

Evidence

From the Desk of Dr. Etward Ritalson

Patient Record: 67-c5 (name redacted) Entry Dated: 16 Kuthona, 4722 ar Exhibit: Physical Manifestations, Various

Examiner's Note: The following details one of my few professional regrets. This case came in the early days of my research into the Missing Moment, but not so early that I was completely in the dark, as I was immediately after my own Gate Crossing. Instead, I had the false confidence of the academic who thinks of himself as, possibly, the preeminent authority on a topic. History, sadly enough, will show how very wrong I was.

Item 4-a

A small locket that, when opened, shows two portraits of the same woman (whom the patient swears she does not recognize.) In one portrait, the woman's eyes are dark holes out of which a black viscous ichor weeps. This ichor spills from the frame while the locket is opened; when completely or partially closed, it slithers over to the second portrait and enters its mouth in a seemingly endless recursive stream. The portrait, despite the patient's denial, very obviously depicts herself.

Items 5-d - 10-d

A loose handful of human teeth. Clean and yellowed with age. The startling aspect of these is not that the patient possessed them (indeed, the practice of carrying the teeth or bones as magical totems has long been documented in cultures from

across the world.) Rather, the reason this seems to be connected to the Event is that each tooth is roughly the size of an adult humanoid fist (approximately 4 inches from root to tip). If it were not for the ossified veins and root canals, I would have assumed this was merely a mineral of odd similarities.

Item 11 (afterward recategorized as Patient 68-X)

This entry cannot be substantiated with an accordant specimen. Instead, you, future researcher, must labor with a meager description of what this researcher observed. When this specimen was collected it was a neatly bound bundle of brown hair wrapped tightly with a piece of black wire. Later, when I asked an assistant to bring it to me as part of the interview process with the patient (observational calculus), the bundle of hair crumbled to dust in the assistant's palm before my eyes. This obviously caused some amount of consternation in the room, and I like to think I would have masked my alarm quite well if it were not for what happened next—

(here the document stops, a large section having been painstakingly cut out and replaced with another piece of paper pasted from the backside of the document, so that at a cursory review it would seem to be merely faded.)



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THEY WATCHED THE STARS

Adventure Summary

The Gatewalkers Adventure Path continues! This adventure begins immediately after the events of the previous volume, "The Seventh Arch."

Chapter 1: Escape from Skywatch4

The characters are transported from Castrovel to the strange, abandoned city of Skywatch. Here, they aid an Erutaki seer named Sakuachi by rescuing her friends before escaping the dangerous site.

Chapter 2: Still Waters...... 20

The party travels west across the Lake of Mists and Veils, during which they must perform a dangerous favor for a ghostly captain. As they approach the far side of the lake, they face a supernatural portent—and encounter a potential clue to their missing memories.

Chapter 3: What Remains......36

Exhausted but alive, the party finds little respite in Egede. Sakuachi interprets the path of a falling star as an important omen, and the party must trek the perilous Sarkoris Scar to reach the site of the meteorite.

Chapter 4: Ruins of Domora54

After beseeching a group of Reclaimers for aid, the party continues their journey west to complete Sakuachi's quest. In Domora, the ruined hometown of the first god caller, they scour the city for clues. To rescue spirit guides who can help fulfill Sakuachi's destiny, the characters must ultimately defeat the powerful demon holding these entities prisoner.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"The Seventh Arch" is designed for four characters. Characters should level up between chapters.

- 21. Characters begin the adventure at 4th level.
- 5 Characters should be 5th level before they reach the Jundlan Wrecks.
- The characters should reach 6th level once they arrive at Egede.
- The characters should be 7th level upon entering the Sarkoris Scar.

The characters should be 8th level at the end of this adventure.

CHOSEN ONE

In this adventure, the characters meet the seer Sakuachi, whose epic quest is the party's primary focus for nearly the rest of this campaign. At first blush, it may seem odd for a non-player character to have such a prominent a role in the Adventure Path. After all, aren't your players supposed to be the heroes?

The answer is, of course, yes. The characters' importance to Sakuachi's story becomes apparent enough in the next volume, "Dreamers of the Nameless Spires," when the characters finally remember their missing memories—specifically that they themselves were the ones who kidnapped Ainamuuren, imperiled Sakuachi's community, and ultimately prompted her quest.

Until this revelation comes to light, however, some players might feel like they're playing second fiddle. You can assuage such concerns by injecting opportunities to show off their characters' brawn, skill, or magic-all things that Sakuachi, though formidable in her own way, lacks. Find ways to remind your party that without them, Sakuachi's quest would've already failed. Finally, it's worth remembering that Sakuachi's quest is the characters' best hope for learning the truth behind the Missing Moment and recovering their lost memories.

THE STARS

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Chapter 2: Still Waters

Chapter 3: What Remains

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The Lake



ESCAPE FROM SKYWATCH

Opportunistic nobles built the city of Skywatch centuries ago. They claimed they felt preternaturally compelled to climb to the top of an ominous mountain in the northern Icerime Peaks, where they discovered an ancient observatory. Though they hardly knew it, it wasn't fate or religion which guided the settlers toward this spot, but rather a powerful ley line—a font of primordial magic—that shot skyward from the center of the mount.

Among the special individuals who could sense the ley line was Yannet Surtova, the stargazing occultist who founded Skywatch; but also, long before her, the elf crafter Candlaron, famed builder of many aiudara.

Candlaron built an ill-fated aiudara in this area before a landslide buried it less than a hundred years after its construction.

Much more recently, Erutaki stargazers from the far north came to the mount to build a marvelous observatory. Though their mark on the place has remained intact, these builders too left, never to be seen again.

Then came the Surtovans, who built the city of Skywatch and claimed the ancient observatory as their own. Brevoy's oldest and most influential house included no shortage of eccentrics, and the occupiers of Skywatch were known in particular for their

standoffishness. On the same day that their close allies in House Rogarvia disappeared from Brevoy without a trace, Skywatch's current ruler, Queen Equendia Surtova, ordered her city's gates closed. She told her citizens that anything they couldn't produce by the sweat of their brows could be found in the stars above. To Equendia, people, goods, and ideas from lands beyond Skywatch's blessed mountain were distractions at best and heresies at worst. Skywatch remained sealed in this way, allowing no one in or out, for over 20 years.

On the night of the Missing Moment, the lost *aiudara* buried beneath Skywatch surged back to life for just a second, powered by the expansive touch of Osoyo. This was long enough for Osoyo to send a message up through the ley line intersecting Velgate and Skywatch. The Blackfrost Whale's whispers found an attentive audience in Queen Equendia and her court of astronomer-priests.

To Equendia, the telepathic instructions transmitted to her were loud and clear: she was to lead her people from their home in Skywatch northward until their compasses failed. To aid Equendia's mission, Osoyo granted the queen supernatural gifts of elocution and persuasion. Under the thrall of her newly silvered tongue, Equendia's people became obedient sheep who willfully followed their queen through rain, hail, and blizzards. In time, those who survived the perilous trek came to the Nameless Spires at the Crown of the World's north pole.

In the months since, adventurers who travel to Skywatch have found the insular city's gates flung open—but behind its walls, no citizens remain. Word soon got out about "the abandoned city," and it quickly became a hotbed of curious vagabonds, ambitious treasure hunters and, eventually, bloodthirsty raiders.

Recently, the young seer Sakuachi and her guides trekked from their boreal hometown of Aaminiut to the gates of Skywatch. The deserted city was the first stop on Sakuachi's quest toward the Sarkoris Scar, "the land where gods still walk with mortals." In Skywatch, Sakuachi hoped to use the observatory to receive further guidance from the stars. She managed to reach the ancient structure, but not before she and her companions were separated by the city's disorienting magical aura and roving bands of violent marauders. Sakuachi barred the observatory's entrance behind her and, as her pursuers searched for another way in, used the ancient telescope to search the stars for counsel.

Sakuachi did indeed find some advice written in the night sky. The magic of Velgate had a peculiar effect on Skywatch's massive telescope, allowing Sakuachi to communicate telepathically with some stargazing elves on the planet Castrovel. Putting her Elven fluency to the test, Sakuachi told the alien astronomers about her predicament but lamented that were was no way they could help her from such a distance. Against all odds, however, Sakuachi's prayers were answered in the form of a band of adventurers—the player characters—who were at that very moment searching for a way back home from Castrovel. Their paths, it seemed, were destined to intersect.

Getting Started

At the end of the previous adventure, "The Seventh Arch," the characters used a magical connection between telescopes to teleport from Loskialua on Castrovel to Skywatch on Golarion. This adventure begins in the moments immediately after their interplanetary voyage.

CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

Having teleported from the planet Castrovel to the city of Skywatch on Golarion, the player characters are out of the frying pan and into the fire. Monstrous fauna, violent thieves, and a territorial dragon all block their escape from the smoldering city. Luckily, the player characters make new friends, chief among them the young seer Sakuachi, whose epic destiny is undoubtedly tied to their own. To help fulfill Sakuachi's quest, the growing party will need to commandeer a riverboat and begin their long trek to the Sarkoris Scar.

PARTY'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

Escape Skywatch with Sakuachi.

PLOT BEATS

The party should learn these details throughout this chapter:

- Sakuachi bears the same strange rune as the player characters, which she explains once belonged to the saumen kar Ainamuuren.
- Sakuachi is on a quest to find a living god in Sarkoris. To seal away an ancient evil and save her home, she must sacrifice this god at the Crown of the World.

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The Skywatch Observatory is a 150-foot-wide hemisphere of solid marble. The 5-foot-wide rectangular opening in the roof spans 75 feet from one end of the dome to the other. The observatory's 100-foot-long telescope is secured to a 2-foot-tall, 25-foot-wide dais in the center of the room.

When the characters arrive, Sakuachi has already cast a *light* cantrip on the tip of a torch she carries. Otherwise, the observatory's interior is totally dark. It's a moonless night, and the stars, though spectacular, aren't bright enough to cast any dim light into the observatory.

To represent combat in and around the observatory, you can draw a map based on the building's description or simply describe combatants' approximate positions aloud.

With a flash of light and a faint popping sound, the party appears in the Skywatch Observatory, where they stand before Sakuachi, the young seer who helped them get here.

The final moments in the interplanetary tunnel between Castrovel and Golarion feel like falling through a tunnel of multicolored light. Then, with a sudden flash, reality snaps back into place. The chamber that appears is large, windowless and circular, its center almost entirely occupied by a massive, mechanical telescope. The telescope's far end pokes out of a wide, rectangular gap in the domed ceiling, beyond which can be seen hundreds of stars in the night sky. The other end of the telescope tapers down to a raised dais, from which a young woman in heavy winter clothing descends. "Oh, thank the stars, it worked!" Before she can say more, loud, hard bangs issue from the other side of a barred pair of wooden doors. The girl's smile turns wry. "As you can see," she says, "I need help."

The party doesn't have time to ask too many questions. With each passing second, the barricaded door splinters and cracks. Raiders bash at the door for 3 rounds before breaking into the observatory (see **Event 1** below).

If they ask her who's on the other side of the door, Sakuachi quickly recounts how some sword-swinging toughs chased her through the streets of Skywatch. The raiders, wearing black armor and terrifying war paint, made their violent intentions abundantly clear. Sakuachi just managed to get into the observatory and bar the double door behind her.

Sakuachi says that the barred door is the only way in or out of the observatory. Canny players, however, might realize that the large telescope window in the domed ceiling is also a viable escape option.

Climbing the Telescope: If they act quickly, the characters can exit the observatory by scrabbling up the 100-foot-long telescope and slipping out the window to the roof. The complex telescope is plenty sturdy and covered in knobs, switches, and levers that can function as handholds; it's just a DC 10 Athletics check to Climb the device and out the window.

From the observatory's roof, the party can see the raiders at the front door (**Event 1**) as well as more raiders circling the building (**Event 2**). The party can easily slide down the building's domed side, either to run away or to get the jump on their attackers.

Treasure: Before the characters do anything, Sakuachi gives them four *lesser healing potions* she found inside the observatory.

EVENT 1: WELCOMING PARTY MODERATE 4

Creatures: The raiders just outside the door are four hobgoblin members of a criminal ring called the Obsidian Oath. They first spotted Sakuachi on the streets of Skywatch, then managed to corner her here. Thinking their victim alone, the eight-person team of raiders split; half their number bash at the door while the other four circle the observatory looking for a way in (detailed in **Event 2**). The raiders aim to slaughter Sakuachi and steal her valuable-looking gear.

They're surprised to find the PCs, once they bust down the door, but aren't about to back down from a fight. If two or more hobgoblins are slain, the remainder retreat to outside to search for their patrol leader, Narthkeza, possibly joining the combatants in **Event 2**.

Though unaccustomed to such violence, Sakuachi participates in this combat to the best of her ability, as described on page 93.

OBSIDIAN OATH RAIDERS (4) CREATURE 2

Elite hobgoblin soldiers (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 206) **Initiative** Perception +9

Search for Safety

Once the first group of raiders is defeated, the party can take a beat to assess their situation, properly meet their new companion, and plan their next move.

SAKUACHI'S TALE

With the immediate threat handled, Sakuachi can now explain how she came to Skywatch, the finer points of her personal quest, and what part she believes the characters play in all of this. Honest and open, she's happy to tell the party as much or as little of her personal history (detailed on page 92) as they're interested in hearing.

You don't need to give your players Sakuachi's story all at once. For now, though, she at least gives the characters the necessary details related to their current situation in Skywatch. Be sure to mention the following key points during the party's conversation with Sakuachi.

- Sakuachi is on a quest to find a living god in lands to the west. According to the elders of her hometown, Aaminiut, Sakuachi's quest will save her people from a powerful evil.
- Sakuachi bears a magical rune which her elder Seshu glimpsed in a dream and inscribed on her palm for protection. (What Sakuachi doesn't know is that this rune is the exact same mark shared by all gatewalkers, including the PCs.)
- Four guides accompany Sakuachi on her quest.
 The quintet became separated by the confounding magical aura that pervades Skywatch, which makes navigating the streets during the day all but impossible.
- Sakuachi believes her meeting with the party was fated, and that they should travel with her to Sarkoris to help complete her quest. Before they depart Skywatch, though, they must find her missing companions.

EVENT 2: NARTHKEZA'S TROOP MODERATE 4

Before the party can safely leave the vicinity of the observatory, they must first deal with one more contingent of Obsidian Oath raiders.

Creatures: Narthkeza is the Obsidian Oath's second-in-command and a capable archer. Her commander, Ghodrak the Quick, tasked her troop with scouting the abandoned city for treasure. The scouting raiders got lost in Skywatch's strange, twisting streets before they eventually encountered Sakuachi and chased her into the observatory.

Narthkeza left four of her subordinates to pummel at the building's front door. Meanwhile, she and two more raiders circle the observatory to look for another way in. As soon as she spots the party, Narthkeza orders her two soldiers forward into melee while she peppers the strongest-looking character with arrows. She fights to the death and expects the same of any raider under her command.

OBSIDIAN OATH RAIDERS (2)

Elite hobgoblin soldiers (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 206) **Initiative** Perception +9

NARTHKEZA

CREATURE 4

Female hobgoblin archer (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 207) **Initiative** Perception +10

Questioning Narthkeza: If defeated, Narthkeza spits in the face of any who tries to question her. Only through the use of *charm* or similar magic does she offer any useful information. (Alternatively, a character can Coerce these details from any other Obsidian Oath raider by succeeding at a DC 17 Intimidation check.)

- Besides Narthkeza and the observatory raiders, the Obsidian Oath now number just seven raiders, plus their leader Ghodrak the Quick.
- The Obsidian Oath has set up their base in an

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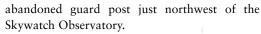
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> Adventure Toolbox

Obsidian Oath Raider

CREATURE 2



• They've come to Skywatch from Daggermark to establish a new seat of power for their order.

The Smiling Wolves

With the raiders dispatched, the party can leave the observatory and walk into Skywatch proper. No sooner than they do this, however, they experience the city's disorienting magic. This illusory aura—a side effect of the ley line at the city's center—warps an observer's perception of their surroundings.

Streets seem to make impossible

turns, and buildings weirdly blend together or appear identical.

Later on, the player characters will have to navigate this befuddling maze on their own. Luckily, for now, it isn't a few moments before they come upon some friendly faces: mercenaries who can give the characters a safe place to camp and tell them where Sakuachi's missing companions were last seen.

INNUMMA APPEARS

After the characters have dealt with the enemies at the observatory, but before they've traveled too far into Skywatch, one of Sakuachi's companions hails them.

A young man dressed in thick sealskin clothes scans the streets a moment before he waves and calls, "Sakuachi!" A pair of pale-skinned humans clad in leather armor and gray furs step out from the shadows, and the three approach.

This is Innumma, one of Sakuachi's escorts. After giving him a hug, Sakuachi introduces her friend to the party. Innumma, in turn, motions to his leather-clad companions and explains that they're members of a Brevic mercenary company called the Smiling Wolves. "I stumbled into their camp at the riverside docks," Innumma says. "They've been very helpful. They know how to navigate this place."

The mercenaries are named **Joruf and Yana** (LN human mercenaries 2). Joruf and Yana quickly recognize the characters as capable adventurers and, once introductions have been made, offer to bring everyone back to their camp along the river.

If asked why the Smiling Wolves are in Skywatch, Yana replies, "Looking for treasure, of course, just

like everyone else." She goes on to say that her fellow Wolves may be able to help Sakuachi and Innumma reunite with the rest of their companions. "Come," she says. "Our leader, Matz, can tell you more."

During the short jaunt to the docks, Yana occasionally looks skyward and measures the stars with her fingers before making a sudden turn down an alley or an inexplicable detour through an empty

building. As they walk, Joruf explains, "Strong magic twists up these streets. The only way to make heads or tails of the place is to use the stars."

SMILING WOLVES' CAMP

The Smiling Wolves' base in Skywatch is a collection of heavy cloth tents erected along some wooden piers that jut out over the Little Icerime. A bonfire burns in the center of the camp, around which tough-looking people mill about or squat, drinking hot tea or sharpening knives. They wear fur-trimmed armor like Joruf and Yana

and look to be no strangers to combat.

When the party reaches the Smiling Wolves' camp, read aloud the following to set the scene and introduce the group's leader.

As they approach the rustic encampment, Joruf and Yana let out a lupine howl that's picked up throughout the camp. As the call dies down, a tall, lean man with a thick head of hair and a scruffy beard emerges from the largest tent with a grin.

This man is **Matz Balandim** (LN male beastkin human monster hunter 6), the leader of the Smiling Wolves. He is an effusive, larger-than-life figure who founded his mercenary company after several years of serving the Brevoy nobles of House Lodovka. Looking to line his pockets, he found several dozen other soldiers ready to sell their sword arms to the highest bidder. Their services were mostly used along the country's southern border against rogues from the River Kingdoms. When Matz heard that the gates of Skywatch were opened and the city abandoned, he brought the Smiling Wolves here to hunt for treasure.

Matz introduces himself to the party and asks them what brought them to Skywatch. During their conversation, he tells the characters a bit about his company and how they got here by rowing up the Little Icerime on rafts. They took control of the lockhouse and now occupy these docks, effectively

Sakuachi

controlling who enters and leaves the city via river. He bemoans the existence of rival treasure hunters like the Obsidian Oath, who mix bloodshed with looting in equal measure. The Smiling Wolves, by contrast, have no interest in mayhem; once they've gathered as much as they can fit on their rafts, Matz says, his company plans to leave the city the same way they entered.

The Smiling Wolves took in Innumma when they found him lost and wandering through the streets. Matz also tells the characters about the disorienting magic that pervades Skywatch and how they can use the stars to supersede this obstacle (detailed in the Navigating Skywatch section below). In the meantime, Matz invites the PCs to rest and recover in the safety of the Smiling Wolves' camp until they're ready to go.

THE MISSING GUIDES

Once the party has had a chance to rest and recover, Sakuachi implores the characters to find her friends so they can all leave Skywatch together. For more information on Sakuachi's companions, see the sidebar on page 15.

Matz tells the characters that his Smiling Wolves have sighted Sakuachi's missing companions around the city. Each of these sightings corresponds to one of the adventure locations summarized below.

Gray Post

A Smiling Wolf named Iabor spotted someone matching navigator Ulikuq's description near a guard post on the other side of the observatory. Matz tells the characters that this post is also the base of operations for Ghodrak the Quick, the leader of the Obsidian Oath.

"The Obsidian Oath has been a real thorn in our side," says Matz, scratching his chin. "Take care of them for us, and I'll give you a raft suitable for a voyage down the Icerime."

Mystic Market

Yana spotted a woman she believes to be the hunter Deniigi near the Mystic Market, a merchant's square in the city's southwestern quadrant. According to Yana, she saw Deniigi talking with some other newcomers and figured they knew each other.

"Maybe she made some friends?" Matz chuckles. "Either way, try and learn a thing or two about these other newcomers while you're there. In return, I'll order the locks open when you're ready to leave."

Skywatch Gates

Joruf saw a figure matching Pamak the storyteller's description leaving the city via the gates to the northwest.

Matz mentions that a Smiling Wolf named Hissoi also went outside the gates to scout the area, but hasn't yet returned. If the characters could solve this mystery while they look for Pamak, Matz promises to load their raft with as much treasure as it can hold before they ship out.

The Streets of Skywatch

At Innumma's insistence, he and Sakuachi stay with the Smiling Wolves while the PCs brave the city's perilous streets. To search Skywatch for Sakuachi's missing guides and perform tasks for Matz, the player characters must use the stars to navigate the disorienting streets.

NAVIGATING SKYWATCH

Skywatch is affected by a strange enchantment that makes it difficult to navigate the streets without becoming lost or turned around. Fortunately, the party can maintain their bearings by using the stars as a guide.

Whenever the party travels from one part of Skywatch to another, the character leading the way can use the stars to avoid getting lost. To do so, the character attempts a DC 20 Survival check to Sense Direction each hour. During the daytime or when the sky is cloudy, the DC of this check is 25 instead.

On a failed check, the party winds up back where it started that hour, making no progress, and also triggers one of the encounters described in **Events 3–5**. On a critically failed check, each character takes a –1 circumstance penalty to their initiative roll at the start of the following event.

Run each of these events only once. After the characters have completed **Events 3–5**, they can explore Skywatch without fear of further confrontation.

EVENT 3: ANGRY ELANANX MODERATE 4

As the PCs walk down a main street between rows of three-story apartment buildings, a monstrous fey seizes the opportunity to play with its next victims.

Creature: An elananx, a feline fey associated with wildfires like those common on the shores of Iobaria to the east, has nested in one of Skywatch's abandoned townhouses. From here, the beast enjoys tormenting vermin, wild animals, scavengers, and anything else that catches its fancy which, currently, this includes the characters. If reduced to fewer than 20 Hit Points, the elananx uses Cinder Dispersal and attempts to flee the fight.

ELANANX

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 143
Initiative Perception +14

EVENT 4: SILENT SHADOWS

I OW A

On an unassuming cobblestone street that runs past an old bakery, shadows cast a mysterious pall

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SHROUD OF SILENCE

HAZARD 4

ENVIRONMENTAL MAGICAL

Stealth DC 25 (expert)

Description Sounds become muted in a 20-foot-wide, 100-foot-long segment of this street corridor.

Disable DC 25 Occultism (expert) to twist the magic of the ley line around you, disabling the hazard for only you; or *dispel magic* (4th level; counteract DC 23) to disable the hazard permanently

Hush (illusion, occult) Trigger A creature reaches the street's halfway point; Effect Each creature in the affected area must succeed at a DC 23 Will saving throw or be silenced as long as it remains in the area. A silenced creature makes no sound and can't use abilities with the sonic or auditory traits, including spells with verbal components.

Creature: Hiding in the darkness near the center of the hazardous street is a violent shadow. It waits until a creature has triggered the hazard before slinking forth to attack.

SHADOW

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 289
Initiative Stealth +14

EVENT 5: GIFT OF THE WINTER WOLF

From the shadowy interior of a vandalized storefront, a low voice like crackling embers beckons the player characters. The figure that emerges is **Isthald** (NE female winter wolf; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 322), but she's non-hostile. The imposing canine—shaggy, muscular, and big as a horse—steps slowly toward the party as she speaks. "A trade," she growls. "I offer a trade."

Isthald left her kin years ago to hunt alone, but shortly thereafter fell into the employ of a powerful moon hag witch. When the wolf announced her intention to leave the witch, her mistress cursed her to wander only in darkness. The only way to break this curse, Isthald believes, is to pass it on to a willing creature. She has wandered the wilds of Brevoy ever since, searching for someone to agree to this foul bargain.

Assuming the characters remain calm, Isthald explains her situation to them. "My eyes," she rasps, "see more than most, come nightfall. In daylight, though... I must rely on other senses." Sure enough, only one of Isthald's eyes blazes with the blue fire typical of a winter wolf. The other eye is milky white and shines ever so slightly, much like a full moon.

A character who succeeds at a DC 29 Occultism check to Identify Magic can ascertain the exact nature of Isthald's curse (stats below). This curse could feasibly

be counteracted with a remove curse spell, though such magic is likely beyond the party's abilities at this point.

MOON HAG'S EYE

CURSE 10

UNCOMMON CURSE ENCHANTMENT OCCULT VISUAL

The pupil and iris in your left eye turn yellowish white, pocked with wheat-colored dots like the craters of the moon. This curse enables you to pierce the veil of night, but only at the cost of some of your daylight vision.

Saving Throw DC 29 Will; Effect You gain low-light vision, or darkvision if you already had low-light vision. In daylight, you take a -1 status penalty to vision-based Perception checks.

It's up to the characters whether or not any of them want to take on the winter wolf's curse. As Isthald said, she can only rid herself of the curse by passing it on to a willing bearer, so she doesn't attempt to use coercion or trickery, and she isn't interested in a fight. She might be willing to strike a bargain—perhaps even accompanying the characters to their next location in Skywatch—but any duplicity invokes her violent wrath. Nevertheless, she doesn't have a death wish, and if attacked, scampers into the streets of Skywatch, never to be seen again.

If a character agrees to take on Isthald's curse, the ritual is short and simple. "Put your brow to mine," the wolf rumbles, "and look me in the eyes." The character then makes a saving throw against the curse. On a failed save, the transfer is complete; the winter wolf's eyes both become fiery blue, and the player character now bears the moon hag's eye. With the ritual complete, Isthald bows silently and strides away.

Mystic Market

Though perfectly situated for a marketplace, the Mystic Market isn't the most tactically sound place for those looting Skywatch to set up a camp. It's wide open and centrally located, making it easy to stumble upon even by mistake. Nevertheless, a loosely connected group of petty thieves and ne'er-do-wells have chosen it for their base of operations. In lieu of a shared identity, objective, or leader, the ruffians pal about until they grow tired of one another, then take the first opportunity to double-cross one another often with fatal consequences.

Most of the hoodlums aren't thrilled by their predicament, but whenever they try to leave the marketplace, Skywatch's confounding streets spit them out right back where they started. They haven't found much of value yet, and they're growing restless.

Sakuachi's companion Deniigi stumbled into the Mystic Market by accident. Knowing she couldn't take so many scoundrels in a fight, she feigned ignorance and acted like a fellow miscreant. Smelling a rat, a poisoner named Vhisa Resgrido offered Deniigi a toxic toast from her wineskin. Though fit and hale, Deniigi didn't stand a chance against Vhisa's potent poison. She stumbled for a few moments before collapsing into unconsciousness. The thieves picked Deniigi's pockets, then dragged her sleeping body to a nearby alley, thinking she might make a useful alarm if an animal or monster were to come by and take a bite of her.

APPROACHING THE MARKET

The characters arrive at the Mystic Market about an hour after Deniigi's ill-fated swig. They can circle the block and approach the market from any direction. Read or paraphrase the following as they do.

Cobblestone streets connect to this open-air market from each cardinal direction. Wooden storefronts line the perimeter of the market plaza, in the center of which stands a one-story wooden building with a wooden door. To the west, an empty stone fountain waits opposite the tents and carts that scatter the plaza's eastern side. A low, pained moaning echoes from the square's northeastern corner.

The moans of pain come from Deniigi (Event 6). If the party arrives at night, the thieves who stole Deniigi's equipment are all asleep near the fountain on the west side of the square (Event 7). Hiding in a store on the other side of the square, smoking a pipe whose lit bowl is barely perceptible from the square, a jumpy thief named Terner shouts in alarm if he sees anyone he doesn't recognize (Event 8). Finally, inside the plaza's central building is an animated apothecary's cabinet, designed to deter intruders (Event 9).

Market Areas

The areas indicated on the map of the Mystic Market (page 14) are described below. Events 6–9 note the areas in which encounters most likely take place, but these events might easily occur in any part of the market, possibly even changing location mid-encounter.

A1. Celestia's Place: The shimmering textiles of Celestia's Place were among the first fineries looted from Skywatch. Now, naked dress dummies and unspooled bolts are all that remain of the once-popular emporium. Deniigi is lying in this store, helpless, when the characters arrive on the scene.

A2. Plaza: The unfurled bedrolls of Vhisa and her minions mark where they sleep around a dry stone fountain on this side of the marketplace.

A3. Shining Silver: A bandit named Terner and his two goons occupy this old jewelry store in the square's WATCHED THE STARS

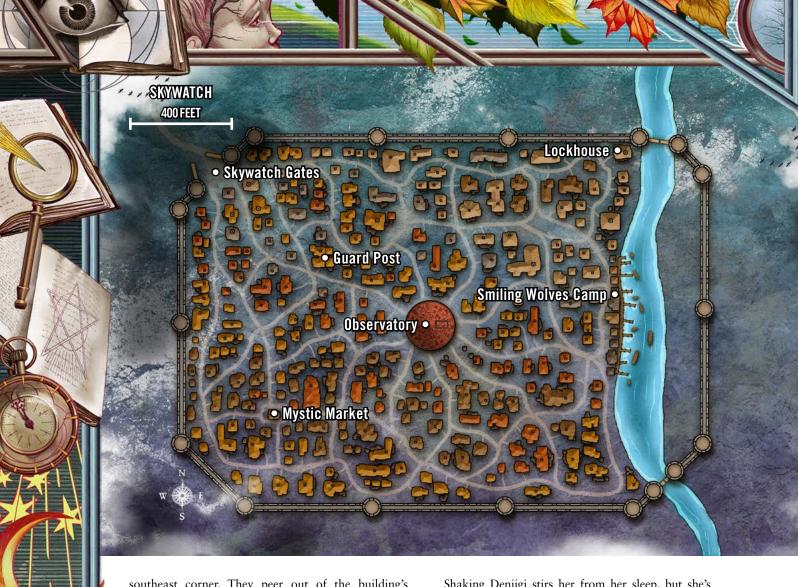
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southeast corner. They peer out of the building's windows all night, watching for potential rivals.

A4. Apothecarium: The sign outside this shop features the text "Apothecarium" above a painted symbol of an alembic flask. Inside, the shop is in surprisingly good shape and seems to have avoided most of the raiding. (This is thanks to its unusual guardian, an animated apothecary's cabinet.)

EVENT 6: RESCUING DENIIGI

When the party first approaches the Mystic Market, they hear the faint sounds of pained moans coming from a building in the northeast corner. A sign jutting out from the storefront's awning reads "Celestia's Place" in a decorative hand. Inside the looted cloth shop is Deniigi, wearing only a woolen base layer and shivering in the fetal position on the floorboards.

Deniigi is unconscious and apparently in the throes of a bad dream. A character who succeeds at a DC 21 Medicine check can determine that she ingested an unusually long-acting variety of dreamtime tea (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 121).

Shaking Deniigi stirs her from her sleep, but she's groggy, cold, delirious and unfit to travel back to the Smiling Wolves' camp. Before they attempt to leave, Deniigi asks the player characters to get her gear back for her. If they can also find something to help her shake off the effects of the dreamtime tea, all the better.

The characters can find an item to help cure Deniigi in the Apothecarium (**Event 9**). Alternatively, if the characters already have an antidote (such as a lesser antidote), they can simply give this item to Deniigi now, in which case she recovers in a matter of minutes.

EVENT 7: DENIIGI'S GEAR MODERATE 4

The thieves who took Deniigi's gear are Vhisa Resgrido and her two allies, Opana and Hirk. After poisoning Deniigi, Vhisa stripped the guide of her belongings, then together with her allies dragged the sleeping woman to a nearby building. Now, all three thieves camp in the eastern half of the Mystic Market.

Failing to realize that the stars are their best means of leaving this place, Vhisa and her crew sleep at night and attempt to explore only during daylight hours. Vhisa believes (correctly) that Terner is too cowardly

to attack her, even while she sleeps, so she doesn't bother setting a watch.

Stolen Gear: Deniigi's gear is scattered about the campground, easily identifiable by its Erutaki design. Stealthy PCs might be able to recover some or all of these items without alerting the bandits.

- Deniigi's weapons—a spear, a bow, and a quiver of arrows—lie in a heap in a corner of the campsite.
- Deniigi's skinning knife and its sheath are fastened to Opana's belt.
- Deniigi's sealskin furs are currently serving as Vhisa's pillow.

Creatures: As soon as they become aware of the characters, Vhisa and her goons attack, eager to plunder the intruders' treasure. All three fight until Vhisa is reduced to fewer than 10 Hit Points, at which point she gives the signal to flee.

BANDITS (2)

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide 208 **Initiative** Perception +6

VHISA RESGRIDO

CREATURE 4

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM ELF HUMAN HUMANOID

Female half-elf elite charlatan (Pathfinder Bestiary 6, Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide 209)

Initiative Perception +8; low-light vision

Questioning Vhisa: From Vhisa, characters can learn the nature of Deniigi's poisoning. "There're antidotes in the potion shop," Vhisa sneers, "if you got the guts to go in there."

If a character Coerces her with a successful DC 22 Intimidation check, Vhisa tells the party about the animated apothecary

Treasure: In addition to their gear, the two bandits carry a fan feather token and two barkskin potions.

cabinet that guards the store.

EVENT 8: PANICKED PILLAGERS MODERATE 4

Terner Sudes is one of the more successful raiders of the Mystic Market, having arrived earlier than the others and taken his pick of the jewelry stores' remaining valuables. He's befriended two rather witless ruffians, Sarin and Delfor,

to serve as his lackeys. Otherwise, his success hasn't earned him any friends among the other thieves in this quarter. Furthermore, he's convinced that Deniigi's allies will arrive any day now to exact revenge for Vhisa's seemingly random act of poisoning.

Exhausted and paranoid, Terner and his goons have holed up in an empty jeweler's shop called Shining Silver (area A3). Only one of them sleeps at a time, meaning at least two are on watch at night, the time when the player characters most likely arrive at the market.

The characters can automatically sneak through the Mystic Market without drawing Terner's attention by staying quiet and avoiding his line of sight in area A3 of Shining Silver. (Draw straight lines from area A3's window to determine Terner's field of vision.) Characters within 30 feet of Terner must succeed at a DC 24 Stealth check to Sneak to avoid making noise.

Creatures: If he hears anyone in the marketplace, Terner extinguishes his pipe and steps out to investigate. As soon as he sees anyone unfamiliar, he shouts in panic and sprints forward to attack, waking his allies (and likely Vhisa and hers too) in the process. Terner and his toughs each try to flee if reduced to fewer than 5 Hit Points.

RUFFIANS (2)

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide 209

Initiative Perception +8

TERNER SUDES

CREATURE 4

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

NE male guide (Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide 217)

Initiative Perception +14

Questioning Terner: If cornered, Terner tells the party everything he knows. He explains how Deniigi (whom he believes to be a fellow raider) came here and how Vhisa poisoned her.

If a PC succeeds at a DC 24

Intimidation check to Coerce Terner, he also reveals that the apothecary in the center of the market (area A4) likely contains an antidote that can help Deniigi recover. He doesn't know about the animated cabinet.

Treasure: In addition to his gear, Terner carries a +1 armor potency rune on a runestone he recently found but hasn't yet had the time to fully utilize.

THEY WATCHED THE STARS

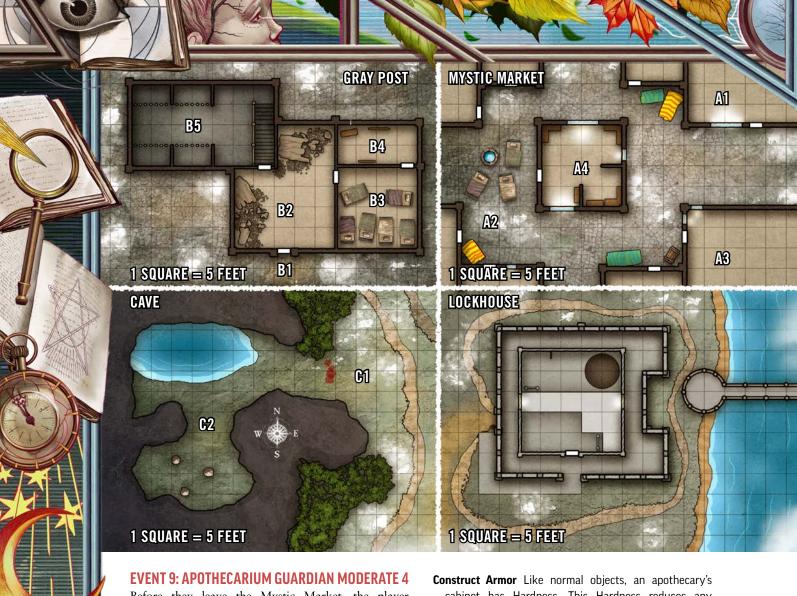
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Before they leave the Mystic Market, the player characters probably need to find an antidote to help Deniigi recover from her poisoning. The Apothecarium at the center of the plaza is an obvious place to look.

Creatures: To keep their wares safe, the spellcasters at the Apothecarium animated the cabinet which contained their most potent concoctions. The cabinet attacks any intruders who don't say the password ("bubble") within 30 feet of it. It fights until destroyed or until it no longer detects enemies within 10 feet of the Apothecarium.

APOTHECARY'S CABINET

CREATURE 6

RARE N LARGE CONSTRUCT MINDLESS

Perception +11; darkvision

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Skills Athletics +15

Str +6, Dex -3, Con +5, Int -5, Wis +0, Cha -5

AC 24 (20 when broken); construct armor; Fort +17, Ref +11, Will +11

HP 80; Hardness 10; Immunities bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious Construct Armor Like normal objects, an apothecary's cabinet has Hardness. This Hardness reduces any damage it takes by an amount equal to the Hardness. Once an apothecary's cabinet is reduced to fewer than half its Hit Points, or immediately upon being damaged by a critical hit, its construct armor breaks and its Armor Class is reduced to 20.

Speed 15 feet

Melee ❖ drawer +17 (magical), Damage 2d8+9 bludgeoning Ranged ❖ poison bottle +14 (magical, thrown 20 feet), Damage 2d6+3 bludgeoning plus poison stock

Poison Stock When the cabinet hits a creature with its poison bottle Strike, roll 1d4 to determine what kind of poison splashes onto the struck creature: **1** nerve poison (clumsy 1); **2** weakening poison (enfeebled 1); **3** noxious poison (sickened 1); **4** clouded mind poison (stupefied 1). The target must attempt a DC 24 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 1d6 poison damage.

Failure The creature takes 2d6 poison damage and is afflicted with the rolled poison's associated condition until the end of its next turn.

Critical Failure The creature takes 2d6 poison damage

and is afflicted with the rolled poison's associated condition for 1d4+1 rounds.

The Antidote: Nestled in the remains of the apothecary's cabinet is an antidote that can cure Deniigi's poisoning.

Treasure: In addition to the antidote, the characters can also find two moderate cheetah's elixirs and two moderate eagle-eye elixirs inside the cabinet.

RETURNING TO CAMP

Once they administer an antidote to Deniigi and retrieve her equipment, the party can escort her back to the Smiling Wolves' camp. There, Sakuachi expresses delight, then concern, at seeing Deniigi, who's clearly still feeling the effects of her poisoning.

Matz's Reward: For dispatching the bandits, Matz makes supplies the PCs with a sturdy raft.

XP Award: For rescuing Deniigi, award the party 10 XP. Grant them 30 XP if they got her gear back, and 30 XP for giving her an antidote.

Gray Post

The Skywatch city guard maintained several guard posts around the city, each of which consisted of a one-story stone barracks with a basement of cells.

The Obsidian Oath traveled to Skywatch in the hopes of seizing its entirety, but they were stymied by the city's confounding streets and competing pilferers. Ghodrak the Quick, the Obsidian Oath's current leader, established his small company's base of operations in a guard post not far from the observatory at the city's center. The raiders tore off the Brevic banners hanging from the post's awnings and smeared the building with blood from wild animals they'd slaughtered. From the Gray Post, as they call it, the Obsidian Oath has made several excursions into the rest of the city. Most of these have been ill-fated; the marauders are now at half the number they started with.

Not all of the Obsidian Oath's efforts have been in vain, however. Most recently, they managed to harry a group of humans—Sakuachi and her escorts—and even capture one of them alive. This captive is Ulikuq, Sakuachi's navigator and apprentice seer. Now, Ghodrak is keeping Ulikuq prisoner in the Gray Post's basement while he plans his company's next move.

GRAY POST FEATURES

The Gray Post's walls are made of stone. Doors are made of reinforced wood except for the basement cells, which are iron bars. The building's interior is completely dark.

SAKUACHI'S COMPANIONS

Elder Seshu sent four experienced Aaminiut tribe members to escort Sakuachi on her quest. These retainers believe Sakuachi will seal away the great evil that threatens their home, and they're unerringly loyal to their charge. When Sakuachi asks the player characters to join her quest, her companions recognize the importance of these strangers and treat them with due respect.

Sakuachi's escorts don't participate in combat or other adventuring tasks. Their primary objective is to ensure Sakuachi's safety, so they rarely leave her side or take orders from anyone else. If such occasion should arise, the retainers throw themselves in harm's way to protect Sakuachi's life; each is willing to die for her cause. If necessary, you can represent each companion's stats using the guide stat block from page 217 of the *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*.

Deniigi (NG female human hunter 4): Brawny, quiet, and stoic, Deniigi is one of Aaminiut's finest hunters. Among Sakuachi's companions, she is the unofficial "muscle" of the group.

Innumma (CG male human survivalist 4): The most well-traveled guide in Sakuachi's party is also their most talented explorer, forager, and weather forecaster. Amiable and good humored, Innumma is always ready to cheer up his fellows or offer some expert advice.

Pamak (LN male human storyteller 4): After becoming separated from Sakuachi's group, the expedition's chronicler suffered a grisly death in the myroga cave outside Skywatch (page 17).

Ulikuq (NG nonbinary human navigator 4): Humble and aloof, the astronomer Ulikuq is the group's best sailor, despite being just a few moons older than Sakuachi. Ulikuq has literally seen Sakuachi's fatal destiny written in the stars, and they respect her all the more for it.

B1. EXTERIOR

Copious amounts of blood stain the face of this squat stone building, likely spattered from the heap of animal carcasses piled nearby. All the windows are barred, and the front door is made of hardwood reinforced with iron fixtures. A tattered linen painted with the symbol of a trident against a gray flame hangs prominently above the lintel.

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City guards kept their records and received complaints in this lobby area. The Obsidian Oath trashed the place looking for useful materials to scavenge. Ghodrak removed the map of Skywatch that hung on the southern wall and keeps it on his person.

B3. BARRACKS

MODERATE 4

A number of iron-framed bunks crowd the corners of this barracks, bedrolls placed atop their sagging straw mattresses. A few more bedrolls lie unraveled on the floor.

Creatures: Four raiders are resting here when the characters arrive at the Gray Post. Their leader is downstairs interrogating Ulikuq, and these four felt safe enough to take their eyes off the front door.

If the raiders hear the characters trying to pick the front door's lock (area B1), or if the characters are particularly noisy elsewhere, they prepare themselves for combat, taking cover behind the bunk beds and readying their shortbows to fire at anyone who comes through the western door. Otherwise, the raiders are taken by surprise and must spend Interact actions to grab their weapons at the start of combat.

If two of the hobgoblins are brought down to 0 Hit Points, the other two retreat to area **B4** if they can. From there, a hobgoblin surrenders if reduced to fewer than 5 Hit Points.

OBSIDIAN OATH RAIDERS (4) CREATURE 2

Elite hobgoblin soldiers (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 206) **Initiative** Perception +9

B4. ARMORY

A pair of empty weapon racks and several naked armor stands are all that remain of this small armory.

What equipment the Skywatch guards didn't take with them during their departure, the Obsidian Oath raiders have already claimed.

Treasure: The raiders didn't search the room thoroughly. A character who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check to Seek finds a hidden compartment in the back wall. Inside is a *striking* weapon rune on a *runestone*.

B5. HOLDING CELLS

Grimy stairs descend into this cold and musty stone basement. Rows of floor-to-ceiling bars form four cells, two on either wall. A human figure in heavy furs huddles behind the bars in the north-west corner.

Creatures: A hobgoblin raider named Rogarr and the Obsidian Oath's leader, Ghodrak the Quick, are interrogating their prisoner Ulikuq here. The navigator has withstood Ghodrak's questioning even after having one of their legs broken. Ghodrak is convinced (incorrectly) that Ulikuq can give him information to help him master Skywatch's street-warping magic.

If Ghodrak or Rogarr notices the characters or if a hobgoblin from upstairs runs down to warm them of intruders, they draw their weapons and fight ruthlessly. Confident that he'll never lose a battle, Ghodrak fights to the death and demands the same of his subordinates. Once Ghodrak is taken out, however, any remaining hobgoblins surrender.

OBSIDIAN OATH RAIDER

CREATURE 2

Elite hobgoblin soldier (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 206) **Initiative** Perception +9

GHODRAK THE QUICK

CREATURE 5

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM GOBLIN HUMANOID

Male hobgoblin leader of the Obsidian Oath

Perception +15; darkvision

Languages Common, Goblin

Skills Acrobatics +13, Athletics +10, Diplomacy +12, Intimidation +13, Stealth +13, Warfare Lore +12

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

Items Gray Post keys, hatchets (4), leather armor, map of Skywatch

Into the Fray ◆ Trigger Ghodrak rolls initiative; Effect Ghodrak Interacts to draw one of his hatchets. On his turn, before doing anything else, he can Stride toward an enemy he can see as a free action.

AC 22; Fort +12, Ref +15, Will +9

HP 80

Speed 25 feet

Melee ❖ hatchet +14 (agile, sweep), Damage 1d6+2 slashing

Ranged ◆ hatchet +14 (agile, thrown 10 feet), Damage 1d6+2 slashing

Axe Critical Specialization When Ghodrak lands a critical hit with a hatchet Strike, he can choose one creature adjacent to the initial target (and within reach if the critical hit was a melee Strike). If the creature's AC is lower than Ghodrak's attack roll result for the critical hit, he deals damage to that creature equal to the result of the weapon damage die rolled. This amount isn't doubled, and no bonuses or other additional dice apply to this damage.

Questioning Ghodrak: If the characters restrain Ghodrak, he's furious to be so humiliated. He reveals everything about the Obsidian Oath's plans in Skywatch, though more as a boastful rant than a confession, and he makes clear in chilling detail what he plans to do to the characters should they make the mistake of leaving him alive. If the party releases Ghodrak, he might turn up elsewhere in the city later, such as in league with the thieves in the Mystic Market, to harry them once more.

RESCUING ULIKUO

Ghodrak carries the keys to every door in the Gray Post, including the cells here, which are secured with simple locks. Ulikuq puts on a stoic face but winces in pain from their broken leg if the characters try to move them. Their broken leg makes them clumsy 3 and reduces their speed to 5 feet until they are healed to maximum hit points or the clumsy condition is removed, or until a character fashions a splint and crutches with a DC 25 Medicine check. The navigator will obviously need the party's help to reach the Smiling Wolves encampment.

RETURNING TO CAMP

Back at camp, Sakuachi greets Ulikuq with a big hug that leaves the navigator breathless. Innumma sees to it that Ulikuq is healed and has a place to rest.

Matz's Reward: If the characters tell Matz that they've taken care of the Obsidian Oath raiders, the ranger grins with glee. As promised, once the party is ready to leave Skywatch, Matz will order the Smiling Wolves stationed at the lockhouse to open the river locks.

XP Award: Grant the characters 30 XP for rescuing Ulikuq and defeating the Obsidian Oath.

Skywatch Gates

When the chronicler Pamak became separated from his allies and found himself seemingly ejected from the city by its own twisting streets, he ventured into the nearby hills to get a better look at the area. He stumbled into the cave of an unusual dragon called a myroga, attracted to the area by the potent energies of the ley line beneath Skywatch. His pleas in Draconic did nothing to sway the misanthropic myroga, who tore the storyteller limb from limb. A similar fate befell the missing Smiling Wolves agent, Hissoi.

The Smiling Wolves saw someone matching Pamak's description—a lanky man in sharkskin leather armor bearing a teal banner with purple stars—wandering around outside Skywatch's gates. Having no other lead, this is the best place for the characters to start their search for the missing bard.

Fortunately, the slushy soil around the city has left Pamak's tracks plain. Any character trained in Survival can easily spot the boot prints without needing to THEY
WATCHED
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STARS

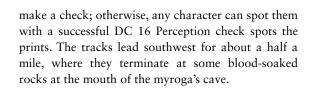
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C1. CAVE ENTRANCE

MODERATE 4

The thin layer of snow outside this shallow rock cave is spattered red with blood, and gibbets of flesh lie scattered here and there.

Creature: Before the characters can flee the scene of the massacre, Pamak's killer emerges from their cave. The myroga issues several challenges to the characters' presence in Draconic, suggesting that they flee immediately unless they want to meet a similar fate as the last "fleshlings" to come upon their cave.

A character who speaks Draconic can attempt a DC 22 Diplomacy check to draw more information from the myroga. On a success, the myroga explains that yes, they met two wanderers matching the descriptions of Hissoi

and Pamak; on a critical success, they even offer to show the PC the severed heads of its two victims in area C2.

Regardless of what the party does, the dragon hisses a final warning: "If my belly weren't so full, I would have torn you limb from limb already." Sure enough, unless the characters heed their warning and leave, the myroga attacks with a salvo of Ley Line Bolts.

When reduced to fewer than 30 Hit Points, the myroga takes flight and flees further into the hills.

MYROGA

CREATURE 6

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Initiative Perception +17

C2. CAVE INTERIOR

Heaps of bones fill the corners of this damp stone cave. The tops of several stalagmites have been broken off to form crude pedestals, atop one of which sit a pair of severed human heads.

The severed heads are those of Pamak and Hissoi.

Treasure: Among several worthless trinkets (though they may appear strange) situated throughout the cave is an *astrolabe of falling stars* (page 79) and 100 gp worth of small esoterica (figurines, scrolls, etc.).

RETURNING TO CAMP

Sakuachi takes Pamak's death hard, holding back tears or openly bawling depending on how the party delivers the news. Innumma swears under his breath, and any other escorts present are only slightly more reserved with their feelings.

Matz's Reward: The Smiling Wolves' leader accepts the report of Hissoi's fate with a grim nod. He loads a cedar box full of treasure onto the party's raft. Inside the heavy chest is 200 gp in mixed coinage, 200 gp in rare gems, and a *traveler's any-tool*.

XP Award: For discovering the final fate of Pamak and Hissoi, award the party 30 XP.

Opening the Lock

Once the characters have rescued Deniigi and Ulikuq and determined Pamak's fate, it's time to leave Skywatch. Matz thanks the party for their help "securing" the city. "You've made the rest of our work here that much easier," he chortles.

"Although," Matz adds, almost as an afterthought, "there's one other matter before you leave: the lockhouse. My Wolves stationed there haven't returned for their last shift change. No one's going anywhere until someone opens the lock. One last favor, for old time's sake?"

LOCKHOUSE

Skywatch's lockhouse is a stone structure at the northeastern edge of the city. Machinery inside the lockhouse can open and close a heavy iron gate that straddles the nearby Little Icerime. Guards used this gate to control who entered and left the city via boat. (A similar lockhouse and gate can be found in the southeastern corner of Skywatch. Since the party's goal is to reach the Lake of Mists and Veils to the north, however, they need only visit the northern lockhouse.)

This location is mapped on page 14.

This thirty-foot-tall stone tower is built atop an artificial mound that overlooks the nearby river. A stone ramp ascends ten feet to a crenellated battlement. The lockhouse's sole entrance is an unmarked wooden door. Two open windows—one facing the city to the west, the other the river to the east—offer additional points of entry. Each window is three feet square and ten feet above the battlement's walkway. Flowering green vines have crept up the western wall and into the window there, but they don't outs look strong enough to climb.

A character who succeeds at a DC 19 Nature check to Recall Knowledge recognizes the vines as glimmervines—carnivorous plants with dazzling flowers native to mountainous regions such as this.

As soon as they enter the lockhouse, the characters attract the attention of the glimmervines infesting the building. Proceed to **Event 10**.

EVENT 10: INVASIVE SPECIES MODERATE 4

The building's windows normally let in plenty of sunlight. At night, most of the lockhouse's interior is dark; spaces within 10 feet of the windows are dimly lit. The ceiling is 20 feet high from the ground floor.

When the characters enter the building, read the following aloud to set the scene for this encounter.

The lockhouse's interior is divided into two levels: the ground floor and an elevated stone walkway. Iron ladders connect the two. The walkway spans the room's breadth, allowing anyone atop to look out the windows. On the ground floor, a squat arch under the walkway leads to the building's rear, where a fifty-foot-deep pit is filled with ropes, pulleys, and mechanical gears. On the wall next to the pit is an auspicious-looking lever.

Two human bodies dangle from the walkway, suspended in a knot of silver-flowered vines.

The corpses are of the missing Smiling Wolves, crushed to death by the glimmervines wrapped around them.

Creatures: A pair of animate, carnivorous plants called glimmervines crept in through the western window and caught the guards unawares. The former residents of Skywatch kept a close eye on the plants' growth, knowing they could be dangerous if left unattended. Under the Smiling Wolves' stewardship, with their lack of knowledge of the

local flora, this exact fear has come to pass. When the player characters enter the room, the vines slither forward to protect their recent kills.

recent kills

CREATURE 4

Page 86

Initiative Perception +11

GLIMMERVINE (2)

Opening the Lock: Pushing up on the lever causes the gears in the pit to slowly rotate and the river gate outside to grind open.

Leaving Skywatch

With the lock open, the party and their allies can board their raft and float down the Little Icerime to leave the city. Before the group leaves, Matz offers some advice.

Matz sees you off at the docks. "I've been talking with some of the smarter Wolves," he says. "This raft will get you to Winterbreak Bay, no problem. The Lake, though, has a mind of its own. If you're going west to Sarkoris, the port you want to reach will be Egede, in Mendev, and that's a long way off. The raft is good, don't get me wrong, but you'll need something bigger to make it all the way.

"There's a ship graveyard," he continues, mock conspiratorially, "not far from Winterbreak Bay. It's called the Jundlan Wrecks. You'll find dozens of ships there, some no doubt seaworthy enough for your voyage. Don't heed the ghost stories—pure poppycock, I'm sure. But hey, who knows? You're good at this treasure-hunting thing. Maybe you'll find more than just a ship among the wreckage."

With a smile and a wink, Matz helps shove the party's raft into the river. The other Smiling Wolves offer friendly waves and a communal howl as the characters begin their voyage.

XP Award: For escaping Skywatch, award each character 80 XP.

WATCHED THE STARS

HEY

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Having escaped Skywatch, the characters' next objective is to reach the Jundlan Wrecks in the Lake of Mists and Veils. There, they can commandeer a vessel sturdy enough to make the rest of the trip across the Lake to the port of Egede on the western shore.

On the Lake

If none of the player characters are sailors, Ulikuq takes the helm and ably steers the raft downriver. Innumma and Deniigi are also competent enough to maneuver the raft, though not as smoothly as Ulikuq. A character trained in Survival who wants to contribute can attempt skill checks to Subsist.

Assuming they used the raft Matz gave them, the party's voyage to Winterbreak Bay is uneventful and takes just shy of 2 days. Characters can use these days to rest, perform limited downtime activities, and get to know their new traveling companions.

Throughout the group's trip, Sakuachi imparts more information about her quest or discusses her background (detailed on page 92). Innumma is also forthcoming with tales of Aaminiut and the many places in northern Avistan he's visited. Ulikuq and Deniigi, on the other hand, don't immediately open up and tend to redirect conversation to focus on the characters, instead.

RECALL KNOWLEDGE

The PCs can attempt a DC 15 Nature or Sailing Lore check to Recall Knowledge about the Lake of Mists and Veils.

Critical Success One of the most noteworthy sites in the Lake of Mists and Veils is the Jundlan Wrecks, a tangle of rimed Issian pirate ships along the coast of Jellicoe Bay. Undead and fey alike infest this sodden boneyard, and every rumor of the Wrecks' supernatural haunts is absolutely true. The PC also recalls the Success information below.

Success The Lake of Mists and Veils is one of Golarion's largest bodies of fresh water, separating much of northern Avistan from the Crown of the World and spanning hundreds of miles from west to east. It's so named for the veil of fog which coats it like a shawl every morning and throughout much of the winter. Countless souls have gone missing in this fog, whether from pirate attacks, freak blizzards, or eerie phenomena which defy explanation altogether.

Failure The character knows nothing in particular about the Lake of Mists and Veils.

Critical Failure The Lake, as it's locally known, is a freshwater ocean which, despite its incredible breadth, is just a few feet deep throughout. Benevolent nixies and cheery-eyed sailors mingle along the Lake's warm, sunny shores no matter the season.

For more information on the Lake of Mists and Veils and inspiration for additional adventures, see The Lake starting on page 68.

Rough Waters

The waters of Winterbreak Bay are choppy and cold. A dense fog hangs in the frigid air, making it difficult to see more than a few yards past the edge of the raft. The lake seems to push the raft toward the shore, as if repelling anyone from its center. With or without the crew's direction, it seems as though the Lake is taking them straight to the Jundlan Wrecks.

It takes 2 days and 2 nights to reach the Wrecks. During this time, the characters can perform more downtime activities. Between days, Sakuachi shares with the group the details of a dream vision she's just experienced.

FLOATING ON A DREAM

The morning before the party arrives at the Jundlan Wrecks, Sakuachi tells everyone that she had a vision in her dreams. She points north, in the direction of the ship graveyard. "By light of the moon, among the tolling of bells," she says solemnly, as if reciting something from memory, "we must find a weeping mermaid."

Sakuachi readily offers her interpretation of the first part of this vision: the party will need to explore the Jundlan Wrecks at night, and should keep an ear out for the tolling of bells. Regarding the "weeping mermaid," however, the seer's guess is as good as anyone's.

When asked, Sakuachi explains that she often catches glimpses of events—past and present, near and far—in her dreams. "My elders tell me it's a blessing," she says. "Sometimes, though, I think it's a curse."

Dream Visitor

If a player character has established a particularly good rapport with Sakuachi, she might share an additional detail of her dream with that character. "There was also a man," she whispers. "He wore a terrible mask

CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

To find a vessel capable of crossing the Lake of Mists and Veils, the party searches the Jundlan Wrecks, a collection of half-destroyed ships trapped in a thawless ice floe. A friendly ghost captain agrees to ferry the group to Egede if they first defeat the naiad queen whose spell binds his ship in ice.

After freeing the ship and nearly completing their voyage across the water, the characters' trip is interrupted by a final danger of the lake's weird magic: a shared hallucination that gives the party their first glimpse of the behemoth Osoyo.

PARTY'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

Sail across the Lake of Mists and Veils to the port of Egede.

PLOT BEATS

The party should learn these details throughout this chapter:

 The characters have all met Osoyo at least once before, as evidenced by their shared hallucination of the Blackfrost Whale.

THEY VATCHED THE STARS

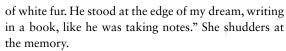
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Characters should recognize the dream visitor Sakuachi describes as the same figure who has invaded their own dreams. This is, in fact, Dr. Ritalson in disguise, checking in on his agents. Thanks to the magic of the rune on Sakuachi's neck, he can see into her dreams as well, even though she isn't a gatewalker. See "The Seventh Arch" for more information about Dr. Ritalson's phantasmal visits.

SAKUACHI'S VISIONS

In game terms, Sakuachi's oracular dreams are a useful narrative device to keep the campaign on track and give the player characters clues about the next steps of their adventure. Use this device in moderation. If you devise additional dreams for Sakuachi to share with the characters, keep the details vague.

REACHING THE WRECKS

At the end of the second day of traveling through Winterbreak Bay, distant shapes slowly coalesce into masts and hulls in the mists ahead. The rough water becomes supernaturally glassy, though here and there the raft bumps into increasingly large ice floes. At the edge of a rather large sheet of ice, the water suddenly opens up, and the mist thins just enough to reveal dozens of half-ruined ships of all shapes and sizes. The party has reached the Jundlan Wrecks.

Jundlan Wrecks

Just east of Acuben Isle, in a portion of the Lake of Mists and Veils called Jellicoe Bay, is a section of water avoided and feared by all sailors of the Lake. The Jundlan Wrecks, as it's known, is a tight collection of broken ships and ancient corpses frozen in thawless ice. The Wrecks are the remnants of a violent naval clash between Issian pirate lords whose names have long been forgotten. It's said that a dreadful curse maintains the ice here all year round, and the ghosts of cruel buccaneers keep stern watch over their tattered ghost ships.

As the party drifts through the wreckage on their little raft, they float past ships in various states of decay. Some poke out of the floe at odd angles, while others are frozen under large mounds of ice. Occasionally, a character might spot a rag-clad skeleton at the helm of a ship, its skull surely staring right at them, or the frozen remains of a first mate staring down from a crow's nest. But the only actual movement the party

sees comes from little whirlwinds of snow kicked up by the wind. An occasional flicker of ghostly light in the distance—will o' wisps, probably—completes the creepy vignette.

JUNDLAN WRECKS FEATURES

The Jundlan Wrecks have the following features.

Light: The dense fog that shrouds the Jundlan Wrecks makes the waxing moon appear even brighter than usual. At night, the ship graveyard is filled with dim light.

Temperature: The temperature of the air around the Jundlan Wrecks is severe cold (Core Rulebook page 512). A character without adequate cold-weather protection (such as winter clothing) takes 1d6 cold damage every hour. While submerged in water or wearing soaking wet clothes, the character is in extreme cold instead and so takes 1d6 cold damage every 10 minutes.

Terrain: Except on the party's raft and in the Temple of the Water Lord (page 24), all the terrain in the Jundlan Wrecks is rimed with ice, making it both uneven ground and difficult terrain.

Exploring the Wrecks

To locate a vessel capable of getting the party across the Lake of Mists and Veils, each character can attempt a DC 20 Perception check to Search or a DC 20 Sailing Lore check to Investigate. Each attempt takes 1 hour. After the party rolls three successes (a critical success counts as two successes), they hear the faint sound of someone sobbing. By following this sound, they come upon a ship called the *Mermaid's Tears*. When the characters board the boat, proceed to **Event 11**.

IUNDLAN WRECKS ENCOUNTERS

As they explore the Jundlan Wrecks, the party might face any of the hundreds of undead pirates that haunt the flotsam. Feel free to liven things up with a fight against a pair of cairn wights (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 292), four draugr (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 102), or any other thematically appropriate Low 5 encounter with local undead.

EVENT 11: THE MERMAID'S TEARS MODERATE 5

The characters can trace the delicate sounds of a person crying to a one-masted merchant ship trapped in thick ice. Read the following aloud to describe the ship to your players.

In contrast to the wreckage all around, the one-masted ship ahead is still upright and looks to be in fine condition, though it's stuck in thick ice. The vessel's figurehead, an oaken carving of a beautiful halfling woman with long hair and the lower body of a fish, is the apparent source of the weeping. Impossibly, actual rivulets of tears stream from the sculpture's eyes. A nameplate beside the figurehead spells out the ship's apt name: Mermaid's Tears. On the ship's port side, a gangplank has been lowered to create a ramp between the main deck and the ice floe in which the ship is trapped.

The Mermaid's Tears is an unusual single-masted knarr owned by Captain Adney Tinhill, an ingenuous Brevic halfling who operated as both a merchant and a mercenary. Combining the mystic techniques of Iobarian witches with the engineering know-how of Numerian shipwrights, Captain Adney animated nearly every part of his ship, essentially creating a vessel that could sail itself. Adney met his mortal end on the cutlass of an Issian pirate lord but, as the characters will soon learn, his ghost has lingered aboard his prized ship.

A character with expert proficiency in Sailing Lore can tell at a glance that the *Mermaid's Tears* is no doubt seaworthy, despite being hundreds of years old; the same can be determined with a successful DC 20 Crafting or Survival check while examining the vessel. However, the vessel isn't going anywhere now, trapped in the ice as it is. Sakuachi suggests the party board the *Mermaid's Tears* to look for more information.

Creature: As soon as the party boards the Mermaid's Tears, the capstan suddenly shutters to life, spinning around and drawing the anchor up onto the deck. This construct—called a capstan swabbie—is the strongest member of Captain Adney's animated crew. It's mistaken the characters for hostile boarders and repels them as such, throwing its anchor at characters to drag them into melee.

CAPSTAN SWABBIE

CREATURE 7

Page 84

Initiative Perception +12

At the beginning of the third round of combat, the ghost of Adney Tinhill emerges from the captain's quarters and orders the capstan swabbie to surrender.

MEETING THE CAPTAIN

Before the party's fight with the capstan swabbie goes too far, the ghost of Captain Adney Tinhill (N male halfling ghost captain 4) drifts from his cabin to intercede. Legless, with solid white eyes and wild hair, the ghost captain is likely a frightful sight, and his eerie wailing doesn't help matters. However, the wail soon transforms into a groan of frustration. Taking a stray piece of wood, he bangs at his capstan swabbie

lightly, admonishing it for attacking "these guests." He apologizes to the party on the swabbie's behalf and introduces himself.

"Welcome aboard the Mermaid's Tears, mateys! I'm Adney Tinhill, captain of this fine vessel. Me and my crew have been trapped in this godsforsaken ice for more years than I care to count. Now, I don't know what kind of ship brought you lot to this floe, but I'd hazard a guess you approached the Tears hoping to commandeer a superior vessel!"

"Well, perhaps you'd like to make a deal with this old salt? Here it is, then: help me break free of the ice, and I'll take you anywhere the water touches!"

Adney outlines the basic points of his request:

- The potent magic of the Jundlan Wrecks is the cause of the ice here. Breaking the ice or melting it simply won't work.
- An evil naiad queen named Pholebis knows a spell that can free the *Mermaid's Tears*. She dwells in a nearby shrine.
- If the characters defeat Pholebis and free his ship,
 Captain Adney will personally escort them to
 Egede on his ship.

ADNEY TINHILL

CREATURE 5

N male elite ghost commoner (Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 167) **Initiative** Perception +12

Questions and Answers

Of course, the party might have some questions or comments for their new phantasmal acquaintance. Their most likely questions and the captain's responses follow.

Who are you? "Why, Adney Tinhill, commodore extraordinaire, master of the Lake of Mists and Veils, the most feared pirate ever to sail the shores of Brevoy! To you, though, just 'captain' should suffice."

How is your ship in such fine shape? The ghostly captain looks proudly at his boat. "A life's work, that's how. I spent all my days salvaging arcane shipwrecks, hiring crew with occult know-how, and engineering every inch of this watercraft. Now, she practically takes care of herself."

Who is Pholebis? "Bad news, that's who. A naiad rotten to the core. Not far from here, she built a temple of bones dedicated to some fey sea serpent or other. She's capable of powerful spellcraft, but guards her magic fiercely, and won't give it up without a fight."

What are we looking for, exactly? "Pholebis possesses a ritual that allows her to turn entire ships into ghosts," Adney says. "We can use that ritual to free the *Mermaid's Tears* from this ice."

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If the characters attack Adney, use the stats for an elite ghost commoner (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 167) to represent him in combat. In addition, the captain can use his telekinetic assault ability to animate the ropes and pullies of his ship, entangling a target on a hit.

To keep the story moving even if they destroy Adney, the party can find scribbled notes in the captain's quarters that point them toward Pholebis and the Temple of the Water Lord. However, Captain Adney's spirit only rests once the *Mermaid's Tears* has completed its voyage to Egede. Until then, his spirit rejuvenates every 2d4 days aboard his ship, meaning the characters will likely have several more chances to engage with the well-meaning ghost captain.

Why should we trust you? Adney looks genuinely hurt. "I swear to Besmara, I'd never do such a thing! A captain is only as good as his word!" With a successful DC 18 Diplomacy check, a character can prod Adney to elaborate. He sighs. "Aye, I have my own reasons for wanting to help you across the Lake. It seems my soul can't move on 'til I've made one final voyage. In other words, you're my ticket to the afterlife!"

Adney's Gifts

If they agree to his request, Adney gives the player characters a *dagger of venom* and a pair of *goggles of night*. "It's likely dark down there," he says by way of explanation. He also advises that the party not board any other ships in the Jundlan Wrecks. "Most of those Issian pirate lords aren't as friendly as myself."

Once the party's ready to go, the ghost captain gives them directions to the Temple of the Water Lord on the other side of the Jundlan Wrecks.

Temple of the Water Lord

Pholebis is a corrupted naiad queen who worships Ragadahn the Water Lord. To honor her patron, she constructed a large shrine from the skeletons of wrecked ships, the bones of fallen pirate lords, and the gold of countless plundered treasures. The so-called Temple of the Water Lord, in which Pholebis holds court over a smattering of undead sailors and cowed fey lackeys, sits at the center of the Jundlan Wrecks.

The temple map can be found on page 26. The PCs approach this structure after 1 hour of picking their way through the Jundlan Wrecks following Captain Adney's directions. Tall masts rise up from the corners of the building, each flying a pennant depicting a blue serpent swallowing its own tail. A single entrance on the west side seems the only way in, though keeneyed characters might find an alternative entrance at area **D2**.

This gray temple is built from the frost-rimed remnants of dozens of shattered hulls and crumbling decks, all held together by makeshift fasteners made from rusty weapons and humanoid skeletons. Icy blue water pours out holes in the wall on either side of the entryway. The whole edifice looms down on its surroundings from atop a large, thick ice floe.

D1. THRESHOLD

LOW 5

A small of wooden stairs ascends to a barnacle-encrusted double-door with bone handles at the front of this gloomy temple. Set in the wall above the door is a gold-and-copper ouroboros, its surface slightly tarnished with verdigris.

A PC who examines the symbol that decorates the temple can attempt a DC 15 Religion check to Recall Knowledge. On a success, the character recognizes the symbol as that of Ragadahn the Water Lord, one the Eldest, the divine beings of the First World.

Creatures: Four drowned sailors guard the entrance to the temple. Unable to speak, they just snarl menacingly at the characters, warning the party away. If the characters don't comply, they raise their axes and attack, fighting until destroyed.

ISSIAN PIRATE LORDS (4)

CREATURE 2

Draugr (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 102) **Initiative** Perception +7

D2. UNDERWATER TUNNEL

A character can attempt a DC 22 Perception check to Seek around this auspicious cleft in the ice under the Temple of the Water Lord. On a success, they recognize the shadowy impression of a tunnel in the ice. A character willing to brave the dark, icy water can swim under the ice floe to access a narrow tunnel. The tunnel spans 10 feet from the bottom of the floe to the 2-foot-wide hole in the floor of area **D6**.

D3. ANTECHAMBER

Three wide corridors branch from this intersection. All around, the walls of the temple are made of thick piles of rotting ship lumber, rusty anchors, and crumbling humanoid bones.

Like an icy royal carpet, a shallow channel of running water cuts into the ice floe that serves as the temple's foundation.

D4. WATERWHEEL

MODERATE 5

The channel of water running through this room's floor passes under a waterwheel connected to a pair of grinding stones. Next to the waterwheel lies a pile of bones.

Water flowing through the channel typically turns the waterwheel here, allowing Pholebis's draugr minions to sharpen their axes and to grind bones into dust for Pholebis's rituals. However, two recent arrivals to this chamber have upset Pholebis's scheme and jammed up the water wheel.

Creatures: A pair of amphibious fey giants known as kvernknurrs lounge about near the waterwheel. They arrived at the temple just a short while ago, sent here by the Lantern King, a trickster god and Eldest rival of Ragadahn. When they heard the telltale

TEMPLE FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted, the Temple of the Water Lord has the following features.

Temperature: The air inside the temple is a bit warmer than outside (mild cold instead of severe cold), so creatures don't take damage from the chill. Wading through water in the temple doesn't deal damage, but creatures wearing totally soaked clothing take 1d6 cold damage each hour inside the temple until they dry off.

Entrances: Aside from the threshold (area **D1**), there's one other entrance to the temple's interior: an underwater tunnel carved through the floe from area **D2** to area **D6**.

Channels: Icy water flows from magical fountains in area **D8** into shallow channels that course through the temple. Pholebis carved these channels to allow her minion, the Fist of Ragadahn, to move throughout most of the temple. Except for the hole in area **D6** and the pool in area **D7**, the water in the channels is only 1 foot deep. These shallow channels are difficult terrain.

Light: Unless otherwise noted, the temple's interior areas are dimly lit by candles wedged at random intervals into the walls.

sounds of the waterwheel, they knew immediately what to do: they dispatched the draugr using the mills, then latched onto the waterwheel with their oversized jaws, bringing the machine to a halt.

Currently, only one kvernknurr remains clamped onto the wheel. The other keeps a lookout for enemies. When the player characters enter the room, the kvernknurr on the water wheel lets go of the device, and both attack with reckless abandon. They're unerringly loyal to their patron deity and fight until destroyed.

KVERNKNURRS (2)

CREATURE 5

Page 87

Initiative Perception +12

PHOLEBIS'S WORK

If the characters defeat the kvernknurrs here before they meet Pholebis in area **D8**, she's automatically friendly toward them at the start of their meeting. In this case, she immediately offers to teach them the *phantom ship* ritual as thanks for "cleansing" her temple.

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More than a dozen wooden figureheads are mounted along the walls here. Their shapes range from human to godly to downright monstrous. Silent eyes peer from each sculpture as they keep watch over the channel of water in the center of the room.

At the far end of the room hangs a figurehead depicting Desna. A crack in the figurehead's breast reveals a hollow cavity in the sculpture—and glimmering gold within.

Pholebis uses this hall to showcase all the Jundlan vessels whose undead crews she's either destroyed or subjugated. For each such defeated crew, the naiad queen incorporates most of their ship into the Temple of the Water Lord, except for the ship's figurehead. She keeps the figureheads of these ships on display in this hall.

Treasure: Inside the Desna-shaped figurehead in the far corner is a cache of 50 gp. This isn't the only treasure-laden figurehead in this room. Many Issian pirates hid ill-gotten booty in unassuming places on their ships.

In addition to the Desnan figurehead, five of the 13 other figureheads here have hidden compartments built into them which contain caches of loot. Four of the caches contain 100 gp each in bullion, small art items, or valuable jewelry. One of the caches contains a *horn of fog*. The remaining figureheads either lack a hidden compartment or the compartment is empty.

Before the party enters this area, choose which figureheads contain what types of treasure. A character can spend 10 minutes to attempt a DC 20 Perception check to Search a figurehead. If they succeed, they either find the figurehead's treasure-filled compartment or determine that the figurehead doesn't have such a compartment.

Each hour, two of the draugr in area **D1** shamble to this area as part of their regular rounds, attacking any intruders on sight. These draugr also come here to investigate any loud noises, such as a character attempting to bash open the figureheads or casting a spell to get at their hidden treasure quickly. Once the draugr have been defeated, the party can spend as long as they like in this room without fear of attack.

D6. ICE HOLE

Nets, hooks, and spears lie scattered about this small chamber. In the southern corner, a circle of ice has been chipped away to reveal the dark lake water underneath the ice floe.

The temple's undead attendants sometimes use the tools in this room to drag useful items that get caught on the floe beneath the ice hole.

Each hour, two draugr from area **D1** come here as part of their regular rounds. They also come here to investigate if they hear any loud noises.

Treasure: The fishing tools here include two nets, a low-grade cold iron dagger, and a +1 striking longspear.

D7. GRODAIR POOL

MODERATE 5

Two channels meet at a rectangular pool carved into the ice. The pool looks about four feet deep and is lined with tar-sealed wood. The air smells strongly of algae and fish.

Creatures: Pholebis built this room for a grodair minion that accompanied her to here from the First World. The grodair is attended by a pair of wights responsible for finding new and interesting things for the grodair to taste; they usually venture into the Jundlan Wrecks and drain the life from curious explorers or unwary animals. The wights learned a while back to not shirk this duty after the grodair ate one of their companions out of boredom.

When the PCs enter, the wights are delighted to see new victims for their charge, especially if one or more of the player characters is of an uncommon or rare ancestry or heritage. In this case, one of the wights hisses, "Ah, new menu," before lunging forward to attack.

On the second round of combat, the grodair emerges from the pool to investigate the sounds of combat and join the fray. The wights fight until destroyed, but if the grodair is reduced to 12 Hit Point or fewer, it retreats back into the pool, begging in Aquan and Sylvan to be spared.

WIGHTS (2)

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 332 **Initiative** Perception +10

GRODAIR

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 140 **Initiative** Perception +13

Questioning the Grodair: If cornered, the grodair tells the party everything it knows about the Temple. It's a lifelong companion of Pholebis, and it knows that, despite her depravity, she's a naiad of her word. Perhaps most usefully, the grodair can describe the entire layout of the temple and all its treasures to the player characters.

Treasure: Two *dragon turtle scales* lie at the bottom of the pool, automatically noticeable by any character who shines a light source into the water.

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Adventure Toolbox

Issian Pirate Lord



D8. RAGADHAN ALTAR SEVERE 5

In the center of this broad altar chamber, a staircase built of countless frozen bones ascends to a raised balcony. Twin fountains in the shape of water-spewing serpents create streams of icy water that cascade down the balcony and into bone pools on either side of the stairway. Between the fountains, looming over the room like a coiling shepherd, is a massive wooden sculpture of a writhing snake eating its own tail.

This room is filled with bright light thanks to the chandeliers hanging by chains from the ceiling.

Pholebis spends nearly all her time between this chamber and the adjoining library, performing rites to Ragadahn and studying aquatic arcana such that it might please the Water Lord. Once every few weeks, she might leave the temple to scavenge more temple parts from the Jundlan Wrecks or destroy a ship in Ragadahn's name. She's always looking for ways to further exult Ragadahn, hoping to turn the entirety of the Jundlan Wrecks into a temple for him.

Creatures: When the characters enter, Pholebis is likely praying before the sculpture here, singing paeans in Ragadahn's name. She doesn't take kindly to interruptions, particularly from non-fey, but she doesn't immediately attack. If the party is open to discussion and tells her what they want, Pholebis proposes that they do her a favor in exchange for the ritual they seek, as detailed in "Pholebis's Request".

The other creature in this room is a servant of Ragadahn that the Eldest sent down to guard the grand temple Pholebis constructed for him. Pholebis calls this servant—a serpentine entity made of living water—the Fist of Ragadahn. This entity shows itself only if the characters attack Pholebis or attempt to desecrate the temple in any way; until then, the Fist of Ragadahn lurks beneath the water in one of the pools, remaining undetected unless a creature succeeds at a DC 32 Perception check to Seek.

In combat, Pholebis and the Fist of Ragadahn fight until destroyed. The Fist of Ragadahn can't stray from water without significantly weakening itself. It travels along the water channels that course through the temple and attempts to push the party outside the structure, where it can fight on open water. If necessary, Pholebis picks up the *staff of evocation* near the door to the library (see Treasure) and uses it to hurl acid arrows and glitterdust at the characters.

FIST OF RAGADAHN

CREATURE 5

Living waterfall (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 152) **Initiative** Perception +10

PHOLEBIS

CREATURE 7

CE female naiad queen (Pathfinder Bestiary 248)

Initiative Perception +18

Items +1 glamered leather armor

Treasure: The offertory plate in front of the altar contains 150 gp worth of pearls and aquamarines (enough to attempt the *phantom ship* ritual three times). In addition, a *staff of evocation* leans against the doorway to the library.

Pholebis's Request

When she first meets them, Pholebis regards the characters as potential tools and asks them to help her solve a little problem. She explains that two kvernknurrs have taken up residence in her temple. These pesky fey have jammed the waterwheel Pholebis relies on to grind bones into dust (area **D4**); this bone dust is a component for many of the unholy rites she commits in Ragadahn's name.

Ordinarily, Pholebis would take care of such pests herself, but she's worried that the kvernknurrs might be agents of some other Eldest come to stir trouble between Pholebis and her patron, Ragadahn. She doesn't want to risk damaging her temple and accidentally offending her god by attacking the kvernknurrs herself. But if the characters were to kill the kvernknurrs on her behalf, freeing up her waterwheel once more, that should be just fine. In exchange, Pholebis offers to give the party a copy of the formula for the *phantom ship* ritual, which they can use to free the *Mermaid's Tears* from the Jundlan Wrecks. She'll even give them 50 gp worth of pearls and aquamarines from the shrine here (enough to attempt the ritual once).

D9. LIBRARY

Various crests, ornaments, and tokens—a scimitar, a stylized snowflake, a burning sun, an angry eye, and more—hang from the walls of this squat library. Bookcases are carved into the walls, each shelf lined with moldering tomes.

Water damage has ruined many of the books in Pholebis's library. Nevertheless, a character can find a bevy of knowledge scattered among the room's surviving vellum scrolls, leatherbound books, and woodcuts. Even if no one in the party is a spellcaster, the party can still nab the formula for the *phantom ship* ritual here. They'll need this ritual to free the *Mermaid's Tears* from the Jundlan Wrecks.

Treasure: In addition to the *phantom ship* ritual, the library contains one intact scroll each of the new spells

in the Adventure Toolbox starting on page 80. These include *advanced scurvy*, *briny bolt*, and *lashing rope*.

A character who spends 1 hour in the library can assemble a compendium of scholarly journals about the Lake of Mists and Veils' history, geography, legends, locations, and inhabitants. See page 291 of the *Core Rulebook* for rules on scholarly journals. See page 68 for more information about the Lake of Mists and Veils.

Casting the Ritual

Once they have access to the *phantom ship* ritual, the characters can return to the *Mermaid's Tears* to tell Captain Adney the good news. If the characters dispatched Pholebis, the captain hoots with good cheer, but if they tell him they made a bargain with her, he only nods grimly.

The party's work at the Jundlan Wrecks is nearly done. All they have to do now is successfully perform the *phantom ship* ritual on the *Mermaid's Tears*. The characters should attempt to perform this ritual to the best of their abilities; if they lack the requisite skills to conduct it, Sakuachi can lead the ritual using Occultism, and Adney and Innumma can act as secondary casters using Sailing Lore and Survival, respectively. Each NPC's skill modifier is +15.

Each time the group fails to cast the ritual, there's a chance that roving undead approach the *Mermaid's Tears* to attack. Roll a DC 15 flat check to determine whether 1d6 draugrs (*Bestiary* 2 102) appears between each ritual attempt.

Once they successfully cast the ritual, the group becomes shrouded in magical fog that turns them and the ship incorporeal. Unfettered by the ice floes and half-sunken ships all around, Captain Adney guides the *Mermaid's Tears* toward open waters. Once there, the ship re-substantiates and sails westward toward the coast of Mendey.

Setting Sail

Adney estimates that, weather permitting, it should take about 4 days for the *Mermaid's Tears* to reach Egede from the Jundlan Wrecks. This swift pace is possible only because the ship's construct crew can sail the vessel at full speed, day and night, without need for rest.

The first 2 days of this voyage are uneventful, with the exception of a minor squall on the second evening. The characters can use these days to rest and perform downtime activities.

Forgotten Memories

About halfway between the Jundlan Wrecks and Egede, sailors have reported sightings of enormous gaseous bubbles that rise from the depths of the Lake of Mists and Veils. When these bubbles pop, they release sweet, poisonous gas that causes sailors to experience mass hallucinations or lose their senses of self entirely.

On the third day of its voyage to Mendev, the *Mermaid's Tears* enters the domain of these mysterious bubbles. The party's first indication of the bubbles comes in the form of warmongering mariners who

THEY
WATCHED
THE
STARS

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Adventure Toolbox

Pholebis



enemy captain (Event 13), whose delusional babble presages the perils to come.

The 36 hours before they reach Egede are the party's most trying yet. They sail through multiple vision-inducing bubbles, the gases of which cause shared hallucinations that show the characters forgotten memories—glimpses of the time they lost on the night of the Missing Moment. These visions are so vivid and so disturbing that the party must fight for their lives against the phantasmagoric monsters that emerge from their own memories (Event 14) and the delirium of their companion Sakuachi (Event 15).

Use the map above for these encounters; the Mermaid's Tears is to the north and the Red Duchess to the south.

EVENT 12: ENEMIES ON BOARD LOW 5

The afternoon of their third day of sailing, one of the characters spots a vessel on the horizon. Time reveals that the ship—a two-masted caravel painted black and bearing a crimson flag-is heading straight toward

echo from the decks of the mysterious caravel, making its crew's intentions patently clear: they intend to board the Mermaid's Tears and kill everyone aboard.

This rival ship is the Red Duchess, a Chelaxian caravel operating between Egede, Chesed, and Port Ice. The crew are all former guards of House Thrune who took up sailing after they failed to stamp out the revolution in Kintargo several years ago. Yesterday, they altered their usual route to avoid a small storm. In doing so, they sailed directly into a bubble as it rose from the Lake of Mists and Veils and popped on the ship's devil-shaped figurehead. The crew caught a strong dose of the bubble's gas, which sent their minds reeling back to the violent days of the Chelaxian revolution. The furious, deluded crew maintained only enough reason to pilot their vessel south until they spotted the Mermaid's Tears—an ideal target upon which to unleash their violent rage.

Vision: As the Red Duchess comes within a few dozen yards of the Mermaid's Tears, a strong breeze wafts a sweet odor—like lilacs and vanilla—from the invaders' ship. As the player characters catch a whiff of the aroma, they're suddenly overcome with a hallucinatory vision of the past.

Read the following aloud to describe their shared vision.

The sweet-smelling breeze sends your mind reeling and provokes a vision so vivid it seems real. This hallucination is no random, meaningless delusion, though—it's a memory. And not just any memory, either, but one which you recalled only hazily until now, rendered in vivid detail before your very eyes: the sun low in the sky, the chill of the fall air, the glowing gateway before you. It's the evening of the Missing Moment, the night everything changed.

The only thing out of place is that, in this memory, you're not alone. Several other figures—your fellow party members—stand beside you as you all gaze at the gate. Standing at a distance is the seer Sakuachi, who silently watches your group. In unspoken agreement, your party strides forward and walks through the gate together.

The vision dissipates as quickly as it formed. In the meantime, the crew of the *Red Duchess* hasn't been idle. When the characters snap to, they discover that the *Mermaid's Tears* has already been boarded!

Allow each player character to roll a DC 20 Will save. They experience the vision no matter the result, but on a success, the character maintains enough self-awareness to gain a +1 circumstance bonus to their initiative roll (+2 on a critical success) against the invading crew.

Creatures: The *Red Duchess*'s bosun and four of her crewmates stand on the *Mermaid's Tears*' deck, brandishing their weapons with murder in their eyes. While Captain Adney tangles with the ropes connecting the two ships, Sakuachi and her companions are still lost in their own hallucinatory reveries. It's up to the characters to repel their enemies!

During Event 13 and Event 14, the *Red Duchess* crew use ropes to latch onto the *Mermaid's Tears* and keep the boats within 15 feet. To get from one boat to the other, characters can Leap over the gap or Climb across a connecting rope; in either case, the DC is 15.

RED DUCHESS SAILORS (4)

CREATURE 2

Pirates (Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide 242)

Initiative Perception +6

RED DUCHESS BOSUN

CREATURE 3

Female human bosun (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 243) **Initiative** Perception +8

After the Fight: With the bosun and her crewmates defeated, the PCs might want to begin hacking at the ropes connecting the two ships. Whether or not they do, Captain Adney bemoans, "It's no good—these maggots seem like they want to chase us to the ends of the world, and they've got a fast enough ship to do it!" The only way to shake the marauders, he says, is to defeat their captain. "A ship with no captain's as good as scuppered," he explains.

EVENT 13: THE RED DUCHESS'S HOLD MODERATE 5

Before they can escape, the PCs need to defeat the *Red Duchess*'s captain. If they don't board her caravel, a few rounds after the party defeats the first wave of sailors, the *Red Duchess*'s captain flings open the door of her cabin and marches out. She's as corrupted by the bubble's gases as her crew, and she unsheathes her scimitar as she makes her way toward the *Mermaid's Tears*, rage on her features.

Chapter 1: Escape from Skywatch

HEY

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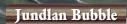
STARS

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Creatures: The captain of the *Red Duchess* is a tall, imposing Chelaxian named Kitari Lambossa. As the wild-eyed captain swings her sword at the party, she shouts nonsensical vitriol, calling the characters "traitorous scum," and "enemies of the one true house of Cheliax." Like her crew, Kitari fights to the death. With her dying breath, she regains just enough clarity to issue a vague warning. "Bubble," she gasps. She repeats the word a few times, then dies.

RED DUCHESS SAILORS (2)

CREATURE 2

Pirates (Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide 242)

Initiative Perception +6



KITARI LAMBOSSA

CREATURE 6

LE female human ship captain (Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide 243)

Initiative Perception +12

Items dagger, hand crossbow (10 bolts), leather armor, main-gauche, +1 scimitar (replaces rapier)

Melee [one-action] *scimitar* +17 (forceful, magical, sweep), **Damage** 1d6+10 piercing

After the Fight: Once they've defeated Kitari, the characters can safely explore the *Red Duchess* before returning to the *Mermaid's Tears*. The caravel's remaining crew don't interfere, and in fact don't seem to be conscious of the situation at all—they simply stand in place on the ship's deck, mouths agape and

eyes unblinking. A character who succeeds at a DC 18 Medicine check can deduce that these sailors are beyond hope—their consciousnesses have been totally destroyed. The best that can be done for them is to make them comfortable before their bodies shut down.

Sakuachi and her companions snap out of their fugues soon after the characters. If prompted, the young seer says that yes, she shared the characters' group hallucination; in her vision, she could only watch as the party walked through the *aiudara*. She shakes her head wearily, unable to make any sense of the vision. See the sidebar on page 34 for more information about these visions and what Sakuachi gleans from them.

Treasure: The *Red Duchess*'s hold contains two lesser sea touch elixirs, two lesser mistform elixirs, and 200 gp.

EVENT 14: ANGRY STORM MODERATE 5

Free of the *Red Duchess*, the *Mermaid's Tears* continues its course toward Egede. Unfortunately, this course takes the party straight through yet another danger: a snowstorm of epic proportions. Worse, the snowstorm is infused with the same sweet, mind-warping gas that affected the crew of the *Red Duchess*.

Vision: As the characters' ship sails through the gas-infused flurry, the characters are all exposed to a second dose of the gas, causing them to have another shared hallucination based on their buried memories. Read the following aloud to describe the party's shared vision.

As you inhale a lungful of crisp, sweet-smelling air, your mind is once more whisked away from the present. This time, though, there's no glowing gate in sight. Instead, your party is somewhere very cold and very desolate. You trudge together through an arctic waste in the middle of

a snowstorm, compelled by some unseen force to move toward an unknown destination. In your hands, you pull one end of a rope secured to a sled that trails behind your party. On the sled is the body of some large creature, hidden to you beneath a canvas tarp.

Once again, Sakuachi stands at a distance, too far from you to do anything but watch. Ahead, a black spire juts from the horizon. Just as quickly, though, the spire resolves itself to be a ship mast. The crunching snow beneath your feet yaws and rolls, and you are once more on the *Mermaid's Tears*, her sail flapping wildly in a strong and bitter wind.

When their vision subsides, the player characters are once again on their ship's deck, but they've seemingly brought back the worst effects of their shared hallucination with them. The blizzard has worsened significantly—the gunwales are coated in ice, drifts of snow are piled by the doors leading below decks, and the lake churns with big, choppy waves. The most pressing matter, however, is a creature of elemental ice—a manifestation of the freak tempest itself.

SNOWSTORM

During **Event 14**, the *Mermaid's Tears* rocks to and fro amid a blinding snowstorm, resulting in the following environmental effects during the party's encounter with the manifested blizzard.

- Heavy Snow: Creatures take a -2 penalty to visual Perception checks. A creature farther than 15 feet away is concealed by the falling snow. (Remember: The manifested blizzard creatures ignores the characters' concealed condition from falling snow.)
- Strong Winds: Creatures take a -2 penalty to ranged attack rolls and a -2 penalty to auditory Perception checks. Torches are extinguished.
- Rocking Ship: Creatures standing aboard the Mermaid's Tears must Balance (DC 18) to move across the pitching vessel.

Creature: The blizzard in the party's vision has coalesced into an elemental entity on the deck of the *Mermaid's Tears*. Its humanoid form looks vaguely familiar; if a player character peers closely at the monster, they see features of their own visage roughly hewn across the elemental's "face."

Though this creature is mostly a product of the characters' psyches, it's real enough to hurt them. It slashes and bludgeons any creature within its reach until destroyed. As soon as the elemental is defeated, the snow on deck melts away and the worst waves cease battering the ship.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND: BRIMGATE WALKER

If a character has the Brimgate Walker character background from the *Gatewalkers Player's Guide*, they recognize the *Red Duchess*, its infamous captain, and the checkered history of the ship's crew. All were loyalists of House Thrune who fought brutally (some would say "valiantly") to maintain Chelaxian rule amid a burgeoning revolution. When the rebel forces humiliated the infernal empire by establishing the nation of Ravounel, Kitari Lambossa and her company were just some among the many disgraced Thrune guards who abandoned their homeland in search of a new path.

MANIFESTED BLIZZARD

CREATURE 7

Elite blizzardborn (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 6, 115) **Initiative** Perception +16

Back to Reality: After the fight, Sakuachi rushes up to the player characters and asks if they're alright. As before, she was privy to the party's vision, though once again she can make little sense of it.

EVENT 15: THE FINAL MEMORY

SEVERE 5

Hours after **Event 14**, night descends. It's the final night of the party's voyage across the Lake, and dark storm clouds roll in to commemorate the occasion.

Captain Adney explains that there's at least another full day of sailing ahead of them, but the *Mermaid's Tears* should reach Egede the following evening. In the meantime, he suggests the party get a night's rest, especially after the day they've had. If asked about the vision-inducing gas bubbles, Adney fibs: "We won't have to worry about those bubbles anymore. We'll be well past that part of the lake in no time." A character can see through his lie with a successful DC 12 Perception check. If called out, he sighs. "We've got no other choice, I'm afraid. The only way out is through." On this point, at least, the captain's right.

At approximately three o'clock in the morning, a thin bubble emerges just a few hundred feet in front of the *Mermaid's Tears*. It reaches the ship before Captain Adney can do anything about it, popping on the ship's mast and dosing everyone on board with the strongest dose of gas yet.

Sakuachi's guides, who were sleeping, are given terrible nightmares. The seer herself also has a bad dream, which causes her to sleepwalk up to the WATCHED THE STARS

HEY

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The characters' bubble-induced visions aboard the *Mermaid's Tears* during **Events 12**, **14**, and **15** are fragments of the memories they lost during the Missing Moment. With to her strange divinatory powers, Sakuachi is able to bear witness to the characters' memories even though she wasn't present at the time they occurred.

For the first two visions, the young seer can make no more sense of the memories than the characters. During the party's final shared vision in **Event 15**, however, Sakuachi has a mind-shattering revelation: that the player characters are the ones responsible for kidnapping the saumen kar Ainamuuren and for helping Osoyo break free from its icy prison. For but an instant, Sakuachi knows exactly what the characters did during the Missing Moment. Unfortunately, as with a dream, she doesn't remember her revelation when she snaps back to reality, though the painful feeling of betrayal will no doubt linger. The party will have to wait until the next adventure, "Dreamers of the Nameless Spires," to make full sense of their visions.

main deck. Whether the player characters are asleep belowdeck or keeping a lookout, they experience a final shared vision—their strangest yet—which is interrupted only by Sakuachi's response to her own very potent dream.

Vision: Read aloud the following to describe the characters' shared vision.

After taking a breath of sweet air that is, by now, quite familiar, you're hardly surprised when your vision blurs and melts into yet another vision. You stand on hard, frozen ground in the center of a circle of towering black monoliths. The spires, each hundreds of feet tall, stand against a moonless night sky, illuminated here and there by curtains of auroral light.

The sled you dragged with you in the previous vision is nowhere in sight, though Sakuachi is present once more, watching from a distance. Below you, the ground is a sheet of solid, blackest ice. Through the nigh-impenetrable ice, you see the form of a massive beast limned in iridescent blue light. You feel compelled to get closer to the titanic being, and kneel to do so. The ice cracks slightly.

A piercing scream breaks the hallucination and dissipates the vision. Back on the *Mermaid's Tears*, Sakuachi stands on deck, mouth agape, clearly caught in

her own hallucinatory trance. She stares with wild eyes at a mass of dark clouds rushing toward the ship at an alarming speed. As the clouds near, they resolve into the shape of some massive, whale-like monster—the same dark shape just glimpsed lurking beneath the ice! Its icy blue eyes shine through the storm like stars.

"The stars!" Sakuachi cries deliriously. "They've come to punish us!" Indeed, the cloud-monster's eyes become javelins of light which streak down toward the *Mermaid's Tears* at incredible speed and land on deck with two audible thuds.

Once again, the player characters have unwittingly brought an entity from their memories with them to the present moment. This time, the manifestation is that of Osoyo, the dread alien they spied beneath a floor of glacial ice in their latest vision. To make matters worse, in Sakuachi's own bubble-induced delirium, she's subconsciously realized that the player characters are responsible for unleashing the Blackfrost Whale. Her panic causes a pair of violent stellar monsters to manifest aboard the *Mermaid's Tears*.

Hazard: A phantasmal manifestation of Osoyo looms high above, gazing down at the ship from dark gray clouds. His shape and features are as indistinct as they were in the vision of him trapped beneath the ice. Just as in that memory, the Blackfrost Whale's eyes glow an icy blue.

This phantom isn't really Osoyo—it's an amalgam of the party's psychic might, a force made semi-real by the effects of the lake's mysterious gases and turned against the characters. This doesn't mean the party's in the clear, though; the mirage is still a dangerous entity.

MEMORY OF OSOYO

HAZARD 5

UNIQUE COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL MAGICAL

Stealth +12 (expert)

Description The party's memories of Osoyo coalesce into a titanic mirage in the storm clouds above.

Disable DC 22 Occultism (trained) or DC 24 Arcana (trained) to divert the memory's rage; three total successful checks are required to disable the hazard

Glacial Gust → Trigger The characters' shared vision during Event 15 subsides; Effect The memory of Osoyo unleashes a tremendous sigh of freezing wind, coating the deck of the Mermaid's Tears in ice in a 60-foot cone. (The hazard can choose any point for the cone to originate.) The area becomes difficult terrain. Creatures in the area must succeed at a DC 26 Fortitude save or take 1d6 persistent cold damage as the freezing wind cuts to the bone. The hazard then rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action) The memory of Osoyo gives a keening scream that shatters the layer of ice coating the deck

of the Mermaid's Tears. Any creature on difficult terrain created by the memory's Glacial Gust takes 2d8+7 cold damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save) from the icy shrapnel.

Creatures: The two beams of starlight that shoot from the memory of Osoyo's eyes and land on the ship are manifestations of Sakuachi's hallucinatory panic. As soon as they hit the deck of the *Mermaid's Tears*, the vengeful stars solidify into snakelike entities. They immediately target the characters and fight in tandem with the memory of Osoyo.

The vengeful stars open

combat by using Hypnosis

on as many creatures on deck as possible. Sakuachi is automatically affected.

Afterward, one vengeful star makes bite Strikes against any characters in reach; the other hangs back to cast spells. Each vengeful star fights until reduced to 0 Hit Points, at which point in Egede they disintegrate into motes of light that streak back

VENGEFUL STARS (2)

up into the sky.

CREATURE 5

Weak lunar nagas (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 6, 178) **Initiative** Perception +14

After the Battle: When she returns to her senses, Sakuachi has only vague memories about what she saw in her vision. She does recall an acute feeling of betrayal or dismay, though. She begins to suspect that the characters may be somehow involved with the entity slumbering under the Crown of the World, as well as perhaps her grandmother's missing saumen kar friend. She isn't certain whether this makes the PCs allies or enemies to her own cause—though how they've treated her up to this point certainly colors her perception.

DEVIANT ABILITY AWAKENING

The hallucinatory visions the characters share aboard the *Mermaid's Tears* awaken dormant powers within each gatewalker. After the party overcomes the manifested dangers of **Event 15**, each character gains the Awakened Power feat from page 100 of *Pathfinder Dark Archive*. See "The Seventh Arch" for details on deviant abilities in the Gatewalkers Adventure Path.

Welcome to Egede

The party's confrontation with their manifested memory of Osoyo and Sakuachi's vengeful stars is their final challenge on the Lake of Mists and Veils. The rest of the night and the entire next day pass without incident. As the sun begins to set on the final day of the voyage, the Mendevian coastline and eventually the city of Egede come into view.

Before Captain Adney can moor the *Mermaid's Tears* at Egede's docks,

a small keelboat rows out to meet the ship. Egede's dockmaster on duty, **Eoldir Evenhand** (N male human dockworker 4), calls out from the boat in a greeting that sounds a bit like a challenge. Eoldir, a white-haired man with a close-cropped

beard and deep lines creasing his face, informs the party that the *Mermaid's Tears* isn't welcome to dock in Egede.

"You might be fine people, but your ship looks like it was dragged from the bottom of lake. We don't want trouble, but we don't want spectral ships or ghostly crew docking at our port either. Really... this is for your own safety."

The characters can ask Eoldir about Egede, but the dockmaster is loath to tell them much about the city's current situation in public. He rightly worries that onlookers from the docks might hear him sharing details with "outsiders" and report him to the fanatics presently controlling the city's government.

Eoldir doesn't board the *Mermaid's Tears*, no matter what the party says. If the characters make him friendly (Will DC 20), Eoldir offers to ferry the party and their living companions ashore. If made helpful, he allows the *Mermaid's Tears* to dock, but only for an hour at most. Otherwise, Captain Adney must sail a short distance along the coast so the party and their allies can disembark at a small cove and enter the city on foot.

In either case, once he's safely deposited them at Egede, Captain Adney says his work is done. His pact fulfilled, he thanks the party for sharing an eventful final voyage with him. As he bids the group farewell and sails the *Mermaid's Tears* into the horizon, the ghost, his mechanical crew, and the entire ship slowly dissipate into thin air.

XPAward: For arriving at Egede in one piece, award the party 80 XP.

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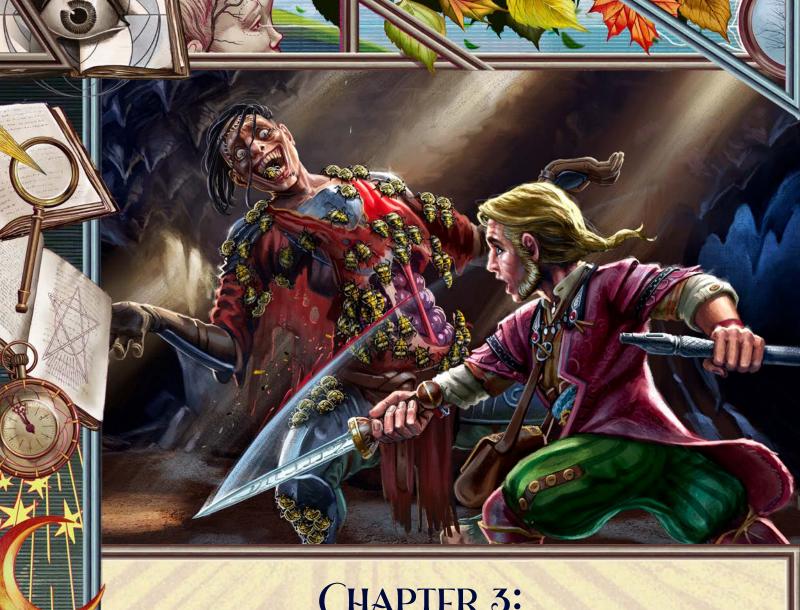
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CHAPTER 3: WHAT REMAINS

Before beginning the on-foot portion of their trek toward "the land where gods still walk among mortals," the player characters and their allies must rest and restock in the city of Egede. At the very least, Sakuachi wants to ask locals for advice on how, exactly, the party should get to the Sarkoris Scar.

Though Egede was once a bustling hub that catered to all manner of travelers, recent events have changed the locals' attitude dramatically. Now, the people of Egede aren't exactly thrilled to see newcomers, especially strange adventurers like the party of gatewalkers and their stargazing friends. Before they can get the information they need to leave the city,

however, the party will need to prove their benign intentions to Egede's xenophobic ruling council.

The following pages present basic information about Egede useful for running this part of the adventure. Since they dock at night and are likely beleaguered from nearly a week of lake travel, the adventurers' first order of business will likely be finding a place to rest. Before the they can even make it to an inn, however, some overcautious locals accost them on the city's streets.

Before beginning the chapter, refer to the Recall Information section on page 38 to determine what each character already knows about Egede. Afterward, proceed with Egede Encounters on page 38.

Egede at a Glance

Egede is the second-largest city in Mendev. It's also the final stop on the River Road—a series of highways, waterways, and backroads spanning most of Avistan and used primarily by crusaders. Though the Sellen River (after which the route takes its name) actually ends in Chesed to the southeast, the River Road is classically said to terminate in Egede.

During the war, much of Egede's economy revolved around providing weapons, armor, and other support to the crusaders who traveled the River Road to the Worldwound. To a lesser extent, the city was also a bastion of healing and recuperation for those who managed to return from the war.

Though the closure of the Worldwound was obviously a positive development for the people of northern Avistan, the end of the Mendevian Crusades proved to be a mixed blessing for Egede. For the last half-decade, the city has been in a decline. The only people coming through nowadays are pilgrims known as Reclaimers—courageous ex-crusaders, benevolent druids, and descendants of Old Sarkoris who've made it their mission to restore the Scar. Though these folks sometimes bring goods to trade for construction materials or adventuring supplies, on the whole Egede has far less hustle and bustle than its mid-war heyday.

Many of Egede's citizens are still so exhausted from over a century of war that, even now, a pall of sadness hangs over the city. For some, this sadness has reverted to an attitude typical of many of the people who dwell along the ominous Lake of Mists and Veils: a mixture of stoicism and aloofness that often manifests as a distrust of strangers. Others, including the leaders of the newly formed Committee for Moral Rectitude, retain the entrepreneurial spirit that previously defined Egede and are all too ready to exploit their fellow citizens' burgeoning xenophobia.

EGEDE SETTLEMENT 6

LG CITY

Insular, war-scarred trading hub whose glory days ended with the closure of the Worldwound.

Government Delegate (elected leader)

Population 28,590 (77% humans, 10% mixed-ancestry tieflings, 8% halflings, 5% other)

Languages Abyssal, Common, Hallit

Religions Gorum, Iomedae, Nocticula (as the Redeemer Queen)

Threats fanatical zealots, religious infighting, stray elements of demonic warfare **End of the Road** With the end of the war to the west, Egede's heyday is over, resulting in a poor local economy and inflated costs across the board. The Price of any item or service is 150% the usual amount. Characters can convince a vendor to lower their Prices by improving the vendor's attitude to helpful.

Becka Rossum (LN female human shopkeeper 7) popular general store owner **Gaar Steelflare** (LN male dwarf ex-crusader 5) zealous war veteran

Zolivelli Suth (LE female half-elf priest of lomedae 6) high-ranking local church official

COMMITTEE FOR MORAL RECTITUDE

A group calling itself the Committee for Moral Rectitude has formed in Egede in the past several months. Its members are former crusaders, Iomedaean fanatics, and holier-than-thou busybodies who feel the reach of demonic influence yet lingers, even in the aftermath of the Worldwound's closure. The heads of the Committee are Becka Rossum, Gaar Steelflare,

CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

When the council of fanatics that secretly controls Egede accuses the player characters of demon worship, the party must engage in trial by combat. Later, as the group crosses Mendev with a caravan, Sakuachi sees a vision of a falling star and leads them directly into the Sarkoris Scar to follow its trajectory. Along the way, the party encounters the creepy underground home of a fallen crusader. They then rescue a group of friendly Reclaimers from the otherworldly visitor who crashed onto Golarion with the meteorite Sakuachi saw in her vision.

PARTY'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

Follow Sakuachi's omens into the Sarkoris Scar.

PLOT BEATS

The party should learn these details throughout this chapter:

- Dr. Ritalson has heard all about the player characters' adventures.
 He instructs them to stay close to Sakuachi.
- The first Sarkorian god caller came from Domora. Spirit guides might still dwell among the town's ruins.

THEY WATCHED THE STARS

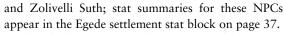
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The Lake



Though the Committee began as a simple group of "concerned citizens," its three leaders have gained almost total latitude to act as they please. Committee loyalists patrol Egede's streets, arbitrating any perceived breach of morality. This usually amounts to stern looks and harsh lectures, but every so often, a particularly salacious citizen or suspicious visitor goes missing after being taken into the Committee's custody.

Many of these disappearances are a result of direct orders from Gaar Steelflare, the most brutal of the Committee's leaders. As part of his efforts to keep Egede safe from demonic influence, Gaar keeps a large ooze he refers to as "living evil." He uses the ooze to test those whose allegiances the Committee doubts. If the living evil consumes the individual in question, then the Committee feels justified in condemning them, as "like calls to like."

The Committee heads are especially suspicious of outsiders. They have ears and eyes everywhere in Egede, and within an hour of the players characters arriving, all three heads are aware of the newcomers. The player characters are sure to have a run-in with some of the Committee's most ardent loyalists (**Event 16**) and might even get a chance to face Gaar's living evil (**Event 17**).

RECALL INFORMATION

The PCs can attempt a DC 20 Society check to Recall Knowledge about Egede.

Critical Success As success, and: Since the Worldwound's closure 4 years ago, Egede has been in something of a slump. Businesses that previously relied on a steady stream of crusaders to buy their wares now struggle to keep the lights on in these far more peaceful times. As a result of Egede's depression, tensions—and prices—run high.

Success Egede is a Mendevian port city and the last stop on the River Road. During the Mendevian Crusades, southern fighters on their way to the Worldwound would stop at Egede to resupply and get one last glimpse of peaceful city life before heading into battle.

Failure Beyond its location on the western shore of the Lake of Mists and Veils and its status as a Mendevian trading hub, you know very little of Egede.

Critical Failure The largest city in Mendev is a chivalric theocracy populated almost entirely by headstrong ex-crusaders from the war of the Worldwound. Only the most righteous newcomers have any chance of making it among the pious zealots and proud warriors who rule over Egede.

DOWNTIME IN EGEDE

During the characters' stay in Egede, Sakuachi meditates on her quest to find a living god. She and her companions also question locals for advice, maps, and guidance to help the group reach the Sarkoris Scar. Meanwhile, the player characters are free to do as they please with their time, whether that includes selling treasure, purchasing equipment, or simply relaxing.

The PCs can purchase any common items of 6th level or lower in Egede, plus certain uncommon or rare items at your discretion. Remember, the price of any item is 150% the usual amount unless the characters manage to get on a vendor's good side.

Egede Encounters

After the party reaches Egede, it isn't long before they catch the attention of the Committee for Moral Rectitude and its self-righteous lackeys. The characters' strife with the Committee can be resolved over the course of the following two event encounters, which should occur one after the other.

EVENT 16: PLAZA AMBUSH

LOW 6

At some point just before dusk, perhaps as the party is finishing up a day's shopping or other downtime activities, they're accosted by some roughnecks devoted to the Committee of Moral Rectitude. This encounter takes place in Egede's Acts Plaza, a small square named after the famed Acts of Iomedae.

To run this encounter, you can use the map of Acts Plaza on page 46 or any map of a town square.

The streets widen to form a circular plaza, at the center of which stands a metal sculpture of lomedae on a stone plinth. The Inheritor's holds her sword high, as if ready to call down divine justice on any evildoers who dare enter the plaza. From nearby alleyways, a trio of humans dressed in old Mendevian armor step into the square to intercept you. "Stop there," says one, hand on the hilt of his sword. "In the name of the Committee of Moral Rectitude, I command you to leave Egede at once."

Creatures: Three armed Committee loyalists named Reargo, Tirron, and Etsallia block the party's way. Reargo does most of the talking, and he demands the characters "tell the truth" about why they're in Egede. The loyalists believe the party and their allies are enemies of all that is good and decent—"demonic agents" aiming to spread sin in this innocent city—and demand that they leave Egede at once.

If the characters deny the loyalists' accusations or ask what this is all about, the loyalists comment on the party's unusual means of arrival (whether that was on their haunted pirate ship or creeping in at night), their choice of traveling companions (nosy strangers from the frozen north), and their brands (if anyone spotted them). They further produce examples of any strange behavior the characters may have exhibited since entering Egede; the Committee has eyes and ears throughout the city, so these loyalists already know about the characters' every public act.

The characters can try to talk their way out of a fight by convincing the loyalists of their harmless intentions. To talk down the loyalists, the characters must succeed at two DC 24 Diplomacy or Intimidation checks before they fail two such checks.

If the characters try to leave the plaza, the loyalists feel justified in using lethal force to detain them. A Committee loyalist flees once reduced to fewer than 20 Hit Points or after taking damage from a critical hit. If the characters down any of the loyalists, Gaar cites this as confirmation of their evilness in **Event 17**.

Each Committee loyalist uses the same stats as a virtuous defender, which first appeared in *Pathfinder Lost Omens: Character Guide*. These stats are reprinted here for convenience.

COMMITTEE LOYALISTS (3)

CREATURE 4

LG MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Virtuous defenders (Pathfinder Lost Omens Character Guide 122)

Perception +10

Languages Common, Varisian

Skills Diplomacy +12, Intimidation +11, Religion +9, Shining Crusade Lore +8, Survival +9

Str +4, Dex +0, Con +3, Int +0, Wis +1, Cha +3

Items composite longbow (20 arrows), full plate, longsword, steel shield (Hardness 7, HP 30, BT 15)

AC 22 (24 with shield raised); **Fort** +12, **Ref** +6 (+9 vs. damaging effects), **Will** +12

HP 70

Shield Ally The Committee loyalist's shield is sturdier in their hands. The statistics for the shield above include this benefit; it's a normal steel shield for anyone else.

Retributive Strike The Committee loyalist can Step to put a foe in reach before making a melee Retributive Strike.

Shield Block 2

Speed 20 feet

Melee ◆ longsword +12 (versatile P), **Damage** 1d8+6 slashing

Ranged ◆ composite longbow +8 (deadly d10, range increment 100 feet, reload 0, volley 30 feet), Damage 1d8+4 piercing

Champion Devotion Spells DC 19, 1 Focus Point; **2nd** lay on hands, veil of confidence

Whether this confrontation culminates in a fight or merely a heated discussion, the party can see townsfolk watching them from the windows or alleys of nearby buildings. The townsfolk mumble Iomedaean prayers as they watch and duck out of sight if addressed.

EVENT 17: TEST OF LIVING EVIL MODERATE 6

As the characters are finishing their confrontation with the Committee loyalists in **Event 16**, a wooden cart comes rattling up the western street. Muscular peasants push the cart from behind at the behest of Gaar Steelflare, an older male dwarf who stands atop the cart's cargo: a large metal crate with a hatch facing the plaza.

Like the loyalists, Gaar wears the burnished plate mail of a Mendevian crusader. His gray beard has been plaited into formal braids threaded through silver rings. "Hold!" he shouts at both the party and the loyalists, the latter of whom cease their aggression immediately. Still atop the metal crate, Gaar then introduces himself. "You've been observed by the Committee for Moral Rectitude," he intones by way of explanation, "and you must now stand trial."

Gaar explains that the Committee keeps Egede safe from lingering demonic influences, and that he and his fellow Committee heads believe the characters are sinners come to sow discord. He pronounces these charges with all the weight and dignity of an actual magistrate, though being a tad more reasonable than the loyalist hooligans, he gives the characters a chance to ask one or two questions.

Before the characters can attempt to escape or talk their way out of this confrontation, Gaar pronounces that for their trial, the party will face "evil itself."

"It's known that evil bears the seeds of its own downfall. So if you are consumed here today, your guilt is proven. If the evil does not kill you, then you are free to go!"

His speech concluded, he kicks open the chest to let the evil out!

Creature: Gaar's "living evil" is a black pudding that crawled out of a cesspit a few months ago. Gaar, then just an ex-crusader with an unhealthy penchant for ale, ran into the ooze in a dark alley. Despite his inebriation, he managed to drive the ooze back, which in his stupor he believed to be an entity of pure evil. He took his survival as a sign to clean himself up and return to the path of righteousness.

In the months after his encounter, Gaar founded the Committee for Moral Rectitude, soldiers from which he tasked to hunt down and capture the "living evil."

THEY
WATCHE
THE
STARS

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EARLY DEPARTURE

The party might not stick around Egede long enough to face the Committee for Moral Rectitude's loyalists or Gaar Steelflare's test of living evil. To repurpose these encounters, you can reframe the Committee loyalists in **Event 16** as ex-crusaders who've become highway bandits and have them assail the party's caravan between Egede and the Sarkoris Scar. Similarly, you can repurpose Gaar's living evil from **Event 17** so that it's a monstrous ally of Valmar or the moonflower in Valmar's burrow.

Now, Gaar releases the ooze from its box whenever the Committee needs to "test" suspected evildoers. So far, no one has passed Gaar's so-called test of living evil. For its part, the ooze only understands that when its prison is opened, it's time to eat. It fights until destroyed.

Gaar doesn't participate in combat; if necessary, use the stats for a lawful good warden (*Gamemastery Guide* 225).

LIVING EVIL CREATURE 8

Elite black pudding (*Pathfinder* Bestiary 6, 255)

Initiative Perception +11

Trial's Aftermath: If the characters survive this trial, Gaar is astounded. He stammers that he was convinced—like everyone else in the Committee—that the characters were truly evil. The fact that they destroyed the living evil is, to Gaar, a testament to their righteousness. He apologizes profusely for his mistake and cautions the characters to act "more normally" in the future. He doesn't linger, ordering his agents to pull the cart away and telling the party to "go about their business in peace."

XPAward: For defeating the living evil and "proving" their benign intentions, each character earns 80 XP.

Final Days in Egede

Having overcome Gaar's test, the PCs find that they're treated very different in Egede now. The Committee makes no further attempts to obstruct them, and townsfolk treat them with outsized deference and respect that borders on hero worship.

In the days that follow **Events 16** and **17**, the player characters discover the implications of their new celebrity status in Egede, receive a missive from their patron Dr. Ritalson encouraging them to stay with Sakuachi, and get the go-ahead from Sakuachi to continue their journey west. These scenes are described on the following pages; you can adjust their order and how long each beat lingers to best suit the pace of your game. When the party is ready to leave Egede and continue to Sarkoris, proceed to "Caravan to Kenabres" on page 42.

Reduced Prices: For the remaining duration of their stay in Egede, the characters get preferential treatment from the city's business owners. The characters' lodging costs half the normal rate. Any items the characters purchase are the standard listed Price, rather than 150% the Price.

PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT

By the time the PCs awake the morning after their trial of living evil, Gaar Steelflare has met with the other Committee leaders, and has convinced his fellows that the

folk, but they may even be chosen by the gods to destroy evil in Egede. Becka is a bit skeptical,

but Zolivelli takes the idea to heart and relays it to her acolytes of Iomedae.

The next time the PCs step outside, they're met by a handful

of young priests of Iomedae. If stats are necessary, the priests are lawful good adepts (*Gamemastery Guide* 228).

The priests greet the characters warmly, ask to shake their hands, and offer to answer any of their questions or show them about town. If any character is still wounded from the previous day, the priests apologize on the Committee's behalf and ask their permission to heal the wounded party member. The priests have a hard time taking no for an answer, and soon are on their knees begging to touch the characters' clothes or do practically any service for them.

During this conversation, one of the acolytes might try to secure a memento from a character such as a lock of loose hair, an empty potion vial, or even just a spare eating utensil dangling out of someone's backpack. If caught, the acolyte fully admits to their attempted theft. They explain that if they had a "relic of the chosen," they would certainly rise in esteem among their peers.

Gaar Steelflare

Devise more such instances of hero worship as the characters continue to go about their business in Egede. Townsfolk stare at the adventurers from every street corner, and Committee loyalists bow before the characters and beg for a souvenir of their meeting. If the party decides to linger in Egede for a bit too long, crowds of sycophants begin assembling outside the party's lodgings at night and mobbing them in the morning. Eventually, the most fanatical commoners bear makeshift icons and holy symbols of the "chosen ones" and beg the characters to perform various miracles. The hero worship continues to escalate before reaching a terrifying crescendo as the party finally leaves Egede (see Leaving Egede).

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

At some point during their stay in Egede, the characters receive a missive from their old employer, Dr. Etward Ritalson. (If your players seem intent on leaving Egede as soon as possible, the characters might even receive this letter before dealing with **Event 16** or **17**.) Whether it's delivered to the party at their lodgings or dropped on their laps from a passing carrier raven, give your players a copy of the handout on page 42 once their characters receive Dr. Ritalson's letter.

In his letter, Dr. Ritalson asks the player characters to continue their investigation of the night of the Missing Moment and the gatewalker phenomena, explicitly telling them to go with Sakuachi to the Sarkoris Scar. After they complete their business there, he writes, the characters should return to Lepidstadt in Ustalav to give the doctor a full report of their findings. He also includes with his message a small payment for the party's good work so far.

How the doctor knew to contact the party in Egede—and how he knows about Sakuachi—will remain a mystery until the characters return to Lepidstadt at the start of the next adventure, "Dreamers of the Nameless Spires."

Treasure: The letter contains a promissory note for 400 gp. It can be exchanged at any bank of Abadar, including Egede's local temple, for gold.

SAKUACHI'S SEARCH

Once your players are ready to move on with the adventure, Sakuachi and her companions approach the party. Sakuachi says they have good news: they've just made contact with a caravan driver who's headed west with building materials. The caravan's final stop is Kenabres, which Innumma notes isn't far from the Sarkoris Scar. "This is our best chance to go to Sarkoris," Sakuachi explains. "If we travel with a caravan, we

can restock on rations and supplies at the edge of the Sarkoris wastes before heading in."

LEAVING EGEDE

The party's departure is marked by their biggest crowd of fanatical hero worshippers yet. More than a dozen of their biggest fans—"true believers," in the crowd's words—assemble at the western road out of the city.

The caravan driver yells at the crowd to clear a way, but it's no good. The party might have better luck; a character can defuse the situation with a successful DC 22 Diplomacy or Intimidation check. On a success, the crowd moves aside long enough for the caravan to pass through. On a failure, the impatient driver spurs the caravan's horses into the throng, knocking one man down and nearly trampling him to death. In this case, a player character can attempt a DC 22 Athletics check to pull the man out of harm's way. On a failure, that PC takes 4d6 bludgeoning damage from the stampeding horses' hooves. Luckily, in any case,

HEY WATCHED THE STARS

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Gatewalkers,

May this missive find you well. It's come to my attention that you've recently arrived in Mendev. Taking the long way home, it seems? No matter. I've also learned that you have some interesting new companions, including a young seer who bears the same mark of the gatewalker as we all do. Continue to travel with her, and help her complete her quest however you can. I've little doubt that this seer will ultimately be useful to our investigation into the meaning of the Missing Moment.

Find attached a bank note with payment for your good work so far. Consider it a bonus. Once you've finished helping the seer, come back to Lepidstadt for a full report. You can expect a sizable reward upon your return.

I imagine you have questions-foremost, perhaps, how I know all this. Suffice to say I kept an ear to the ground after Fianara sent me word you'd disappeared from sevenarches. The full story is too complicated to tell in a letter. I'll explain everything when you finish your work in the sarkoris scar and return to Lepidstadt.

-Dr. Ritalson

HANDOUT 1

the PC can catch up to the rear wagon before the caravan picks up too much speed.

If a player character critically fails any of these checks, a few fanatical townsfolk try to climb aboard the caravan to touch the party members or steal a memento from their things. At your discretion, characters might take a little damage from this ruckus or lose an item or two, but one way or another the worshippers eventually stumble off the wagon, finally leaving the PCs to continue on in their quest.

Caravan to Kenabres

The caravan consists of three wagons full of goods pulled by two dray horses each, plus a fourth, smaller wagon pulled by a single roan horse which Innumma secured for the trip. A dour, no-nonsense Iobarian halfling named **Aettik Longwheel** (LN nonbinary halfling caravanner 8) drives the caravan. They accepted Sakuachi's patronage only once she'd paid in full, and they allow her and her companions (including the player characters) to ride only in the last, smallest wagon in the caravan.

The journey from Egede to Kenabres is approximately 225 miles, which takes the caravan about 10 days. Rolling plains and craggy badlands fill most of the space between the two cities. After 2 days of travel, the caravan reaches the Estrovian Forest, where the gloomy atmosphere and bare trees offer only a minor respite from the otherwise-monotonous journey.

The caravan trip can be as uneventful or as hectic as you want. You can use the Sarkoris Scar Random Encounters table on page 44 to introduce dangerous monsters for the caravan to encounter, or you can introduce NPCs traveling with the caravan to give your players an opportunity for some roleplaying.

Some potential scenes that might occur during the caravan journey follow. These occur throughout the first week of travel, taking place in the Estrovian Forest and along the Mendevian heartlands.

- One of the other caravanners, Crisha, tells a spooky story about a Mendevian crusader who fell in battle. The crusader's thirst for glory caused her soul to rise as a violent specter and slay her demonic killers—as well as her party of fellow crusaders.
- A rustling in some bushes in the Estrovian Forest spooks the caravanners. The culprit turns out to be just a wild hare caught in some brambles.
- One of the caravan's horses goes missing in the middle of the night. No matter how hard anyone looks, there's not a trace of where the animal went.

Once the caravan is only a day or two out from Kenabres, proceed to Sakuachi's Vision, below.

SAKUACHI'S VISION

Somewhere in the badlands between the edge of the Estrovian Forest and Kenabres, the caravan camps alongside a dusty road beneath a starry sky. Suddenly, Sakuachi snaps awake and sits upright. A PC on watch

notices the seer start; otherwise, she gently wakes up the player character of whom she's grown fondest.

Catching her breath, she explains that she had a dream vision.

"In my dream, I stood alone in a clearing among great pillars—stone monoliths, perhaps, or bare trees. Before me, a hole opened in the ground, perfectly circular and impossibly deep. Like a falling star in reverse, a divine being shot up out of the hole, and it floated before me so I could gaze upon it. It was a dazzling white bird surrounded by a whirlwind of snow. The bird swept toward me and wrapped me in its wings, which, though rimed in ice, felt impossibly warm on my skin."

At this point in her story, something high above makes a faint popping noise. It's the sound of a celestial object breaking through the atmosphere at incredible speed. As if on cue, the falling star arcs toward the western horizon and crashes somewhere far out of sight. Sakuachi, agog, points wordlessly at the meteorite's trajectory.

Afterward, Sakuachi doesn't bother to point out the obvious; she simply smiles knowingly at the character with whom she's just shared this special experience. "It looks like we're leaving the caravan tomorrow morning," she says quietly. In her excitement, she spends the rest of the night tending the fire, wide awake.

PREPARING FOR THE TREK

The morning after her vision, Sakuachi explains the plan to her companions and the rest of the party: their new task is to locate the site of the falling star to the west. To do so, they'll part ways with the caravan here, a few days south of Kenabres, so they can cut across the West Sellen River and reach the impact site as quickly as possible.

Before the characters break off from the caravan, Aettik offers to sell them extra rations and any other last-minute supplies they might need. For the convenience, he hikes the price of each item up to twice the normal amount. However, if the caravan encountered any dangers on the road and the characters helped protect the wagons, Aettik might reduce the price of his wares—possibly, even, to less than their usual price.

Once they've stocked up and are ready to go, the player characters and their companions leave the relative safety of the caravan and start their trek into the unknown.

The Sarkoris Scar

The Worldwound wreaked havoc on northern Avistan for over a century, transforming the verdant plains of Old Sarkoris into a demon-plagued wasteland. Though the Abyssal rift was sealed several years ago, charred chasms and swaths of blighted earth still scar the region, hence its common name: the Sarkoris Scar. Demons and other terrible creatures prowl the wastes, and pervasive diseases keep both flora and fauna from flourishing. Crossing this poisoned landscape on foot is a struggle, even for the most prepared travelers.

The party must trek across 250 miles of badlands before reaching the place where Sakuachi's falling star made impact. In the meantime, they'll have to survive a harsh environment and the dangerous monsters who call the Sarkoris Scar home.

RECALL KNOWLEDGE

The PCs can attempt a DC 25 Nature, Religion, or Demon Lore check to Recall Knowledge about the Sarkoris Scar.

Critical Success When the Worldwound was sealed just a few years ago, it seemed for the first time in generations that the land might once again be free of demons. To ensure such a future, pilgrims calling themselves Reclaimers make forays into the Sarkoris Scar to cleanse the wasteland, eradicate stray demons, and reestablish ancient customs like god calling. In addition, the PCs learn the Success information below.

Success The Sarkoris Scar is all that remains of Old Sarkoris. Once, this vast land was a verdant sprawl

Shooting Star Over Sarkoris

THEY
WATCHED
THE
STARS

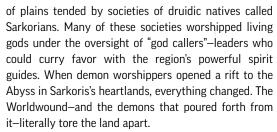
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Failure Except that it is a demon-blighted wasteland, you know basically nothing of the Sarkoris Scar.

Critical Failure The Sarkoris Scar is a flourishing wildland whose soils were enriched for generations with the spilled blood of demons and crusaders alike. Now that the Mendevian Crusades are over, Sarkoris has essentially returned to normal—a land of enigmatic druids, fey tricksters, and fruitful pastures.

Scar Encounters

The party's journey from the West Sellen River to the meteorite's crash site takes at least a week. Days of otherwise unremarkable travel are interrupted by **Events 18–21**. Run these events in the order presented.

Oversized vermin threaten the group almost from the start (Event 18), and a hungry demon picks up on their trail soon after (Event 19). After over 200 miles of travel, the characters crest a hill and glimpse the meteorite's glowing crash site (Event 20). It's just another few days to the edge of the Needleglens, where the party comes across the harrowing scene of a dead horseback rider fleeing a carnivorous alien flower (Event 21)—an omen of more terrors to come.

The party's pace across the Sarkoris Scar depends on the Speed of the slowest creature in the party. The following table summarizes how many days it takes the party to reach each event, measured from the start of their journey at the West Sellen River.

SARKORIS SCAR TRAVEL TIMES

Days to				
Slowest Speed		Event 19 (~100 mi.)	Event 20 (~200 mi.)	Event 21 (~250 mi.)
20 feet	3	6	13	17
25 feet	3	5	10	13
30 feet	2	4	8	10
40 feet	2	3	6	8

You can alter the pace of the party's journey by interweaving **Events 18–21** with brief descriptions of wasteland phenomena, roleplaying opportunities with any of the party's companions, or random encounters with wandering monsters of your design (try to keep these encounters to Trival 6 or Low 6 encounters).

Random Encounters: If the party is low on Experience Points or you want to introduce some more challenges into their exploration of the Sarkoris Scar, you can introduce some random combat encounters between Events **18–21**. Each day the party travels across the Scar, roll a d20 and refer to the Sarkoris Scar Random Encounters table to determine what violent monsters they encounter. You can use the maps on page 46 for these encounters.

SARKORIS SCAR RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d20	Encounter	Threat		
1-4	No encounter	_		
5-10	4 dretches**	Trivial 6		
11-13	4 elite quasits and giant stag beetle	Low 6		
14-16	2 daeodons and elite ogre warrior	Low 6		
17-18	2 babaus*	Moderate 6		
19-20	invidiak* and shadow	Moderate 6		
* See Pathfinder Bestiary 2.				
** See Pathfinder Bestiary 3.				

EVENT 18: BLOODSUCKERS

MODERATE 6

About 50 miles from the West Sellen River, the party passes a small bubbling lake, its waters clearly fetid and toxic.

A low buzz drones beneath the sound of the bubbling muck in the pond here. The source of the buzzing quickly reveals itself as a pony-sized mosquito emerges from the rotten reeds, shrouded in a haze of much smaller but equally bloodthirsty insects. Sensing a fresh meal, the mosquitos surge forth!

Creatures: Demonic energies caused this mosquito to grow to behemoth proportions. It now "leads" two swarms of mosquitos in attacks against wild animals—or, in this case, travelers—who stray too near the pond. Mindless in their hunger, the insects fight until destroyed.

FEN MOSQUITO SWARMS (2) CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 175
Initiative Perception +8

GIANT MOSQUITO CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 175
Initiative Perception +17

EVENT 19: THE HUNGRY NIGHT MODERATE 6

A few days after Event 18, the PCs find a good stand of trees to make camp. The evening is particularly cold, and Innumma starts a campfire to keep the group warm.

This encounter occurs a few hours after sunset; the only light in the area is the player characters'

campfire. Depending on how the party organizes their watch schedule, one or more characters might be fast asleep when this encounter starts. Innumma is awake regardless, and he shouts in alarm on the first round of combat.

Creature: A nabasu demon descends stealthily toward the camp. It's so pleased to see so many sleeping creatures laid out like a buffet that its belly gurgles in anticipation. An awake character with a Perception DC of 20 or higher hears the hungry demon's stomach and can spend 1 action to prepare for a fight. Otherwise, Innumma hears the demon and says, "What was that?" A second later, the monster emerges and combat begins.

Though not usually a fighter, Innumma bravely joins the fight by waving a makeshift torch at the demon. Each round that Innumma does this, he grants a +1 circumstance bonus to AC to an ally within 5 feet of his choice until the beginning of his next turn. Innumma usually picks a character who's fighting the nabasu up close to receive this bonus. The nabasu tends to target the strongest-looking character or any creature that triggers its starvation vulnerability. The demon fights until destroyed.

NABASU CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 66
Initiative Stealth +18

EVENT 20: GLOW ON THE HORIZON

After over 200 miles of trudging through the Sarkoris Scar, the party finally catches another glimpse of their celestial objective. As the group sets up camp for the night, Sakuachi points toward the horizon and shouts, "Look!" In a dense forest of twisted trees and thorned brambles many miles away, a glowing green light emanates from a conspicuous clearing.

The green glow on the western horizon persists through the next day and evening, making it easy for the party to determine the direction of their destination. By the next morning, however, the glow has vanished. That's because Valmar, a monstrous ex-crusader who discovered the glowing meteorite, finally managed to move it into his underground lair and have his minions bury it beneath dozens of feet of clay soil.

Nevertheless, Sakuachi grows excited at the prospect of her quest coming to an end. Innumma warns her to temper her expectations, as there is much about the land of Sarkoris they don't understand.

"Could it be a god?" Innumma asks. "Perhaps. But it could also be something much more dangerous."

EVENT 21: MENACING MOONFLOWER

LOW 6

At the edge of the forest where the fallen star is located, the characters stumble upon a spooky situation: a wounded riding horse staggers out of the woods, followed closely by a large, carnivorous plant monster. Complicating the scene is the dead rider—a half-elf in tattered leather armor—slumped in the horse's saddle.

Creature: The horse is exhausted and badly wounded, which is why it couldn't outrun the moonflower pursuing it. Instinctually recognizing the party as potential allies, the horse stumbles toward them. The moonflower, having come too far to give up now, attacks the player characters, attempting to chase them away from its prey.

The dead half-elf was a member of a group of Reclaimers who were in the area when the meteorite crashed into the Needleglens. They went together to investigate the crash site, where they met a dangerous ex-crusader named Valmar who lured them into his underground dungeon. Eijanna, the half-elf, escaped the dungeon but was pursued by one of the moonflowers inhabiting the meteorite. The party will meet the rest of the imprisoned Reclaimers—and the other moonflower that rode the crashed meteorite—in the recesses of Valmar's burrow.

WOUNDED MOONFLOWER

CREATURE 7

Weak moonflower (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 6, 173) **Initiative** Perception +14

The Needleglens

The dead horse rider encountered on the edge of the forest left a trail of blood and trampled brush through the Needleglens. The trail lines up with the direction of the fallen star, so it's a fairly simple matter to reach the spot where the meteorite struck ground. A character can attempt a DC 15 Survival check to Track the rider's path through the woods; if Innumma is still alive, he can easily perform this function on the party's behalf.

The rider's tracks lead to a strange clearing with some unusual features, chiefly a large knoll made of piled dirt like a giant termite nest. According to Sakuachi's calculations, the meteorite should have landed roughly in this clearing. The party will need to explore this location, starting in area E1 (page 47), to figure out what became of their falling star. These encounters use the map on page 48.

VALMAR'S BURROW

Almost a decade ago, at the height of the crusade against the Worldwound, a Mendevian soldier named Valmar stumbled into the woods here after becoming separated from the rest of his troop. Demons attacked

THEY
WATCHED
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STARS

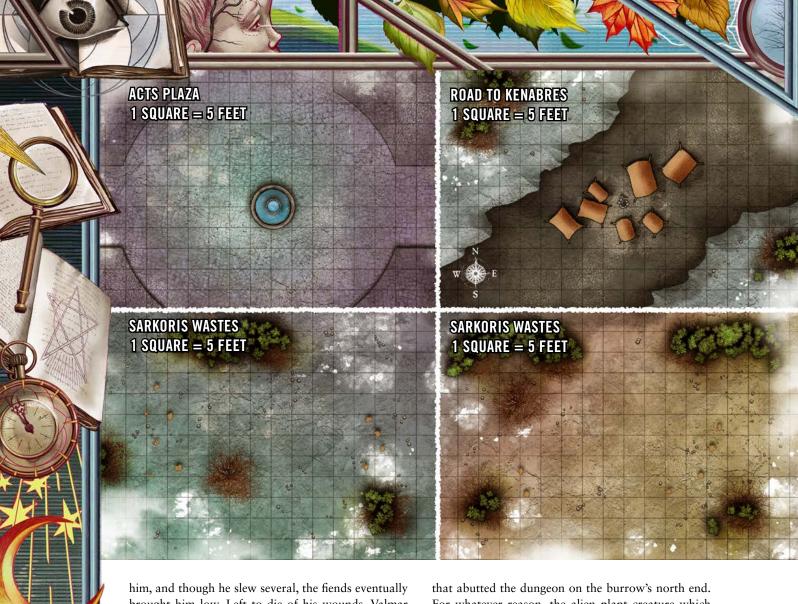
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him, and though he slew several, the fiends eventually brought him low. Left to die of his wounds, Valmar was "rescued" by an unlikely source: a swarm of skin beetles found the dying man and stitched him up using the demons' carcasses. In the process, he became an umasi—an aberrant amalgamation of grafted flesh and transplanted organs.

When Valmar regained consciousness discovered that his wounds had been patched with swaths of demon skin, he howled at his unholy fate. Rightly fearing the persecution of his fellows if he returned to civilization, he elected to live out the rest of his miserable umasi life as a hermit in the Needleglens. The skin beetles who saved Valmar allowed him into their burrow at the bottom of an old Sarkorian well. and Valmar developed an unusual kinship with the vermin, whom he came to see as his friends. Both parties benefited from their symbiotic alliance: The champion could easily lure in and bring down large game for the beetles to eat, while the beetles could keep Valmar alive with fresh skin grafts.

Over a week ago, a meteorite crashed into the same clearing as Valmar's burrow, leaving a deep crater

that abutted the dungeon on the burrow's north end. For whatever reason, the alien plant creature which inhabited the meteorite had no interest in Valmar, who pondered what to do. Ultimately, he decided to simply incorporate the meteorite and its crater into his burrow, ordering his pet beetles to mound dirt atop it, obscuring it from outside.

Just a few days ago, a group of Reclaimers wandered into the area to investigate the meteorite. As he'd done countless times before, Valmar waited until the curious travelers entered his burrow, then trapped them in his dungeon. He fed one of the prisoners to the moonflower in the meteorite and watched excitedly as one moonflower became two. The next time he tried to feed a Reclaimer to one of the plants, though, the victim escaped to the surface and clambered atop her loyal horse, though not before being dealt a mortal wound. The younger moonflower chased the dying Reclaimer, a half-elf named Eijanna, and Valmar was once again down to just one pet plant. He resolved to be more careful when it came to future feedings.

When the player characters arrive at the burrow, it's just about time for Valmar to feed the moonflower

again. Whether the player characters enter the twisted ex-crusader's burrow stealthily or not may determine where inside they meet their monstrous foes—and how many there are. (See Doorbell in area **E2** for more details.)

E1. NETTLEGLENS CLEARING

LOW 6

A steep mound of dirt, like an oversized insect nest, looms in the middle of this clearing. Much of the mound is covered with weeds and compacted from years of settling, but the eastern half is much looser and made of fresher soil. Above, scorched tree limbs suggest something recently came crashing down into the clearing, hot and fast.

A forty-foot-wide stone well punctuates the earth west of the mound. A trail of fresh blood spans the ground between the well's western edge and the forest to the west. The well's interior is lined with a rickety wooden spiral staircase.

The dense brush around this clearing is greater difficult terrain. The well descends 50 feet; though the wooden stairs Valmar built inside it are creaky and old, they're strong enough to support 300 pounds of weight per 5-foot square. A character can Climb the well's stone walls with a DC 16 Athletics check.

Creatures: The first time one or more PC approaches within 30 feet of the well, a quartet of skin beetles—cat-sized insects with oversized mandibles—emerges from the dirt to defend their home. Each of beetle's carapace bears a crudely-painted face; though he's no artist, Valmar decorates his beetle friends so that he can more easily tell them apart.

SKIN BEETLES (4)

CREATURE 3

Page 89

Initiative Perception +9

Sakuachi Stays Behind: Sakuachi and her entourage stay in this clearing outside the burrow. Eager as she is to see the meteorite likely buried under the mound, she implores the characters to go down the well and quickly root out any threats. Innumma examines the trail of blood leading to the well. "Sakuachi is right to suggest haste," he says. "If anyone else is down there, they might be in danger."

E2. FRONT DOOR

The floor at the base of the well is made of tightly packed clay soil. Stones along the eastern wall of the well have been removed and replaced with a large, sturdy wooden door.

This is Valmar's "front door." The hermit enters and exits his underground domain via this entry. He locks the door during his rare excursions to the surface, but while in the burrow he keeps it closed but unlocked. Always on the hunt for new victims, Valmar knows that few beleaguered travelers or cocky adventurers can resist the temptation of an unlocked wooden door at the bottom of a dried-up well.

Doorbell: The door is rigged with a crude but effective alarm trap. A flimsy wire, nigh imperceptible from the western side, connects the ring pull on the inside of the door to a bundle of rusty shields suspended from

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the ceiling in area **E3**. When the door is pushed open, the wire slips from the ring and releases the satchel of scrap metal, which loudly clatters to the ground in a noisy heap.

A character who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check while examining the door can feel a strange tug from the other side (the wire straining against the ring). Anyone with thieves' tools can Disable the Device with two successful DC 20 Thievery checks—one to snag the wire from this side of the door, and one check to secure the wire in a way that prevents it from releasing the bundle of scrap on the other side.

THE BURROW ON ALERT

The final leg of this dungeon crawl plays out differently depending on whether or not the characters trigger the alarm trap in area **E2**. If they do, Valmar hears the noise from the dungeon and decides to hold off on feeding the moonflower. Instead, he rushes to area **E8** to hide, hoping to flank the intruders with his skin beetle minions in area **E7**. It takes Valmar 2 rounds to Stride the distance from

the dungeon to his sleeping den; if the characters rush into the burrow, they might manage to see him dart across the tunnel from area **E9** to area **E8**.

If, on the other hand, the characters sneak into the burrow without triggering the doorbell, Valmar feeds the Reclaimer Zeah to the moonflower. It takes just 4 hours for the moonflower to turn its meal into another moonflower. Should this come to pass, the fight in area **E13** is that much harder.

E3. GREAT ROOM

A zig-zagging path of packed dirt descends down this ten-foot-high underground chamber. A tattered red banner hangs from the ceiling near the two tunnels. On it is a stylized depiction of a regal human woman in profile, wearing a crown and surrounded by a halo of white light.

A character who succeeds at a DC 16 Society check recognizes the woman depicted on the banner as Galfrey, the former queen of Mendev and a popular icon of the Mendevian Crusades. On a critical success, the character knows that the style and coloration of the banner was prevalent only during the Fourth Mendevian Crusade, which ended 15 years ago.

E4. DINING AREA

A long table surrounded by rough-carved chairs fills most of this cavern, which has all the trappings of a Mendevian dining area. Metal plates and small cups are arranged on the table, as if for a meal. Empty pantry shelves fill an alcove to the north. A row of four paintings adorns the area's southern wall. Tunnels exit east and west.

Valmar doesn't require much in the way of food—merely the occasional influx of fresh skin. He made this dining room to remind himself of his former life in southern Mendev and how he'd often hold court at the head of the family dining table.

Treasure: The framed paintings on the southern wall were made by various traveling painters who rendered the horror of the Mendevian Crusades in art. These four paintings depict, individually, a flaming Mendevian pasture, a tranquil town along the Sellen River, a blood-soaked Sarkorian battlefield, and a somber tiefling in three-quarter profile. If sold to a collector, each is worth 50 gp (for a total of 200 gp).

E5. ARMORY

Statues, upholstered furniture, and old crates fill every corner of this storage cave. Hanging from the northern wall is a small framed painting. A tunnel exits west.

When Valmar discovers a particularly valuable Mendevian relic or salvages something that reminds him of his former life as a crusader, he puts it in this cavern for safekeeping. Despite his monstrous deeds since his transformation, the soldier still harbors a faint hope of someday returning to society.

Hazard: The painting in the northern corner is smudgy and indistinct. Valmar made this "artwork" himself, and though it vaguely looks like a portrait, it's utterly indistinct from any distance or angle. The ex-crusader put the painting here to attract intruders to the trap set beneath it: the ground around that part of the wall is rigged to collapse beneath anyone who steps on it. A creature that falls with the collapsing dirt tumbles 20 feet down a hole into area **E10**.

VALMAR'S PIT TRAP

HAZARD 4

MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 25 (expert)

BURROW FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted, the areas in Valmar's burrow have 10-foot-high ceilings, and the walls are made of tightly compacted clay soil reinforced with plant roots. All the walls can be Climbed with a successful DC 15 Athletics check. Except for the bottom of the well (area **E2**), the burrow's interior (areas **E3-E13**) is totally dark.

Description The ground here is made of loosely packed soil that, when stepped upon, collapses.

Disable DC 22 Survival (trained) to reinforce the dirt so it's safe to walk on, or DC 18 Thievery (trained) to collapse the trap from a safe distance

AC 10; Fort +2, Ref +3

Hardness 1, **HP** 6 (BT 3); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Collapse Trigger A creature steps onto any space in the dotted area on the map, or at least 30 pounds of pressure is put on the area; **Effect** The ground gives way. The triggering creature falls 20 feet down the hole, taking 10 bludgeoning damage and landing prone in area **E10**. A creature can Grab an Edge to avoid falling.

Reset Creatures can still fall into the pit, but the soil must be replaced for the trap to become hidden again.

Treasure: Though interesting from a historian's perspective, none of the relics in this room are valuable enough to warrant the trouble of transporting them. However, some useful adventuring basics are stuffed into the crates, including 10 sunrods, a set of infiltrator thieves' tools, a set of expanded healer's tools, four lesser elixirs of life, and four doses of moderate antiplague.

E6. SILVER TUNNEL

A handful of shiny silver coins glimmer on the ground to the north, where this tunnel forms a T intersection.

Valmar leaves coins sprinkled here to draw intruders toward areas **E7** and **E8**.

Treasure: In all, there's just 10 sp worth of Mendevian coinage on the ground here.

E7. BEETLE NEST TRIVIAL 6

Valmar's pet skin beetles make their nests in this corner of the burrow.

Creatures: The three adult skin beetles here are trained to recognize Valmar's screams. If they hear

HEY WATCHE THE STARS

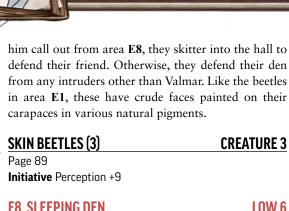
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E8. SLEEPING DEN

LOW 6

The only ornamentation of note in this small den is a matted bearskin rug crumpled in a heap on the hard-packed earth.

Creature: If Valmar heard the doorbell in area E2, he waits for the intruders here, crouched under his fur rug in the corner. He uses the Ready action to prepare a war razor Strike against any intruder who investigates the rug he's hiding under. He also leaps out to attack if an enemy enters this den and then leaves, or if an enemy goes into area E7.

As soon as any of these come to pass, Valmar shrieks in a violent rage and begins slashing at his foes. Valmar's scream attracts the attention of the beetles in area E7, who rush to join Valmar in combat and flank the intruders.

VALMAR

CREATURE 7

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM ABERRATION HUMANOID

Elite umasi (Pathfinder Bestiary 3 6, 280)

Perception +14 or Stealth +15

Items steel shield (Hardness 5, HP 20, BT 10), +1 striking war razor, keys to the front door (area **E2**) and dungeon cell (area E12)

Melee ◆ war razor +20 (agile, backstabber, deadly d8, finesse, magical), Damage 2d4+10 slashing

Combined Encounter: If the characters fight Valmar and the skin beetles simultaneously, this becomes a Severe-threat encounter that awards 105 XP.

E9. STEEP TUNNEL

This steep tunnel doubles back on itself and descends 20 feet from west to east. At the bottom of the tunnel is a sturdy wooden door leading to area E10. The door is locked with a strong padlock that requires three successful DC 20 Thievery checks to pick.

E10. COOLING CHAMBER

MODERATE 6

Half a dozen animal skins hang from iron chains attached to the lumpy clay ceiling. This corner of the caves is utterly frigid-a thick layer of frost rimes the animal skins and earthen walls. Much of the ground is, incongruously, made of white bricks. A sturdy wooden door to the southwest is one way out, while two tunnels to the north offer alternative exits.

The white-brick floor here exudes a powerful magical freezing effect. It was salvaged from a Mendevian prison designed to hold demonic prisoners, but Valmar uses it to freeze and preserve animal skins for later grafting. Because he prefers his skin grafts to be fresh, he uses the frozen skins here only as a last resort.

Creatures: If the characters make a considerable ruckus in this area, the skin beetles and skinstitch in area E11 come over to investigate.

Hazard: Contact with the floor causes the magical bricks to issue jets of freezing air, so Valmar keeps his preserved skins hanging well above the floor with hooks secured to the packed-dirt ceiling. The freezing floor can be deactivated by erasing three discreetly drawn magical runes on three random bricks.

FREEZING FLOOR

HAZARD 8

COMPLEX MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth +16 (expert) or DC 31 (master) to notice the cold fog rising from the floor

Description The white brick floor radiates ice-cold air.

Disable DC 24 Thievery (expert) to erase a rune, or dispel magic (3rd level; counteract DC 24) to dispel a rune; all three runes must be erased or dispelled to disable the trap.

AC 27: Fort +13. Ref +17

Hardness 14; HP 56 (BT 28) to destroy the bricks and disable the trap; Immunities critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Cold Snap Trigger A creature steps on the white bricks; Effect The trap makes a frost jet Strike against the triggering creature and rolls initiative.

Routine (3 actions) With each action, the trap attempts a frost jet Strike against any creature standing on the white bricks. The trap loses 1 action per disabled or dispelled rune.

Ranged frost jet +20, Damage 2d6 cold plus 1d4 persistent cold; no multiple attack penalty

Frostbite A creature that takes persistent cold damage from the trap's frost jet Strike must attempt a DC 18 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature isn't affected and is immune to this frostbite effect for 24 hours.

Success The creature isn't affected.

Failure The creature can't stop shivering and becomes clumsv 1.

Critical Failure As failure, and the creature becomes fatigued.

Reset The trap deactivates and resets after 1 minute.

Pit Trap: The nook in the southern corner of this area has a weirdly high ceiling—nearly 20 feet tall. Creatures who fall down the pit trap in area **E5** land on the ground here. As in the rest of the burrow, the Athletics DC to Climb the hard-packed clay wall is 15.

Treasure: Not all of the skins hanging here belonged to animals—some were demons who underestimated Valmar's combat prowess. Characters who search the hanging bits of flesh find two *greater polished demon horns* (page 80).

E11. SEWING ROOM

MODERATE 6

A tangle of stitched-together animal hides lays on the bloodstained wooden table in this chamber's center. Racks of skinning and tanning tools lean against the western wall. In the opposite corner, someone has piled a mound of discarded clothes and adventurers' gear. Tunnels exit north and south.

Valmar and his skin beetle pets use this chamber as a combination workshop/infirmary. The ex-crusader places fresh kills on the operating table and clumsily flays them with scavenged hunting gear. Afterward, his skin beetles graft the hides onto their master before hungrily feasting on whatever meat is left behind.

Creatures: A juvenile skin beetle swarm and an abominable construct called a skinstitch dwell in this chamber. The player characters might attract the creatures' attention if they make substantial noise in area **E10**; otherwise, the creatures attack as soon as the party enters this area.

The skinstitch is one of Valmar's recent experiments. To alleviate his loneliness, he's attempted to craft a human-shaped companion from spare bits of flesh and bone. This monstrous amalgamation of various dead travelers, demons, and animals—clumsily animated by a swarm of skin beetles trained specifically for the purpose—is the result. Valmar affectionately calls the monster "Stuffy" after a small stuffed bear he had as a boy.

SKINSTITCH

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 242 **Initiative** Perception +12

WEAK SKIN BEETLE SWARM

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, page 89
Initiative Perception +14

Treasure: In the heap of clothes and assorted gear, the player characters can find four full waterskins, 2 weeks' worth of rations,

RECLAIMERS

Reclaimers are adventurers dedicated to healing the Sarkoris Scar and rooting out any lingering demons. For more information on Reclaimers and their goals, refer to Pathfinder Lost Omens World Guide.

a wooden religious symbol of Desna (belonging to Vennesi, see page 52), and a *grim trophy* talisman.

E12. DUNGEON

The walls in the northwestern corner of this otherwise earthen den have been reinforced with stone masonry. A few figures huddle together in the corner of the cell. THEY
WATCHED
THE
STARS

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Adventure Toolbox



Valmar

Valmar built this roughly hewn dungeon to house living victims-to-be. The umasi isn't especially cruel

or depraved—he doesn't take particular pleasure in inflicting pain—but he does prefer to augment his deteriorating body with only the freshest skins. To this end, he keeps his excess victims penned here until it's time for another skin graft.

Creatures: Currently, there are three or four Reclaimers in this cell, depending on whether or not Valmar has fed Zeah to the moonflower (see below). Upon seeing the characters, one of the prisoners, a Varisian named Vennesi Iyanitri (NG female human cleric of Desna 3), stands up and calls out. "Help!" she rasps. "Please, free us!"

The Reclaimers are in no state to fight. If necessary, use the stats for a chronicler (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 216) with just 10 Hit Points remaining to represent each Reclaimer.

The Situation: If the characters didn't trigger the alarm in area E2, Valmar is currently feeding the Reclaimers' leader, Zeah Kelembrey-Neverhome (CG female gnome ranger 3), to the moonflower in area E13. In that case, Vennesi does the talking and keeps her voice low to avoid drawing Valmar's attention.

Vennesi quickly explains how she and her party came to this area to investigate a falling star.

"We thought this well was abandoned and entered it for shelter," Vennesi says. "A sadistic skinner and his grotesque beetles were on us in seconds. Now he's holding us prisoner!" She shudders. "We started with six, but he fed Dreikar to his pet... thing, which multiplied from one to two. The next time it was time for 'feeding,' Eijanna managed to escape, but she was chased by whatever Dreikar turned into, and I don't know what happened to her.

"It's feeding time again, and the monster took our leader Zeah to be consumed in that cave right over there! Please, you have to get us out of here!"

Alternate Situation: If the characters triggered the alarm in area E2, they've likely already fought Valmar, whether near the beetles' nest (areas E6–E8) or in the steep tunnel (area E9). In this case, Valmar put off the moonflower's next feeding so it could rush to intercept the intruders for him, and Zeah is still alive and safe in the cell to speak on the group's behalf. She shares the same details as Vennesi in the

readaloud text, except for the last paragraph. Hungry and annoyed at its delayed feeding, the moonflower attempts to sneak up on the characters and catch

them by surprise (see E13, below).

E13. BURIED CRATER MODERATE 6

The ground in this corner of the burrow slopes down steeply, like the edge of a crater. In the center of the depression, a skull-sized rock lies half-buried in the hard clay soil. Above, the packed dirt ceiling is much loamier than elsewhere and lacks roots that might give it structure.

After a moonflower bud hitching a ride on a meteorite crashed into this side of his burrow, Valmar ordered his pet skin beetles to incorporate the crater into their

home. By the time the moonflower bud blossomed into a full-grown specimen, the beetles had covered its crater in clay dirt and connected it to the dungeon where Valmar keeps his prisoners.

Since then, Valmar has been experimenting with the alien creature. The goodly crusader in Valmar hopes to discover some way to use the moonflower's pods for future skin grafts so that he doesn't need to kill any more living creatures. Valmar's demonic side, on the other hand, revels in watching swallowed victims squirm inside the moonflower's pods.

Creature: The moonflower, for its part, is still recovering from its long interstellar voyage, and so it hardly minds the free meals it's getting. The plant doesn't find Valmar's twisted umasi form particularly appetizing, and so it's refrained from attacking him for now.

If Valmar has remained unaware of the characters' intrusion all this time, then he's also in this cave, having just fed the Reclaimers' leader, Zeah, to the moonflower. Valmar watches intently as the moonflower's pod crushes the still-living Zeah, who struggles inside. Zeah has 45 Hit Points remaining when the characters arrive on the scene; they'll need to act fast if they want to rescue her alive.

MOONFLOWER

CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 173 **Initiative** Perception +16

Treasure: The meteorite itself is little more than a melon-shaped hunk of unremarkable space rock. But the moonflower wasn't the only plant who caught a

Zeah Kelembrey-Neverhome

ride to Golarion: sprouting out the top of the meteorite is a single sprig of *primeval mistletoe*.

Reclaimers' Aid

After the PCs defeat Valmar and the moonflower and potentially rescue Zeah, the Reclaimers thank the party profusely for their heroism. They don't linger underground to make proper introductions; as soon as they're free, the Reclaimers make haste toward the exit, eager to escape the dank burrow. They promise to wait for the party on the surface, where they meet Sakuachi and the rest of the characters' companions.

Back in the Needleglens, Zeah makes proper introductions with the party. She explains why she and her fellow Reclaimers are in the area and answers any of the player characters' questions to the best of her ability. In turn, Sakuachi shares her own reason for coming to the Sarkoris Scar—to find a "living god." Zeah smiles in response.

"Sarkoris has a proud tradition of calling down gods. The overgrown vegetable in that murderer's burrow is definitely no god—that I can assure you—but you haven't traveled all this way for naught. Tell me, what do you know of the history of god calling?"

The question is rhetorical. Zeah explains the following points in the course of the rest of the conversation.

God Calling: Many people of Old Sarkoris were animists who venerated religious leaders called god callers. These god callers summoned and communed with powerful manifestations of nature which they called gods. Sakuachi might be able to recruit a "living god" by taking up the mantle of this ancient tradition and becoming a god caller. If there's anywhere such a feat is possible, it's the ruins of Domora to the west.

Domora: Though Sarkorians have practiced various god calling customs since antiquity, many regard the city of Domora as the place where god calling's modern incarnation took root.

The history of Domora is legendary. Over 500 years ago, a Sarkorian man named Domora Hume summoned a powerful entity from the Plane of Water to protect his people from violent raiders. Domora founded a city on the spot where the god manifested, and his followers and descendants worshipped the god, named Dyzad, for generations.

Present State: Since the Worldwound opened and destroyed Sarkoris, the city of Domora has been in ruins. Even now, it's a shattered place overrun with demonic stragglers. "Old faiths never really die, though," Zeah says with a grin. "Dyzad—or other

THE RECLAIMERS' LEADER

If Zeah doesn't survive her encounter with the moonflower, her fellow party members are somber but understanding. The survivors elect the cleric Vennesi as their new leader. Fortunately for the characters, Vennesi knows just as much about Domora as Zeah did, and she imparts all the details necessary for the characters to make the journey to Domora in Chapter 4.

gods like her—no doubt remain buried somewhere beneath the city's wreckage."

NEXT STEPS

Zeah explains that Domora is about 150 miles from their current location in a northwesterly direction. As thanks for them, the Reclaimers offer to take Sakuachi and the rest of the party to Domora as soon as the next morning. It should take about 8 days to reach the ruined city.

If the characters are concerned about continuing to survive the wilds of the Sarkoris Scar (especially if they've had a rough go of it so far), Zeah tells them not to worry. "You're with the Reclaimers now," she says by way of explanation, then produces some dried jerky from her rucksack to share with the group. It's surprisingly peppery. Vennesi casts *produce water* to give the characters something to wash down the food.

Sakuachi eagerly accepts the Reclaimers' offer, quickly getting over her disappointment at what came of the meteorite. She admits that sometimes her visions aren't precise, but that they "always point in the right direction." Her companions defer to Sakuachi's wishes, though they're clearly relieved to join the Reclaimers' company. The Reclaimers aren't just familiar with the terrain—they've dedicated their lives to studying the Sarkoris Scar and are experts in all aspects of the region.

After a peaceful night's rest, the party's new friends start leading the way to Domora. The journey itself is uneventful; the travails within the city, though, are anything but. When your players are ready to continue the adventure, proceed to Chapter 4.

Treasure: As additional thanks for saving their lives, the Reclaimers give the characters a *ring of energy resistance (acid)* and a *scroll of air walk*.

XP Award: For rescuing the Reclaimers and learning about Domora, award each character 30 XP. If Zeah survived, award each character 80 XP instead.

HEY WATCHE THE STARS

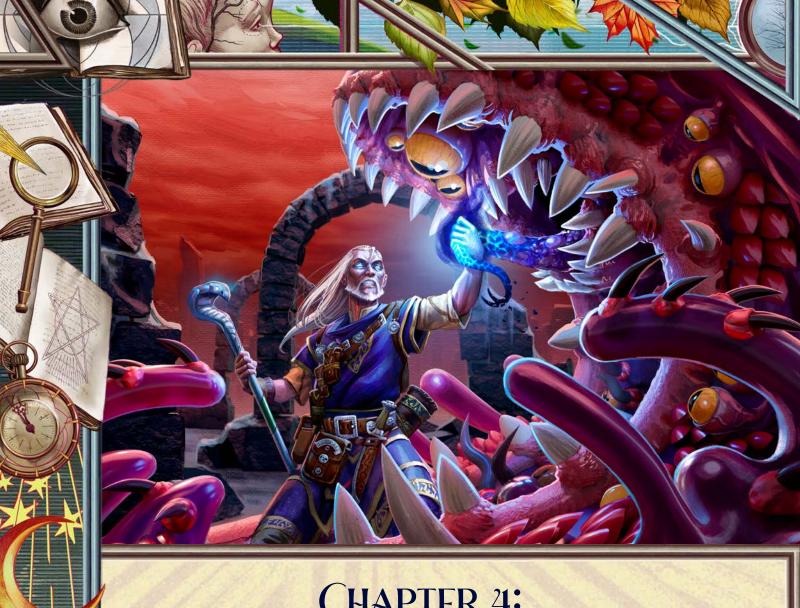
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CHAPTER 4: RUINS OF DOMORA

During this final chapter, the PCs and their allies travel further across Sarkoris and eventually reach the ruins of Domora. The Reclaimers help them find food and drinkable water, and aid in securing shelter. As a result, this leg of the journey should be uneventful until the PCs reach their destination.

After a week of walking, the group reaches Hume's Pool, a dried-up lakebed on whose northern shore stand the ruins of Domora.

Ahead, ruined stone monoliths and crumbling wooden structures loom over the dry lakebed that was Hume's Pool. The winter sun beats down on the cracked soil but does little to warm it. The earth is muddy from melted snowfall, and ancient skeletons of fish poke out here and there. Somehow, the rotting smell of a low tide still wafts through the air.

The Reclaimers set up a base camp behind a cracked, chalky mound out of sight of the broken road leading toward the city. Zeah explains that she and her companions have their own agenda in the area, so they won't be accompanying the party any further. All the same, she says, they're welcome to share the Reclaimers' camp as a home base between excursions.

Domora

Before he was the region's most famous god caller, Domora Hume was a noted but humble Sarkorian conjurer. He founded a small village on a lake that would become the large city named after him. Decades of successful trade earned the town a reputation for quality horses and fair trade for native Sarkorians and outsiders alike. This blossoming fame, however, also attracted trouble.

When western raiders launched a devastating attack on Domora, the city's peaceful horse breeders didn't stand a chance. Domora Hume prayed to all the deities he could think of for salvation, and it was an ancient entity named Dyzad who responded. She emerged from the depths of Hume's Pool and drove off the attackers. From that day on, Domorans made offerings to Dyzad, who became their patron deity, making Domora Hume the first of Sarkoris's modern god callers.

Domora's time of peace ended with the opening of the Worldwound. Even the god callers of Sarkoris couldn't stand against the endless tide of demonic invaders. Like so many other Sarkorian settlements, Domora fell.

Even now, years after the Worldwound's closure, demons and other monstrosities still stalk Domora's ruined quarters. The kithangian demon Malgamon is of particular note, since he's trapped with Domora's first goddess, Dyzad, and four other Sarkorian deities who bravely locked themselves in stasis to keep Malgamon contained and prevent him from tormenting the region's abandoned gods.

Today, Domora remains a blasted, abandoned ruin. Scattered among the few extant stone structures are various clues hinting at the nature of Domora's mysterious deities, but the riddle of what became of these divine beings is a tangled one indeed.

Investigating the Ruins

The party's first mission in Domora is to explore the city's ruins. "The god I'm seeking might be anywhere," Sakuachi notes. "Let's not leave any stone unturned."

The Reclaimer Zeah suggests four locations for the PCs to investigate: a field of battle where Domora's warriors made their last stand against demonic invaders; the city's largest repository of knowledge, the Holobrim Library; a large temple-mausoleum called the Hall of Gods; and Domora Hume's tower, where generations learned the secrets of god calling.

Investigation Sites: The characters can investigate the four sites in any order and can travel to each site as a group or strike out individually. In each instance, it takes 1 day to find the site, perform the investigation, and regroup with the rest of the party; this whole process is covered with the Investigate Domora activity.

INVESTIGATE DOMORA

CONCENTRATE EXPLORATION

Over the course of the day, you sift through ruins, study relics, or comb through archives in order to learn about Domora. Attempt a skill check to determine how many Investigation Points (IP) your efforts yield. Which skills you can use and the DC for it depend on the site you visit.

Critical Success You gain 2 IP.

Success You gain 1 IP.

Critical Failure You make a false discovery and lose 1 IP.

CHAPTER 4 SYNOPSIS

With the help of the Reclaimers, the party reaches Domora, home of the first god caller. Here, the player characters search the city's ruins for clues to Sakuachi's quest, encountering demons and other dangers as they uncover Domora's legendary past. Ultimately, to fulfill the young seer's mission, the party must delve into the haunted cistern beneath Domora, where a powerful demon has imprisoned an ancient Sarkorian god.

PARTY'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

Fulfill Sakuachi's quest to acquire the aid of a living god.

PLOT BEATS

The party should learn these details throughout this chapter:

- To learn what they can of Domora's gods, the party must investigate the remains of the city's most significant locales.
- To help Sakuachi fulfill her destiny, the party must slay the demon in Domora's cistern.

THEY WATCHE THE STARS

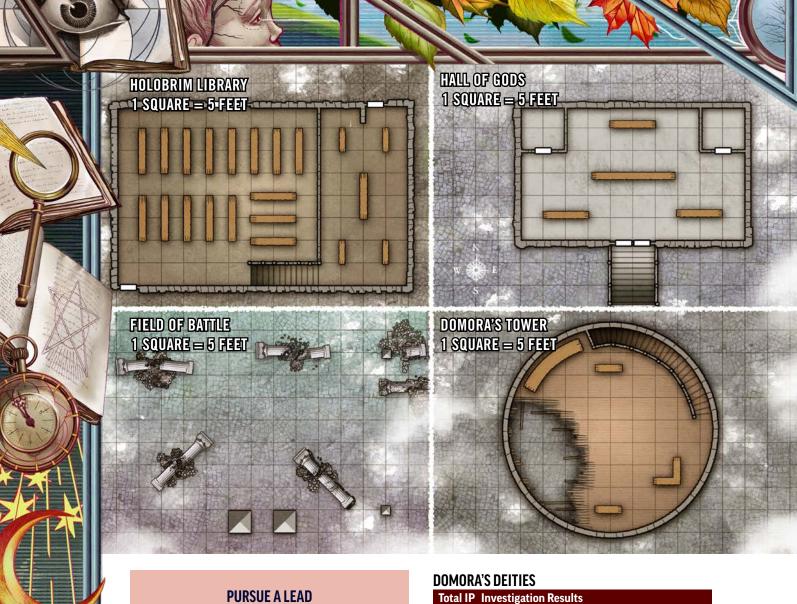
Chapter 1: Escape from Skywatch

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The Lake



A character with the Pursue a Lead activity (such as investigators; *Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide* 56) can use that activity in place of Investigate Domora. In this case, the character gains their +1 circumstance bonus to any of the skill checks listed in the investigation site stat blocks.

End of Day Results: At the end of each day, perform the following steps.

- 1. Tally the IP gained at each investigation site.
- 2. Compare the IP gained at each site to the thresholds listed in the site's stat block. If the party has enough IP to meet or exceed a threshold, reveal the information indicated for that threshold.
- 3. Combine the party's IP from each site to calculate the party's total IP.
- 4. Compare the party's total IP to the thresholds listed in the Domora's Deities table, following If their total IP meets or exceeds a threshold, tell your players the information listed for that newly-reached threshold.

- Domora's founder, Domora Hume, saved his people from violent raiders by summoning a powerful water spirit named Dyzad from the lake just outside town. Henceforth, the water was called Hume's Pool, and the people of Domora revered Dyzad and Domora Hume as goddess and god caller. Future generations of Domorans continued the tradition of god calling, summoning Dyzad and other spirits to guide and protect the city.
- Many of the deities summoned by Domora's god callers were spirit guides. Spirit guides are phantasmal creatures that represent various aspects of the natural world. They often manifest as chimeric beasts that combine features from multiple animals or elements of nature such as plants and weather phenomena.
- During the Worldwound, a demon called
 Malgamon took special pleasure in
 slaughtering spirit guides and the god callers
 who worked with them. Malgamon was known

to lair in Domora's underground cistern, but no demon slayers ever managed to penetrate this dungeon—the wells and tunnels that had once connected to the cistern were all destroyed during the demonic incursion. Still, Malgamon somehow managed to make forays to the surface, so a final entrance to the cistern must exist somewhere.

8 Even after Abyssal magic dried Hume's Pool to a muddy pond at the center of a dry lakebed, it remained a sacred site. Knowing this, Malgamon lured his prey to Hume's Pool, then funneled them into his lair through a now-dry tunnel to the city's cistern system. Dyzad—the first Domoran goddess—and four powerful spirit guides were the last known deities to enter Malgamon's cistern lair.

Demonic Encounters: As they poke around the city, the PCs inevitably attract the ire of its inhabitants. Whenever the player characters visit a new investigation site, they must first overcome a violent monster encounter before undertaking their investigation. These encounters are detailed in the Demonic Encounters section starting on page 59. You can run each encounter in any order, at any investigation site, choosing whichever encounter/location combinations most appeal to you. Maps for each investigation site appear on page 56.

XP Award: For earning 8 IP and collecting enough information to locate the entrance to Malgamon's lair at Hume Pool, award the PCs 80 XP.

INVESTIGATION SITES

The party can visit the following locations in any order while investigating Domora. Each site entry includes some basic background info; an investigation stat block listing what the characters can learn by investigating the site; and any additional details, such as hazards or treasure, that might come into play before or after the demonic encounter at that location.

Field of Battle

This windswept battlefield is an obvious site, not far from the Reclaimers' camp. For many years, Mendevian crusaders tried to retake Domora to establish a base of operations west of the Worldwound, but each attempt was beaten back by the demons occupying the city. The majority of these battles took place in these fields.

FIELD OF BATTLE

Investigation Checks DC 18 Warfare Lore; DC 23 Athletics or Survival; DC 25 Perception

- **1 IP** The armaments and remains scattered about all vary considerably in age. Clearly, there was more than just one battle here—there were dozens over many years.
- **2 IP** Iron trinkets bearing the symbol of Iomedae are common among the fallen, as are demonic sigils, but there aren't any remains that suggest the presence of Sarkorian god callers. This battlefield was clearly used by demons and crusaders, not Domorans.
- **4 IP** Of the war horse remains half-buried here, many bear evidence of having been mutilated, torn asunder, or otherwise defiled. The rampant desecration appears to be most densely concentrated near the dried-up lakebed of Hume Pool.

Treasure: If the PCs earn 4 Investigation Points here, they find a *lesser sturdy shield* tucked beneath a fallen crusader's otherwise-ruined armaments.

Holibrim Library

Among the crumbling stone shelves of Domora's last standing library lie weather-beaten tablets bearing the city's greatest secrets. The player characters can find a bevy of historical information on Domora here, including old maps and useful details about the city's layout.

Located near the northern edge of Domora, this twostory room is the only extant area of what was once a much larger library. A staircase connects the ruin's western and eastern halves. The eastern section is 10 feet higher than the west and features a railing where visitors could look out over the lower stacks.

HOLIBRIM LIBRARY

Investigation Checks DC 18 Academia or Library Lore; DC 23 Nature or Occultism; DC 25 Perception

- **1 IP** Hieroglyphic inscriptions on the walls tell the story of how Domora's first god caller, Domora Hume, summoned the goddess Dyzad to repel a massive party of invading raiders.
- **2 IP** A series of stone tablets detail ancient Sarkorian god-calling rites performed on the shores of Hume's Pool that far predate Domora Hume's legendary feat, suggesting that the body of water had long been known to have sacred properties.
- **4 IP** An atlas of Domora shows the city's vast cistern network just a few years before the city was destroyed by demons. The map shows all the various tunnels and connections between the cistern's nexus and the city above, as well as an aquifer that drew water from Hume's Pool into the cistern.

Hazard: The free-standing stone shelves filling the library once contained hundreds of tomes, historical artifacts, and other implements of higher learning.

THEY WATCHED THE STARS

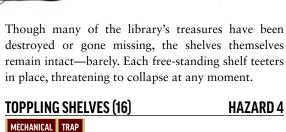
Chapter 1: Escape from Skywatch

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The Lake



Stealth DC 18 (trained) to notice the shelf's precarious

Description This stone bookshelf is badly compromised. It's just one push away from toppling over.

Disable DC 22 Thievery (expert) or Engineering Lore (trained) to shore up the shelf

AC 18; Fort +8, Ref +8

Hardness 8, HP 30 (BT 15), any attack that fails to destroy the shelf triggers its Topple reaction; **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Topple Trigger The shelf is attacked or touched forcefully (such as by a creature Shoved into it); Effect The shelf tumbles over in the direction opposite its triggering creature, crashing onto the ground in a 10-foot-by-10-foot area. Creatures in the area take 4d8+10 bludgeoning damage (DC 25 basic Reflex save). A creature that critically fails its save falls prone. The affected area becomes difficult terrain.

If the toppling shelf crashes into a space occupied by another toppling shelf, it triggers that shelf's Topple reaction. This can result in a chain reaction that causes multiple shelves to Topple, one after the other.

Treasure: If the characters earn 4 Investigation Points here, they find an unassuming piece of rubble that's actually a *runestone* inscribed with a *resilient* rune.

Hall of Gods

For many Domorans, the Hall of Gods was the center of spiritual life. Part temple, part crypt, this was a place where citizens could pay homage to the city's large pantheon, learn about past Domoran deities and god callers, and honor the spirits of departed ancestors.

HALL OF GODS

Investigation Checks DC 21 Genealogy Lore; DC 23 Nature, Occultism, or Religion; DC 25 Perception

- **1 IP** The characters hear wispy fragments of Domoran phrases echoing among the halls, each word spoken by an invisible spirit. These whispers come from dozens of god callers from Domora's past. The people of Domora clearly didn't just worship one deity-they had many.
- **2IP** Sounds of nature intermingle with the murmured voices: susurrations become leaves rustling in the wind, and low chants morph into the creaking of an old tree. Clearly, forces of nature were integral to Domoran spirituality.

4 IP Beneath the whispered tones of humans and even the gentle din of nature, the sounds of animals and beasts thrum almost imperceptibly in the background. The growling of tigers, the snorting of horses, the hooting of owls-within every Domoran deity lay a powerful, primordial animal spirit.

Treasure: If the characters earn 2 Investigation Points, they find two scrolls: a 3rd-level scroll of summon animal and a scroll of animal vision.

Domora's Tower

After Domora Hume summoned Dyzad at Hume's Pool, a stone tower was constructed near the city founder's stables. From this tower, Domora communed with his goddess and trained aspirants who wanted to continue the tradition of god calling. Even after his passing, Domora's Tower was an important place of study for the city's future generations of spiritual leaders.

Though badly damaged, the tower remains standing after all these years. A winding stone staircase circles the tower's interior and connects its five stories. Each story is one large, open room.

The map on page 56 shows the tower's uppermost floor. The tower's four lower levels are identical in shape, but contain no furniture.

DOMORA'S TOWER

Investigation Checks DC 21 Arcana or Architecture Lore; DC 23 Occultism or Religion; DC 25 Perception

- **1IP** Tucked between the staircase and the wall are a quartet of large metal plates, each etched with a portrait and a fantastical story of one of Domora Hume's most talented students. These four students came from four separate Sarkorian clans. Their names were Sagiyas Howlingblood, Jaki Allriver, Gennin Wintersun, and Alkin Stareye.
- 2 IP A tightly rolled tapestry hidden in the hollow leg of a table was spared destruction. The tapestry shows Domora Hume's four successors standing in a circle, enacting a ritual. A beastly yet regal crustacean the size of a bear rises from a pillar of water between the assembled god callers. Sarkorian runes describe the scene, explaining how the city's greatest god callers could, even after Domora Hume's death, channel their combined powers to summon the original divine protector of Domora, the goddess Dyzad.
- **4 IP** Hidden in the ceiling tiles is a series of vellum scrolls. The scrolls were written by Domora Hume himself, and they concern the matter of divine beings rising from the depths of the nearby lake called Hume's Pool. Hume speculated that his city was a good place for god calling because the lake's blessed waters ran beneath Domora via an extensive aguifer system.

Treasure: If the characters gain 2 or more Investigation Points here, they find a bag of holding type II. It contains two potions of quickness, four moderate healing potions, and 500 gp.

Demonic Encounters

Each day, either during their investigation of Domora or after the party has reconvened at camp, the characters face one of the following encounters.

EVENT 22: ARSON DEMONS MODERATE 7

Creatures: Much of Domora was destroyed by brimoraks—demons manifested from the souls of evil arsonists. Little of the city has yet to be marred by demons' wanton chaos; still, one group of brimoraks based out of the city's core remains intent on finding and immolating every last unscorched pebble.

BRIMORAKS (4)

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 62

Initiative Perception +12 or Stealth +12

EVENT 23: TONGUE-TIED

LOW 7

Creatures: Since the Worldwound opened over a century ago, countless demons have been slaughtered on the streets of Domora. Their remains sometimes coalesce into further unholy terrors, among the most gruesome examples of which are a trio of large, quivering tangles of knotted demon tongues. These "demontangles" haunt the city's streets day and night, slithering across the ruins in search of mortals to corrupt, destroy, and consume.

DEMONTANGLE (3)

CREATURE 5

CE variant gibbering mouthers (Pathfinder Bestiary 176) **Initiative** Perception +15

HP 140; Weaknesses bludgeoning 5, cold iron 5, good 5

Treasure: One of these tangles is composed of particularly well-preserved demon tongues. From its corpse, a character can extract two greater pickled demon tongues (page 80).

EVENT 24: ARCHIVIST OF WASTES TRIVIAL 7

Creature: A unique 10-headed monstrosity called Alkoasha, "the Archivist of Wastes," dwells in the sodden ruins of Domora. Alkoasha bears physiological similarity to a hydra, except its heads resemble those of cave worms rather than serpents. Divinely corrupted long ago by the demons who besieged Domora, Alkoasha attacks any living creatures on sight, making no distinction between mortal or demon for the purposes of its rampages.

Any of the investigation sites in this chapter are suitable locations for this encounter, except for Domora's Tower.

ALKOASHA

CE variant elite hydra (Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 210)

Initiative Perception +19

Alkoasha's Head Regrowth Alkoasha uses the same rules for a typical hydra's head regrowth, except it starts the battle with 10 heads and each uncauterized stump regrows only one head, rather than two.

Speed 25 feet, burrow 25 feet

EVENT 25: ZOMBIE DRAGON

MODERATE 7

CREATURE 7

Creature: Over a century ago, an evil black dragon named Ymynsallion came to Domora to see if any treasures of the first god caller remained. Demons slew the dragon, and a heinous necromancer subsequently raised Ymynsallion's corpse as a zombie. Now, only a rotten husk remains of the dragon's former dreadfulness. Though mindless, Ymynsallion continues to haunt the city where she met her demise, flying from roost to roost and dive-bombing any creatures she spots below.

This encounter makes particular sense on the top floor of Domora's Tower, but could occur at any of the investigation sites.

YMYNSALLION

CREATURE 9

Zombie dragon (Pathfinder Bestiary 3 303) **Initiative** Perception +16



HEY

Chapter 2:

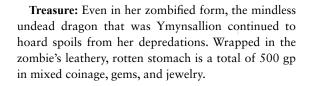
Still Waters

Chapter 3: **What Remains**

Chapter 4: **Ruins of Domora**

The Lake





COMPLETING THE INVESTIGATION

Once the characters have completed their investigation by accruing 8 or more Investigation Points, they have enough clues to determine that the legacy of Domora's god callers might yet remain in the city's subterranean cistern. Their next task is to enter the cistern via a dried-out tunnel in the remains of the nearby lake called Hume's Pool.

When the party is ready to proceed with the adventure, they can start their exploration of Domora Cistern in area F1. Sakuachi insists that she accompany them, since she must be directly involved in this part of her quest. Indeed, the player characters won't get far without her, so even if they blanch at first, they'll eventually have to let her follow them. Innanuma and the rest of her companions remain outside, to guard the entrance and await the party's return.

Domora Cistern

Domora's cistern and the wells connected to it were built after the time of Domora Hume. At the height of the Worldwound, the tunnels all collapsed and most of the drainageways became clogged with debris. By the time a kithangian demon named Malgamon moved into the cistern, the only remaining entrance was a dried-up aquifer tunnel connected to Hume's Pool.

THE WELL SHRINES

At the time of Domora's fall, four god callers held sway in the city along with their spirit guide deities, their fame second only to Domora's first goddess, Dyzad. Together with Dyzad, these four divinities sacrificed their bodies to protect the city from Malgamon. While Dyzad distracted Malgamon in the cistern, the other four locked their souls into shrines at the bases of four nearby wells. This caused the cistern's doors to seal and the cistern to fill with water, creating a magical prison within which Dyzad and Malgamon were to be trapped for eternity.

To this day, Malgamon and Dyzad continue their struggle in Domora's cistern. The pair can be released from their prison only if the four spirit guides inhabiting the wells around the cistern release their magic, causing the cistern's seals to open, the cistern water to funnel into the wells, and the magical prison to be dispelled.

When the party arrives at the entrance to the cistern tunnels, one of the four, gods Ruun, detects Sakuachi

and decides to help fulfill her quest. But first, Sakuachi and her companions will need to prove themselves. They'll need to not only overcome the four Sarkorian deities' challenges, but also defeat Malgamon in the central cistern.

As noted above, Sakuachi accompanies the player characters for their exploration of the cistern network. Sakuachi's stats are on page 93. She attempts to Aid characters in skill checks with which she is proficient, but lets the party lead the way through the tunnels. In battle, she casts beneficial spells on the characters from a safe distance.

SAKUACHI'S SACRIFICES

To enlist the aid of her own Sarkorian deity, Sakuachi must make a suitable sacrifice to each of the four divinities in the wells around the central cistern (areas F7, F11, F12, and F14). These offerings must be important symbols that separate people, of the "false" world, from animals and beings of the "natural" world. These could be material goods, creature comforts, or even some intangible concepts.

At each of the first three wells the party visits, Sakuachi sacrifices one of the material things most important to her:

- Her weapon (a spear passed down to her from her father)
- Her favorite furs (which she crafted after her first successful seal hunt as a teenager)
- Her astrolabe (a navigational aid her companion Ulikuq gifted her at the outset of their journey.

At the Stareye Well (area **F14**)—which can be accessed only via the central cistern (area **F13**)—Sakuachi makes her final, most dramatic sacrifice: her name. In so doing, she proves her dedication to the path of god calling and gains the companionship of the Sarkorian god Ruun.

THE CENTRAL CISTERN

The central cistern, F13—where Malgamon continues his generations-long fight with Dyzad—is full of water. The large, sealed door between the cistern and area F8 can't open until the cistern's water has been drained into the adjacent wells. To open the hatch separating each well from the cistern, Sakuachi must make an offering to the deity inhabiting the well's shrine, and the characters must overcome the ensuing haunt that manifests to test them. Afterward, the deity opens the hatch to the cistern and uses their magic to pump water from the cistern into the well until the well is full.

The god Ruun conveys all of this to Sakuachi when the party enters the tunnels around the cistern. See area F1 for details.

Cistern Features Unless otherwise n

Unless otherwise noted, Domora's cistern and adjoining tunnels share the following environmental features.

Ceiling and Walls: Walls are made of either natural or worked stone. Ceilings are 20 feet high.

Light: Except for area F1, all areas are dark.

F1. AOUIFER

This tunnel is a mucky morass of red mud and stagnant water. Above, a stone bridge spanning north to south overlooks the aquifer. A stairway leads up to the bridge. West of the stairway, a mound of rubble slopes up to a separate enclosure.

The water is 2–1/2 feet deep at its center, and is difficult terrain.

During winter mornings, a faint trail of sunlight streams in from the lakebed to the east, casting most of the aquifer in dim light.

The PCs likely attract the attention of the vrock in area **F2** as soon as they arrive.

Shared Vision: When the party first enters, they garner the attention of the god Ruun. Peering into the mind and heart of Sakuachi, Ruun speaks to her in a booming voice. Read or paraphrase aloud the following.

"I am Ruun, one of the four who guard this cistern. I felt your presence when you first entered this domain, and I believe you may be worthy of my service. My kin, however, are not so sure.

To prove yourself, visit our shrines at the bottom of the wells in these tunnels. At each, you must make a worthy sacrifice, and you must overcome a challenge posed by the shrine's patron. Complete my three siblings' challenges, and we will unseal the cistern's door.

"Within, elder Dyzad does battle with Malgamon. If you can defeat Malgamon and offer me your final sacrifice, then I will deign to let you call upon me as your god."

Sakuachi stands in ominous silence as she listens to Ruun's instructions. When Ruun at last falls silent, Sakuachi turns to the other party members and gives them a determined look, eager to begin.

F2. AQUIFER BRIDGE

This stone bridge connects a balcony-like structure south of the aquifer to the tunnels and caves north of areas F5 and F6.

Creature: A bedraggled vrock perches atop the bridge here. The last of its flock, the vrock is unaffiliated with Malgamon and knows nothing of the kithangian. Rather, the wrath demon has simply learned that this bridge makes a good place to watch out for wandering travelers or animals who make their way into the aquifer hoping for shelter. It attacks on sight and fights until destroyed.

Chapter 1:

THEY

WATCHED

THE

Chapter 2: Still Waters

Skywatch

Chapter 3: What Remains

hapter 4: of Domora

Lake





INVIDIAKS (2)

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 65
Initiative Stealth +17

F7. HOWLINGBLOOD WELL

MODERATE 7

This soaring cylindrical chamber appears to be the bottom of a massive, dried-up well. Along the southern wall, a humble, red marble statue stands watch over the empty chamber.

None of these wells open on the surface above; rather, small tunnels branch out from each well's higher reaches and channel water to smaller wells throughout Domora. All these tunnels have been collapsed or ruined, making it impossible to enter any of the wells via any other means than the aquifer south of here.

Haunt: This well, like the other three in this cistern, is warded by a Sarkorian deity. All together, the deities' magic keeps Malgamon and Dyzad sealed in the cistern's central chamber. When Sakuachi approaches the statue along the well's northern wall, the god here, Waiixi—god of a famous god caller and clanliege named Sagiyas Howlingblood—manifests as a phantasmal guardian.

Waiixi resembles a human-sized praying mantis with eight long legs made of variously colored glass. Where the mantis's head should be is instead a series of interlocking stone rings that float roughly in the arrangement of a sphere. Each ring is carved with glowing Sarkorian runes that denote Domoran virtues like strength of will, forethought, and partnership with animals.

Though Waiixi isn't actually dead, the god's manifestation functions as a haunt. To assuage Waiixi and free the god's spirit, the characters must disable the haunt after Sakuachi makes her sacrifice.

As soon as it manifests, the god launches into a flurry of attacks to test the party's worthiness. Two aspects of the god Ruun—incorporeal owls rimed with magical ice—also come into being with the haunt (see Creatures).

TEST OF THE GOD CALLER

HAZARD 7

COMPLEX HAUNT

Stealth +12 (expert)

Description An incorporeal Sarkorian deity manifests before the party and challenges their resolve. Only aspirants whose motives are pure and whose hearts are in tune with the natural world can hope to overcome this "test of the god caller."

Disable Three DC 27 Nature or Occultism (trained) checks can disable the haunt

Manifest Trigger Sakuachi makes an offering at the well shrine; Effect The Sarkorian deity inhabiting the well surges to life, manifesting as a large, ghostly beast surrounded by throngs of smaller animals. The rush

of spiritual energy washes over everyone in the well, dealing 8d6 force damage (DC 25 basic Will save).

Routine (3 actions) The Sarkorian divinity commands a swarm of ghostly animals to overwhelm creatures in a 10-foot burst in the well. The haunt can select up to three different points to target, spending 1 action per burst. Creatures in an affected take 4d6 force damage and must attempt a DC 25 Will save. The haunt loses 1 action for each successful check to disable the haunt.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target takes half damage.

Failure The target takes full damage and is flat-footed until the beginning of the haunt's next turn.

Critical Failure The target takes double damage, is flat-footed until the beginning of the haunt's next turn, and is slowed 1 for 1 round.

Reset 8 hours

Creatures: Two spectral, owl-shaped entities attack along with the haunt. These beings are minor extensions of Ruun (area **F14**), who has taken a special interest in Sakuachi. They are statistically identical to stone-breasted owls, except they also have immunity to cold.

ASPECTS OF RUUN (2)

CREATURE 5

Variant stone-breasted owls (page 91)

Initiative Perception +15

HP 75; **Immunities** cold, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision; **Resistances** all damage 5 (except force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Aftermath: Once the haunt is disabled and the owls defeated, the god in the well shrine peers down at the party, bows, and dissipates into a swirl of lightly glowing ethereal mist. The mist weaves a winding trail through the air to the small tunnel connecting to the central cistern. There, in a burst of light, the god unseals the channel, allowing stagnant water to quickly drain from the cistern into the well. As the room fills with water, the misty god swirls around the party and pushes them through the large open door from whence they came. Once everyone is out of the well, the large door shuts behind them and locks, creating a water-tight seal so the well can fill with water.

F8. CISTERN DOORS

Time seems not to have touched the sturdy, watertight, impossibly clean iron doors blocking this pathway. Beads of condensation drip down the doors' surface. From the other side come muted sounds of thrashing and churning water.

THEY WATCHED THE STARS

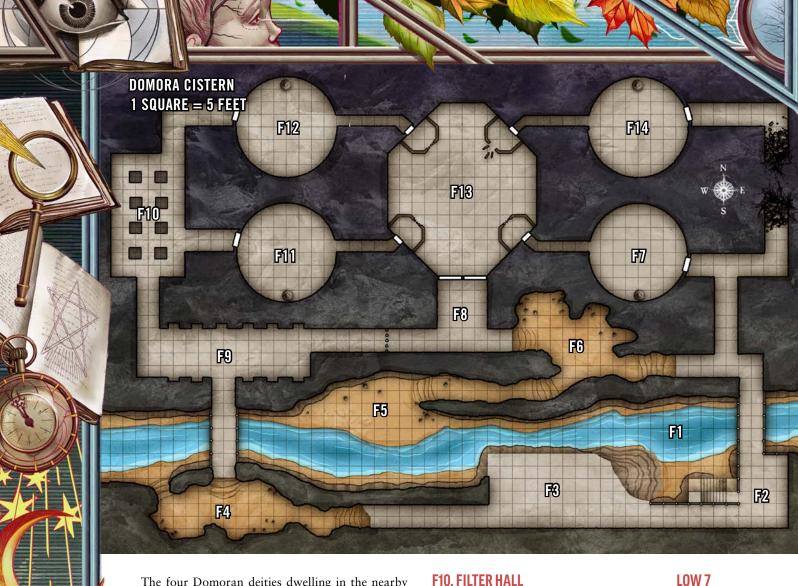
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The four Domoran deities dwelling in the nearby well shrines focus their magic on these massive cold iron doors, from which radiates the invisible prison that prevents Malgamon from escaping the central cistern beyond. Only after Sakuachi has made her offerings at the three accessible cistern wells (areas F7, F11, and F12) will the divine magic abate enough for the god Ruun to fling these doors open. Until then, the way remains blocked.

F9. NORTH TUNNEL

A portcullis made of thick iron bars divides this long hallway into two sections.

The portcullis is connected to the central cistern's door, so that when that door opens, this portcullis lifts too. A character can deduce as much by succeeding at a DC 20 Crafting or Engineering Lore check while examining the portcullis. A creature can lift the portcullis with a successful DC 30 Athletics check to Force Open.

The matter caking the portcullis is a remnant of the clog in area F10.

Two rows of pillars made of overlapping sheets of thick iron grating line this passage. Soggy leaves, weeds, and vines choke the intricate pillars.

These iron pillars were part of an advanced filtration system imported from Numeria and constructed here in Domora's twilight years. The complex machinery and special knowledge necessary to operate the filters was lost during the city's demonic siege.

Creature: Demonic vegetation has crept into this filtration system and grown into a monstrous mass. This behemoth, called simply "the clog," attacks intruders on sight, eager to absorb their nutrients.

THE CLOG

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE N HUGE FUNGUS PLANT

Elite tendriculos (Pathfinder Bestiary 2 6, 257)

Initiative Perception +17

Treasure: Once the clog has been defeated, the player characters can spot two arrows poking out of its central mass. Both are pieces of spellstrike

ammunition type III—one arrow already holds a spell of earthbind, but the other is empty.

F11. ALLRIVER WELL MODERATE 7

Like the Howlingblood Well, this simple cylindrical chamber resembles the bottom of a dry well except for an ominous cloaked statue along the southern wall.

Haunt: This well shrine is inhabited by the Sarkorian god Enaaku, last called upon by the god caller Jaki Allriver. As in the other two extant well shrines, the god manifests in a spectral form as soon as Sakuachi approaches the statue, then attacks the party to test their worthiness. Enaaku resembles a horse-sized silver ferret with the horns of a ram and large, furry moth wings.

TEST OF THE GOD CALLER

HAZARD 7

Page 63

Stealth +12 (expert)

Creatures: Two ice-rimed entities shaped like owls attack the party alongside the haunt.

ASPECTS OF RUUN (2)

CREATURE 5

Variant stone-breasted owls (page 91)

Initiative Perception +15

HP 75; **Immunities** cold, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision; **Resistances** all damage 5 (except force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Aftermath: As soon as the haunt is disabled and the aspects of Ruun defeated, the Enaaku's phantasmal manifestation ceases its attack and calmly regards the party. Without a word, the vision turns to glowing dust, then floats into the drainage tunnel connecting to area F13. It unseals the drain, causing water to pour into the well. Sakuachi urges the party to leave the well so Enaaku can close the door behind them and allow the well to fill with water.

F12. WINTERSUN WELL MODERATE 7

This well is physically identical to areas **F7** and **F11**, except the statue is on the northern part of the wall.

Haunt: The fiery griffon god Posololo, last called upon by the god caller Gennin Wintersun, inhabits this well shrine. As soon as Sakuachi approaches the statue, the god awakens to attack the party and test their mettle.

TEST OF THE GOD CALLER

HAZARD 7

Page 63

Stealth +12 (expert)

Creatures: Two ice-rimed, owl-shaped aspects of Ruun attack the party alongside the haunt.

ASPECTS OF RUUN (2)

CREATURE 5

Variant stone-breasted owls (page 91)

Initiative Perception +15

HP 75; **Immunities** cold, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision; **Resistances** all damage 5 (except force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Aftermath: As in areas **F7** and **F11**, once the haunt is disabled and the aspects of Ruun defeated, the god here unseals the drain to the central cistern, allowing this well to fill with water. If the party has overcome the challenges at the other wells, the central cistern is now suitably drained, and the party can go through the doors at area **F8** to reach Malgamon, their final challenge.

F13. CENTRAL CISTERN

SEVERE 7

Domora's patron goddess Dyzad and the dread kithangian demon Malgamon have been trapped inside this chamber for generations. The last four god callers of Domora imbued the shrines connecting to this cistern with the spirits of their deities to seal Dyzad and the demon in here.

The magic of Domora's four final deities encases this chamber in an invisible magical shroud. Neither Malgamon nor his fiendish minions can use their teleportation abilities within the central cistern, but the PCs can utilize such effects normally.

Sealed Door: The door to the cistern is massive, watertight, and made of magically reinforced cold iron. When the party first arrives in the tunnels beneath Domora, the cistern is filled with water; the door won't budge until they drain the water from the cistern by activating the three accessible well shrines (areas **F7**, **F11**, and **F12**) and defeats the haunts inhabiting those shrines.

Once the party has overcome the challenges at the three wells in a span of less than 8 hours, the door remains sealed but glows with soft silver light. As the party approaches it, Sakuachi asks if the player characters are ready, then presses her hand to the door. Ruun, the Sarkorian god who's been guiding Sakuachi through the sewers, fills the seer with power. The massive door rumbles, then swings forward, allowing the party into the chamber.

A few inches of fetid water cover the ground of this vast stone reservoir. Two giant arthropods with otherworldly features tangle amid the muck. On the edges of the chamber, four narrow tunnels set into the walls allow water to drain in ordinal directions. Though three of the drains are open and appear to be functioning normally, the northeastern drain's seal is broken, and somehow, the tunnel is filled with thick blue ice.

Chapter 1: Escape from Skywatch

WATCHED

STARS

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The Lake

Fetid Water: A creature that falls prone in this room or gets any water in its mouth is exposed to a disease called sewer haze (*Gamemastery Guide* 119).

Sakuachi's Quest: As soon as the party enters the cistern, Sakuachi sprints toward the ice-choked drain in the northeast corner. "The god calling to me is this way!" she cries. When she nears the drain, the ice blocking the tunnel rapidly melts of its own volition, like curtains parting, allowing Sakuachi to crawl inside. Just as quickly, the ice magically re-forms behind the seer, blocking anyone from following her. The ice abates again only after Malgamon is defeated and Sakuachi has completed her final sacrifice (see Aftermath).

Creatures: Dyzad and Malgamon don't stand idly by while Sakuachi heads for the tunnel. Seeing the young woman, the first goddess of Domora transforms into a whirlwind of water and enshrouds Sakuachi, protecting her from damage and hastening her movement. Malgamon, seeing the cistern doors open, summons two minions from the Abyss to help him escape. The three fiends attack those who stand in their way.

As soon as Sakuachi makes it through the ice tunnel, Dyzad briefly re-forms in midair above the party and their foes. She regards the party with an inscrutable

The Clog

expression, then departs from the Material Plane by exploding in a deluge of water. For the rest of the player characters' fight with Malgamon in the cistern, water falls from above like soft rain.

SERVANTS OF MALGAMON (2)

CREATURE 5

Weak babaus (Pathfinder Bestiary 2 6, 64)

Initiative Perception +11

MALGAMON

CREATURE 9

Male kithangian (page 85) **Initiative** Perception +19

Aftermath: Once Malgamon and his minions are defeated, the ice blocking the tunnel to Stareye Well begins to melt slowly. The player characters can either go through the tunnel to check on Sakuachi or wait for her to emerge after several hours.

Either way, with Malgamon defeated and Sakuachi having completed her quest to gain the aid of a living god, the party has completed their work in the tunnels beneath Domora. Refer to Concluding the Adventure for details on how to wrap up this chapter.

XP Award: For defeating Malgamon and helping Sakuachi complete her quest, award each PC 120 XP or however much they need to reach 8th level, whichever is greater.

F14. STAREYE WELL

The Sarkorian god Ruun, last called upon by a disciple of Domora Hume named Alkin Stareye, dwells in this well. Wise and old beyond reckoning, Ruun felt Sakuachi's presence as soon as the party entered the cistern complex. After Sakuachi sacrificed her furs, her spear, and her astrolabe at the shrines of Ruun's contemporaries, Ruun determined that Sakuachi to be a worthy god caller.

The eastern tunnel originally connecting to this well caved in years ago. To enable Sakuachi to enter the well, Ruun broke the well's seal to the cistern, causing water from the central cistern to flood the Stareye Well. Ruun turned the water in her shrine to ice as hard as steel, and she melts it only to allow Sakuachi into the shrine from the central cistern. Here, Sakuachi must make her final and most important sacrifice: her name.

The party doesn't need to overcome a haunt in this chamber, and they likely access it only after defeating the demons in the central cistern. See Concluding the Adventure for an explanation of what



the player characters see in the Stareye Well and how their adventuring companion has changed.

Concluding the Adventure

By the time the player characters have defeated Malgamon and his minions, Sakuachi has already entered the Stareye Well, told Ruun of her quest, and completed her final sacrifice. The ice blocking the well's small inlet gradually melts after Malgamon is destroyed, allowing the PCs to follow Sakuachi's trail into the shrine. If they do so, they find a spectacular sight: Sakuachi floating in midair, held aloft by spectral owl wings made of dazzling blue ice, which extend from her shoulders. Though the well is freezing cold and she wears only a thin base layer of clothes, the seer doesn't shiver or show any signs of discomfort. In fact, she seems utterly serene as she calmly regards the player characters and descends gently to the ground.

If the player characters ask her what happened, their companion states simply that her quest is complete. "To become closer to the gods of the natural world, I have made my final offering," she says. "I can no longer answer to the name I once went by. From now on, you may call me Snowy Owl."

As if to lend further significance to the event, when the characters leave the tunnels and step outside, they see that it has begun to snow.

NEXT STEPS

Back outside at their campsite, Innumma, Ulikuq and Deniigi rejoice upon seeing their charge, but they don't embrace her or even clap her on the back, perhaps sensing that she's no longer quite of their world. Snowy Owl is also far less bubbly than she used to be.

"The god Ruun has agreed to join me on my quest," she announces to her fellows. "Our next destination is the Crown of the World." To punctuate her words, she motions to a nearby stump. Ruun, a magnificent snowy owl rimed in shards of bright blue ice, manifests above the stump in a flurry of snow, then lands to perch on the fallen tree. The god blinks her eyes slowly while peering at each of her caller's allies each in turn.

For their part, the player characters' next goal is to travel south and return to Lepidstadt in Ustalav, as Dr. Ritalson requested in the letter that found the party in Egede. Perhaps surprisingly, Snowy Owl tells the party that she and her entourage will be joining them on their journey. "Ruun tells me there is

a magical gateway there that connects directly to the Crown," she explains. "It will be more expedient for us to go south and use the gateway, rather than head straight north."

Zeah explains that she and her fellow Reclaimers intend to stay in Domora for now and continue their efforts to cleanse the place of lingering evil. However, expert local navigator that she is, Zeah is more than happy to provide the party with directions to Lepidstadt from their current position. In exchange for everything the party's done for them, the Reclaimers gift the player characters enough rations to make it to the city.

What the player characters discover in Lepidstadt, and how they eventually go with Snowy Owl to the Crown of the World to stop their shared monstrous rival, is the subject of the next and final volume in the Gatewalkers Adventure Path, "Dreamers of the Nameless Spires." THEY
WATCHED
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Chapter 1: Escape from Skywatch

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The Lake

Adventure Toolbox

Malgamon



THE LAKE

The Lake of Mists and Veils is a vast freshwater realm spanning hundreds of leagues in every direction. Located between three continents—Avistan to the south and west, Casmaron to the east, and the Crown of the World to the north—the lake plays host to hundreds of spine-tingling myths and haunting mysteries.

Locals warn visitors to suspend their preconceptions of what is "natural" or "unnatural" on the shores of the lake. Here, nothing is ever as it seems, and the only certainty is that there are no certainties. Every wealthy pirate and salty sailor grimly understands that their success is a result only of the lake's good humor, and that at its discretion any voyage could well be their last. All are equal on the waters of the lake.

The lake's enigmatic nature makes it difficult to speak of the place in facts or details. Freak weather events and waterborne mirages quickly teach newcomers to distrust their own senses, and seafaring chroniclers who attempt to catalog the lake's features often sink to its bottom along with their vellum scrolls.

The shoreline is no safer. Supernatural phenomena, monstrous cryptids, and unexplainable disappearances are all the order of the day along the Lake of Mists and Veils. Only the lake's various aquatic denizens seem at ease in the freshwater ocean, though perhaps they are simply resigned to their fates. Native aquatic peoples such as the tritons of Heziodi and merfolk of the Laliana Collective, are easily as insular and wildeyed as shore dwellers.

The dangers of the lake are multiplied during the winter months, or "sleet season" as Brevans call it. Icy storms buffet fishing villages on a near-nightly basis. Calmer are the mornings, when the lake's eponymous fogbanks roll in, shrouding the coast in an impenetrable mist that blocks sight and dampens sound.

The oldest lakeside cultures have developed mythological vocabularies and druidic traditions to explain and interpret local phenomena. Oral historians often disagree on the specifics of their tales or how exactly to use the lessons of the past to inform the present, but every lake denizen knows there are three basic tenets for those who wish to survive here: Honor the lake. Respect the lake. Beware the lake.

The Lake at a Glance

Reliable information about the Lake of Mists and Veils is hard to come by, and histories of the region are murky and full of inconsistencies. The lake is best described in generalities, the most common of which are detailed herein.

SHORELINE

In general, the coasts of the lake are rocky, forlorn affairs ill-suited for agriculture or industry. Sandy beaches and balmy breezes are all but unknown to the wind-beaten folk who call the lake's edge home. The scattered pockets of habitable shoreline are marked by modest villages and a few significant cities. Outsiders call the dwellers of these settlements lakesteaders, who, despite their disparate nationalities and allegiances, all share a uniquely dour demeanor and fear of strangers.

Soaring, gusty cliffs and murky gravel beaches predominate the southern shores, which ostensibly belong to the tumultuous governments of Numeria and Brevoy. To the west, Mendev controls their portion of the coast in a slightly more orderly fashion, though here too the lake defies mastery. The glacial Ice Wall and adjoining Ice Steppes loom over the lake's northern expanse, marking the edge of the frigid Crown of the World from which the lake's coldest winds blow.

The lake's eastern quadrant is both its wildest and most storied. Many tales from this side of the lake come from plague-wracked Iobarian settlements built here during the Age of Enthronement. According to skalds and adventurers, the Iobarian coast is a dense tangle of pine forests home to nations of centaurs. Farther inland, ancient cyclopean monoliths and temples poke out from peat bogs, acidic marshes, and mucky flatlands.

Not all of the lake's shorelines are wholly bleak, barren places. At Port Ice, whorls of frost rime the city's breakwaters over half the year, their eerie yet beautiful patterns glimmering under pale moonlight. To the west, the shores of Shatterglass are a kaleidoscope of sparkling lake glass bathed in spectacular hues during summer dry spells. Other, stranger shores exist, including Heavyweight Tongue near Gulukka, a glacial beach piled high with an unexplainable mound

Chapter 1: Escape from Skywatch

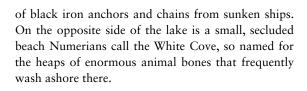
WATCHED THE STARS

Chapter 2: Still Waters

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The Lake



DEPTHS

Though its still, dark waters look largely the same from above, the lake's bottom is an amalgamation of textures, colors, and features often far more vibrant than the monotonous, rocky shores above. Various aquatic humanoids have carved out a few pockets of civilization along the lakebed, but most of it is, like the coastline, unexplored wilderness.

At its center, the lake is perilously deep, requiring special gear or rigorous physical training for land dwellers to survive the benthic pressures. Along most of the shore, lakesteader foragers can safely wade into the cool water to a distance of a dozen or so yards as they search for slimy yellow clams and meaty hardcrabs. Go too far, though, and the lakebed drops precipitously into unfathomable darkness. A thousand-foot-tall underwater cliff spans most of the Brevic coastline, and a powerful undertow drags a few careless villagers to their dooms every summer. Along the Ice Wall, the lake's bottom is over a mile below the surface. Nonetheless, fearless divers sometimes plumb the freezing waters in search of mythical sea caves said to dot the glacial wall.

Myths and Legends

Every culture along these turbulent shores is host to many tall tales and urban legends. The lake's primordial origins are a frequent topic among the shoreside skalds of Brevoy and the druidic storytellers farther east. To the north and south, native Erutaki and Kellid cultures pass down oral mythologies of great creator animals and powerful elemental forces. The Mendevian crusaders to the west focus on the lake's much more recent history.

SWEAT OF A GOD

Along the fiery shores of Iobaria to the east, no story of the Lake of Mists and Veils' manifestation is so pervasive as the druid-king Aalgin's carefully crafted mythology. This is because Aalgin, who rules the city of Okormirr, enforces such a strict animist philosophy within his realm that alternative beliefs are all but forbidden.

According to Aalgin, a little-known giant god named Perbov, the Father of the North, dwells within the Ice Wall along the lake's northern coast. When the first forest fires raced through Iobaria, they melted enough of the Ice Wall to release a monstrous leviathan called Nornunar, the Dweller. To protect his believers, Perbov followed Nornunar into the waters and beat the serpent back into his cave at the base of the Ice Wall. The giant god exerted himself so much to fight Nornunar that he spilled copious amounts of sweat in to the lake. The combination of Perbov's sweat and the icy waters created the shroud of mist that so often hangs about the lake.

Every night, Druid-King Aalgin explains, Perbov continues his divine battle against the Dweller, shedding sweat anew into the lake's frigid waters. So it is that every morning the lake's shores are once again cloaked in a deep, sticky fog. The fog is a reminder to the people of Okormirr the daily cost of living on the lake's shore as well as a warning of the terrible dangers that lurk just beneath its surface.

DEMON'S WATER

For Iomedae's faithful in Mendev, the most important event in the history of the Lake of Mists and Veils occurred just a few hundred years ago, when the then-living god Aroden drove the nascent demon lord Kholerus and his burgeoning cult of Deskari, Demon Lord of Locusts, into the lake's frigid waters. For days, the shores of Mendev boiled red with the blood of slain demons. Iomedaeans in Egede still celebrate this historic event with a 24-hour jubilee called Drowning Day. By all accounts, Drowning Day is at once joyous (to Egedens) and disturbing (to everyone else).

Of course, as history would soon show, Kholerus's cult was a meager force in comparison to the demonic hordes that would soon pour out of the Worldwound. In the years after Aroden's death and the opening of the Abyssal rift where Sarkoris once stood, Mendevians' relationship with the lake changed dramatically. Once, the lake had been a sacred body of water capable of drowning demon lords. In the middle years of the Mendevian Crusades, however, demons pushed countless mortal soldiers up against the coast like a wall, such that the bloodstained shoreline became just one more symbol for beleaguered crusaders fighting a losing war. Now that the Worldwound has closed, Mendevians have set about the long, arduous task of reclaiming their shattered shorelines.

Phenomena

The ghost stories and spooky fables of the Lake of Mists and Veils are, in large part, based on the many types of supernatural phenomena that swirl about the lake. Such phenomena, though undeniably real, are also almost wholly unexplainable. Impenetrable fog banks, waves of living water, and horizon-spanning mirages are some of the lake's most famous paranormal features, to say nothing of more "mundane" mysteries.

THE MIST

Every good story about the Lake of Mists and Veils starts with the mist.

The lake's eponymous gray mists roll in with the first rays of sunlight over the eastern horizon. At dawn, the early sun's rays turn the mist into a blinding white curtain in all directions, obliterating all visual markers save for a nebulous fogbow here and there. During summer months, sailors can hope for a few mercifully clear hours in the late afternoon, during which time most vessels launch from and dock in trade ports. In the winter, the mist lingers day and night, with many patches so thick that captains can't see the tips of their mastheads, let alone incoming ships or jagged rocks.

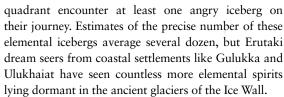
Those who spend too long on the water in heavy fog risk developing an acute panic syndrome that culminates in psychosomatic blindness. Lakesteaders don't get too technical, though, and simply call this sensation mist madness. It can last anywhere between days and weeks.

To mitigate the fog's risks, prudent sailors keep the coastline in sight as long as possible, though this causes its own problems: countless scrapes, battered crews, and shipwrecks occur in the lake's crowded shipping lanes even in off seasons. Farther out from shore, wealthy captains hire powerful druids to manipulate the weather, at least temporarily. Magnetic compasses, too, are a highly valuable commodity on the lake, though a compass can't predict giant aquatic monsters or freak wandering icebergs hiding under cover of the mist.

Some regard the lake's mists not as a potential peril, but as an opportunity for profit. Mariners brave enough to sail straight through the lake's center where the mists are densest might discover an expedient trade route. Likewise, treasure troves like the Wandering Waypoint, the sunken city of Quintarusa, and the archwizard Zetter's flying ship are all rumored to float somewhere around the center of the lake. Countless young adventurers pour their families' fortunes into obtaining ships and crews capable of voyaging across the lake in search of fables.

For most who venture into the mist, their efforts are in vain and, for many, the cost of failure is weighed in blood. Every lakeside port of call has some version of a "lake list"—a directory of sailors lost to the lake's fog—tacked up in a gloomy tavern. Every year these lists of the missing grow, but the number found always stays the same.





All these glaciers swear allegiance to Nizsazic, the evil elemental who dwells around an ice cave called Duru Gival. Nizsazic commands a fleet of water elementals in order to dissuade intruders. Ships who manage to make it past her frozen flotilla inspire her most brutal fury. To trap the offending vessel, Nizsazic freezes over the lake's surface for hundreds of feet in all directions. She then pummels the ship with sword-sized icicles, icy gusts of cutting fog, and boulder-sized ice orbs. Few survive this onslaught.

MIRAGES

The lake's dangers aren't only of the physical realm. On the Lake of Mists and Veils, it's vital to keep your wits about you, lest your own psyche become a burden—or even a liability. Aside from mist madness (see The Mist above), the most common mental affliction to affect lakesteaders and mariners is acute shared delusions—in other words, mass mirages.

Common wisdom dictates that sailors who spend days on the lake's misty waters will inevitably conjure imaginary landmarks to break up the monotonous view. Some believe that the Wandering Waypoint (see page 77) is one such shared hallucination. The truth of that particular site—and of the source of most of the lake's mass mirages in general—is far weirder.

Many miles north of Chesed, giant gas bubbles have been known to rise, apropos of nothing, from the lake's depths. When such bubbles pop, they release a potent, sweet-smelling toxin. Crews who inhale the toxin inevitably experience violent mass hallucinations so vivid they're all but indistinguishable from reality. Stranger still, these hallucinations combine elements from the repressed dreams, memories, and desires of each affected mariner. Numerian occultists speculate that the gas bubbles might have some connection to the Dimension of Dreams—perhaps unveiling temporary portals through which animate dreams or other phantasmagoric horrors might crawl onto the Material Plane—but the truth will likely never be known for sure.

Underwater adventurers are no safer. In certain parts of the lake, the water is a miasma of phytoplankton and benthic dust easily as murky as the mists above the water's surface. The tritons of Heziodi use magical multicolored lanterns called glowstems to light the way between outposts around their city's

hinterlands. Unfortunately, most other creatures can't tell glowstems apart from the lake's native species of underwater will-o-wisps, who are all too happy to exploit their prey's confusion.

The same mist that causes so many travails on water can be just as dangerous on land. Many lakesteaders claim to hear the voices of lost loved ones deep in the fogbanks that roll ashore. Those who follow the sounds sometimes disappear for good, though just as often their bodies are found dashed across rocks at the bottom of lakeside cliffs. Mist-shrouded harpies, green hags, and even blue dragons are to blame for many of these aural tricks, though eerily not all.

Sight and sound aren't the only senses compromised by such hallucinations. Crews sailing along the Mendevian coast between Egede and Jonia have reported numerous experiences of huge temperature swings. Survivors describe feeling familiar icy winds one moment, then, suddenly, suffering from a rush of stifling heat like dry fire. Those few crew members immune to the sensation can only watch in horror as their fellows strip in panic and roll about half-naked on the deck, as if to put out an invisible fire, or jump overboard into freezing water.

Lake Denizens

A variety of roguish treasure hunters, coldhearted monsters, and stubborn feudalists call the lake their home. Traders and adventurers make their visits to the Lake of Mists and Veils as quick as possible, rarely looking back on the trips except in bad dreams. Only the hardiest, most eccentric individuals migrate to the lake's shores with the goal of staying. Ultimately, though, the lake itself has the final say on who survives and who gets driven away.

LAKESTEADERS

The people who live along the shores of the Lake of Mists and Veils refer to their own as lakesteaders. Along the northern and southern shores, humans are the predominant ancestry, though the lake attracts all manner of folk. Demon-haunted Mendev is, perhaps unsurprisingly, home to nearly as many tieflings as the backwaters of Cheliax. Contingents of halflings and orcs dwell in hamlets between the major ports of Numeria and Brevoy, and gnomes and elves can be found in equal measure along the Iobarian coast. Among amphibious beings, boggards predominate east of the Icerime Peaks, in addition to the occasional grippli commune. Despite their ability to dwell on land as well as water, few tritons native to the Lake of Mists and Veils spend much time, if any, on shore.

Many lakesteaders are pirates or mercenaries—and often both at once, depending on who you ask. "A sellsword in one port can be called a pirate in any other," goes one Mendevian saying. No matter the port, there are always at least a half-dozen captains looking for able-bodied crew to join some ill-fated expedition. Magically inclined adventurers such as druids, shamans, and other primal spellcasters can likewise make a healthy living selling their services to outbound ships.

AQUATIC HUMANOIDS

While the coastal nations and shoreside settlements are the best known lakeside locales to land-dwellers, those who dare to plumb the lake's depths can find yet more humanoid refugees. Tritons, merfolk, and sea devils are the most populous types of humanoids to dwell along the bottom of the lake, and these are the people with which most landbound lakesteaders interact.

Foreign mariners accustomed to the curious and sometimes benevolent merfolk of the Steaming Sea or the friendly undine enclaves around the warm waters of Qadira would do well to leave their preconceptions on shore. Like their land-dwelling counterparts, the aquatic humanoids of the lake are reclusive and xenophobic as a rule, since the dangers beneath the lake's surface are many and sanctuaries are few. This is particularly true of native merfolk, most of whom quietly tend algae fields and clam farms around the Laliana Collective and want nothing to do with land dwellers. The surest way to gain a Lalianan's trust is to bear a trophy claimed from their people's most hated foes, the sea devils of Yuovviv to the southeast. The inverse is naturally true when parlaying with the bloodthirsty warriors of Yuovviv, who keep fresh Lalianan heads mounted on the spear-walls that demarcate their holdings. The origins of the Laliana-Yuovviv conflict are as ancient and murky as the lake itself.

Tritons have the widest command of the lake's floor, with small towns and enclaves scattered across the water's four corners. Based primarily out of the city-nation of Heziodi near the lake's core, the stoic imperialists maintain a sprawling network of underwater trade routes called the Hezic Roads. Specially trained "hook wardens" patrol the routes regularly and keep them lit with special floating lanterns called glowstems, which are similar to the surface world's sunrods. Anyone traveling the Hezic Roads would do well to pay the hook wardens due respect—these spear-wielding soldiers are just as capable of slaying would-be highway robbers as underwater monsters.

CRYPTIDS

As perhaps befits a body of water so shrouded in mysteries, the Lake of Mists and Veils is home to a bevy of mythical monsters and cryptozoological creatures.

Along the fir-lined shores of Iobaria, sasquatches mount guerrilla attacks against loggers and firestarters who threaten their forest home. Even Greenhoof centaurs, sworn to protecting the woods, know well the signs of a sasquatch assault: broken ribs, caved-in skulls, and worse. Similarly, small coppices of hostile pine leshys, such as the poachers of Poyanyar, terrorize humanoids at the behest of scornful druids and wicked oracles.

To the north, an orca-sized bunyip called Heggrauku, the Savage Seal, haunts the waters around Ulukhaiat, capsizing fishing boats and dismembering ice fishers THEY
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The Lake

Adventure Toolbox

Wandering Waypoint



The ancient water elemental Nizsazic has dwelled along the northern fringes of the Lake of Mists and Veils since time out of mind. Though she has assumed many shapes and many names over the millennia, her best-known incarnation is as the Warden of the Wall, a serpentine leviathan made of unbreakable turquoise ice. Even the bravest explorers give Nizsazic's domain a wide berth, for her ire is nearly as legendary as her power to create and command whole icebergs.

Despite her distant vantage and legendary aloofness, through proxies and thralls Nizsazic has witnessed the rise and fall of countless coastal empires and has reputedly bargained with some of Golarion's most powerful residents. According to Nizsazic, she personally worked with Aroden on numerous occasions and even helped him force the demon lord Deskari's avatar into the Lake of Mists and Veils. It would be folly to trust the serpent-tongued behemoth's word, though—her draconic form exemplifies not only her immense physical power, but also her mordant wit and an outsized perception of her own magnificence.

No one would call Nizsazic a liar to her face, at least not without a death wish. Quite the contrary, in fact. As the elemental herself will tell you, flattery will get you everywhere. But simple words rarely suffice; gold is a surer means to Nizsazic's good graces. For a Chelaxian fleet's worth of bullion, the Warden of the Wall might even be persuaded to reveal her greatest secret, which is also the reason why she's remained in this desolate part of the world all these years: Hidden in the deepest part of the ice caves she guards is a cavern called Duru Gival, in the center of which is an interplanetary gateway. The portal connects to Triaxus, a distant world of extreme climatic variation where dragons reign supreme.

who fail to observe its blood-soaked hunting grounds. Yetis of the Coldpaw clan perform a similar function on land, repelling arctic travelers who stray too far from established trails.

Across the water, the Brevic coast is classically the realm of elusive dragons like sea serpents and shoal linnorms, plus restless dead and their ethereal ghost ships. An infamous wyrmwraith linnorm named Akilaxxes combines the worst aspects of both dragon

and undead. Any who succumb to Akilaxxes's curse of drowning rise as draugr if their bodies aren't found and consecrated by the next new moon.

To the west, kelpies, rusalkas, and other shapeshifting fey menace the shores of Numeria and the Sellen River delta. Finally, Mendev still wrestles with demonic stragglers from the crusader days, including a trio of aquatic succubi called the Cheerless Choir, who sing siren songs to augment their duplicitous infernal charms.

FLORA AND FAUNA

Lumber and fish are abundant around the Lake of Mists and Veils. The forests of the southern and eastern shores of the lake are mainly fir and cedar, which Brevic and Iobarian communities have long depended on for construction materials and fuel.

The lakesteaders rely solely on a healthy fishing economy for food and trade. The most profitable fish is the illiar tench, though misty guppies and one-eyed bush fish are common catches too. Yellow clams, by contrast, are unpleasant both to look at and to eat, though their gritty meat provides important vitamins and minerals to otherwise malnourished lakesteaders.

Within the northern depths of the lake, a pod of whalelike creatures breach the water at dusk to share their haunting songs. There are fish that light up the water, and others that emit dark clouds around them wherever they go. Sometimes, entire schools of fish spontaneously die. Most of the lake's fish kills occur along the Mendevian coastline, where blooms of a slimy crimson algae locals call "fiend fungus" are common. The algae itself is mostly harmless; the gaseous toxin it emits, however, is not. Tritons born amid a fiend fungus bloom often bear mutations like calcareous horns, puss-weeping gills, and even brittle exoskeletons.

Notable Locations

Despite, or perhaps because of, all of the intrigue and danger that surround it, the Lake of Mists and Veils is not a desolate place. Small communities and huge cities alike call the lake home, to say nothing of the countless flooded caverns, ancient ruins, and wrecked vessels that dot its shores.

In addition to those mentioned throughout this article, the following are a few of the most noteworthy locations on and around the Lake of Mists and Veils. These locations correspond to the map on page 76.

Acuben Isle

In and around the city of Winterbreak, one could be forgiven for thinking Brevic order reigns supreme on lonely Acuben Isle. Just outside the city's walls, however, is a lawless wilderness filled with primordial forests, monstrous beasts, and villainous pirates.

Among this latter faction, a fiery-haired Iobarian gnome named Greya "Winterbitten" Holomirika (CN female fey-touched gnome pirate 5) is the current pirate powerhouse. She owes her great fortune to a boatload of superstitious underlings who believe Greya to be a powerful demigod from the First World. Greya, who in fact hails from a backwater gnome enclave in Taldor, makes no attempt to dispel these notions. Under her command, "the Winterbitten Wharfers" wreak havoc among Winterbreak's crabbing boats and rob anyone foolish enough to travel too far into the forests of Acuben. Greya's ship, the Asellus, is tended to by a trio of cowed nixies who likewise revere Greya and enjoy their stations as her "high priests." Winterbreak's governor, Lady Gerrami Dolnor (LN female human aristocrat 7) of House Lodovka, has placed a substantial bounty on Greya's head.

Chesed

A strange city of alien technology and stark inequality, the last port of call on the River Road is a bastion of civilization or a cesspit of despair, depending on who you ask. During the Mendevian Crusades, aspiring demon slayers stopped in Chesed for a few final creature comforts before heading into the fray. Now, tired veterans spend their last coins at any of the city's squalid gambling halls or creaky taverns while pondering the weight of their wartime deeds.

Half of Chesed is literally mired in filth. Along the Sellen's east banks, unmonitored waste runs off into the Lake of Mists and Veils, making the water highly toxic up to a mile from port. Sometimes, the waste fluids of slum-dwellers combines with alchemical overflow from the Chymist's Ward in a way that results in filthy ooze creatures. Such globules of living muck often cling to the undersides of ships

docked in Chesed; entrepreneurial captains scrape the goo off and keep it contained in watertight compartments for use against enemy boarders. Back in port, these oozes can be sold to the city's gladiatorial arena, where freakish lake monsters are a highly prized commodity.

Claw Point

This uninhabited escarpment of wind-blasted rock is a prominent

bulwark against pirates who would plunder the lakeside villages of Winterbreak Bay. Mercenaries from House Lodovka draw straws to determine which unlucky souls must occupy Claw Point's meager stone bunker until the next winter. Inside this bunker is an emerald crystal ball which enables the outpost's scouts to report incoming threats to mages at the Limstatic Academe in Winterbreak, though this powerful communication device is the full extent of Claw Point's meager accommodations.

Countless Iobarian warlords have attempted to seize Claw Point over the years, but such confrontations end, at best, in the mutual destruction of defenders and attackers alike. Such fatal stalemates are often the result of inexplicable windstorms, hail, and explosive rockslides, all of which suggest that the cliff itself punishes those who would spill blood on its soil.

Duru Gival

Half a mile beneath the water where the elemental Nizsazic defends her corner of the Ice Wall, dozens of tunnels pock the northern glacier, some leading to a labyrinthine warren of ice caves. Stories of THEY
WATCHED
THE
STARS

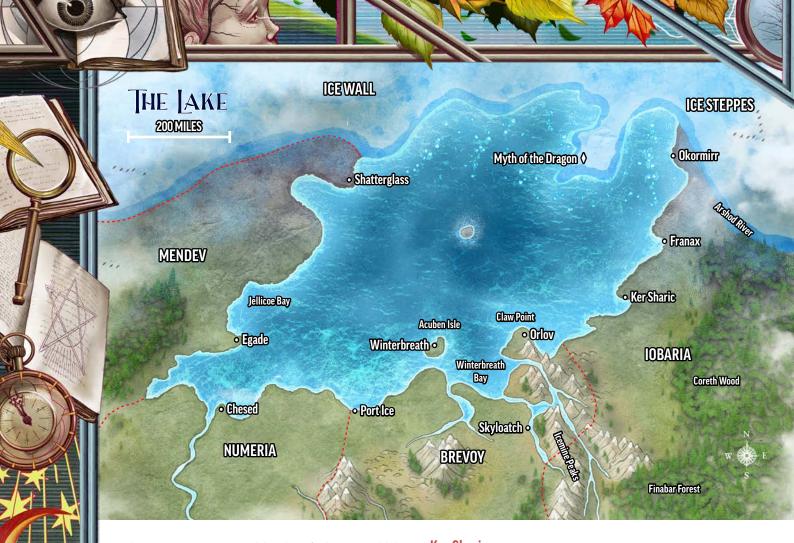
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these caves are rare and hard to find, most told by Erutaki seers who have visited the caves only in their dreams. According to these seers, some of these tunnels connect to the Darklands below, while others span the entire underside of the Crown of the World before emerging in Tian Xia. Of course, only Nizsazic herself knows about the greatest treasure hidden in the ice caves—a doorway to another world in a vast chamber of solid ice called Duru Gival. (See Nizsazic sidebar on page 74.)

Heziodi

Despite being the largest known underwater settlement beneath the Lake of Mists and Veils, this nation of tritons is, by all appearances, anything but inviting. In the city core, wispy structures made from the skeletons of sunken ships stand eerily beneath curtains of thick, specially treated algae. Small fortresses made of stones and shells dot the city's perimeter, each occupied by highly capable sorcerers loyal to the Heziodan crown. The city's current monarch, Queen **Gatokska Argamir** (LN female triton aristocrat 15), is a capable and stern leader, the seventh in her line to bear the crown and lead the glacially slow—yet undeniably steady—expansion of the Heziodi Empire.

Ker Sharic

The tunic- and smock-garbed folk of Ker Sharic may look like simple farm peasants, but their plain clothing and meager lifestyles belie the villagers' true passion, an incredible shared artistry that rivals the most cosmopolitan crafters of New Stetven or Oppara. Flawless window glass, impossible gossamer damask tapestries, and finely glazed stoneware are just some of the beautiful wares for which the Ker Shari are locally famous.

Due in part to the high demand, Ker Shari artwork is constantly in short supply. The townspeople themselves are insular even by lakesteader standards, and they rarely leave the fenced borders of their little commune. The real reason for the dearth of Ker Shari crafts, however, is that nearly all the town's works go to a single group of buyers: cloaked visitors who bear a mysterious white-and-blue banner and visit the town once a month like clockwork. The unmarked gold coin offered by these silent patrons is Ker Sharic's lifeblood. None know the visitors' provenance or intentions, but all Ker Shari live in fear that someday the visitors will stop coming, putting an end to their scanty but steady income.

Okormirr

Located on the northeastern edge of the lake near the mouth of the Ardshrod River, the Iobarian city of Okormirr has not only stood the test of time in the oftvolatile coastal region of Iobaria, but has flourished over its centuries of existence. This is in no small part thanks to the gracious but strict rule of Druid-King Aalgin (NG male half-orc druid 13), who requires all citizens of Okormirr to adhere to a strict philosophy called the True Wyrd.

The tenets of the True Wyrd are simple but arcane: all who wish to call Okormirr home must pledge loyalty to Perbov, a mythical giant god of stability and protection, and make suitable sacrificial offerings on specific holidays. Believers say that Perbov is a protector of the lake, and of all its people, keeping them safe through the darkest of winter nights. Opponents argue that there's no proof of Perbov's existence, and that Aalgin's faith borders on cultism.

Regardless, few can argue with the results of Aalgin's leadership; under his guidance, the once-fetid mire around Okormirr is drinkable, and outdoor public areas are shielded from the elements by magically interwoven spruce canopies. Okormirr is a peaceful town, but many visitors return shaken or filled with an unexplainable dread. Some of these returners bear mysterious scars or brands whose provenance they can't recall.

Port Ice

The former capital of the now-defunct nation of Issia is a powerful trading hub in theory, but a chaotic pirate haven in practice. The city's current caretaker, **Domani Surtova** (LE male human aristocrat 10), undertakes only those administrative functions which can be performed from the comfort of the lavish Blue Manor. For the most part, though, Domani leaves the practical affairs of city management to the sword-wielding lawkeepers under his command. A far more organized civic society can be found in Port Ice's finest tavern, the Ice Bound Inn, which is also the headquarters of a simmering peasant rebellion.

Shatterglass

Named for the shimmering lake glass that blankets its shores, this small village of retired pirates is constructed entirely from salvaged ship lumber. Before starting a building project, Shatterglass carpenters scrutinize the provenance of their materials, preferring the hulls of famous pirate ships above all other types in spite of the fact that many buildings made from legendary vessels have a propensity for being haunted.

The village's official mode of government could rightly be called anarchy, but the term implies destructive mayhem that's all but unknown to the peaceful ex-captains. In Shatterglass, the common belief is that if you do right by others, they'll do right by you. Those who fail to observe this credo often don't live to see the next sunrise.

Shatterglass residents make a good living selling their eponymous lake glass to local buyers, such as the artisans of Ker Sharic. For the less artistically minded, the village offers an alternative product: grain alcohol from a filthy distillery called the Shattered Jug. Rumor has it that the distillery's operator, **Danigan Odmire** (CN female halfling brewer 8), uses a *decanter of endless water* to produce her literal boat-loads of exported liquor.

Wandering Waypoint

In the middle of the Lake of Mists and Veils is a floating island that eludes charting and appears in a different location every time it's discovered. Most who come upon the so-called Wandering Waypoint find it by sheer accident; those who go looking for it are almost surely doomed to find naught but mist.

Excepting its variable location, accounts of the island itself are markedly consistent. Sailors who've seen it describe the island as barely more than a hundred yards across, consisting of a gradually sloping beach of glassy, opalescent stones with a small fire circle in the center. Those who disembark their vessel, walk to the center of the island, and light the fire experience a spectacular phenomenon—a moment of omniscience during which they glimpse the entirety of the Lake of Mists and Veils, east to west, north to south, surface to bottom. Even the entrance to Nizsazic's icy subterranean realm, Duru Gival, appears in the fire-lighter's impossible field of vision.

On this last point, the glimpse of Duru Gival comes with a cost. At the exact moment the fire-lighter glimpses Duru Gival, Nizsazic also sees the fire-lighter. This is because it was none other than Nizsazic herself who created the Wandering Waypoint, in order to anticipate would-be treasure hunters who might get too close to her treasure.

Of course, it's a mystery why the elemental would create such an awesome oracular tool rather than simply hide her treasures out of view entirely. Some say the cruel elemental simply enjoys the game of cat and mouse the Wandering Waypoint provokes. Others speculate that the floating island might hold some key clue to Nizsazic's powers—or perhaps even the magic that allows her to remain on the Material Plane.

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ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

The party can gain access to the following new rules and character options throughout "They Watched the Stars."

Equipment and Magic Items

The abandoned city of Skywatch still holds many secrets, including treasures valuable to astronomers and those who look to the stars for guidance.

To the west, crusaders fashion sturdy

spellhearts from the demons they slay.

ASTRONOMERS' TOOLS

These precious instruments enable their wielder to determine important information on long wilderness expeditions. Though most navigators use the typical type of astrolabe found in large city markets, sailors often employ a variety specifically designed

for turbulent sea voyages. The most dedicated astronomers employ magical astrolabes, such as the astrolabe of falling stars.

<u>ASTROLABE</u>

ITEM 2+

UNCOMMON

Usage held in 2 hands; **Bulk** L **Activate** 1 minute (Interact)

Astrolabes can be used for navigation in unfamiliar or featureless locations. To use an astrolabe, the holder must be trained in Survival. By spending 1 minute to measure the height of the stars and planets, a holder who knows the time and date can determine the latitude, and a holder who knows their latitude can determine the date and time. An astrolabe also grants a +1 item bonus to checks to identify celestial bodies. A standard astrolabe functions only on steady ground.

Type standard astrolabe; Level 2; Price 30 gp

Type mariner's astrolabe: Level 3; Price 50 gp

A mariner's astrolabe contains additional stabilizers that make it suitable for use on moving surfaces, such as the deck of a ship.

ASTROLABE OF FALLING STARS

ITEM 5

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Adventure Toolbox

UNCOMMON EVOCATION MAGICAL

Price 150 gp

Usage held in 2 hands; Bulk L

This astrolabe is fashioned of magically attuned platinum plates and rings and is inset with carefully measured ruby gems. The astrolabe's back is engraved with helpful charts, a calendar, and a maker's mark.

An astrolabe of falling stars can be used as a mariner's astrolabe. In addition, it can produce

the following magical effect.

Activate (Interact) Frequency once per day; Effect With a flick of your finger, you set the astrolabe's rule spinning, causing the inset rubies to become a blur. Choose a point within 100 feet. The astrolabe of falling stars calls down a brief rain of meteorites in a 10-foot burst centered on that point, dealing 1d8 bludgeoning and 1d8 fire damage to creatures in the area (DC 19 basic

Reflex save).

STARGAZER'S SPYGLASS

ITEM 4

UNCOMMON DIVINATION MAGICAL

Price 80 gp

Usage held in 2 hands; Bulk L

This ornate spyglass has a brass tube inscribed with constellations and green-tinted lens. It's often used by field astronomers to pick out greater details among stars and other celestial bodies. Like a typical spyglass, you can see eight times farther while looking through a stargazer's spyglass.

Activate ◆ (envision) Requirements You are viewing the night sky with the spyglass. Frequency once per day; Effect You set your eye upon a star and think of someone to cast guiding star.

DEMONIC SPELLHEARTS

Characters can find the following new spellhearts during the course of "They Watched the Stars." For the full rules on spellhearts, see page 170 of *Pathfinder Secrets of Magic*.

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PICKLED DEMON TONGUE

ITEM 3+

UNCOMMON ACID EVOCATION DIVINE SPELLHEART

Usage affixed to armor or a weapon; Bulk -

This small crystal vial contains the forked end of a demon's tongue, preserved in brine. The spell attack roll of any spell cast by Activating this item is +7, and the spell DC is 17.

- · Armor You gain resistance 2 to acid and attacks by demons.
- Weapon After you cast an acid spell by Activating the pickled demon tongue, your Strikes with the weapon deal an additional 1d4 acid damage until end of your next turn.

Activate Cast a Spell; Effect You cast acid

Type pickled demon tongue; Level 3; Price

Type greater pickled demon tongue; Level 8; Price 460 gp

Resistance when affixed to armor is 5, extra damage when affixed to a weapon is 1d6, the spell attack roll is +14, and the spell DC is 24.

Activate Cast a Spell; Frequency once per day; Effect You cast 3rd-level acidic burst (Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic 106).

Type major pickled demon tongue; Level 12; Price 1,750 gp Resistance when affixed to armor is 10, extra damage when affixed to a weapon is 1d8, the spell attack roll is +19, and the spell DC is 29.

Activate Cast a Spell; Frequency once per day; Effect You cast 4th-level acid arrow.

Activate Cast a Spell; Frequency once per day; Effect You cast 4th-level acidic burst (Gods & Magic 106).

POLISHED DEMON HORN

ITEM 3+

UNCOMMON ENCHANTMENT DIVINE SPELLHEART

Usage affixed to armor or a weapon; Bulk -

This spellheart is fashioned from the tip of a demon's horn that's been polished until smooth and shiny. The spell DC of any spell cast by Activating this item is 17.

- Armor You gain resistance 2 to evil and chaotic.
- Weapon After you cast an enchantment spell by Activating the horn, your Strikes with the weapon deal an additional 1d4 mental damage until end of vour next turn.

Activate Cast a Spell; Effect You cast daze.

Type polished demon horn; Level 3; Price 55 gp

Type greater polished demon horn; **Level** 8; **Price** 450 gp Resistance when affixed to armor is 5, extra damage when affixed to a weapon is 1d6, and the spell DC is 24.

Activate Cast a Spell; Frequency once per day; Effect You cast 3rd-level fear.

Type major polished demon horn; **Level** 12; **Price** 1,750 gp Resistance when affixed to armor is 10, extra damage when affixed to a weapon is 1d8, and the spell DC is 29.

Activate Cast a Spell; Frequency once per day; Effect

You cast 4th-level agonizing despair (Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide 214)

Activate Cast a Spell; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You cast outcast's curse.

Spells and Rituals

In "They Watched the Stars," characters can find scrolls of the following new spells and ritual in Pholebis's library in Chapter 2.

MARITIME SPELLS

Those who ply the ghostly waters of the Lake of Mists and Veils call upon many types of maritime magic, including Pickled Demon Tongue

the following new spells.

ADVANCED SCURVY

SPELL 2

DISEASE NECROMANCY

Traditions divine, primal

Cast >>> somatic, verbal

Range touch: Targets 1 creature

Saving Throw Fortitude

Your touch afflicts the target with an advanced form of scurvy, a mariner's disease stemming from improper nutrition. The symptoms of scurvy include fatigue, joint pain, loose teeth, and internal hemorrhaging.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target is enfeebled 1 for 1 minute.

Failure The target is afflicted with advanced scurvy at

Critical Failure The target is afflicted with advanced scurvy at stage 2.

Advanced Scurvy (disease) Level 4; for 1 day after eating fresh fruit, a creature gains a +2 circumstance bonus to their next saving throw against this affliction; Stage 1 enfeebled 1 and the damage dealt by persistent bleed effects is increased by 1 (1 day); Stage 2 enfeebled 1, fatigued, and the damage dealt by persistent bleed effects is increased by 1d4 (2 days); Stage 3 enfeebled 2, fatigued, and the damage dealt by persistent bleed effects is increased by 1d6 (4 days)

BRINY BOLT

SPELL 1

ATTACK EVOCATION WATER

Traditions arcane, primal Cast >>> somatic, verbal

Range 60 feet; Targets 1 creature

You hurl a bolt of saltwater from your extended hand. Make a ranged spell attack against a target within range.

Critical Success The creature takes 4d6 bludgeoning damage and is blinded for 1 round and dazzled for 1 minute as saltwater sprays into its eyes. The creature can spend an Interact action to rub its eves and end the blinded condition, but not the dazzled condition.

Success The creature takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage and is blinded for 1 round. The creature can spend an Interact action wiping the salt water from its eyes to end the blinded condition.

Heightened (+1) The damage increases by 2d6.

LASHING ROPE

SPELL 3

TRANSMUTATION

Traditions arcane, occult Cast >>> somatic, verbal

Range 50 feet; Targets up to 50 feet of unattended rope or an inanimate rope-like object

Duration sustained up to 1 minute

You cause a section of rope or a rope-like object to animate, slither to your square, and encircle you, wreathing you in twisting, lashing fibers.

When you Cast the Spell and each time you Sustain the Spell, you can make a melee Strike with the rope, which uses and contributes to your multiple attack penalty. These rope Strikes are melee spell attacks; have the magical, reach, and trip weapon traits; and deal 2d6 slashing damage plus your spellcasting ability modifier.

If you critically fail a check to Trip using the rope, you can't make any more Strikes with it this turn, nor can you use it to make an Attack of Opportunity until the beginning of your next turn. This replaces the usual results of a critical failure to Trip.

Heightened (+2) The damage from your rope Strikes increases by 2d6.

PHANTOM SHIP RITUAL

This ritual allows a beloved ship to follow its captain into death, however briefly. In "They Watched the Stars," it's a sure means of freeing the Mermaid's Tears from the Jundlan Wrecks so the party can continue westward.

PHANTOM SHIP

RITUAL 2

UNCOMMON CONJURATION TELEPORTATION

Cast 1 hour; Cost pearls or other gems worth a total value of 50 gp; Secondary Casters 2

Primary Check Occultism (expert); Secondary Checks Sailing Lore or Survival

Range 10 feet; Targets 1 ship no more than 175 feet long

You create a link between a ship and an undead member of its crew to temporarily make the ship, and

its passengers and crew, as incorporeal as ghosts. The targeted ship must be intact and on or near the surface of some water, and an undead who was a member of the ship's crew in life must be present for the entire ritual.

Critical Success The ship and all creatures aboard it become incorporeal for 1 hour. During this time, the ship can sail at its top speed in any heading chosen by the primary caster, regardless of the winds. The ship can pass through any corporeal obstacles in its path (such as rocks or other vessels), but it must remain in contact with water or the ritual's effects end prematurely. Any skill checks required to sail the ship through rough weather gain a +2 status bonus. A creature that disembarks the ship while the ritual is in effect becomes corporeal again.

Success As critical success, but the status bonus to skill checks is only +1.

Failure The ritual has no effect.

Critical Failure The ship, but not its passengers or crew, becomes incorporeal for 10 minutes, usually resulting in the passengers and crew falling through the ship into the waters below. If the ship was already sailing, it continues in its current direction at its current speed.



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additional 2d6 force damage. If your weapon has a *major striking rune*, this Strike instead deals 3d6 force damage.

GUIDED SKILL •

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Scion of Domora Dedication

Frequency once per day

You ask your spirit guide for aid. For the next 10 minutes, you gain a +2 status bonus to checks made using Acrobatics, Occultism, Stealth, or Survival.

GUARDIAN'S EMBRACE ◆

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Scion of Domora Dedication

Requirements You are adjacent to your spirit guide or it is sharing your space.

Your spirit guide discorporates to surround you in an invisible protective shroud. You gain a +2 status bonus to AC against physical attacks until the beginning of your next turn. If you are hit by a physical attack during this time, you can use a reaction to gain resistance 10 to physical damage dealt by that attack; doing so ends the AC bonus, and you can't use Guardian's Embrace again for 10 minutes. Your spirit guide cannot be targeted by effects, cannot be affected by area effects, and cannot take any actions while this ability is active. Your spirit guide appears in a space adjacent to you when the effect ends.

INVIGORATING BREATH •

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Scion of Domora Dedication

Frequency once per hour

Requirements You are adjacent to your spirit guide or it is sharing your space.

Your spirit guide exhales its sweet-smelling breath on you, granting you the strength to push through your pain. You gain 20 temporary Hit Points for 10 minutes. At 15th level, you instead gain 30 temporary Hit Points for 10 minutes.

SPIRITUAL FLURRY

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Scion of Domora Dedication, Spiritual Strike When you use Spiritual Strike, hit targets become flat-footed until the end of your current turn. In addition, the additional force damage dealt by the Strike increases by 2d6.

SPIRITUAL AID

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Scion of Domora Dedication

When you call your spirit guide for aid, its presence bolsters your will and agility. You gain the Spiritual Aid reaction.

Spiritual Aid Trigger You fail a Reflex or Will saving throw; **Effect** You reroll the triggering saving throw. You

must use the second result, even if it's worse. If you roll a success, you get a critical success instead.

SPIRIT GUIDE FORM ***

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE POLYMORPH TRANSMUTATION

Prerequisites Scion of Domora Dedication

Frequency once per day

You fuse with your spirit guide, becoming a hybrid being with enhanced physical and spiritual power. This effect lasts 1 minute; you can end it early as a free action. During this time, you can't use any other actions granted by this archetype.

You gain the following statistics and abilities, regardless of your type of spirit guide.

- · You become incorporeal.
- You gain resistance 10 to all damage (except force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical).
- Darkvision.
- An unarmed melee attack of the same type as your spirit guide (either claws or jaws), which is the only attack you can Strike with. You're trained with this attack. Your attack modifier is +29 or your normal unarmed attack modifier, whichever is higher. You use the listed statistics for the unarmed attack type:
- Claws (agile, backstabber, finesse) ◆, Damage 3d6+5 slashing plus 1d6 force;
- Jaws (forceful) Damage 3d10+5 piercing plus 1d6 force.

SPIRIT GUIDE FAMILIARS

The spirit guide is a specific familiar (*Advanced Player's Guide* 147) you can gain during this adventure. Spirit guide familiars typically take the form of cunning guides (*Bestiary* 3 252) or nimble guides (page 90).

SPIRIT GUIDE

RARE BEAST SPIRIT

Required Number of Abilities 3

Granted Abilities independent^{APG}, lifelink, speech

Spiritual Recall → (magic, occult) Frequency once per day;
Trigger An attack would reduce your familiar to 0 Hit
Points; Effect You use your bond to rescue your familiar.
The familiar survives the attack with 1 Hit Point remaining
and becomes incorporeal until the end of your next turn.

Bound to Mortal Your familiar gains unique benefits from its bond to you. Your familiar gains an additional 10 Hit Points and can make an either a jaws or claws unarmed attack using your normal melee attack bonus. You choose whether it has a jaws or claws unarmed attack when you first gain the spirit guide as your familiar. If it has a jaws unarmed attack, the attack deals 1d6 piercing damage and is in the brawling group. If you choose the claws unarmed attack, it deals 1d4 slashing damage, has the agile trait, and is in the brawling group

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The kithangian—a horrifying amalgam of horse and scorpion also known as a "beast demon"—is a foul fiend born of the souls of mortals who abused and tormented animals in life. Kithangians tend to roam wild areas rife with animals to torture, though humanoid settlements with plenty of pets or livestock also make for tantalizing hunting grounds. Uncontested for too long, a kithangian's presence has a corrupting influence on the local fauna, which birth fiendish monstrosities until the demon is vanquished. If it realizes it's being tracked by vengeful druids or demon slayers, a kithangian assumes the shape of an unassuming animal so it can get the jump on its pursuers.

KITHANGIAN CREATURE 9

UNCOMMON CE LARGE DEMON FIEND

Perception +19; darkvision

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; *speak with animals*, telepathy 100 feet **Skills** Athletics +20, Intimidation +20, Nature +21, Stealth +16

Str +6, Dex +3, Con +5, Int -2, Wis +4, Cha +3

AC 28; Fort +20, Ref +15, Will +19; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 205; Weaknesses cold iron 10, good 10

All-Around Vision

Animal Kindness Vulnerability Kithangians find kindness to animals revolting. The first time each round that a kithangian sees someone heal or otherwise provide aid to a creature that has the animal trait, the kithangian takes 3d6 mental damage.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ❖ pincer +21 (magical, reach 10 feet), Damage 2d12+9 slashing plus Grab Melee ❖ stinger +21 (agile, magical, reach 10 feet), Damage 2d8+9 piercing plus

kithangian venom

Divine Innate Spells DC 25; 4th air walk, dimension door; 3rd paralyze (×2); 1st command (at will, animals only); Constant (4th) speak with animals

Divine Rituals DC 25; **1st** abyssal pact

Animal Killer A kithangian's melee Strikes deal an additional 2d6 damage to animals.

Change Shape ◆ (concentrate, divine, polymorph, transmutation) The kithangian can take on the appearance of any Medium or Large animal. This doesn't change its Speed or their attack and damage modifiers with its Strikes, but it might change the damage type its Strikes deal.

Kithangian Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 25 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 2d6 poison damage (2 rounds); **Stage 2** 2d6 poison damage and sickened 1 (2 rounds); **Stage 3** 3d6 poison damage and sickened 2 (2 rounds)

Rasping Tongues ◆ (attack) Frequency once per round;
Requirements The kithangian has a creature grabbed in one or both pincers; Effect Barbed tongues slither out of the faces in the kithangian's pincers. The tongues burrow into grabbed creatures and inject their minds with haunting psychic screams. Each grabbed creature takes 2d8 piercing damage and 2d8 mental damage. A creature can try to resist the mental damage by attempting a DC 25 basic Will save.



DEMON HUNTERS

Reclaimers of the Sarkoris Scar who follow the Green Faith consider kithangians particularly heinous foes. They take grim satisfaction in hunting and slaying such demons, viewing their extermination as just vengeance for the evils these demons visit upon wildlife.

THEY
WATCHED
THE
STARS

Chapter 1: Escape from Skywatch

Chapter 2: Still Waters

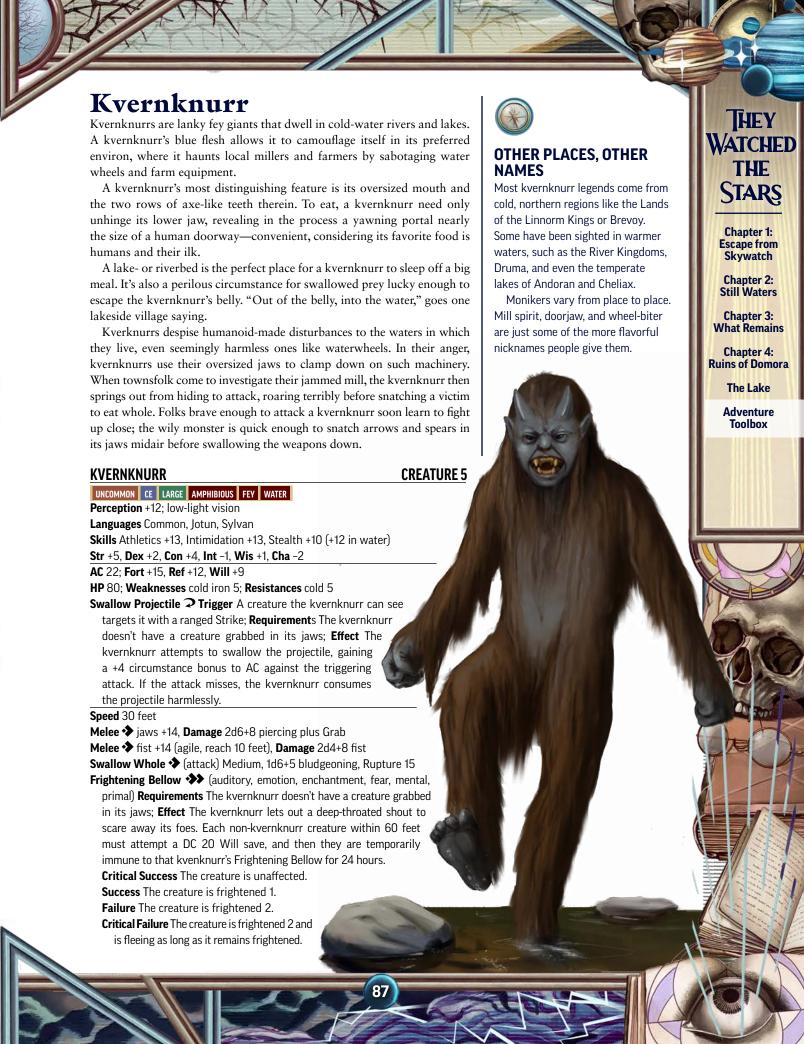
Chapter 3: What Remains

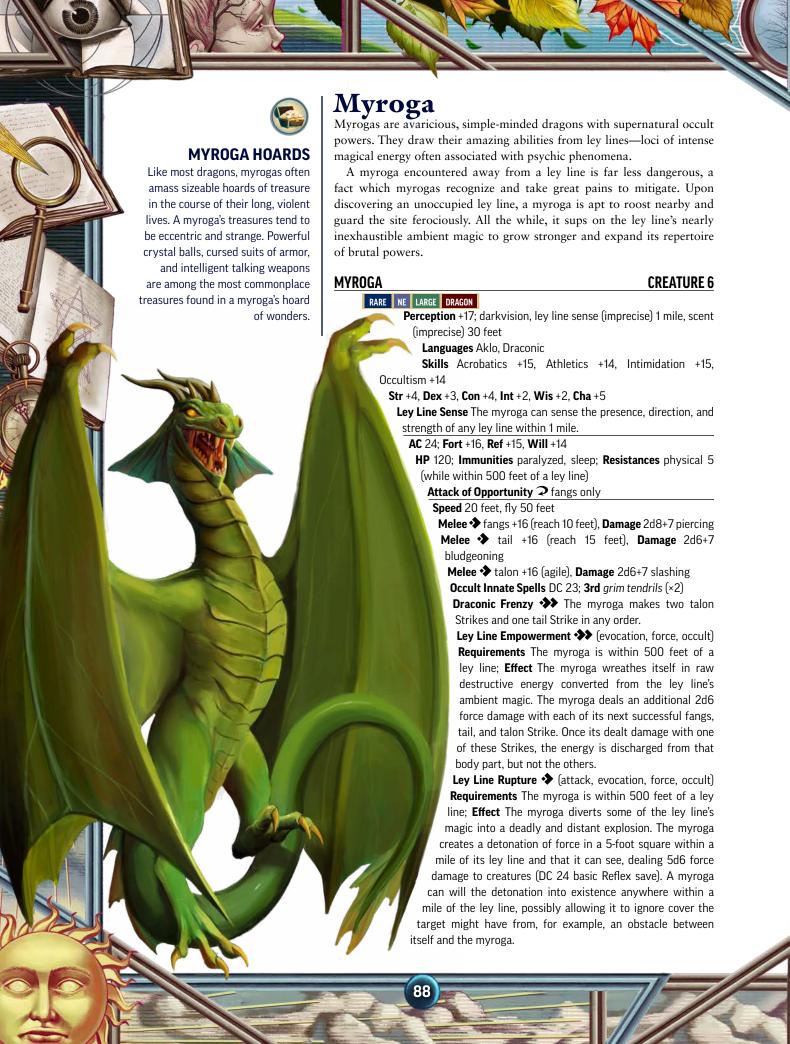
Chapter 4: Ruins of Domora

The Lake









Skin Beetle

Skin beetles are found in most environments that can sustain life, from cold, dry steppes to dense, humid jungles. They use their complex multi-jointed mandibles to strip the skin and flesh from recently deceased creatures with almost surgical precision.

While skin beetles eat most of what they remove, they also preserve chunks for later by coating it in special salivary secretions similar to formaldehyde. The skin beetle rolls this coated flesh into a ball, then stores it under an exposed tree root or rock for leaner times. Signs of skin beetle activity include excoriated skeletons and the smell of the beetles' preservative saliva.

SKIN BEETLE

A typical skin beetle is 1-1/2 feet long and weighs 10 pounds—about the size of a house cat. Its oval-shaped body is covered in dull-colored scales, and short, club-like antennae stem from shallow grooves in its head.

SKIN BEETLE CREATURE 3

UNCOMMON N TINY ANIMAL

Perception +9; low-light vision

Skills Acrobatics +10, Medicine +9, Stealth +10

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

Surgical Mandibles A skin beetle can use its mandibles as healer's tools.

AC 18; Fort +9, Ref +13, Will +7

HP 55

Speed 20 feet, burrow 15 feet, fly 15 feet

Melee ◆ mandibles +13 (agile, finesse), Damage 1d8+4 piercing

Ranged ◆ spit +13 (range 30 feet), Damage 1d6+4 acid plus anesthetic saliva

Anesthetic Saliva (poison) A creature exposed to a skin beetle's saliva must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save or become clumsy 1 for 1 round.

Harvest Flesh >>> The skin beetle makes a mandibles Strike against an animal or humanoid. If the Strike deals damage, the beetle tears off a large portion of flesh, dealing an additional 1d6 persistent bleed damage.

SKIN BEETLE SWARM

When a massive creature such a dinosaur or giant dies in skin beetle territory, the industrious vermin swarm together.

SKIN BEETLE SWARM

UNCOMMON N LARGE ANIMAL SWARM

Perception +16; low-light vision

Skills Acrobatics +18, Stealth +18

Str +2, Dex +6, Con +4, Int -5, Wis +3, Cha -2

AC 26: Fort +16. Ref +20. Will +13

HP 125; Immunities precision, swarm mind;

Resistances bludgeoning 5, piercing 8, slashing 8; Weaknesses area damage

8, splash damage 8

Speed 20 feet, burrow 15 feet, fly 15 feet

Swarming Bites • Each enemy in the swarm's space takes 5d6 piercing damage (DC 23 basic Reflex save). A creature that fails the saving throw also takes 1d4 persistent bleed damage and is clumsy 1 as long as it's taking bleed damage.



UMASI BEETLE MASTERS

Though best known for flaying carrion, skin beetles can also heal gravely wounded individuals. Skin beetles can graft preserved flesh onto a dying animal or humanoid. The end result isn't pretty, but it sometimes works. From the perspective of the healed, the blessing can be mixed, as the beetle's surgery often transforms the subject into a patchwork aberration called an umasi (Pathfinder Bestiary 3 280).

Umasi created by skin beetles sometimes develop supernatural connections to their insectile saviors. Such umasi can command skin beetles to harvest more flesh to keep their decaying bodies intact.

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with only one mortal at a time, and can take this action again to end the bond or to form a new bond (which also ends the old bond). The bond ends if the spirit guide or the mortal dies.

This bond strengthens the spirit guide's connection to the Material Plane. While bonded, the spirit guide loses the incorporeal and spirit traits, loses their immunities and resistances, and changes their Strikes to deal the appropriate physical damage (typically piercing or slashing) instead of force damage.

Bonded Strike Requirements The spirit guide is currently Bonded with a Mortal; Effect The spirit guide makes a jaws Strike. If this attack hits, the bonded mortal can spend their reaction to Strike the same target.

SAGE GUIDE

Sage spirit guides are among the wisest spirits. They often take the forms of raptors such as owls, using their keen senses to evaluate situations from high above before swooping in to aid imperiled mortals.

Adventurers who befriend a sage guide are fortunate indeed; in addition to providing sage counsel before conflict begins, sage guides can restore and tend to their allies in the aftermath of a violent dispute.

In many stories, the sage guide assumes the form of a large owl whose proud breast is composed of hard stone. This depiction combines the wisdom commonly attributed to the owl with the strength and fortitude of the earth.

STONE-BREASTED OWL CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON N SMALL BEAST INCORPOREAL SPIRIT

Perception +15; darkvision

Languages Common, Sylvan; tongues

Skills Acrobatics +12, Diplomacy +13, Nature +14, Survival +12

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

AC 22; Fort +9, Ref +12, Will +15

HP 75; **Immunities** disease, paralyzed, poison, precision; **Resistances** all damage 5 (except force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Warning Hoot � (auditory) Trigger The stone-breasted owl is about to roll a Perception or Survival check to determine initiative; Effect The stone-breasted owl lets out a hoot to warn allies, granting each ally a +1 circumstance bonus to their initiative roll.

Speed 10 feet, fly 40 feet

Melee ◆ talon +13 (agile, finesse, magical), Damage 2d6+3 force

Primal Innate Spells DC 25; **3rd** heal (×2), remove disease; **2nd** remove fear, restore senses; **1st** detect poison, purify food and drink; **Cantrips (2nd)** guidance, know direction, stabilize; **Constant (5th)**

tongues

Bond with Mortal ◆ (mental, necromancy, primal) As nimble green monkey, except HP increases by 14.

Bonded Strike Requirements The spirit guide is currently Bonded with a Mortal; Effect The spirit guide makes a talon Strike. If this attack hits, the bonded mortal can spend their reaction to Strike the same target.

Empowered Healing When the stone-breasted owl casts *heal*, it rolls d10s instead of d8s.



THE SARKORIS SCAR

Some spirit guides encountered in the haunted badlands now known as the Sarkoris Scar are remnants of god calling, an ancient tradition practiced by many Sarkorian cultures. Severed from their callers by the demonic war that devastated the land for over a century, such gods now roam the blasted landscape, occasionally helping those they find worthy.

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Destined Dream Seer

Sakuachi is the youngest scion in a long line of Erutaki seers. Like her forebears, she was born and raised in Aaminiut, a small town on the Crown of the World northeast of Avistan. Her mother Sialuk and her grandmother Seshu both taught Sakuachi how to see patterns in the ice below, read the stars above, and interpret the signs of the natural world all around.

It was astronomy, above all other pursuits, which appealed most to Sakuachi. As a girl, she spent many long nights studying constellations, practicing with her astrolabe, and divining omens from the wisps and waves of the aurora. Before she was 5 years old, she'd already learned the names of every star configuration, the positions of the visible planets, and how to predict and interpret the movement of the celestial mantle. By the time she was a teenager, Sakuachi was the town's best astronomer.

All the while, Elder Seshu looked proudly upon her granddaughter. But Seshu also bore the burden of a terrible secret—she knew that, one day, her beloved Sakuachi would be forced to reckon with an ancient and terrible evil. On 21 Erastus of 4722 AR, at the close of Sakuachi's final summer before adulthood, unnatural blue lights beamed up from the center of the Crown of the World. Around Golarion, this occasion was known as the night of the Missing Moment. To Elder Seshu, it was a sign that the time had come for Sakuachi to fulfill her grim destiny.

That night, Seshu dreamt of an ancient being of white fur, bestial horns, and glowing runic tattoos: Ainamuuren, the Last Saumen Kar. Seshu had befriended Ainamuuren long ago, and for years she'd listened to his dire warnings of a great evil that lurked beneath the Crown of the World. She hadn't seen her friend in many seasons, though, so his dream visit came as a surprise. In this dream, Ainamuuren told Seshu that his strength was fading, and that soon he wouldn't be able to maintain the magic that keeps the ancient evil sealed beneath the ice. To renew the seal, Ainamuuren explained, the saumen kar's magic would need to be renewed through the sacrifice of a god, a quest which only a mortal could undertake. As Seshu's dream vision faded to darkness, one of Ainamuuren's runes glowed brighter and longer than all the others.

Early the following morning, Seshu met with the other elders and told them the time had come to send one of their own on a holy quest. As Seshu had predicted, her granddaughter Sakuachi eagerly volunteered to take on this quest. Together, the elders agreed that Sakuachi—young and good of heart—should take on this great task. With her, the town sent four companions: the hunter Deniigi, the guide Innumma, the storyteller Pamak, and the navigator Ulikuq. Together, the group gathered and took a solemn vow to return to their homeland with a sacrificial god.

Before the party left, Seshu took Sakuachi aside "To honor the one who has given us this quest," Seshu told the girl, "you must take his symbol as your own." Seshu held the nape of Sakuachi's neck firmly in her grasp, so much so that it hurt. Though the grip was tight, Sakuachi felt a warmth in her grandmother's palm. When her grandmother withdrew her palm, Sakuachi bore one of Ainamuuren's runes like a fresh tattoo.

In his travels, the guide Innumma had heard of a land called Sarkoris, where gods still roamed the Material Plane, but no one in Aaminiut had ever been there. The town's most skilled sorcerer had visited a city called Skywatch long ago, so she teleported the group there to expedite their journey. Yet when they arrived, Sakuachi and her companions discovered the city strangely abandoned and full of danger. The streets seemed to writhe and twist under the group's feet, confusing their minds. They became separated, and Sakuachi barricaded herself in the city's observatory after being chased by violent raiders.

Glancing through the observatory's telescope, Sakuachi prayed to the stars above for help in her challenging endeavor. Amazingly, the stars answered—the telescope formed a magical conduit with astronomers on another planet, and they teleported a group of adventurers to Skywatch to help her. Even more astonishing, these "gatewalkers" bore the same rune of Ainamuuren as she did. The young seer believed in many wonders, but not coincidences. From then on, she knew that their destinies were intertwined, and she'd need to stay close to her strange new friends if she was to fulfill her quest.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

The party first comes in contact with Sakuachi and her companions during their exploration of the abandoned city of Skywatch at the beginning of this adventure. Based on what the player characters learned about the alien entity Osoyo from the astronomers of Loskialua in the "The Seventh Arch," their investigation into the cause of the Missing Moment overlaps significantly with Sakuachi's quest to find and sacrifice a living god. Indeed, by the time the characters and their new friends escape Skywatch's dangers and reach safety on the shores of Mendev, their employer, Dr. Etward Ritalson, tasks the characters with helping Sakuachi fulfill her quest.

Sakuachi's success will ultimately be the player characters' success, so it's important they see her as a key to solving their own mystery. In the next adventure, Sakuachi will need to sacrifice her spirit guide to seal away Osoyo once more, but this doesn't mean she's the star of the story. In fact, as they'll soon learn, the player characters are the primary instigators of the troubles which set Sakuachi's quest in motion in the first place. How this story ends is, ultimately, the party's decision to make.

Sakuachi is more a scholar more than a fighter. During the times when she's accompanying the characters and a battle occurs, such as in Chapter 3 of "They Watched the Stars," she rarely (if ever) directly attacks a foe. In the heightened stress of combat, her connection to Ainamuuren may manifest as visions and flashes of memory as the saumen kar attempts to communicate with her, which allows her to Recall Knowledge about one or more of the creatures in combat using her Fortune-Telling Lore skill, though it also prevents her from participating in combat. Beyond providing information, she also can use spells like *resist energy* or *guidance* to support the party.

CREATURE 4

UNIQUE NG MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Female human dream seer

Perception +14

SAKUACHI

Languages Celestial, Common, Elven, Erutaki **Skills** Astronomy Lore +15, Fortune-Telling Lore +15,

Medicine +10, Nature +12, Occultism +15, Religion +12, Survival +10

Str +0. Dex +1. Con +2. Int +1. Wis +3. Cha +4

Items padded armor, spear, standard astrolabe (page 79), winter clothing

Search the Stars (concentrate, manipulate)
Requirements Sakuachi is holding an astrolabe
and can see the stars; Effect Sakuachi spends 1 hour

attempting to gain a vague glimpse of the future written in the stars. She attempts a DC 24 Fortune-Telling Lore or Occultism check.

Critical Success Sakuachi receives an accurate vision of an event to come within the next week. While this vision can be vague and confusing, it's typically true.

Success As critical success, but the vision is of an event that will occur within the next day. If nothing noteworthy is to happen within the next day, she sees nothing written in the stars.

Failure Sakuachi sees nothing written in the stars.

Critical Failure Sakuachi misinterprets the writing in the stars and receives an inaccurate vision of an upcoming event. Such a vision looks the same as one achieved with a critical success, but is typically false.

AC 21; Fort +11, Ref +10, Will +14

HP 60

Speed 25 feet

Melee ❖ spear +9, Damage 1d6 piercing

Ranged ◆ spear +10 (thrown 20 feet), Damage 1d6 piercing

Occult Prepared Spells DC 18, attack +12; 2nd augury, resist energy, silence; 1st bless, liberating command, sleep; Cantrips (2nd) detect magic, guidance, light, read aura, shield

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Next Month

DREAMERS OF THE NAMELESS SPIRES

by James Jacobs

A dream is never just a dream! The gatewalkers' quest for answers reaches its exciting conclusion when they return for a reunion with their cryptic employer, the eminent researcher Dr. Ritalson. The characters discover that matters at home have been far from quiet. The final leg of the party's quest to unravel their memory gaps and fulfill Sakuachi's destiny takes them to the Crown of the World, where ice-rimed temples, dream-devouring monsters, and ancient alien evils await.

FINDELADLARA

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Interview 2

From the Desk of Dr. Etward Ritalson

Patient Record: 98-a5 (name redacted) **Entry Dated:** 25 Kuthona, 4722 ar

Examiner's Note: At this point the linens fell off the doors and the patient ceased speaking. They

Exhibit: Liminal Obsession, Physical Transference of Manifested Delusions

Examiner's Note: This is yet another scriptmatron transcript from an original audio record stored in a sort of arcane crystal (see record 77-G14a for notes on this phenomenon and its applications elsewhere in the investigation). Normally, transcribing the crystal's contents to page would be the work of an assistant, but the subject matter uncovered in this interview is of such alarming nature that the contents of this record would very likely induce a panic in the populace, and thus calls for utmost security.

Ritalson: I hope you're comfortable, (redacted name), we have covered all the

doors in the room with linens as you requested. I hope we can avoid the

scene that happened the first time we attempted this interview.

Patient 98-a5: I am sorry for the trouble sir, it's just every time I see a door now... I have

to open it, if only to find out what they are whispering about. Ordinary things seem to me they could be doors, you know? Why not a door? Who knows what can come through most things? Who knows what is hiding inside of things? People, you know what I mean? I heard you went

through that door, too? Do you hear them? Do you need them?

Ritalson: When you say "them?" Are you referring to doors or something behind

the doors or perhaps something else entirely?

appeared to enter a catatonic trance focused on the exposed door. After several attempts to rouse them from this trance, I got up to go to cover the door once more, to see if that would snap them out of it. But that was a mistake, for my movement caused the patient to focus on me. Their throat began to bulge in the manner I have seen many amphibians exhibit in naturalist folios and, for a moment, I could only think that something was crawling out of their neck. Some parasite, or possibly a manifestation of whatever had happened to them during their Moment. But instead, they began to howl a series of repeated syllables. Each syllable shook the patient in a succession of greater tremors and their frame began to flex from the physical stress. Now, I had summoned assistants to attempt to restrain the patient, but the paroxysms were violent, each one wresting them free, and a most gruesome sound of bones popping and cracking came with each. Before I could administer any sort of alchemical or arcane sedative, they gave one final howl and the syllable blended together into what could possibly be a word... maybe a name... and the patient's body distended yet again as they vomited out a palm-sized tablet of granite upon which was engraved a word that I dare not commit here. I will secure it with the rest of the unstable artifacts from my research in the vault that only I know the placement of and have access to... I hope my suspicions on this matter are not correct and all my precautions are just the product of an overtaxed mind, but I can't shake the feeling that... well never mind. That is for another report.





