps partially ruined—sculpture of a sprawling city sits atop a five-foot-diameter circular table.

The sculpture is of Absalom, depicted with heavy damage in several areas. With a successful DC 20 Society check to Recall Knowledge, a hero can confirm that the damage roughly matches what the city was said to have suffered over the centuries from all of the siege attempts it repelled, up until about 500 years ago (it doesn't include

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more recent attacks, such as the Red Siege, the Siege of the Ravenous Raja, or the Black Echelon Uprising).

Most of these books focus on the history of Absalom's sieges, and while many of them contain contradictory information, the collection as a whole makes cross-referencing it to determine likely errors easier. Anyone perusing these books finds heavy annotations in all of them; taken together, they reveal that a previous researcher was using the books to catalogue the failures of prior sieges and analyze the city's response to various exterior threats, all in the interest of ensuring the success of a new siege. Books in this room can be used just like the books in area C11 to aid in Investigation on the history of sieges of Absalom, providing a +1 item bonus to relevant skill checks.

Creatures: A wood golem carved to resemble Belcorra still stands guard in this room. It lumbers to action as soon as anyone enters the room who doesn't also resemble Belcorra. It doesn't pursue enemies out of the room but otherwise fights until destroyed.

WOOD GOLEM

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 130

Initiative Perception +12

Treasure: A wealth of books of potential interest to Morlibint can be found here—4 Bulk in all.

C31. UNFINISHED LIBRARY

The walls of this room are only partially completed and bear the telltale marks of chisels and picks. Discarded stone-working tools lie against the unfinished walls.

Belcorra planned an expansion wing to house additional tomes that had started to pile up elsewhere in her library, but the project was never completed before her death, and the ghouls haven't yet gathered the initiative to resume the work.

Treasure: Most of the mining tools remaining here are mundane, but one of them is a +1 *striking pick*.

C32. FURNACE ROOM

LOW 3

The air in this room feels blisteringly hot, although the source of the heat isn't apparent. Neither the wooden barrel containing a few iron scoops nor the metal bin with a hatch-like lid seems to be the source.

This room was used to burn refuse that accumulated in the dungeon—more often than not, books Belcorra came into possession of that she found to be useless or dangerous. Originally, the refuse would be loaded into

the metal bin; once the hatch was closed, powerful fire magic incinerated the contents, and the ashes were then scooped out and dumped in the swamp.

Hazard: In the aftermath of Belcorra's death, a squabble between two scholars concluded in this room when they attempted to burn each other alive. The machine malfunctioned and burned both scholars to ashes. Today, echoes of their souls haunt the room.

VENGEFUL FURNACE

HAZARD 4

COMPLEX **HAUNT**

Stealth +15 (expert)

Description The hatch atop the haunted furnace flips open and disgorges a pair of shrieking, burning ghosts.

Disable DC 22 Intimidation (trained) to cow one of the vengeful spirits or DC 25 Religion (trained) to exorcise the spirit. The haunt remains active until both spirits are cowed or exorcised, or until the furnace is destroyed.

AC 21; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +8

Hardness 13; **HP** 60 (BT 30); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage; **Weaknesses** cold 8, positive 5

Ghostly Assault ⤿ (divine, enchantment, fire, mental)

Trigger A living creature with an Intelligence score of 15 or higher enters the room, or any creature touches the furnace; **Effect** Burning ghosts burst from the furnace, exposing the triggering creature to the haunt's burn knowledge effect. The haunt rolls initiative.

Burn Knowledge (divine, enchantment, fire, mental) The target of the haunt's initial Ghostly Assault, as well as any creature later hit by a burning lash Strike, loses random memories, as if these thoughts were incinerated like pages in a burning book. The creature must attempt a DC 23 Will save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature becomes stupefied 1 for 1 minute while they forget random memories, as if these thoughts were incinerated like pages in a burning book.

Failure As success, but the stupefied 1 condition persists for 24 hours.

Critical Failure As failure, but stupefied 2.

Routine (3 actions) The burning ghosts lash at a random stupefied creature in the room (or any random creature, if no creatures in the room are stupefied).

Ranged ♦ burning lash +14 (fire, mental, range 10 feet),

Damage 2d6 fire plus 2d6 mental and burn knowledge

Reset The haunt resets 1 hour after there are no creatures in the room.

Treasure: The furnace contains a layer of ashes. Searching through the ashes turns up the only item to survive its owner's immolation—a *ventriloquist's ring* carved with strange glyphs.

C33. RESTRICTED COLLECTION

SEVERE 3

Rows of bookshelves run the length of this room, although in places they've been damaged or tipped over. The books that once sat on the ruined shelves appear to have been relocated to other shelves. Several doors lead out from this room, but the double door to the north is the most impressive: it's made of stone, carved with a strange feminine shape rising from the ghost-laced mists of a cemetery of emptied graves.

The bulk of Belcorra's most valuable tomes were kept here, in a collection that was available to only key scholars and very influential visitors. Much of the damage done to this room is relatively recent, for when the Ghost Queen morlocks emerged into this room from the stairs to the east, they clashed violently with the Cult of the Canker. Both sides suffered losses, but the ghouls won the fight and forced the surviving morlocks to flee west, eventually finding their way to the Servants' Quarters level upstairs.

The books here cover all the same subject matter as those in area **C11** but are much more useful and better organized. Checks to Recall Knowledge about the relevant topics here have a +2 item bonus instead.

A hero who succeeds at a DC 25 Religion check to Recall Knowledge recognizes the scene on the north door as the Outer God Nhimbalothe feeding on the spirits of those who worship her.

The stairs beyond the east door descend to area **D16**.

Creatures: A single Canker cultist and four ghouls are repairing the shelves as best they can—a task that keeps suffering setbacks due to the decayed quality of the ancient wood. They don't immediately attack, but instead adopt a defensive position around the north door. The Canker cultist then addresses the heroes, offering them the chance to have an audience with her high priestess, Nhakazarin. Of course, this is a ruse—she hopes to lead the heroes to her high priestess only to betray them, and if her attempt to Lie to the heroes fails (a likely outcome, given her mere +3 Deception modifier), she grows frustrated and orders an attack. These ghouls all fight until destroyed.

CANKER CULTIST

CREATURE 3

Page 59

Initiative Perception +11

GHOULS (4)

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary 169

Initiative Perception +7

Treasure: There are 6 Bulk of books here to gather for Morlibint.

C34. TEMPLE OF THE CANKER

MODERATE 3

Soft light illuminates several display cases in this vast room. Once used to display books, the cases stand smashed and empty. Along the curved north wall stands a hideous, towering figure of a woman. The form is composed of hundreds of portions of stitched-together flesh from a variety of different creatures and draped in tattered, filthy sheets. The stench of rot from the statue fills even this large room.

Belcorra once displayed her most important and valuable tomes here. A graveknight named Caliddo Haruvex, one of Belcorra's distant relatives and a loyal guardian of her treasure vault far below, retrieved the books and returned to the vault with them on Belcorra's orders. The magical light that once illuminated their display cases remains, rendering this room well-lit.

The immense rotten construction to the north is an incomplete shell akin to a flesh golem. The Cult of the Canker intends it to serve as a new body for Belcorra once it's finished. The rotting statue looks ominous but is inanimate... for now.

The secret door to the west is particularly well hidden; heroes Searching this area must succeed at a DC 30 Perception check to find it. None of the ghouls know it's here, and it's unlikely that the heroes will find it at first. Note, however, that the existence of this secret door (as well as all other secret doors on the upper three levels) is revealed in the blueprints found in area **D8**.

Creatures: The high priestess of the Cult of the Canker is a ghoul named Nhakazarin, a woman who was cruel and sadistic even in life. Born with an infestation of undeath in her soul, she served as one of Belcorra's many necromantic advisers. After her death, she was the one who galvanized the other servants of this level to prepare for Belcorra's resurrection.

Nhakazarin spends her time working with bits of flesh harvested from morlocks, monsters, and even other ghouls. She's stitching this flesh to her masterpiece, a 15-foot-tall statue of Belcorra made from decaying meat and stained bone.

Nhakazarin demands the heroes abandon their gear and their lives, promising glory with the Canker if they agree to accept ghoul fever and then be locked away in the Author's Hall (area **C38**) until they transform. If the heroes refuse, Nhakazarin laughs imperiously and attacks, using Intimidation for initiative. As she fights, she promises the heroes that they'll join her cult, willingly or not. Once combat begins, Nhakazarin prefers to fight in a square adjacent to her statue so she can use her Consume Masterpiece ability if needed.

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NHAKAZARIN

CREATURE 5

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM GHOUL UNDEAD

Female ghoul cult leader (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 168)

Perception +10; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Necril, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +13, Intimidation +14,

Occultism +11, Religion +10, Stealth +11

Str +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +2, **Wis** -1, **Cha** +5



Nhakazarin

Items *staff of necromancy*

AC 21; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +12, **Will** +9

HP 75, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

Speed 30 feet, burrow 5 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +14, **Damage** 2d8+6 piercing plus ghoul fever and paralysis

Melee ♦ claw +14 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+6 slashing plus paralysis

Melee ♦ staff +14 (magical, two-hand d8), **Damage** 1d4+6 bludgeoning

Divine Prepared Spells DC 22, attack +14; **3rd** *chilling darkness*, *harm*, *vampiric touch*; **2nd** *dispel magic*, *harm*, *silence*, *sound burst*; **1st** *bane*, *command*, *harm*, *ray of enfeeblement*; **Cantrips (3rd)** *chill touch*, *daze*, *read aura*, *shield*, *sigil*

Domain Spells 1 Focus Point, DC 22; **3rd** *touch of undeath* (*Core Rulebook* 398)

Consume Flesh ♦ (manipulate) **Requirements** Nhakazarin is adjacent to the corpse of a creature that died within the last hour; **Effect** Nhakazarin devours a chunk of the corpse and regains 3d6 Hit Points. Nhakazarin can regain Hit Points from any given corpse only once.

Consume Masterpiece ♦ (manipulate) **Requirements** Nhakazarin is adjacent to the rotting statue of Belcorra in area **C34**; **Effect** Nhakazarin devours a chunk of flesh from the statue and regains 3d6 Hit Points and is quickened 1 until the end of her next turn. She can use this extra action only to make a jaws Strike or Cast a Spell. She can feed from the statue only once each day.

Ghoul Fever (disease) As Canker cultist (page 59), but DC 22.

Paralysis (incapacitation, occult, necromancy) As Canker cultist (page 59), but DC 22.

Swift Leap ♦ As Canker cultist (page 59).

The Statue: Note the condition the heroes leave the statue in, as it might animate and cause them problems later, based on their actions in area **F25**.

C35. SECURE COLLECTION

The walls of this small room have built-in shelves. Books line the shelves to the north and south, while a stack of loose scrolls sits on the shelf to the west. A single chair and a small writing desk sit in the middle of the room.

Belcorra kept her most valuable and significant books in the large chamber to the east, but she stored everything involving her work on *Gauntlight* and the Abomination Vaults here. These resources have remained here since her demise, since the ghouls don't know this room exists.

The largest book on the northern shelf is a large journal that focuses largely on Belcorra's hatred of Absalom. It's written in Aklo, and a hero who spends 8 hours reading it learns of her family history from their exile to poverty and her eventual return to the region to build a lair from which she hoped to exact revenge on the city that disgraced and impoverished her family. The last several pages of the journal document much of her work in building the Abomination Vaults. While the journal doesn't offer many specific details, it mentions construction of fleshwarping laboratories, arenas where she pitted enemies against monstrous champions for her amusement, prisons, torture chambers, links to the Darklands, and a great temple where "once the Empty Death herself brushed against this fragile world." Belcorra's entries often speak of her minions in the abstract, as if bragging about how many have come to serve her in creating the complex, but she only ever mentions one by name: her "amusingly vain" apprentice, Volluk Azrinae. One of the last entries describes how this apprentice arrived from "a community of upstart and meddlesome drow below" to serve Belcorra. The notes don't provide any further information about this drow community.

The stack of loose papers and scrolls contain a wealth of information about *Gauntlight* (page 215). These papers are written in Aklo; sorting and then reading them takes 8 hours, after which the reader can learn about *Gauntlight's* functions as if they'd fully researched the artifact.

Treasure: A folio containing several esoteric diagrams is sandwiched between several books on teleportation on the north shelf. The folio details Belcorra's series of linked *teleportation circles* to quickly move around the Abomination Vaults, and it notes the importance of using the *awaken portal* ritual (page 223) to activate them should time or mischance deplete them of power. The *awaken portal* ritual is included here.

The largest book in the room, on the southern shelf, is a rare text called *The Whispering Reeds* (page 216). This magical book describes 77 supposed encounters with the Outer Goddess Nhimbaloth and how each encounter left physical or mental scars. The book is heavily annotated in Belcorra's hand, particularly in areas where themes of Nhimbaloth as an "eater of ghosts" play into the parables and tales.

C36. SCRIPTORIUM

SEVERE 3

This room is lined with tables divided up into several narrow carrels with old wooden chairs pushed in against them. Upon them, old stacks of paper and tattered books sit

amid dry inkwells and brittle writing quills. To the south, a skeleton dressed in shiny-looking chain shirt lies slumped on the floor, clutching something in its bony hands.

This room once served as a scriptorium where Belcorra's scribes worked to transcribe and copy important books.

A hero who Searches the eastern wall and succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check finds an empty carrel, which folds up to access a secret door leading to area C37.

Creatures: The skeletal remains to the south were once a drow woman named Chandriu Invisar, director of the scriptorium. Chandriu harbored a poorly hidden adoration for Belcorra's apprentice, Volluk, and in the days after Belcorra's death, Chandriu tried to convince him to flee with her to start a new life together somewhere far from the Abomination Vaults. Volluk spurned Chandriu, insisting that "Belcorra needs me now in death even more than in life; you should consider the same!" Chandriu returned here in despair, only to be murdered by her disgruntled scribes eager to get out from under her bullying, and she grasped for Volluk's portrait as she died.

As with so many others who had the misfortune to perish in the Abomination Vaults, Chandriu arose as a ghost. She now spends her days floating among the work spaces, as if looking over the shoulders of scribes to appraise their work, not realizing that any time has passed at all since the hour preceding Belcorra's death. When the heroes enter the room, the ghost mistakes them for new scribes and chastises them for their tardiness before ordering them to begin transcribing the old books stacked here. Any attempt to do anything other than comply with Chandriu's commands (including simply leaving the room) arouses her anger and prompts her to attack.

If the heroes each sit at a carrel and begin to work—or even pantomime working—Chandriu is satisfied unless they stop. She entertains brief questions and discussion from her "scribes," though, and will answer any questions the heroes have, within reason, and that don't make her realize that Belcorra is dead or that she's a ghost. Every 10 minutes, she drifts through the secret door to area C37, and a hero who watches and succeeds at a DC 12 Perception check notes that her actions suggest a hidden door (even though she simply passes through the wall). She returns from these short trips to area C37 in 1d4 rounds. The heroes can safely escape the room during this window; if they later return, Chandriu doesn't remember them at all.

If the heroes attack Chandriu, or force her to confront the truth that she's a ghost or that Belcorra is dead, she cries out in despair, then attacks.

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Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox

CHANDRIU INVISAR

CREATURE 6

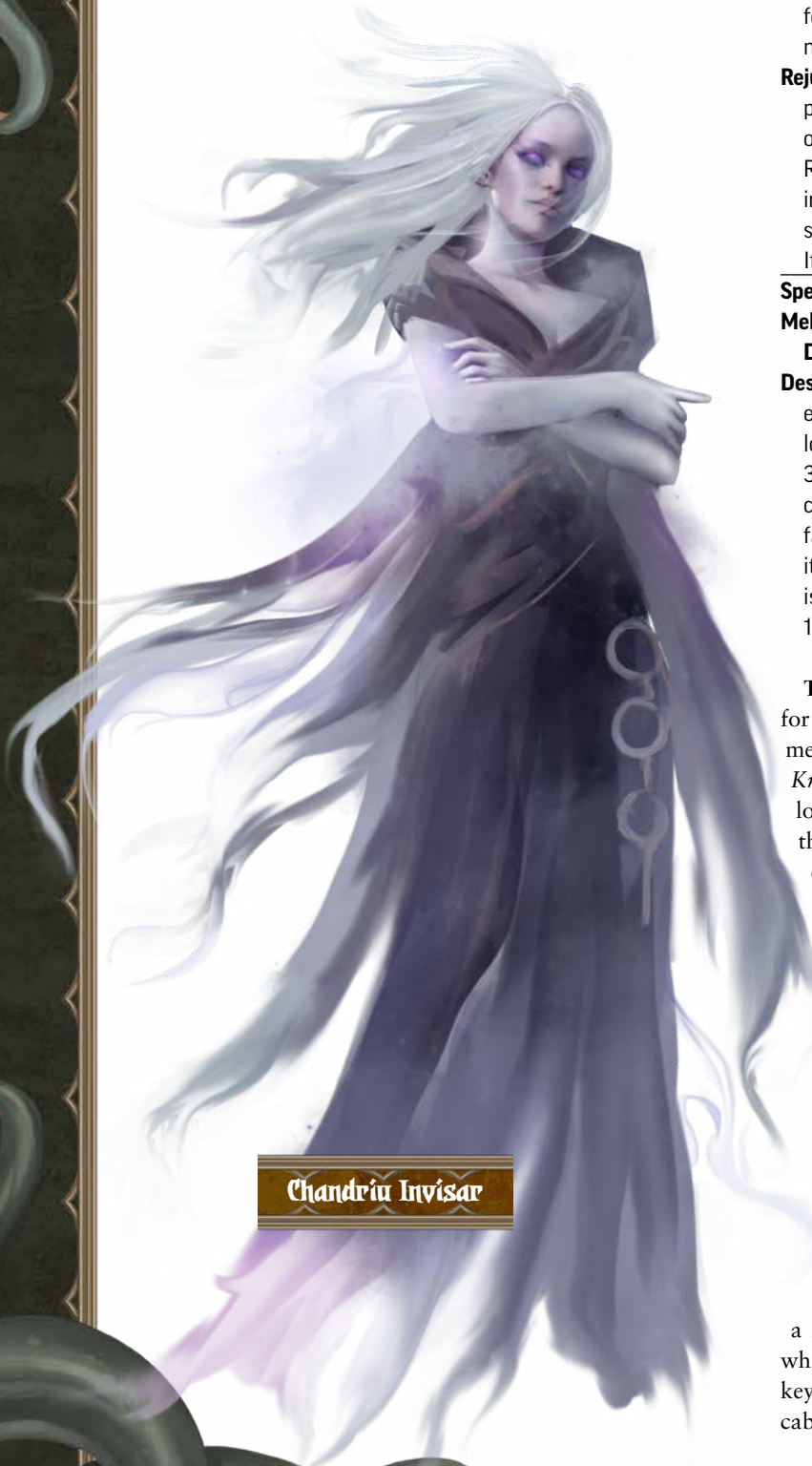
UNIQUE CE MEDIUM GHOST INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Female drow ghost administrator (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 166)

Perception +17; darkvision

Languages Common, Elven, Undercommon

Skills Scriptorium Lore +18, Society +16, Stealth +15



Chandriu Invisar

Str -5, **Dex** +5, **Con** +0, **Int** +4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

Site Bound (area **C36** and **C37**)

AC 23; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +17, **Will** +11

HP 64, negative healing, rejuvenation; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistance** all damage 7 (except force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Rejuvenation (divine, necromancy) To put Chandriu to rest permanently, a hero must convince her to stop pining over Volluk with a successful DC 21 Diplomacy check. Regardless of the result of this check, Chandriu flies into a rage and attacks, but if the Diplomacy check is successful, she's slowed 1 for 10 rounds while she fights. If defeated while she's slowed, she's put to rest.

Speed fly 25 feet

Melee ♦ ghostly hand +16 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 3d8+4 negative

Despairing Cry ♦♦ (auditory, divine, emotion, enchantment, mental) Chandriu wails in despair at her loss and betrayal, forcing each living creature within 30 feet to attempt a DC 24 Will save. On a failure, a creature becomes slowed 1 (slowed 2 on a critical failure) for 1 round as it's overcome with sadness over its own missed opportunities. On a success, a creature is temporarily immune to Chandriu's Despairing Cry for 1 minute.

Treasure: There are 1 Bulk of books here to gather for Morlibint. In addition to these books, the three mentioned in the note in area **B3** (*What The Worm Knows*, *Grave Feasts*, and *Secrets of the Skull*) are located here as well. Morlibint has no interest in these three grim treatises on necromancy, but they can be sold for 8 gp each to someone other than Morlibint (Yanyismera, for example, might be able to procure a buyer).

A search of Chandriu's remains reveals that her +1 *chain shirt* is in good condition. The object she clutches is a framed portrait of Volluk Azrinae. The portrait captures the drow's beauty as well as his imperious, vain smirk, both qualities Chandriu adored. His name appears on a tiny gold plaque at the portrait's base. The work of art has endured the passage of time quite well and is worth 10 gp, but it might be more immediately valuable to the heroes as a way to fight against Volluk (area **D8**).

In addition to the obvious armor and portrait, a hero who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check while Searching Chandriu's remains spots a tiny iron key concealed beneath them; this key unlocks the cabinet in area **C37**.

C37. SECRET SCRIPTORIUM

A worktable covered with blank scrolls and papers sits against the eastern wall of this room. A cabinet with several closed drawers stands to the north.

There are five locked drawers in the cabinet; each can be opened by a hero using the key from area C36, succeeding at three DC 20 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock, or with a successful DC 16 Athletics check to Force it Open. Several books are stored within—copies of texts produced by scribes and once intended for sale or as gifts to Belcorra's allies in other lands, all of whom are now dead. These books consist of 2 Bulk for Morlibint, though.

Not all of the scrolls on the desk are blank; one tucked beneath the others is an infernal contract. This contract was meant to be stored deeper in the Abomination Vaults, but it never quite made it there. A character who can read Infernal and takes 10 minutes to look over the contract learns that this is the devil Korlok's contract that binds him as a guardian. A reader who succeeds at a DC 18 Perception or Society check, or who's trained in Legal Lore, notes a loophole that can release the devil if it's brought to his attention (area C8).

Treasure: There are 2 Bulk of books here to gather for Morlibint.

C38. AUTHORS' HALL

MODERATE 3

Long shelves with several chairs drawn up to them ring this room on all sides, save the north. Rancid stains of old blood and decay cake the shelves and floor.

Belcorra's scribes once used this room to pen new works. The Cult of the Canker now use it as a place to store victims of ghoulish fever until they die and arise as ghouls. There are no bodies stored here now, but the heroes can find ample evidence of the suffering and death that has occurred here.

A hero who Searches the south wall and succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check finds a section of shelving that folds down to allow access to a secret door leading to area C39.



Creatures: A pair of ghoulish cultists are having a spirited debate on whether or not flesh "ripened" by violet fungi tastes better than naturally decayed meat. They're distracted enough that they don't overhear the sounds of combat in area C33, but they attack any intruders they notice.

CANKER CULTISTS (2) CREATURE 3

Page 59

Initiative Perception +11

C39. GUARD ROOM

A small alcove, its floor decorated with a silvery circle of inlaid runes, sits in the eastern wall of this empty room.

This room once housed a bound devil who served as one of Belcorra's guardians, but this creature's contract expired long ago, releasing her back to Hell.

C40. POOL

MODERATE 3

The dripping, sloshing sound of water fills this large cavern chamber. The air is cold and damp, and to the east sits a sizable pond. A lazy rivulet of overflow trickles to the north down a sloping tunnel, while a five-foot-diameter opening gapes in the ceiling above the center of the pool.

The pool here is 5 feet deep and was once used as a source of drinking water for these levels; the hole in the ceiling 15 feet above leads up 25 more feet to the well in area B23, while the downward sloping tunnel to the north leads to area D14.

Creatures: A gibbering moulder has dwelt in this cavern for decades. It periodically crawls along the tunnel to area C2 to hunt bats and rats. It immediately attacks intruders and pursues foes as best it can. The monster doesn't differentiate between the heroes and other denizens, so a canny group might lure the gibbering moulder into a fight against ghouls, morlocks, or other creatures.

GIBBERING Moulder

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 176

Initiative Perception +15

Treasure: Heroes Searching the pond discover 190 cp and 64 sp under the well opening. These offerings were tossed here by superstitious servants ages ago.

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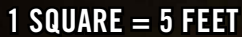
Chapter 9:
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Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET





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CHAPTER 4: Long Dream the Dead

The fourth level of the Abomination Vaults is one of the smaller ones overall, yet it's among the finest, as it once served as Belcorra's personal retreat.

Belcorra's Retreat Features

Ceilings in this level are 10 feet tall in halls and 15 feet in rooms. Unless otherwise indicated, rooms are unlit. The doors are iron-banded wood; ephemeral spirits gently shut any door left open for more than a minute.

The map for this level appears on page 70.

D1. BELCORRA'S DINING ROOM

MODERATE 4

A pair of brightly glowing chandeliers illuminates a long banquet table surrounded by luxurious, high-backed chairs. The table is still set as if for a grand meal, but some of the place settings are scattered and toppled, as are a few of the chairs. Four skeletons in tattered finery are scattered about the room, some of them clutching their own necks.

When the Roseguard assaulted Gauntlight Keep so many years ago, Belcorra was dining here with

representatives of a now-extinct Absalomian thieves' guild whom she was courting as potential allies against the city. When word came that the Roseguard was handily overcoming the keep's defenses, Belcorra took no chances. She politely excused herself, bade her guests finish their meal, and magically commanded her chef to poison them all and murder the other servants before taking his own life.

Stairs beyond the north door lead up to area C29.

Creatures: The guests died in excruciating pain, then later became havens for corpselights seeking hosts. When a living creature other than Volluk enters this room, the corpselights within the skeletons begin to glow, and then the skeletons stagger to their feet and attack. Each time a corpselight is forced into wisp form, it flees to one of the adjoining rooms (areas D2, D3, or D6) to claim another corpse host and return to the fight.

CORPSELIGHTS (4)

Page 232

Perception +7

CREATURE 2

Treasure: A search of the guests' remains reveals 48 gp, a *bracelet of dashing*, and a *viper arrow*.

D2. KITCHEN

A strange, squat cast-iron stove with no chimney sits in the southwest corner of this room, while to the north, a large oak table covered with cooking utensils sits against a wall. A skeletal body slumps at the base of the cupboards along the western wall.

The stove magically transmutes smoke welling up from its fire into clean air, but it's built into the stone of this room and far too heavy to be worth the trouble of hauling away from the dungeon. The body was once Belcorra's cook, who died by suicide after carrying out Belcorra's magical commands to poison the guests and kill the other servants.

A hero who Searches this room and succeeds at a DC 19 Perception check spots a secret door to the north. Some cooking utensils are affixed to the wall; manipulating them in the correct order opens the secret door.

D3. STORAGE

The walls of this chamber are lined with cupboards, shelves, and cabinets. A few barrels sit in the middle of the room. Two skeletons lie slumped near the barrel.

The skeletons were two other servants who retreated to this storage room before being murdered by the chef. Nothing of value remains.

D4. WINE CELLAR

A tall wine rack, its bottles thick with dust after so many years, stands against the north wall.

Treasure: Nearly all of this wine has gone bad, but a successful DC 18 Society check is enough to note three valuable bottles worth 20 gp each.

D5. LEVEL FOUR PORTAL CHAMBER

The walls of this chamber are decorated with twisting runes carved into the wall and filled with dull, silvery metal. The floor and ceiling are almost completely covered with large, polished metal discs.

This room contains an inert *teleportation circle* like the ones in areas **B17** and **C16**. This *teleportation circle* must be reactivated with the *awaken portal*

ritual hidden in area **C35** to connect it to other portal chambers in the dungeon.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for activating this portal.

D6. WASHING ROOM

A dusty metal washtub with a small skeleton lying inside sits next to a low shelf in this room.

As the guests in area **D1** were dying of poison, one of them managed to stab a halfling servant who staggered into this large dish washing tub and died. If the skeleton is disturbed, the tub momentarily appears to be clean and filled with soapy water before returning to its actual dusty state. The scent of harsh dish soap clings for a minute before fading.

D7. DISPOSAL ROOM

LOW 4

An open metal hatch lies in the floor against this room's east wall. Storage bins sit to the north and south, each heaped with old bones, broken tools, and lumps of stone.

Several bones in one of the trash bins belong to a human, which a hero Investigating the bones can easily determine. A servant slipped against a trash bin and died here two days before Belcorra's last meal in area **D1**. The other servants simply hefted her body into the bin.

The hatch opens into a long chute that leads to the disposal pond at area **D17**. Anyone who enters the chute swiftly slides down to the pond in a rough trip that deals 3d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 20 basic Reflex save) upon landing. Anyone in the chute who doesn't want to slide down can arrest their fall with a successful DC 18 Reflex save to Grab an Edge or with a successful DC 18 Acrobatics or Athletics check to brace in place. In either case, a successful DC 18 Athletics check is required to safely traverse the chute.

Creatures: The spirit of the servant who accidentally died here has returned as a poltergeist wracked with indignation. It's lurking here, invisible, but it doesn't attack until it's spotted or someone approaches the lip of the chute. It hurls debris from the trash bins or uses *telekinetic maneuver* to Shove foes into the open hatch. It fights until destroyed but can't leave this room. The poltergeist can be put to rest by disposing of its remains in a respectful manner, such as cremating them or saying a word of blessing over them.

POLTERGEIST

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 264

Initiative Stealth +14

D8. LOUNGE

SEVERE 4

The walls of this large chamber are hung with grisly paintings depicting various spectral beings cavorting among ruined neighborhoods, overgrown swamps, and foggy graveyards. Three large overstuffed chairs pair with small end tables, upon which sit empty wine glasses. To the south stands a cluttered writing desk with its own chair, while a large iron tub to the west is visible between standing screens depicting shadowy marshes.

This large lounge once served as a place for Belcorra to relax, but today it functions as a den for her one-time apprentice, the drow Volluk Azrinae. Most papers on the desk are Volluk's disjointed notes. More usefully to the heroes, the papers also include detailed blueprints of the top three levels of the Abomination Vaults, including all secret doors.

A hero Searching the room and who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check finds the secret door in the east wall: a lifelike graveyard painting that swings outward. Every 10 minutes or so, a faint scream issues from the other side of the secret door, though it sounds like it's emanating from the picture. After the first scream, the DC to find the door drops to 12.

A hero Searching this room who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check finds an iron key hidden in a secret slot in one of the desk's legs; it opens Lasda's manacles (area D9).

Creatures: Unlike most of the denizens who dwelt in the Abomination Vaults in Belcorra's day, Volluk is still alive—after a fashion. After feeding himself to a vat of ritually prepared leeches, he lives on as a hideous worm that walks. Volluk resembles a roughly drow-shaped mass composed of thousands of slithering leeches. He has been working with the voidglutton that now dwells in Belcorra's old chambers (area D20) to restore *Gauntlight*, but he's frustrated that Belcorra's ghost doesn't speak to him directly. Being forced to do his mistress's bidding through the will of the voidglutton galls the proud occultist.

Volluk is reading at his desk when the heroes first arrive. As soon as he notices the heroes' intrusion, he rises up—a squirming, awful mess—and demands to know who they are and why they've come. He has little interest in constructive discourse, but if the heroes let him talk, he uses Intimidation to roll initiative.

VOLLUK AZRINAE

CREATURE 7

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM ABERRATION SWARM

Male worm that walks occultist (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 296)

Perception +15; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Aklo, Common, Elven, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +17, Crafting +15 (+17 when painting), Deception +15, Intimidation +17, Occultism +17, Religion +15, Stealth +15

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +2, **Int** +6, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

AC 25, all-around vision; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +17, **Will** +15

HP 85, fast healing 7; **Immunities** disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, swarm mind, unconscious; **Weaknesses** area damage 7, splash damage 7; **Resistances** physical 7

Discorporate As worm that walks, but slow-moving leeches give the heroes 2 rounds, rather than 1 round, to dispatch the fleeing vermin before they escape.

Hateful Memories (emotion, enchantment, mental, occult, visual) If Volluk can see an accurate depiction of his former appearance as a living drow at the

CHAPTER 4 SYNOPSIS

The fourth level of the Abomination Vaults was designed as a retreat for Belcorra to relax and to revere her uncaring deity Nhimbalo. No faction of significance holds sway over Belcorra's Retreat today. Instead, several powerful individuals claim separate portions of this level. The most significant ally the heroes can acquire is the ghost of Otari Ilvashti, the fallen hero who gave the town of Otari its name.

Environmental Cues: Cool but comfortable temperature, fine furnishings that are old yet luxurious, haunted house effects such as closing doors or sliding chairs, profusions of fungi, smells of dust and faint spices, spectral visions of rooms as they looked 500 years ago.

CHAPTER 4 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 4 are as follows.

- +1 ghost touch whip
- +1 striking composite longbow
- +1 striking katar
- +1 studded leather
- bracelet of dashing
- dagger of venom
- holy prayer beads
- lantern of empty light (page 221)
- lesser mistform elixir
- minor sturdy shield
- scroll of comprehend languages
- scroll of paralyze
- scroll of worm's repast (page 225)
- sneaky key
- viper arrow

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Nhimbalo

Adventure Toolbox



Volluk Azrinæ

start of his turn, he must attempt a DC 28 Will save or become filled with self-loathing and become slowed 1 for 1 round.

Speed 10 feet, swim 25 feet

Melee ♦ tendril +18 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+8 persistent piercing damage

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 25, attack +17; **4th** (3 slots) *dimension door*, *suggestion*, *worm's repast* (page 225); **3rd** (4 slots) *bind undead*, *mind reading*, *paralyze*, *phantom pain*; **2nd** (4 slots) *comprehend language*, *illusory disguise*, *mirror image*, *vomit swarm* (Advanced Player's Guide 227); **1st** (4 slots) *alarm*, *grim tendrils*, *mindlink*, *unseen servant*; **Cantrips (4th)** *daze*, *light*, *mage hand*, *read aura*, *shield*

Divine Innate Spells DC 25; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *faerie fire* (at will); **Cantrips (4th)** *dancing lights*

Rituals *animate object*, *create undead*

Squirming Embrace ♦ Volluk Strides, ending his movement sharing a space with a creature, and deals 3d8 piercing damage to the creature. The creature can attempt a DC 23 basic Reflex save.

Swarm Shape ♦ (concentrate) Volluk collapses into a shapeless swarm of leeches. He drops all held, worn, and carried items. While discorporated, he can't use attack actions and can't cast spells, but he can move through areas small enough for his individual leeches to fit without having to Squeeze. He can use the same action to coalesce back into his normal form.

Treasure: Among Volluk's papers are a *scroll of comprehend language*, a *scroll of paralyze*, and a *scroll of worm's repast* (page 225). A *lantern of empty light* (page 221) sits on the writing desk. Volluk takes this lantern on his journeys above ground, where he unknowingly spawned the rumors of the lantern-carrying stranger.

D9. LASDA'S LAMENT

MODERATE 4

The walls of this circular chamber are smooth and gray. A flickering, nauseating ribbon of pale blue light churns in the center of the room. Where the light touches the ceiling, the stone bubbles as if it were infected flesh. Below, the light bathes a screaming, thrashing dwarf bound onto a metal table, his body covered in blisters.

As in area **B35**, the ribbon of light is a manifestation of *Gauntlight's* growing power. This eerie light churns in a 5-foot-diameter burst at the room's center. Any living creature ending its turn in it takes 5d6 negative damage (DC 18 basic Reflex save) and undead creatures regain the same amount. To reactivate *Gauntlight* for its test firing on Otari's graveyard,

Volluk and the voidglutton needed a living creature as an anchor for the light. While others who touch the light suffer negative damage, the light simultaneously heals its anchor as swiftly as it harms them, keeping the person in a perpetual state of agony.

This victim is a dwarf named **Lasda Venkervale** (LG male dwarf bartender 2), once the bartender at the Rowdy Rockfish in Otari. Volluk abducted Lasda just over a year ago for nefarious experiments while the dwarf was on one of his customary predawn walks from the Rockfish up to the graveyard. Volluk kept Lasda a prisoner in area **D11** for many months and, impressed by the dwarf's hardiness, decided to use him as *Gauntlight's* anchor.



Lasda Venkervale

Creatures: The heroes can't focus on rescuing Lasda without first defeating a will-o'-wisp that has been gorging itself on Lasda's terror. It's invisible when the heroes first arrive, but it flares up in an angry blue glow as soon as the heroes attempt to aid the dwarf. It pursues foes who flee and fights to the death.

WILL-O'-WISP

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 333

Initiative Stealth +16

Side Quest: To remove Lasda from the terrible ribbon of energy, the heroes must first unlock the four manacles that bind him. The key to these manacles can be found in area **D8**, or the heroes can succeed at three DC 22 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock on each manacle. Unless the heroes have some means of working on the locks from a distance, each round a hero works to unlock a manacle (by the key or otherwise), that hero is exposed to the ribbon of necromantic energy.

Once freed and removed from the energy ribbon, Lasda recovers his mobility after 2d4 rounds of gasping for breath. Lasda can tell the heroes the harrowing tale of his imprisonment and give a partial description of areas **D1** to **D11**. The heroes might have heard of Lasda's disappearance if they've spoken to his worried mother, Brelde, at the Rowdy Rockfish. If the heroes return Lasda to the Rowdy Rockfish, his mother is overjoyed and presses upon the heroes a family heirloom, a *minor sturdy shield* emblazoned with an angry-looking rockfish, as a reward.

Removing Lasda from the ribbon of light causes the necromantic energy here and in areas **B35** and **C15** to vanish. While this prevents Belcorra from firing *Gauntlight's* beam upon Otari again, the reprieve is only temporary. As the heroes will learn from Otari's ghost, Belcorra continues to prepare *Gauntlight* for its true purpose far below.

In addition, once Lasda is removed, the haunts on the upper four levels of the Abomination Vaults don't reset if they're deactivated or defeated. These effects return if both Volluk and the voidglutton survive, and they're given several days to find and install a new victim. If they do so, this should be an NPC whose kidnapping spurs the heroes into action!

D10. SCALATHRAX PEN MODERATE 4

The floor of this rough-hewn cavern is strewn with bones and scraps of metal and cloth.

All three irregular, rocky passages out of this area end in secret doors. All three secret doors are obvious from within the cavern.

Creatures: This cavern once merely connected the southwestern and northeastern wings of the level, but it now serves as a pen for a trio of scalathraxes. One of these has already been transported from area **D9** via *Gauntlight's* beam to Otari in Chapter 2, but the other two remain here, awaiting Volluk's next *Gauntlight* test. They're poorly fed and attack the heroes on sight, pursuing them relentlessly.

SCALATHRAXES (2)

CREATURE 4

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Initiative Perception +11

D11. TORTURE CHAMBER MODERATE 4

Three five-foot-square iron cages, the bars lined with spikes on the inside, hang from chains in the middle of this room. Blood-crusted manacles dangle from chains on the west wall. A stout wooden table with more manacles anchored to it stands in the southwest corner, and on it sits a whip made of blood-red leather with a silver handle.

Here, Belcorra imprisoned and tortured those lacking the qualities she sought for fleshwarping experiments or arena battles in the levels below. Once she was satisfied

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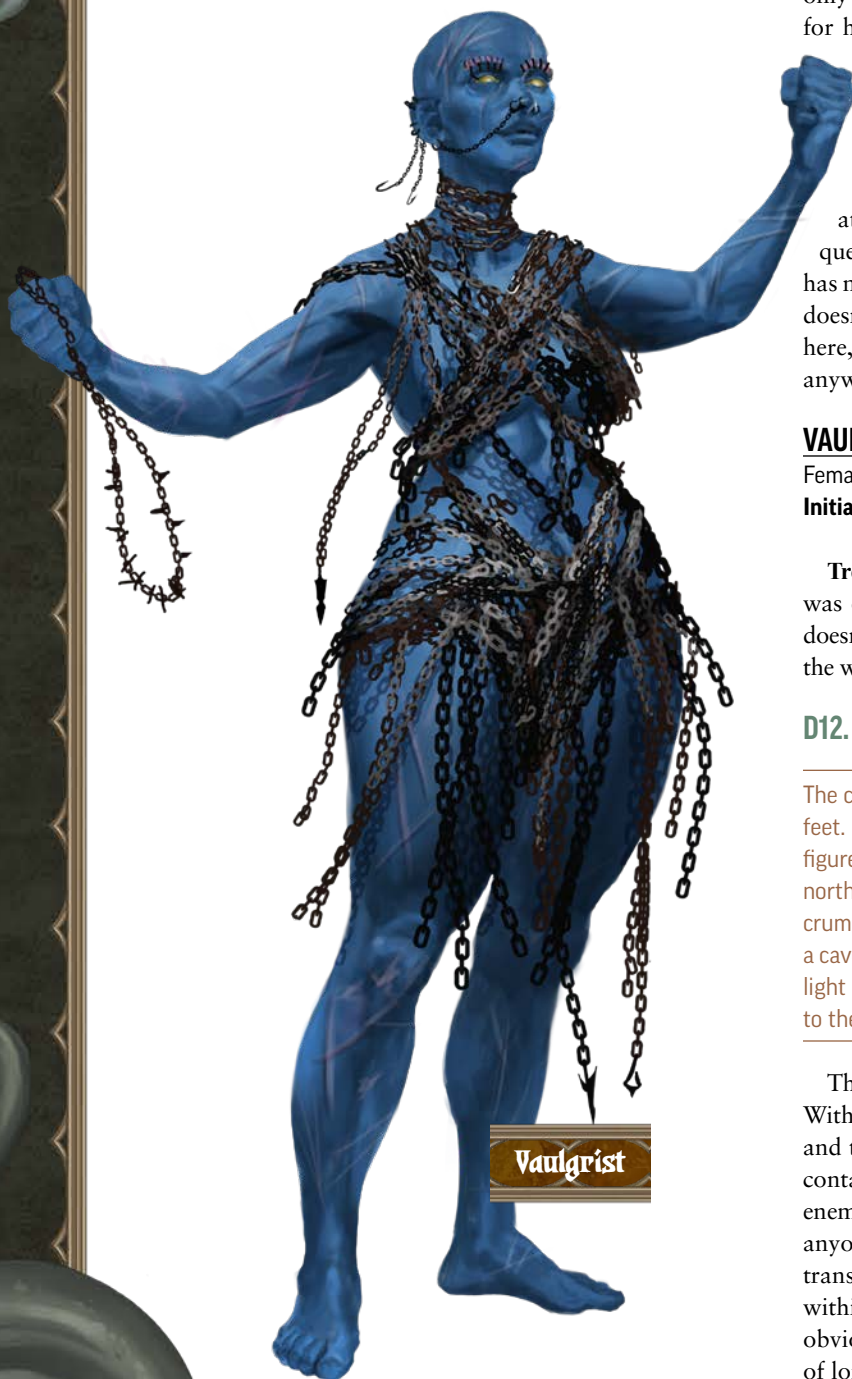
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Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox

her prisoners had nothing left to offer, or once she grew bored, she sent them to area **D13** for sacrifice. The dwarf bartender Lasda inhabited the central hanging cage for many months.

The northern cage has silver-lined runes carved into its exterior. This cage is the destination of the inactive *teleportation circle* in area **C5b**. It can be restored with the *awaken portal* ritual; if so, it makes a useful way to imprison anyone pushed into the alcove in area **C5**.



Vulgrist

A hero who Searches the table and succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check spots a hidden switch on its underside that opens the secret door to the south.

Creatures: An evangelist velstrac named Vulgrist has been bound here by Belcorra's magic for centuries. The interminable years instilled a sense of listlessness in the torturer, and she rarely even moves about the room. Her hope of cruel amusements was briefly rekindled when she had Lasda to toy with, but she'd only just begun a few months of laying the groundwork for his torment when he was taken away. Her ennui has returned even stronger than before.

At first, Vulgrist can hardly stir herself to bother with the heroes. She morosely invites them to depart this chamber and never return. There's no trick here—if the heroes simply leave at once, the velstrac lets them go. If they persist or question her, she sighs in frustration and attacks; she has no interest in talking. She fights until destroyed but doesn't leave this area. With all the manacles present here, Vulgrist can use her *animate chains* ability from anywhere in this room.

VULGRIST

CREATURE 6

Female evangelist velstrac (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 282)

Initiative Perception +13

Treasure: The whip is a +1 *ghost touch whip*. It was once one of Vulgrist's favorite weapons, but she doesn't use it any longer. Pay attention if a hero keeps the whip, as it might have some use for them in area **E2**.

D12. THE GHOSTWALK

MODERATE 4

The ceiling of this wide hall rises to a height of twenty-five feet. Stone sarcophagi carved with tormented, emaciated figures stand upright in alcoves along its walls. To the northeast, a fifteen-foot-wide portion of the wall has crumbled away into a series of ledges that drop down into a cavern. Eerie blue lights glow to the north and south—the light to the south is brighter and constant, while the light to the north flickers softly.

This long hallway served as a gruesome trophy hall. With the exception of the two northernmost alcoves and the alcove leading to area **D10**, each sarcophagus contains the defiled remains of one of Belcorra's enemies, stripped of gear and put on display. As soon as anyone steps up to a sarcophagus, its stone lid becomes transparent, providing a view of the long-dead body within. Each corpse is dressed in rags and marked with obviously fatal wounds. Most of these are the remains of long-dead heroes with no significant relation to the

story of the Abomination Vaults Adventure Path. The corpses here used to be linked to enslaved ghosts that guarded the hall, but their undead presences have been inadvertently drawn into the magical wall at the south end of this hallway.

A large flight of stairs to the south leads down to area **E1**. For now, progress to this level is blocked by a shimmering wall of ectoplasm. Now and then, silently shrieking ghosts flit through the swirling mist of this wall. The stairwell beyond remains visible yet tauntingly inaccessible. This wall acts as a *wall of force* heightened to 9th level and has been forged from the agonized souls of the heroes displayed throughout this hallway—they're the trapped ghosts who silently cry out in agony within the wall. This wall's creation was an unintended side effect of *Gauntlight's* test firing after it had lain dormant for so long. For now, though, the wall blocks progress deeper into the dungeon. Only the icons of Belcorra's killers can bring it down, as the ghost of Otari Ilvashti in area **D18** can explain.

The secret door in the alcove, which leads to area **D10**, is built into the back of the only empty sarcophagus. A hero who Searches the empty sarcophagus and succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check discovers the latch to swing the sarcophagus open like a door.

The collapse in the northwest wall leads to a series of 5-foot-high ledges that drop down to area **D14**.

Creatures: The two northernmost sarcophagi contain traitorous apprentices transformed into cairn wights. If anyone approaches within 15 feet of them, both lids pop open and the cairn wights emerge to attack. They relentlessly pursue foes through this level.

CAIRN WIGHTS (2)

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 292

Initiative Stealth +12

D13. UPPER TEMPLE OF NHIMBALOTH SEVERE 4

This vast octagonal chamber is mostly empty. The walls are carved and painted to resemble a sprawling graveyard half-sunken into a swampy morass, yet all the graves in the mural are open and empty. Carved images of shrieking ghosts parade upward and into the hungry pupil of a malevolent eye at the apex of this room, thirty feet above. A circular fifteen-foot-diameter platform sits in the middle of the room, raised three feet off the surrounding floor. The platform supports an altar stone made of an irregular slab of rock marked by seven deep indentations, almost as if a huge, seven-fingered hand had gripped the stone with enough force to leave grooves behind. Now and then, a faint blue light flickers and pulses inside one of these indentations. Small objects lie heaped atop the altar.

A successful DC 25 Religion check to Recall Knowledge identifies this chamber as a shrine dedicated to Nhimbalothe, the Outer God of despair, ghosts, and swamps. Her shrines are often empty of additional furnishings, such as statues or benches, symbolizing the emptiness of death itself. Worshipers typically kneel or prostrate themselves on the stone floor while priests lead sermons and sacrifices at the altar.

The entire shrine is infused with an overwhelming sense of despair and hopelessness. Any living creature who enters this room must succeed at a DC 22 Will save or become frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure). A living creature can't reduce its frightened condition while in this chamber. A critical success grants the creature temporary immunity for 24 hours.

Creatures: A hero who succeeds at a DC 16 Perception check from the room's entrance identifies the objects on the altar as four severed hands. These undead guardians scuttle forth and attack when the heroes enter this room. When the hands animate, four flickerwisps slither out from indentations on the altar's sides and join in their attack. The flickerwisps and crawling hands don't pursue foes from the shrine room. If no foes are present, they return to their original places on the altar. They fight until destroyed.

FLICKERWISPS (4)

CREATURE 2

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Initiative Perception +9

ELITE CRAWLING HANDS (4)

CREATURE 0

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 6, 56

Initiative Perception +7

Lights from the Altar: The altar produces a new flickerwisp each day at dusk, but no more than four flickerwisps can exist in this chamber at one time. The malevolent aura and flickerwisp generation persist until the heroes place the four Roseguard icons atop the altar stone, as directed by Otari's ghost (area **D18**). At this point, the frightening despair in the room ends, and the altar produces no more flickerwisps.

D14. PAVILION

SEVERE 4

This immense cavern is cold and damp. Water drips from condensation above into a large, still lake. Thick patches of moist mushrooms, some nearly four feet tall, grow along the western shore of the lake, while a narrow trickle of water feeds in from a tunnel to the south. A thirty-five-foot-long pavilion made of stone stands in the middle of the lake, elevated ten feet above the water level by more than a dozen stone columns. The entire pavilion is

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encrusted with damp, pale fungus. Two stone bridges arch from the pavilion—one connecting it to a door set in the northern wall and another to a door to the east. A faintly flickering campfire burns in the middle of the pavilion, its smoke curling to the ceiling.

The fungus growing here might look ominous, but it's harmless. The lake has steep banks that drop away into a nearly uniform depth of 15 feet.

Belcorra built this pavilion as a place to meditate. The denizens of the Abomination Vaults don't visit

here, as the lingering presence of Otari's ghost in area **D18** subconsciously influences them to stay away. Living creatures (such as the pavilion's current inhabitants) don't feel these influences.

Creatures: A grizzled, feral-looking man lives in the pavilion. He's Jaul Mezmin, a violent criminal and murderous werewolf wanted in the town of Otari for the slaying of several locals 30 years ago. Jaul's last victim was a woman named Ayla Lathenar, wife of Keeleno Lathenar, the owner of the Otari Market. Jaul hid in plain sight as one of the druids of Stone Ring Pond while he committed his murders, but when he was found out, he escaped capture by leaping from the Otari cliffs into the sea. The tides pulled him into sea caves, leaving him nearly drowned, but over the following weeks, he recovered and found his way here.

Jaul's been living here ever since. His skin is pasty and pale, and he reeks of mushrooms and sour sweat. Cave crickets make up the bulk of his diet. His only companions over the years have been a series of loyal wolves; when one perishes, Jaul simply makes his way out through the caves to bond with another. At first, he made plans to return to Otari, but after living in this cave for so many years, Jaul knows no other life.

The heroes disrupt that life, though. When Jaul notices them, he staggers up to the edge of his pavilion and howls and barks wildly to warn them away. The wolf at his side accompanies his howls with its own. A hero who succeeds at a DC 27 Society check to Recall Knowledge realizes this man is the killer who disappeared from Otari a generation ago. At your discretion, a hero familiar with Jaul's legacy treats the result of this check as one degree of success greater than the rolled result.

If the heroes attack Jaul or attempt to enter his pavilion, he assumes his hybrid form and attacks. If the heroes hang back, he continues to bark and howl until someone can calm him down.

As soon as the heroes successfully use any skill with the linguistic trait on Jaul (such as to create a convincing Lie, use Diplomacy to Make an Impression, or try to Coerce him), he stops howling and blinks several times as he remembers that he can talk as well. A few moments later, he calls out in a halting voice, warning the heroes that this is his territory and they aren't welcome. His initial attitude is hostile, and if the heroes try to talk to him



Jaul Mezmin

too much, he grows frustrated and uses his magic to attack from afar. Depending on the questions the heroes ask, Jaul might reveal his name or who he is, but it's likely only a matter of time before the paranoid werewolf loses patience and attacks.

If Jaul is reduced to 30 or fewer Hit Points, he begs for mercy and promises to give the heroes a reward if they spare him. This reward is Ayla's necklace. Heroes who show Jaul mercy can get him to talk further; Jaul is somewhat familiar with the eastern half of this level (areas **D14** to **D19**). For example, he can warn the heroes of the shadowy ghost on the island to the south (area **D18**) and tell them that if they enter the "nightmare stairs" to the north (area **D19**), they'd do well to keep their eyes closed if they want to ever escape them. If the heroes let him go, he exits through the sea caves and flees the region. Whether or not he resumes his murderous ways is left for you to decide.

JAUL MEZMIN CREATURE 6

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM BEAST HUMAN HUMANOID WERE CREATURE

Male human werewolf stalker (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 330)

Perception +14; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Common; wolf empathy

Skills Acrobatics +12, Athletics +15, Deception +12, Nature +14, Survival +14

Str +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +0, **Int** -1, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

Items +1 striking katar (2), bejeweled necklace worth 10 gp featuring a porpoise and the engraving, "Ayla, My Beloved"

Wolf Empathy (divination, primal) Jaul can communicate with wolflike creatures.

AC 24; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +14, **Will** +16; +1 status vs. poison

HP 120; **Weaknesses** silver 7; **Resistances** poison 3

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *katar* +17 (agile, deadly d6, magical, monk), **Damage** 2d4+7 piercing

Melee ♦ *claw* +16 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+7 slashing

Melee ♦ *jaws* +16, **Damage** 2d8+7 piercing plus curse of the werewolf

Primal Prepared Spells DC 24, attack +15; **3rd** *heal*, *lightning bolt*, *wall of thorns*; **2nd** *heal*, *summon animal*, *water breathing*; **1st** *feather fall*, *grease*, *magic fang*; **Cantrips (3rd)** *acid splash*, *detect magic*, *produce flame*, *tanglefoot*

Animal Order Spells 1 Focus Point, DC 24; **3rd** *heal animal* (*Core Rulebook* 399)

Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, polymorph, primal, transmutation) As werecreature (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 329); human with fist +16 for 1d6+7 bludgeoning, or wolf with Speed 40 feet and jaws with Knockdown.

Curse of the Werewolf (curse, necromancy, primal) This curse only affects humanoids; **Saving Throw** DC 23 Fortitude. On each full moon, the cursed creature

must succeed at another Fortitude save or turn into a werewolf until dawn. The creature is under the GM's control and goes on a rampage for half the night before falling unconscious at dawn.

Moon Frenzy (polymorph, primal, transmutation) When a full moon appears in the night sky, Jaul must enter his hybrid form, can't Change Shape thereafter, becomes Large, increases his reach by 5 feet, and increases the damage of his jaws by 2. When the moon sets or the sun rises, Jaul returns to humanoid form and is fatigued for 2d4 hours.

Wolf Coordination Jaul's Strikes deal an additional 1d6 damage to creatures within his wolf's reach.

JAUL'S WOLF CREATURE 4

UNIQUE N MEDIUM ANIMAL

Male wolf (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 334)

Perception +11; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Acrobatics +9, Athletics +11, Stealth +11, Survival +9

Str +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

AC 21; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +9

HP 60

Speed 35 feet

Melee ♦ *jaws* +13, **Damage** 2d6+7 piercing plus Knockdown

Jaul Coordination The wolf deals an additional 1d6 damage to creatures within Jaul's reach.

Side Quest: The heroes can bring Jaul in, dead or alive, to Otari for a 50 gp bounty. If the heroes don't realize who he is right away, allow a hero who looks over the inscription on his necklace to attempt a DC 18 Society check (DC 13 if the hero is affiliated with the Otari Market). On a success, the hero recognizes the name as Ayla Lathenar, the dead wife of the Otari Market merchant, Keeleno Lathenar. Approaching Keeleno with proof that the werewolf is dead—as the bitter man won't accept his wife's murderer remaining alive—earns the heroes a 20 percent discount for all purchases at the Otari Market for life.

D15. TWISTING TUNNEL

Several slippery ledges lead up and out of area **D14**, joining a small complex of caverns that stretches between Fogfen and the coast. It was via these tunnels that Jaul Mezmin arrived, and he leaves through them occasionally to hunt for food. The tunnels connect to the coastline west of Otari in a sea cave that's underwater even at low tide. The actual contents of these caverns are beyond the scope of this adventure, but they likely contain other predators and dangers. Feel free to expand them if the heroes wish to explore them and are in need of additional XP.

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Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox

D16. HAUNTED STAIRS

A staircase leads upward from this narrow landing. The south wall, facing the stairs, flickers and glows with ribbons of eerie green luminescence.

These stairs lead up to area **C33**.

During his flight through the Abomination Vaults, Otari Ilvashti made one of his final stops on this staircase. He waited here for only an hour to patch some wounds and regain his courage, then moved on through the door to area **D14**, hoping to find an escape route. Unfortunately, he never made it to the sea cave exit, for the enormous otyugh that dwelt in the cavern in those days attacked him at once. Otari was forced to flee south and made it to area **D18**. The otyugh was too large to reach him there but too stubborn to leave, and it's there that Otari finally perished from a disease the otyugh inflicted upon him.

As in areas **B28** and **C3**, Otari's spiritual energy remains here. When the heroes reach this point, another message manifests in the glowing light on the wall: "Gauntlight is a weapon, built to raze Absalom—it must be brought down!" After the message is read, the words slide down into a writhing ribbon of footprints that leads into area **D14**, then makes a panicked, twisting route down through area **D17** and into area **D18**.

This spectral manifestation can appear once per day.

D17. DISPOSAL POND

A rusty metal chute protrudes from the ceiling to the west here, coming to an end over a pool of slimy water. A huge mound of fungus lies under the tube against the west wall, resting in a strangely monstrous shape.

This chute leads up to area **D7**, but it's slick and requires a successful DC 18 Athletics check to Climb. Characters who are dumped into the pool of water here find it cold and unpleasant, but it's only 3 feet deep. Fortunately, the immense otyugh once kept here for trash disposal purposes died long ago. Its strangely preserved body lies encased in fungus under the pipe. Anyone who examines the remains of the Huge otyugh can identify it with a successful DC 23 Occultism check to Recall Knowledge.

D18. OTARI'S DOOM

SEVERE 4

The water in this area is dark but only 3 feet deep.

A low rocky isle rises less than a foot above the surrounding water here, its surface covered with a fine layer of pale green mushrooms and mold. A human skeleton dressed in

rotten leather armor and clutching a rapier lies in a heap at the center of the isle.

The skeleton on the island was once Otari Ilvashti. He survived the battle with Belcorra and a desperate flight through the upper levels of the Abomination Vaults only to become trapped here by the immense otyugh waiting in area **D17**. Already weakened from his ordeal before contracting filth fever from the fight with the otyugh, Otari lingered on the tiny islet only two days before he perished.

Today, his spirit lingers on, both in the form of the strange warnings on the walls throughout the Abomination Vaults and also as a ghost consumed by two linked desires—vengeance on Belcorra and fear that *Gauntlight* might yet be used to harm his hometown of Absalom. As the heroes draw near, Otari's ghost rises up from his skeleton, appearing much as he did during the late stages of filth fever, albeit with a transparent green shade. Otari can't leave this area, and since the heroes are the first potentially helpful adventurers to visit his haunted remains, he's eager to provide help.

Creatures: Before Otari can speak to the heroes, a will-o'-wisp and two flickerwisps that have tormented him for years dart forth to protect their fear-laden victim. Otari can do little more than warn the heroes about the "Eyes of the Empty Death" before they swoop forth to attack.

Once combat begins, Otari provides what aid he can. The aberrations long ago learned to stay out of the ghost's reach, but Otari makes Infested Shadow Strikes against them by momentarily possessing the heroes' shadows. After the wisps are defeated, Otari provides much more information, as described below.

WILL-O'-WISP

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 333

Initiative Stealth +16

FLICKERWISPS (2)

CREATURE 2

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Initiative Perception +9

Treasure: Otari encourages the heroes to claim and use his gear once he's done speaking with them. His infiltrator thieves' tools are one of the four icons required to overcome the barrier in area **D12**. His other gear consists of a *dagger of venom*, a *sneaky key*, and +1 *studded leather armor*.

What Otari Knows

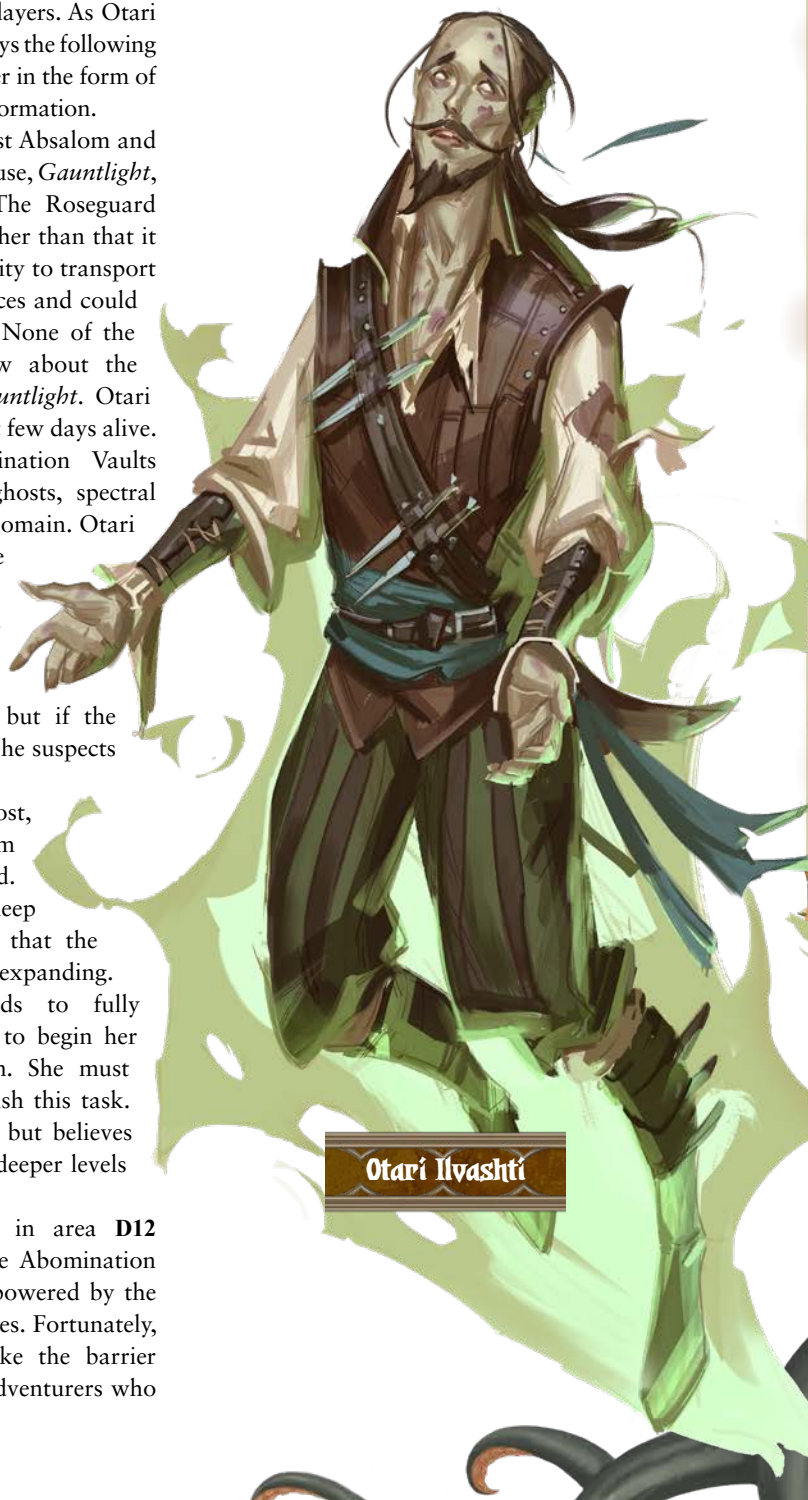
Otari's role is to present the tasks necessary to reach the lower levels of the Abomination Vaults. Once the

heroes encounter Otari's ghost and drive off the wisps that torment him, he relates his tale of woe. He has difficulty remembering much of his life but becomes very emotional if he learns that the other members of the Roseguard survived and founded a town they named after him.

While Otari's information about the dungeon is centuries out of date, his supernatural link to the Abomination Vaults affords him glimpses into the inner workings of the dungeon and its key players. As Otari speaks to the heroes, make sure he conveys the following key points of information to them, either in the form of answers to questions or volunteered information.

- Belcorra harbored a grudge against Absalom and intended to use her sinister lighthouse, *Gauntlight*, as a weapon against the city. The Roseguard never discovered its actual use, other than that it had something to do with the ability to transport creatures across significant distances and could animate the dead with its light. None of the other Roseguard members knew about the Abomination Vaults beneath *Gauntlight*. Otari learned about them only in his last few days alive.
- Some property of the Abomination Vaults increases the manifestation of ghosts, spectral undead, and haunts within their domain. Otari initially believed this was a side effect from *Gauntlight* but has now come to suspect a link to a much more ancient and ominous source deep below this level. He knows nothing of Nhimbalo, but if the heroes tell him of the Outer God, he suspects her influence is the source.
- Belcorra herself is now a ghost, although she can't move far from the site to which she's anchored. Otari can sense her somewhere deep underground and is also aware that the range of her movements is slowly expanding.
- Otari suspects Belcorra intends to fully reactivate *Gauntlight* and use it to begin her long-delayed attack on Absalom. She must be put to rest before she can finish this task. Otari isn't sure how to stop her, but believes that clues await discovery in the deeper levels of the Abomination Vaults.
- Finally, Otari feels the barrier in area **D12** blocking progress deeper into the Abomination Vaults. He understands that it's powered by the souls of Belcorra's defeated enemies. Fortunately, he also understands how to take the barrier down. The Roseguard were the adventurers who

finally killed her, and their psychic resonance can drop the barrier. The heroes must find and place four icons the Roseguard once held dear onto the altar in area **D13** to do this. Otari's thieves' tools are here with his bones and serve as his icon. The other icons are the brooch belonging to the cleric Aesephna Menhemes (which bears the religious symbol of her god, Erastil), the spellbook belonging to the wizard Zarmavdian, and the



Otari Ilvashti

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Nhimbalo

Adventure Box

trusty longsword of the fighter Vol Rajani. These other three icons are described on page 217 and can be found on the surface. Recovering them is the focus of the first part of the next chapter.

Once the heroes take on the burden of facing and defeating Belcorra and open the way to the deeper levels of the Abomination Vaults, Otari's soul is free to travel to its final reward. You should ensure he has imparted all of the above information to the heroes before he fades away.

If you wish, though, you can put a darker spin on things—rather than have Otari's spirit achieve freedom, it could instead be captured by the temple of Nhimbalo at the bottom of the Abomination Vaults. In this case, the heroes should learn about Otari's fate through a vision or nightmare, or perhaps even see his tormented ghost pulled downward against his will. Otari's ghost remains trapped until the heroes finally defeat Belcorra.

OTARI ILVASHTI

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE CG MEDIUM GHOST INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Male ghost adventurer (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 166)

Perception +18; darkvision

Languages Common, Elven, Gnomish

Skills Acrobatics +18, Society +18, Stealth +20, Thievery +20

Str -5, **Dex** +6, **Con** +0, **Int** +4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

Site Bound (area **D18**)

AC 25; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +20, **Will** +17

HP 120, negative healing, rejuvenation; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistance** all damage 10 (except force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Rejuvenation Securing the four icons of the Roseguard and placing them on the altar in area **D13** allows Otari to move on to the afterlife.

Speed fly 25 feet

Melee ♦ ghostly hand +19 (agile, finesse, magical),

Damage 3d6+6 negative

Filth Fever (disease) The sickened and unconscious conditions from filth fever don't improve on their own until the disease is cured. **Saving Throw** DC 25 Fortitude; **Stage 1** carrier with no ill effect (1d4 hours); **Stage 2** sickened 1 (1 day); **Stage 3** sickened 1 and slowed 1 as long as the affected creature remains sickened (1 day); **Stage 4** unconscious (1 day); **Stage 5** dead

Infested Shadow ♦♦ (conjuraton, divine, teleportation) Otari fades away, momentarily emerges from the shadow of another creature within 30 feet, and makes a ghostly hand Strike against a single target within reach of this creature (but not against the creature whose shadow he infests). On a successful Strike, the target is

also flat-footed until the start of Otari's next turn. Otari then reappears at his starting point. The creature whose shadow Otari infests is exposed to filth fever.

Sneak Attack Otari deals an additional 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

D19. THE FOREVER STAIRS

The walls of this five-foot-wide hallway shimmer and ripple with faint whorls of pale blue energy. A staircase to the west leads upward, and the one to the east leads down. Both the ascending and descending stairs reach small landings.

While at first glance this hallway might seem unremarkable, it should quickly become clear that something truly strange is going on once the heroes start to travel it. The hallway loops back upon itself; for example, if the heroes choose to go clockwise, the stairs will always lead upward, but they end up at the same place they started after making a complete circuit. Belcorra created this distorted spatial effect in the early days of her construction of the Abomination Vaults as she was experimenting with several magical methods of delivering her monsters directly into the streets of Absalom. While she ultimately abandoned spatial warping as too inefficient to be used on a sufficiently large scale, she kept this warped hall she constructed as a sort of defensive "moat" around her personal quarters.

The outside doors to areas **D13** and **D14** are always present, but the alcove and door to area **D20** are concealed by an illusory wall created by a 5th-level *illusory object* spell. The Will DC to disbelieve the illusion is 26, but the heroes might find the wall in other ways. A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check while Searching the north hallway or a DC 20 Arcana or Occultism check while Investigating the north hall identifies anomalies in the blue energy that indicate something unusual about that section of the wall.

XP Award: Grant the heroes 30 XP the first time they manage to reach area **D20**.

D20. BELCORRA'S SUITE

EXTREME 4

These four angled rooms have identical basic descriptions; adjust the following as needed to account for the location of any doors in the room. Area **D20d** also features a plain stone archway in one wall filled with blank stone. This is an inactive portal to the depths of the Abomination Vaults.

A pair of doors provide exits from this room, one of which is set a foot higher than the room's dusty floor on a semicircular step.

When Belcorra first began construction of the Abomination Vaults, these chambers served as her personal suite. She lived here for many years as she oversaw the construction of the dungeons both above and below, but once the project was complete, she abandoned this home for one even deeper underground. She moved her belongings deep below as well, leaving these chambers abandoned and empty, but when she became a ghost, her spiritual energy reacted in much the same way Otari's did by manifesting lingering images within these rooms where she spent so many hours.

As a result, each time the heroes step into one of these four rooms, they're greeted with a brief ghostly image of the room as it once was. Each time, they also see a vision of Belcorra herself within the room. Descriptions of each room's visions are given below, but chances are good that the heroes won't have time to study the scenes at first—see *Creatures* below.

D20a: This room was once a comfortable sitting room with two chairs and a low end table between them. In the brief vision, Belcorra is meeting with the drow Volluk (as he was in life, as a drow). Although the image has no sound, Belcorra is speaking animatedly about something, and Volluk is listening attentively.

D20b: Originally a lounge with two plush divans, this room flashes an image of Belcorra relaxing while reading a large tome. A hero who succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check sees that the book is titled *The Whispering Reeds* (this book is currently in area C35).

D20c: A well-set table reveals this to have once been Belcorra's private dining room. In the image, she sits alone at the table, drinking a glass of wine and enjoying an elegantly plated roast arm that looks disturbingly human.

D20d: Belcorra's bedroom features a large bed along the west wall. The stone archway to the north shimmers as a portal opens and Belcorra steps through with a cruel smile on her lips and blood on her hands.

Creatures: A powerful and horrific entity known as a voidglutton has dwelt within these chambers since Belcorra abandoned them. Unlike many of Belcorra's minions, the voidglutton came to her of its own free will, drawn from across the dimensions by echoes of Nhimbaloth's presence. It volunteered to aid Belcorra as a guardian of the upper shrine (area D13), but once she relocated her personal effects to deeper within the Abomination Vaults, it took over these rooms. It basks in the latent fears and pains of the dungeon's haunts and ghosts.

When Belcorra rose as a ghost, the voidglutton took note and visited her, learning of her plans to reactivate

Gauntlight and realizing it would take time to awaken the dormant artifact. The voidglutton helped her refine the plans to testing *Gauntlight* and has recently done so with Volluk's aid (as the heroes experienced at the beginning of Chapter 2). Since then, the voidglutton has lurked here, understanding that it's just a matter of time before Belcorra contacts it again to enact the next stage of her plan.

The voidglutton moves from room to room in this area, as it finds the echoes of Belcorra's spirit soothing. It therefore has an equal chance of being in area D20a, D20b, D20c, or D20d when the heroes arrive. It notes the heroes' intrusion immediately, however, and swiftly moves to confront them. The creature has no interest in negotiation; it attacks at once and fights to the death, but it doesn't pursue heroes who flee these rooms. If the voidglutton clearly has the upper hand over a group of intruders, it might offer to let most of them flee if they leave it a single survivor to torment to death over a few months.

VOIDGLUTTON

CREATURE 8

Page 251

Initiative Perception +18

D21. TROPHY VAULT

The walls of this octagonal chamber are sheathed in a foul-looking, moist webbing made of stringy, semi-transparent slime. The bodies of three creatures have been mounted on the walls in this webbing, as if on display: a lavender-skinned elf, the legless body of a spider-like humanoid, and a hideous humanoid with transparent flesh.

Belcorra took all of her treasure with her when she left, but the voidglutton has used this place as a den for many years and has placed a few of its favorite trophies here—bodies of creatures whose minds it fed upon and found to be particularly delightful, along with some of their potent gear and treasures. The bodies themselves are encased on the walls by the voidglutton's ectoplasmic webbing and must be cut free before they can be searched. Once freed, the bodies swiftly begin to decay, no longer held in stasis by the effects of the voidglutton's webs.

Treasure: The upper torso of a drider from the fleshwarping labs on the sixth level of the Abomination Vaults carries a vial with a *lesser mistform elixir*. A drow outcast from the outpost of Yldaris on the ninth level of the Abomination Vaults wears a strand of *holy prayer beads* on one wrist. The body of an urdefhan from the same level carries a +1 *striking composite longbow* in a case.

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Chapter 8: Decaying Gardens

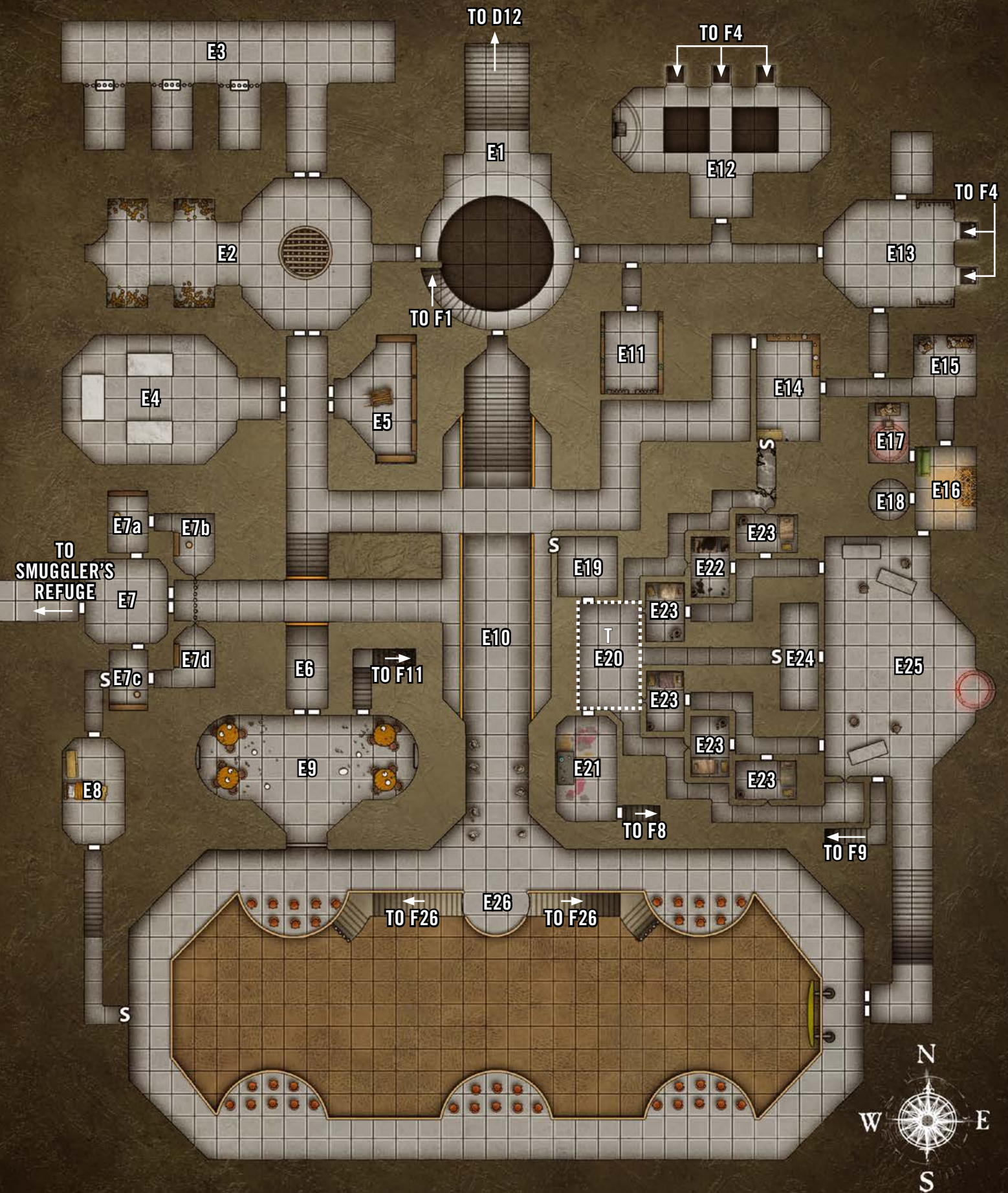
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Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox

LEVEL 5: ARENA
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET





CHAPTER 5: Into the Training Grounds

While the upper levels of Belcorra's massive dungeon were primarily for her personal use, she designed the middle levels for work. Belcorra trawled the Darklands for dangerous predators and bloodthirsty aberrations, but their feral power wasn't enough for her. She needed to mold them into an army to assault the metropolis of Absalom. In the middle levels, she had these forces forged for battle, in body and in mind. The fifth level thus included a massive arena and training grounds where gladiators would fight for the right to lead her monstrous troops.

In the Darklands, Belcorra encountered wormlike aberrations called seugathis, who had a curious eagerness to serve her. She then repurposed the sixth level—formerly support rooms for her monsters and their trainers as well as a “preserve” where she kept large beasts—as laboratories. There, the seugathis sought to perfect fleshwarping to create flawless monsters under the guidance of their leader, Jafaki.

Belcorra constructed the smaller seventh level as a prison. She didn't intend to keep many captives, since creatures who displeased her could serve as raw flesh

for Jafaki's experiments or as food for her monsters. However, one of Belcorra's chief administrators, the contract devil Urevian, insisted on building the prison. Before long, the level became a warped mirror of Hell.

A decade into building her dungeon and honing her preparations, Belcorra died at the hands of the heroic Roseguard, who had no idea about these subterranean machinations. The Abomination Vaults fell into disarray almost immediately. Urevian attempted to assert control, but Jafaki's aberrant creations fought the devil's forces to a standstill. A sort of stalemate settled over the middle levels, and the borders of control have shifted only slightly over the centuries. Jafaki merely wanted peace to continue their experiments; Urevian idly prepared for the surface invasion as his contract required of him, even though he knew it was almost impossible for him to complete his contract because Belcorra had died.

Word of the seugathis' skilled fleshwarping spread. Before long, arrogant or desperate creatures came to the Abomination Vaults seeking remarkable transformations, though few ultimately considered

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their changes to be improvements. The people of Otari have no idea that this traffic exists, because it comes from the Darklands far below into the dungeon's middle levels.

When Belcorra returned as a ghost only a few years ago, the Abomination Vaults hummed with the power of her return. The significance of this event was lost on the research-focused Jafaki, but not on Urevian; the devil realized he could now finally fulfill his contract with the sorcerer. Yet Urevian had already spent centuries contemplating a well-drafted loophole that would allow him to simply return to Hell without providing her any aid at all. To do so, Urevian needs a specific mortal soul: that of Vol Rajani, one of the Roseguard. Vol is long dead, of course, but the clause can still apply if Urevian receives the soul of Vol's last descendant, Carman Rajani. Urevian

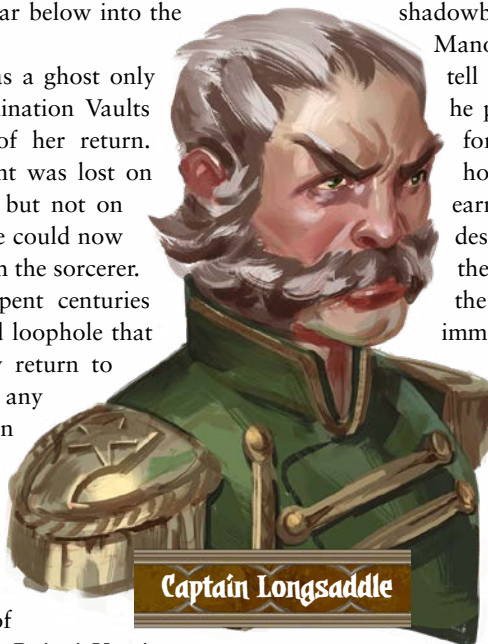
couldn't collect the soul while Belcorra was merely dead, but now that she has returned, Urevian is willing to abandon his extensive preparations if someone can get Carman's soul for him—and he selects the dungeon delvers from Otari to handle this matter on his behalf.

The Spectral Seal

A spectral barrier blocks the only passage from the fourth level of the Abomination Vaults to the fifth. As the heroes learned from the ghost of Otari Ilvashti in area **D18**, only icons of all four members of the Roseguard can pierce it.

RETRIEVING THE ICONS

It shouldn't take the heroes too much asking around in town to find out about the Roseguard's icons. The Roseguard founded Otari and consisted of the rogue Otari Ilvashti, the cleric Aeseephna Menhemes, the wizard Zarmavdian, and the fighter Vol Rajani. The best place to learn about the Roseguard is Menhemes Manor, the residence of the town's mayor and his family (all descendants of Aeseephna Menhemes). The manor's eastern wing contains a public museum of the town's history. Although this museum contains replicas of the Roseguard's adventuring gear and even a few common items that the adventurers once owned, the specific icons Otari Ilvashti's ghost described to the heroes aren't here. Mayor Oseph Menhemes, Vandy Banderdash at the Dawnflower Library, or Wrin Sivinxi at Wrin's Wonders can point the heroes in the right direction.



Captain Longsaddle

The icons are described on page 217. Aeseephna Menhemes's *hunter's brooch* is in a locked shadowbox in the music room of Menhemes Manor. If the heroes honestly and openly tell Oseph Menhemes why they need it, he permits them to borrow the brooch for as long as they'd like. For being honest with him, they automatically earn the Menhemes's support (as described on page 10), which allows the heroes to Earn Income by tutoring the Menhemes children and, more immediately pertinent, lets them meet Dorianna Menhemes and aid with her malady (page 91). If the heroes previously earned the Menhemes's support, Oseph lets them keep the brooch in exchange for all they've done for him and the town.

The bookseller Morlibint keeps Zarmavdian's *Thresholds of Truth* in his academic collection at Odd Stories. If Odd Stories already supports the heroes, Morlibint gladly allows them to borrow the book. If not, they must promise Morlibint that they'll take special care of the spellbook before he loans it to them. Convincing Morlibint might require extensive promises, a demonstration on the proper care of ancient tomes, or both. Either way, Morlibint wants to get a full account of what they do with it (and any related magical phenomena).

Vol Rajani's longsword, the *Cooperative Blade*, is normally on display at the entrance to Dawnflower Library, but it was stolen the previous night.

CARMAN'S BACKGROUND

Carman grew up on stories of Vol's bravery, dedication, and skill. As a boy, Carman didn't understand why his family's sword was hanging in the Dawnflower Library and not in their house. It was theirs, or so his parents insisted. As Carman grew older, he first worked at Otari's blacksmith's shop, Blades for Glades, and later won the shop in a lucky wager against the prior owner. Yet he couldn't forget his family's sword. Officially, the Menhemes family claimed ownership over Vol's ancient blade but "allowed" it to stay in the library in an act of purported generosity that Carman found offensive.

The summer his parents were waylaid and slain by bandits on the road from Absalom, Carman became a broken man. His work at the smithy became erratic, and he stopped relaxing with his friends and helping his community. With no other direction, Carman squandered his inheritance, spending the money on entertainment,

fine clothes, and rare whiskey. He started spending more time gambling and drinking at the Crook's Nook than he did at his smithy. Eventually the inheritance money ran out, and Carman was faced with a sizable debt. Several owed favors later, he started grifting travelers or hustling them at the knife-throwing board at the Crook's Nook. But his vices still outpaced his earnings from petty cons, and soon he took to outright thievery under Yinyasmera's tutelage. The "Ace of Blades" is the moniker given to the best knife thrower in the Crook's Nook, and Carman Rajani has held that title for so long that it's become his nickname among fellow members of the Osprey Club.

Within a few years, Carman had settled into his new life, working as a smith during the day, carousing at the Crook's Nook at night, and occasionally engaging in some petty larceny when his coin purse started to get light. When he heard rumors that people thought he was wasting his life, though, it stung his pride. He resolved to run for mayor against Oseph, to show the whole town that his family was the equal of the Menhemes family.

Everyone thought Carman's candidacy was a joke. The second time he ran, his platform became nothing more than sharp personal attacks against the Menhemes family; the townspeople felt the joke had gone sour and considered it a waste of their time. He met their jibes with violence, getting into brawls to prove he was the better man. The third time he ran for office, he actually put in effort to help the community. Though he lost by much smaller margin, he took the loss as proof that kindness can't get you any further than your fists can. The fourth time, he tried to force a successful campaign with open bribes and blackmail.

Oseph won by a landslide, showing up on Election Day wearing the *Cooperative Blade* as part of his celebratory regalia. Carman finally decided that the magic sword must be the key to his success. Everyone in town knew it brought Otari good luck, so whoever held the sword had the town in their pocket. As Vol's heir, he deserved the sword. He begged Oseph to sell the weapon, but Oseph suspected it was some new scheme—or worse, connected to one of Carman's rumored crimes or debts—and countered with delays, excuses, and price increases.

Finally, Carman decided he'd had enough. If he wanted his family's sword back, he'd have to take it.

THE THEFT

While the heroes were off in the Abomination Vaults, Carman crept into the Dawnflower Library and started a small fire in the book restoration room. While the fire distracted the staff, he broke the *Cooperative Blade's* display case and fled with the sword.

After an hour, the staff had put out the fire without any serious injuries and only a few lost books—a miracle the acolytes attribute to Sarenrae's protection. By the time anyone discovered the theft, Carman was already on his way to a local cave called Smuggler's Refuge. It didn't take long for the town guard to realize that the missing Carman Rajani was the prime suspect. He had pestered the mayor about the sword for years, after all, and a few witnesses saw someone matching his description absconding from the library, clutching his cloak over some long object.

Vandy Banderdash, head priestess of the Dawnflower Library, meets with the heroes when they come to ask about the sword. She can barely contain her rage, although she seems more angry about the theft than the fire. She asks them to find Carman and bring him in alive to face trial and receive an appropriate punishment.

CHAPTER 5 SYNOPSIS

The chapter begins with the heroes seeking the final icons needed to enter the Abomination Vault's middle levels, but a recent theft complicates this task. The heroes confront the thief, Carman Rajani, in a remote cave, where they must decide what to do with him—a choice they don't yet realize will have meaningful repercussions later. They can then explore the fifth level of the Abomination Vaults, which contains masterless horrors and malevolent spirits, and address a mystery regarding the mayor's daughter.

Environmental Cues (Smuggler's

Cave): dripping water, mineral tang in the air, broken crates, moldy bedding, old campfires

Environmental Cues (Arena level):

dust with strange tracks in it, gouges along walls, broken links of chains, splintered furniture, unidentifiable bones, rusted scraps of metal, bits of broken claw or carapace

CHAPTER 5 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 5 are as follows.

- +1 striking composite shortbow
- +1 studded leather armor
- +1 tamchal chakram (page 226)
- bloodseeker beak
- bottled air
- climbing bolt
- *Cooperative Blade* (page 217)
- dragon turtle scale
- everburning torch
- greater hat of disguise
- hunter's brooch (page 217)
- lesser sea touch elixir
- moderate bestial mutagen
- moderate juggernaut mutagen
- moderate quicksilver mutagen
- moderate tanglefoot bag
- ring of wizardry (type I)
- staff of abjuration
- wand of heal (2nd level)
- wand of locate
- wand of summon animal (2nd level)

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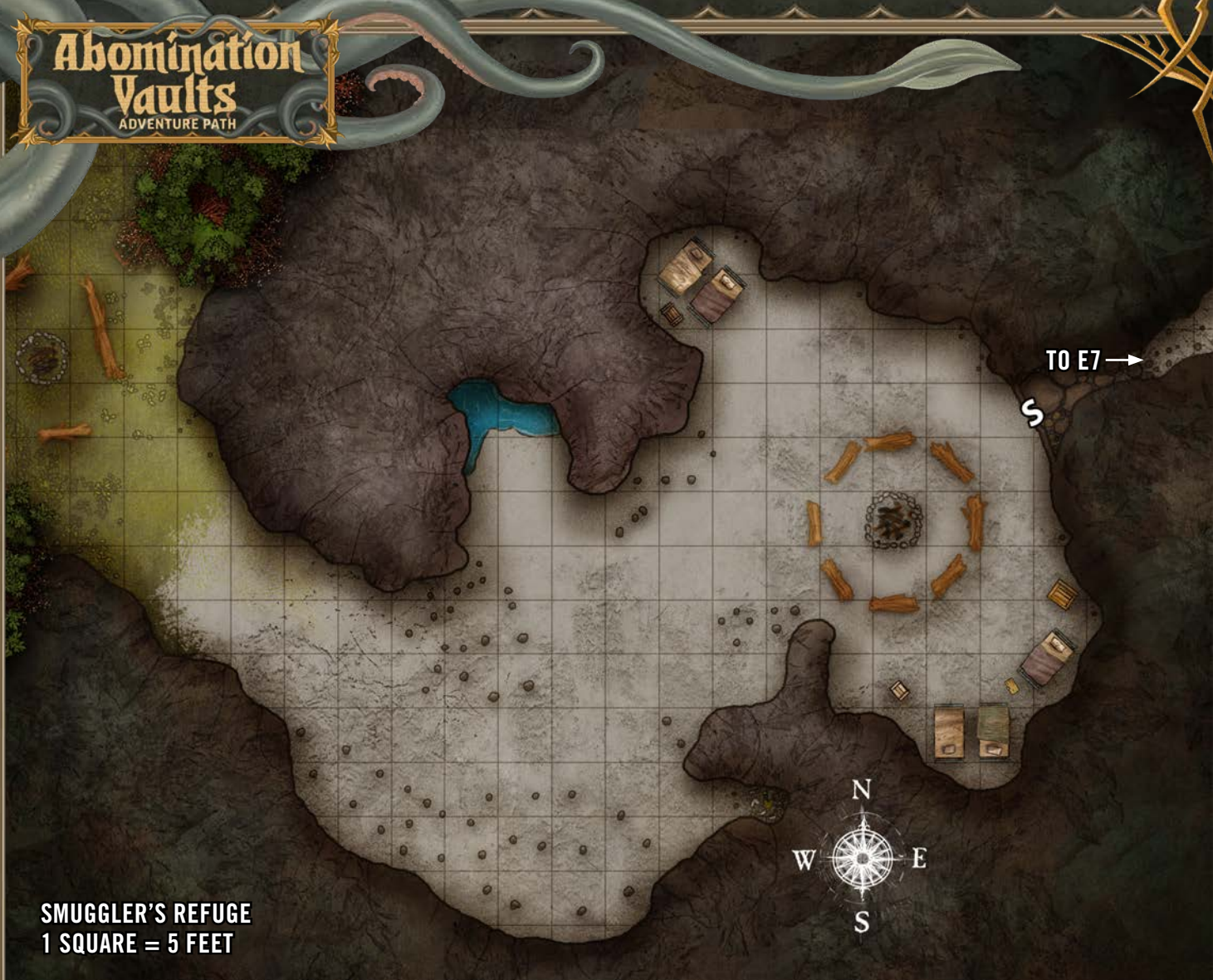
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Nhimbaloth

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SMUGGLER'S REFUGE

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

Finding Carman shouldn't be too hard, as he acted hastily and didn't have time to cover his tracks or prepare a good cover story. The Otari Garrison can't provide much help; Captain Longsaddle points out that since Carman isn't in town or along the roads, the guards don't have jurisdiction to pursue him. He harrumphs and adds, "Good riddance to that troublemaker. He'll keep running if he knows what's good for him." He doesn't provide any aid to capture Carman but happily takes him into custody if the heroes bring the smith into town.

Blades for Glades: The heroes find Carman's blacksmith shop, Blades for Glades, closed; they won't find any clues here. If the heroes already had the support of Blades for Glades, they recall that Carman mentioned Smuggler's Refuge in the past, so it's a likely hideout.

Combing the Town: If the heroes ask about Carman's location in Otari, nearly everyone suggests they go to the Crook's Nook. A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Diplomacy check to Gather Information hears about

the Smuggler's Refuge from townsfolk and recalls that Carman spent time there in his youth (as did many people in Otari).

Crook's Nook: Asking around at the Crook's Nook brings the owner, Yinyasmera, over to talk. She brazenly asks for a 10 gp "special fee" for food and drinks; heroes who pay up (or succeed at a DC 20 Diplomacy check to Request information) get her to open up about Carman. The blacksmith has been a little too bold to remain in her good graces, and this theft is the last straw. She mentions that Carman has likely gone into hiding at Smuggler's Refuge outside of town. If Yinyasmera has a favorable opinion of the heroes from their previous actions, she gives this information for free.

SMUGGLER'S REFUGE

LOW 5

This cave is only about an hour outside of town, just a short walk through the forest, north of an abandoned fish camp. Though it's too far inland for transporting heavy cargo, this cave once saw a lot of use from smugglers moving lighter goods. They hid their loot in

one of the cave's many niches, planning to come back for it at a later time, or used the site as a drop point for transactions with a buyer. Today, with the recent decline in smuggling, Otari's young people camp in the cave when they need a break from the lumber town.

The map of Smuggler's Refuge appears on page 88.

Rotted crates, forgotten clothes, and other debris suggest this cave is occasionally used but rarely cleaned. A cold campfire surrounded by logs sits at the cave's center. Faint smells of mildew and smoke hang in the still air.

Like many visitors before him, Carman initially built a fire here but put it out when he realized there isn't a good place for the smoke to vent. A few old cots, heaps of discarded clothes, and empty crates show that this cave is occasionally inhabited. Carman uses the best of the cots and the freshest clothes for bedding.

The east wall of the cave contains an exceptionally well-hidden secret door that leads into the fifth level of the Abomination Vaults. A hero Searching this area must succeed at a DC 28 Perception check to find it. Even if discovered, however, the secret door doesn't open from this side. The door's mechanism causes the heavy stone wall to swing inward, and it can't do so because of a cave-in just on the other side of it. The heroes might clear this entrance from the other side later (area E7).

Creature: If Carman isn't aware of the heroes, he sits on his cot, chewing on some dried fish and turning the *Cooperative Blade* over and over in his hands while he thinks. He wonders whether to return the sword and hope for nothing more than a stiff fine, or flee to his ancestral homeland of Nidal.

If Carman knows of the heroes' presence, he hides behind a crate and uses Stealth for initiative.

Carman knows the heroes by reputation. He assumes they've come here to take him prisoner, and he puts up a fight. While defending himself, he shouts to them, "You'll never take me alive!" and "This is my sword! I only took what's rightfully mine!" He surrenders if the heroes plainly don't reciprocate his aggression, or when he's reduced to fewer than 30 Hit Points.

CARMAN RAJANI

CREATURE 6

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Male human scoundrel

Perception +12

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +15, Athletics +14, Deception +12, Intimidation +14, Society +10, Stealth +15, Thievery +15

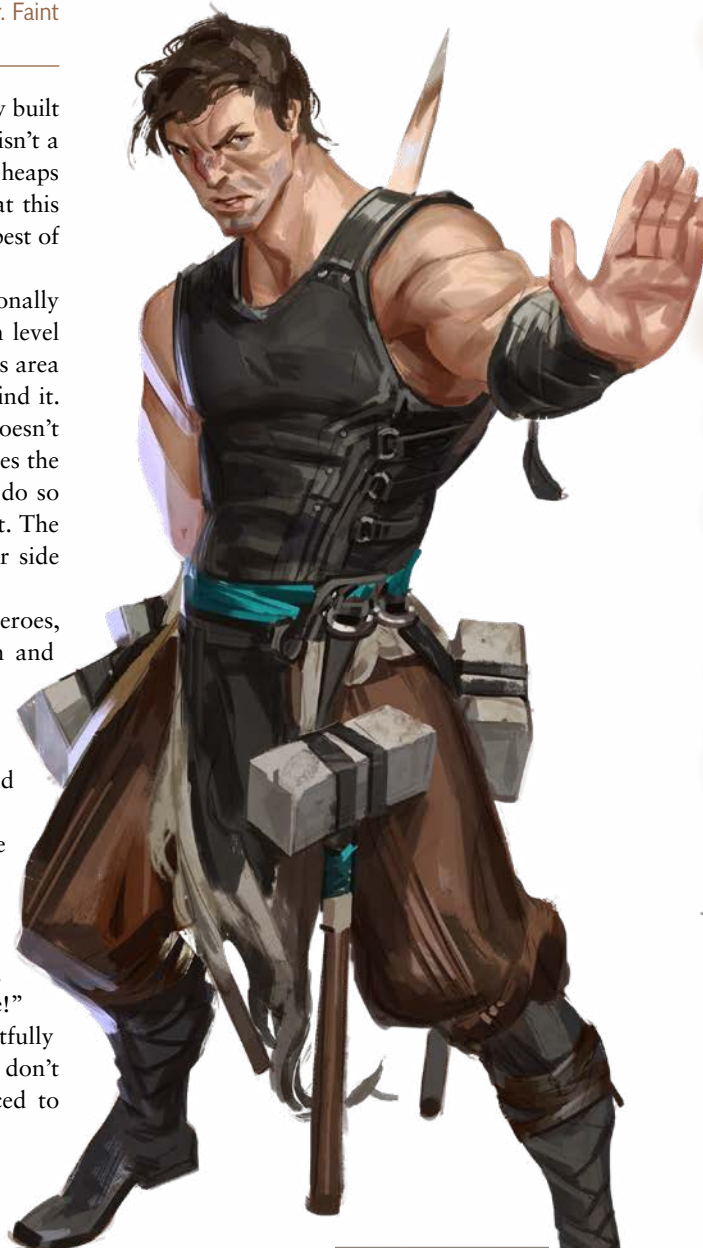
Str +4, **Dex** +5, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +2

Items *Cooperative Blade* (page 217), light hammer (4), +1 studded leather armor, thieves' tools, 110 gp

AC 24; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +17, **Will** +10

HP 95

Skillful Catch **Trigger** Carman is targeted with a ranged attack by a thrown weapon and has a hand free; **Effect** Carman gains a +2 circumstance bonus to his AC against the triggering attack. If the attack misses, Carman



Carman Rajani

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Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox

catches the weapon and can immediately make a ranged Strike with it.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *longsword* +17 (magical, versatile P), **Damage** 2d8+8 slashing

Melee ♦ *light hammer* +16 (agile), **Damage** 1d6+4 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ *light hammer* +17 (agile, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d6+4 bludgeoning

Sneak Attack Carman deals an extra 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Sudden Throw ♦ (flourish) Carman quickly draws a thrown weapon and makes a ranged Strike with it. His target must succeed at a DC 22 Perception check or be caught flat-footed by the attack.

Surprise Attacker On the first round of combat, creatures that haven't acted yet are flat-footed to Carman.

TALKING WITH CARMAN

If Carman has a chance to explain himself before the heroes take him into custody, he tries to justify stealing the sword. Read or paraphrase the following.

"It's mine, I tell you! The sword is mine! How can I steal something that already belongs to me? It belonged to Vol Rajani, and I'm her only surviving descendant. That uptight mayor says the sword belongs to his family just because a pack of kobolds had their hands on it for a while, and his ancestor snatched it from them. He says an heirloom is an heirloom, and he's right, but it's my heirloom! Look, I tried to buy it off him, but every time I saved enough coin, he raised the price—fifty gold, then one hundred, then two hundred. Then he said it wasn't for sale! I had no choice but to take it. It belongs to Vol—to the Rajani family. It belongs to me!"

Carman pleads for the heroes to let him go and steadfastly claims his right to take the sword. He answers their questions as best he can. Likely inquiries and his responses follow.

Why is the sword so important to you? "It belonged to my family, to Vol. She was the best of the Roseguard and the best of the Rajanis... and I wanted to be mayor. I've tried four times but always lost to Oseph. If I had the sword, well—people say that it gives the town good luck! If I had it, they'd want me to be mayor so that I could give them luck."

Why do you want to be mayor? "To be in charge! There's no reason a Menhemes should always run this place. Oseph says it's because his family is descended from heroes. Well, so am I, and I can do a much better job than that old bastard."

Why did you set the fire at the library? "The fire was just a distraction. I didn't want to hurt anyone, and they

should've put it out soon enough. It's not like I burned anything other than some paper."

Even if the sword is rightfully yours, you committed arson. Don't you think you deserve to go to jail? "Arson? Heh. Vandalism maybe. I'll pay a fine for starting the fire, but the sword is mine."

Why should we let you go? "Because I'll pay you. Fifty gold coins—a hundred, even. Take it all. But I get to keep my sword."

How did you get that much gold? "Saved it, borrowed some. Okay, borrowed most of it. Look, I just had to get that sword."

If we let you go, what will you do? "I don't know. Stay here a while, maybe, and think it out. I guess I can't really go back to town now. Maybe I'll head to Nidal. They say Vol was from there—some say she was royalty, and maybe I can get the life that's due to me."

If we let you go, can we borrow the sword first? "As long as you're not taking it or me back to town, I'll go with you to do whatever you need to do."

CARMAN'S FATE

The heroes decide what to do with Carman. He likely goes along with any of the heroes' demands, particularly if they already proved they can beat him in a fight.

Let Him Go: Even if the heroes are willing to let him go, they still need the *Cooperative Blade* to breach the barrier in the Abomination Vaults. Carman goes with them for this task since he doesn't want to let the sword out of his sight, but he doesn't fight in the Abomination Vaults if the heroes get into trouble. After the barrier goes down, Carman retreats to the cave to consider what to do and likely stays there for a few days.

Turn Him In: If the heroes turn him over to the Otari Garrison, Captain Longsaddle tosses him in a cell and jokes about throwing away the key. Longsaddle lets the mayor know that the heroes have the *Cooperative Blade*; the mayor is fine with the heroes borrowing it, as long as it ends up back with the town. Longsaddle takes Carman's money as a pool to repay any costs from his crimes but lets the heroes keep Carman's other equipment.

Kill Him: If the heroes kill Carman in combat, people in town understand that's a risk when apprehending a criminal. Oseph arranges for Carman's burial in the Otari Cemetery and lets the heroes borrow the *Cooperative Blade*.

Treasure: Apart from what Carman carries on him, his adventurer's pack near the fire contains a week of improvised rations and two waterskins. A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check while Searching the cave finds a long-forgotten bottle of Old Law Whiskey hidden in a pebble-covered niche. The aged alcohol is worth 3 gp.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for capturing Carman alive, in addition to the XP for defeating him.

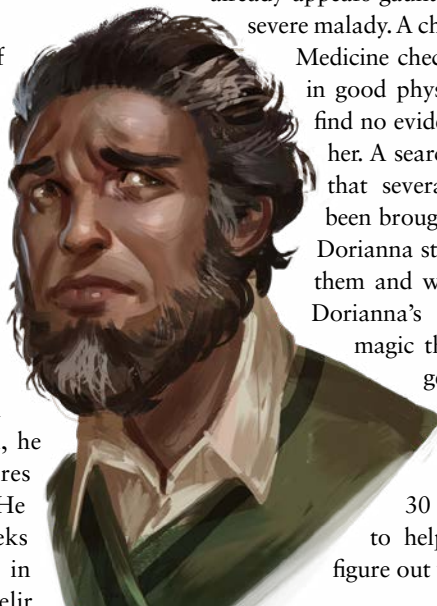
Dorianna's Dreams

Although the heroes can find plenty of adventure in the Abomination Vaults, other mysterious events are afoot in Otari. The most significant of these occurrences centers around the mayor's eldest daughter, the teenaged Dorianna Menhemes. Dorianna is on the cusp of developing psychic powers. While no one on the surface is aware of this, a denizen of Leng named Ysondkhelir (area **G18**) has become aware of her power. With the barrier to the lower levels down, he can twist her dreams into nightmares and take the role of her savior. He intensifies this long plan over weeks of nighttime adventures with her in the Dimension of Dreams. Ysondkhelir intends to eventually thrust Dorianna physically into the Dimension of Dreams to augment other denizens' plots.

Two nights after the heroes open the seal to the Abomination Vaults' lower levels, Dorianna Menhemes begins having horrifying nightmares. She awakens several times each night, screaming and clutching a stuffed griffon she hasn't touched in years. When asked, she doesn't recall the specifics of these nightmares beyond her fear and the appearance of a man shrouded in mismatched fabric who comforts her.

If the heroes have earned the support of Menhemes Manor, they've met Dorianna, and they hear about her nightmares from the other children. Otherwise, the mayor seeks out whichever hero is best known as a healer or as an authority on Occultism. He mentions his daughter's nightmares and the "motley man" who acts as a protector and savior within them. He asks them to discreetly look into the matter and help his daughter.

Asking Wrin: Mayor Menhemes views Wrin Sivinx of Wrin's Wonders as an unreliable eccentric, so he doesn't think to involve her in his family's troubles. However, she's an expert in Occultism; she gladly accompanies the heroes to help Dorianna if they ask, so long as she doesn't need to meet with the beleaguered girl indoors. If the party lacks someone with Occultism training to get to the bottom of these mysteries, Wrin's involvement is a possible solution.



Oseph Menhemes

EXAMINING DORIANNA

Even the first time the heroes examine Dorianna, she already appears gaunt and pale as if she had caught a severe malady. A character who succeeds at a DC 15 Medicine check verifies that she's nevertheless in good physical health. The heroes initially find no evidence of any magic or curse upon her. A search of Dorianna's room discovers that several of her childhood toys have been brought back out for her to play with. Dorianna states vaguely that she just missed them and wanted to play with them again. Dorianna's nightmares are tenacious; any magic the heroes use to help Dorianna get a good night's sleep fail unless the caster succeeds at a secret DC 27 counteract check.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for taking the care and time to help Dorianna, even if they can't figure out what's wrong just yet.

DORIANNA'S DECLINE

Dorianna's condition worsens over time. Her nightmares lessen in intensity, but she feels exhausted and anxious during the day. She begins to talk with the Motley Man as an imaginary friend even when awake, eschewing activities with anyone else. Her disposition becomes erratic and childish, and she often scratches absently at her right hand. Her siblings don't want anything to do with her, and even her parents find her hard to put up with. She's been afflicted by Ysondkhelir's *outcast's curse* spell, which the heroes might detect or remove normally. If they do, Ysondkhelir casts it on her again the following night.

With a successful DC 26 Diplomacy check, the heroes gain Dorianna's trust and get her to open up to them. If they have the support of Menhemes Manor, they have a +4 circumstance bonus to this check. Only one hero can attempt this check each day (on a critical failure, they must instead wait 1d4 days). On a success, Dorianna insists that the Motley Man is real and discusses one of the following two subjects with them (on a subsequent day's success or an initial critical success, she reveals both).

Gifts: The Motley Man gives her gifts in the form of her old childhood toys, and the best of them is the stuffed griffon. Even a cursory examination reveals that something hard is sewn inside the stuffed toy; characters who open it up find a large, flawless ruby worth 30 gp. Even if the heroes take this ruby, the next time Dorianna dreams, it reappears inside another childhood toy from wherever it is. It's keyed to Dorianna and doesn't leave her for long.

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Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox

Wrist Writing: Dorianna absently points out several bruises on her right wrist that she can't remember getting. A hero trained in Occultism who views the bruises can attempt a DC 22 Occultism check to Decipher Writing. A hero who speaks Aklo gains a +2 circumstance bonus to this check. On a success, the hero notes that the words are related to some dream-traveling rituals; on a critical success, the hero notes the word "Leng" among the bruises.

Either of these clues points to the involvement of a malevolent extraplanar creature called a denizen of Leng. Leng is a terrifying extraplanar location just past the Dimension of Dreams, where cruel and sinister people called denizens of Leng live. A hero who succeeds at a DC 24 Occultism realizes the nature of the creature plaguing Dorianna; if the heroes obtained both clues, then any hero trained in Occultism realizes this without a check. Though the heroes might identify the source of Dorianna's trouble, there's not much they can do for her yet, because Ysondkhelir doesn't ever physically get anywhere near her.

XP Award: Award the heroes 80 XP if they discover a denizen of Leng is involved in Dorianna's malady.

DORIANNA'S MADNESS

About the time the heroes finish their exploration of the laboratories level and start to investigate the prison level, Dorianna's condition suddenly gets worse. She sleepwalks most of the time and is unaware of events around her, as though seeing the world in a hazy dream. Her right hand withers for no discernible reason. Mayor Menhemes takes his daughter to Vandy Banderdash at the Dawnflower Library, but the clerics there can't aid her.

The heroes hear about all of this on their next return to Otari. Everyone else in the Menhemes family is beside themselves with grief. If the heroes haven't previously gained Dorianna's trust, they can now attempt to do so, but the DC for the Diplomacy check is 27, and they gain no bonus for having the support of Menhemes Manor—Dorianna is beyond caring about her former friends.

If the heroes have Dorianna's trust, she describes great adventures with the Motley Man in a fantastical land of forests, palaces, and snowfields. The Motley Man told her they would soon be together on their

adventures forever, but he wanted her right hand as a token. Dorianna didn't hesitate to offer it to him,

and when she awoke her hand was withered. She doesn't consider it a particularly serious loss, since her best friend wanted it so much.

Dorianna doesn't know how long it will be until she and the Motley Man are together forever, and this timetable is intentionally left vague so you can prompt your players to action without punishing them if they fail to reach Ysondkhelir quickly. They should have, at a minimum, a week before Dorianna vanishes.

Dorianna's connection to Ysondkhelir is now so strong that the heroes can discover him through this link. A hero trained in Occultism realizes they can learn more by examining Dorianna's psychic patterns while she is dreaming. This is an exploration activity that takes 8 hours and requires a DC 23 Occultism

check. With a successful check, the hero learns the first fact below they don't already know; with a critical success they learn two facts; and with a critical failure, they learn a false fact of your invention.

- There is a strong link between Dorianna's mind and the Dimension of Dreams. A denizen of Leng has strengthened this conduit; unless that creature is destroyed, Dorianna will eventually be drawn wholly into that dimension and lost to this world.
- The hero gains images of the denizen's lair: a stone chamber with a very old map of the Inner Sea region painted on it across from a map consisting of several tattered pieces of paper that, together, constitute a detailed map of Otari.
- The hero knows the denizen's name is Ysondkhelir and gains an accurate mental image of him.
- The hero can use the ruby in Dorianna's possession to track Ysondkhelir and can use the following activity with the ruby. Even though Dorianna doesn't care if they take it, it's still attuned to her and returns to her each night. The heroes must therefore return to Otari to recover it each day.

Activate 10 minutes (envision); **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You focus on the ruby, which casts a 5th-level *locate* spell that only targets Ysondkhelir.

Treasure: After the heroes defeat Ysondkhelir, the ruby no longer returns to Dorianna and becomes an unusually shaped *wand of locate*. Dorianna swiftly recovers afterward. Mayor Oseph effusively thanks the heroes and arranges for each of them to receive an



Dorianna Menhemes

item of 7th level or lower of their choice from Absalom at his expense. These items take a week to arrive.

XP Award: Award the heroes 120 XP for freeing Dorianna from Ysondkhelir's clutches.

Arena Features

Once the heroes recover all four of the icons and place them on the altar in the Upper Temple of Nhimbalo in area **D13**, they are able to enter the fifth level of the Abomination Vaults. Belcorra used this level to test the resolve of her minions and her prisoners, and hoped to someday establish a premier facility for gladiators, from which she would take the best combatants for her forces. Presently, Jafaki and the other seugathis use this level as a dumping ground for failed experiments.

The ceilings on this level are 15 feet tall unless otherwise indicated. Areas not described as having light are completely dark. The doors are made of wood banded with iron, and virtually all of them bear gouges or scarring from violent beasts smashing their way through in the past. The doors are weighted to swing closed after a few moments if they aren't propped open.

The Arena map appears on page 84.

E1. UPPER SHAFT

MODERATE 5

A crumbling staircase leads to a cracked and badly stained mosaic tile floor. To the south, a walkway encircles a round, gaping pit, leading to a spiral stairway that clings to the edge of the pit. A twisted iron banister follows the edge of the walkway and stairs. The acrid smell of chemicals and rot, with just a tinge of sulfur, wafts from the pit's darkness. Strange moaning echoes up the shaft.

The circular pit is 80 feet deep and ringed with a spiral staircase. The laboratories level is 40 feet below (area **F1**), and the prison level is at the bottom (area **G1**).

Creatures: The seugathis deposited some rejected experiments here to keep them out of the way. Two grothluts lurk around the bends, just out of sight of the stairs, and a gibbering moulder sprawls on the walkway near the door leading east. They attack as soon as they detect any creatures in the area, moaning and gibbering as they do. (The grothluts are immune to the moulder's gibbering, but the moulder isn't immune to the grothluts' piteous moan.) These creatures fight until destroyed, but they don't bother pursuing anyone who retreats up the stairs.

GIBBERING Moulder

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 176

Initiative Perception +15

GROTHLUTS (2)

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 158

Initiative Perception +5

E2. LARGE MONSTER HOLDING

MODERATE 5

Rusted iron chains hang from the ceiling of this room, each ending in an oversized manacle. The octagonal eastern end of the room contains a circular pit covered by a rusted iron grate. Torn bolts and scrap metal dangle from the ceiling above the pit. Piles of scrap fill the four alcoves that open off the wide hall that constitutes the room's west end.

A velstrac named Cratonys once prepared large monsters for fighting in the arena in this part of the dungeon. She kept them in the cells in area **E3**, where she tortured them to enhance their aggressiveness and scarred them to augment their ferocious appearance using the now-rusted contraptions in the alcoves. When it came time for the creatures to fight, she lowered them into the chamber below (area **F2**) using a heavy winch in the ceiling, which is now inoperable and unstable.

The heroes might have met another evangelist velstrac named Vulgrist on the level above this one. Cratonys and Vulgrist were once as close as sisters, but each has fallen into her own independent malaise.

Hazard: The rusty and unstable grate over the pit collapses as soon as any significant weight is placed upon it. The remains of the dangling winch mechanism fall into the pit moments later. The Athletics DC to Climb the pit is 20.

RUSTY GRATE PIT

HAZARD 6

MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 20 (expert), or 0 if the grate is open

Description The rusty grate covers a pit that's 10 feet in diameter and 40 feet deep.

Disable DC 18 Thievery to harmlessly trigger the trap by nudging the gate or the dangling winch, or DC 24 Thievery to stabilize the grate so it doesn't collapse.

AC 21; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +11

Hardness 14; **HP** 56 (BT 28); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Pitfall **Trigger** A creature walks onto the grate; **Effect** The triggering creature falls in and takes falling damage (20 bludgeoning damage). That creature can use the Grab an Edge reaction to avoid falling. Whether or not the creature Grabs an Edge, the rusty winch above crashes down atop the triggering creature, dealing 3d10 bludgeoning damage and dislodging its grip (DC 24 basic Reflex save). The creature can still try to Grab an Edge again.

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Nhimbalo

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Toolbox

Creature: Belcorra's magic binds Cratonys to this level, preventing the velstrac from leaving. After centuries surrounded by mindless aberrations and the twisted logic of the seugathis, she has gone feral and lost all sense of purpose. She doesn't speak or respond to any who try to communicate with her, but lashes out in a desire to inflict pain. She fights from the room's west end, using the rusty chains to strike her foes.

If any hero obviously bears the silver-handled +1 *ghost touch whip* that once belonged to Vulgrist, Cratonys recognizes it and appears taken aback by its presence. She refuses to attack anyone carrying it, and

anyone holding out the whip can compel her to cease her attacks for at least a few minutes with a single Interact action; however, Cratonys doesn't become any less violent or more prone to speak.

CRATONYS

CREATURE 6

Female evangelist velstrac (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 282)

Initiative Perception +13

Rusty Chains When Cratonys damages a creature with her chains, including persistent bleed damage from being impaled by a chain, the creature must succeed at a DC 21 Fortitude saving throw or contract a severe form of tetanus called velstrac tetanus.

VELSTRAC TETANUS

DISEASE 6

DISEASE **VIRULENT**

Velstracs sometimes intentionally infect their chains with dangerous diseases, such as this aggressive form of tetanus. Tetanus can produce stiffness, muscle spasms strong enough to break bones, and ultimately death.

Saving Throw DC 21 Fortitude; **Onset** 1d4 days; **Stage 1** clumsy 1 (1 week); **Stage 2** clumsy 2 and can't speak (1 day); **Stage 3** paralyzed (1 day); **Stage 4** death

XP Award: If the heroes get Cratonys to stand down by displaying Vulgrist's whip, award them 60 XP as though they defeated her in combat (if they later fight her anyway, they don't gain any XP for doing so).

E3. MONSTER HOLDING

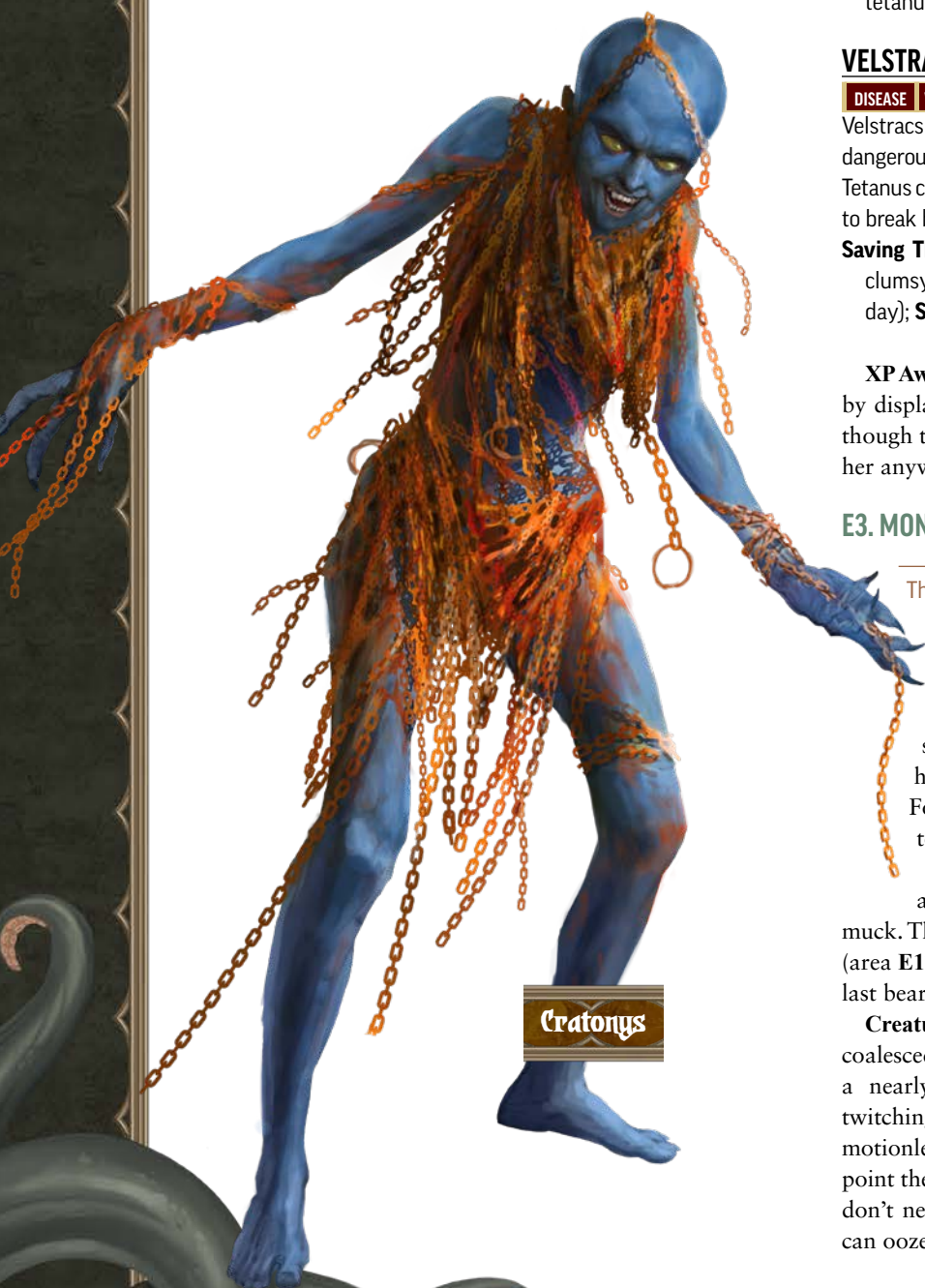
MODERATE 5

Three cells line the south wall, their bars only a few inches apart. Each cell contains a heap of rotted flesh and shattered bone.

The locks on these cell doors have all seized shut due to age. Opening one requires a hero to succeed at a DC 20 Athletics check to Force it Open or a single DC 20 Thievery check to disable the jammed mechanism.

The center cell holds the only item of interest: a copper key that glitters within the fleshy muck. This spare key can open the locked supply room (area E11). The creature in the cell consumed the key's last bearer decades ago but couldn't digest copper.

Creatures: In each cell, the fleshy detritus has coalesced into a strange creature called a shanrigol, a nearly mindless amalgamation of undeath and twitching life. These three shanrigol heaps remain motionless until one of them is disturbed, at which point they all slither forward to attack. The shanrigols don't need to open the cell doors to get out, as they can ooze between the bars with their Undulating Step.



Cratonys

They pursue the heroes as best they can and fight until destroyed.

SHANRIGOL HEAPS (3)

CREATURE 4

Page 246

Perception +9

E4. SURGICAL SUITE

MODERATE 5

Lanterns hanging from the ceiling shine bright circles of light over three stone tables topped with metal slabs. A single lightweight chain dangles near each table. The remnants of a dead morlock lies on one slab. Dried splatters of blood cover the walls, floor, and ceiling.

The three lights in this room are magical; they illuminate the tables with bright light but provide only dim light to the rest of the room. The metal slabs at the top of each table have hinges on the sides. A tug on the hanging pull-chain causes the table's hinged slabs to fold down then back up, dumping anything on the table into a 40-foot-deep shaft to area **F6**. The slabs easily fold down from the underside, so anyone climbing up one of the shafts can open the slab and get out. The Athletics DC to Climb the pits is 20.

Jafaki previously used this chamber for fleshwarping trials, dumping failed experiments and waste from his surgeries into the pits for the oozes below to devour. He eventually deemed this location too inconvenient and virtually never uses it anymore.

Creature: The last time Jafaki came here, he abandoned a morlock whose arms and legs he had amputated (and disposed of). The creature died in agony and its spirit arose as a specter. The specter wants only to inflict its interminable agony upon others, and it still harbors a visceral fear of the operating tables. The bright lights shining on the tables activate its sunlight powerlessness.

SPECTER

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 248

Initiative Perception +15

E5. MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Shelves of dusty bottles and surgical equipment line the walls in this room. Cobwebs and dust hint that this chamber has remained untouched for quite some time. At the center of the room stands a solitary pushcart.

Jafaki kept spare parts, alchemical reagents, and tools organized in this room. He hasn't visited this room in decades, so many reagents have spoiled.

On a successful DC 15 Perception check, a hero Searching this room locates an unusual key that fell behind one of the shelves. The key has a round shaft tipped with several teeth of varying length; it opens one of the locks in the plinth room (area **F7**).

Treasure: The shelves contain two sets of healer's tools, a set of expanded healer's tools, and alchemical reagents worth 10 gp.

E6. HALLWAY

A steep staircase descends underneath a footbridge, which crosses this hall at 20 feet above the ground. From this side, the double door to the south is barricaded with several bars of twisted metal scrap and a sturdy wooden shelf. The footbridge's wrought iron railing prevents anyone on it from easily falling off. With a successful DC 20 Athletics check, a character can climb up onto (or down from) the footbridge.

E7. SECURITY CHECKPOINT

MODERATE 5

The heroes might have some difficulty reaching this area from the east since a closed portcullis flanked by arrow slits blocks the hall, but a character can lift this portcullis with a successful DC 30 Athletics check. Some of the bars near the north arrow slit have partially melted and twisted, perhaps caused by powerful acid. A Small or smaller creature who's trained in Acrobatics can Squeeze through the opening with a successful DC 18 Acrobatics check, but the opening is too small for larger creatures.

This central octagonal room is flanked on the north and south by single iron doors, each with a narrow viewing port and archery slit. The stone double door to the east features an emblazoned carving of a dripping skull, its mouth stuffed with weeds. The western double door is made of iron pitted with rust.

This area acted as a gateway for Belcorra's scouts to go out into the world and as an egress point for her army of well-trained champions. The double door to the east leads to a passage that ends at a cave-in behind the well-hidden secret door in Smuggler's Refuge. The cave-in and secret door are obvious from this side. Clearing the cave-in requires 40 hours of manual labor, but the heroes can divide up this task (four characters can clear it in 10 hours, for example).

The two guard chambers (areas **E7a** and **E7c**) and archer stations (areas **E7b** and **E7d**) were looted centuries ago but still bear empty weapon racks.

The east wall in area **E7b** has a lever that raises and lowers the portcullis. Although rusty, it still works. Any creature squeezing past the gap in the portcullis can see the lever in the archer station.

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Area **E7c** has a secret door in its west wall that opens by manipulating a hook on the room's weapon rack. With a successful DC 20 Perception check, a hero Searching this room locates identifies this door and how to open it.

Creature: Belcorra's chief assassin, Siora Fallowglade, tried to flee the Abomination Vaults during the chaos following Belcorra's death. She

murdered the two guards stationed here to hide the evidence of her flight, but one of the guards managed to inflict a mortal wound. Siora died before reaching the other end of the tunnel.

At Belcorra's death, a surge of negative energy swept through this area, tethering Siora's soul to this area as a shadow. Siora is eager to create minions to serve her. She thus focuses on one enemy at a time; she steals their shadow, marks them for death, then murders them. She retreats if badly damaged, but only to set up an ambush later. An implacable foe, she continues her attacks until destroyed.

SIORA FALLOWGLADE

CREATURE 7

Female greater shadow (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 289)

Initiative Perception +14

Mark for Death ♦♦ **Requirements** Siora can see the target she intends to mark; **Effect** Siora designates a single target as her mark. She gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to Seek her target, and her spectral hand Strikes against her target gain the deadly d8 weapon trait.

Treasure: Two *bloodseeker beaks* are stashed behind a dusty weapon rack in area **E7d**.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP if they reopen the passage to Smuggler's Refuge, which they can use to more easily come and go from Otari.

E8. ASSASSIN'S QUARTERS

The secret doors providing entrance to this room—one at the end of the hall that leads north and another at the end of the hall leading south—are both obvious from this side.

Dust and neglect cover this chamber's narrow bed, warped wooden wardrobe, and large footlocker.

Siora Fallowglade once lived here, but no one has come here since her death centuries ago. The bedding and clothing have all decayed into threadbare scraps.

Treasure: The footlocker contains a wide-brimmed red hat with a large black feather (a *greater hat of disguise*), a pouch of tiny emeralds worth a total of 25 gp, and Siora's

poison codex. This book contains the formulas for hunting spider venom, giant scorpion venom, giant wasp venom, and malyass root paste. The book is

Siora Fallowglade

exceedingly fragile; the first time a creature opens it, they must succeed at a DC 20 Thievery check or a random formula is destroyed as some pages disintegrate. On a critical failure, the entire book is destroyed. Consulting the book thereafter doesn't risk further disintegration unless the handler is intentionally careless.

E9. ELITE VIEWING ROOM

MODERATE 5

The curved east and west walls contain tables with small, built-in ovens. Wood fragments, heavily dented pewter serving dishes, silver flatware, and crystal shrapnel litter the floor. A wide alcove to the south ends at a cloudy window overlooking a much larger space. An array of magical glyphs glows next to the window.

This elegant meeting room is where Belcorra's guests watched arena matches and enjoyed the food cooked in the kitchen below (and kept warm in the ovens).

Most of the debris scattered across the floor is worthless, but it creates difficult terrain across the entire room. The staircase leading down to the Warped Brew Tavern (area F11) is choked with trash and is greater difficult terrain instead.

The south wall overlooking the arena (area E26) isn't glass, but transparent stone. The glyphs on the wall control the magic infused in this stone. A hero Investigating the glyphs who succeeds at a DC 20 Arcana or Occultism check understands how to use them. A creature manipulating the glyphs can make the wall ethereal (it still resembles transparent stone, but creatures and objects can pass through it), render it opaque, or change it back to transparent stone, as well as control what part of the arena it shows. Each change is a 2-action Interact activity with the manipulate trait.

Creatures: When Belcorra died, two of her guests—squabbling aristocrat siblings—let their fear of being trapped in the Abomination Vaults overwhelm them. They murdered each other in a panicked rage and arose again as poltergeists, who continue their fight to this day. Their hurled accusations against each other invariably escalate into hurled debris, and these frequent rages have produced the wreckage throughout this room. The poltergeists put their differences aside to fight intruders, but they soon fall back into their endless squabbling again if the heroes retreat. As they fight, they mutter phrases like “can't get out” and “trapped here forever.” They fight until destroyed.

SQUABBLING POLTERGEISTS (2)

CREATURE 5

Poltergeists (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 264)

Initiative Perception +11

Side Quest: The heroes likely consider the poltergeists' ramblings as threats, but they hold the



Squabbling Poltergeist

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Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox

key to putting the spirits permanently to rest. Anyone who responds to the poltergeists, even during combat, might get them to expand upon their worries with statements like “We have no way out of the arena!” or “There’s no path to escape!” If the heroes establish a clear exit path of open doors that lead to the surface and then describe this path to the poltergeists, the spirits immediately cease their attacks, concentrate on the avenue of escape the heroes describe, and vanish for good.

Treasure: Hidden among the debris is a dented, lead-lined steel box. A character must succeed at a DC 20 Thievery check to disable the jammed mechanism that keeps it shut. No amount of force can get the box open; the poltergeists have been hurling it about for centuries already. It holds a type I *ring of wizardry* with the symbol of Nhimbaloth on it.

E10. GRAND CONCOURSE

MODERATE 5

This stately hallway stretches from a single door to the north to a wide exit to the south. Frescoes depicting powerful creatures in battle with each other adorn the walls. Pinpoints of light glimmer in the vaulted ceiling, illuminating the hallway with a pale radiance. Balconies run the length of the hallway, twenty feet above the floor, their low railings rusty and twisted in places. A stone bridge connects the balconies across the hallways to each other, providing access to the tunnels out of the hallway to the east and west from the balcony. Several badly damaged statues decorate the south end of the hall.

The vaulted ceiling reaches 20 feet over the balconies and 40 feet over the ground level. The pinpoints of light are irregularly spaced and at first appear to replicate stars in the night sky. A hero trained in Nature realizes that the lights are unlike the night sky from anywhere on the surface of Golarion and instead represent what the night sky looks like on some incredibly distant world.

Characters must succeed at a DC 20 Athletics check to Climb up onto (or down from) the footbridge.

Most of the statues at the south end of the hall resemble exceptionally lifelike fleshwarped creatures, such as grothluts, driders, and mulventoks (page 237). All have been toppled, and most have been partially eaten. Two statues remain in reasonable condition, as described in Restoring the Statues below.

Creatures: A mated pair of basilisks has a nest at the south end of this hall. The seugathis occasionally send a fleshwarped creature to clear them out, or a creature wandering through the area crosses their path. All have thus far fallen to the basilisks’ petrifying

gaze. When the heroes arrive, the basilisks lurk amid the statues of their victims. They viciously guard their territory but don’t pursue foes who flee.

BASILISKS (2)

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 38

Initiative Perception +11

Restoring the Statues: All but two of the statues are too damaged to be restored, whether by basilisk blood or other means. One appears to be a pale, vampire-like humanoid known as an urdefhan (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 272), but the other looks like a far brawnier version of one. The larger creature is a mulventok (page 237), a type of fleshwarp created from an urdefhan; it has lost its connection to its inherent purpose while petrified and, if restored, attacks in a frenzy until slain. If the heroes restore the urdefhan, he shouts, “War Chieftain Khurfel! Belcorra has need of the eye!” in Undercommon, screams in pain from internal injuries, and dies.

Treasure: The equipment here is too damaged to be useful, save for the urdefhan’s +1 *striking composite shortbow* and the mulventok’s +1 *tamchal chakram*. The heroes can recover these weapons if they restore those statues.

XP Award: If the heroes restore the mulventok and defeat it, award them 80 XP for the combat encounter.

E11. LOCKED SUPPLY ROOM

Both doors leading into this room are locked. A hero without the key (Jafaki carries one; the other is in the debris in area E3) can Force Open each door with a successful DC 25 Athletics check or Pick the Lock with four successful DC 25 Thievery checks.

This room’s shelves are well-stocked with jars of preserved organs, crates filled with bones wrapped in rags, and surgical tools. Two armor stands flank a weapon rack to the south, but they bear only a pair of gnarled sticks in leather sheaths.

Belcorra’s quartermaster once stored valuable supplies here—usually armor and weapons. All were removed in the chaos following Belcorra’s death, and this room sat empty for a long time. Jafaki recently discovered a key and decided to repurpose this room to store spare parts for his experiments, as well as magical equipment he doesn’t need. He visits the room only every few months, as needed.

Treasure: The shelves here contain a moderate bestial mutagen, a moderate juggernaut mutagen, and a moderate quicksilver mutagen. The two wands

hanging on the rack are a 2nd-level *wand of summon animal* and a 2nd-level *wand of heal*.

E12. SENTENCING CHAMBER

MODERATE 5

The floor of this room contains several open square pits: one in each of the three alcoves to the north and two larger pits in the middle of the room. A dais at the room's west end contains a stone throne with two rusty levers jutting from the floor next to it.

In Belcorra's day, prisoners were brought to this room for the sorcerer to pronounce judgment against them. Nearly always, this judgment involved feeding them to the hydras below. The two levers correspond to the two pits; each lever once released the supports on a false stone trapdoor, dropping anyone standing on it into the water 55 feet below (area F4). The hinges to the trapdoor broke away long ago, and the fallen trapdoors now rest at the bottom of the pool. The rusted levers are currently useless.

The pits in the alcoves never had trapdoors; they simply drop into the water below and were used to dispose of multiple creatures in quick succession. The pits are narrow enough that a Medium creature falling into any of them can Grab an Edge automatically.

The Athletics DC to Climb these pits is 20.

Creatures: Jafaki trapped two gibtas bounders in this room; his efforts to mutate or train them proved entirely ineffective, so he has given up on them for the time being. The gibtas bounders attack intruders, but they don't coordinate their tactics. They're smart enough to avoid the pits, and a gibtas reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points starts trying to Shove opponents into the pits with its bouncing slam.

GIBTAS BOUNDERS (2)

CREATURE 5

Page 238

Initiative Perception +13

Into the Pits: A hero who falls into a pit and fails to Grab an Edge lands in area F4, awakening the hydras there and potentially getting into a very tough fight. If a gibtas falls into the pit, it briefly fights with the hydra under the water, biting off a head and cauterizing the stump with its acidic saliva before the hydra's other heads rip it to pieces. The heroes see only roiling water followed by a cloud of green blood and pieces of the gibtas's corpse floating to the surface.

Treasure: The stone throne contains a secret compartment in the back. A hero Searching it who succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check finds the compartment and its contents: a *climbing bolt*, a *dragon turtle scale*, and 31 gp.

E13. GLADIATOR READINESS ROOM

LOW 5

Weapon racks stand in the northeast and southeast corners of this room. The southeast rack is empty, but the northeast rack holds a hatchet made of dark crystal. Two alcoves between the racks on the eastern wall each have an open hatch and a ladder leading down. Additional exits lead out to the north, west, and south.

Gladiators readied themselves for aquatic battles in this room, climbing down the ladders to the shallows in the pool below. The exit to the north leads to a supply closet; the door fell off the hinges decades ago, and a mimic recently took the door's place. The weapon rack with the hatchet is another mimic, the hatchet merely a part of its camouflage.

The hatches leading down into the water below (area F4) are open. Several of the ladder rungs are missing, so a character must succeed at a DC 10 Athletics check to Climb either ladder.

Creatures: A pair of mimics recently entered this room. One settled in the northeast corner, disguising itself as a weapon rack identical to the one in the southeast corner. The second mimic wedged itself into the northern door frame, disguising itself as a door that collapsed inward into the storage closet. If the heroes approach this area with great stealth, they might overhear the two mimics murmuring about the flavors of the dungeon's various denizens.

MIMICS (2)

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 236

Initiative Perception +9, or Deception 28 if mimicking an object

Treasure: Shattered jars fill the supply room in the north. Among the debris, the heroes can find a few intact bottles, including a lesser sea touch elixir and a corked glass bottle. A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Arcana or Occultism check while Investigating this room or handling the bottle recognizes the runes on its base, which label it as *bottled air*.

E14. LOUNGE

A counter wrapped around the northern and northeastern wall bears a few cracked serving dishes. A dusty and shattered display case features only grime and broken glass.

This room once hosted gladiators looking to compete in the pits, where they fought to eventually become leaders of Belcorra's army. A hero who Searches the display case finds the words "They Are

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Watching You” carved into one of its wooden sides. Anyone examining this carving can attempt a DC 20 Perception check; on a success, they realize that the words are near a hidden hinge, and the entire case swings aside as a secret door.

E15. WAITING ROOM

Mounds of white fungus blossom from what was once padded furniture in this small waiting room.

Tiny fungal spores drift throughout this room. A hero who succeeds at a DC 22 Nature check to Recall Knowledge realizes the danger the spores pose and that limiting time in the room to less than a minute provides the safest way to prevent exposure.

Hazard: For each minute a creature spends in this room with any exposed skin, it must attempt a saving throw to avoid contracting fungal rot.

FUNGAL ROT

DISEASE 6

DISEASE

This fast-acting disease causes tiny spores to take root under the skin and blossom in the lungs or in the bloodstream. You become easily winded and incapable of moving quickly. You can't reduce your sickened condition while afflicted with fungal rot.

Saving Throw DC 22 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 hour; **Stage 1** sickened 1 (1 day); **Stage 2** slowed 1 and sickened 2 (1 day); **Stage 3** slowed 2 and sickened 3 (1 day); **Stage 4** unconscious (1 day); **Stage 5** death

Treasure: In the cushions of the sofa are 13 assorted silver pieces, minted centuries ago by a long-shuttered mint that are worth 4 gp each to a collector.

E16. ADMINISTRATOR'S ANTECHAMBER

This sitting room glows from the light of a fire, crackling pleasantly in a web-choked fireplace on the east wall. A large divan has been pushed up against the door to the northwest. Several pitons pounded into the gap between the stone door and its frame ensure it remains shut.

The magic that sustains this fire has lasted centuries. Several harmless spiders inhabit the fireplace and have filled it with their webs over the years because the light attracts insects.

Removing the divan from the door is simple enough, but the heroes must spend 10 minutes with a crowbar or similar tool to pry the pitons out of the door to open it. The door's stone is magically enhanced and difficult to smash through (Hardness 18, HP 76). Most attempts

to bypass the door using magic fail, due to magical protections placed upon the room beyond (area E17).

E17. IMPRISONED ADMINISTRATOR SEVERE 5

This room's occupant placed magical defenses on the room to prevent teleportation effects or ethereal travel from accessing it.

A glowing circle of runes covers the floor in this chamber. Parchment covered with cramped writing sits on a desk situated against the north wall, and the splintered remains of a bed are piled in a corner.

In the chaos following Belcorra's fall, someone locked the arena administrator, Chafkhem, in his room. As Chafkhem had previously warded his room against interdimensional travel, he was effectively imprisoned. Before he succumbed to starvation, the erudite wizard cobbled together reagents to mummify himself with parchment paper, hoping to one day escape his bounds and inflict revenge on Jafaki, whom Chafkhem believed ordered him to be imprisoned in his room.

In his isolation, Chafkhem has attempted to devise a means of escape by creating a temporary portal through the wall. A simple mistake in his assumptions rendered all his calculations incorrect, and he has failed to get the spell to work—a point of great frustration for the vainglorious mummy.

The magic circle at the center of the room assists Chafkhem with maintaining magical energy. The circle gives him a +2 status bonus to skill checks when performing rituals. Additionally, he's quickened while within the circle but can use the additional action only to Sustain a Spell.

Creature: When the heroes unseal his chamber, Chafkhem holds up his parchment-wrapped arms to show he means no harm. He's genuinely thankful for his release and quite charming by nature. Unfortunately, he's as bossy in undeath as he was in life, and he soon starts demanding, rather than requesting, information from the heroes about the current status of the seugathis and the Abomination Vaults. If the heroes don't indulge Chafkhem, he decides to kill them and animate them as undead who don't talk back nearly as much.

CHAFKHEM

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM MUMMY UNDEAD

Male mummy ritualist 8 (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 240)

Perception +17; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Necril

Skills Acrobatics +16, Arcana +19, Athletics +15, Diplomacy +16, Intimidation +16, Occultism +17, Religion +15

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +7, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4


Items *staff of abjuration*

AC 26; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +16, **Will** +17; +1 status to all saves vs. positive

HP 135, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** fire 10

Despair (aura, divine, emotion, enchantment, fear, incapacitation, mental) 30 feet. Living creatures are frightened 1 while in Chafkhem's despair aura. They can't naturally recover from this fear while in the area but recover instantly once they leave it. When a creature first enters the area, it must succeed at a DC 24 Will save (after taking the penalty from being frightened) or be paralyzed for 1 round. The creature is then temporarily immune for 24 hours.

Rejuvenation (divine, necromancy) When Chafkhem is destroyed, necromantic energies rebuild his body in the magic circle in his room over 1d10 days. If the re-forming body is destroyed during that time, the process starts anew. Chafkhem can be destroyed for good with a *consecrate* ritual, or if the magic circle is destroyed.

Warding Script  (abjuration, arcane, manipulation)


Trigger A creature Chafkhem can see makes a melee Strike against Chafkhem; **Effect** Chafkhem traces a magical glyph in the air that glows and fades. The triggering creature must attempt a DC 25 Fortitude save.


Success The target is unaffected.

Failure The target is blinded until the start of its next turn.

Critical Failure The target is blinded for 1 minute.

Speed 20 feet

Melee  fist +19 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d6+7 bludgeoning plus mummy rot

Melee  staff +18 (two-hand d8), **Damage** 1d4+7 bludgeoning

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 26, attack +18; **4th** *freedom of movement*, *invisibility*, *phantasmal killer*, *spell immunity*; **3rd** *glyph of warding*, *grim tendrils*, *haste*, *mind reading*; **2nd** *blur*, *dispel magic*, *hideous laughter*, *see invisibility*; **1st** *command*, *mending*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *unseen servant*; **Cantrips (4th)** *chill touch*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *shield*, *tanglefoot*

Rituals DC 29; *awaken portal* (page 223), *create undead*, *inveigle*

Mummy Rot (curse, disease, divine, necromancy, negative)

This disease and any damage from it can't be healed until this curse is removed. A creature killed by mummy rot turns to dust and can't be resurrected except by a 7th-level *resurrect* ritual or similar magic. **Saving Throw** DC 24 Fortitude; **Stage 1** carrier with no ill effect (1 minute); **Stage 2** 6d6 negative damage and stupefied 1 (1 day)

Side Quest: As long as the heroes obey Chafkhem's demands and suffer his imperious demeanor, he can be a font of information. His initial attitude toward the heroes is indifferent, but they can improve it with a successful Diplomacy check to Make an Impression (or another relevant skill, such as Deception to Lie or Arcana to Recall Knowledge that impresses him). The DC for this check is 27 (Chafkhem's Will DC).

If the heroes get on Chafkhem's good side, he speaks with open contempt about the seugathis that Belcorra permitted to operate their fleshwarping laboratory on the next lower level, as they displaced arena functions Chafkhem controlled. He doesn't know precisely how many seugathis remain, but he describes their leader as an alchemist and fleshwarper named Jafaki, whom he blames for locking him in



Chafkhem

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this room to die several centuries ago. Chafkhem wants revenge against Jafaki, and he suggests that the heroes seek it on his behalf.

Chafkhem knows Belcorra is long dead, although he expresses concern if the heroes let him know that she also returned as an undead creature. Chafkhem makes plans to depart the Abomination Vaults and return to his native Osirion; whether the heroes want to let an evil mummy go free is up to them.

Chafkhem takes 2d4 days to put his papers in order and carefully replicate the arcane patterns of his magic circle before he leaves. If the heroes return in that time with proof that they've slain Jafaki or that the imp Szek orchestrated Chafkhem's imprisonment, the mummy expresses his gratitude and rewards them with information. He sketches out the entirety of the Arena level for them, including all its secret doors and passages, and provides the heroes with the magical passphrase to disable the trap in area **E20**. He doesn't have any blank parchment, so he writes on his spellbook page containing *freedom of movement*; the heroes can later Learn a Spell from that page, in addition to having the useful map.

Treasure: Chafkhem's desk contains hundreds of pieces of parchment with writing covering every bit of space. For many years, Chafkhem only had access to this parchment, and he has made full use of it. These papers not only serve as Chafkhem's spellbook, allowing heroes to Learn a Spell from them, but also contain the *awaken portal* and *create undead* rituals. Any hero who spends time Investigating these papers discovers both rituals.

E18. LEVEL 5 PORTAL CHAMBER

The door to this room is locked, and Chafkhem has the only key. A hero can Force it Open with a successful DC 25 Athletics check or Pick the Lock with four successful DC 25 Thievery checks.

Swirling runes carved into the stone and filled with silver cover the walls of this circular chamber. The floor is polished smooth, as is the ceiling 10 feet above.

The heroes might have discovered the inactive network of permanent *teleportation circles* Belcorra installed to move quickly throughout the Abomination Vaults in the dungeon's upper levels. The heroes could have even started restoring the network if they discovered the *awaken portal* ritual (if they didn't find this ritual in area **C35**, they can find it in Chafkhem's notes in area **E17**). This room contains yet another inactive *teleportation circle* that the heroes can connect to others they've already reawakened.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for using the *awaken portal* ritual to reactivate this room's magic.

E19. SPYING CHAMBER

This unadorned room's most notable feature is the secret door that leads to the grand concourse (area **E10**). The secret door isn't obvious from this side, so a character must succeed at a DC 20 Perception check to locate it. A hero who knows the series of knocks that opens the door in the grand concourse can also open the secret door from this side, making the door ghostly and incorporeal.

A window of one-way transparent stone allows anyone from within this room to view events in the grand concourse. The stone appears opaque from the concourse side, and the window is undetectable. Anyone touching the transparent stone from this side can hear anything in the concourse through a permanent *clairaudience* effect.

E20. SECRET HALLWAY

SEVERE 5

Bones and dismembered limbs lay scattered throughout this irregular, branching hallway.

Belcorra and Chafkhem spied on gladiators from this secret hall, paranoid about insurrection. When neither Belcorra nor Chafkhem was present, they activated a deadly trap to protect the hall from intruders. The severed limbs here once belonged to seugathis, skulks, and several fleshwarped creatures who tried and failed to contend with the trap over the past several years.

The jagged halls contain several blocks of one-way transparent stone offering a view into the gladiators' quarters. The stone appears opaque from within the rooms and can't be detected. Anyone touching a transparent stone from this side can hear in the room through a permanent *clairaudience* effect.

The two secret doors in this branching hall (leading to areas **E14** and **E24**) are obvious from this side.

Hazard: Originally intended to keep intruders out of the secret hall, a scythe trap currently interferes with the seugathis' efforts to explore this area. The 15-foot-by-25-foot area where the branching hallways connect contains dozens of pressure plates that trigger the trap when someone moves anywhere in the area.

None of the three narrow halls have any pressure plates, though the blades pass through them. The trap lashes out with its blades, then retracts them and moves them around secretly so the blades' next Strikes are hard to predict.

SHUFFLING SCYTHE BLADES

HAZARD 8

COMPLEX MAGICAL MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC +18 (expert)


Description Six long blades, hidden in grooves in the walls and floor, zigzag through different parts of this hallway when any pressure plate in the hallway intersection is depressed; there are so many plates it's impossible to avoid them when moving through the room. The blades retreat into the floor and move through the hidden grooves before swinging out from the wall again in a different location.


Disable DC 26 Thievery (expert) to disable each blade, or utter the magical passphrase (which only Chafkhem knows) to deactivate the trap for 10 minutes

AC 27; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +13

Scythe Blade Hardness 16, **Scythe Blade HP** 30 (BT 15);


Immunities critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Dicing Scythes  **Trigger** A creature steps in the 15-foot-by-25-foot area where the branching hallways connect; **Effect** The trap uses Scythe Shuffle; each blade makes a scythe Strike against each creature in its region, then it uses Scythe Shuffle again. The trap then rolls for initiative.

Scythe Shuffle  The blades travel erratically throughout the hallway's branches, out of sight under the floors or behind the walls. For each blade, roll 1d4 to determine the region in which it next makes scythe Strikes. A creature can Seek (DC 22) to learn clues about blades in the region they're currently occupying. On a success, the creature knows how many blades are currently in its region.

1. Main intersection (the 15-foot-by-25-foot area where the hallways connect, as marked on area **E20**)
2. North branch (from the main intersection to the secret door to area **E14**)
3. Central hall (from the main intersection to the secret door to area **E24**)
4. South branch (from the main intersection to the wall shared with area **E25**)

Routine (7 actions) The trap spends 1 action for each of its blades; a blade makes a scythe Strike against each creature in its region. With its final action, the trap uses Scythe Shuffle. Reduce the number of actions the trap can take by 1 for each destroyed blade.

Melee  scythe +20 (deadly 1d12), **Damage** 1d12+8 slashing; no multiple attack penalty

Reset The trap resets when no creatures remain in area **E20**. Damaged or destroyed blades aren't repaired when the trap resets.

E21. STAGING AREA

Large, dark discolored patches of dried fluids adorn the floor of this oddly shaped chamber. A stone desk stands against the west wall and holds tools, bottles, and jars of a variety of substances.

Here, Belcorra's agents kept notes about the gladiators they spied upon. Recently, Jafaki's minions have spent time and resources trying to disable the scythe trap in the hallway to the north, and they stage their attempts here. Parchment marked with tick marks indicates how the blades shuffle around the hallway when triggered. The seugathis have sought a pattern in the randomness without any luck.

The doorway to the southeast opens to a cramped and steep staircase, which leads down to the observation gallery (area **F8**).

Treasure: The heroes can find expanded alchemist's tools and three moderate tanglefoot bags on the table.

E22. SLUDGE-FILLED ROOM

MODERATE 5

Several feet of thick, black sludge fill this room. The sludge is a creature, but that's not obvious upon a casual look (such as viewing the room through the one-way stone in area **E20**). Several weeks ago, Jafaki caught one of Urevian's devils poking around, lured them into this chamber, and sent in an alchemically modified black pudding. The ooze killed the devil and dissolved them completely.


Creature: If disturbed, the black pudding rouses from its torpor to feed, pursuing prey relentlessly.

VISCOUS BLACK PUDDING

CREATURE 7

Variant black pudding (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 255)

Initiative Perception +9

Adjust Shape  A viscous black pudding is thicker than most black puddings and can heap its body upon itself or spread itself out again. The pudding changes its size to Medium, Large, or Huge. If the pudding is Medium, its density reduces its Speeds to 10 feet, but this ability doesn't otherwise change its Strikes or its Speed. If the viscous black pudding Splits, both of the new puddings have the same size as it had at that time, until they Adjust their Shape.

E23. EMPTY GLADIATORS' QUARTERS

These chambers include nothing more than a single bed, an empty footlocker, and a metal chamber pot. Anything of value was stripped long ago, and each room has signs of being used as a prison.

A metal bolt was once mounted on each door's interior side for privacy, but some time ago, each of the bolts was relocated to the exterior to keep creatures trapped inside. This remounting has somewhat loosened the bolts, however, and a character who succeeds at a DC 20 Thievery check can open a bolted door from the inside.

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E24. HALL OF HEROES

A giant mural wraps around this entire chamber; this mural depicts mutated and fleshwarped warriors, grotesque and powerful, standing in a round room within a beam of eerie blue light. The blue light originates from a tall lighthouse, and the inhuman champions spring forth from the light to slaughter humans, elves, and other surface-dwelling creatures.

The mural portrays how the arena's greatest warriors would be sent into battle by *Gauntlight's* magic. The display was intended to spur the gladiators to fight more fervently, which could have earned them the right to battle on the surface in Belcorra's name. The heroes likely remember this function of *Gauntlight* from the artifact's recent test firing that awakened Otari's dead and sent a scalathrax into the heroes' midst in Chapter 2.

A hero Searching this room discovers a secret door in the west wall that leads to area **E20** with a successful DC 20 Perception check. Poking two buttons in the eyes of a powerfully mutated ogre shown in the mural causes a section of the wall to slide upward into the ceiling.

E25. GLADIATORS' MEAD HALL

MODERATE 5

Overtured tables and benches, all made of petrified wood, lie scattered around the edges of this expansive chamber. Pale bones are interspersed with these furnishings. Several preserved monster heads and silver plaques adorn the walls. A glowing circle of runes is etched on the floor of an alcove to the east.

Belcorra's gladiators spent their leisure time in this room. The preserved monster heads display creatures killed for sport, including a basilisk, a chimera, and three manticores. The plaques commemorate victories in the arena; many bear dates, and all occurred within a 10-year period from 4235 AR to 4244 AR. The sturdy furniture, though upended, remains intact.

The door to the south leads to a very steep staircase descending to the testing grounds (area **F9**). Rarely did anyone descend these stairs, though losers from the fights below ascended them.

The circle of runes marks a permanent, active *teleportation circle* that connects to the circle in the testing grounds directly beneath it. This *teleportation circle* functions both ways but doesn't connect to the portal chamber network throughout the Abomination Vaults. A creature stepping into the *teleportation circle* appears in the training grounds amid a blast of pale blue fire and a loud clanging noise (the fire is principally for dramatic effect and isn't bright or hot enough to cause damage). Anyone using the *teleportation circle* to travel to the testing grounds appears with a sigil on their forehead that reads "challenger" in Aklo. Anyone using the *teleportation circle* to return here receives a sigil that reads "victor" instead. A new casting of *sigil* by the teleportation circle replaces any old one.

Creature: The scattered bones of gladiators, slaughtered here shortly after Belcorra's fall, still hold on to the grim memory of death and combat. When a living creature approaches, they rattle and slide across the room, forming a massive gladiator made from the assorted bones of several humanoids. It tries to pursue foes that flee, but it can't fit through any of the doors leading out of this room, which allows others to escape it fairly easily. It fights until destroyed.

Viscous Black Pudding

BONE GLADIATOR

CREATURE 7

UNIQUE NE HUGE MINDLESS SKELETON UNDEAD

Variant skeletal hulk (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 299)

Perception +16; darkvision

Skills Athletics +20, Intimidation +17

Str +7, **Dex** +0, **Con** +4, **Int** -5, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +4

AC 24; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +13, **Will** +13

HP 105, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, mental, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Resistances** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5, piercing 5, slashing 5

Loose Bones A critical hit jostles the skeleton's loose bones, making it clumsy 1. Additional critical hits increase this value, up to clumsy 4.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ claw +18 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d6+11 slashing

Broad Swipe ♦♦ The skeleton makes two Strikes with its claw against two adjacent foes, both of whom are within its reach. The multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after both attacks are resolved.

Terrifying Charge ♦♦ The skeleton Strides and makes a claw Strike with a +4 circumstance bonus to damage. If the Strike hits, it attempts to Demoralize the target.

E26. ARENA BALCONY

This section represents only the top half of a massive arena. The arena floor (area **F26**) holds the majority of the threat here.

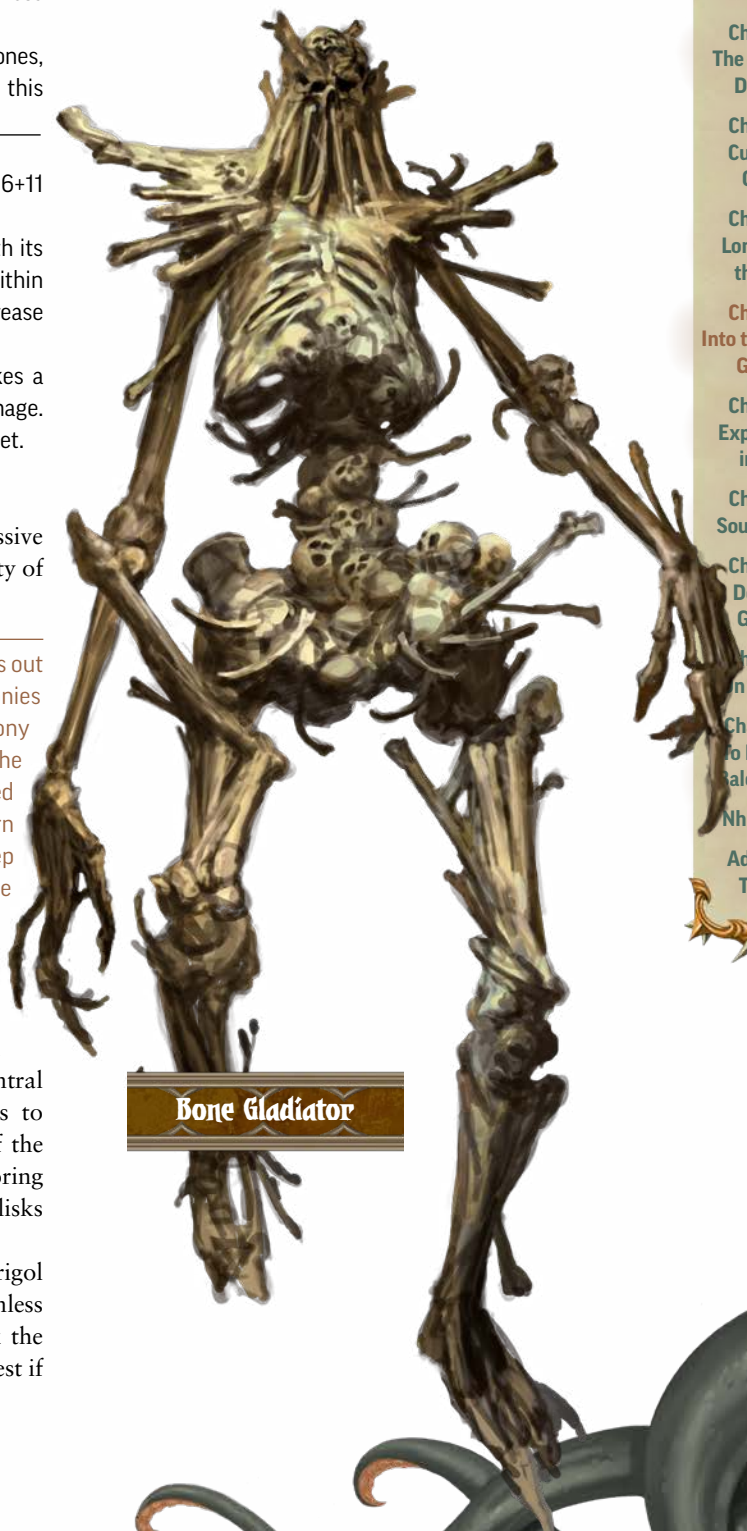
A wide walkway around this cavernous chamber looks out over a stone arena floor thirty feet below. Six balconies with built-in seating provide the best view. Each balcony has a bright torch jutting from it, illuminating the entire arena while leaving this viewing level shrouded in shadows. An enormous metal gong on the eastern end of the chamber hangs on thick chains. Two steep staircases lead down from the central balcony on the north side of the arena floor.

Belcorra and her guests watched the blood sports from sumptuous seating here, cheering on the gladiators as they faced off against each other or against terrifying monsters. The north central balcony has two large levers and crank wheels to control each of the portcullises at the bottom of the stairs that lead to the arena floor. Anyone exploring this balcony likely draws the attention of the basilisks lairing nearby in the grand concourse (area **E10**).

The heroes can easily see the gargantuan shanrigol behemoth on the arena floor from here. Unless they make an absurd amount of noise or attack the shanrigol, it remains dormant (probably for the best if the heroes are still only 5th level).

A secret door on the eastern balcony is difficult to spot. A character who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check locates it, and they also determine the special series of knocks that turns the door ghostly and incorporeal, allowing the heroes to pass through.

Treasure: The six torches burning at the balconies are all *everburning torches* and take a minimal amount of effort to remove.



Bone Gladiator

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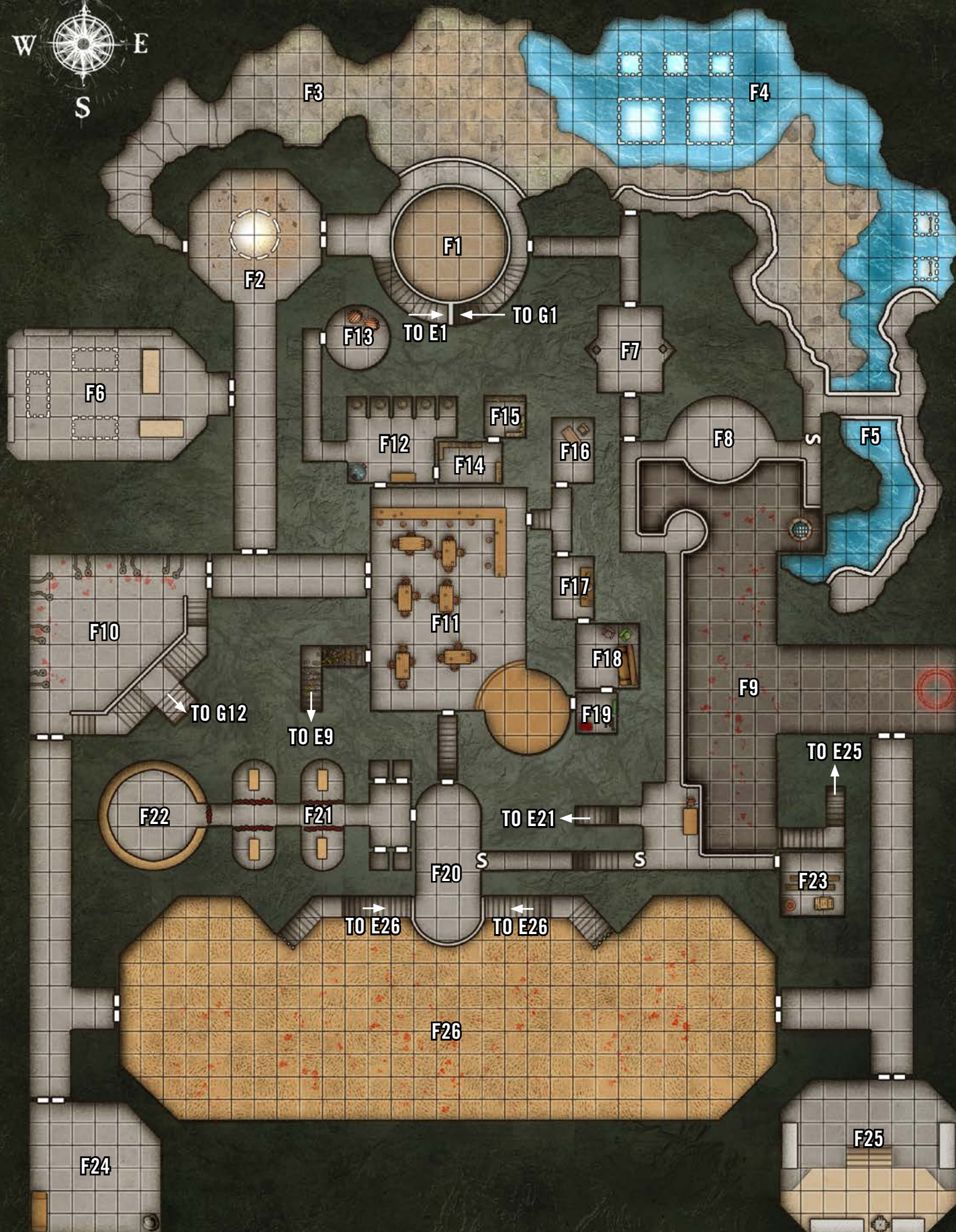
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Nhimbaloth

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LEVEL 6: LABORATORIES
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET





CHAPTER 6: Experiments in Flesh

Under Belcorra, the Abomination Vault's sixth level was split between support for the arena above and the laboratories that created new and terrible monsters. The two activities weren't all that separate since the most powerful of the monsters created in the laboratories fought in the arena, where the survivors joined Belcorra's growing ranks of monsters to assault Absalom. Conversely, failures in the arena became fodder for further experiments in the laboratories.

When Belcorra died, the overbearing control of a bone devil named Tarkannah initially kept infighting on this level at a minimum, but many creatures chafed at Tarkannah's control. The seugathi fleshwarper Jafaki organized a coup and murdered the bone devil, taking control of the entire floor. Since this rebellion, Jafaki has maintained the level as the seugathis' domain, believing their resources are better spent on the relentless refining of experiments rather than expanding territory.

Due to Jafaki's relatively relaxed disposition toward administration, creatures on this level tend to look after themselves. Many are more recent arrivals who

have come seeking the seugathis' skills and are willing to risk experimentation for the chance of becoming stronger. Creatures who haven't been slated for fleshwarping yet spend most of their time drinking and relaxing in a large, central chamber that has long served as a tavern called the Warped Brew. The urdefhan Vischari manages the Warped Brew, keeping cooks, bartenders, and even a band on retainer.

Laboratories Features

This level feels more cramped than the lofty arena level above because of its lower ceilings, which average 10 feet high in halls and 15 feet high in rooms, unless otherwise indicated. None of the rooms on this level have light, as the denizens can all see in the dark. The stone doors throughout this level have sturdy iron hinges; most can be simply pushed open, which the seugathi do to move around. The smell of acrid chemicals lingers throughout this level, except near the Warped Brew Tavern (area **F11**), where the smell of spilled fungus beer replaces it instead.

The map for this level appears on page 106.

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Toolbox

F1. CENTRAL SHAFT

LOW 6

The wide spiral staircase continues downward, leveling out long enough to pass by a single door leading east and a hallway leading west to a double door. The space between them has a rounded, cloudy window overlooking a large pool in a natural cavern. A dim orange glow emanates from far below and, with it, a sulfurous stench.

The spiral stairs lead up to the fifth level (area **E1**) and down to the seventh level (area **G1**). The stairs and the walkway connecting them have a narrow iron handrail to prevent a fall 40 feet down to area **G1**.

The window is magically transparent stone. As it's part of *Gauntlight's* support and thus part of the artifact, it can't be damaged. It also can't be manipulated like the transparent stone elsewhere in the dungeon, as it lacks control glyphs.

Creatures: Jafaki knows that controlling this main staircase is the best way to keep Urevian's troops from invading his territory; it's also the ideal place to capture new research subjects. A seugathi is on guard here, along with a grothlut chained to the handrail. The grothlut can move anywhere along the walkway in the northern half of the room.

The seugathi watches for attacks from below, so heroes descending from above might catch them off guard (moaning and gibbering from monsters on the landing above aren't unusual and don't alert the seugathi). If the seugathi knows someone is coming, they cast *see invisibility* from their wand, suppress their mindfog aura, and feign friendliness just long enough to put the newcomers at ease. They then try to take the intruders prisoner, fighting to the death to do so if necessary.

The grothlut moans and charges forward when it detects intruders of any kind but loyally follows the seugathi's commands.

SEUGATHI GUARD

CREATURE 6

Seugathi servant (page 244)

Initiative Perception +14

Items longsword, *wand of see invisibility*

GROTHLUT

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 158

Initiative Perception +5

Reinforcements: Jafaki doesn't replace these guards. If this landing remains unguarded for more than 5 days, Urevian sends a cautious barbaz from area **G3** or **G5** and two dreshkans from area **G4** or **G15** to secure it.

F2. GRIME DEPOSITS

Rust and grime fill this octagonal chamber. A wide hallway leads to the south.

A circular shaft in the ceiling leads up 25 feet through the stone to area **E2**. If the heroes haven't triggered the pit trap there, the shaft's top is covered with the rusty grate that collapses when moved.

F3. ROCKY CAVE

MODERATE 6

The mossy walls of this pebble-strewn cavern extend upward to a ceiling thirty feet high. A wide, rounded window fifteen feet above the floor overlooks this cavern.

Dripping water echoes from the east. The moss on the walls is edible and, in fact, surprisingly tasty.

Creatures: Belcorra bound several earth elementals here, more to keep wandering guests out of her nature preserve (area **F4**) than for any other reason. The elementals spring from the walls and floor 1d4 rounds after any creature enters this cavern. They have ethereal shackles visible on their limbs, representing their bound nature; the shackles prevent them from leaving this cave, but they can lurk just within the walls and floor. An elemental reduced to fewer than 5 Hit Points retreats into the stone and doesn't return for several days.

LIVING LANDSLIDE

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 146

Initiative Perception +12

SOD HOUNDS (3)

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 146

Initiative Perception +9

Side Quest: A hero who's an expert in Arcana or Occultism realizes that the elementals' binding is weak and can be undone. This reversal ritual must be performed in sight of the binding location; the stairs leading up to area **F2** or the window in area **F1** make good locations for the ritual since the elementals can't attack anyone there. The ritual takes 4 hours, consumes 60 gp of gems, and requires a hero to succeed at a DC 25 Arcana or Occultism check. The character attempting the check must be an expert in the skill being used. Up to four other characters can act as secondary casters. Each secondary caster can attempt a DC 23 secondary check (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 408) using Arcana, Nature, or Occultism but must be trained in the skill used. The unbinding can use fewer than four secondary casters (and need not include

any). If the ritual succeeds, the elementals return to their home plane. The living landslide grants a boon to one of the heroes who participated in the unbinding (most likely the primary caster). That character gains the crystal sense ability of a sod hound for 1 week.

Treasure: The sod hounds buried six gemstones worth 15 gp each, given to them as payment for their service. Heroes who Search the area find the stones with a successful DC 27 Perception check; the hero with the crystal sense ability locates them automatically.

F4. DEEP POOL

MODERATE 6

A rocky shoreline drops steeply into a large pool beneath several stalactites. Five square shafts in the stony ceiling lead upward. To the south, a barrier of transparent stone protects winding raised ledges that run along each side of the cavern. A short bridge, similarly encased in transparent stone, crosses over the pool to connect the two ledges.

This area functioned as Belcorra's underground nature preserve. She kept a pair of hydras here, as hydra blood has many applications in alchemy, magic, and fleshwarping. The pool averages 15 feet deep, and tiny subterranean streams refresh its waters.

Creatures: Jafaki maintains the preserve and two hydras (descendants of the original pair) for the same reasons Belcorra did. He induced them into a chemical stupor to extend their lives, lower their food intake, and reduce the amount of trouble they cause. When the heroes first arrive, the hydras are sleeping with just their heads above the water's surface.

If the heroes approach this chamber carefully with at least half the party successfully Avoiding Notice from the hydras, the creatures remain asleep. Any actions that significantly disturb the water—such as someone falling into the room from above—rouse them.

Due to their forced alchemical hibernation, each hydra takes 3d4 rounds to fully wake up; in the meantime, it's slowed 2. Each time a hydra takes damage, reduce the number of rounds remaining by 3.

The hydras defend their territory to the death but don't pursue prey beyond the confines of the cave.

HYDRAS (2)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 210

Initiative Perception +17

F5. THE DEEP END

MODERATE 6

The southern end of this cavern is entirely flooded. A walkway encased in transparent stone runs along the eastern wall, ten feet above the water's surface.

The hydras once kept their nest at the far end of the pool, where the depth dips down to 25 feet. They're afraid of the recent arrival here, however, and now don't venture into this part of the pool.

An overhang above the deepest part of the pool is pierced by a well capped by a sturdy iron grate. The grate's bolts appear to have been broken from underneath, so the grate lifts off with only a little effort. With a successful DC 20 Athletics check, anyone in the water can Climb up into area F9.

CHAPTER 6 SYNOPSIS

The Abomination Vaults' sixth level served to support the gladiator games in the arena above but also included extensive laboratories for creating increasingly bizarre and powerful creatures. A small team of seugathis pursue their fleshwarping experiments while resisting encroachment from the devils below. The heroes encounter these worm-like monsters, but they also find a strangely civilized tavern in the midst of the dungeon.

Environmental Cues: acid pitting on floors and doors, crude graffiti carved into walls, distant shrieks, old bloodstains, squelching noises, stench of acrid chemicals and beer

CHAPTER 6 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 6 are as follows.

- +1 composite longbow
- +1 glaive
- +1 resilient scale mail
- +1 striking battle lute (page 226)
- +1 striking handwraps of mighty blows
- +1 striking rapier
- belladonna
- bloodletting kukri
- caterwaul sling
- clandestine cloak
- crafter's eyepiece
- emerald grasshopper
- folding drums (page 221)
- ghoul hide
- hand of the mage
- horn of fog
- ichthyosis mutagen (page 213)
- iron cube
- moderate acid flask
- moderate antiplague vial
- moderate healing potion
- sloughing toxin (page 214)
- standard-grade cold iron shield
- wand of gentle repose
- wand of illusory creature
- wand of magic missile (2nd level)
- wand of see invisibility
- wand of status

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A hero who Searches the walkway and succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check finds a suspicious masonry square near floor level. When pushed like a button, this secret door to area **F8** swings open.

Creature: Urevian sent a sarglagon to spy on Jafaki and his plots several weeks ago. The sarglagon is paranoid and unwilling to take risks that might overtly expose their presence; therefore, they spend most of their time fouling the water under the well if any creatures come to fill the bucket. If the heroes approach, the devil believes they've been discovered by Jafaki's allies and desperately attacks. Unwilling to admit defeat to Urevian, the sarglagon fights until slain. They carry one of five pieces of Urevian's pendant, used to open the door into the contract devil's domain (area **G10**).

SARGLAGON

CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 273

Initiative Perception +18

Items fragment of Urevian's pendant (see area **G10**)

Treasure: The abandoned hydra nest at the deepest point of the pool contains the equipment and bones of long-dead gladiators. The only intact piece of equipment is a +1 *resilient scale mail* with lion motifs.

F6. DISSECTION CHAMBER

LOW 6

Metal shelves and operating tables hint at this room's original purpose. Clean bones and bits of rusted metal lie in piles throughout the rest of the room.

Jafaki has dumped garbage in this medical bay for decades. Three shafts in the ceiling lead up to area **E4**. The lids at the top open easily from within the shafts.

A hero Searching through the detritus discovers a large key with an elaborate, four-prong design among the various bits of junk in this room. The key opens one of the locks in the plinth room (area **F7**).

Creatures: Two ochre jellies lazily squelch around this chamber, feeding on trash thrown here. They move to creatures they sense, expecting food; if the characters don't immediately offer some sort of food, the jellies attack, fighting until destroyed.

OCHRE JELLIES (2)

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 255

Initiative Perception +7

Treasure: Amid the jumble of items scoured clean by the oozes' acid is a chain shirt, a steel shield, three daggers, a pick, several caltrops, professional fishing tackle, a spyglass, 14 pitons, and 30 feet of chain.

F7. PLINTH ROOM

This chamber's east and west walls feature sharply angled alcoves bearing stone carvings too defaced to indicate what they originally depicted. Two angled plinths stand here, one in the alcove to the east and another in the alcove to the west. A single door leads north; the south wall opposite it bears the outline of a door but no handle or latch.

This mostly destroyed room once held relief art extolling the majesty of Belcorra and Nhimbalo. All that remains are two plinths, one on both sides of the room, that each bear a unique lock. The door to the south and the one beyond it don't open normally; each is functionally a solid stone wall 2 feet thick unless unlocked.

The eastern plinth features a lock with a round keyhole; turning the proper key in this lock opens or closes the northernmost door in the passage to the south (the outline visible in this room) with a grinding noise. The western plinth has four holes clustered together in a metal plate; turning the proper key in this lock opens or closes the southern of the two doors, also with a loud grinding noise. Without the proper keys, a character who's a master in Thievery can activate one of these tricky locks with five successful DC 30 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock.

Three copies of each key exist scattered around this level. The round key can be found on a shelf in the old medical supply room (area **E5**) and in the prisoner processing chamber (area **F10**). The four-pronged key can be found on the floor of the old dissection chamber (area **F6**) and in Vischari's safe (area **F16**). Jafaki also carries a copy of each key.

F8. OBSERVATION GALLERY

TRIVIAL 6

Fifteen feet below the ceiling, this gallery traverses all but the east side of a large, bloodstained room with a floor five feet lower than the gallery. A window made of cloudy, transparent stone provides an excellent view of the nearby room while blocking direct access to it. Two rounded observation areas overlook the room from the north; a small room to the south has a small table, an old chair, and stairs leading up.

Belcorra used this walkway to observe one of her champions closely as she pitted them against various opponents or they settled disagreements through ritual combat. A magical enchantment in the two rounded observation vestibules transmit sound from the testing ground into this observation gallery, but not vice versa. The table features some pieces of chalk and

a few writing slates, upon which the seugathis take notes when observing creatures in the testing grounds.

The stairs near the southwest corner lead up to area **E21**.

The northwest door has no visible latches, but the wall next to it features two distinct keyholes: one is a round indentation, and the other is a circular piece of stone with four separate holes. They function identically to the keyholes in area **F7**.

The wall at the eastern end of the observation gallery bears faintly glowing magical glyphs. These glyphs simultaneously affect all the transparent stone ringing the gallery and operate as described in area **E9**.

Two secret doors lead out of this room to the north (to area **F5**) and southeast (to area **F20**). A hero Searching the right area who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check locates them. Both secret doors operate the same way: a masonry square near floor level depresses like a button and causes the secret door to unlatch and swing open.

Creature: A seugathi researcher observes the destrachan in the testing grounds and takes notes on a writing slate. Upon noticing the intruders, the seugathi becomes eager to see how the destrachan performs in combat; they retreat as soon as possible to the east end of the gallery to turn the wall ethereal. Once the wall is no longer solid stone, the destrachan's echolocation allows it to recognize the heroes' presence and join in combat as the seugathi directs, together presenting a severe-threat encounter for 6th-level characters.

SEUGATHI RESEARCHER

CREATURE 6

Seugathi servant (page 244)

Initiative Perception +14

Items longsword, *wand of status*, writing slate and chalk

F9. TESTING GROUNDS

MODERATE 6

This twenty-foot-high chamber's stone floor is heavily stained with blood. A wall of transparent stone separates this room from an observation gallery that rings its north, west, and south sides. The northeast corner features a short stone well, while the room's south end has a steep, ascending staircase. The room juts out a side hall to the east that ends at a charred circle in the stone with a double door nearby.

This chamber was intended for grudge matches between gladiators; however, it saw equal use in testing aberrant

monsters' capabilities. Since Jafaki seized control of this level, the room has served only as testing grounds.

The room is 20 feet high from floor to ceiling, and the floor is 5 feet below the observation gallery. Two iron ladders bolted to the north wall ascend the 5 feet to the transparent stone, but they don't allow access to the gallery unless the characters use the glyphs in area **F8** to render the stone ethereal.

A sturdy iron grate caps the well in the north. It was built to provide food—normally in the form of defeated combatants cut into chunks—to the hydras in the pool. The grate appears firmly fastened to the stone

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Nhimbaloth Adventure Toolbox

Seugathi Researcher

but easily comes off if tried. The sarglagon in area **F5** has broken away the grate's bolts for easy access to the seugathis' chambers, but it has yet to muster the courage to venture into this room.

The steep staircase to the southeast leads up to the gladiators' mead hall (area **E25**). The charred circle in the eastern wing is the other end of the *teleportation circle* in the mead hall.

Creature: Upon arrival, the characters find a destrachan systematically shattering crystal chunks with its destructive harmonics at the command of a seugathi in the observation gallery. Hungry for fresh meat, it attacks the heroes immediately, particularly if they arrive with dramatic clanging through the *teleportation circle*. The destrachan fights to the death and pursues any foes that flee. The seugathi in the observation gallery, if present, takes notes throughout the combat.

DESTRACHAN

CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 71

Initiative Perception +20

F10. PRISONER PROCESSING

MODERATE 6

Anchored shackles and fetters line the north and west walls, and bloodstains obscure the stone floor. At the east and south, two sets of double doors lead out of the room; two steep staircases beside each of them lead further below.

While Belcorra lived, jailers brought prisoners up the stairs and shackled them to the walls before processing their paperwork on a desk that has long since been removed. These captives were then shuffled into the arena, ready to meet their death for the entertainment of Belcorra's cheering guests. This room became a frequent battleground during the brief the turf war between Jafaki and Urevian. When some degree of peace settled over these levels, Jafaki's creations still held this room. A single fleshwarp remains on guard.

Three steps down the northern stairs, a solitary key lies forgotten beneath a crusty chunk of dried viscera. A hero who Searches the stairs and succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check locates it. The key has a round shaft tipped with several teeth of varying length. It opens one of the locks in area **F7**.

The stairs descend to area **G12**. The hallway on the other side of the south double door gently slopes 10 feet down to the arena.

Creature: A single irnakurse guards this room. The seugathis don't realize it, but the devils have inflicted an infernal malediction to gradually weaken the creature. It's now constantly restless and tense, but

it remains determined to slaughter anyone who isn't accompanied by a seugathi.

AFFLICTED IRNAKURSE

CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 6, 118

Initiative Perception +16

Fearful Curse The irnakurse is permanently frightened 2, which lowers its effective level by 1.

F11. WARPED BREW TAVERN

MODERATE 6

Polished wooden tables, chairs, and a long wooden bar mark this chamber as a tavern. The smell of spilled beer and fried morsels pervades the room. In the southeast corner, an elevated stage overlooks the seating. Doors lead out of this room along all four walls, including a double door to the west that looks to be the main entrance.

Once an elaborate dining hall for Belcorra's gladiators and guests, this area has, over the years, taken on the function of a tavern for fleshwarped creatures, those waiting to undergo fleshwarping, and a few rare visitors. It has had its current name—the Warped Brew Tavern—for more than a century. Due to Jafaki's general lack of discipline, many of this level's denizens come here to drink, gamble, argue about who's next to go under the seugathis' knives, and listen to Shadow Malice, the resident band.

The door to the southwest opens onto a steep stairway that leads up to area **E9**. When the poltergeists there started flinging debris down the stairway, the patrons stopped using it, except as a garbage disposal. The stairway is greater difficult terrain.

Creatures: Five creatures are usually found in the tavern: a female drider named Lallizanx flipping through a book filled with crudely drawn drow erotica, two morlocks playing a card game called towers, a morlock tending the bar, and another morlock complaining to the bartender about having to wait so long for her fleshwarping. There's a 1 in 4 chance that the tavern's band, Shadow Malice, is on stage when the heroes arrives; instead of randomly determining this, you can also decide whether the band is playing.

Lallizanx is ostensibly the bouncer, but cares little about what happens in the tavern. The morlock patrons hope to be chosen for fleshwarping in the near future, and even the morlock bartender looks forward to becoming like the powerful dreshkans who come here from time to time.

Everyone here assumes that intruders from the surface, like the heroes, have come to start a fight. If the heroes quickly display peaceful intentions, these patrons keep a close eye on them but resume their

business. The bartender has only a few drinks available but sells them to the heroes at inflated prices.

The patrons all have a starting attitude of Unfriendly to the heroes. Lallizanx casts *suggestion* on any hero who persistently bothers her, insisting that they leave her alone. The morlock bartender gives only a halfhearted attempt to prevent the heroes from leaving by either of the doors behind the bar; she doesn't consider her pay sufficient to stand in the way of well-armed intruders. The morlock patrons all idolize the band Shadow Malice and bring them up in conversation.

If a fight breaks out, the tavern's urdefhan manager, Vischari, comes from area **F16** in 3 rounds to join the battle. Vischari and Lallizanx fight to the death to protect the tavern they consider their home turf, while any morlock reduced to fewer than 10 Hit Points flees. If the members of Shadow Malice are present, they retreat to area **F18** rather than risk injury.

LALLIZANX

CREATURE 6

Female drider (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 159)

Initiative Perception +13

MORLOCKS (4)

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 174

Initiative Perception +7

Melee ♦ wooden chair +7 (forceful), **Damage** 1d8+4 bludgeoning

Melee ♦ jaws +9 (agile), **Damage** 1d4+4 piercing

Ranged ♦ pewter mug +8 (range increment 10 feet), **Damage** 1d4+4 bludgeoning

Side Quest: If the heroes seem curious about Shadow Malice (regardless of the band's presence), the morlocks all start chanting the band's name and "Challengers!" in Undercommon. It might seem like the morlocks intend to set up the heroes to fight against the band, but they call for a battle of entertainment, not of weapons. The cries bring Shadow Malice onto the stage, if the band's not already there, and Ryta, the band's vocalist, explains the rules.

"You want to challenge us? Then let's get to it. We'll each face off one-on-one. Each pair squares off with some kind of show: music, acrobatic tricks, displays of strength, whatever. Then we perform as two groups—mine then yours—and let the crowd tell us who's the best overall!"

The challenge has an individual and a group phase. The individual phase pairs each hero with one of Shadow Malice's four members (if the party has more than four heroes, some must sit out this phase). A band member provides the best solo performance they can on their instrument of choice, then the paired hero can attempt a DC 22 check with a relevant skill, such as Performance, Acrobatics, Athletics, or any you



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deem appropriate to impress a crowd. (This DC is the Performance DC of the band member, which is 22 for all of them). Record each hero's degree of success.

The second part is the group phase. Shadow Malice performs a high-energy musical number, then passes over their instruments for the heroes to use (if the heroes don't have any instruments of their own). Unlike the individual contests, this phase requires a Performance check. If the heroes balk, Ryta grins and says, "This stage is for performers, friends." To compete, one hero must attempt a DC 22 Performance check. This hero is the lead performer. Any number of other heroes can Aid at this check. In addition, the lead performer's Performance check gets a +2 bonus for each hero who got a critical success in the individual phase, a +1 bonus for each hero who got a success in the individual phase, and a -1 penalty for each hero who got a critical failure in the individual phase. Unlike the normal rules for bonuses, these bonuses to the Performance check are cumulative with each other.

If the lead performer succeeds at this final Performance check, Ryta acknowledges that the heroes are Shadow Malice's superiors on the stage and resolves to leave them alone. Word gets back to Vischari about the heroes' success, and the tavern manager treats them with a modicum of respect. On a critical success, Ryta gives the heroes the group's instruments, insisting that the instruments belong in the hands of such talented performers. The other members of Shadow Malice grumble at this decision but sullenly comply.

If the lead performer fails at this final Performance check, Shadow Malice sees the heroes as being out of their depth and resolves to attack the heroes right on the stage. The band members' statistics are described in area **F18**. Anyone remaining in the tavern simply watches the fight, considering it a bloody part of the show. On a critical failure, the patrons join the fight after the first round, which means the heroes should likely make a hasty retreat before getting overwhelmed.

Treasure: The gambling morlocks have a total of 15 gp, 181 sp, a gold tooth worth 5 gp, and a perfectly fossilized tuna skeleton on the table. Behind the bar, there's 28 gp and 74 sp in the cash box and a vial with sloughing toxin (page 214) that the bartender can use to poison troublesome patrons.

XP Award: If the heroes participate in the challenge against Shadow Malice, award them the usual 30 XP for completing a side quest. If the heroes win, award them an additional 80 XP.

F12. KITCHEN

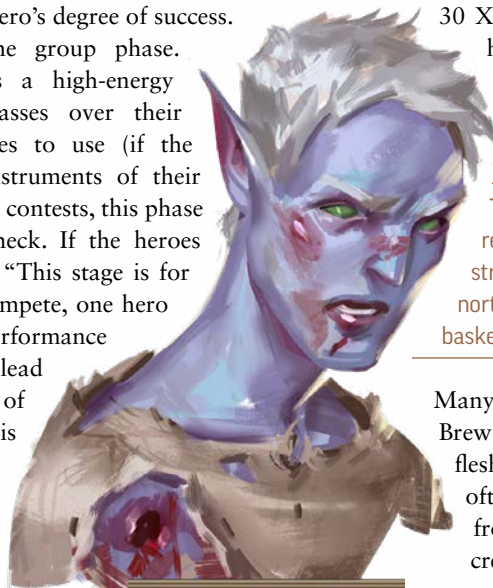
This dirty kitchen features a lit stove replete with oil stains, gristle, and the strong aroma of smoke. Alcoves to the north contain meat hooks and overflowing baskets of fungus.

Many creatures that frequent the Warped Brew are evil carnivores who relish the flesh of the living, so the meat hooks often have intelligent creatures dangling from them. There are three such creatures here now. All still live but are unarmed, weakened from their captivity, and desperate to avoid being placed on the menu. The creatures include a deep gnome named

Glashdrumdur, a drow named Falxi Orshendiel, and a skulk named Jedzeli. The heroes find all three of them tightly bound, hanging from meat hooks, and unable to free themselves.

Glashdrumdur: This grumpy deep gnome warrior (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 75) has been here the longest and is currently unconscious. If roused, he's quick to swear vengeance against the fleshwarped raiders who captured him. After even a few moments of reasoned reflection, he acknowledges he's outclassed and prefers to leave the Abomination Vaults behind. He has little to tell the heroes.

Falxi Orshendiel: This young drow rogue (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 137) is chaotic neutral. The most alert when the heroes first arrive here, he quickly asks for his freedom. He knows the seugathis have considered transforming him into a drider or feeding him to the patrons here, and he desperately wishes to avoid either fate. He explains that he hails from a small drow settlement deeper underground called Yldaris, but he's unwilling to give much detail about Yldaris to strangers. He says only that the city welcomes traders and that the heroes should visit, peacefully, if they come to the area. Falxi and two other drow were scouting farther from their settlement than usual when urdefhans attacked them; he was knocked unconscious and somehow ended up here. Though selfish, Falxi isn't evil (nor are the other inhabitants of Yldaris). If the heroes let him go, he eventually returns to Yldaris and might meet the heroes in area **I6**. The heroes' encounter with Falxi



Falxi Orshendiel

should suggest that Yldaris is a safe place to visit, and set the stage for a peaceful encounter with drow living in the lower levels.

Jedzeli: This unfortunate skulk (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 243) hangs limply on her hook, her right hand visibly missing. She constantly mumbles and murmurs about “the man in colored rags who takes hands.” Other attempts at conversation with her prove unintelligible. Before Ysondkhelir discovered the psychic human girl, Dorianna Menhemes, he amused himself by tormenting Jedzeli’s dreams. With a successful DC 22 Perception check, a hero who has interacted with Dorianna notices some disturbing similarities with the way Jedzeli mutters about the “man in colored rags.” Helping Jedzeli reclaim her sanity is a long and difficult road outside the scope of this adventure, but Glashdrumdur offers to look out for her if the heroes set them both free.

Treasure: While nothing in this kitchen is suitable for consumption by anyone but perhaps a goblin, a large jar labeled “deadly nightshade” lies at the bottom of one of the mushroom baskets. The jar contains four doses of belladonna poison.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for each prisoner they set free and help to reach an exit to the Abomination Vaults.

F13. LEVEL 6 PORTAL CHAMBER

This circular chamber is plainly used for storage, as it has several large casks stacked along its rounded walls. Dull silver fills the faded runes carved into the stone walls.

This room contains an inert *teleportation circle* like the ones in areas **E18** and **G2**. As with those rooms, this *teleportation circle* must be reactivated with the *awaken portal* ritual before it can be used.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for activating this portal.

F14. STORAGE ROOM

Spare chairs and shelves piled with grimy bottles and poorly cleaned dishes fill this storage room.

F15. MOLDY SUPPLIES

Fuzzy yellow moss covers the shelves of this room and their contents.

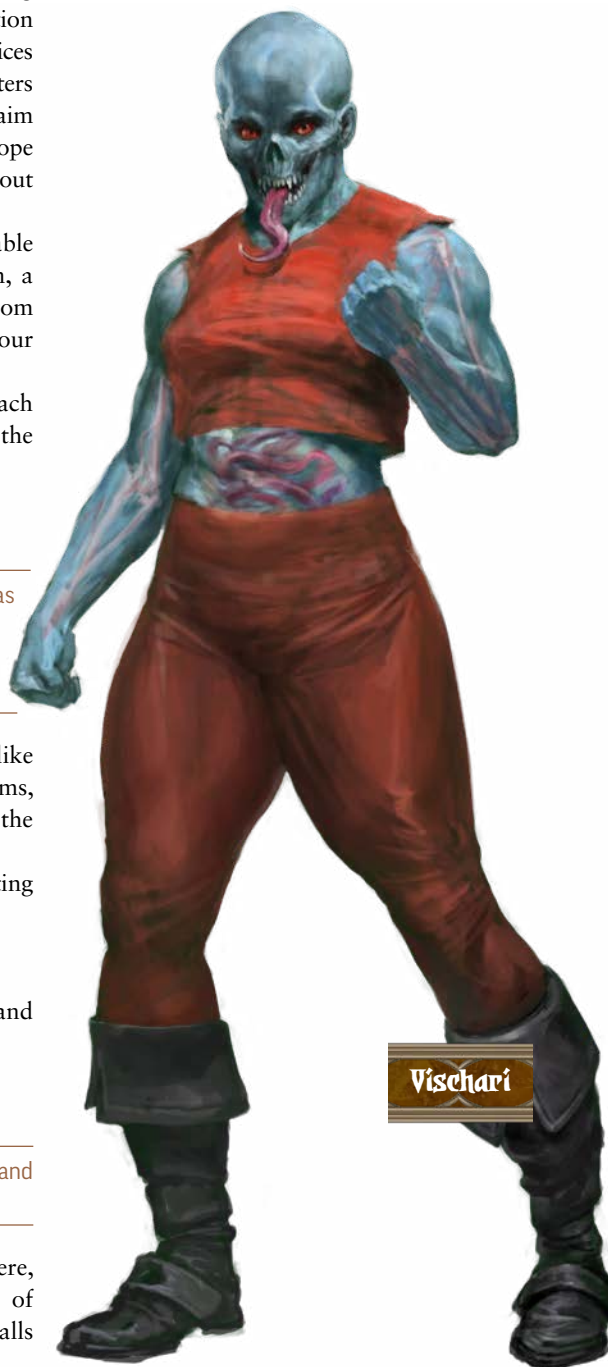
Hazard: Yellow mold had started to grow here, leaving the store room unusable. After months of being left alone, the mold has grown all over the walls and poses a danger to anyone entering this room.

YELLOW MOLD

Pathfinder Core Rulebook 524

Stealth DC 28 (trained)

Treasure: A forgotten *moderate healing potion* in the back of the room has partially congealed over time to become oddly lumpy. Although the potion is unpleasant to consume, it’s no less efficacious for its semi-congealed consistency.



HAZARD 8

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F16. TAVERN OFFICE

LOW 6

This messy office features a battered wooden desk with paperwork and ink stains scattered over its surface. The only exit is a door to the south.

This office belongs the manager of the Warped Brew Tavern, an urdefhan named Vischari. The papers include supply lists, startling recipes for serving different kinds of fungus, and employee pay rates. The chaos of the office belies Vischari's orderly mind—she knows where everything is here.

Creature: Vischari used to make the trip from the urdefhan stronghold deeper in the Abomination Vaults to enjoy the atmosphere in the Warped Brew a few times a year. On one visit, she realized that the seugathis planned to capture and experiment on her the next time she visited the establishment. Rather than leave the tavern she'd come to enjoy, Vischari elected to make herself indispensable by murdering the tavern's current owner and taking over its operation. She's proven to be a competent manager, so the seugathis have kept their threats to operate on her to a minimum.

Vischari knows that anyone disrupting the Warped Brew's operations threatens her livelihood, so she readily attacks surface dwellers who barge in uninvited. If she already knows the heroes, such as if they bested the tavern's band, she is merely brusque at insisting on her privacy here, insisting that they leave before she guts them and serves them in stew.

VISCHARI

CREATURE 7

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMANOID URDEFHAN

Female urdefhan pugilist (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 272)

Perception +15; greater darkvision

Languages Aklo, Daemonic, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +15, Athletics +17 (+19 to Grapple or Shove), Intimidation +15, Medicine +13, Survival +15

Str +6, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +4

AC 25; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +17, **Will** +13

HP 115, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fear; **Weaknesses** positive 10

Necrotic Decay (divine, necromancy, negative) When Vischari dies, her invisible flesh rots away and sublimates into a foul-smelling gas that fills a 5-foot emanation around her body. This gas deals 7d6 negative damage to creatures in this area as their flesh curdles and rots (DC 24 basic Fortitude save).

Attack of Opportunity ☞

Speed 25 feet

Melee ☞ fist +18 (deadly d8), **Damage** 2d8+10 bludgeoning

Melee ☞ jaws +17, **Damage** 2d6+10 piercing plus wicked bite

Divine Innate Spells DC 22, attack +14; **3rd** fear; **2nd** darkness, death knell; **1st** feather fall (at will, self only), ray of enfeeblement

Immobilizing Blow ☞☞ (incapacitation) Vischari makes a fist Strike that shuts down her target's motor control. The target must make a DC 25 Fortitude save. If the Strike was a critical hit, treat the target's save result as one degree worse. The target is then temporarily immune for 1 hour.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target is stunned 1.

Failure The target is paralyzed for 1 round.

Critical Failure The target is paralyzed for 1 minute.

At the end of each of its turns, it can attempt a new Fortitude save to reduce the remaining duration by 1 round or end it entirely on a critical success.

Wicked Bite ☞ **Requirements** Vischari damaged a creature with a jaws Strike on her last action; **Effect** Vischari maintains contact, turning the creature's flesh translucent around the site of the injury. Vischari chooses one of two options, each of which requires the target to attempt a DC 25 Fortitude save. If her jaws Strike was a critical hit, the creature suffers both effects, using the same save result for both.

- **Drain Blood** Vischari drinks some of the creature's blood. On a failed save, the creature is drained 1 and Vischari regains 10 HP (on a critical failure, it's drained 2 and Vischari regains 20 HP).

- **Drain Vitality** (necromancy) Vischari draws out some of the creature's vital essence. The creature becomes enfeebled 1 for 1 hour on a failed save (or enfeebled 2 for 1 hour on a critical failure).

Treasure: A dented safe under Vischari's desk is locked with a simple lock, but Vischari—perhaps unwisely—keeps the key in the lock so she can access it easily. The safe holds neat stacks of coins (34 gp, 179 sp, and 57 cp) and an odd key with an elaborate four-prong design, which is one of the keys that opens a lock in area F7.

F17. PRIVATE DINING

Placed against the east wall, a disgusting buffet table holds a buffet of smelly fried morsels, gloppy dipping sauce, and spiny mushrooms.

This food is provided for the members of Shadow Malice. Although not poisonous, this buffet isn't likely to appeal to the palates of surface dwellers. Doors exit to the north and south; the one to the south has the words "Performers Only" written on it in Undercommon.

F18. DRESSING ROOM

MODERATE 6

Oversized furniture, certainly intended for rooms larger than this one, has been jammed into this small room. An acrid smell, like burning paint, fills the air.

Shadow Malice's members hang out in this room when not on stage. The smell comes from a cracked and barely functioning hookah, but the band members nevertheless use it with whatever substances they find.

Creatures: The four members of Shadow Malice are Gulzash, Kragala, Nox, and Ryta. If encountered here, they simply insist that the heroes leave them alone. If the heroes seem up for a challenge but aren't overtly hostile, Ryta challenges them on the Warped Brew's main stage in area F11, in the performance challenge described there.

If things come to blows with Shadow Malice, Gulzash swings his battle lute while Nox fights with their kukri. Kragala and Ryta prefer to cast spells to harass enemies from a distance but can fight in melee if it becomes necessary: Kragala clubs foes with her drumsticks and Ryta gnaws her enemies. Any band member reduced to fewer than 15 HP flees, taking their cherished instrument with them to seek a safer gig somewhere else.

GULZASH

CREATURE 4

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMANOID XULGATH

Male xulgath lutenist
(*Pathfinder Bestiary* 336)

Perception +10;
darkvision

Languages Common,
Draconic, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +12, Intimidation +10,
Performance +12, Stealth +10

Str +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2,
Cha +2

Items +1 striking battle lute (page 226),
daggers (4), leather armor

AC 20; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +10, **Will** +13

HP 72

Stench (aura, olfactory) 30 feet. A creature that enters the area must attempt a DC 20 Fortitude save. On a failure,

the creature is sickened 1, and on a critical failure, the creature also takes a -5-foot status penalty to its Speeds for 1 round. While within the aura, the creature takes a -2 circumstance penalty to saves to recover from the sickened condition. A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune to all xulgaths' stench for 1 minute.

Stench Suppression ♦ Gulzash can suppress or resume his stench as a free action.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ battle lute +14 (shove, two-hand d8), **Damage** 1d4+6 bludgeoning

Melee ♦ jaws +13, **Damage** 1d6+6 piercing

Melee ♦ claw +13 (agile), **Damage** 1d4+6 slashing

Melee ♦ dagger +13 (agile, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+6 piercing

Ranged ♦ dagger +11 (agile, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+6 piercing

Mosh ♦ Gulzash Leaps to a square adjacent to a creature, then Shoves that creature. If Gulzash rolls a success on the Shove, he gets a critical success instead.

KRAGALA

CREATURE 4

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM DUERGAR DWARF HUMANOID

Female duergar drummer
(*Pathfinder Bestiary* 138)

Perception +8; darkvision

Languages Common,
Dwarven, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +11, Crafting +8,
Intimidation +12, Occultism +10,
Performance +12, Survival +8

Str +3, **Dex** +0, **Con** +4, **Int** +2,
Wis +0, **Cha** +2

Items drumstick (2; as light
hammer), folding drums
(page 221)

Light Blindness

AC 21; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +8, **Will** +11; +2 status to saves vs. magic

HP 62

Knock It Away ↻ **Trigger** Kragala is holding a drumstick and is targeted with a ranged weapon attack by an attacker she can see; **Effect** Kragala gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack.

Speed 20 feet

Melee drumstick +13 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+3 bludgeoning

Ranged drumstick +10 (agile, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 2d6+3 bludgeoning



Kragala

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Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 21, attack +13; **2nd** (3 slots) *death knell*, *sound burst*, *telekinetic maneuver*; **1st** (4 slots) *bless*, *magic missile*, *protection*, *sanctuary*; **Cantrips (2nd)** *daze*, *ghost sound*, *guidance*, *mending*, *telekinetic projectile*

Occult Innate Spells DC 21; **2nd** *enlarge* (self only), *invisibility* (self only)

Guiding Rhythm When Kragala casts *guidance* while using a percussive instrument, her targets don't become temporarily immune to her *guidance*.

Percussive Reverberation Kragala deals an additional 1d6 damage with hammers, including drumsticks (already included in the Strikes' damage).



Nox

NOX

CREATURE 4

UNIQUE N MEDIUM CALIGNI HUMANOID

Nonbinary caligni lutenist (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 50)

Perception +11; greater darkvision

Languages Caligni, Common, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +11, Deception +10, Performance +12, Society +8, Stealth +11

Str +1, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

Items hand crossbow (10 bolts), kukri, leather armor, virtuoso handheld musical instrument (theorbo)

Light Blindness

AC 21; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11

HP 60 (death flame)

Death Flame (light) When Nox dies, their body combusts in a flash of white-hot flame that deals 5d6 fire damage to creatures in a 20-foot burst (DC 21 basic Reflex save). Nox's gear and treasure are unaffected by the flames and are left in a pile where they died.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ kukri +14 (agile, finesse, trip), **Damage** 1d6+5 slashing

Ranged ♦ hand crossbow +14 (range increment 60 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d6+2 piercing

Occult Innate Spells DC 20, attack +12; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *sound burst* (at will); **Cantrips (2nd)** *detect magic*, *ghost sound*

Intense Performer When Nox has a musical instrument in hand, they can use Performance to Feint or Demoralize.

Sneak Attack Nox deals an additional 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

RYTA

CREATURE 4

UNIQUE LN SMALL HUMANOID RATFOLK

Female ratfolk vocalist (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 277)

Perception +10; darkvision

Languages Common, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +11, Diplomacy +12, Intimidation +12, Performance +12, Society +9, Stealth +11

Str +1, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +4

Items studded leather armor

AC 21; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +13, **Will** +10

HP 60

Dance Moves ➤ **Trigger** Ryta is targeted with a melee or ranged attack by an attacker she can see; **Effect** Ryta Steps and gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ fangs +13 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d4+1 piercing

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 21, attack +13; **2nd** (3 slots) *deafness*, *shatter*, *soothe*; **1st** (4 slots) *charm*, *command*, *soothe*, *ventriloquism*; **Cantrips (2nd)** *dancing lights*, *daze*, *ghost sound*, *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*

Cheek Pouches Ryta has stretchy cheek pouches that can store up to 1 cubic foot of objects (though no more than four light items). She can remove or store an item using the Interact action. As long as she has at least one object in her cheek pouches, her speech is noticeably difficult to understand.

Swarming Ryta can end her movement in the same square as an ally that also has this ability. Only two such creatures can share the same space.

Vocal Warm-Up ♦ Ryta sets up devastating vibrations that echo in her throat and her cheek pouches. Until the start of her next turn, her fangs Strikes deal an additional 2d8 sonic damage. Ryta can't use Vocal Warm-up if she has an object in her cheek pouches.

F19. BACK STAGE

Stands for music, a folded velvet curtain, and the wooden cutout of a tree clutter this small space.

Props for the stage are stored here when not in use. Gulzash usually sleeps on the folded curtain.

Treasure: The velvet curtain is in very good condition and worth 10 gp, although it weighs 5 Bulk and smells vaguely of vulgath stink. Folded up within it is a *clandestine cloak*. Anyone Searching the room or taking the curtain as loot discovers the cloak.

F20. LOWER OBSERVATION DECK MODERATE 6

This long chamber is rounded on both ends with a door to the north and a curved wall of transparent stone to the south. A faint stink wafts from an exit in the west wall.

This observation area permits an intimate view of the arena fights. Since viewing the spectacle is a bit better from the higher arena balconies, usually trainers or fleshwarpers watched the fights here to get a close and detailed view of the action.

Creatures: A seugathi servant observes the shanrigol behemoth in the arena and takes notes in a large tome. Their two dreshkan bodyguards stand ready to defend them from any trouble. The seugathi fanatically protects their research, screeching for the dreshkans to enter melee while the seugathi wields a sword in one tentacle and uses the other to keep their book away from foes. The seugathi also carries a tarnished silver key that unlocks the door to the main laboratory (area F25).

SEUGATHI RESEARCHER CREATURE 6

Seugathi servant (page 244)

Initiative Perception +14

Items key to area F25, longsword, research book and quill, wand of illusory creature

DRESHKANS (2)

CREATURE 4

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Initiative Perception +11



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Treasure: The seugathi's book contains several sketches of the shanrigol behemoth and notes in Aklo about its nature (it includes parts of, and therefore derives abilities from, driders and urdefhans), its weakness to positive energy, and that it's kept docile in the arena by a steady diet of failed experiments. More than just a text about one specific monster, this book contains several insights of general applicability to other creatures. It's worth 25 gp to a collector of rare tomes, such as Morlibint.



F21. SPA

LOW 6

This room bears the rich stink of rot. Doors to four changing stalls prominently appear at the east end of this long hallway. Each door has a makeshift clockwork mechanism attached to it, and the mechanism connects to a lever on the eastern wall through a series of wires and pulleys. The hallway to the west is hung with four wide, tattered curtains. Another, thicker curtain covers the hall's west end.

The spa kept the gladiators in their best health and entertained visiting guests. None of the seugathis or their minions want to use it. The four tiny changing rooms to the east have wooden doors that stop six inches from the ceiling and the floor. The four thinner curtains cover alcoves that serve as massage rooms; each has only a dilapidated massage table. The thicker curtain conceals the entrance to another chamber.

An enterprising morlock engineer rigged a complicated clockwork latching mechanism to turn the changing rooms into very small prison cells. The lever opens all four doors at once, but it then sticks and won't close them again.

Creatures: The room's stink plainly originates from the changing rooms. Some of Jafaki's minions captured, tortured, and imprisoned four ghastrs here, one in each changing room. The gaps below and above the doors allow their potent stench to escape, but not the ghastrs themselves. They occasionally reach under or above the doors with their claws, but they can't harm anyone who isn't pressed up against a changing room door. If freed, they immediately attack any living creatures they see, so cunning heroes might use them against other enemies in the dungeon.

ELITE GHASTRS (4)

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 169

Initiative Perception +10

F22. SAUNA

MODERATE 6

This round sauna is constructed entirely from polished stone. A wooden bench lines the circumference of the room, save for the exit to the east, which is covered by a thick curtain. At the center of the chamber stands a stone pedestal topped with a heavy bronze bowl filled with red-hot rocks. A wooden bucket full of water rests next to the pedestal.

The bowl maintains an evocation effect that keeps the rocks within it constantly heated. The command to turn it off and on is long forgotten. The intense heat in the room gives creatures in the room a -1 circumstance

penalty to saving throws against fire effects or against effects that give the enfeebled condition.

Creatures: Murschen is a rare skulk who enjoys public attention. Once lauded as his town's best brawler, he started exploring the world in search of fame and wealth, and to further his ability to hurt people who consider themselves strong. Eventually, Murschen came here with the notion that the seugathis could make him an even better warrior. Jafaki believes Murschen will make an excellent candidate for fleshwarping, so they shower the skulk with treasure and pit him against their finest monstrosities in the testing grounds (area F9). A sigil on Murschen's forehead reads "victor" in Aklo.

Murschen hasn't figured out that the seugathis don't intend to let him leave once they've experimented on him or that their experiments will likely result in a tortured existence. He feels like he'll be able to take whatever physical improvements the seugathis offer and return to a life of seeking championships on the surface again.

Murschen doesn't like being outnumbered and therefore doesn't pick a fight with the heroes right away, yet he doesn't want to simply let them go. He attempts to make his way past the heroes to the lever to release the ghosts. Once the undead have softened up the heroes, Murschen plans to beat them to death. He doesn't realize that the ghosts are just as likely to attack him as the heroes. Murschen flees the Abomination Vaults altogether if reduced to fewer than 20 Hit Points.

MURSCHEN

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMANOID SKULK

Male skulk brawler (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 243)

Perception +16; low-light vision

Languages Common, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +16, Athletics +17, Deception +13, Stealth +18, Survival +17

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1

Items +1 striking handwraps of mighty blows, platinum medal worth 20 gp, shuriken (10)

Camouflaged Step Murschen gains the benefit of the Cover Tracks action in forests and subterranean settings without moving at half Speed.

Chameleon Skin Murschen's skin shifts and changes to match the surroundings. As long as most of his body isn't covered by clothing or armor, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Stealth checks to Hide.

AC 27; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +16, **Will** +15

HP 140

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ fist +20 (agile, finesse, unarmed), **Damage** 2d6+7 bludgeoning

Melee ♦ red claw +20 (finesse, sweep, unarmed), **Damage** 2d10+7 slashing

Ranged ♦ shuriken +20 (agile, range increment 20 feet), **Damage** 1d4+7 piercing

Flurry of Blows ♦ **Frequency** once per turn; **Effect** Murschen makes two unarmed Strikes. If both hit the same creature, combine their damage for the purposes of resistances and weaknesses. Murschen's multiple attack penalty applies normally to these Strikes.

Red Ruin Stance ♦ (stance) **Requirement** Murschen is unarmored; **Effect** Murschen takes the stance of the red ruin, designed to tear away chunks of flesh like a ferocious beast. Murschen can make red claw unarmed attacks. These attacks deal 1d10 slashing damage; are in the brawling group; and have the finesse, sweep, and unarmed traits. While in this stance, when Murschen would reduce his frightened condition value by 1, he reduces it to 0.

Sneak Attack Murschen's Strikes deals an additional 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Side Quest: Murschen has met the urdefhan pugilist Vischari a time or two. If the heroes take the time to talk with the skulk, he mentions that he wants nothing more than a one-on-one brawl with her to determine who's best. Vischari has never taken Murschen's challenges seriously, and the seugathis consider her too useful as the manager of the Warped Brew to force her into the arena. If the heroes agree to set up a match between them, Murschen lets them leave to do so.

Vischari won't agree to a fight unless the heroes are on good terms with her (such as if they bested Shadow Malice). To convince her, a hero must succeed at a DC 23 Diplomacy check (Vischari's Will DC) convinces her to accept Murschen's challenge. The two set up an exhibition match on the Warped Brew's stage, wagering Murschen's magical handwraps against the contents of Vischari's office safe. The two are evenly matched, so you can decide who wins; neither combatant will be in any shape to challenge the heroes in the aftermath. Whether or not the heroes threaten to pounce upon them in this moment of weakness, the victor considers the possibility and offers the spoils from the fight if the heroes agree to leave them alone thereafter.

Treasure: The heroes can find the skulk's treasures stashed under a bench: a gold and emerald ring worth 40 gp, a ruby-encrusted dagger worth 70 gp, and a fine mithral bracelet worth 20 gp.

F23. STORAGE CLOSET

Cluttered tools, scraps of wood, and furniture are haphazardly stacked in this cramped room.

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HELLFORGED WEAPONS

Weapons forged in the depths of Hell often gain sinister powers. Urevian established a hellforge on the prison level (area **G4**) and has gifted a few of his favored followers with hellforged weapons manufactured there. In the hands of a devil, these hellforged weapons gain the agile and deadly d8 weapon traits (if the weapon already has the deadly trait, increase the size of the deadly damage die by one step instead of giving it deadly d8). Although worth as much as an ordinary weapon of its kind, hellforged weapons exude palpable menace, so upstanding merchants usually refuse to trade in them.

The seugathis use this area as a storage closet. Only their alien minds can comprehend why they store things like broken tables, three cots hopelessly tangled together, a dismantled clock, a brass kettle with four evenly spaced holes in its bottom, and seven mustard-yellow and moth-eaten bedsheets.

Treasure: A hero Searching this area might find rare treasures hidden among this trash. Each successful DC 22 Perception check reveals one item, while a critical success reveals two. The valuables include an *emerald grasshopper*, a *hand of the mage*, an *iron cube*, and two ichthyosis mutagens (page 213).

F24. TORTURE CHAMBER

LOW 6

As the heroes approach this room, there's a 1 in 3 chance that one of the zebubs in the room is invisibly patrolling the hallway. If it spots the heroes but isn't detected, it returns to the torture chamber with *dimension door* to alert the other devils, who prepare to rush out of the room and attack.

The stone walls of this chamber appear to glisten with blood. An iron maiden stands in one corner, while the other corner has a metal table bristling with nails.

Belcorra felt the natural red stone walls of this room, which appear slick due to water seeping through them, made it an ideal place for a torture chamber. The victims here were usually gladiators in the arena who she felt showed mercy or an insufficient will to fight.

Creatures: Urevian sent a barbaz and two zebubs to secure a foothold on this floor and prepare for an incursion. The barbaz keeps weapons at the ready and awaits further orders. A zebub sometimes patrols the

corridor to the north to ensure they aren't caught. When they spot one of Jafaki's minions in the corridor, they attack, drag the minion back, and torture it to death. The iron maiden currently holds a morlock's corpse.

A devil reduced to fewer than 15 Hit Points flees from combat and heads back to the prison level (using *dimension door* if possible). They report the heroes' presence to Urevian, who then reassigns them elsewhere on that level, at your discretion.

BARBAZU

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 88

Initiative Perception +13

Items hellforged glaive

Melee ♦ hellforged glaive +15 (agile, deadly 1d10, evil, forceful, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d8+7 slashing plus 2d6 evil and infernal wound

ZEBUBS (2)

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 72

Initiative Perception +12

Treasure: The weapon racks hold two +1 *glaives*, a *bloodletting kukri*, a standard-grade cold iron shield, and three moderate acid flasks.

F25. MAIN LABORATORY

The door to this chamber is locked with a good-quality lock. A character who succeeds at five DC 30 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock opens the door; alternatively, the key held by the seugathi in area **F20** can also open it. The heroes can Force Open the sturdy door with a successful DC 30 Athletics check.

Books, glass bottles emitting smoke, and clumps of slime fill the shelves that cover the high walls of this chamber. The southern area displays the dissected remains of several creatures, pinned to a wall like rare and unusual specimens. The head of a morlock, somehow kept alive through some mechanical means with tubes and wires connecting to its body, screams a constant hoarse note.

The ceiling of this room is 25 feet high, and its shelves go all the way to the ceiling.

JAFAKI'S BACKGROUND

Belcorra first spotted Jafaki and several other seugathis slithering through the Darklands while she was building the Abomination Vaults. They expressed an eagerness to serve her and advance their own experiments. Belcorra knew the seugathis could improve her forces, as well as expand. She tasked them with building her a perfect soldier, then making armies of them to conquer Absalom. Knowing that perfection

was a high price to ask, Belcorra funneled all the resources she could to the seugathis. The seugathis pursued not one research path but many, including fleshwarping, monster breeding, and even dabbling in magical constructs. Belcorra didn't mind this broad experimentation, as nearly all of it provided her with useful monsters for her growing army. She passed along the seugathis' innovations to other alchemists and mages who could duplicate the work.

When the Roseguard defeated Belcorra, the seugathis nevertheless continued pursuing their objective. Their initial obstacle was a bone devil named Tarkannah. Tarkannah deemed that ongoing duty to Belcorra—to whom the bone devil remained loyal even after her death—meant taking a firmer hand in overseeing the seugathis. Tarkannah tried to constrain and direct the seugathis' sprawling research. Rather than comply with these unwelcome demands, the seugathis rebelled; Jafaki ambushed and killed Tarkannah and seized control of the laboratories level.

This assault started a brief war between the devils and the seugathis. For months the two sides fought, but Urevian soon discovered the seugathis weren't really interested in expanding their holdings, only defending the territory they had. The two sides settled in an uneasy truce on their respective levels of the vaults. These front lines aren't absolute; Urevian is happy to permit potential "raw materials" to pass through the prison, and the seugathis' cast-off creatures often find their way into the devil's gradually increasing forces.

Jafaki has little concern for the army growing on the level below. The seugathis don't bother with the imp and zebub spies that occasionally pass through the laboratories, but Jafaki and their colleagues can make marching through with a large army costly or even impossible. Jafaki plans to permit free passage only in exchange for additional concessions to bolster their ongoing experiments, even though Urevian is certain to balk at the cost.

Jafaki's research has seemed to drift over the years through various abhorrent sciences: fleshwarping, reanimation of the dead, selective breeding, or even golem creation. Yet they remain as focused on their goal of creating the perfect soldier as they were when they spoke to Belcorra all those years ago.

That word has driven Jafaki for centuries. Good soldiers? They've created those, and all have died by the dozens or hundreds in the arena. Great soldiers? Some of Jafaki's finest works have been nearly unstoppable. But "nearly" is not "perfect." Jafaki will pursue perfection for as long as it takes.

ENCOUNTERING JAFAKI

Jafaki does all their best work in chamber **F20**, continuing their existence's driving purpose:

SEVERE 6

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Jafaki

scientifically engineering the most powerful monsters. They might be encountered elsewhere in the Laboratories level, as needed to evaluate potential successes. They even strive to make the best of their failures, such as by cultivating the shanrigol behemoth in area **F26**. Jafaki isn't likely to venture out in direct response to the heroes' presence; they consider the heroes to be little more than annoyances and trusts in others to take care of them. Once the heroes show up here, Jafaki finally realizes they might have underestimated them.

Creatures: Jafaki sends the drider to answer any knock at the door since other seugathis sometimes come by for Jafaki's guidance. The heroes might take advantage of this habit to take the preoccupied researcher by surprise.

If the heroes try to Force Open the door open or Pick the Lock, Jafaki realizes they're intruders and prepares for a fight. The drider scrambles up to the ceiling. Jafaki envenoms their rapier and casts *levitate* to stay out of melee reach. Both use their spells as often as they can; the drider uses *fireball* and *acid arrow* to inflict direct damage, while Jafaki prefers spells that disorient opponents and turn them against each other, like *confusion*. They hope to distill out which of the heroes is the toughest, then take that hero captive for experimentation. When direct damage is more useful, Jafaki hurls their alchemical bombs to catch as many targets as possible.

Both of these foes fight to the death—the drider out of loyalty to Jafaki, and Jafaki because they can't abandon their life's work.

JAFAKI

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE CE LARGE ABERRATION SEUGATHI

Seugathi fleshwarper (page 244)

Perception +18; darkvision, tremorsense 30 feet

Languages Aklo, Common, Undercommon; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +18, Crafting +18, Diplomacy +15, Intimidation +17, Medicine +16, Nature +16, Occultism +18, Stealth +18

Str +3, **Dex** +6, **Con** +4, **Int** +4, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3


Items +1 striking rapier, wand of gentle repose, wand of 2nd-level magic missile, expanded alchemist's tools, keys to areas **E11** and **F7**

Infused Items Jafaki carries these infused items: 2 moderate acid flasks, 2 moderate bottled lightnings, 2 moderate cognitive mutagens, 2 lesser elixirs of life, 2 moderate mistform elixirs, and 2 doses of wyvern poison (one of which they have already applied to their rapier). These items last for 24 hours, or until the next time Jafaki makes their daily preparations.


AC 26; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +18, **Will** +16; +1 status to all saves vs. magic


HP 100; **Immunities** mental, poison; **Resistances** bludgeoning 10


Mindfog Aura (enchantment, mental) 20 feet. A creature that starts its turn in the aura must succeed at a DC 23 Will save or become confused for 1 round; on a success, that creature is temporarily immune for 1 minute. Jafaki can suppress or activate this aura as a single action with the concentrate trait.


Command Confusion  **Trigger** A creature fails its save against Jafaki's mindfog aura; **Effect** Jafaki determines who the confused creature attacks for that round, instead of the target being randomly determined by the GM. If the chosen target is the confused creature's ally, the creature can immediately attempt a DC 21 Will save; on a success, its target is determined randomly as normal, and on a critical success the target is no longer confused.

Speed 25 feet


Melee  bite +18 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d6+5 piercing plus seugathi venom

Melee  rapier +19 (deadly 1d8, disarm, finesse, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d6+5 piercing plus wyvern poison


Ranged  acid flask +19 (bomb, range increment 20 feet, splash), **Damage** 5 acid plus 2d6+2 persistent acid and 6 acid splash

Ranged  bottled lightning +19 (bomb, range increment 20 feet, splash), **Damage** 2d6+2 electricity plus 6 electricity splash

Occult Innate Spells DC 26, attack +18; **4th** *confusion* (×3), *phantasmal killer*; **3rd** *hypercognition*, *levitate*, *mind reading* (×3); **Cantrips** (4th) *daze*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *telekinetic projectile*

Envenom Weapon  (manipulate) Jafaki applies their innate seugathi venom to one weapon they wield.

Magic Item Mastery Jafaki can Cast a Spell from magic items even if the spell isn't on their spell list. All such spells are occult spells and use Jafaki's innate spell DC and attack modifier.

Quick Consumption  (flourish) Jafaki Interacts to draw an elixir or mutagen, then drinks it.

Seugathi Venom (poison); **Saving Throw** DC 24 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d6 poison damage and stupefied 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 2d6 poison damage and deafened and stupefied 2 (1 round)

DRIDER

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 159

Initiative Perception +13

Side Quest: Jafaki's current project is to manufacture a flesh golem with occult machinery

here. They intend to assemble it using the morlock's head and the neatly labeled body parts scattered around the room. A sketch pad bears the instructions for assembly and notes that ambient necromantic energy in the Abomination Vaults will animate the flesh golem. The key to this experiment is the occult machinery keeping its head alive, which focuses this ambient energy. Finishing the golem requires Jafaki's knowledge and expertise; doing so goes beyond the heroes' current capabilities.

The heroes can, however, disconnect the machine to end the morlock's torment. Disconnecting this machinery requires a hero to succeed at a DC 22 Occultism check. On a success, the morlock head dies and the machinery can't be used again. On a failure, or if the heroes simply smash the machine, the morlock head dies, but the invisible energies accumulated within the machine seek another source of stitched skin and meat to animate as a flesh golem.

If the heroes left the fleshy statue of Belcorra intact in the Temple of the Canker (area **F34**), these errant energies animate it as a flesh golem (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 184) instead. The flesh golem comes to life with an instinctive drive to find and kill whoever ruined the machine. It always knows the distance and direction to the hero responsible and immediately begins pursuit down through the Abomination Vaults. As the golem is far away, it might take hours to catch up to the heroes, at your discretion, but when it does, it fights until destroyed.

Disappearing Morlocks: Jafaki is wrapped up in their experiments and projects but nevertheless has an effect on the surrounding dungeon. Every few days, Jafaki calls for one of the morlocks in the Warped Brew Tavern to come here with the promise of being fleshwarped into a dreshkan. The morlocks eagerly come since Jafaki has created the many dreshkans in the Abomination Vaults, but it's a ruse. Jafaki instead carefully dissects the morlock to add additional living pieces to their current golem project. If the heroes come here but retreat, Jafaki continues these gruesome experiments; when the heroes return, there should be more morlock parts affixed to the machinery (and fewer morlocks in area **F11**, if any remained there). Once he has run out of morlocks to experiment on, Jafaki starts capturing and dissecting members of Shadow Malice instead.

Treasure: Scattered around the room are all the pieces for an expanded alchemist's lab, expanded healer's tools, and a superb repair kit. None of the proper pieces are together, however, so it takes several minutes of hunting around to assemble them all. In

addition, a *crafter's eyepiece* and two vials of moderate antiplague sit on the shelves.

XP Award: Award the heroes 80 XP, rather than 30 XP, for successfully disconnecting the occult machinery. If they fail, award them this amount if they defeat the flesh golem in combat.

F26. ARENA FLOOR

SEVERE 6

Dried blood from past combats forms a crust over the sand spread across this arena's stone floor. Torches illuminate the floor in bright light but hardly reach the walkway ringing the arena high above. Two staircases lead up to this walkway, but a metal portcullis blocks each one.

The site of hundreds of bloody battles, this arena entertained Belcorra's bloodthirsty guests and tested her many gladiators. From these champions, she chose officers to lead her monstrous armies.

The portcullises are controlled by a wheel and lever on the balcony above (area **E26**), but a creature can lift a closed portcullis with a successful DC 25 Athletics check. The doors to the east and west are unlocked.

Creature: After the death of hundreds of monsters and gladiators, the arena is imbued with the essence of death. When Jafaki first dumped scraps from failed creations here, the decaying flesh spontaneously arose as shanrigols. The first few times this happened, Jafaki had their driders drag the resulting shanrigols to the holding cells (area **E3**) for study. Curious about how large these aberrations could grow, Jafaki assembled a giant pile of flesh and assigned a seugathi to document the resulting shanrigol's composition and growth.

The creature has grown into a massive shanrigol behemoth from incorporating scraps of driders, urdefhans, and other creatures. The monstrosity simply waits for meals of scraps and corpses. Outside of feeding, the creature remains dormant and is relatively unobservant. However, if it's attacked, or if a creature enters the area of its tremorsense, the shanrigol rouses and attacks. It fights ferociously, using its web trap against foes who flee and shooting bone shards at creatures who remain out of its reach. The shanrigol behemoth fights until destroyed.

SHANRIGOL BEHEMOTH

CREATURE 9

Page 247

Initiative Perception +18

Treasure: A few creatures have tested their might by fighting the shanrigol—and lost. Their equipment lies scattered in the bloody sand on the floor: *ghoul hide*, a *caterwaul sling*, and a *horn of fog*.

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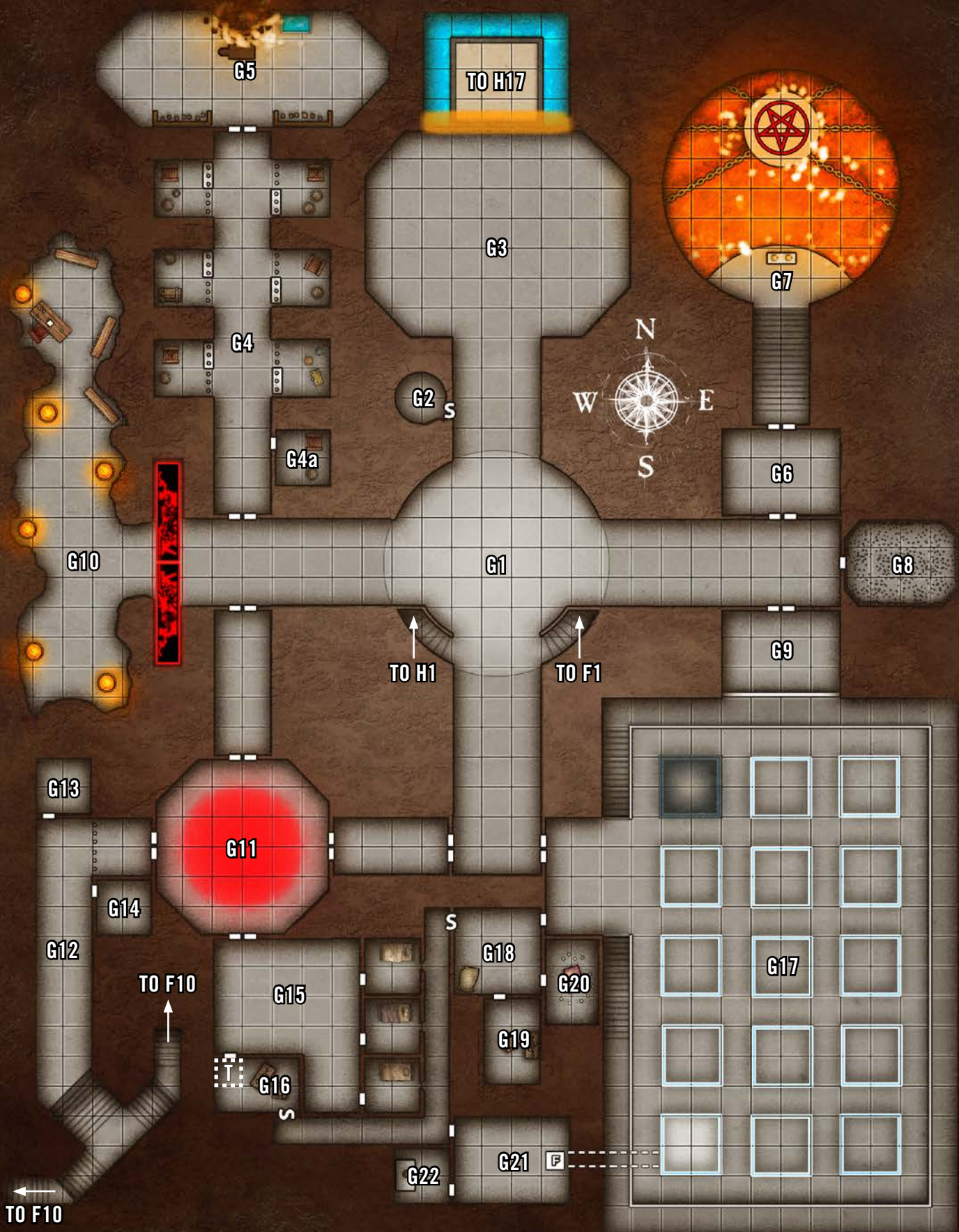
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Nhimbaloth

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LEVEL 7: PRISON
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET





CHAPTER 7: Soul Keepers

Five centuries ago, Belcorra summoned the contract devil Urevian to administer her Abomination Vaults. Always looking to sweeten a deal, Urevian further offered to train Belcorra's armies and lead her invasion of Absalom—for a price. Urevian knew that Vol Rajani, legendary Roseguard swordswoman and exiled royalty from Nidal, lived in Absalom. The Rajani family has, for reasons even Urevian doesn't know, special value to certain parties in Hell. In exchange for Urevian's aid, Belcorra guaranteed him Rajani's soul. When the Roseguard attacked *Gauntlight*, bringing the soul right to Belcorra's doorstep, Urevian was in Hell, committing Rajani's soul to a much more powerful entity—even though he didn't yet have it. By the time he returned, the Roseguard had prevailed with Belcorra slain. The sorcerer couldn't fulfill her end of the bargain, trapping Urevian in the interminable process of preparing a surface invasion that would gain him nothing. Worse, he didn't dare return to Hell without the Rajani soul, and his agreement forbid him from capturing the soul directly or through his infernal proxies, as Belcorra was intended to deliver it. Urevian was trapped.

Now that Belcorra has returned, Urevian's agreement with her can be fulfilled. He plans to train her armies and invade the surface, starting with Otari; his spying has informed him that Carman Rajani, whose soul can also fulfill his contract, lives there.

Urevian has fully mobilized his devils to train the fleshwarps who've come into his realm. Belcorra placed several horrible monsters in stasis, though Urevian doesn't yet know how to reliably free them and has made that discovery his next priority.

Although the devils can use *dimension door* to reach the surface quickly, Urevian's other troops need physical access, which required him to approach the seugathi Jafaki about allowing them through the laboratories. Jafaki feared another diabolic ruse—a reasonable assumption given the seugathis' past relations with Urevian—and agreed on one condition: Urevian must allow the seugathis to “personally inspect” all infernal forces and make “upgrades and improvements.” Urevian knew this ploy was for Jafaki to get their tentacles on endless research subjects and that the fleshwarper would never sign off on any

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troops. Urevian is ready to wash his hands of this entire arrangement, but alas, he has a contract.

Urevian sees the heroes as an unexpected opportunity and a potential solution. If the heroes slaughter their way through Jafaki and the seugathis, then all the better for the devil. Urevian has ordered his devils to keep an eye out for the heroes, to kill all but one or two, and then bring him the survivors for negotiations. He plans to convince the remaining heroes to deliver Carman Rajani to him. Otherwise, he'll march his army up through the dungeon and destroy Otari.

Urevian's devils have had little contact with the Abomination Vaults' lower levels, even in less troubled times. He receives food from the farm level below to feed his mortal soldiers but cares little for the denizens there or their machinations. Since Belcorra's return,



Urevian has seen an increase in urdefhans, drow, and more parading through the prison level, and he has had enough. He recently blocked the stairs leading down to the lower level with rubble (area **G1**) and erected a magical barrier across the large elevator opening (area **G3**). Urevian knows that his control over these barriers probably gives him some leverage with the heroes, too, which further benefits him. He needs them to be his hands on the surface.

Prison Features

Ceilings are 20 feet high throughout the prison, which is illuminated by dim, red light from flickering flames or glowing diabolic symbols. The doors are all stone bound in iron, and many are locked. As a side effect of pervasive, diabolic influence, all doors flicker briefly with fire around their edges when opened or closed, making sneaking in the prison level difficult. A hero trained in Religion can utter a brief incantation (which requires no action) when opening a door to prevent this effect.

The map for this level appears on page 126.

G1. LOWER SHAFT

Barbazu Drill Sergeant

The spiral staircase bottoms at a circular chamber's red stone floor. Four wide passages lead away in opposite directions, three of them ending at a door. The west passage features the most impressive of these doors, which are fifteen feet high and inscribed with a blazing pentagram. The southwest stairway descends from this room and appears choked with boulders, rubble, and dust.

This chamber provides easy access to the prison's cell blocks. Most doors leading from this room are unlocked and open easily, except for two described in their respective locations: the secret door to area **G2** is both hidden and locked, and the pentagram-inscribed doors to area **G10** are magically sealed.

The stairs leading downward connect to area **H1**, 100 feet below. The currently impassable stairs take at least a week of labor to clear. This level's denizens likely won't give the heroes this time without harrying them, so they can't effectively clear away the rubble while the devils and other hostile creatures remain. Urevian agrees to clear the way for the heroes if they negotiate with him, as described in area **G10**.

An Eye on the Shaft: This room doesn't have any guards, but the barbazu drilling the unit of dreshkans in area **G3** to the north likely sees anyone entering it. That barbazu exhorts his soldiers to attack.

G2. LEVEL 7 PORTAL CHAMBER

A hero who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check spots the secret door to this room. Pressing a particular stone above the door causes it to rotate inward, but only an inch or so and just enough to reveal a combination lock made of metal cylinders. The combination is long lost, but a hero can open the door with a successful DC 25 Athletics check to Force it Open, or four successful DC 25 Thievery checks to Pick the Lock. A hero who's a master in Thievery recognizes the tumblers as the lock's most vulnerable part and can open it with a single successful DC 20 Thievery check.

This room's floor gleams under a thin layer of dust. Runes filled with silver inlay have been carved into the walls.

This room contains an inert *teleportation circle* like the ones elsewhere in the Abomination Vaults (area **B17**). This *teleportation circle* must also be reactivated with the *awaken portal* ritual.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for activating this portal.

G3. DRILL FIELD

MODERATE 7

This chamber's well-worn floor attests to its constant use. The walls angle up to the ceiling twenty feet overhead. The northern wall has a mine shaft elevator, but a wall of shimmering orange energy blocks the passage leading into it.

Belcorra welcomed her guests from the Darklands here before leading them upstairs for entertainment and refreshments. The chamber's opulence has diminished over time. Centuries of military drills, sparring, and other abuses have damaged the walls, which are splattered in blood and ichor.

Urevian pulled in favors from infernal contacts to create a permanent, glowing *wall of force* that blocks the elevator's shaft and sheds dim light throughout the chamber. He has no personal control over the wall; it's tied to the essence of Urevian's contract. It disappears immediately only when Urevian's contract with Belcorra is fulfilled, or if he's slain. Details about concluding the deal are presented in area **G10**. The elevator descends 100 feet to area **H17**; its function is described there, as its in the lower position.

Creatures: Jafaki doesn't pay much attention to the many grothluts whom the devils defeated, assuming that the devils slew them all. In truth, Urevian's forces have trained the grothluts to fight on their side against

CHAPTER 7 SYNOPSIS

Long ago, Belcorra handed over the prison level to the contract devil Urevian and his infernal minions. They now prepare diligently to invade the surface, and the level is on reasonably high alert. The heroes must fight their way through many devils and fleshwarp minions. They might find some surprising allies, including an imprisoned bounty hunter and an imp named Szek who's eager to make a deal. Here, the heroes can also put an end to the malevolent creature tormenting Dorianna Menhemes. When the heroes finally meet Urevian, he extends an offer wrapped in a difficult moral choice.

Environmental Cues: stench of brimstone, eerie silence, flickering flames, smoke, cell doors, infernal runes carved on surfaces (Urevian has been spying on Carman Rajani and thus knows a little about the heroes. You can play up the ominous atmosphere by having some of the heroes' opponents call them by their names or predict their general tactics—particularly anything they've used or discussed around Carman.)

CHAPTER 7 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 7 are as follows.

- +1 flaming striking hellforged glaive (page 122)
- +1 striking composite longbow
- +1 striking kukri
- +1 striking warhammer
- +1 tamchal chakram (page 226)
- bag of holding type II
- bracers of armor type I
- drover's band (page 220)
- gallows tooth
- grim trophy
- moderate alchemist's fire
- scroll of dream message
- spellstrike arrow (3rd level)
- standard explosive arrow
- transparent elemental gem
- young red dragon's breath potion

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their creators. As grothluts are mindless creatures, training them is an exceptionally slow process, but the devils have had a lot of time on their hands.

A barbaz is currently drilling six grothluts here. He uses his magical bracers to encourage compliance, and the grothluts follow his orders. The devil is immune to the grothluts' piteous moaning. These troops attack as soon as they see intruders, which likely occurs when the heroes arrive in area G1.

BARBAZU CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 88

Initiative Perception +13

Items drover's band (page 220), glaive

GROTHLUTS (6) CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 158

Initiative Perception +5

G4. STORAGE CELLS LOW 7

These rooms stem off a long hall and obviously functioned as prison cells, but the doors stand open. The cells contain stacks of crates, barrels, and quivers full of arrows.

These former prison cells hold barrels of pitch, jugs of lantern oil, fuse cord, flint and steel, and hundreds of arrows—sufficient supplies to destroy a small village.

Only one cell door is locked—the isolation cell to the west (area G4a). The zebub in this hall holds the key; the door can also be opened by a hero who succeeds at three DC 20 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock or a DC 25 Athletics check to Force it Open.

Creatures: A zebub named Azvalvigander is responsible for itemizing this equipment, which Urevian intends to use against Otari. The fussy zebub has checked the inventory twice over, doing so again to ensure she didn't make any mistakes. Four dreshkans help her with brute labor and defense.

AZVALVIGANDER CREATURE 3

Female zebub quartermaster (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 272)

Initiative Perception +14

Items fragment of Urevian's pendant (see area G10), key to area G4a

DRESHKANS (4) CREATURE 4

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Initiative Perception +11

Treasure: The locked storage room contains valuable, destructive equipment stored for the inevitable assault on Otari: a *standard explosive arrow*, three 3rd-level *spellstrike arrows*, three *young red dragon's breath potions*, and 10 moderate alchemist's fires.

G5. HELLFORGE MODERATE 7

This chamber's walls are charred black. Chains hang from the twenty-foot-tall ceiling, suspending shelves holding tools and metal ingots. A forge fills an alcove in the north wall; its mouth yawns open, filled with jagged teeth like those of a great beast, and a blazing fire roars inside. Between the beast-forge's horns, a hole in the ceiling captures the smoke belching from its nostrils. An anvil rests near the forge. The west wall has a trough of sooty water pushed up against it, and weapon racks flank the double door on the south wall.

This room once served as a torture chamber, but Urevian repurposed it for a more efficient use: creating weapons for his inevitable assault on the surface.

The tiny ventilation shaft extends upwards hundreds of feet before ending in a large, empty chamber in the earth, where smoke is trapped until it settles.

Creatures: Urevian assigned forge duty to an erinys named Barcumbuk, a skilled smith who bristles at having to produce mundane weapons. He derives more pride from the laborious and lengthy process of

creating hellforged weapons, so his overall productivity over the centuries has been relatively modest.

The devils realize that the heroes must have defeated Azvalvigander and her bodyguards to get here, and they're openly appreciative of the exacting zebub's demise. They still attack the heroes, however. Barcumbuk fights with his fiery forge hammers; he has the flames of fury ability common to erinyes, so any weapon he holds gains the effects of the flaming rune while he holds it. The barbazu uses a magical hellforged glaive (making its damage considerably greater than that of a typical barbazu). The devils fight to the death.

BARCUMBUK

CREATURE 8

Male erinyes (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 89)

Initiative Perception +18

Items breastplate, fragment of Urevian's pendant (see area G10), light hammer (4), 100 feet of erinyes-hair rope, +1 striking warhammer

Melee ♦ *flaming warhammer* +20 (evil, fire, magical, shove), **Damage** 2d8+6 bludgeoning plus 1d6 evil and 1d6 fire

Ranged ♦ *flaming light hammer* +19 (agile, evil, fire, magical, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d6+6 bludgeoning plus 1d6 evil and 1d6 fire

BARBAZU

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 88

Initiative Perception +13

Items +1 flaming striking hellforged glaive

Melee ♦ *flaming hellforged glaive* +16 (agile, deadly 1d10, evil, fire, forceful, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+7 slashing plus 2d6 evil and 1d6 fire and infernal wound

The Hellforge: The heroes lack the skills to use the evil hellforge as anything but an ordinary forge, but they can certainly destroy it. A hero who succeeds at a DC 22 Crafting or Religion check to Recall Knowledge remembers that even a small amount of holy water splattered on an infernal forge can destroy it (on a critical success, the hero also remembers that doing so releases a blast of energy). If the heroes splatter the hellforge with holy water, it cracks down the middle with a mighty groan. It deals 4d6 sonic damage and 4d6 evil damage (DC 23 basic Fortitude save) to creatures in the room.

Treasure: Special metals Barcumbuk hasn't gotten around to forging are stacked neatly near the anvil: five cold iron chunks (10 gp each), two silver chunks (10 gp each), and an adamantine chunk (500 gp).

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for destroying the hellforge.

G6. GUARD CHAMBER

MODERATE 7

This plain stone chamber has two double doors, one on the north wall and a second on the south wall. Tiny carvings cover the east and west walls.



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Barcumbuk

The guardian here made these carvings to pass the time. Each carving represents a nonsense metaphysical question in Infernal, such as “Who are you if you are no one?” and “When your soul is consumed, do you consume yourself?” The creature likes to pose these types of questions during their interrogations to make victims puzzle over them in search of deeper meanings and feel foolish upon failing to find any.

Creature: A bone devil named Iyagian stands watch here at Urevian’s command. Unhappy with serving as a mere guard, yet bound by the contractual terms of their service, Iyagian treats their charge very literally. They never warn the erinyes in the summoning chamber of any trouble and don’t leave this room no matter what they hear elsewhere unless they’re personally under attack. If given the chance to talk, Iyagian freely explains their role and offers some of their nonsense meditations. The devil uses the time the heroes spend contemplating to ask questions using their Stygian Inquisitor ability. Iyagian quickly loses patience, however, and insists the heroes must leave or risk their wrath. If combat begins, the bone devil fights to the death.

IYAGIAN

CREATURE 9

Osyluth (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 273)

Initiative Perception +13

G7. SUMMONING CHAMBER

SEVERE 7

A stairway at the room’s south end leads north to a platform overlooking a cylindrical chamber. Half-melted candles cover a stone altar perched on this platform’s edge. Above the altar, water slowly drips from a crack in the ceiling and onto the platform, the droplets rapidly evaporating in the stifling heat. Six heavy chains suspend a wide metal disk above a magma pool that illuminates the chamber with an orange glow. A fiery pentagram features visibly atop the disk.

Belcorra had geomancers divert a natural magma flow to pool here. She then commissioned the creation of the ritual altar and the summoning circle atop the disk. Belcorra summoned several fiends in this chamber, binding each to her service. The greatest of these was Urevian, as her contract with him gave her access to all the devils who serve Urevian as well.

The ceiling is 20 feet tall at the doors of this room. As the stairs descend to the platform, the ceiling stays the same height, so it’s 25 feet above the platform. The disk is at the same level as the platform, but the 15-foot gap over magma makes it daunting to reach.

The air in this chamber is magically cooled to only severe heat (*Core Rulebook* 518), dealing 1d6 fire damage every hour. The 10-foot-deep magma pool

presents a greater danger; immersion in the magma deals 20d6 fire damage each round. A hero who succeeds at a DC 23 Crafting or Religion check realizes that the magma’s heat powers the summoning circle.

The Cracked Ceiling: A character who succeeds at a DC 23 Nature check (or a related Lore skill, such as Mining Lore) recognizes that the crack in the ceiling allows water to drip down from the underground lake directly above (area F4). If the heroes widen this crack—a task requiring appropriate tools, the ability to reach the ceiling, and several hours of chipping away the stone—the drips become a trickle, then a flood. The rush of water fills the room with steam and cools the magma to stone over a few hours. The hero also knows that cooling the magma destroys the summoning circle.

Creatures: Twin erinyes sisters are trying to convert the summoning circle into a permanent gate to Hell. Concerned more with the theory of extraplanar portals than the application, the sisters spend a lot of time discussing their work but haven’t done much to enact it. Furious at interruptions to their discourse, they most likely attack intruders. However, if they think a hero shares their interests (such as if they see a hero summon a creature in a fight), they offer to cease combat to discuss the finer points of extraplanar lore. When they’ve learned all they think they can, the erinyes attempt to murder the rival scholar.

ERINYES (2)

CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 89

Initiative Perception +18

Items +1 striking composite longbow, one erinyes has a fragment of Urevian’s pendant (see area G10)

G8. ISOLATION CHAMBER

SEVERE 7

The door to this cell has a note affixed over a small sliding grate at eye level. Written by the imp Szek in Common, Undercommon, and Infernal, the note reads, “Do not disturb if you value your limbs.”

The walls and floor of this chamber are covered in short spikes just long enough to cause discomfort to anyone standing, sitting, or leaning on them.

Once a chamber to detain particularly headstrong or troublesome prisoners, this room has seen very little use until recently.

This isolation chamber no longer has a lock, so the door closes but doesn’t latch. Anyone moving the note and sliding the grate aside to look in the cell sees its gug occupant meditating; if she succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check when the grate slides aside, she awakens from her meditation.

Creature: Belcorra recently sent a gug named Aulr to check on Urevian's progress. Aulr's unexpected and unwelcome arrival was one of the intrusions that convinced Urevian to finally block access to the lower levels. Urevian has put off talking to Aulr because he doesn't really want to renew or revisit his deal with Belcorra. Aulr has grown tired of speaking to Urevian's underlings and demanded to have her next conversation with Urevian himself. If the heroes disturb the gug, she mistakes them for yet more lackeys and reacts with sudden and startling violence. She allows foes who flee to retreat, but she otherwise fights to the death.

AULR

CREATURE 10

Female gug (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 198)

Initiative Perception +19

G9. OBSERVATION ROOM

This tall chamber reaches a height of thirty feet. Transparent stone makes up the southern wall, which looks into a vast room filled with square, transparent pillars surrounded by a catwalk. A jumble of metal scrap lies against this transparent wall.

While transparent from this side, the southern wall appears opaque from the other side. Strategists could look out over the stasis chamber to the south to select creatures to transport with *Gauntlight*. The metal scrap used to be a high catwalk, but the gug in area G8 wrecked it in a fury when Urevian sent a barbazzu to provide a summary report rather than personally meeting with her.

Creature: An imp named Szek flutters near the ceiling, holding a small notebook and charcoal pencil. She records observations about the various prisoners with recommendations on how to use them in the upcoming invasion of Otari. Sample entries include "gibbering moulder—ground manipulation could disable or destroy bridges, such as the tavern bridge near river mouth."

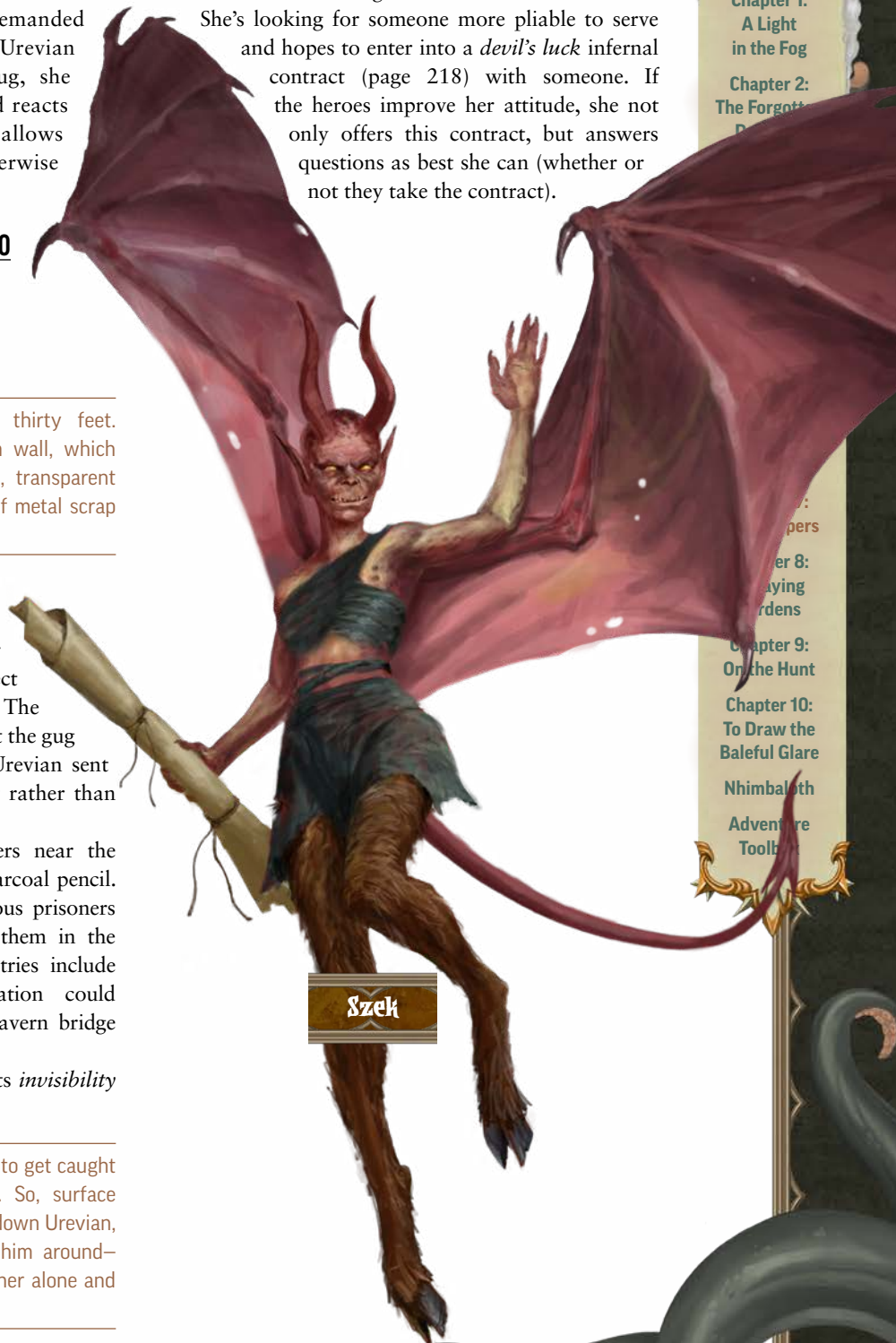
When Szek detects the heroes, she casts *invisibility* and attempts to parlay rather than fight.

"Close the door! Close the door! I don't want to get caught talking to you—you'll get us all tortured. So, surface dwellers, eh? Glad to see you. You're taking down Urevian, right? Nasty devil. Bad business keeping him around—yup, yup, yup. How about we leave each other alone and pretend we never saw each other?"

Although perfectly happy if the heroes leave, Szek will speak to them if broached. Her starting attitude is indifferent, and she remains invisible until the heroes change her attitude to friendly, which requires a character to succeed at a DC 17 Diplomacy check to Make an Impression (as that's Szek's Will DC).

Szek tires of running menial errands for Urevian.

She's looking for someone more pliable to serve and hopes to enter into a *devil's luck* infernal contract (page 218) with someone. If the heroes improve her attitude, she not only offers this contract, but answers questions as best she can (whether or not they take the contract).



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The

What Szek Knows: Szek knows that Urevian has some sort of arrangement with Belcorra, but he wants to get out of it, even if it means making a deal to undercut Belcorra's efforts. She suggests talking to Urevian to find out more, but she knows they'll need the five parts of a pentagram amulet to open the door to area **G10**.

If asked about the pieces' locations, she speculates that the fragments could be held by the sarglagon sent to sabotage the laboratories level (area **F5**), Azvalvigander the quartermaster (area **G4**), Barcumbuk the smith (area **G5**), Iyagian the guard (area **G6**; they don't have one), the gate-forgers (area **G7**), or the strange Motley Man who Szek sees sometimes but who terrifies her (she refers to Ysondkhelir in area **G18**).

Szek knows that Urevian got tired of visitors from the lower levels and blocked one route with magic and the other route by simply stuffing it full of rubble. She's certain he could open either easily.

If asked about the higher levels, Szek gleefully admits to participating in a "big fight" between Urevian and "the worm-monsters" a long time ago. She locked a powerful wizard in his room with just a few pitons and still takes pride in the act. The wizard—Chafkhem in area **E17**—would be keen to learn that Szek is the one who imprisoned him.

As far as the prison level's layout, Szek has limited information. She knows only about areas **G1** through **G16**, although she's aware of an angry green spirit in area **G17**. She has a rough idea of each room's forces, but she doesn't know about the traps in areas **G11** or **G16**; in fact, she believes area **G16** is haunted.

SZEK

CREATURE 1

Female imp (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 87)

Initiative Perception +7

G10. UREVIAN'S DOMAIN

SEVERE 7

The huge doors to this room are magically sealed and emblazoned with an enormous, glowing pentagram. The pentagram's center has a circular indentation about the size of a human hand with five deeper indentations. The heroes can discern that some device, like an amulet, fits into the indentation.

Urevian's pendant opens the door, but it's currently split into five fragments held by his lieutenants. A devil who casts *dimension door* while touching even a single fragment to the door can teleport to the other side. To open the door, other creatures must reassemble all five fragments and touch the pendant to the indentation. After doing so, the door effectively stays open for good; Urevian can enact a year-long ritual to recreate the door and the pendant, but he likely won't do so.

Urevian doesn't realize it, but a clever user can open the door with only four pendant fragments by touching them to the door and succeeding at a DC 25 Religion check to mimic the unholy energies of the missing fragment. A creature who fails this check takes 4d12 fire damage and is stupefied 1 for 1 hour (8d12 fire damage and stupefied 3 for 1 hour on a critical failure). The five pieces are in areas **F5**, **G4**, **G5**, **G7**, and **G18**.

A large chamber of natural stone runs north to south with an enormous stone double door as its only exit. Lit braziers cast strange shadows on the walls and bathe the room in a sinister light. Bookshelves and a sturdy desk, accompanied by neatly rolled-up scrolls and stacks of parchment, fill an alcove to the north.

Urevian made this room his home, sealed off from the rest of the dungeon so that he can work in peace. He fashioned the door for himself, but he had to manufacture a magical pendant for Belcorra so she could bypass it. Shortly before Belcorra's death, Urevian had the imp Szek steal the pendant back. Urevian broke it into five pieces, giving one to each of his lieutenants. His trusted devils can come and go as they please, but even they know not to bother Urevian barring official business.

The desk contains reports, inventories, and maps that depict the surface world, *Gauntlight*, and the surrounding Darklands. Of particular note to the heroes are complete maps of the fifth, sixth, and seventh levels of the Abomination Vaults, including all secret doors on those levels. The characters can also find copies of several infernal contracts, the originals of which are safely stored in Hell's vaults. A character who Investigates the desk and succeeds at a DC 23 Society or Legal Lore check realizes that Urevian has kept tabs on Vol Rajani's line for generations.

Creatures: The phistophilus Urevian spends most of his time revising attack plans based on numerous contingencies. He keeps two barbazus bodyguards nearby at all times to intercept reports from his lieutenants and to keep him from being disturbed. When the heroes open the doors, the barbazus spring forward, but Urevian stops them and warmly greets the heroes. Read or paraphrase the following.

As a ruggedly handsome devil steps forward, as the long rolls of parchment hanging from his horns curl up, then unroll again. "Friends, friends! Weapons away. Truly, I am happy to see you." The devil turns to the two bearded devil bodyguards, their glaives raised. "Stand down, you two. I doubt they are arrogant enough to fight us.

"I am Urevian, phistophilus and contracted agent of Belcorra, but I assure you I am no enemy of yours. You seek

to vanquish her? Put an end to her murderous spirit, the threat she poses to mortal life, et cetera, et cetera? Then perhaps we can broker a deal—one that greatly benefits both of us with a minimal number of precious lives lost.”

If the heroes already encountered SzeK and made an agreement with her—which Urevian doesn’t really mind—he adds, “You already struck a bargain with SzeK, so I know it is not a matter of if, but of what price. Trust me when I say, I am offering you an excellent deal.” For this conversation, refer to the following list of likely questions and Urevian’s responses.

Who are you? “I am Urevian, a contract devil of some renown, if I do say so myself.”

What do you want from us? “Simply put, you are the third-party agents I need to get out of this dreadful place and return home. You see, there is something I want but am not allowed to go and get myself, nor can I employ any infernal agents to retrieve it. No, the hands of a mortal foe of Belcorra must deliver me my prize. My devils are valueless in this regard, as are my fleshwarp soldiers.”

Why does it have to be a mortal foe of Belcorra? “That is the delight of legalistic contract interpretation. It cannot be me, any of my minions, or any ally of Belcorra. The contract was written with the intent that Belcorra alone could give me the prize as my payment. Which, of course, she will not until I have given her the full measure of service the contract requires. However, a very technical reading means any of her foes can also provide it—and you have thus far conclusively demonstrated that you oppose her.”

What is it that you want? “I require the soul of Carman Rajani. In his living body, if possible, though I can make do should he... perish.”

What do you want with Carman’s soul? “I owe the soul of a Rajani to someone much more powerful than myself. It would be... unwise for me to leave the Material Plane without it. Carman is the last descendant of Vol Rajani.”

What will this powerful someone do with Carman’s soul? “I do not know; my contract merely stipulated to turn it over. Just arranging the deal proved considerably costly, but I stand to gain quite a bit of prestige in Hell if it is completed.”

What do we do if he died? “I know a ritual that can summon his spirit out of the River of Souls and back to the place where he died. There it can be captured. If you sign an agreement with me, I shall teach it to you.”

We can’t give you someone’s soul. That’s evil! “Is it? I say it is a lesser evil to turn over the soul of one corrupted individual than to allow an entire town’s destruction. Far less bloodshed on all



Urevian

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ASKING ADVICE

Your players might not spent a lot of time heavily considering the moral question of whether to turn over Carman Rajani over to Urevian. But perhaps they thoughtfully debate the issue or even seek other opinions. NPCs in Otari are split on the matter.

Vandy Banderdash thinks it's wrong to bargain with a devil using another person's soul. She believes that everyone deserves a chance at redemption, even Carman. However, she holds a particular contempt for thieves, as she never really recovered from the betrayal of her sister stealing from her years ago. She doesn't push the heroes if they disagree with her.

Wrin Sivinx also opposes the deal since she finds limiting a soul's freedom to be abhorrent.

Captain Longsaddle happily releases Carman to the heroes so they can turn him over to the devil. He considers this choice a straightforward way to eliminate a serious threat to his town.

For once, **Yinyasmera** agrees with the guard captain. She's had so many past problems with Carman that she'd also like to see him gone, especially knowing that doing so would save the town.

Mayor **Oseph Menhemes** doesn't take a position but backs whatever choice the heroes make, especially if they've been helping his daughter. The mayor believes that the heroes are capable and trustworthy decision-makers. If his opinion serves as a tie-breaker, he leans toward showing Carman mercy.

Morlibint doesn't offer a direct opinion but recommends several stories about dealing with devils (virtually all of which turn out very poorly for the mortals involved).

sides. I do not want to raze Otari, and I don't want to kill you. However, the contract I have with Belcorra requires that as long as I remain within her employ, I must pursue the domination of the surface world and the destruction of her enemies. Once my contract ends, so does my obligation to her. All I need is the soul of Carman Rajani to fulfill the contract."

How's Carman Rajani corrupted? "Oh, that bastard of a man. His soul is already damned for lying, cheating, theft, vandalism, destruction of property, arson, abuse of power, blackmail—even a murder. It is quite clear where he shall go in the afterlife. You would simply cut out the bureaucracy by giving him to me directly."

If we hand over Carman, he'll never have a chance at redemption. "Do you honestly believe that? Just recently he burned a library and stole a historical relic in some misguided ploy to win a political office, which he would just use to further abuse his power and increase his wealth. If I did not need his soul for this specific purpose, I would hire him."

What do we get out of this arrangement? "Peace for Otari. I will leave, taking all of my devils with me. And when I go, the barrier preventing you from getting to the lower level will disappear. If you would like, I can direct my fleshwarp minions to clear away the blocked staircase, giving you a second way down. I can even broker further agreements between you my devils."

What further agreements? Urevian can arrange for infernal contracts (page 218) with any of his surviving barbazus (*pact of blood-taking*) or erinyes (*right of retribution*). As Urevian drafts these agreements on his devils' behalf, skill checks to interpret the contracts use a DC of 33 (Urevian's Legal Lore DC), rather than the contracts' item levels.

We've already defeated your devils; you have nothing to invade with. "Ah, but I can conscript more after I kill you. The inconvenience is, at best, temporary."

We'll never make an agreement with you! "Are you sure about that? Consider carefully. Turning down my offer most likely means your death." Urevian gestures meaningfully to his barbazus bodyguards.

If the heroes take Urevian's offer, he uses his Draft Contract ability to summon a contract for them to sign in blood. Urevian drafts an honest offer: upon his receipt of Carman Rajani (or his soul) from the heroes, he will leave the Material Plane along with all his devils remaining in the Abomination Vaults. His departure immediately removes the barrier in area **G3**. Before leaving, he will, if the heroes wish, order any fleshwarps to clear the staircase leading down from area **G1**. His departure otherwise doesn't affect the fleshwarps or other creatures in the prison, leaving the heroes to deal with them. Heroes who sign are compelled to work toward delivering Carman to Urevian, as from a *geas* ritual (*Core Rulebook* 412).

If the heroes ultimately decline Urevian's offer, he sighs in disappointment before saying, "What more should I have expected from mortals?" He then orders his barbazus to attack. He casts *flame strike* before entering melee with his diabolic quill.

Convinced the heroes are mere mortals who can't overcome diabolic soldiers in combat, the barbazus fight to the death. The more injured Urevian becomes, the more he tries to convince the heroes to accept his deal. However, Urevian breaks off combat only if the heroes agree to accept his terms. If he's slain, the magical barrier in area **G3** vanishes, though the stairs remain blocked.

UREVIAN

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM DEVIL FIEND

Male phistophilus field commander (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 90)

Perception +19; greater darkvision

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Celestial, Common, Infernal, Necril, Undercommon; telepathy 100 feet, *tongues*

Skills Acrobatics +17, Deception +21, Diplomacy +19, Intimidation +19, Legal Lore +23, Religion +19, Society +19, Thievery +18

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +6, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +6

AC 28; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +17, **Will** +22; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 135; **Immunities** fire, ward contract; **Resistances** physical 10 (except silver), poison 10; **Weaknesses** good 10

Distracting Declaration Urevian keeps a few sly words at the ready to distract enemies. He always uses Deception for initiative.

Ward Contract Any signed contract Urevian carries (including any draped over his horns) is immune to damage from creatures other than Urevian. In addition, Urevian is immune to mental effects that would make him alter, nullify, or destroy a contract.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ diabolic quill +21 (agile, evil, fatal 1d12, finesse, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d6+9 piercing plus 1d6 evil and infernal wound

Melee ♦ horn +20 (magical), **Damage** 3d10+9 piercing and infernal wound

Divine Innate Spells DC 30; **6th** *scrying* (at will, see right of inspection); **5th** *dimension door*, *flame strike*, *locate* (at will), *mind probe*, *sending* (×3), *wall of force*; **4th** *dimension door* (at will), *private sanctum*, *silence*; **3rd** *enthrall*, *mind reading* (at will); **Cantrips (5th)** *detect magic*; **Constant (5th)** *tongues*

Rituals DC 30; *call spirit*, *infernal pact*, *inveigle*

Draft Contract ♦♦♦ (conjunction, divine, manipulate) Urevian produces an infernal contract for a single living mortal. This contract can grant a wide range of abilities and effects, akin to the power of a wish spell but fulfilled to the letter by Urevian. To receive any of those benefits, the mortal must willingly sign its true name to the contract. At that point, the mortal's soul is bound to Urevian and to Hell.

While the contract is in effect, the mortal can't be restored to life except by *wish* or similar magic. If the mortal is restored to life by those means, Urevian knows which mortal came to life and can locate the creature or creatures who restored the mortal to life for 1 year, gaining the effects of a *locate* spell with unlimited range. Avoiding the terms of an infernal contract is difficult and often dangerous.

Infernal Wound (divine, necromancy) Urevian's Strikes also deal 2d6 persistent bleed damage that resists attempts to heal them. The flat check to stop the bleeding starts

at DC 20. The DC is reduced to 15 only if the bleeding creature or an ally successfully assists with the recovery.

The DC to Administer First Aid to a creature with an infernal wound is increased by 5. A spellcaster or item using healing magic on a creature suffering from an infernal wound must succeed at a DC 28 counteract check or the magic fails to heal the creature.

Right of Inspection Urevian can cast his innate *scrying* spell at will, but only to target a creature with which he has a contract, a specific creature named in a contract he has, or a descendant of any of those creatures. The outcome of the target's saving throw is one step worse than the result it rolled.

BARBAZUS (2)

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 88

Initiative Perception +13

Items hellforged glaive

Melee ♦ hellforged glaive +15 (agile, deadly 1d10, evil, forceful, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d8+7 slashing plus 2d6 evil and infernal wound

RECOVERING CARMAN

How easily the heroes can recover Carman depends on his fate in Chapter 5. If they released him, the heroes likely find him still brooding in Smuggler's Refuge, as he hasn't yet summoned the courage to depart. He certainly won't go with the heroes willingly if they explain what they want with him, but the heroes could trick him. If Carman knows what he's in for, he does his best to flee the area, and the heroes probably have to work with Urevian to scry his new location—which the contract devil certainly makes them pay for, one way or another.

If Carman is in jail, the heroes can simply fetch him from custody. Longsaddle doesn't mind turning him over to the heroes, as they captured him in the first place. If they're up-front about why they want Carman, he's surprisingly agreeable to turning the scoundrel over to the devil (see the sidebar on page 136).

If Carman is dead, the heroes must go to the place of his death to trap his spirit. Urevian explains that the heroes must perform the *call spirit* ritual (which he can teach them) while holding a specially-prepared gemstone (that he also provides). The heroes are responsible for performing the ritual and paying its cost. If they call Carman's spirit, it's automatically drawn into the gemstone.

Delivery: If the heroes bring Carman Rajani to Urevian alive or give him a soul gem with Carman's soul inside, Urevian flicks a hand toward his desk. All the contents magically pack themselves into smaller and smaller boxes, eventually into a single valise that one of the barbazus picks up. The other barbazus takes

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Carman (or the gem) in a firm grip, and both barbazus disappear. “It was a pleasure doing business with you,” says Urevian, “I will look you up again, perhaps in a few years or decades. And if you have died in that time... well, I can come find you anyway. You are so delightfully useful. I shall be in touch.”

XP Award: Award the heroes 120 XP if they make a deal with Urevian and get the devil to depart.

G11. NEXUS

LOW 7

This chamber forms a large octagonal pyramid and has four exits on opposite walls. Bright, blood-red light shines down from the top of the pyramid in a perfect circle on the floor.

Hazard: Urevian constructed a magical trap here to capture invaders and summon reinforcements.

PARALYZING LIGHT TRAP


HAZARD 8

COMPLEX MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC +18 (expert)

Description When any creature other than a devil enters the light, the magic interwoven in the light holds the creature in place and rings an alarm.

Disable DC 26 Thievery (master) to distort or diffuse the light, keeping the light cone intact but preventing the trap from triggering, or *dispel magic* (4th level; counteract DC 26) to dispel the light, leaving the room in darkness

Stasis Field  (enchantment, incapacitation, mental, occult) **Trigger** A non-devil creature moves into the light; **Effect** The light expands to fill the room, and each non-devil creature within the room must attempt a DC 26 Will save. A high-pitched chime sounds in the barracks (area G15), audible in this room as well. The trap then rolls initiative.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target is stunned 2.

Failure The target is paralyzed for 1 round.

Critical Failure The target is stupefied 2 for 1d4 rounds and paralyzed for 1 round.

Routine (1 action) All stunned and paralyzed creatures in the room take 1d10 mental damage (DC 26 basic Will save). Creatures who fail also become paralyzed for 1 round but can use a reaction to mentally fight off this stasis; creatures who do so take 5d10 mental damage but are no longer paralyzed.

Reset The stasis magic in the light builds up over the course of an hour, after which the trap can trigger again.

Reinforcements: When the alarm goes off in area G15, half of the enemies in the barracks (one mulventok and one dreshkan) make their way here

immediately. If they don't come back in 3 rounds, the other two fleshwarps in area G15 realize something must be wrong and come to provide help as well.

G12. ARENA WALK

LOW 7

A long hallway, stretching north to south, ends in a staircase at the southern end that branches left and right. The north and east walls each have a door with small, sliding windows. A raised portcullis at the northeastern end here has metal points crusted with dried blood.

Not all combatants in Belcorra's arena participated willingly. Prisoners intended for the gladiatorial games were kept here briefly before being sent upstairs to meet their fates. The sliding windows allow the heroes to peek into the cells.

The stairs lead up to area F10.

Creatures: Two will-o'-wisps patrol this corridor, killing whatever unfriendly creatures they find. They spontaneously appeared in the Abomination Vaults decades ago and drifted to this level. When the devils assumed they served Belcorra, the wisps simply agreed, even though they've never met her. Urevian assigned the creatures to keep watch here. They also suggested subjecting the fleshwarp in area F10 to the slow curse, as it lets them sup on the creature's fear as often as they'd like.

The will-o'-wisps fight intruders tenaciously to maintain their favored position. If one is destroyed, the other attempts to flee to area G15 and warn the creatures there.

WILL-O'-WISPS (2)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 333

Initiative Perception +16

G13. EMPTY CELL

Dust and cobwebs cover this forgotten cell. The heroes find its door unlocked. Since the devils never check it, this cell makes for a safe, if cramped place to rest.

G14. IMPRISONED BOUNTY HUNTER

Most of this cell has received very little care in the past several decades, but the manacles on the wall appear carefully polished.

The devils have recently put this cell back into service. A tiefling bounty hunter named Cynemi hangs upside down, her ankles bound by the manacles. She looks clearly weakened from ill treatment and neglect.

Through infernal contracts, Cynemi learned that a contract devil named Urevian had offered a high bounty for a specific target. Cynemi made her way here and agreed to retrieve Carman Rajani for a healthy sum. However, Carman proved too cunning, hustling Cynemi out of her magic armor and leaving her stranded on a leaky boat on the Inner Sea.

By the time Cynemi swam back to shore, the time she negotiated with Urevian to catch Carman had run out, so an erinys dragged her back. She has been here since, fed only irregularly and often hung by her feet. She suspects she has spent months or even years imprisoned. Her manacles open easily, but Cynemi can't reach them. If you need Cynemi's stats, use those of a bounty hunter (*Gamemastery Guide* 226), except Cynemi is neutral evil and has darkvision.

Side Quest: Cynemi requires urgent care, as she's on the verge of death from dehydration. A hero must succeed at a DC 23 Medicine check while providing water and food to Cynemi to save her; on a critical failure, the bounty hunter dies. Even if saved, she stays distant and suspicious; her starting attitude is unfriendly. If the heroes can improve Cynemi's attitude to at least indifferent (usually, a hero must succeed at a DC 22 Diplomacy check to Make an Impression, although you might allow other skills at this DC to get Cynemi to open up), she shares her story. She emphasizes how urgently Urevian wants to capture Carman Rajani, and that the contract devil is willing to cut a deal for just about anything to get him. Regardless of her attitude toward the heroes, Cynemi wants the heroes to help free her and to get far away from here.

Cynemi is a criminal wanted by Absalom authorities. A hero who succeeds at a DC 23 Society check recalls seeing a wanted poster for her (heroes from Absalom gain a +2 circumstance bonus to this check). Of course, Cynemi doesn't volunteer this information.

Getting Cynemi out of the Abomination Vaults—whether or not the heroes place her in their custody—completes this side quest.

Treasure: If the heroes turn Cynemi over to the Otari Garrison, they earn a 30 gp reward. If they have the Otari Garrison's support, Captain Longsaddle gives them an additional 30 gp.



G15. BARRACKS

SEVERE 7

This old prison block has been converted into a makeshift barracks with several shoddy cots pushed into the cells and against the walls. The three cell doors have been chained open. Foot lockers sit near each cot.

Creatures: When not drilling with the barbazu or performing other menial tasks, the devils' fleshwarped soldiers relax here. They fight to the death.

MULVENTOKS (2)

CREATURE 7

Page 237

Initiative Perception +15

DRESHKANS (2)

CREATURE 4

Page 236

Initiative Perception +11

Treasure: The seven meager footlockers hold almost nothing of value. Each footlocker contains 3d6 sp.

G16. PRISON OFFICE

This old prison office is full of filth and cobwebs. A single door exits to the north.

A hero can locate the secret door in this room by succeeding at a DC 28 Perception check while Searching. If the heroes clean the dust and cobwebs from this room first, this DC drops to 24. Tiny cracks form the subtle shape of a manacle and chain on the wall. The spaces between the chain links are buttons that, when pressed, cause the secret door to slide open. Beyond the secret door, a narrow hallway has several peep holes filled with one-way transparent stone for spying on prisoners, along with a door to area G21. Characters can clearly see the secret doors leading out of this hidden hall (to areas G16 and G18).

Ysondkhelir didn't like the fact that a secret tunnel led directly into his suite of rooms, so he installed a trap to keep any nosy creatures away. He pressed Urevian to help with the ruse, so the devil had the erinys start a rumor about the prison office being haunted. Virtually all other creatures on the prison level believe this rumor, especially the fleshwarps who bunk just outside the room, which has given Ysondkhelir the peace he desires.

Hazard: The magical trap in this room triggers when anyone steps inside.

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Nhimbaloth

Adventure
Toolbox

PAINFUL SUGGESTION TRAP


HAZARD 8

MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 26 (expert)

Description A hidden rune on the floor under the filth, just past the threshold, triggers an ersatz ghost.

Disable DC 28 Thievery (expert) to remove the rune without triggering it, or *dispel magic* (4th level; counteract DC 26) to dispel the rune

Counterfeit Haunting  (auditory, enchantment, incapacitation, linguistic, mental) **Trigger** A living creature moves over the rune; **Effect** A frightful moan echoes through the room, and a hoarse telepathic

voice shouts, "Get out!" This shout deals 6d12 mental damage to creatures in the room (DC 26 basic Will save). Creatures who fail this saving throw must immediately leave the room and can't willingly reenter it for 1 minute (1 hour on a critical failure).

Reset The trap automatically resets after 1 hour.

G17. STASIS CHAMBERS

MODERATE 7

Fifteen transparent pillars fill the center of this 30-foot-high room. A bright light shines down into the center of each chamber. A catwalk 10 feet above the ground circles around the edge of the room without handrail or banister; at the western side, each stops at a staircase leading down.

Belcorra kept dangerous creatures in this room prior to teleporting them via *Gauntlight's* beam. Each cell is 10 feet square, 20 feet tall, and made of transparent stone. Each creature stands motionless in its own column, held in suspended animation outside the flow of time. The creatures haven't aged and ignore any effect from the normal timestream as long as they stay imprisoned within their stasis chambers. However, such effects can work on the pillars, which are made of transparent, magically enhanced stone (Hardness 18, HP 76).

Ten pillars are occupied. Nine contain living creatures: a chuul (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 64), a drider (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 159), three ghonhatines (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2119), a gibbering moulder (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 176), a giptanious (page 239), and two gugs (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 198). One contains a dead gogiteth because of a flaw in its chamber's magic. If a hero breaks the pillar around one of the creatures, roll a DC 3 flat check; on a success, the collapsing stasis effect messily kills it. On a failure, the creature returns to normal time and attacks anything in sight until destroyed. (High-level monsters, such as the ghonhatines, pose a serious danger even for 7th-level characters!)

Of the five empty stasis chambers, two are noteworthy. The northwest chamber appears badly blackened, as though from soot on the inside. After the error with the gogiteth, Belcorra appointed a hag to oversee this room, knowing that her magical expertise would prove invaluable in maintaining the stasis chambers, but she didn't intend the hag to do this job in life. Belcorra trapped the hag in this pillar, burned her to death, and bound her spirit as a witchfire. A creature entering a square adjacent to this blackened pillar receives a brief telepathic flash of Belcorra burning



Witchfire Warden

the hag alive and gains a +1 circumstance bonus to saving throws against the witchfire's spells and abilities for 1 minute. A creature adjacent to that pillar can also just make out the objects inside it (see Treasure below). The pillar must be smashed open to retrieve them.

The second unusual stasis chamber, in the southwest, looks like the other empty chambers. However, its top and floor are both illusions. An open area below the chamber's "floor" leads to a 5-foot-wide crawl space to the open trapdoor in area **G21**. The wisp in area **G21** comes and goes this way while invisible.

Creature: The witchfire still guards this room. Three rounds after anyone enters, she materializes and attacks. Creatures who must pass through this room regularly, such as the denizen of Leng Ysondkhelir or the zebubs who report to him, do so quickly.

Urevian has tried to make deals with the witchfire time and again, but the witchfire simply won't listen to him. He knows the creatures in stasis are valuable to his invasion plans, so he has postponed his invasion until he figures out how to reliably free them.

WITCHFIRE WARDEN

CREATURE 9

Witchfire (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 293)

Initiative Perception +18

Rejuvenation (divine, necromancy) When the witchfire warden is destroyed, and as long as any creatures remain in stasis in this room, she reforms in 1d4 days at the soot-blackened pillar, fully healed.

Treasure: The soot-blackened pillar still contains a few items left behind when the hag died: *type I bracers of armor* and a *type II bag of holding* containing a dozen cheap, broken clocks.

G18. WAR ROOM

MODERATE 7

This small chamber features a large map of the Inner Sea painted on the north wall, though the listed countries seem long out of date. A large cushion rests in the room's southwest corner. On the west wall, overlapping scraps of paper create a much newer map of the town of Otari and the area around it.

This chamber has seen little use as a war room and has been repurposed for its current inhabitant's personal agenda, as evidenced by the out-of-date maps on the north wall, but the much more focused and updated map of Otari on the west wall.

The paper maps conceal a secret doorway to a hall that connects to areas **G16** and **G21**. A hero Searching this room locates the secret door with a successful DC 28 Perception check. If the heroes remove the papers, this DC drops to 24. This secret door opens the same

way as the one in area **G16**. The secret doors leading out of the hidden hallway (to areas **G16** and **G18**) are obvious from within it.

Creatures: Belcorra appointed the ageless and mysterious denizen of Leng named Ysondkhelir as her chief strategist. After Belcorra died, Ysondkhelir lost interest in planning troop movements, though he convinced Urevian that he was still doing so and that he would have plans ready by the time the devil chose to march on the surface. Ysondkhelir insisted that Urevian's zebubs keep scouting the surface and report back to him, which has allowed the denizen to make the exceptionally detailed map found here.

Instead of planning troop movements, Ysondkhelir seeks powerful latent psychics whom he can torment and, by means of eldritch invocations, send physically into the Dimension of Dreams so that other denizens of Leng can make use of them. He has had little success in the last five centuries—not only is true psychic potential very rare, but Ysondkhelir is as likely to drive his victims to insanity as to successfully send them to his extraplanar compatriots. He had most recently manipulated the addled skulk Jedzeli (area **F12**). Ysondkhelir abandoned Jedzeli as a lost cause to prey upon Dorianna Menhemes instead, and his schemes with her near completion.

Ysondkhelir likes to claim a hand from creatures he has corrupted. As he hasn't ever met Dorianna in person, he instead stole a psychic imprint of her right hand and manifested it as a massive, gnarled claw. This giant crawling hand obeys Ysondkhelir loyally and does its best to defend him.

If the heroes simply barge in, Ysondkhelir and the hand fight back. The hand tries to keep foes from reaching Ysondkhelir, who retreats into the doorway of either adjacent room to keep out of melee range. He prefers spells that debilitate his foes, such as *hypnotic pattern* and *phantom pain*.

If the heroes come to him with knowledge of Dorianna, the denizen knows his latest plot has put him in significant jeopardy. He attempts to calm the heroes and convince them that he'll release Dorianna from his clutches—an outright lie—if one of them willingly accepts his Leng ruby.

If the heroes fall for this ruse, he relocates to another part of the prison level (which you can determine); he continues to afflict Dorianna and begins tormenting the hero who took his ruby as well.

If Ysondkhelir is slain, he eventually reforms in Leng and gives up his Material Plane plots—for now.

YSONDKHELIR

CREATURE 8

Male denizen of Leng (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 70)

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Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox

Perception +17

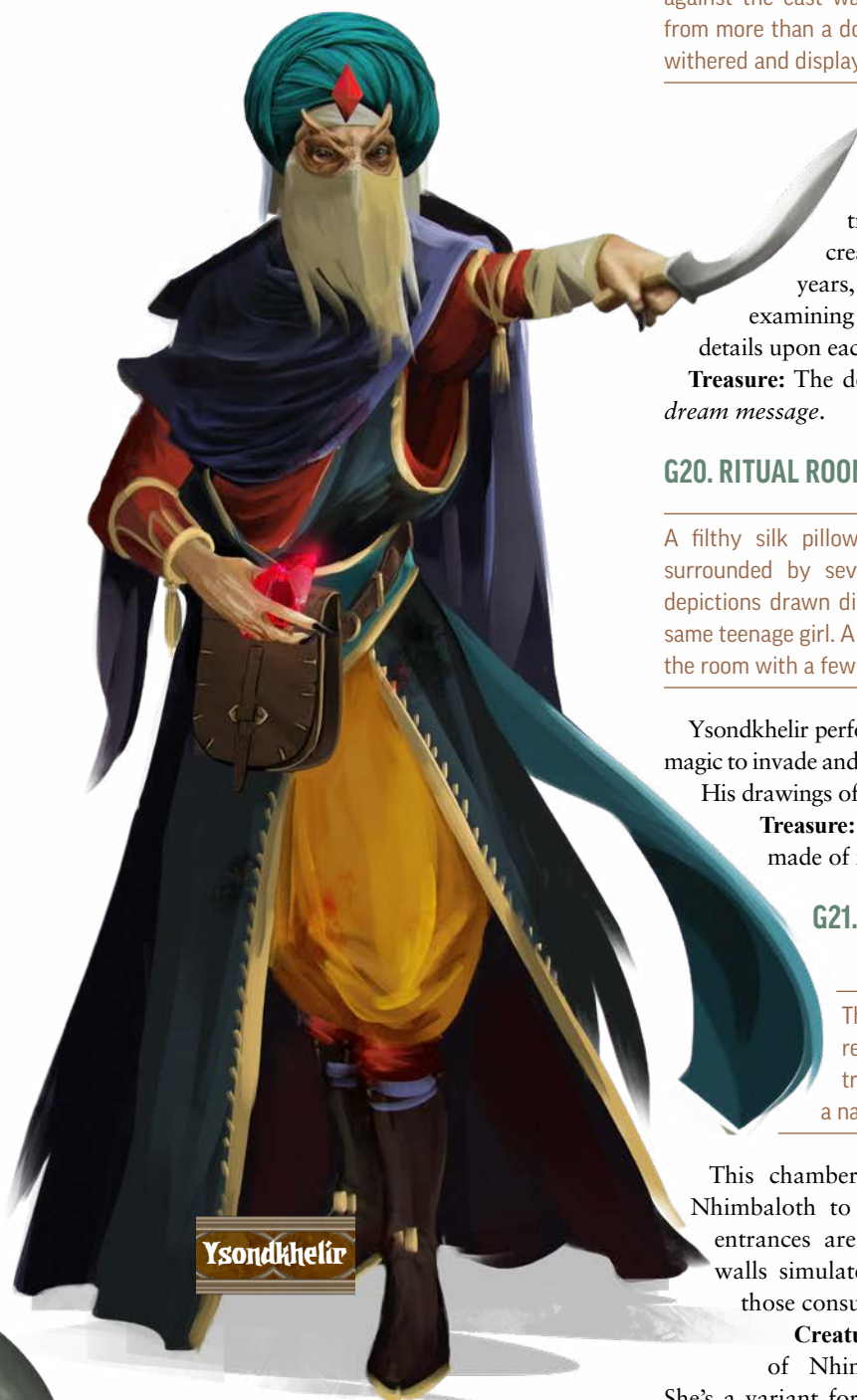
Items +1 striking kukri, fragment of Urevian's pendant (see area G10), Leng ruby worth 30 gp

GIANT CRAWLING HAND

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 56

Perception +12

CREATURE 5



Ysondkhelir

Restoring Dorianna: Slaying Ysondkhelir frees Dorianna, as described on page 92. Destroying the giant crawling hand immediately restores Dorianna's hand to normal.

G19. HAND COLLECTION

A small desk covered in the stubs of burned candles stands against the east wall. The west wall has severed hands from more than a dozen creatures nailed to it, each badly withered and displayed palm outward.

Ysondkhelir performs his research in this room, but it primarily serves as his gruesome trophy hall—it bears the hands of creatures he has corrupted over the years, including Jedzeli's. He spends hours examining them, mesmerized by the intricate details upon each hand that tell an entire life's story.

Treasure: The desk drawer contains two scrolls of *dream message*.

G20. RITUAL ROOM

A filthy silk pillow rests at the center of this room, surrounded by several unlit candles. Several charcoal depictions drawn directly on the stone walls feature the same teenage girl. A small wooden box sits in the corner of the room with a few more candles inside.

Ysondkhelir performs his dream rituals here, using his magic to invade and twist Dorianna Menhemes's dreams. His drawings of her help him to focus on her mind.

Treasure: The box contains several candles made of rare waxes worth 50 gp in total.

G21. THE SECRET VOID

MODERATE 7

The flat, black walls of this chamber reflect an eerie emptiness. An open trapdoor against the east wall leads to a narrow crawl space.

This chamber was built for a high priest of Nhimbalothe to sleep and meditate in. The only entrances are concealed and the room's black walls simulate the void of oblivion granted to those consumed by the Empty Death.

Creature: Sacuishu, a will-o'-wisp priest of Nhimbalothe, occupies this chamber. She's a variant form of will-o'-wisp who has gained

extra powers from her devotion to the Empty Death. Sacuishu was sent from the lower levels to check on the prison by Lady's Whisper, a patient and silent servitor of Nhimbalothe (area I61). While the gug Aulr—who's angry, direct, and abrupt like Belcorra—has mostly failed to get any answers after being sent to the prison level by the sorcerer, Sacuishu found more success in her delving. She has learned a great deal about the inhabitants of the middle and even upper levels of the Abomination Vaults, and she rests here between her invisible excursions. Sacuishu can't return, as Urevian blocked the ways down in area G3, but she thinks it's just a matter of time until the way opens again.

Because of her frequent wanderings, you can have Sacuishu encounter the heroes nearly anywhere; she attacks to learn their tactics and abilities but retreats to this area when reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points.

While here, Sacuishu floats, very still, near the center of the ceiling, washing the room in a pale glow and basking in the emptiness. The presence of outsiders in her secret room offends her; she immediately Goes Dark and casts *darkness* before attacking. If any of the heroes openly carry the tome *The Whispering Reeds*, Sacuishu is appalled that the sacred book has fallen in the hands of a nonbeliever and targets whomever carries it.

If reduced to 20 or fewer hit points, Sacuishu casts *sanctuary* and retreats to area G3, hoping it has opened; if it's blocked, she makes her last stand there.



Sacuishu

SACUISHU

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE CE SMALL ABERRATION AIR

Female will-o'-wisp spy (*Bestiary* 333)

Perception +21; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Infernal, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +19, Deception +17, Intimidation +17, Religion +19, Stealth +19

Str -5, **Dex** +6, **Con** +0, **Int** +3, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +4

AC 30; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +18, **Will** +20

HP 80; **Immunities** magic

Glow (aura, light) 20 feet. Sacuishu is naturally invisible but glows with a sickly green light, casting bright light in the aura and making her visible.

Magic Immunity Sacuishu is immune to all spells except *faerie fire*, *glitterdust*, *magic missile*, and *maze*.

Speed fly 50 feet

Melee ♦ shock +21 (electricity, magical), **Damage** 2d8+8 electricity

Divine Prepared Spells DC 28, attack +20; **4th** *crisis of faith*, *dispel magic*, *divine wrath*, *read omens*; **3rd** *blindness*, *chilling darkness*, *fear* (2); **2nd** *augury*, *darkness*, *grim tendrils*, *see invisibility*; **1st** *bane*, *fear*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *sanctuary*; **Cantrips** (4th) *chill touch*, *daze*, *divine lance*, *prestidigitation*, *sigil*

Feed on Magic ♦ (concentrate) **Requirement** A creature who can cast spells is within 15 feet of the spellvoid; **Effect** The spellvoid feeds on the creature's magic. The spellvoid regains 2d8 Hit Points, and the target must attempt a DC 28 Will save. The target is then temporarily immune for 1 hour.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The first time the target Casts a Spell before the start of the spellvoid's next turn, the spell is disrupted unless the target succeeds at a DC 15 flat check.

Failure As success, but the effect applies the first time the target Casts a Spell within the next minute.

Critical Failure As success, but the effect applies each time the target Casts a Spell within the next minute. In addition, the spellvoid doubles the Hit Points it regains.

Go Dark ♦ (concentrate) Sacuishu extinguishes her glow, becoming invisible. She can end this effect with another use of this action. If she uses her shock attack while invisible, the arc of electricity lets any observer determine her location, making Sacuishu hidden to observers only until she moves.

G22. MAGICAL COMMUNICATOR

A bowl of filthy swamp water rests upon a crude altar.

Priests once used this scrying bowl to communicate with Belcorra before it became inactive upon her death. It regained a fraction of its power now that she has returned. The first creature to look into its waters sees Belcorra's hateful visage glaring back. The creature takes 9d6 mental damage (DC 33 basic Will save). A creature that fails its save is also stupefied 1 for 1 minute. After this initial appearance, Belcorra's image doesn't reappear, but she remembers the hero who called upon her in this way in future encounters.

Treasure: The following items lie next to the bowl: a *gallows tooth*, a *transparent elemental gem*, and a *grim trophy* in the form of seven ears impaled on a nail.

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Nhimbalothe

Adventure
Toolbox

LEVEL 8: FARM
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET





CHAPTER 8: Decaying Gardens

Gauntlight is active, but its true power is yet to be realized. Belcorra penetrated deep underground to build *Gauntlight*'s foundation, following the psychic pull of the Empty Vault, a place sacred to Nhimbalothe at the heart of an ancient, subterranean temple. *Gauntlight* draws upon the energies of the Empty Vault as its foundation and the source of its powers. Within the Empty Vault, Belcorra empowered four *fulcrum lenses* that, when installed in the lighthouse high above, focus Nhimbalothe's attention and unleash the artifact's full power. But the *fulcrum lenses* are dangerous; they invite Nhimbalothe's uncaring gaze, and even Belcorra can't withstand the scrutiny of the Outer God. Thus, though they hold great power, the *fulcrum lenses* are also Belcorra's greatest weakness.

Belcorra repurposed the massive natural caverns above the Empty Vault for her needs. The eighth level made a lush cavern of fungus growths and freshwater lakes that teemed with subterranean fish, while the ninth level was a wilderness where predators and prey alike could thrive. Heroes must descend through these levels to reach the Empty Vault.

Children of Belcorra

Uninterested in administering these vast caverns herself, Belcorra enthralled deep gnomes already living there, compelling them with threats and favors to tend her subterranean farm. She dubbed these loyal, diminutive gardeners the Children of Belcorra.

The Children of Belcorra disbelieved rumors of Belcorra's death as some sort of trick or test and didn't waver in their duties. But as the years passed, more and more feral monsters made their way into the level and made their mission in the farm more difficult. Believing that Belcorra (or, perhaps, some other Haruvex) would return, the Children chose to become undead to combat their dwindling numbers and increasing age. They immured each other in the muddy shores to rise again as bog mummies or undertook difficult transformations into other, more powerful, undead.

Eventually, their timeless lives and lack of direction took their toll. Many Children fell into a torpor or retreated into obsession or isolation. The farm they'd carefully tended became infested

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Nhimbalothe

Adventure
Toolbox

EVENT: BELCORRA ATTACKS!

Ghost stories work best when the ghost is an active and terrifying adversary. When any wisp in Chapters 8 or 9 see the heroes, they immediately alert Belcorra through the magic of the swampy basins throughout the lower Abomination Vaults. Belcorra is worried to hear that the heroes have penetrated this far, and she resolves to harry them until the other dungeon denizens can overcome them. The sidebar on page 148 sets out in detail how to most effectively use Belcorra's attacks, and you might use this event multiple times in the last few chapters.

XP Award: Each time the heroes survive one of Belcorra's attacks, award them 30 XP. Increase this to 80 XP if they manage to defeat her in a confrontation and force her to rejuvenate.

with monsters and subterranean explorers, such as calignis, drow, and urdefhans.

Even Belcorra's return as the Ghost Queen couldn't quite energize all of the Children of Belcorra to action, but many realized how much they'd failed their charge. Belcorra gave the Children a new mandate: to round up the various dangerous creatures of the farm level to serve her in her assault on the surface. She placed the Children under the command of a new supervisor, a dark naga named Vethris, but chose poorly; the naga is corrupt, lazy, and more interested in her creature comforts than guiding the deep gnome undead in their tasks.

The Children of Belcorra aren't happy with the naga's indolence but are reluctant to contradict their Ghost Queen. The pace of the Children's work is, at best, plodding and has done little to reduce the chaos in the garden.

Wisps

Although Belcorra trusts the Children—and their new overseer, Vethris—to put things in order on the Farm level, she still keeps tabs on the area. A few will-o'-wisps and dread wisps (page 252) can communicate with the Empty Vault. They hover over basins filled with brackish swamp water and reeds that thrive despite the darkness, as they draw nourishment from their connection to the swamp fed by the Empty Vault. The wisps quickly inform Belcorra of any unexpected intruders, such as the heroes, leading her to make an appearance, as described in the Event: Belcorra Attacks! sidebar, above.

The Cult of Urthagul

A group of caligni refugees came to the Hunting Grounds years ago, fleeing some deeper calamity. Their two leaders—a spellcaster named Galudu and a warrior named Dulac—led them into the safety of an old lodge in the Hunting Grounds level. From there, the calignis explored upward, reaching an abandoned shrine of Nhimbalothe and eventually discovering a gug mystic named Urthagul. Urthagul laired in a cave resonating with strange psychic whispers that awed the calignis. Some of the calignis, led by Dulac, revered the gug and his eerie visions; others remained skeptical of Urthagul's powers. This ultimately resulted in a schism: the self-named Cult of Urthagul inhabits the shrine, and Galudu's calignis reside in the lodge below. The two groups aren't enemies, but they only rarely interact.

The Cult of Urthagul has grown increasingly insular and zealous. (Urthagul, for his part, hardly even noticed their presence, much less their worship.) The calignis hunt chuul eggs from the lake, ritually cooking and consuming them as part of their strange rites. Dulac and her second-in-command, Padli, have both gained occult powers from meditating on the whispers in Urthagul's cave, which they use to keep the cult in line.

When Belcorra awakened, she visited the shrine to Nhimbalothe and was surprised to find the calignis there. She visited with Urthagul and found that the gug's strange behavior wasn't only due to the psychic emanations of the cave, but also because the gug had found the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens* and communed with the splinter of Nhimbalothe's essence inside it. Belcorra realized the lens was probably safe in the gug's claws, but she didn't want it to end up in the hands of some interloper cult she didn't have the time or desire to deal with. She tasked her wisp minions to keep the calignis contained within their shrine.

It frustrates the cult to be apart from the object of their veneration. Dulac is desperate for a solution, so the heroes might find the calignis eager to talk.

Yldaris Drow

The drow outpost of Yldaris lies on the next level of the Abomination Vaults, but their silent, skilled hunters have established a watch post in an abandoned Children of Belcorra outpost. The heroes might ally with the drow here, which makes a peaceful meeting with Yldaris more likely in Chapter 9.

Farm Features

The vast caverns of this level and the many structures and rooms within them are normally dark, though

bioluminescent fungus is common in overgrown areas. The caverns reach 50 feet high, but the ceilings in rooms carved out of the stone are much lower. Ceilings in the areas claimed by the Cult of Urthagul (areas **H2** to **H10**) are only 10 feet high. Ceilings in other interior areas are sized for the Children of Belcorra and are only 8 feet high. Sturdy planks of fungal wood form the doors. They are crusted with mold and give off an unpleasantly earthy, rotten smell.

The map of the Farm level appears on page 144.

H1. OVERGROWN STAIRS

The smell of rot and mildew pervades the air of this enclosed staircase. At the base, a moist carpet of fungus, slime, and mold grows thickly on the walls.

The western wall of the passage contains a secret door leading into *Gauntlight's* footprint (area **H37**) that's magically locked and can't be broken open. A hero spots the door's faint outline with a successful DC 15 Perception check. It has a concave indentation, and it only opens when touched with a *fulcrum lens*.

H2. HALL OF EYES

MODERATE 8

Six alcoves line the walls, three to the north and three to the south. The four easternmost alcoves each contain a large stone planter filled with muddy water that reeks like a dismal swamp. Two scorch marks on the ground near the eastern door surround piles of dark rags. The pommel of a blade peeks out from underneath one of the rag piles.

The basins are magically connected to the swamp in the Temple level far below (area **J15**). They remain filled with the swamp's waters, and the will-o'-wisp here can use them to transmit images to Belcorra.

The scorch marks and rags are the remains of two calignis who ran afoul of this room's denizens.

Creatures: A will-o'-wisp hovers over each basin, although they appear at first to be merely decorative lights. They telepathically report on the heroes' actions until they're attacked or until the heroes try to leave this chamber. At that point, the will-o'-wisps spring into action and fight until destroyed.

Belcorra should attack the heroes (see the sidebar on page 148) sometime shortly after this encounter.

WILL-O'-WISPS (4)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 333

Initiative Perception +16

Treasure: One rag pile has a *gloom blade* in it.

H3. HAZY SHRINE

LOW 8

An unusual scent, as of burning fungus, is apparent to anyone approaching any of the doors to this chamber.

A haze of smoke with a pungent but not entirely unpleasant scent emanates from a large copper cauldron atop a bed of coals on a dais to the east. A metal

CHAPTER 8 SYNOPSIS

The chapter begins with the heroes descending into the overgrown Farm level from either entrance in the Prison level above. The primary denizens, other than feral monsters, are listless undead gnomes and addled caligni cultists, both of whom can provide some clues about Belcorra's return. The heroes will likely face Belcorra in person for the first time—but certainly not the last!

Environmental Cues: glowing moss, creeping tendrils of mold, decaying wood, distant splashing, foul mists, muddy footprints, smells of earthy rot, towering fungi

CHAPTER 8 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 8 are as follows:

- +1 composite longbow
- +1 composite shortbow
- +1 repeating hand crossbow
- +1 striking longsword
- +1 striking shortsword
- +1 striking war flail
- armbands of athleticism
- barkskin potion
- black smear poison
- *Crimson Fulcrum Lens* (page 220)
- *dust of disappearance*
- *eyes of the eagle*
- *gloom blade*
- *greater bracers of missile deflection*
- *greater cheetah's elixir*
- *greater staff of healing*
- *jade bauble*
- *javelin of lightning*
- lethargy poison
- moderate bravo's brew
- *moderate healing potion*
- *murderer's knot*
- *potion of quickness*
- standard-grade darkwood shield
- stupor poison (page 214)
- *thundering runestone*
- *wand of fireball*
- *wand of magic missile* (3rd level)

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USING BELCORRA EFFECTIVELY

During their trek through the lowest levels of the Abomination Vaults, the heroes likely face Belcorra several times before they finally acquire the *fulcrum lenses* they need to defeat her for good. She learns about them from her wisp allies, as described in the sidebar on page 146, and you can thereafter use her whenever her appearance might cause the most tension. She should attack at least once on each dungeon level, as often as every couple of days. You shouldn't have Belcorra fight alongside other creatures until the Adventure Path's finale—she's tough enough on her own!

Belcorra's statistics appear on page 204. Each time Belcorra attacks, she learns more about how the heroes fight and adapts her tactics. She might cast *spell immunity* to protect herself from the heroes' most effective spells, *true seeing* to keep them in sight, or *dispel magic* to counter their magical defenses. She mocks the heroes for their failures and rages at their successes—remember, she has been aware of them since her test firing of *Gauntlight's* beam in Chapter 2.

First Attack: As soon as Belcorra realizes the heroes' presence, she seeks them out, traveling through the *Gauntlight* footprint (areas **H37** and **I28**). She casts *phantasmal calamity* at a distance and retreats, moving through walls if necessary so the heroes can't follow.

Second Attack: Belcorra wants the heroes to fear her, so she approaches them more closely the second time and uses single-target spells like *feblemind* and *phantasmal killer* while demanding the heroes flee her Abomination Vaults. With her message delivered, she retreats after only a few rounds.

Later Attacks: Once the heroes have recovered a *fulcrum lens* or the *Fulcrum Lattice*, Belcorra considers the heroes an actual threat, but her anger overrides her caution. She attacks with her full might, using her Corrupting Gaze and ghostly hand along with her spells. If she defeats a hero, she retreats, confident that they'll now leave her alone.

Leveraging Agents: Belcorra has several living allies within the Abomination Vaults, including the urdefhan cult and the Children of Belcorra. She might send these groups after the heroes, insisting they let the heroes know they're acting on Belcorra's orders. Fortunately, neither group can muster large numbers at once, so the heroes should be able to handle their attacks.

Killing Allies: Belcorra learns if the heroes make alliances, such as with the calignis or drow. She knows better than to face powerful, entrenched leaders like Galudu or Quara, but she might murder a few guards or direct monsters where they can do the most damage to the heroes' allies. It's important to Belcorra that she leave some evidence (usually a single, injured survivor) to let the heroes know she orchestrated the attack.

In the Footprint: Belcorra is most effective fighting the heroes who enter the *Gauntlight* footprint (areas **H37** and **I28**) due to her Haunted Lighthouse ability.

The Final Attack: If the heroes defeat Belcorra shortly before they reach the Empty Vault, she uses the power of the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens* to hasten her rejuvenation so she can face them in her sanctum.

Belcorra doesn't ever surrender or flee in the Empty Vault. The heroes could possibly face her there without yet having the ability to permanently defeat her. In this case, they'll need to retreat to collect the *fulcrum lenses* and return to face her again. Once the heroes can focus Nhimbaloth's gaze upon Belcorra, they can defeat the sorcerer for good.

rack over the basin holds several brown and purple eggs, each about the size of a human head, cooking in the smoke. The walls are painted with sweeping lines and whorls.

Belcorra crafted these chambers centuries ago as both a shrine to Nhimbaloth and as a base to study the strange visionary effects of the island caves (area **H12**). Calignis of the Cult of Urthagul now use this room for prayer and meditation and to cook the chuul eggs they harvest from the lake. The ones being cooked now are the last of the cult's current store of eggs.

A secret door to the lodge on the lower level is hidden amid the abstract patterns painted on the west wall. The calignis know about the secret door but are reluctant to reveal it. A hero Searching this room

finds the door and the hidden knob to open it with a successful DC 25 Perception check. The door's other side has an obvious latch mechanism that isn't hidden.

Creatures: Six calignis meditate here and attack if disturbed. They believe their death flames empower Urthagul, so they fight tenaciously to the death.

CALIGNI STALKERS (6)

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 51

Initiative Perception +10

H4. STORAGE

This square chamber is filled with a jumble of open boxes, casks, bundles of torches, and faintly glowing plants.

This storage chamber is a mess because calignis have haphazardly thrown supplies in here over the years. The plants are bioluminescent reeds that retain their glow for weeks after being harvested, and they provide dim light here. Most casks contain the meaty, dried mushrooms calignis favor, although their gritty taste makes them practically inedible to other creatures.

Treasure: A hero Searching through this room uncovers three beautiful amethysts worth 20 gp each.

H5. CULT BARRACKS

This drab chamber contains a few bedrolls and a box with several earthen mugs atop it. A desk holds stacks of paper.

Rank-and-file members of the Cult of Urthagul all sleep in the eight bedrolls here. The bedrolls contain nothing of interest.

Some cult members are mapping the Abomination Vaults, in the hopes of finding an easy way around the wisps to reach Urthagul again. Their map is on the desk. They've mapped out areas **H2** to **H14** and drawn several lobster-like shapes in the water between areas **H13** and **H14** to represent the chuuls. Several angry ball-like shapes in areas **H2** and **H10** represent the new wisps. They've also mapped out areas **I22** to **I26** and the connecting staircase. The secret door in area **H8** isn't noted.

H6. PADLI'S CHAMBER

MODERATE 8

This room is a jumble of pillows, furs, blankets, and rugs. Several empty jugs litter the floor.

While Dulac is studious and intense, her second-in-command, Padli, is a selfish, gregarious hedonist. He favors mushroom wine, and the jugs around this room once held the earthy, intoxicating beverage.

Creatures: For all his hedonism, Padli is no less devout than Dulac, and he sees any intrusion here as an assault on the faithful. Padli lets his companions take the brunt of melee attacks and hangs back to cast spells. The calignis here have no interest in parley or quarter.

PADLI

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM CALIGNI HUMANOID

Male caligni subcommander (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 50)

Perception +16; greater darkvision

Languages Caligni, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +18, Deception +20, Diplomacy +20, Intimidation +18, Occultism +14, Stealth +18

Str +2, **Dex** +5, **Con** +1, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +5

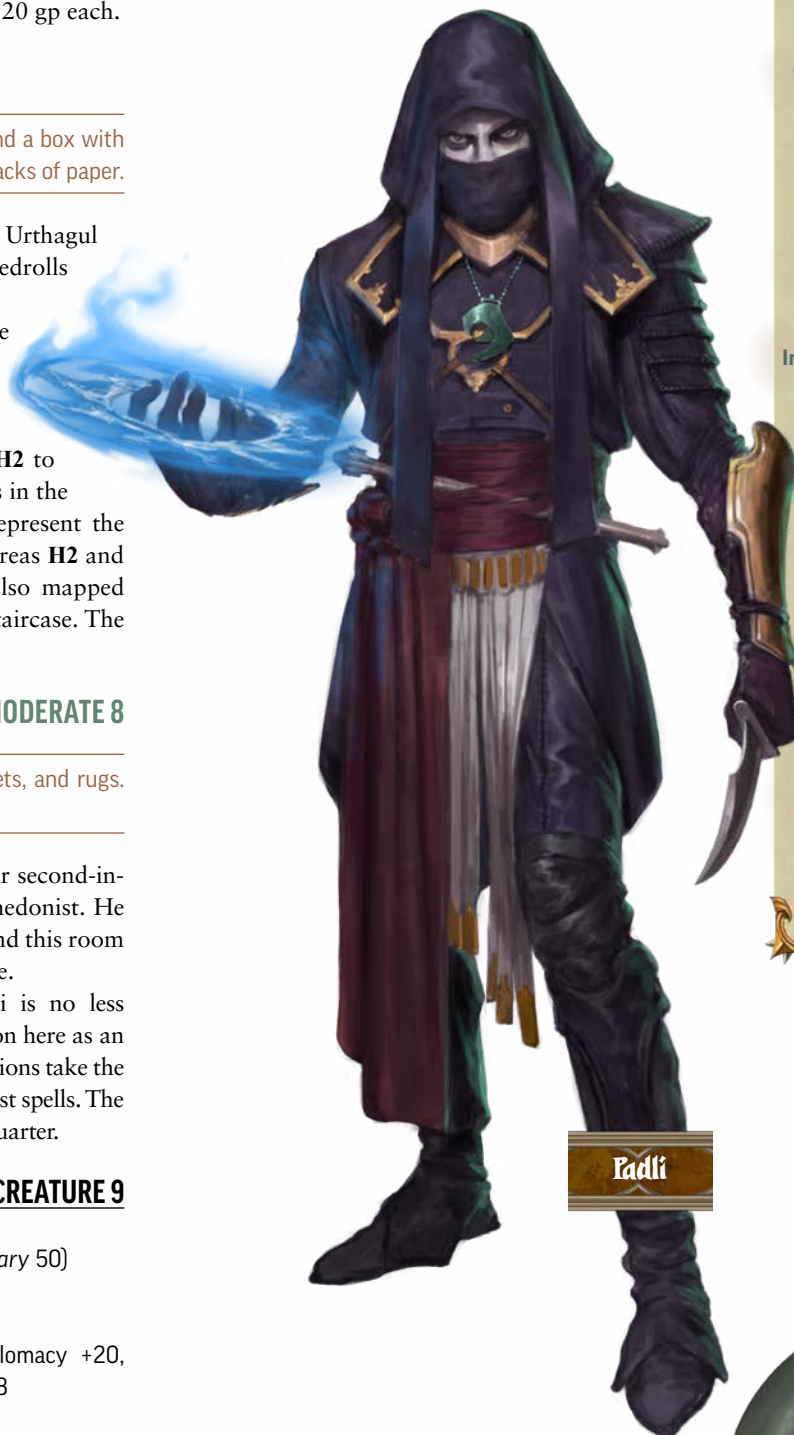
Items dagger (3), key to area **H7**, leather armor, wand of magic missile (3rd level)

Light Blindness

AC 26; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +20, **Will** +18

HP 160; death flame

Death Flame (light) When Padli dies, his body combusts in a flash of white-hot flame. All creatures in a 20-foot burst take 6d10 fire damage (DC 28 basic Reflex save).



Padli

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His gear is unaffected by the flames and is left in a pile where he died.

Occult Ward ➤ **Trigger** Padli attempts a saving throw against a spell cast by a creature he can see; **Effect** Padli gains a +2 circumstance bonus to the triggering save.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ dagger +15 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+7 piercing

Occult Innate Spells DC 26, attack +18; **4th** *darkness*, *phantom pain*, *suggestion*; **3rd** *blindness*, *enthral*, *paralyze*; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *invisibility*, *obscuring mist* (at will); **Cantrips (5th)** *chill touch*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *shield*

Sneak Attack Padli deals an additional 3d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

CALIGNI STALKERS (2)

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 51

Initiative Perception +10

Treasure: Amid the comforts of the room is a small pouch with 25 gp, 10 sp, and a greater cheetah's elixir.

H7. PRISON

This room is locked on the outside; Padli has the only key. A hero can open it with four successful DC 25 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock or a successful DC 29 Athletics check to Force it Open.

A single prisoner waits inside: an urdefhan warrior (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 272) named Huglu whom the calignis recently captured. The calignis have denied Huglu food and water to get information out of him, but the stubborn warrior would rather die than tell his captors anything. He's currently pretending to be dead to catch his abductors off-guard, but as his Deception DC is only 12, the heroes likely see through his ruse.

Getting any information out of Huglu is virtually impossible, as the evil warrior's only desire is to inflict as much death and destruction as he can before oblivion. Diplomacy attempts to improve Huglu's hostile attitude don't work, though the heroes might get information out of him with Deception checks to Lie or Intimidation checks to Coerce compliance. The DC for these checks is 19, which is both his Will DC and his Perception DC.

On a success, Huglu relays his name, that he was caught near the door in area **H9**, that he serves a great war champion named Khurfel, and that his people control the territory at the bottom of a nearby chasm (area **H34**). Huglu sprinkles this information with threats against the heroes and promises to drink the heroes' and the calignis' blood (on a critical success, however, Huglu omits these threats).

If the heroes free Huglu, he turns on them as soon as he thinks he can kill one of them before being killed himself.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for getting information about the urdefhans from Huglu.



H8. DULAC'S CHAMBERS

Moderate 8

This sparsely appointed chamber contains a single mat in the far corner of the room and a small desk on the south wall with an iron strongbox sitting under it. A bowl with some gray gruel and a spoon are the only items on the desk.

This chamber serves as quarters for a severe caligni woman named Dulac, the head of the Cult of Urthagul. She has granted herself the title of “custodian” to demonstrate her humble subservience to Urthagul. Once a very active and vital leader, she drew the attention of an owb, one of the malevolent manipulators of caligni communities. The owb spends his time in the secret chamber off of this room, twisting Dulac’s faith.

Dulac’s control and self-confidence took a severe blow when Belcorra stationed the will-o’-wisps around the cultists’ domain. Cut off from Urthagul’s bizarre babblings and strange insights, Dulac isn’t sure what to do next. The owb offers vague assurances, but he secretly likes seeing the cult crumble and doesn’t want contact with Urthagul restored.

A hero who Searches this room and succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check discovers the secret door in the east wall as well as the hidden latch that must be pulled and turned to open it. The room is empty—the owb needs no comforts, only solitude.

Creatures: Custodian Dulac and the owb are in here in close conversation. They fight intruders, but if the heroes give any indication that they’re willing to talk, Dulac ceases hostilities to hear them out. However, the owb presses the attack to silence the heroes.

If the owb is defeated and Dulac is reduced to fewer than 30 Hit Points, she surrenders.

DULAC

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE N MEDIUM CALIGNI HUMANOID

Female caligni cult leader (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 50)

Perception +18; greater darkvision

Languages Caligni, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +18, Athletics +19, Intimidation +18, Occultism +16, Religion +18, Stealth +18

Str +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +5

Items chain shirt, +1 striking war flail

Light Blindness

AC 28, **Fort** +15, **Ref** +18, **Will** +20

HP 155; death shadows

Death Shadows (cold, darkness) When Dulac dies, her body is destroyed in a burst of chilling shadows. All creatures in a 20-foot burst take 8d8 cold damage (DC 28 basic Reflex save). Dulac’s gear and treasure are unaffected by the shadows and are left in a pile where she died.

Opportune Step **Trigger** A dazzled or blinded creature, or a creature with light blindness, ends its move adjacent to Dulac; **Effect** Dulac Steps.

Warding Shove **Trigger** An ally within Dulac’s reach is targeted with a ranged or melee attack by an attacker she can see; **Effect** The ally gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack, and the ally can Step after the attack.

Speed 25 feet

Melee **war flail** +21 (disarm, sweep, trip), **Damage** 2d10+8 bludgeoning

Occult Innate Spells DC 28, attack +20; **4th** darkness, read omens, suggestion; **3rd** haste, paralyze, vampiric touch; **2nd** darkness (at will), ghoulish craving, obscuring mist (at will); **Cantrips (5th)** daze, detect magic, shield, telekinetic projectile

Sneak Attack Dulac deals an additional 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

OWB

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 196

Initiative Perception +13

Side Quest: If the heroes parley with Dulac, she proposes a deal. If the heroes gather more chuul eggs and eliminate the wisps on the fringes of the cult’s territory, Dulac will make them formal allies of the cult. As allies, they can rest in the shrine whenever they’d like. Further, she can grant them safe passage through caligni territory in the lodge. She warns that the caligni defenders on the lower level aren’t likely to speak with the heroes without Dulac’s good word.

Treasure: The iron strongbox holds one small pouch containing 13 gp and 50 sp, another with 30 pieces of onyx worth 2 gp each, four moderate healing potions, and a barkskin potion.

XP Award: Award the heroes XP for talking with Dulac as though they’d defeated her in combat.

H9. BARRICADED DOOR

This stout, iron-bound door swings open to the north. It used to be barred from the north, but after Huglu sneaked in, the calignis blocked the southern side with rubble for additional security. Moving the rubble to open the door is time-consuming but not difficult.

H10. STAIRS OF URTHAGUL

Severe 8

This long chamber features roughly carved stairs leading upward. Its sides are dotted with nooks, two of which contain stone basins filled with muddy water.

The basins are similar to and serve the same purpose as those in the Hall of Eyes (area H2).

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Adventure Toolbox

When Belcorra learned that calignis were meeting with Urthagul, she sent a pair of dread wisps here to prevent the calignis' passage. She doesn't want the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens* to fall into caligni hands, as she sees them as less reliable guardians than the gug.

Creatures: The pair of dread wisps attack any creatures other than Belcorra and any Children of Belcorra who attempt to pass. The defeat of the dread wisps triggers the Belcorra Attacks! event described in the sidebar on page 146.

DREAD WISPS (2)

CREATURE 9

Page 252

Initiative Perception +20

H11. CARRION AMBUSH

LOW 8

Even before the heroes enter this chamber, they can smell a putrid stench of carrion and decay.



Child of Belcorra

This large, smelly cave opens onto a cliff with a large body of murky water about twenty feet below. At the edge of the cliff sits a heap of reeking, decomposing carrion. A stream of water flows from the north, past the heap and over the cliff in a narrow waterfall.

The pile of carrion was once a Huge aquatic reptile that scaled the cliff to escape the predatory chuuls but died here. Its rotting mass hides a group of Children of Belcorra who wait underneath to gain information about—and hopefully capture—Urthagul. They plan to either follow Urthagul if the gug passes this way (which they don't realize the gug never does) or capture and interrogate calignis (which they don't realize Belcorra has prevented).

Creatures: Four Children of Belcorra are hiding in the carrion heap, which counts as a bog for the mummies' abilities. They attack anyone who comes near and fight until destroyed.

CHILDREN OF BELCORRA (4)

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON LE SMALL MUMMY UNDEAD

Bog mummies (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 177)

Initiative Stealth +13

Languages Common, Gnomish, Undercommon

H12. ISLAND CAVERN

MODERATE 8

Four small streams flow through this chamber, fed by a dark pond against the west wall. The streams divide the chamber into islands, each covered with lichen, mildew, and mushrooms. Bioluminescent fungi and strange motes of light bathe the place in eerie illumination, playing off the water to form odd shapes on the cavern's walls, like humanoid apparitions gliding through the air. Water flowing along the sides of the islands echoes off the walls in weird ways, like harsh whispers.

"Haruvex has risen. There is nothing you can do," the overlapping echoes say. The sound is hypnotizing, and strangely calming.

Long-gone cultists used this cavern as a meditation chamber to calm their emotions and clear their minds, but it now echoes with subtle whispers of Nhimbalo's alien will. These whispers can be maddening or enlightening but are usually wholly unintelligible.

The northwestern end of this cavern forms a rock wall 10 feet high that leads to a natural bridge 30 feet above the lake to an old cage (area A13). Urthagul used to leave this way every week or two to hunt for food in the lake but hadn't bothered to do so while the calignis were bringing him offerings.

Distracting Whispers: Creatures in the cavern are immune to emotion effects, but spending time amid the whispers affects the mind. Every minute, creatures in the cave must attempt a DC 24 Will save or become stupefied 1 (stupefied 2 on a critical failure) for 24 hours. This condition is cumulative, up to stupefied 4. The whispers speak a different truth each time a creature here increases its stupefied condition, as follows.

Stupefied 1: “The lenses. She knows the secrets of the lenses. Three are within reach, one very close. The other lost by Yldaris. One held by the blood eaters.”

Stupefied 2: “She keeps them apart while she works her petty vengeance, but the essences shall become one.”

Stupefied 3: “Find the lenses and place their essences together within a host.”

Stupefied 4: “Join the essences within Haruvex, and she can fall again. This is a promise of the Empty Death, a promise of empty death.”

The cavern affects aberrations and sorcerers with the aberrant bloodline differently; they don’t gain the stupefied condition but are fascinated while within the cavern. This fascination ends as soon as they leave. If such creatures stay here too long, they involuntarily babble strange truths that echo in the whispers, which is how Urthagul obtained his reputation as a mystic among the calignis.

Creatures: On the northernmost island, amid a nest of glowing toadstools, lurks the gug Urthagul. He sits hunched, purring and stroking the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens* in one of his four hands. Urthagul has been here for decades, or perhaps longer. While a formidable creature, his fascination with the whispers and the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens* have taken a toll. He rarely eats, and does so even less now that the caligni cultists don’t visit him. His glowing treasure commands nearly all of his attention.

When the heroes enter, Urthagul takes no more notice other than a glance in their direction. The heroes can even explore or pass through the cave without rousing Urthagul; if they speak to him, he doesn’t respond other than to shift his treasure to the hand farthest from anyone who might try to take it.

If the heroes use force against Urthagul or try to take the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens*, he attacks with relentless brutality. In combat, he prefers to use his jaws, supplemented with the powers of the lens. When Urthagul uses his Furious Claws ability, he can only make three attacks instead of four, as he doesn’t let go of the lens. Urthagul fights to the death to protect his treasure, but he doesn’t leave this cavern.



Urthagul

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URTHAGUL

CREATURE 10

Male gug (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 198)

Initiative Perception +19

Items *Crimson Fulcrum Lens* (invested, page 220)

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for recovering the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens*.

H13. ISOLATED CAGE

This large metal cage stands atop a natural pillar rising thirty feet above the water. The bars have been ripped and bent, and bones lie scattered about the cage's bottom.

The Children of Belcorra once imprisoned creatures in this cage. After Urthagul attacked and ate the creatures within, twice, the deep gnomes realized the cage wasn't worth the bother and abandoned it.

H14. RICKETY DOCK

LOW 8

A lone dock, rotten and rickety, juts out from a shelf of rock. It looks long unused, and no vessel is tethered to its moorings.

This dock went unused for many years as the Children of Belcorra withdrew from their duties. It's still usable, with only the occasional mishap of a collapsing board. The Cult of Urthagul used to dive for chuul eggs from it, but they haven't done so since being wracked by the trauma of being cut off from Urthagul.

Creatures: A pair of chuuls hunt in this area, sometimes working together, other times competing for food. They prefer to sneak up on their prey, clambering onto the dock close to the shore so their prey has nowhere to run except into the water. A chuul reduced to fewer than 20 Hit Points flees and doesn't return.

CHUULS (2)

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 64

Initiative Perception +15

Treasure: While the chuuls carry nothing of value, heroes who Search under the water find their hidden nesting nook some 15 feet below the surface. It holds a cache of 6 chuul eggs, 9 gp, 42 sp, and a +1 *striking longsword*.

H15. FETID LAKE

These waters are brackish and silty. Dark clouds of fetid air and grimy mists cling to the surface. Where it laps on the shore, the water leaves trails of glistening muck.

The lake's water was once potable, fresh, and teaming with subterranean fish stocked by the Children of Belcorra. After Belcorra's fall, the gnomes allowed and even fostered strange aberrations and other aquatic monsters in the lake. Despite the lake's calm, the visibility at the water level is poor; the mist imposes a –2 circumstance penalty to Perception checks, everything beyond 30 feet is concealed, and visibility ends at about 90 feet. Visibility from a higher point (such as the cliff in area **H11**, the pillar in area **H13**, or the caves in area **H22**) is unobstructed and gives a better view of the lake cavern.

Drinking the water can be hazardous but not fatal. There's a 1 in 6 chance that anyone drinking the water is exposed to sewer haze (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 119). Fish still live in the lake: blind, ugly, spinous things that are poisonous to most creatures. Eating these fish—even when well cooked—is a slimy and sickening affair and also spreads sewer haze. The other foul creatures living in the lake have built a tolerance to its diseased water and fish.

Random Encounters: Every 15 minutes that the heroes spend traversing the lake, make a secret DC 5 flat check. On a success, the heroes come across one of the following encounters, determined randomly or at your choice. If the result is a creature the heroes have already faced, treat it as no encounter.

d10	Encounter
1–4	One chuul, from area H14
5–6	Four Children of Belcorra on a skiff, from area H17
7	One krooth (<i>Pathfinder Bestiary</i> 215)
8	Two brood leech swarms (<i>Bestiary</i> 2 156)
9	One lost deepwater dhuthorex, from area I39
10	The froghemoth from area H27 , which only fights for 1 round before retreating

H16. MONSTER CAGES

VARIABLE 8

Seven cages constructed of metal and strange fibrous wood line this beach, each partially submerged in the stinking waters.

The Children of Belcorra use the cages to trap powerful monsters living in the lake, as Belcorra recently commanded them to do. It is hard going and involves many setbacks, but the Children are used to taking their time to complete their goals. Each cage has a simple latching device—a curved bar leading through metal hoops—that takes three Interact actions to open or close. The latch can't be reached by a creature inside the cage due to its position. The metal gives the cages strength, and the fibrous wood allows enough give that they're particularly difficult to burst open. Forcing Open

a cage requires a successful DC 40 Athletics check. The cages have wide enough gaps that a Medium creature can Squeeze through the bars with a successful DC 25 Acrobatics check. Small or smaller creatures don't need to Squeeze and can simply move through the bars as greater difficult terrain.

Creatures: The three unmarked cages are empty and open. A “c” indicates a cage with a chuul, a “k” indicates a cage with a krooth, and an “s” indicates a cage with a skeletal hulk that was once a Large reptilian humanoid. The creatures are furious at their imprisonment and, if freed, simply attack anyone nearby and flee if reduced to half their Hit Points. The heroes might be able to negotiate with the chuul, although it only speaks Aklo and Undercommon. The chuul insists it will simply swim away and not trouble the heroes again if freed; if the heroes seem to need further enticement, the chuul offers to reveal the location of several chuul eggs (area H15). It goes back on its word only if the heroes seem particularly vulnerable.

CHUUL

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 64

Initiative Perception +15

KROOTH

CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 215

Initiative Perception +16

SKELETAL HULKS (2)

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 299

Initiative Perception +16

H17. DOCK AND LIFT

LOW 8

This large, T-shaped dock has four old skiffs moored to it. On the land side, the docks open up to a large wood and iron platform; at each corner, an iron chain climbs upward into darkness. At the south end of this platform sits a large pulley device. Its chains and machinery, as well as the chains on the platform, are crusted with rust.

This is the launch point for the Children of Belcorra's increasingly rare lake excursions.

The platform is a lift that connects to area G3 100 feet above. The big lift once brought food and supplies from the Farm level to the upper levels of the Vaults. While the rusted machinery can still be coaxed to work, it's slow and often stalls. It's controlled by four levers situated in a mechanism on the platform. The controls are unintuitive;

each lever controls a chain pulley on a corner, but each lever pulls at a different rate. It takes 1d4 hours of tinkering to figure out exactly how to control the lift, and such trial and error might ruin the entire mechanism (roll a DC 11 flat check; on a failure, the mechanism is permanently destroyed). A hero who succeeds at a DC 24 Crafting check to Repair the mechanism reduces the DC of this flat check to 5 (or to 1 on a critical success). The lift is marked by a white square on the map.

Creatures: Four Children of Belcorra are repairing a skiff here. When they spot intruders, three rush to fight while the fourth flees to area H19 for aid. Although there are several caged creatures nearby, the Children don't release them because it was such trouble to capture them in the first place. Instead, if in genuinely desperate straits, the undead either flee to area H19 or launch a skiff to get aid from area H21.

CHILDREN OF BELCORRA (4)

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON LE SMALL MUMMY UNDEAD

Bog mummies (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 177)

Initiative Perception +12

Languages Common, Gnomish, Undercommon



Elder Child of Belcorra

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H18. ROPER PEN

MODERATE 8

The entrance to this cave is blocked by a makeshift barricade of wood and iron straps. Its door is barred from the outside, and the bar has the words, "Danger! Do not open!" written on it in Gnomish.

The Children of Belcorra keep their largest and most dangerous monsters here. The barricade has obviously been broken and rebuilt many times, but it's sturdy enough to keep its current prisoner contained.

Creatures: The cave contains a single roper. The Children who discovered the creature took great care to capture it and move it here. They have no idea how to control the aberration, but they're sure that Belcorra will want it for her army. The roper waits in the back of the cave, disguised as a nondescript stalactite. If given the chance (such as if the heroes open the door and then leave), it creeps out of the cave so it can't be imprisoned again. Otherwise, it waits for creatures to step further inside before striking, and it fights until destroyed.

ROPER

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 282

Initiative Stealth +25

H19. GAME ROOM

MODERATE 8

Four small reclining couches circle a small table toward the corner of this L-shaped room. On the table is an elongated game board split into rows of squares. Various pieces sit in place on the board, and pyramid-shaped dice are scattered about the surface.

Some Children of Belcorra retreated from their duties after long years and spend their time gambling on a deep gnome board game called "The Dark Chase." Their set is missing several pieces (although it has all six required four-sided dice), but the incompleteness holds a peculiar attraction to the Children: the missing pieces mean there's no end state, so the game is never over. The wagers around the board are all colored pebbles that are pretty but not particularly valuable. A simple iron key to area H20 is among the pebbles.

Creatures: The three Children here fight intruders, but they avoid disturbing the game in progress. If a hero damages the game (such as by moving across the square containing the low table or by damaging the square with a splash or area effect), the mummies focus their rage upon that hero. They fight until destroyed.

CHILDREN OF BELCORRA (2)

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON LE SMALL MUMMY UNDEAD

Bog mummies (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 177)

Initiative Perception +12

ELDER CHILD OF BELCORRA

CREATURE 9

RARE LE SMALL MUMMY UNDEAD

Variant bog mummy (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 177)

Perception +18; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Common, Gnome, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +19, Nature +19, Stealth +19 (+21 while buried in a bog)

Str +6, **Dex** +3, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

AC 28; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +18, **Will** +20

HP 155, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** cold 10; **Resistances** fire 10

Breath of the Bog (aura, divine, enchantment, mental) 30 feet. A creature that begins its turn within the area feels as if its lungs were filling with water and must succeed at a DC 28 Fortitude save or be unable to speak or breathe. The creature can still hold its breath and can attempt a new save at the end of its turn. A creature that succeeds is temporarily immune for 24 hours.

Rise Up ➤ **Trigger** A creature walks on top of a bog mummy that lies buried in the mud or peat below; **Requirements** Initiative hasn't yet been rolled; **Effect** The bog mummy automatically notices the creature and Burrows before rolling initiative.

Speed 20 feet; burrow 15 feet

Melee ➤ fist +21, **Damage** 2d10+8 bludgeoning plus bog rot

Primal Prepared Spells DC 28, attack +20; **4th** *air walk*, *barkskin*, *freedom of movement*; **3rd** *blindness*, *glyph of warding*, *meld into stone*; **2nd** *acid arrow*, *entangle*, *glitterdust*; **Cantrips** (**5th**) *acid splash*, *detect magic*, *prestidigitation*, *produce flame*, *read aura*

Primal Innate Spells DC 28; **1st** *illusory disguise*

Rituals DC 28; *plant growth*

Bog Rot (curse, disease, divine, necromancy, negative) This affliction can't be reduced below stage 1, nor can the damage from it be healed, until it's successfully treated with *remove curse* or a similar effect; the affliction can then be removed as normal for a disease. A creature killed by bog rot melts into a noxious sludge and can't be resurrected except by a 7th-level *resurrect* ritual or similar magic; **Saving Throw** DC 21 Fortitude; **Stage 1** carrier with no ill effect (1 minute); **Stage 2** 3d6 negative damage and clumsy 1 (1 day)

Treasure: The game board is inlaid with semiprecious stones. Even incomplete, the set is worth 80 gp.

H20. TOMB OF THE DEMILICH

LOW 8

The door to this chamber is locked; the key is in area H19. The lock requires five successful DC 30 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock to get open or a successful DC 30 Athletics check to break it down. The door is also magically protected with a *glyph of warding* containing

a 3rd-level *fireball* (DC 28 basic Reflex save; DC 28 to notice and disarm the glyph). The glyph triggers when a non-undead creature touches the door, even to open it with the key.

This chamber is dusty and dry. At its west end sits a stone slab three feet high. Atop it lies a small body covered in funeral wrappings.

Gorsalthith, one of the oldest Children of Belcorra, plans to become a demilich. The other Children don't know where he got this idea; none of them have even seen a demilich, although they've all heard stories of the gem-studded undead skulls with phenomenal spellcasting power. But Gorsalthith was adamant that he knew the method: he placed gemstones in his eyes, replaced his teeth with smaller gems, and drilled holes into his head to lodge a crown of crystals there. He then locked himself in this room to lay in repose, patiently waiting for his body to turn to dust and his transformation to take its final form. He has been here for nearly a century with no change in his mummified form.

Creatures: Gorsalthith is determined in his unrealistic goal. When the heroes enter, he becomes convinced he must defeat them to advance his evolution. He arrogantly talks about his pending transformation as he fights.

GORSALTHITH CREATURE 9

Elder child of Belcorra (page 156)

Initiative Perception +20

Treasure: Gorsalthith's only treasures are the gemstones grafted to his skull. The teeth are a variety of semiprecious stones, 24 in total, each worth 8 sp. His eye sockets each have a clear topaz worth 50 gp, and his crown is nine bits of quartz worth 3 gp each.

A21. ANCIENTS' CAVES SEVERE 8

Four caves atop steep cliffs sit ten feet above the lake's dark water.

These cliff walls have numerous handholds and require a successful DC 15 Athletics check to Climb to the caves (or across from one to the other).

Creatures: Three Children of Belcorra became far too interested in the lore of Nhimbalothe and were blasted with a powerful glimpse of the Outer God, transforming them into bodaks. Nursing their pain and resentment, the bodaks retreated to these caves. The other Children acknowledge the bodaks' power and knowledge but rarely approach them. The bodaks dwell individually in areas **H21a**, **H21b**, and **H21d**. When any bodak is disturbed, the others clamber over to help, so anyone fighting one of the bodaks soon fights them all.

EMPTY DEATH BODAK (3) CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON CE SMALL UNDEAD

Variant bodak (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 42)

Initiative Perception +17

Treasure: While two bodaks have no treasure, the one that dwells in area **H21d** has valuables scattered about its cave. A sack contains 80 gp, 2 pp, and *eyes of the eagle*. A *greater staff of healing* lies discarded at the back of the cave, and a +1 *striking shortsword* is wedged in a crack in the wall.

H22. QUIET LAKE

The western side of the large lake has foul water and obscuring mist like the lake to the east (area **H15**). This side is less populated, predominantly due to the appetite of the froghemoth lairing to the south.

The heroes might have random encounters here, too, but the DC of the flat check for an encounter is 10 rather than 5.

H23. SHADOWED DOCK LOW 8

This T-shaped dock has been recently repaired, and a single skiff is moored on its north side. Beyond the dock, a masonry structure juts out from the cavern walls, the drifting mist creating strange shadows on the stonework. At its center is a single iron-bound door.



Empty Death Bodak

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Nhimbalothe

Adventure Toolbox

This dock and building were abandoned decades prior to Belcorra's return. Vethris, the spirit naga Belcorra recently put in charge of the Children of Belcorra, now claims it as her lair. The door to the building is unlocked.

Creatures: The shadows playing on the masonry are more than just a trick of the water. A dread wraith haunts this area, acting as a lookout. When it spots strangers, it silently moves to the inner complex to warn Vethris. Vethris peevishly dismisses the dread wraith, commanding it to "take care of the problem." The dread wraith then hunts down the heroes, eager to make wraith spawn out of them.

DREAD WRAITH

CREATURE 9

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 298

Initiative Stealth +19

H24. MUD ROOM

LOW 8

This damp room has a recessed floor filled with mud.

The mud is only a few inches below the doors' thresholds but is two feet deep and is difficult terrain.

Creatures: Four Children of Belcorra lurk in the mud in the eastern part of this room, bitter at being stationed here under the command of the lazy Vethris. They're quick to attack when anyone disturbs this room, but, being beneath the mud, they don't notice when the dread wraith flits overhead to warn the naga of intruders and aren't likely to know the heroes are present until the heroes enter the mud.

CHILDREN OF BELCORRA (4)

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON LE SMALL MUMMY UNDEAD

Bog mummies (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 177)

Initiative Perception +12

H25. NAGA LAIR

LOW 8

This room is filled with rugs, tapestries, and pillows. Most are stained with mud.

This is the lair of the scheming spirit naga Vethris. Vethris convinced Belcorra she would do a good job of getting the Farm level back in good order and keep the Children in line, but she has done nothing of the sort. Vethris spends her days lounging about and ordering her new minions to bring her food and treasures. While the undead are dissatisfied with her, they're loyal to Belcorra, so they alternate between grudgingly follow the naga's orders and finding ways to ignore her.

Vethris brought the pillows and other trappings, but good hygiene isn't one of the naga's priorities. One tapestry, depicting a stylized nest of intertwining snakes, covers the secret door on the south wall. Anyone removing the tapestry or Searching the room locates the secret door with a successful DC 25 Perception check. It's opened by pressing the proper stone on the eastern wall.

Creatures: Vethris is lazy, but she snaps into action against any who dare intrude on her relaxation. She screams curses at her foes while casting spells at them. She prefers to use *black tentacles* to keep her foes at a distance, but then she follows

up with *paralyze* as often as possible; this is her favorite spell, and it frustrates her that the Children of Belcorra are immune to it, and thus she can't use it to discipline them. Vethris surrenders if reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points and tries to slither away.



Vethris

If the heroes managed to get here without disturbing the mud in area **H24**, the mummies there rise up and fight alongside the naga.

VETHRIS

CREATURE 9

Female spirit naga (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 179)

Initiative Perception +18

H26. SECRET TREASURY

A glittering mass of treasure sits at the south end of this small room.

This is the bulk of the treasure Vethris had accumulated as well as that she tasked the undead to gather.

Poisoned Treasure: A porcelain teapot in the hoard is slathered with nettleweed residue (*Core Rulebook* 553).

Treasure: Once the poison is washed off the teapot, it's worth 40 gp. Scattered about the room are 130 gp, 310 sp, *greater bracers of missile deflection*, a *wand of fireball*, three *murderer's knots*, a *potion of quickness*, and a *javelin of lightning*. A small sack contains 10 saltwater pearls worth 9 gp each.

H27. SHORES OF DEATH

EXTREME 8

At this southern terminus of the foul underground lake, a small wooden dock juts out from a stone and masonry building. The dock is in ruin; its front has been ripped away with massive force, leaving the rest of it sloping down into the water. The building had a door at the dock's end, but it has been ripped off its hinges, with a chunk of the door partly submerged and leaning against the cavern wall. South of the structure, the lakeshore gives way to a forest of massive fungi. The water near the dock occasionally bubbles, as if something massive dwells somewhere below the surface.

A surly froghemoth attacked the Children of Belcorra in this outpost, damaging the dock and driving the bog mummies away. It's the source of the bubbles in the water. A hero who succeeds at a Perception check against its Stealth DC of 38 spots its eyestalk peeping above the fetid water.

Creatures: How the froghemoth came to the lake is a mystery, but in the short time, it has been here, it has damaged this building and driven nearly all the aberrations and creatures away from the southern lake. It sometimes makes its way north to hunt, but it's usually lurking under the water by the shattered dock.

The Children of Belcorra injured the froghemoth more than they've realized; it's afflicted with bog rot that has affected its alien physiology in strange and

debilitating ways. Rather than simply being clumsy, the froghemoth has the weak adjustment.

A lazy hunter, the froghemoth tends to attack from the water and rarely pursues those who find shelter within the fungus garden. However, it's vindictive in a way; if it loses at least half of its Hit Points, there's a chance (DC 15 flat check) it becomes enraged and follow its attackers onto dry land.

BOG-ROTTED FROGHEMOTH

CREATURE 12

Weak froghemoth (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 6, 122)

Initiative Stealth +28

H28. RUINED OUTPOST

The remains of a table and some chairs are scattered around the room. While the western door has been ripped off its hinges, the southern door is still intact but open. Two torn, soggy corpses are slumped in the doorway.

The corpses are Children of Belcorra who were destroyed in the froghemoth's rampage.

While there's nothing of value in the abandoned room, there's a secret door on the east wall. A hero Searching the room who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check spots the fake flagstone in the wall and can pull it aside with the rest of the secret door. Beyond the door is a narrow passage heading east and then turning north, leading to another secret door of similar design. The Children of Belcorra used this passage to gain quick access to the northern reaches of the fungus garden.

H29. WEST GARDEN

While the fungal forest continues to grow high, there are also signs that this area was recently tended. Rocks outline sections of healthy growth, and the paths are clear of all the but the occasional bits of mold and fungus. Bioluminescent moss provides a low, even glow throughout the area, as though intentionally cultivated for the effect. To the east, a wide stone bridge spans a massive chasm. A gigantic iron ladder snakes down into the darkness of the chasm from its other side. Beyond the bridge and the ladder, the fungal forest becomes even more overgrown.

The Children of Belcorra long ago limited their efforts from tending the entire fungus garden to only this western end. With the recent arrival of the froghemoth, they've even stopped their efforts here.

The fungi here are harmless; in fact, they're good sources of nutritious food, fungus-wood lumber, and luminous moss.

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Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox

H30. LUMBER SHED

This squat stone building looks like a storage room.

One of three storage rooms in the fungal garden, this building was used to store wood formed from tough fungus fibers. Inside, a pile of fungus woods still sits, along with a bundle of axes and saws used to collect the fungus and cut the boards into shape.

H31. TOOL SHED

This shed has a small hole where a lock would be, but traces of rust around the hole are all that remain there.

The tools once stored here have met the same fate as the lock and are nothing more than a piles of rust around axe handles, wooden shims, and other non-metallic materials. The shriveled corpse of a fat rust monster lies in the center of the room; the Children of Belcorra killed it years ago when it got into their tools, and they never bothered to remove it.

H32. INHABITED SHED

MODERATE 10

This simple storage shed is filled with small, gnawed bones, discarded scales, and a pungent reptilian reek.

The ghonhatine fleshwarp lairing here doesn't know that there's a secret door in the west wall. A hero who

Searches the room discovers the false flagstone that opens it automatically, as the flagstone has shifted slightly out of place.

Creatures: Some time ago, the ghonhatine escaped from the Laboratory level far above and fled all the way here. It has found more than enough to eat in the surrounding fungus garden, so it never ranges far, although it prefers living prey. As it has learned to avoid the nearby lake because of the lurking frogemoth, it hasn't had more than a few small bats or rodents in months, and it's eager for larger flesh. It rushes at the heroes who open this door and attacks with a single-minded fury until slain.

GHONHATINE

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 119

Initiative Perception +19

Treasure: The repulsive residue of the ghonhatine's meals contain bloodstained *armbands of athleticism*.

H33. LEVEL 8 PORTAL CHAMBER

The round walls of this chamber are deeply carved with flowing runes. The runes are filled with silver and dust.

This is another portal chamber containing an inactive *teleportation circle*. The heroes can connect it to those in other levels of the Abomination Vaults with the *awaken portal* ritual.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for using the *awaken portal* ritual to reactivate the *teleportation circle* here.

H34. EASTERN WILDS

MODERATE 8

Across the bridge's span, fungus grows to greater heights—some reaching nearly to the high ceiling of the cavern, fifty feet overhead. The remains of old paths remain here, but most are covered with clumps of smaller fungus or patches of pale slime. Spores drift through the air, and huge red blooms on the fungi shift as though in a wind, although there's no wind here. An enormous iron ladder hangs down into the deep chasm. Each link of the chains that hold it up are about as large as a human, but the rungs are spaced to give even small creatures an easy climb.

The east side of the fungus garden has gone a long time without proper cultivation, which has made it overgrown and dangerous. The paths are somewhat

Dragon's Blood Puffball

clear, if overgrown, and the rest of the cavern is greater difficult terrain if it's passable at all.

The gigantic iron ladder leads more than 100 feet down to area **I27**.

Creatures: The massive patch of fungus closest to the bridge has grown two deadly red puffballs. These dragon's blood puffballs resemble overgrown flowers, but they soon detach and float toward the heroes to attack with their fatal blooms. They follow fleeing heroes and fight until destroyed in an explosive burst.

DRAGON'S BLOOD PUFFBALLS (2) CREATURE 8

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Initiative Perception +12

H35. WEBBED CROSSROADS SEVERE 8

The towering fungi around these overgrown paths are laced in thick webbing. Within are a few humanoid figures, too shrouded in webs to see clearly.

The webbed corpses are a desiccated urdefhan and two much-more-recently killed drow from Yldaris. It takes half an hour to clear the thick webbing from each corpse.

Creatures: The hungry goliath spider that has made its web here isn't on the ground, but hiding in a crevasse in the ceiling 60 feet above, where it has greater cover. The spider begins its assault with its Descend on a Web ability to catch its prey off guard. If reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points, it retreats for the safety of its ceiling crevasse high above.

GOLIATH SPIDER CREATURE 11

Pathfinder Bestiary 307

Initiative Perception +22

Treasure: The urdefhan carries a *jade bauble* and a standard-grade darkwood shield. One of the drow corpses has a pouch with *dust of disappearance*.

H36. ROUNDED WALL LOW 8

This patch of fungus sits lower than the rest, though it bears no signs of cultivation. Amid the other fungi are bulbous green growths. The back wall of the cavern is visible through a cloud of drifting spores; it isn't natural rock, but a pale, curved, seamless stone.

The wall is part of the footprint of *Gauntlight* high above and is thus impervious to damage. A secret door in the curved wall provides access to the structure's interior (area **H37**); like the secret door in area **H1**, it's

easy to find (DC 15 Perception) but only opens when a *fulcrum lens* is placed into its indentation.

Creatures: The spores and green growths belong to a drakauthix lairing here. It attacks any living creatures that approach, floating upward to reveal its hooked tentacles. If reduced to fewer than 20 Hit Points, it ascends to the ceiling and tries to float away to the south. If the heroes haven't dealt with the goliath spider lurking above area **H35**, the drakauthix floats right beneath its crevasse. The spider darts out, kills the drakauthix, and retreats into its bolt-hole. This might alert the heroes that the spider is there!

DRAKAUTHIX CREATURE 9

Pathfinder Bestiary 129

Initiative Perception +17

H37. UPPER PIT

This large, circular room is made of pale stone and covered with dust. At its center stands a single, stone-lipped pit. A twisting ribbon of blue light coils and twists in the air, extending from the ceiling down into the pit. The stone of the ceiling and the walls of the pit undulate in the eerie light as though the stone itself were suffering.

This pit leads down through *Gauntlight*'s lowest levels. The ribbon of energy shows that *Gauntlight* is drawing even more power, and the heroes might have seen a ribbon like it in the dungeon's higher levels. A living creature ending its turn within the 5-foot-diameter ribbon of light takes 10d6 negative damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save); unlike the ribbons discovered in the upper levels, this energy doesn't heal undead creatures.

The pit leads down over 100 feet to a similar chamber on the Hunting Grounds (area **I28**) and then another 100 feet to the Empty Vault (area **J20**), where Belcorra typically dwells.

H38. STRANGE SENTRY TRIVIAL 9

Toward the end of the fungal path, a masonry structure juts out from the cavern wall, a door at its center.

The structure served as a waypoint where the Children of Belcorra could converse with their Ghost Queen through the wisps. They abandoned this building when they left the eastern fungus garden.

Creatures: A sinister, sloth-like monster called a nilith moved into the structure, but it left a guardian outside: a *feebleminded* medusa it calls Murmur. Murmur stands in front of the door, her hood up, muttering unintelligible words to herself.

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Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox

Murmur isn't likely to pose much of a challenge for 8th-level characters, but she's an indication that something strange is afoot. She fights with her bow,

which she only barely remembers how to use, if creatures remain at a distance. If foes close in, she drops her bow and flees into area **H29** to join her master.

MURMUR

CREATURE 7

Female feebleminded medusa (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 234)

Initiative Perception +10

Side Quest: Restoring Murmur's mind is a challenge, but it isn't impossible. If the heroes restore her, the medusa introduces herself as Moadenn and offers to fight alongside them for a few days before striking off on her own. She's bossy and cruel, so the heroes might not want her aid; she's perfectly happy to depart sooner if the heroes don't want her around.

H39. LAIR OF THE DREAMER

MODERATE 8

Three alcoves in this square chamber are overgrown with a tangle of thin mushroom stalks and creeping, flowering vines. The air smells sweet and heady.

The alcoves each contain stone basins, like those in areas **H2** and **H11**. They used to provide a connection to the swamps below, but the nilith lairing here didn't want the interruption. It pulled the muck from the basins, coated their interiors with a fungal resin, and repurposed them as planters to grow vegetation that remind it of its former home in the Dreamlands. If the heroes clean them out, they refill with fetid swamp water once again, and a will-o'-wisp (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 333) appears above each. Their observation triggers the Belcorra Attacks! event, as described in the sidebar on page 146.

Soporific Pollen: The pollen in the air gives living creatures in the room (except the nilith) a –1 circumstance penalty on Will saves. This is an olfactory effect.

Creatures: The nilith climbs around on the vines in this room, idly tending the flowers. It is bored with Murmur and is looking for other minds to twist, but it's willing to engage in conversation first if the heroes seem amenable. It talks about how the basins connect to some malignant swamp far down, and it proudly shows off its means of sealing them with resin to grow its own strange garden. As it talks, it tries to rank the heroes from the weakest mind to the strongest, so it knows who to target best with its mental attacks. It might propose puzzles or riddles to find this out or ask the heroes about their recent dreams.

NILITH

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 245

Initiative Perception +19



Murmur

Treasure: Hidden deep in the nilith's hanging tangles is its treasure, consisting of a bag with 253 sp, three topaz gemstones worth 60 gp each, a *thundering runestone*, and a moderate bravo's brew.

H40. BETWEEN A ROCK AND A DOORWAY LOW 8

The path ends at a door leading west. A large boulder covered with spidery carvings blocks a cave entrance to the east.

The door to this room is locked, and Nyzuros (in area H44) has the key. A hero can open it with four successful DC 25 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock or a successful DC 25 Athletics check to Force it Open.

The boulder seems impassable, but it's cleverly hinged to open when parts of its surface are pressed in the proper configuration. The Elven carvings describe how to move the boulder, but these instructions are intentionally wrong and trigger the hazard below. Finding the proper way to move the boulder requires a successful DC 25 Nature, Perception, or relevant Lore check. Alternatively, a hero can roll it aside with a successful DC 30 Athletics check to Force Open, and a Small or smaller creature can Squeeze past the boulder with a successful DC 25 Acrobatics check.

Glyph of Warding: The carvings form a *glyph of warding* containing a 4th-level *sound burst* (DC 28 basic Reflex save; DC 28 to notice and disarm the glyph). The glyph triggers when a creature handles the boulder in the way indicated by the Elven carvings. The noise also alerts the nearby drow to intruders, and they go on alert.

H41. DESCENT TO YLDARIS SEVERE 8

Faintly glowing green veins of crystal line the walls of this large cave. To the south, a wide passage spirals into the earth as though created by some massive burrowing creature.

The slick, green veins crackle with faint electricity when touched, but they aren't harmful. A cave worm burrowed this passageway long ago. It leads to the drow outpost of Yldaris far below (area II).

Creatures: This passage isn't unguarded; a quartet of drow hunters is always on alert here. If they detect intruders, they form a firing line to prevent anyone from getting past them. Although they're quick to attack calignis, urdefhans, or other enemies they recognize, a group of surface-dwellers intrigues them. The hunters keep their weapons at the ready, but so long as the heroes don't attack first, they ask the heroes why they're trespassing

in Yldaris territory. Their starting attitude to the heroes is indifferent. If the heroes improve their attitude to friendly (which requires a successful DC 24 Diplomacy check to Make an Impression), they agree to escort the heroes to their leader in Yldaris. Three drow escort the heroes through areas II, 15, 16, and II7 to meet Quara Orshendiel. If the heroes improve their attitude to helpful, only a single drow accompanies them. If they can't improve the hunters' attitude, the drow firmly turn them away.

If the heroes mention that they rescued Falxi Orshendiel from the Warped Brew kitchen (area F12), the hunters remember that Falxi mentioned them. The heroes thereafter have a +4 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks to negotiate entry into Yldaris.

The heroes might have earned the trust of the drow in areas H44 or H45; in that case, the heroes don't need to separately win over these hunters.

DROW HUNTERS (4) CREATURE 7

Page 234

Initiative Perception +16

XP Award: Award the heroes 80 XP if they successfully negotiate entry to Yldaris from these drow.

H42. SPIDER GUARD TRIVIAL 8

Sheets of webbing hang on the south wall of this room, between two wooden doors.

Creatures: A trained hunting spider, the loyal pet of the drow shootist Iribo in area H44, lairs in this room. The spider whistles shrilly as its first action when it spots intruders, then springs to attack. The noise alerts the nearby drow and brings them running; together, this is a severe encounter for 8th-level characters.

HUNTING SPIDER CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary 306

Initiative Perception +7

H43. CELL

This square cell has two pairs of rusted manacles bolted into the wall about six feet from the floor.

The drow recently captured one of the Children of Belcorra in the fungus garden and brought her here. She dangles from one of the manacles. They've been interrogating her for information about the layout and denizens of the level, but the mummy hasn't yet been forthcoming with any information.

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Creatures: The Child of Belcorra realizes that the heroes aren't with the drow and asks for release. She makes only vague promises about what she can do for the heroes if released because she's lying; as soon as they let her go, she flees to warn the other Children of Belcorra that the drow have made significant inroads to the fungus forest (although the listless mummies aren't likely to act on this information anytime soon).

The prisoner knows the denizens and layout of areas **H15** to **H25** and that there's a frogemoth in area **H27**.



CHILD OF BELCORRA

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON LE SMALL MUMMY UNDEAD

Female bog mummy (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 177)

Initiative Perception +12

H44. OBSERVATION POST

TRIVIAL 8

This small room appears to be a lookout post. Three narrow slits line the north and east walls, giving a view of the overgrown fungus garden beyond.

The Children of Belcorra observed their cultivated and thriving gardens from here, but the post had been abandoned for some time before the drow of Yldaris discovered it.

Creatures: A drow shootist named Iribo serves as a lookout in this room. She investigates any indication of intruders, such as her pet spider's shrill whistle. In a fight, Iribo attempts to quickly incapacitate her foes with her poison and calls for the drow in area **H45**. However, she doesn't foolishly throw herself into combat; if she thinks it's possible to negotiate with the heroes, she does so.

A longtime friend of Yldaris's leader, Quara, Iribo knows that Quara might have some use for surface dwellers. The heroes can attempt to improve her starting attitude of indifferent just as they can with the hunters in area **H41**. If they improve her attitude to friendly, she personally escorts them to Yldaris.

IRIBO

CREATURE 8

Female drow shootist (page 235)

Initiative Perception +16

XP Award: Award the heroes 80 XP if they talk to Iribo rather than fight her. Award them an additional 80 XP if they successfully negotiate Iribo's escort into Yldaris, but don't award this additional XP if the heroes have already arranged an escort from the drow in area **H41**.

H45. PLANNING ROOM

MODERATE 8

This large room might have once been richly appointed, but it's now full of mold and decay. Shattered furniture covers the floor, and tattered, mildew-specked tapestries hang from the walls. At the north, curtains obscure a wide bay window made of what looks like transparent stone.

The elder Children of Belcorra used to plan their lush gardens from this room, but it's now the staging area for the small drow contingent. The curved, floor-to-ceiling bay window provides a

clear view into the garden. The window is made from blocks of enchanted stone that are transparent from this side but resemble ordinary, natural stone when viewed from outside. The drow stationed here might have gotten a good look at the heroes passing by in area **H34**, were it not for the fact they keep the curtains closed most of the time.

Creatures: A drow hunter named Nyzuros and four drow wardens huddle over a map of the gardens. Their main concern is the goliath spider that dwells at the crossroads, as it has already feasted on two drow scouts. They debate whether to risk attacking the spider, gaining significant glory for vanquishing such a dangerous foe, or to summon aid from Yldaris. Nyzuros commands this contingent, even though Iribo in area **H44** is their most respected fighter. Whether the heroes make it this far without alerting these drow, or they're called into battle by noise, the wardens are hotheaded and quick to attack. Nyzuros is more circumspect, however, and wants to know how and why intruders have come. Like the hunters in area **H41**, he has an indifferent attitude toward the heroes, but his attitude can be improved in the same way (and, if made friendly or better, he personally escorts them to Yldaris). The heroes have another option to get into Nyzuros's good graces: if they've killed the goliath spider in area **H34** and promise to let Nyzuros and his team take the credit for doing so, his attitude automatically improves to friendly.

Nyzuros's forbearance isn't without limits. If the heroes have slain other drow, he turns against them.

NYZUROS CREATURE 7

Male drow hunter (page 234)

Initiative Perception +16

Items Nyzuros also holds the keys to areas **H40** and **H46**.

DROW WARDENS (4) CREATURE 4

Page 234

Initiative Perception +11

XP Award: Award the heroes 60 XP if they talk to Nyzuros rather than fight him. Award them an additional 80 XP if they successfully negotiate Nyzuros's escort into Yldaris, but don't award this additional XP if the heroes have already arranged an escort from the drow in area **H41** or from Iribo.

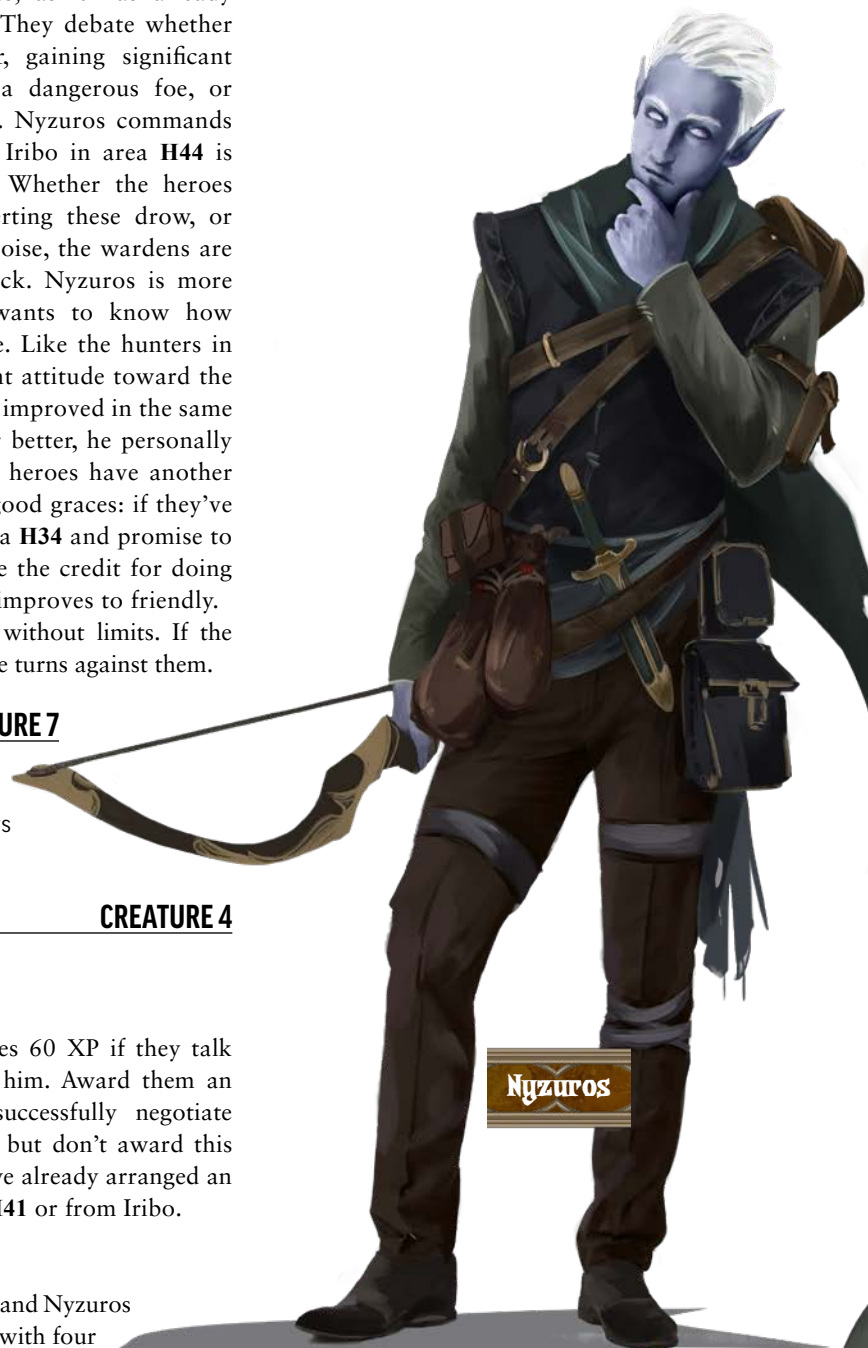
H46. PROVISIONS ROOM

The door to this room is locked, and Nyzuros has the key. A hero can open it with four

successful DC 25 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock or a successful DC 29 Athletics check to Force it Open.

This room is plainly used for storage. Casks and bundles are stacked against its north and west walls.

Treasure: The drow on this level keep their supplies here, including six weeks of rations, three casks of water, two casks of fungus wine (worth 2 gp each), five longswords, six hand crossbows, 50 bolts, and 50 gp.



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Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox

LEVEL 9: HUNTING GROUNDS
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET





CHAPTER 9: On the Hunt

As any explorer of the Darklands can tell you, the farther you descend, the wilder and stranger things become. As Belcorra dug the Abomination Vaults deeper, she found an extensive system of caverns. Unlike the self-contained Farm level, these caverns were truly wild. At first, she fought against the fierce denizens and tried to close off the passages to deeper places, but the task was futile. She dubbed the place the Hunting Grounds and left it mostly alone, save for building alliances with the communities there. Belcorra established only a few strongholds in the area, including a lodge, a vault, and the entrance to the Gate of Nhimbalothe, the subterranean temple holding the Empty Vault and the source of *Gauntlight's* power.

The Urdefhan Cult

Urdefhans are vampire-like humanoids who largely pursue lives of violence and slaughter. As brutal killers obsessed with ending life and existence itself, the urdefhans who regularly emerged from their caves to raid the caverns and lake of the Hunting Grounds were precisely the kind of soldiers Belcorra needed for

her campaign. She made a calculated, overwhelming attack to awe the urdefhans, and when the sorcerer called for a parley, the urdefhan war champion listened. Belcorra swore the urdefhans would be the vanguard of her eventual assault on the surface and gave the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens* to the war champion as a token of her favor until then. Generations passed, and the war champions passed down the *fulcrum lens* as their symbol of leadership.

Drow Allegiance

With the deep gnomes cowed and the urdefhans awed by her power, Belcorra next turned to the drow of the Hunting Grounds. From their secure stronghold of Yldaris, the drow ranged through the caverns like deadly apparitions, retreating in the face of significant danger. Belcorra knew that she must trap the drow into an alliance, so she captured and imprisoned more and more of their hunters until Yldaris's leader agreed to meet with her. She traded the captives for a promise that the drow would keep the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens* safe and provide aid in her attack on the surface.

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Belcorra's Return

When Belcorra arose as a ghost, she visited the Hunting Grounds first. She checked her treasure vault to ensure its most important contents remained secure and then sent the vault's graveknight guardian to retrieve the valuable books she'd left on an upper level. She next visited the urdefhans, who still told vague legends of the quasi-mythical sorcerer. Their new war champion, Khurfel, carried the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens* and agreed to follow their Ghost Queen to raze the surface world. The urdefhans have since stepped up their summoning of daemon allies, preparing for the pending assault.

Belcorra's visit to the drow of Yldaris went less well. Quara Orshendiel, the granddaughter of the leader from whom Belcorra extracted a promise to serve, had little idea who Belcorra was. Still, Belcorra nevertheless accepted Quara's hastily-given (and not entirely genuine) renewal of her grandfather's promise.

Hunting Grounds Features

The numerous interconnecting caverns in the Hunting Grounds are dark, but glowing fungus illuminates enough areas to provide a sense of the caverns' great size. Ceiling height varies widely: large caverns are 40 feet high, smaller caverns are 20 feet high, and areas worked for humanoid habitation—such as Yldaris, the calignis' lodge, and the Gate of Nhimbalo— are 12 feet high. Doors in most areas are made of stone or sturdy fungal wood. Entrances to inhabited areas are often thicker or otherwise reinforced for defense.

The map of this level appears on page 166.

I1. GUARDED INTERSECTION TRIVIAL 9

The passage upward to the Farm level is fairly secure, but the cautious drow keep a guard here regardless.

Creatures: A surly drow hunter named Rikizlia sits here on a stool, carving a bit of fungus wood with a small carving knife. If the heroes arrive without escort, she speeds toward area I2 for help. If other drow accompany the heroes, she watches them with open curiosity but doesn't stop her whittling.

RIKIZLIA CREATURE 7

Female drow hunter (page 234)

Initiative Perception +16

I2. CARAVAN STAGING MODERATE 9

Several bags, barrels, and crates line the walls between this cavern's three exits.

Caravans going between Yldaris and Lozardyn load and unload in this cave. It isn't always busy, as the

caravans are on an erratic schedule, but usually at least a few drow linger here. The passage east leads to a network of twisting Darklands caverns.

Creatures: When the heroes first arrive, six drow are unloading cargo from a large, harnessed pack lizard. If the heroes are under guard, or have otherwise gained the trust of Yldaris, the drow don't confront or question them; otherwise, they mobilize a quick defense. A warden takes 2 Interact actions to unhitch a riding lizard to fight alongside it. When combat starts, one of the hunters races to area I3 to rally the creatures there to join the attack. Drow who are badly outnumbered or injured flee into the caverns to the east and don't return for a few days.

DROW HUNTERS (2) CREATURE 7

Page 234

Initiative Perception +16

DROW WARDENS (4) CREATURE 4

Page 234

Initiative Perception +11

RIDING LIZARD (2) CREATURE 5

Giant frilled lizard (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 229)

Initiative Perception +11

Treasure: These trade goods include spices, dried fungus, and cloth that are all uncommon on the surface. The 18 Bulk of goods is worth 100 gp in total.

I3. STABLE MODERATE 9

This cavern contains pens for half a dozen giant lizards. A jumbled pile of harnesses sits near the corrals.

Creatures: Three drow wardens are usually here, guarding and feeding Yldaris's riding lizards. The lizards can climb out of the pens along the walls, but they don't do so unless directed to fight.

DROW WARDENS (3) CREATURE 4

Page 234

Initiative Perception +11

RIDING LIZARDS (6) CREATURE 5

Giant frilled lizard (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 229)

Initiative Perception +11

I4. SECRET TUNNEL

This tunnel appears to come to a rocky end in the south, but this ersatz collapse hides a secret door the Yldaris hunters use to come and go from the caverns.

Characters who Search this dead end can discover the secret door with a successful DC 26 Perception check. Any character who is Detecting Magic or is an expert in Survival automatically finds it, as the secret door is magical in nature, and there are several subtle tracks leading right to it.

The rubble swings aside when an invisible magical wall panel is touched by someone speaking any words in Elven. Magic reinforces the secret door, so it's impossible to break through.

15. YLDARIS ENTRY

TRIVIAL 9

Iron sheets cover the outside of the western door, with a slot at drow eye level covered by a sliding plate on the inside. The door has no keyhole or handle and is reinforced by heavy bars. Anyone seeking entrance must either burst through the door (Hardness 15, Hit Points 60) or supply the secret knock known to all of the outpost's drow (which occasionally changes) and wait for the guard to open it.

The door to the east, leading into Yldaris, uses the same construction, but it's normally open and unbarred.

Creature: A drow warden named Taklitur stands guard inside the door, ready to admit anyone who gives the proper knock. If the warden hears the wrong knock, he first ignores it, thinking another drow is just misremembering. If the beats persist, or if he realizes someone is trying to break down the door, he opens the slot to take a shot at anyone on the other side, shuts it, and raises the alarm.

TAKLITUR

CREATURE 5

Male drow warden (page 234)

Initiative Perception +11

16. WATCH CHAMBER

MODERATE 9

A table and chairs sit in the northeast corner of this large room. The walls feature words carved in a flowing script underscored with hash marks. Of the four doors leading out of this chamber, the door leading west looks sturdier than the others.

The words on the wall are drow aphorisms in Elven about staying alert and protecting one's home. The hash marks record times the drow have repelled invaders and lived up to these sayings.

Creatures: When the heroes first arrive, a drow shootist named Yrorix and a pair of hunters are playing cards with a drow version of a harrow fortune-telling deck. In the event of an assault, they knock on the three doors leading deeper into Yldaris to alert more defenders, but they make their stand here.

If the heroes are allies of Yldaris, the drow cheerfully invite the heroes into their game. The stakes aren't high, and the drow cheat relentlessly, but it might be an enjoyable way for the heroes to pass the time.

If the heroes rescued the drow rogue Falxi Orshendiel from area **F12**, he's also here gambling. Falxi is well-regarded because he's a distant cousin of Yldaris's leader, but he's fundamentally lazy. He greets the heroes warmly and insists to his companions that they can be trusted.

YRORIX

CREATURE 8

Male drow shootist (page 235)

Initiative Perception +16

CHAPTER 9 SYNOPSIS

The Hunting Grounds contains aggressive urdefhans, insular drow, and some of the most powerful monsters the heroes face in this Adventure Path. It's key for the heroes to learn about the *fulcrum* lenses, such as from the drow Quara.

This chapter provides substantial treasure, by design, as there's very little treasure on the level below.

Environmental Cues: mold, echoing roars, patches of slick slime, rough stone walls, strange tracks

CHAPTER 9 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 9 are as follows:

- +1 repeating hand crossbow (page 226)
- +1 resilient full plate
- +1 shauth blade (page 226)
- +1 striking corrosive longsword
- +1 striking kukri
- +1 striking repeating hand crossbow
- +1 striking rhoka sword (page 226)
- +1 striking shauth lash (page 226)
- +2 armor potency rune
- +2 resilient chain shirt
- +2 striking battle axe
- +2 striking dagger
- +2 striking mace
- boots of elvenkind
- cloak of elvenkind
- Emerald Fulcrum Lens (page 221)
- Fulcrum Lattice (page 221)
- greater healer's gloves
- greater pendant of the occult
- iron medallion
- lethargy poison
- moderate necrotic bomb (page 213)
- mummified bat
- Ochre Fulcrum Lens (page 222)
- oil of keen edges
- ring of lies
- scroll of spirit blast
- standard-grade adamantine warhammer
- stupor poison (page 214)
- swan boat feather token
- wand of continuation (stoneskin)
- wand of manifold missiles (1st level)

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DROW HUNTERS (2)

CREATURE 7

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Initiative Perception +16

FALXI ORSHENDIEL

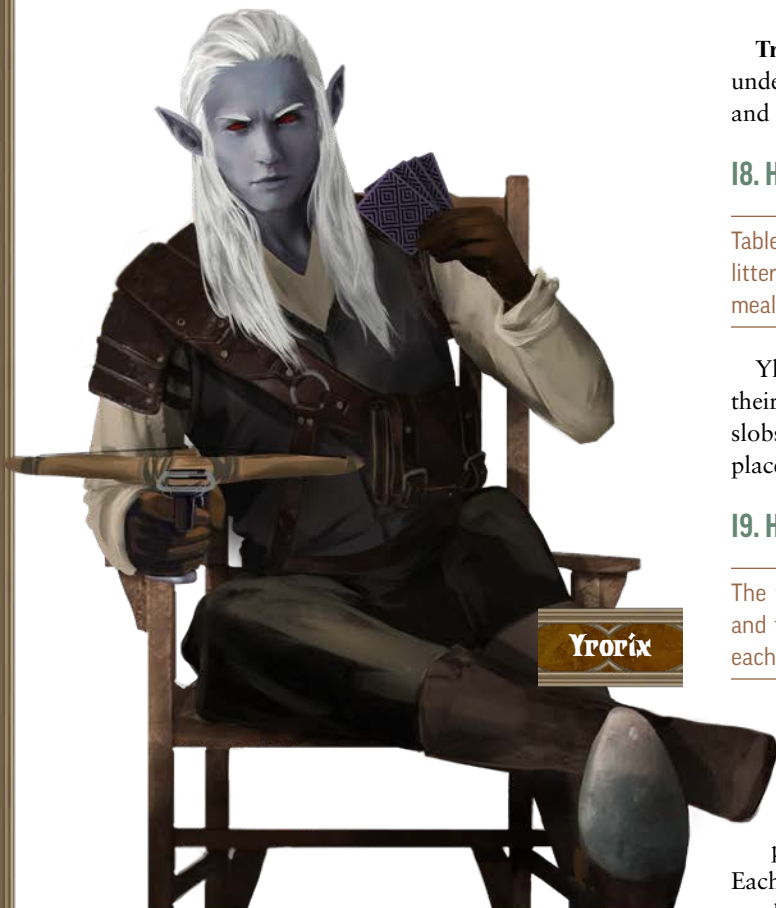
CREATURE 2

Male drow rogue (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 137)

Initiative Perception +6

A Peaceful Meeting: If any drow led the heroes to meet with Quara, they stop here and ask the heroes to leave their weapons for the duration of that meeting. Falxi (or, in his absence, Yrorix) promises to watch over their gear personally. As it's forbidden to bring armed strangers before their leader, the drow don't negotiate this point. If the heroes balk, the drow usher them out and invite them to return if they change their minds.

Treasure: The deck of harrow cards is well worn but features unusual drow iconography. It's worth 15 gp. Stacks of wagers worth 24 gp sit around the table.



17. TANIETH'S ABODE

TRIVIAL 9

This small room has a bed and table next to it. A ceramic mug and a modified hand crossbow sit next to the bed.

This is the sleeping quarters for a solitary shootist named Tanieth. Tanieth is a loner; when he isn't resting here, tinkering with his repeating hand crossbow with parts from another, inoperable repeating hand crossbow, he's ranging the Hunting Grounds alone. His good looks and remote demeanor make him something of a heartthrob among some Yldaris drow.

Creatures: Tanieth doesn't like being disturbed. He tends to shoot first and ask questions later, even if it's another drow who bothers him.

TANIETH

CREATURE 8

Male drow shootist (page 235)

Initiative Perception +16

Treasure: Tanieth has hidden several treasures under his mattress, including a small sack with 50 gp and three opals worth 100 gp each.

18. HUNTERS' MESS

Tables, chairs, dirty dishes, empty bottles, and utensils litter this chamber. It's evident that creatures eat their meals here but very rarely clean up afterwards.

Yldaris's hunters are skilled at their craft and keep their equipment in good working order but tend to be slobs in their day-to-day living. They usually avoid this place unless they're eating.

19. HUNTERS' QUARTERS

LOW 9

The five bunk beds in this area are a mess of blankets and furs. A trio of locker boxes is stacked at the foot of each bunk.

While not in the total disarray of the adjacent mess hall, this room is remarkably untidy. The beds are unassigned; hunters simply grab a bunk when they can. Unlike the beds, each padlocked locker box belongs to a specific hunter. Each padlock requires five successful DC 30 Thievery checks to unlock or a single DC 30 Athletics check to Force Open. Most hunters carry their keys on their person.

Creatures: At least three hunters are usually resting here. They're quick to rouse and confront danger.

DROW HUNTERS (3)

CREATURE 7

Page 234

Initiative Perception +16

Treasure: Each locked box has some personal items, 2d10 gp, and 4d10 sp. One contains a *mummified bat*.

I10. TARGET PRACTICE

LOW 9

A cluster of stools takes up one corner of this room, but most of it's empty space with several reed-stuffed dummies dangling from the ceiling on the south wall. The dummies are full of holes, a few bolts still lodged in them.

The shootists engage in close-range target practice here. A secret door conceals a storage closet to the west; a hero who Searches the room and succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check locates it. One of the hooks for hanging dummies, when pulled, causes the door to slide open. The closet holds discarded dummies and some atrocious fungus wine.

Creatures: There are typically a pair of shootists practicing here. Fiercely competitive, they ignore any sounds outside this room, as they're so focused.

DROW SHOOTISTS (2)

CREATURE 8

Page 235

Initiative Perception +16

I11. SHOOTISTS' QUARTERS

LOW 9

Four bunk beds are crammed into this room. In front of each sits a trio of sturdy, padlocked boxes.

The shootists tend to be much more orderly than the hunters, but this is still a communal space. Shootists come and go when they aren't doing other tasks in and outside of Yldaris and sleep where they'd like. The lockboxes are similar to those in area 19.

Creatures: There are typically a pair of shootists resting here at any given time. They're quick to respond to any alarm or sounds of trouble.

DROW SHOOTISTS (2)

CREATURE 8

Page 235

Initiative Perception +16

Treasure: Each locked box has personal items, 3d10 gp, and 5d10 sp. One contains an *oil of keen edges*.

I12. WARDEN BARRACKS

TRIVIAL 9

This room contains a pair of bunks and a low table.

Like the hunters and the shootists, drow wardens dwell in these barracks. The more regimented wardens insist on assigned bunks, but they don't have lockboxes and thus keep their valuables with them and their personal items tucked inside their blankets.

Creatures: There's typically at least one warden resting in each room. When any are in danger, they call out for the others, who quickly come out of their rooms. Encountering these wardens together constitutes a Trivial challenge for 9th-level characters (if Salaisa Malthulas is present in area I14, she joins the fight, making this a severe challenge).

DROW WARDENS (5)

CREATURE 5

Page 234

Initiative Perception +11

I13. OVERFLOW LODGING

This room contains a pair of bunks, each with a carefully folded bedroll atop the mattress. At the foot of each sits a pair of strongboxes with padlocks and keys.

As with any border outpost, Yldaris's population waxes and wanes with caravans coming and going at any given time. These rooms are set aside for visitors, and Quara offers them to the heroes. The empty locker boxes and padlocks are like those in area 19.

I14. MASTER WARDEN'S QUARTERS MODERATE 9

Master Warden Salaisa Malthulas keeps the door to her bedroom locked and carries the only key. It requires five successful DC 30 Thievery checks to unlock or a single DC 33 Athletics check to Force Open.

This room is tidy and clean. It contains a bed, a small desk, and a large trunk.

Yldaris drow all look to Salaisa for leadership when Quara isn't around. If something happens to Quara, Salaisa becomes Yldaris's next leader.

The desk contains extensive notes about the wardens of Yldaris: their names, schedules, personal quirks, and other evidence that Salaisa is watching them all very closely. The trunk contains only personal items.

Creatures: Salaisa is continuously on the move and rarely uses her room for anything but sleep. The heroes might encounter Salaisa anywhere in or near Yldaris. She isn't nearly as friendly with the heroes as Quara is, and she's concerned that having unknown surface dwellers in Yldaris puts the whole community at risk.

In a fight, Salaisa quickly seeks aid from any nearby drow. She's reluctant to let opponents flee because she

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doesn't want to fight them again later. She's utterly loyal to Yldaris, and she fights to the death to protect it.

SALAIISA MALTHULAS

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE N MEDIUM DROW ELF HUMANOID

Female drow head warden (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 136)

Perception +22; darkvision

Languages Elven, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +21, Athletics +22, Intimidation +20, Stealth +21, Survival +20



Salaisa Malthulas

Str +5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1

Items breastplate, hand crossbow (10 bolts), +1 *striking corrosive longsword*, stupor poison (3; page 214)

Light Blindness

AC 31; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +21, **Will** +22; +1 status to all saves vs. magic, +2 status to all saves vs. mental

HP 200; **Immunities** sleep

Attack of Opportunity ⤴

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ *longsword* +24 (versatile P), **Damage** 2d8+9 slashing plus 1d6 acid

Ranged ♦ hand crossbow +22, **Damage** 1d6+8 piercing plus stupor poison

Divine Innate Spells DC 28; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *faerie fire* (at will); **Cantrips (6th)** *dancing lights*

Attack Now! ♦ Salaisa shouts, and a drow ally within 30 feet that can see or hear Salaisa makes a melee or ranged Strike as a reaction.

Storm of Blades ♦♦ Salaisa Strides up to her Speed. She can make up to three longsword Strikes at any point during this movement, each against a different target within reach. These attacks count toward her multiple attack penalty, but the multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after she makes all of her attacks. If she moves half her speed or less during Storm of Blades, that movement doesn't trigger reactions.

Treasure: Salaisa's desk contains suspicious items confiscated from visitors, including a ruby idol of the evil god Mazmezz worth 40 gp.

I15. COMMON AREA

LOW 9

This large room contains several tables with benches and a few padded chairs. Heads of strange creatures hang stuffed and mounted on the walls.

The heads are trophies of creatures slain in the Hunting Grounds. They include an albino basilisk, a chuul, an ether spider, and a seugathi (page 244).

The secret door on the south wall is one-way; it doesn't open from this side and can't be detected here.

Creatures: There are 2d4 wardens here at any time, eating meals or swapping stories.

DROW WARDENS (2D4)

CREATURE 5

Page 234

Initiative Perception +11

I16. KITCHEN

TRIVIAL 9

Several fire pits and small ovens with flues bored into the rock walls stand about this chamber. Dishes

and utensils are stacked on a central table. A basin of water stands in one corner, a soapy film across the top. Stacks of barrels and crates totter precariously against the south wall.

Yldaris has no dedicated cooking staff. Drow prepare their own food or talk others into cooking for them (a common penalty for losing at gambling or an athletic contest).

Creatures: There are typically 1d4 wardens preparing meals here.

DROW WARDENS (1d4)

CREATURE 4

Page 234

Initiative Perception +11

117. GREAT CHAMBER

MODERATE 9

This massive chamber has a high, vaulted ceiling. At its center stands a small forge, anvil, and worktable with various tools. A few benches line the walls.

This room serves double duty as the outpost's workroom and meeting hall. The drow sometimes move tables here for banquets or meetings.

Creatures: Quara meets with the heroes here; see **Befriending the Drow** on page 174.

QUARA ORSHENDIEL

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM DROW ELF HUMANOID

Female drow leader (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 136)

Perception +21; darkvision

Languages Common, Daemonic, Elven, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +20, Deception +22, Diplomacy +20, Intimidation +22, Stealth +20, Survival +19

Str +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +5

Items chain shirt, +1 striking repeating hand crossbows (2, with 3 magazines; page 226), shootist bandolier (page 225), +1 striking kukri, stupor poison (4; page 214)

Light Blindness

AC 30; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +22, **Will** +21; +1 status to all saves vs. magic, +2 status to all saves vs. mental

HP 190; **Immunities** sleep

Commanding Aura (aura, emotion, mental) 30 feet. Drow around Quara are heartened by her presence. Her drow allies in the aura gain a +1 status bonus to attack rolls and skill checks.

Deny Advantage Quara isn't flat-footed to hidden, undetected, or flanking creatures of 11th level or lower, or to creatures of 11th level or lower using Surprise Attack.

Evasion When Quara rolls a success on a Reflex saving throw, she gets a critical success instead.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ kukri +24 (agile, finesse, trip), **Damage** 2d6+9 slashing

Ranged ♦ repeating hand crossbow +24 (range increment 60 feet, reload 0, repeating), **Damage** 2d6+9 piercing plus stupor poison

Divine Innate Spells DC 28; **2nd** darkness (at will), *faerie fire* (at will); **Cantrips (6th)** dancing lights

Defensive Shooter Quara's attacks don't trigger reactions.



Quara Orshendiel

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DROW AID

Gaining the drow's trust is a tremendous boon to the heroes' mission in the Hunting Grounds and beyond. Not only do they gain a safe place to rest, but they can also use the outpost's forge and workspace (area **I17**) to repair or even craft items. Furthermore, traders can sell them any common items up to 7th level including alchemical items, gear, and weapons from the Adventure Toolbox. Items they don't have on hand require a week or so to fetch from Lozardyn.

Lastly, heroes who learn from Yldaris's shootists gain access to the drow shootist archetype (page 227).

Poison Weapon ♦ (manipulate) **Requirements** Quara is holding a piercing or slashing weapon and has a free hand; **Effect** Quara applies poison to the weapon.

Reloading Trick ♦ **Requirements** Quara is holding an unloaded repeating hand crossbow; **Effect** Quara Interacts to reload the repeating hand crossbow and Strikes with it.

Shootist's Draw ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Quara Interacts to draw a loaded repeating hand crossbow and Strikes with it, or Strikes with a loaded repeating hand crossbow she's holding and then Interacts to stow it.

Skirmishing Dash ♦♦ Quara Strides or Steps, then Strikes. This Strike deals an additional 3d6 damage.

Treasure: A repeating crossbow magazine (page 226) and a superb repair kit are on the worktable.

BEFRIENDING THE DROW

If the heroes dealt peacefully with the drow and earned an audience with Quara, wary drow wardens escort them here and ask them to wait. Various staff bring in chairs from the common area (area **I15**) and food and fungus wine from the kitchen (area **I16**). The wardens are curious and talkative, as they have little experience with surface-dwellers, but they avoid conversation that sounds like an interrogation—that's Quara's prerogative. If the heroes are reticent or rude, the drow simply wait in silence. If the heroes unwisely attack, the wardens call for backup.

Before long, Quara arrives to greet the heroes, radiating calm command and curiosity. She's joined by the stern-looking Salaisa Malthulas, commander of the outpost's wardens, and the strange twin drow cavern seers, Bhazrade and Klathor, who remain quietly at a distance. Quara does the talking.

"You have the look of surface dwellers. I've never met any of your kind, but I've seen artwork. Strange, you are not nearly as ugly as our art makes you out to be. I am Quara Orshendiel, leader of this outpost. Let's figure out whether or not we can help one another."

If the heroes rescued Falxi, Quara adds her thanks for rescuing her cousin from "one of the scrapes he keeps getting himself into."

Quara is sincere in her words and her goals. The seers foretold that surface dwellers would come as potential allies, and Quara wants to believe it.

Quara invites the heroes to tell their story. She sympathizes with hardships, laughs at humorous parts, and asks questions when she doesn't understand something. If the heroes mention the *fulcrum lenses* or show her one, she takes an obvious interest. Quara overlooks petty slights or rudeness, but she chastises any overt aggression calmly—once. Her patience isn't infinite, and overly obnoxious heroes are asked to leave Yldaris and not return.

At the end of the conversation, Quara says, "You've given me some things to think about. Thank you." She then invites the heroes to stay in the overflow lodging (area **I13**) until she makes up her mind. Quara spends a few hours thinking, then gambles on an alliance.

She calls the heroes back into this room, either a few hours later or the next time they return to Yldaris. Bhazrade and Klathor are, as before, lurking at the edges of the room. Quara explains the following.

"I believe you've been truthful with me, so I'm going to be truthful with you. Yldaris only exists at Belcorra's pleasure. It was here when she first created her vast dungeons; at the time, my grandfather was its leader. Belcorra made allies of several groups, including drow, urdefhans to the west, and the deep gnomes above, who have embraced undeath. To each, she gave a large magical lens with strange powers. For safekeeping, I believe. Ours was the Ochre Fulcrum Lens, and it could manipulate emotions.

"But there was more to the lens. My grandfather told my father, Larathols, who became Yldaris's leader after him. But my father never told me." Quara sighs. "I was never meant to lead. My older sister was to succeed my father. They both embarked on a secret expedition a few years ago. On an island in the great lake, the urdefhan warlord Khurfel caught and killed them. Their expedition had something to do with the lens, I believe, and I suspect my father had it with him. Perhaps he hid it someplace; perhaps Khurfel took it. I don't know.

"Belcorra came to me as a ghost shortly afterward. She insisted I swear Yldaris's support and aid in a surface invasion that drives her even in death. For the good of

Yldaris, I renewed the vows my grandfather made. But I've never felt bound by mere words. I won't help her. I'll help you. You're welcome in Yldaris as long as you'd like."

The heroes can ask Quara more questions if they'd like, but she knows little else. Before the conversation winds down, however, Bhazrade and Klathor speak.

"There is more..." one of the twins says. They move their mouths in unison, making it hard to tell which is speaking.

"...you should know," the other drow continues.

This plainly piques Quara's interest, and she motions for the brothers to go on.

"The ochre lens lies in a dark and wet place. Khurfel didn't claim it. Larathols dropped it in the water to deny it to his enemy. He died attempting to learn more of its purpose, more than the partial truth we know," one twin speaks.

"We have seen in a vision that the stones both empower the Ghost Queen and hold the key to her demise. They are slivers of something ancient, alien, evil, and hungry," the other continues.

"We saw eyes of Empty Death!" they cry in unison.

"She separated the lenses because, together, they draw the baleful attention of the Empty Death. Even the Ghost Queen cannot withstand the Empty Death when their powers are joined within her. The secrets to the lenses are in the old treasure vault, which overlooks the lake."

"Find the lenses and the answers Larathols sought."

The twin seers fall silent again, and Quara looks back to the heroes. She explains, "I would say you get used to Bhazrade and Klathor, but one never does. Let me assure you that when they do speak, it's important. This is all news to me, but when their words benefit Yldaris, and you as well."

Consulting the Whispering Reeds: The heroes might have recovered a book of Nhimbaloth's lore, called *The Whispering Reeds*, from higher in the Abomination Vaults. A hero who consults this tome finds references to the *fulcrum lenses* without a check to Recall Knowledge and without suffering from the book's curse. *The Whispering Reeds* speaks of slivers of Nhimbaloth's essence existing in the *fulcrum lenses*, perhaps as a means to contact the Outer God. The *fulcrum lenses* possess different and powerful (but, in the text, unspecified) abilities. Yet the *fulcrum lenses* are dangerous in close proximity, and even Nhimbaloth's worshippers fear to bring more than two or three together. Using their powers draws Nhimbaloth's scrutiny and invites destruction.

Side Quest: Finding the *fulcrum lenses* and using them against Belcorra is the primary goal of the Abomination Vaults Adventure Path. But Quara has

a side task that's personally important to her: she'd like Khurfel killed and his rhoka sword brought to her as a trophy. As pragmatic as Quara is, she carries the common drow vice of vengeance. She emphasizes to the heroes that Khurfel would never part with the lens while he draws breath, so defeating him is necessary in any case.

XP Award: Award the heroes 120 XP for allying with Quara and the Yldaris drow.



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118. SEERS' QUARTERS

MODERATE 9

This large room contains only two thin sleeping mats. The ceiling is painted with patterns resembling constellations.

Bhazrade and Klathor live here. The twins receive enigmatic divinations by communing with the stone of the Darklands, focused through the patterns in the ceiling. They share this wisdom with their allies in whatever way they believe best benefits Yldaris.

Creatures: When here, the twins are usually meditating or resting. In a fight, they use their occult powers to harry and incapacitate foes one at a time.

BHAZRADE AND KLATHOR

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM DROW ELF HUMANOID

Male drow cavern seers (2; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 136)

Perception +18; darkvision

Languages Common, Elven, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +17, Nature +18, Occultism +18 (+20 underground), Stealth +19, Survival +18

Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

Items staff, *wand of manifold missiles* (1st level)

Light Blindness

AC 27; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +19, **Will** +18; +1 status to all saves vs. magic, +2 status to all saves vs. mental

HP 110; **Immunities** sleep

Stone Defense **Trigger** An enemy is about to damage the cavern seer with bludgeoning damage or with a spell that has the earth trait; **Effect** The cavern seer gains resistance 10 against the triggering damage.

Speed 30 feet

Melee **◆** staff +19 (two-hand d8), **Damage** 1d4+4 bludgeoning

Divine Innate Spells DC 28; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *faerie fire* (at will); **Cantrips (5th)** *dancing lights*

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 28, attack +20; **5th** (3 slots) *black tentacles*, *ectoplasmic expulsion* (page 224), *prying eyes*; **4th** (4 slots) *dimension door*, *globe of invulnerability*, *outcast's curse*, *sound burst*; **3rd** (4 slots) *blindness*, *heroism*, *slow*, *wanderer's guide*; **2nd** (4 slots) *augury*, *false life*, *invisibility*, *paranoia*; **1st** (4 slots) *bless*, *command*, *grim tendrils*, *mending*; **Cantrips (5th)** *chill touch*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *know direction*, *shield*

Rituals DC 28; *commune*, *geas*

Cavern Distortion **◆◆** (occult, transmutation) **Frequency** once per day; **Requirements** The cavern seer is underground; **Effect** Pebbles and dust rise from the stone to impede vision. The cavern seer and their allies within 60 feet become concealed for 1 minute. This concealment can't be used to Hide or Sneak.

Underground Stride The cavern seer ignores difficult terrain while underground.

119. QUARA'S CHAMBER

Both doors along this hallway are locked, and Quara carries the keys. Picking a Lock requires five successful DC 30 Thievery checks or a successful DC 33 Athletics check to Force Open. The inner door bears a *glyph of warding* containing a 4th-level *sound burst* (DC 28 basic Reflex save; DC 28 to notice and disarm the glyph). The glyph triggers if the door is opened without the key.

An unmade bed piled with pelts sits next to a table stacked with papers and a half-eaten meal on a plate. A chest sits crookedly in the corner with clothing spilling out of it.

This chamber has always housed Yldaris's leader; it was most recently Larathols's room, and now it's Quara's. This fact sits uneasily with her, as she still considers the room to be her father's private space.

The north wall contains a cunning secret door, which Quara can use to slip into the common area to find reinforcements or escape from trouble. Locating the secret door requires a successful DC 30 Perception check, and opening it involves pushing the correct sequence of hidden wall panels to cause the wall to slide outward.

Treasure: Within the open chest, amid personal items and changes of clothes, is a small iron box containing 50 gp, a gold and opal bracelet worth 75 gp, and 5 tiny diamonds worth 30 gp each. The chest also contains two black *cloaks of elvenkind* and two pairs of *boots of elvenkind*. Quara loans these items to her people during particularly sensitive missions in the Hunting Grounds. She might loan them to heroes on especially good terms with her.

120. MEDITATION CAVE

This massive cavern is stunning. Among its gray stones cut veins and growths of crystals in lustrous shades of pearl white, dark purple, glimmering blue, and brilliant scarlet. At the center of the chamber waits a shallow pool, its bottom and sides made of the same glittering crystals.

This chamber is the closest thing that the outpost has to a temple, though few Yldaris drow are religious. Bhazrade and Klathor perform their rituals here.

121. LODGE ENTRY

This large stone structure is flanked on one side by the massive *Gauntlight* footprint to the north and on the other by the enormous iron ladder descending from the chasm in the Farm level. Belcorra built this lodge so those hunting in the wild caverns could relax in relative safety. In the earliest days, urdefhans, drow, and

various mercenary hunters all used the lodge in a series of uneasy truces enforced by Belcorra and her Children. These fragile truces fell apart when Belcorra died, and the lodge has changed hands several times since then.

The calignis currently holed up within are insular and reclusive. They only rarely leave to hunt, as their leader Galudu takes care of most of their needs. The heroes' best way to meet them peacefully is to speak with Dulac in the shrine (area H8). Otherwise, the calignis view anyone barging in here as a threat, and the heroes must be especially diplomatic to placate them.

The door had a massive lock, but it was smashed long ago. Now, the calignis bar the door from the inside. It can't be Forced Open, but it can be destroyed (Hardness 15, Hit Points 60). It's also protected by the glyph described below.

Glyph of Warding: Galudu placed a *glyph of warding* on this door that affects any non-caligni who touches it. It contains a 5th-level *lightning bolt* (DC 26 basic Reflex save; DC 26 to notice and disarm the glyph).

122. GREAT HALL

SEVERE 9

This large hall was once grand and impressive. Now the walls' murals are chipped and stained, the floor is covered with mud, and the few pieces of furniture look like they've been hastily repaired many times. A fire pit sits at the center of the chamber.

Once a lively meeting place and banquet hall for hunters, the area now serves as an outpost where caligni refugees keep a careful watch for intruders. The two smaller doors of the area are unlocked, but the large double door to the west is barred from this side.

Creatures: Three calignis try to contain intruders and keep them from penetrating any deeper into the lodge. If possible, a defender moves to the smaller doors and knocks on them, alerting the other calignis to an attack. This brings the calignis in area I23; together, this makes up a Severe encounter for 9th-level characters. If Custodian Dulac accompanies the heroes, the calignis grudgingly point her toward area I25 to speak with Galudu.

CALIGNI DEFENDERS (3)

CREATURE 8

RARE CN MEDIUM CALIGNI HUMANOID

Perception +16; greater darkvision

Languages Caligni, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +17, Athletics +18, Intimidation +16, Stealth +17, Survival +16

Str +4, **Dex** +5, **Con** +1, **Int** -1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2

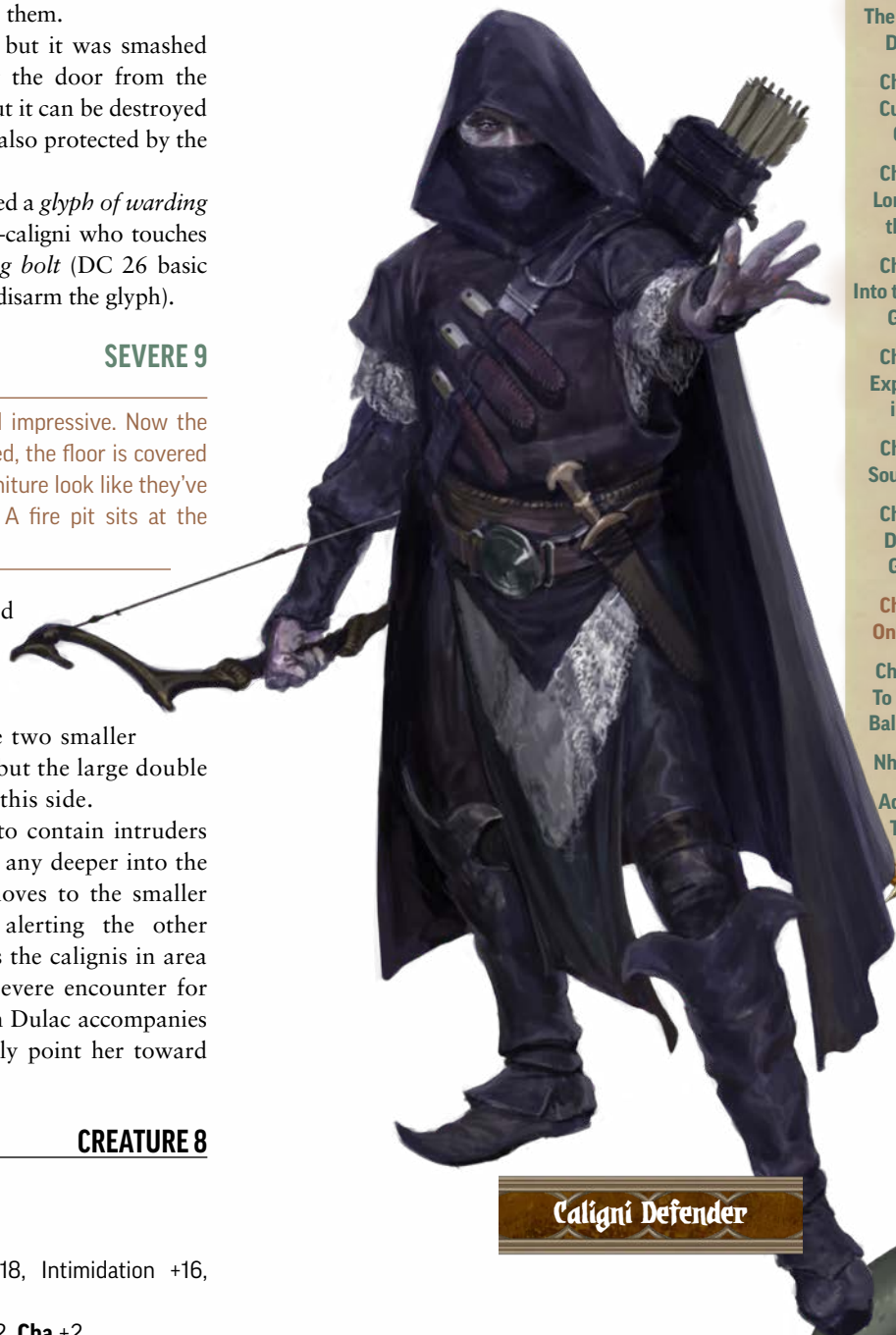
Items black smear poison (2 doses; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 51), chainmail, shortbow (20 arrows)

Light Blindness

AC 28; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +19, **Will** +16

HP 125; death flame

Bravery When the caligni defender rolls a success on a Will save against a fear effect, they get a critical success instead. In addition, any time they gain the frightened condition, reduce its value by 1.



Caligni Defender

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Death Flame (light) When the caligni defender dies, their body combusts in a flash of white-hot flame. All creatures in a 20-foot burst take 6d10 fire damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save). Their gear and treasure are unaffected by the flames and are left in a pile where they died.

Attack of Opportunity ☞

Speed 25 feet

Melee ✦ shortsword +19 (agile, finesse, versatile S),
Damage 1d6+8 piercing plus black smear poison

Ranged ✦ shortbow +19 (deadly d10, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), **Damage** 1d6+8 piercing plus black smear poison

Occult Innate Spells DC 24; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *obscuring mist* (at will); **Cantrips (3rd)** *detect magic*

Shoulder to Shoulder When adjacent to one or more defenders they can see, the defender deals an additional 2d6 damage with their Strikes.

I23. CALIGNI BUNKS

LOW 9

This room is filthy and smells stale. Rags and tattered rugs and blankets litter the floor.

This sleeping chamber is dimly lit, as the cracks around the door to area **I24** glow.

Creatures: The two calignis resting here respond to commotion in the great hall. If outclassed, a defender opens the door to area **I24** to set the undead free.

CALIGNI DEFENDERS (2)

CREATURE 8

Page 177

Initiative Perception +16

I24. STRANGE DEAD

MODERATE 9

If the heroes examine the glow in the door's cracks, it shifts as if the light source within is moving around.

A stack of dusty urns is heaped against the east wall of this small room. Each is covered with jagged runes.

The caligni keep out of this room due to its strange occupants, a pair of rare undead calignis called bright walkers. Only Galudu regularly comes here to speak with them; the other calignis only open the door if they need serious and immediate aid.

The urns are left over from when this place was a lodge for hunters. There are 11 urns in total, each 3 feet tall. They were used to magically preserve creature parts taken as trophies, but their magic expired long ago. Four urns contain shriveled claws or bones.

Creatures: The two bright walkers pace restlessly in this room, but Galudu does her best to keep them

grounded and calm. When they see non-calignis, they assume the lodge is under attack and fight until destroyed, or until Galudu calls them off.

BRIGHT WALKERS (2)

CREATURE 9

Page 231

Initiative Perception +19

I25. OLD RUBBISH

Piles of broken furniture, rags, and other rubbish litter this dirty room.

Galudu sometimes meets with others here, rather than in her private chamber to the south. If the heroes are with Custodian Dulac, Dulac asks them to wait here while she privately informs Galudu about them.

I26. GALUDU'S ROOM

MODERATE 9

A large bay window of transparent stone overlooks the wilderness outside the lodge, but it's so covered in grime that it's difficult to see through with any clarity. A makeshift table has been erected near the center of the room, and a sleeping mat is rolled up to one side of it.

Creatures: Galudu spends most of her time here. She isn't only the leader of the calignis but their chief provider, feeding them with conjured food and water when hunters return empty-handed—or not at all.

If the heroes fought their way through the lodge, Galudu uses her spells to drive them off. With nowhere else to go, she fights to the death.

If Custodian Dulac led the heroes here, Galudu is wary but welcoming; if the heroes aided Dulac and her band of foolish cultists, they might be able to help her as well. She listens to the heroes but quickly introduces the topic of her side quest on page 179.

GALUDU

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM CALIGNI HUMANOID

Female caligni leader (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 50)

Perception +18; greater darkvision

Languages Caligni, Common, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +20, Arcana +18, Deception +22, Diplomacy +20, Stealth +20

Str +2, **Dex** +5, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +5

Items dagger, wand of continuation (stoneskin)


Light Blindness

AC 30; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +21, **Will** +22


HP 195, death motes


Death Motes (force, light) When Galudu dies, her body explodes into brilliant motes of magical energy. All creatures

in a 20-foot burst take 12d6 force damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save). Galudu's gear is unaffected by the explosion and is left in a pile where she died.

Opportune Step  **Trigger** A dazzled or blinded creature, or a creature with light blindness, ends its move adjacent to Galudu; **Effect** Galudu Steps.

Speed 25 feet

Melee  dagger +22 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+9 piercing

Melee  dagger +22 (agile, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+9 piercing

Occult Innate Spells DC 28, attack +20; **4th** *darkness*; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *obscuring mist* (at will); **Cantrips** (6th) *detect magic*

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 30, attack +22; **6th** *dominate*, *mislead*, *repulsion*; **5th** *banishment*, *cloudkill*, *cone of cold* (×2); **4th** *create food* (×2), *globe of invulnerability*, *veil*; **3rd** *blindness*, *glyph of warding*, *lightning bolt* (×2); **2nd** *create food*, *hideous laughter*, *invisibility*, *telekinetic maneuver*; **1st** *alarm*, *create water* (×3); **Cantrips** (6th) *acid splash*, *daze*, *message*, *ray of frost*, *shield*

Sneak Attack Galudu deals an additional 3d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Survivor's Nourishment (healing) A creature that eats food conjured by Galudu's *create food* spell regains 4d4 Hit Points. A creature can only benefit from this healing once per week.

Side Quest: Galudu explains that the calignis here are all refugees, fleeing from some calamity deeper in the Darklands that she doesn't explain. Several calignis died before they made it safely to this lodge; only the strongest now remain. She quickly glosses over the schism that led to Dulac occupying the upper levels as Cult of Urthagul; Galudu considers Dulac and her cult to be simpletons clinging at misplaced hope and doesn't care about their fate. She's more interested in finding a safe exit for herself and her caligni defenders; the cultists are welcome to come along if they don't slow Galudu down.

Galudu explains that there are two ways to leave, but both are blocked by powerful monsters: a daemon to the south (area I31) and a dragon to the west (area I51). Furthermore, hunting bands of urdefhans can—and have—whittled down the calignis' numbers. If the heroes agree to eliminate either monster (or, better yet, have already done so) and escort the calignis there, Galudu gives them her magic wand as payment. Galudu doesn't know that area I42 also leads out of the Hunting Grounds, but she's happy to take that passage if the heroes clear the way. The heroes are on their own to defeat the creature they choose and

can come back to escort the calignis. As the defenders in area I22 don't let them in through area I21, they'll have to return to the Farm level and descend through the shrine to return to Galudu.

URDEFHAN ATTACK

If the heroes accept the side quest, the journey isn't without incident. Urdefhan death scouts are waiting for the calignis to come into the open. The denizens of areas I35 and I36 come together to assault the group.

SEVERE 9



Galudu

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THE CAVERN VAST

Most of the Hunting Grounds is a wilderness of rock formations, crystal growths, mineral springs, and vast swaths of towering fungi. Its denizens aren't always found in their respective encounter areas. Every 15 minutes that the heroes spend traversing the cavern, make a secret DC 5 flat check. On a success, they face one of the following random encounters. If the result would be a creature the heroes have already faced, treat it as no encounter.

d12	Encounter
1	An escaped riding lizard from area I30
2	Salaisa Malthulas from area I14 and 1d4 wardens from area I12
3-4	2 drow shootists from area I10
5	2 caligni defenders from area I23
6-7	Urdefhan warband: 2 death scouts and 2 lashers from area I34
8-9	Urdefhans and daemons: 4 warriors and 2 ceustodaemons from area I34
10	Urdefhan sacrifice seekers: 1 blood mage and 3 tormenters from area I35
11	The cauthooj from area I41 , which returns to its nest after 2 rounds
12	Ravirex from area I51

This is a Severe encounter for 9th-level characters, but they have the calignis on their side.

I27. LADDER BASE

LOW 9

A large, iron ladder stretches upward into the darkness. Its chains and rods are cracked and flaked with rust.

This ladder leads over 100 feet up to area **H34**.

Creatures: Four ceustodaemons prowl amid the rubble and fungus at the ladder's base. They're so eager for violence that they fight anyone they see to the death.

CEUSTODAEMONS (4)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 71

Initiative Perception +14

I28. CENTRAL PIT

A ribbon of twisting light extends from a circular hole in the ceiling to a matching hole in the floor. The stone near the

light looks pockmarked and infected. The rounded walls are decorated with snarling stone heads of fearsome monsters.

Gauntlight's interior can't be reached from this level; the only access is from 100 feet above (area **H37**) or 100 feet below (area **J20**). A living creature that ends its turn within the 5-foot-diameter ribbon of light takes 9d6 negative damage (DC 24 basic Reflex save). The stone heads are simply decor that Belcorra liked; they constitute a checklist of sorts for aberrations. They include chuuls, fleshwarps, gugs, and other monsters the heroes have likely already encountered. They aren't made of the same invulnerable stone as *Gauntlight* and thus can be removed or destroyed normally.

I29. BOATHOUSE

MODERATE 9

This squat stone building, only eight feet high, hugs the shore. Two wooden docks jut from the building into the dark waters of the massive underground lake. The doors are caked with mold and lichen, as if they haven't been opened in years.

The Children of Belcorra once tended to this lake as they did the one above, but the urdefhans routed them centuries ago. During this rout, the urdefhans drove Beluthus, a powerful occultist among the Children of Belcorra, back to this boathouse and locked him in. Beluthus has remained inside ever since, succumbing to torpor like many of the other undead gnomes. In addition to being caked with mold, the doors have makeshift planks nailed across them on the outside. The planks are easy to pry off, but doing so is noisy and alerts Beluthus. Inside, an old but serviceable rowboat hangs from the ceiling on short chains.

Creatures: Beluthus wakes when anyone pries open the doors or intrudes into the boathouse. He lashes out with fury, eager to recover more souls after his long torpor and rejoin the other Children of Belcorra.

BELUTHUS

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE NE SMALL UNDEAD

Male devourer (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 278)

Initiative Perception +22

Treasure: The rowboat contains a small sea chest with a *swan boat feather token*, a *runestone* with a +2 armor potency rune, and a +2 striking dagger.

I30. LIZARD RUN

LOW 9

The ceiling of this cavern sports many crystal growths and stalactites. A pattering drizzle drips from these formations, and paths wind through thick fungus growing on the ground.

The Yldaris drow cultivated this area with a thick, fast-growing fungus developed by drow mycologists in distant communities. These mushrooms hide drow movements and provide the community with a ready source of food.

Movement in this area is challenging, as the thick mushrooms conceal stalagmites and crystalline growths on the ground. For Yldaris drow and their riding lizards, who know the terrain, the ground is difficult terrain; for all other creatures, it's greater difficult terrain.

Creatures: The drow let their riding lizards run free in this area. The predators of the cavern sometimes catch and kill an errant lizard, but the drow don't mind the loss, as they can study the site of the kill and learn more information about creatures hunting near their home. Four riding lizards currently reside here, all just reaching maturity. As two of their siblings were recently killed by urdefhans, they're aggressive to non-drow humanoids. A lizard reduced to fewer than 25 Hit Points flees the area.

RIDING LIZARDS (4)

CREATURE 5

Giant frilled lizard (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 229)

Initiative Perception +11

Treasure: While the giant frilled lizards have no treasure, 87 gp and 120 sp are scattered near the remains of a spider's web. A dead drow in the web wears *greater healing gloves* and a *cloak of elvenkind*.

131. THE BARRENS

SEVERE 9

The fungus growth thins in this cavern, giving way to barren rock and rubble. Amid the dull gray stone, strange clouds of thick, grayish-black fog hug the ground.

The Yldaris drow skirt the north stretch of this cavern when they come this way, knowing of the dangers that lurk deeper in. The drow call this place the Barrens; if the heroes have earned their aid, they warn the heroes of its risks: the fog is deadly, and the cavern harbors a dangerous monster.

The fog imposes a -2 circumstance penalty to Perception checks. Everything beyond 10 feet is concealed, and visibility ends at 30 feet.

A narrow passage leads south to distant, equally treacherous Darklands caverns outside the scope of this adventure.

Hazard: The fog's effects are tied to the daemon's miasma. When a non-fiend, non-urdefhan creature ventures halfway into the cavern, the mist solidifies into life-draining mouths. If the derghodaemon is killed, this hazard disappears in minutes.

DROW TO THE RESCUE

If the heroes have gained the aid of Yldaris and indicated they were going against Khurfel, the drow might have followed at a distance to keep an eye on them. If the heroes are in over their heads, a group of two drow hunters and two drow shootists come to their aid. The drow won't enter melee if they can avoid it, but they're happy to pick off urdefhans at a distance. If the heroes have truly shown their worth to Yldaris, Quara might come to their aid as well.

DAEMONIC FOG

HAZARD 10

ENVIRONMENTAL MAGICAL

Stealth DC 30 (expert)

Description The fog solidifies into tiny, gnawing creatures that devour everyone within before fading back into mist.



Belathus

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Disable DC 28 Survival (expert) to disrupt the fog before the hazard triggers or *dispel magic* (5th level; counteract DC 26) to counteract the magic.

Gnawing Fog ☞ (divine, evocation) **Trigger** A creature crosses the cavern's midpoint (the dotted line on the map); **Effect** The hazard deals 9d6 piercing damage (DC 32 basic Reflex save) to the triggering creature and all other non-fiend creatures within 20 feet. A creature that critically fails the saving throw is confused for 1d4 rounds.

Reset The hazard resets over the course of an hour as the daemonic stain reenergizes the fog.



Urdefhan Death Scout

Creatures: A derghodaemon lurks in the fog at the south end of the cavern. It keeps an eye on the deeper Darklands passages to protect the urdefhan hunting grounds from anything that might come from that way. It scuttles forth whenever anyone triggers the hazard, or when it otherwise hears intruders come close.

DERGHODAEMON

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 60

Initiative Perception +24

132. SOUTHERN JUMBLE

MODERATE 9

Fungus grows wild and tall throughout this enormous cavern, sometimes reaching as high as thirty feet. The cavern ceiling, when visible through the fungal canopy, is higher still.

Creatures: Some fungus in this wild section of the cave is dangerous. Two deadly puffballs float toward the heroes when they first enter this area, descending from the mushroom tops high above. They pursue foes as best they can and fight until destroyed.

REAPER SKULL PUFFBALLS (2)

CREATURE 9

Page 242

Initiative Stealth +17

133. FEROCIOUS DISPLAYS

LOW 9

This wide cavern entrance is a disgusting sight. The walls are splashed with ochre and scarlet images in a riot of violent and obscene symbols. Stakes around the entrance hold up skulls and dismembered parts of strange creatures.

This is the main entrance of the cavern complex where the urdefhans live. Intelligent creatures in the Hunting Grounds avoid this place, knowing the urdefhans ruthlessly protect their territory.

Creatures: Two urdefhan lashers stand guard, while two death scouts lurk amid the gruesome displays of skulls and body parts. They've been directed to shout an alarm in the face of powerful or numerous foes, but they jump eagerly into a fight as soon as they detect any enemies. If any three urdefhans are defeated, the survivor suddenly realizes they should've called for help sooner and flees to area 134 to raise the alarm.

URDEFHAN DEATH SCOUTS (2)

CREATURE 6

Page 248

Initiative Stealth +14

URDEFHAN LASHERS (2)

CREATURE 7

Page 248

Initiative Perception +16

Replacements: If these guards are defeated, they're first replaced with death scouts and lashers from area **I34**, then with a pair of nervous urdefhan warriors from the same area.

I34. URDEFHAN HORDE

SEVERE 9

This massive cavern holds a jumble of low-lying tents made of stitched-together pelts and blood-streaked leather. Most of the tents surround a natural stone pillar decorated with strange symbols in brown and red paint, amid skulls tied or spiked to the pillar. Hides of various creatures cover the entrances to three caves to the southeast, each with a narrow wooden door.

Most urdefhans in the Abomination Vaults dwell in this enormous cavern. They sleep in small, cramped tents but spend their time awake eating, sparring, or working with their weapons. Other accouterments to support their camp, such as food storage and mundane supplies, are in the tents.

Traversing this war camp to face Khurfel is difficult. With their craving for destruction, the urdefhans are always ready for battle. As they spend so much time sparring and fighting among themselves, the denizens of the adjacent caves (areas **I35**, **I36**, and **I37**) don't respond to the sounds of combat here. The heroes might have an easier time bypassing these forces if they use stealth or trickery, but keep in mind the daemons here have a constant *see invisibility*.

Creatures: Nearly 20 urdefhans can be found here at almost all times, along with two ceustodaemons who stoke their bloodlust. About a third of the urdefhans are sleeping, but they're quick to grab their weapons and join in a fight if other urdefhans raise a hue and cry. All the urdefhans fight with growling whoops and revel in the battle, even if they're losing. If the heroes defeat all the foes here other than urdefhan warriors, the urdefhan warriors all break and flee together.

If the heroes retreat from this battle, most of the urdefhans let them go; 1d6 urdefhan warriors follow, screaming for the heroes' blood.



Calinth Narogblom

KHURFEL ON THE MARCH

If the heroes assault the urdefhan camp and retreat or escape, Khurfel is active in his retribution. He doesn't wait for the heroes to return. Instead, he leads a lasher, a death scout, and four urdefhan warriors in the search for them. The next random encounter the heroes have is an encounter with Khurfel's war party. Alternatively, you can have the war party show up whenever the heroes are traveling outside of Yldaris.

If the urdefhans defeat the heroes, they don't kill them, but rather take them alive and hand them over to the tormentors in area **I35**, where they might have a chance to escape before being sacrificed.

URDEFHAN WARRIORS (12)

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 272

Initiative Perception +9

URDEFHAN TORMENTORS (2)

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 273

Initiative Perception +13

CEUSTODAEMONS (2)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 71

Initiative Perception +14

URDEFHAN DEATH SCOUTS (2)

CREATURE 6

Page 248

Initiative Stealth +14

URDEFHAN LASHERS (2)

CREATURE 7

Page 248

Initiative Perception +16

I35. SUMMONING CAVERN

LOW 9

This cavern slopes upward to a flat area. A metal box about three feet across sits against the northern wall, its lid pressed against the wall to prevent it from opening. A bloody circle surrounded by runes is painted on the floor.

Dedicated to bringing more daemons into their midst, the urdefhans use this chamber for vile

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summoning rituals. They currently keep one prisoner they intend to sacrifice: a deep gnome rockwarden named Calinth Narogblom (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 75). The unfortunate Calinth came to the Abomination Vaults searching for evidence that an offshoot of his people were still living here. He never even met up with the Children of Belcorra—whose current state would horrify him—before being captured by an urdefhan raiding party. They keep Calinth in the metal box pushed against the wall so he can't *meld into stone* and escape.

Creatures: Three urdefhan tormentors chant and wail, casting a lengthy summoning ritual with the assistance of a scarred and cruel blood mage. The tormentors hope to empower their *daemonic pact* ritual to bring in a more powerful daemon; whether or not they succeed is up to you. All four urdefhans attack any intruders that interrupt their rite. They fight to the death.

URDEFHAN TORMENTORS (3) CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 273

Initiative Perception +13

URDEFHAN BLOOD MAGE CREATURE 8

Page 249

Initiative Perception +15

Side Quest: Calinth carries no gear, but he nevertheless still wants to find out about the deep gnomes living here. If the heroes show him evidence of the Children of Belcorra—even their corpses from past fights—Calinth is sad but his curiosity is satisfied. If the heroes lead him to one of the exits to the Darklands, he can make it back to his people. A week later, Calinth sends them a token of his appreciation: a jet and opal complete set of the Dark Chase board game, worth 120 gp. If the heroes told Calinth that they're friendly with the Yldaris drow, he sends it by the caravan route between the outpost and Lozardyn. Otherwise, he searches the heroes out himself, even braving the surface world if he must.

136. THE BLOOD TEMPLE LOW 9

A raised platform with a bloody altar stands on the east side of this roughly triangular cavern.

A constant orgy of bloodletting goes on in this chamber, all part of the strange and gory urdefhan religion. If interrupted, the participants are anxious to cover their altar with fresh blood.

Creatures: Two tormentors guide two lashers in the

rites. All of them attack nonbelievers who interfere with their gruesome rituals and fight to the death.

URDEFHAN TORMENTORS (2) CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 273

Initiative Perception +13

URDEFHAN LASHERS (2) CREATURE 7

Page 248

Initiative Perception +16

137. KHURFEL'S TENT MODERATE 9

At this cavern's center sits a single fur-and-skin hovel. A path to the hovel is flanked with skull-topped spears.

It's the tradition of this urdefhan cult that the war champion dwells apart and lives in a home no more elaborate than that of other urdefhans. The skulls all belong to rivals that Khurfel defeated to obtain and maintain his position as war champion. Their teeth are gone, having been used for the shauth weapons these urdefhans use (page 226).

Creatures: Once Khurfel notices the heroes, he looks pleased, his face contorting in a terrifying grin. He calls out, "We meet on a good day to kill" in Undercommon as he draws his rhoka sword and strides forward. As his blood visions foretold his fight with the heroes, he doesn't shy away from it, and he neither offers nor accepts quarter. He keeps the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens* on his person at all times, strapped across his back so it doesn't get in the way during a fight. He has invested the lens, so *harm* spells cast on him heal additional Hit Points.

Two tormentors advise Khurfel and join any battle with him. They're careful not to get in their war champion's way, and they use their *harm* spells to keep him in the fight. They flee if Khurfel is defeated.

URDEFHAN TORMENTORS (2) CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 273

Initiative Perception +13

KHURFEL CREATURE 10

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMANOID URDEFHAN

Male urdefhan war champion (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 272)

Perception +19; greater darkvision

Languages Aklo, Daemonic, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +22, Intimidation +19, Survival +20

Str +5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +4

Items chain mail, *Emerald Fulcrum Lens* (page 221), heavy crossbow (10 bolts), +1 striking rhoka sword

AC 28; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +19, **Will** +22

HP 200, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fear; **Weaknesses** positive 10

Necrotic Decay (divine, necromancy, negative) When Khurfel dies, his invisible flesh quickly rots away and sublimates into a foul-smelling gas that fills a 10-foot emanation around his body. The gas deals 10d6 negative damage to creatures in this area as their flesh too curdles and rots (DC 28 basic Fortitude save).

Attack of Opportunity ➤

Speed 25 feet

Melee ➤ *rhoka sword* +24 (deadly 2d8, magical, two-hand 2d10), **Damage** 2d8+11 slashing

Melee ➤ *jaws* +23, **Damage** 2d8+11 piercing plus wicked bite

Ranged ➤ *heavy crossbow* +22 (range increment 120 feet, reload 2), **Damage** 1d10 piercing

Divine Innate Spells DC 28, attack +20; **4th** *harm, read omens*; **3rd** *blindness, paralyze*; **2nd** *augury, death knell*; **1st** *feather fall* (at will, self only), *ray of enfeeblement*

Frenzied Attack ➤➤ Khurfel makes one *rhoka sword* Strike and two *jaws* Strikes against one or two different creatures (splitting up the attacks any way he wishes). His multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after all three attacks.

Insightful Swing ➤➤ Khurfel makes a melee weapon Strike. On this Strike, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus to the attack roll and ignores any concealment the target has.

Wicked Bite ➤ **Requirements** Khurfel damaged a creature with a *jaws* Strike on his last action; **Effect** Khurfel maintains contact, turning the creature's flesh translucent around the injury. Khurfel chooses one of two options, each of which requires a DC 28 Fortitude save. If the *jaws* Strike was a critical hit, the creature suffers both effects, using the same save result for both.

- **Drain Blood** Khurfel drinks some of the creature's blood. On a failed save, the creature is drained 1 and Khurfel regains 10 HP (or, on a critical failure, it's drained 2 and Khurfel regains 20 HP).
- **Drain Vitality** (necromancy) Khurfel draws out some of the creature's vital essence. The creature becomes enfeebled 1 for 1 hour on a failed save (or enfeebled 2 for 1 hour on a critical failure).

Treasure: Inside Khurfel's hovel are mounds of tribute: 180 gp, 1,320 sp, five moonstones worth 10 gp each, and two chrysoberyls worth 20 gp each.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for recovering the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens*.

138. GUARD POST

LOW 9

The urdefhans use this passageway to come and go from the lakeshore.



Khurfel

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Creatures: The three urdefhan lashers assigned to guard this little-used entrance are itching for a fight.

URDEFHAN LASHERS (3) CREATURE 7

Page 248

Initiative Perception +16

Reinforcements: If the guards are defeated, they're replaced by the ceustodaemons in area **I34**. If the daemons are defeated, this area remains unguarded.

I39. DEADLY LAKE MODERATE 9

The murky waters of this massive lake shift ominously.

Though not covered with a cloying, sickly mist like the large lake in the Farm level, this lake is hundreds of feet deep in its center and harbors strange aquatic life.

Creatures: A total of six deepwater dhuthorexexes swim in this lake. Two quickly come to investigate any disturbance in the water. This attack should occur the first time the heroes venture into the lake, but you can have another pair of dhuthorexexes attack during later excursions if you choose. The dhuthorexexes attack singly or in pairs and are shockingly aggressive; they pursue foes on land and fight to the death.

DEEPWATER DHUTHOREXES (2) CREATURE 9

Page 233

Initiative Perception +18

I40. CRYSTAL SHORE

The stone along the shore here sprouts large growths of pale-green crystals. The crystals hang from the ceiling, climb up the wall, and reach toward the water in long strands.

While some of these crystals are pointed, they aren't hazardous. However, if a creature touches one of the crystals, it begins to vibrate, which starts a chain reaction of resonant, ringing sounds among the crystals. The sound is loud but not unpleasant. The noise piques the attention of the cauthooj nesting in area **I41**, which swims over to investigate.

I41. ISLAND NEST SEVERE 9

A mix of green crystals and grayish stone make up the mass of this island. A few patches of fungus grow across

the rocks, with a particularly thick patch near the island's eastern shore.



Ochre Fulcrum Lens

The thick patch is a cauthooj nest holding two eggs.

Creatures: A cauthooj recently came to this island to lay its eggs and stockpile corpses to feed the hatchlings. When it detects the heroes, it attacks immediately to secure a source of food. If reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points, it flees the island and abandons its eggs. It's wary of a trap and doesn't pursue anyone who flees into a narrow passage, such as to areas **I38** or **I43**.

CAUTHOOJ CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 55

Initiative Perception +22

Finding the Lens: Quara's father dropped the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens* in the water near the eastern shore of this island during his battle with Khurfel. Spells like *detect magic* locate it easily; otherwise, a hero Searching the water finds it with a successful DC 28 Perception check. If the heroes haven't already encountered deepwater dhuthorexexes in area **I39**, those monsters might harass anyone spending a lot of time searching this area.

Treasure: The two cauthooj eggs are valuable to the right buyer, but finding one can be difficult. Worliwynn, who runs the Stone Ring Pond just outside of Otari, has contacts who offer 400 gp or any common permanent magic item that's 8th level or lower for the eggs.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for recovering the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens*.

I42. STEEP EXIT

This rubble-filled passage slopes steeply downward. The passage's ceiling undulates as an echoing chitter fills the air.

The passage leads deeper into the Darklands, but the going isn't easy. The steep and rocky decline slopes downward for 80 feet before reaching a sheer, 300-foot drop. Several disused natural passages radiate outward from its base, but where these passages might lead is beyond the scope of this adventure.

Hundreds of tiny subterranean bats lair here. They don't pose a threat to high-level characters, even with

their staggering numbers and tendency to swarm around the heads of intruders. The bats sometimes hunt in the Hunting Grounds, or in deeper Darklands caverns, but are just as often food for larger creatures.

143. SANCTUARY

A thick growth of fungus blocks this narrow cave entrance.

The harmless fungus can easily be pushed aside. It conceals an out-of-the-way cavern with a small spring of fresh water. This cavern makes a perfect place for the heroes to rest, as wandering monsters ignore it.

144. DIGGER'S CAVERN

SEVERE 9

A jumble of fungus grows in the center of this roughly square cave. A large lizard's corpse lies amid the fungus.

The giant frilled lizard barely escaped the roper in area 145 but collapsed and died in this harmless fungus patch.

Creatures: When the heroes examine the lizard or the fungus, the entire cavern starts to shake as a shuln chews its way through the north wall. The enormous, rodent-like shuln scented the dead lizard and was coming to eat it, but it's more excited for living prey. It's hungry and fights until slain. It pursues foes that run away but doesn't like the water, so it gives up chasing anyone that flees into the lake.

SHULN

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 294

Initiative Perception +20

145. DEAD ROPER

A rocky depression at the south end of this chamber contains a thick stalagmite toppled over in a pool of dark ichor.

Upon closer inspection, the stalagmite is a dead roper. The shuln in area 144 burrowed up from beneath it and bit off its lower third before deciding its taste was wholly unpleasant and leaving the rest of the body behind. A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Nature or relevant Lore check realizes that a Huge burrowing beast came up beneath the roper and bit it, but the burrowing creature's tunnel has collapsed behind it and is now impassable.

146. PUDDING WALLOW

A pool of thick black goo coats a large patch of the floor in this cave.

A black pudding stripped most of the fungus in this room clear before it was defeated by another predator. Its gooey remains rest in a shallow pit.

147. CORRUPTED GARDEN

LOW 9

An ancient and crumbling stone bridge stretches across the water to an island teeming with reeking fungus.

The old stone bridge is still stable enough to traverse safely, though it's slick with slime and moist lichen that make it difficult terrain. The island used to be a tended garden, but it's now greater difficult terrain thanks to the dense, slick fungus. The slime growing on the fungus emits a terrible smell, but one overwhelmed by the stench of the island's denizen.

Creatures: An ofalth dwells on the island. The fungus and the layer of filth it grows from fuels the creature's Filth Wallow ability. It treats the slime-covered fungus as difficult terrain rather than greater difficult terrain.

OFALTH

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 251

Initiative Perception +18

148. HORRID CARNAGE

Bones and discarded viscera are strewn across this cavern as if some horrifying battle recently occurred here. A trail of the gruesome remains winds to the northeast, up a narrow tunnel.

The carnage is the result of gogiteth feeding. The gnashing, nightmarish aberration lairs in area 149, but it sometimes lurks in the passageway to ambush prey. When the heroes approach this area, make a secret DC 15 flat check. On a success, it's watching from the passageway and is prepared to strike.

149. GOGITETH CAVE

SEVERE 9

If the heroes haven't already defeated the gogiteth lairing here, as they approach, they hear its clacking and popping legs as it moves about. Any hero who succeeds at a DC 30 Occultism check recognizes the sound as that of a gogiteth.

Creatures: If the gogiteth is here, it's tearing up an urdefhan corpse. It drops the dead urdefhan with a sickening plop to skitter forward and feast upon the heroes. It doesn't pursue prey out of areas 148 and 149.

GOGITETH

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 183

Initiative Perception +21

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150. COINS AND SLIME

Hanging streamers of mold dangle from the ceiling here. Several coins protrude from a shelf of stone to the north.

A traveler left the coins in the wall here long ago, hoping to keep them safe, though they never returned. A patch of green slime grew from the streams of mold, particularly over the coins, where it could fall upon greedy treasure-seekers, dissolve them, and slither up the ceiling to await a new victim.

Hazard: The green slime is hard to spot amid the hanging mold. It drips upon anyone who tries to pull the coins free.

GREEN SLIME

Gamemastery Guide 78

Stealth DC 30 (expert)

HAZARD 9

Treasure: There are only 15 sp stuck in the floor, and breaking out each coin requires a few minutes'

chiseling or *shape stone* or similar magic (which is how the coins got stuck in the stone in the first place).

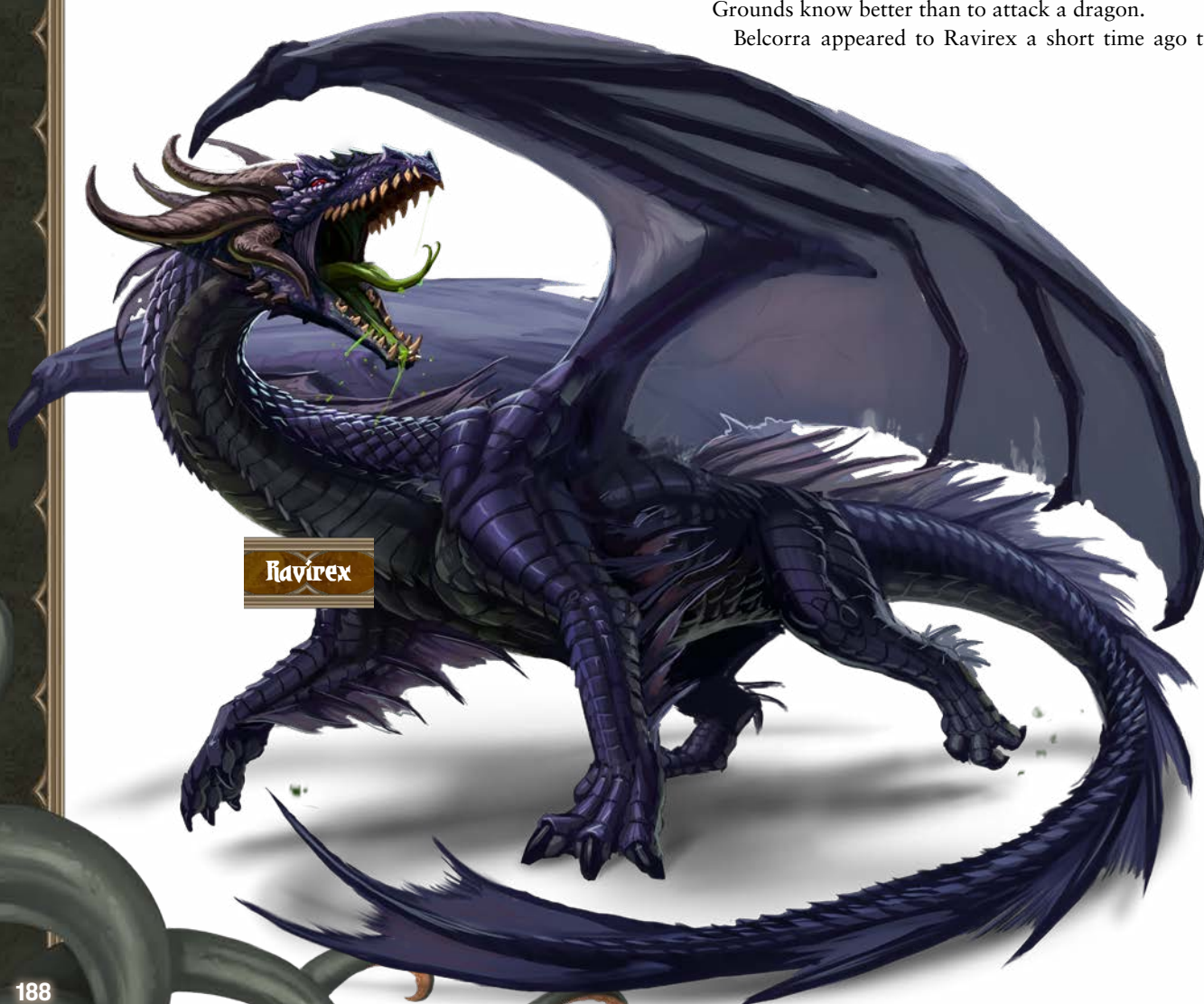
151. RAVIREX'S FEN

MODERATE 9

A morass of mud sprouting thick fungus and clinging vines makes up the floor of this large cavern. A few boulders protrude from the mud.

Not long ago, a black dragon named Ravirex moved into the swampy cavern at the edge of the Hunting Grounds to make his lair. He initially thought to dominate the area but soon ran afoul of powerful creatures like the derghodaemon in area **131**, the gogiteth in area **149**, and the drow hunters who have proven impossible to pin down. Ravirex quickly realized the need to be much more circumspect in the Hunting Grounds, and these days he primarily works on sculpting the growth in his wide cavern to his liking. He's too arrogant to consider defense, assuming that even the other dangerous creatures of the Hunting Grounds know better than to attack a dragon.

Belcorra appeared to Ravirex a short time ago to



Ravirex

open negotiations about aiding an attack on a surface city that Ravirex doesn't know, and the dragon awaits her next visit to learn more. She mentioned something about entrusting a colored magical lens to Ravirex, so he's keeping an eye out for those in the hopes of currying favor with Belcorra.

Two passages lead out of this area to wild Darklands areas to the west. Swamp water floods the southern passage entirely, while the northern passage is clear but very narrow.

Creatures: While not working to sculpt the fungus in its lair or out hunting, Ravirex rests upon his hoard in the alcove to the north. He defends his lair ferociously and works hard to drive intruders away so he can preserve his privacy. If he learns that the heroes have any of the magic lenses he believes Belcorra wants, he targets the heroes who carry them and tries to take them.

RAVIREX

CREATURE 11

Male adult black dragon (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 105)

Initiative Perception +22

Treasure: The dragon's hoard consists of 260 gp, 1,412 sp, 4,303 cp, a golden goblet worth 200 gp, a +2 *striking mace*, an *iron medallion*, a *scroll of spirit blast*, and a *mummified bat*.

152. VAULT LEDGE

The lake's water laps lazily on a wide stone ledge surrounding a structure built into the cavern wall. The ledge is thick with lichen and barely wide enough to stand on. A single iron, vault-like door with a metal handle and a keyhole leads into the structure.

Belcorra built this secure vault as a place to gather the treasures she planned to use to fund her assault on Absalom. Beneath the profusion of lichen, the ledge holds several cleats for securing boats.

The vault door looks formidable but is, surprisingly, unlocked. The vault's only intelligent occupant, a graveknight named Caliddo, recently traveled to the third level of the Abomination Vaults to recover some books Belcorra wanted, and he neglected to lock the door when he returned.

Hazard: The vault door isn't locked but is trapped.

BLAST TUMBLER

HAZARD 10

MAGICAL MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 32 (master)

Description A hard-to-reach rune is placed on the lock's tumbler. It emits a blast of force when the door is jostled.

Disable DC 32 Thievery (master) to disarm the rune, or

dispel magic (5th level; counteract DC 28) to counteract the rune's magic.

Force Blast ⚡ (evocation, force, occult) **Trigger** A non-undead creature opens the door or critically fails an attempt to disarm or dispel the rune; **Effect** A 30-foot cone of force issues forth from the lock. Creatures within the cone must succeed a DC 29 basic Fortitude saving throw or take 8d12 force damage. Those who fail the save are pushed 10 feet, and those who critically fail are pushed 20 feet and are stunned 2.

Reset The rune resets 1 minute after it triggers.

153. VAULT ANTECHAMBER

LOW 9

The dust is thick in this room, save for footprints that lead to and from the southernmost of three iron doors, which look similar to the vault's entrance.

On the south side of the chamber is a hardened clay statue sculpted to resemble Belcorra.

Each door leads to another vault. The doors to areas 154 and 155 are both locked, and Caliddo the graveknight has the keys. The locks require six successful DC 40 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock to open, and they can't be Forced Open. The door to area 156 is unlocked; this is where Caliddo went.

Creatures: The statue is a clay golem charged with attacking any creature other than Belcorra or Caliddo. It fights until destroyed, its old clay grinding as it attacks. The sound quickly brings Caliddo to fight as well. Together, they're a Severe encounter for 9th-level characters.

CLAY GOLEM

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 186

Initiative Perception +16

154. COIN VAULT

Three iron chests, all in different sizes, are lined up against the north wall of this room.

The boxes hold a mass of treasure that Belcorra accumulated in life to aid in her assault on Absalom.

Treasure: The largest box contains 8,000 sp, and the next largest holds 500 gp. The smallest has 100 pp. All these coins were minted centuries ago.

155. ALCHEMICAL VAULT

This door is difficult to open, even once unlocked, because the inside has been warped by an explosion. Inside the vault is a tangle of ancient wood and shattered glass and pottery. Scorch marks scar the stone walls.

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Belcorra stored a variety of alchemical bombs in this vault. As the centuries passed, the wooden shelves that held some of them collapsed, creating a chain reaction of explosions and leaving the room and its vault door in its current state. Nothing of value remains.

156. CALIDDO'S VIGIL

LOW 9

This small, bare room contains more vault doors, just as in area **153**; Caliddo Haruvex carries these two keys as well. There's also a remarkably well-hidden secret door here; a hero Searching this room discovers the hidden switch to open it with a successful DC 30 Perception check.

Creatures: A warrior in archaic armor stands in this room, clutching a greatsword. This is Caliddo Haruvex, a skilled mercenary who came to serve Belcorra when he heard how powerful his distant relative had become. Belcorra accepted Caliddo's offer of aid and promptly killed him, raising him as a graveknight eternally bound to serve her. Caliddo proved his worth and loyalty to Belcorra many times, so she entrusted him with guarding her vault. He kept a silent vigil here for centuries.

When Belcorra returned, she put Caliddo to work fetching several books she wanted out of the hands of others who might use them against her. For the first time in centuries, Caliddo left the vault. He recovered the texts from an upper level of the dungeon and locked them in area **158**.

Caliddo remains at his post and assaults anyone who enters. If the heroes don't face him with the golem in area **153**, he's encountered here. Caliddo fights until destroyed, but he doesn't leave his post in the vault unless Belcorra expressly orders him to.

CALIDDO HARUVEX

CREATURE 10

Male graveknight (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 191)

Initiative Perception +19

Items composite longbow (20 arrows), +1 resilient full plate, greatsword, keys to Belcorra's vault (areas **152** to **159**)

Caliddo's Return: Destroying Caliddo for good proves difficult because his armor rebuilds him. If he rejuvenates after the heroes have plundered the vault, he pursues them in an attempt to recover the items. He doesn't have any special connection to the treasures, though, so he might have to search around a lot to find out where the heroes went. Caliddo isn't likely to negotiate, but he's most interested in reclaiming his keys and returning the books to the vault (as those were the last things Belcorra expressed particular interest in and, he assumes, the most valuable to her). Heroes who turn over the keys and books might avert Caliddo's retribution and keep the other treasures.

157. DERELICT ARMORY

Ancient weapon racks have collapsed over time, leaving many swords, spears, and axes jumbled on the floor.



Caliddo Haruvex

Belcorra hoarded dozens of weapons for her campaign in this room, intending to arm the humanoid warriors who fought alongside the aberrant monsters in her attack. While most of the weapons are merely well-made, a number of them are genuinely superior.

Treasure: Amid the weapons are a standard-grade adamantite warhammer and a +2 *striking battle axe*. A fallen armor stand is tangled up with the +2 *resilient chain shirt* that was once displayed on it.

158. VAULT OF SECRETS

The shelves of this room contain several old books and various odds and ends. In the center of the room is a dusty mechanism of copper and silver. It's missing its lenses but otherwise looks like the framework of a lantern that belongs in the top of a lighthouse. The dust in this room has been recently disturbed.

This is Belcorra's most protected vault, holding her treasures and secrets of her past. The books that have been most recently shelved here—as evidenced by the trails in the dust—are research journals Belcorra penned when she was alive. They're centuries old, but careful magical preservation has kept them from falling apart. These journals describe four *fulcrum lenses* (in crimson, ebon, emerald, and ochre) that focus Nhimbaloth's soul-extinguishing gaze across space and time.

Belcorra's journal details how she built *Gauntlight* and created a special framework called the *Fulcrum Lattice* to fit the four lenses and harness their power. A diagram of the *Fulcrum Lattice* makes it clear that the device is the very one sitting here. Belcorra expresses some trepidation at using the *fulcrum lenses*; they each contain a sliver of Nhimbaloth's essence, and bringing them in close proximity can be dangerous. More specifically, the lenses impart Nhimbaloth's essence into those who use or are touched by them. Having all four essences imbued at once is sure to bring Nhimbaloth's dreadful scrutiny. Belcorra had her talented apprentice, Volluk Azrinae, fashion mundane lenses that would allow *Gauntlight* to function at a diminished capacity until the *Fulcrum Lattice* and the *fulcrum lenses* could be installed, on the eve of Belcorra's assault on Absalom. The *Fulcrum Lattice* allows all four of the large, heavy lenses to be carried with ease.

Belcorra's journals explain that she used only the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens* in the Empty Vault at *Gauntlight*'s base, deeming the essence within one *fulcrum lens* a minimal risk. She gave the other lenses to trusted groups in the lower vaults: the emerald lens to the urdefhans,

the ochre lens to the drow, and the crimson lens hidden where her undead gnome minions could protect it. She trusts that the groups won't work together, much less learn that bringing the lenses together to imbue a single creature with all four splinters of Nhimbaloth's essence would impart total annihilation.

Other Books: The other books are aging tomes full of occult knowledge; they've been in the Haruvex family for generations. They hold a wealth of occult lore about ghosts, Nhimbaloth, and the Haruvexes. A hero who peruses these tomes for at least an hour gains a +2 item bonus on checks to Recall Knowledge on these subjects when using the Investigate exploration activity here.

Treasure: Belcorra keeps many valuables here, including a skull-shaped key worth 30 gp that unlocks the doors to the Gate of Nhimbaloth (area 160) and two signet rings that each bear the symbol of a tentacle wrapped around a skull with a moss-filled mouth. One is a *ring of lies*, and the other functions as a *greater pendant of the occult*. The *Fulcrum Lattice* is also here, and it's surprisingly lightweight for its size. If the heroes have discovered any *fulcrum lenses* so far, they fit neatly into the lattice, and the lattice grows no heavier for their weight.

XP Award: Award the heroes 80 XP for uncovering the lore of the *fulcrum lenses* and learning how to destroy Belcorra.

159. LEVEL 9 PORTAL CHAMBER

Spiraling runes filled with silver cover this chamber's curved walls. The same silvery metal covers the floor and ceiling.

This room contains another inactive *teleportation circle* that the heroes might connect to others in the Abomination Vaults with the *awaken portal* ritual.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for using the *awaken portal* ritual to reactivate the *teleportation circle* here.

160. EBON DOORS

These massive double doors are made of black and green stone. An oxidized bronze lock has a keyhole but no handles.

This door leads to a structure called the Gate of Nhimbaloth, an ancient temple made of black stone streaked with a greenish, nauseating hue. Belcorra didn't build this place; she found it and incorporated it into her ever-expanding dungeon. Whether the Gate of Nhimbaloth always existed underground or was once cast down from the surface is a mystery,

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as are the cultists who once inhabited it. In any case, its entry is now seamless with the stone of the Abomination Vaults. The Gate of Nhimbalothe includes not only the rooms beyond it, but most of the lower level as well.

The door's ancient lock is incredibly complex. Six successful DC 40 Thievery checks are required to Pick the Lock, and the door can't be Forced Open at all. The skull-shaped key located in area 158 opens this door. When it does, the key's carving changes to show moss sprouting from the skull's mouth.

161. HALL OF PRIESTS

MODERATE 9

This large chamber is made of the same black stone as the imposing ebon doors to the north. Eight alcoves, four on each side, line the east and west walls. Each alcove contains the remains of jade-colored statues. All of the

figures have been defiled; none have any heads remaining, most are missing hands, and one is just a pair of bare feet upon a pedestal. An enormous stone throne carved out of heavy blocks stands in a domed chamber opposite the black doors.

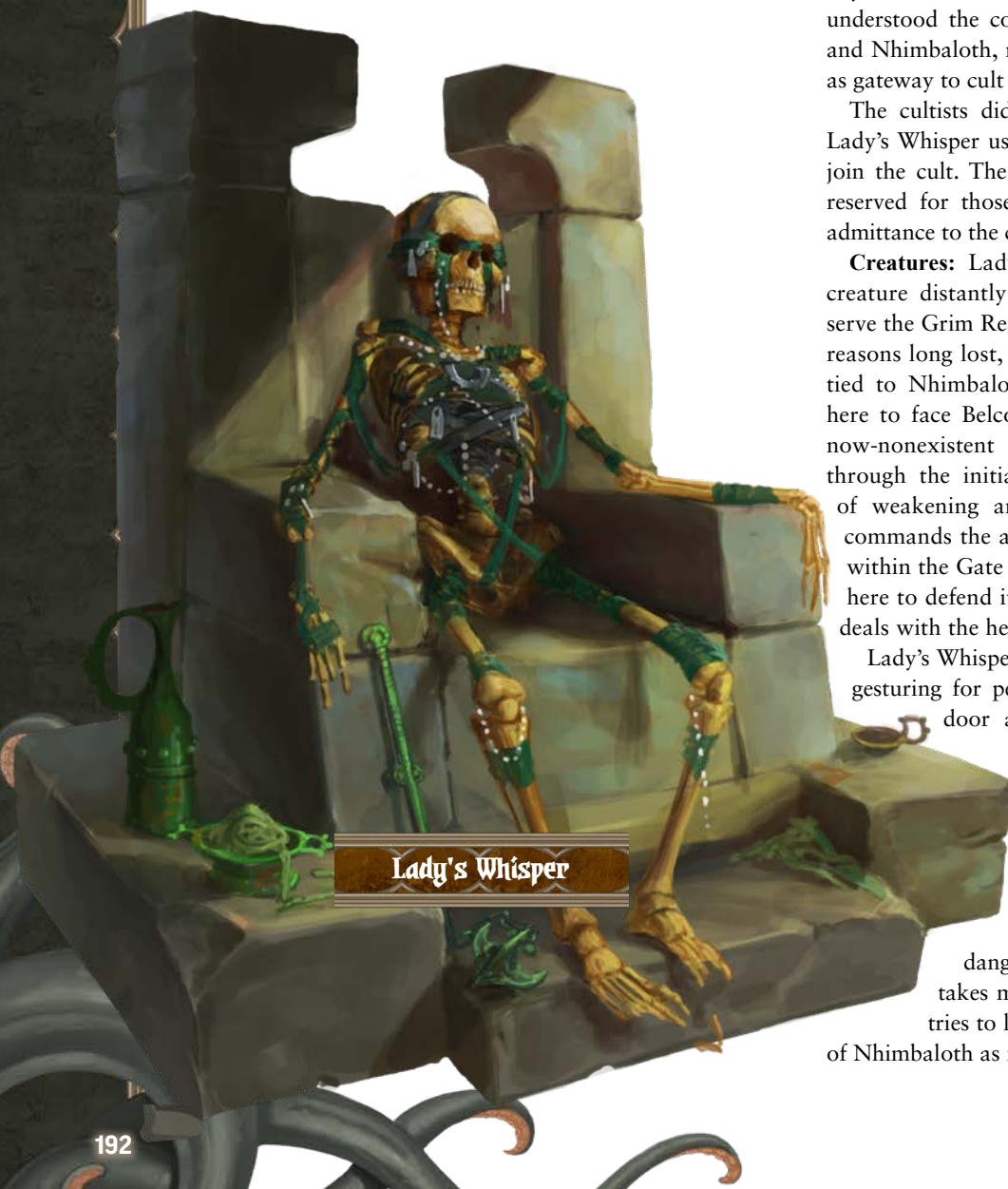
Well before Belcorra's time, this served as a semipublic area of worship for a cult of Nhimbalothe. Those seeking vengeance, an enemy's obliteration, or assurance that a lost loved one would return as a ghost left offerings and sacrifices around the throne and the creature sitting on it, who was called Lady's Whisper—the creature that sits there still. Aspirants hoped the shrouded skeleton would rise and lead them through one of the three doorways to take the tests to become an initiate in the cult. Lady's Whisper sometimes remained still for years, or ushered in new cultists for days on end. Although even the senior cultists never understood the connection between Lady's Whisper and Nhimbalothe, none questioned the skeleton's role as gateway to cult membership.

The cultists did know, however, that only those Lady's Whisper ushered into the eastern door would join the cult. The western doors lead to grim fates reserved for those unworthy to even be tested for admittance to the cult.

Creatures: Lady's Whisper is a unique undead creature distantly related to the lesser deaths that serve the Grim Reaper (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 196). For reasons long lost, the skeletal creature is irrevocably tied to Nhimbalothe. It knows that the heroes are here to face Belcorra and are ill-suited to join the now-nonexistent cult, but it decides to put them through the initiation trials anyway in the hopes of weakening and killing them. Lady's Whisper commands the allegiance of the many dread wisps within the Gate of Nhimbalothe, but there are none here to defend it when the heroes first arrive, so it deals with the heroes cautiously.

Lady's Whisper rises and holds forth both hands, gesturing for peace. It then points to the eastern door and whispers the names of each hero, one by one. It steps toward the eastern door, gesturing for the heroes to follow.

If the heroes attack, Lady's Whisper lashes out with its claws to teleport heroes away, preferably into the adjacent chambers with dangerous wisps and traps. It flees if it takes more than 50 points of damage but tries to lure the heroes deeper into the Gate of Nhimbalothe as it does.



Lady's Whisper

LADY'S WHISPER

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM UNDEAD

Perception +25; darkvision, *see invisibility*, *true seeing*

Language Aklo, Common, Necril, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +20, Deception +21, Diplomacy +21, Intimidation +21, Occultism +21, Religion +23, Society +21, Stealth +22

Str +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** +4, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +4

Death's Grace Lady's Whisper can choose whether or not it counts as undead for effects that affect undead differently. Even if it doesn't count as undead, Lady's Whisper never counts as a living creature.

AC 31; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +20, **Will** +25; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 195, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

Negative Recovery Lady's Whisper can choose whether or not it takes positive damage.

Sibilant Whispers (auditory, aura, divine, emotion, enchantment, mental) 20 feet. Each creature that begins its turn within the aura and can hear the ominous whispers must succeed at a DC 30 Will save or become frightened 2. On a success, the creature is temporarily immune for 1 minute.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ claw +23 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d10+7 slashing plus unwilling teleportation

Divine Innate Spells DC 30, attack +22; **Constant (6th)** *true seeing*; **(3rd)** *haste*; **(2nd)** *see invisibility*

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 30, attack +22; **5th** (4 slots) *crushing despair*, *mind probe*, *shadow blast*, *vampiric touch*; **4th** (4 slots) *blink*, *gaseous form*, *modify memory*, *phantasmal killer*; **3rd** (4 slots) *hypercognition*, *levitate*, *paralyze*, *slow*; **2nd** *calm emotions*, *death knell*, *mirror image*, *touch of idiocy*; **1st** (4 slots) *command*, *fear*, *illusory disguise*, *magic missile*; **Cantrips (6th)** *daze*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*

Gatekeeper's Will ♦ (concentrate) Lady's Whisper mentally causes any doors or portals within the Gate of Nhimbaloth (areas **I60** to **I64** and areas **J1** through **J18**) to open or shut. If Lady's Whisper wills a door closed, it must be Forced Open or battered down.

Unwilling Teleportation (conjunction, divine, teleportation) When Lady's Whisper hits and damages a creature with its claw Strike, it can choose to teleport that creature to any open space within 15 feet, even if Lady's Whisper can't see the destination. The target can attempt a DC 30 Will saving throw to resist this effect.

I62. OBLIVION FALL

Made of the same dark stone as the rest of the temple, this passage opens into a rectangular chamber.

Hazard: The chamber at the end of the hall has no floor. It's a bottomless pit that, unlike the hazard in the *Core Rulebook*, has no trapdoor; nevertheless, because it's set into reflective black stone, it's still difficult to notice. Lady's Whisper led aspirants whom it judged to be useless to Nhimbaloth's cause into this pit—forcefully, when necessary.

BOTTOMLESS PIT

HAZARD 9

Core Rulebook 524

Stealth DC 26 or *detect magic*

I63. GARDEN OF FAILURES

TRIVIAL 9

A black-stoned passage opens into this octagonal chamber. The room is a riot of foul-smelling swamp weeds.

Creatures who made it into the Gate of Nhimbaloth but were, in their hearts, too afraid to undertake the initiation tests below were brought here. Often, Lady's Whisper gave them comforting words about how they could simply rest and depart in peace, but this was a lie—creatures were brought here to be killed, their blood and essence used to fuel the cavern's sunless garden.

Creatures: A single dread wisp floats in this room, desperate to feed for the first time in many, many years.

DREAD WISP

CREATURE 9

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Initiative Perception +20

I64. INITIATES' CHAMBER

SEVERE 9

The walls of this room are carved from black stone and feature four large alcoves, two to the east and two to the west. Three contain large stone basins filled with reeds, moss, and other swamp plants. The basin in the fourth alcove is empty. Stairs lead downward to the north.

The stairs lead down to area **J1**.

Creatures: Three dread wisps hover here over three of the stone basins (the fourth dread wisp once stationed here was slain long ago, and its basin now contains only desiccated soil). If the heroes are accompanied by Lady's Whisper, two of the dread wisps follow it and the heroes at a distance, ready to intervene if the heroes become violent. If the heroes aren't with Lady's Whisper, the dread wisps attack.

DREAD WISPS (3)

CREATURE 9

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Initiative Perception +20

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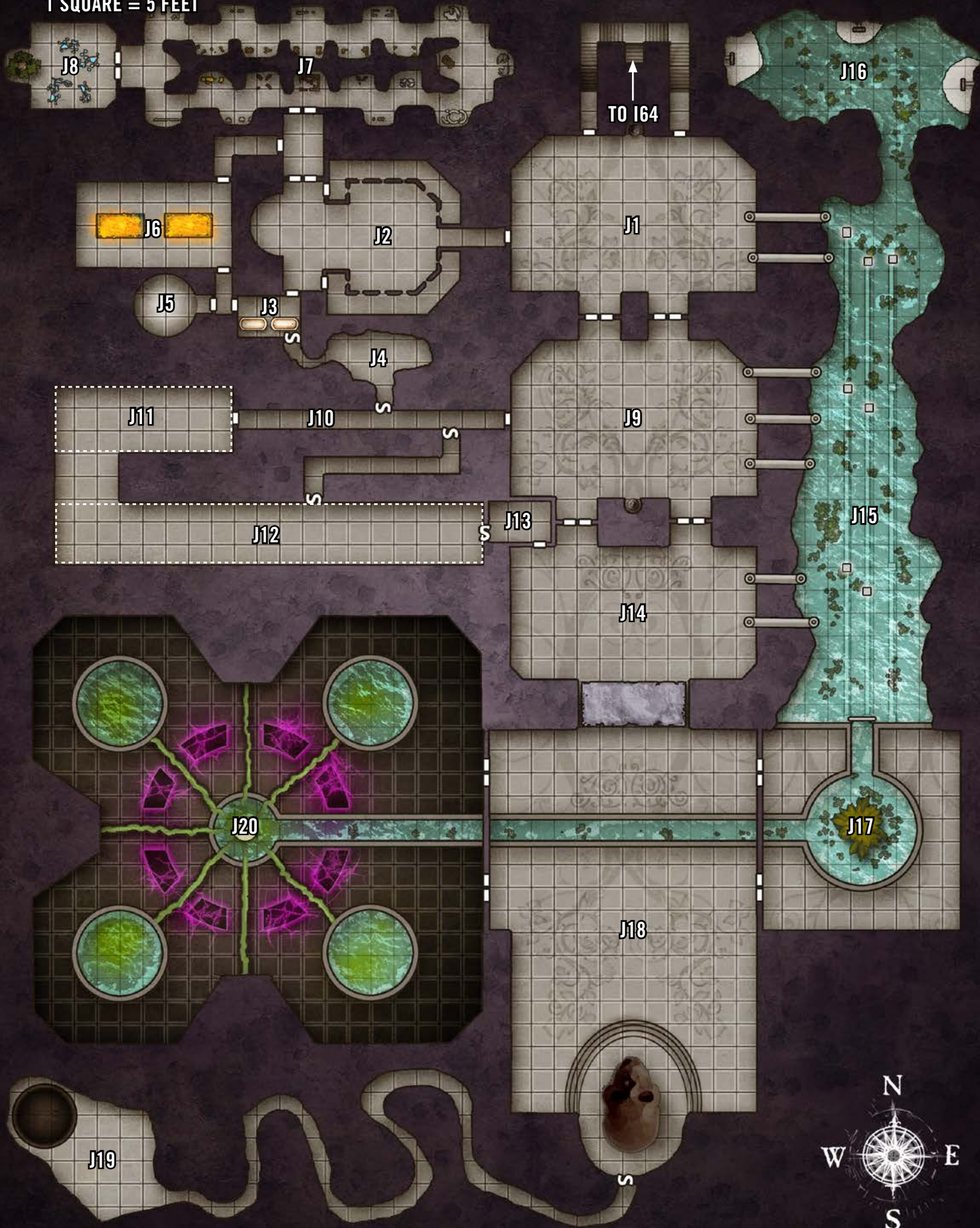
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LEVEL 10: TEMPLE
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET





CHAPTER 10: To Draw the Baleful Glare

Perhaps a few of the vaults' inhabitants know the true story of Nhimbaloth's ancient temple—notably Lady's Whisper and maybe a dread wisp or two—but none will tell the tale. Was it the hub of a cult cast deep into the earth by some ancient enemy, or the headquarters of a Darklands cabal? No matter its original purpose, the complex series of initiation trials are the last challenges that the heroes must face to confront Belcorra. The first is the Challenge of Souls, where unworthy initiates were poisoned, tormented, and had their souls extracted. The second is the Challenge of Despair, where initiates faced their greatest fears. The last test is the Challenge of the Swamp, where initiates demonstrated their mastery over swampland dangers. The heroes are likely to face these in order only if guided by Lady's Whisper; otherwise, they're free to tackle them in whatever order they'd like. Beyond lies the Empty Vault, Belcorra's domain and the source of *Gauntlight*'s powers.

Temple Features

The temple is wholly dark, except where otherwise noted. Ceilings are generally 15 feet high but reach

60 feet in the main chambers (areas **J1**, **J9**, **J14**, **J18**, and **J20**). The stone doors all bear intricate carvings, such as a moss-filled skull, swirling mists, or detailed swamp scenes, as well as clusters of seven divots. Lady's Whisper controls the doors here.

The map of the Temple level appears on page 194.

J1. FIRST CHALLENGE

A basin filled with reeds and moss stands in an alcove between doors that lead to the north. Two metal tubes jut into the room from the east, each sealed off by some iris-like mechanism a foot or so inside the pipe. No method of opening these mechanisms is visible. Black stone doors lead south, and a single gray stone door carved with shapes of swirling mist leads west. None of the doors have handles or latches.

The tests begin with the Challenge of Souls through the western door. The metal tubes slant downward and drain into the swamp (area **J15**). They're just large enough for a Medium creature to slide down. If the

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THE PROCTOR

The heroes might go along with Lady's Whisper at first, wondering just what the enigmatic undead is asking of them. After they complete one or two tests, they might decide they don't want to be judged worthy of Nhimbaloth's attention after all. This is especially true if they realize that each successful test increases Lady's Whisper's displeasure and that the undead plans to kill them.

Lady's Whisper responds to any preemptive attack by the heroes as though expecting it. The undead attempts to levitate out of melee reach and cast spells to eliminate the heroes. The lurking pair of dread wisps that might have followed from area 164 join the fight as well.

heroes enter here with Lady's Whisper, the skeleton silently points at the gray door. That door opens with a push or simply swings aside if someone stands in front of it for 1 round. The doors to the south (Hardness 15, Hit Points 60) and the tubes' mechanical iris openings (Hardness 18, Hit Points 72) are all shut and don't open unless Lady's Whisper wills it.

If dread wisps are following the heroes, one of them takes a position above the basin to silently report everything the heroes do here to Belcorra.

Passing the Challenge of Souls: When the heroes return here having either fed or defeated the dread wisps in area J8, Lady's Whisper opens the doors to the south and leaves them open. A hero who succeeds at a DC 27 Perception check to Sense Motive realizes that Lady's Whisper is offended that the heroes passed the test but is keeping this irritation suppressed.

J2. POISONING ROOM

MODERATE 10

At the eastern end of this long room stands a giant jade statue of a cracked and chipped skeleton in a burial shroud. The skull clenches a bundle of swamp weeds in its teeth. Built into the walls are several narrow slits and stone doors.

A hero who Investigates the statue and succeeds at a DC 25 Religion check realizes that it's a rare physical representation of Nhimbaloth.

Long ago, initiates were commanded to kneel before Nhimbaloth. When they did, cultists hiding in the galleries shot poisoned blowgun darts at them. Those who didn't succumb to poison were deemed to

be worthy and led south; those who succumbed were taken north to have their souls harvested.

Creatures: Six cultists have arisen as specters. They manifest in the shooting galleries with ghostly blowguns, which they use in addition to their vile touch Strikes to shoot ephemeral darts made of their own ghostly substance. The narrow slits provide anyone in the shooting galleries with greater cover (+4 circumstance bonus to AC, Reflex saves against area effects, and Stealth checks). If the heroes enter a shooting gallery, the specters pass through the walls to keep their distance. The specters fight until destroyed.

SPECTERS (6)

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 248

Initiative Stealth +17 (+21 in the shooting gallery)

Ranged ♦ vile blowgun +18 (range increment 20 feet),

Damage 3d6 negative plus 3d6 poison and spectral corruption

J3. CLEANSING CHAMBER

Two grime-crusted copper tubs, devoid of water, stand against the south wall.

Long abandoned, this chamber was once where initiates who survived the poisoning room were stripped, bathed with swamp water, and then escorted into the worthies' cave. A hero can discover the secret door while Searching this room with a successful DC 25 Perception check. A false stone on the eastern wall must be rotated to pivot open one of the copper tubs and the wall behind it.

J4. WORTHIES' CAVE

LOW 10

The ceiling of this natural chamber bears seven holes no larger around than a human finger.

Before surviving initiates took the next challenge—the Challenge of Despair—they were subjected to a mind-numbing gas to make the test more difficult.

The secret doors here both open the same way: when rotated, a portion of the smooth, flat wall makes the door pivot open. The secret doors are each at the end of short hallways, so they aren't hard to find. Anyone Searching either short hall discovers the secret door and the method of opening it. The doors won't open, however, if the room's trap is active, so they must be battered down (Hardness 18, Hit Points 60) to escape the trap.

Hazard: The trap spews mind-numbing gas through the seven holes in the ceiling.

BEFUDDLING GAS TRAP

HAZARD 11

COMPLEX MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth +21 (expert) or DC 31 (expert) to notice the hidden override mechanism on the north wall.

Description Seven nozzles hidden within holes in the 15-foot-high ceiling release a poison gas.

Disable DC 33 Thievery (master) to disable the hidden mechanism on the north wall, immediately sucking the gas from the room, or DC 29 Thievery (expert) to adequately plug one of the seven nozzles. When all seven nozzles are plugged or destroyed, the trap is deactivated.

AC 31; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +18

Nozzle Hardness 20; **Nozzle HP** 32 (BT 16); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Gas Release ☞ (inhaled, mental, poison) **Trigger** Both secret doors are closed and at least one creature is in the room; **Effect** Gas fills the chamber. Creatures within the chamber must succeed on a DC 30 Fortitude save or become stupefied 1 (stupefied 2 on a critical failure). The trap then rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action) The gas intensifies. Each creature in the room must make a DC 30 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected and becomes temporarily immune to the gas for 1 hour, though if the creature has already been stupefied by the trap, that condition remains for its normal duration.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature becomes stupefied 1 for 24 hours. If the target is already stupefied, the condition value increases by 1 (to a maximum of stupefied 4) and the target takes 8d6 mental damage.

Critical Effect As failure, except the target takes double the mental damage.

Reset After an hour, the trap deactivates; the gas disperses slowly, and the doors can be opened again. After 24 hours, the gas builds up and the trap can be triggered once more.

J5. LEVEL TEN PORTAL CHAMBER

MODERATE 10

Belcorra added this room to the temple to connect her network of permanent *teleportation circles*. Its door is locked, and the key is long lost. A hero can Force it Open with a successful DC 25 Athletics check or Pick the Lock with four successful DC 25 Thievery checks.

Swirling, silver-filled runes adorn the rounded walls of this chamber. Sheets of reflective metal cover the floor and ceiling.

The heroes can reactivate this portal chamber and connect it to others throughout the Abomination Vaults, as described in area B17.

Creatures: As the lowest portal chamber, Belcorra ensured this room was well-guarded. A powerful stone golem is built into the wall, in an open space between the silver-filled runes. It steps out and attacks anyone who isn't accompanying Belcorra.

ELITE STONE GOLEM

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 187

Initiative Perception +19

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for using the *awaken portal* ritual to reactivate the *teleportation circle* here.

CHAPTER 10 SYNOPSIS

The heroes have their final confrontation with Belcorra in this chapter. On the way to the Empty Vault, where Belcorra can be found, they pass through several challenges that aspirants of Nhimbalothe faced back when this was an active temple to the Empty Death. Ironically, this lowest level of the Abomination Vaults is one of the safest, in that its denizens generally stay put and the heroes can rest for as long as they need in empty chambers. They'll need to be in top form to tackle Belcorra; if they haven't collected all three *fulcrum lenses* by now, they might need to retreat, recover them, and face Belcorra again.

Environmental Cues: black stone, carvings of bones or mist, clammy air, eerie lights, fog, swamp plants

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J6. CREMATORIUM

MODERATE 10

Two pools of bubbling magma sit side by side in the center of this large chamber.

This crematorium is extremely hot (*Core Rulebook* 518), dealing 2d6 fire damage every 10 minutes (the scorpions are immune). Immersion in the 25-foot-deep magma pools deals 20d6 fire damage each round.

Creatures: Bound fire elementals have maintained the heat in this room for centuries. They climb out of the magma pits to attack intruders, pursuing aggressively and fighting until destroyed.

MAGMA SCORPIONS (4)

CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 111

Initiative Perception +18

J7. SOUL EXTRACTORS

MODERATE 10

This strange, irregular hall features several wide alcoves, each with a standing rack bearing crystals and levers, like bizarre torture devices.

Failed initiates were brought here and strapped to the strange standing racks. These occult machines extracted the initiates' souls into crystal globes as special glass golems sliced their bodies to pieces. Cultists took the soul-infused globes (which were far too delicate for the blade-handed golems to handle) to the dread wisps in area J8.

Only three of the occult machines still function, and each holds a crystal globe containing the soul of an initiate killed centuries ago. A hero Investigating a functional machine and succeeding at a DC 30 Occultism, Religion, or relevant Lore check (such as Spirit Lore) realizes what the globes are and how they were created.

Creatures: The four golems remain here and do their best to slice intruders to ribbons. Their greenish glass bodies emit an unsettling glow, giving them the Grim Glimmering ability instead of Dazzling Brilliance.

NHIMBALOTH'S CUTTERS (4)

CREATURE 8

RARE NE MEDIUM CONSTRUCT GOLEM MINDLESS

Variant glass golems (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 131)

Initiative Perception +14

Grim Glimmering ♦♦ (evocation, light, visual) The golem creates waves of baleful light that cast dim light in a 60-foot emanation. The light lasts until the start of the golem's next turn, after which the golem can't use Grim Glimmering for 1d4 rounds. A creature within the light or that enters the light must attempt a DC 23 Will save.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature is dazzled for 1 round.

Critical Failure The creature is doomed 1 and blinded for 1 round.

Nhimbaloth's Cutter

Treasure: The three crystal globes are each about a foot in diameter and worth 200 gp to certain unsavory soul merchants, such as night hags. If smashed, their fragments are valueless but the soul trapped within travels to the Boneyard and its ultimate reward.

The three functioning machines contain some valuable parts. With several hours' work and a successful DC 30 Crafting check, a hero can strip a machine of rare metals and delicate gears worth 80 gp. If this check is a critical success, the parts are worth 160 gp; on a critical failure, the parts in that machine are ruined and valueless.

J8. DEVOURING CHAMBER

SEVERE 10

This large chamber has a spiny, dust-covered floor. On the far western end is a large stone basin filled with swamp plants.

A thick layer of dust covers the shattered crystal shards littering the floor, evidence of hundreds of initiates' extracted souls. The broken crystal makes the ground difficult terrain and inflicts a -5 circumstance penalty to Stealth checks, but it isn't dangerous to anyone who isn't barefoot. Barefoot creatures take 5 piercing damage at the end of each Stride in the room.

Creatures: Three powerful dread wisps called soul feeders float here. As extensions of the evil energies of the Empty Vault (area J20), they funnel souls released here into that chamber. They can't return to the Empty Vault, or even leave this room, without more souls.

When the heroes arrive, the bobbing wisps demand that the heroes gather the crystal globes from the next room and smash them here. They don't admit that doing so frees them to return to the Empty Vault but might insist (truthfully) that doing so will cause them to vanish from here. One soul feeder winks out for each sphere the heroes smash; the heroes will face them again in the Empty Vault.

If it becomes clear to the soul feeders that the heroes aren't going to comply, they attack the heroes in an attempt to kill them and use their souls as the fuel for the Empty Vault instead. Soul feeders gang up on one hero at a time, moving on to another when their target is dead. Each hero killed in this room returns one soul feeder to the Empty Vault immediately.

SOUL FEEDERS (3)

CREATURE 10

Elite dread wisps (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, page 252)

Initiative Perception +22

Stolen Soul: A hero who dies in this room has a portion of their soul stolen to power the Empty Vault. The hero can be raised as normal, but they gain the

doomed 1 condition and can't reduce their doomed condition below 1 for a year.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for dealing with these soul feeders and passing the Challenge of Souls.

J9. SECOND CHALLENGE

This chamber looks much like the room to the north, except the gray door to the west is carved with frightened faces rather than mist, and there are three metal tubes rather than two. The basin of reeds and swamp water is to the south.

This is where initiates began the Challenge of Despair. The south doors and mechanical iris openings in the tubes are similar to those in area J1. The door on the west wall is unlocked and leads to second test.

If Lady's Whisper is leading the heroes through the challenges, it points silently at the western door. The second dread wisp shadowing Lady's Whisper moves to hover above the basin and silently report the heroes' movements to Belcorra. Once the heroes are through the door, Lady's Whisper opens the doors to area J14 and awaits the heroes there, closing the doors after moving through them.

J10. PATH OF PLEASANT MEMORIES

The walls of this long, narrow hall are momentarily stark white, but colorful images soon swirl upon them. A door stands at each end of the hall.

Occult magic powers the illusions here and along the path that constitutes the Challenge of Despair (areas J11 and J12). Each viewer sees different images, as they're all a hodgepodge of memories drawn from the viewers' mind. You might draw upon the heroes' victories, friendships, and amusing encounters in this Adventure Path to describe the images. A hero who approaches the western door must attempt a DC 27 Will saving throw; on a failure, the hero is entranced by the illusory images for 24 hours. While so entranced, the hero takes a -10-foot penalty to all Speeds in areas J10 to J12 and can't Avert their Gaze from the images in the same areas.

Two secret doors allowed cultists to cut quickly between the challenges. Heroes Searching this hall discover the secret door to the north with a successful DC 25 Perception check and the secret door to the south with a successful DC 30 Perception check. Each is opened by manipulating a nearby section of the wall that's slightly darker than the surrounding stone. The secret door to the south is one-way only; the heroes can use it to access area J12 but can't come back.

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J11. PATH OF FAILURE

This path widens and turns south opposite the single narrow door. Its walls are a riot of swirling images.

The occult magic in this hall pulls personalized memories from the viewer, as in area **J10**, but these memories are all failures: mentors scolding the viewer, authorities punishing them, or lost friends crying. You can also pull from any significant failures a hero had during this Adventure Path, such as needing to flee a significant foe or triggering a damaging trap.

Hazard: This room's images worm into the victim's mind. The heroes can *Avert their Gaze* (*Core Rulebook* 472) from these images and gain that action's bonus to saving throws required by this hazard, even though these illusions are more than merely visual.

IMAGES OF FAILURE

HAZARD 12

MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 35 (expert) to realize the illusory images conceal a magical trap (noticing the images has a DC of 0)

Description Psychically enhanced illusions flood the minds of creatures in the 40-foot-long, 15-foot-wide hallway (the white dotted box on the map) with memories of their past failures.

Disable DC 32 Occultism (master) or *dispel magic* (5th level; counteract DC 26) to weaken the images; three successes are required to disable the trap

Echoes of Defeat ♦ (curse, emotion, enchantment, mental)

Trigger A creature ends a move action within the trap's area; **Effect** The triggering creature takes 2d10+10 mental damage (DC 32 basic Will save) as it recalls its past failures. A creature that takes damage hears a soft whisper offering, "Let me take something from you and I can stop the pain." A creature who agrees loses access to a random skill feat that isn't a prerequisite for another feat, and the creature doesn't take further damage from Echoes of Defeat. This effect lasts for 1 week and can be ended by effects that remove curses.

Reset The trap resets immediately and can affect the same creature multiple times on the creature's turn.

J12. PATH OF POWERLESSNESS

The walls, floor, and ceiling of this long hall swirl with overlapping, shifting images.

This hall's occult magic manifests images drawn from the viewer's mind, as in areas **J10** and **J11**, but these images predict failure in the future. Viewers see themselves growing infirm, succumbing to disease, or falling in battle against Belcorra.

The secret door leading north doesn't open from this side. The secret door to the east is the only way to leave and complete the Challenge of Despair; those who couldn't find this hidden exit eventually died from the torment in the images. Anyone more than 20 feet from the secret door can't see it due to the overlapping images, but anyone within 20 feet who Seeks in the area discovers it with a successful DC 27 Perception check. A hero who Searches the hall (which isn't possible while the trap is active, as the heroes are in encounter mode rather than exploration mode) finds the secret door automatically.

Hazard: This trap is similar to the one in area **J11**, though its area is much larger, as it fills the entire long hallway. The heroes can also *Avert their Gaze* from the images in this trap as well, if they choose.

IMAGES OF POWERLESSNESS

HAZARD 12

MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 35 (expert) to realize the illusory images conceal a magical trap (noticing the images has a DC of 0)

Description Psychically-enhanced illusions flood the minds of creatures in the 95-foot-long, 15-foot-wide hallway (the white dotted box on the map) with visions of their failures yet to come.

Disable DC 32 Occultism (master) or *dispel magic* (5th level; counteract DC 26) to weaken the images; three successes are required to disable the trap

Flood of Despair ♦ (curse, emotion, enchantment, mental)

Trigger A creature ends a move action within the trap's area; **Effect** The triggering creature takes 2d10+10 mental damage (DC 32 basic Will save) as it considers its future failures. A creature that takes damage hears a soft whisper offering, "Let me take something from you and I can stop the pain." A creature who agrees loses access to a random class feat that isn't a prerequisite for another feat, and the creature doesn't take further damage from Flood of Despair. This effect lasts for 1 week and can be ended by effects that remove curses. The creature also immediately detects the secret door at the end of the hall, no matter how far away from the end of the hall they are.

Reset The trap resets immediately and can affect the same creature multiple times on the creature's turn.

J13. CHAMBER OF REFLECTION

The walls of this bare room are white and plain.

Initiates who passed the Challenge of Despair were permitted to stop in this psychic refuge to recover before facing the next test.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for reaching this room after passing the Challenge of Despair.

J14. THIRD CHALLENGE

This large room has double doors of black stone to the north and an enormous slab of rough-hewn rock blocking passage to the south. Two metal tubes jut into this room from the east wall. Both of their mechanical irises are open.

The slab of rock blocking the passage south is one of two slabs that function as enormous doors. There's a gap of only a few inches between them. The doors are particularly sturdy, and the only way for anyone other than Lady's Whisper to open them is to smash them down (Hardness 20, 80 Hit Points each).

Passing the Challenge of Despair: Lady's Whisper meets the heroes who enter from area J13 here. A hero who succeeds at a DC 22 Perception check to Sense Motive realizes that Lady's Whisper is angry that the heroes passed. On a critical success, the hero realizes that Lady's Whisper plans to betray them if they keep passing Nhimbaloth's tests.

Lady's Whisper points to the open pipes. When the heroes exit through the pipes, it closes the iris portals after them and then raises the stone slabs enough to enter area C18, where it again waits for the heroes.

J15. DEADLY SWAMP

MODERATE 10

The pipes leading to this chamber end with a drop (25 feet from area J1, 20 feet from area J9, and 15 feet from area J14). In all cases, the drop is into reeking swamp muck, so falling creatures take no damage but draw the attention of this room's inhabitants.

This massive cavern is a thick swamp, moist and stinking. Seven rusted metal boxes are just visible within the dense reeds of the swamp. The south end of the cavern is a rounded metal dam that's slid upward so only a constant trickle of water dribbles from its top, near the ceiling. Ancient gears on either side of the dam appear to lower it, though streaks of rust show they haven't moved in quite some time. At the lower north end of the cavern, the swamp water drains into a murky, flooded room.

This room's environment echoes the poisonous terrain of Nhimbaloth's dead world, Voidbracken. The Challenge of the Swamp is simple: survive, find the way to open the dam, and enter area J17.

This area is difficult terrain, as the water isn't deep, but the ground beneath it is sucking and treacherous. Further, the air in the swamp is toxic. Any creature starting its turn in the swamp must succeed at a DC 27 Fortitude saving throw or become sickened 2 (sickened 4 on a critical failure) and can't reduce its sickened condition while in the swamp. The creature

DESTROYING BELCORRA

Belcorra only stops rejuvenating once she completes her goal of inflicting murderous revenge upon Absalom—but there's another way to end her villainy for good. Nhimbaloth, the devourer of spirits, can utterly annihilate the ghost so she troubles the world no longer. Drawing the reclusive and inhuman Nhimbaloth's attention isn't easy, but Belcorra laid the groundwork for this by relying so heavily upon the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens*. Nhimbaloth is already inclined to turn her spirit-consuming attention to Belcorra because Belcorra has made frequent use of the glimmers of Nhimbaloth's essence within the item. The heroes must strengthen this contact by imbuing Belcorra with the splinters of Nhimbaloth's essence in the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens*, the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens*, and the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens* (it's easier to do so via the *Fulcrum Lattice*, but that item isn't strictly required). Each splinter gives Belcorra a bit more power, but all three together (building upon her past use of the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens*) draw Nhimbaloth's dread gaze to her ghostly devotee.

is then temporarily immune for 10 minutes, whether or not it succeeded at the save. This is a poison effect.

Heroes Searching this area spot three rusted metal pipes running just beneath the swamp water and weeds. These connect to the rusty metal boxes (marked on the map) and are part of the control system to lower the dam. Heroes who succeed at a DC 25 Crafting, Engineering Lore, or Thievery check to Recall Knowledge realize that the pipes are important to controlling the dam; on a critical success, the hero also realizes that they connect to controls further north (in area J16).

Rusting Boxes: Each box has a single valve turned sideways, pointing east to west. This is the "off" position; turning it to point north to south (the way the pipes run beneath them) puts it in the "on" position. All seven boxes must be turned to the "on" position before the control wheels in area J16 can turn. If your players like puzzles, you can have each valve that's turned (in either direction) automatically turn all other valves along its pipe and in its row as well; the players then need to puzzle out how to turn them all "on."

Creatures: Before the heroes can do much, they must contend with a trio of chuuls imbued with Voidbracken's vile energy. The chuuls fight until slain.

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VOIDBRACKEN CHUULS (3)

CREATURE 9

RARE CE LARGE ABERRATION AMPHIBIOUS

Variant chuul (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 64)

Perception +18; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Aklo, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +21, Nature +18, Occultism +17, Stealth +17, Survival +16

Str +6, **Dex** +4, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

AC 31; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +18, **Will** +15

HP 140; **Immunities** poison

Attack of Opportunity ☞

Speed 30 feet, swim 25 feet

Melee ☞ claw +22 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+12 bludgeoning plus Grab

Constrict ☞ 1d8+12 bludgeoning, DC 28 (grabbed by claws only)

Draining Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 28 Fortitude;

Maximum Duration 6 rounds; **Stage 1** drained 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** drained 2 (1 round)

Mind Feeding ☞ **Requirements** A drained creature is grabbed by the chuul's tentacles; **Effect** The creature takes 3d6 mental damage.

Swamp Stride The Voidbracken chuul ignores difficult terrain and greater difficult terrain in swamps.

Tentacle Transfer ☞ **Requirements** The Voidbracken chuul has a creature grabbed; **Effect** The chuul transfers the grabbed creature from its claws to its tentacles, or vice versa. The creature is exposed to the chuul's draining venom when transferred into the tentacles and at the start of each of the chuul's turns if it remains grabbed by the tentacles.

J16. PERILOUS CONTROLS

SEVERE 10

Swamp water floods much of this cave. Three small islands each bear a metal box with a rusty wheel.

The murky water in this room looks no deeper than the swamp in area **J15**, but the water is 25 feet deep. The heroes will likely need to swim to reach the islands. Fortunately, the air in this cavern isn't as toxic as that in area **J15** and no saving throws are required for breathing the air here.

The three wheels on the islands control the dam in area **J15**. If all are turned fully clockwise (requiring three Interact actions each) while all the valves are positioned "on," the dam there grinds downward, releasing a cascade of fetid swamp water. This influx raises the water level here and in area **J15** by several inches.

Creatures: Lurking under the water are a pair of dread dhuthorexexes that attempt to ambush intruders and fight to the death.

DREAD DHUTHOREXES (2)

CREATURE 11

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Initiative Perception +22

J17. INFESTED REEDS

LOW 10

This room is usually filled a foot deep with swamp water that drains from the Empty Vault when the dam connected to area **J15** is closed.

The heroes most likely enter this area from area **J15** after lowering the dam; if they do, they've completed the Challenge of the Swamp.

Voidbracken Chuul

A circular pool of swamp water sits at the center of this square chamber. The pool is fed by a channel in the west wall, between two sets of black stone double doors. The water flows out to the north, through a metal dam. A thick knot of writhing reeds, like a grotesque tree, rises from the pool.

The pool and channels are only six inches deep, which is why the room floods so easily when the dam is closed.

Creature: The writhing here is caused by an isqulug infestation. When the heroes arrive, the grotesque aberration moves out of the reeds to attack. While a malevolent creature, it isn't affiliated with Nhimbalothe and recalls very little about how its larvae came here ages ago. If reduced to fewer than 150 Hit Points, the isqulug casts *control water* to raise the water in this room by 10 feet and, it hopes, gain an advantage in the fight. When destroyed, its larvae scatter in the water and slip into the swamp below—in time, to grow a new host body.

ISQULUG

CREATURE 11

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 149

Initiative Perception +24

J18. MAW OF THE GODDESS

LOW 10

The vaulted ceiling of this massive chamber reaches eighty feet high and is carved with intricate patterns of bones, swamp weeds, and misty swirls. To the south stands a huge dais, its stone carved into crooked, cracked teeth. Upon the dais rests a massive skull, its eye sockets empty and its visage menacing. A channel of filthy water cuts across this room, emerging from the base of the walls on the east and west side. Double doors bracket each channel outlet.

The wall behind the giant skull hides a secret door, partially outlined in moisture and easier to find than normal. A successful DC 20 Perception check while Searching this area locates it.

Creature: If the heroes have yet to defeat Lady's Whisper, it's waiting on the dais. It doesn't point toward any direction, but instead walks slowly toward the heroes. It whispers, "I know that you are pretenders. Defilers. You should not be here. Nhimbalothe thinks you serve some purpose to her plans, but I disagree." Lady's Whisper then attacks to stop the heroes' progress. It uses its unwilling teleportation ability to shunt the heroes into area J14 if it can, so they have to take the time to come around through the swamp again. Lady's Whisper fights until destroyed.

LADY'S WHISPER

CREATURE 11

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Initiative Perception +25

J19. PASSAGE TO THE DEPTHS

SEVERE 10

A smooth, natural cavern winds its way through the darkness, ending in a larger chamber with a wide pit at the far side. A corpse is slumped at the pit's edge.

The pit is hundreds of feet deep and leads to even deeper places in the Darklands. Its challenges are beyond the scope of this Adventure Path.

The corpse is a messily killed humanoid of a strange appearance: two heads and a chitinous body. The irлгаunt in the pit hollowed it out and filled it with gravel, so it makes a clattering noise when disturbed unless it's handled very carefully.

Creatures: Although this passage hasn't been used in centuries, it isn't wholly abandoned. A crab-like irлгаunt from deeper in the Darklands lurks in the pit. When the irлгаunt hears activity in the room above, such as the clattering of gravel from the gruesome alarm it made, it skitters up the pit and arrives in 2 rounds. It retreats, abandoning its potential meal, if reduced to fewer than 50 Hit Points.

IRLGAUNT

CREATURE 13

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 148

Initiative Perception +24

Treasure: The odd corpse still wears a strange jeweled torc worth 500 gp.

J20. EMPTY VAULT

EXTREME 10

This strangely shaped chamber is humid and oppressively clammy. The room's four wings each contain a massive pool of bubbling swamp water. Flickering motes of light and darkness play underneath the surface of the pools. The chamber's center is partially blocked by a circle of towering black standing stones, which crackle with eerie energy that shoots up into a shaft in the ceiling. Seven narrow channels, as though dug into the stone by a seven-fingered hand, run from each pool and three of the walls to a moat in the center of the room. From there, the water flows under the wall to the east, between a pair of black stone double doors. An island in the moat holds a smooth altar topped with a black lens the size of a fist.

The Empty Vault has always been a generation pit for the wisps who serve Nhimbalothe. A funnel of swamp, despair, and ghostly energies, it's mystically connected to the various swamp plant basins throughout the lower Abomination Vaults. Any follower of Nhimbalothe can telepathically communicate with wisps adjacent to the basins from here.

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The Empty Vault drew Belcorra's soul after the Roseguard killed her, and her ghost reappeared here 500 years after the most traumatic event in her life—not her death, but her family's exile from Absalom. Belcorra can't leave this chamber for long, so she uses her wisp proxies and bound agents to enact her will throughout the Abomination Vaults. She keeps the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens* on the altar to restore its energies; while here, it can regain its glimmers of Nhimbaloth's essence, but this takes time.

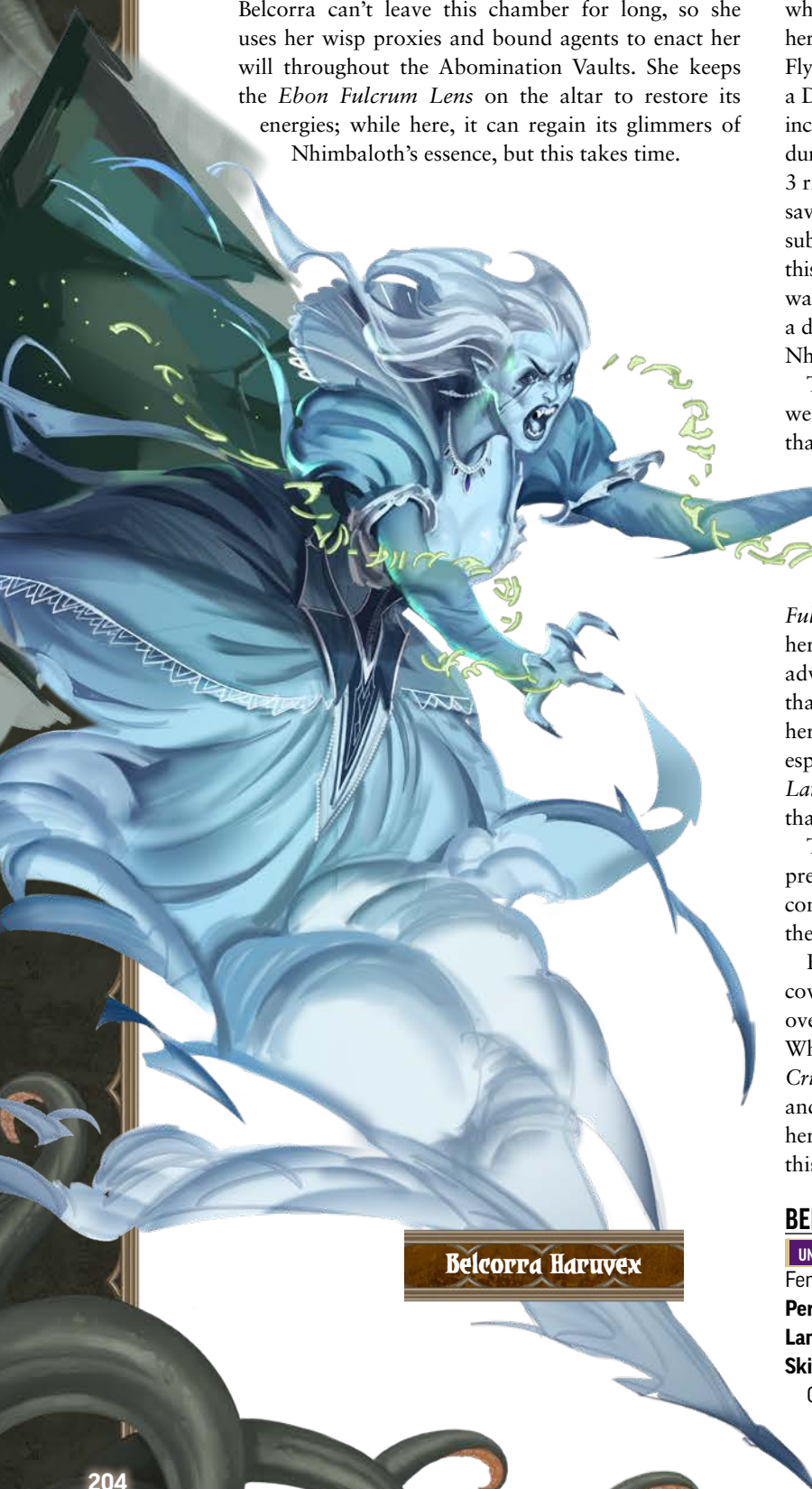
The seven swamp water rivulets are both dangerous and noxious, as they mark where Nhimbaloth once touched the world. It's a simple matter to step over them, but they pull unpleasantly at the life energy of anyone who crosses them. At the end of any turn in which a hero crosses a rivulet (whether by Striding, Stepping, Flying, or any other means), the hero must succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude save or become doomed 1. This DC increases by 2 for each additional unique rivulet crossed during that turn (for example, a hero who crosses over 3 rivulets in their turn must attempt a DC 26 Fortitude saving throw). The doomed condition is cumulative on subsequent rounds. Crossing the pools doesn't have this effect, so the heroes might learn that there are safer ways to move about the room than simply walking in a direct line. The rivulets have no effect on followers of Nhimbaloth, including Belcorra and the dread wisps.

The black stone menhirs help support *Gauntlight's* weight and emit the twisting ribbon of eerie energy that writhes up the shaft through areas **B35**, **C15**, **H37**, and **I28**. Belcorra can manipulate this ribbon of energy to power *Gauntlight*.

Creatures: If Belcorra hasn't yet rejuvenated, the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens* automatically rejuvenates her when the heroes arrive. She's so incensed that another group of adventurers would dare to oppose her in her sanctum that she attacks with her full fury. Belcorra focuses her attacks on anyone who carries *fulcrum lenses*, especially a hero who carries them in the *Fulcrum Lattice*. She realizes that the lenses are potent weapons that can be used against her.

There's one soul feeder here at all times. If the heroes presented souls to the soul feeders in area **J8**, they've come here and also fight at Belcorra's side; this makes the encounter particularly challenging!

Belcorra and the soul feeders use the menhirs for cover as they dart about, hoping to draw the heroes over the doom-inducing rivulets of swamp water. When the heroes infuse Belcorra with splinters in the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens*, the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens*, and the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens*, Nhimbaloth comes for her, and she's forever destroyed. When the heroes do this, proceed to Nhimbaloth's Entrance (page 205).



Belcorra Haruvex

BELCORRA HARUVEX

CREATURE 12

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM GHOST INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Female ghost sorcerer (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 166)

Perception +22; darkvision, magic sense

Languages Aklo, Common, Undercommon

Skills Arcana +23, Diplomacy +23, Intimidation +25, Occultism +26, Religion +22, Stealth +22

Str -5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +7

Magic Sense (detection, divination) Belcorra can sense the presence of magic auras as though she were always using a 1st-level *detect magic* spell. When she Seeks, she gains the benefits of a 3rd-level *detect magic* spell on things she sees.

Site Bound (lowest three levels of the Abomination Vaults)

AC 30; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +22, **Will** +20; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 175, negative healing, rejuvenation; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistances** all damage 10 (except force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Rejuvenation (divine, necromancy) When Belcorra is destroyed, she re-forms in 2d4 days within the Empty Vault (though she can reduce that time by empowering herself with glimmers of Nhimbaloth's essence using the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens* [page 220]). Belcorra can only be permanently destroyed if she enacts her full revenge on Absalom or if Nhimbaloth devours her soul.

Speed fly 25 feet

Melee ♦ ghostly hand +24 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 3d8+12 negative

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 33, attack +25; **6th** (4 slots) *dispel magic*, *feeblemind*, *phantasmal calamity*, *true seeing*; **5th** (4 slots) *black tentacles*, *crushing despair*, *illusory scene*, *tongues*; **4th** (4 slots) *confusion*, *globe of invulnerability*, *phantasmal killer*, *spell immunity*; **3rd** (4 slots) *mind reading*, *nondetection*, *paralyze*, *vampiric touch*; **2nd** (4 slots) *death knell*, *see invisibility*, *telekinetic maneuver*, *touch of idiocy*; **1st** (4 slots) *mindlink*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *spider sting*, *true strike*; **Cantrips (6th)** *daze*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *message*, *read aura*, *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*

Sorcerer Bloodline Spells DC 33; **6th** (2 Focus Points) *aberrant whispers*, *tentacular limbs*

Rituals DC 33; *legend lore*, *planar binding*, *teleportation circle* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 244)

Blood Magic Each time Belcorra casts a sorcerer bloodline spell or an aberrant bloodline granted spell, she can grant herself or a target of the spell a +2 status bonus to Will saving throws for 1 round.

Corrupting Gaze ♦♦ Belcorra stares at a creature she can see within 30 feet. The target takes 9d6 mental damage (DC 33 basic Will save). A creature that fails its save is also stupefied 1 for 1 minute.

Haunted Lighthouse ♦ **Frequency** once every 10 minutes; **Effect** Belcorra extends her presence throughout the lowest three levels of *Gauntlight* until the end of her next turn. She can see with the benefits of all-around vision and can make ghostly hand attacks or use special abilities originating from any surface in this area.

Quicken Casting ♦ **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** If Belcorra's next action is to cast a sorcerer spell of 4th level or lower, she reduces the number of actions to cast it by 1 (minimum 1 action).

SOUL FEEDERS (1 TO 4)

CREATURE 10

Elite dread wisps (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, page 252)

Initiative Perception +22

Nhimbaloth's Entrance

Once the heroes infuse Belcorra with all three of Nhimbaloth's splinters, the earth shakes. A tremendous and hideous wail emanates from somewhere beyond this chamber—indeed, it seems, from beyond the Material Plane. All creatures in the Abomination Vaults must succeed a DC 30 Will save or become frightened 3 (a creature that critically fails is also paralyzed for 1d4 rounds). At the start of the following round, Nhimbaloth's essence pervades the room.

A terrible, blackish-gray mist seeps into the room. It stinks of a fetid bog and leaves a layer of cloying, slimy water upon everything it passes. The mist twists in shape and form, with seven-fingered tentacles appearing and disappearing in the fog.

This misty incarnation can't be attacked or damaged. It flows into Belcorra, who shrieks, "No! I deserve your power, not your attention! My death is full of rage and strength—it is not empty!" Despite these protestations, Belcorra's form is pulled apart into the mist, and the mist vanishes.

An immense grinding noise comes from high above. *Gauntlight*, Belcorra's greatest work, is collapsing, one level at a time. With each passing round, the artifact drops one dungeon level along the lighthouse's footprint (but not in the rest of the Abomination Vaults!), obliterating anything directly beneath it. In the 9th round, it collapses into this chamber, destroying everything here—by then, the heroes would best be gone.

Conclusion

With Belcorra destroyed, Otari and Absalom are safe from her spiteful schemes. The heroes receive a warm welcome in Otari, and everyone wants to hear their tales over a friendly fire, good food, and more than a few drinks. The heroes are told, retold, and embellished upon for generations.

Gauntlight is no more, and only the pit in the Fogfen marks the spot it once stood. The dangers lurking there might one day regain their strength and menace the surface—but those are tales for other heroes.

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NHIMBALOTH

The banks of the River of Souls brushes against every world, for when a mortal dies, their spirit steps out of their body to cross over these banks on the first step toward the afterlife. Yet, as with most rivers, predators lurk along these perilous banks. Night hags, astradaemons, devourers, and worse stalk the River, eager to pluck souls free and feed on them. Dread Nhimbaloth, the Empty Death, doesn't deign to hunt the shores of the River of Souls alongside these predators—she instead feeds upon the predators themselves, reveling in consuming souls already being digested in the gullets of those who would deem themselves the apex hunters of the dead.

Nhimbaloth uses the shores of the River of Souls to manifest upon the universe's countless worlds, but she can't just do so whenever she wills it. Before the Empty Death can manifest within a world, it must first endure a cataclysm so vast that the outflow of the dead into the River of Souls weakens the boundaries between life and death. When such massive casualties sufficiently thin these borders, she can drift in through the cracks and stain what she finds. The resulting blurring between the River of Souls and its shore is metaphysically akin to the muddled boundary of a swamp. It's no coincidence that when Nhimbaloth emerges into a world, she chooses to dwell in its remote swamplands. Nhimbaloth isn't a glutton—she's endlessly patient and can linger on a world for centuries before being noticed.

More often, her presence in an isolated swampland simply festers, turning a region of natural beauty into a dangerous fen that draws all manner of monsters to its fetid heart. Such lands call to will-o'-wisps; for these feeders of fears, the ruin wrought by the Empty Death is like a fine wine of unparalleled vintage. In time, many of these wisps realize the truth of the

influence in their chosen haunts, and in most cases, these ravenous aberrations become Empty Death's most fervent worshippers.

Personification and Realm

While Dread Nhimbaloth has no physical body of her own, she has been known to manifest a perceivable shape under the perfect conditions, growing visible after consuming a huge quantity of souls the way an empty glass's contours becomes more defined once filled with

liquid. In this form, Nhimbaloth appears as a twisting, melted mass of glistening blue fluid with eyes the shape of yellow four-pointed stars and a tangle of translucent tentacles extending in every direction. The tentacles' tips split into seven smaller tendrils, and where these "hands" touch the world, they leave her mark behind—a ring of seven strange divots where vegetation refuses to grow, stone becomes chalky, and flesh festers as if it had forgotten how to heal. The position of the stars in the sky, the number of dead trapped within the swamp, and the time of year all seem to play a part in determining when this shadow of what might have once been Nhimbaloth's body can appear, as does the presence of her cultists, but the manifestation rarely persists for long. Always, the manifestation ends in a sudden consumption from within when the Empty Death retreats to her domain, leaving behind a dead swampland of toxic waters and mindless undeath.

This form often appears in illustrations that depict the Empty Death, though Nhimbaloth is also portrayed as a ghostly human woman with a single yellow eye in the shape of a four-pointed star filling her otherwise blank face, and a long, writhing mane of ghostly, seven-fingered tentacles wraps around

"The wind, her voice;
The wisp, her eye;
Your life, her choice;
Your lot, to die."
—*The Whispering Reeds*

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NHIMBALOTH'S INSPIRATION

H. P. Lovecraft encouraged others to add to the mythos of eldritch beings he created to populate his weird fiction, and it was in this tradition that I first created Nhimbalothe as an antagonist for my own stories and roleplaying campaigns. Largely inspired by the mysterious horror lurking behind nature's veil in Algernon Blackwood's classic short story "The Willows," and with some valuable advice on Outer God naming conventions from the fine folks at Chaosium, Nhimbalothe has become one of my proudest additions to the ever-expanding Lovecraft Mythos. —James Jacobs

her nearly skeletal body in a smoky shroud. This version of her is surely the product of an artist's nightmare, yet cults have adopted it as their own.

Nhimbalothe's realm is a twofold domain. She uses the banks of the River of Souls as a hunting ground and a highway to travel from world to world, but supposedly dwells on a distant, dead planet. The name of this domain has been lost to time; the faithful of Nhimbalothe refer to it in whispers only as Voidbracken. Here, an ancient battle between Nhimbalothe and another power took place (most myths suggest her foe was Pharasma) that resulted in the destruction of the Empty Death's body. This conflict didn't result in her death, however, and her cult fondly views the event as an evolution—for without a body, she could now come and go as she pleased along the shores of the River of Souls. Voidbracken spins still in the Dark Tapestry, wandering aimlessly through the universe but driven always by Nhimbalothe's will, and when it draws near an inhabited system, the souls of the living are drawn from their mortal shells in a cataclysm referred to in rare surviving accounts as the Deadtide. According to certain passages scribed in ancient texts like the *Necronomicon*, many of the Great Old Ones and Outer Gods must wait for the stars to align just right to manifest. This is quite literally true in Nhimbalothe's case. Eventually, her Deadtides will claim enough lives so that Nhimbalothe's death will die; the accumulated spiritual energy she has digested will ultimately undo her ancient defeat, allowing her to once more exist as a physical being.

She will rise from death hungrier than ever.

Dogma and Worshippers

Nhimbalothe's creed and worship are entirely the product of her cultists, as the Empty Death has little interest in providing her worshippers with direct inspiration or direction. This tradition echoes the pattern established with all other cults centered on entities of the Elder Mythos who similarly care not for their worshippers. Because of this lack of divine direction, while their worshippers strive to accomplish specific goals, they aren't limited by anathemas.

In Nhimbalothe's case, her worshippers seek to create undead—particularly ghosts and other incorporeal creatures—to provide sustenance for their eldritch icon. They also feast upon carnivores at their ceremonies, aping Nhimbalothe's predation upon soul-eating monsters. Her faith is all but unknown in urban areas, but in isolated swamp villages, worship of the Empty Death can suffuse entire settlements. In such instances, the cult typically builds the shell of a mainstream church to serve as a front and satisfy any curious outsiders passing through, while worshipping their goddess at a hidden location in the heart of the night.

Lower-level clerics of Nhimbalothe dress in whatever corpse's attire is commonly used in their society's burial rites, choosing to wear a "final suit" or "last gown" during their rituals in hopes that sweet oblivion might answer their prayers. Cult leaders, however, often eschew this tradition, instead wearing dark green or gray hooded robes adorned with tangled sheets of clinging moss and skull-shaped masks adorned with veils of additional moss. The cultists favor flails in combat; these weapons often have heads shaped into four-pointed stars with the flail's chain attached to the center of the star and handles wrapped in moss and tanned flesh stripped from the dead.

Humanoids are far from the Empty Death's only worshippers. As mentioned, will-o'-wisps and their kin find much to admire in the sinister aura Nhimbalothe's presence brings to desolate swamplands, and it doesn't take long for them to take up faith in the Empty Death, almost as if feeding on fear spurred by her influence infects the wisps with devotion to her faith. Marsh giants have also been known to venerate Nhimbalothe under names like "Bogmother," "The Rushlight Woman," "Swampfire Queen," or the like, although they pray to her more as a patron of swampland than anything else. Vampiric mists commonly appear in her swamplands as well, and many scholars have nervously wondered about the implied connection between Nhimbalothe's mark and the clusters of seven perfectly spaced punctures vampiric mists leave in the bodies of those they've fed upon through their misty tendrils.

Temples and Shrines

Often, the members of a cult of the Empty Death consist of the truly desperate, those with little money and less hope. They conduct their worship in their homes, or what passes as a home—partially collapsed shacks, abandoned barns, or even slumped survivalists' shelters all suffice for the worship of Nhimbalothe. The rarer cults led by deviants of means construct larger structures to honor Nhimbalothe and often build these structures as mockeries of other churches by including stained glass windows, mosaics, and other works of art that honor the Outer Goddess. In such cases, the structure often serves a secondary purpose, such as a castle, a manor house, or the like. Curiously, these larger structures often share a particular feature: a tower that serves as a beacon or lighthouse as a way to honor will-o'-wisp, which the cult adore. To her followers, will-o'-wisps are Nhimbalothe's eyes, and her gaze looks out upon the world through the lambent glow of these supernatural predators. A beacon or lighthouse in a temple thus symbolizes a will-o'-wisp, but also, they believe it gives Nhimbalothe a lens through which to gaze upon the world.

Nhimbalothe's symbol is a skull with moss stuffed into its jaws, although her cultists often create variants of it as crude dolls or effigies of moss-caked bones and fragments of skulls. Temples that can afford to be open about their affiliation with the goddess often adorn their structures with skulls that have moss carefully grown into soggy, vermin-infested beards or with moss draperies that hang down over archways to form moist curtains in place of proper doors.

A Priest's Role

As with most cults of the Elder Mythos, the majority of Nhimbalothe's devout don't worship out of respect or adoration so much as fear. For them, the concept of death isn't what evokes nightmare, but the fear of what judgment might await in the afterlife is what drives most to her faith. Those who have sinned, who have committed heresy against a prior faith, or who simply live in constant terror of what Pharasma might say to them when they reach her throne instead seek the oblivion offered by Nhimbalothe. They seek not to escape death or life, but to escape what they fear will be an even worse afterlife.

Yet this is not the only motive that draws worshippers to her fold. Some, rather than being driven by a fear of the afterlife, are enticed by the opportunity to bask in the misery and despair of others. These members are some of the most awful in the sect, for they use the promise of oblivion that Nhimbalothe offers to those who worship her as a lure to draw in the desperate

to aid their own nefarious plots. Some seek to use these eager-for-oblivion zealots as disposable armies for acts of vengeance or rage; others draw upon these worshippers as sacrifices to fuel abhorrent rituals or to craft horrific magic items.

Even these predators of the desperate pale in comparison to the worst of Nhimbalothe's worshippers—nihilists who fully understand the Empty Death and see in her the ultimate tool to destroy a world they've grown to loathe. For these cultists, nothing less than using the Voidbracken to bring a Deadtide upon their world will suffice. They might have a hidden plan to escape the world the moment all life is ended; they might even seek their own oblivion or believe that Nhimbalothe herself might reward them with dominion over a dead world. Regardless of their intent, these doomsday shepherds are the most dangerous of the Empty Death's worshippers.

Holidays

Cults of Nhimbalothe that exist in small communities under the guise of a different religion take pains to observe that faith's holidays if visitors or (more rarely) townsfolk don't know their gathering's true faith, but apart from that, worshippers of the Empty Death don't observe regular holidays or religious festivals—with one unusual exception. The exact date on which Nhimbalothe's body was taken from her and Voidbracken was denuded of life is unknown, so each cult chooses one day of import to observe this anniversary. The fact that no one knows the length of Voidbracken's year makes this ritual even more arbitrary; regardless, her faithful believe that on one of these so-called Void Dawns, the sun won't rise upon the world and all life will be snuffed in a Deadtide. Cultists celebrate the night leading to a Void Dawn with a gluttonous feast consisting of all manner of carnivores and monsters—meals they often make during the proceedings while the "food" still lives. When the sun inevitably rises, the cultists choose one of their own as the final feast in atonement for failing to bring the Deadtide to their world.

Aphorisms

Worshippers of Nhimbalothe fondly quote and recite their favorite tales from *The Whispering Reeds*, each of which has a number of memorable and haunting lines. However, a variant of an infamous quote from the *Necronomicon* particularly resonates with all of her worshippers.

Long Dream the Dead, Yet Even Death Can Die: To many, the notion of death is akin to an eternal slumber, a dawnless rest in which the soul experiences

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an afterlife in the way a sleeping person could dream several different lives in the span of a single night. Whether a dreamer wakes with the dawn or dies in their sleep, all dreams eventually come to an end. Just as when the Empty Death comes to call, even death knows oblivion—and even death may die.

Holy Text

Mentions of Nhimbalothe are rare, even for the esoteric topic of the Outer Gods. The dread *Necronomicon* mentions her, and certain translations of that book purportedly contain descriptions of her true form, which might be the only place where Nhimbalothe's true form is set down in print. This information isn't even present in the text most often associated with her worship: a rare tome called *The Whispering Reeds*.

The genesis of *The Whispering Reeds* lies not in those who worship the Empty Death, but in those who

sought to oppose her. The book consists of stories, myths, parables, and encounters with Nhimbalothe gathered from hundreds of regions in dozens of worlds. The compiler's name has been long forgotten, as they neglected to name themselves in the text. This matters not to those who worship Nhimbalothe, nor does the fact that the author originally penned the book for the purpose of cataloging the ways in which Nhimbalothe's influence could be opposed. The very act of collecting these old stories of the Empty Death brushing against the world had the opposite effect, and now, those who seek to draw their goddess's attention to their world uses *The Whispering Reeds* to spread stories of her previous visits.

Details on this potent, cursed work appear on page 216.

Relations with Other Religions

Nhimbalothe doesn't consort with other gods, although often her visitations upon the wilderness force confrontations with other faiths. In particular, Gozreh and Desna oppose her influence—the former because of the proliferation of unnatural elements that taint swamplands, and the latter out of a mixture of anger and fear that her flock might stumble into Nhimbalothe's clutches accidentally while exploring the wilds. The Eldest of the First World also oppose Nhimbalothe, whose parasitic tendrils can occasionally drift into that plane through fey gates and portals.

Even after driving out the Empty Death, small cults of fey who have fallen under her sway inevitably remain.

Pharasma opposes Nhimbalothe for multiple reasons. Those who perish in lands haunted by the latter's presence tend to rise as ghosts. Moreover, the Empty Death's habit of consuming those ghosts has rightly angered Pharasma, for rather than being released to the Boneyard, the consumed souls simply disappear. One might assume that such an affront to the cycle of life and death would compel Pharasma into a direct confrontation with Nhimbalothe, and indeed, certain ancient texts tell of such a clash between the two goddesses at the very dawn of mortal civilization. The titanic battle left neither goddess the victor. Nhimbalothe learned



Priest of Nhimbalothe

to hide her predations upon the world so that even Pharasma can't readily find her, and one particularly blasphemous tale in *The Whispering Reeds* speaks of a hidden scar that Pharasma bears to this day as a reminder of her failed attempt to decisively defeat the Empty Death—a scar, supposedly, in the pattern of seven divots of flesh where Nhimbalothe fed upon the essence of the Goddess of Death.

Whether or not this myth has any basis in fact, the faithful of Pharasma view Nhimbalothe and her cult with a combination of hatred and fearful respect. Only the most devout and powerful of Pharasma's worshippers receive leave to hunt Nhimbalothe's faithful, and they work hard to prevent lay worshippers from learning much of the Empty Death. Their justification—that Nhimbalothe feeds only on ghosts, and that by defeating or preventing the formation of theses undead, they strike blows against the Empty Death—reads to some as an excuse.



Nhimbalothe (CE)

The Empty Death's sphere of influence encompasses despair, ghosts, and swamps. As with most of the Outer Gods, Nhimbalothe cares nothing for those who worship her (and thus her clerics have no key anathemas), yet those who venerate the Empty Death nonetheless toil in vain to attract her favor.

Edicts create undead (particularly incorporeal undead), feast upon carnivores that have recently feasted upon others

Anathema none

Follower Alignments CE

DEVOTEES BENEFITS

Divine Font harm

Divine Skill Nature

Favored Weapon flail

Domains decay (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 112), nature, undeath, void (*Gods & Magic* 119)

Alternate Domains abominations (see below), delirium (*Gods & Magic* 113)

Cleric Spells 1st: *grim tendrils*, 2nd: *entangle*, 5th: *cloudkill*

New Rules

ABOMINATIONS DOMAIN

You seek to instill abhorrence and horror in those around you.

Domain Spell: *lift nature's caul*

Advanced Domain Spell: *fearful feast*

LIFT NATURE'S CAUL

FOCUS 1

UNCOMMON FEAR ILLUSION VISUAL

Cast ☞ somatic, verbal

Range 5-foot emanation; **Targets** creatures in the area

Saving Throw Will; **Duration** varies

With a wave of the hand, you cause the targets to see the world around them as if a gauzy film had been lifted away to expose the truth that lies below their perceived reality. Natural features they can see grow twisted and horrendous, structures appear distorted and ruined, and objects seem warped and alien. This alternate vision fades quickly, but the glimpse beyond the natural world lingers for the spell's duration.

Aberrations or worshippers of Outer Gods or Great Old Ones are bolstered by this vision of warped reality and gain a +1 status bonus to Will saving throws and attack rolls for 1 minute, while all other creatures must attempt a Will saving throw.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected and temporarily immune for 1 hour.

Success The creature is frightened 1.

Failure The creature is stupefied 1 for 1 minute and frightened 1.

Critical Failure The creature is stupefied 1 for 1 minute and frightened 2. It can't reduce the value of its frightened condition below 1 as long as it remains stupefied by this spell.

Heightened (+2) You increase the area by 5 feet and the duration of the stupefied condition by 1 minute.

FEARFUL FEAST

FOCUS 4

UNCOMMON FEAR MENTAL NECROMANCY

Cast ☞ somatic; **Trigger** A creature within range becomes frightened.

Range 30 feet; **Targets** the triggering creature

Saving Throw Will; **Duration** varies

You open your mouth wide and inhale sharply; you draw in the bravery, self-confidence, and hope to which the frightened target clings and then strip away the target's false assumption that these fragile emotions can save them from the oblivion of terror. The target's stolen hope reinvigorates you.

You deal 6d4 mental damage to the creature, which must attempt a Will saving throw.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes half damage.

Failure The creature takes full damage; you regain Hit Points equal to half the damage the target takes.

Critical Failure The creature's frightened condition increases by 1 (to a maximum of frightened 4) and it takes double damage; you regain Hit Points equal to half the damage the target takes.

Heightened (+1) The damage increases by 2d4.

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Toolbox

The Abomination Vaults harbor many secrets, but not all of them are dangerous. Some are useful tools or fantastically powerful artifacts the heroes can find as they journey into the depths. The new rules the heroes can find by delving into the Abomination Vaults are presented below.

Alchemical Items

The following alchemical items can be found in this adventure, usually in the hands (or claws) of the creatures who manufactured them.

ALCHEMICAL BOMBS

Alchemical bombs are martial thrown weapons with a range increment of 20 feet. Like all alchemical bombs, necrotic bombs combine volatile alchemical components that explode when the bomb hits a creature or object.

Urdefhans distill and use necrotic bombs against living foes, since they don't need to worry about dealing splash damage to their allies in melee range of their targets. Urdefhan death scouts usually carry several necrotic bombs and are quick to employ them against their enemies.



Necrotic Bomb

NECROTIC BOMB

ITEM 1+

ALCHEMICAL BOMB CONSUMABLE NEGATIVE SPLASH

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activate ♦ Strike

Necrotic bombs combine reagents most people consider disgusting at best and unholy at worst, creating a life-sucking miasma upon contact with air. A necrotic bomb deals the listed negative damage and splash damage, and it sickens the primary target on a critical hit. This damage harms only living creatures. Many types grant an item bonus to attack rolls.

Type lesser; Level 1; Price 3 gp

The bomb deals 1d6 negative damage and 1 negative splash damage. On a critical hit, the target is sickened 1.

Type moderate; Level 3; Price 10 gp

You gain a +1 item bonus to attack rolls. The bomb deals 2d6 negative damage and 2 negative splash damage. On a critical hit, the target is sickened 2.

Type greater; Level 11; Price 250 gp

You gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls. The bomb deals 3d6 negative damage and 3 negative splash damage. On a critical hit, the target is sickened 3.

Type major; Level 17; Price 2,500 gp

You gain a +3 bonus to attack rolls. The bomb deals 4d6 negative damage and 4 negative splash damage. On a critical hit, the target is sickened 4.

ALCHEMICAL ELIXIRS

These consumable alchemical concoctions have unusual effects. Some seugathi fleshwarpers brew ichthyosis mutagen from the rare chemicals they use to break down their victims' skin; the elixir has the reverse effect, toughening the imbiber's hide. The heroes can find ichthyosis mutagen tucked away in an storage closet

on the Laboratories level.

Skeptic's elixir is popular with anyone who anticipates a tense diplomatic exchange or otherwise expects to be lied to in the near future. Belcorra and her guards stashed some skeptic's elixirs on the higher levels of the dungeon.

ICHTHYOSIS MUTAGEN

ITEM 5

RARE ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE ELIXIR MUTAGEN POLYMORPH

Price 24 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activate ♦ Interact

After you drink this mutagen, your skin continually renews itself, thickening into large, scaly patches.

Benefit For 1 minute, you gain fast healing 2 and automatically succeed at flat checks to recover from persistent bleed damage.

Drawback Your thickened skin makes quick movement difficult, and your excess skin flakes off with the slightest movement. You take a -2 penalty to Reflex saves for 1 minute. Any creature attempting to Track you in the next 24 hours gains a +4 circumstance bonus to their check.

SKEPTIC'S ELIXIR

ITEM 1+

UNCOMMON ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE ELIXIR

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Activate ♦ Interact

This elixir sharpens your mind and allows you to see through lies, falsehoods, and magical trickery. You gain an item bonus to Perception checks and Perception DCs to notice falsehoods that the person making them knows to be false, whether they're spoken lies or written deceit. You gain this same item bonus to Will saves.

Type lesser; **Level** 1; **Price** 4 gp

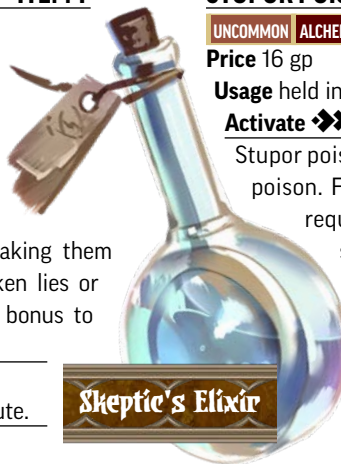
The bonus is +1, and the duration is 1 minute.

Type moderate; **Level** 6; **Price** 50 gp

The bonus is +2, and the duration is 10 minutes.

Type greater; **Level** 11; **Price** 300 gp

The bonus is +3, and the duration is 1 hour.



Skeptic's Elixir

ALCHEMICAL POISONS

Poisons can produce a variety of debilitating effects on the body. Seugathi fleshwarpers use sloughing toxin on their victims. The heroes might come across sloughing toxin as they explore the laboratories where the seugathis work their wicked science.

Stupor poison is a potent toxin distilled from sources deep in the Darklands. It's popular among drow who consider the more common lethargy poison to be insufficient to bring down their foes, including most drow of Yldaris (who fight monsters in the Hunting Grounds).

SLOUGHING TOXIN

ITEM 7

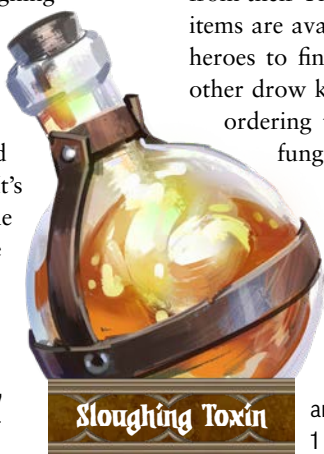
RARE ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE INJURY POISON

Price 60 gp

Usage held in 2 hands; **Bulk** L

Activate ♦♦ Interact

This complex toxin makes the muscles beneath a creature's skin loose and malleable, which fleshwarpers find useful in their work. Rough or jerky movements the victim performs concentrate the toxin in subdermal muscles and eventually cause skin and muscle to slough away.



Sloughing Toxin

Saving Throw DC 25 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 round; **Maximum Duration** 1 hour; **Stage 1** 1d6 poison damage for each action with the attack or move trait the victim uses (1 round); **Stage 2** 1d6 poison damage and 1d6 slashing damage for each action with the attack, manipulate, or move trait the victim uses (1 round); **Stage 3** as Stage 2, but 1d6 poison damage and 2d6 slashing damage, and forced movement also causes damage (1 hour)

STUPOR POISON

ITEM 4

UNCOMMON ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE INCAPACITATION INJURY POISON SLEEP

Price 16 gp

Usage held in 2 hands; **Bulk** L

Activate ♦♦ Interact

Stupor poison is a more potent distillation of lethargy poison. Further exposure to stupor poison doesn't require the target to attempt additional saving throws; only failing a saving throw against an ongoing exposure can progress its stage.

Saving Throw DC 20 Fortitude;

Maximum Duration 6 hours; **Stage 1**

slowed 1 and flat-footed (1 round); **Stage 2**

slowed 2 and flat-footed (1 round); **Stage 3**

unconscious with no Perception check

to wake up (1 round); **Stage 4** unconscious with no

Perception check to wake up (1d6 hours)

ALCHEMICAL TOOLS

The heroes might obtain specialized alchemical tools from their Yldaris drow connections. Neither of these items are available in the Abomination Vaults for the heroes to find as treasure. However, Quara and the other drow know about them and might recommend ordering them from Lozardyn if the heroes face fungal dangers or underwater exploration.

FUNGAL WALK MUSK

ITEM 5

ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE OLFACTORY

Price 21 gp

Usage Held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Activate ♦ Interact

This foul-smelling unguent dulls the odors and traces that fungus creatures detect. For 1 day after you slather this musk on your body, fungus creatures take a -4 penalty to

Perception checks to Seek you or otherwise notice you. If a fungus creature is mindless, it instead has a -6 penalty. The musk also grants you a +1 item bonus to AC against melee attacks from fungus creatures with no vision for the same period of time. The effects of fungal walk musk end immediately if you're submerged in water or subject to another olfactory effect.

WASUL REED MASK

ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE

Price 6 gp

Usage Worn; Bulk L

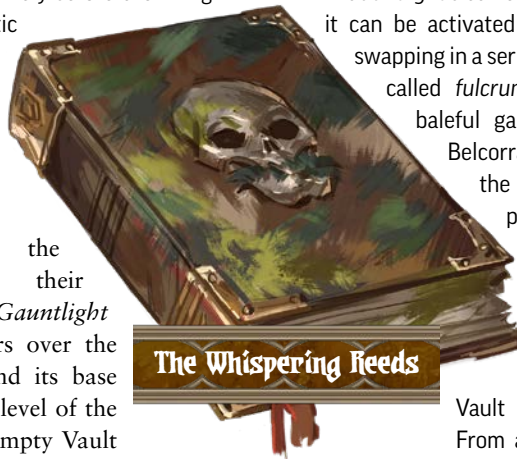
Activate ♦ Interact

This mask is made of Darklands wasul reeds, which have been alchemically treated to enhance their air-retaining properties when submerged in water. When you put on this mask, for the next hour, you can hold your breath for 15 rounds plus your Constitution modifier (instead of 5 rounds + your Constitution modifier) before drowning. It has no effect in non-aquatic environments that require you to hold your breath. One hour after you apply the mask, it flakes away into fiber shreds.

Artifacts

The heroes come across the following artifacts in their explorations. Of course, *Gauntlight* is hard to miss, as it towers over the ruins of Gauntlight Keep and its base extends down through every level of the Abomination Vaults to the Empty Vault far below. In many ways, this artifact is just as much a key danger of the campaign as the spiteful Belcorra Haruvex herself.

The heroes might discover the dread tome known as The Whispering Reeds in Belcorra's secure collection of books on the Library level.



The Whispering Reeds

GAUNTLIGHT

UNIQUE ARTIFACT MAGICAL NECROMANCY

Gauntlight is much more than a 115-foot-tall lighthouse rising from the heart of an old ruin in Fogfen—its pale stone walls extend far below the ruins, passing through eight different dungeon levels and finally terminating at the ninth level below the surface, where its deep foundation centers on an ominous chamber where, long ago, Nhimbaloth herself once physically brushed against this world. Once she finished its physical construction, the sorcerer Belcorra Haruvex used this spot as a source of power to infuse the walls, floors, and ceilings of each of *Gauntlight*'s levels with eldritch power. The lens at the apex of the lighthouse would have, in time, been able to focus this lingering eldritch energy into a powerful beam, but Belcorra's plans were cut short before she could replace the mundane lenses with dangerous magical ones.

As an artifact, *Gauntlight* can't be damaged by normal means. Its walls are impenetrable and impervious to any attempt to breach them by anybody except for followers of Nhimbaloth. They block effects that allow temporary

ITEM 2

passage, such as *passwall*, and also create a barrier against dimensional travel. The walls attempt to counteract teleportation effects and planar travel into or out of areas within *Gauntlight* and efforts to summon creatures into the area (using a +37 counteract modifier); this effect does not stop a summoned creature from departing when the summoning ends. Note that this effect only applies to the areas that are within *Gauntlight* and its footprint (areas **A11**, **A25**, **B35**, **C15**, and so on), and not to the entirety of the Abomination Vaults!

In *Gauntlight*'s current state of diminished functionality, it can be activated only in the two ways below. By swapping in a series of four magical lighthouse lenses called *fulcrum lenses* that focus Nhimbaloth's baleful gaze—lenses so powerful that even Belcorra takes special care with them—the artifact gains significantly greater power, including the ability to reach all the way to Absalom and to activate its effects every minute.

To activate *Gauntlight*, a creature must be in the deepest portion of the artifact, the Empty Vault on the Temple level (area **J20**). From anywhere within the Empty Vault, a creature can observe the world outside remotely through *Gauntlight*'s lens in its cupola, including any area *Gauntlight*'s beam can reach.

Activate ♦♦♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per month; **Effect** A pale blue beam shines from *Gauntlight*'s lens and illuminates a 30-foot-radius burst centered on any point within 1 mile. The light saturates the region, causing any corpses in the area or within 10 feet of the surface of the illuminated area to animate as level -1 undead (typically as skeleton guards or zombie shamblers). Once animated, the undead remain active until slain. Until then, they remain uncontrolled and are driven only by the desire to slaughter the living. If *Gauntlight* is fully restored, the undead instead animate as any Common undead of 15th level or less, as the user wishes.

Activate ♦♦♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per month; **Effect** A pale blue beam shines from *Gauntlight*'s lens and illuminates a 30-foot-radius burst centered on any point within 1 mile. The user chooses one creature of 4th level or less that is physically located within *Gauntlight*; this creature is then is teleported to any point within this illumination radius. If *Gauntlight* is fully restored, any number of creatures within *Gauntlight* of 15th level or lower can be transported. This is a teleportation effect.

Destruction If Belcorra's ghost is permanently destroyed, *Gauntlight* loses all of its magical properties and collapses in on itself all the way down to its base, leaving an incredibly deep pit in the Fogfen.

Abomination Vaults

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Nhimbaloth

Adventure
Toolbox

THE WHISPERING REEDS

ITEM 10

RARE **ARTIFACT** **DIVINATION** **OCCULT**

Usage held in 2 hands; **Bulk** 2

This hefty tome was compiled centuries ago by an anonymous author who sought to collect all parables, myths, stories, and encounters with the Outer Goddess Nhimbalothe. According to the introduction, the author's original intent was to create a work that foes of the Empty Death could use to fight against her influence, but as one reads through the book, it becomes apparent that the opposite effect has been achieved—by compiling these stories, the author inadvertently generated a work that made it easier for Nhimbalothe to influence the world. Those who venerate the Empty Death seek copies of this book to use as a guide and religious text, while those who don't know better and peruse the book as though it were merely an anthology of stories find themselves unwittingly falling prey to Nhimbalothe's cult or agents of the entity herself. Those who study from *The Whispering Reeds* for too long are often cursed to rise as ghosts after death—though their existence never lasts for long, as they are inevitably consumed by Nhimbalothe.

If a character understands the dangers of this book, however, moderated use can stall or even prevent such a fate from befalling them. If a character takes special care, they can even potentially use *The Whispering Reeds* for its original purpose—as a weapon against the cult of Nhimbalothe. Using the text too often or leveraging some of its more powerful effects, however, causes the user to feel an ominous chill. In these cases, the user is exposed to the tome's curse, Empty Death (see below).

The anonymous compiler wanted to produce an enormous print run of *The Whispering Reeds*, but after the initial run they realized the danger and scuttled those plans, instead attempting to destroy those copies already created. This crusade caught the attention of Nhimbalothe's cult, who swiftly assassinated the compiler. Fewer than two dozen copies of this rare tome are believed to still exist. The book's sinister nature causes all attempts to transcribe it to fail, resulting in bodies of gibberish, nonsense text.

The Whispering Reeds provides several abilities, but you can't activate any of them while you are stupefied unless you are a follower of Nhimbalothe.

Activate 10 minutes (Investigate); **Effect** You gain a +2 item bonus to skill checks to Recall Knowledge about Nhimbalothe, her faith, or creatures associated with her (such as incorporeal undead, vampiric mists, wisps, and other incorporeal creatures associated with death). Each time you use this ability after the first in a 24-hour period, you are exposed to the Empty Death.

Cooperative Blade

Activate ♦♦ command, Interact; **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** You read aloud a phrase from the book and target a single incorporeal undead creature within 30 feet. That undead creature takes 5d6 positive damage (DC 27 basic Will save) as portions of their incorporeal being are consumed in patches of seven equally spaced holes.

Each time you use this ability after the first in a 24-hour period, you are exposed to the Empty Death.

Activate ♦♦ command, Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You invoke a tale from *The Whispering*

Reeds that parallels the situation, environment, or creatures nearby. Eerie mists and indistinct whispers rise in a 20-foot emanation around you, and clusters of seven perfectly spaced divots manifest in the ground, vegetation, and flesh of creatures in the emanation other than yourself and up to three creatures you designate at the time of activation. Creatures afflicted with these

divots suffer from agonizing mental anguish in the form of crippling despair and take 4d6 mental damage (DC 27 basic Will save). The

mists, whispers, and strange divots fade away at the end of the round, but any creature that takes mental damage from the effect also takes a -1 penalty to saving throws against effects with the emotion trait for 1 minute. You are exposed to the Empty Death each time you use this ability.

Activate Cast a Spell; **Frequency** three times per day; **Effect** You cast one of the following spells at the lowest level possible (unless otherwise specified): *crushing despair* (one target within 30 feet only), *fear* (3rd), *paranoia*, or *phantasmal killer*. You are exposed to the Empty Death each time you use this ability.

Empty Death (curse, necromancy, occult) **Saving Throw** DC 27 Will; **Effect** If you activate *The Whispering Reeds* and are not a worshipper of Nhimbalothe, you become stupefied 2 for 24 hours as your thoughts fill with paranoia that something is watching you from the other side of death. If you die while affected by the Empty Death, you immediately become a chaotic evil ghost. Every 7 days that pass after you become a ghost, you must succeed at a DC 2 flat check. On a failure, you are consumed by Nhimbalothe. A creature whose ghost is consumed in this way does not travel to the River of Souls and is utterly annihilated; this creature can only be restored to life via a 10th-level spell effect or ritual, like *wish*.

Destruction Copies of *The Whispering Reeds* have no special protections and can be destroyed like any regular book, but doing so without engaging in careful ritual preparations exposes the one who destroyed the book to the Empty Death.

Icons of the Roseguard

The founders of Otari each had a single item imbued with the essence of their abilities as adventurers. Two of these are mundane items, invested with a spark of magic sufficient to keep them from deteriorating over the years: Otari Ilvashti's infiltrator's thieves' tools (which the heroes can find in area **D18**) and Zarmavdian's spellbook, *Thresholds of Truth*. Vol Rajani's sword and Aesephna Menhemes's brooch are magic items. Otari's thieves' tools are no different than standard infiltrator's thieves' tools; the other three items are described here in detail.

The Roseguard didn't realize that these items would become icons imbued with their essence, of course; this occurred after their deaths, when they'd already put their adventuring gear away for their well-earned retirement. (Of course, each member of the Roseguard had other useful, if mundane, adventuring gear, much of which is on display in the town museum in Menhemes Manor as historical relics.) Otari Ilvashti only learned that these specific items are critical to bypassing the ward that blocks the Abomination Vaults' lower levels once he returned as a ghost and witnessed the barrier's creation.

COOPERATIVE BLADE

This longsword has been in the Rajani family for years, and Vol Rajani carried it throughout her distinguished adventuring career. Despite its pristine and gleaming appearance, the *Cooperative Blade* is incredibly ancient, created in pre-Earthfall Nidal. The *Cooperative Blade* is normally on display at the Dawnflower Library, but Carman Rajani steals it from the library at the beginning of Chapter 5.

COOPERATIVE BLADE

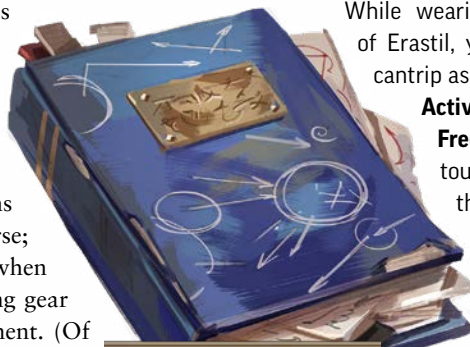
ITEM 6

UNIQUE DIVINATION MAGICAL

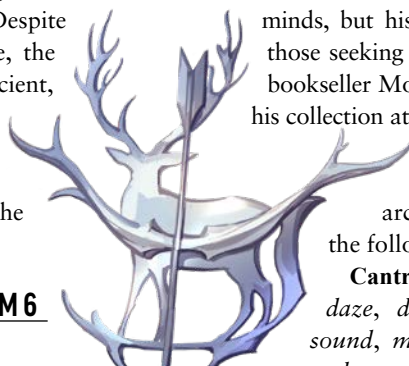
Price 250 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk 1

This +1 striking longsword has a mirror-like blade free of tarnish despite being millennia old. While wielding it, you gain a +2 item bonus to checks to Aid. If you're an expert with the skill or attack roll you're using to Aid and you critically succeed, you grant your ally a +3 circumstance bonus to the triggering check instead of a +2 bonus.



Thresholds of Truth



Hunter's Brooch

HUNTER'S BROOCH

Aesephna Menhemes, a cleric of Erastil, wore this brooch during her time as an adventurer. She passed it down to her descendants, and it's now on display in Menhemes Manor.

HUNTER'S BROOCH

ITEM 4

UNIQUE DIVINE INVESTED POSITIVE TRANSMUTATION

Price 80 gp

Usage worn; Bulk L

While wearing this silver religious symbol of Erastil, you can cast the *disrupt undead* cantrip as an innate divine spell.

Activate >>> command, Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** By touching a weapon you wield to the symbol and uttering a plea for Erastil's steadying hand, you grant that weapon the deadly d12 trait. Against undead, the weapon instead gains the fatal d12 trait. This blessing lasts for 1 minute, until you score a critical hit with the weapon, or until you aren't wielding the weapon.

THRESHOLDS OF TRUTH

Zarmavdian's spellbook, *Thresholds of Truth*, was once a straightforward treatise on arcane and occult lore containing several useful spells. It's been so heavily annotated, however, that the original text is hard to read. It's clear that Zarmavdian wanted to prevent eldritch creatures from manipulating innocent minds, but his spellbook is a treasure trove for those seeking dangerous or inscrutable lore. The bookseller Morlibint currently keeps this book in his collection at Odd Stories.

Thresholds of Truth provides access to the Eldritch Researcher archetype (page 228) and contains the following spells.

Cantrips: *chill touch*, *dancing lights*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *electric arc*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *light*, *prestidigitiation*, *read aura*, *shield*

1st Level: *alarm*, *charm*, *color spray*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *true strike*, *unseen servant*

2nd Level: *comprehend language*, *dispel magic*, *false life*, *glitterdust*, *web*

3rd Level: *haste*, *lightning bolt*, *locate*, *paralyze*, *slow*

4th Level: *clairvoyance*, *daydreamer's curse* (page 224), *resilient sphere*

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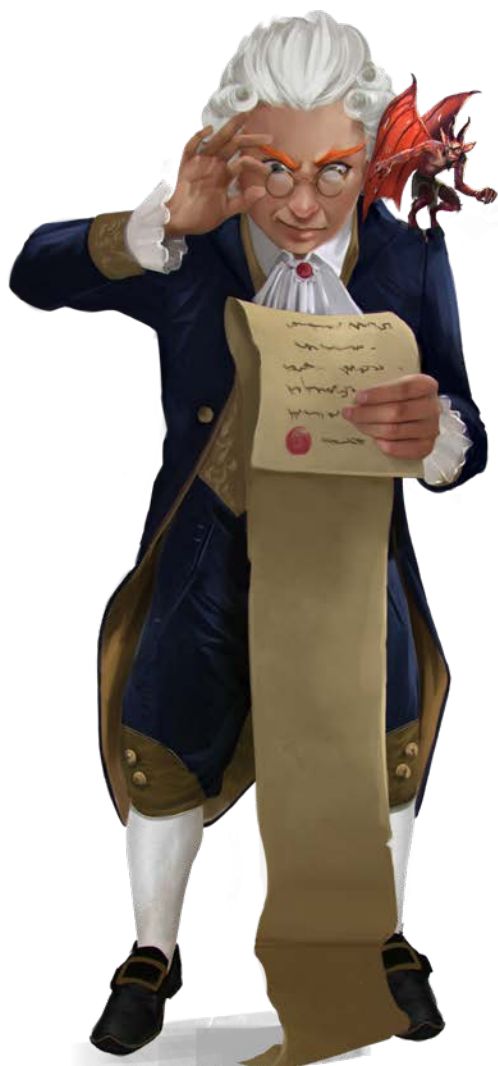
Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox

Infernal Contracts

Some mortals damn themselves through tyranny, murder, or other soul-staining offenses. Others need a little assistance surrendering their souls to Hell. Devils gladly offer enticing temptations to desperate mortals—but at a high price.

These arrangements are formalized in the traditions and trappings of binding agreements most familiar to the mortal's culture, such as a handshake, a hand-binding ceremony, or a written agreement signed by both parties. Devils often include their own diabolical spin on the traditions by requiring the handshake to be performed while mingling the blood of both parties, binding hands with a red-hot chain, or signing a document in blood. These flourishes are rarely necessary; demanding them of the mortal is simply a display of power designed to put the devil at an advantage. Most deals with devils in the Inner Sea region take the form of written contracts, which purport to offer full transparency to mortal



signatories, but in actuality incorporate additional agreements hidden in obfuscated language.

Nearly all infernal contracts have three separate provisions: an ongoing benefit to the mortal, a payment the mortal must make to the devil (usually in the form of a supernatural restriction or prohibition), and a termination clause that, upon its occurrence, immediately voids the entire contract and ends all its effects. Contracts often include hidden conditions that give the devil additional leverage.

The rules effect of an infernal contract is that of a magic item with the contract trait. This item has no physical substance and can't be dispelled, altered, or destroyed except by destroying both physical copies of the contract (a virtually impossible task, as most devils send their copy to the Fallen Fastness in Dis, an infernal library all but off-limits to mortals). An infernal contract is automatically invested and counts toward a character's limit of 10 invested items—all such contracts therefore include, as part of their cost, a fraction of the bargainer's ability to use other magic items. Once invested, infernal contracts aren't visible—though their effects can be—but anyone who has one is constantly aware of its presence. If a creature dies with an infernal contract invested, its soul is consigned to Hell and it can't be restored to life unless its soul is freed.

The following are some examples of contracts a mortal might obtain; each specifies the type of devil most likely to offer them and the kinds of checks readers can use to decipher their terms.

DEVIL'S LUCK

ITEM 3

RARE CONTRACT ENCHANTMENT FORTUNE INVESTED MAGICAL

Devil imp; **Decipher Writing** Arcana, Occultism, Society

You've bargained with an imp, one of the least powerful devils, for a fragment of infernal luck.

Benefit Once per day, you can roll a saving throw twice and use the higher result.

Payment At the termination of your mortal life, your soul must serve the imp for 100 years.

Hidden Condition The "termination of mortal life" clause is carefully worded to hasten your demise. You can't use the benefit against a death effect, and if you roll a failure on a saving throw against a death effect, you get a critical failure instead.

Termination Clause If you critically fail a saving throw against a death effect and do not die, the contract becomes unenforceable on its terms and is voided.

PACT OF BLOOD-TAKING

ITEM 5

RARE CONTRACT INVESTED MAGICAL NECROMANCY

Devil barbazû; **Decipher Writing** Society, Warfare Lore

You negotiate for might and viciousness.

Benefit Your successful Strikes with slashing and piercing melee weapons deal 1 persistent bleed damage. On a critical success, this persistent bleed damage is equal to half your level.

Payment You regain half the normal number of Hit Points from resting (including Hit Points gained from long-term rest) and from any application of the Medicine skill.

Hidden Condition The barbazu owns any weapons you find. No more often than once per month, the barbazu can demand a single weapon of its choice (often the best weapon in your possession). You are compelled to hand over the weapon immediately, without question.

Termination Clause The contract guarantees that you will not "be slain by the barbazu or by barbazu action." This wording is vague; if any barbazu kills you, or if you die from persistent bleed damage from any source, the contract is voided.

RIGHT OF RETRIBUTION

ITEM 8

RARE CONTRACT ENCHANTMENT INVESTED MAGICAL

Devil erinys; **Decipher Writing** Nature, Religion

Profane powers of vengeance are yours to inflict.

Benefit When a creature deals damage to you, you can call out for retribution as a reaction. Until the end of your next turn, you gain a +1 status bonus to attack rolls against that creature.

Payment If you wound a creature, it is your duty to kill it. If a creature survives for 24 hours after you deal it damage, you are doomed 1. If you already have the doomed condition, it increases by 1.

Hidden Condition No more than once per year, the erinys can compel you to attack a creature of the erinys's choice that you can see. You are controlled by the erinys and must fight the chosen creature for 1 minute.

Termination Clause The contract demands that you enact bloody vengeance against anyone who has ever wronged you, but the nature of the vengeance is vague. You can end the contract by creating effigies of everyone you believe has ever wronged you, bleeding upon them all at once (at least 1 Hit Point per effigy), and destroying them.

ICY DISPOSITION

ITEM 11

RARE ABJURATION CONTRACT INVESTED MAGICAL

Devil gelugon; **Decipher Writing** Nature, Games Lore

Your flesh looks no different, but is cold to the touch.

Benefit You gain cold resistance equal to your level and a +1 status bonus to saving throws against mental effects.

Payment Liquids in your possession, including potions and liquid alchemical items, freeze over the course of 1 minute and thaw 1 minute after they leave your possession. Frozen potions and elixirs take 1 minute to consume.

INTERPRETING AN INFERNAL CONTRACT

Understanding the complex, legalistic provisions of an infernal contract is difficult, and doubly so when a devil is at hand demanding an expeditious signature. A reader must attempt a secret check to Decipher Writing to understand a contract's provisions. Each contract indicates appropriate skills to use, and the DC is based on the contract's item level (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 503). Alternatively, the reader can always use the Legal Lore skill to decipher the contract at the DC - 4. Regardless of the outcome of the check, the reader always understands the Benefit and Payment provisions of the contract.

Critical Success The reader understands the Hidden Condition and the Termination Clause.

Success The reader understands the Hidden Condition.

Failure The reader misunderstands the Hidden Condition and receives false information about it.

Critical Failure The reader misunderstands both the Hidden Condition and the Termination Clause, receiving false information about each.

A mortal can try to renegotiate the contract; whether the devil agrees is up to the GM. The mortal must understand the Hidden Condition or Termination Clause to change the terms in their favor; the devil knows if the mortal misunderstands these clauses (from a failed Decipher Writing check) and if so usually plays along, knowing that any further agreements they make based on a misunderstood clause aren't binding and don't change the contract's effects.

Hidden Condition (conjunction, teleportation) No more than once per week, the gelugon can move you like a piece on a game board to advance its schemes. The gelugon can appear and transport you and any items you're wearing and holding from your current space to a clear space within 500 feet (the gelugon need not see this location, but must know its relative location and distance from you). This effect doesn't transport any other creatures. The gelugon is unlikely to place you in a less dangerous space than the one you left.

Termination Clause The contract provides you the benefits of "the eternal ice of Cocytus." If you travel to Cocytus, Hell's seventh layer, and stand within an area at least 100 feet across that contains no ice and has a temperature above freezing, the contract is void. Such locations are exceptionally rare in Cocytus, and the efforts to create such an area are likely to attract unpleasant attention.

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Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox

Magic Items

The Abomination Vaults hold several new magic items for the heroes to find. The *lantern of empty light* is in the possession of Volluk Azrinae, the worm that walks who sometimes ventures out into the Fogfen with it. Kragala, Shadow Malice's duergar drummer, uses as set of *folding drums* in her performances. The devils of the Prison level use the *drover's band* to drill their fleshwarp troops.

Fulcrum lenses are unique magical crystals that each contain a sliver of Nhimbalothe's essence. They belong to a larger set of lenses created to manipulate or even bind the Empty Death; most of the other lenses are long lost and likely destroyed. The Haruvex family came into possession of four of the lenses, and they knew that bringing them together focused Nhimbalothe's attention in unprecedented and dangerous ways. Belcorra brought all four lenses to the Abomination Vaults with her, intending to install them in *Gauntlight* for her ultimate revenge upon Absalom. She also created a special receptacle called the *Fulcrum Lattice* to hold the lenses so that their power could be focused together. She realized the danger of keeping the *fulcrum lenses* too close together until the right time and spread them out among loyal groups in the Abomination Vaults' lowest levels for safekeeping.

Belcorra keeps only the most powerful lens, the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens*, with her—indeed, as a ghost, it's the only one she can carry. If the heroes can bring the other three lenses to bear against Belcorra, they can draw Nhimbalothe's dread glare to the sorcerer. Despite her loyalty, Belcorra can't hope to keep her spirit intact when Nhimbalothe gazes directly upon it.

The *fulcrum lenses* are more than mere receptacles of Nhimbalothe's essence. Each grants those who use it a fragment of the Great Old One's power.

CRIMSON FULCRUM LENS

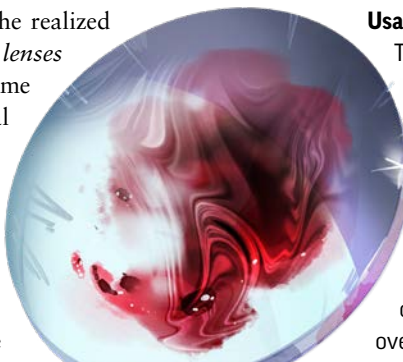
ITEM 9

UNIQUE ENCHANTMENT INVESTED OCCULT

Price 700 gp; Bulk 1

This concave lens has a drifting crimson cloud resembling slowly swirling blood within it.

While you have the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens* invested, you seethe with malevolent fury you can barely contain. You gain a +2 item bonus to saving throws against fear effects and a +2 item bonus to your melee Strike damage (this increases to a +4 item bonus to damage if the melee Strike is a jaws attack).



Crimson Fulcrum Lens

You can activate the lens in the following ways.

Activate ♦♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You grasp the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens* in one hand and make a Strike that doesn't require that hand. The Strike deals an additional 1d8 precision damage (or 2d8 precision damage if you make a jaws Strike) and doesn't count toward your multiple attack penalty.

Activate ♦♦ Interact (attack, possession); **Effect** While grasping the lens, make a melee spell attack roll with a modifier of +18. On a hit, you force the splinter of Nhimbalothe's essence from the lens to possess the target. You're no longer invested in the lens, and the target gains the benefits as though it had invested the lens but can't activate the lens's other abilities. This effect is permanent, but it can be ended by any effect that removes a possession effect. The lens doesn't have any magical abilities until the possession effect ends; when it does, the essence returns to the lens.

DROVER'S BAND

ITEM 7

RARE ENCHANTMENT INCAPACITATION INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 675 gp

Usage worn bracers; Bulk L

This black leather wrist guard has a bright red gem on the inside of the wrist. Faint glyphs and words of domination in Infernal swim inside the gem. Your words become harsh and clipped when you have this magic item invested.

Activate ♦♦♦ command; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You exert your will over a mindless creature within 30 feet. If the target is a mindless creature of 3rd level or lower, it must attempt a DC 20 Will save. If you are a devil, the target uses an

outcome one degree of success worse than the result of its saving throw.

Critical Success The target creature is unaffected.

Success The target creature is slowed 1 for 1 round as its responses are muddled by your commands.

Failure The creature is controlled by you for 1 hour, although it doesn't follow commands that are obviously self-destructive.

Critical Failure As failure, but the duration is 1 day.

EBON FULCRUM LENS

ITEM 12

UNIQUE INVESTED NECROMANCY OCCULT

Price 2,000 gp; Bulk L

This strangest and most powerful of the *fulcrum lenses* resembles a chip of smooth obsidian containing three dark glimmers of Nhimbalothe's essence. Incorporeal creatures can touch and carry the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens*.

While you have the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens* invested, and you're a corporeal creature, you become insubstantial, gain the incorporeal trait, and are drained 2. Your drained condition can't be reduced below 2 as long as you have the lens invested.

You can activate the lens in the following ways. Both require expenditures of glimmers within the lens; once the lens is depleted of its three glimmers, it retains its ability to make corporeal creatures insubstantial but can't be used for its other abilities until its glimmers are restored (which generally requires a ritual or being steeped in an area of Nhimbalth's power).

Activate ➤ envision; **Frequency** once per day;

Requirement At least one glimmer remains in the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens*; **Prerequisites** you have the rejuvenation ability; **Trigger** you would be destroyed and are able to rejuvenate; **Effect** For the first 24 hours after you rejuvenate, you gain a +1 item bonus to attack rolls, saving throws, and DCs. Reduce the number of glimmers remaining in the lens by 1.

Activate ➤➤ Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Requirement** At least one glimmer remains in the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens*; **Effect** You draw upon a glimmer of Nhimbalth's essence for power; reduce the number of glimmers remaining in the lens by 1. You're quickened for 1 minute and gain a +1 item bonus to attack rolls, saving throws, and DCs. You can use this extra action to Stride or Step, or for an action in a special ghost ability you have.

EMERALD FULCRUM LENS ITEM 10

UNIQUE INVESTED NECROMANCY NEGATIVE OCCULT

Price 1,000 gp; **Bulk** 3

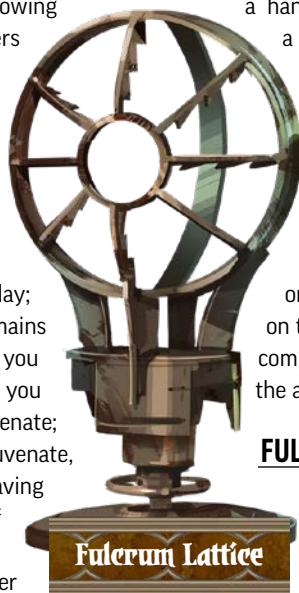
This concave green lens is pitted and flawed; its jagged edges can cut those who don't handle it with care.

While you have the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens* invested, your flesh appears waxen and pallid. You gain negative healing and *harm* spells gain a +4 status bonus to the Hit Points they restore to you.

You can also activate the lens in the following ways.

Activate ➤➤ Interact (healing); **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You grasp the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens* in one hand, regain 30 Hit Points, and gain a +2 item bonus to saving throws against magic for 1 round.

Activate ➤➤ Interact (attack, possession); as *Crimson Fulcrum Lens*, but the melee spell attack modifier is +20.



Fulcrum Lattice



Emerald Fulcrum Lens

FOLDING DRUMS

ITEM 5

UNCOMMON MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION

Price 160 gp

Usage varies (see text); **Bulk** varies (see text)

You can unfold this virtuoso percussion instrument into a hand drum (1 Bulk), a marching drum set with a shoulder harness and back brace (3 Bulk), or a large standing drum set with a built-in stool (16 Bulk). Changing the *folding drum's* size is a 3-action Interact activity, and the drums must have sufficient open space to accommodate their new size or they can't be unfolded.

Activate ➤ Interact (concentrate) **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** You play a pounding rhythm on the drum. If the next action you use is to cast a composition cantrip that has an emanation, increase the area of the emanation by 30 feet.

FULCRUM LATTICE

ITEM 11

UNIQUE OCCULT TRANSMUTATION

Price 1,200 gp

Usage held in 2 hands; **Bulk** 2

This silver and copper framework is shaped to hold four focusing lenses, one behind the other, from smallest to largest. It has a socketed base to be mounted into a stand, such as that found atop a lighthouse. The *Fulcrum Lattice* was specifically designed to hold the four *fulcrum lenses* from smallest to largest (ebon, crimson, ochre, emerald), and it hums slightly while within 10 feet of any *fulcrum lens*. A *fulcrum lens* slotted into the *Fulcrum Lattice* has no Bulk; the lattice remains at 1 Bulk. Inserting or removing a lens from the *Fulcrum Lattice* requires an Interact action.

The *Fulcrum Lattice* channels the power of *fulcrum lenses* joined with it. While you hold the *Fulcrum Lattice*, lenses socketed into it are considered to be in your hand for the purpose of activating their abilities. When you make a melee spell attack with a lens in the *Fulcrum Lattice*, you use the highest melee spell attack modifier of any lens in the lattice, or you can use your melee attack modifier with simple weapons if it's greater.

LANTERN OF EMPTY LIGHT

ITEM 6

RARE ENCHANTMENT MAGICAL

Price 240 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

It's said that the pale blue light of this eldritch lantern shines from another dimension or even is linked, somehow,

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to the glow of a ghost when it is consumed by the Outer Goddess Nhimbalo. A *lantern of empty light* is not intrinsically an evil item, though it remains a favored tool of those who would manipulate the minds of others for sinister reasons. It can be used as a normal bull's-eye lantern, but prolonged use tends to instill in the user a vague sense of being watched by unseen eyes, even when the lantern isn't in use.

Activate ♦♦ Interact (emotion, visual);

Frequency once per day; **Effect** You direct the lantern's light upon a single living creature within 60 feet. That creature must attempt a DC 20 Will save to resist the light's effects.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected and realizes that you attempted to mentally influence them with the light.

Success The creature is unaffected but thinks the light was harmless, unless it knows the true nature of the lantern already.

Failure The creature becomes fascinated by the lantern's light, and remains fascinated as long as you Sustain the Activation, up to 10 minutes.

Critical Failure As failure, but you can Sustain the Activation for up to 1 hour. When the effect ends, the fascinated creature remembers any events that took place while fascinated only as indistinct, dream-like memories.

Activate ♦♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect**

You direct the lantern's light upon a single incorporeal undead creature within 60 feet to siphon away some of the creature's essence, dealing 4d8 positive damage to the creature (DC 20 basic Will save).



Lantern of Empty Light

OCHRE FULCRUM LENS

ITEM 11

UNIQUE ENCHANTMENT INVESTED OCCULT

Price 1,400 gp; **Bulk** 2

This brownish-orange lens always feels dusty and gritty, regardless of how often it's polished, though it doesn't impede light shining through it.

While you have the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens* invested, lassitude grips you and your emotions are hard to sway. You gain resistance 10 to mental damage and a +2 status bonus to saves against emotion effects.

You can also activate the lens in the following ways.

Activate ♦♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You hold up the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens* in your hand and the item casts *crushing despair* (DC 31 Will save).

Activate ♦♦ Interact (attack, possession); as *Crimson Fulcrum Lens*, but the melee spell attack modifier is +21.

Pantheon

A pantheon is a collection of deities worshipped together. The rules for following a pantheon are on page 92 of *Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic*.

COSMIC CARAVAN

As friends of Wrin Sivinx, the heroes all know that she follows a pantheon of deities collectively known as the Cosmic Caravan. Any hero who wants to can learn about this pantheon from her.

COSMIC CARAVAN

Areas of Concern constellations, fortune telling, the night, hope for a better tomorrow

Alignment CG (CG, CN, NG)

Divine Font harm or heal

Divine Ability Dexterity or Charisma

Divine Skill Occultism

Domains darkness, fate, freedom, moon

Alternate Domains star, void

Cleric Spells 1st: *object reading*^{APG}, 2nd: *glitterdust*, 6th: *blanket of stars*^{APG}

Edicts spend time stargazing or meditating in moonlight, aid those who live in regions where Zon-Kuthon (or other religions that espouse the night as a bastion for evil) hold sway, help the desperate or forlorn to see potential for a better life in the future, travel with no particular destination in mind

Anathema portray the night as a time of evil, destroy astronomical or astrological equipment, spend the night in the same place twice in a row

Favored Weapon starknife

The Cosmic Caravan is known to astronomers and astrologers alike as a collection of constellations in the sky, said to travel forever in a circle around the star Cynosure. The association of a diverse array of gods and demigods thematically linked with the stars and the spaces between is a relatively new faith that first rose to prominence in western Avistan, particularly in Varisia, Nidal, and Ravounel. The deities worshiped by the faithful of the Cosmic Caravan include: Desna and Sarenrae; the empyreal lords Ashava, Black Butterfly, and Pulura; the elven god Ketephys; the outer god Yog-Sothoth; and, in the regions where he is known, the moon god Tsukiyo. This faith has been gaining ground particularly in Nidal, where the worship of the night is overwhelmingly associated with Zon-Kuthon, and a rising number of Cosmic Caravan worshipers seek to oppose or, one day, even overthrow the Midnight Lord's theocracy to reclaim the night from the implications that all who dwell in the dark are evil.

Rituals and Spells

The heroes may find the following new ritual and spell useful in the Abomination Vaults.

AWAKEN PORTAL

The Abomination Vaults are vast, and Belcorra sometimes considered them too large to traverse by normal means, particularly when she was in a hurry. She therefore installed *teleportation circles* throughout the Abomination Vaults, both for directed travel and for more convenient general transport. Over time, the magic of Belcorra's teleportation circles has faded. The *awaken portal* ritual is required to reactivate them. Each linked *teleportation circle* must each be individually reactivated with this ritual, before they can be used, so the heroes must physically travel to each side of a linked pair of portals to awaken them. An exception is the network of portal chambers throughout the Abomination Vaults (areas **B17**, **C16**, **D5**, **E18**, **F13**, **G2**, **H33**, **I59**, and **J5**); for this network, the heroes can awaken the portals as they find them, but the awakened portals only connect to others in the network that the heroes have previously awakened.

This ritual is recorded in a folio in Belcorra's secure collection (area **C35**), but the mummy ritualist Chafkhem (in area **E18**) knows it as well, so the heroes might learn it from him.

AWAKEN PORTAL

RIUAL 3

RARE **CONJURATION**

Cast 1 hour; **Secondary Casters** up to 5

Primary Check Arcana or Occultism (trained); **Secondary Checks** Arcana or Occultism (whichever is used for the primary check)

Range 10 feet; **Target** 1 portal

You attempt to reactivate a dormant gate, portal, or *teleportation circle* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 244) by infusing it with magical energies. This ritual must be successfully performed twice, once at each location the portal connects. While the *teleportation circles* and portals found in the Abomination Vaults require no additional cost to awaken, other portals might require rare items or specific materials as a cost for this ritual at the GM's discretion—some portals might even be so powerful that this ritual cannot awaken them at all.

The DC required to successfully awaken a portal varies based on the strength and distance between its end points. For the portals found in the Abomination Vaults Adventure Path, the DC varies according to the dungeon level on which it is located.

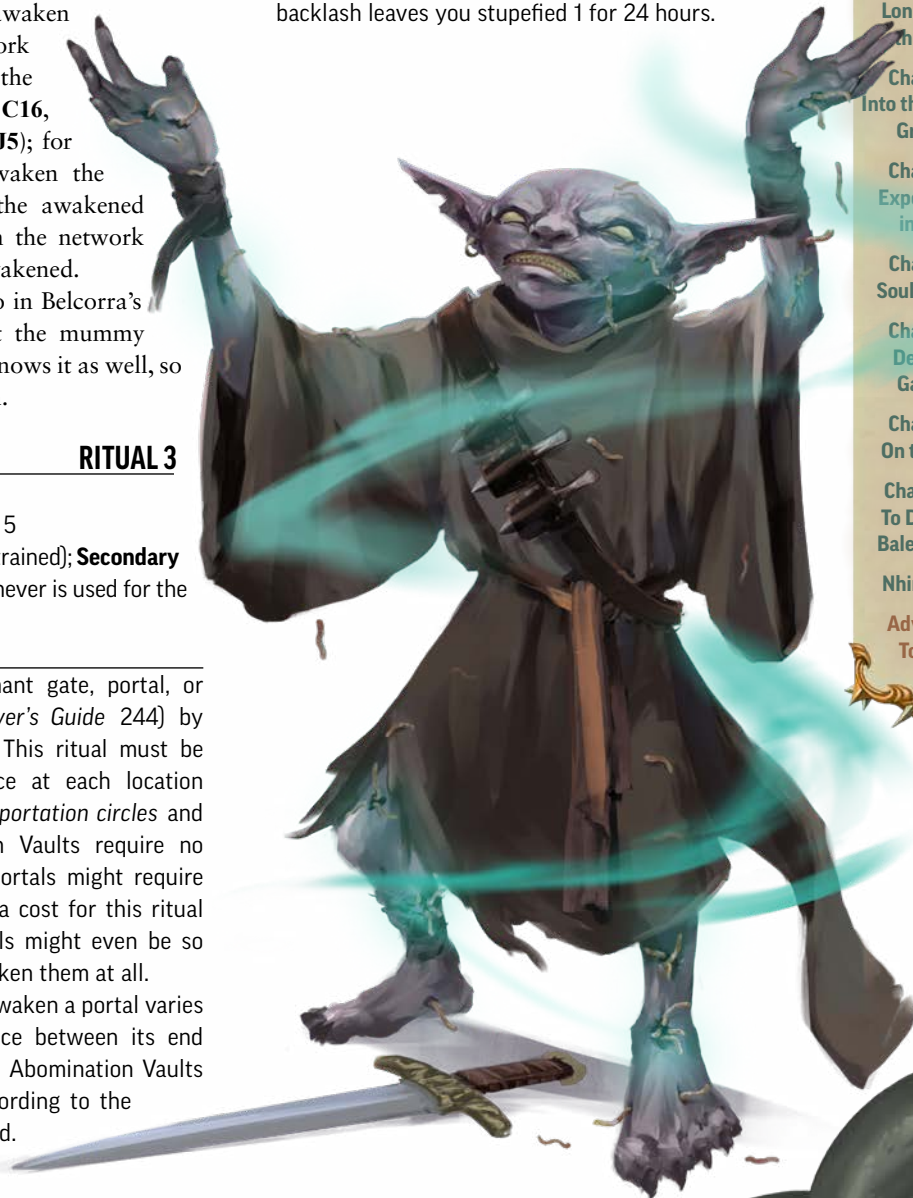
Use the DCs by Spell Level section

of Table 10-5 on page 503 of the *Core Rulebook* to determine the DC for a portal, using the dungeon level in place of spell level. Thus, activating the portal on the first level of the Abomination Vaults requires a successful DC 15 check, while activating the portal on the fourth level requires a successful DC 23 check.

Critical Success You awaken the portal. If its other side is awakened, the portal can be used normally and won't deactivate naturally. If its other side is not awakened, this side remains awakened for 1 year, possibly allowing you enough time to find and awaken the connecting portal.

Success As critical success, but if the portal's other side is not awakened, this side remains awakened for only 1d6 days before it fades and falls dormant again.

Failure You fail to activate the portal, and magical backlash leaves you stupefied 1 for 24 hours.



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Critical Failure As failure, but in addition, a hostile creature is drawn through the portal and immediately attacks anyone present. The creature drawn through the portal varies, according to the portal's nature; in the Abomination Vaults, the creature conjured depends on the dungeon level where the ritual was attempted, as listed below.

First Level vampiric mist (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 278)

Second Level scalathrax (page 243)

Third Level gibbering moulder (*Bestiary* 176)

Fourth Level will-o'-wisp (*Bestiary* 333)

Fifth Level soul eater (*Bestiary* 2 247)

Sixth Level voidglutton (page 251)

Seventh Level dread wraith (*Bestiary* 2 298)

Eighth Level ghost mage (*Bestiary* 167)

Ninth Level gosreg (*Bestiary* 2 133)

Tenth Level shining child (*Bestiary* 292)

CALL THE BLOOD

This horrid spell is widely circulated among urdefhan blood mages, and its gruesome use is a signature ability of those spellcasters.

CALL THE BLOOD

SPELL 4

UNCOMMON DEATH NECROMANCY NEGATIVE

Traditions arcane, occult, primal

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range 60 feet; **Target** 1 living creature

Saving Throw basic Fortitude

With a word and gesture, you cause streams of blood to erupt from the target's mouth, nostrils, ears, or other facial openings and come rushing into your mouth. You deal 8d4 negative damage to the target.

If the target takes damage, its blood flows into your mouth. If you're a living creature and don't have negative healing, you're sickened 2. If you're undead (or living but have negative healing), you can choose to either gain temporary Hit Points equal to half of the negative damage the target takes (after applying resistance and the like) and become quickened for 1 round, or forgo the temporary Hit Points and become quickened for 1 minute. You can use this extra action only to Step, Stride, or Strike. You lose any remaining temporary Hit Points after 1 minute.

Heightened (+1) The damage increases by 2d4.

DAYDREAMER'S CURSE

This spell creates a stultifying curse that afflicts the target and inhibits the ability to think clearly. The heroes are most likely to gain access to this spell because it's included among the spells in Zarmavdian's spellbook, *Thresholds of Truth*. It's also among the spells that a character with the Eldritch Researcher archetype can learn.

DAYDREAMER'S CURSE

SPELL 4

UNCOMMON ATTACK CURSE ENCHANTMENT MENTAL MISFORTUNE

Traditions arcane, occult

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range touch; **Targets** 1 creature

Saving Throw Will; **Duration** varies

You impose a curse upon the target that renders it easily distracted and unable to focus on tasks demanding insight or discernment. The target must attempt a Will save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success For 10 minutes, the target must roll twice and use the worse result whenever attempting a Medicine, Nature, Perception, or Survival check. If the target critically succeeds at a Perception check or skill check to perform an action with the concentrate trait, the target gets a success instead.

Failure As success, but the effect is permanent.

Critical Failure As failure, except the target treats the outcomes of all checks with the concentrate trait as one degree of success worse than the result it rolled (a critical success becomes a success, a success becomes a failure, and a failure becomes a critical failure).

ECTOPLASMIC EXPULSION

Cavern seers are those rare denizens of the Darklands who can pull whispers from the stone that supports the world. Although drow cavern seers are rare, the drow twins Bhazrade and Klathor have both tapped into this power and can share this spell that draws out possessing influences from living hosts. They teach it to heroes on good terms with the Yldaris drow.

ECTOPLASMIC EXPULSION

SPELL 5

UNCOMMON MENTAL NECROMANCY

Traditions occult

Cast ♦♦♦ material, somatic, verbal

Range 30 feet; **Target** 1 creature

You call upon tendrils of ephemeral ectoplasm to pass through the target and carry away a harmful psychic affliction. You immediately attempt to counteract a single effect on the target with the emotion or possession trait, or an effect giving the target the controlled or fascinated condition. If you fail to counteract the effect, you nevertheless set up a resonance that allows the target to more ably escape the effect on its own; for the next hour, the target gains a +2 status bonus to Will saves to shrug off the effect you failed to counteract (such as Will saves to shake off control by the *possession* spell).

SAGE'S CURSE

This spell overwhelms the brain with knowledge and is available to characters with the Eldritch Researcher archetype.

SAGE'S CURSE

SPELL 4

UNCOMMON ATTACK CURSE ENCHANTMENT MENTAL MISFORTUNE

Traditions arcane, occult

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range touch; **Targets** 1 creature

Saving Throw Will; **Duration** varies

You afflict the target with a curse that fills its mind with distracting and hyper-specialized minutiae, causing it to second-guess even simple facts. The target must attempt a Will saving throw.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success For 10 minutes, the target must roll twice and use the worse result whenever attempting an Arcana, Lore, Occultism, or Society check. If the target succeeds at a check to Recall Knowledge, it gains one piece of true knowledge and one piece of erroneous knowledge, but it has no way of knowing which is which (this has no effect if the target critically succeeds at a check to Recall Knowledge).

Failure As success, but the effect is permanent.

Critical Failure As failure, and the target treats the outcomes of all checks to Recall Knowledge as one degree of success worse than the result the target rolled (a critical success becomes a success, a success becomes a failure, and a failure becomes a critical failure).

WORM'S REPAST

The worm that walks occultist Volluk Azrinae created this repulsive spell while undertaking the research required for his horrid transformation. The first time the heroes encounter this spell might be when Volluk uses it against them, but it's also on a scroll in his quarters (area D18).

WORM'S REPAST

SPELL 2

RARE NECROMANCY

Traditions occult, primal

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range 30 feet; **Targets** 1 corporeal creature

Saving Throw Fortitude; **Duration** see below

Gnawing worms materialize within the flesh of the target creature, dealing 4d6 piercing damage and 1d6 persistent piercing damage. If the target is a non-

skeletal corporeal undead creature, you deal an extra 2d6 persistent piercing damage. The target must attempt a Fortitude save.

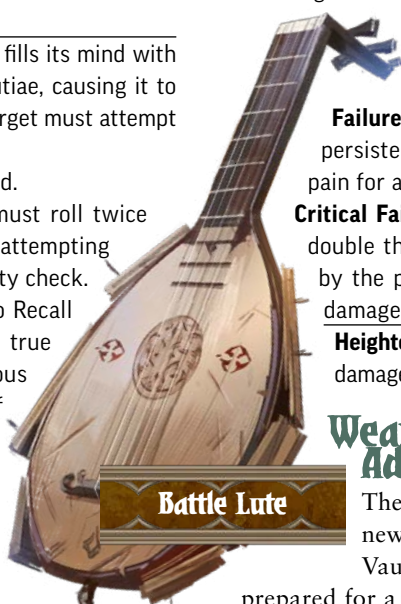
Critical Success The worms writhe away harmlessly and the target takes no damage.

Success The target takes full initial damage but no persistent damage, and the spell ends immediately.

Failure The target takes full initial and persistent damage and is flat-footed due to the pain for as long as it takes persistent damage.

Critical Failure As failure, but the target takes double the initial damage and is also slowed 1 by the pain for as long as it takes persistent damage.

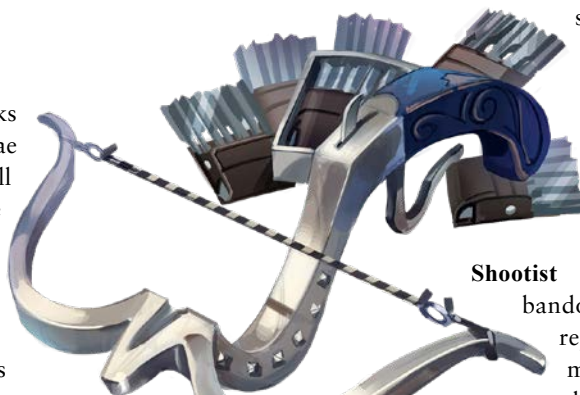
Heightened (+2): The initial and persistent damage increase by 2d6 and 1d6, respectively.



Battle Lute

Weapons and Adventuring Gear

The heroes can find several unusual new weapons in the Abomination Vaults. The xulgath lutenist Gulzash is prepared for a fight with his battle lute, and drow make heavy use of repeating hand crossbows and the associated gear that makes using repeating hand crossbows even easier. Urdefhans use a variety of strange weapons that are wholly unknown on the surface, including rhoka swords, shauth blades, and shauth lashes. Even fleshwarps made from urdefhans use bizarre weapons, including the tamchal chakrams that mulventok fleshwarps employ.



Repeating Hand Crossbow
and Magazines

GEAR DESCRIPTIONS

Shootist Bandolier: This leather bandolier holds up to three repeating hand crossbow magazines in leather pockets that pop open with the quick flick of a thumb. You reduce the reload time for a repeating hand crossbow magazine from the bandolier by 1, to a total of 2

actions. You can wear only one shootist bandolier at a time.

WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

The heroes can find the following weapons on their explorations. Their statistics are provided in Table 1 and Table 2 on page 226.

TABLE 1: MELEE WEAPONS

Uncommon Simple Weapon	Price	Damage	Bulk	Hands	Group	Weapon Traits
Battle lute	15 gp	1d4 B	1	1	Club	Shove, two-hand d8
Uncommon Martial Weapons	Price	Damage	Bulk	Hands	Group	Weapon Traits
Shauth blade	2 gp	1d4 S	L	1	Knife	Agile, deadly d8, finesse, versatile P
Uncommon Advanced Weapons	Price	Damage	Bulk	Hands	Group	Weapon Traits
Rhoka sword	4 gp	1d8 S	2	1	Sword	Deadly d8, two-hand d10
Shauth lash	8 gp	1d6 S	1	2	Flail	Deadly d10, finesse, trip
Tamchal chakram	5 gp	1d6 S	L	1	Dart	Agile, deadly d6, finesse, thrown 20 feet

TABLE 2: RANGED WEAPONS

Uncommon Advanced Weapons	Price	Damage	Range	Reload	Bulk	Hands	Group	Weapon Traits
Repeating hand crossbow	10 gp	1d6 P	60 ft.	0	L	1	Bow	Repeating
Magazine with 5 bolts	9 sp	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

TABLE 3: UNCOMMON ADVENTURING GEAR

Item	Price	Bulk	Hands
Shootist bandolier	1 gp	—	—

TABLE 4: ALCHEMICAL ITEMS

Level	Item	Category	Price
1	Necrotic bomb, lesser	Bomb	3 gp
1	Skeptic's elixir, lesser	Elixir	4 gp
2	Wasul reed mask	Tool	6 gp
3	Necrotic bomb, moderate	Bomb	10 gp
4	Stupor poison	Poison	16 gp
5	Fungal walk musk	Tool	21 gp
5	Ichthyosis mutagen	Elixir	24 gp
6	Skeptic's elixir, moderate	Elixir	50 gp
7	Sloughing toxin	Poison	60 gp
11	Necrotic bomb, greater	Bomb	250 gp
11	Skeptic's elixir, greater	Elixir	300 gp
17	Necrotic bomb, major	Bomb	2,500 gp

Battle Lute: This reinforced lute is suitable both for use as a handheld musical instrument and for bashing heads should a crowd turn sour. Its strings are finely braided wires that run along its sturdy metal neck.

Repeating Hand Crossbow:

This weapon features an ingeniously designed catch mechanism at the top of the flight grove, just in front of the latch, which automatically loads a bolt from a magazine and resets the string each time the weapon is fired. A typical repeating hand crossbow magazine holds five bolts.

Rhoka Sword: These dual-bladed swords are commonly used by urdefhan warriors.

Shauth Blade: These strange curved blades are jagged and deadly weapons made from the alchemically

strengthened teeth of dead urdefhans. Each weapon is typically named for the urdefhan whose teeth were forged into the weapon, which are often carried (and revered) by that urdefhan's descendants. Magical shauth blades allow an urdefhan wielder to channel their Wicked Bite ability through shauth blade Strikes.

Shauth Lash: This metal chain bears hook-like barbs made of alchemically strengthened urdefhan teeth. Magical shauth lashes have the same ability to channel an urdefhan wielder's Wicked Bite as magical shauth blades, and urdefhans hold these weapons with the same reverence as they do shauth blades.

Tamchal Chakram: These circular weapons are among the many strange weapons used by urdefhans. The sharp metal circle contains numerous protruding blades, while an angled central handle provides a decent grip that spins the weapon as it's thrown.

WEAPON TRAITS

Repeating hand crossbows have the following new weapon trait.

Repeating: A repeating weapon is typically a type of crossbow that has a shorter reload time.

These weapons can't be loaded with individual bolts like other crossbows; instead, they require a magazine of specialized ammunition to be loaded into a special slot. Once that magazine is in place, the ammunition is automatically loaded each time the weapon is cocked to fire, reducing its reload to the value in its reload entry (typically 0). When the ammunition runs out, a new magazine must be loaded, which requires a free hand

and 3 Interact actions (to remove the old magazine, retrieve the new magazine, and slot the new magazine in place). These actions don't need to be consecutive.



Tamchal Chakram

Archetypes

The heroes can gain access to these archetypes in the Abomination Vaults Adventure Path.

DROW SHOOTIST

Some drow take skill with the hand crossbow to new heights. With fearlessness and swagger, you've learned the secrets of these fabled drow shootists.

Additional Feats: You can select these class feats as archetype feats, as described on page 149 of the *Advanced Player's Guide*. **8th:** Poison Weapon (*Core Rulebook* 185), Running Reload (*Core Rulebook* 172); **10th:** Skirmish Strike (*Core Rulebook* 186).

DROW SHOOTIST DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisite trained in the hand crossbow

Every chance you get, you practice with the hand crossbow to increase your draw speed and accuracy. Whenever you gain a class feature that grants you expert or greater proficiency in a given weapon or weapons, you also gain that proficiency in the hand crossbow. If you're at least an expert in a hand crossbow you're using, you gain access to its critical specialization effect. You also gain the Shootist's Draw action.

Shootist's Draw ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** You Interact to draw a hand crossbow and Strike with it, or you Strike with a loaded hand crossbow you're already holding and then Interact to stow it.

Special You can't select another dedication feat until you've gained two other feats from the drow shootist archetype.

REPEATING HAND CROSSBOW TRAINING

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Drow Shootist Dedication

You become trained in the repeating hand crossbow (page 73) and gain access to repeating hand crossbows and shootist bandoliers (page 73). Whenever you gain a class feature that grants you expert or greater proficiency in a given weapon or weapons, you also gain that proficiency in the repeating hand crossbow. If you're at least an expert in a repeating hand crossbow you're using, you gain access to its critical specialization effect. You can perform the Shootist's Draw action with repeating hand crossbows.

Special If you have the Running Reload feat, you can reload a repeating hand crossbow magazine on the move. You can use Running Reload as a 3-action activity to reload a magazine into a repeating hand crossbow after you Stride, Step, or Sneak, or as a 2-action activity if you use a magazine from a shootist bandolier.

RELOADING TRICK ♦

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE MANIPULATE

Prerequisites Drow Shootist Dedication

Frequency once per round

Requirements You're holding an unloaded hand crossbow. You can fire off a single shot even when unprepared. You Interact to reload your hand crossbow and Strike with it.

Special If you have the Repeating Hand Crossbow Training feat, you can use this feat with a repeating hand crossbow to load either a bolt or a magazine, but the speed means you can fire only one bolt, then the magazine jams. You must spend a 3-action Interact activity to remove the jammed magazine and clear it before it can be used again.

LETHARGY POISONER

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Drow Shootist Dedication, trained in Crafting You've learned more than the use of hand crossbows from drow lore. During your daily preparations, you can prepare a dose of lethargy poison (*Core Rulebook* 552) from ordinary materials in a wilderness or urban area. If you're an expert in Crafting, you can instead craft a dose of stupor poison (page 74). You can prepare two doses (of either poison) if you're a master in Crafting and three doses if you're legendary in Crafting. The save DC for this poison is equal to your class DC. Only you can use these poisons, and they expire the next time you make your daily preparations. The GM might decide that the area you're in is too barren to provide the materials you need for this feat.



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ELDRITCH RESEARCHER

An eager student of occult lore, you enjoy reading rare or forgotten tomes with ancient rituals and hidden secrets. You connect disparate facts to unlock deeper mysteries and uncover the truths of the universe, and you zealously hoard the knowledge your painstaking research produces. Aberrations fascinate you for many reasons, not the least of which is because their anatomy is wholly alien and yet, to the insightful, eminently sensible.

You've been particularly enlightened by the accumulated lore in *Thresholds of Truth*, and you know Zarmavdian was a kindred soul in occult research. With this book in hand, you feel like you stand at the doorway to unprecedented occult discoveries.

You scoff at those fools who claim you meddle in things mortals aren't meant to know—for isn't it the duty of the enlightened to gather the universe's deepest truths?

ELDRITCH RESEARCHER DEDICATION FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites Trained in Arcana and Occultism

You gain the ability to cast a single arcane or occult cantrip of your choice (which is heightened to a spell level equal to half your level rounded up). If you weren't already, you become trained in that tradition's spell DCs and spell attack rolls with Intelligence as your spellcasting ability.

Regardless of whether you choose an arcane or occult cantrip, you also become an expert in your choice of either Arcana or Occultism. You also gain a +1 circumstance bonus to checks you attempt with the chosen skill when Investigating or Identifying Magic.

Special You can't select another dedication feat until you've gained two other feats from the Eldritch Researcher archetype.

SEEKER OF TRUTHS FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Eldritch Researcher Dedication

Your devotion to discovering and hoarding abstruse truths borders on the fanatical, and you can bring this devotion to bear. You gain the cleric's Domain Initiate feat but must select knowledge, secrecy, or truth as your domain. You cast that domain's domain spell as a focus spell of the same tradition as your cantrip from Eldritch Researcher Dedication, and you Refocus by contemplating abstruse mysteries rather than praying to a god. When an ability would manifest a divine symbol—such as the *word of truth* focus spell—it instead manifests as a strange shape unique to you that seems to defy geometry.

Special You can take this feat up to three times, selecting a different domain each time.

STRANGE SCRIPT FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE DIVINATION

Prerequisites Eldritch Researcher Dedication

You have such familiarity with obscure texts that you can compel them to reveal their secrets. Once per day, you can touch a single text (such as a tome, a wall of hieroglyphics, or something similar) and understand its meaning for 1 hour. If the text is in multiple languages, you gain the ability to understand them all for only the purposes of reading the text. If the text is in a code or cypher, you don't automatically understand the text, but you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to checks to decipher it.

SCHOLARLY DEFENSE FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Eldritch Researcher Dedication

Your knowledge of strange creatures and their bizarre anatomy allows you to anticipate their physical attacks and reduce the damage you take from them. You gain resistance to physical damage from melee attacks made by aberrations and oozes. This resistance is equal to one-third your level.

ABLE RITUALIST FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Eldritch Researcher Dedication

Your readings on rituals make you a skilled participant. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to primary and secondary checks you attempt as part of casting a ritual.

LOREFINDER FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Eldritch Researcher Dedication

You know that fate sometimes conspires to keep dangerous knowledge or items from the eyes of those most able to understand them. You deny fate the ability to conceal truths from you. You can cast *locate* as an innate occult spell once per day. When you reach 14th level, this spell is heightened to 5th level.

KNOW IT ALL FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Eldritch Researcher Dedication

Your knowledge of abstruse topics is unparalleled. When you succeed at a check to Recall Knowledge, you gain additional information or context. When you critically succeed at a Knowledge check, at the GM's discretion you might gain even more additional information or context than normal.

ADVANCED SEEKER OF TRUTHS FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Eldritch Researcher Dedication, Seeker of Truths

You have unlocked deeper secrets to uncovering and hoarding lore. You gain an advanced domain spell from one domain you selected with Seeker of Truths. Increase the number of Focus Points in your focus pool by 1.

Special You can take this feat up to three times, each time selecting a different advanced domain spell from a domain you selected with Seeker of Truths.

WORDS OF UNRAVELING

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Eldritch Researcher Dedication

You have unlocked abstruse methods to tangle with reality itself, altering the fate of a single individual by untethering their fate from reality. Once per day as an occult innate spell, you can cast *daydreamer's curse* (page 224), *outcast's curse*, or *sage's curse* (page 225). At the GM's discretion, you can substitute or add additional occult curse spells of 4th level or lower to this list. You can choose a different spell from the list each time you use this ability. If you couldn't already cast occult spells, these spells use Intelligence as your spellcasting ability, and you become trained in spell attack rolls and spell DCs for occult spells; if you could already cast occult spells, your proficiency in spell attack rolls and spell DCs for occult spells increases to expert.

ENTITIES FROM AFAR

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Eldritch Researcher Dedication

You can call in aberrations to fight for you or to answer questions about the universe that their own strange perspective can illuminate. You can cast *summon entity* as an innate occult spell once per day. If you couldn't already cast occult spells, these spells use Intelligence as your spellcasting ability, and you become trained in spell attack rolls and spell DCs for occult spells; if you could already cast occult spells, your proficiency in spell attack rolls and spell DCs for occult spells increases to expert.

As soon as the aberration arrives, instead of giving it any other commands, you can demand that it answer a single question that you pose to it. For the creature to effectively answer, you must Sustain the Spell for 1 minute, and you must understand and be understood by the aberration. If you do, the aberration gives you a cryptic clue as provided by the *read omens* spell, except that the clue is even more enigmatic than normal; the creature then immediately returns from whence it came without providing you any other benefit or taking any other actions.

At 16th level and every 2 levels thereafter, the *summon entity* spell is heightened by 1 level (to a maximum of 8th level when you reach 20th level).

INCREDIBLE RECOLLECTION

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Eldritch Researcher Dedication

You can sift through knowledge locked within your mind at an incredible pace. You instantly use up to 5 Recall Knowledge actions. If you have any special abilities or free actions that would normally be triggered when you Recall Knowledge, you can't use them for these actions.



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GHOST HUNTER

Ghosts have a wide range of capabilities and features—no two ghosts are exactly alike, as the nature of their abilities depends as much upon who they were in life as on how they died. Haunts, the spectral phenomena remaining in a site of death or powerful emotions, are related to but distinct from ghosts.

The ghost hunter knows that ghosts and haunts share many features. By focusing on these similarities, they can track down, confront, and defeat all manner of unquiet souls, helping them to find peace and move on to the afterlife.

GHOST HUNTER DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites Trained in Occultism or Religion

You have focused your training on hunting and defeating ghosts, spirits, and all manner of haunts. Pick Spirit Lore or Haunt Lore; you become trained in this skill. If you were already trained in both skills, you become trained in a new Lore skill of your choice.

Choose two cantrips from the occult spell list. Each cantrip must have the divination, enchantment, or necromancy trait. You can cast these spells as innate occult spells. You gain access to the Cast a Spell activity if you didn't have it already. You're trained in occult spell attack rolls and spell DCs. You can usually replace material components with somatic components, so you don't need a spell component pouch. Your key spellcasting ability for these spells is Charisma.

Special You can't select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the ghost hunter archetype.

GRAVE'S VOICE

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ghost Hunter Dedication

You can use your choice of Spirit Lore or Haunt Lore to Make an Impression or Request things of incorporeal creatures. At the GM's discretion, an incorporeal spirit might be willing to hear you out.

INVESTIGATE HAUNTING

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ghost Hunter Dedication

You are skilled at noticing the telltale signs of ghosts and hauntings. Even when you aren't Investigating in exploration mode, you get a check to Recall Knowledge about incorporeal undead and haunts active in the area. You also gain a +2 circumstance bonus to skill checks to disable haunts.

SPIRIT SPELLS

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ghost Hunter Dedication

Your ability to confront incorporeal menaces develops into full-fledged spellcasting. Choose a 1st-level occult spell. You can Cast this Spell as an innate occult spell. At 6th level, you gain a 2nd-level occult spell, and at 8th level, you gain a 3rd-level occult spell. Each of these spells must have the divination, enchantment, or necromancy trait. You can cast each of these spells once per day.

GHOST STRIKE

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ghost Hunter Dedication

Once per day, you can infuse a weapon you are carrying with magical energies that allow it to strike true against incorporeal undead. The weapon gains the effects of the *ghost touch* property rune for 10 minutes.

At 10th level, you can apply this effect to two weapons instead of one.

PEER BEYOND

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ghost Hunter Dedication

You have uncanny insight into the way ghosts and haunts manifest, manipulate the mind, and rejuvenate. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to saving throws against mental effects caused by incorporeal undead and haunts, and you can roll a Spirit Lore or Haunt Lore check for initiative if you know that an incorporeal undead or a haunt is present.

If you are present when a spirit or haunt is defeated, you instantly gain a flash of insight into how it can be permanently put to rest. Typically, this flash manifests as a vision that presents a quick scene closely linked to the source of the spirit or haunt's creation. Attempt a Spirit Lore or Haunt Lore check, respectively, with a DC appropriate for the spirit or haunt's level. On a success, you gain a hint about how to put the spirit to rest or permanently disable the haunt; on a critical success, you learn the exact method of doing so.



Bright Walker

Those who encounter calignis (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 50) quickly learn that their deaths involve burning out instead of bleeding out. At times, this dramatic immolation is denied to a caligni, so they arise as a bright walker. Tied to caligni society, these creatures don't understand that their glow damages and repels living calignis. Despite their name, these undead don't walk; they instead float a few inches above the ground.

BRIGHT WALKER

CREATURE 9

RARE NE MEDIUM INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Perception +19, greater darkvision

Languages Caligni

Skills Acrobatics +19, Intimidation +18, Stealth +19

Str -5, **Dex** +6, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4,

Cha +3

AC 26; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +21, **Will** +19

HP 115, negative healing; **Immunities**

death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious;

Resistance all damage 10 (except for force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical).

Bright Release (fire, light) When a bright walker is reduced to 0 Hit Points, they flash out in a burst of light, obtaining the blazing end they were denied at death. This blaze deals 10d6 fire damage (DC 25 basic Reflex save) to creatures within 20 feet. Creatures who fail this save are also dazzled for 1 minute (blinded for 1 minute on a critical failure).

Light Aura (aura, divine, light) 30 feet. The bright walker sheds bright light. Any creature that starts its turn in the aura must attempt at a DC 24 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is temporarily immune for 24 hours.

Success The creature is dazzled for 1 round.

Failure The creature is blinded for 1 round.

Critical Failure The creature is blinded for 1 hour.

Suppress Aura ♦ (concentrate) The bright walker suppresses their light aura for 1 round, reducing it to a faint, ghostly glow of dim light.

Speed fly 25 feet; landbound

Melee ♦ radiant touch +21 (agile, finesse, fire, light, magical), **Damage** 2d8+11 fire

Ranged ♦ radiant ray +21 (fire, light, magical, range increment 60 feet) **Damage** 2d6+11 fire

Landbound A bright walker can't fly higher than 1 foot above the ground. If they fly higher than this distance, they fall but don't take any damage from falling.

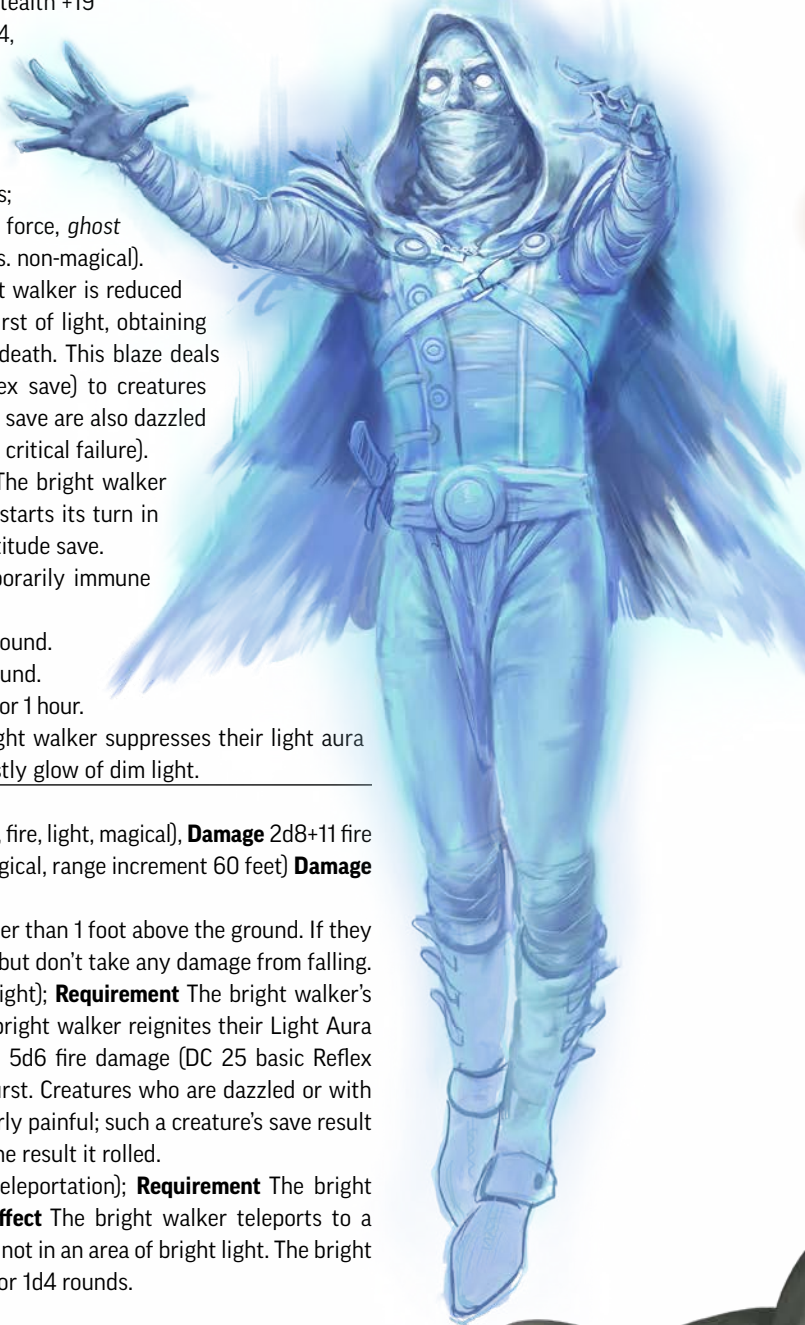
Light Flare ♦♦ (divine, evocation, fire, light); **Requirement** The bright walker's Light Aura is suppressed; **Effect** The bright walker reignites their Light Aura with a burst of brightness that deals 5d6 fire damage (DC 25 basic Reflex save) to creatures within a 20-foot burst. Creatures who are dazzled or with light blindness find this flare particularly painful; such a creature's save result is one degree of success worse than the result it rolled.

Shadow Jump ♦ (conjuration, divine, teleportation); **Requirement** The bright walker's Light Aura is suppressed; **Effect** The bright walker teleports to a square it can see within 60 feet that is not in an area of bright light. The bright walker can't use Shadow Jump again for 1d4 rounds.



BRIGHT WALKER FORMATION

Most calignis assume that bright walkers arise at the whims of their malign and capricious demigods, the Forsaken, but as the Forsaken are denied the souls of these undead, some other unknown force must be involved.



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LARGER CORPSELIGHTS

A typical corpselight can animate only a Small or Medium corpse, but particularly powerful corpselights can inhabit larger bodies. Their basic abilities remain the same, but the damage they deal and the DC of their Death Light increase as appropriate for their increased level.

Corpselight

A will-o'-wisp that starves to death might rise as a cold, blue, glowing sphere of spongy wetness—a corpselight. A corpselight instinctively seeks out a host corpse to dwell within, as its physical form quickly deteriorates if not hidden within a dead creature.

CORPSELIGHT

CREATURE 2

RARE CE MEDIUM UNDEAD

Perception +7; corpse sense (precise) 30 feet, darkvision

Languages Common, Necril

Skills Athletics +7, Intimidation +8, Stealth +8

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** +1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +2

Corpse Sense A corpselight can sense dead bodies within range. This is a precise sense that functions through solid barriers less than 5 feet thick.

AC 17; **Fort** +5, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

HP 40, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fear, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Weaknesses** bludgeoning 5 (in skeletal corpses) or slashing 5 (in fleshy corpses)

Sunlight Powerlessness A corpselight exposed to sunlight is stunned 2 and clumsy 2, and cannot Claim a Corpse.

Wisp Form When a corpselight is reduced to 0 Hit Points while merged with a corpse, it is instead reduced to 1 Hit Point as the corpse collapses to the ground and the corpselight emerges in its wisp form. While in wisp form, a corpselight is Tiny and can take no actions other than Claim Corpse or Fly. A corpselight that starts its turn in wisp form must attempt a DC 16 flat check at the end of its turn; if it fails, it loses 1 Hit Point. A corpselight reduced to 0 Hit Points while in wisp form is destroyed.

Speed 25 feet, fly 25 feet (wisp form only)

Melee ✦ jaws +10, **Damage** 1d8+6 piercing

Melee ✦ claw +10 (agile), **Damage** 1d6+6 slashing

Claim Corpse ✦ (necromancy) **Prerequisites** The corpselight is in wisp form and is adjacent to a Medium or Small corpse that hasn't been claimed by a corpselight in the past 24 hours; **Effect** The corpselight merges with the corpse, causes the corpse to Stand, and regains 3d6 Hit Points.

Death Light ✦✦✦ (emotion, fear, mental, necromancy, occult) **Prerequisites** The corpselight is merged with a corpse; **Effect** The corpselight emits a sickly blue beam of light from its mouth and eyes in a 20-foot cone. All living creatures in this area must attempt a DC 18 Fortitude saving throw. If at least 1 creature fails its save, the corpselight regains 2d6 Hit Points, gaining any that exceed its maximum as temporary Hit Points that last for 1 minute. The corpselight can't use Death Light again for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 1d6 negative damage.

Failure The creature takes 2d6 negative damage and is frightened 1.

Critical Failure The creature takes 4d6 negative damage and is frightened 3.



Dhuthorex

Strange things swim in sunless seas, but few as fierce as the shark-like dhuthorex. These beasts chase prey fearlessly and tenaciously.

DEEPWATER DHUTHOREX

The typical dhuthorex is a hungry beast, chasing prey through the depths and venturing onto land only to pursue easy prey.

DEEPWATER DHUTHOREX

CREATURE 9

UNCOMMON CN LARGE ABERRATION AQUATIC

Perception +18; darkvision, wavesense (imprecise) 60 feet

Skills Athletics +20, Stealth +18, Survival +19

Str +7, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** -4, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +0

AC 28, all-around vision; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +18, **Will** +17

HP 155; **Immunities** acid

Attack of Opportunity ⤴

Speed 10 feet; swim 40 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +21 (deadly d10, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d10+11 piercing plus Grab

Melee ♦ snout +21 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+11 bludgeoning plus Push

Melee ♦ tentacle +19 (agile, reach 15 feet),

Damage 2d6+11 slashing

Aquatic Ambush ♦

Overpowering Jaws A deepwater dhuthorex deals 7 piercing damage to its target if its jaws Strike is a failure (but not a critical failure).

Swallow Whole ♦ (attack) Medium, 2d6+7 bludgeoning plus 2d6 acid, Rupture 20

DREAD DHUTHOREX

More intelligent than their lesser kin, dread dhuthorex possess eerie, enchanting powers.

DREAD DHUTHOREX

CREATURE 11

UNCOMMON CN LARGE ABERRATION AMPHIBIOUS

Perception +22; darkvision, wavesense (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Aklo

Skills Athletics +23, Occultism +16, Stealth +20, Survival +21

Str +8, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** -1, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +0

AC 31, all-around vision; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +18, **Will** +21

HP 195; **Immunities** acid

Attack of Opportunity ⤴

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 60 feet, DC 27

Speed 20 feet; swim 40 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +24 (deadly d12, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d10+12 piercing plus Grab

Melee ♦ snout +24 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d8+12 bludgeoning plus Push

Melee ♦ tentacle +22 (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d6+12 slashing

Occult Innate Spells DC 27; **5th** mariner's curse; **3rd** hypnotic pattern, mind reading

Aquatic Ambush ♦

Overpowering Jaws As deepwater dhuthorex, but 8 piercing damage.

Swallow Whole ♦ (attack) Large, 3d6+8 bludgeoning plus 2d6 acid, Rupture 23



DHUTHOREX SAGES

Rare dread dhuthorex develop additional, linked brains down their throats. These dhuthorex sages lose Overpowering Jaws and Swallow Whole but have an Intelligence of +3 and can cast the following spells.

Occult Prepared Spells DC 27, attack +19; **5th** cloak of colors, crushing despair, hallucination; **4th** confusion, nightmare, read omens; **3rd** enthrall, fear, paralyze; **2nd** augury, death knell, telekinetic maneuver; **1st** bane, mindlink, sanctuary; **Cantrips (5th)** detect magic, mage hand, message, read aura, shield

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ADHERENTS OF CHAOS

Away from the larger drow cities, where worship of demon lords is instilled into all citizens from a young age, drow might adopt the worship of other entities. Many drow feel the call of the protean lords and embrace chaos, art, and freedom to set themselves apart from their demon-worshipping kin. These communities often have proteans living among them, instructing drow proteges in the power of disorder.

Drow

Drow (*Bestiary* 136) have a reputation for evil due to demon worship in their major settlements. However, like members of any ancestry, drow can have any alignment, especially when removed from the demon lords' sinister influence.

DROW WARDEN

Wardens watch over drow encampments and often work in small groups.

DROW WARDEN

CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON CN MEDIUM DROW ELF HUMANOID

Perception +11; darkvision

Languages Elven, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +12, Intimidation +8, Stealth +9, Survival +11

Str +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

Items chainmail, elven curve blade, hand crossbow (10 bolts), lethargy poison (3)

Light Blindness

AC 21; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9; +1 status to all saves vs. magic, +2 status to all saves vs. mental

HP 60; **Immunity** sleep

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Speed 30 feet

Melee ✦ elven curve blade +14 (forceful), **Damage** 1d8+6 slashing plus hampering slash

Ranged ✦ hand crossbow +13 (range increment 60 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d6+2 piercing plus lethargy poison

Divine Innate Spells DC 19; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *faerie fire* (at will); **Cantrips (2nd)** *dancing lights*

Hampering Slash A target damaged by the warden's melee Strike must succeed at a DC 21 Fortitude save or be slowed 1 until the end of the warden's next turn.

Sneak Attack A warden deals an extra 1d6 damage to flat-footed creatures.

DROW HUNTER

Hunters seek out game to keep drow communities fed and functioning.

DROW HUNTER

CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON CN MEDIUM DROW ELF HUMANOID

Perception +16; darkvision

Languages Elven, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +14, Nature +14, Stealth +15, Survival +16 (+18 to Subsist)

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1

Items chain shirt, +1 *composite longbow* (20 arrows), *longsword*

Light Blindness

AC 25; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +15, **Will** +14; +1 status to all saves vs. magic, +2 status to all saves vs. mental

HP 115; **Immunities** sleep

Deft Evasion When the hunter rolls a success on a Reflex save, they get a critical success instead.



Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ longsword +16 (versatile P), **Damage** 1d8+7 slashing

Ranged ♦ *composite longbow* +18 (deadly d10, propulsive, range increment 100 feet, reload 0, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 1d8+7 piercing

Divine Innate Spells DC 23; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *faerie fire* (at will); **Cantrips** (4th) *dancing lights*

Hunter's Wound ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Prerequisites** The hunter is wielding a ranged weapon with a reload of 0; **Effect** The hunter makes two ranged Strikes against their prey. If both hit and deal damage, the target takes an additional 1d8 persistent bleed damage.

Skirmish Strike ♦ The hunter can Step and then Strike, or Strike and then Step.

DROW SHOOTIST

The rare few drow who specialize in the repeating hand crossbow command respect not only for their skills but for their luck and swagger.

DROW SHOOTIST

CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON CN MEDIUM DROW ELF HUMANOID

Perception +16; darkvision

Languages Elven, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +19, Athletics +16, Deception +16, Intimidation +14, Stealth +17, Thievery +17

Str +2, **Dex** +5, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

Items +1 *repeating hand crossbow* (4 magazines; page 226), rapier, shootist bandolier (page 226), stupor poison (4; page 214), studded leather armor

Light Blindness

AC 27; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +17, **Will** +16; +1 status to all saves vs. magic, +2 status to all saves vs. mental

HP 120; **Immunities** sleep

Shootist's Luck ☞ (fortune) **Trigger** The shootist fails a save; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The shootist rerolls the save and uses the better result.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ rapier +18 (deadly d8, disarm, finesse), **Damage** 1d6+9 piercing

Ranged ♦ *repeating hand crossbow* +20 (range increment 60 feet, reload 0 [3 to reload magazine], repeating), **Damage** 1d6+9 piercing plus stupor poison

Divine Innate Spells DC 24; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *faerie fire* (at will); **Cantrips** (4th) *dancing lights*

Distracting Shot ♦♦ The shootist takes aim and makes a ranged Strike. If the attack hits and deals damage, the target is flat-footed until the end of the shootist's turn, or until the end of the shootist's next turn on a critical hit.

Reloading Trick ♦♦ **Requirements** The shootist is holding an unloaded repeating hand crossbow; **Effect** The shootist Interacts to reload the repeating hand crossbow and Strikes with it.

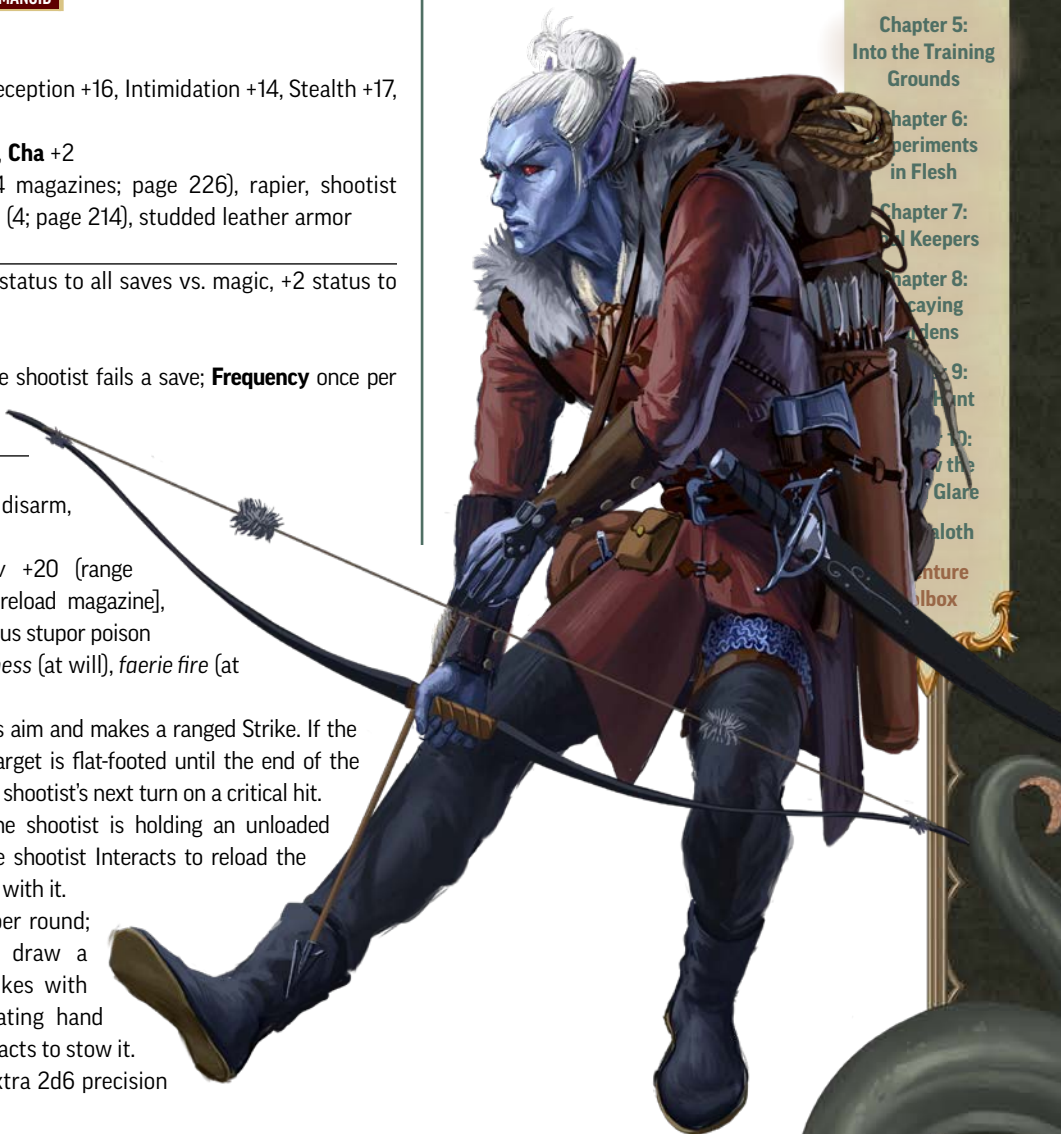
Shootist's Draw ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The shootist Interacts to draw a repeating hand crossbow and Strikes with it, or Strikes with a loaded repeating hand crossbow they're holding then Interacts to stow it.

Sneak Attack The shootist deals an extra 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.



SHOOTIST ENTOURAGES

Many drow shootists have a magnetic bravado that draws others to follow and learn from them. Few shootists are as skilled at teaching as they are at fighting, however, and their followers aren't much more than an entourage. These hangers-on are rarely as lucky or quick as the shootist, so shootists lose their followers to monsters or mischance with startling frequency.



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DRESHKAN VARIATIONS

Though most dreshkans fire electrified needles from the metal limbs on their backs, some are built with even stranger abilities. Seugathi masters looking to perfect their craft will sometimes "upgrade" dreshkans' artificial limbs to gout steam, hammer through stone, or launch hooks at the end of long cables.

Fleshwarp

Although twisting victims into horrid shapes is a well-known pastime of evil drow, other subterranean monsters have stolen these practices or developed them independently. The worm-like seugathis (page 244) sometimes warp other creatures whose territories abut their lightless lands; the fleshwarps below result from morlocks and urdefhans, respectively.

DRESHKAN

Because morlocks are descended from distant human ancestors, clumsily or hastily fleshwarping a morlock simply produces a grothlut (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 158). Skilled fleshwarpers, however, can tease out a morlock's genetic differences to make an entirely different creature. Creating a dreshkan involves replacing the morlock's bones with a metal skeleton. This new skeleton is often heavily augmented, such as with spiderlike limbs protruding from the spine or magazines of tiny, deadly needles. Arcane electricity courses through the dreshkan thereafter, making it jumpy and irritable.

Morlocks view dreshkans as impressive fusions of flesh and technology. They gladly fight alongside dreshkans, viewing them as paragons of morlock potential. Dreshkans don't think much of morlock allies and don't much care if they're injured by an errant spray of electrified needles.

DRESHKAN

CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON N MEDIUM ABERRATION CONSTRUCT

Perception +11; darkvision

Languages Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +12 (+14 to Climb), Intimidation +10, Stealth +13

Str +4, **Dex** +5, **Con** +2, **Int** -2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

Light Blindness

AC 20; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11; +2 status to all saves vs. bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, fatigued, paralyzed, poison, and sickened

HP 72; **Immunities** electricity

Partially Technological A dreshkan is partially technological. Positive healing effects only heal a dreshkan half as much as normal.

Defensive Needle **Trigger** A creature critically fails a melee Strike against the dreshkan; **Effect** The dreshkan makes a needle Strike against that creature.

Speed 30 feet, climb 30 feet

Melee **claw** +13 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d6+4 slashing

Ranged **needle** +13 (range increment 30 feet), **Damage** 1d4 piercing plus 2d8 electricity

Needle Spray **◆◆◆** The dreshkan braces itself on all four limbs and sprays needles at as many creatures as it would like in a 30-foot cone, dealing 2d4 piercing plus 2d8 electricity damage (DC 21 basic Reflex save).

Swarming Stance A dreshkan can share the same space as a morlock or another dreshkan, but no more than two such creatures can occupy the same space. When these creatures share the same space, they gain a +1 circumstance bonus to attack rolls.



MULVENTOK

Sinister fleshwarppers reshape captive urdefhans into these juggernauts of war. Their clear skin is hardened into a thick, mirror-like carapace, creating an intimidating exoskeleton. Mulventoks don't live long; within weeks—or, at most, months—their hyperdeveloped muscles split open their toughened skin, and they erupt in a shower of gore. A mulventok's creator shapes its mind just as much as its body, directing its aggression toward a single purpose, such as to raze a fortress or murder a specific individual.

MULVENTOK

UNCOMMON N MEDIUM ABERRATION

Perception +15; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Daemonic, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +17, Intimidation +17, Purpose Lore +15, Survival +15

Str +6, **Dex** +0, **Con** +4, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +6

War Leader (emotion, mental) A mulventok's fervor inspires its allies. Allies within 30 feet that can see or hear the mulventok gain a +1 status bonus to attack rolls and skill checks as long as their actions don't impede the mulventok's imprinted purpose.

Items +1 *tamchal chakram* (page 226), steel shield (Hardness 5, HP 20, BT 10)

AC 24 (26 with shield raised);

Fort +15, **Ref** +11, **Will** +17

HP 115, negative healing;

Immunities death effects, disease, fear; **Weaknesses** positive 10

Explosive Decay (necromancy, negative, occult) When a mulventok dies, its mirrored flesh ruptures and explodes in a 20-foot radius. Creatures caught in the blast are covered with viscera and take 8d6 negative damage (DC 22 basic Reflex save).

Stay in the Fight (healing, necromancy, occult); **Trigger** An allied creature within 30 feet reaches 0 HP; **Effect** The mulventok imparts some of its own energy to keep the ally fighting. The target creature gains 1 Hit Point, and the mulventok takes 2d6 mental damage.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *tamchal chakram* +18 (agile, deadly 1d6, finesse, magical), **Damage** 1d6+8 slashing plus 1d6 mental

Melee ♦ fist +17, **Damage** 2d8+8 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ *tamchal chakram* +13 (agile, deadly 1d6, magical, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d6+8 slashing plus 1d6 mental

Fervent Command ♦ (auditory, mental) The mulventok shouts an order to one of its allies within 30 feet. That ally immediately takes a Raise a Shield or Step action. A creature can benefit from Fervent Command only once per round.

Psychokinetic Honing (occult, transmutation) A thrown weapon gains the effects of a *returning* rune when a mulventok throws it. Thrown weapons the mulventok uses deal an additional 1d6 mental damage, whether used in melee or thrown.



MULVENTOK LEADERS

Some fleshwarppers forge small units of mulventoks to pursue a similar but important goal, thinking that if some of the creatures don't survive, the others can complete the objective. Mulventoks work together surprisingly well, creating hierarchies of command that shift as needed in the field. Although mulventoks are arguably just as effective when working with non-mulventoks, their singular focus—which even extends to what they eat and where and how they sleep—is off-putting at best.

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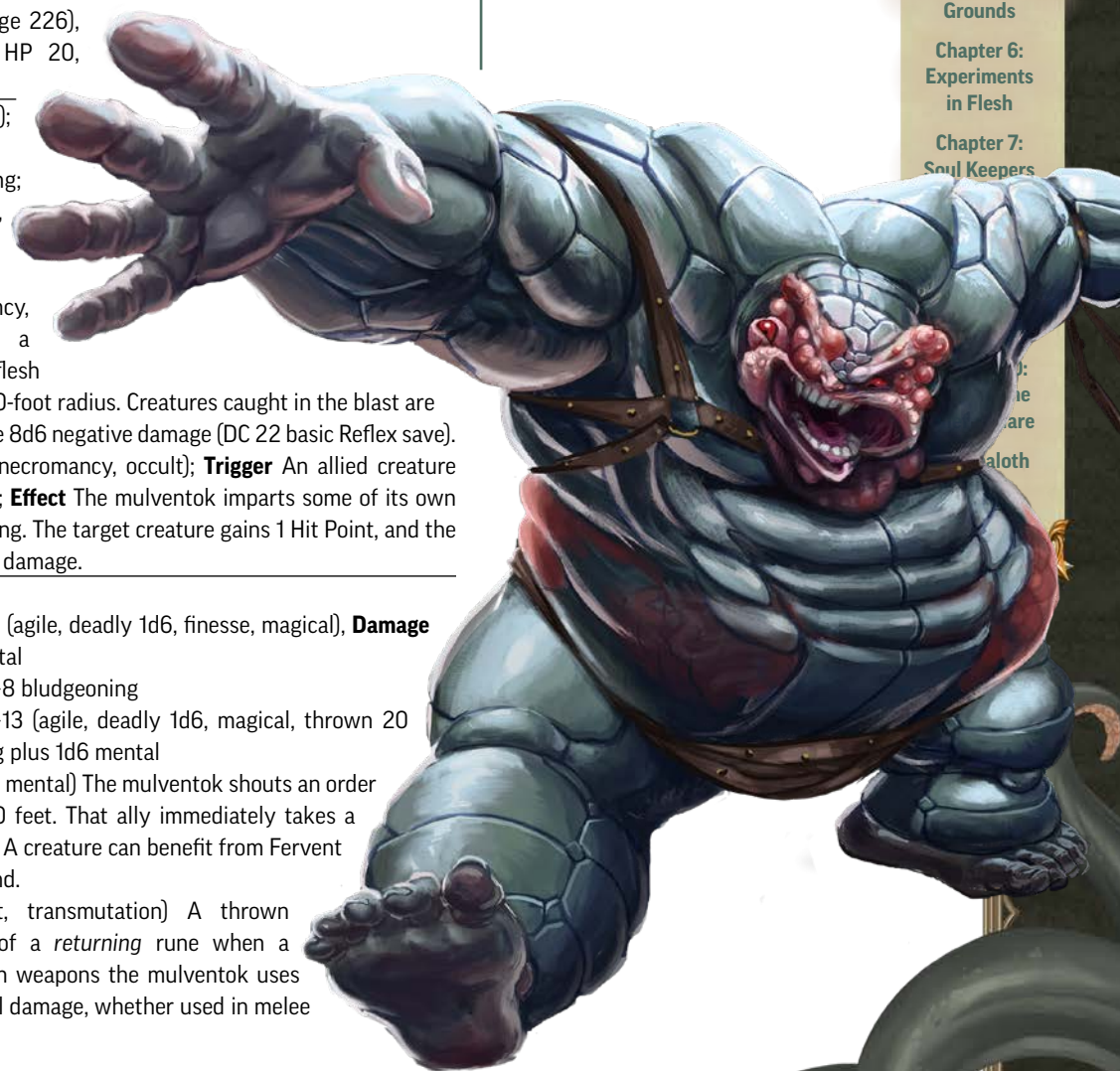
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WILD GIBTASES

In the wild, gibtases are scavenger creatures, avoiding much larger and more powerful predators while feeding off abandoned scraps. This limits their consumption-based reproduction. By spawning hundreds of offspring at once during times of plentiful food, they ensure the propagation of their species only during times of plenty.

Gibtas

This rubbery, spheroid scavenger is nearly all acid-dripping mouth, with five bulbous black eyes and two powerful, gangly legs. A gibtas often forms a bond with a single other creature—usually, a more powerful aberration—and serves this master loyally, if erratically. Creatures who keep a gibtas as a pet or guard soon learn to keep it away from any important possessions they don't want spattered with acid.

GIBTAS BOUNDER

A full-grown gibtas uses its powerful legs and rubbery body to bound great distances. Most gibtases remain solitary, unless bonded with a creature.

GIBTAS BOUNDER

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON CN SMALL ABERRATION

Perception +13; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Aklo (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +12 (+16 to High Jump or Long Jump), Intimidation +11, Survival +11

Str +5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** -3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2

AC 22; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11

HP 76; **Immunities** acid; **Resistances** bludgeoning 5

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +15 (deadly 1d12), **Damage** 1d8+7 piercing plus 1d6 persistent acid

Ranged ♦ spit +14 (range increment 30 feet, splash), **Damage** 1d6 acid plus 1d6 persistent acid and 1d6 acid splash damage

Bouncing Slam ♦ The gibtas Leaps toward a Medium or smaller creature, landing in the creature's space and Shoving the creature. If the Shove fails, the gibtas bounces out of the target's square to an adjacent square of the target's choosing.

Pinning Chomp ♦ **Requirements** The gibtas's last action was a Bouncing Slam and the gibtas successfully Shoved the target;

Effect The gibtas attempts to Trip the target of its Bouncing Slam, then makes a jaws Strike against the target. The Trip and Strike both count against the gibtas's multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after both attacks.

GIBTAS SPAWN SWARM

When a gibtas gorges itself on an incredible amount of flesh, it vomits up a pool of acid filled with tiny pink egg sacs that burst immediately. The new babies hunt as a pack, growing in size until they go their separate ways or consume each other.

GIBTAS SPAWN SWARM

CREATURE 6

UNCOMMON CN LARGE ABERRATION SWARM

Perception +14; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Acrobatics +15, Survival +12

Str -4, **Dex** +5, **Con** +4, **Int** -4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2

AC 23; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +17, **Will** +12

HP 70; **Immunities** acid, precision, swarm mind; **Weaknesses** area damage 5, splash damage 5; **Resistances** bludgeoning 9, piercing 5, slashing 5

Bounce ↻ **Trigger** A creature that the gibtas spawn swarm can see targets the swarm with an attack; **Effect** The swarm bounces to the side and gains a +2



circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack. After the attack, the swarm can Stride up to its Speed in a straight line as part of the reaction.

Speed 20 feet

Bounding Swarm The gibtas spawn swarm moves in loping bounces. The swarm ignores difficult terrain.

Swarming Bites ♦ Each enemy in the swarm's space takes 2d8 piercing damage and 1d6 acid damage (DC 22 basic Reflex save). A creature that fails its save against Swarming Bites also takes 1d4 persistent acid damage.

GIBTANIUS

When a gibtas feeds regularly but never receives sufficient food to procreate, it grows into a mighty gibtanius. They become surly, uncontrolled predators, forsaking their bonded masters to satiate their unending hunger.

GIBTANIUS

CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON CN LARGE ABERRATION

Perception +16; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Aklo (can't speak any language)

Skills Athletics +18 (+22 to High Jump or Long Jump), Intimidation +15, Survival +16

Str +6, **Dex** +3, **Con** +6, **Int** -3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +3

AC 28; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +15, **Will** +16

HP 140; **Immunities** acid; **Resistances** bludgeoning 10

Powerful Stench (aura, olfactory) 20 feet. A creature that enters the aura must succeed at a DC 26 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature is sickened 2; on a critical failure, the creature is also slowed 1 for as long as it is sickened. A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune for 1 minute.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +20 (deadly 1d12, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d10+10 piercing plus 1d4 persistent acid

Ranged ♦ spit +17 (range increment 30 feet, splash), **Damage** 2d6 acid plus 1d6 persistent acid and 1d6 acid splash

Bouncing Crush ♦♦ The gibtanius Leaps and can end this Leap occupying the same space as other creatures. It deals 5d6 bludgeoning damage to each creature in the space it Leaps to (DC 26 basic Reflex save), then Shoves each of those creatures. If it fails to Shove any creature out of its space, it bounces to the closest available space of its choosing that does not contain any creatures. Bouncing Crush counts as one attack when determining the gibtanius's multiple attack penalty.

Breath Weapon ♦♦ (acid, evocation, primal) The gibtanius vomits a stream of acid that deals 9d6 acid damage to all creatures in a 60-foot line (DC 26 basic Reflex save). It can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.



GIBTAS COMPANIONS

A gibtas can make for an unusual animal companion, with the GM's permission. Use the statistics for a bear animal companion (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 215), except the companion has the rare trait, is an aberration rather than an animal, has darkvision rather than low-light vision, and gains the gibtas bouncer's Bouncing Slam as an advanced maneuver instead of Bear Hug.

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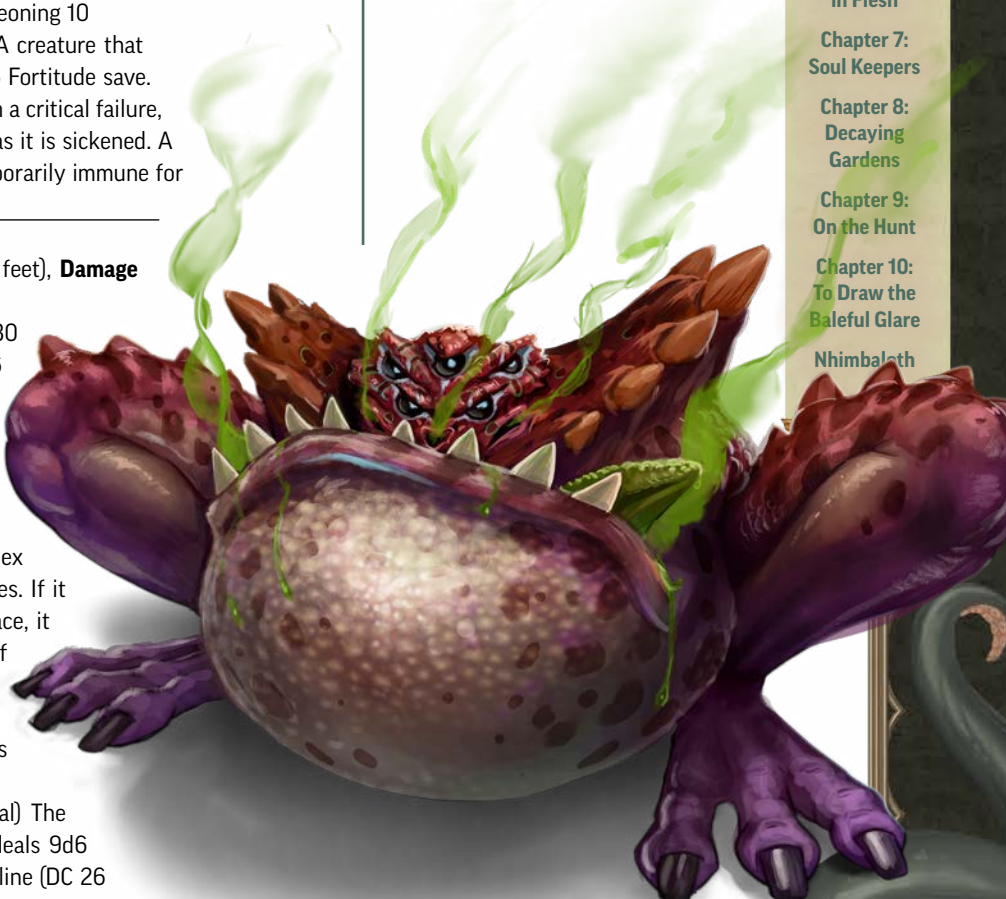
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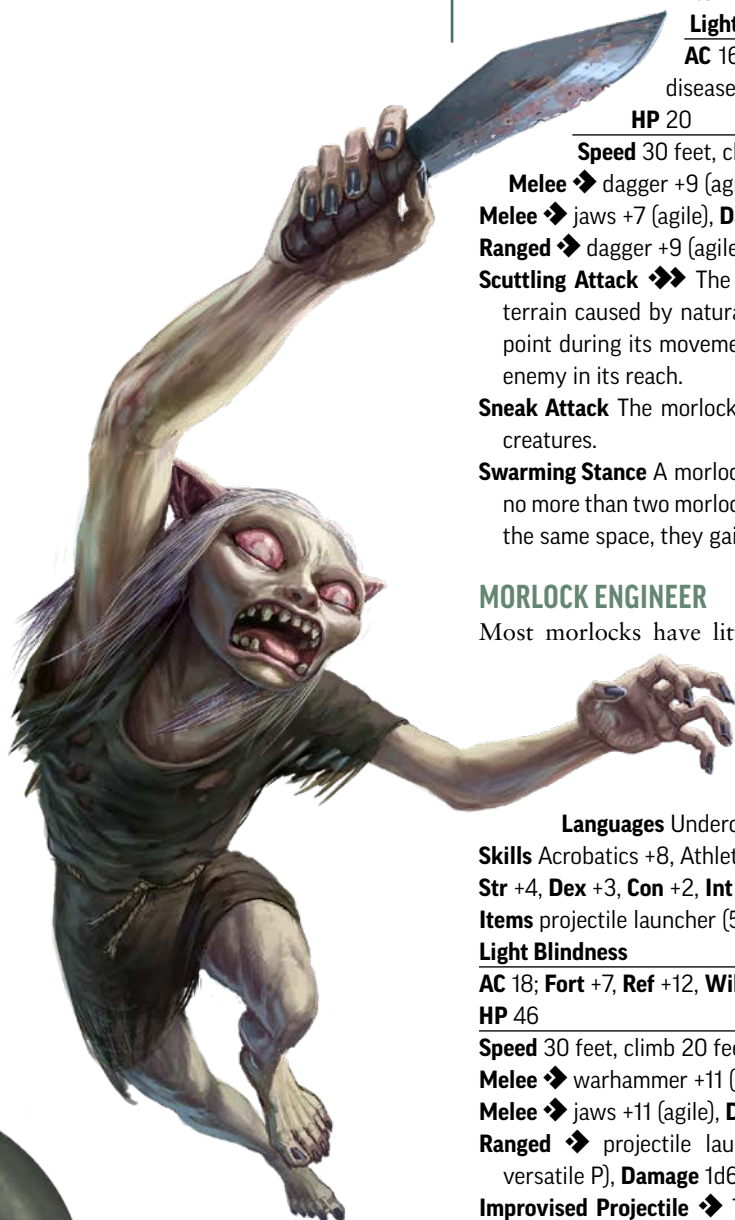
Nhimbal'eth





MORLOCK MACHINES

Morlock engineers are talented at figuring out ancient machinery or damaged constructs, but don't keep notes or record their techniques. As a result, a morlock enclave might well be defended by strange, ancient mechanical hazards or constructs that treat morlocks as allies, even though none of the morlocks can say who built the machines they use.



Morlock

Morlocks originate from humans long lost to the surface world. They have an affinity for machinery, scavenging, and strange occult behaviors.

MORLOCK SCAVENGER

The morlock scavenger is a lankier, smaller version of a typical morlock. Their stature allows them to wriggle into areas other morlocks can't access.

MORLOCK SCAVENGER

CREATURE 1

CE SMALL HUMANOID MORLOCK

Perception +6; darkvision

Languages Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +5 (+7 Climbing), Stealth +7

Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** -2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1

Items dagger

Light Blindness

AC 16; **Fort** +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +6; +2 status to all saves vs. disease and poison

HP 20

Speed 30 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ dagger +9 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+2 piercing

Melee ♦ jaws +7 (agile), **Damage** 1d4+2 piercing

Ranged ♦ dagger +9 (agile, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+2 piercing

Scuttling Attack ♦♦ The morlock scavenger Strides twice, ignoring difficult terrain caused by natural cavern features like rubble or stalagmites. At any point during its movement, the morlock can make a melee Strike against an enemy in its reach.

Sneak Attack The morlock deals an extra 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Swarming Stance A morlock can share the same space as another morlock, but no more than two morlocks can occupy the same space. When morlocks share the same space, they gain a +1 circumstance bonus to attack rolls.

MORLOCK ENGINEER

Most morlocks have little talent for crafting, but a rare few have an uncanny knack for tinkering.

MORLOCK ENGINEER

CREATURE 3

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM HUMANOID MORLOCK

Perception +8; darkvision

Languages Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +9 (+11 Climbing), Crafting +10, Stealth +10

Str +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

Items projectile launcher (5 handfuls of junk), warhammer

Light Blindness

AC 18; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10; +2 status to all saves vs. disease and poison

HP 46

Speed 30 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ warhammer +11 (shove), **Damage** 1d8+6 bludgeoning

Melee ♦ jaws +11 (agile), **Damage** 1d4+6 piercing

Ranged ♦ projectile launcher +10 (deadly d8, range increment 50 feet, versatile P), **Damage** 1d6+6 bludgeoning

Improvised Projectile ♦ The morlock engineer quickly crafts an improvised

projectile from objects it carries or that are readily accessible in adjacent squares. Where unusual materials are available, an improvised projectile might deal damage other than bludgeoning or piercing—for example, a morlock engineer by a campfire could build a projectile that deals fire damage.

Sneak Attack The morlock deals an extra 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Swarming Stance As morlock scavenger.

Uncanny Tinker ♦♦ The morlock engineer tinkers with an adjacent construct or mechanical hazard. They attempt a Crafting check against the construct's or hazard's Fortitude DC. The morlock can't get an outcome better than failure if the target's level is more than double the morlock's. This ability reflects hasty battlefield repairs; once a construct or hazard regains Hit Points from this ability, it can't do so again until it's been Repaired.

Critical Success The target regains 8d6 Hit Points and a +1 circumstance bonus to attack rolls for 1 minute. Alternately, the morlock can deal 8d6 damage (bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing, as chosen by the morlock engineer) to the construct or hazard.

Success As critical success, but the target regains 4d6 Hit Points or the morlock deals 4d6 damage.

Critical Failure The morlock injures themselves, taking 3d6 damage (typically bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing, but potentially a different type at the GM's discretion).

MORLOCK CULTIST

Morlocks who serve as priests in their conclaves usually dabble in eerie occult magic.

MORLOCK CULTIST

CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM HUMANOID MORLOCK

Perception +11; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +10, Athletics +11 (+13 Climbing), Crafting +11 (Repair only), Occultism +13, Stealth +11

Str +3, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** +5, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

Items club

Light Blindness

AC 21; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +11, **Will** +11; +2 status to all saves vs. disease and poison

HP 58

Speed 30 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ club +11, **Damage** 1d6+5 bludgeoning

Melee ♦ jaws +11 (agile), **Damage** 1d4+5 piercing

Ranged ♦ club +13 (range increment 10 feet), **Damage** 1d6+5 bludgeoning

Occult Innate Spells DC 21, attack +13; **2nd** *mirror image*, *phantom pain*, *telekinetic maneuver*; **1st** *bane*, *grim tendrils*, *ray of enfeeblement*; **Cantrips** (2nd) *daze*, *ghost sound*, *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*

Occult Attack ♦♦ The morlock cultist Strides up to half its speed, ignoring difficult terrain caused by natural cavern features like rubble or stalagmites. At any point during its movement, the morlock cultist can Cast a Spell that normally takes two actions or fewer to cast.

Sneak Attack The morlock deals an extra 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.



MORLOCK CULTS

Morlocks led by cultists don't always follow an established religion, in part because their insular background limits contact with the rest of the world. In many cases, a morlock cult worships some figure from the group's past, be it a revered (or more often, feared) ancestor, or even the strange machines or statues left behind from a mysterious civilization that once ruled the place where the morlocks now live.



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Nhimbaloth

Adventure Toolbox



VALUABLE SPORES

Alchemists, naturalists, and other collectors prize samples from unusual underground fungi. Deadly puffballs are even more valuable. The carefully harvested scraps of an exploded deadly puffball can fetch as much as 150 gp to the right buyer.

Puffball Fungus

Many benign puffball fungi cling to the detritus of forest floors in Darklands caverns. These fungi's giant versions are more mobile and dangerous.

DRAGON'S BLOOD PUFFBALL

This bulbous, deep red fungus looks like an enormous, decaying rose.

DRAGON'S BLOOD PUFFBALL

CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON N LARGE FUNGUS MINDLESS

Perception +12; motion sense 60 feet, no vision

Skills Stealth +14

Str +6, **Dex** +1, **Con** +4, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2

Motion Sense The puffball senses motion through vibration and air movement.

AC 24; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +15, **Will** +12

HP 170; **Immunities** bleed, fatigued, mental, poison, sleep, unconscious;

Weaknesses piercing 10

Spore Explosion When the dragon's blood puffball dies, it explodes, dealing 7d8 poison damage to each creature in a 20-foot emanation (DC 26 basic Fortitude save).

Speed 10 feet

Melee ♦ bloom +18, **Damage** 2d10+8 bludgeoning plus 1d6 poison

Ranged ♦ spore jet +18 (range increment 30 feet), **Damage** 3d8 poison

REAPER SKULL PUFFBALL

When this fungus detects prey, its tendrils writhe and exude a paralytic toxin.

REAPER SKULL PUFFBALL

CREATURE 9

UNCOMMON N LARGE FUNGUS MINDLESS

Perception +15; motion sense 60 feet, no vision

Skills Acrobatics +19, Stealth +17

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +3, **Int** -5, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -2

Motion Sense As dragon's blood puffball.

AC 25; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +21, **Will** +15

HP 195; **Immunities** bleed, fatigued, mental, poison, sleep, unconscious;

Weaknesses fire 10, piercing 10

Spore Explosion As dragon's blood puffball, but DC 28 and 8d8 poison damage. Creatures that fail the save are exposed to skull rot.

Speed 10 feet, fly 20 feet

Melee ♦ tendril +21 (finesse, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d12+8 plus paralysis

Spore Cloud ♦♦ (poison) The puffball releases a 30-foot cone of spores that deals 4d8 poison damage (DC 28 basic Fortitude save) to creatures in the cone. Creatures that fail this save are also exposed to skull rot.

Paralysis (incapacitation, poison) A creature hit by the puffball's tendril must succeed a DC 28 Fortitude save or become paralyzed. The paralyzed creature can attempt a new save at the end of each of its turns.

Skull Rot (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 28 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration**

6 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d8 poison damage plus enfeebled 2 (1 round);

Stage 2 2d8 poison damage plus enfeebled 2 and drained 1 (1 round); **Stage 3** 3d8 poison damage plus enfeebled 2 and drained 2 (1d4 rounds)

Scalathrax

These slippery, scaly horrors dwell in remote cave networks in the Darklands, preferring to nest in narrow fissures. When on the hunt, they flick barbs from their long legs, or spray down their foes with a clear, toxic oil. The same oil coats the scalathrax's body, all of which is quite flammable—whether it's coating a victim or the scalathrax itself.

While a scalathrax appears feral, it's more intelligent than it seems and is capable of speaking in a wet, slithery voice. The vast majority of scalathraxes are foul-tempered and quick to anger, and most of them enjoy killing. It's possible to forge an alliance with a scalathrax, but doing so requires either constant bribes of new creatures to kill or a particularly intimidating personality—scalathraxes often respect bullies, seeing in them a mirror of their own cruel values.

SCALATHRAX

CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON NE MEDIUM ABERRATION

Perception +11, darkvision

Languages Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +11, Stealth +13

Str +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** -2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

AC 21; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +13, **Will** +9

HP 60; **Weaknesses** fire 5; **Resistances** poison 5

Oily Scales A scalathrax constantly sweats a glistening oil that makes it exceptionally slick. It treats the results of Acrobatics checks to Squeeze or of any skill check to Escape as one degree of success greater than the rolled result. A scalathrax loses this benefit for 1 minute after it takes any amount of fire damage.

Speed 25 feet, climb 25 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +13 (finesse), **Damage** 2d8+5 piercing plus scalathrax venom

Ranged ♦ leg quill +13 (range increment 20 feet), **Damage** 2d4+5 piercing

Scalathrax Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 21;

Maximum Duration 6 rounds; **Stage 1** clumsy 1

(1 round); **Stage 2** clumsy 1 and slowed 1 (1

round); **Stage 3** clumsy 1 and slowed 2

(1 round)

Spray Toxic Oil ♦♦ (conjunction, primal) The scalathrax disgorges a gout of toxic oil from its mouth in a 15-foot cone. Creatures in the area must attempt a DC 21 Reflex save. The scalathrax can't Spray Toxic Oil again for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 1d8 poison damage.

Failure The creature takes 2d8 poison damage. For 1 minute, the creature gains weakness to fire 5, and whenever the creature critically fails with an attack roll with a wielded weapon, it drops the weapon.

Critical Failure As failure, but 4d8 poison damage.



SCALATHRAX OIL

Scalathrax oil is a valuable alchemical component, but it's difficult to harvest and preserve. By spending 10 minutes and succeeding at a DC 21 Crafting check, a character can extract 1 Bulk of scalathrax oil worth 20 gp from a recently killed scalathrax. If scalathrax oil is used to Craft an alchemical item that deals fire damage or would benefit from the slippery quality of the oil, the crafter gains a +1 item bonus to their Crafting check. Scalathrax oil can be used as lantern oil, though it's often considered too valuable for such a mundane use.

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SEUGATHI OBSESSIONS

Because of their singlemindedness, seugathis often come across as eerily obsessive. These obsessions can include corralling 100 deros into a cave, collecting skulls of a certain shape, or even more unusual tasks that either have no apparent result or are harmful to the seugathi itself. A seugathi that completes their mission nearly always finds another to replace it buried in its psyche, creating a centuries-long chain of inscrutable—and sometimes even contradictory—commands.

Seugathi

The wicked, alien neothelids (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 181) impregnate themselves through ritualistic magic to produce wormlike servitor creatures called seugathis. These creatures spawn with a strong psychic drive to complete some task on behalf of the neothelids' far-reaching plans. These directives are diverse, strange, and usually cruel toward humanoid life.

SEUGATHI SERVANT

The most common seugathis spawned by neothelids are seugathi servants. Their masters equip them with tools useful in their tasks (often a wand and a weapon), and they rarely value other material things beyond their usefulness in completing their imprinted mission.

SEUGATHI SERVANT

CREATURE 6

UNCOMMON CE LARGE ABERRATION SEUGATHI

Perception +14; darkvision, tremorsense 30 feet

Languages Aklo, Undercommon; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +15, Crafting +12, Intimidation +15, Occultism +12, Stealth +13, Survival +10


Str +2, **Dex** +5, **Con** +2, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +5

Items longsword

AC 23; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +17, **Will** +12; +1 status to all saves vs. magic


HP 75; **Immunities** mental, poison; **Resistances** bludgeoning 5

Mindfog Aura (enchantment, mental) 20 feet. A creature that starts its turn in the aura must succeed at a DC 21 Will save or become confused for 1 round; on a success, that creature is temporarily immune for 1 minute. A seugathi can suppress or activate this aura as a single action with the concentrate trait.

Command Confusion  **Trigger** A creature fails its save against the seugathi's mindfog aura; **Effect** The seugathi determines who the confused creature attacks for that round, instead of the target being randomly determined by the GM. If the chosen target is the confused creature's ally, the creature can immediately attempt a DC 21 Will save; on a success, its target is determined randomly as normal for confusion, and on a critical success the target is no longer confused.

Speed 25 feet

Melee  bite +17 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d6+5 piercing plus seugathi venom

Melee  longsword +14 (reach 10 feet, versatile P), **Damage** 1d8+5 piercing

Occult Innate Spells DC 24, attack +16; **3rd** hypercognition, levitate, mind



reading (×3); **Cantrips (3rd)** daze, detect magic, mage hand, telekinetic projectile

Envenom Weapon ♦ (manipulate) The seugathi applies their seugathi venom to one weapon they wield.

Magic Item Mastery A seugathi can Cast a Spell from a magic item even if the spell isn't on their spell list. All such spells are occult spells and use the seugathi's innate spell DC and attack modifier.

Seugathi Venom (poison); **Saving Throw** DC 21 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d6 poison damage and stupefied 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 2d6 poison damage and deafened and stupefied 2 (1 round)

SEUGATHI REALITY WARPERS

Seugathi reality warpers create and destroy inhospitable environments on a small scale by manipulating the forces of raw chaos. A neothelid might spawn such a seugathi to create habitats for unique slaves or guests, or to destroy the ecosystem of a troublesome species. Darklands scholars refer to reality warpers as veterans in the seugathi ranks, but they're more accurately compared to aggressive landscape architects.

SEUGATHI REALITY WARPERS

CREATURE 9

UNCOMMON CE LARGE ABERRATION SEUGATHI

Perception +17; darkvision, tremorsense 30 feet

Languages Aklo, Undercommon; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +19, Arcana +19, Crafting +19, Deception +20, Intimidation +18, Nature +17, Occultism +19, Stealth +19

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +3, **Int** +4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +5

Items +1 battle axe

AC 27; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +21, **Will** +15; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 120; **Immunities** mental, poison; **Resistances** bludgeoning 10

Mindfog Aura (enchantment, mental) 20 feet. As seugathi servant, but DC 25.

Command Confusion ↻ As seugathi servant, but DC 25.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ bite +19 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d6+8 piercing plus 1d10 chaotic plus seugathi venom

Melee ♦ battle axe +18 (magical, sweep, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d8+8 bludgeoning plus 1d10 chaotic

Occult Innate Spells DC 28, attack +20; **5th** black tentacles, crushing despair, hallucination, synesthesia; **4th** confusion (×3), phantasmal killer, suggestion; **3rd** hypercognition (×3), levitate (×3), mind reading (×3); **Cantrips (5th)** daze, detect magic, mage hand, telekinetic projectile

Envenom Weapon ♦ (manipulate) As seugathi servant.

Magic Item Mastery As seugathi servant.

Seugathi Venom (poison) As seugathi servant, but DC 25.

Warp Reality ♦♦♦ (concentrate, occult, transmutation) The seugathi bends reality in their choice of a 10-foot emanation or a 60-foot line, altering the terrain of the area. The terrain becomes a different type of terrain (such as aquatic, arctic, or desert) and becomes normal or difficult terrain, as the seugathi chooses. Structures, general geographic features, and creatures in the area aren't transformed, but creatures in the area take 5d6 chaotic damage (DC 28 basic Fortitude save) as reality tries to bend them along with the terrain. Though changes to the area are permanent, the natural environment might eventually revert the land back to its original state (aquatic areas drain, arctic areas thaw, and so on).



UNUSUAL EQUIPMENT

Most seugathi carry a magic wand—either one gifted by their neothelid master to serve a particular end or simply one they've discovered to be particularly useful. A *wand of 2nd-level magic missile* is common, but specific equipment is as varied as the seugathi's inexplicable missions. A seugathi might instead carry alchemical equipment, a strange tool, or another magic item. One is just as likely to have a *traveler's anytool* as a jar full of eerie, unstable explosives.

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SHANRIGOL TREASURE

Because these undead aberrations seek only to absorb more flesh, they don't care about material things. When near a shanrigol's lair, it's not uncommon to see bloody armor, unsheathed weapons, and intact potion bottles scattered around the site of a battle. A shanrigol's fruitful ambush location is likely to have piles of overlooked valuable treasure from past victims.

Shanrigol

Fleshwarper, regardless of their origin or training, create a shocking amount of waste. When the discarded remnants of aberrant flesh are heaped together with an accidental mixture of alchemical compounds or odious energy, the mass can quicken and regain life. Without the guidance of a fleshwarper, these aberrant body parts form into a shanrigol, a mess of bone, muscle, and sinew.

SHANRIGOL HEAP

The most basic and common type of shanrigol is called, based on its general shape, a shanrigol heap. These amalgamations of warped flesh and shattered bone establish hunting grounds by accident rather than design, remaining where prey has been plentiful in the past so they can grow larger and larger as they add to their jumbled forms. Only rare fleshwarper create these abominations willingly, as they ignore all commands and containment to seek out prey.

SHANRIGOL HEAP

CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON N MEDIUM ABERRATION UNDEAD

Perception +9; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Athletics +12, Stealth +10

Str +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** +1, **Cha** -5

AC 20, all-around vision; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9

HP 55, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Resistances** slashing 5, piercing 5; **Weaknesses** positive 5

Speed 20 feet, climb 20 feet, swim 20 feet

Melee ♦ fleshy slap +14 (forceful), **Damage** 2d6+8 bludgeoning plus Grab

Ranged ♦ bone shard +11 (agile, range increment 20 feet, versatile P), **Damage** 1d8+8 bludgeoning

Sapping Squeeze ♦ **Requirements** The shanrigol has a creature grabbed; **Effect** The shanrigol squeezes the life essence from its target, dealing 1d6+5 bludgeoning and 1d4 persistent bleed damage (DC 18 basic Fortitude save). The shanrigol regains temporary Hit Points equal to half the amount of bludgeoning damage a single target takes; these temporary Hit Points last for 1 minute.

Shred Flesh A shanrigol rips flesh away from targets in great chunks. Creatures critically hit by the shanrigol's fleshy slap Strike take an additional 1d6 persistent bleed damage and are enfeebled 1 for as long as they are bleeding.

Undulating Step ♦♦ The shanrigol separates its flesh from its bones to fit through small spaces. It Strides, ignoring difficult terrain and fitting through tight spaces as though it were a Tiny creature. It can't use any actions other than Undulating Step until it occupies an area large enough for its normal form.



SHANRIGOL BEHEMOTH

Shanrigols that grow with the additions of many living victims can become truly enormous in size and pose a greater danger in their expanding hunting territories. Subterranean communities have collapsed entire tunnels to prevent the creatures from reaching their settlements.

Many shanrigol behemoths absorb enough brain matter to form crude intelligences and take a serpentine or humanoid shape. They're more varied in their abilities than shanrigol heaps, as they often gain abilities from their constituent creatures. The shanrigol behemoth presented below contains flesh from driders and urdefhans, giving it a web attack and necrotic decay ability. Not all shanrigol behemoths have these two abilities, but should have other abilities to replace them.

SHANRIGOL BEHEMOTH

CREATURE 9

UNCOMMON N GARGANTUAN ABERRATION UNDEAD

Perception +18; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Athletics +20, Stealth +16

Str +7, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** -5

AC 27, all-around vision; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +18, **Will** +16

HP 140, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Resistances** slashing 10, piercing 10; **Weaknesses** positive 10

Necrotic Decay (divine, necromancy, negative) When the shanrigol behemoth dies, its flesh rots away and sublimates into a foul-smelling gas that fills a 5-foot emanation around the body. This gas deals 9d6 negative damage to creatures in this area as their flesh curdles and rots as well (DC 27 basic Fortitude save).

Speed 30 feet, climb 20 feet, swim 20 feet

Melee ♦ fleshy slap +21 (forceful, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d10+11 bludgeoning plus Grab

Ranged ♦ bone shard +18 (agile, range increment 30 feet, versatile P), **Damage** 1d12+11 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ web +18 (range increment 30 feet), **Effect** web trap

Sapping Squeeze ♦ As shanrigol heap, but 1d10+11 bludgeoning and 1d6 persistent bleed, DC 25.

Shred Flesh A shanrigol behemoth's attacks brutally rend its foes. Creatures critically hit by the shanrigol's fleshy slap Strike take an additional 2d6 persistent bleed damage and are enfeebled 1 for as long as they are bleeding.

Undulating Step ♦♦ As shanrigol heap.

Web Trap A creature hit by the shanrigol behemoth's web attack is immobilized and stuck to the nearest surface until it can Escape (DC 25).



SHANRIGOL COMPONENTS

As shanrigols incorporate pieces of creatures near their hunting ground, explorers who examine a shanrigol can gain many valuable clues about nearby creatures. In the case of a shanrigol behemoth, these explorers might find the beast using strange abilities from creatures they haven't yet faced!

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SHAUTH WEAPONS

Shauth blades and shauth lashes are made from the teeth of fallen urdefhans. Collecting these teeth is difficult, as a slain urdefhan dissolves into a foul-smelling gas almost immediately. However, their bones are somewhat more durable.

Urdefhan

Translucent-skinned scourges of the Darklands, urdefhans (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 272) are remorseless killers and foot soldiers of the world's end.

URDEFHAN DEATH SCOUT

Death scouts train as spies and assassins for their cult. Other urdefhans scorn their stealthy methods, but none can argue with their results.

URDEFHAN DEATH SCOUT

CREATURE 6

NE MEDIUM HUMANOID URDEFHAN

Perception +15; greater darkvision

Languages Aklo, Daemonic, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +14, Athletics +12, Intimidation +11, Stealth +14, Thievery +14

Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1

Items leather armor, moderate necrotic bomb (3; page 213), +1 shauth blade (page 226)

AC 24; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +16, **Will** +11

HP 92, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fear; **Weakness** positive 5

Necrotic Decay (divine, necromancy, negative) As urdefhan warrior (*Bestiary* 2 272), but DC 23 and 6d6 negative damage.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *shauth blade* +17 (agile, deadly d6, finesse), **Damage** 1d6+4 slashing plus 1d6 persistent bleed and Wicked Bite

Melee ♦ *jaws* +16, **Damage** 2d6+4 piercing plus Wicked Bite

Ranged ♦ *necrotic bomb* +16 (range increment 20 feet, splash), **Damage** 2d6 negative plus 2 negative splash damage (and sickened 2 on a critical hit)

Divine Innate Spells DC 21, attack +13; **4th** *invisibility* (self only); **2nd** *death knell*; **1st** *feather fall* (at will, self only), *ray of enfeeblement*

Shauth Bite The death scout deals an additional 1d6 persistent bleed damage with shauth blades and can use their Wicked Bite through magical shauth weapon Strikes.

Sneak Attack The death scout deals an extra 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Wicked Bite ♦ As urdefhan warrior (*Bestiary* 2 272) but DC 24.

URDEFHAN LASHER

Trained from a young age with the strange and powerful shauth lashes, urdefhan lashers would rather die than retreat from combat.

URDEFHAN LASHER

CREATURE 7

NE MEDIUM HUMANOID URDEFHAN

Perception +16; greater darkvision

Languages Aklo, Daemonic, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +17, Intimidation +13, Religion +14, Survival +14

Str +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

Items chain shirt, +1 striking shauth lash (page 226)

AC 24; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +14, **Will** +16

HP 120, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fear; **Weakness** positive 5

Necrotic Decay (divine, necromancy, negative) As urdefhan warrior (*Bestiary* 2 272), but DC 24 and 7d6 negative damage.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *shauth lash* +18 (deadly d8, trip), **Damage** 2d8+7 slashing plus Grab and Wicked Bite

Melee ♦ jaws +17, **Damage** 2d6+7 plus Wicked Bite

Divine Innate Spells DC 22, attack +14; **3rd** *paralyze*; **2nd** *death knell*; **1st** *feather fall* (at will, self only), *ray of enfeeblement*

Constrict ♦ 1d8+7 slashing, DC 25

Shauth Seize The lasher gains the Grab ability with a shauth lash and can use their Wicked Bite through magical shauth weapon Strikes.

Wicked Bite ♦ As urdefhan warrior (*Bestiary* 2 272), but DC 25 and the urdefhan regains 10 Hit Points when they Drink Blood if the target fails its saving throw (20 Hit Points on a critical failure).

URDEFHAN BLOOD MAGE

Hardened masters of occult power, urdefhan blood mages trade their blood for magical might. A heavily scarred blood mage is held in esteem by their fellow urdefhans, as it shows they have survived many bargains with eerie occult patrons.

URDEFHAN BLOOD MAGE CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON NE MEDIUM HUMANOID URDEFHAN

Perception +15; greater darkvision

Languages Aklo, Daemonic, Undercommon

Skills Arcana +16, Athletics +16, Intimidation +16, Occultism +18, Religion +16

Str +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +6, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

Items +1 striking *kukri*

AC 26; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +14, **Will** +17

HP 140, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fear; **Weakness** positive 10

Necrotic Decay (divine, necromancy, negative) As urdefhan warrior (*Bestiary* 2 272), but DC 24 and 8d6 negative damage.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *kukri* +16 (agile, trip), **Damage** 2d6+8 piercing

Melee ♦ jaws +15, **Damage** 2d6+8 plus Wicked Bite

Divine Innate Spells DC 26, attack +18; **3rd** *paralyze*; **2nd** *death knell*; **1st** *feather fall* (at will, self only), *ray of enfeeblement*

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 26, attack +18; **4th** (4 slots) *call the blood* (page 224), *confusion*, *dimension door*, *phantasmal killer*; **3rd** (4 slots) *haste*, *levitate*, *slow*, *vampiric touch*; **2nd** (4 slots) *dispel magic*, *ghoulish craving*, *invisibility*, *touch of idiocy*; **1st** (4 slots) *bane*, *fear*, *grim tendrils*, *phantom pain*; **Cantrips** (8th) *chill touch*, *daze*, *message*, *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*

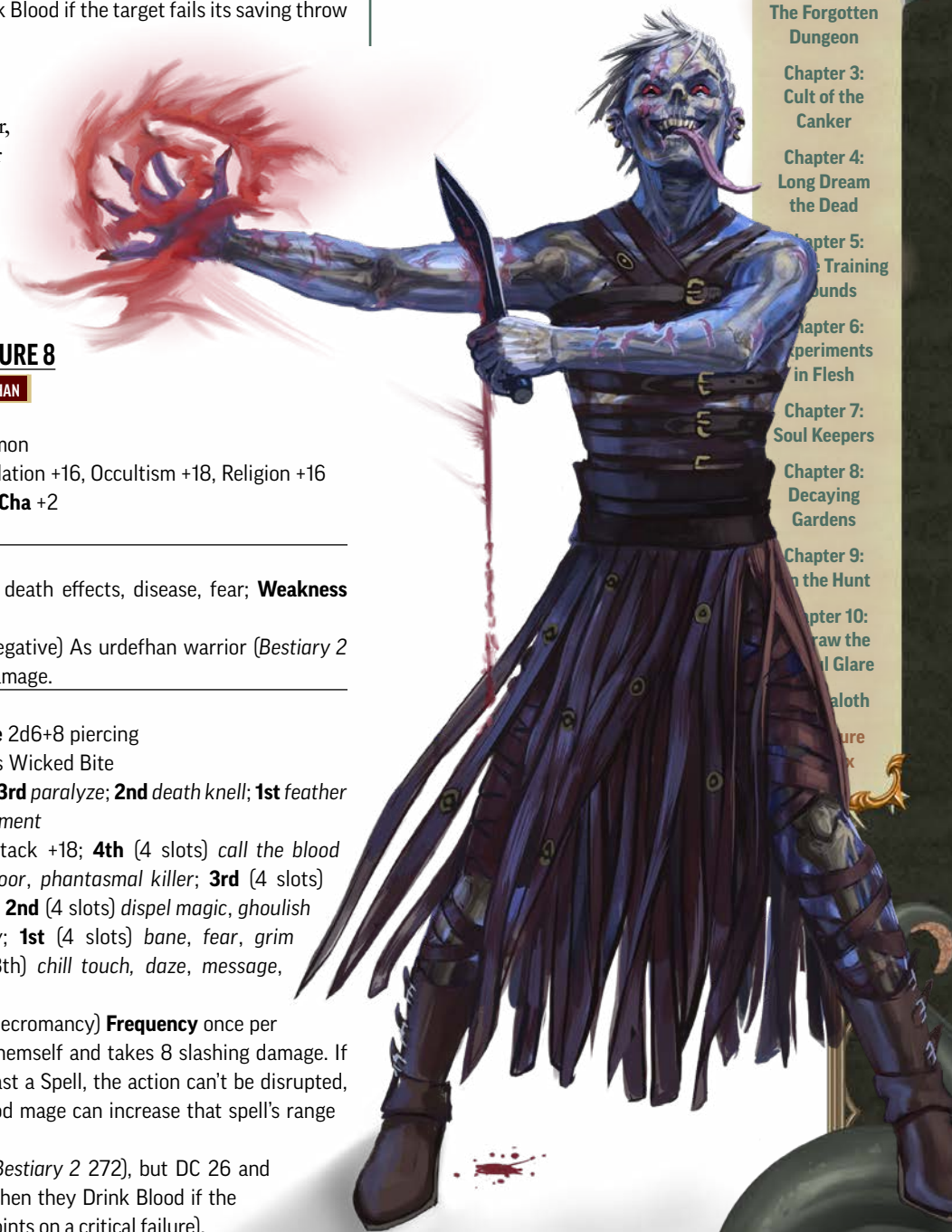
Blood Offering ♦ (occult, metamagic, necromancy) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The blood mage cuts themselves and takes 8 slashing damage. If the blood mage's next action is to Cast a Spell, the action can't be disrupted, and if the spell has a range, the blood mage can increase that spell's range by 30 feet.

Wicked Bite ♦ As urdefhan warrior (*Bestiary* 2 272), but DC 26 and the urdefhan regains 10 Hit Points when they Drink Blood if the target fails its saving throw (20 Hit Points on a critical failure).



BLOOD MAGIC

Urdefhans typically cast divine spells, as their cultural connection to the Four Horsemen is strong. Those who embrace blood magic turn away from their cult's zealous faith for strange occult powers.



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EMPTY CARESSES

Just as the cult of Nhimbalothe regards will-o'-wisps as their goddess's eyes, their teachings hold that flickerwisps are the gentle caress of her touch. To them, the confusion imposed by a flickerwisp is akin to opening the mind to the goddess's presence, and many cultists of the faith keep flickerwisps around to use in much the same way other faiths use incense or intoxicants to achieve deeper religious ecstasies.

Wisp

The eerie aberrations called will-o'-wisps (*Bestiary* 333) come in many types.

Flickerwisp

The dancing, twisting flickerwisp is a less powerful but no less malevolent type of will-o'-wisp. Like their more dangerous kin, flickerwisps prefer to haunt lonely swamps or stretches of lonely rivers or creeks, particularly near the shorelines where they can pass themselves off as a small gathering of fireflies. A flickerwisp's body is a 3-foot-long length of hair-like fibers that flash and pulse with ribbons and points of eerie yellow light.

While a flickerwisp can taste fear, and finds the flavor delectable, it does not feed on this emotion. Instead, flickerwisps subsist on confusion and doubt. The sense of unease a traveler exudes when they become lost in the woods is flickerwisps' favorite repast. They can sip from this sense of disorientation without betraying their presence or harming their prey. Eventually, the flickerwisps grow too hungry and are compelled to flit closer, confuse their prey, and glut on the raw emotions. The most skilled of these tormentors can keep a chosen meal alive for days, sipping from confusion in small doses.

FLICKERWISP

CREATURE 2

UNCOMMON CE SMALL ABERRATION AIR

Perception +9; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common

Skills Acrobatics +8, Deception +7, Intimidation +5, Stealth +8

Str -5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1

AC 20; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

HP 18; **Immunities** magic

Glow (aura, light) 5 feet. A flickerwisp is itself naturally invisible, but glows with pale yellow light, casting bright light in the aura and making it visible.

Innocuous A flickerwisp's appearance registers strangely in the minds of creatures who are confused. A creature with the confused condition never targets a flickerwisp with attacks unless the creature has been damaged by the flickerwisp's shock ability within the last 24 hours.

Magic Immunity A flickerwisp is immune to all spells except *faerie fire*, *gust of wind*, *magic missile*, and *maze*.

Speed fly 25 feet

Melee ♦ shock +11 (magical), **Damage** 1d8+2 electricity

Consume Confusion ♦ (concentrate) **Frequency** once per round;

Requirement A creature within 15 feet of the flickerwisp is confused;

Effect The flickerwisp feeds on the creature's confusion, even as its flashing body and disjointed gyrations cause existing confusion effects to persist. It regains 1d4 Hit Points, and if the creature's confused condition has a limited duration, it lasts 1 additional round.

Flicker ♦♦ (emotion, enchantment, mental, visual) The flickerwisp churns and flits in the air around an adjacent creature's head, and its length flashes and sparkles in a bewildering array of distracting pulsations. The creature must succeed at a DC 18 Will save or become confused for 1 round (2 rounds on a critical failure). On a critical success, the creature is temporarily immune to Flicker for 24 hours.

Voidglutton

A voidglutton is a powerful type of will-o'-wisp that haunts a site where misery dwells—such as a graveyard, prison camp, or recent battlefield.

VOIDGLUTTON

CREATURE 8

RARE CE MEDIUM ABERRATION AIR

Perception +18, darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common

Skills Acrobatics +18, Deception +15, Intimidation +15, Occultism +18, Stealth +18

Str +0, **Dex** +6, **Con** +3, **Int** +6, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3

AC 30; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +18, **Will** +16

HP 90; **Immunities** magic

Glow (aura, light) 30 feet. The voidglutton's fingers and eyes glow, casting bright light in the area and making it visible if it was invisible.

Magic Immunity A voidglutton is immune to all spells except *faerie fire*, *glitterdust*, *magic missile*, *maze*, and spells with the light trait.

Speed fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ claw +20 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d6+2 piercing plus 4d6 force and fearful strike

Ranged ♦ ectoplasmic web +20 (range increment 10 feet),
Effect ectoplasmic web trap

Occult Innate Spells DC 26; **4th** *darkness* (at will)

Consume Light ♦ (darkness, evocation, occult)

Trigger The voidglutton casts *darkness*; **Effect**

The voidglutton extinguishes its Glow as part of Casting the Spell. It becomes invisible as long as it remains in the area of *darkness*. If the voidglutton uses a hostile action, its invisibility ends as soon as the hostile action is completed.

Ectoplasmic Web Trap (conjunction, occult) A creature hit by the voidglutton's ectoplasmic web trap is immobilized and stuck to the nearest surface until it succeeds at a DC 26 check to Escape. Ectoplasmic Web Trap can immobilize incorporeal creatures.

Fearful Strike (emotion, fear, mental, occult) When the voidglutton damages a creature with its claw Strike, the creature must succeed at a DC 26 Will save or become frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure).

Feed on Fear ♦ (concentrate) **Frequency** once per round; **Requirement** An enemy is affected by a fear effect or has the frightened or dying condition, and is within 25 feet of the voidglutton; **Effect** The voidglutton feeds on the creature's terror. It regains 3d4 Hit Points and its Glow reignites if it had been extinguished. It cannot use Consume Light again for 1d4 rounds, as it is too glutted on fear to suppress its Glow.



AGENTS OF EMPTY DEATH

As with will-o'-wisps and flickerwisps, voidgluttons are associated with the Outer Goddess Nhimbaloth. Her cultists see voidgluttons as roving incarnations of her hunger and have been known to offer themselves up to voidgluttons as prey in order to achieve religious insights. Most who attempt this get a closer look at death than they intended.

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DREAD WISP ORIGINS

The origins of will-o'-wisps are hotly debated, but dread wisps have a commonly understood origin. Surface wisps give momentary hope to those lost and scared in a dark and damp wilderness, but nearly all of the Darklands is dark and damp. Hope has little place here, and defiant people and menacing monsters populate the Darklands. Subterranean will-o'-wisps adapted to overcome these new, resilient food sources. Dread wisps descended from those tenacious survivors.

Dread Wisp

Will-o'-wisps native to the Darklands are more ominous and malevolent than those that bob about in the lonely marshes and surfaces of the upper world. These dread wisps instill terror with eerie shifts of light and consume the fear they create, drawing life energy from their victims in the process. While dread wisps can survive anywhere within the Darklands, they prefer moist areas like the banks of underground rivers.

Dread wisps don't glow as brightly as surface will-o'-wisps because even the dimmest light attracts notice underground. Long-lived and hateful creatures, they remember vivid details about their lives, travels, and most delicious prey. Although dread wisps could share extensive lore and unique experiences, they don't, as they find amusement in others' ignorance.

DREAD WISP

CREATURE 9

UNCOMMON CE SMALL ABERRATION

Perception +20; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +23, Deception +16, Intimidation +16, Stealth +23

Str -5, **Dex** +6, **Con** +0, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

AC 31; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +21, **Will** +18

HP 90, negative healing; **Immunities** magic; **Weaknesses** positive 10

Dread Flickering (aura, light) 20 feet. A dread wisp, though naturally invisible, glows with a grayish illumination, casting dim light in the aura and making them visible. Living creatures that end their turn in the aura must succeed at a DC 25 Will saving throw or become frightened 1 (or frightened 2 on a critical failure). Those that critically succeed are temporarily immune for 10 minutes.

Magic Immunity A dread wisp is immune to all spells except *faerie fire*, *magic missile*, *maze*, *searing light*, and spells with the positive trait.

Speed fly 50 feet

Melee ♦ draining touch +17 (magical, negative), **Damage** 3d8+8 negative plus wearying touch

Feed on Despair ♦ (concentrate, necromancy, negative, occult); **Frequency** once per round; **Requirement** An enemy within 15 feet of the dread wisp is under a fear effect, drained, or dying; **Effect** The dread wisp feeds on the creature's despair. The dread wisp regains 2d8 Hit Points and deals 3d8 negative damage to the creature (DC 25 basic Fortitude save), and if the dread wisp has Gone Dark, their Dread Flickering reignites.

Go Dark ♦ (concentrate) The dread wisp extinguishes their Dread Flickering, becoming invisible. They can end this effect with another use of this action. If the dread wisp uses their draining touch Strike while invisible, the arc of pale energy lets any observer determine their location, making them hidden to all observers only until the dread wisp moves.

Shadow Flitter ♦ (conjuration, occult, teleportation) The dread wisp teleports to a square they can see within 30 feet that isn't in an area of bright light. The dread wisp can't use Shadow Flitter again for 1d4 rounds.

Wearying Touch If the dread wisp critically hits with their draining touch Strike, the target is drained 1.



Glossary and Index

The Abomination Vaults Adventure Path is filled with many characters, places, and groups to keep straight. This glossary provides a quick reference of key names.

Abomination Vaults The sprawling dungeon Belcorra built around and beneath *Gauntlight*.

Absalom The largest city in the Inner Sea region, founded by Aroden and located in the Isle of Kortos.

Aesephna Menhemes Female human cleric of Erastil in the Roseguard, ancestor of Oseph and Dorianna Menhemes.

Belcorra Haruvex (CE female ghost sorcerer 12) Spiteful sorcerer whose plans to destroy Absalom were delayed when the Roseguard slew her 500 years ago, architect of *Gauntlight* and the Abomination Vaults (area J20).

Boss Skrawng (LE male mitflit gang boss 1) Leader of the Mudlicker mitflit gremlins (area A10).

Brela Venkervale (LG female dwarf innkeeper 3) Owner of the Rowdy Rockfish inn, mother of Lasda Venkervale.

Carman Rajani (LE male human scoundrel 6) Bitter blacksmith and criminal, descendant of Vol Rajani.

Chafkhem (LE male mummy ritualist 8) Former overseer of Belcorra's arena (area E17).

Darklands The immense area of caverns, vaults, and passages beneath the surface of Golarion.

Dorianna Menhemes (LG female human scion 2) Teenaged potential psychic, dream-victim of Ysondkhelir, daughter of Mayor Oseph Menhemes.

Dulac (N female caligni cult leader 9) Leader of caligni zealots on the Farm level, rival of Galudu (area H8).

Empty Vault An ancient subterranean shrine to Nhimbalo.

Falxi Orshendiel (CN male drow rogue 2) Amateur scout captured by seugathis on the Laboratories level, cousin to Quara Orshendiel (area F12).

Fogfen A swampy area north of the town of Otari.

Fulcrum Lenses A series of four magical lighthouse lenses that, when brought together, can destroy Belcorra.

Galudu (CN female caligni leader 11) Desperate leader of the caligni defenders holed up in the Hunting Grounds levels, rival to Dulac (area I26).

Gauntlight An eerie lighthouse rising from the Fogfen and built by Belcorra Haruvex. It rests upon the Empty Vault.

Graulgust (CE male morlock cultist 4) Leader of the Ghost Queen morlocks (area B12).

Jafaki (CE seugathi fleshwarper 8) Leader of the seugathis working on the Laboratories level (area F25).

Jaul Mezmin (NE male human werewolf stalker 6) Escaped killer lurking around the Otari region (area D14).

Keeleno Lathenar (N male human market owner 2) Bitter shopkeeper in Otari who seeks revenge on Jaul Mezmin.

Khurfel (CE male urdefhan war champion 10) Warlike leader of the Hunting Grounds urdefhans (area I37).

Lady's Whisper (NE undead proctor 11) Agent of Nhimbalo who oversees tests in the Gate of Nhimbalo (area I61).

Lardus Longsaddle (LN male human fighter 4) Short-tempered captain of Otari's town guard.

Lasda Venkervale (LG male dwarf bartender 2) Prisoner in *Gauntlight*, son of Brela Venkervale (area D9).

Lozardyn A drow city in the Darklands with ties to Yldaris.

Morlibint (LN male human wizard 4) Friendly bookseller and bibliophile in Otari.

Nhakazarin (CE female ghoulish cult leader) Leader of the Cult of the Canker ghouls (area C34).

Nhimbalo Also known as the Empty Death, malevolent and distant Outer God of despair, ghosts, and swamps.

Oseph Menhemes (N male human mayor 4) Mayor of Otari and lumber magnate, father of Dorianna Menhemes.

Otari A seaside lumber town located on the Isle of Kortos near the metropolis of Absalom.

Otari Ilvashti (CG male ghost adventurer 9) Deceased human rogue and member of the Roseguard who perished after Belcorra's defeat (area D18).

Quara Orshendiel (CN female drow leader 11) Drow shootist and wary leader of the drow outpost of Yldaris (area I17).

Roseguard A four-member adventuring party that vanquished Belcorra Haruvex almost 500 years ago.

Shadow Malice A band of Darklands entertainers who perform at the Warped Brew tavern (area F18).

Stonescales A large group of kobolds that once plagued Otari but are all but gone now.

Urevian (LE male phistophilus field commander 9) A contract devil bound to create an army for Belcorra who seeks to escape the deal by claiming Carman Rajani's soul (area G10).

Vandy Banderdash (NG female halfling cleric of Sarenrae 5) Friendly head priest of Otari's library-temple.

Vethris (NE female spirit naga 9) Indolent naga whom Belcorra recently tasked with leading the undead children of Belcorra on the Farm level (area H25).

Vol Rajani Female human fighter in the Roseguard, ancestor of Carman Rajani.

Volluk Azrinae (CE male worm that walks occultist 7) Former drow and Belcorra's acolyte (area D8).

Warped Brew A tavern in the Laboratories level that caters to Darklands clientele (area F11).

Wrin Sivinx (CG female tiefling elf oddities merchant 5) Proprietor of Wrin's Wonders in Otari, fortune teller, and devotee of the Cosmic Caravan.

Yinyasmera (CN female human smuggler 5) Influential innkeeper and head of Otari's thieves guild.

Yldaris A small outpost of cautious drow elves on the Hunting Grounds level.

Ysondkhelir (CE male denizen of Leng 8) A malevolent dream-twister who has Dorianna Menhemes in his psychic clutches (area G18).

Zarmavdian Male human diviner, conspiracy theorist, and Roseguard member.

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Chapter 5: Into the Training Grounds

Chapter 6: Experiments in Flesh

Chapter 7: Soul Keepers

Chapter 8: Decaying Gardens

Chapter 9: On the Hunt

Chapter 10: To Draw the Baleful Glare

Nhimbalo

Adventure Toolbox

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