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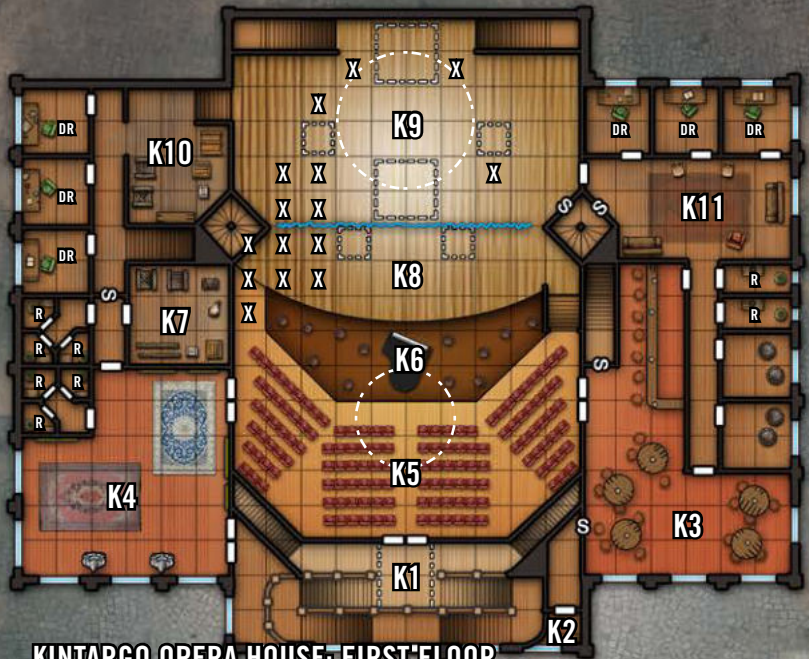


Curtain Call

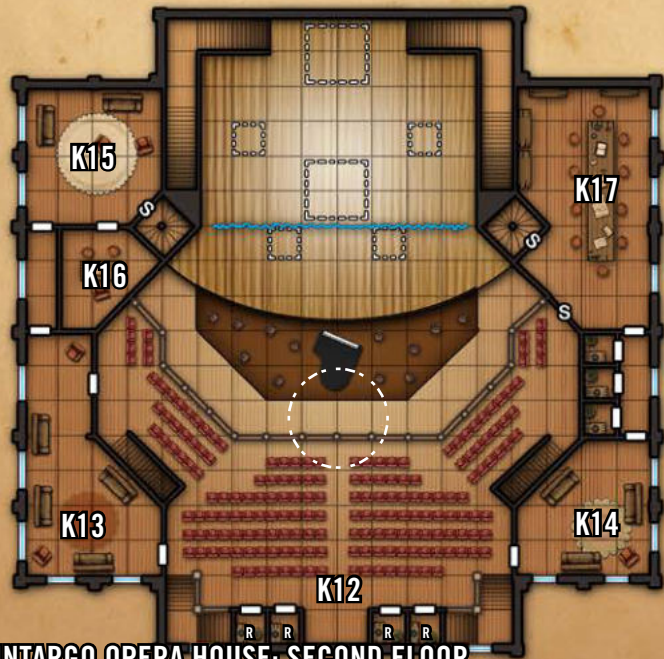
ADVENTURE PATH

Bring the
House Down

By Sen H. H. S.

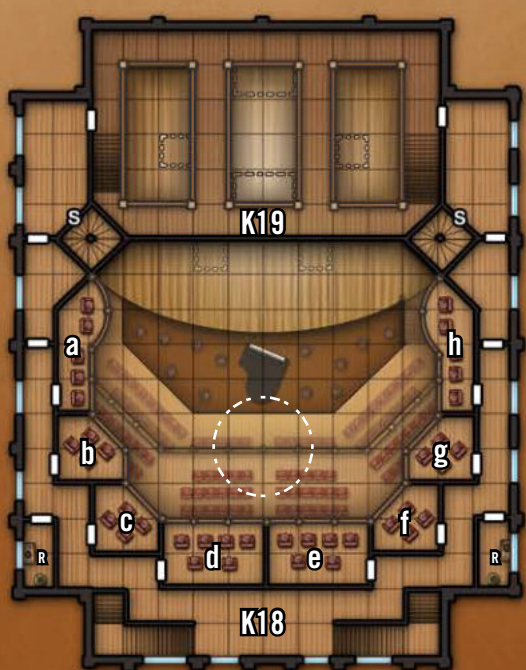


KINTARGO OPERA HOUSE: FIRST FLOOR

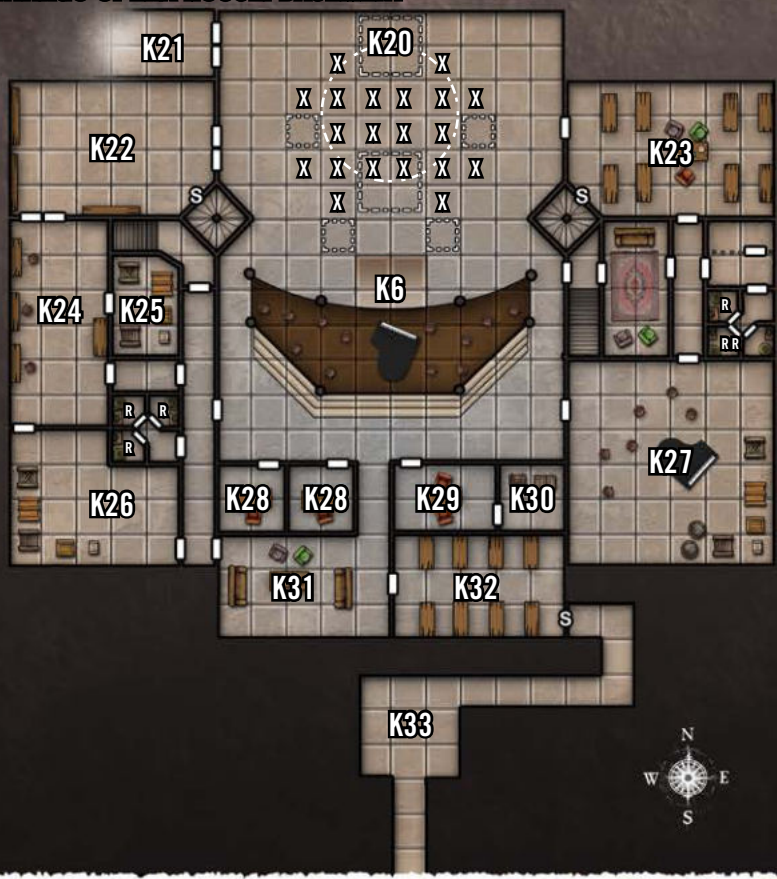


KINTARGO OPERA HOUSE: SECOND FLOOR

KINTARGO OPERA HOUSE: THIRD FLOOR
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



KINTARGO OPERA HOUSE: BASEMENT



PATHFINDER

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Curtain Call

ADVENTURE PATH

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Bring the House Down

Chapter 1: Hell Month.....4

With only a month left before the big premiere, the PCs have to scramble to make sure everything is in place and ready to go for their opera. Of course, no show survives contact with reality, so when the god of war is slain right at the opera's climax and reality shudders and quakes, the PCs must swiftly transition from stars to heroes!

Chapter 2: Shards of War..... 26

The PCs travel to Vyre, hoping to learn more of what Norgorber plans to do with a stolen shard of Gorum's remains. There, they meet with Delaraius Solzakarr, a leader in Norgorber's church, after which they set out to discover and explore the four lairs of Norgorber's manifestations in hopes of learning each of their secrets.

Chapter 3: Evening Eternal..... 56

The PCs have done the impossible—they've attracted the personal attention of a god: Norgorber. When Norgorber plucks them from their world, they must delve into the god's mortal memories before speaking with him in his planar realm of Duskfathom. There, they have a chance to convince him to turn away from his plans to become a pantheon of gods—but if they fail, their deaths would be a mercy.

KINTARGO AND VYRE

During the course of this Adventure Path, all pertinent information about the cities of Kintargo and Vyre are provided in context with the encounters and events that take place, but if you're looking to expand your game's presentation of either city, check out the following.

Pathfinder Lost Omens World

Guide: A two-page summary of the nation of Ravounel appears on pages 104-105 of this book, including some information about Kintargo. A paragraph of information about Vyre appears on page 105.

In Hell's Bright Shadow (Hell's Rebels Adventure Path, Book 1):

This volume presents an extensive gazetteer of Kintargo that can give you a great starting point for expanding upon the events of Curtain Call.

Dance of the Damned (Hell's Rebels Adventure Path, Book 3):

This volume presents an extensive gazetteer of Vyre that can give you a great starting point for expanding upon the events of Curtain Call.

Tomorrow Must Burn (Age of Ashes Adventure Path, Book 3):

This volume provides a quick update to many of the locations in Ravounel and Kintargo in a post-Hell's Rebels era.

Curtain Call Player's Guide: Finally, this Player's Guide presents much of the above information as well, in a player-friendly format.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Bring the House Down" is designed for four characters.

18 The PCs begin this adventure at 18th level.

19 The PCs should be 19th level before traveling to Vyre.

20 The PCs should be 20th level before Norgorber brings them to Duskfathom.

The PCs should be 20th level by the time they complete the adventure.



Chapter 1: Hell Month

Before he was a god, Jaxter Gorb was a mortal human who would go on in life to possess several faces. His first was that of a bastard, born in 1860 AR to one of Vyre's founding families. When his family suffered one hypocrisy too many, Jaxter donned a second face and triggered the Revolt of Indulgences of 1882 AR, during which the founding families of Vyre were deposed and the first Kings and Queens of Vyre rose to power. Emerging from the rebellion, Jaxter left his hometown and name behind to roam the Inner Sea, taking on a new name for himself: Norgorber.

Over the next decade, he gained silent notoriety in many dark dealings, taking on new faces inspired by those who'd significantly influenced his childhood. To apothecaries and assassins, he was the prodigious

alchemist Blackfingers, who produced potent drugs and insidious poisons. Among the thieves' guilds of provincial Andoran, he masterminded heists on the richest and most secure treasuries as the mysterious Gray Master. For Imperial Taldor, he went by the title Reaper of Reputation, as he brokered scandals that allowed one's ambitions to rise as far as their opponents fell. Finally, Norgorber was the uncaught perpetrator behind massacres and homicides scattered throughout Avistan that left authorities confounded and murderers inspired—an urban legend known as Father Skinsaw.

None realized these four faces belonged to the same man, as Norgorber was careful to limit each persona's activities to avoid any potential overlap that would've

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Adventure Toolbox

given up the game, at least, until he finally turned his attentions to the bustling streets and tangled alleys of the city of Absalom. Here, Norgorber found a place ripe for all four of his criminal pursuits, and it wasn't long before he'd established four separate but equally fearful reputations in the city at the center of the world.

After he ascended to divinity in 1893 AR, those who followed or idolized these four came to see them as his aspects. Voices in the dark whispered only of Blackfingers, the Gray Master, the Reaper of Reputation, and Father Skinsaw. Meanwhile, Norgorber's fifth aspect, as one who manipulated the city of Vyre into war, remained obscured and largely forgotten. Ages passed, and worship of Norgorber flourished. The fifth aspect has been waiting all this time—yearning, longing, but also patient. Norgorber feared that to release this Prince of Propaganda, he would be forced to unveil the secrets of his mortal life, an act he believed would undo his divinity.

When Norgorber learned of a conspiracy to engineer the assassination of Gorum, the god of war, he recognized a singular opportunity to expedite not only the rise of his fifth aspect, but also to elevate all of his manifestations to gods. Fragments of a god associated with war could not only empower the manifestation of his secret fifth aspect without self-consuming his own divine power, but if things went according to plan, Norgorber would become more than a mere deity. He would become an entire pantheon, able to incite and ignite wars to shape the mortal affairs to his—or rather, their—whims. Future schemes need no longer be executed alone, even if Norgorber might not be who he once was after the deed was done.

And so Norgorber waited patiently for Gorum's demise, knowing that the war god's death would have unparalleled effects on reality. Among a dozen places he monitored for manifestations of these effects, one was conveniently close to Vyre: the city of Kintargo. Here, Norgorber theorized that damage in the River of Souls manifested as something called a soul anchor, which could act as a lure for a dead god's fragmented power. No one—not even Norgorber's worshippers—is aware of what's soon to transpire. The god of greed, murder, poison, and secrets watches as the war god's final act plays out, waiting for the entrance cue for his manifestations to step onto the stage when the Universe experiences Godsrain.

FINAL PREPARATIONS

Once the PCs have rested and recovered from their previous adventure, Fallenta arrives to greet them wherever they've been staying.

"Welcome back! It's a relief to see you all and Oriole safe. Now, I have good news... in a sense. Oriole's abduction sort of became sensational news while you were away. Your success and Oriole's return made an enormous splash. As a result, everyone from noble to cobbler expects the performance of the decade once we premiere. And now that we're only one month out, Hell Month has officially started! Oh, I don't think I've been this nervous since my first libretto at the Ivy Playhouse! Time to dance in double time, triple time, and overtime. On with the show!"

Fallenta enumerates the challenges she faced while the PCs were away, from hiring seamsters to replace Fenton (which strained the budget), to fretting over who gets box seat tickets, to several other unfortunate but ultimately minor incidents: sportlebone infestations, conflicts between the Abadarans and Kuthonites, unruly teens "haunting" the alleys around the opera house, and more. Luckily, an unexpected visitor to Kintargo stepped up, volunteering his aid to Fallenta as an assistant director. At the mention of this visitor, Fallenta dreamily sighs, saying she's eager to introduce him to the PCs, but first, she asks the PCs to give her a report of their adventures in Vyre. As they give their report, she leads them toward Aria Park.

KINTARGO

SETTLEMENT 12

CITY

Avant-garde, recently Cheliox-emancipated trade hub and capital of Ravounel

Government Mayor (elected leader)

Population 15,960 (80% humans, 6% halflings, 5% hellspawn nephilim, 1% aiuvvarins, 8% other)

Languages Common, Diabolic, Elven, Halfling

Religions Calistria, Cayden Cailean, Irori, Sarenrae, Shelyn, Milani, Zon-Kuthon

Threats competitive artists, criminal activity, lingering diabolic elements, political treachery

Trade Port Kintargo has always been an important trade port, but now that it has escaped Cheliox's control, its value to merchants along Avistan's west coast has increased dramatically. While it's only a level 12 settlement, common items of level 14 or lower are always available for purchase, and items above that level can be ordered and arrive in the city after 1d4+2 days (or on the same day, if the shopper pays an extra 500 gp to have the item shipped via teleportation).

Jilia Bainilus (inspiring female human politician 11) mayor of Kintargo

Shensen (famous female aiuvvarin bard 12) leader of the Silver Raven Firebrands

Zachrin Vhast (philanthropic and friendly male human cleric of Shelyn 10) high priest of Songbird Hall

AN ASSISTANT FROM NIRVANA

Once the PCs complete their report, Fallenta tells them her new assistant director awaits introductions in Aria Park. Soon after the group enters the park, they spot a stunningly beautiful young man dressed in the seven-colored vestments of a Shelynite cleric sitting on a bench. As the PCs approach, he stands, then bows gracefully as he greets them.

"Good morning, Director Fallenta, and to your friends. I am ready to help."

Fallenta introduces the visitor as **Duvall Wolfsgeheul**, a traveling Shelynite and opera aficionado who tells the PCs of his recent long residence in Nirvana, where he studied the magic and arts in Shelyn's divine realm. In truth, Duvall is much more than a mere traveling priest. He's the goddess Shelyn in disguise. While Shelyn isn't aware of Gorum's imminent demise, she's taken note of Norgorber's increased interest in Kintargo. While the gods try to avoid direct intervention in the affairs of mortal life, Shelyn doesn't trust Norgorber to abide by this tradition, and so she has come to Golarion to be on hand and provide assistance if she can.

THE DISGUISE

The form Shelyn takes is a rough impersonation of Dou-Bral, her brother before he was transformed into Zon-Kuthon. Duvall's name is a play on her brother's ancient name, and the last name alludes to the siblings' shared parent, Thron, the Prince that Howls. Eventually, Shelyn reveals the truth of who she is to the PCs, but until then, even as the PCs likely begin to suspect Duvall is more than he claims, keep them in the dark as long as possible while trying to maintain the theme that Duvall is a friend. With the PCs' recent experience with Fenton's treachery, they might begin to suspect Duvall is another betrayer, and if you feel that your group is starting to get frustrated or distracted with this mysterious man, have him take the PCs aside in secret to "reveal" he's in fact a powerful angel in Shelyn's service, disguised as a mortal. You can even have him change form into an angel for a moment, after which he asks the PCs to remain silent but promises that Shelyn is eager to see how their performance plays out.

CATCHING UP

Fallenta puts the heroes in Duvall's care before she races off to make last-minute arrangements with a small publisher who's agreed to print the opera's program. Duvall leads the PCs back to the Kintargo Opera House, intending to give them a tour of the building to point out features added or changed since the heroes were last here (see *A House in Operation* on page 7).

During this tour, the PCs have a chance to speak more with Duvall. Likely questions and Duvall's answers are given below.

What needs to be done first?

"Fallenta mentioned the invitation list for the premiere must be finalized soon so they can be delivered on time. The stage crew needs help getting sets and rigging in place for technical rehearsals. The costume makers could also use some extra hands for needlework."

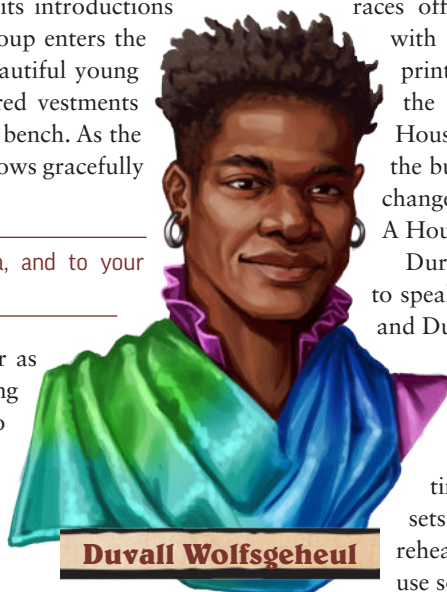
Are there any other things scheduled to be done during Hell Month? "High priest Vhast will provide a blessing for the production. Final rehearsals start on Toilday three weeks hence. The fourth and last week before the premiere are for dress rehearsals and promotions. There's also a private dinner party with the sponsors the evening before the premiere. As producers, Fallenta suggests at least one of you should attend. It would be best if all of you did."

How are you helping out? "I'm assisting Fallenta as she requires. As for the premiere, it depends on our preparations. If we fall short, I'll join as an usher. If everything goes smoothly—and if you allow it—I hope I might enjoy the opera among the audience."

Can you perform/sing/draw/create art? Duvall blanches. "I... beg you not to ask me. I appreciate art of all kinds, but my skills in producing it are... tragically imperfect." In truth, as goddess of art, Shelyn is unmatched in her artistic skill, but she also knows that producing it when disguised as a mortal would be too disruptive, so she avoids it entirely.

PLAYING DUVALL

Duvall claims he's a nephilim in his thirties, born in Nidal and raised by Shelynite fugitives. He left his birthplace young to travel the world, during which he developed an appreciation for art and performances of many different regions and cultures. About 10 years ago, he traveled to Nirvana and took up residence there to study divine magic and rituals under various azatas



Duvall Wolfsgeheul

before homesickness brought him back to Golarion. He and Zachrin Vhast quickly found kinship in one another due to their shared experience in Nidal, and through that relationship, he met Fallenta.

Duvall is dignified, polite, and knowledgeable. He has a calming and steady presence, though when it comes to his work, perfectionism gets the better of him. Shelyn, as Duvall, is a supporting NPC who won't be an active ally in challenges or combat. Keep in mind that the goddess isn't omniscient. What she can provide is insight into her areas of concern: art, beauty, love, and music. For example, she can tell if the love between two people is genuine and whether it's familial, platonic, or romantic in nature. When Godsrain occurs, the magnitude of the event catches most deities (including Shelyn) by surprise, and her immediate concerns are for her own realm, as she's unsure if Gorum's death is but the start of something more devastating. As such, Duvall goes missing once Godsrain begins later in this chapter, and after that time, all attempts to locate him should fail.

A HOUSE IN OPERATION

A map of the Kintargo Opera House appears on the inside front cover of this adventure, and the "Showtime!" article in the first *Curtain Call* adventure has descriptions of its interiors. In the past several days, new features and adjustments have been made. Make sure the players are familiar with these new features, using Duvall's tour of the opera house to remind them or reveal any changes.

Beneath the Stage: Depending on what the PCs opted for, stage mechanisms for scene changes or complex effects are being constructed in the underworld (area K20). In the previous adventure, the PCs likely contacted the Blade Witch to commission props for the opera—these props are among those being installed here. If the props are among the Blade Witch's best work, then they are streamlined and block none of the trapdoors; otherwise, the props are bulkier and block access to all four of the 5-foot-square trap doors connecting to the stage above.

New Chandelier: A sponsor insisted a new chandelier be installed. The huge structure is suspended in the center of the hall, 40 feet above the lower seats and orchestra pit (between the tags for areas K5 and K6), but hangs high enough that it doesn't block the view from the box seats (area K12).

Security: During performances, 12 security guards (watch officers; *Gamemastery Guide* 234) led by a cheerful and friendly woman named Captain **Rudele Leafweave** (female human captain of the guard 6; *Gamemastery Guide* 234) are active in the theater.

Typically, Captain Leafweave and three guards monitor the audience from vantage points on the third floor, while the other guards split into three groups of three between the foyer (area K1), the hall outside of the imperial boxes (area K18), and a patrol that wanders the rest of the opera house out of view of the central auditorium.

Seating: The seating in areas K5 and K12 functions as greater difficult terrain, but they can be adjusted. If the PCs have fewer than 31 Production Points by the end of Hell Month, it indicates that advance ticket sales aren't what they were hoping for. While this situation is disappointing, it allows the crew to quickly adjust the seating in these areas to give the audience more comfort and room to stretch out; doing so improves these areas to merely difficult terrain.

HELL MONTH BEGINS

Traditionally, the final week of production before a premiere is known as "Hell Week" for all of the last-minute scrambles and the race against time to get everything right, but in the case of a significant production like this one, the cast and crew refer to the 4 weeks that remain before the premiere once this adventure begins as "Hell Month."

During these 4 weeks, the PCs have various opportunities and face several obstacles during which they have last minute chances to earn more Production Points, solve problems that could become disasters, and otherwise prepare for the big night. Each week is presented separately below, split between a primary task, secondary tasks, and rewards.

Primary Task: Run this activity for the party first, as this task requires teamwork for the PCs to face.

Secondary Tasks: Once the primary task is complete, the PCs can spend the remaining days in the week pursuing secondary tasks. Each week lists three secondary tasks, each designed for a single PC to attempt to complete in a day.

Experience Point Rewards: Each week's primary task awards Experience Points as detailed in the following text. For each secondary task the party completes in a week, they earn an additional 10 XP, up to a maximum of 30 XP per week for completing at least three secondary tasks.

WEEK 1: INVITATION CONUNDRUM

Once the PCs finish their tour of the opera house, Duvall hands them a folder containing a list of influential and important movers and shakers in Kintargo. Duvall explains that they've set aside seats

A TIME TO SHINE

Each week of Hell Month, two different persona traits are particularly well suited to help with that week's challenges. A PC with the week's most appropriate traits reduces DCs for all skill checks they attempt when pursuing that week's primary task by 5.

Week 1: Flirt or Wildcard

Week 2: Guardian or Scholar

Week 3: Scoundrel or Underdog

Week 4: Leader or Warrior

for sponsors, patrons of the arts, and other important individuals who might merit a complimentary invitation to the premiere. The problem arises from the simple fact that only two dozen or so seats are available to give out for free. The task of looking over the list involves deciding who should receive a complimentary invitation, and while this task mainly falls to Duvall to determine, he asks the PCs to help him with one problem in particular.

He points out one name on the list: Maestro Quendle Strikrunner. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Society or Theater Lore check to Recall Knowledge recognizes the maestro as the owner, composer, and prima donna of the Warius Opera House in Egorian, the capital city of Cheliix. If no PC recognizes her, Duvall can reveal this information to them, in addition to the news that Maestro Strikrunner has made it known that she intends to attend the premiere and has implied that a complimentary seat would "go a long way toward soothing certain ruffled feathers" in Cheliix.

Maestro Strikrunner's influence in Cheliix's artistic circle is enormous, and a favorable review and reaction from her would be a vast boon for the opera's longevity and critical success, but Fallenta has concerns over the maestro's rumored ties with Cheliix's queen and potential allegiance to House Thrune. While Fallenta has put her feelings aside, she doesn't trust herself to make decisions about how to respond to Maestro Strikrunner's request and has asked Duvall to recruit the PCs to compose an invitation to the potentially problematic foreign entertainer.

Strikrunner's initial request is not only for a dozen seats (for herself and her entourage), but for the best dozen seats in the house. Simply giving in to this request doesn't guarantee she'll provide ongoing support for the opera, but it certainly angers and

annoys Kintargo's elite, who chafe at the implication that "the best seats in the house" have been, in effect, given to House Thrune. Fallenta hopes the PCs can work together to create a diplomatic invitation that minimizes the number of seats comped to Maestro Strikrunner in a way that doesn't infuriate her.

Each PC can take part in the composition of the invitation via the following activity. The party has until the end of the week to complete this task, as tradition demands the invitation must be delivered with plenty of time for the recipient to hem and haw about whether or not they wish to accept—another example, Fallenta notes, of the ridiculous paperwork Cheliix's high and mighty are so fond of.

COMPOSE DIPLOMATIC INVITATION

CONCENTRATE **DOWNTIME**

A PC spends the day working on an invitation to Maestro Strikrunner then attempts one of the following checks to earn Victory Points (*GM Core* 184). Inform the PCs of the three tiers of success possible (see below); the

PCs can opt to seal and deliver the invitation at any point, should they decide that their time is better spent pursuing other tasks rather than chase the highest possible amount of points.

DC 33 Theater Lore to diplomatically cite the maestro's contributions to plays and operas.

DC 36 Kintargo Lore to address the political complications of providing too many seats to someone from Cheliix.

DC 38 Diplomacy to help edit the final invitation to be worded perfectly.

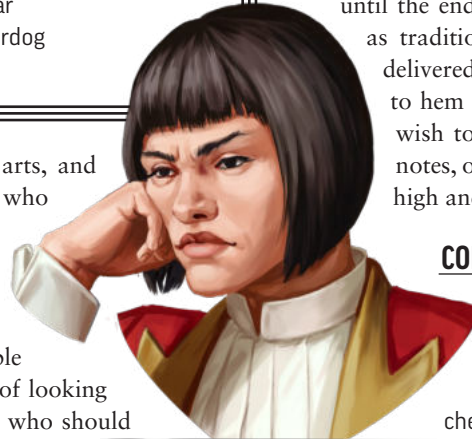
DC 40 Society to use logic and appeal to her business sense about the problems that could arise from setting aside too many complimentary passes for too few movers and shakers.

DC 43 Crafting to ensure the calligraphy, envelope, and other physical elements of the invitation are properly extravagant.

Victory Point Results The results of the invitation depend on how many Victory Points the party accumulates before they decide to seal the invitation and deliver it or before they run out of days in the week to work on the invitation.

5 or fewer Victory Points: The invitation is flawed and Maestro Strikrunner is insulted; she loses interest in attending the premiere. The loss of her influence costs the PCs 1 Production Point. The PCs earn 20 XP each.

6–10 Victory Points: The invitation is respectful and diplomatic while simultaneously explaining that only half of the seats Quendle requested are available.



Quendle Strikrunner

The party earns 1 Production Point, and each PC earns 40 XP.

11 or more Victory Points: The invitation manages the task of informing Maestro Strikrunner that only two seats are available, but in a way that makes it appealing nonetheless. The party earns 2 Production Points, and each PC earns 80 XP.

WEEK 1 SECONDARY TASKS

On the first week of Hell Month, the PCs can also pursue any of the following daily downtime tasks.

MORALE SUPPORT

DOWNTIME

A PC spends the day preparing meals and drinks for the actors and workers by attempting a DC 28 Crafting check or a DC 28 Food or Drink Lore check. Alternatively, the PC can provide entertainment for the actors and workers with a DC 28 Performance check. If the PCs accumulate at least seven critical successes by the end of the week, increased morale results in the earning of 1 Production Point.

Each time a PC critically succeeds at this check, that PC can attempt a secret DC 38 Perception check; on a success, they note that Oriole doesn't seem to be affected and seems to have a poor appetite. If they're confronted, Oriole shrugs it off and says that they're always a bit "off" in the last few weeks before a premiere, but in fact, it hints at their turmoil that erupts in week 3.

PICKING UP THREADS

DOWNTIME

The tailors from the Silver Spindle (previously known as The Devil's Threads) have been hired to take up the remaining costuming tasks left undone by Fenton's abandonment of his duties, but without help, there's no way they'll be able to finish in time. A PC can pitch in for a day to help with the remaining tasks by attempting a DC 38 Crafting or a DC 40 Theater Lore check. If the PCs fail to do so at least three times this week, Fallenta is forced to hire additional help, and the PCs lose 2 Production Points.

STAGE TECHNICALITIES

DOWNTIME

There remains an almost overwhelming amount of miscellaneous jobs that must be completed as well as checked and double checked for quality control. A PC can spend the day helping with these tasks around the opera house with a DC 28 Acrobatics or Athletics check, or a DC 26 Engineering Lore check. If the PCs accumulate at least three critical successes with this activity by the end of the week, they gain 1 Production Point, but for each critical failure a PC gets, the setback costs 1 Production Point.

PRODUCTION POINTS

Throughout the Curtain Call Adventure Path, the PCs have opportunities to earn Production Points. Keep track of Production Points the PCs earn publicly, so the party can keep an eye on how things are going. The *Curtain Call Player's Guide* contains more player-facing information about Production Points.

PERSONA TRAITS

In several parts of this adventure, PCs with certain persona traits gain advantages or disadvantages, as detailed in the text. Persona traits are fully detailed in the *Curtain Call Player's Guide*; if you're not using this Player's Guide in your game, ignore all references and adjustments in this adventure involving persona traits.

WEEK 2: RITUALS TO DO

As the second week starts, the traditional blessing of the production is scheduled to take place. As high priest of Kintargo's church of Shelyn, Zachrin Vhast has led this blessing rite many times before, and he's willing to do so again for the PCs' opera—but not alone. He and Fallenta agree that the PCs should be a key part of the blessing rite, if only because the optics of the heroic inspiration of the opera taking part in the blessing rite will help drum up even more excitement and anticipation.

Zachrin meets with the PCs on the first day of the week to set expectations and explain what he needs from them. The traditional blessing rite involves the casting of a *consecrate* ritual onstage and, as such, takes 3 days to perform. Songbird Hall (the church of Shelyn in Kintargo) fronts the cost of the ritual's rare incense and offerings, and Zachrin is prepared to be the ritual's primary caster, but he suggests that a PC take on that role instead. At the same time, Zachrin suggests incorporating a memorial for the Ruby Massacre into the blessing.

The PCs might know the *Song of Silver* from the previous adventure (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #205: Singer, Stalker, Skinsaw Man* 84) and might suggest incorporating this ritual into the blessing. Zachrin recommends the PCs wait until a few days before the premiere to do so since its effects are only a week long.

Consecrate Blessing: The *consecrate* ritual Zachrin seeks to perform is modified, such that the secondary casters need only be worshippers of faiths that aren't significantly opposed to the primary caster's faith, but if all casters of the ritual are of the same faith, the DCs for performing the ritual are all reduced by 2.

Zachrin's modifiers for Religion and Performance (he uses the former as a primary caster and the latter as a secondary caster) are +20. If he's the primary caster, he casts it at 2nd-rank to maximize his chances of success—the DC for the primary caster in this case is DC 25, while it's DC 20 for secondary casters.

If a PC is the primary caster, they can heighten the ritual as they wish. In this case, the primary caster DC is equal to the very hard DC of that spell's rank +7, and the secondary caster DC is equal to that spell's rank +2 (both as defined on page 53 of *GM Core*). For example, if the ritual is heightened to 7th rank, the primary caster check is DC 38 and the secondary caster check is DC 33.

Memorial: Zachrin suggests a work of art to serve as a memorial for the Ruby Massacre, along with a plaque that lists the names of those who perished during the tragedy. Creating the memorial involves day-long downtime activities that PCs who aren't taking part in the ritual's casting can attempt (or any PC can attempt later in the week after the ritual is complete). To work on the memorial requires a PC to attempt either a DC 33 Art Lore check to concept the memorial or a DC 38 Crafting check to create it—each successful check earns Victory Points, and once the PCs have accumulated 8 Victory Points (and at least one of the checks was a Crafting check), the memorial is finished. If the work bleeds into week 3 or beyond, though, the missed deadline costs Production Points (see Rewards below).

Rewards: If the PCs help to cast *consecrate*, they earn 40 XP. Once the memorial is complete, the PCs earn an additional 40 XP. Regardless of the rank it's cast at, if the *consecrate* ritual is a success, the PCs earn 1 Production Point, or 2 Production Points if the ritual is a critical success.

WEEK 2 SECONDARY TASKS

On the second week of Hell Month, the PCs can also pursue the following secondary tasks.

AN UNEXPECTED CELEBRITY

DOWNTIME

Rumors spread that one of Kintargo's most famous celebrities, Shensen, has secretly returned after finishing a long and complex mission abroad for the Firebrands. Shensen is delighted to learn about the upcoming production and fully intends to be at the premiere in disguise, as she's wary about stealing even a tiny speck

of limelight from the PCs. Fallenta, once she hears the rumors, approaches the PCs with the idea that having one of Kintargo's most famous opera stars publicly attending the performance could only help, and she asks the PCs to seek out Shensen to extend a complimentary invitation to her.

Shensen is indeed trying to remain incognito. A PC can attempt to locate or contact her by spending a day spreading subtle rumors and working with messengers who can keep secrets. On a successful DC 30 Deception or DC 35 Diplomacy check, the PCs' efforts are successful, and Shensen sends word that she'd love to sit and chat with the PCs at their earliest convenience; she suggests meeting at the opera house after dark but agrees to any other proposed meeting location the PCs might suggest.

During the meeting, Shensen congratulates the PCs on what, by all accounts, is going to be a blockbuster premiere, and as she asks questions about their adventures, it should become apparent that she's been following the PCs' adventures and is a huge fan of them. She gratefully accepts an invitation to attend the opera, and if the PCs are okay with it, she agrees to attend in person rather than in disguise.

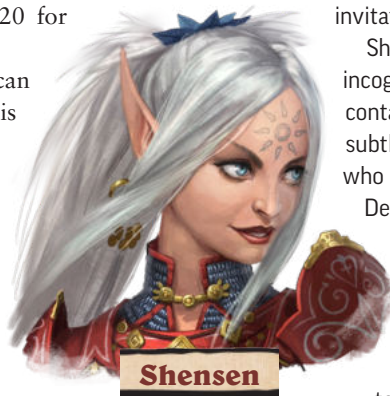
All PCs present can attempt DC 32 Diplomacy or DC 30 Performance checks to impress Shensen. If at least one PC is successful at either check, she offers to become a last-minute sponsor for the opera as well as attending the premiere—this additional prestige grants the PCs 1 Production Point. If at least one PC critically succeeds at the check, she's very impressed and offers to put additional funding and support into the production, which increases the PCs' Production Point reward to 2.

Shensen also extends some of her personal funds to the PCs to use as they see fit if they successfully impress her. This amount equals 1,500 pp if at least 2 PCs succeed at the above checks, which increases to 3,000 pp if at least one of these PCs critically succeeds.

MAGICAL ENHANCEMENTS

DOWNTIME

By this time, the mechanical aspects of the opera's set and effects are mostly dialed in, and it's time for the PCs to decide whether they'd like to incorporate magic. Even a little magical enhancement can go a long way. A PC can spend the day developing methods to bolster the presentation with a wide range of magic by attempting a DC 33 Arcana or Occultism check or a DC 36 Nature or Religion check to earn Victory Points. If the party can accumulate at least 4 Victory Points by the end of the week, the opera can move



forward with the enhancements—doing so earns the PCs 1 Production Point. If the PCs can accumulate at least 8 Victory Points by the end of the week, increase this reward to 2 Production Points. Once the week ends, the crew's focus must be on other parts of preproduction, and there's no further time to pursue Magical Enhancements.

TOXIC SABOTAGE

DOWNTIME

The cult of Norgorber has its eyes on the PCs and their opera. As vengeance, a small group of Blackfinger poisoners seek to disrupt the production as a warning to the PCs.

The Norgorberites pursue their poisoning on the evening of the week's sixth day. Any PC who spent the day in the opera house can attempt a secret DC 38 Perception check; on a success, they notice something suspicious in time to minimize the poisoning, and on a critical success, the PC notices the poisoned food and drink in time to prevent the sabotage entirely—in either of these cases, alas, the poisoners are long gone before they can be confronted.

On the seventh day, many of the cast and crew become poisoned, and the opera house becomes a sort of field hospital as healers and herbalists tend to the poisoned. A PC can spend the day helping out with a DC 36 Medicine check or a DC 40 Nature or Religion check to help minimize the sabotage and to earn Victory Points. If the PCs became suspicious the night before, the DCs for these checks are each reduced by 5. The results depend on the total number of Victory Points earned by the PCs, but regardless of the results, enough evidence remains behind to confirm the cult of Norgorber was responsible.

-1 or fewer Victory Points The PCs made things worse, and there are even a few deaths among the cast and crew. The production loses 3d6+6 Production Points.

0 Victory Points Whether the PCs failed to help, or they simply didn't try, the cast and crew are painfully poisoned, and potions, elixirs, and outside help costs extra. The production loses 1d6+2 Production Points.

1 to 2 Victory Points The PCs' efforts help keep the cast and crew comfortable and speed along recovery, but not without impacting the schedule a little. The production loses 1d2 Production Points.

3 to 4 Victory Points The PCs minimize the damage, and the sabotage barely impacts the schedule. No Production Points are lost.

5 or more Victory Points Not only do the PCs keep things on schedule, they prevent anyone from suffering. If the PCs critically succeeded at the previous night's Perception check, they earn this result automatically. Not only are no Production Points lost to the sabotage, but the improved morale actually increases Production Points by 1.

THE RUBY MASSACRE

The PCs automatically know about and recall the Ruby Massacre, as does anyone in Kintargo, for this notorious event took place during the height of Barzillai Thrune's rule over Kintargo back in 4716 AR. Originally billed as the Ruby Masquerade, it was an attempt by Barzillai to trap and slaughter the rising heroes of the Silver Ravens. The event took place in the Kintargo Opera House, but things didn't go precisely as planned. The Silver Ravens defeated the devils, infernal agents, and monsters that attacked them at the height of the masquerade and also rescued a previously-petrified Shensen (one of Kintargo's most famous celebrities and a key member of the Silver Ravens ever since) and mayor Jilia Bainilus (who had been transformed into a vampire and was then restored to life by the heroes after her defeat). Today, the event is largely considered to be the point at which Ravounel's resistance against Cheliox finally turned the tide, yet it's also remembered for the many Kintargo citizens who perished during this violent fight, both within the opera house and the city streets beyond.

WEEK 3: UPROOTING THE CULT

The PCs have clearly made an enemy in the Norgorberites—and vice versa. With the poisoning at the end of the previous week fresh in mind, Fallenta fears the cult might be planning to target the premier gala with an even deadlier attack. She therefore asks the PCs to spend some time this week infiltrating Kintargo's underworld to do what they can to minimize the cult's presence in the city through negotiations, threats, or good old fisticuffs. Discretion is necessary as to not tip off the cultists, who might go into hiding. Each PC who wishes to spend time working on uprooting, exposing, and driving off the cultists can do so with the following activity.

UPROOT THE CULT

CONCENTRATE DOWNTIME

The cult of Norgorber has its eyes on the PCs and the opera after the heroes have meddled in the affairs of some of their most powerful members in Vyre over the past few adventures. The group of cultists newly arrived in Kintargo have set up a base of operations in Old Kintargo.

To fight back, the PCs can attempt any of the following skill checks to earn Victory Points.

DC 33 Underworld Lore to know where to go, to understand who to watch, and to learn ways to fight

fire with fire by using Kintargo's own criminals against the cultists.

DC 36 Thievery to steal key bits of evidence from the cultists.

DC 38 Deception to gather information on the cult through bribes and by infiltrating Kintargo's criminal underworld to spy on suspects.

DC 40 Intimidation to interrogate suspects, to exude a show of force and strength, or to simply try to frighten off the cultists with public acts (such as by posting bounties or taking to the streets to publicly proclaim the party is more than willing to fight the cult).

DC 43 Society to use the city's built-in resources and laws to rally official channels and rely on established methods to fight back against the cult.

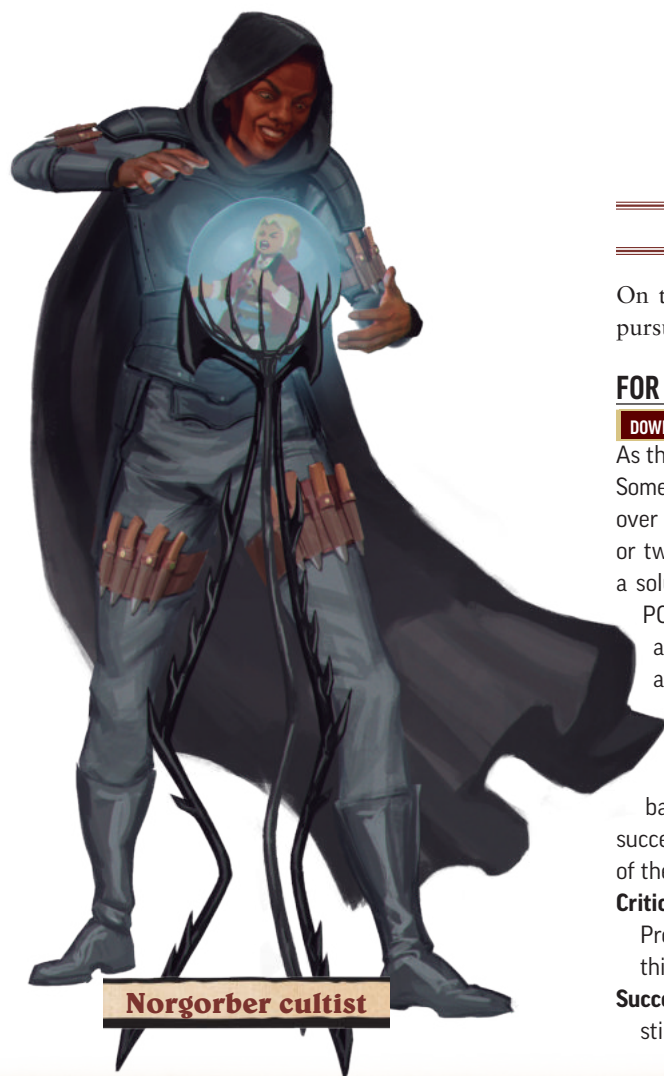
Victory Point Results The results of the PCs' efforts against the cult depend on how many Victory Points they accumulate before the end of the week.

5 or fewer Victory Points: The cultists spread slanderous rumors about the PCs in an attempt to damage their reputation as legendary heroes and accomplished

adventurers, hoping to cause the public to lose interest in their opera. Each PC must attempt a DC 38 Performance, DC 40 Diplomacy or Intimidation, or DC 43 Kintargo Lore or Society check to defend their reputation. Each PC who fails their check costs the party 1 Production Point (or 2 Production Points on a critical failure, or for each PC who simply decides not to defend their reputation at all). The PCs earn 20 XP each for their efforts.

6–10 Victory Points: The PCs force the cult of Norgorber onto the defensive, lessening the faith's impact and effects on the opera's premiere. They avoid having their reputations ruined, and more importantly, the PCs earn 1 Production Point since they won't have to spend additional resources in the last few days before the premiere fixing damage the cult otherwise would've caused. Each PC earns 40 XP.

11 or more Victory Points: The PCs force the cult to abandon Kintargo and know that they no longer have to continue this activity. Not only does this remove any further threat from the cult to their production, but they also recover some treasure from the cult headquarters, including a *moonstone crystal ball* and several chests of coins and gems that served the cult as funds worth 40,000 gp. The party earns 2 Production Points, and each PC earns 80 XP.



Norgorber cultist

WEEK 3 SECONDARY TASKS

On the third week of Hell Month, the PCs can also pursue the following secondary tasks.

FOR A WANT OF MANY NAILS

DOWNTIME

As the week begins, Fallenta comes to the heroes alarmed. Somehow, the production is tens of thousands of silver over its projected budget. Fallenta hopes that at least one or two of the PCs will have a chance to try to figure out a solution to bring the production back under budget. A

PC can spend the day going over the budget and then attempt a DC 36 Accounting Lore check, or they can attempt a DC 38 Crafting check to reorganize what work remains to be done on building the set and creating costumes to save money. Alternatively, the PCs can simply donate the 2,000 gp needed to get back on budget and automatically achieve the critical success result below. If the PCs do nothing, then at the end of the week they lose 3 Production Points.

Critical Success The PC balances the budget perfectly. No Production Points are lost; further attempts to pursue this activity have no additional effect.

Success The PC makes adjustments, but the production is still a little over budget. The PCs reduce the loss to only

1 Production Point (instead of 3 Production Points) and can attempt this activity again.

Failure The PC fails to determine any way of saving money.

Critical Failure Disaster! An accident results in the destruction of important accounting documents or the ruining of previously crafted sets and costumes. The PCs lose 5 Production Points, and there's no time left to attempt this activity again to start over. The PCs can spend 4,000 gp to avoid this result and "buy" their way into a critical success at this point, but they must decide to do so immediately.

REGAINING CONFIDENCE

DOWNTIME

During a rehearsal, Oriole stumbles over a line so badly that they storm out to find a box seat on the opera house's upper floor to brood. Fallenta asks the PCs to step in to talk to Oriole to help if they can.

Oriole reveals that with their imminent return to the public only weeks away, they've grown nervous that they'll disappoint their audience. The PCs have several different options through which they can help Oriole face their fears, with each successful check earning Victory Points.

A PC can attempt a DC 38 Performance check to inspire and entertain Oriole, a DC 40 Diplomacy check to bolster their morale, or a DC 43 Theater Lore or Society check to impress on Oriole just how important their return is. If a PC mentions Arshea (Oriole's muse and inspirational patron) as they relate to artistic endeavors, that PC reduces the DC of the check by 2.

2 or fewer Victory Points: If by the end of the week the PCs earned 2 or fewer Victory Points, Oriole gets back to work, but it's obvious their heart isn't in it. The PCs lose 2 Production Points.

3 to 5 Victory Points: The PCs successfully inspire Oriole and help them rediscover their confidence.

6 or more Victory Points: Oriole not only recovers their confidence, but is both inspired by the PCs and motivated more than ever to make them proud. The PCs earn 2 Production Points.

WEEK 4: FINAL COUNTDOWN LOW 18

On the first day of the final week, the PCs, cast, and crew discover a last-minute problem—something seems wrong with the third act. That section of the opera just isn't hitting the way it should. After a somewhat snarky but legitimate observation from Oriole, where they note that, "After my aria, the heroes and I essentially just yowl at one another like territorial cats for the rest of the climax and stumble around on stage. I think we all need the

true stars of this show to demonstrate what they're capable of! I think we need a stage fight!"

Once Fallenta hears this, her eyes light up, and she snaps her fingers, immediately agreeing. She spends a few minutes speaking to Duvall, then gathers the entire cast and crew in the opera house to reveal what she's got planned while Duvall retires backstage.

"It turns out that Duvall made some powerful friends during his stay on Nirvana—friends who are huge fans of operas and would love to help us out. He's going to contact these friends and arrange things for a stage fight this evening, an hour after sunset. We'll be able to all watch our heroic producers do their thing in person!"

Everyone seems excited by this proposal, but the PCs likely have questions—Fallenta coyly just smiles and tells them to be on stage at the appointed time, ready for a fight. If the PCs are nervous, she assures



Operatic Emissary

them that it isn't going to be a fight to the death for anyone involved, and that there are rules against damaging the stage as well.

Creatures: No one in the cast nor crew can withstand a punch from the heroes, and a stage fight the PCs put on between themselves simply wouldn't be as inspiring as Fallenta hopes. Duvall's suggestion seems perfect—he'll cash in some favors, and that evening, the PCs face off on the opera house stage in an exhibition match against a group of four tabellia angels who happen to be huge fans of mortal opera. Since he's actually Shelyn in disguise, "Duvall" has no problem calling in four powerful angels to help, but the PCs might wonder at how he might have pulled this off; if they ask him, he shrugs and says, "I made a lot of friends during my years in Nirvana, and what are friends for if you can't invite them to share in your interests? Much better, I think, to call in a favor to do something positive than to get involved in real violence, don't you think?"

When the tabellia angels arrive, they're much more excited and giddy than one might normally expect for such serious defenders of all that's holy. The angels see this as a short vacation from their duties on Nirvana, and they certainly won't reveal the truth of Duvall's nature; instead, they eagerly wish the PCs the best of luck in the stage fight before they take up position onstage. The angels are dressed in outlandish devil costumes and are obviously enjoying the chance to "play against type."

As the cast and crew fill out the seats in the opera hall, Fallenta asks the PCs to step up onstage—the curtain is raised, so they have plenty of room, including the backdrop north of the curtain, to play out the fight. The rules are simple—the PCs must defeat the four angels in combat but without using any lethal force or destructive magic.

The angels are armed with +2 *striking holy returning tridents* rather than their typical warhammers, and the outfits they wear include well-crafted devil masks and black and red robes—much more playful diabolic costumes than any actually blasphemous outfits.

When they attack, the operatic emissaries take a –2 circumstance penalty to their Strikes with their tridents, as they make nonlethal Strikes with the weapons. They avoid using lethal spells like *blessed boundary*, *divine decree*, or *divine wrath* in the fight. If an angel starts their turn at 25 or fewer Hit Points, they abandon the fight by taking all 3 actions to play out an overly dramatic stage death.

The first time the PCs use lethal force against the angels, the audience boos. The second time the PCs do so, the angels break off attacking, and Fallenta calls

for an end to the battle. Otherwise, the stage fight proceeds until either all four angels have "died" or the PCs give up or are knocked unconscious. After the fight (assuming it wasn't called off on account of lethal violence), the audience and angels alike cheer at how the PCs performed. The angels then bow, promising to spread the PCs' fame on Nirvana, then vanish (surreptitiously sent back home by Duvall).

OPERATIC EMISSARIES (4)

CREATURE 15

Elite tabellia angels (*Monster Core* 6, 17)

Initiative Perception +28

Melee ♦ *trident* +30 (holy, magical, thrown 20 feet),

Damage 2d8+16 piercing plus 1d4 spirit

Ranged ♦ *trident* +26 (holy, magical, thrown 20 feet),

Damage 2d8+12 piercing plus 1d4 spirit

Treasure: If the PCs completed the fight without resorting to lethal force, Duvall gifts them a *greater maestro's lute* and a *runestone* bearing a +3 *armor potency* rune.

If the PCs also managed to win the fight, an inspired Oriole races up to them to gush over their performance, congratulating the PCs in a reversal of their typical role of the famous performer being admired. Oriole spontaneously suggests they and the PCs go get matching tattoos to commemorate the opera and their shared time together, revealing they have "credit" with one of Absalom's most famous tattoo artists—a man named **Arhan Benimaya** (famous male human tattoo artist 13). If the PCs take Oriole up on the offer, they don a disguise (so they don't attract undue attention in the city) and then offer to bring the PCs to Absalom at once to get tattoos, traveling via a pair of *interplanar teleport* spells (first to the First World, then back to Absalom; Oriole will, of course, cede to the PCs if they have a more efficient method of swift travel).

Feel free to play up this unexpected trip to Absalom as a chance for the PCs to roleplay a "night out on the town" with Oriole. The performer removes their disguise only once they meet with Arhan in Kraken's Ink Tattoo, where Arhan's reaction to the unexpected visit from his old friend is one of unbridled delight. He quickly agrees to Oriole's request and offers to give each PC (and Oriole) matching tattoos—Oriole suggests they get small angel wings on their shoulders to commemorate the amazing fight the PCs just took part in.

All this likely consumes the bulk of the 24 hours following the first day if the PCs rely upon Oriole's *interplanar teleport* spells to come and go (remember that when they arrive in Absalom and return to Kintargo in this way, their arrival points are imprecise,

Bring the House Down

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Adventure Toolbox

requiring some additional travel to cover the remaining distance), but if the PCs have more precise fast travel methods, they can potentially cut this side trip down to merely a night.

The trip to Absalom can also give the PCs a chance to shop at a bigger city than Kintargo, but the true reward doesn't manifest until the next time they wake and do their daily preparations—at this point, each PC who got a tattoo discovers that the tattoo functions as a *true faith tattoo* (Treasure Vault 120). This unexpected benefit is a gift granted to them secretly by Shelyn—once she reveals herself to the PCs at the end of the adventure, she confesses to it, but until then, Oriole's take on this unexpected benefit is simply proof that “the world loves what we're doing!” Unlike the typical *true faith tattoo*, this gift doesn't symbolize the wearer's actual devotion to a deity, but instead shows the appreciation of a deity for their artistic craft—wearing or using this tattoo has no adverse effect on the creature's actual beliefs. It can be used to cast a 7th-rank *heal* or a 7th-rank *dizzying colors* when activated.

Reward: If the PCs complete the fight without resorting to lethal damage, the increased morale and inspiration they provide the cast and crew grants them 1 Production Point. If they win the fight as well, increase this award to 2 Production Points. They should also earn XP as normal for defeating the angels in combat, plus an additional 20 XP if they avoided using lethal damage.

WEEK 4 SECONDARY TASKS

No other new downtime activities are available for the PCs this week, but on the last evening of the last day of the week, after the cast and crew finish the final dress rehearsal (an event the PCs can watch, but it runs smoothly enough that they don't need to help in any way), they and Fallenta are expected to host the traditional Sponsor's Dinner.

SPONSOR'S DINNER

Fallenta and her assistants handle all of the preparations for the Sponsor's Dinner—all the PCs need to do is show up to have one last chance to thank the sponsors they gathered during the previous adventure for their support. This dinner is held onstage at the opera house

on tables and chairs set up before the scenery and set dressing for the opera's first act, giving the sponsors a chance to admire a sort of “sneak preview” of the production. In addition to the sponsors, other luminaries

the PCs might have had contact with, including all of those who were extended complimentary invitations, are present as well, such as Zachrin Vhast, Mayor Jilia Bainilus, and Shensen. If you'd like, previous PCs whom your group might have played in *Hell's Rebels* can be present as well.

During the dinner, the PCs can socialize with the opera's sponsors. As they chat and enjoy a repast of fruits, cheeses, cured meats, and wine, a common refrain they hear from their sponsors involves worries that the production might have exceeded expectations in its expenses and that so much money spent on frivolous things could impact the opera's profitability. During the dinner, each PC can attempt either a DC 36 Diplomacy check to Make an

Impression on the sponsors to soothe their fears or a DC 40 Deception check to Lie to them and put them at ease. If no PC critically fails a check and at least 1 PC succeeds at a check, the sponsors' fears are mollified; if at least one PC also critically succeeds at one of these checks, the sponsors grow even more excited, and the party gains 1 final Production Point before tomorrow's premiere.

Among the guests at the Sponsor's Dinner is an exquisitely dressed woman who introduces herself at some point to the PCs as Countess **Manticce Kaleekii** (flirtatious cambion nephilim aristocrat 19). The countess says she's come from her hometown of Vyre to wish the PCs luck on their premiere, but if the PCs ask around, no one on the cast or crew remembers extending her an invitation. A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Vyre Lore or DC 33 Society check to Recall Knowledge (or who's a master in Vyre Lore) realizes that this individual is none other than Manticce Kaleekii, overseer of Vyre's Opal Market and one of the city's most influential aristocrats. A PC who critically succeeds at either check recalls hearing compelling but unverified rumors that the countess is one of Vyre's leaders—one of the city's mysterious Masks. If asked about it, Manticce is coy and brushes off the question, noting that, “Tonight is about you and your success, not about anything I've managed to do for myself.”

At some point during her brief conversation with the PCs, the countess produces an unlabeled bottle of perfume and challenges the PCs to identify at least three of the six notes in the perfume's scent. Each PC who takes a whiff of the perfume can attempt a DC



Manticce Kaleekii

STARRING ROLES

Curtain Call assumes that actors play the PCs' parts in the opera, but it's possible that one or more PCs might have taken it upon themselves to play their own characters in the performance. In this case, once the opera begins, any PC who's playing himself on stage has to split their focus between performing and helping solve obstacles—as a result, all PCs to earn Opera Points during obstacles for this PC increase by 5, except for the two intermission obstacles, where the PCs only increase by 2.

36 Herbalism Lore, DC 38 Nature, or DC 40 Crafting check to recognize one note, or two on a critical success. The six notes are (in no particular order) blood, dust, musk, rust, salt, and wine—a strange combination that results in a scent that's both arousing and invigorating.

If the PCs identify three of the six notes, Manticce is delighted and has a favorable impression of the group. If they identify all six notes, she's visibly impressed. In either case, she tells the PCs that they should “drop by Cobweb Manor for a visit” the next time they're in Vyre, letting them keep the perfume vial and telling them it'll let her house guards know they're invited if they take her up on this offer.

If they identify fewer than three notes, she shrugs and muses with a giggle, “Oh well, I suppose not everyone's nose knows quality!” The rest of the meeting with the mysterious woman consists mostly of just idle gossip and flirtation—her true purpose here is to scope out the “heroes” who have been making waves in Vyre lately, and she gets what she's looking for even if the PCs fail to impress her.

In any event, at some point after this meeting when the PCs lose sight of the countess, she vanishes as mysteriously as she appeared (stepping away to return to Vyre the way she came—through the use of *translocate* and *teleport* spells).

Treasure: The vial of rare perfume contains 10 doses after Manticce uses a few to challenge the PCs. Each dose is worth 1,000 gp, while the delicate vial the perfume is contained in is worth 2,500 gp.

Reward: If the PCs soothe the sponsors' worries, grant them 40 XP. For each note they correctly identify in Manticce's perfume, grant them an additional 10 XP to a maximum of 60 XP if they get all six correct.

LIGHTS! MUSIC! CURTAINS!

The day of the premiere arrives. Whether or not the

PCs are nervous, all of the cast and crew are. The day is spent in a frenzy of last-minute preparations, both for the performance as well as for the opera house. Fallenta encourages the PCs to take time to rest and relax, but as evening draws near, all of Kintargo increasingly buzzes with anticipation. Scores of attendees dressed in their finest, perfumed and powdered, arrive at the opera house. They gasp in awe at the new imperial staircase and chatter about the replicated tavern bar from which the faint smell of roasted food drifts. Backstage, cast and crew scramble for a last bit of makeup, prop detail, voice and dance warm-up, or instrument tuning. Yet as with any complex performance, once the opera begins, there are many potential problems that the PCs must act quickly to address!

RUNNING THE OPERA

The opera uses a modified version of the Chase rules (GM *Core* 192), with each of the opera's three acts playing out as a four-obstacle “chase.” The PCs must try to accumulate as many Chase Points—or rather, Opera Points—as they can during the three acts. Whether or not they successfully overcome the individual obstacles, the total number of Opera Points they gain determines their production's level of success in the end.

Passage of Time: Each act is an hour long (including intermissions). Each individual obstacle in an act is a single round of play and represents 15 minutes of time passing.

Number of Rolls: The number of PCs don't set the number of times the players can roll to accumulate Opera Points each round through their Overcome attempts. Instead, their total number of Production Points accumulated throughout this Adventure Path determines their number of rolls, representing how well prepared they are, how many resources they have, and how much incidental aid from NPC members of the cast and crew can help.

OVERCOME ATTEMPTS PER ROUND

Production Points	Number of Rolls
0 or less	One roll (at a -4 penalty)
1-15	One roll
16-30	Two rolls
31-45	Three rolls
46 or more	Four rolls

Spellcasting: A PC capable of spellcasting can always expend a spell to attempt to gain Opera Points to overcome an obstacle. To do so, the PC must expend the spell (and must be able to complete casting it

during the 15 minutes the obstacle lasts), then attempt a DC 40 Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion check to determine how well that spell solves the situation rather than attempting one of the obstacle's listed skill checks. If the spell being cast is particularly perfect for solving the obstacle, reduce this check's DC to 36.

Finishing a Round: Each round, the players choose which PCs attempt rolls to overcome that round's obstacle. No single character can attempt the same skill check in an individual round, but otherwise, the mix of who does and doesn't roll in a round is up to the players. If the PCs fail to gain enough Opera Points to overcome the obstacle by the end of the round, the penalty takes place, and play proceeds on to the next round and the next obstacle. If the PCs earn more Opera Points than are necessary to resolve the obstacle, they don't earn any additional benefit other than avoiding the penalty—but the more points they accumulate, the better their final result will be when determining the opera's success. Keep track of the Opera Points they earn overall!

XP Reward: At the conclusion of each of the opera's three acts, grant the PCs 80 XP, regardless of their failure or success with the obstacles.

LET THE FUN BEGIN!

This is the event the PCs have been preparing for! In between each act's obstacles, take time to narrate how the opera is going, and give the players a chance to add narrative flourishes of their own.

ACT I

OPENING GALA

OBSTACLE 18

Opera Points 1; Overcome DC 36 Athletics to push between the audience members and prevent a fight long enough to resolve the argument, DC 38 Diplomacy to convince the two to come to a friendly resolution, or DC 40 Intimidation to tell each audience member where to sit, regardless of their preference

Audience members in the balcony seating (area **K12**) begin arguing over a chair, both insisting they hold the real ticket for the seating (each ticket is smudged and hard to read).

Penalty Someone stomps on a random PC's foot. That PC becomes clumsy 1 for the remainder of Act 1.

OVERTURE

OBSTACLE 18

Opera Points 2; Overcome DC 36 Acrobatics to quickly race over and close the door, DC 38 Theater Lore to use theatrical shorthand to direct available ushers to close the door quietly, or ranged Strike against AC 40 to throw

AN ALTERNATE CLIMAX

This adventure is constructed so that the climax consists of the PCs' confrontation with Norgorber, but you might prefer to end the Curtain Call Adventure Path on a more upbeat and whimsical note by moving the premiere of the opera to take place at the very end of this campaign. Certainly, putting on the opera after the events of Godsrain gives the people of Kintargo a much needed escape from recent upheavals, and moving the premiere to the end of the adventure might make for a more natural and satisfying conclusion for your table.

If you wish to do so, then Godsrain interrupts the Sponsor's Dinner rather than the premiere. Alternatively, you can have Godsrain take place just after the PCs have their mock combat at the start of week 4. Chapters 2 and 3 then play out as presented on the following pages, and once the PCs return from Duskfathom at the end of Chapter 3, proceed with the opera's premiere as detailed on the following pages. If you do so, you'll want to adjust XP awards a bit so the PCs don't fall behind, but you shouldn't modify the DCs for the obstacles in the opera's three acts. In this variant, having 20th-level PCs face 18th-level obstacles gives your players one last chance to feel like overachieving heroes!

If you choose this route, it's best to have Shelyn reveal herself to the PCs after the opera concludes so that her presence isn't distracting during the performance.

a cushion into the doorway to quiet its closing
Somewhere in the hall, a door has been left unlatched, and it's making an increasingly loud amount of noise; secure it before it distracts and disrupts the orchestra!

Penalty Someone eventually gets the door secured, but not before the damage is done, and the banging causes the orchestra to stumble a bit during the overture. Lose 1d6 Production Points, and increase the DCs for all checks attempted in the next obstacle by 2 while the cast and crew scramble to recover.

FIRST ACT

OBSTACLE 18

Opera Points 2; Overcome DC 40 Crafting to quickly adjust some of the backdrops to give the lead monster a better view before they lead the ambush, DC 36 Deception to subtly use hand signals to create improvised cues to the monsters, or DC 38 Performance to direct the cast from backstage to adjust their performances and seamlessly improvise around the mistake

A big scene in the first act recounts an early ambush of

the heroes by a group of monsters, but when the time comes, it's obvious that some of the monster performers are in danger of missing cues as a result of a costume malfunction that makes it difficult for them to see through their masks; find a way to give the monsters a reliable cue so they don't spring the ambush at the wrong time!

Penalty The ambush sequence is rushed and chaotic, with one of the lead monsters being knocked unconscious. The next obstacle's DCs increase by 2 as that monster was one of the better singers, and a randomly determined PC suffers a sprain and is enfeebled 1 for the rest of Act I and all of Act II.

CHORUS'S DEBUT

OBSTACLE 18

Opera Points 3; **Overcome** DC 40 Deception to convey via subtle hand signals to the off-key singer to stop singing and silently mouth the words, DC 36 Performance to direct the chorus backstage to compensate and recover, or DC 38 Stealth to sneakily remove the off-key singer

The chorus swells, but as it does, a discordant harmony rises



Operatic Villain

as one off-tune singer threatens to drag everyone down.

Penalty The chorus ends in a swirl of dissonance, setting up some unfortunate criticism in the chatter during the First Intermission. The PCs lose the option to use Diplomacy to overcome that obstacle as a result of their distracted nature, and one PC chosen at random is so frustrated and distracted by the failure that they become sickened 1 until the end of Act II (that PC can't reduce this sickened value, but effects like *sound body* can remove it earlier).

ACT II

FIRST INTERMISSION

OBSTACLE 18

Opera Points 2; **Overcome** DC 36 Diplomacy to convince the fans to wait until after the show, DC 40 Intimidation to frighten the fans away, or DC 38 Stealth to intercept the fans and divert them

A small group of Oriole's more intense fans sneak past the guards and seek to confront Oriole in their dressing room for autographs.

Penalty These zealous fans become frustrated and turn against Oriole when they (rightfully) refuse to give out autographs in the middle of the show. Increase all DCs during the Villain's Aria in Act III by 2 as the fans heckle Oriole during their aria.

SECOND ACT

OBSTACLE 18

Opera Points 2; **Overcome** DC 38 Crafting to help the prop master make fast adjustments to make things work, DC 40 Performance to go onstage to swap out the mixed-up props out in the open while appearing to be a legitimate part of the show, or DC 36 Thievery to set everything back in place quickly enough that the prop master barely has time to even notice the problem

The props are out of place! The prop master is having a breakdown. Save them!

Penalty The audience becomes painfully aware of the props being out of place, even as the cast improvises around them. Increase the DC of all Performance checks to Overcome obstacles by 2 for the remainder of the opera.

HEROES' ARIA

OBSTACLE 18

Opera Points 1; **Overcome** DC 36 Intimidation to efficiently escort the hecklers out of the building, DC 40 Perception to notice the hecklers getting ready to be disruptive and having enough time to quietly confront and stop them before they even begin, or DC 38 Performance to direct the cast backstage on how to respond to the heckling in a way that shames the hecklers into silence

As the heroes of the opera begin their arias, a heckler (or three) shouts degrading taunts based on the heroes'

personas and public reputation; the heckler could be an NPC with whom the PCs have had trouble with earlier in the Adventure Path or even an NPC from their previous adventure on which the opera is based.

Penalty The hecklers eventually make a scene of walking out of the performance and continue to do so on the streets. This bad publicity reduces the PCs' overall Opera Points total by 2 when you're determining the opera's overall success.

CURTAIN TROUBLES

OBSTACLE 18

Opera Points 3; **Overcome** DC 36 Athletics to quickly clamber up the backstage ropes to release the curtain, DC 40 Crafting to quickly repair the tangled workings, or DC 38 Thievery to disentangle the curtains from below by twisting and tugging ropes just right

The crescendo of the last note representing the heroes' resolve ends with thunderous applause. The second act concludes satisfyingly... at least until the curtains, meant to close, get stuck.

Penalty Cast, crew, and PCs spend much of the intermission untangling the knots. The number of checks allowed to overcome the Last Intermission is reduced by 1.

ACT III

LAST INTERMISSION

OBSTACLE 18

Opera Points 2; **Overcome** DC 38 Deception to distract the pair long enough for their animosity to dwindle, DC 40 Diplomacy to negotiate a peaceful resolution, or DC 36 Society to know just what to say to defuse the situation

A pro-Throne noble of House Aulamaxa crosses paths with a Silver Raven. The animosity is instantaneous, and it's a matter of minutes, perhaps less, before a fight starts!

Penalty A fistfight break out. One of the PCs, selected randomly, takes 4d6 bludgeoning damage and becomes clumsy 1 for the remainder of the opera as a result of taking a few unfortunately well-placed hits.

Special If either Quendle or Shensen are here, decrease the DCs for this obstacle by 2, as they can step in and help soothe ruffled feathers. If both are present, decrease the DCs by 5.

THIRD ACT

OBSTACLE 18

Opera Points 1; **Overcome** DC 38 Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion to adjust the opera's magical effects to ignore the jewelry, DC 40 Society to convince the audience member to take off the jewelry and hide it for the rest of the show, or DC 36 Thievery to quickly remove the malfunctioning jewelry without making a scene

An audience member in the lower seating area wears enchanted jewelry intended to enhance her glamour, but

it starts flashing light as it malfunctions and interacts with some of the magical effects created during the opera, causing them to misfire. Get rid of the faulty jewelry or work around it!

Penalty A magical effect backfires dramatically. While the audience interprets the flashing lights as intentional and is impressed, one PC determined randomly is struck by an invisible blast of magical energy and takes 15d8 mental damage (DC 40 basic Will save).

VILLAIN'S ARIA

OBSTACLE 18

Opera Points 2; **Overcome** DC 36 Art Lore to work with the conductor to time an upswell of music to signal the start of the final scene, DC 40 Deception to distract the audience from going on too long, or DC 38 Performance to help encourage Oriole to take a final bow before they exit the stage so the next scene can begin

Oriole takes the stage and performs so brilliantly that they receive a standing ovation. It goes on for a minute, then two, then five... How long is this going to go on for?

Penalty The clapping persists for a record of 25 minutes, enough for the PCs to take a 10-minute activity, but throwing off the performers' momentum enough that all DCs in the final obstacle to follow are increased by 5 each.

CLIMAX

OBSTACLE 18

Opera Points 3; **Overcome** DC 38 Acrobatics to navigate the quaking surroundings to reach places where you're needed to help with safety measures, DC 40 Athletics to get up into the rigging above to help support the catwalk and keep it from collapsing, or DC 36 Nature to realize that this tremor is potentially an earthquake and leap into action a precious few dozen seconds early

An unexpected spectacle manifests in the background during the opera's climax when the otherwise static backdrop animates, showing an image of an armored man being violently cut in half by an enormous red praying mantis that rises up behind him. The unplanned "special effect" somehow works seamlessly into the scene, such that the audience takes it as part of the show and even the cast and crew assume it to be an unplanned surprise placed in the show by the PCs and their magic. At the same time, as the armored figure is slain, what feels like a tremor ripples through the ground, causing the catwalk above the stage to creak and sway ominously.

Penalty Part of the catwalk collapses near the back of the stage, creating an incredibly dramatic sound and plume of dust; while the audience continues to think the tremor and this collapse are all part of the climactic scene for the moment, one PC chosen randomly is struck by falling debris and takes 15d8 bludgeoning damage (DC 40 basic Reflex save).

GODSRAIN

The tremor that interrupts the opera's climax recedes quickly. As cast and crew joke about how the performance was so amazing that the world itself applauded, they encourage the PCs to come out to take a bow. As the PCs come onstage, the audience goes wild and a standing ovation begins—only for everyone to realize that the tremor was the start of something unprecedented across all of reality.

Gorum, the god of war, has been slain, and fragments of his body are now raining down upon all worlds where he's worshipped!

THE DEATH OF GORUM

Gorum's death creates an event that spans multiple worlds across multiple planes. In the era to follow, this cataclysmic event becomes known as Godsrain, but during the calamity, people know only that strange rain falls from the skies, along with meteor-like fragments of metal that slice down from the heavens to scar the lands below. Some of this strange rain is silver—rain infused with Gorum's divinity that can potentially result in the manifestation of mythic power. Elsewhere, as in Vyre and Kintargo, red rain falls. Regions struck by red rain grow more unstable and violent as themes of war and conflict infect them. And those fragments of metal are tiny portions of Gorum's armored body and weaponry that have been scattered across reality. Where these fragments land, they wreak devastation and turn into divine relics that, in the years and decades to follow, become sought-after resources to forge into mighty artifacts or use as fuel for mythic spells. Those who have a view of the skies in affected regions behold a brief but all-encompassing vision of Gorum looming beyond the horizon, only to be struck down from behind by the scything claw of the assassin god Achaekek.

For the PCs, cast, crew, and audience members in this adventure, this particular spectacle manifests instead as an unexpected backdrop to the opera's climax—mere moments before a spear-shaped fragment of Gorum punches its way through the roof of the Kintargo Opera House to strike the stage just as the PCs take their bow!

IMPLICATIONS

Gorum's death is cataclysmic. Certain characters (particularly clerics of Gorum) are affected in very real and very immediate ways by this event. Any PC who receives power from Gorum immediately knows that

their god has died, and while the exact emotions this event sparks vary wildly, all worshippers of Gorum in particular feel a particularly strange combination of almost overwhelming relief and a pressing need to "finish up what needs finishing up."

In time, worshippers of Gorum will find their own transition to other faiths as makes sense for each individual, just as those who worshipped Aroden nearly 100 years ago found their way to other faiths like Iomedae, Milani, and others, but for any PC worshippers of Gorum, their connection to the god doesn't immediately end with his death. As a side effect of their own faith's strength and the fact that an actual shard of their god's body just crashed down next to them, clerics and other characters who draw power from Gorum become infused with raw divine power from their god. This power effectively serves as a sort of "battery" for divine power, allowing those PCs to continue to receive spells and power from Gorum as they did while the god still lived. This persists through the remainder of this adventure, even as the PC can feel their connection to Gorum's power slowly fading. A cleric of Gorum will need to change to a different religion if they wish to retain their supernatural power, or they can continue worshipping Gorum in their own way (a GM might wish to consider allowing a player of such a character to rebuild their cleric of Gorum as an oracle, or as a divine sorcerer or witch).

THE SKY IS FALLING

As the PCs take their bow, make sure to note where each character is on the stage, because a moment later, a tremendous explosion rocks the Kintargo Opera House as a shard of metal smashes through the roof above to punch a hole into the stage below, smashing a twenty-foot-diameter hole just between the two largest trapdoors in area **K9**. As Norgorber predicted, this particular fragment (as with several others, along with the silver and red rain that sweeps across Ravounel) are drawn to the region in part by the presence of the *soul anchor* deep below Kintargo (and in fact, the anchor's shaking caused by this event is the source of the tremor that strikes Kintargo in the moments before Godsrain)—but in the case of the fragment that nearly struck the PCs, there's an additional effect. The warped soul of their Nemesis has been pulled out of its afterlife against its will by the PCs' growing fame and lingering needs for vengeance. Unlike the brainchild version of Nemesis they faced in the first Curtain Call adventure, the thing they're about to face onstage in the Kintargo Opera House actually rises from the defeated foe's fragmented soul.

Bring the House Down

Chapter 1:
Hell MonthChapter 2:
Shards of WarChapter 3:
Evening Eternal

A History of Secrets

Adventure Toolbox

BLAST DAMAGE

When the fragment of Gorum's armor crashes through the Kintargo Opera House roof and through the stage to lodge itself (ironically) in the house's underworld (area **K20**), most of the occupants of the building aren't in the blast radius—but the PCs are. All PCs on stage take 5d6 bludgeoning damage and 4d6 spirit damage (DC 38 basic Reflex save) from falling debris and the blast of divine power in the fragment's wake; characters who critically fail the save are pushed 10 feet toward the orchestra pit and knocked prone—a PC pushed over the stage edge can Grab the Edge with a DC 30 Reflex save; otherwise, they fall 10 feet into area **K6** below.

EVENT A1. ENCORE

MODERATE 18

A few moments after the shard of Gorum interrupts the PCs' bow and blasts them with damage—enough time for the PCs to get back up to their feet and glance around but not enough to take any significant actions—a roar of rage emerges from the fresh gaping hole in the stage as a ghostly figure rises up from below. This entity is the Risen Nemesis—the very soul of their old foe wrenched backward along the River of Souls in the wake of Gorum's shard, drawn back to unlife by their lingering hatred of the PCs.

The hole in the stage is filled with dust and smoke that obscures vision into the underworld—strive to prevent the PCs from exploring further below until this current event resolves, for as soon as they approach what lies below, **Event A2: Do Not Follow** triggers.

In the meantime, the cast, crew, and audience watch agog and motionless, in part enthralled by what they believe is a cleverly staged encore, but also as a result of being overwhelmed by the blast of divine energy just unleashed into the building.

Creature: The Risen Nemesis is a rare form of undead known as a palinthanos, a soul forced back into the Universe by a calamitous event that causes the River of Souls to, if only for a moment, flow backward. The appearance of the Risen Nemesis varies and should be instantly identifiable as the foe the PCs defeated in their previous adventure before starting *Curtain Call*, but the Risen Nemesis appears ghostly and wreathed in flames that burn backward in time. When the Risen Nemesis confronts the PCs, they do so in a rage-filled voice, yet their words come out reversed, for just as their genesis rises from a reversal of the flow of death, their minds operate backward in time while simultaneously and paradoxically moving forward in time. Their words, “!elbissop eb t'nac sihT ?niaga uoy ot llaf I nac woH

OTHER RESOURCES

Godsrain and its aftermath will continue to periodically feature in Paizo publications from this point forward, most notably in *Pathfinder War of Immortals*, the standalone Pathfinder adventure *Prey for Death*, and the novel *Godsrain*. The immediate effects of how this event affects the Curtain Call Adventure Path are all contextualized in the following pages, but if you're interested in expanding things beyond the details provided—particularly if you want to give your players the option near the end of their characters' careers to become mythic—*Pathfinder War of Immortals* is what you should refer to first.

?woH” can be deciphered by any PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check: “How? How can I fall to you again? This can't be possible!”

As panic sets in through the audience, the crowd surges in a desperate attempt to flee, and so do the cast and crew backstage. For the moment, focus on the fight between the PCs and their Risen Nemesis. When the combat begins, piles of rubble left in the wake of the shard of Gorum crashing through the roof and stage make for difficult terrain in all of the squares marked with an “X”; the dotted red circles in areas **K9** and **K20** show the location of the hole in the stage.

The Risen Nemesis attacks at once. Their cries of frustration at being defeated shift toward confident boasts of the PCs' imminent demise as the fight goes on. When the PCs defeat them, the Nemesis issues a challenge: “!noivilbo ot emocleW !llaf ot seno eht eb llahs uoy woN !nruter I” (With a successful DC 30 Perception check, a PC interprets this as: “I return! Now you shall be the ones to fall! Welcome to oblivion!”)

Collateral Damage: On the second round of combat, the massive new chandelier (its position indicated by a blue dotted circle) installed over the seating areas (areas **K5** and **K12**) and orchestra pit (area **K6**), shudders slightly. Allow all PCs who have line of sight to the chandelier to attempt a DC 38 Perception check to notice—a PC can then take an action with the linguistic trait to shout at the crowd and get them to move out from under the hazard with a successful DC 30 Diplomacy or Intimidation check. When the third round starts, the chandelier falls and creates a tremendous explosion of crystal, glass, metal, and wood. Any character within or adjacent to the dotted blue circle takes 8d6 piercing and 8d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 35 basic Reflex save), and is immobilized by rubble on a critical failure (DC 35

to Escape). If no PC successfully warned the crowd to move out of the way, the collapse costs the lives of 2d4 people.

RISEN NEMESIS

Page 92

Initiative Perception +35

Treasure: As the Risen Nemesis is defeated, its incorporeal body twists and shrinks down on itself, compressing to a point of light that then drops to the ground. The PCs have once and for all defeated their legendary foe, and all that remains of their Nemesis's passing is now theirs to claim: two crystalline *runestones*, each bearing a *major striking weapon rune*. Unlike most *runestones*, this weapon quality can be applied to a weapon as a single Interact action, after which the *major striking rune* functions normally (and can be transferred to another runestone or weapon using the normal, lengthier procedure).

CREATURE 20



Warshard

EVENT A2. DO NOT FOLLOW MODERATE 18

The shard of Gorum that wreaked so much havoc lies embedded in the stage underworld (area **K20**), looking like a blade of crimson metal that steams and sizzles with internal heat while giving off the stink of boiling blood. The power exuded from this warshard is unmistakable, and an instant after the battle in **Event A1: Encore** concludes, a shimmering red light shines up out of the hole in the stage floor. The cast, crew, and audience remain engrossed by what's playing out on the stage as a shadowy figure floats down from the darkness above to loom over the stage, hovering over the hole below. This figure addresses the PCs in what sounds like four separate voices speaking at once in almost (but not quite) perfect synchronicity.

"Do pardon my intrusion upon your performance, mortals. My sympathies that your night has not gone as planned."

A moment later, the shadows retreat, and the figure reveals itself to be a hooded robe and pair of gloves that appear to be worn by an invisible humanoid. Deep within the inky darkness within the hood flickers a single point of light where a left eye would be. Spiders scuttle and clamber over the robes, and an aura of absolute menace washes out from the figure, holding the PCs in place. This is Norgorber, manifesting within the world in a rare show of audacity for a deity.

Norgorber reaches out a glove toward the pit, causing the shard of Gorum to rise up from the red-lit hole to float toward his hand. He plucks the shard from the air, and indeed the screams of thousands of souls cry out in agony. Each PC can do nothing but watch as Norgorber claims the shard of Gorum.

Norgorber then speaks for a second time, his voice cutting through the screaming souls.

"This is mine now. Do not follow. This is not for you, little mortals."

Creatures: With these words, Norgorber vanishes, along with the warshard. The screaming stops, and sections of stage collapse under the feet of all PCs who are standing on the stage. Each of these PCs can leap aside with a successful DC 30 Acrobatics check; on a failure, they fall 15 feet into the underworld below. At the same time, agents of Norgorber manifest in the area to attack. In the underworld, a pair of astradaemons appear and immediately attack any PCs who fell—if no PCs fell, they emerge up from the larger hole created by the fallen warshard. Onstage, two humanoid figures who look similar to Father Skinsaw appear: both these entities are masks of Father Skinsaw. All four of these fiendish monsters attack the PCs at once—and as before, the cast, crew, and audience do nothing but watch, amazed, as the fight plays out.

ASTRADAEMONS (2)

CREATURE 16

Pathfinder Monster Core 75

Initiative Perception +28

MASKS OF NORGORBER (2)

CREATURE 16

Father Skinsaw aspect (page 84)

Initiative Perception +32

EVENT A3. CHAOS IN THE AISLES

After the PCs defeat the astradaemons and masks of Norgorber, everything falls silent. Then the sound of rain falling on the roof above fills the air. The rain that cascades through the jagged breach in the Kintargo Opera House roof is red, as if blood were falling from the sky, and as these red drops strike the ground, they sizzle and vanish, leaving no trace of their passage.

This red rain is a direct result of Gorum's aspect as a god of war, and it spreads seeds of conflict throughout Ravounel—and indeed to many other places throughout the world. The red rain, mixing with the aftereffects of Norgorber's manifestation of Father

Skinsaw in the building, quickly spreads through the opera house. Chaos erupts as the audience, cast, and crew are overwhelmed by the red rain's wrath. Instead of breaking out into wild applause, the audience breaks out into something entirely inappropriate, as determined by the genre of opera the PCs helped to create.

Comedic Opera: The irreverent nature of the opera is infused with Gorum's association with strength, and the audience members are suddenly overwhelmed with the urge to pursue outlandish feats of strength at each other's expense. One person might attempt to rip a seat loose or heft an occupied chair over their head. Another might attempt to lift their neighbor and hurl them across the hall. A third might try to clamber up the walls or rip apart a wall, while still more lunge at each other in impromptu wrestling matches. It won't be long before the injuries and deaths begin.

Dramatic Opera: The intensity of the opera's dramatic notes become infused with Gorum's association with weapons, and the audience members break into groups and furiously work to gather what weapons they can from the environment: mostly impromptu clubs fashioned from chair arms and legs, but also prop weapons, kitchen utensils, musical instruments from the orchestra pit, or ropes used as garrotes, lassos, or tied to heavy objects as impromptu flails. It's only a matter of time before people seek to test their new weapons out on one another.

Spectacular Opera: The bombastic spectacle of the opera becomes infused with Gorum's association with war. The audience splits into four different factions—one associated with the seats nearest the stage, one with the furthest section, one with the balcony, and one made up of the cast and crew and various servants. These four factions quickly disperse throughout the main hall, claiming territory and increasingly shouting threats to the others. It won't be long before the four factions go to bloody war.

STOPPING THE CHAOS

It falls to the PCs to stop this chaos, for they alone are unaffected by these strange urges. The mayhem has swept up even important NPCs like Fallenta. If the PCs don't take action to take control of the scene, the Kintargo Opera House will become a charnel house.

To defuse the crowd from feats of strength, testing of improvised weapons, or burgeoning war games, the PCs must accrue Victory Points by pursuing the Stop the Chaos activity below. These attempts to Stop the Chaos play out during 1-minute rounds, but the PCs have only 2 minutes (and thus a total of eight

THE WARSHARD CRATER

The warshard that punched through the roof of the Kintargo Opera House and the stage left a crater in the underworld below, a divot in the floor that looks almost as if the worked stone melted into a bowl with ripples of stone splashing upward, only to resolidify instantly in mid-splash. The divot looks unusual, and anyone who touches it or sits within it feels a sudden strange mix of anger and fear. At this time, these sensations cause anyone who makes contact with the 10-foot-diameter crater to become stupefied 1 with an unlimited duration unless they succeed at a DC 38 Will save (this effect has the mental trait). Every day that passes, this save DC is reduced by 2, so that 20 days later, the divot finally becomes harmless.

chances to earn Victory Points) before time runs out, at which point you should compare their total accumulated Victory Points to the results listed at the end of this event.

STOP THE CHAOS

EXPLORATION

A PC acts quickly to quell the chaos that has engulfed those within the opera house and prevent those within from doing each other harm. Regardless of the number of PCs in the group, each minute, four of the following six options can be attempted to earn Victory Points. None of these options can be attempted more than once per minute.

Crowd Control: A PC can move quickly and efficiently through the crowd to target flash points and deftly neutralize key troublemakers by attempting a DC 43 Acrobatics check. The activity gains the move trait.

Entertainment: A PC can attempt to entertain the people and pull them away from the chaos that threatens to engulf them by attempting a DC 36 Performance check. The activity gains the concentrate trait and the auditory and/or visual traits.

Physical Restraints: A PC can try to physically restrain people by tying them up, forcing them apart, disarming them, or simply impressing them with a distracting feat of strength by attempting a DC 33 Athletics check. The activity gains the manipulate trait.

Spoken Appeals: A PC can attempt to distract, convince, or frighten the divinely influenced crowd out of their mayhem through words alone by attempting a DC 40 Deception, Diplomacy, or Intimidation check. The activity gains the auditory, concentrate, linguistic, and mental traits.

WHERE IS DUVALL?

As the PCs explore the opera house and recover from these events, they eventually realize that Duvall is missing. If the PCs grow concerned, Fallenta tells them that she'll take care of tracking him down—they have more important issues to attend to, after all!

When Godsrain struck, it shocked and surprised Shelyn. She felt the sudden and apocalyptic death of Gorum, and fear for her own divine realm of Blossomheart in Nirvana overwhelmed her. Trusting the PCs to be able to handle the situation here, she abandons her role as Duvall to immediately return home to ensure her realm's safety and learn more about what could've caused this disaster. No one in the opera house sees Duvall leave, and no one seems to have any idea of where he went. This mystery must remain unsolved for now, but later in the adventure, the PCs learn the truth.



Mask of Father Skinsaw

Theatrical Training: The PCs relies upon their own theater training to handle an unruly crowd by attempting a DC 38 Theater Lore or DC 40 Society check. The activity gains the manipulate and move traits.

Use Magic: A PC can cast spells or use magic items to help solve the situation. The player must describe to you how they wish to use their spell to stop the chaos, and if you deem it appropriate, the PC then attempts a DC 38 Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion check (based on the tradition of magic they're drawing upon) to earn Victory Points. Spell effects that cause actual damage or physical destruction never help. If a PC casts appropriate spells (or multiple different spells) more than once during the minute, reduce the DC of this check by 1 per additional spell, to a maximum reduction down to DC 33. The activity gains all the traits of the spell or spells used.

RESULTS

After 2 minutes and eight opportunities to Stop the Chaos, total the number of Victory Points the party accumulated and compare that result to the following.

3 or fewer Victory Points: The PCs utterly fail to stem the chaos, and the crowd erupts into self-destructive feats of strength, weapon demonstrations, or mock warfare. The chaos wanes quickly, and the crowd comes back to their senses with no memories of how they were acting, but many are wounded, and 3d6 people have lost their lives. The PCs lose an Opera Point for each life lost.

4–6 Victory Points: The PCs minimize the chaos, but the minute that follows is a tense standoff in which several people act out and get hurt. No one loses their lives, but memories of the opera are forever tainted. The PCs lose 3 Opera Points but gain 30 XP.

7 or more Victory Points: The PCs manage to negate the chaos, and the crowd snaps out of it with no memory of what they nearly did. Momentarily confused, they drop any improvised weapons or objects, then break into a strange mix of cheers and worried cries for help. No one loses their life, the PCs lose no Opera Points, and they each gain 60 XP.

CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER

Once the PCs stop the chaos in **Event A3: Chaos in the Aisles**, the rain ends, and the audience members eagerly flee, but with each step they take from the opera house, their topics of discussion turn increasingly to the spectacle they just witnessed. While elsewhere in Kintargo, the aftermath of Godsrain leaves citizens

frightened, angry, or worse, to those who happened to be at the big show, this event will be remembered as nothing more than an outstanding and memorable night out.

As you end this chapter, take the time to congratulate the players on pulling off their opera. This production has been a significant goal they've been working toward, and even though their producers' bow was interrupted by events beyond anyone's control, they should receive a chance to celebrate their success.

While the PCs' duties swiftly shift from Kintargo to Vyre and thence to the Great Beyond as the final two chapters of this campaign play out, their production continues to play in the Kintargo Opera House in the days, weeks, and months to come. It might even become one of Kintargo's proudest and most therapeutic pursuits—embracing an amazing new opera is an excellent way to escape the strange new reality that the post-Godsrain world presents. Entertainment often flourishes in times of trouble, and this upcoming period proves no exception.

At this time, use the total number of Opera Points and Production Points the PCs have accumulated to determine the overall success of their opera. Present the information to them as a sort of “preview” of how their legacy and this opera exist in the future.

OPERA SUCCESS

The total Opera Points the PCs have accumulated determines the success of their opera, but their Production Points can bolster this success.

If the PCs have accumulated at least 20 Production Points, the success of the opera increases by one tier above where their Opera Points place it. If the PCs accumulated more than 45 Production Points, the opera's final success is two tiers higher.

TIER 1—SPECTACULAR FAILURE

Opera Points 6 or fewer

The opera receives scathing reviews, and all performances are canceled after 2 weeks. Oriole goes back into retirement, Fallenta moves on to restore her reputation in some distant location, and the other cast and crew fade into obscurity—they never work in the industry again.

Rewards None

XP Award 10 XP

TIER 2—FLAWED PERFORMANCE

Opera Points 7–11

The opera fails to meet expectations, but a local brewery gifts the PCs for trying their best. The opera performs for a month before being shelved. Oriole goes back into

retirement, and Fallenta turns her attention to smaller, more personal projects going forward.

Rewards Each PC receives a gift of a *triple Cayden's brew* (*Pathfinder Treasure Vault* 88) with snarky notes attached that read, “You tried YOUR best, now try OUR best!”

XP Award 20 XP

TIER 3—EXPERT ENTERTAINMENT

Opera Points 12–20

The opera receives modest attention, and it plays for 3 months. The production breaks even with a bit of profit. Oriole heads to Absalom to pursue some passion projects, while Fallenta gets to work on a different opera in the same genre as this one but featuring an entirely fictional story.

Rewards The opera's success grants the party a payment of 25,000 gp at the end of the month, just in time for things to get underway for Chapter 2. At the GM's discretion, additional residuals might come the PCs' way later, but such payments should come after this Adventure Path's conclusion.

XP Award 40 XP

TIER 4—MASTERFUL PRODUCTION

Opera Points 21–30

The opera receives high praise. Kintargo books the opera for an entire year and pays a handsome advance, and showings in other cities throughout the Inner Sea region are sure to follow. Oriole continues to play the *Nemesis* in Kintargo, and Fallenta continues to direct the opera.

Rewards As Tier 3 above, but the payment increases to 35,000 gp. In addition, the delighted sponsors see to it that each PC receives a powerful magical gift—a theatrically-themed apex item, chosen from the new items presented on pages 81–82.

XP Award 80 XP

TIER 5—LEGENDARY ACHIEVEMENT

Opera Points 31 or more

The opera receives rave reviews and becomes the most sought-after opera in Avistan. Kintargo books the opera with no set end date. The PCs are offered the chance to become the new owners of the Kintargo Opera House in exchange for giving Kintargo exclusive performance rights for 10 years. If they agree, the opera becomes a staple tourist attraction for the city. Oriole and Fallenta remain in Kintargo for a while, but they eventually take the show on the road to other cities in the Inner Sea region and beyond.

Rewards As Tier 4 above, but the payment increases to 50,000 gp, and in addition to the apex items from Tier 4, each PC is also gifted two true elixirs of life from the grateful and now quite rich sponsors.

XP Award 120 XP



Chapter 2: Shards of War

"Where were you when it happened?"

"Where were you when Godsrain brought floods of red and silver rain and hurtling fragments of a god's body down from the skies, shaking existence?"

"Where were you when Gorum died?"

Following Godsrain, these questions and more spread like wildfire, and Norgorber can't be more pleased, for Godsrain gives him the perfect distraction. In the days leading up to Godsrain, he created four manifestations—avatars embodying his aspects—and sent them down to Vyre to help prepare the way for his plans. Each manifestation had time to claim hidden lairs of their own in the city's shadows and to prepare to serve as their father demanded. These manifestations kept their presence even from the

faithful—or so they thought, for Vyre's most powerful cleric of Norgorber, Warden Delaraius Solzakarr, swiftly realized something was afoot.

After Norgorber stole the warshard from within the Kintargo Opera House, he broke fragments off of it and entrusted his four manifestations each with a portion of the whole, giving them instructions to explore their fragment for ways in which Gorum's remains could be weaponized. What he doesn't share with them is that this task to weaponize the shards is a smokescreen—in truth, Norgorber knows that the manifestations' time spent handling the warshard fragments will prepare them for his true plan for them: to use them as fuel for his own ascension from a single god to a pantheon of evil deities.

AFTER GODSRAIN

When the PCs emerge from the Kintargo Opera House, they step into a Kintargo that may look the same. The eerie red rain left no puddles or stains of blood on the city, passing by without leaving a physical mark, yet tempers among those in the city seem quicker to rise, and musings on what the death of the god of war might portend are on everyone's lips.

But the biggest local story is the fallen warshard that pierced the roof of the Kintargo Opera House during the opera's premiere. Word soon arrives from other nations that similar shards have struck throughout the world, and the mysterious fragments are believed to be shards of Gorum himself.

Give the PCs time to rest and recover—allow them as long as makes sense for your table to take time to decompress and process all of what's happened. Norgorber's plans won't be realized anytime soon, so the PCs should be given ample time to shop, recover, pursue downtime activities, and wrap up roleplaying opportunities with cast, crew, sponsors, and other NPCs who have grown important to them during the long production process.

AN UNEXPECTED INVITATION

After Norgorber steals the warshard, he disperses fragments to his manifestations before returning to his divine domain Duskfathom to focus on his plot to become a pantheon of evil deities—a plot he decides to keep secret from everyone, including his own worshippers, yet some of them see hints of his plans.

One such worshipper is Delaraius Solzakarr. Already struggling with his faith, Godsrain pushes Delaraius's frustration far enough that he sees the PCs as his best chance to set things right. He intends to manipulate the PCs into restoring the status quo in Vyre while preparing a personal grab for greater power. He begins spying on the PCs soon after Godsrain, using his *peridot crystal ball* to snoop on them.

When you're ready to begin this chapter, Delaraius uses his *peridot crystal ball* to communicate with one of the PCs while he's scribing on them, using the item's telepathy power to do so. If a PC realizes they're being scribed and reacts visibly, Delaraius might even use that as an "icebreaker" to speak to them telepathically. When he contacts the PC, he's quick and to the point, eschewing his normal instinct for secrecy in favor of trying to earn the PC's trust. He introduces himself by name, admitting he's both the warden of Dunrock and the King of Keys in Vyre, and that he and the PCs share a concern regarding Norgorber's theft of

the warshard. He invites the PCs to travel to Vyre to meet with him, suggesting that they meet at Graymire Textiles, "the site of your latest triumph here in Vyre," promising to give them "invaluable assistance." He expects suspicion, of course, and readily agrees to meet elsewhere, even outside of Vyre in Kintargo or somewhere else if the PCs suggest it, and he expects that'll help set them at ease. He could even conduct his business entirely via telepathy with one PC he's scribing, but prefers to meet face to face so he can speak to the entire party. See Meeting the High Priest on page 28 for more details.

ONE MORE TRIP TO VYRE

Vyre and Kintargo are 70 miles apart, with trade and passenger ships alike departing for either port daily. A typical journey between the two cities costs a mere 8 sp and generally takes about 18 hours to complete; ships typically depart late afternoon, sail through the night, and arrive at their destination the next morning. Of course, for high-level PCs who have visited Vyre before, teleportation is perhaps a better way to travel.

VYRE

SETTLEMENT 16

CITY

Hedonistic settlement of secrets, vice, and hidden agendas
Government Council (five self-selected monarchs)

Population 17,300 (76% humans, 8% halflings, 4% hellspawn nephilim, 3% aiuvarins, 3% dromaars, 2% gnomes, 2% elves, 1% dwarves, 1% other)

Languages Common, Diabolic, Elven, Halfling, Shadowtongue

Religions Norgorber

Threats corrupt officials, criminals and thieves, gang violence, monsters in the sewers

Troubled Times During this chapter, Vyre is in a troubled state (see **Event B1** on page 32); as a result, many of the city's shops and merchants aren't open for business. As a result, items of level 12 or higher are simply unavailable for purchase. The PCs might be able to bypass this limitation if they have a special arrangement with Manticce Kaleeki (see page 31).

Delaraius Solzakarr (scheming male human priest of Norgorber 20) King of Keys, Warden of Dunrock, and high priest of Norgorber

Manticce Kaleekii (hedonistic female hellspawn nephilim witch 19) Queen of Delights, Overseer of Opal Market

Mera Bantikere (irreverent female halfling swashbuckler 16) Queen of Blades, owner of the Final Throw

Pirreta (manipulative female lunar naga sorcerer 18; deceased) Queen of Blood, Madam of the Heavenly House

Simandu (secretive female jorogumo rogue 19) Queen of Whispers, Mistress of Dunrock Dungeon

VYRE

As a 16th-level settlement, common 16th-level or lower items are readily available from the city's many shops. Higher-level or less common wares can be purchased at times, but many such items must be imported or sought out (and thus subject to the GM's discretion as needed).

MEETING THE HIGH PRIEST

Regardless of where the meeting takes place, Delaraius attends alone. If the location is in public, he disguises himself until the PCs agree to retire to somewhere more private, but once the conversation begins, he makes only the simplest attempt to hide his identity as warden of Dunrock Prison, Vyre's King of Keys, and the regional high priest of Norgorber. A PC can recognize him on sight with a DC 20 Vyre Lore or DC 25 Society check, but he won't confirm the observation, simply waving a hand and saying "Who I am is not as important as how I can help you." He takes the time to congratulate them on their opera, then cuts to the chase.

"We now live in strange times. A god has died, and another, my own Norgorber, capitalizes upon this death in ways unpredicted and unknowable to we who worship. Manifestations of his aspects have surreptitiously infiltrated my city and work in secret on a task I fear might bode ill for Vyre, if not all of Ravounel and beyond. And so you see, I am a man torn between loyalty to my faith and loyalty to my home. My suspicion is that, somehow, the four manifestations plot against my god, somehow set free on their own accord by the devastation wreaked upon reality by Gorum's death. While the manifestations appear to be working for themselves and not Norgorber, I cannot be sure. It is not my place to directly question the will of my god. You are not so hampered, though, are you? And your goals in Kintargo aren't so different from mine here in Vyre, yes? Safety and security for our homes? We both want these manifestations to leave us alone."

Delaraius walks a dangerous line, very close to blasphemy, but for the moment he remains in Norgorber's grace. He believes this is because the manifestations have gone rogue, but also arrogantly believes he can keep his true plans secret from his god. The truth is much more humiliating: Norgorber sees Delaraius simply as being inconsequential to his plans and allows him to continue to serve even as he flirts with an alliance with the PCs.

So the high priest treads carefully. Not denying a PC who claims to recognize his true identity isn't the same as confirming it (and thus does not *quite* break his clerical edict to keep his true identity secret), while the other edicts of worshipping Norgorber (sacrifice anyone necessary, take every advantage in a fight, and work from the shadows) are upheld well by his acts. Trickier to avoid is breaking any anathemas. His actual goal—an attempt to enthrone Father Skinsaw as the only aspect of Norgorber—is something he absolutely keeps secret from the PCs. Likewise, he won't share secrets freely. He agrees to answer some questions, but any beyond those brief answers below he waves off as being "unimportant" and a waste of time.

A few questions the PCs might have that he is willing to answer are listed below.

Why are you being so forthright with us? "The god of war is dead, and all who worship should be wary. These are strange times, and strange times call for strange allies."

What happened to the shard of Gorum that Norgorber took? "I believe he broke it into four fragments and delivered one each to the manifestations here in Vyre, but what came of those fragments I can't say—this is yet another secret kept from me."

Where should we begin? "Start with the manifestation of Blackfingers, for the location of his lair is the only one I have suspicions of. He can be found in a place where failures, disappointments, and madness meet. The others dwell in lairs unknown to me." Delaraius offers this information without being prompted if the PCs don't ask, but his religion forbids him from freely sharing a secret such as the location of this lair. If the PCs use this clue, it lowers the DCs for locating Blackfingers' lair by 4. Alternatively, the PCs can press Delaraius for more information by Lying (DC 46 Deception), Requesting (DC 41 Diplomacy), or Coercing (DC 48 Intimidation). On a success, he sighs and gives the PCs the precise location of the lair, deftly avoiding breaking his anathema to share a secret freely.

What else can you tell us? If the PCs want to learn more from Delaraius, see Research on page 29.

Angering Delaraius: If the PCs anger Delaraius or attack him, he grows frustrated but doesn't fight back quite yet—instead, he seeks to escape, potentially even using *gate* to travel to Duskfathom to throw off pursuit. He avoids doing lasting harm to the PCs, hoping that even if he abandons them, they'll still act according to their nature as heroes and take steps to seek out and defeat the manifestations on their own—but when he meets the PCs again, he won't be well disposed toward them at all.

DELARAIUS SOLZAKARR

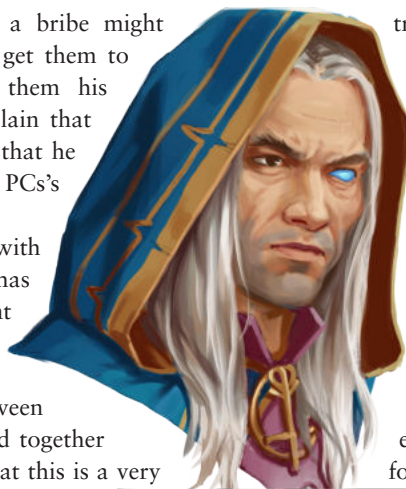
CREATURE 20

Page 90

Initiative Perception +36

Treasure: If he feels that a bribe might help settle the PCs' fears or get them to cooperate, Delaraius offers them his *wand of massacre*, making plain that this is a loan, not a gift, and that he expects its return once the PCs's work in Vyre is done.

Once the PCs are done with their questions, Delaraius has one final and very important resource to share with them. He places before them a thick sheaf of pages held between two thin slats of wood bound together in twine, then tells the PCs that this is a very rare copy of an ancient operetta called *A History of Secrets*, a work many



Delaraius Solzakarr

thought was apocryphal at best. This rare, unproduced operetta, Delaraius explains, tells the history of Vyre's early years, and he encourages the PCs to spend some time studying and researching it, for there are surely clues in there that can help them sort out the hidden places in Vyre. He hasn't read the text herself, but knows that clues about Norgorber's true nature are hidden within—and that this is why the text is so incredibly rare, as one would expect of a book the god of secrets might seek to suppress! By giving this valuable resource, a heretical text in his faith, to the PCs, he hopes to give them the resources they need to learn more about what Norgorber might be up to so that he can learn from them later, all as a way to skirt his own edicts and anathemas.

The text consists of several dozen hand-written and unbound pages, and is detailed fully in "A History of Secrets" beginning on page 75. *A History of Secrets* is one of the greatest research tools the PCs gain during this chapter, but this alone can't reveal enough to trigger the beginning of Chapter 3.

Before he lets the PCs go to begin their research and search, Delaraius cautions them about the nature of the secrets they'll start to discover.

"My god is the god of secrets, and will not sit idly by if his own secrets are spread far and wide. I suspect that as long as you keep what you discover to yourselves and, I suppose, to powerful agents of my faith, you'll be fine, but the more you spread around and make public what you discover, the more likely it is that Norgorber will become angry and be forced to act."

Research: Delaraius himself holds some secrets and information about Norgorber the PCs can use to learn more, but he won't give this information up easily.

The PCs can pry information out of him through trickery, smooth-talking, or threats—see "A History of Secrets" on page 75 for how the PCs can research the topic of Norgorber in this way.

Reward: If the PCs meet with Delaraius and learn the clue about Blackfingers' lair, grant them 40 XP. If they convince him to reveal the location, increase this award to 80 XP.

TROUBLE IN VYRE

Norgorber intends to use divine power extracted from Gorum's body (in the form of the stolen warshard) to empower a transformation he regards as his destined next step in his divine evolution. He's already gone from man to god, and now he plans to go from god to pantheon. If he succeeds, he knows those who worship him in his current aspects will continue to do so, and plans on claiming many of Gorum's disenfranchised worshippers by presenting a new and more warlike fifth aspect of his faith associated with themes of sabotage, war profiteering, and propaganda—an aspect that (unlike the other four) more closely resembles the role he actually played in life before he became a god.

This is a step Norgorber has secretly been working toward for thousands of years, but one he has long feared to take, since doing so would require revealing more of his actual history as a mortal and would risk, he believes, undoing the very strengths he relied upon to pass the test of the *Starstone* so long ago: skills at alchemy, political manipulation, thievery, and murder. With a shard of another god's body, Norgorber believes he can use it as a reservoir of divine power to safely bring this fifth, secret aspect based on his real self into existence—a final step toward splitting his identity apart to become a pantheon of like-minded deities, essentially going from a single god of thieves to an entire guild of divine thieves.

In order to prepare his four manifestations for this transition from aspects to gods, he sent them to Vyre and gave them free will. He then provided each manifestation with a fragment taken from his stolen warshard and gave them instructions to find a way to weaponize the shard so that it could be used in the mortal world—a process, he explained, that could only be performed and completed while on that mortal



VYRE LOCATIONS

world. That the manifestations use their divine-given free will to suspect their creator's intentions and to pursue their own nefarious goals is irrelevant to Norgorber; he only requires them to spend time in the mortal world in close proximity to the warshard fragments so that when the time comes for them to ascend, they will survive. Could Norgorber have fully disclosed his plans to them? Perhaps, but as a god of secrets who exists only on the strength of those hidden truths, such is simply not in Norgorber's nature.

Even as he toils in secrecy, though, some have grown to suspect the truth. He's accounted for those suppositions among his manifestations, and one of his most powerful clerics, Delaraius, has come to similar conclusions. Unfortunately for Delaraius, the nascent fifth aspect—the embodiment of Norgorber as a young mortal war profiteer who calls himself the Prince of Propaganda—is ahead of him. Sending subtle dream-borne messages to the Queen of Whispers, the jorogumo Simandu, the Prince of Propaganda twists a bond into overzealous loyalty. As Delaraius hesitates and seeks to involve outsiders, Simandu (as the Prince of Propaganda's pawn) is already taking steps to ensure events shall spiral beyond Delaraius's control.

THE MANIFESTATIONS

Norgorber's faithful have always regarded him in one of four aspects: as a poisoner, as a murderer, as a greedy thief, or as a manipulator of secrets. This has resulted in something akin to a pantheon of sorts (one that Norgorber hopes to make official with his current plot), with each faction of the faith almost functioning as their own group. Many individual worshippers revere their favored aspect as the "one true Norgorber."

When Norgorber manifested these four, he "grew" them out of creatures or presences already active in Vyre. While these four manifestations obey their creator in seeking their own ways to weaponize the warshard fragments they were given, they all toy with rebellion for their own reasons—reasons that canny PCs might be able to take advantage of.

MANIFESTATION LAIRS

Once the PCs learn about the manifestations from Delaraius, they need to investigate Vyre to track down where their lairs are located. These locations are all

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well-hidden secrets, and the DCs to discover them are quite high—yet still quite within the grasp of characters as powerful as the PCs.

The simplest method for the PCs to discover the location of a manifestation's lair is to use the Investigate exploration activity for eight hours, then attempt a DC 37 Vyre Lore, DC 39 Diplomacy, or DC 41 Society check. If the PCs use magic to aid the search, you can either have them attempt a DC 39 Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion check as appropriate, or you might just rule that the spell automatically reveals the lair's location. A successful check reveals the entrance to the manifestation's lair, while a critical success grants a bit of information about the type of challenges (up to your whim) the PCs will face within. The PCs can also learn the location of a manifestation's lair as a side effect of their research into Vyre and Norgorber (see "A History of Secrets" starting on page 75).

Note that the unrest in the streets of Vyre may make learning of manifestation lairs more difficult (see **Event B1** on page 32).

NORGORBER'S SECRETS

The PCs are poised to uncover one of the greatest secrets in the Universe: Norgorber's mortal identity as a man named Jaxter Gorb. They also learn about four other people who were the inspirations behind Norgorber's four aspects: his father Jax (inspiration for greed), his mother Cleome Gorb (inspiration for secrets), his mentor Thamir (himself now a god and inspiration for poison), and the family nemesis Inaverin Zakarr (inspiration for murder).

The PCs learn these secrets and more as they research the pages of *A History of Secrets*, interact with the four manifestations, and investigate clue-rich locations in their lairs. The article "A History of Secrets" (starting on page 75) contains more information about these secrets and how the PCs can research truth from the clues they'll be uncovering.

RULERS OF VYRE

With Vyre still reacting to the events of Godsrain and its citizens being more affected by the wrathful red rain than those of Kintargo, the situation in the city is complicated (see **Event B1**), causing its five mysterious rulers to react in different ways.

King of Keys Delaraius Solzakarr: Norgorber's high priest and the most powerful Mask of Vyre. He interacts the most with the PCs in this adventure, but when he's not, the majority of his focus remains on Dunrock Isle, which he places on lockdown both to

ensure its prisoners don't take advantage of the chaos but also to protect his flock and employees.

Queen of Blades Mera Bantikere: The PCs met Mera Bantikere in the previous adventure, and they might seek her out. If they do so, they find that the halfling swashbuckler and owner of The Final Throw has closed down the casino and gone into hiding. She intends to wait out this storm and then emerge in the aftermath—whether or not you wish to allow the PCs to contact her is up to you, but she shouldn't be that much help.

Queen of Blood Pirreta: Pirreta is a lunar naga sorcerer who has the most public-facing reaction to recent events and pays for it dearly: when she takes to the streets with several of her bodyguards and mercenaries in an attempt to establish order in and around the Heavenly House in Old Vyre, she is assassinated by a mysterious figure. The fact that the position of Queen of Blood has become vacant won't become the matter of public rumination for some time, and who fills Pirreta's role is beyond the scope of this adventure. Depending on how this adventure plays out, though, her leadership role may not be Vyre's only new vacancy.

Queen of Delights Manticce Kaleekii: The PCs met Manticce Kaleekii earlier in this adventure during the Sponsor's Dinner back in chapter one. When Vyre slips into increasing chaos post-Godsrain, Manticce mobilizes a large network of mercenaries and guards to maintain order and a modicum of safety in Opal Market. If the PCs earned an invitation to visit her home, Cobweb Manor, during the Sponsor's Dinner, they may do so at any time and as often as they wish, but each time they do so they must expend one use of the vial of perfume she gave them (unless they made a significant impression by correctly identifying all of the perfume's notes during the dinner, in which case the PCs don't require any uses of the perfume to visit and may come and go as they please). Manticce Kaleekii's home is a sprawling mansion that sits on a hill overlooking Opal Market, and can serve as a safe place to rest and recover in Vyre. More importantly, with Manticce's aid, each time they visit the PCs can shop Vyre's wares without penalty during these tumultuous times in the city.

Queen of Whispers Simandu: Perhaps the most sinister and cruel of Vyre's rulers, the jorogumo Simandu has fallen under the manipulative and sinister influence of the nascent Prince of Propaganda and is unknowingly serving as another of Norgorber's puppets during this chapter. It's just a matter of time before the PCs cross paths with her—see **Event B2** (page 32).

EVENTS IN VYRE

The following ongoing and specific events in Vyre take place during this chapter.

EVENT B1: ONGOING UNREST

As soon as the PCs arrive in Vyre, they find the city to be unusually rowdy. While Norgorber's manifestations have been doing their best to remain quiet, their presence combined with the red rains that recently washed over Vyre during Godsrain has begun to influence the citizens. While worship of Gorum has never been significant in Vyre, some of his panicked followers have taken to the streets as well, launching indiscrete attacks on locals and visitors alike. Tempers fray, angers rise, and bloodshed in the streets is increasingly common. Vyre's third promise—"I May Wound Yet Shall Not Kill"—in particular grows more and more ignored, and making things worse, the orange-cloaked Collectors of the Abattoir (themselves under the influence of and distracted by the manifestation of the Gray Master) cease their service of gathering up and disposing of the city's dead. Bodies become an increasingly common sight in the streets as a result.

While none of these clashes are of any significant threat to the PCs (at your whim, you can have them be confronted by low- or mid-level Gorum worshippers or criminals making poor decisions on who to mug), the unrest does make it more difficult for them to Gather Information and to research the locations of manifestation lairs. All such skill checks take a -4 circumstance penalty as a result of the discord, but a PC can accompany another who intends to make the check and work to counter the discord by exuding an air of danger and menace. If such a PC spends time at the other PC's side and succeeds at a DC 39 Intimidation check, then this circumstance penalty to Gathering Information or discovering a manifestation's lair is negated.

EVENT B2: MEETING SIMANDU TRIVIAL 19

Creature: Delaraius has long regarded Simandu, a sadistic captain of the guard, as something of a sibling. Both revere Norgorber in his aspect as Father Skinsaw, but when Norgorber puts his plot into motion, his growing aspect of sabotage and propaganda, the Prince of Propaganda, unexpectedly reaches out to influence several worshippers throughout the many worlds on which Norgorber is venerated, causing them to work clandestinely to oppose those who might endanger Norgorber's plots. In Vyre, Simandu becomes

influenced in just such a way, and she abandons her post in Dunrock over the prison's deepest chambers where torture and execution are daily facts of life.

Simandu increasingly works to help guard Norgorber's secrets and to oppose the PCs as a result. When the PCs first arrive in Vyre, she only knows them by reputation and suspects they might meddle, but as the PCs meet with more and more success and each time they complete an investigation of a manifestation lair, her opposition to them grows.

One Manifestation Lair Is Explored: Simandu now regards the PCs as dangerous. Select one of the remaining three manifestation lairs at random. Simandu infiltrates that lair and sabotages the lair's research facility (area C5 in Blackfingers' Laboratory, area D2 in Gray Master's Gauntlet, area E1 in Skinsaw's Dungeon, and area F1 in the Reaper's Library). Increase all research checks made using this area's clues by 1.

Two Manifestation Lairs Are Explored: Simandu moves more quickly. She sabotages all remaining lair research facilities.

Three Manifestation Lairs Are Explored: Simandu prepares an ambush in the remaining lair, preparing an attack against the PCs in that lair's research facility.

Simandu's Ambush: When Simandu decides to take matters into her own hands, she lies in wait for the PCs. If the area in which she's waiting has other hazards or creatures, she waits for the PCs to finish that encounter, hoping they fall to the dangers, before she launches her attack. Simandu rolls for initiative using Stealth, then focuses her attacks on PCs who become off-guard from her aura. While dangerous, against a group of PCs Simandu is a trivial encounter, so she's unlikely to be a significant threat to them. If she's brought below 100 HP, her own sense of self-preservation finally grows stronger than the Prince of Propaganda's influence and she tries to break off the fight, promising to answer the PCs' questions if they grant her mercy, even going as far as to offer them her shortsword as a bribe. She attempts to escape if they do not agree and try to continue the fight.

Speaking with Simandu: If the PCs agree to speak to her, Simandu does her best to learn more about their intentions, plots, and goals by proposing a quid pro quo of traded questions and answers. Not only does this grant the PCs another opportunity to research Vyre and Norgorber (see "A History of Secrets" on page 75), but she can also reveal to the PCs the location of the fourth manifestation's lair automatically. If she finds out the PCs are working with Delaraius, she's surprised. She admits that she almost considers him an older brother and presses the PCs for more

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information about what he's been up to and why he's working with them. Beyond this, you can use Simandu to help direct the PCs toward the end of the chapter, or she can simply be on her way once they finish speaking to her.

SIMANDU

CREATURE 19

UNIQUE MEDIUM HUMANOID

Female variant jorogumo (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 141)

Perception +35; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Diabolic, Fey; *truespeech*

Skills Acrobatics +34, Athletics +33, Deception +36, Diplomacy +34, Intimidation +34, Norgorber Lore +32, Society +32, Stealth +36, Vyre Lore +34

Str +6, **Dex** +7, **Con** +6, **Int** +5, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +7

Items +2 greater striking keen wounding high-grade dawnsliver shortsword

AC 43; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +34, **Will** +33

HP 355; **Resistances** poison 20; **Weaknesses** cold iron 15

Aura of Whispered Secrets (aura, mental, occult) 30 feet.

The soft sound of whispering fills the area, and those in the area hear their own voice whispering among the voices. A creature that enters the area or begins their turn in the area must attempt a DC 38 Will save.

On a failure, they become distracted by the conviction that their own voice is whispering out their secrets, and the creature becomes off-guard until the start of their next turn.

Darting Legs ⤵ As jorogumo.

Speed 30 feet, swim 30 feet

Melee ⤵ *shortsword* +36 (agile, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 3d6+14 piercing plus 1d6 persistent bleed

Melee ⤵ *jaws* +33, **Damage** 3d12+14 piercing plus jorogumo venom

Ranged ⤵ *web* +34 (range increment 60 feet), **Effect** web trap

Occult Innate Spells DC 34, attack +26; **9th** *summon animal* (spiders only), **8th** *charm* (×3), *outcast's curse* (×3), *pinpoint*, *quandary*, *suggestion* (×3); **7th** *mind probe*, *mind reading* (at will); **Constant** (9th) *truespeech*, *speak with animals* (spiders only)

Change Shape As jorogumo.

Jorogumo Venom (incapacitation, poison) As jorogumo, but DC 41.

Sneak Attack Simandu deals 3d6 extra precision damage to creatures who are off-guard.

Spider Legs As jorogumo.

Web Trap As jorogumo, except DC is 34.

Whispered Revelation ⤵⤵ (incapacitation, mental, occult) Simandu whispers an overwhelming secret

to an adjacent creature—the nature of the secret is so staggering that the creature's mind immediately recoils from the truth and forgets it; the creature must then attempt a DC 41 Will save.

Critical Success The creature is off-guard until the end of Simandu's turn.

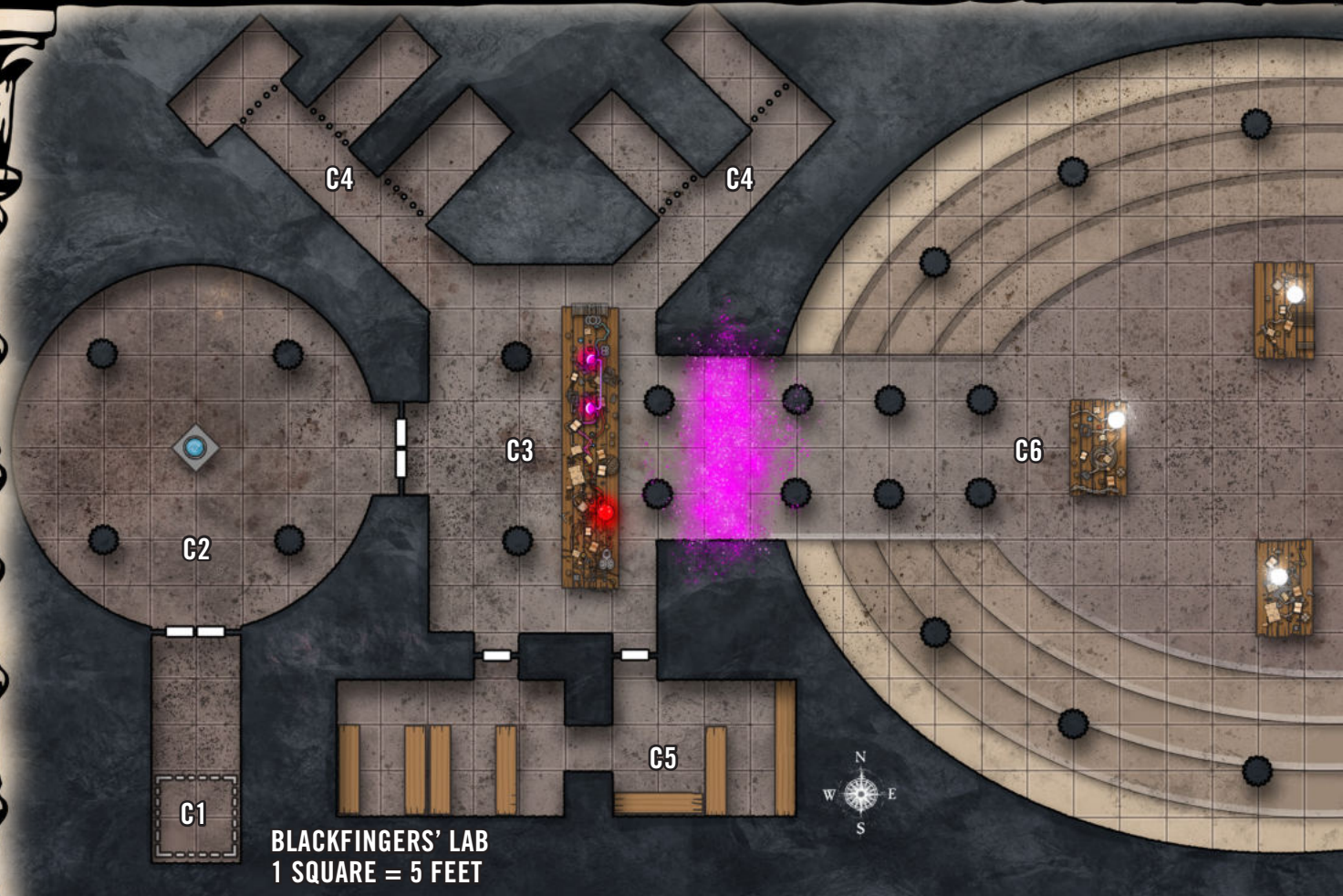
Success The creature is slowed 1 for 1 round.

Failure The creature is stunned 3.

Critical Failure The creature becomes paralyzed for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, it can attempt a new DC 41 Will save to end this effect early.

Reward: Grant the PCs 80 XP if they grant Simandu





BLACKFINGERS' LAB
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

mercy or otherwise manage to speak with her and have the opportunity to use her research.

BLACKFINGERS' LAB

In Vyre, worshippers of Blackfingers—Norgorber's aspect focused on alchemy and poison—control a notorious institution called Darakole Sanatorium. While the manifestation of Blackfingers appreciates their devotion to misery and experimentation, he repurposed an old laboratory under one of Darakole Sanatorium's abandoned outbuildings just east of the central walled compound as his lair. As a result of the red rain that visited the region, Darakole is in lockdown. None of its inhabitants even suspect that a physical manifestation of their god has come to Vyre.

Once Blackfingers' Lab is located (see *Manifestation Lairs* on page 30), they also learn which abandoned building the lab is hidden under and about the secret trapdoor in the floor in that building's southwest corner. Opening this trapdoor reveals an upswell of acrid-smelling air and a dark pit that drops 100 feet

down to area C1. Anyone who's at least expert in Crafting automatically recognizes the smell in the air as indicative of an alchemical laboratory.

LABORATORY FEATURES

The laboratory lies a hundred feet below ground. Its walls are lined with red bricks and can be Climbed with a DC 20 Athletics check unless otherwise noted in the text. Doors are made of reinforced wood and while they can all be locked, most are kept unlocked. Those that are locked can be opened with one of the keys carried by the manifestation of Blackfingers, or with four successful DC 40 Thievery checks to Pick the Lock. The entire laboratory is unlit unless otherwise noted.

Any PCs who possess the guardian or scholar persona trait discover the laboratory to feel strangely welcoming with its focus on alchemical lore and experimentation. These PCs gain a +3 circumstance bonus to Perception checks and all skill checks while in this complex.

C1. ENTRANCE

A ten-foot-wide shaft rises up here to the abandoned building and its secret trapdoor above. The walls of this shaft are brick, like those elsewhere in the laboratory, but are coated with streaks of slippery green mold, so it's a DC 30 Acrobatics check to Climb these walls.

C2. FEASTING PIT

MEDIUM 19

A platform with a stone plinth sits in the center of this rotunda, while iron-bound wooden double doors stand in the walls to the south and east. Four stone pillars help support the domed roof thirty feet above.

Creatures: Of the four manifestations, Blackfingers was the most intrigued by the strange side effect Godsrain had on the River of Souls and in the creation of palinthanos. Through his divine power, he drew the attention and loyalty of four spider-like egarhowls, creatures he playfully regards as his "children" but who serve little more than the roles of guardians here. They attack intruders on sight, but hang back if everyone in the room openly wears the symbol of Norgorber. They pursue those intruders relentlessly, fighting until destroyed.

BLACKFINGERS' CHILDREN (4)

CREATURE 17

Egarhowls (page 86)

Initiative Perception +31

Treasure: A closer inspection of the short plinth reveals it to be an offering plate for visitors to leave tithes and payments without directly interacting with those who work within the laboratory. The bowl-shaped indentation atop the plinth is covered with dust, as is the single vial of *greater Rovagug's mud* (Treasure Vault 90) that still sits within. Blackfingers has no use for this offering plate at this time, and while he knows about the potion, he has no use for it and left it sitting here.

C3. PICK YOUR POISON

A long wooden table runs the length of this alchemical workshop. Bottles of all shapes and sizes and one pitcher of clear liquid sit on the table. Some sort of message has been carved into the tabletop, but it's hard to decipher with all of the clutter. A pair of doors stand to the south, while to the north, two hallways angle off the room into what appear to be small prison blocks. To the east, a shimmering, opaque wall of violet energy fills a twenty-foot-wide tunnel.

A minute of work is enough to carefully clear away space on the tabletop without jostling anything to reveal the message carved into the tabletop. The message is in Diabolic and reads as follows: "Mix your key or leave! The prisoners know what's on the menu."

Blackfingers suspects visitors will come in search of him, be they worshippers who have caught wind of his presence in Vyre, or the PCs seeking answers. The manifestation is always eager to talk, but only with those who have a deep understanding of alchemy, and so he set up a complex alchemical puzzle here to try to ensure that only those deserving of his time can enter his operation theater (area C6).

The purple energy that blocks access to area C6 is opaque, appearing on closer inspection to be a wall of roiling, colorful gas that prevents all passage as if it were a solid barrier. The violet wall functions as a *wall of force* heightened to 8th rank (AC 10, Hardness 30, Hit Points 80) that automatically repairs damage to itself at the rate of 30 Hit Points per round until it is removed or destroyed.

Treasure: If a character starts to work with the supplies here, the resources and tools shift and change on their own, almost as if the lab were trying to influence and guide what sort of concoction was being made. A PC who succeeds at a DC 35 Crafting check to Identify Alchemy or a DC 40 check to Identify Magic understands how to use the lab by pursuing the Pick Your Poison activity, detailed below.

Once the wall of violet mist vanishes, the alchemical laboratory here becomes non-magical, but still functions as an expanded alchemist's lab. Blackfingers can reactivate the laboratory's effects if he so chooses by spending an hour working here.

PICK YOUR POISON

EXPLORATION MANIPULATE SECRET

You spend 10 minutes working at the laboratory, letting its influence help and guide your hands as you brew up a special drink—but whether it will grant a potent alchemical boon or a debilitating poison, who can say? Attempt a DC 39 Crafting check. The resulting concoction is short-lived and evaporates in 10 minutes if no one drinks it.

Critical Success The resulting brew tastes delicious, and also affects the drinker with a randomly determined elixir effect, as rolled on the Concoction Effects table on page 36. If the character already has an elixir effect, this new drink replaces the old effect. The wall of violet mist blocking access to area C5 vanishes.

Success The concoction tastes unremarkable. If the person who drinks it hasn't yet tried a concoction created here, roll on the Concoction Effects table on page 36 to determine the elixir effect that the drinker enjoys, otherwise the

drink has no effect. If the character already has an elixir effect, this new drink replaces the old effect. If this is the character's third success, the wall of violet mist blocking access to area **C5** vanishes.

Failure The resulting concoction smells fine but tastes foul, causing the drinker to become sickened 1, but has no other effect unless the drinker has already imbibed a concoction crafted here, in which case treat this result as a critical failure instead.

Critical Failure The resulting concoction smells fine but is actually dangerously poisonous. Roll on the Concoction Effects Table below to determine what kind of poison affects the drinker. If the drinker has already imbibed a concoction crafted here, roll twice—they are affected by both poisons.

CONCOCTION EFFECTS

d8	Elixir or Potion Effect	Poison Effect
1	major antidote	slumber wine
2	major elixir of life	slumber wine (level 15, DC 36)
3	major bravo's brew	slumber wine (level 18, DC 40)
4	major eagle-eye elixir	wolfsbane (level 15, DC 36)
5	greater energy (acid) breath potion	wolfsbane (level 20, DC 42)
6	greater potion of flying	hemlock
7	truesight potion	black lotus extract
8	starsong nectar (Treasure Vault 91)	tears of death

C4. PRISON CELLS

Each of these prison cells is set off from the hall by a wall of iron bars with no apparent way to access the cell within. Humanoid corpses lie slumped in various states of decay within—one body per cell. Long, complicated-looking messages have been etched with acid into the far wall of each cell.

Five bodies in various states of decay lie in the cells. All bear symptoms of death by poison, with blackened lips, bloated throats, hideously visible blackened veins, bloody eyes, or the like. The cells have no doors, but a worshipper of Norgorber who's at least 11th level can cause the bars closing a cell to vanish (or appear) by Interacting with the bars. A successful DC 30 Religion check to Identify Magic reveals this function; a PC with the Trick Magic Item feat can trick the bars for one cell to vanish or appear with a DC 30 Religion check. Otherwise, the bars can be Forced Open with a DC 30 Athletics check or simply destroyed (AC 10,

Hardness 18, Hit Points 72 [BT 36]) to grant access to the cell, although with one exception (see Treasure), there's nothing in any of these cells worth the trouble.

The messages burned into the brick wall in each cell are written in Diabolic. Each message describes the precise alchemical formula of the toxin used to kill the prisoner, but one who studies all five messages in all five cells also realizes that the messages' metaphorical use of poison as a "key to the next life" is in fact literal, and that by mixing the proper combination of these toxins, one can open a magical barrier.

Any PC who can read Diabolic can spend 10 minutes to study these five messages by using Decipher Writing with a DC 37 Arcana or Occultism check or a DC 39 Society check. The results of this check are as follows.

Critical Success The PC understands how to use the alchemical equipment in area **C3**, and lowers all DCs to use it by 5.

Success The PC understands how to use the alchemical equipment in area **C3**.

Failure As success, but all DCs for that PC to use the alchemical equipment increase by 2.

Critical Failure As failure, but any concoction they create is automatically poison. They can still trigger the removal of the violet mists as normal with three successes or one critical success.

Treasure: If the heroes Search the cells, they uncover a true numbing tonic (*Treasure Vault* 60) in the westernmost cell, clutched tightly in the corpse's hand.

C5. ARCHIVE

Both of the doors to this room are locked.

The shelves in this two-wing storeroom are full of disorganized documents and personal belongings, all covered in a thick layer of dust. One section of shelves in the eastern wing has had its shelves removed to be converted into a clothing rack.

This room was used to store items confiscated from the prisoners brought to area **C4**, but also served as an archive for the numerous lab notes resulting from experiments in area **C3**. Originally, the two wings of this area were well organized, but over time things began to migrate between rooms and organization suffered.

This area is a potential ambush point for Simandu (see **Event B2**).

Research: This area provides a wealth of opportunity to research the history of Vyre and Norgorber, as this complex has been in use, on and off, for many centuries.

Bring the House Down

Chapter 1:
Hell MonthChapter 2:
Shards of WarChapter 3:
Evening Eternal

A History of Secrets

Adventure Toolbox

See “A History of Secrets” on page 75 for how the PCs can use the contents of this room to research.

C6. OPERATION THEATER SEVERE 19

The walls and pillars of this domed operation theater are thick with cobwebs. A trio of tables stand on the theater floor, while tiers of two-foot-high benches line the walls to the north and south. Tables in the center of the room are heaped with alchemical supplies and tools, including a staggering combination of bubbling concoctions, shiny glasswork, open flames, containers of reagents, and scattered tools—some of which are recognizable and others that are so strange that their intended use cannot be discerned. The ceiling rises to a height of thirty feet.

Creatures: The manifestation of Blackfingers works here before a mostly phantasmal audience of ghostly figures who sit on the tiers to the north and south. Blackfingers’ focus is the shard of Gorum granted him by Norgorber—he’s been tasked with rendering the shard down to its constituent materials and then to learn what he can from them. Though much to his surprise, the shard simply crumbled away into a strange, homogeneous ash. One after another, his experiments with this ash backfire or fizzle out, and he worries that he’ll run out of material before he makes any breakthrough. Blackfingers suspects that Norgorber wants to use the material to concoct some sort of potent toxin—even something capable of poisoning a god. At the same time, he hopes to find a way to render himself immune to its effects in anticipation of potentially becoming a test subject.

Blackfingers formed from a spider-like minion of Norgorber known as a karumzek, yet his head is that of a male halfling, and his small, spindly hands are red, while his fingers are scorched black. If any of the PCs drank poison in area C3, Blackfingers makes a show of sniffing the air as he automatically notices the PCs’ arrival, greeting them by asking how their experiment tasted, hoping for details of the effects the poison had upon the PCs.

Blackfingers doesn’t initiate an attack—in fact, he invites the PCs to join him on the operation theater floor. All eyes among the ghostly figures in the audience watch the PCs as they reply; if they do so, Blackfingers informs the PCs that they’re just in time to help him test out some new concoctions. He promises to answer their questions for each concoction they “taste test.” A PC who agrees to drink one of the concoctions is exposed to a random poison—roll on the table for area C3 to determine exactly what kind of poison they drink. Each time a PC does, Blackfingers cackles

in glee and takes copious notes on how the poisoned character suffers and reacts. If a PC uses magic to cure the poison, Blackfingers shakes his head and makes a “tsk tsk” sound while recording notes, but still agrees to answer a question in return (see Research on page 38) each time one of them drinks poison.

After the PCs drink four doses of poison (and potentially get a fourth answer), Blackfingers sets aside his gear and draws his dagger, saying in a light-hearted voice, “Very well—it’s time to examine your entrails, my friends, to see firsthand how my concoctions have damaged you from the inside out.” He attacks at once, hoping to capture the PCs alive but unconscious for vivisection.

Once a fight begins, Blackfingers fights on his own, but as soon as the PCs inflict any damage upon him, the ghostly crowd reacts with shocked cries and boos, as if deriding a hated performance. At the start of the next round, a member of the audience grows solid and transforms into a Mask of Blackfingers; this repeats every additional round until a maximum of four Masks of Blackfingers have joined the fight.

The PCs need not defeat the masks to win this battle, for once Blackfingers is defeated, the remaining Masks, as well as the ghostly audience, sigh in regret and fade away. Blackfingers writhes on the ground, obviously in pain, and manages to gasp out to the PCs to “help him” an instant before he dissolves away, leaving behind his gear and a pile of red hemlock. As he fades, his final whisper reaches the PCs’ ears: “Little Spider lost in darkness. Swore it on my luck to help, to help him... grow.”

BLACKFINGERS

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE MEDIUM HUMANOID UNHOLY

Male variant karumzek (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #171: Hurricane’s Howl* 81)

Perception +35; greater darkvision, poison sense (precise) 60 feet

Languages Common, Diabolic; *truespeech*

Skills Acrobatics +35, Crafting +38, Deception +35, Intimidate +35, Medicine +37, Norgorber Lore +38, Occultism +38, Religion +35, Stealth +37, Vyre Lore +38

Str +6, **Dex** +7, **Con** +9, **Int** +10, **Wis** +7, **Cha** +6

Items +3 greater striking corrosive keen returning dagger, key ring for all locks in the lab, *Red Hand’s Satchel* that contains two elixirs of rejuvenation (*Player Core* 2 288) and 10 doses of Vyre’s Bliss (page 81)

Poison Sense Blackfingers senses any poisoned creature. He can spend an action with the concentrate trait to determine the poison’s type and current stage.

AC 45; **Fort** +37, **Ref** +35, **Will** +33

HP 360; **Immunities** poison; **Weaknesses** holy 15

Consumed by Bloodlust ➤ (emotion, mental) **Frequency** once per day; **Duration** 1 minute; **Trigger** Blackfingers damages a creature; **Effect** Murderous instinct consumes Blackfingers' mind. He gains a +2 status bonus to attacks and damage with his dagger, but is stupefied 2 and cannot use concentrate abilities. If he brings a creature to 0 Hit Points while consumed by bloodlust, he gains 20 temporary Hit Points, and this effect ends.

Venomous Aura (aura, occult, poison) 60 feet. Each creature that enters or starts its turn within the area must succeed at a DC 39 Fortitude saving throw or gain weakness 10 to poison (weakness 15 on a critical failure). Worshippers of Norgorber are immune, as are those who drank any poison in area C3.

Speed 40 feet, climb 30 feet

Melee ➤ dagger +38 (agile, finesse, magical, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 3d4+16 piercing plus 1d6 acid and Blackfingers' venom

Melee ➤ jaws +34, **Damage** 4d10+16 piercing plus Blackfingers' venom

Ranged ➤ dagger +38 (agile, finesse, magical, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 4d8+15 piercing plus Blackfingers' venom

Occult Innate Spells DC 41; **10th** *toxic cloud*; **9th** *slither* (spiders instead of snakes), *vision of death*; **8th** *disappearance*; **5th** *hallucination* (at will); **Constant** (10th) *truespeech*

Change Shape (arcane, concentrate, polymorph) Blackfingers can take the shape of a Tiny spider. This

doesn't change his Speed or jaws Strike, but prevents him from making dagger Strikes.

Blackfingers' Venom (divine, incapacitation, poison) Blackfingers' dagger is constantly coated with the same insidious toxin that drips from his fangs, and recoats his dagger instantly each time after he Strikes; **Saving Throw** DC 42 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 4 hours; **Stage 1** 3d6 poison damage; **Stage 2** 3d6 poison damage and slowed 1 (1 round), **Stage 3** 4d6 poison and slowed 2 (1 round); **Stage 4** paralyzed for 1d4 hours.

Enhance Poison ◆ (divine) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Blackfingers causes the save DC of a dose of poison he holds in a hand (or that coats a weapon he holds) to increase to DC 42 until the start of his next turn.

Stab! Stab! Stab! Stab! ◆◆◆ Requirements Blackfingers is Consumed by Bloodlust; **Effect** Blackfingers lashes out and makes four dagger Strikes against adjacent targets at his current attack modifier but with a -2 penalty. Each attack counts toward his multiple attack penalty but the penalties don't apply until the end of this activity. On each successful hit he restores 15 Hit Points. Consumed by Bloodlust's effects then end.

Sneak Attack Blackfingers deals 3d6 extra precision damage to creatures who are off-guard.

MASKS OF BLACKFINGERS (4)

CREATURE 16

Masks of Norgorber (page 84)

Initiative Perception +32

Research: By agreeing to drink poison for Blackfingers, the PCs can ask the manifestation questions. Each round of questioning consists of a single research check; see "A History of Secrets" on page 75 for how the PCs can use the contents of this room to research.

Treasure: When he fades away, Blackfingers leaves behind four doses of hemlock. His gear is even more valuable, particularly *Red Hand's Satchel* (page 83). This artifact can become more powerful if the PCs awaken it by learning more of Norgorber's secrets—see page 60 for further details.

A pile of dust heaped in single glass dish on the table glows with the same red light that shone up from the hole in the Kintargo Opera House. This is all that remains of the fragment of the Gorum shard Blackfingers was entrusted with, and is a single dose of *ashes of the war god* (page 81).



Blackfingers

GRAY MASTER'S GAUNTLET

As he is the patron of all thieves, many in Vyre at least pay lip service to the Gray Master—Norgorber's aspect focused on thievery, extortion, larceny, and other non-violent but devastating crimes. Yet the heart of this aspect's influence in Vyre is not an all-powerful thieves' guild; instead, it lies with the orange-cloaked Collectors of the Abattoir, those in Vyre who are responsible for the disposal of the dead. Gray Master's teachings kick in as these collectors also confiscate valuables on the bodies they gather, of course, but also in the theft of bodies, for those so collected are not cremated in the Blissful Abattoir as many believe, but are instead smuggled into Dunrock Prison or abroad for necromantic experimentation.

It is, perhaps, this association with death and undeath that threw an unexpected wrinkle into Norgorber's manifestation of Gray Master, for the god certainly did not expect this manifestation to appear in the form of an undead geist, yet after a moment's thought, Norgorber was pleased and sent the manifestation on its way into Vyre. Gray Master was drawn to the vicinity of the Blissful Abattoir, but did not enter the sprawling compound. Instead, the geist drifted downward through an old, dry well behind the abattoir and settled into a long-forgotten hideout, transforming it into a gauntlet of traps.

Once the PCs locate Gray Master's Gauntlet, they learn that access to the hidden complex can be had through the overgrown well in the back alley behind the Blissful Abattoir. The top of the well is blocked by a rusty grate that can be hefted aside with a DC 30 Athletics check to Force Open, or simply smashed through in a few rounds of battering (Hardness 10, HP 30 [BT 15]). Beyond the grate, the stone-lined well drops 60 feet down to area **D1**. The walls of the five-foot-diameter shaft are slippery and can be Climbed with a DC 30 Athletics check.

GAUNTLET FEATURES

With the exception of area **D4** (which is a natural cavern), the walls, floor, and ceiling of the gauntlet are of smooth worked stone, reinforced with iron and wooden bands. Doors are made of reinforced wood but are kept unlocked. The gauntlet is unlit, and ceiling height averages 10 feet.

Any PCs who possess the scoundrel or underdog persona trait find themselves feeling strangely inspired and at home in these trap-infested chambers. These PCs gain a +3 circumstance bonus to Perception checks and all skill checks while in this complex.

All of the secret doors in the area can be discovered by a PC who Seeks or Searches in the area and succeeds at a DC 38 Perception check.

BEING WATCHED

Note that Gray Master can sense when any traps in the gauntlet are triggered, and can use Scry Trap to observe the PCs through these traps. He does so frequently, hoping to learn about the PCs' tactics but also watching how they deal with his traps so he can improve them in the future. A PC who can see invisible objects automatically notices a glowing white eye open in a visible trap whenever this occurs, and a DC 38 Occultism check (or DC 42 Arcana or Religion check) to Identify Magic reveals the eye to be a variant form of *scouting eye*, but not who cast the spell. Once the PCs encounter Gray Master, any PC who's seen these eyes open on traps automatically realizes they're the same as the Gray Master's sparkling white eye.

D1. CORRIDOR MAZE

TRIVIAL 19

The well that provides access to the gauntlet went dry long ago, and the winding tunnel that leads west was originally crafted not long after that. The claustrophobic, twisting tunnel appears to branch out into three dead ends, but one of them contains a secret door that can be spotted by any PC who succeeds at a DC 35 Perception check while Searching.

Hazards: This minor maze isn't likely to confuse explorers for long, but the six dangerous traps that have been rigged up in the tunnels are more than capable of causing harm. These six vorpal executioner traps are placed at the locations marked with a circled "T" on the map. Unlike a typical vorpal executioner, this trap triggers when a creature attempts to exit one of the marked squares, making one Strike against that creature; it does not travel a path and cannot Strike additional targets.

VORPAL EXECUTIONERS (5)

HAZARD 19

Pathfinder GM Core 105

D2. MEETING SUITE

MODERATE 19

A fireplace burns brightly in the southeast corner of this cozy-looking room furnished with a sofa, two overstuffed chairs, and a large table surrounded by stools. To the north, three doors hang ajar, revealing smaller rooms that include a bath, a combination kitchen and pantry, and a barracks.

This suite of rooms once served high-ranking members of Gray Master's cult as a secret place to gather together to brainstorm and develop long-term plans and projects.

GRAY MASTER'S GAUNTLET

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



Often, these meetings would run for days, so the three rooms to the north were installed to give the conspirators a place to rest, relax, and eat. The cult has dozens of such hideaways hidden throughout Vyre, and this one in particular hasn't been used in well over a decade.

This area is a potential ambush point for Simandu (see **Event B2**).

Hazard: Gray Master placed six summoning rune traps in this room. Each invisible rune sits on the floor in the areas indicated by a circled "T" on the map.

MASK SUMMONING RUNES (6)

HAZARD 16

RARE COMPLEX MAGICAL TRAP

Variant summoning rune (*Pathfinder GM Core* 108)

Stealth +32 (master)

Description A cloud of invisible sensors in a 10-foot-radius surrounds an invisible floor rune.

Disable DC 40 Acrobatics to approach a rune without triggering it followed by DC 42 Thievery (master) to erase the rune, or *dispel magic* (8th rank, counteract DC 34) to counteract the rune.

Summon Mask ☞ (divine) **Trigger** A creature enters the cloud of magical sensors; **Effect** The rune causes

a chain reaction throughout the room, causing all remaining active summoning runes in area **D2** to summon a Mask of Gray Master. The masks roll initiative and remain for 12 rounds, after which the effect ends and any remaining Masks disappear. A Mask also disappears if someone disables its linked trap before the duration expires. The Mask can use 3 actions each round and can use reactions, unlike most summoned creatures.

Reset The trap resets each day at dawn.

MASKS OF GRAY MASTER (6)

CREATURE 16

Mask of Norgorber (page 84)

Initiative Perception +32

Research: The clues found throughout this suite of rooms can be used to research the history of Vyre and Norgorber. See "A History of Secrets" on page 75.

D3. THE BONE PIT

Low 19

A pair of balconies connected by a short, five-foot-wide bridge allows plenty of vantage points in this circular room

to look out over the thousands of bones that fill the room ten feet below. The roof rises to a twenty-foot-high dome.

While worshippers of the Gray Master do not focus on violent crimes, it's not uncommon for murder to arise from their acts of extortion, thievery, abduction, or blackmail. In such cases, where the dead could serve as unwanted evidence or even witnesses, Collectors of the Abattoir originally sought to dispose of these bodies here, in a vast ossuary where flesh-eating beetles swiftly reduced corpses down to bones. The tradition of disposing of bodies here waned decades before the dawn of the Age of Lost Omens, and while no new bodies have been added to the bone pit, the eerie supernatural nature of this area has kept the bones fresh and shiny.

Creatures: Much of the bone pit's air of supernatural menace comes from its guardians, a pair of skulltakers named Xylobone and Myribbah. Normally manifestations of agony suffered by doomed mountain explorers, these two skulltakers were raised from the bones below centuries ago by a deliberate act of necromancy. For the past several decades, the two have settled into a strange sort of hibernation as the bone pit hasn't been used, but the recent manifestation of Gray Master in the area has roused them from their strange meditative repose.

The two skulltakers aren't quite sure what to make of the Gray Master. They are not worshippers of Norgorber, but they understand the manifestation's power and have grown used to their long period of slumber. At the same time, fragments of the thousands of souls who once inhabited the bones that make up each skulltaker's body constantly lament and cry out in despair about how they shall never see the light of the sun or moon again or of families, friends, and fortunes long lost in Vyre above.

When the PCs enter this area, the two skulltakers rise up from the bones with these whispering auras, but when they speak, they do so in low, rumbling voices. Neither is initially hostile, but they are curious as to why the PCs have come to visit. If the PCs can resist attacking, the skulltakers reveal to them that the constant whispering of their bones has made it difficult for them to slumber (not that either undead monster ever truly sleeps), and propose to the PCs a strange offer—if they can regale their wailing bones with stories of life in Vyre today, the skulltakers can inform the PCs of secrets these bones might know.

If the PCs agree, they can speak with the skulltakers, using their storytelling and acting skills to soothe the unquiet bones in return for information; see "A History of Secrets" on page 75 for how the PCs can use the contents of this room to research.

The skulltakers immediately attack if the PCs become hostile, or if any of their attempts to soothe their anguished bones backfire and cause greater distress (by critically failing any attempt at storytelling or entertainment).

XYLOBONE AND MYRIBBAH

CREATURE 18

Skulltakers (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 314)

Initiative Perception +33

Reward: If the PCs interact with the skulltakers without resorting to violence and manage to conduct research with them, grant them XP as if they'd defeated the undead in combat.

D4. THE MASTER'S DEN

MODERATE 19

The long flight of stairs ends at the entrance to a sprawling natural cavern. The northern half is empty ground, while to the south lies a pool of water. A massive amount of treasure lies strewn on a fungus-caked island in the pool, including a single glass vial that glows with a strange red light.

The pool to the south is brackish, frigid water, 15 feet deep.

Creature: Gray Master's manifestation as an undead geist was something of a surprise to Norgorber, but he still entrusted a fragment of the shard of Gorum to him, ordering him to work with the fragment to see if it could be used to empower traps with enough divine energy to strike against gods. Gray Master wasted no time splitting the fragments apart to create the numerous traps found throughout this complex without bothering to research as Norgorber bade him, and now frets and worries about the wasted resources.

The geist spends most of his time drifting aimlessly in this cavern, pausing now and then to spy on the PCs through traps as they trigger them. Once the PCs arrive here, he flies over to loom above the treasure to the south, hoping to lure the PCs into the room and into the traps he's laid here. Gray Master isn't interested in discussion, but as the traps spring and he attacks, he constantly speaks in a worrying whispering voice, uttering things like the following.

"He wanted me alive. I can't be alive, so I am unliving. Unliving is good enough, wanting more is wrong. He wants more now. I might be undone. Rebuilt as a living. Would it be me? No one is certain. Not certain isn't good. Not certain means no. I must stay me! He created me so! Though I he mourns, I must remain so! I must stay so!"



Gray Master

In battle, Gray Master first uses *Infectious Delirium*. On following rounds, he casts *disappearance*, then tries to lure PCs into a trap. He uses *Brushed by Death* as often as he can. He can use any of the greatswords in an adjacent trap as an item to trap a creature's soul in using *seize soul*. He uses *collective transposition* to relocate PCs into untriggered trapped areas, and if reduced to fewer than 100 Hit Points casts *possession* to hide within a PC and use them to try to finish off the fight.

Gray Master fights until destroyed. At this time, as the powerful geist fades away, he mutters out the words "stay" and "words of partings ungiven, advice wanted but untold" before vanishing entirely—leaving behind a plain-looking gray cloak that flutters to the ground (see *Treasure* on page 43).

GRAY MASTER

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE MEDIUM INCORPOREAL UNDEAD UNHOLY

Male variant geist (*Pathfinder Book of the Dead* 96)

Perception +34; greater darkvision

Languages Common, Diabolic; *truespeech*

Skills Acrobatics +35, Deception +36, Intimidate +38, Norgorber Lore +34, Society +34, Stealth +37, Thievery +35, Vyre Lore +36

Str -5, **Dex** +7, **Con** +0, **Int** +6, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +7

AC 43; **Fort** +28, **Ref** +37, **Will** +34

HP 280, void healing; **Immunities** confusion, death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Resistances** all damage 15 (except force, *ghost touch*, or vitality; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Glide Aside (move) **Trigger** A Strike targeting Gray Master fails or critically fails; **Effect** Gray Master dodges and redirects the attack to a creature adjacent to him and within reach of the triggering Strike. The attacker rerolls the Strike's attack roll against the new target.

Ignore Gauntlet Traps Gray Master does not trigger any of the traps in his Gauntlet, and cannot be damaged by them.

Power of the Trap As long as there's at least one trap in Gray Master's Gauntlet that isn't disabled or destroyed, Gray Master gains a +2 status bonus to AC and saving throws and deals an additional 1d6 spirit damage with his bite Strikes.

Gray Master is automatically aware of any trap in his Gauntlet as soon as it is triggered, and also as soon as it is disabled or destroyed.

Scry Trap (divine) **Frequency** once per minute; **Trigger** Gray Master senses a trap activate in his Gauntlet via *Power of the Trap*; **Effect** Gray Master casts *scouting eye*, but instead of creating an invisible, floating eye, he uses the triggering trap as the eye, and can see in all directions from it. He can Sustain the spell normally, and can continue to view through the trap even if it deactivates without being disabled or destroyed, but can't move his point of view away from it. If the trap is destroyed or disabled while Gray Master is observing through it, the spell ends and Gray Master takes 4d6 points of mental damage (DC 40 basic Will save).

Speed fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ bite +37 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 4d10+10 piercing

Occult Innate Spells DC 41; **10th** *collective transposition* (*Player Core* 2 243); **9th** *possession*, *seize soul*; **8th** *disappearance*; **5th** *scouting eye* (at will); **Constant** (10th) *truespeech*

Brushed by Death ♦♦ Gray Master Flies once and makes a Strike against up to three targets he passes through at his current attack modifier. Each attack counts toward his multiple attack penalty, but he does not increase his penalty until he has made all three attacks. Gray Master cannot use *Brushed by Death* again for 1d4 rounds.

Infectious Delirium ♦ (divine, emotion, fear, mental) **Frequency** once per minute; **Effect** Gray Master unleashes a blast of stilted laughter in a 20-foot emanation, lasting until the beginning of his next turn. Any creature in the area or entering it must succeed at a DC 39 Will save or be overcome with conflicting thoughts, becoming stupefied 3 (and also confused for 1 minute on a critical failure). A creature attempts only one save per *Infectious*

Delirium, and a creature that succeeds on its saving throw is temporarily immune for 24 hours.

Sneak Attack Gray Master deals 3d6 extra precision damage to creatures who are off-guard.

Wrath of the Trap ♦♦ (divine) **Frequency** once per round; **Requirements** Gray Master is within 100 feet of an active complex trap; **Effect** Gray Master absorbs the power of the complex trap. It becomes inactive until the end of his next turn, and Power of the Trap deactivates until the complex trap becomes active again. The edges of Gray Master's cloak transform into knife-like blades that stab out at all nearby creatures. Any living creature within 10 feet of Gray Master takes 8d10 slashing damage and 8d6 void damage (DC 40 basic Reflex save).

Hazard: Gray Master's presence in this cavern has infused six points in the cavern with traps.

GORUM'S EPITAPHS (6)

HAZARD 15

RARE **COMPLEX** **MAGICAL** **TRAP**

Stealth +33 (master)

Description A section of ground thrusts up to form what looks like a mountain in which a sword has been impaled, and then the sword lashes out to stab at someone nearby. A successful DC 15 Religion check to Recall Knowledge is enough to note that the hazard looks very similar to Gorum's religious symbol; any character who is at least expert in Religion notes this automatically.

Disable DC 40 Thievery (master) to wipe away the faint runes scratched on the floor without activating a blade, or DC 43 Religion (master) to utter memorial prayers to Gorum to rob from the trap its violent energy

AC 37; **Fort** +32; **Ref** +23; **Will** +29

Hardness 24; **HP** 94 (BT 47); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Erupting Burst ⤵ **Trigger** A creature steps into the square in which the trap is hidden; **Effect** The ground erupts upward in the shape of a mountain impaled by a +2 *greater striking greater astral wounding greatsword*. The triggering creature must succeed at a DC 36 Reflex save to avoid becoming off-guard until the start of their next turn (plus being knocked prone on a critical failure). The trap then rolls initiative.

Routine (3 actions) If the Gorum's epitaph is adjacent to a creature, it uses its three actions to make greatsword Strikes on that creature (determining targets randomly if more than one creature is adjacent). Otherwise, it uses actions to Stride toward the closest visible target, then uses any remaining actions to Strike that target. Gray Master can flank with a Gorum's epitaph.

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ *greatsword* +30 (magical); **Damage** 3d12+8 plus 1d6 spirit and 1d6 persistent bleed

Treasure: The treasure strewn across the island in the pool represents a wide range of coins, art objects, gems, and other valuables that have been stolen over the centuries and stashed here by previous worshippers of the Gray Master. In all, the trove of treasure is worth 40,000 gp in scattered coins and valuables. None of the treasures are particular standouts in value—as a whole, the collection of treasure is 10 Bulk (with each Bulk being worth 4,000 gp). Only one of these items is magical—the vial of glowing red dust is a dose of *ashes of the war god* (page 81), and is all that remains of the fragment Norgorber supplied Gray Master with.

The +2 *greater striking greater astral wounding greatswords* in each of the six Gorum's epitaphs can be salvaged, but are broken if the trap they were a part of was destroyed rather than disabled.

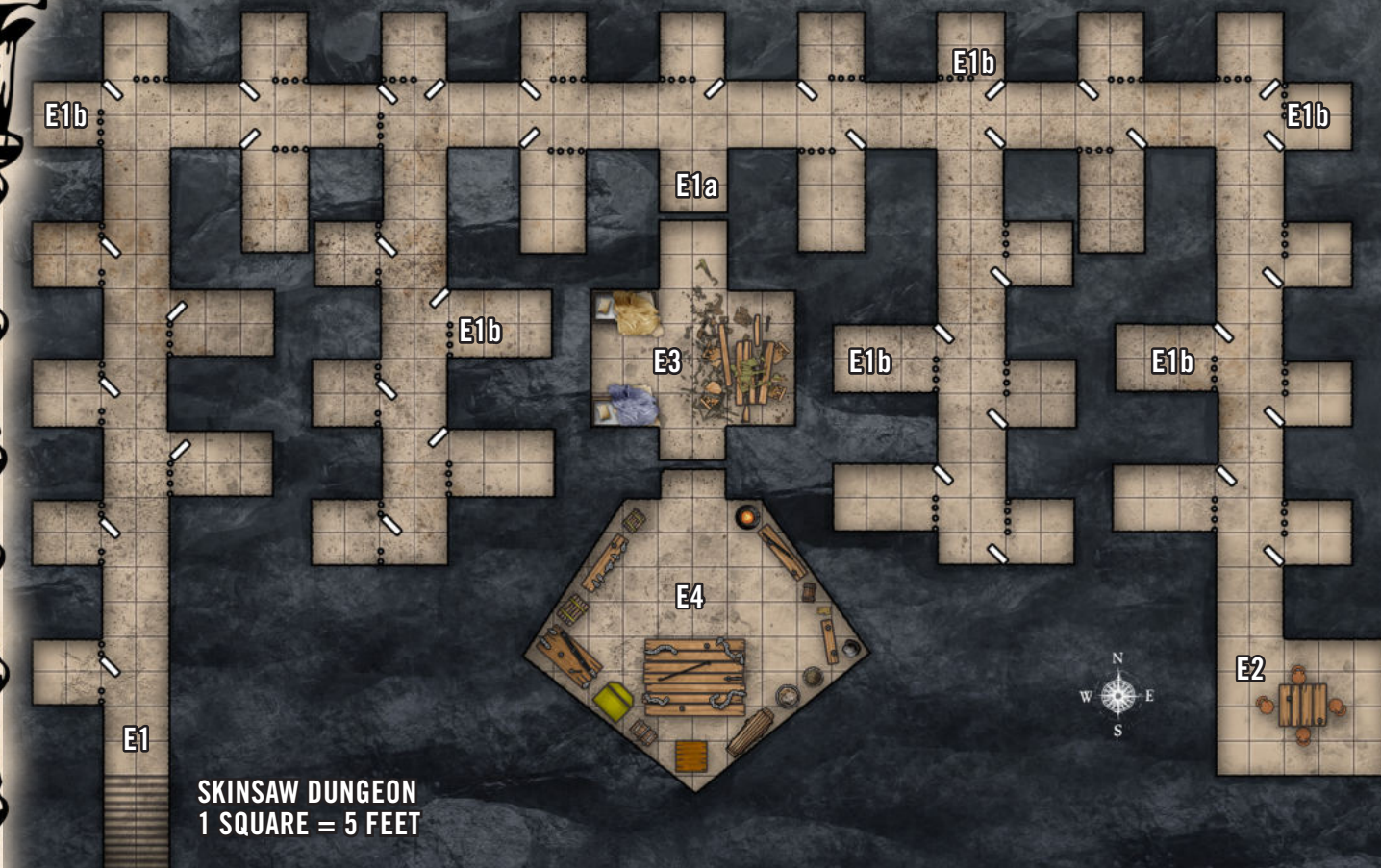
The cloak Gray Master leaves behind is arguably the greatest treasure to be found here, though, for this is *Graymist* (page 83), a powerful artifact that contains a spiritual echo of Norgorber's father. This artifact can become more powerful if the PCs awaken it by learning more of Norgorber's secrets—see page 60 for further details.

SKINSAW DUNGEON

Of Norgorber's four aspects, Father Skinsaw is the most notorious and most reviled. As an aspect focused on bloodthirsty murder and brutal violence, only the most violent of Norgorber's worshippers gravitate toward the worship of Father Skinsaw. His influence has encouraged countless slaughters through the ages, but when Father Skinsaw manifested as a powerful brainchild built upon a foundation of fearful whispers and frightening rumors, he realized there was something missing. As word spread through the other manifestations that Norgorber's plans were kept secret from them, Father Skinsaw realized what this missing element was—Norgorber's lifeblood on his blade.

To Father Skinsaw, the potential assassination of his own "father" is a logical next step while so much of Norgorber's power is diverted to the other manifestations. With the fragment of Gorum supplied to him, Father Skinsaw seeks a way to weaponize that shard to aid him in this impossible task. In the PCs, Father Skinsaw sees nothing more than another potential catalyst for this plan, for the lifeblood of powerful mortal heroes can certainly bolster the weapon he hopes to forge!

In Vyre, the cult of Father Skinsaw maintains numerous hideouts. Dunrock Prison is perhaps the most oft-whispered of these locations, but in the case of Father Skinsaw, he's chosen a less conspicuous



SKINSAW DUNGEON
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

area to pursue his plots—one of several prison blocks located under a ruined temple originally devoted to Gorum, located along Heretic’s Row. Like all of the temples found here, it hasn’t served as a sacred place to its original patron for many centuries, and most recently the arena-like structure has served as a site for blood sports run by a local gang—or at least, it did, until a mobogo got loose and slaughtered everyone in attendance at the last match. For the past five decades, the structure’s been dormant. When the PCs discover the location of Father Skinsaw’s lair, they also learn the route through the abandoned arena-like cathedral to the secret door in the back that, once opened, reveals a ten-foot-wide staircase that descends 50 feet into area E1.

DUNGEON FEATURES

The air quality in this dungeon is stale and oppressive—not enough to cause harm, but certainly enough to create a sense of stifling discomfort. Walls are made of hewn stone. The dungeon is unlit and the ceilings are 10 feet high unless otherwise noted.

Any PCs who possess the leader or warrior persona trait feels particularly bolstered here—not so much from the nature of the prison, but from a combination of ancient lingering influences from Gorum’s faithful and the urge to honor those who may have once been imprisoned here. These PCs gain a +3 circumstance bonus to Perception checks and all skill checks while in this complex.

E1. PRISONER’S ROW

MODERATE 19

Ancient, rusty bars block off empty prison cells along this ten-foot-wide stone tunnel. Each of the cell doors has been wrenched open and now hangs ajar, and while each of the cells are empty, faint whispers, mutterings, moans of despair, and even soft screams can be heard as if from a great distance from each.

The whispers and moans issuing from each prison cell are echoes of the tormented and despairing souls of all those who were once imprisoned within these chambers. A PC who spends a few minutes concentrating on the soft sounds and succeeds at

Bring the House Down

Chapter 1:
Hell MonthChapter 2:
Shards of WarChapter 3:
Evening Eternal

A History of Secrets

Adventure Toolbox

a DC 25 Religion check or a DC 35 Society check understands this, and realizes that the voices are not only harmless, but could potentially be communicated with—see Research.

The ten-foot-square chamber at area **E1a** lacks any prison bars, indicating that this alcove may have once served a different purpose, and indeed anyone who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check while examining this area notes that the southern wall can be retracted upward into the ceiling. In the center of the wall is a clock made of strips of leather with 13 hours instead of 12, and the clock's hands consist of a long and a short straight razor blade. Splatters of blood stain the wall, reforming as quickly as they might be cleaned. A DC 15 Religion check to Recall Knowledge identifies this as the Skinlock, one of Father Skinsaw's unsettling symbols. A critical success on this check notes that the faith believes that with each murder they commit, they alter the future by removing what the slain person would have accomplished had they lived, and that by committing enough murders, the Skinlock's time approaches 13:00, at which point some great revelation or reward will be visited upon the faithful.

The Skinlock is actually a complicated combination lock. A PC who succeeds at three successful and consecutive DC 39 Thievery checks to Pick the Lock causes the wall to silently slide up into the ceiling, providing access to area **E3** beyond (this DC is reduced to 34 if the PC is at least master in Religion, or critically succeeded at the previous Religion check to Recall Knowledge, as their insights into the cult's number symbology aids in the task of cracking this lock). Each critical failure at trying to Pick the Lock results in a painful slice as the clock hands twist to inflict debilitating cuts to the fingers and hands, causing 1d6 persistent bleed and increasing the character's clumsy condition value by 1 to a maximum of 3 (this clumsy condition persists until the PC is restored to full Hit Points). Otherwise, a DC 44 Athletics check allows a character to Force Open the slab by lifting it. The stone wall can be smashed through as well, given enough work (AC 10, Hardness 14, HP 56).

This area is a potential ambush point for Simandru (see **Event B2**). If she ambushes the PCs here, she waits for the masks of Father Skinsaw to strike, hoping they do the job for her, and attacks the PCs only once they defeat those foes.

Creatures: The cells here once contained dozens of skeletal remains of previous prisoners left here to die after the temple above was abandoned, but Father Skinsaw wrenched the doors open to gather the bones for his project in area **E2**. While this seems to leave the cells empty, six of them (those marked area **E1b**)

are occupied by a mask of Father Skinsaw in hiding. If they notice the PCs approaching (this is automatic unless the PCs are all being stealthy and aren't using an obvious light source), they each cast invisibility; otherwise, they rely on Stealth to remain unseen. If the PCs don't spot them as they pass by, the masks creep out to converge, either attacking the PCs if they start to take time at area **E1a**, or joining a fight at area **E2** (this turns the Low 19 encounter there into an Extreme 19 encounter!). If the PCs spot one of the masks first, they attack at once with a cry of alarm—the others immediately rush to join the fight. In combat, they concentrate their attacks on one target at a time, favoring spellcasters as initial targets. They fight to the death.

MASKS OF FATHER SKINSAW (6) CREATURE 16

Masks of Norgorber (page 84)

Initiative Perception +32

Research: The unquiet spirits heard within these cells can be communicated with to research the history of Vyre and Norgorber. See "A History of Secrets" on page 75 for how the PCs can use the contents of this room to research.

E2. INTERROGATION ROOM **Low 19**

A thick stench of rot fills this humid chamber, which seems to have once served as some sort of interrogation room. The single ancient wood table surrounded by four stools at the room's center appears to be only moments away from collapsing. Coatings of thick blood slathered on the walls, floor, and bits on the ceiling seem to be the source of the stink, although it's hard to tell how old the blood is.

Note that if the creature in this room hasn't already awoken, make sure to add to the above read-aloud text that hundreds of humanoid bones lie strewn across the floor of this room.

Creature: The source of the stink in the air is indeed the blood, which is an unsettling supernatural manifestation of the awful experimentation Father Skinsaw pursued in this room—the creation of a particularly powerful form of undead known as a tanglebones. Formed from the skeletal remains of the dozens of prisoners left to die here, this tanglebones is much more powerful than most of their kind. In addition, Father Skinsaw made sure that many of the individual bones that comprise this awful undead monster were filed to razor sharp edges—calling the resulting guardian a razorbones. Having perfected the method of this creature's creation, he intends to

intentionally build more of them, but for now he's left the creature to lurk here as another guardian.

If the PCs engage in a fight against the masks of Father Skinsaw in area E1, the razorbones wakens here and slithers out to join the fight, but shouldn't attack the PCs until the round after they defeat all the masks (unless the PCs flee down into this room during the course of the fight). The razorbones fights until destroyed.

RAZORBONES

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE LARGE UNDEAD UNHOLY

Variant tanglebones (*Malevolence* 71)

Perception +34; darkvision

Languages Necril

Skills Acrobatics +35, Athletics +38, Stealth +36

Str +10, **Dex** +7, **Con** +6, **Int** +0, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +6

AC 45; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +35, **Will** +32

HP 430, void healing; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weakness** bludgeoning 20

Ectoplasmic Filaments ➤ **Trigger** A creature within the razorbones' reach uses a manipulate action or a move action or leaves a square during a move action it's using; **Effect** A filament of black, oily ectoplasm lashes out at the triggering creature, dealing 4d8+18 slashing damage (DC 42 basic Reflex save). If the filament deals damage, the razorbones gains 8d8 temporary Hit Points as blood flows back along its bones to sheathe them in glisten red fluid.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ➤ claw +38 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 4d6+18 slashing plus 1d6 persistent bleed and Improved Grab

Ranged ➤ hurled bone +38 (brutal, range 30 feet), **Damage** 4d4+18 piercing

Eerie Flexibility A razorbones can shift and adjust its mass to fit into smaller areas, allowing it to fit through tight spaces as if it were a Medium creature. While Squeezing, it can move at its full speed.

Gnaw ➤ **Requirements** The razorbones has grabbed a foe; **Effect** The razorbones gnaws and chews on the grabbed target with its many skulls, dealing 4d6+18 piercing damage (DC 42 basic Fortitude save). On a critical failure, the creature is also drained 1 (or increases an existing drained condition by 1, to a maximum of drained 4) from the grievous gnawing.

Skeletal Storm ➤➤ The razorbones makes a single claw Strike against every creature in reach. These attacks count toward the razorbones' multiple attack penalty, but the multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after the razorbones makes all its attacks.

Sprawled Bones ➤ (concentrate) Until the next time it acts, the razorbones appears as a sprawling mass of

bones. It has an automatic result of 56 on Deception checks and DCs to pass as a grisly but seemingly harmless mess.

E3. GUARD POST

TRIVIAL 19

To the west stand a pair of ancient wooden bunk beds, their mattresses and blankets long gone. An equally ancient-looking wooden table and four chairs sit to the east. Directly south, a clock of made of stretched strips of leather with 13 hours and straight razors for hands is affixed to the wall in an alcove.

This room was once used as a guard post, but is now left empty.

Hazard: The wall in the southern alcove is identical in many ways to the one to the north—a large movable slab of stone that can be unlocked to automatically raise up if the right combination is put into the clock's hands. Not only is the combination to this door different than the one to the north, but it's also protected by a potent magical trap.

SKINCLOCK

HAZARD 19

UNIQUE MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 50 (legendary)

Description Blood sprays from clock's straight razor hands, forming a large set of oversized blood red razors that slice out to hew at flesh and bone.

Disable DC 47 Thievery once on the clock's hands and once on its face to decouple both of the magical sensors in the trap from each other, or *dispel magic* (10th rank, counteract DC 39) to counteract the trap

Time to Bleed ➤ **Trigger** An attempt to Pick the Lock on the Skinclock fails, or any attempt to Force Open the wall or to damage it occurs; **Effect** A pair of bloody straight razors form and then slash forward to scissor at the triggering creature. The blades attempt to Strike the triggering creature before they vanish.

Melee Skinclock razors +40 (deadly d12, magical, reach 10 feet); **Damage** 8d10+33 slashing damage plus 2d6 persistent bleed

Reset The Skinclock resets automatically.

E4. TORTURE CHAMBER

SEVERE 19

Implements of torture—iron maidens, stretching racks, chains, racks of weapons, and horrific tools—have been pushed aside to the walls to make room at the center for a horrific-looking display of body parts mounted on a twisted frame of wood and metal that almost looks like an orrery made of gore and pain. The body parts drip with fresh blood while others reek of long days spent in decay.

Creature: Father Skinsaw's manifestation formed from whispers and fears into a brainchild, much to Norgorber's delight. He entrusted a fragment of a shard of Gorum with instructions to use the shard to enhance a weapon with a sharp enough edge to cut through a deity's flesh. Unlike the other four, Father Skinsaw obeyed Norgorber's commands and did just that, yet the manifestation fully intends to use the final weapon, if he's successful, against Norgorber himself as proof of concept. Fortunately for Norgorber, Father Skinsaw's strengths lie in killing, not in the crafting of killing tools, and so far he's been frustrated in his research. His latest focus is the grisly creation in this room—a sort of spiritual hive mind constructed from the bodies of dozens of Father Skinsaw's own worshippers. Part grisly work of art, part a device meant to capture and combine the souls of murdered faithful, Father Skinsaw has made some progress in his research with advice granted him by these tormented, trapped souls. But it's not enough, and he suspects that by adding the souls of truly powerful enemies of the faith to his device—the PCs—he can make a breakthrough.



Skinlock

Once the PCs arrive, Father Skinsaw turns away from his device to regard them. He appears the same as he did in the previous adventure when Norgorber intervened to claim Fenton's mask, and that mask still hangs from a hook on his belt like a trophy. Father Skinsaw spreads his arms wide in welcome and greets the PCs warmly, asking if they like his collection as he indicates the body parts mounted on his device. He takes time to explain what he admires about each piece on his wall, then laments that they pale in comparison to the works he used to produce.

"You have been in contact with my brothers and my father. It pains me that they think of me as a butcher when, truly, I am an artist. They think what I enjoy is the cutting and sawing. No, no, that is not what I enjoy. The part that fulfills is the texture of the materials in my hands as I work. Warm until cold, yielding softly to the edge, with life frozen in its final moment, forever preserved. I doubt you could conceive of a greater fate, your own lives immortalized by my hand."

Despite the obvious threat in his words, Father Skinsaw is willing to speak with the PCs for a time, and as long as the PCs don't attack, he graciously answers their questions. As he does, he evaluates their

intellects and methods, sizing them up for addition to his collection. See Research on page 48 for more details.

Eventually, Father Skinsaw grows tired of the discussion—either after enough failures while the PCs Research, or once the PCs accumulate all possible Research Points during their discussion. Once either of these occur (or once the PCs attempt to leave or attack), Father Skinsaw giggles in excitement and immediately attacks. As soon as he does so, several of the body parts on the device drop away and form into six awful amalgamations of savaged cultists, each bearing their own unique and horrific wounds. These "skinsaw trophies" regard their wounds as gifts from their god, and as they join their lord in the fight, they ask the PCs if they find their wounds pretty or enticing or inspiring, functioning similar to kuchisake-onna. Unlike the typical kuchisake-onna, the Skinsaw Trophies fight with silver war razors, but this does not alter their melee Strikes or abilities.

FATHER SKINSAW

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE MEDIUM ILLUSION MENTAL UNHOLY

Male variant brainchild (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 38)

Perception +33; greater darkvision

Languages telepathy 100 feet, universal language

Skills Athletics +37, Deception +38, Intimidation +40, Norgorber Lore +36, Occultism +34, Religion +33, Society +36, Stealth +38

Str +7, **Dex** +8, **Con** +7, **Int** +6, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +10

Items *Retribution* (page 83)

Universal Language As brainchild.

Urban Legend As brainchild except Father Skinsaw's abilities are determined by the collective memories of his worshippers and Norgorber himself. Instead of using Seek or Sense Motive to disbelieve any of his abilities, a character who's discovered some of Norgorber's secrets can confront Father Skinsaw with these truths by using Demoralize (DC 41), or they can taunt him with these secrets by Creating a Diversion (DC 43). On a success, in addition to the normal effects, that person can disbelieve one of Father Skinsaw's following abilities: resistance to physical damage, the extra bleed damage caused by his Strikes, his occult innate spells, or his Grievous Cut ability.

AC 44; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +38, **Will** +31

HP 380; **Immunities** death effects, detection, diseased, doomed, scrying; **Weaknesses** mental 15; **Resistances** physical damage 15 (except cold iron)

Bloodletting ♦ **Trigger** Father Skinsaw is adjacent to a creature that takes persistent bleed damage; **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Blood writhes from the bleeding creature to splash onto Father Skinsaw, granting him 40 temporary Hit Points for 1 minute.

Persistence of Memory (illusion, mental, occult) As brainchild, except the time is chosen by Norgorber.

Speed 30 feet, fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ **Retribution** +41 (agile, backstabber, deadly d8, finesse, magical), **Damage** 3d4+17 slashing plus 1d6 persistent bleed

Occult Innate Spells DC 41; **10th** *massacre*; **9th** *phantasmagoria*, *vampiric exsanguination*; **8th** *disappearance*; **6th** *blood vendetta* (at will); **Constant (10th)** *truespeech*

Cut Across Space ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Father Skinsaw makes a war razor Strike against a target within 120 feet.

Grievous Cut ♦♦ Father Skinsaw attempts a war razor Strike against an adjacent target. If he hits, the blade cuts deep and creates a grievous wound. In addition to the normal damage caused by the attack, the creature struck takes 4d6 persistent bleed damage and becomes wounded 1 (or increases the value of an existing wounded condition by 1, to a maximum of wounded 4).

Sneak Attack Father Skinsaw deals 3d6 extra precision damage to creatures who are off-guard.

SKINSAW TROPHIES (6)

CREATURE 15

Variant elite kuchisake-onna (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 6, 156)

Initiative Perception +30

Compulsive Wound Admiration A Skinsaw Trophy is compelled to admire grisly wounds inflicted in battle. When any creature in a fight they're in suffers a critical hit, a Skinsaw Trophy becomes off-guard to all creatures until the start of their next turn.

Research: If the PCs speak to Father Skinsaw, they can pursue research as detailed in "A History of Secrets" beginning on page 75. Father Skinsaw tends to color his responses with disturbing anecdotes and unsettling implications, so each round of research here takes 10 minutes to conduct.

Treasure: A quick search of the awful soul orrery reveals a small silver bowl at the center that contains a dose of *ashes of the war god* (page 81). In addition, once Father Skinsaw is defeated, he melts away into a puddle of blood, and all that remains behind is *Retribution* (page 83). This artifact can become more powerful if the PCs awaken it by learning more of Norgorber's secrets—see page 58 for further details. Fenton's *soulfeeding mask* (detailed in the previous adventure) can also be recovered at this point.

REAPER'S LIBRARY

While often regarded as the "least malevolent" of Norgorber's four aspects, the truth is that the Reaper of Reputations may in fact be the most dangerous. By focusing on more subtle crimes and manipulating the flow of information and the renown of others, the Reaper of Reputations coaxes non-worshippers to violence and criminal acts rather than commit them himself, and encourages his followers to do so in his name. In Vyre, the Reaper's stronghold maintains these themes of subtlety. While the faiths of the other three aspects are focused on a prison, a sanatorium, and an abattoir (and thus influence



Father Skinsaw

the city's criminals, unfortunates, and its dead), the Reaper's worshippers control one of Vyre's hostels: The Dancing Cat.

When Norgorber manifested the Reaper of Reputation, he ascended from a manipulator of society known as a palace skelm. This antlered fey creature could masquerade in humanoid form and had done so to walk among the people of Vyre for years, unsuspected by all save Norgorber himself. Now, reborn as the Reaper of Reputation, the skelm's previous personality and goals are forever gone—the first casualty of the Reaper's work. It was the Reaper who first spread whispers among the other three manifestations about Norgorber's true goals, and thus planted the seeds for each of their unique reactions. But whereas the other three have largely self-centered concerns, the Reaper fears not for himself but for Norgorber. He believes that Norgorber has grown tired of divinity and is seeking a way to return to mortal life—a sort of deific “suicide” that, while it would let Norgorber live the rest of his life as a mortal man, would end the manifestations forever. The Reaper wants to save Norgorber from himself as a result.

The Reaper of Reputations' lair is an extradimensional chamber hidden within a closet in the Dancing Cat. When the PCs locate the lair, though, they don't actually learn this—instead, they unknowingly attract the Reaper's attention. Seeing them as perhaps his best tool to save Norgorber from abandoning his divinity, the Reaper sends the PCs an invitation to visit him in his home. This invitation appears mysteriously, perhaps used as a bookmark left by a previous reader in a book a PC is using to research the Reaper's lair, or maybe appearing next to a pillow upon waking the day after the latest research session. The invitation is presented on page 50 as Handout 1.

A gaudy sign of a cat leaping on a bed of hot coals hangs above the entrance to the Dancing Cat. Its owner, **Inaminah Clov** (female aiuvarin cleric of Norgorber 12), is a leader in the branch devoted to the Reaper of Reputation, and she's expecting the PCs. When they arrive, she wordlessly escorts them to the Leopard Room and nods toward the nearby closet door, expecting the PCs to head on in.

LIBRARY FEATURES

The Reaper's Library is an extradimensional space hidden within a closet in the Dancing Cat. When the Reaper of Reputation isn't present within, or wants to keep someone out, opening the closet reveals a normal closet interior, and forcing the portal open would require a DC 40 Religion check to Trick

Magic Item at the least, and more appropriately a quest to recover a ritual or item that could bypass the Reaper's wishes. However in this case, the Reaper expects the PCs to arrive. When a PC opens the closet door, they see a short, ten-foot-wide stone passageway that leads into a large chamber filled with floor-to-ceiling bookshelves.

Within the Reaper's Library, everything is brightly lit by numerous glowing lanterns and torches (none of which require fuel or give off heat), yet a shimmering white mist in the air limits line of sight to a range of 50 feet. Objects and creatures beyond this are faintly visible as shadowy shapes and are concealed. The mist also deadens sound, so that noises beyond a range of 50 feet are muffled and distorted, so that even screams sound like whispers. Effects with the auditory and visual traits do not function beyond this range.

The climate within is comfortable, if not cozy. The floor has a soft gray carpet over stone, while the walls and ceiling are made of polished granite. Ceiling height in the library is a uniform 30 feet. As an extradimensional space, the area has no need for pillars for roof support. Attempts to move beyond the borders of the library fail, as there is nothing beyond these borders to interact with. The closet entrance is the only easy way to come and go—otherwise, a character must use planar travel like *interplanar teleport* or *gate* to leave the library.

The library only exists as long as the Reaper remains in Vyre; if he leaves or is slain, the library vanishes after a week, during which its contents slowly go missing one at a time until, just before the plane collapses, the room reverts to an empty space. Any foreign creatures or objects still within the library at this time are shunted into the Astral Plane.

Any PCs who possess the flirt or wildcard persona trait find themselves feeling particularly welcome in the library. These PCs gain a +3 circumstance bonus to Perception checks and all skill checks herein.

F1. MEMORY TROVES

The bulk of this chamber consists of two different types of shelving, both of which run floor to ceiling. Closer to the entrance, these shelves are long and rectangular, stacked five feet apart to make for a maze-like layout. These shelves are filled with all manner of objects from everyday life, with no two objects repeating each other. Each of these objects contains implanted memories accessible to anyone who picks an item off a shelf, allowing for a detailed historical investigation of the land, region, and history of the object.

Intrepid Heroes,

I have watched you seek my home, and I know what you have come to seek. This may be difficult to believe, but our goals align with regards to undoing the plans of the God of Secrets. I invite you into my library, though there are some tasks I would like you to help me with before I would see you.

First, in my library, a trio of my scribes have been quite morose of late. If you have flattering words to give, please, uplift their mood. They may be inclined to help you research if you manage.

Second, I have a guest who has overstayed his welcome. Unfortunately, he got the better of me and pulled me into a bet. I cannot tell you what the bet is but if you evict him, I would be most grateful. Try not to kill him, though it's understandable if that cannot be helped. You will recognize him by his familiar features—he cannot be missed, as I surely will not once he is gone.

Finally, come to me with as much information as you can find regarding Norgorber, his cult, and associated mysteries. I deal in secrets after all, and the more you have to give, the more I can offer in return.

A silver for your safety, and may gold never make gods out of you. You may find me in the closet of the Leopard Room at the Dancing Cat. I hope to see you soon.

—A friend

Further from the entrance stand a very different type of shelf—circular, pillar-like structures that slowly rotate in a clockwise manner, each shelf here filled with books, scrolls, tablets, and other forms of written lore. These records chronicle many of the vast number of reputations savaged and ruined by the Reaper over the centuries—yet despite the vast number of records stored here, they're still a fraction of the total holdings found in Norgorber's realm of Duskfathom.

All of the objects found here can be “read” merely by handling them—language is no barrier to learning here, but the time needed to study and research is no different than the standard methods of reading.

This area is potentially an ambush point for Simandu (see **Event B2**).

Research: This area provides a wealth of opportunity to research the history of Vyre and Norgorber. See “A History of Secrets” on page 75 for how the PCs can use the contents of the Memory Troves to research.

F2. SCRIBING TABLES

Low 19

A set of four low tables sits here, each surrounded by plush cushions for someone to sit upon. Each table has several tools for scribing and scriving laid out on them.

Creatures: Four masks of Norgorber associated with his aspect as Reaper of Reputations sit here, one at each table. A large book sits on each of the table's stands, and the four masks work listlessly at

transcribing the dense text into a blank book set on the table before them. Tasked with summarizing volumes about different types of subjects (artists, diplomats, politicians, and scholars) whose reputations have been reaped over the years, these four have become distracted and troubled by what they fear is a brewing schism among the four aspects of Norgorber. They barely react to the PCs' approach beyond a glance up at them followed by a sigh of frustration before they continue their work.

These are the “morose scribes” that the Reaper mentioned, and while they don't immediately regard the PCs as threats or victims, they quickly grow frustrated at any perception of being distracted from their work. Starting with the masks' first sigh of frustration, the moment the PCs first make themselves known, they have only a limited amount of time to “uplift their mood.”

While all four masks have the same statistics, they look quite different. The first (known as “the Glamorous”) is dressed in fine clothes and extravagant makeup. The second (known as “the Forthright”) is stern in countenance and dressed in an impeccable uniform similar to what one might expect of a city official or judge. The third (known as “the Insidious”) is a sneering and sinister figure dressed in bloody robes and armed with numerous well-used knives. The fourth (known as “the Distracted”) is dressed in gaudy performer's clothing and keeps distracting themselves by humming tunes. In order to bring the scribes out of

their frustrations, a PC must take the Uplift Scribe's Mood activity.

UPLIFT SCRIBE'S MOOD

AUDITORY **CONCENTRATE** **EXPLORATION** **LINGUISTIC** **MENTAL**

You spend 1 minute and attempt to bolster a scribe's mood. Choose a scribe, then attempt a DC 45 Deception, Diplomacy, Intimidation, or Performance check to inspire that scribe. This is reduced to a DC 35 check if you use Deception on the Forthright, Diplomacy on the Glamorous, Intimidation on the Insidious, or Performance on the Distracted. Only one scribe may be interacted with at a time, but multiple PCs can attempt to uplift different scribe moods simultaneously. Each scribe begins this encounter with 3 Misery Points. Once a scribe is reduced to 0 Misery Points, they are inspired and uplifted, and can no longer gain Misery Points.

Critical Success Not only do you uplift the scribe's mood and reduce their Misery Points by 1, but your influence also helps another scribe of your choice. Reduce the Misery Points of any of the four scribes by 1 (you can apply this to your targeted scribe to reduce their Misery Points by a total of 2).

Success You're on the way to uplifting the scribe's mood; reduce the scribe's Misery Points by 1.

Failure You fail to uplift the scribe's mood.

Critical Failure Not only do you fail to uplift the scribe's mood, but you actually make it worse, increasing that scribe's Misery Points by 1. The next time you attempt to uplift this same scribe's mood, you take a -4 circumstance penalty to the check.

Once the PCs make their first attempts to Uplift Scribe Moods, they have five minutes to do so. At the end of those five minutes, consult the following results to see what happens next.

All four scribes have at least 1 Misery Point after 5 minutes: The scribes cry out in anger at having their time wasted and attack.

At least one scribe has at least 1 Misery Point after 5 minutes: The scribes dismiss the PCs, ordering them to leave them to their tasks. If the PCs persist in speaking to the scribes, they attack. Make a note of how many scribes had their Misery Points reduced to 0, as this number will be important when the PCs encounter the Reaper of Reputations at area F4.

All four scribes have 0 Misery Points after 5 minutes: The scribes are inspired and thank the PCs for the stimulating conversation. While they are eager to get back to work, they each also offer to help out once with the PCs' research here in the library. A PC who takes a scribe up on this offer reduces any DC to Research the Memory Troves by 10, after which

point that scribe must return to their work and can no longer help with Research.

MASKS OF THE REAPER (4)

CREATURE 16

Page 84

Initiative Perception +32

Reward: Grant the PCs 10 XP for each scribe who they reduce to 0 Misery Points. If they reduce all four scribes to 0 Misery Points, grant them 40 XP for all four plus an additional 40 XP, for a total reward of 80 XP.

F3. LIBRARY LOUNGE

Low 19

Salon chairs with plump velvet pillows surround a warm fire pit. A bit to the side is a large dining table, surrounded by chairs and set with a large spread of snacks and drinks.

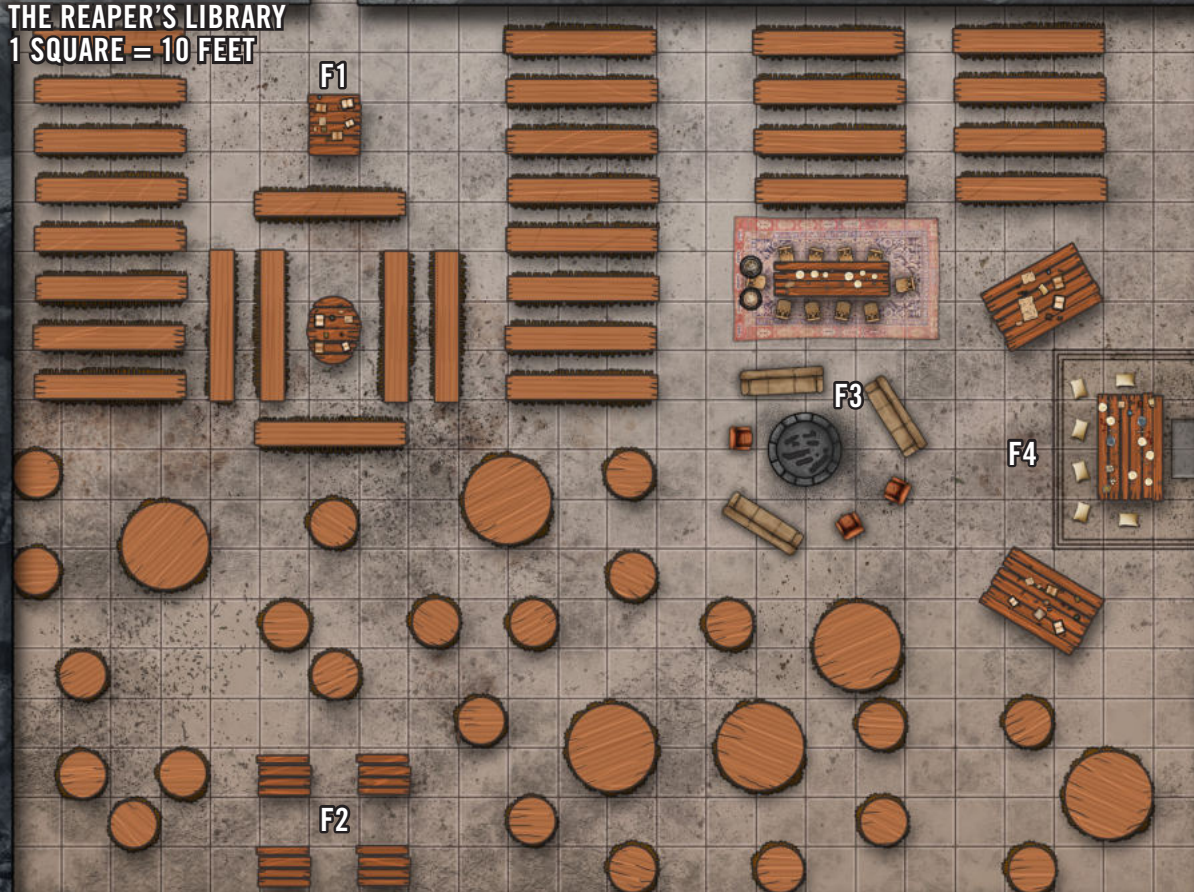
Creature: The first unexpected visitor to the Reaper's Library was a powerful rakshasa named Kimingio. When Gorum was slain, Kimingio's immediate reaction was an urge to consume a portion of the slain god, in part to experience the flavor of divinity, and in part for the rush of considering himself to be a "predator of the gods." Kimingio became obsessed with the fragment that fell in Kintargo simply out of chance, and chased that fragment here to Vyre and eventually sniffed his way into the Reaper's Library.

The Reaper was surprised at the visitor and intrigued by his offer, and decided to place a little challenge for Kimingio: if he could pass himself off as Delaraius in a conversation with a stranger, he would be rewarded with a remaining fragment of Gorum to consume. Kimingio's pride did him no favors in compelling him to boast he could keep that charade up even in combat. But the rakshasa is equally intrigued and delighted by the perpetual banquet on offer here, and rather than go out to put his challenge to the test, he's spent his time here, eating food and wearing out his welcome. That Kimingio is immune to the food's dangers only frustrates the Reaper more, yet so far, his curiosity as to whether Kimingio can succeed at his bet has prevented him from taking action. A conflict against the PCs is just the thing to solve the awkwardness.

Kimingio has used Change Shape to assume Delaraius Solzakarr's appearance, and as soon as he spots the PCs, he invites them to join him at the banquet table while asking them to explain themselves—why have they intruded upon this sacred place? If asked, he claims to be visiting with the Reaper to share secrets, "As is

THE REAPER'S LIBRARY

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



my right as leader of Norgorber's faith here in Vyre!" Unless the PCs have been particularly vocal about their earlier meeting with Delaraius, Kimingio doesn't know the PCs have met him before, and once he realizes this mistake he attempts to Lie to cover things up, perhaps implying to the PCs that he's playing an undercover role here in the library.

If any PC agrees to taste anything from the banquet, though, Kimingio uses his Reassert Fate reaction to disrupt the hazard's effect in an attempt to frighten the PC, then rolls Deception for Initiative. If the PCs refuse to eat, he shrugs, tells them they don't know what they're missing, and as he pretends to reach out for a goblet of wine, instead attacks, still using Deception for Initiative.

Kimingio does his best to fight as would Delaraius, but if he's reduced to fewer than 150 HP, his frustrations get the better of him and he uses Cruel Majesty to reveal his true form to finish the fight, figuring he can negotiate another bet with the Reaper at a later date. Kimingio flees the Reaper's Library if reduced to fewer than 75 Hit Points, and does not return.

KIMINGIO

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE MEDIUM RAKSHASA SPIRIT UNHOLY

Male variant raja-krodha (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 287)

Perception +33; darkvision

Languages Chthonian, Common, Diabolic, Empyrean

Skills Athletics +35, Deception +40, Diplomacy +38, Intimidation +38, Performance +36, Religion +33, Society +34, Stealth +35

Str +7, **Dex** +7, **Con** +6, **Int** +6, **Wis** +7, **Cha** +10

Items +3 greater striking wounding shortsword, silver key set with black rubies worth a total of 2,500 gp (planar key to Duskfathom for use with *interplanar teleport*), +2 greater resilient studded leather armor

AC 45; **Fort** +32, **Ref** +35, **Will** +34; +2 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 380; **Weaknesses** holy 20; **Immunities** fear, fortune, misfortune

Knowledge of Delusion (divine) As raja-krodha.

Reassert Fate ⤵ (divine) As raja-krodha.

Speed 35 feet

Melee ✦ shortsword +38 (agile, finesse, magical, unholy, versatile S), **Damage** 3d6+15 piercing plus 1d6 persistent bleed

Melee ♦ fangs +35 (agile, magical, unholy), **Damage** 3d6+15 piercing plus Grab

Melee ♦ claw +35 (agile, finesse, magical, unholy), **Damage** 3d6+15 slashing

Divine Innate Spells DC 42, attack +34; **9th** *crisis of faith*, *invoke spirits*, *vampiric feast*; **8th** *blood vendetta*, *dispel magic*, *hallucination*; **7th** *haste*, *interplanar teleport*, *invisibility*; **6th** *clairvoyance*, *clairaudience*, *unfettered movement*; **Cantrips (9th)** *detect magic*, *divine lance*

Cleric Domain Spells 2 Focus Points, DC 42, attack +34; **9th** *savor the sting* (Player Core 378), *sudden shift* (Player Core 379)

Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, divine, polymorph) As raja-krodha, but Kimingio can use this ability to appear as a specific individual.

Cruel Majesty ♦ (emotion, mental, visual) As raja-krodha, but DC 42.

Sneak Attack Kimingio deals 3d6 extra precision damage to off-guard creatures.

Swallow Whole ♦ (attack) Medium, 4d12+15 bludgeoning, Rupture 38

Hazard: While the banquet table constantly replenishes food and drink, it comes with a danger. Anyone who eats this food gains nourishment, but no matter how much one eats, the food always leaves them with the nagging suspicion that something was off and the meal could have been just slightly better, potentially compelling them to become obsessed.

UNFULFILLING BANQUET

HAZARD 20

ENVIRONMENTAL MAGICAL

Stealth DC 51 (legendary)

Description This banquet table is covered with a wide range of delicious-looking snacks and a mix of chilled and piping hot beverages.

Disable DC 48 Religion to offer prayers to neutralize the sour reputation of the food and render it safe to eat

Disappoint Feaster 2 (curse, divine, mental, misfortune)

Trigger A creature tastes any of the food or beverages on the banquet table; **Effect** The flavor blooming in the triggering creature's mouth simultaneously delights and frustrates the triggering creature, who must attempt a DC 47 Will save.

Critical Success The triggering creature is unsatisfied by the taste, but is otherwise temporarily immune to the Unfulfilling Banquet for 24 hours.

Success The triggering creature is momentarily distracted by their unsatisfying taste, and until the start of their next turn takes a -2 status penalty to Perception checks.

Failure The triggering creature becomes obsessed with dissatisfaction and becomes stupefied 1 (or increases

their existing stupefied condition value from this hazard by 1, to a maximum of stupefied 4) for an unlimited duration.

Critical Failure As failure, but the creature is compelled to taste something else from the table on their next turn and won't willingly move away from the table until they do so. They take a -2 status penalty on their Will save to resist the hazard's effects on their next taste.

Reset The unfulfilling banquet resets instantly.

F4. THE REAPER'S COURT

SEVERE 19

This area of the Reaper's Library is set off from the rest by an opaque barrier that looks identical to the stone walls surrounding the room, but functions as a *wall of force* cast as a 10th-rank spell. A PC who succeeds at a DC 40 Perception check while examining the wall notices the strange shimmer that sets it apart from the other stone walls, and it can be identified as an opaque *wall of force* with a DC 39 Arcana or Occultism check (or DC 44 Nature or Religion check) to Identify Magic. If the wall is removed or once the PCs move beyond it, read or paraphrase the following.

A pair of low wooden tables, each surrounded by cushions for comfortable seating, sit to either side of a short three-step dais that leads up to a platform on which sits a third table. At the far side of the table sits a strange throne that appears to be made of hundreds of slowly rustling scrolls on which dense lines of text are written. To either side, windows in the walls allow sunlight to pour in, presenting a view of a garden with two trees—one with a tree house and one with a swing.

A closer inspection of the throne reveals it to be made of magically animated scrolls that contain lines of indecipherable text, while the "windows" that look out and provide sunlight are little more than very realistic illusory scenes.

Creatures: This area is the court of the Reaper of Reputation, and once the PCs have made their attempts to uplift the scribes at area F2 and to drive off the unwelcome guest at area F3, the Reaper snaps his fingers to remove the wall of force surrounding this area. He then welcomes the PCs as they approach and invites them to be seated at the lower tables for a conversation. If the PCs reach this area before that (likely by bypassing or destroying the wall of force), the Reaper exasperatedly waves a hand and commands the PCs to "finish the first two things I asked of you, then we'll talk." If the PCs refuse, the Reaper sighs in frustration and attacks.

The Reaper was tasked by Norgorber to use a fragment from the shard of Gorum as a subject for object reading to divine what Gorum's last few thoughts were before he died. Rather than pursue this goal (which the Reaper suspects is part of Norgorber's plan for divine suicide), he simply reduced the shard to ashes and keeps them in a vial in a pocket. He is attended by a quartet of mouthless Masks of the Reaper who silently do his bidding, serving the PCs (safe) drinks and snacks while the discussion takes place. If combat breaks out, these silent Masks work to flank foes for the Reaper, but otherwise they stand back and do their best not to be distracting. Otherwise, the Reaper addresses the PCs as follows before engaging in a trade of secrets (see Research on page 55).

"I hope my brothers haven't or won't cause you much distress. We manifestations are duplications of those that made the mortal that became Norgorber. In shaping us from his memories of them, we take up their faces, demeanors, and motivations. Not all of us are equally pleased with this situation, as you may have noticed, but personally, I enjoy this moment of autonomy. Unlike my brothers, I do not wish to impose my desires on Father. I love him as he is, and I cannot condone that he might seek to destroy himself. Therefore I... sit opposed from him. That is all the strength I have at the time, and I hope by trading in secrets you might be able to help."

The Reaper's intention is to find out how much the heroes have come to understand who Norgorber was before he became a god to satisfy his own curiosity about their abilities to discover secrets. While he would rather not resort to violence, if the heroes attack or make it clear they are only interested in destroying Norgorber's plot without a care of the god's motivation, the Reaper sighs in frustrated understanding and graces them with combat.

If combat breaks out and the Reaper of Reputation hasn't yet spoken with the PCs (such as might occur if they barge into this area before he's ready to speak to them), he attempts to break off combat once he's reduced to fewer than 150 Hit Points, remarking that the PCs are "greater heroes than he expected, and more than deserve a chance to speak to him now." If the PCs agree, then conversation can continue as detailed above; otherwise, the Reaper fights to the death.

REAPER OF REPUTATION

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE MEDIUM HUMANOID UNHOLY

Male variant palace skelm (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 240)

Perception +37; greater darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet


Languages Common, Diabolic; truespeech

Skills Acrobatics +35, Athletics +34, Deception +40, Diplomacy +38, Intimidation +38, Norgorber Lore +38, Occultism +36, Religion +36, Society +36, Vyre Lore +38
Str +6, **Dex** +7, **Con** +4, **Int** +8, **Wis** +7, **Cha** +10

Items *ashes of the war god*, *greater healing potions* (2), +2 *greater resilient antimagic raiment leather armor*, *panaceas* (2), +3 *greater striking greater astral keen wounding rapier*, *White Cleome's Eye* (page 83)

AC 45; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +35, **Will** +37; +1 status vs. magical effects

HP 375; **Immunities** mental

Corrupt Speech  (auditory, illusion, linguistic, occult)

Trigger The Reaper of Reputation hears a creature speak within 30 feet; **Effect** The Reaper of Reputation manipulates those words to damage the speaker's repute by putting treacherous words on another's lips. The Reaper whispers up to 12 words and attempts a Deception check against the Perception DC of a creature other than the triggering creature within 30 feet.


Critical Success The target hears the Reaper's words as if they were spoken by the triggering creature. This can alter linguistic effects. The Reaper casts *subconscious suggestion* on the target as part of the reaction.

Success As critical success, except the Reaper can't cast *subconscious suggestion*.


Failure The target doesn't hear the Reaper's words, and they have no effect.


Critical Failure The target hears the Reaper speak the words.

Speed 25 feet

Melee  *rapier* +37 (deadly d8, disarm, finesse, magical),


Damage 3d6+16 piercing plus 1d6 spirit and 1d6 persistent bleed


Melee  antler +35 (finesse, magical), **Damage** 4d8+16 piercing plus Knockdown

Melee  fist +35 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 4d4+16 bludgeoning

Occult Innate Spells DC 41; **10th** *fabricated truth*; **9th** *duplicate foe*, *spirit blast*; **8th** *disappearance*; **5th** *subconscious suggestion* (at will); **Constant** (10th) *truespeech*

Rituals DC 48; *collective memories*, *geas*, *planar servitor*

Change Shape  (concentrate, divine, polymorph) The Reaper of Reputations can take on the appearance of any Small or Medium humanoid. This doesn't change his Speed or his attack and damage bonuses with his rapier or fist Strikes, but does prevent him from using his antlers Strike. The Reaper can Change Shape to Impersonate specific individuals.

Reap Reputation  (auditory, emotion, linguistic, mental, occult) The Reaper of Reputation makes a compelling and devastating speech in a language of his choice. Any number creatures chosen by the Reaper who are

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within 30 feet who can understand this speech feel their own reputations twisting as a mix of fear and paranoia take hold. Each creature in the area must attempt a DC 42 Will save. The Reaper of Reputation can't Reap Reputation again for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 10d6 mental damage.

Failure The creature becomes confused for 1 minute. Once the confusion effect ends, the mental anguish and memories of what they did while they were confused cause them to take 10d6 mental damage.

Critical Failure As failure, but 20d6 mental damage and 1d6 persistent mental damage.

Sneak Attack The Reaper of Reputation deals 3d6 extra precision damage to creatures who are off-guard

MASKS OF THE REAPER (4)

CREATURE 16

Page 84

Initiative Perception +32

Research: By trading secrets the PCs have learned about Norgorber, they can Research additional information in this discussion, as detailed in "A History of Secrets" starting on page 75.

Treasure: If the PCs manage to earn at least one Research Point with the Reaper, he rewards them for their diligence with the vial of *ashes of the war god* he carries. If they earn all possible Research Points for this encounter, he also rewards them with *White Cleome's Eye*. This artifact can become more powerful if the PCs awaken it by learning more of Norgorber's secrets—see page 57 for further details.

Reward: If the PCs end their encounter with the Reaper without resorting to combat, grant them XP as if they had defeated him nevertheless.

ENDING THE CHAPTER

Norgorber eventually takes note of the PCs, realizing that they are learning secrets about him he thought he'd scrubbed out. Once he decides that he needs to address this threat, he whisks the PCs out of Golarion and into his divine realm of Duskfathom, causing Chapter 2 to end and Chapter 3 to begin.

Once the party is 20th level, Norgorber takes note of them and whisks them away into Chapter 3 once any two of the following conditions are true:

- The party has all four of the manifestations' artifacts (*Graymist*, *Red Hand's Satchel*, *Retribution*, and *White Cleome's Eye*).
- The party has earned at least 60 RP and have learned what Norgorber's actual plan is (see "A

History of Secrets" on page 75). Note that it's possible for the PCs to be whisked away before they have a chance to learn Norgorber's birth name—they may still have a chance to learn this during Chapter 3, even though opportunities to continue to research Norgorber are limited.

- Delaraius Solzakarr is dead.
- Either the PCs spend more than a month not engaging in pursuing this chapter's contents or researching Norgorber, or a month passes during which they make public some of the secrets they learn through research.

If you're using milestones for XP, then as soon as any two of the above four conditions are true, then Norgorber whisks them away, and the PCs advance to 20th level. Regardless, when this happens, make sure to take a break from the game to give your players time to level up their characters!



Reaper of Reputation



Chapter 3: Evening Eternal

Once this chapter begins, things move along at a brisk pace. The PCs won't have much time to stop and shop for items, pursue downtime events, or otherwise take their time with the story, so keep that in mind before you have Norgorber trigger the start of Chapter 3.

Make sure to give the players time to level up their characters. If the PCs need downtime or resources as they level up to 20, give them some downtime in Kintargo before Norgorber whisks them away.

This chapter expects that the PCs have recovered all four of the personal artifacts linked to Norgorber's past and have learned what his actual plans are, but if they triggered being taken away through other, less desirable developments, they might be forced to begin this chapter at a disadvantage!

DIVINE INVITATION

When Norgorber takes action to abduct the PCs, he does so simultaneously for them all, regardless of where they might physically be. That said, you should try to time this event for a point where all of the PCs are idle, so that none of them are interrupted in the middle of something—give your players time to finish up their characters' latest tasks.

When the time comes, the ambient light in the area suddenly reddens and dims as if the sun were setting. Sounds muffle before going silent as darkness engulfs the PCs, and then in that darkness, everyone suddenly feels an intense feeling of vertigo combined with the conviction that someone or something very powerful

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is watching them. The light and sound return within moments, revealing that they're somewhere else entirely. From this point on, the PCs are Norgorber's guests, and mortal magic won't allow them to escape—spells like *interplanar teleport* and *gate* don't work.

What Norgorber doesn't fully realize at this time is that it's as much his own choice to do this as it is a form of "divine subconsciousness" influenced by his fifth aspect as the Prince of Propaganda. In a somewhat ironic turn, one of the reasons Norgorber doesn't just obliterate the PCs to keep his secrets hidden is because the long-suppressed ancient memories of himself as a mortal—which have strongly influenced where the Prince of Propaganda is today—interferes.

If the PCs recovered none of the four artifacts linked to Norgorber's history, then they reappear in Duskfathom before Norgorber himself—proceed with Duskfathom on page 62.

If the PCs recovered any of those artifacts, then instead they reappear in one of the four locations detailed in Secrets Revealed below. Note that these memories are revealed in order from *White Cleome's Eye* to *Retribution* to *Red Hand's Satchel* to *Graymist*. If the PCs recovered all four of these artifacts, play each of the memory encounters out as presented. If the PCs recovered three or fewer, play them out in the order presented while skipping the encounters linked to artifacts they never acquired.

SECRETS REVEALED

While Norgorber's initial plan (as subconsciously influenced by the Prince of Propaganda) is to simply bring the PCs to the streets of Duskfathom, the presence of any of the four potent artifacts associated with his mortal past causes a diversion that manifests in the form of a series of self-contained, divinely created mindscapes. In each of these mindscapes, the PCs face a challenge associated with one of the four artifacts, and if they succeed, that artifact awakens and grows more powerful. Play each of the following four encounters out in order, but skip those that are associated with artifacts the PCs don't possess. As with their initial transition from Golarion, each time the PCs move from one mindscape to the next, they experience a dimming of light and sound for a moment before things return to normal with them in a new location.

While these encounters can certainly be solved without combat, fights remain a very real possibility, in which case you'll want to provide a map for the scene to play out in—the specifics of each aren't particularly relevant, though, so you can make these maps as complex as you wish.

GAMING WITH THE GODS

The actions and powers of deities like Norgorber, Shelyn, Sivanah, and Gyronna aren't governed by rules—they're governed only by the narrative needs of the story. In this adventure, and particularly in this final chapter, the PCs interact directly with a number of gods and goddesses. While in these encounters, the PCs face challenges they must overcome, these encounters' rules don't govern how divinities function. These encounters were customized for this adventure only, and you can use them to inspire your own encounters with deities in your game, but they shouldn't set precedents for how difficult it might be to accomplish any of the tasks put before the party in this adventure. Likewise, this isn't a place for you to take advantage of a deity's great power to arbitrarily punish players or to rob their characters of agency. In the end, successful PCs should feel like they've influenced the gods, but they shouldn't feel like that influence was guaranteed to be successful or a failure from the outset.

Each time the PCs appear in a new memory, they do so refreshed, as if they'd just slept for the night and finished their daily preparations—allow the players to make adjustments as needed before proceeding with the next memory. Any PC who was slain in a memory wakens alive once again in the next, refreshed and restored as are any PCs who survived, yet a PC who comes back to life becomes doomed 1 (or increases their doomed condition value by 1). Their "full night's rest" doesn't reduce this condition, but if they survive a following memory, it's reduced as normal each time they enjoy these restorative effects from entering a new memory.

G. A SECRET WEDDING

SEVERE 20

If the PCs don't have *White Cleome's Eye*, skip this.

The PCs appear in a dungeon. With a successful DC 30 Vyre Lore or DC 35 Society check to Recall Knowledge, a PC knows the dungeon is likely part of Vyre's notorious Dunrock Prison.

This is indeed the case, but before the PCs can move or react, four figures enter the room, and they can do nothing but observe for a few moments.

A filthy bearded man dressed in rags and an elegant woman dressed in finery hold hands and carry expressions of mixed joy and sorrow. They hurry to the far side of the room, where a makeshift altar of sorts has been set up.

The couple are accompanied by a somber-looking, elderly halfling man. A priestess dressed in black and white robes with a gray veil obscuring her face steps into view and begins what appears to be a wedding ceremony with the halfling man playing the role of witness.

The PCs can't interfere with the vision of the ceremony, nor can they hear the words spoken. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Religion check recognizes the priestess is not a mortal, but Sivanah, goddess of illusions, mysteries, reflections, and secrets. A moment after the ceremony begins, a shadowy figure steps out of a nearby archway to stand beside the PCs—a figure they should immediately recognize as Norgorber. He addresses them softly.

"I was not here to witness what The Seventh Veil did for the bride and groom, this favor of allowing them to be wed not long before the groom's death. She has seen fit to share this memory with me, and I come here often to watch, and I like to think it is accurate. Contracts made in secret, be they marriages or something else, are my favorites. But you are no strangers to secrets. Tell me, do you know the names of the groom, the bride, and the witness?"

Creatures: The PCs might be able to tell that the three in the vision are Jax, Cleome, and Thamir simply as a result of their research—particularly if they managed to reach 46 RP in researching Norgorber's secrets. A PC who carries or wears *White Cleome's Eye* automatically recognizes the bride as Cleome when they hear a woman whisper in their ear, "This was my final joy." Otherwise, a PC can recall the name of one of the three (their choice) if they succeed at a DC 45 Vyre Lore or a DC 50 Religion or Society check to Recall Knowledge (on a critical success, a PC recalls the names of two of the three); these DCs are reduced by 10 if the PCs have reached at least 46 RP and for a character who wears *White Cleome's Eye*.

Norgorber allows the PCs to consult privately to compare their memories but only allows them one chance to speak as a group and name the three.

If the PCs can name all three, Norgorber replies, "Secrets are only such if someone remains to keep them in mind; thank you for carrying their secret in your hearts." He then vanishes and the memory fades, transporting the PCs to their next destination.

If the PCs can't name all three, Norgorber says, "Alas, secrets forgotten are no longer secrets, and

left to fester, they can become tangled dangers—tangles that could well mean your dooms." With that, Norgorber vanishes, as does the vision of Sivanah officiating the wedding along with any of the three among the bride, groom, and witness whom the PCs correctly named. Those they didn't correctly name suddenly shriek in pain as they transform into roaring, two-headed draconic serpents—tarn linnorms! This encounter is either a Trivial, Moderate, or Severe threat to 20th-level PCs, depending on how many of the unnamed visions transform. The linnorms fight to the death; once the last is defeated, the memory ends, and the PCs are transported to their next destination.



Sivanah

TARN LINNORMS (1-3) CREATURE 20

Pathfinder Monster Core 221

Initiative Perception +35

Treasure: If the PCs successfully name all three figures, the PC who possesses *White Cleome's Eye* feels a surge of joy and nostalgic melancholy as the artifact they wear awakens, gaining additional powers as detailed on pages 72 and 83. Otherwise, *White Cleome's Eye* awakens once the linnorms are defeated as long as the item's owner survives the encounter.

H. PUPPET STRINGS SEVERE 20

If the PCs don't have *Retribution*, skip this encounter.

When this encounter takes shape, the PCs find themselves in a vast gladiatorial arena, the surrounding seats filled to capacity with cheering and jeering figures.

The roaring crowd that packs this arena's seating grows in volume as a lone figure strides out into its center. He raises high his bloodstained, manacled hands and regards the crowd with an expression of utter hatred, and it's easy to imagine this man murdering every single one of the spectators.

A moment later, this man turns his gaze to the PCs, and they should immediately recognize him as Delaraius Solzakarr. At the same time, the PCs should notice they stand within what appears to be a juror box and that an intimidating woman with wild hair and a bulging red eye squats imperiously on a judge's throne nearby. Sitting silently with them in the juror box is Norgorber, who remains quiet and observant

during this encounter. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Religion check recognizes this figure as Gyronna, goddess of extortion, hatred, and spite.

Gyronna raises one arm, and the entire arena goes silent. She turns to speak to the PCs in a cruel voice that sounds on the verge of an enraged scream.

"This man's ancestors brought misery to Vyre, to an extent that has rarely been matched. Since those ancestors faced no trial or punishment, this man, the last of his line, must answer. What say you, my jurors? Should this man be slain, or shall we forgive him?"

Creatures: While the PCs might initially assume that the man who appears to be Delaraius standing before them is a vision or hallucination, he's in fact the actual man, plucked out of Vyre by Norgorber and placed in this sham trial. By inviting Gyronna to officiate this trial, Norgorber can hide his involvement and observe unseen from beyond, curious to learn if the PCs are merciful or cruel. Delaraius knows none of this, only that he's suddenly standing before the PCs in a strange arena, and based on his last interactions with the PCs, he'll either beg them for mercy or hurl insults and challenges at them.

If the PCs decide that Delaraius is to be executed, Gyronna cackles in delight and then waves her hand, causing the PCs to be transported to the arena floor. "Then have at him, my executioners! Make his death cruel and memorable!" Delaraius's shackles vanish, and with a wave of Gyronna's hand, his Skinsaw Eye flies from its home (leaving a bloody socket behind) and returns to Norgorber. If the PCs attack, he fights to the death. If the PCs balk and refuse to carry out the order, or if they attempt to grant him mercy before delivering a death blow, proceed as if the PCs had decided to forgive him.

If the PCs decide to forgive Delaraius, Gyronna shrieks in frustration. "Wrong! He is to be executed, and you at his side for betraying your roles!" The PCs find themselves down on the arena floor, but this time, Delaraius's manacles stay in place, as does his Skinsaw Eye. Freeing him from the manacles requires a DC 40 Thievery check to Pick the Lock; this is also the DC for him to Escape. If he gets free, Delaraius joins the fight at the PCs' side, for as soon as the PCs arrive, they're attacked by a half-dozen spiderlike monstrosities—agents of Norgorber known as zimiezecks. The fiends fight to the death.



Gyronna

DELARAIUS SOLZAKARR

CREATURE 20

Page 90

Initiative Perception +36

ZIMIEZEKS (6)

CREATURE 18

Page 89

Initiative Perception +33

Cutting the Strings: If the PCs have achieved at least 54 RP, they catch glimpses of what appear to be four strings of energy attached to Delaraius's ankles and wrists, almost like puppet strings.

A PC who Seeks to look more closely and succeeds at a DC 40 Perception check realizes these strings are manifestations of Delaraius's lineage all the way back to the Zakarr patriarch, and they represent that ancient killer's influence over his destiny (in large part as a result of Norgorber's eagerness to keep him close when Delaraius first prayed to the god years ago). A character who holds *Retribution* in their hand automatically succeeds at this Perception check and hears a rasping male voice whisper to them, "Ah... my legacy lives on, and my murders still matter..."

A PC can Point Out the strings to others, allowing all allies to see them for the rest of this encounter. Anyone adjacent to Delaraius can attempt to destroy one of the four strings. Each has an AC of 40 and 20 Hit Points, but if *Retribution* is used to cut one, the artifact automatically hits and destroys a string with each Strike. If all four strings are destroyed, the PCs cut Delaraius free from Norgorber's influence—his Skinsaw Eye vanishes and is replaced by a healthy eye if this occurs. Each string cut causes one living zimiezek remaining in the arena to howl in frustration and immediately vanish. Once all four are cut, all remaining zimiezecks vanish, and Delaraius is instantly transported back to Vyre with a gasp of shock—the PCs can follow up on how this experience might change the man during the Adventure Path's aftermath (see *Beyond the Campaign* on page 73). If the PCs do cut the strings, Norgorber acts for the first time in the encounter by standing, giving the PCs a long cold stare from his empty hood, and then vanishes, leaving behind a complicated sensation of gratitude and anger.

Treasure: If the PCs kill Delaraius, cut his four strings, or defeat all of the zimiezecks, the PC who carries *Retribution* feels a sudden but fleeting surge of bloodlust as the artifact awakens, gaining additional powers as detailed on pages 72 and 83.

I. A TOUGH LESSON

If the PCs don't have *Red Hand's Satchel*, skip this.

When this encounter takes shape, the PCs appear in the upper seats of an operating theater. The PCs can do nothing at the moment but observe.

The stadium-like seating area for this operating theater is dimly lit, but each seat offers an excellent view of the stage below, where there are several long tables covered with alchemical experiments in progress. An elderly halfling man watches, arms folded as he stands atop one of the tables, while a younger human boy wearing an eye patch over one eye works hard at an experiment. As he toils, the boy cries out in frustration when his experiment suddenly makes a small explosion, forcing him to start over. "No no no!" cries the halfling, stomping a foot in exasperation. "You're smarter than this. You know what to do! Try again!"



Thamir Gixx

The PCs are now free to speak, but an intense feeling of forbidding prevents them from standing up or interacting with those down below, who don't respond to any attempts to make contact. With a successful DC 20 Religion check, a PC recognizes the elderly halfling man as Thamir Gixx, god of greed, opportunity, and thievery. Regardless of the result of this check, the PCs realize someone else is sitting with them—Norgorber has returned to their side. As soon as the PCs notice him, he speaks.

"I remember this lesson with a mix of fondness and frustration. He tried so hard to get me to master this toxin, but I never did manage it. My error seems so obvious to me today, but I wonder... can you catch my mistake?"

After Norgorber speaks, the younger version of him below begins to work out the experiment again. As the PCs watch, young Norgorber moves about the tables, carefully selecting one reagent after the other. Once he's made four selections, he returns to the central workbench to try again, only to create an even larger explosion—one that forces his teacher to race to his side to drag him from a fire. As Thamir extinguishes his student, Norgorber asks the PCs what his mistake was.

To formulate an answer, up to four PCs can attempt checks to earn Victory Points. A PC can attempt a DC 38 Crafting check to understand the flaws in the attempt, or a DC 40 Occultism check to make

inferences about the process, or a DC 42 Perception check to interpret subtle facial expressions Thamir flashes each time young Norgorber makes a choice. A PC who carries *Red Hand's Satchel* subconsciously reaches for it whenever young Norgorber makes a choice of reagents, and after young Norgorber makes his final choice, they hear an elderly halfling whisper in their ear, "How severe must the lie we tell ourselves be?" This PC reduces the DC for any attempt to earn Victory Points in this challenge by 10.

If the PCs have achieved at least 60 RP in researching Norgorber, they know of his plan to manifest a fifth aspect and realize there's a thematic connection going on here—increase their Victory Points by 2.

2 or Fewer Victory Points: The PCs realize that young Norgorber is attempting to brew a toxin that will come to be known as Vyre's Bliss (page 81)—a concoction that famously uses four distinct

reagents. The exact reagents can vary as long as one is one part lesser poison, one part murder victim's blood, one part tears that flowed from a source of public shame, and one part expensive wine. Norgorber is impressed that the PCs figured it out but then notes that even young Norgorber had this knowledge. The encounter ends without the PCs learning the mistake, and the next scene begins.

3 or more Victory Points: The PCs make the same deductions as above but realize what young Norgorber missed is a fifth reagent—a single whisper from the alchemist himself, spoken into the concoction just as it comes to a boil. The whisper must be a lie that, if it were to spread, would cause discord and even warfare between two factions known to the alchemist. Norgorber is impressed, but so is Thamir—the elderly halfling looks up to the PCs in the audience, as if noticing them for the first time, and nods in approval. A PC who carries *Red Hand's Satchel* feels a sudden surge of pride as the artifact awakens, gaining additional powers as detailed on pages 72 and 83. The encounter ends, and the next scene begins.

J. BENEATH THE WAVES

SEVERE 20

If the PCs don't have *Graymist*, skip this encounter.

As this memory forms, the PCs find themselves on the deck of a ship flying merchant flags, with each of them in the role of one of the crew. The PCs can do nothing at the moment but observe.

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The deck of this merchant ship bustles with activity as crew members race along the deck and clamber through the rigging in a frantic attempt to correct course. Off the ship's bow, in the distance, lies a strangely familiar coastline, barely visible through storm-tossed waves and sheets of rain.

With a successful DC 25 Vyre Lore or DC 30 Society check, a PC recognizes the coastline as Vyre Island, yet as it would've appeared before Vyre was founded, thousands of years in the past. As the ship heaves, the PCs realize they're among the crew of a ship called *Sea Spider* and that they're all members of House Gorb, one of Vyre's founding families. An instant later, a rogue wave rises before them and threatens to sink the ship—the captain and others shout out orders, and the PCs must quickly comply!

Ask each player what their characters are doing aboard the ship to help avoid the rogue wave, but also let them know that their PCs are acting this scene out rather than enduring the danger in person. Each PC can then attempt either a DC 40 Performance check to play the role of the sailor as they act out their desperate attempt or a DC 38 check with a different skill based on the action they're trying to perform. This can always be a Sailing Lore check but also might be Acrobatics (if the PCs are attempting to clamber along the rigging to trim sail), Athletics (if they're down on the deck helping to pull lines), Nature or Survival (if they're trying to use their knowledge of the sea), and so on. A PC who wears *Graymist* hears a whisper in their ear—"In this place I drowned in sleep"—which increases the result of their check by one degree of success.

If at least half of the PCs succeed, they avoid the rogue wave and make it to shore, but if less than half of the PCs succeed, the ship sinks. Take a moment to describe either set of events, then inform the PCs that they're seated with some others on large lengths of driftwood on a beach at sunset. A bonfire burns nearby, and the skyline of Vyre can be seen down the coast. Seated with the PCs is the same young boy with an eye patch whom they saw in the previous vision. If the PCs made it to shore in the scene, young Norgorber claps in delight, telling them they did well in recounting the old heroic story of House Gorb's first arrival on Vyre Island. If *Sea Spider* sank, young Norgorber scolds them for taking artistic license and turning a tale of heroism into a tragedy.

Young Norgorber then fades into shadows, and a moment later, he's replaced by the intimidating cloaked figure he's known as today, looming high over the seated PCs. The waves of the ocean grow violent once again, and Norgorber speaks once more.

"You know much about me, mortals. Too much. I think it's time for you to learn the rewards of all those who pry too deeply into knowledge that doesn't concern them. But since you seem so interested in my past, let us see how you fare against those who brought my family to Vyre's shores so long ago... and the one who I keep to this day as one of my favored pets!"

Creatures: As he finishes speaking, a new wave surges in, and a moment later, the PCs are adrift at sea with no land in sight. Norgorber looms impossibly large on the horizon. The ocean they find themselves in is miles deep, and the waves are rough—it's a DC 30 Athletics check to Swim in the stormy swell. Worse, the PCs aren't alone in this ocean. Bearing down on them are ships flying the spider flag of House Gorb, carried forward on an immense surge of water. As combat begins, these ships resolve into the form of a pair of bone ships moving toward the PCs at either side of the wave, which rises up into a humanoid shape—Norgorber's legendary ally, *Venomfist*.

While this fight might be particularly deadly for PCs not ready to deal with being cast suddenly adrift into the ocean, keep in mind that as with all of these memory encounters, PCs who perish are restored in the next scene. In addition, items and pieces of gear dropped and that appear to sink into the abyss below are gone for the remainder of this encounter, but they're restored to the PCs once this final memory resolves.

VENOMFIST

CREATURE 22

Page 88

Initiative Perception +40

LOST FOUNDERS OF VYRE (2)

CREATURE 18

Bone ships (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 34)

Initiative Perception +32

Speaking a Name: If at any time during this encounter a PC speaks Norgorber's birth name aloud—"Jaxter"—the god is genuinely surprised and a little angry. Whatever is happening around the party seems to freeze in time, and then the sun sets once more, things go dark, and the PCs suddenly find themselves in Duskfathom.

Treasure: If the PCs make it to the shore when reenacting the storm, the PC who possesses *Graymist* feels a sense of triumph as the artifact they wear awakens, gaining additional powers as detailed on pages 72 and 83. Otherwise, *Graymist* awakens once *Venomfist* and the *Lost Founders of Vyre* are defeated (or as soon as a PC speaks "Jaxter" aloud)—as long as the item's owner survives the encounter.

DUSKFATHOM

Norgorber's divine realm of Duskfathom is technically a part of the planar city of Axis, but its location deep below that city, combined with its mostly self-contained features, results in a region that feels in some ways like its own realm. Physically accessible via long, winding routes through the sewers and cisterns below Axis, the region lies in an enormous cavern far below. Norgorber discovered the cavern not long after ascending to divinity, and he wasted no time in shaping the realm into a strange duplicate of his hometown, creating it in the image of Vyre.

Beyond Duskfathom's borders, the cavern stretches for a few dozen miles of ocean and wilderness before reaching the cavern walls, which arch up to form a vast dome that hangs 3,000 feet above. Here, a maze of hanging structures, roiling clouds of vapor, flickering crystals, and glowing fungi provide points of light that give the illusion in the city below of the first few stars starting to flicker in a twilight sky. North exists at Norgorber's will, and to the west, out over the sea, a mostly set sun appears to hover on the horizon

in a perpetual twilight. Up close, this "sun" is revealed to be a vast hole in the wall, and the light it emits is nothing more than the dismal glow of Hell itself far below. The ocean pours through this hole in an immense cataract, the waters of which never drain their source and vaporize long before reaching Hell.

When the PCs finally travel to Duskfathom, the first thing they encounter is a brick archway partially filled with cobwebs, but through which they can see an alleyway in a city on a foggy night. A moment later, the PCs are drawn through this portal into Norgorber's realm.

DUSKFATHOM TRAITS

The sprawling city of Duskfathom includes everything from isolated dungeons in dark caverns to an entire duplication of the city of Vyre. The citizens of Duskfathom are largely comprised of the shades of those who once worshipped Norgorber, who are in turn served by captured souls of those sacrificed to the god from life. All manner of other powerful and supernatural creatures dwell here, including Norgorber's spiderlike fiend-servitors known as karumzeks and zimiezek. Undead are common here, as are creatures who have fled the streets of Axis far above (particularly unusual aeons who have abandoned their nature in pursuit of self-interest) and various fiends come up from Hell, Abaddon, and the Outer Rifts (who value the city as a trade hub). Indeed, anything can be purchased in Duskfathom, but the price one must pay can be tremendous indeed. The smallest number of Duskfathom's citizens are planar travelers from the many worlds where Norgorber is worshipped, come here to be closer to their god or to seek personal power.

Duskfathom exists in a perpetual state of twilight. Dim illumination is the norm here, but areas with a direct line of sight to the westward "sun" are brightly lit. The realm impairs spells and effects with the light trait, causing such effects that have a range of greater than touch to be halved.

The most infamous of Duskfathom's features is its shrouded nature—for the god of secrets has enhanced Vyre's promises. Here in Duskfathom, every creature is protected so that those within Duskfathom can't detect or scry upon those outside of it, and sleeping creatures are immune to dreams sent by spells cast from outside the city. These effects function normally if their source and target are both in Duskfathom.



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ROLEPLAYING NORGORBER

The PCs are drawn into Duskfathom by Norgorber, who can no longer ignore how many secrets they've learned, but some small part of him admires what the PCs have done. Just as he, once a mortal, struggled against insurmountable odds, he sees in the PCs the same tenacity with their actions. At the same time, the ranks of the divine as a whole are only now starting to understand and comprehend the true magnitude of how things have changed with Gorum's death. Gods have died before, but none of such power as Gorum have done so recently, and so like all other deities, Norgorber has a fresh, new, and largely unfamiliar sense of doubt about his everlasting immortality.

So rather than simply solve the problem by wiping the PCs out of existence, Norgorber is moving carefully—not only to avoid an act that enrages other deities who might move against him for destroying some of their worshippers, but out of his own sense of curiosity. After all, what better way to protect your secrets than recruiting those who managed to discover them despite your best efforts?

During their extended visit in Duskfathom, Norgorber is never far from the PCs and is often right there at their side as a figure they can speak to. When roleplaying Norgorber, strive to present him as mysterious. The PCs should find him disarmingly affable, calm, and empathetic, with moments that make him seem a playful trickster who knows right from wrong and where the two sides become muddled. Yet at the same time, a sinister menace underlies all he does—in time, Norgorber will likely shift away from being a god of secrets and become a god of lies, and the PCs might just see some of that transition happening in real time as they speak to him.

ARRIVAL IN DUSKFATHOM

When the PCs arrive in Duskfathom, they find themselves in a familiar urban landscape, at sundown during a rainstorm. They stand at the northeastern end of Heretic's Row, near the entrance to the large park in the northeast corner of the neighborhood of Sanctuary. Looking back down the wide avenue, the PCs note one immediate difference to confirm they aren't actually in Vyre: all of the temples on Heretic's Row are obviously devoted to Norgorber in one of his four aspects, their decor all brazenly out in the open.

The presence of Norgorber himself is an even greater revelation, for soon after the PCs get their bearings, he rises up before them from the surrounding

shadows, reaching a height of 9 feet as he spreads wide his arms and, in his soft, whispering voice, says, "Welcome to Duskfathom, zealots of truth!"

If the PCs attack Norgorber, they swiftly find that nothing they do can harm him; he patiently waits for them to exhaust their violence, perhaps warning them against wasting resources when their "final test" has yet to begin. Likewise, any PC who attempts to escape only finds himself arriving precisely back here, standing before the god. When they're finally ready to listen—or if they already were ready to listen from the start, Norgorber speaks.

"You have learned much about my history. Secrets I have sought to keep as secrets. Not so long ago, I would have handled your discoveries through my faithful, empowering them to hunt you down, slay you, and deliver your souls to Duskfathom for eternal servitude. But now we are in a new era—an era in which a god of war is dead. We among the divine would be fools to assume what fate visited Gorum could not visit any of us... and I am no fool. And so I have brought you here—to study you, to understand you, and yes, perhaps even to learn from you. But first, now is your chance to admit to me what you have learned."



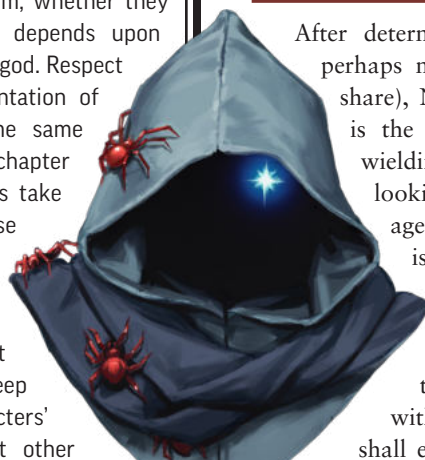
Duskfathom Portal

EARNING NORGORBER'S RESPECT

Once the PCs arrive in Duskfathom, whether they realize it or not, their survival depends upon whether or not they can impress a god. Respect Points are a mechanical representation of their efforts and function in the same way as Victory Points. As this chapter plays out, certain actions the PCs take automatically increase or decrease their Respect Points, while in other cases, they must succeed at skill checks to earn Respect Points using the standard Victory Point rules (GM Core 184). You should keep the players aware of their characters' current Respect Point total, but other than it being important to avoid reaching 0 Respect Points, they shouldn't know what total they're hoping to reach. The final ramifications for Respect Points earned are given later in this chapter on page 66.

Initial Respect Points

When the PCs arrive in Duskfathom, they start with up to 4 Respect Points, depending on their success at researching Norgorber's secrets (page 78). Increase this total by 1 for each artifact they manage to awaken in encounters G through J.



Norgorber

AN EVENING TO REMEMBER

After determining what the PCs know (and perhaps more importantly, what they don't share), Norgorber changes his form. Gone is the 9-foot-tall, spider-covered, sword-wielding figure, and in its place is a plain-looking young man of about 22 years of age wearing an eye patch. This form is how Norgorber appeared in his mortal life as Jaxter on the day he left Vyre behind. Norgorber tells the PCs that a "final test" awaits them on the far side of Duskfathom within his family home and that he shall escort them on a walk through the city to this locale. Along the way, he promises stops for shopping, refreshments, and entertainment, and he explains he's adopted this form as a disguise so that they can interact more naturally with Duskfathom's citizens, warning the PCs against revealing who he actually is to any they encounter. During this trip, Norgorber hopes to observe the PCs and learn more about them, giving the party a few more opportunities to earn his respect.

A BIT OF SHOPPING

The first stop along the way is in Duskfathom's bustling duplicate of Vyre's Opal Market. Here, one can wander for days without seeing everything it has to offer, and once one enters and explores, the size of the market seems larger than it ever could be when first viewed. Norgorber notes that the PCs are free to sell and purchase what they need here, and he recommends they take the opportunity to make any last-minute upgrades or purchases they feel they might need without offering suggestions.

Here, the PCs can purchase any common item of any level up to 20. Norgorber notes that there's no real rush to get to where they're going, and if the PCs want to take time to transfer runes between items, they have time to do so, taking as many days as they need to transfer and etch runes. If the PCs spend multiple days here, there are plenty of inns and hostels to stay at. Norgorber gives them privacy and ensures they aren't interrupted during their stay. If the PCs spend more than a week here (or attempt to leave the marketplace), Norgorber is secretly amused, but if you want to encourage the PCs onward, you can have Norgorber grow impatient and warn them that if they're done, there's still

Norgorber falls silent and listens, waiting for the PCs to reveal to him what they've discovered. He's a god, but like all the gods of the Great Beyond, he isn't omniscient. If the PCs fully and truthfully reveal to him all of the secrets they've learned without trying to cover anything up, Norgorber's opinion of them diminishes—he values secrets, after all, and offering everything up without holding anything back is, to him, a show of weakness.

The PCs can try to hide their secrets or even lie about what they think they've learned by attempting a DC 40 Deception check to earn Respect Points. Alternatively, they can outright refuse to reveal what they've learned at all by attempting a DC 42 Intimidation check. Finally, a PC can attempt a DC 45 Religion check to earn Respect Points by using Norgorber's own dogma against him to justify not telling him a thing. Each PC can attempt one of these checks to earn Respect Points, up to a total of four rolls.

Respect Points: If the PCs don't try to keep any secrets at all from Norgorber and instead tell him everything they know about him, they lose 4 Respect Points.

some ways to go. A party that abuses this hospitality might lose a Respect Point.

At some point during this shopping, a mortal human thief visiting Duskfathom attempts to pickpocket one of the PCs. His attempt fails automatically, for the PCs are far too high level for this foolish thief to rob from. Ask the party how they respond to the pickpocket. If they try to turn the tables on the pickpocket, either by simply stealing back what he stole or using their own criminal knowledge to deal with him, a PC can roll a DC 38 Thievery check to earn Respect Points. If they attack or become aggressive, one PC of the party's choice can roll a DC 40 Intimidation check to earn Respect Points. If they react with kindness and charity, a PC of the party's choice can roll a DC 45 Society check to earn Respect Points. Other reactions won't earn a chance to earn Respect Points, but if the PCs simply ignore the thief or let him move on with his stolen item, choose what minor item a random PC loses. The party also loses 2 Respect Points.

A STOP FOR FOOD

Once the PCs have concluded their shopping, Norgorber leads the PCs south along the harbor. Along the way, he and the PCs come to a section of boardwalk on which a wide range of street food and pier-side taverns beckon. Norgorber pauses, then asks if the PCs would like to join him in a short meal? If the PCs refuse, Norgorber shrugs and leads them on to the next encounter but interprets their choice as distant and cold—the party loses 2 Respect Points.

The PCs need not spend money on the meal—it's Norgorber's treat! The food is delicious and filling, and the alcohol pleasant but not impairing. During the meal, up to four PCs have the opportunity to chat a bit more in-depth with their deific guide. When a player wishes to do so, they select the topic of conversation, and then you should decide what skill most closely approximates that topic—if no particular skill comes to mind, it's a Diplomacy check. The PC attempts a DC 40 skill check with this skill to earn Respect Points. If the PC succeeds at the check, use this opportunity to have Norgorber explain away a lingering question about the campaign's events that might be associated with the topic; on a critical success, Norgorber answers two such questions. The only topic he won't speak of are his secrets, as listed in the Research Point thresholds on page 78.

NORGORBER'S NAME

Once the events of An Evening to Remember begin, Norgorber assumes the appearance he held as a mortal. The first time the PCs address him by his birth name of "Jaxter," Norgorber is unexpectedly touched—the PCs earn 2 Respect Points. Conversely, if the PCs ever reveal in public where others beyond the party can hear that Norgorber's birth name is Jaxter, Norgorber is annoyed, and the PCs lose 4 Respect Points.

Norgorber asks questions of the PCs in return. He asks a PC one of the following questions, chosen by you (but never repeated), after each time a PC attempts a skill check here to earn Respect Points. The PCs are free to answer in any way they wish, but a PC who refuses to answer costs the party 1 Respect Point. The questions Norgorber asks include the following.

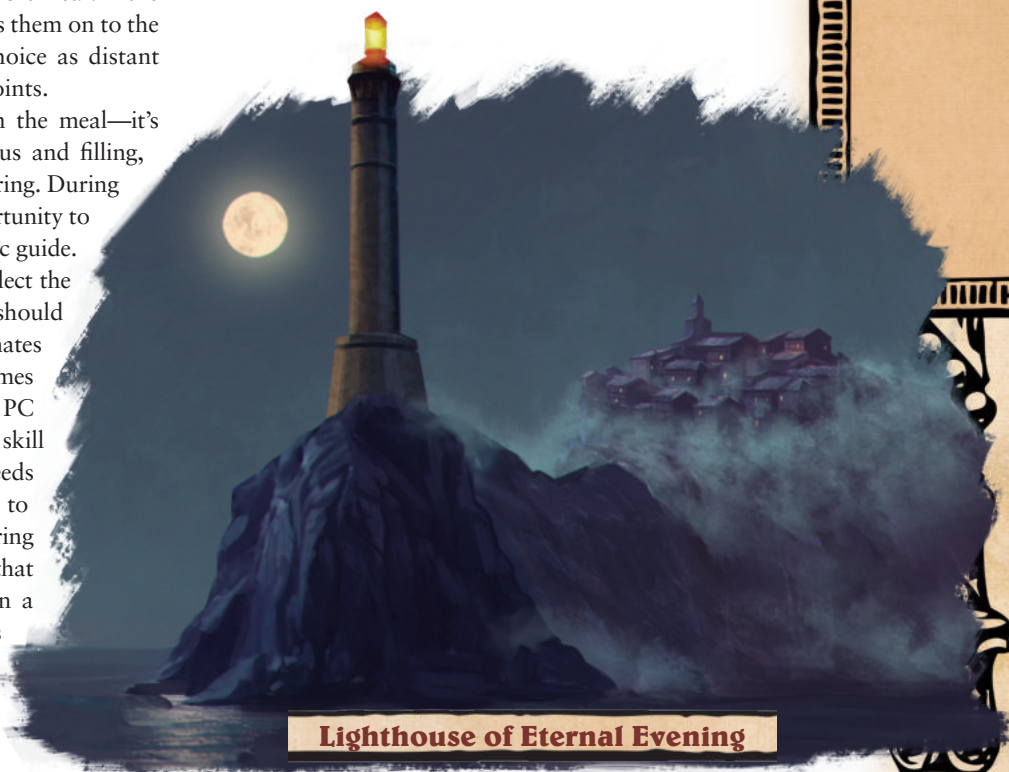
"Why did you leave home to become an adventurer?"

"What was your family like growing up?"

"What would you have done with your life if you never became an adventurer?"

"Have you ever wished for a simpler life?"

Once at least four PCs have had a chance to bring up a topic and ask a question, Norgorber finishes his meal and stands, indicating it's time to continue their walk.



Lighthouse of Eternal Evening

THE STOLEN OPERA

As Norgorber leads the PCs along the southern boardwalk, up ahead the PCs see a large opera house built onto the boardwalk and overlooking the harbor. With a successful DC 25 Vyre Lore check, a PC confirms no such analog exists in Vyre. As they come closer, the impossible is made clear—the Kintargo Opera House stands here, and judging from the decor of its facade, their own opera is being performed at this very moment!

If the PCs make no comment, Norgorber appears not to notice and leads them on, but he's both surprised and disappointed that they didn't appear to care that their opera or even their opera house appears to have been stolen—the party loses 2 Respect Points.

If the PCs call out the strangeness, Norgorber chuckles, then suggests that they purchase a ticket to see if those who have obviously stolen their opera are better at it than the PCs were—he even offers to pay for the tickets! If the PCs want only to attack the thieves and fight it out, as soon as they start to take actual violence against the opera house's crew, the entire building simply vanishes, revealing itself to have been a complex sham placed at Norgorber's whim. The god shakes his head, noting that such violence against those who would attempt to profit from their hard work is understandable, but that he's disappointed that they missed the chance to see the performance.

If the PCs agree, they're led into the opera hall and given the best seats in the house. As the opera proceeds, describe how the actors put their own spin on the story, taking liberties with the plot, characters, costumes, and set. If the PCs' premiere was a Tier 2 or lower success, then this production makes obvious improvements, and each PC must succeed at a DC 40 Will save to avoid becoming stupefied 1 (or stupefied 2 on a critical failure) as a result of the frustration and jealousy it creates; this condition has an unlimited duration and has the curse and mental traits.

If, on the other hand, the opera's premiere was a Tier 3 success, then this production is obviously inferior. The production's obviously lower quality bolsters the PCs by making them feel as if only they could've done this story justice, and for the remainder of this adventure, each PC gains a +1 circumstance bonus to all saving throws. This circumstance bonus increases to +2 if the PCs' premiere was a Tier 4 success, and to +3 if it was a Tier 5 success.

After the show, as Norgorber leads the PCs on, he asks them for their review of the performance. One PC of the party's choice can attempt a DC 38 Theater Lore, DC 40 Performance, or DC 42 Society check to offer their response in a way to earn Respect Points.

THE SHOW MUST END

Eventually, Norgorber leads the PCs up onto the city walls, across a bridge over a harbor entrance, and then onto what's known as Keelwrack Island in Vyre. His journey ends as he brings the PCs to the southern tip of the isle, where a fortress-like lighthouse stands. This place is the Lighthouse of Eternal Evening, a focus of Duskfathom and one of the city's most prominent skyline features. Norgorber leads the PCs up to the top of the light and then lets them take in the sight of Duskfathom laid out below. As he does, he speaks again. If the PCs haven't yet discovered his actual plans by reaching 60 RP while researching his secrets, Norgorber explains his plan to them.

He then goes on to explain that he's already given life to his fifth aspect, a manifestation he calls the Prince of Propaganda—a creature devoted to the manipulation of society solely to promote war and violence between factions, be they feuding families, bickering nations, or anything else. He reveals that with the power he's claimed from just one warshard of Gorum, he's now confident that he could lift all five manifestations to divinity, yet the actions of the PCs gave him pause.

Total the number of Respect Points (RP) the PCs have accumulated, then see below for the results.

NORGORBER'S DECISION

RP	Result
Less than 5	Norgorber is unimpressed with the PCs. He wipes all knowledge of himself from their minds, then proceeds with his plan to become a pantheon.
6–15	Norgorber is intrigued by the PCs. He sends them on to House Gorb but offers them no advantage.
16–25	Norgorber is impressed. He sends the PCs on to House Gorb but adjusts the situation within those walls to be weighted in their favor—reduce all DCs associated with the chase in House Gorb by 5.
26 or more	Norgorber fully respects the PCs. Reduce all DCs associated with the chase by 10. In the end, he opts to destroy the Prince of Propaganda if the PCs fail to do so, so that even if the PCs ultimately fail to succeed in this last dangerous encounter, in the end they still prevail as Norgorber remains a single deity.

INTO HOUSE GORB

Assuming that the PCs ended up with at least 6 Respect Points, Norgorber directs the sunlight-hued beam of the Lighthouse of Eternal Evening out over Duskfathom. As the beam passes over the city, it illuminates an ancient version of Vyre as it existed thousands of years ago, finally coming to a rest on a vacant lot in Vyre's Westwatch subdistrict, on the far side of the city. There, a lone, two-story building with an attached garden is revealed.

"This was my home. House Gorb. When I left Vyre so long ago, nothing remained of House Gorb, and today, very few recall it ever existed. You are among those few. I have given this house over to the Prince of Propaganda and have afforded him a few guardians for protection. He waits there with the warshard of Gorum clutched in hand, ready for ascension to divinity.

"I am no longer certain this plot is in my best interest. The Prince of Propaganda is more of who I was eons ago than I am today, and to ascend him and my other aspects as separate gods, I would undo all I was as a mortal. Yes, who I am now would be much more powerful, but at the cost of my legacy. In time, who is to say the five parts of what I became would not turn on each other, bicker and fight and destroy, just as we did so long ago to each other?

"But... I am still not sure. You have made me doubt. And so I ask you to help me make this decision. Go now to House Gorb. Infiltrate it and force a confrontation with the Prince of Propaganda. Put him to the test. If he falls to you, be it to violence or merely to your words, then my plan was flawed from the start, and I shall return to what I was. Fail, and you prove that the Prince of Propaganda is the way forward—I shall become five, and my domain over your worlds will only grow."

Once the PCs are ready, Norgorber indicates they should step into the path illuminated by the light. An instant later, they're transported through time and space, arriving at the southern entrance to House Gorb. Around them looms a cityscape in its death throes—be it Vyre or Duskfathom, whatever the PCs see, they should instinctively understand it to be the immediate aftermath of what will happen to both locations should the Prince of Propaganda become a god and that the war wracking these locations will swiftly spread throughout many worlds.

HOUSE GORB FEATURES

House Gorb is a fine manor with strong, reinforced stone walls covered with plaster. Ceiling height in

rooms is 12 feet. The interior floors are hardwood on the ground level and carpeted on the upper level. Doors are made of wood, and while all can be locked, none are when the PCs first arrive and take the time to explore the manor. A locked door can be opened with three successful DC 40 Thievery checks to Pick the Lock, or Forced Open with a successful DC 45 Athletics check. Characters can discover secret doors with a successful DC 40 Perception check. Lighting within House Gorb is bright with lanterns glowing brightly in each room, but these lighting conditions (as well as the locked status of its doors) can change if the PCs don't do well in their infiltration of Norgorber's memories.

EXPLORING HOUSE GORB

Only one combat faces the PCs in House Gorb—a confrontation with the Prince of Propaganda. Before the PCs can force this conflict, they must explore the manor and use what they've learned about Norgorber's history to force the Prince of Propaganda out. As the PCs move through the manor, they fall into the roles of those who once lived here or influenced the fortunes of House Gorb and, in a way, become actors within a complex stage, playing the very characters who, ultimately, transformed young Jaxter Gorb into the god of greed, murder, poison, and secrets.

This plays out using the infiltration subsystem (GM Core 196), and the obstacles the PCs face are all scenes from Norgorber's early life. The PCs don't have any opportunity to take preparation activities for this infiltration, neither are there complications nor opportunities. As soon as they set foot within the manor, they're swept up in Norgorber's memories. While the PCs can explore the manor at their own pace, they face no danger nor find no notable treasure within. What they do sense are the locations where six of Norgorber's key memories await. The party knows where these locations are, and while the six memories do follow a chronological order (as listed on pages 68-69), the order in which the party chooses to visit the locations and trigger their obstacles is left to them, perhaps leaving them to puzzle out the actual order in which these events took place.

As with all infiltration obstacles, if a character's actions automatically help without requiring a check (like using an appropriate spell), that action can at your discretion grant the party 1 Infiltration Point (IP). Each infiltration round consists of 10 minutes of work. Obstacles K1 and K6 are group obstacles, and every PC in the group can attempt a check to overcome that obstacle each round. Obstacles K2-K5 are different—each round, only one PC can attempt



GROUND FLOOR



UPPER FLOOR



HOUSE GORB
ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET



to overcome the obstacle. In each case, that character becomes the focused character of that obstacle as they play out that role in Norgorber's past. While that PC attempts to overcome the obstacle, the other PCs take on roles of silent observers. If a PC fails to overcome an individual obstacle, they or a different PC can attempt that obstacle again the next round—but note that with each failed check, the PCs accrue Awareness Points, which eventually draws the Prince of Propaganda's attention!

K1. INFILTRATING HOUSE ZAKARR **OBSTACLE**

Infiltration Points 3 (group); **Overcome** DC 40 Stealth, DC 42 Thievery, or DC 45 Performance

This obstacle takes place in Jaxter's bedroom on the upper floor. The PCs see young Jaxter busy at a desk, poring over maps and notes on the Zakarr manor. Jaxter plots an infiltration in hopes of finding something scandalous he can use to discredit Inaverin Zakarr and stop the patriarch from pursuing his mother's hand in marriage. The PCs find themselves in the roles of imaginary muses there to inspire and guide Jaxter in his work to develop the perfect plan.

K2. THE THIRD PROMISE **OBSTACLE**

Infiltration Points 2 (individual); **Overcome** DC 42 Diplomacy or DC 45 Performance

This obstacle takes place in a large meeting room in an outbuilding housed in the manor's northern courtyard. One of the PCs takes on the role of Cleome, Jaxter's mother. She's just learned that her enemy, Inaverin Zakarr, has caught her son sneaking around in his manor and is holding Jaxter hostage while pushing for the boy's execution. Here, Cleome wastes no time mourning, instead working with a group of her spies, the Spiders (nonspeaking roles played by the other PCs), to push through a Third Promise in Vyre that forbids execution.

K3. PATRIARCH'S DEMANDS **OBSTACLE**

Infiltration Points 2 (individual); **Overcome** DC 42 Medicine or DC 45 Performance

This obstacle takes place in the manor's northern garden, where Inaverin Zakarr formally accepts House Gorb's promise to hand over Cleome Gorb's hand in marriage and to strike out one of Jaxter's eyes in exchange for allowing Vyre's Third Promise (and thus Jaxter's escape

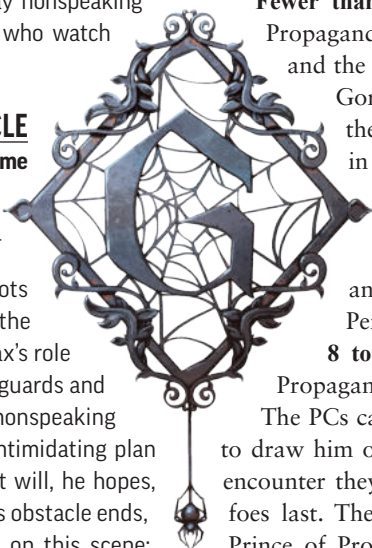
from execution) to be ratified. One of the PCs takes on the role of Inaverin as he surgically removes Jaxter's eye with a straight razor while the other PCs play nonspeaking roles of Jaxter's family and house staff who watch on in resignation.

K4. PLOTTING REVENGE **OBSTACLE**

Infiltration Points 2 (individual); **Overcome**

DC 42 Intimidation or DC 45 Performance

This obstacle takes place in the house barracks, where Jaxter's father Jax plots out vengeance on Inaverin Zakarr for the latest insults. One of the PCs takes on Jax's role as he speaks to several assembled bodyguards and soldiers (which include the other PCs in nonspeaking roles) and lays out a complicated and intimidating plan to lead an assault on House Zakarr that will, he hopes, skirt the edges of legality in Vyre. As this obstacle ends, the PCs notice Jaxter has been spying on this scene; when they notice him, Jaxter flees, and the PCs realize that he's running off to take matters into his own hands.



House Gorb crest

they've accumulated to determine how the campaign's final encounter begins.

Fewer than 7 Awareness Points: The Prince of Propaganda isn't prepared for their confrontation, and the PCs can choose any location in House Gorb to draw him out—the GM places the Prince of Propaganda and his agents in this region first, then lets the PCs decide where they wish to begin the encounter. The PCs have 6 rounds to Influence the Prince of Propaganda, and if combat results, the enemies roll Perception for initiative.

8 to 16 Awareness Points: The Prince of Propaganda catches wind of the confrontation. The PCs can choose any location in House Gorb to draw him out, but they must decide where in the encounter they begin first, with the GM placing the foes last. The PCs have 4 rounds to Influence the Prince of Propaganda. Enemies roll Perception for initiative.

17 or more Awareness Points: The

Prince of Propaganda confronts the PCs immediately in the location where they completed their last obstacle. The PCs only have 2 rounds to Influence the Prince of Propaganda. Increase all Influence DCs in this encounter by 2, and if combat results, the enemies roll Stealth for initiative. Two additional zimiezeaks are with the Prince of Propaganda.

K5. A CRUEL MERCY **OBSTACLE**

Infiltration Points 2 (individual); **Overcome** DC 42 Crafting or DC 45 Performance

This obstacle takes place in a bedroom that contains a small alchemy lab, where Thamir works furiously into the night to brew a dose of the poison he plans on smuggling to Jax, who'll be able to use it to soften the pain of his imminent execution for the attack on House Zakarr. One PC takes on Thamir's role, while the other PCs take on the roles of doubts and misgivings who hopelessly whisper warnings in Thamir's ear that this plan will backfire.

K6. REVOLUTION OF INDULGENCES **OBSTACLE**

Infiltration Points 3 (group); **Overcome** DC 40 Deception, DC 42 Society, or DC 45 Performance

This final obstacle takes place in the House Gorb library, where a bitter Jaxter, now wearing an eye patch, plots with family agents and spies to trigger what will become known in Vyre as the Revolution of Indulgences—a period destined to throw Vyre into chaos but also to erase Jaxter and House Gorb entirely from the city's history. The PCs take on the roles of Jaxter's assembled spies who offer advice and warnings, only for them all to burn in the fires of revolution as they watch Jaxter decide to act as he desires.

FINAL RESULTS

Once the PCs complete all six obstacles while exploring House Gorb, total up the number of Awareness Points

SCION OF SABOTAGE

SEVERE 20

Once the PCs finish exploring House Gorb and complete the six obstacles, they can sense the Prince of Propaganda is near. If they accumulated more than 16 Awareness Points, the encounter begins immediately, but otherwise, the PCs have time to prepare and select a location in House Gorb to draw out the Prince of Propaganda for this final confrontation. At the end of every 10 minutes they delay drawing him out, increase their Awareness Point total by 1d6.

If he doesn't appear on his own as a result of Awareness Points, the PCs know they can draw out the Prince of Propaganda by calling out to him.

Creatures: When the Prince of Propaganda appears, he isn't alone—he's accompanied by three zimiezeaks (or five, if he's fully aware of the PCs). Standing at a height of 10 feet with four arms and an intimidating raven-like mask protruding from under a dark cowl, the Prince of Propaganda doesn't attack at once. He's curious about these interlopers, and even if he isn't immediately sure of their presence (if some or all of the PCs manage to remain hidden from him), he calls out

to them in a bemused voice with a hint of impatience to his clipped words.

"Meddlers in my home. Flies in my proverbial ointment. You are aware that you stand in the path of a god to be? Are you truly the fools you seem? I admit I am curious. So I give you one chance for mercy before annihilation—tell me, why do you think you can oppose a god's destiny to be born?"

What follows is an opportunity for quick-witted PCs to Influence the Prince of Propaganda and his zimiezek followers—they might manage to scare off these additional foes, and if they're lucky or particularly skilled, could even resolve this encounter without a fight at all! Rules for influence encounters appear on page 187 of *GM Core*. Each round of this influence encounter lasts for 10 minutes. The total

number of rounds the PCs have to Influence the Prince of Propaganda depends on how many Awareness Points they have when this encounter begins.

PRINCE OF PROPAGANDA

LEVEL 21

UNIQUE MEDIUM FEY

Manifestation of Norgorber

Perception +37

Will +33

Discovery DC 47 Perception, DC 40 Religion, DC 42 Society, or DC 37 Warfare Lore

Influence Skills DC 37 Norgorber Lore or Vyre Lore (to use historical examples to undermine his convictions), DC 40 Religion (warning that these turbulent times in the aftermath of a god's death aren't the best times to make waves in the ranks of the divine), DC 42 Performance, DC 43 Intimidation, DC 45 Diplomacy, or DC 47 Deception

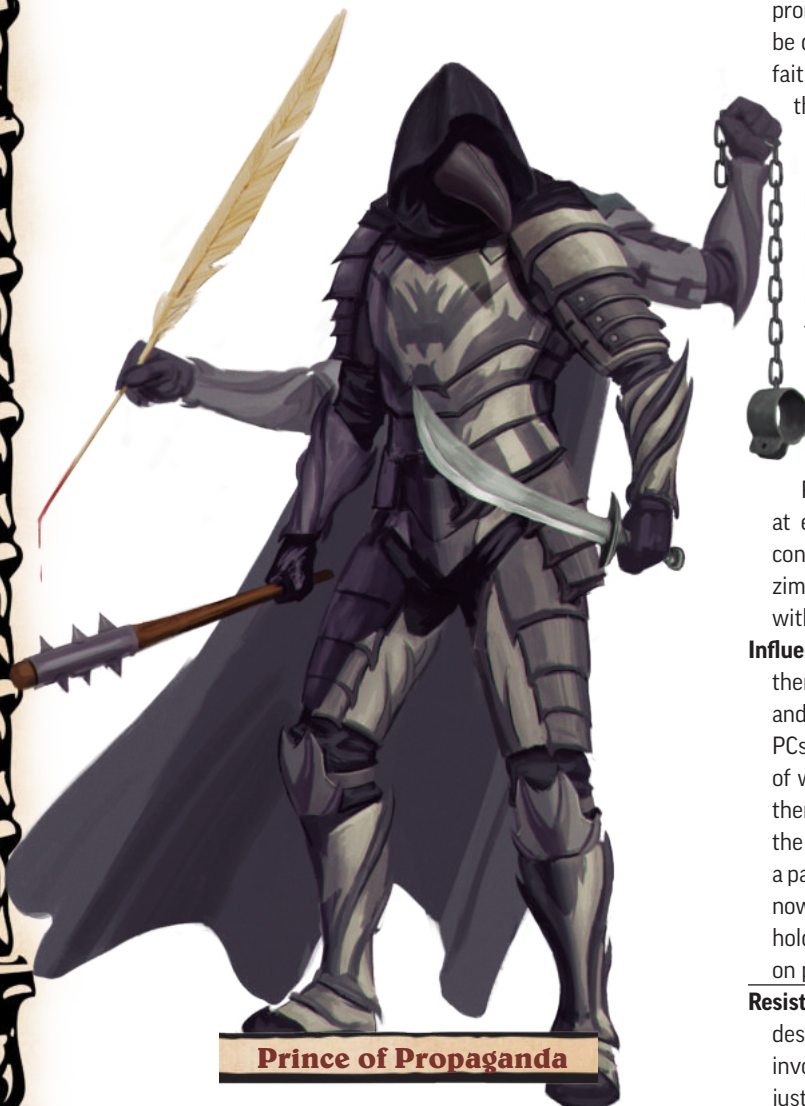
Influence 2 The Prince imparts a vision to the PCs, promising that those they love and their homelands shall be dragged into an unnecessary war as the result of his faith's manipulations upon the world—manipulations that, to those involved, seem to be the fault of the PCs themselves! The vision unsettles the PCs, and if combat results before they reach Influence 4, they begin the fight frightened 1.

Influence 4 The Prince abandons his mean-spirited plan to target the PCs' homes and loved ones, but instead shows them a near future where nations formally at peace suddenly find reasons to go to war. Two of the Prince's remaining zimiezek agents falter and vanish.

Influence 8 The Prince concedes that there's enough war in the world already and shows the PCs visions of nations in Golarion that are already at each others' throats, promising these conflicts will continue without end. All of the Prince's remaining zimiezek agents falter and vanish, leaving him alone with the PCs.

Influence 12 The Prince pauses, considers the PCs' words, then nods in agreement. War is a part of mortal nature, and it doesn't need external manipulation. He warns the PCs that no amount of talking can stem the thoughts of war Gorum's death has visited upon so many worlds, then fades away into nothingness. Norgorber has heard the PCs and has decided to abandon his plans to become a pantheon, but a lingering threat should remain—they've now attracted a god's notice, and Norgorber is one to hold grudges. Continue with *Concluding the Adventure* on page 72.

Resistances The Prince of Propaganda is sure of his destined place among the gods, and any argument that involves mentioning he doesn't deserve to become a god just makes him more stubborn—all additional Influence



Prince of Propaganda

DCs for that PC increase by 2, or by 5 if the PC implies that any of the other aspects of Norgorber are superior to him.

Weaknesses The Prince of Propaganda thinks of himself as the most important part of Norgorber, and any attempt to Influence him that includes a PC bad-mouthing or belittling any of the other four aspects reduces the DC of that Influence check by 2.

THE PRINCE ENRAGED

Unless the PCs convince the Prince to abandon his efforts by influencing him, he eventually attacks. He does so automatically once the PCs run out of influence rounds or if the PCs initiate hostilities. Once combat begins, the Prince and any zimiezek agents take advantage of House Gorb's layout—they know the locations of all secret doors and can spend a single Interact action to cause an adjacent door to lock or unlock.

As the fight goes on, damage to the Prince of Propaganda begins to reflect on House Gorb as well, as if the more damage he takes, the more decrepit and ruined the building becomes. Once he's reduced to 300 or fewer Hit Points, the ambient lighting in House Gorb falters and drops to dim illumination, and upon him being reduced to 150 or fewer Hit Points, the house's decrepitude grows enough so that the entire place becomes difficult terrain. Upon the Prince's death, the house bursts into flames and begins crumbling around the PCs. His body is immediately consumed by fire—only his magic weapons remain behind. Any remaining zimiezek agents are slain by the fire and collapse of House Gorb, but the PCs remain unharmed. Continue with Concluding the Adventure on page 72.

PRINCE OF PROPAGANDA

CREATURE 21

UNIQUE MEDIUM FEY UNHOLY

Variant vilderavn (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 287)

Perception +37; greater darkvision, *truesight*

Languages Common, Diabolic; *truespeech*

Skills Acrobatics +36, Athletics +36, Deception +40, Diplomacy +38, Intimidate +40, Norgorber Lore +38, Religion +35, Society +36, Stealth +38, Thievery +36, Warfare Lore +38

Str +9, **Dex** +7, **Con** +7, **Int** +7, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +9

Items +3 greater striking returning club, +3 greater striking sword

AC 47; **Fort** +36, **Ref** +39, **Will** +33

HP 400; **Immunities** curses, death effects, drained, fear; **Weaknesses** cold iron 20

Aura of Disquietude (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 30 feet, DC 41. As vilderavn.

Reactive Strike

Speed 40 feet, fly 120 feet

Melee ♦ *shortsword* +40 (agile, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 3d6+19 piercing plus prince's curse

Melee ♦ *club* +40 (magical), **Damage** 3d6+19 bludgeoning plus prince's curse

Ranged ♦ *manacle* +40 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Effect** Improved Grab

Ranged ♦ *club* +38 (magical, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 3d6+14 bludgeoning plus prince's curse

Occult Innate Spells DC 44; **10th** *fabricated truth*; **9th** *confusion*, *rewrite memory*; **8th** *disappearance*; **5th** *mind probe* (at will); **Constant (10th)** *truesight*, *truespeech*

Inscribe Propaganda ♦ (curse, divine, incapacitation, mental) **Frequency** once per turn; **Effect** The Prince lifts the writer's quill he carries, points its nib at a target he can see that's within 120 feet, and then writes invisible text in the air. The target hears the sound of the quill nib scratching words into parchment and must attempt a DC 44 Will save. The target then becomes temporarily immune to Inscribe Propaganda for 24 hours.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target's worldview shifts, causing it to momentarily lose track of who its allies and enemies are. It becomes slowed 1 for 1 round.

Failure The Prince's propaganda influences the target, causing it to believe lies about allies or foes and to take a course of action chosen by the Prince of Propaganda. The target is affected as if by *subconscious suggestion*, but with a duration of 1 hour, and the suggestion must arise logically from the target's temporary belief in the lie or conspiracy.

Critical Failure As failure, but with an unlimited duration.

Prince's Curse (curse, occult) A creature hit by the Prince's melee attack becomes cursed. It becomes off-guard and takes 2d6 persistent bleed damage that's difficult to stanch. The DC to stop the bleeding using Administer First Aid is 40, and healing the creature to full HP doesn't automatically end the bleeding. Removing the curse ends the bleeding and off-guard condition.

Shed Manacle ♦ **Trigger** The Prince has grappled a creature with his manacle; **Effect** The manacle clasps drop away from the chain the Prince holds. The creature remains grappled until they Escape (DC 44), at which point its manacles vanish. The Prince can't make manacle Strikes again until his next turn when his chain creates a new set of manacles at its end.

Sneak Attack The Prince deals an additional 3d6 precision damage to off-guard creatures.

ZIMIEZEKS (3 OR 5)

CREATURE 18

Page 89

Initiative Perception +33 or Stealth +35

USING NORGORBER'S ARTIFACTS

The four artifacts the PCs potentially recovered from Norgorber's other four manifestations can be used in a special way in the fight against the Prince of Propaganda, but only if the artifact has been successfully awakened and gained additional power. When the fight with the Prince of Propaganda begins, each PC who carries an awakened artifact instinctively realizes they can take the following action in the fight.

INVOKE JAXTER'S MEMORY ♦

EMOTION FEAR MENTAL

Frequency once per artifact

Requirements You openly wear or carry one of the four artifacts taken from Norgorber's manifestations and have awakened its memories to enhance its power

You draw upon Jaxter's memories associated with the artifact and direct those mortal remembrances at the Prince of Propaganda in an attempt to unsettle him. The Prince of Propaganda must be within 60 feet of you, but you don't have to be able to sense him. If you Invoke Jaxter's Memory and the Prince of Propaganda isn't in range, the invocation is wasted. When you invoke the artifact, the Prince of Propaganda must attempt a DC 45 Will save.

Critical Success The Prince is unaffected.

Success The Prince is startled by an unexpected memory of his father, mother, teacher, or his enemy (as determined by the artifact) and is off-guard until the start of your next turn.

Failure The Prince is overwhelmed by a potent memory and is off-guard until the start of your next turn. He's further affected differently depending on which artifact you're drawing the memory from.

Graymist (Jax): A memory of a time when Jaxter felt weak in the presence of his father's strength and couldn't save his father from being executed causes the Prince to become enfeebled 1.

Red Hand's Satchel (Thamir): A memory of a time when Jaxter felt shocked and stupefied the first time he witnessed his teacher's violent bloodlust causes the Prince to become stupefied 1.

Retribution (Inaverin Zakarr): A memory of Jaxter's pain upon losing his eye to his family enemy causes the Prince to become drained 1.

White Cleome's Eye (Cleome Gorb): A memory of stumbling away from his mother in her time of need causes the Prince to become clumsy 1.

Critical Failure As failure, but increase the condition's value to 2, and the Prince is also slowed 1 for 1 round.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the Prince of Propaganda defeated, either through words or force, House Gorb burns to ashes all around the PCs. A moment later, they once again stand in Norgorber's presence at the top of the Lighthouse of Eternal Evening. With the Prince's defeat, those memories and divine essences return to the source, allowing Norgorber to realize that his old memories as Jaxter were able to manipulate him subconsciously to not only avoid destroying the meddling mortal PCs, but to coax them on the path they took. The god is confused and at odds as to what this means, and it will take him many years to sort out his internal conflicts. For now, he regards the PCs silently for a moment, then bows his head as a soft lullaby issues from the depths of his hood, a requiem both for Jaxter and for the Prince of Propaganda.

"Oh Little Spider all alone

Behold how far you've strayed from home

The River's flow and silver song

Recall you to familiar shores

Name effaced

Memories fade

Back to the cradle you were born."

A sense of melancholy washes over the PCs, soon replaced by fear as Norgorber rises to his full height. A moment later, he produces the warshard of Gorum he stole, four small divots missing from its face where he gave fragments to his manifestations. Norgorber closes his fist around the warshard, and it crumbles away into a dozen doses of *ashes of the war god* (page 81) that he simply flings into the air to scatter across Duskfathom.

He then turns to face the PCs. By helping to defeat the notion of becoming a pantheon, the PCs have enhanced Norgorber's acceptance of himself, and whether they intended it or not, this outcome makes Norgorber more powerful than before. No longer are his aspects clashing. Now, the god is once more of a single mind. He speaks again, this time to the PCs.

"The time has come for you to leave Duskfathom and never return. You have shown me the error of my ways, and in doing so, prevented a spread of lies and propaganda that would have torn your world apart.

"But war is still coming to your world. Gorum's death will spread like an infection through all of your lives. I will no longer seek to profit from what is coming, nor do I desire to manipulate conflict where none yet exist. Yet do not assume you have won peace for your world today.

Bring the House Down

Chapter 1:
Hell MonthChapter 2:
Shards of WarChapter 3:
Evening Eternal

A History of Secrets

Adventure Toolbox

"In all that I have learned about you and in all you have learned about me, to have it end in ashes would forever erase the story you have written tonight. Go, before it is too late. Run. Hide. Live while you can. You have my secrets. What you do with them is for you to decide, but know I am always watching."

AND CURTAINS...

With that, the PCs return in the blink of an eye to their home, appearing on the stage of the Kintargo Opera House. In the time they've been gone, their crew has worked to clean and repair the place—the holes punched in the roof and stage from Gorum's warhard are patched, yet there will always be a strange divot in the underworld's floor below.

When the PCs arrive, they aren't quite alone. One figure waits for them in the front row—a familiar face. Duvall. As the PCs arrive, he rises and gives them a standing ovation, then floats into the air to land lightly on the stage at their side—transforming as he does into a vision of beauty. Once again the PCs face a god onstage, but this time, it's Shelyn, goddess of art.

Shelyn thanks the PCs not only for the amazing show they put on, but for what they've done to turn Norgorber from his destructive path. The divine—even those born into it—are susceptible to change, a sentiment slowly being acknowledged after Godsrain. Some live. Some die. Some make mistakes. And some even manage to learn from those mistakes. After taking a moment to reflect in silence, Shelyn cheerfully asks if the heroes have any plans for a sequel to their opera?

BEYOND THE CAMPAIGN

The PCs are now at the height of power, 20th-level heroes and among the most famous citizens in Kintargo. Where they go from here is up to the players, but their story in *Curtain Call* comes to an end with their return to the stage where it all began.

The ramifications of Gorum's death and Godsrain continue to ripple through all realities, and in the coming months, these events will seed new adventures, generate new conflicts, and unlock new opportunities. Norgorber's warning wasn't merely a shamed god's snark—war is indeed coming to Golarion, and in the months and years to follow Godsrain, the need for heroes will be greater than ever.

Still, there are a few unlikely developments from your *Curtain Call* campaign you'll want to consider going forward.



Shelyn

Delaraius: If the PCs cut Delaraius's strings and he survived his final encounter, he no longer feels indebted to Norgorber. He might continue to worship the god, in which case both consider each other in a less destructive light, or he might show up in Kintargo, eager to seek a new faith and a new role in life.

Being Sent Home: If Norgorber decides to wipe the PCs' minds and return them to live the rest of their lives, the campaign is essentially over, but what happens if one of those PCs remembers? What happens if someone approaches that PC with questions they should be able to answer but they can't? Consider allowing the players to return their characters to a lower level of your choice, and then start an entirely new campaign with the same characters—in this case, consider

giving them a chance to recover their lost memories near the end of this new campaign, and just perhaps earn a chance to have a rematch against Norgorber.

A New Pantheon: While *Pathfinder's* story going forward assumes Norgorber remains unchanged, if the PCs fail to convince him otherwise, in your game he might well make the transition to becoming a new pantheon. In this case, these five new deities should play important roles in your world with their faiths growing in power as antagonists for future PCs to work against. The faith of the Prince of Propaganda in particular will ensure that war becomes a greater element in the world going forward than it ever was when Gorum was around.

Secrets No More: One development of *Curtain Call* that influences *Pathfinder's* story going forward is the fact that the god of secrets has lost vital secrets of his own. Even if the PCs never share what they've learned with another soul, it's enough to alter Norgorber's personality, especially in his aspect of the Reaper of Reputation, as he shifts from a focus of keeping secrets to a more sinister focus of creating secrets—particularly through the creation of conspiracies and lies. No longer does this faction of his faith remain passive and rely upon existing faults in those they seek to ruin. Now, deliberate misinformation and damaging conspiracies increasingly become Norgorber's remit—a change in personality that grows slowly but, in time, might put him in the path of another party of adventurers seeking to do the impossible: to challenge the will of a god.

Godsrain Repercussions: As for the Godsrain, Paizo products will continue to explore the significant ramifications of these events in numerous products to come, starting next month with the start of the *Triumph of the Tusk* Adventure Path!



Bring
the
House
Down

Chapter 1:
Hell Month

Chapter 2:
Shards of
War

Chapter 3:
Evening
Eternal

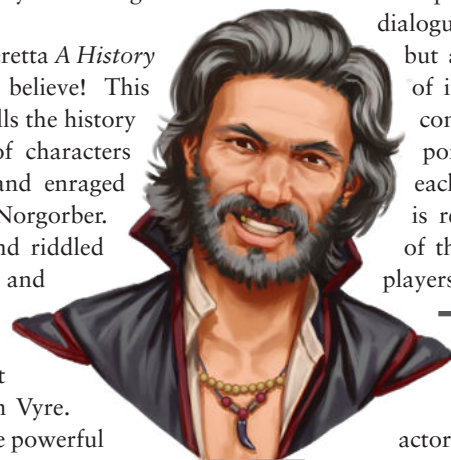
A History
of Secrets

Adventure
Toolbox

A History of Secrets

Before he was a god, Norgorber was a man, and one of the first things he pursued after emerging from the Starstone Cathedral as a god was to use his newfound power to erase his mortal history from the world. As a god of secrets, it would not serve for anyone to know his name. Yet the rise of a new god isn't something that can be ignored, and Norgorber's rise caught the attention of an unlikely trio of immortals—three diabolic demigods who gathered on the shores of the poison swamp of Stygia in Hell to gossip about the city of Vyre and the secret history this new god took such pains to erase.

Or so the infamously rare operetta *A History of Secrets* would have you believe! This legendary unproduced opera tells the history of Vyre, focusing on a cast of characters who once inspired, terrified, and enraged the man who would become Norgorber. The text is dense, complex, and riddled with deliberate confusion and contradictory elements, but a close study of its pages can reveal very real secrets about Norgorber's early childhood in Vyre. Told as a framing device of three powerful figures (largely believed to be the infernal demigods Barbatos, Geryon, and Mahathallah) gathering in Stygia to gossip, the actual author of the text is unknown.



Jax

A HISTORY OF SECRETS

The full title of this mysterious tome is *A History of Secrets, as told by the Gatekeeper, Traitor, and Widow*.

An initial read-through of the text (an hour-long Exploration activity with the concentrate trait) is enough for the reader to understand the basic plot, which chronicles the foundation of the city of Vyre and the scandals, triumphs, and ordeals endured by several of its founders.

While the operetta has only three actors, the story they tell together mentions numerous additional characters—as these characters aren't actual roles in the operetta, they're not included in the text's short dramatis persona (which is limited to the Gatekeeper,

[Enter] the GATEKEEPER, the TRAITOR, and the WIDOW, gathering upon a shore overlooking the poison fens of STYGIA on the eve of a newly created god's ascension to power.

—Opening stage instructions for *A History of Secrets*

the Traitor, and the Widow). *A History of Secrets* is a one-act operetta comprised of four scenes. The dialogue spoken by the three narrators is but a fraction of the text, with the bulk of it comprising the complex and often contrary stage directions meant to portray scenes that take place between each section of dialogue. The dialogue is reproduced on the inside back cover of this book for you to share with your players if you wish.

FIVE ASPECTS

While the three narrators are the only actors who have dialogue in *A History of Secrets*, in the extensive set designs and scenes there are many other non-speaking roles who perform in between the spoken lines to present a visual history of Vyre's foundation. In these scenes, five nameless characters take particular prominence, and it's these five characters who represent Norgorber's aspects of greed, murder, poison, secrets, and himself.

The Boy: Jaxter Gorb, son of Jax and Cleome, who would eventually become Norgorber.

The Father: Jax, lover of Cleome, father of Jaxter; inspiration for Norgorber's aspect of greed.

The Mother: Cleome Gorb, youngest daughter of House Gorb, lover of Jax, mother of Jaxter, wife of Zakarr, leader of the spy network known as the Spiders; inspiration for Norgorber's aspect of secrets.

The Protector: Thamir, bodyguard of Cleome, Jaxter's tutor; inspiration for Norgorber's aspect of poison.

The Patriarch: Inaverin Zakarr, last patriarch of House Zakarr, sadistic serial killer; inspiration for Norgorber's aspect of murder.

NORGORBER'S SECRET HISTORY

- 1673 AR** Vyre is founded by seven noble families. First Promise of Vyre is established.
- 1693** The Dunrocks, one of the founding families, are forced to relocate their estate to a small island in the harbor after their abuses of Vyre's libertine rules went too far.
- 1720** Construction of Dunrock Castle is completed.
- 1730** The Zakarr family flees Casmaron and immigrates to Vyre.
- 1797** Inaverin Zakarr is born. Over the decades to follow, his ruthless tactics catapult House Zakarr into great power in Vyre.
- 1798** Thamir "Red-Hand" is born.
- 1820** Inaverin Zakarr commits his first murder in Vyre. He continues to murder sporadically for the rest of his life, giving rise to the urban legend of the Sundown Skinner.
- 1833** After a devastating personal tragedy, Thamir abandons Absalom for Vyre.
- 1837** Inaverin Zakarr adds his own father to his list of victims, then assumes control of the family as its patriarch. He continues to murder, but now brings his victims home to slaughter in secret.
- 1838** Jax born on Dunrock Island.
- 1839** Thamir attempts to assassinate Inaverin Zakarr. When his attempt fails, House Gorb shelters him, hiring him as a bodyguard for their children.
- 1841** Cleome Gorb is born.
- 1856** Jax joins the Gorb household as a bodyguard and thief. He and Thamir become friends.
- 1857** Cleome begins her political career and creates the Reaping Spiders, a network of spies, to help her.
- 1859** Jax and Cleome begin their love affair.
- 1860** Birth of Jaxter. Jax's criminal exploits via his alter ego Graymist and Cleome's spy network begin to turn the tables on the Zakarrs.
- 1866** Vyre's Second Promise is established. Thamir becomes Jaxter's tutor. Jaxter takes particularly well to alchemy lessons, and the black on his fingers resulting from long hours experimenting earns a nickname from Uncle Thamir: "Blackfingers."
- 1867** Inaverin Zakarr becomes obsessed with Cleome Gorb. House Zakarr sets aside its feud with House Gorb, and Inaverin makes public his proposals that their two houses merge into one great house.
- 1871** Jaxter sneaks into House Zakarr to spy on its patriarch only to be caught. Inaverin Zakarr pushes for the young spy's execution, but Cleome and the Reaping Spiders push for Vyre's Third Promise to be ratified, in hopes of saving her son. Inaverin Zakarr relents and agrees to release Jaxter on two conditions. One, that Jaxter

be branded for his crime, and two, that Cleome should take Inaverin's hand in marriage. Seeing no other way to save Jaxter's life, Cleome and the Gorb family agree. Zakarr cuts out Jaxter's left eye with a straight razor.

- 1875** Birth of Jaxter's half-sister to Inaverin and Cleome. Jax seeks to protect Cleome and her newborn from Zakarr's lethal intentions.
- 1876** After Inaverin threatens Cleome's and their daughter's lives, Jax begins to plot an illegal assault on the manor. Jaxter learns of his father's plans and takes matters into his own hands, hoping to resolve the situation before his family goes to war. Jaxter poisons Inaverin. Cleome returns home to House Gorb, but has Jaxter's sister sent away to parts unknown.
- 1877** Zakarrs from beyond Vyre demand an investigation into Inaverin's death. When he learns what Jaxter did, Jax takes the fall and confesses to the poisoning. His execution is scheduled. Before his death, Jax and Cleome are secretly married by a priestess of Sivanha, finally making Jaxter a legitimate scion of House Gorb. Thamir gifts Jax a vial of poison to numb his senses during his execution. Cleome throws herself into politics, steering the Gorb's from crime to philanthropy using Zakarr's fortune. Thamir confines himself to a shed on the Gorb's holdings. Jaxter, sick of the hypocrisy of Vyre, assembles insurgents within the Reaping Spiders to fomenting a revolution.
- 1882** The Revolution of Indulgences erupts. The people of Vyre rise up against the founding families, installing new rulers chosen from the people. Despite her popularity and Jaxter's secret attempts to protect her, Cleome is swept up in the conflict and executed alongside many other founding family members. Jaxter, with Thamir, leave Vyre entirely to seek his missing sister.
- 1883** Vyre recovers from the Revolution of Indulgences, and its fourth and fifth Promises are ratified in an attempt to prevent the ruling elite from claiming so much power over the city ever again.
- 1892** Over the course of a decade, Jaxter travels across the Inner Sea, adopting personas based on his mother, father, enemy, and teacher to keep his true identity hidden. Eventually, he arrives in Absalom.
- 1893** On the night of 2nd of Desnus, Jaxter takes the Test of the *Starstone*. As part of his test, he destroys all traces of his mortal life. Amused eyes from Hell watch his antics and pen the pages of *A History Of Secrets*.
- 1910** Thamir, dying from painful ailments, receives a

Bring the House Down

Chapter 1:
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A History of Secrets

Adventure Toolbox

visit from Norgorber who came to euthanize him. Wishing to spare his student the responsibility, Thamir poisons himself. Alarmed as he felt the last impressions of Jaxter Gorb fade with Thamir's death, Norgorber plucks Thamir's soul out of the River, an act that accidentally revives Thamir as a demigod. The two resume the search for Jaxter's lost half-sister, but by the time Norgorber picks up her trail, she's been long dead, leaving behind only rumors of who she was in life.

4670 Delaraius Solzakarr is born.

4676 Delaraius and his family are kidnapped by deros. He escapes after nearly a year.

4687 Delaraius Solzakarr calls upon Norgorber's assistance in matters of vengeance against the deros. Norgorber answers those prayers, and as he does, he realizes Delaraius is the sole living descendant of his half-sister. Norgorber gifts Delaraius a divinely duplicated version of the eye he lost to Inaverin Zakarr's razor so many centuries ago to aid Delaraius in his quest, but also to literally keep an eye on the man.

4702 Delaraius arrives in Vyre.

4703 Delaraius becomes a prison floor captain in Dunrock and continues to gain power as a cleric of Father Skinsaw.

4707 Delaraius becomes Vyre's King of Keys and one of Norgorber's most powerful clerics on Golarion.

4723 Norgorber discovers hints of a secret conspiracy to engineer the assassination of Gorum and begins to lay plans for becoming a pantheon fueled from fragments stolen from the war god's remains.

4724 Present day.



Cleome Gorb

DC 39 Performance, or DC 41 Society to pour through the text for clues and to correctly interpret them when they're found—each attempt requires 4 hours of study.

Archive: Any number of PCs can research the archive in Blackfingers' Lab (area C5) simultaneously. **Maximum RP 8; Research Checks** DC 37 Academia Lore or Vyre Lore, DC 39 Society, or DC 41 Religion to sift through the texts for clues—each attempt requires 4 hours of study.

Blackfingers: The manifestation of Blackfingers agrees to answer questions, but at a price—before he'll allow a question, the PC who's going to ask the question must drink a dose of Vyre's Bliss (page 81) the manifestation produces. Blackfingers allows for preparations that bolster the drinker's Fortitude save, but not preparations that render the effects of the

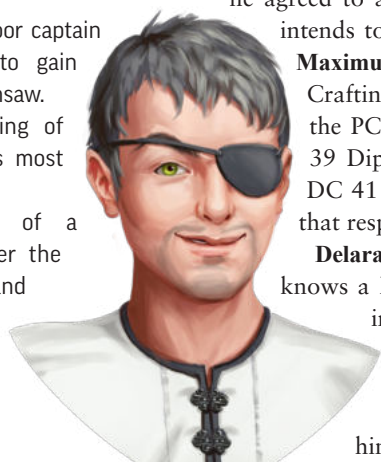
poison harmless. He answers one question per round. Once he hands out all 10 doses of poison, the PCs have earned all possible RP from questioning him, or once the PCs decide to end the questioning and attempt to leave the area), he attacks—just because he agreed to answer the questions doesn't mean he intends to let the PCs live with the knowledge!

Maximum RP 6; Research Checks DC 37 Crafting to ask a question in a way that makes the PC's knowledge of alchemy obvious, DC 39 Diplomacy to politely ask a question, or DC 41 Religion to ask the question in a way that respects his divine nature.

Delaraius: The high priest of Norgorber knows a lot about his god but won't volunteer information willingly. He answers one question per minute, and once the maximum RP is reached, indicates to the PCs he's revealed enough. Pressing him further could anger him enough that he lashes out and attacks. **Maximum RP 4; Research Checks** DC 37 Deception to

trick him into answering, DC 39 Religion to frame the question in such a way that Delaraius's answer doesn't violate his anathemas, or DC 41 Intimidation to threaten him into answering.

Father Skinsaw: The manifestation of Father Skinsaw is curious about the PCs' intellects and methods, and answering their questions gives him a great chance to study them. Every 10 minutes, he'll engage with a PC and answer their question in a long, rambling, back-and-forth discussion. Once the PCs have earned all possible RP from questioning him or



Jaxter Gorb

RESEARCHING

There are many resources available to the PCs to use to research Norgorber. *A History of Secrets* is given to them and represents their first resource. Others require exploration or asking the right questions of those they meet during Chapter 2. Full rules for research begin on page 190 of *Pathfinder GM Core*.

A History of Secrets: Many clues and revelations are hidden in this text. Only one PC can research *A History of Secrets* at a time. **Maximum RP 12; Research Checks** DC 37 Theater Lore or Vyre Lore,

they decide to end the questioning and attempt to leave the area, he attacks. **Maximum RP 6; Research Checks** DC 37 Medicine to engage in Father Skinsaw's interest in vivisection techniques during the back and forth, DC 39 Intimidation to embrace the sinister and cruel nature of the back and forth, or DC 41 Religion to ask the question in a way that respects his divine nature.

Meeting Suite: The meeting suite in Gray Master's Gauntlet (area **D2**) contains many journals, diagrams, and resources containing information and clues; any number of PCs can research the archive simultaneously. **Maximum RP 8; Research Checks** DC 37 Underworld Lore or Vyre Lore, DC 39 Society, or DC 41 Thievery to sift through the texts for clues and to understand their context—each attempt requires 4 hours of study.

Memory Troves: Any number of PCs can research the Memory Troves in the Reaper's Library (area **F1**) simultaneously. **Maximum RP 10; Research Checks** DC 37 Library Lore or Vyre Lore, DC 39 Society, or DC 41 Arcana or Occultism to pour through these resources—each attempt requires 4 hours of study.

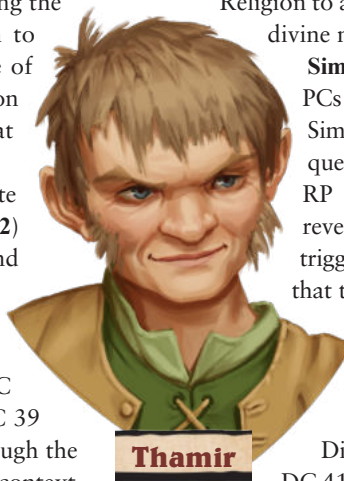
Prisoner's Row: The dozens of unquiet spirits in the cells found here in Skinsaw's Dungeon (area **E1**) can be interacted with in order to learn more, but doing so is dangerous as it opens up the mind and soul to supernatural influence and infection from these fragmented remnants. Any number of PCs can pursue research here, but each critical failure to research causes the spirits to infest thoughts and memories, causing that PC to become stupefied 1 (or to increase the value of their existing stupefied condition from this research by 1, to a maximum of stupefied 4) with an unlimited duration. Each attempt to interrogate the spirits requires only 1 minute of work. **Maximum RP 8; Research Checks** DC 37 Religion to safely interrogate the spirits, DC 39 Diplomacy to respectfully interrogate the spirits, or DC 41 Intimidation to forcefully interrogate the spirits.

Reaper of Reputation: The manifestation of the Reaper of Reputation is curious to find out what the PCs have learned and offers a "trade of secrets." He answers one question per minute, and only after a PC reveals to him one of the blocks of information the party's already learned from a research threshold in the Norgorber's Secrets research stat block. Unlike the other manifestations, the Reaper of Reputation doesn't attack the party once they exhaust his available RP or attempt to leave the area. **Maximum RP 6; Research**

Checks DC 37 Society to appeal to the Reaper's delight in political double-talk, DC 39 Deception to ask the question in a subtle and manipulative way, or DC 41 Religion to ask the question in a way that respects his divine nature.

Simandu: In **Event B2: Meeting Simandu**, the PCs might have an opportunity to question Simandu, Queen of Whispers. She answers one question per minute, and once the maximum RP is reached, indicates to the PCs she's revealed all she can—pressing her further likely triggers an attack. If the PCs make it apparent that they're working with Delaraius, reduce all further research check DCs made with her by 2. **Maximum RP 4; Research Checks** DC 37 Vyre Lore to impress her with knowledge of the city, DC 39 Diplomacy to question her respectfully, or DC 41 Deception or Intimidation to use trickery or threats to extract information.

Skulltakers: The two skulltakers that dwell in Gray Master's Gauntlet (area **D3**) can be conversed with. The skulltakers are bored and eager for entertaining stories about life in modern Vyre, but as soon as a PC critically fails at a research check with them, the two undead grow angry and attack. **Maximum RP 4; Research Checks** DC 37 Performance to entertain them enough for a reward, DC 39 Acrobatics or Athletics to undertake physical stunts to delight them, or DC 41 Intimidation to force them to comply.



Thamir

NORGORBER'S SECRETS

RESEARCH 19

UNIQUE DIVINE

Research Checks *A History of Secrets* (anywhere once the PCs have this text), Delaraius (initial encounter), Simandu (**Event B2**), lair locations (areas **C5**, **D2**, **D3**, **E1**, and **F1**), manifestations (areas **C6**, **E4**, and **F4**)

4 Research Points Norgorber's faithful, split among his four aspects, are powerful factions in Vyre, but they've been struggling recently with internal strife. Some among his faithful have been whispering that Norgorber is planning on doing something big, and they are frustrated at not knowing what their god intends.

6 Research Points When he was a mortal man, Norgorber lived in Vyre. Grant the PCs 20 XP.

10 Research Points Norgorber created four living manifestations based on his aspects by infusing existing creatures or elements in Vyre with divine power. He also gave each of them an amount of free will that allows them to pursue their own agendas. Each manifestation carries a powerful artifact that's tied to Norgorber's past in some way. The PCs also learn the exact location of a manifestation lair of their choice.

14 Research Points Norgorber was apparently prepared for Godsrain and manifested his four aspects in Vyre months before this event. He then provided each with a fragment of the warshard he stole, asking each manifestation to research a method of weaponizing these fragments of a dead god.

16 Research Points The weaponization of warshards is a smokescreen—Norgorber's actual plans for the warshard are something else entirely. Grant the PCs 20 XP. The PCs earn 1 Respect Point.

20 Research Points Norgorber's family was one of Vyre's founding families. They became embroiled in a violent feud with another powerful family—not one of the founding families, but a mercantile family who settled in Vyre several decades after the city was founded. The PCs also learn the exact location of a manifestation lair of their choice.

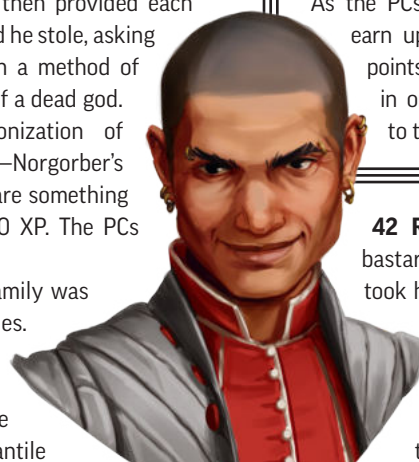
24 Research Points Norgorber took his four aspects from four individuals who left lasting impressions on him during his childhood in Vyre: his father (who inspired greed), his mother (who inspired secrecy), his tutor (who inspired an obsession with poison), and his family enemy (who inspired his murderous nature).

28 Research Points The name of the family who Norgorber's family feuded with was "Zakarr." Delaraius Solzakarr is perhaps the sole living descendant of this family. The PCs also learn the exact location of a manifestation lair of their choice.

32 Research Points As a child, Norgorber was caught sneaking around Zakarr manor. The Zakarr patriarch wanted him executed. His mother negotiated a lighter sentence, and she agreed to marry the Zakarr patriarch. The sly man took one of Norgorber's eyes in payment. Norgorber's father was distraught but agreed to support his lover's decision in order to keep Norgorber alive.

36 Research Points Norgorber's father became a master thief named Graymist. Norgorber's mother ran a band of spies called the Reaping Spiders who specialized in manipulating and influencing society. Norgorber's tutor focused his teachings on alchemy and poisons. Norgorber's enemy was a feared serial killer known as the Sundown Skinner.

40 Research Points Norgorber's father, Jax, was from Dunrock Island. His mother was a noble named Cleome. Norgorber's enemy was Inaverin Zakarr, patriarch of a rival family. Norgorber's teacher was a halfling named Thamir, who may well be the same Thamir who is known today as a god of ambition and trickery. Grant the PCs 20 XP. The PCs earn 1 Respect Point.



Inaverin Zakarr

RESPECT POINTS

As the PCs discover Norgorber's secrets, they can earn up to a total of 4 Respect Points. These points are used in Chapter 3 of this adventure in order to determine how Norgorber reacts to their actions. See page 64 for more details.

42 Research Points Norgorber was born a bastard in Vyre in 1860 AR. When Inaverin Zakarr took his eye, the man also cursed him so that he would not live beyond the age of 33.

46 Research Points Norgorber's father was executed in his son's place for the poisoning and murder of Zakarr, who threatened to flay Norgorber's parents and one other relative. Before the execution, Cleome and Thamir snuck into Dunrock

castle with a priestess of Sivanah. Jax and Cleome were married, making Norgorber a legitimate scion. The PCs gain additional insight into encounter **G** (page 57).

50 Research Points Cleome bore a daughter to Inaverin Zakarr a few years after her marriage to him. After Zakarr's death, Cleome arranged for her daughter to be sent away to a hidden location. Norgorber, as a god, only located her after she was long dead. Even now, he cannot remember why she was sent away. Grant the PCs 20 XP. The PCs earn 1 Respect Point.

54 Research Points As the sole living descendant of the Zakarrs, Norgorber's interest in Delaraius could be a desire to bring the last living scion of his enemy's line into his control, a nefarious long con with Norgorber setting up Delaraius for an epic fall from grace as one last triumph over his enemy's legacy, or a desire to protect his mother's and sister's descendant. The PCs gain additional insight into encounter **H** (page 58).

56 Research Points The founding family that Norgorber belonged to was House Gorb. Grant the PCs 20 XP.

60 Research Points Norgorber's plan is to use the divine power from Gorum's warshard to manifest a fifth aspect—one associated with sabotage and propaganda and representing his own life rather than four others who influenced him in childhood—and to ascend all five of his aspects into individual deities. Essentially, he seeks to change from one god into an entire pantheon of criminal deities—an act that would sacrifice his current manifestations (and is thus why he's keeping this plan a secret, even from them) and perhaps himself too. The PCs gain additional insight into encounter **I** (page 60).

66 Research Points Norgorber's birth name is Jaxter Gorb. Grant the PCs 40 XP. The PCs gain additional insight into encounter **J** (page 60). The PCs earn 1 Respect Point.



Adventure Toolbox

TREASURE

ALCHEMICAL POISON

VYRE'S BLISS ITEM 20

RARE ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE INGESTED POISON VIRULENT

Price 8,500 gp

Usage held in 2 hands; **Bulk** L

Activate ◆ (manipulate)

Vyre's Bliss is a toxin that looks and tastes like fine wine.

Saving Throw DC 43 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 24 hours; **Stage 1** off-guard and stupefied 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** off-guard, clumsy 1, and stupefied 2 (1 round); **Stage 3** off-guard, clumsy 2, and stupefied 3 (1 round); **Stage 4** clumsy 2, stupefied 3, and unconscious (8 hours)

WONDEROUS CONSUMABLE

ASHES OF THE WAR GOD ITEM 20

RARE CONSUMABLE MAGICAL

Price 14,000 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** –

Activate ◆ (manipulate)

Ashes of the war god may be applied to armor, a weapon, or mixed into an elixir or potion.

Armor The armor becomes +3 *major resilient armor* for 1 day. It retains any property runes.

Elixir or Potion In addition to the normal effects drinking the elixir or potion grant you, you gain a +3 item bonus to Athletics checks and Fortitude saves for 1 hour.

Weapon The weapon becomes a +3 *major striking weapon* for 1 day. It retains any property runes.

APEX ITEMS

ANGELIC OPERA CLOAK ITEM 19

RARE APEX HOLY INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 40,000 gp

Usage worn cloak; **Bulk** L

This luxurious cloak embodies an angel's swiftness. You gain a +3 item bonus to Acrobatics checks and never take falling damage, as your cloak billows like a pair of wings to soften any fall you take. When you invest in the cloak, you either increase your Dexterity score by 2 or increase it

to 18, whichever would give you a higher score. If you are unholy, you are slowed 1 while wearing this cloak.

Activate—On Angel's Wings ◆◆ (concentrate) **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** The opera cloak transforms into two pairs of brilliant, feathered wings that grant you a fly Speed of 40 feet for 10 minutes. During this time, you gain immunity to paralysis effects and ignore effects that would give you a circumstance penalty to speed.

CHORAL TOGA ITEM 19

RARE APEX HOLY INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 40,000 gp

Usage worn clothing; **Bulk** L

This elegant toga is infused with inexhaustible energy to enjoy life possessed by azatas. You gain resistance to poison 20 and become immune to deafened. When you invest in the robes, you either increase your Constitution score by 2 or increase it to 18, whichever would give you a higher score. If you are unholy, you become deafened while wearing the toga.

Activate—Elysium's Gasp ◆ (concentrate) **Frequency** once per hour; **Trigger** You are exposed to an inhaled poison; **Effect** Purifying gusts of sweet-scented air swirl around you, making you immune to inhaled poisons for 1 minute.

Activate—Elysium's Breath 1 minute (concentrate, healing) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The air around the robe constantly circulates to keep you healthy. For 8 hours, you become immune to diseases spread via inhalation, olfactory effects, and environmental effects that would prevent you from breathing (including being underwater or from being strangled).

DRACONAL MASK ITEM 19

RARE APEX HOLY INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 40,000 gp

Usage worn mask; **Bulk** L

This dragon-themed half-mask helps you to navigate through darkness and to notice things from afar—such as helping to find seats in a theater after a show begins, or to pick up details from a show even if you're seated in the back row! You gain a +3 item bonus to Perception checks and never take a penalty to Perception checks based on distance or weather. You gain darkvision, or greater darkvision if you have darkvision. When you invest in the mask you either increase your Wisdom score by 2 or increase it to 18,

whichever would give you a higher score. If you are unholy, you become blinded as long as you wear the mask.

Activate—Dragons See the Truth ☞ (concentrate)

Frequency once per hour; **Trigger** You fail a saving throw against an illusion effect; **Effect** The mask attempts to counteract the triggering illusion with a counteract rank of 9 and a counteract modifier of +31.

You then gain the effects of *truesight* for 1 minute.

GOLDEN GLOVES

ITEM 19

RARE APEX HOLY INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 40,000 gp

Usage worn gloves; **Bulk** L

These golden-threaded gloves fit snugly past the elbows, and imbue all other worn clothing with an aristocratic mien. The gloves grant you a +3 item bonus to Society skill checks. When you invest the gloves, you either increase your Intelligence score by 2 or increase it to 18, whichever would give you a higher score. This gives you additional trained skills and languages, as normal for increasing your Intelligence modifier. You must select skills and languages the first time you invest the gloves, and whenever you invest the same *golden gloves*, you get the same skills and languages you chose the first time. If you are unholy, you become enfeebled 2 when invested in these gloves.

Activate—Heaven's Wings ⬡⬡ (manipulate, visual)

Frequency once per hour; **Effect** You throw wide your arms, putting the golden gloves on full display and causing a blazing halo to form above your head. All enemies within a 40-foot emanation must make a DC 41 Fortitude save or be dazzled for 1 minute (or blinded for 1 minute on critical failure). Unholy creatures take a -2 item penalty to their roll. The halo then melts into your body and attempts to counteract any one affliction you are currently suffering of your choice with a counteract rank of 9 and a counteract modifier of +31.

SACRED VALKYRIE HELM

ITEM 19

RARE APEX HOLY INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 40,000 gp

Usage worn headwear; **Bulk** L

Lightning crackles from the wings flanking this helm, which is emblazoned with images of valkyries in the service of benevolent deities. You gain a +3 item bonus to Athletics checks and gain electricity resistance 20. When you invest in the helm, you either increase your Strength score by 2 or increase it to 18, whichever would give you a higher score. If you are unholy, you become drained 2 as long as you wear the helm.

Activate—Path of the Pegasus 10 minutes (concentrate)



Sacred Valkyrie Helm

Frequency once per day; **Effect** The sacred valkyrie helm casts *interplanar teleport* to your specifications. When you start this activation, each creature you target with this spell mounts a conjured pegasus who then carries them through reality to arrive at the specified location; each affected creature experiences the 10-minute activation as a kaleidoscopic ride through strange worlds and realities atop a pegasus's back.

Activate—Storm's Arms ⬡⬡ (concentrate, manipulate) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect**

The helm casts a 9th-rank *weapon storm* to your specifications. At your option, all damage caused by this spell is electricity damage—in this option, the duplicated weapons created by the spell appear to be made of lightning.

SILVANSHEE COLLAR

ITEM 19

RARE APEX HOLY INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 40,000 gp

Usage worn; **Bulk** L

A *silvanshee collar* appears as a collar of prismatic cloth affixed with a tiny bell, but once worn on the body or affixed to your hair, a Tiny cat wearing a similar (but non-magical) collar appears at your feet. This cat is similar to a silvanshee agathion (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 10), but its stats are determined as if you gained the Pet general feat (*Player Core* 259). When you first invest the collar, you must name your silvanshee pet, then build its statistics as detailed in the Pet general feat. The silvanshee has a name (chosen by you) and a unique personality. Whenever you invest the same *silvanshee collar*, the silvanshee who appears is the same one you named and chose the first time. If you already have a pet, familiar, or other companion that uses the Pet feat, that pet can change its shape as an action to appear as a silvanshee agathion at will (while perhaps retaining some of your pet's cosmetic traits at your option), but this doesn't otherwise alter your existing pet's statistics.

As long as you wear the *silvanshee collar*, you gain a +3 item bonus to Performance checks and a +2 circumstance bonus to Gather Information. When you invest it, you either increase your Charisma score by 2 or increase it to 18, whichever would give you a higher score. If you are unholy, you become clumsy 2 as long as you wear the collar.

Activate—Awww! ☞ (concentrate, fortune, visual)

Frequency once per hour; **Trigger** You fail on an attempt to Lie or Make an Impression; **Requirements** Your pet can observe you; **Effect** Your pet does something distracting or adorable at the precise moment you failed, allowing you to reroll the failed check and to use the result of your choice as the actual result.

ARTIFACTS OF SECRETS PAST

These artifacts don't have specific destruction conditions, but Norgorber can recreate them as he wills.

GRAYMIST

ITEM 21

UNIQUE APEX ARTIFACT DIVINE INTELLIGENT INVESTED

Usage worn cloak; **Bulk** L

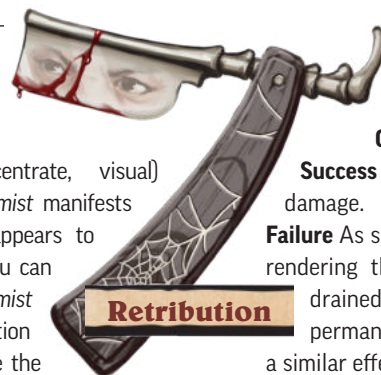
Graymist functions as a *shadowmist cape* (Treasure Vault 104).

Once restored, *Graymist* gains these activations.

Activate—Diverting Reveal ♦ (concentrate, visual)

Frequency once per hour; **Effect** *Graymist* manifests a dangerous-looking assassin, who appears to step out of hiding at any point you can sense within 60 feet. This allows *Graymist* to Create a Diversion using his Deception skill, but the closest creature to where the Diverting Reveal appears must attempt a DC 44 Will save or become so startled by the assassin's sudden appearance that they become stunned 3 (or stunned 6 on a critical failure). The assassin vanishes a moment after the diverting reveal, appearing to go back into hiding.

Activate—Traceless Retreat ♦♦ (concentrate) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** *Graymist* casts *mislead* on yourself and up to three other targets of your choice within 30 feet. *Graymist* sustains this effect up to 1 minute, during which you cannot activate *Graymist* and *Graymist* cannot take any other actions.



RED HAND'S SATCHEL

ITEM 21

UNIQUE ARTIFACT DIVINE EXTRADIMENSIONAL INVESTED

Usage worn backpack; **Bulk** 1

Red Hand's Satchel is an alchemist's haversack (Treasure Vault 145), with a main section containing an extradimensional space like that of a type IV *spacious pouch*. Once restored, the satchel gains the following activation.

Activate—Instant Alchemy ♦♦ (manipulate) **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** You name and then produce a common alchemical item of any level up to level 20 from the satchel's main compartment. This item has the infused trait and remains potent for 24 hours. Make a flat check with a DC equal to the alchemical item's level. On failure, you can't activate *Red Hand's Satchel* in this way until the next time you make your daily preparations.

RETRIBUTION

ITEM 21

UNIQUE ARTIFACT DIVINE

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Retribution is a +3 greater striking keen shifting wounding war razor (Treasure Vault 25).

Activate—Vengeful Slice ♦ (manipulate) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** You make a Strike with *Retribution* against a target within 120 feet that you can see and who damaged you within the last minute, as if they were within reach.

Once *Retribution* is restored, it becomes a +3 major striking keen shifting wounding war razor and gains the following additional activations.

Activate—Cruel Cut ♦♦ (curse, death, manipulate)

Frequency once per day; **Effect** Choose a target within 120 feet who you can see. That target must attempt a DC 44 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target takes 3d6 persistent bleed damage.

Failure As success, but one of their eyes is damaged, rendering them dazzled. The target also becomes drained 1. The dazzled and drained condition are permanent until removed by *cleanse affliction* or a similar effect.

Critical Failure As failure, but 6d6 persistent bleed damage and the target is blinded instead of dazzled, and drained 2 instead of drained 1. If the target is ever reduced to 0 Hit Points or less while under this curse, they immediately die.

Activate—Reflect Curse ↻ **Frequency** once per hour; **Trigger** You are about to attempt a saving throw against a curse; **Effect** If you succeed or critically succeed against the curse, it is reflected back to its source and it does not affect you; the source must then attempt a saving throw against the curse.

WHITE CLEOME'S EYE

ITEM 21

UNIQUE ARTIFACT DIVINE INVESTED

Usage worn eyepiece

Delicate engravings of spiders and cleomes decorate the silver cover of this magnifying loupe. *White Cleome's Eye* functions as *spectacles of inquiry* (Treasure Vault 147), but the item bonuses granted to Perception checks increase by 1 (so +3 while worn, and +4 to Sense Motive when you activate the artifact).

Once restored, *White Cleome's Eye* gains the following additional activations.

Activate—Look to the Past 1 minute (concentrate, manipulate)

Frequency once per day; **Effect** You twist *White Cleome's Eye* in a clockwise rotation, allowing you to peer back in time, causing it to cast a 9th-rank *retroognition* spell.

Activate—Relive the Past ♦♦ (concentrate, manipulate)

Frequency once per day; **Effect** You twist *White Cleome's Eye* in a counter-clockwise rotation, allowing you to experience previous events that impacted an object you are touching, causing *White Cleome's Eye* to cast a 9th-rank *object reading* spell (Player Core 2 248).



OTHER ANCESTRIES

Most of the masks of Norgorber are human, but not all. A mask's statistics don't change if it's a Small creature, and they gain increased space and reach as shown on page 421 of *Player Core* if they're Large or larger. Change ancestry traits as needed, but Speed and languages are unchanged. All masks of Norgorber possess darkvision granted them by their deity. Whether or not you grant a mask additional ancestry-based abilities is left to you to decide.



MASK OF NORGORBER

CREATURE 16

RARE MEDIUM FIEND HUMAN HUMANOID UNHOLY

Perception +32; darkvision, truesight

Languages Common; truespeech

Skills Acrobatics +31, Athletics +28, Crafting +29, Deception +30, Diplomacy +30, Intimidation +30, Norgorber Lore +31, Religion +28, Society +27, Stealth +33, Thievery +31

Str +6, **Dex** +9, **Con** +5, **Int** +5, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +6

Items +2 greater striking shortsword, true faith tattoo (Treasure Vault 120), +2 resilient leather armor

AC 39; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +33, **Will** +28

HP 290

Secretive Tattoos The mask keeps their *faith tattoo* hidden (typically by wearing gloves to cover the palm). To use it as a divine focus, they must first Interact to uncover the tattoo. The tattoo then stays uncovered until the mask Interacts to cover it up. A mask's *faith tattoo* only allows for the casting of *harm*. Upon the mask's death, the tattoo disappears.

Reactive Strike ⤵ (Pathfinder Monster Core 359)

Speed 30 feet

Melee ⬥ *shortsword* +33 (agile, finesse, magical, versatile P), **Damage** 3d6+14 slashing plus 1d6 persistent damage (see Aspect's Agony)

Divine Innate Spells DC 37, attack +29; **8th** *heal* (×3), *shadow blast*; **7th** *cleanse affliction*, *divine decree*; **6th** *sending* (×3), *spellwrack*; **4th** *invisibility* (×3), *silence* (×3); **Cantrips (8th)** *daze*, *detect magic*, *message*; **Constant (8th)** *truesight*, *truespeech*

Aspect's Agony When a mask of Norgorber Strikes a foe with a weapon, they inflict an additional 1d6 persistent damage of a type determined by their aspect. As long as a creature is taking this persistent damage, they're off-guard.

Sneak Attack A mask of Norgorber deals 2d6 extra precision damage to creatures who are off-guard.

ASPECT OF BLACKFINGERS

These masks focus on the use of poisons to spread Norgorber's will.

BLACKFINGERS ASPECT

Aspect's Agony 1d6 persistent poison

Additional Divine Innate Spells **8th** *toxic cloud*; **7th** *slither*

Evaporate Poison ⬥ (divine, poison) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The mask blows out a breath and targets a creature within 30 feet that is currently poisoned or is taking persistent poison damage. The target must attempt a DC 37 Fortitude save as the mask attempts to transmute the poison afflicting them into toxic vapor.

Critical Success The poison effect on the target immediately ends.

Success The poison effect on the target immediately ends, but toxic vapor fills one of the target's adjacent squares, chosen by the mask. A creature in this square is exposed to brimstone fumes (*GM Core* 248); the toxic vapor then vanishes.



Failure As success, but the toxic vapor fills a 5-foot emanation around the target, exposing all creatures in the area (including the target) to brimstone fumes; the toxic vapor then vanishes.

Critical Failure As failure, but the toxic vapor fills a 10-foot emanation around the target, and the poison effect or persistent poison damage the target is suffering does not end.

ASPECT OF FATHER SKINSAW

These masks are murderers who revel in the ripping of an opponent's flesh.

FATHER SKINSAW ASPECT

Aspect's Agony 1d6 persistent bleed

Additional Divine Innate Spells 8th *blood vendetta*; 7th *mask of terror*

Invigorating Flense ♦ (divine) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The mask makes a quick striking motion, as if slicing flesh with a small knife, and targets a creature within 30 feet. The target immediately takes 12d6 slashing and 5d6 persistent bleed damage (DC 37 basic Fortitude save), and the mask becomes quickened as long as the target continues to take persistent bleed damage. The mask can use the extra action only to Stride or Strike.

ASPECT OF THE GRAY MASTER

These masks focus on theft in all of its forms.

GRAY MASTER ASPECT

Aspect's Agony 1d6 persistent void

Additional Divine Innate Spells 8th *quandary*; 7th *umbral graft* (*Secrets of Magic* 137)

Steal Life ♦♦ (death, divine, void) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The mask makes a quick plucking gesture as they attempt to steal a creature's life. The mask targets a living creature within 30 feet, inflicting 17d6 void damage (DC 37 basic Fortitude save). The mask gains temporary Hit Points equal to half the void damage the target takes (after applying resistances and the like), and loses any remaining temporary Hit Points after 24 hours.

ASPECT OF THE REAPER

These masks fracture trust and turn allies against each other.

REAPER OF REPUTATION ASPECT

Aspect's Agony 1d6 persistent mental

Additional Divine Innate Spells 8th *suggestion*; 7th *warp mind*

Insidious Secrets ♦ (auditory, divine, emotion, fear, linguistic, mental) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The mask whispers, then targets a creature within 30 feet. The target must then attempt a DC 37 Will save.

Critical Success The target fails to hear the secret whispered and is unaffected.

Success The mask whispers a horrific secret to the target, and though their mind recoils and forgets, the target still takes 8d6 mental damage and is frightened 1.

Failure As failure, but 17d6 mental damage and frightened 2; the target is confused as long as they are frightened.

Critical Failure As failure, but 30d6 mental damage and the target is confused for 1 minute.



MASKS AND THE AFTERLIFE

When a worshipper becomes a mask, they technically die and travel to the Boneyard to be judged by Pharasma, but in this case, the process is almost instantaneous. When Norgorber chooses someone to become a mask, a swift and nearly instantaneous blurring of the creature is the only indication of their change. Like most fiends, masks are immortal unless slain through violence or misadventure. Once slain, a mask's body decays as normal, and after a variable amount of time has passed, their soul returns to the Great Beyond to accrete its quintessence into Norgorber's realm of Duskfathom.



BACKWARD TIME

Palinthanos movements often feel counterintuitive to the senses, as if there is some invisible force from the unseen future acting upon them. For example, wounds created by palinthanos attacks tend to appear on bodies out of sync with the inflicting strike, manifesting a fraction of a section before the attack lands. Wherever they appear, it's as though two streams of time collide and flow opposite of one another, which the Universe does its best to make sense of.

PALINTHANOS

When a cosmic event like Godsrain disturbs all that exists, the River of Souls sometimes flows backward for a brief moment, literally, from the shockwave. Unwilling and confused souls that are forced back far enough can have the agonizing experience of enduring death in reversed time. Some of these souls manage to re-enter the river once the flow returns to normal, but those who are stranded on the metaphorical shores of the living can become palinthanos: powerful undead born from their reversed demise who struggle futilely until their predestined banishment back to the River.

EGARHOWL

Souls of beasts and animals that return as palinthanos manifest as ghostly, bestial undead of pure hunger and instinct. They appear as somewhat indistinct monstrous creatures, regardless of what they were in life.

EGARHOWL

CREATURE 17

RARE **MEDIUM** **INCORPOREAL** **PALINTHANOS** **UNDEAD** **UNHOLY**

Perception +31; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Acrobatics +32

Str -5, **Dex** +7, **Con** +0, **Int** -4, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +0

AC 38; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +32, **Will** +29

HP 235, void healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistances** all damage 15 (except force, *ghost touch*, or vitality; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Reaction Reversal Since an egarhowl appears to move backwards in time and the results of its actions manifest slightly out of sync, its manipulate or move actions and Strikes don't trigger reactions normally. Whenever a reaction would be triggered by an egarhowl in this way, the reacting creature must attempt a DC 11 flat check. On a failure, their reaction does not trigger.

Predestined Defeat ➤ (occult) **Trigger** The egarhowl rolls initiative; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** At the start of combat, an inverted, reversed explosion of spiritual and void energy implodes in a 30-foot emanation centered on the egarhowl—a reversal of the creature's spiritually explosive death. All creatures in the area take 6d8 spirit damage (DC 35 basic Fortitude save); creatures that fail this save are also slowed 1 for 1 round as time seems to distort around them.

Speed fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +32 (finesse, magical), **Damage** 3d12+8 piercing plus 3d6 spirit and rabid rage

Melee ♦ claw +32 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 3d8+8 slashing plus 3d6 spirit

Rabid Rage (emotion, mental, occult) An egarhowl's bite transmits its supernatural fury. A creature bitten by an egarhowl must attempt a DC 36 Will save. They then become temporarily immune to rabid rage for 24 hours.

Critical Success The creature suffers no ill effects.

Success The creature is filled with anger and becomes slowed 1 for 1 round as they waste some of their time shrieking and raving on their turn.

Failure As success, but slowed 1 for 1 minute.

Critical Failure As failure, but the creature is also confused for as long as it is slowed.

ECHOPSYVNE

Palinthanos formed from intelligent creatures tend to be scheming and envious opportunists who seek to possess mortal bodies. They appear as vortexes of twisted, misty faces from which ghostly limbs emerge, regardless of their appearance in life.

ECHOPSYVNE

CREATURE 18

RARE MEDIUM INCORPOREAL PALINTHANOS UNDEAD UNHOLY

Perception +31; darkvision

Languages Common, Necril

Skills Acrobatics +35, Deception +32

Str -5, **Dex** +9, **Con** +0, **Int** +6, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +6

AC 39; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +33, **Will** +31

HP 255, void healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistances** all damage 15 (except force, *ghost touch*, or vitality; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Reaction Reversal As egarhowl.

Predestined Defeat ♦ As egarhowl, but DC 37 and 15d8 spirit damage.

Speed fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ claw +33 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 3d6+8 slashing plus 3d6 spirit

Occult Innate Spells DC 40; **9th possession** (×3)

Distort Perception ♦ (incapacitation, mental, occult) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The echopsyvne targets a creature it can see within 30 feet and alters its perception of time. The target must attempt a DC 40 Will save. Regardless of success or failure, the creature then becomes temporarily immune to this ability for 24 hours.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature perceives time to flow backward briefly and becomes slowed 1 for 1 round.

Failure Time flows backward for the creature, leaving them unable to interact with the world around them. The creature is stunned 3, after which it is slowed 1 for 1 round.

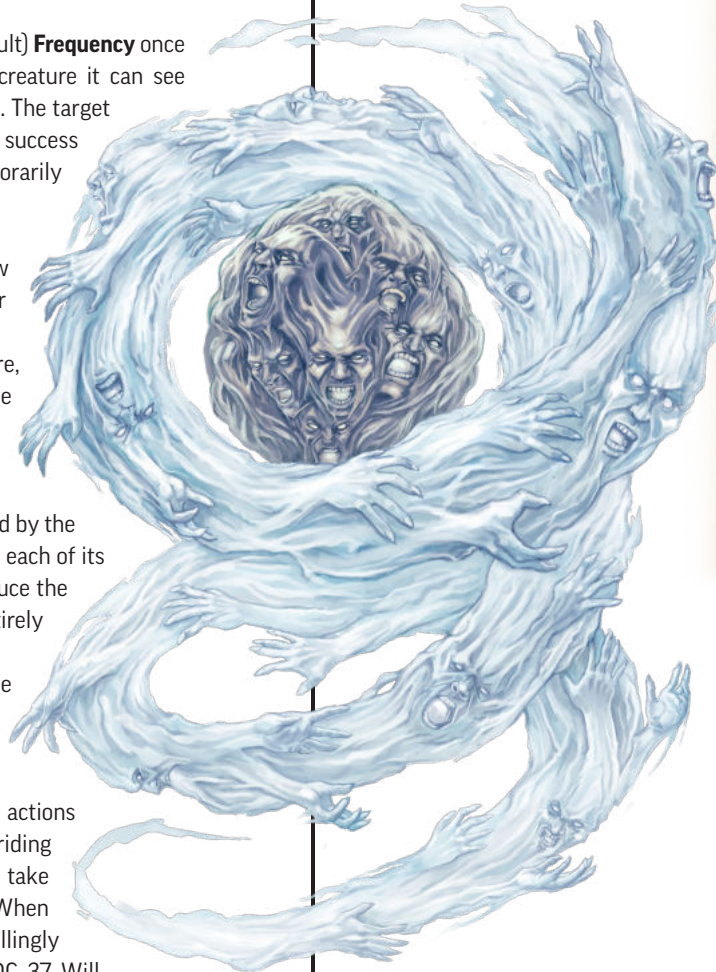
Critical Failure The creature's mind becomes stuck in a time loop, and it becomes paralyzed by the disorienting sight for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, it can attempt a new Will save to reduce the remaining duration by 1 round or end it entirely on a critical success.

Temporal Possession When the echopsyvne casts *possession* on a creature, that creature experiences time backward. When the echopsyvne controls the target, they function normally, but when the target takes their own actions while the echopsyvne is in partial control or riding along in their body, they become clumsy 3 and take a -10-foot status penalty to all of their Speeds. When the echopsyvne stops possessing the target, willingly or otherwise, the target must succeed at a DC 37 Will save or be stunned 1 as they readjust to a more familiar flow of time.



BACKWARD SPEAKERS

When a palinthanos vocalizes, the sounds it creates are reversed. For the egarhowl, this only results in unnerving backwards sounds of angry roars and bestial noises, but for those who can speak, it makes understanding them difficult. A palinthanos has no difficulty understanding any language it can speak, but when it speaks, listeners must succeed at a DC 30 Perception check made as a free action with the concentrate trait each round to quickly decipher the reversed conversation. This prevents a palinthanos from being able to easily utilize linguistic actions.





SPARED FROM DEATH

Venomfist was instrumental in helping Norgorber cross the chasm outside the Starstone Cathedral. In an ironic turn of events, Venomfist warned that the proposed plan could kill the then-very-mortal Norgorber. The man's response? "I don't care." Even today, Venomfist doesn't know what desperation drove Norgorber to seek out the *Starstone*. As they never pried into Norgorber's past, motivations, or business, the god never felt the need to kill Venomfist after his ascension.

VENOMFIST

Before he became a deity, Norgorber gained Venomfist's eternal service by giving the disgraced faydhaan shuyookh (*Rage of Elements* 182) poisons to exact revenge upon those who stripped the genie of their status. The vengeance transformed Venomfist into what they are now, an outcome Norgorber cautioned of, yet one Venomfist doesn't regret.

Today in Duskfathom, Venomfist resides in the Sky Sea as the perfect defender of the unnamed islands. When summoned to other planes, only a part of them leaves while their main body remains behind. Venomfist's vivid green body is a testament to all the deals for poisons made with mortals and immortals alike over millennia.

VENOMFIST

CREATURE 22

UNIQUE GARGANTUAN AMPHIBIOUS ELEMENTAL UNHOLY WATER

Perception +40; greater darkvision, wavesense (precise) 120 feet; *truesight*

Languages Common, Muan, Petran, Pyric, Sussuran, Talican, Thalassic; telepathy 100 feet, *truespeech*

Skills Athletics +43, Crafting +39, Diplomacy +36, Intimidation +38, Nature +38, Norgorber Lore +41, Religion +40, Stealth +38 (+42 in water)

Str +11, **Dex** +8, **Con** +10, **Int** +9, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +6

AC 48; **Fort** +42, **Ref** +34, **Will** +36

HP 430; **Immunities** bleed, paralyzed, poison, sleep;

Resistances acid 20, bludgeoning 20, fire 20

Toxic Downpour (aura, primal) Venomfist's presence alters the weather within 2 miles to heavy rainfall as long as they're located in a sizable body of water. When they become hostile, the rain in a 120-foot emanation from them becomes highly toxic and deals 8d8 poison damage (DC 42 basic Fortitude half) to all creatures in the area.

Vortex (aura, water) 120 feet. Water in the area that is in the same body of water as Venomfist is difficult terrain for Swimming creatures that don't have the water trait.

Speed 40 feet, swim 120 feet

Melee ♦ fist +42 (magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 4d6+21 bludgeoning plus 4d6 poison and Improved Grab (*Monster Core* 359)

Divine Innate Spells DC 45; **10th** *cataclysm*; **9th** *toxic cloud*, *wrathful storm*; **8th** *hydraulic push* (at will); **Cantrips (9th)** *caustic blast*; **Constant (10th)** *truesight*, *truespeech*

Constrict ♦ 4d6 bludgeoning and 4d6 poison, DC 45

Create Poison ♦ **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** Venomfist transforms a portion of their watery body into a single dose of any type of common poison of 20th level or lower—tears of death (*GM Core* 250) is their favorite. If they're holding a container, they can create the poison within that container, at which point the poison remains viable for 24 hours before it reverts to water. Alternatively, they can apply a contact or injury-created poison to their fist.

Surge ♦♦ Venomfist expands their space to fill the area of their vortex. Creatures within the aura take 6d12+6 bludgeoning damage and 6d12+6 poison damage with a DC 45 basic Fortitude save. A creature that fails this save is pushed 40 feet. Venomfist then retracts to their former space and cannot use Surge again for 1d4 rounds.



ZIMIEZEK

The zimiezecks, also known as those-that-weave-secrets, are one of many creatures native to Duskfathom. They resemble large spiders with humanoid hands instead of spidery feet and possess vaguely humanoid heads with multiple eyes and spider fangs for jaws. Their faces are often shrouded by a veil, mask, or webbing to both hide their identity and as a gesture of peace, for a zimiezek's bite can turn other humanoids into them.

Unlike the karumzecks, Norgorber's more common divine servitors, zimiezecks almost never leave Duskfathom. Most are average citizens who revere Norgorber as both deity and prince. Only a few serve the god of secrets directly as the city's security and elite strike force.

ZIMIEZEK

CREATURE 18

RARE LARGE ABERRATION FIEND UNHOLY

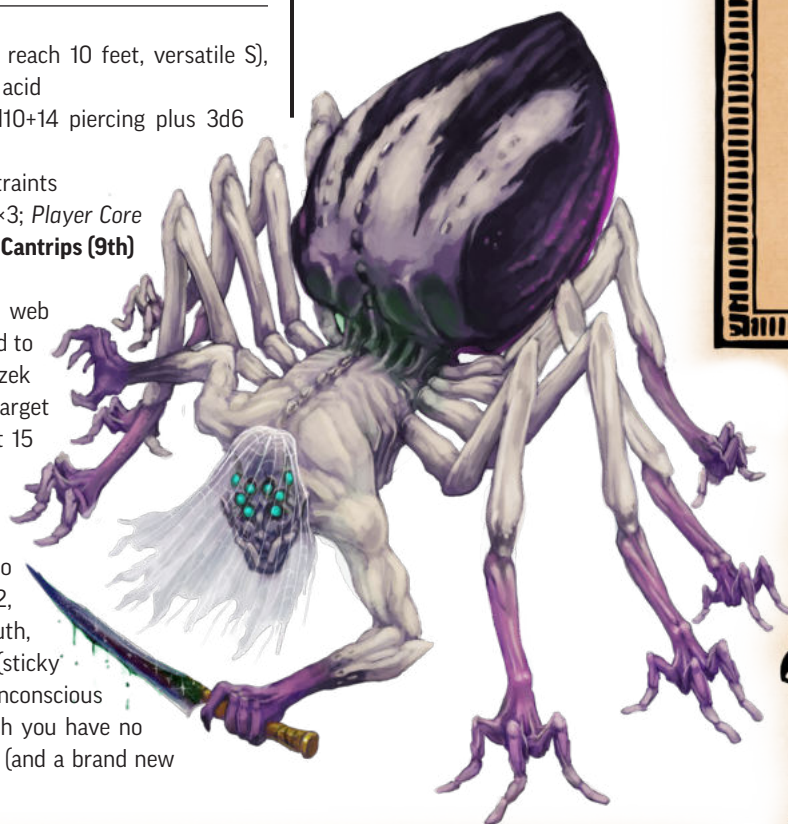
Perception +33; greater darkvision**Languages** Chthonian, Common, Daemonic, Diabolic, Utopian**Skills** Acrobatics +35, Athletics +32, Deception +34, Duskfathom Lore +31,

Stealth +35, Society +31, Survival +33

Str +6, **Dex** +7, **Con** +6, **Int** +5, **Wis** +9, **Cha** +6**Items** +2 greater striking astral corrosive shortsword**AC** 41; **Fort** +28, **Ref** +31, **Will** +33**HP** 335; **Immunities** poison**Darting Legs** ➤ **Trigger** The zimiezek is targeted with an attack; **Effect** The Zimiezek gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack.**Reactive Strike** ➤ The zimiezek gains two extra reactions on their turn that they can only use to make Reactive Strikes.**Speed** 40 feet, climb 40 feet**Melee** ♦ *shortsword* +35 (agile, finesse, magical, reach 10 feet, versatile S),**Damage** 3d6+14 slashing plus 1d6 astral and 1d6 acid**Melee** ♦ bite +33 (finesse, magical), **Damage** 3d10+14 piercing plus 3d6 poison and zimiezek infection**Ranged** ♦ web +33 (range 60 feet), **Effect** web restraints**Occult Innate Spells** DC 37, attack +29; **9th** *web* (×3; *Player Core* 2 255); **5th** *translocate*; **4th** *translocate* (at will); **Cantrips** (9th) *telekinetic hand*, *telekinetic projectile***Web Restraints** A creature hit by the zimiezek's web Strike is restrained either to a surface or tethered to the zimiezek until it Escapes (DC 40). The zimiezek gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Trip a tethered target and can Interact with the tether to pull a target 15 feet toward them.**Zimiezek Infection** (disease, virulent) Anadis are immune; **Saving Throw** DC 37; **Stage 1** clumsy 1 (1 day); **Stage 2** clumsy 2 (eight spider legs start to grow out of your back; 1 day); **Stage 3** clumsy 2, drained 1 (venomous fangs grow from your mouth, 1 day); **Stage 4** clumsy 2, drained 1, slowed 1 (sticky webbing exudes from your flesh, 1 day); **Stage 5** unconscious (you become cocooned in webbing, during which you have no need for food and water, 1 week); **Stage 6** death (and a brand new zimiezek emerges from your cocooned body)

UNCERTAIN ORIGINS

The zimiezecks believe the first of them arose from souls who were once Norgorber's allies in life who stumbled upon the god's greatest secret and were slain to conceal his identity. Some doubt this claim, given Norgorber's anathema on showing mercy. Nevertheless, a connection exists between Norgorber and both zimiezecks and karumzecks that lets the god automatically know the creatures' names and identities.



Delaraius Solzakarr

Blood of the Last Sand

Delaraius was a Taldan-Keleshite child born in Cassomir, the sole scion of a loyal but unremarkable family of Abadaran merchants. Over 40 years ago, he and his parents were abducted by a group of deros, after which the three were subjected to strange, hideous experiments. Delaraius escaped from the deros' clutches but was forced to leave his parents behind to certain death. Orphaned and increasingly shunned for his stories of being stolen away by "strange little men," despite the compelling evidence of how those eldritch experiments left him with skin that swiftly charred under the sun's light, young Delaraius prayed to Norgorber for deliverance. Amused that a law-abiding Solzakarr would pray to him, Norgorber rewarded Delaraius with a touch of power to aid his desire for vengeance.

Years later, Delaraius—now a young man—returned to the enclave of the deros who killed his family, but this time he brought adventuring allies with him on his quest for revenge. He lost his left eye in the resulting battles, an ironic reflection of Norgorber's own injury. Norgorber sent Father Skinsaw to congratulate Delaraius; the manifestation gruesomely gifting the promising young worshipper an unholy eye—a divinely created duplicate of the very eye Norgorber once lost. Father Skinsaw then told the fledgling cleric to seek the power that lies in his family.

Intrigued by Norgorber's unusual interest in him, Delaraius traveled, researching his lineage and leaving ritualistic murders in his wake. He increasingly came to believe he and Norgorber shared a historic link, and even wondered if Norgorber, as a mortal man, had been the sire of one of his own ancestors. His discoveries eventually led him to Vyre, where he flourished. He fell in with the cult of Norgorber there and quickly rose in rank among the Turnkeys and Skinsaw cult. Within a year of settling in Vyre, Delaraius was a prison-floor captain and feared Skinsaw murderer.

With access to Vyre's palace records, Delaraius was finally able to complete his lineal research and confirmed that his ancestry traced all the way back to Vyre's founding days—but rather than discovering a direct link to Norgorber himself, he learned he was a descendant of Lord Zakarr—one

of Vyre's first rulers who did not belong to one of the founding families, and whose legacy in the city was tarnished and shameful, largely remembered as a sadistic killer whose family line was thought to have gone extinct. The revelation that he wasn't Norgorber's descendant was insult upon injury, as Delaraius realized that Norgorber could not have aided him all these years without an ulterior motive. An urge to spit in Norgorber's remaining eye rose in his soul, but Delaraius also knew that renouncing his faith wouldn't harm the god who had spent the past several decades toying with him.

Instead, Delaraius hatched a complex plot to have Father Skinsaw, one of Norgorber's four aspects, rise up and replace him entirely, for it seemed obvious to Delaraius that Lord Zakarr was the original inspiration for this aspect of the god. And so Delaraius became simultaneously a blasphemer and an even more devout worshipper of Norgorber, focusing on the worship of one aspect to the exclusion of others he sought to undermine and destroy.

Delaraius continued climbing the echelons of power, becoming Head Warden, King of Keys, and Father Skinsaw's high priest. By the time Ravounel seceded from Cheliah, he was indisputably the most powerful figure in Vyre.

CAMPAIGN USE

Delaraius starts as a tenuous ally who sees the PCs as a convenient way to set into motion his plans while keeping his hands relatively clean. If the PCs discover the cleric's lineage and secrets too early and turn against him, he marks them as sacrifices to be made to Father Skinsaw.

In Chapter 3, whether he seeks the PCs' aid, walks separately from them, or becomes an enemy revived, one last fated showdown occurs between Delaraius and the party. How that confrontation ends—and whether the PCs might help Delaraius redeem himself to the extent he can be saved—will be up to them.

DELARAIUS SOLZAKARR

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID UNHOLY

Male human priest of Norgorber

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Perception +36; darkvision, truesight

Languages Aklo, Common, Daemonic, Diabolic, Halfling, Kelish, Sakvroth

Skills Acrobatics +35, Deception +39, Diplomacy +37, Intimidation +37, Medicine +36, Norgorber Lore +38, Occultism +36, Religion +38, Society +34, Stealth +37, Thievery +37, Vyre Lore +38

Str +4, **Dex** +9, **Con** +6, **Int** +8, **Wis** +10, **Cha** +9

Items *A History of Secrets* (page 75), +2 greater resilient raiment greater winged studded leather armor, +3 greater striking quickstrike spell reservoir unholy wounding orichalcum shortsword (contains blindness), peridot crystal ball, Skinsaw Eye, wand of massacre

AC 45; **Fort** +32, **Ref** +35, **Will** +38

HP 375; **Immunities** bleed; **Weaknesses** vulnerable to sunlight

Skinsaw Eye Norgorber granted Delaraius an eye to aid him in his quest for vengeance, but this eye also significantly enhances the priest. It grants him darkvision and truesight as a constant innate spell, and also increases all of his attribute modifiers by 4. He is immune to bleed damage, magical detection and mental communication (unless he chooses otherwise), and magical alteration of his memories unless he chooses to be affected or the effect comes from a deity or artifact. The Skinsaw Eye serves as a religious symbol for Delaraius. If he ever loses the Skinsaw Eye, Delaraius loses all of these benefits and becomes drained 3.

Vulnerable to Sunlight Delaraius takes 50 damage for every hour he's exposed to sunlight.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *shortsword* +38 (agile, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 3d6+12 piercing plus 1d4 spirit and 1d6 persistent bleed

Divine Prepared Spells DC 42, attack +34; **10th** *harm* (x6), *gate*; **9th** *heal*, *overwhelming presence*, *vision of death*; **8th** *blood vendetta*, *dispel magic*, *pinpoint*; **7th** *interplanar teleport*, *planar seal*, *regenerate*; **6th** *cleanse affliction*, *dominate*, *repulsion*; **5th** *command*, *scouting eye*, *truespeech*; **4th** *invisibility*, *talking corpse*, *unfettered movement*; **3rd** *blindness*, *dream message*, *fear*; **2nd** *calm*, *lock*, *translate*; **1st** *command*, *enfeeble*, *sanctuary*; **Cantrips** (**10th**) *daze*, *message*, *read aura*, *shield*, *void warp*

Cleric Domain Spells 3 Focus Points, DC 42; **10th** *death's call*, *sudden shift*, *trickster's twin*

Rituals DC 42; *geas*, *planar servitor*, *resurrect*, *teleportation circle* (Player Core 2 270)

King of Keys Delaraius's magic is more powerful when he's located in Vyre or Duskfathom. The counteract DC for all

of his spells increases by 2 as long as the spell effect is located in either of these locations, and Delaraius gains a +2 status bonus on counteract checks while in either location.

Skinsaw Strike ♦ (divine) Delaraius focuses his attention on a target he can see, causing his Skinsaw Eye to glow red for a moment as he seeks out the most painful place to attack that target. He then attempts a Medicine check against the target's Fortitude DC; on a success, that target is off-guard to Delaraius until the end of his turn. On a critical success, that target is off-guard to Delaraius until the end of his next turn.

Sneak Attack Delaraius deals 3d6 extra precision damage to creatures who are off-guard.



Risen Nemesis

Foe From Beyond

The heroes' Nemesis makes their return from the Great Beyond as Godsrain strikes Kintargo just as the heroic opera concludes. They ride back to reality from beyond as they are torn from the afterlife by a shard of Gorum's armor in the instant the god of war is slain on the shores of his own divine realm. The bitter memories of Nemesis's defeat replay in their mind as they go backward along the River of Souls; they were given an unexpected do-over, and they're eager to seize upon it. Infused with power from an exposure to Gorum's death throes and wrenched painfully from their afterlife, the Risen Nemesis is a unique palinthanos forced back into the universe to seek a reckoning with their hated foes—the PCs.

CREATING THE RISEN NEMESIS

The exact appearance of the Risen Nemesis depends on the nature of who serves this role in your Curtain Call campaign, but they should be immediately recognizable by the PCs—manifesting as a ghostly version of their old foe whose movements jerk and twist almost as if they were moving backward in time. The basic stat block for the Risen Nemesis is presented on the following page, but in preparation for running the event in which the PCs face off for one last time against this old foe, you should take the time to customize this stat block to make it feel more like the old foe returning at last for one final battle.

Traits If the PCs' Nemesis wasn't Medium, change the size trait as needed; don't forget to adjust reach for melee Strikes (as summarized on page 421 of *Player Core*).

Perception As a unique palinthanos, the Risen Nemesis doesn't have any additional senses that they may have had in life unless such a sense was a significant element and key part of their theme, in which case add that sense.

Languages In addition to the languages the Nemesis knew in life, add Necril.

Skills Add the Nemesis's most important skill from in life with a modifier of +39, unless it was Athletics, in which case the Risen Nemesis gains Acrobatics +39 (since as an incorporeal creature, it has little use for Athletics). Any Lore skills it had in life are gained with a modifier of +35. If the Nemesis was a spellcaster, add Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion (as appropriate) with a modifier of +35 (unless this was the most important skill, in which case it has a modifier of +39).

Saves Increase the Nemesis's best save by 3, and decrease their worst save by 3.

Melee Adjust the Risen Nemesis's claw attack to match their most iconic melee Strike when they lived; if this was via a wielded weapon, the Risen Nemesis appears to be carrying that weapon but does not actually possess gear. Change the slashing damage caused by this Strike if appropriate to bludgeoning or piercing, but its traits and damage remain unchanged.

Additional Offensive or Defensive Abilities Pick two of the abilities below based on the Risen Nemesis's emotional state. If the Risen Nemesis doesn't cast spells or only has innate spells, you can pick one more:

Additional Innate Spells If in life the Nemesis was a spellcaster, they can take this ability to expand upon their innate spells. Regardless of their tradition in life, the Risen Nemesis casts occult innate spells. Add one 9th-rank spell, two 8th-rank spells, and two 7th-rank spells to the Risen Nemesis's innate spells, picking spells that thematically match those they used in life. Spells from traditions other than occult are allowed, but they become occult innate spells when added in this way.

Euphoric Cackle ☞ (occult) **Trigger** A creature the Risen Nemesis can observe critically fails an attack or save; **Effect** The Risen Nemesis revels and gains 20 temporary Hit Points that last for 24 hours. They cannot use Euphoric Cackle again for 1d4 rounds.

Fixated Obsession ♦♦ (emotion, mental) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The Risen Nemesis expresses a vengeful interest in a target within 30 feet. The creature must succeed at a DC 42 Will save or become sickened 1 for 1 minute (sickened 2 on a critical failure). On failure or critical failure, the Risen Nemesis also gains a +2 status bonus on Strikes and damage rolls against the target until the target or the Risen Nemesis dies, whichever comes first.

Indignant Curse ☞ (curse) **Trigger** The Risen Nemesis critically fails a save; **Effect** The Risen Nemesis curses the creature who created the triggering effect with bad luck by sneering or shouting a cutting insult. The triggering creature must attempt a DC 42 Will save. On failure, the Risen Nemesis can reroll the triggering roll and take the better result of the two (a fortune effect); the cursed creature must make their next d20 roll twice and take the worse result (a misfortune effect).

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Pained Retribution ♦♦ (enchantment, mental) The Risen Nemesis demands the PCs see how they have wronged them. All PCs within 30 feet of the Risen Nemesis must attempt a DC 42 Will save. Regardless of the outcome, the PCs become temporarily immune to this ability for 24 hours. On failure, the PCs are restrained by invisible chains of guilt that only they can see (Escape DC 42). On a critical failure, the PC is also slowed 1 for 1 minute as they hesitate from a guilty conscience.

RISEN NEMESIS

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE MEDIUM FIEND INCORPOREAL PALINTHANGS UNDEAD UNHOLY

Variant echopsyvne (page 87)

Perception +35; greater darkvision

Languages all known in life plus Necril

Skills Acrobatics +35, Deception +35, Intimidation +37

Str -5, **Dex** +7, **Con** +7, **Int** +7, **Wis** +7, **Cha** +7

AC 43; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +33, **Will** +33

HP 290, void healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistances** all damage 20 (except force, *ghost touch*, or vitality; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Reaction Reversal As echopsyvne.

Predestined Defeat ⤵ As echopsyvne except DC 39 and 16d8 spirit damage.

Speed fly 30 feet

Melee ♦ claw +35 (agile, finesse, magical),

Damage 4d6+10 slashing plus 4d6 spirit

Occult Innate Spells DC 42, attack +34; **9th**

phantasmagoria; **8th** *vision of death*; **7th** *warp mind*; **Cantrips (9th)** *telekinetic projectile*, *void warp*

Come Out, You Cowards! ♦♦♦ (move, occult) In each round the Risen Nemesis does not have a PC to target, they go on a rampage, harming innocent bystanders and damaging the opera house structure. The Risen Nemesis Strides, then damages enough of their immediate surroundings at the end of this Stride to fill a 10-foot emanation with rubble that functions as difficult terrain (or greater difficult terrain where difficult terrain from rubble already existed). The PCs lose 1d4 Opera Points from their accumulated total.

Distort Perception ♦ As echopsyvne, but DC 42.

Undo Destruction ♦♦ (occult) Destruction is the beginning, not the end! The Risen Nemesis rewinds time on a pile of rubble that they can see within 120 feet, causing the rubble in a 10-foot burst to restore itself to its pre-destroyed state and causing the area to no longer serve as difficult terrain. All creatures in the area must make a DC 42 Reflex save. The Risen Nemesis cannot use Undo Destruction again for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success The creature avoids being harmed by the violence of the repairs.

Success The creature takes 2d10 bludgeoning, 2d10 piercing, and 2d10 slashing damage as pieces of rubble bash, slice, and pierce them while it swirls through the air to rebuild.

Failure As success but 4d10 for each damage type and the creature is knocked prone.

Critical Failure As failure but 8d10 for each damage type and the target is carried away with the rubble. They become restrained by the rebuilt structure (usually the wall or floor within the rubble pile or closest to it; Escape DC 42). The restrained character might be so encased in rubble that they run the risk of suffocation.



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by Brian Duckwitz

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Excerpted from A History of Secrets

SCENE ONE—CITY OF VICES

"Behold Vyre, City of Vices Free!

"The year was ten-six-seventy-three.

"Noble families disgruntled by Corentyn's ways sail eagerly north in search of lucrative days. Great storms and high waves were not what they planned, with but seven families surviving to land.

"Yet they were not slowed by those who deceased and founded new homes where families could feast. Pleasures of mind, of heart, and of flesh, upon the forbidden they chose to refresh.

"The founders agreed on a rule to obey, a Promise to hold as the one sacred way: **I Shall Honor All Coin.** Everything can be given a price, all free to be traded, in City of Vice.

"A saying arose from this booming alliance: 'A coin for your service, a coin for your silence.' And soon those arrived with purses so vast that the coffers of Vyre had endless repast. This wave of new trade did Vyre serenade: Bring it strife, bring it debts, bring it lives, bring it deaths! Let nothing but fortune and wealth now cascade!

"So come now and follow us to the past, its forbidden doors open at last. Secrets revealed, a god's history unsealed. A new life ascended from criminal winnings, this is the story of mortal beginnings!"

SCENE THREE—BLOOD FROM SANDS

"In realms far from Vyre where the seas were but sands, the Zakarrs were powers amid arid lands. Yet soon their strange customs and sinister past found them few allies and enemies vast. To the sea did they flee, leaving blood in their trail, visiting port after port 'till to Vyre they set sail.

"What fear such a name can so swiftly inspire, even in those from lands different entire. They grew strong swift in Vyre, spreading like fire, engulfing competitors full and entire. And with such great power came freedom to cheat. The Promises bolstered this newcomer elite.

"One set to the city with subversive guile, and soon to the alleys came murder most vile. With knives made to skin and saws to cut bone, Vyre's august new hunter swift made himself known. For Vyre let him fear no chance of execution—with no laws to be broken for such persecution.

"Remember how he most desperate desired to collect and display one precious Cleome admired?"

"Oh speak you a name and a secret too soon! You'll leave our admirers' interests all strewn! But yes was this woman quite doomed and ill-fated, and Zakarr's vile need to cause pain she soon sated.

"One family of note rose up in dissent. 'How can we bear it when a life is so spent?' A payment of gold was soon to follow, yet it did little to fill their new hollow. They took to the people and rallied all Vyre, even as mother faced danger so dire.

"And so did Third Promise come down from on high, allowing for mayhem as long as none die. **I May Wound Yet Shall Not Kill.** And while Cleome ill-fated remained trophy caught, a few more years of living her family bought. Lord Zakarr's transgressions would soon quiesce, for alive was an infant, Lord's rightful heiress."

SCENE TWO—SALT AND SIN

"In a score of Vyre risen came advent of prison! Witness the birth of Dunrock's red rule, a nobleman eager to be the most cruel.

"In fathomless depths of their dungeons endless, the Dunrocks indulged acts fiendish yet fiendless. So horrific and fearful grew rumors of the clan, that Dunrock's descendants from Vyre's shores were banned. Yet even though exiled by those once his kin, Lord Dunrock in dungeons found profit within.

"Give me thy gold, and your castoffs I'll house. I'll harbor your hated from legend to louse! The people had struggled with crime having risen, and thankful they were for the promise of prison. The cleansing of culprits saw crime hit new lows, but few neighbors were friends and all friends were soon foes.

"As Dunrock grew gravid on criminal game, Vyre gave all Isle-born Dunrock's ill name. A child born to prison, upon adult age, could promise to submit and step out from the cage. Yet what offer the Vices to those so disdained? Nothing but paupers or crimes too constrained.

"Year ten-eight sixty-six, a time for new truths! Dunrock's traditions release all their youths. A parent of fortune might follow in hand, for infants so young they must still attend. In turn, Dunrock's castle the founders expand, and ashore the true Dunrocks may finally ascend."

"From there, all in Vyre to a mouth now agreed, a new Promise to uphold as tenet and creed. **I Shall Speak Many Names.** For children of cages have lives yet to live, regardless of wages of sin to outlive. And those whose professions were hampered by fame, they reveled in freedom away from their name.

"New promise held fast and traditions soon changed, and with this Vyre's future was all but arranged!"

SCENE FOUR—REGENT SUPREME

"And now we come to it: ten-eight-eighty-two, Vyre's founders great fears have at last all come true. A Revolt of Indulgences seeks a new prize: seven must fall so that five may arise.

"To settle new thrones Five spoke the Fourth and the Fifth, two rules in succession to follow forthwith. **I Know None Are Below Me. I Shall Let Closed Doors Remain Closed.**

"Was this what the Spider wished to impose? Now with new Masks, new rulers arose!

"While titles had changed, Promise remained. The First: Delights hold silver and gold. The Second: Whispers hide secrets untold. The Third: Blades for city militia warrant. The Fourth: Blood of laws and spies foreign. The Fifth: Keys for the walls, gates, and locks; both siege or escape, this ruler stops.

"How to recognize one as a Mask of Vyre? No outer mark shall there be to admire. The real magic of Vyre is the city entire. That any Five could rule just adds fear to the fire.

"So what of two houses left fallow to fate? Any who knew passed in ten-nine-ten-eight. The ways that they fell were both strange and bizarre, and now they're forgotten—a memory's scar. And centuries pass and their legacies dim, and so does their power empower Him.

"But! Where hid the name of our character main? Those who seek history, ware what you might find: what lusts to be vacant won't pay you in kind. Know just that the Spiders who ruled that lost House are still out among us: the cat to our mouse. Thief or assassin, toxin or fame. A mortal now god—yet know you his name?"

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