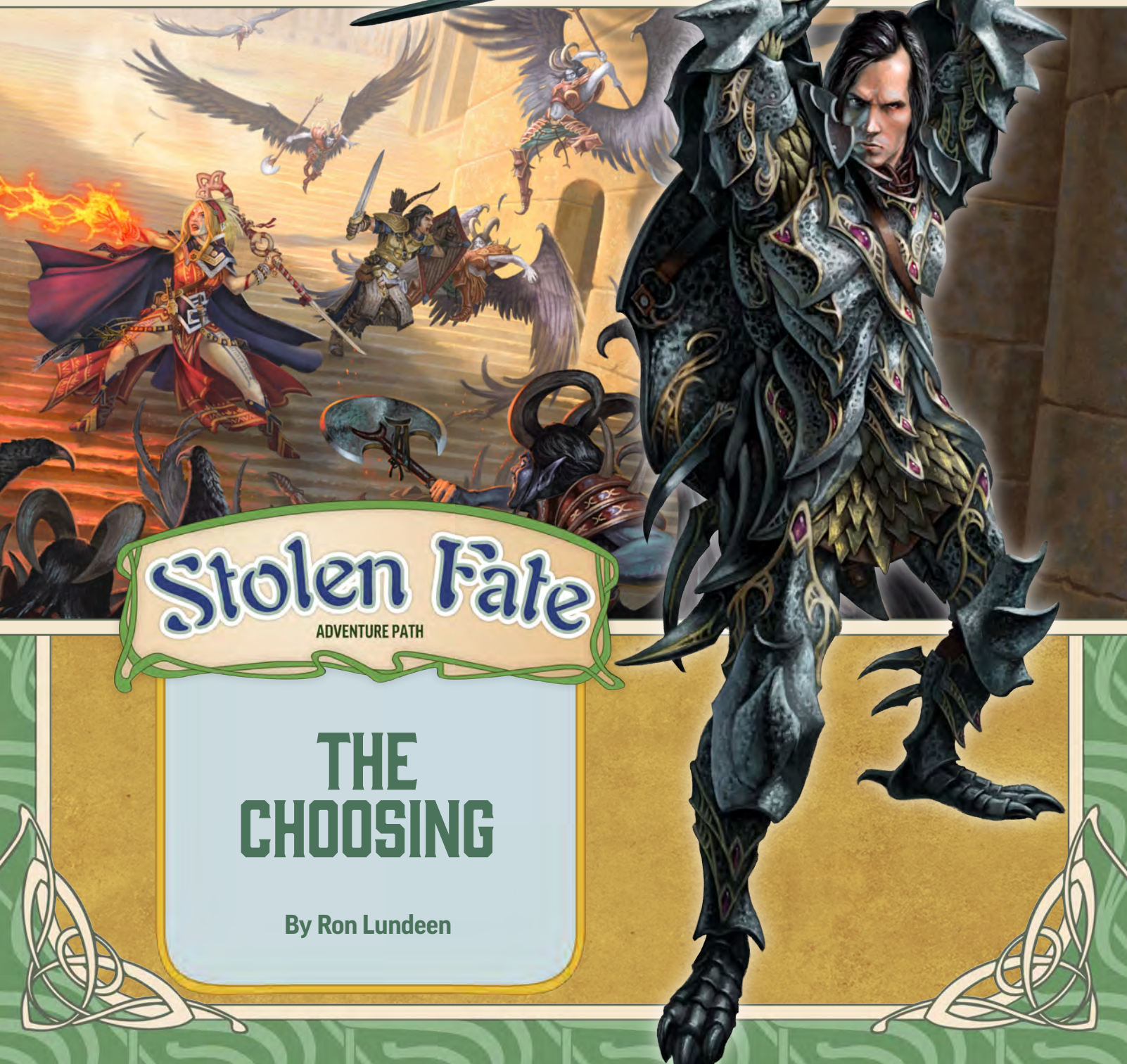


SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER®



Stolen Fate

ADVENTURE PATH

THE CHOOSING

By Ron Lundeen



PATHFINDER

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Stolen Fate

ADVENTURE PATH

ADVENTURE PATH 1 OF 3

The Choosing

Stolen Fate

by James Jacobs and Jason Tondro

2

The Choosing

by Ron Lundeen

6

Chapter 1: Luck of the Draw

8

Chapter 2: Scattered Stories

22

Chapter 3: Queen of the Storval Stairs

46

The Harrow Court

by James Jacobs and Jason Tondro

68

Adventure Toolbox

by Ron Lundeen and James Jacobs

74

Magic Items

Deck of Destiny

75

Creatures

Bhanyada

84

Devil, Ferrugon

86

Devil, Uniila

87

Lilu, Hurlilu

88

Oppali

89

NPCs

Arodeth

90

Drustan

92



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Stolen Fate

Just over a century ago, reality itself changed forever. Within the Inner Sea region, events like the opening of the Worldwound, the manifestation of the perpetual hurricane known now as the Eye of Abendego, and the unexpected death of the god Aroden shook nations and tested faiths, but the tumultuous events were not only limited to this part of Golarion. The collapse of the Lung Wa empire in Tian Xia, the uprising of an army of aberrations across the Open Bridge of Vudra, the failure of Myth-Speaking traditions in Iblydos, and the withering of the Veins of Creation in Arcadia all upended those locales as completely as eternal hurricanes, Abyssal portals, and deific deaths did in the Inner Sea. But these disasters, as horrible as they were, paled against the simple fact that, from that day

forward, prophecy no longer could be trusted. This reality-spanning transformation is what gave the Age of Lost Omens its name.

It was this loss of prophecy that compelled a norn triumvirate called the Harrowing Three to undertake the creation of a powerful artifact—the *Deck of Destiny*. This artifact, they hoped, would correct the cosmic disaster and place destiny itself back on a predictable path. The norns could not accept the idea that fate itself had been stolen, but had their plan succeeded, it would have resulted in the loss of free will for all.

Using This Adventure Path

This Adventure Path chronicles the PCs' journey from 11th level to the absolute height of power at

20th level. These three volumes, together with the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*, *Pathfinder Bestiaries* 1–3, *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*, and additional supplemental rules in the Pathfinder Reference Document (available online at paizo.com/prd), present everything you need to run the Adventure Path. This includes the adventures themselves, articles to enhance the campaign's setting, and the Adventure Toolbox, which presents new creatures to fight, key NPCs to interact with, and a wealth of new rules options the PCs can gain access to.

To play in this campaign, a player should have a copy of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* as well as the *Stolen Fate Player's Guide*, a free supplement downloadable from paizo.com. In addition, this campaign makes heavy use of an in-world deck of cards used for fortune-telling and magic rituals—the harrow. The *Stolen Fate Player's Guide* includes methods by which you can randomly determine draws from a harrow using dice or a regular deck of playing cards, but using an actual *Pathfinder Harrow Deck*, available from paizo.com or at most game stores, can enhance the immersion in your game.

Campaign Background

The story of *Stolen Fate* begins approximately 120 years ago, at the dawn of the Age of Lost Omens, when prophecy itself seemed to die. While divination magic continued to function as it always had, prophecies that claimed to predict the future failed, one after the other—most dramatically when the prophesied return of the god Aroden failed to come about after the god himself died. Since then, the very nature of prophecy grew unreliable and unpredictable—the prophecies that did come true seemed to do so almost accidentally, and far more of them simply never came to pass at all. Those who had built their lives around anticipating prophesied events or studying these foretold futures were forced to adjust their world views or have their beliefs shattered. Yet believed there was still an opportunity to set things right.

The Harrowing Three

At the dawn of the Age of Lost Omens, a triumvirate of norns (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 184)—**Fabrina the Spinster** (the triumvirate's Maiden), **Hala the Rod** (the Mother), and **Diskrasia the Sharp** (the Matriarch)—took grave offense at what they regarded as an unthinkable distortion of reality: the failure of prophecy. Regarding the other disasters occurring across the world as little more than symptoms or side effects of the assault on fate, they debated how to repair the damage, soon coming to the conclusion that

while they could not mend the past, they could “heal” the future.

The norns quickly settled on a plan to combine two different but equally potent sources of divination: their own fey nature and the harrow, a deck of playing cards used by people throughout the Inner Sea region. The trio envisioned a special harrow deck they dubbed the *Deck of Destiny* and decided to call themselves the Harrowing Three. The project took them just over a century to finish, with each card in the deck requiring raw quintessence harvested from across the Great Beyond. Once the *Deck of Destiny* was completed, the Harrowing Three turned to the task of finalizing their plans. They knew they'd have but one chance to set the future in stone. If their plan worked, there would never be a need to use such magic again, and if it failed, retribution against Pharasma for daring to usurp her mantle would surely mean their end.

And so the Harrowing Three took more time debating and preparing. The *Deck of Destiny* had been constructed to perform a harrowing spread requiring all 54 cards that would set the future of the entire multiverse. To be used in this way, every card in the deck must be laid out in a set of 3 concentric circles, each containing 18 cards. The innermost circle would represent the past, the central the present, and the outer ring the future. If the Harrowing Three were right—if they'd constructed the *Deck of Destiny* correctly and if the harrowing was properly performed—this would seal fate. The future foretold by the deck wouldn't be just a possible future, but *the* future, for all time. And, the Three hoped, prophecy would work once more.

The Harrowing Three were wrong. The *Deck of Destiny* isn't quite powerful enough to set every future in stone, but it's more than powerful enough to wreak great havoc if it were to fall into the wrong hands.

The Unmatched

The Harrowing Three were not the only ones who raged against the death of prophecy. In 4648 AR, an exile from Cheliaz named Garron founded a group called the Harbingers of Fate, a secret society who believed that the events at the onset of the Age of Lost Omens were some sort of divine mistake. Lord Garron taught his followers the *Book of 1,000 Whispers*, a tome that detailed numerous prophecies that were supposed to have occurred since the Age of Lost Omens began. Lord Garron believed this book told the true history of Golarion as it should have happened, and with the aid of his growing cult, he set about trying to bring these prophecies to pass,

believing that if he could make them happen, reality would course correct.

Lord Garron died before seeing anything come of the Harbingers of Fate, but his daughter Arodeth took up his mantle and led the group into the new century. Her focus increasingly fell upon the final prophecies in the *Book of 1,000 Whispers*, which were predicted to occur in 4714 AR. When that year passed with nothing from the book coming true, the Harbingers of Fate imploded, its members turning on each other in a fit of bitter frustration that ultimately, like the predictions from the *Book of 1,000 Whispers*, had very little impact on the world at large. Arodeth would survive these events, but in the years that followed, the Harbingers of Fate began a quick slide into obscurity, their legacy amounting to little more than a curiosity of recent history.

But not everyone has forgotten. One bitter and disillusioned man, an exiled Chelaxian aristocrat named **Drustan** (LE male human tyrant), only grew more frustrated by the failure of the Harbingers' cause. In the following years after the cult's implosion, Drustan fled the Isle of Kortos and headed north, hoping to avoid persecution while simultaneously seeking a new way to "fix" the Age of Lost Omens. He eventually found himself in Varisia, where he met a mysterious woman named **Raven Nicoletta** (NE female human harrower).

Raven explained to Drustan that she had foreseen his arrival and that their meeting was destined, and as proof, she revealed to him her own discoveries—for she had learned of the Harrowing Three and that they were seeking to "heal the cosmic wound" in the world. Unlike the Harbingers, who sought to fix the past, the Harrowing Three looked forward, hoping to fix the future. To Drustan, this reversal was a revelation, and he pledged his services to Raven when she asked him to accompany her even further north to seek out the norns. In short order, the pair tracked the Harrowing Three down and offered their services—yet from the start, Raven and Drustan had their own plot in mind.

By this time, the Harrowing Three had completed all the individual cards from the *Deck of Destiny*, but the norns needed an equally impressive case to hold them within while they prepared for the final harrowing. The norns took Drustan and Raven into their service and sent them to gather various rare components for the deck's powerful container. While they served, the two bided their time, delighting in the irony at how their plot against those who would seek to know the future continued to go unnoticed. Raven impressed on the norns her own skill with the harrow and increasingly became an integral part of

their final preparation for the activation of the *Deck of Destiny*, allowing Drustan more freedom to gather additional allies. Chief among these was a violent warlord and mercenary leader who was so obsessed with the harrow that he'd adopted the name of one of the deck's most infamous apocryphal cards, the "Prince of Wolves," as his own.

THE SCATTERING

As the time for the Harrowing Three's fate-fixing harrowing drew nearer, Raven, the Prince of Wolves, and Drustan secretly formed their own alliance. Calling themselves the Unmatched (believing themselves to be unhindered by any fate, magical harrow or otherwise), they had bided their time long enough. They knew what the *Deck of Destiny* was theoretically capable of, and if they could seize control of the artifact at just the right moment, they could stack the deck in their favor to ensure their own glory and power. As the Stolen Fate Adventure Path is about to begin, the Unmatched show their hand and try to steal the *Deck of Destiny* for themselves, mere moments before the Harrowing Three begin the process of setting the future "right."

The norns were unprepared for the betrayal but certainly not defenseless. They quickly realized what the Unmatched were hoping to do, and in a desperate ploy, the Harrowing Three cut the ties between each of the *Deck of Destiny's* individual cards. In a flash, all 54 cards of the deck scattered across Golarion, each landing somewhere unknown to the Harrowing Three. The Unmatched were not prepared for this tactic, and panicking in the face of the combined wrath of the norn triumvirate, wisely fled to regroup and recover. The Harrowing Three let them go, feeling a loss of confidence as they were forced to grapple with the simple truth that they, in their obsession with knowing the future, were ignorant to the treacheries of the present.

As for the cards, they were scattered to places or people of great mystical power and potential. Some were drawn to regions or individuals whose themes matched the cards. Other showed up in entirely unexpected places, and in a few cases, with individuals who themselves were fated to play key roles in the continuing story—the PCs.

Which is when our story begins.

Adventure Path Summary

In Stolen Fate, the Harrowing Three attempt to activate the *Deck of Destiny* when the Unmatched—a group of villains who covet the artifact and wish to use it to remake fate into something that benefits

only them—attempt to steal the deck. In the resulting chaos, the deck becomes scattered, its cards spreading out across Golarion and leaving both the Harrowing Three and the Unmatched with only a tiny fraction of the cards each. Yet as these two opposing groups scramble to regain control of the *Deck of Destiny*, some of the cards fall into the hands of the PCs, who eventually may become the saviors of fate itself.

THE CHOOSING

By Ron Lundeen

Pathfinder Adventure Path

#190, Levels 11–13

When the PCs discover strange magical harrow cards in their possession, a compelling vision draws them to the city of Absalom, where they soon learn the true nature of these magical cards. With fate seeming to push the PCs toward gathering more of these cards, it won't be long before they trigger the creation of a brand-new demiplane associated with the cards—the Harrow Court. As the PCs continue to collect the scattered cards, they learn that a villainous opposing group known as the Unmatched has the same goal and ultimately come face-to-face with one of their members on the legendary Storval Stairs of Varisia.

THE DESTINY WAR

By Chris Sims

Pathfinder Adventure Path #191, Levels 14–17

With potentially a third of the *Deck of Destiny* now in the PCs' hands, their hold over fate and the power of the Harrow Court grows. Yet their success has not gone unnoticed, and another agent of the Unmatched, a man who calls himself the Prince of Wolves after one of the harrow's most infamous apocryphal cards, leads his demonic minions against them in an invasion of the Harrow Court. After the Prince of Wolves' bold attack, the PCs must seek out and use another legendary artifact, the *Deck of Harrowed Tales*, to retaliate and secure even more cards from the *Deck of Destiny*.

WORST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS

By Luis Loza

Pathfinder Adventure Path #192, Levels 18–20

With the defeat of the Prince of Wolves, the PCs have likely gathered a majority of the *Deck of Destiny*, and

triumph almost seems certain. That is, until disaster strikes when the most powerful of the Unmatched, Raven Nicoletta, steals the PCs' cards from under their noses. At this point, the norms of the Harrowed Three reveal they have been manipulating the PCs all along as their unwitting agents in gathering the cards, and they offer their aid in tracking Raven down—as long as the PCs promise to let them “heal the cosmic wound of Stolen Fate” when all is said and done. Whether the PCs agree to this is up to them to decide, but doing so would rob the PCs, along with anyone who can make choices, of free will.

Key Names

There are several important NPCs, locations, and items to keep track of in this Adventure Path. The most important are compiled here for reference.

All-Seeing Hajeck: A doomed harrower whose involvement with the *Deck of Destiny* begins with her death.

Arodeth: A disillusioned mercenary leader who once tried to alter history.

Deck of Destiny: A deck of harrow cards created for the purpose of setting all futures in stone and giving those who use it power over destiny.

Deck of Harrowed Tales: A legendary harrow deck used to create the Harrowed Realm.

Diskrasia the Sharp: The matriarch norn of the Harrowing Three.

Drustan: An exiled Chelaxian noble; one of the Unmatched.

Fabrina the Spinster: The maiden norn of the Harrowing Three.

Hala the Rod: The mother norn of the Harrowing Three.

Harrow Court: A demiplane that rises from the *Deck of Destiny* as the PCs begin to rebuild the artifact.

Harrowed Realm: A demiplane based on the stories associated with the traditions of the harrow.

Harrowing Three: A triumvirate of norns, creators of the *Deck of Destiny*.

Prince of Wolves: A dangerous Abyssal mercenary; one of the Unmatched.

Raven Nicoletta: A powerful harrower; the most dangerous of the Unmatched.

The Unmatched: Three treacherous agents of the Harrowing Three who covet the *Deck of Destiny* for themselves.

Zellara Esmeranda: A ghost whose fate is bound to the harrow.



Deck of Destiny

The Choosing

Chapter 1:
Luck of the Draw

Chapter 2:
Scattered Stories

Chapter 3:
Queen of the Storval Stairs

The Harrow Court

Adventure Toolbox



The Choosing

Chapter 1: Luck of the Draw 8

Drawn to the metropolis of Absalom by the magical harrow cards they've acquired, the PCs investigate a murder and follow leads to find a harrow card proprietor named Dieral Myrnes before the devils on his heels get to him!

Chapter 2: Scattered Stories 22

Now that the PCs have gathered enough cards, their magic flows together to fashion an entirely new realm: a demiplane called the Harrow Court. Within the Harrow Court, six portals open that lead the PCs to the next six cards from the *Deck of Destiny* they are fated to recover.

Chapter 3: Queen of the Storval Stairs 46

The Harrow Court pinpoints a concentration of harrow cards at the Storval Stairs, a titanic series of steps that connect lowland Varisia to the Storval Plateau. Control of the stairs changes often—it's currently in the hands of a mercenary band, as are several more cards from the *Deck of Destiny*.

COMING TOGETHER

As described in the *Stolen Fate Player's Guide*, the PCs start this Adventure Path having each come into possession of a single card from the *Deck of Destiny*—cards that grant visions of and compulsions to visit a certain shop in Absalom's Grand Bazaar.

The assumption is that the cards they received are *The Brass Dwarf*, *The Empty Throne*, *The Paladin*, and *The Rabbit Prince*. If you have fewer than 4 PCs, give the leftover cards to Drustan at the end of the adventure. If you have more than 4 PCs, award the additional PCs with either *The Locksmith* or *The Mountain Man* (removing either card you use from Part 3 of this adventure).

If you have more than 6 PCs, work with your players to determine which PCs start with cards—those who don't should have strong ties to those who do so that they're compelled to accompany card-carrying PCs.

You could also simply grant these additional PCs cards selected from this or other adventures in *Stolen Fate*. If you do, you'll need to adjust the encounters that no longer have their associated card (and may need additional volumes beyond this one for a card's rules). If you grant additional cards, avoid granting any from the suit of Star before the PCs recover *The Carnival*, as doing so could trigger an early trip to the Harrow Court!

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"The Choosing" is designed for four characters.

- 11 The characters begin this adventure at 11th level.
- 12 The characters should be 12th level before they first enter the Harrow Court.
- 13 The characters should be 13th level before journeying to the Storval Stairs.

The characters should reach 14th level by the time they complete the adventure.



Chapter 1: Luck of the Draw

All-Seeing Hajeck lived a life full of magical schemes, wild successes, and improbable failures. After a stint as a harrower in a traveling carnival that saw her fall under the influence of the *Deck of Harrowed Tales* (a powerful magical harrow deck that plays a larger role in the next adventure), Hajeck moved on to ply her trade in Absalom, where she gained ownership of a small game store called “Three Moves Ahead.” She’s had a mystical association with the harrow ever since her experiences with the *Deck of Harrowed Tales*, so when a strange card appeared in her shop one evening, she knew it to be a significant portent. The Vision was a harrow card she knew well, but this one didn’t belong to any deck she’d ever seen. Certain that it was from a unique deck, Hajeck closed her shop to spend time

investigating the card in her front room, where she had floor space to sketch out occult diagrams and consult her eclectic collection of maps and charts. As she began to piece together the clues, her magical investigations caused *The Vision* to resonate with other cards in the region. It is this resonance that causes the PCs to experience the strange pull toward Absalom’s Grand Bazaar at the start of this campaign.

Hajeck was startled to learn that other magical cards were in the region—while she only received vague sensations from those held by the PCs, another card appeared to fairly close to her. This was a card that appeared in the collection of Dieral Myrnese, an itinerant merchant who sold harrow cards (both authentic and faked) and associated items from his

mobile shop, the Harrow Barrow. Hajeck had avoided getting to know Dieral, as she didn't want her connection as a harrower easily traced and, truth be told, she considered the showy and gregarious Dieral to embody the worst elements of fortune-telling hucksters (like herself, although she couldn't admit it). Hajeck wasn't sure whether Dieral even knew he'd acquired one of these special harrow cards; with his jumbled collection of harrow-themed paraphernalia, Hajeck doubted it.

Hajeck decided to wait in Three Moves Ahead for the time being, suspecting that these travelers with their cards were coming to her but not realizing she would soon be entertaining much more unwelcome guests.

Getting Started

If you're running *Stolen Fate* as a continuation of an established campaign, the task of getting the party together and establishing their backstories is already done for you. But if you're running *Stolen Fate* as a new campaign, and if your players have created brand new 11th-level characters, you'll want to give the players time at the start of the first session to work out how they know each other—or if they're meeting each other for the first time.

The *Stolen Fate Player's Guide*, a free PDF available at paizo.com, is meant to help you and your players answer these questions in addition to providing context and advice for what sorts of characters are most appropriate for this campaign.

As this Adventure Path begins, each PC discovers on their person a strange card from the harrow, its appearance among their belongings a mystery. See *Coming Together* on page 7 for a list of which cards appear here—which PC starts with which card can be discussed among the players, or you as the GM can simply assign them as you wish (since these cards can be traded freely, the ones each PC starts with is mostly cosmetic). As soon as a PC touches the card, they receive a clear vision in their mind of the storefront of Three Moves Ahead. The vision also reveals to the PC where this store is located in the Grand Bazaar of Absalom and imparts a strange urge to travel there. Though they don't know why they feel compelled to visit the shop, the fact that all the PCs received the same vision at the same time they discovered their own strange card should have the players wondering if something magical involving the harrow awaits them at Three Moves Ahead.

MOTIVATING THE PCS

Stolen Fate's plot is not something the PCs are assigned to investigate by an NPC. Instead, this Adventure Path relies initially on curiosity to compel the PCs to investigate further. Where did this strange magical card come from? What can it do? What lies in wait at the location of their shared visions? As the second part of "The Choosing" begins, the PCs learn that the cards of the *Deck of Destiny* have been scattered and that powerful evil forces seek them for their own nefarious designs. While the PCs won't initially know what these evil forces are planning, or even who they are, the quest to gather up as much of the *Deck of Destiny* as they can remains the core plot of this campaign. The longer the PCs play *Stolen Fate*, the more invested in protecting destiny the PCs should become, so that their own desires become their most compelling motivation for continuing the campaign.

However, some groups might need additional motivation. If you find your players are hesitant to heed the visions and clues the *Deck of Destiny* provides, or if they get distracted by one of the unexpected locations their

CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

At the prompting of their harrow cards, the PCs are all drawn to a game shop in Absalom to meet someone who's also received a card. This unfortunate recipient is already dead, but clues point the PCs toward a harrow card purveyor named Dieral Myrinese. The PCs must ask around Absalom's Grand Bazaar, meeting all manner of interesting characters and helping with their problems, before they gain the clues pointing them to Dieral's hideout in an abandoned forge. Devils and mercenaries hound the PCs' investigations, and the mercenary leader also discovers Dieral's hideout, leading to a dramatic showdown.

The Choosing

Chapter 1:
Luck of the Draw

Chapter 2:
Scattered Stories

Chapter 3:
Queen of the Storval Stairs

The Harrow Court

Adventure Toolbox

THE HEROES' ADVANTAGE

The many methods used by the Unmatched to track down the missing cards are effective but hardly all-encompassing, and the fact that these methods initially miss the cards that come into the PCs' possession is a fatal flaw that gives the PCs a significant head start over their enemies. Whether this is merely an element of chance or an active intervention by fate itself is left to the imagination—feel free to lean into one choice or the other as you wish if the players become intrigued at how the Unmatched were able to track down Hajeck and Dieral but took a bit longer to discover the PCs themselves.

quest sends them, consider having the Harrowing Three, one of their agents, or even the *Deck of Destiny* itself serve as a mysterious patron to nudge the PCs along the plot. Visions or dreams can also fill the role of the classic “quest-giving NPC.” It can be helpful to use these visions to impress upon the PCs that powerful enemies with nefarious plans seem to have a growing interest in gathering the cards for themselves, but take care not to reveal too many of the plot twists and surprises in store for the players to discover later in the campaign!

Three Moves Ahead

Staying put at Three Moves Ahead proves to be a fatal mistake for Hajeck. As described in the Campaign Background, the Unmatched know quite a lot about the *Deck of Destiny* and have been working to collect its cards to reassemble the deck and control the future. Drustan, a disaffected lieutenant in a mercenary group called the Band of Blades and master of several devils, learned that two of the cards had found their way to Absalom. He instructed his second-in-command, a violent mercenary captain called Vharnev the Butcher, to reclaim them while Drustan tracks down a different card, *The Mountain Man*, in northwestern Varisia.

Vharnev sent a pair of devils to recover the card at Three Moves Ahead while he focused on tracking down the Harrow Barrow and its owner. The devils arrive at the shop not long before the PCs, finding Hajeck and painfully questioning her, but they underestimate her willpower and overestimate her endurance. Hajeck died from their cruel ministrations before they got much of anything from her. At the start of the adventure, the devils are still searching the shop for the card they've been told was in her possession.

Use the map on the inside cover for this area. As the PCs approach the shop, read or paraphrase the following.

The Grand Bazaar is crowded with shops. This one, flanked by a flower shop and an open-air meat vendor, is caught between smells both floral and savory. A sign above the door reads “Three Moves Ahead,” with images of dice and game pawns. The shop appears to be closed.

Three Moves Ahead is currently unlit, but it's not as abandoned as it appears. A character who listens for activity in the apparently empty shop hears creatures moving around with a successful DC 25 Perception check. These are the two devils searching the shop. Anyone announcing their presence (such as by knocking at the door) alerts the devils that they might soon be interrupted.

The front door is slightly stuck but not locked; a sturdy shove as an Interact action opens it without need for an Athletics check.

A1. GAME ROOM

MODERATE 11

The shop consists of a single wide room. A few shelves hold dice games and card decks, while private gaming rooms to the west sit beyond open curtains. Chalk lines cover the floor of the room, some of them smeared beneath the body and blood of a dead Varisian woman.

Creatures: Before the characters can look around the room, the devils take action. These devils assume—correctly—that the PCs' arrival is in some way linked to the chalk drawings on the floor, so they're ready to fight. The ferrugon engages in melee as quickly as possible, assuming it can physically overpower the PCs with ease and saving its magic for emergencies. The osyluth is a bit more circumspect and remains at a distance if it can, casting *zone of truth* and then using Stygian Inquisitor to interrogate the PCs about whether they have harrow cards, whether they know the owner of this shop, and where the shop owner keeps her harrow cards. The devils fight to the death.

FERRUGON

CREATURE 12

Page 86

Initiative Perception +22

OSYLUTH

CREATURE 9

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 73

Initiative Perception +21

Hajeck's Corpse: The body is that of All-Seeing Hajeck, slain by the two devils. Her possessions were roughly searched and dumped in the blood pooling around her body. Her upper arm bears a very recent tattoo that looks like an architect being struck by

lightning (an image often associated with The Vision, a side effect of the card that came into Hajeck's possession recently).

Characters of a level appropriate for this adventure might have ways of questioning Hajeck despite her death. *Talking corpse* allows the PCs to interrogate her remains, while a *call spirit* ritual could contact her actual spirit. In such a case, Hajeck can provide some of the information in the first few paragraphs of this chapter and describe the sudden and surprising attack of the devils here in her shop, but beyond pointing the PCs toward Dieral, she has little more to reveal to them.

Chalk Map: The chalk lines on the floor form a rough map of Absalom that Hajeck was working on just before she was killed. She was tracing the locations of other *Deck of Destiny* cards in the city. The PCs' path through the city is immediately evident, tracing the route they took to Three Moves Ahead. More subtle markings indicate the meandering path through the Grand Bazaar that Dieral Myrnes took with the Harrow Barrow; identifying those markings requires a successful DC 25 Perception check or a DC 20 Society check. For each round of combat in this room, increase the DCs by 2 as the chalk marks are scuffed by footwork or collateral damage from attacks or spells. With a successful check, a PC can identify the locations of Historia Reliquary, Kraken's Ink Tattoo, and Reclaimed Paradise, all of which have been indicated with marks but without context as to what the marks mean. If the PCs can speak with Hajeck's spirit or corpse, they may learn that Hajeck suspected more information about the strange card might be found at these locations, but she hadn't yet had the opportunity to investigate further.

XP Award: If the characters discover the three locations in the chalk map, award them 30 XP.

A2. OFFICE

The door to this room has a small opening at a human's eye level, revealing the office beyond. The office is a mess, with piles of paperwork and incomplete games covering every surface. A messy cot indicates that someone's been sleeping here for the past few days.

As noted in Treasure on page 12, as soon as the PCs enter the office, the mental pull of their shared vision flares up again, revealing to them the location of *The Vision* in this room.

Office Clues: The office is an eclectic mix of records and personal effects from the game store's previous owner and Hajeck's things. She never got rid of her

ALL-SEEING HAJECK

All-Seeing Hajeck first appeared in the standalone adventure *The Harrowing*. If your players are familiar with Hajeck or if having her appear in this adventure wouldn't make canonical sense at your table (for example, if you've previously run *The Harrowing* for your group), you can replace her role as an ill-fated shopkeeper in this adventure with any NPC of your choice.

In any event, as this adventure begins, Hajeck's soul is in a state of limbo, held in a sort of stasis by *The Vision*. Once the PCs begin the next adventure, she manifests in the Harrow Court, but until this point all attempts to resurrect her or otherwise restore her to life fail, as her soul (at this time) has no desire to return to life. Full details on Hajeck's fate and potential future appear in the next adventure.

predecessor's stuff, just simply moved her things in and made use of whatever was at hand. The resulting jumble is therefore confusing to look through. Amid various business records, unfinished puzzles, boxes of clothes, and incomplete or broken games, the PCs can find several ordinary harrow decks that Hajeck stashed around the room.

The most significant clue, however, is a business ledger jammed awkwardly onto a shelf. Its matching ledgers are all tucked away in a box under the desk. When *The Vision* card came into her possession, Hajeck grabbed the first thing at hand—this ledger—and jotted down her initial revelations and suspicions. The last few pages of the ledger contain Hajeck's summary of the meaning of *The Vision* (that it's the chaotic neutral card of Intelligence, and that it represents abstruse knowledge, sudden insight, or instability) and her suspicions that more cards from the same deck must be somewhere out there in the world. She noted that one Dieral Myrnes, owner of the Harrow Barrow, might know more. The Harrow Barrow isn't a shop but a traveling business whose proprietor wanders throughout the Grand Bazaar and (at times) elsewhere in Absalom. These notes also indicate a few nearby people who have a close connection with Dieral: Erikanesh runs a reliquary, Arhan owns a tattoo shop, and Clemeth owns a scrapyard. If the PCs successfully interpreted the map in area A1, they can connect each of these people to their shops without a check; otherwise, the PCs must succeed at a DC 20 Society check (or spend a little time asking around the Grand Bazaar) to make the connection.

The Choosing

Chapter 1:
Luck of the Draw

Chapter 2:
Scattered Stories

Chapter 3:
Queen of the Storval Stairs

The Harrow Court

Adventure Toolbox

Treasure: *The Vision* is tucked in between pages in the ledger. Finding the card would normally be somewhat difficult without scanning for magical auras, but the PCs, who've already been granted guiding visions by the card, automatically know where to look for it once they enter this room.

Elsewhere in the room are four scrolls: a *scroll of quench* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 223), a *scroll of heroism* (6th level), *scroll of slow* (6th level), and a *scroll of telepathic bond*.

XP Award: For discovering the names of the three locations and their proprietors, award the PCs 30 XP. Award them 60 XP for recovering *The Vision*.

The Investigation Begins

With the clues from Three Moves Ahead, the PCs can investigate the shops Dieral is known to frequent. The three shops are described below, along with their proprietors. This investigation makes use of the influence subsystem found on pages 151–153 of the *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*. A single round of attempting to influence a shopkeeper takes 1 hour to complete. Each shopkeeper grants rewards after gaining a certain number of Influence Points with that person, as noted in their influence stat blocks. Once the PCs earn 8 Influence Points with a shopkeeper, they know that shopkeeper has given out the most relevant clue they have. Note that if the PCs take too long, they may attract unwanted attention—see Assassin Attack on page 17 for more details.

All three shops are located in the Grand Bazaar of Absalom's Coins District. They aren't far apart, but the near-constant press of the crowds means it takes about a half hour to travel from one shop to another.

INITIAL RESEARCH

At the start of this campaign, the PCs are hardly low-level adventurers who lack their own skills and resources. Rather than follow up directly with the clues they discover at Three Moves Ahead, some PCs may instead cut to the proverbial chase and use their own abilities and methods to track down Dieral. If the PCs do so, they may well miss out on the opportunity to make additional contacts, earn additional rewards, and gain additional XP from visiting the three sites detailed on the following pages—in this case, you can keep these locations handy in case the PCs decide they want to go check them out later! If the PCs do make use of methods like those outlined below, make sure to award them equal amounts of XP to what they would have learned by visiting the three locations—you shouldn't punish the party for being resourceful and skilled enough to skip portions of the adventure

where they otherwise would have earned notable XP awards, after all!

Gathering Information: If the PCs decide to simply ask around the Grand Bazaar and use their skill at Diplomacy to track down Dieral's location, they can attempt to Gather Information in the marketplace. While many people have heard of Dieral or have noted his unique magical cart, the PCs should also take note of just how well the man's managed to maintain an air of mystery about him. An attempt to Gather Information takes 2 hours and requires a DC 30 Diplomacy check. With a success, the PC learns that Dieral is known to have associated with one of the three shopkeepers listed below, while on a critical success, the PC learns instead one of the clues they would have otherwise learned via successfully influencing a shopkeeper. On a critical failure, the PC learns nothing, but they accidentally attract the attention of their enemies, who soon thereafter organize an attack on the party (see Assassin Attack on page 17).

Using Magic: Spells like *locate* heightened to 5th level can be an excellent resource when attempting to divine the location of a hidden target or person—within limitations. *Locate* not only requires the PC to be within 500 feet of Dieral but also to have met him in the first place, so for the initial attempt to track him down, this specific option is likely unusable. Other spells, like *scrying*, have a greater chance of success, but whether or not the PCs can learn enough information from scrying Dieral to figure out where he's at is up to you. Ultimately, if the PCs are struggling with other avenues of the investigation and you feel like they've hit a wall, allowing them to learn where Dieral's location via some kind of magical assistance is a good idea. However, if they attempt *scrying* early, consider having the PC observe Dieral interacting with a visual clue that instead leads them to one of the three shopkeepers detailed below.

HISTORIA RELIQUARY

Erikanesh (LN agender lizardfolk anthropologist) is the founder and owner of one of the largest antique shops in the Grand Bazaar. They're a serious and studious academic with striking knowledge about Avistani antiquities. Erikanesh might seem dismissive or even rude to people who don't seem to appreciate historical subjects, but they're engaging and witty when among fellow scholars.

Historia Reliquary is a pleasant, orderly shop lit by glass globes containing *continual flames*, with historical relics on display in cases. The shop is as much a museum as it is a store; Erikanesh keeps the entrance

hung with black cloth to deter casual browsing and charges 1 silver piece just to enter their shop. Once customers are inside, Erikanesh is reluctant to let them leave so long as the antiquarian can drone on about the history of various pieces. Fresh rolls and tea are complimentary to all visitors, and Erikanesh is just as fussy about preparation of these treats as in the meticulous organization of the shop's wares.

Erikanesh's deep knowledge about Avistani history includes the harrow, as Varisians have inhabited Avistan since long before Earthfall. The antiquarian has a solid familiarity with each card of the harrow and what they symbolize—although Erikanesh insists that, from a purely academic perspective, fortune telling is “unscientific nonsense.” Still, Erikanesh has fostered a good working relationship with Dieral Myrnes, as some truly rare finds sometimes make their way into the Harrow Barrow among the dross. Erikanesh therefore always makes time for Dieral when he visits with his gaudy, wheelbarrow-mounted “shop” in the hopes of finding something of historical importance—a card used in a reading for an important historical figure, for example. The prices Erikanesh pays for these historical cards keep Dieral coming around, despite the lizardfolk's snooty demeanor.

Erikanesh heard Dieral discussing a truly unique card, one both powerfully magical and historically significant, and they're eager to determine just what that card might be. Unfortunately, Erikanesh is extremely hesitant to speak to just anyone about Dieral's cards or even to speculate on Dieral's location, for fear someone might try to acquire this special card before Erikanesh gets the opportunity to examine and make an offer for it.

If any PC is an expert or better in a Lore skill related to an Avistani location or about history more broadly, Erikanesh takes an initial liking to the party. In this case, the PCs automatically gain 1 Influence Point after their first meeting with the antiquarian and don't have to pay the admission fee thereafter. Otherwise, Erikanesh insists on collecting the admission fee each time they seek to enter Historia Reliquary.

The PCs can engage in up to five Influence rounds per day with Erikanesh (either sequentially or split up among multiple visits), because the antiquarian likes to talk. After that, however, Erikanesh has too much work to do for any further meaningful discussion. If

a character critically fails at an attempt to Influence Erikanesh more than 3 times, that PC may no longer attempt to influence them.

More information about Historia Reliquary and its proprietor appears on pages 28–29 of *Pathfinder Lost Omens Grand Bazaar*.

ERIKANESH

UNIQUE LN MEDIUM HUMANOID LIZARDFOLK

Antiquarian and proprietor of Historia Reliquary

Perception +17

Will +19

Discovery DC 23 Academia Lore, DC 30 Perception, DC 28 Society

Influence Skills DC 26 Academia Lore (to discuss educational opportunities), DC 26 Deception (to imply some false connection to Dieral), DC 30 Diplomacy (to indicate honest appreciation of Erikanesh's knowledge),

DC 28 Intimidation (to warn Erikanesh to back off from Dieral), DC 28 Society (to leverage social connections the antiquarian appreciates)

Influence 2 The antiquarian likes talking to the characters and reveals that they know Dieral fairly well, as Erikanesh likes purchasing antique harrow cards of special significance from the gregarious merchant (although Erikanesh doesn't have any right now). Erikanesh then steers conversation to some of their wares and goes so far as to press one of them upon the PCs, believing they'll carry—and thus, effectively advertise—the antiquarian's historical relics. The party receives either an *amaranthine pavise* (*Grand Bazaar* 30), a *greater staff of final rest* (*Grand Bazaar* 30), or a *cape of the mountebank* embroidered with vibrant patterns for free, as they prefer. If the PCs can't agree on a choice, Erikanesh defers to whichever PC succeeded at the Influence check that brought the group's total to this threshold. The PCs gain 60 XP.

Influence 4 The antiquarian gossips about some of the other proprietors in the Grand Bazaar, including those Dieral seems to know best: Arhan Benimaya at Kraken's Ink Tattoo and Clemeth Falk at Reclaimed Paradise. Erikanesh considers both individuals to be utterly lacking in academic discipline or good business sense. This gossip gives the PCs a +1 circumstance bonus to attempts to Discover for both of these individuals.

Influence 6 Realizing that the PCs are people with insight and wealth, Erikanesh invites them to shop at any time. The PCs gain access to all uncommon wares sold by Historia Reliquary (*Grand Bazaar* 30–31). Erikanesh admits that dealing with Dieral can be somewhat



Erikanesh

wearying, as his mobile shop is filled with a lot of useless clutter, but the occasional rare finds make entertaining Dieral worthwhile. In fact, Erikanesh recently heard that Dieral had come into possession of a particularly rare harrow card. The PCs gain 60 XP.

Influence 8 Erikanesh feels they can trust the PCs with information they know about where to find Dieral. Unfortunately, it isn't much; Erikanesh only knows that the Dieral said he's been living somewhere in the Eastgate district of the city. The PCs gain 80 XP.

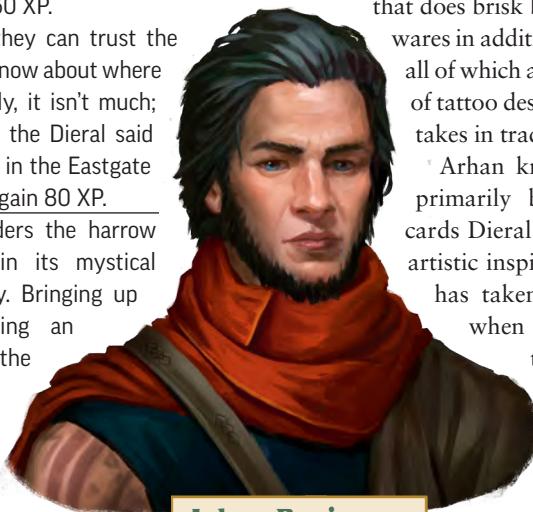
Resistances Erikanesh considers the harrow and those who believe in its mystical reputation to be a bit silly. Bringing up harrow cards when taking an Influence action increases the DC of that check by 2.

Weaknesses Erikanesh likes long-winded discussions with clients. If a character using Academia Lore or Diplomacy to Influence Erikanesh is willing to extend the time of the current social round from 1 hour to 4 hours, reduce the DC of that check by 2.

Background Erikanesh grew up in the Mwangi Expanse and graduated with distinction from the Magaambya before traveling to Absalom.

Appearance Erikanesh is a tall, blue-skinned lizardfolk who dresses fashionably with no thread out of place.

Personality Arrogant, long-winded, methodical



Arhan Benimaya

KRAKEN'S INK TATTOO

Kraken's Ink Tattoo is an old business in the Docks district, but the shop's secondary stall in the Grand Bazaar sees a good deal of business. **Arhan Benimaya** (NG male human tattoo artist) is a skillful artist who takes on the more complex jobs while leaving the minor piercings and simple tattoos to his able assistant, **Nara** (NG female kobold artist). Market policy demands that stall owners spend a certain amount of time in the Grand Bazaar per month, so that's where he is when the PCs look for him. He finds the liveliness of the enormous market exciting but a bit overwhelming at times; he likes to lose himself in the detailed work of his craft, taking comfort from his ever-present dog, Apple.

The timbers of the sturdy wooden shop retain the salty smell of the ocean, as they were mostly recovered from an old ship, an effect that makes sailors or fishers feel comfortable making the trek from the Docks district. Another factor that lends the shop a waterfront feel is Arhan's boyfriend **Brine** (CG male azarketi laborer), who is usually hanging around, fresh

from his work in the sea. Nara's and Brine's constant good-natured teasing of the other provides a delightful background burble in the shop.

Kraken's Ink Tattoo is a friendly, laid-back place that does brisk business. The shop sells numerous wares in addition to tattoo and piercing services, all of which are either Nara's artistic renderings of tattoo designs or bartered goods that Arhan takes in trade for his work.

Arhan knows and likes Dieral Myrnes, primarily because the variety of harrow cards Dieral brings with him provide endless artistic inspiration for Arhan's designs. Brine has taken to giving Dieral severe glares when he comes around, as well as teasing Arhan about having a crush on the handsome elf. Arhan hasn't seen Dieral in a while and doesn't know where to find him. Arhan would like to help the PCs locate Dieral, but he doesn't realize that he holds an

important clue to doing so.

Arhan's business is doing quite well, which unfortunately means he's unable to spend a lot of time talking with the PCs. The PCs can engage in up to three Influence rounds per day with Arhan (either sequentially or split up among multiple visits) before he's simply too busy to give them any more time. A character who critically fails at an attempt to Influence Arhan twice in a row annoys him and may no longer attempt to Influence him.

More information about Kraken's Ink Tattoo and its proprietor appears on pages 36–37 of *Lost Omens Grand Bazaar*.

ARHAN BENIMAYA

UNIQUE NG MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Tattoo artist and proprietor of Kraken's Ink Tattoo

Perception +18

Will +18

Discovery DC 23 Art Lore, DC 28 Perception, DC 26 Scribing Lore, DC 30 Society

Influence Skills DC 28 Arcana (to discuss magical tattoos or harrow cards), DC 26 Crafting (to discuss ink and tool creation), DC 30 Deception (to insinuate some information regarding Dieral), DC 28 Diplomacy (to ask about Dieral openly and honestly), DC 26 Intimidation (to deliver threats about Dieral)

Influence 2 Arhan discusses how much he knows and likes Dieral, and how his unusual harrow cards are great inspiration for tattoo designs. He hasn't seen Dieral in a few weeks, which he suddenly realizes

is an unusually long time. In addition, Arhan is now willing to take the PCs as customers and offers to sell magical tattoos to them. The PCs gain access to the tattoos sold by Kraken's Ink Tattoos (*Grand Bazaar* 38), and to the *familiar tattoo* and *warding tattoos* from *Pathfinder Secrets of Magic* (pages 164 and 165). The PCs gain 30 XP.

Influence 4 Arhan believes the PCs to be good people, worthy of the magical protection his tattoos provide. He agrees to scribe a *greater enveloping light tattoo* (*Grand Bazaar* 38) upon anyone who wants one free of charge (up to one per PC). If the PCs have told Arhan about their encounters with devils, he offers to instead scribe a *fiend warding tattoo* (*Secrets of Magic* 165) on anyone who prefers that tattoo. Arhan thinks about some other contacts in the Grand Bazaar who Dieral has mentioned in the past: Erikanesh at Historia Reliquary and Clemeth Falk at Reclaimed Paradise. He gives some suggestions about how to best talk with these people. These suggestions gives the PCs a +1 circumstance bonus to Deception, Diplomacy, and Intimidation checks used as Influence actions for both of these individuals. The PCs gain 60 XP.

Influence 6 Arhan shares some of his secret processes, providing the PCs with access to the Tattoo Artist skill feat (*Secrets of Magic* 164) and Arcane Tattoo, Ornate Tattoo, and Virtue-Forged Tattoo human ancestry feats (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Character Guide* 11, 13, and 14). Arhan can help one PC retrain into one of these feats each day, although this takes an entire day. At this point, Arhan considers the PCs to be worth enticing as repeat customers. He offers them a permanent 10% discount on all uncommon wares sold by Kraken's Ink Tattoos. The PCs gain 30 XP.

Influence 8 Arhan offers a clue that might help the PCs find Dieral. When looking over a book of tattoo images, Dieral remarked that one of the images reminded him of the sign above a safe place he knows. It's where he'd go if he were ever in trouble. It takes Arhan a few minutes to find that image, but he shows it to the PCs: that of a stylized horse in profile. Arhan apologizes that it's not much, but he hopes that the clue is helpful. The PCs gain 80 XP.

Resistances Arhan relies upon the support of his friends and allies. If a character tries to influence Arhan while he's alone (that is, while Apple, Brine, or Nara aren't around, as is often the case during off-hours or after dark), increase the DC to Influence by 2.

Weaknesses Arhan can best focus while he works. If one of the characters agrees to get a tattoo during the Influence round—whether a moderate piece costing only 2 gp up to one of the magical tattoos available to them once they reach 2 Influence Points—reduce the DC of checks to Influence in that round by 2.

Background Arhan was born in Cheliox but came to Absalom during adolescence, first sketching travelers for coppers to help feed his family and ultimately becoming a tattoo artist at Kraken's Ink Tattoo.

Appearance Arhan is a small, dark-haired man with kind eyes and a body covered with tattoos in a variety of styles.

Personality Patient, shy, sympathetic

RECLAIMED PARADISE

Reclaimed Paradise is a walled scrapyard in the Grand Bazaar. Although scrap yards have a reputation as noisy, dirty businesses, **Clemeth Falk** (N female orc mechanic) keeps her yard from getting too dirty and often employs magic (such as *telekinetic haul* or *silence*) as needed to avoid bothering her neighbors when particularly loud tasks must be performed. Clemeth has a reputation as being more than an exceptional mechanic: she works hard to mend people, too, particularly those who seem to be the most broken. She likes talking with her clients about the tough times they've had, hoping to give them some insights about how to mend damaged relationships, overcome self-defeating doubts, and more. Clemeth employs several hands to help with all the work of fixing vehicles, reducing irreparable machines to spare parts, and cobbling together useful contraptions. These employees are all healthy, happy, and seem to really love their work. They've quickly learned Clemeth's prohibitions on lying, stealing, or cheating, and how those who break these rules are lucky if they're only ejected from Reclaimed Paradise for life.

Clemeth has an intense focus on good health. She's constantly rearranging the scrap in her walled compound to create obstacle courses that take exceptional physical skill to navigate effectively. She trains on her courses every day and encourages her employees to do the same (and her customers, while they're waiting for repairs to be completed). Clemeth doesn't consider it a failure if someone can't overcome her latest obstacle course, but instead nearly always uses it as an opportunity to instruct them on how to practice physical fitness and think more quickly on their feet.

Clemeth and Dieral Myrinese are unlikely friends. Dieral needed his wheelbarrow fixed one day, and Reclaimed Paradise had the right resources for the job. Dieral assumed that the shop was only for people with large, complicated vehicles like clockwork boats or iron-plated carriages, but Clemeth insisted that she could have his broken wheelbarrow fixed within the time it'd take for Dieral to give an honest effort on her obstacle course. Dieral succeeded on his first try with a mixture of luck and skill. The orc mechanic

was impressed, and she's been fine-tuning Dieral's wheelbarrow ever since. She hasn't seen him in a while, though, and worries a bit about what's happened to him.

Clemeth has plenty of assistants to help her with her work, but she prefers to keep a hands-on approach that doesn't leave a lot of time for idle chatter. The PCs can engage in up to four Influence rounds per day with Clemeth (either sequentially or split up among multiple visits) before she can't spare them any more time.

A PC who critically fails three checks to Influence Clemeth in the same day can no longer attempt to Influence her.

More about Reclaimed Paradise appears on pages 74 to 75 of *Grand Bazaar*.



Clemeth Falk

CLEMETH FALK

UNIQUE N MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

Mechanic and proprietor of Reclaimed Paradise

Perception +16

Will +20

Discovery DC 23 Engineering Lore, DC 26 Labor Lore, DC 29 Perception, DC 27 Society

Influence Skills DC 26 Athletics (to demonstrate physical fitness), DC 26 Crafting (to discuss repair work), DC 28 Deception (to invent a fabrication about Dieral), DC 26 Diplomacy (to openly talk about the PCs' problems), DC 30 Intimidation (to threaten Clemeth for information)

Influence 2 Clemeth tells what she knows about Dieral. She hasn't seen him in a while but notes that Dieral talked a lot about other friends in the Grand Bazaar, including Erikanesh at Historia Reliquary and Arhan Benimaya at Kraken's Ink Tattoo. Clemeth recounts what she's heard about these people, stating that it seems easy to lie to Erikanesh ("that stuffy lizard sure likes a story, even if it isn't true—maybe especially if it isn't true.") and that Arhan appreciates good workmanship ("We agree on the value of working with tools, but there's something fishy about him other than the smell of his shop.") These are clues to some of the easiest Influence skills to use against these people (Deception and Crafting, respectively). The PCs gain 30 XP.

Influence 4 Clemeth offers a chance for the PCs to try out her latest obstacle course in the scrapyard—a gauntlet of pivoting blades, greasy ladders, and

unstable platforms. A PC can try to navigate the obstacle course instead of making an Influence skill check in subsequent Influence rounds. Doing so requires successfully Running the Obstacle Course (page 17). The first time a PC succeeds, Clemeth nods in respect then opens up further about Dieral, expressing some worry about how he obsessed over his collection more than she considered healthy. He told her more than once that if he ever found a really rare, magical card, he'd consider giving up his card-peddling business. He thought for a minute, though, and admitted that if he did get a very powerful magic card, dangerous people might be after it, too. Clemeth laughed off Dieral's worry, poked his bony

shoulder, and told him that was a good reason to get into better shape. She's now worried that her friend is in real danger and hopes the PCs can help him. The PCs gain 60 XP. If at least one PC completes the obstacle course, increase this reward to 90 XP.

Influence 6 Clemeth provides access to all the wares in Reclaimed Paradise (*Grand Bazaar* 76–77) at a permanent 10% discount, although the PCs aren't likely to have much use for vehicles in this Adventure Path.

Influence 8 Clemeth remembers that Dieral seemed familiar with some of the specialty repair tools he saw her using. She expressed surprise—as he didn't seem like someone good with his hands—and Dieral made a dismissive comment about an abandoned forge that he'd go to if he ever got into trouble. Clemeth hopes that clue will help the PCs find him. The PCs gain 80 XP.

Resistances Dishonesty is one of the few things that shake Clemeth's calm. If a PC fails when using Deception to Influence Clemeth, that PC increases the DC of all subsequent Influence attempts with her by 2.

Weaknesses Clemeth doesn't like to admit her bias, but she's partial to those who are well-muscled. Any PC with a Strength of 15 or higher reduces the DC of their Influence actions by 1.

Background Clemeth proved so adept at engineering that the previous owner left the shop to her. She's made the entire scrapyard more efficient, with happier employees, and she can afford to be selective about the clients she accepts.

Appearance Clemeth is a tall orc in extraordinarily good shape. She wears a comfortable uniform complete with all the necessary safety gear of her trade: goggles, knee pads, thick gloves, and a heavy leather apron.

Personality Chatty, honest, independent

RUN THE OBSTACLE COURSE

EXPLORATION MOVE

You attempt to navigate the obstacle course Clemeth set up in the Reclaimed Paradise Scrapyard. Attempt a DC 26 Acrobatics check, a DC 26 Athletics check, then a DC 28 check using your choice of Acrobatics, Athletics, or Perception. Regardless of the check, each is a 1-minute activity. You successfully navigate the obstacle course once you earn 3 Obstacle Course Points without taking a break between checks. If you attempt this activity more than 4 times in a row, you become fatigued.

Critical Success You earn 2 Obstacle Course Points and gain a +2 circumstance bonus to your next check to Run the Obstacle Course.

Success You push forward on the course and gain 1 Obstacle Course Point.

Failure You earn no Obstacle Course Points and must attempt a DC 28 Reflex save. If you fail, you wrench a muscle or otherwise hurt yourself and become enfeebled 1 for 1 hour.

Critical Failure You lose 1 Obstacle Course Point and twist an ankle or otherwise seriously hurt yourself, becoming enfeebled 2 (a successful DC 28 Reflex save reduces this to enfeebled 1).

ASSASSIN ATTACK

MODERATE 11

At Drustan's direction, the mercenary group known as the Band of Blades is also seeking Dieral Myrnese, yet they're taking steps to maintain secrecy about their involvement. As this adventure begins, only one member of the Band of Blades is active in Absalom—Vharnev the Butcher. The PCs encounter Vharnev in due time, but they may well attract his attention earlier should they critically fail at an attempt to Gather Information or if they haven't learned where Dieral is within 7 days of this adventure's beginning. When the PCs first catch Vharnev's attention, he doesn't initially suspect they possess cards from the *Deck of Destiny* but does consider them meddlers. You can also use attacks from his hired mercenaries as needed to liven up play or to provide the PCs with new chances to pick up additional clues that might have fallen out of reach.

These attacks can occur anywhere in the city, either in a place the party is staying, a deserted alley, or an open plaza, and as such no map for this encounter is provided—feel free to design one of your own, use a map of a city location from another adventure you own, or use one of the many urban-themed Flip-Mats available at paizo.com.

Creatures: The Band of Blades' leader, Arodeth, has a fraught history with Absalom, and as such, she hopes to keep any involvement in the city hidden for now.

Furthermore, her posting to Absalom is under Drustan's command—he's not even technically supposed to be operating in the area as far as Arodeth is concerned. As a result, Vharnev the Butcher is under orders to not reveal his affiliation with the Band of Blades and has been supplied with all the funds necessary to hire as many mercenaries as he needs to achieve the Band's goals in Absalom, thanks to Drustan.

When an attack occurs, a group of four hired assassins strike at the PCs; some with arrows from rooftops and others in melee as they dart out from alleyways. A mercenary assassin reduced to fewer than 30 Hit Points flees or surrenders. If captured and interrogated, these mercenaries can reveal the name of the man who hired them (Vharnev the Butcher), but they don't know of his ties to the Band of Blades or that he reports to Drustan. They can also reveal to the PCs that the man who hired them wanted the assassins to search the PCs for any harrow cards, and if they found any, to keep them safe until they could bring them back to Vharnev. Asked where or how they intend to meet with Vharnev, the assassins shrug, saying "He always contacted us. If we'd found those cards on your bodies, he'd have arrived soon after." They can confirm that Vharnev can use magic, but that he's also an intimidating soldier as well.

MERCENARY ASSASSINS (4)

CREATURE 9

RARE NE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Human assassin

Perception +17

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +19, Athletics +17, Deception +15, Society +17, Stealth +19, Survival +15, Thievery +19

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

Items +1 composite shortbow (20 arrows), +1 leather armor, simple injury poison (4 doses, 2d4 poison damage), +1 striking rapier

Swift Sneak The assassin can move their full Speed while Sneaking.

AC 27; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +19, **Will** +15

HP 155

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *rapier* +20 (deadly d8, disarm, finesse, magical), **Damage** 2d6+9 piercing

Ranged ♦ *shortbow* +20 (deadly d10, magical, propulsive, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), **Damage** 1d6+9 piercing

Poison Weapon ♦ (manipulate) **Requirements** The assassin wields a piercing weapon and has a free hand; **Effect** The assassin applies a poison to the weapon.

Sneak Attack The assassin deals an extra 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Gaining the Clue: One of the assassins carries a short directive to attack the PCs before returning to the search for Dieral Myrnes. The directive contains a clue of your choice to Dieral's location that the PCs haven't yet managed to discover.

Stirrup & Barding

Once the PCs have all three clues, they'll know that Dieral's "safe place" is an abandoned forge in Eastgate marked with an image of a stylized horse in profile. At this point, a successful DC 25 Society check or DC 20 Absalom Lore check is enough for a PC to confirm the one location that matches all three clues—Stirrup & Barding. If the PCs instead attempt to use these clues to Gather Information, a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check provides this information.

Once a farrier who made little more than horseshoes, Abreth Myrnes came into a substantial inheritance and expanded her business to encompass all kinds

of other blacksmith needs for horses: tack, barding, and even the occasional chariot. She received several lucrative contracts from the Post Guard, Eastgate's neighborhood guard, which possessed a small cavalry but nevertheless wanted it outfitted well, and her business expanded. She bought a failing stable called Stirrup & Saddle, renamed it Stirrup & Barding, and settled in to a busy and well-compensated life.

Yet Abreth became increasingly uncomfortable working for law enforcement, as she had many friends in Eastgate's criminal underworld. She didn't want to simply cancel her contracts for fear of what retribution the Post Guard might bring upon her and her friends, so she disappeared one day along with her most recent payments. The Post Guard simply went looking elsewhere for work and Stirrup & Barding was left abandoned.

Dieral thought of his cousin's comfortable stable when he realized he was being pursued by unknown forces. He was initially delighted to find a strange card among his wares—*The Carnival*—but it almost immediately gave him visions of being pursued. This was a genuine warning from the card, but it's the nature of *The Carnival* to be cryptic and strange, so Dieral couldn't get any specific information about his pursuers no matter how many harrow readings he attempted.

Dieral hadn't seen Abreth for years, but he believed she'd shelter him and his wheelbarrow while he figured out this next move. He was surprised to find Stirrup & Barding shuttered, but that didn't stop him from breaking in and making it his hiding place anyway. He's been lying low there ever since.

One part stable and one part blacksmith shop, this forlorn stone and thatch building has the words "Stirrup & Barding" painted above a picture of an armored horse facing the street. The massive chimney rising from the structure emits no smoke and lists a bit to the side as though in danger of collapse. The windows are shuttered, and weeds fill the small corral to the side and behind the building.

Use the map on the inside front cover for this area.

B1. FORLORN FORGE

There are several entrances to Stirrup & Barding. The gate to the paddock and the front double door, as well as the windows, are all barred. Opening them requires a successful DC 20 Thievery check to Pick a Lock, or a DC 20 Athletics check to break them open. The southern door to the forge appears to be locked, but Dieral broke this lock to get in a few days ago and re-hung it here. Upon anything other than cursory examination, it's clear that this lock is broken, and the door opens easily.



Mercenary Assassin

The stable's interior is dim and drafty. Several supplies are stacked in one corner, near a cold fireplace with an enormous anvil next to it. A few blacksmith's tools hang on the wall. A small door to an interior room has a bit of light beneath it. A large wheelbarrow sits near this door. Its lower half is a complex clockwork-like contraption with a single large metal wheel and a pair of handles affixed with leather straps, and its upper half appears to be a colorful miniature shop with its walls and roof line set with dozens of hinges and latches.

If the PCs make noise here, Dieral puts out his light and remains silent, hoping that whoever it is will go away.

The light comes from the storage room (area **B3**) where Dieral is hiding, since he keeps an *everburning torch* in the windowless room. The complicated wheelbarrow itself is, of course, the eponymous Harrow Barrow. A closer examination reveals that the "shop" built on top of the wheelbarrow incorporates several dozen small images—54 in all, each referencing one of the classic 54 cards of the harrow. The wheelbarrow is in fact a complicated set of drawers and cabinets that can be opened and closed—many of which contain valuables (see Treasure below), but all of which are currently locked. Dieral carries the key, but a character who succeeds at a DC 30 Thievery check can Pick a Lock on any of these. The lower portion of the wheelbarrow is fitted with a set of clever gears and clockwork machinery that allows a single person to haul the heavy contraption around with relative ease. The Harrow Barrow itself is 16 Bulk, but it counts as only 8 Bulk when one engages the device's clockwork machinery.

Treasure: A +2 *striking mithral longspear* has fallen behind the stack of supplies in the southwest corner of the room. Its head is marked with the symbol of the Post Guard, Eastgate's neighborhood guard. A *vanishing coin* hangs with the tools on the wall.

The Harrow Barrow itself is a cunning contraption worth 60 gp, although it's well-known to belong to Dieral, and if the PCs steal it, so they may have trouble selling it at any market in Absalom! The Harrow Barrow contains a staggering amount of relatively valueless gaudy accessories for harrow readings, including a large number of harrow-inspired works of art and tiny sculptures. In all, this collection is worth a total of 45 gp.

B2. WEEDY PADDOCK

The wide, weedy paddock next to Stirrup & Barding has a sturdy wooden fence and a gate to the main road. A single donkey lazily chews the weeds within.

Abreth left the paddock empty, but an enterprising neighbor decided to keep his donkey there a few days ago when he realized Abreth was gone. The donkey can confirm that a man with wheelbarrows sometimes comes and goes from the building, assuming the PCs use methods like *speak with animals* to establish meaningful communication. The donkey was particularly amused to see a human hauling a barrow rather than employing something like a donkey—amused, and more than a little thankful to see at least one person who understands what it's like to be a beast of burden.

B3. TOOL STORAGE

SEVERE 11

This room is lined with shelves containing scraps of metal and various tools. Some of the shelves have been cleared to make room for a few piles of clothes, some food and wine bottles, and several stacks of harrow cards.

This is where Dieral Myrinese has been hiding out; he's been biding his time by performing non-stop harrow readings in an attempt to seek guidance, but also peeking through cracks in the wall whenever he hears anything in the street outside. He rarely sleeps more than an hour at a time and is currently fatigued as a result. Dieral's fears about being chased are legitimate but have been enhanced after being affected by *The Carnival*, which he keeps hidden in a secret pocket in his vest at all times.

Dieral isn't sure who or what is after him—for all he knows it's the PCs themselves, and as soon as they confront him here, he shrieks in panic and begs for mercy. His lack of sleep, healthy food, and opportunities for personal hygiene over the past few days have certainly left him in a sad state, but a successful DC 25 Perception check is all that's needed for a character to determine that Dieral seems legitimately afraid of being chased by something and isn't particularly dangerous himself.

If the PCs are peaceful and calm in their demeanor, Dieral's initial panic at being discovered slowly fades—he's a talkative individual, and being alone for even a few days without anyone to interact with has been hard on him. If a PC can soothe his nerves by speaking calmly for a minute and making a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check, Dieral sighs in relief and admits that he's not sure who's after him, but ever since he found "that card" he's been sure that it was only a matter of time before "they" catch up with him.

At this point (or any other moment you feel is sufficiently dramatic), just before Dieral can reveal

more information, his fears are proven true as Stirrup & Barding is attacked.

Creatures: Vharnev the Butcher, agent of the Band of Blades and commander of the devils and assassins, discovers where Dieral has been hiding at about the same time as the PCs. While the PCs first begin talking to the Harrow Barrow proprietor, Vharnev strikes.

Each of these mercenaries attacks from a different direction, if possible. Vharnev himself comes



Vharnev the Butcher

charging through the double door from the street in the northeast of area **B1**, while his assassins drop in through the thatch roof near the supplies in the room's southwest corner. They're accompanied by an uniila devil named Havvzi, who enters through the front door just south of area **B3**. Havvzi has taken on the refreshingly straightforward task of nudging Vharnev to corruption with increased magical power. Vharnev wears the uniila's *witch token* as an amulet, as described in his stat block below.

If the PCs have encountered any assassins earlier in the adventure, this group knows a little bit about their meddling and expects to find them here; otherwise, they're surprised to find that Dieral has allies.

Dieral cowers and hides during the fight, counting on the PCs to save him—he only takes part in the fight if there's no other option, and even then, he does his best to escape rather than defeat any foes.

Vharnev fights to the death to defeat the PCs, confident in the uniila's magical support. He prefers to use Sudden Charge and fight whichever PC looks like the biggest threat.

Havvzi focuses on any obvious arcane spellcaster in the group, trying to kill that person first (if the party has no arcane spellcaster, the uniila instead targets an occult, divine, or primal spellcaster, in that order). The uniila fights to the death as long as Vharnev lives, but if the Butcher is slain or obviously defeated and the uniila is reduced to 50 HP, it flees via *dimension door* and goes into hiding somewhere in Absalom—whether the PCs encounter Havvzi again in this campaign is up to you.

The assassins like to flank foes when possible. They fight to the death so long as Vharnev is up and fighting; once Vharnev is defeated, any assassin reduced to fewer than 30 HP flees.

VHARNEV THE BUTCHER

CREATURE 10

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID TIEFLING

Male tiefling human mercenary (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 262)

Perception +14; darkvision

Languages Common, Infernal

Skills Arcana +19, Athletics +21, Intimidation +20, Society +19, Stealth +15

Str +5, **Dex** +1, **Con** +2, **Int** +3, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +4

Items +2 striking wounding battle axe, +1 half plate, steel-colored bird feather token, uniila witch token

AC 29; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +18, **Will** +18

HP 180

Attack of Opportunity ⤵

Defensive Charm ⤵ (abjuration, arcane, manipulation)

Trigger Vharnev is the target of a ranged attack;

Effect Vharnev quickly traces a defensive rune between himself and the source of the ranged attack, giving him a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ battle axe +23 (magical, sweep), **Damage** 2d8+11 slashing plus 1d6 persistent bleed

Arcane Spontaneous Spells DC 26, attack +18; **5th** (2 slots) *magic missile, weapon storm*; **4th** (2 slots) *dispel magic, phantasmal killer*; **3rd** (2 slots) *earthbind, haste*; **Cantrips (5th)** *acid splash, dancing lights, electric arc, prestidigitation, telekinetic projectile*

Sorcerer Bloodline Spells DC 26, 2 Focus Points; **5th** *ancestral memories* (Pathfinder Core Rulebook 402), *extend spell* (Core Rulebook 404)

Sudden Charge ♦♦ Vharnev Strides twice and makes a melee Strike.

Uniila Witch Token Vharnev bears the uniila's *witch token* in the form of an amulet with Mahathallah's rune-ringed eye symbol. Vharnev's spells lower than 5th level count as 1 level higher for the purpose of being counteracted and counteracting other spells. Once per day, Vharnev can activate the token to cast *confusion* (DC 29).

HAVVZI

CREATURE 10

Uniila devil (page 87)

Initiative Perception +21

MERCENARY ASSASSINS (3)

CREATURE 9

Page 17

Initiative Perception +17

DIERAL MYRNESE

CREATURE 5

UNIQUE N MEDIUM ELF HUMANOID

Male elf fence (Gamemastery Guide 210)

Initiative Perception +11

Skills Fortune-Telling Lore +15

Treasure: Dieral gives *The Carnival* to the PCs, as he's decided that it's not healthy for him to continue to possess it. He's also found two moderate salamander elixirs here, which he presumes his cousin used when working on particularly hot items in the forge. He gives them to the PCs as well with his thanks for saving him.

In the event that the PCs capture Vharnev alive and attempt to interrogate him (or use methods like *talking corpse* to interrogate his remains), they may be able to learn a bit about the Band of Blades, including that he works for Drustan. Even if he's slain, a PC who examines Vharnev's steel-colored *bird feather token* can attempt a DC 35 Society check to recognize the significance of this magic item as a token often carried by agents of the Band of Blades.

XP Award: Grant the PCs 60 XP for recovering *The Carnival*. In addition, if Dieral survives the encounter (or if he's slain but the PCs restore him to life), grant the PCs an additional 60 XP.

Facing Destiny

Fortunately for the PCs, Vharnev isn't particularly dutiful in keeping his superiors up to date on his progress, and for their own part, Drustan and the other Unmatched are keeping their focus elsewhere for the time being. Even if Vharnev escapes, he'll more than likely just try to ambush the PCs again in the future rather than risk punishment for failure. As a result, the PCs should have plenty of time as this part of Stolen Fate ends to rest, recover, and further investigate the strange cards they've discovered.

Dieral is assumed to be their primary source of information at this point. Although he knows precious little about the individual cards beyond *The Carnival*, he does know that the cards belong to a greater whole—a powerful collection known as the *Deck of Destiny*. Asked how he knows this, he fearfully recounts his nightmares of being pursued by a man in demonic armor, a hulking werewolf, and a monstrous black bird, all of whom taunted Dieral that the glories of the *Deck of Destiny* were not meant for him. (These three tormentors are, of course, the *Deck of Destiny* symbolizing the three Unmatched.)

Dieral further explains to the PCs that he's tried to sell, discard, and even destroy *The Carnival* in countless ways, only to fail each time and find the card returned to him—if the PCs ask for the card, he gratefully gives it to them but fully expects it to return to him within a few moments. When it doesn't, he's shocked, amazed, and more than anything else, relieved. He'll have no explanation for why possession of *The Carnival* doesn't instill in the PCs a sense of being pursued, other than to ruminate that perhaps they, unlike him, are destined for the artifact's power. Regardless, he's convinced that if all of the cards in the deck are gathered in one place, the resulting collection will likely have much greater powers. The fact that he doesn't recognize *The Carnival* (or any of the other cards the PCs may have collected, should they share that information with him) makes Dieral think that either the *Deck of Destiny* itself is remarkably ancient and forgotten, or unusually recent in its construction.

If Dieral was slain during the fight and the PCs lack the means to restore him to life, the information he provides them could come from one of the other NPC shopkeepers the PCs befriended earlier in the adventure, or more simply, by reading about this information in journals Dieral kept and carried.

The Choosing

Chapter 1: Luck of the Draw

Chapter 2: Scattered Stories

Chapter 3: Queen of the Storval Stairs

The Harrow Court

Adventure Toolbox



Chapter 2: Scattered Stories

That the *Deck of Destiny's* ability to manifest the Harrow Court is a side effect of the artifact's power speaks to its potency. Not even the Harrowing Three suspect the artifact is capable of such wonder, but soon after the PCs gain *The Carnival* from Dieral, something astounding happens, for at this point, the PCs should own six cards—one from each suit.

This close proximity of six cards from each suit is all that's needed to trigger the formation of the Harrow Court. Once Dieral hands over *The Carnival*, the PCs each experience a sudden and potent vision.

A sudden sense of vertigo overwhelms you as a thunderous sound fills the air of what must be a colossal deck of cards being shuffled. The world around you flickers and fades as

images of a new reality, viewed as if in a series of rapidly flashing pages flipping over and over, manifests before you. This vision shows a sprawling valley surrounded by impossibly tall mountains. Within the valley lie forests and swamps, deserts and plains, and a massive lake. At the valley's heart sits a lonely castle atop a low hill, surrounded by a village. A sudden sense of homesickness seems to rise up from that castle, and then, just as quickly as it began, the vision comes to an end.

Any character in the immediate vicinity understands at once the truth—by bringing together a card from every suit, a new reality has been created. Further, each PC instinctively understands how they can enter this new reality and knows its name—the Harrow Court.

The Harrow Court

At this point, the plot of *Stolen Fate* depends on the PCs taking the initiative to enter the Harrow Court for the first time. The article on page 69 of this volume presents rules for this demiplane, including how the PCs can come and go from the Harrow Court and how they can build upon the realm's reality by recovering and investing cards from the *Deck of Destiny*. Once the Harrow Court forms, the cards the PCs carry impart to them the methods by which they can enter the Harrow Court—a revelation that none of the others who carry cards from the *Deck of Destiny* receive even a hint of.

Since the campaign won't proceed until the PCs enter the demiplane, the PCs should use their cards to Enter the Harrow Court soon—if they seem hesitant to do so, you can use Dieral or other shopkeeper allies to encourage them to investigate, or perhaps ply them with additional visions to compel them forward. The Harrow Court is intended to develop into a sort of home base for the PCs to take advantage of, as well as a staging ground for them to launch numerous forays into the world as they continue to track down cards from the *Deck of Destiny*.

Once the PCs step into the portal created by the Enter the Harrow Court activity, they appear in the grand hall of a sprawling castle called Harrowheart. Proceed with the boxed text for the following section.

THE GRAND HALL

The bare stone walls of this cathedral-like chamber are draped with cobwebs and dust. No furnishings adorn the immense hall, while the ceiling above arches up to a height of nearly a hundred feet. Dozens of stained glass windows, each depicting a different scene from the Harrow, allow light to stream into the dusty chamber, and several wooden doors allow exit in all of the room's walls but one. This wall instead features six shallow alcoves filled with swirling gray mist. Each alcove is framed by an elegantly carved archway featuring decorations from the six suits of the Harrow—hammers, keys, shields, tomes, stars, and crowns.

As the PCs arrive within the Harrow Court, they instinctively understand the nature of the realm. Take some time to explain to the players what the Harrow Court is—a creation formed from the cards they've discovered—and that they can expand upon it by finding more cards and “epitomizing” them into the Harrow Court. Explain to the PCs the effects of the epitomes they may have just activated by entering the Harrow Court with any of the *Deck of Destiny* cards they have invested.

If the PCs head through any of the doors, they can move on to explore the rest of Harrowheart or the realm beyond—refer to the article beginning on page 71 if they do so. If instead they are intrigued by the six arches, proceed with The Six Arches on page 24.

EXPLORING THE COURT

The exploration of the Harrow Court takes place entirely in exploration and downtime mode, and the amount of time the PCs spend here is largely up to them. As they continue to enhance the demiplane by recovering and incarnating more cards from the *Deck of Destiny*, they'll not only gain more opportunities and support from their personal demiplane, but the simulacra that dwell within grow more numerous.

CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

The PCs enter the Harrow Court, a demiplane created by the *Deck of Destiny*. Within the Harrow Court, they receive leads on where to find six more cards. Each of these cards is scattered across Golarion, but the Harrow Court delivers them to a safe site near each. The PCs meet rebels in the Halana Theocracy, a naga vampire in Nagajor, an army of aberrations in Vudra, a puzzling monolith in Iobaria, mayhem in a Chelaxian theater, and an earnest shrine keeper in the Mwangi Expanse. The order of these encounters is up to the PCs, but there's adventure to be found at each far-flung site!

GETTING DISTRACTED

The locations the PCs visit in this chapter are spread across Golarion. While this allows the PCs to experience a wide range of regions, it doesn't allow for much additional detail, and if your players become distracted by the opportunity to explore a new region, they may attempt to travel beyond the confines of the following six encounter areas. If they do so you have a choice—you can either roll with it and allow the distraction to develop as you see fit (possibly derailing the plot of the Stolen Fate Adventure Path), or you can rule that soon after the PCs have managed to secure control over the region's card from the *Deck of Destiny*, they are automatically pulled back into the Harrow Court. This option can be presented to PCs who are curious as the artifact doing its best to try to keep the PCs focused—you can also lean on the use of additional visions, as detailed in the section on page 9 about motivating the party, to remind the PCs that there's a greater issue at hand.

If you don't have the PCs automatically return to the Harrow Court, the assumption is they Enter the Harrow Court on their own soon after acquiring each of the six cards they're after.

At first, the Harrow Court is sparsely populated, with the castle of Harrowheart being attended by a single servant who struggles to keep up with cleaning and cooking duties, and the surrounding village consisting of dilapidated buildings housing only a few squatters and vagrants. Feel free to give these initial folk interesting personalities and appearances as you see fit—by drawing upon your players' preferences and tropes they enjoy, you can make the Harrow Court feel even more like home to them. One potentially interesting place to draw from is allies or even foes who the PCs have lost on previous adventures—but note that when they appear in the Harrow Court, they are in part drawn from the memories of those PCs and are not actual allies and enemies brought back to life!

With each card the PCs epitomize, the demiplane grows more alive. More servants work in Harrowheart, whose chambers become progressively cleaner, comfortable, and outfitted with grander decor. The village grows more sound and inviting, while its occupants grow into larger groups of happier citizens. And throughout the realm, wildlife grows more plentiful, be it butterflies in the gardens, birds in the skies, or animals both domesticated and wild.

Give the PCs all the time they need to become accustomed to the Harrow Court and to trust it as a safe place to rest and relax, but once they turn their attention to the six arches in the Grand Hall, they'll realize where they need to go from here to continue chasing down the cards of the *Deck of Destiny*.

THE SIX ARCHES

The PCs are likely to be intrigued by the six mist-filled arches in the Grand Hall first before they move on to explore the rest of the Harrowed Court. These six arches are each attuned to the six suits of the Harrow, and as soon as any PC approaches an arch, the mists grow clear and display a region in Golarion, as if the archway were actually an exit from the building into another place.

A character who approaches the arches automatically understands that each one is a one-way portal back to somewhere on Golarion. The portals themselves are physical manifestations of the *Deck of Destiny's* need to return to a full collection, and in order to facilitate the recovery of these cards, the portals indicate to the PCs which cards in each suit their destinies are “most comfortable” with at any point in time. In effect, the portals direct the PCs toward cards that they have the best chance at retrieving. As the PCs recover cards, gain experience, and grow more powerful, the portals point toward increasingly difficult goals.

While the precise location that an active portal leads to may not be obvious to all, the card that lies beyond the portal is. When a character approaches an active portal, the name and imagery of the card that lies beyond manifests in their mind. As with the location the portal leads to, the location of the card in question is not revealed, but the PCs at least know which card they're seeking out—and thus, once they find it, that their task in that area is complete.

At this point in the campaign, all six arches are active, and as the PCs investigate, they become aware that the cards in question are (in order from left to right as they appear in the six arches) *The Big Sky*, *The Juggler*, *The Trumpet*, *The Snakebite*, *The Silent Hag*, and *The Theater*. Each of the short adventures in which the PCs seek out these cards are detailed through the remainder of this chapter. The order in which the PCs seek out these cards is left to them—once a card is collected, that archway fills once more with mist and becomes inactive. Only once the PCs have gathered all six of these cards do the arches activate again, at which point proceed to Chapter 3 of “The Choosing.”

The Big Sky

When the PCs peer through the Arch of Hammers, they observe a forest clearing dominated by a few fallen

trees (area C1). A character who studies the plant life visible can attempt a DC 30 Nature or appropriate Lore check to identify the species as being common to the northwestern reaches of the Deadshot Lands in Arcadia. (Reduce this DC to 15 for characters who are from or are familiar with Arcadia.)

THE DEADSHOT LANDS

The Arch of Hammers deposits the PCs at the edge of a forest in the Halana Theocracy—a nation on the continent of Arcadia far to the west of Avistan and the ruined continent of Azlant. Halana is, unfortunately for its oppressed human and tengu denizens, an overbearing theocracy devoted to the demon lord Pazuzu. The Windborne Theocrats that rule the land enforce their erratic will with elite soldiers called Mivanians. Mivanians maintain control through two primary means—their notorious alliances with avian demons, and their tight control over access to deadly firearms. The Mivanians are opposed by groups of scrappy rebels who plot the overthrow of the brutal demonic regime and secretly stockpile caches of guns in preparation for uprising. They want nothing other than the right to rule their land free of fiendish dictators.

The Mivanians (and, indeed, the ruling Windborne Theocrats) claim control of Halana's skies as their divine right. It was therefore not a surprise to the Mivanian fiend Zashuvin when a magical card called *The Big Sky* came into her possession. Zashuvin doesn't know anything about the Harrow or the *Deck of Destiny*, but she knows power when she sees it. Prompted by the card's arrival, Zashuvin has decided to send her Mivanian troops (vlocks and tengus) to find and quash a rebel group. Zashuvin might be making a critical mistake, though, especially if the PCs aid the rebels.

C1. FOREST EDGE

LOW 12

Old trees hanging with ivy and moss provide deep shadows, but the trees end at a rolling plain of waving grass so green that it almost glimmers in the bright sunlight. A few clouds scud across the bright blue sky, while a deadfall provides something of a defensive bulwark along the side of the clearing closest to the plains beyond.

Creatures: Several people cluster beneath a fallen tree, cautiously looking out over the plain while obviously protecting a large mound of bulging sacks. These are a group of fifteen human and tengu rebels led by an elderly, dun-feathered tengu named Skawnak, whose home and family were burned by Mivanians a decade ago. When the PCs appear at the western edge

LANGUAGE BARRIERS

During many of the encounters in this chapter, the PCs travel to a wide range of locations across the face of Golarion, and communicating with those they encounter may at times be a problem. For example, when seeking *The Big Sky*, the PCs travel to Arcadia, where the Common tongue is not Taldane, but instead Razatlani. Language barriers represent a potential problem to PCs not familiar with some of the cultures and people they'll be encountering in this chapter, which may not be to the liking of all groups—particularly those who don't feature PCs with a wide range of languages or access to magic like *tongues*. Before proceeding with this part, look through the various languages spoken by friendly NPCs and compare that to those spoken by the PCs. If there's not many languages shared in common, and if the PCs don't have access to spells like *tongues* or *comprehend language*, consider adding a *wand of tongues* to one of the items the PCs discover in Chapter 1 of this adventure, or adjust the languages spoken by NPCs as needed. You could even change the activated power of a card like *The Vision* so that instead, that card allows the player to cast *tongues* once per day. In the end, you should be using this diversity of language as a feature—as a way to quickly showcase the wide range of areas the PCs visit in these short encounters—not as a way to introduce frustrating game play to your table.

of the clearing, the rebels don't immediately notice them. If the PCs don't announce themselves, though, Skawnak spots them within a round of their arrival and, with a startled cry, orders his soldiers to arms.

Since the PCs aren't wearing the Mivanian insignia (a taloned claw over a dark cloud), the rebels don't immediately attack, but trickery and deception are a staple of Windborne agents, as one might surmise from a theocracy devoted to a demon lord of temptation. As the rebels split their focus on the PCs and the skies above, watching for any hint of airborne demonic assault, Skawnak demands the PCs identify themselves. Fortunately, his natural knack with languages and his studies of realms beyond the Deadshot Lands (where he hopes to discover workable tactics against demons) help him establish communication quickly if no PC speaks Tengu. After addressing them first in Tengu, and upon regarding their attire a bit more closely, he addresses them again in another language he thinks the strange visitors might speak (using Taldane, Halfling, Elven, or Sylvan as makes sense).

The Choosing

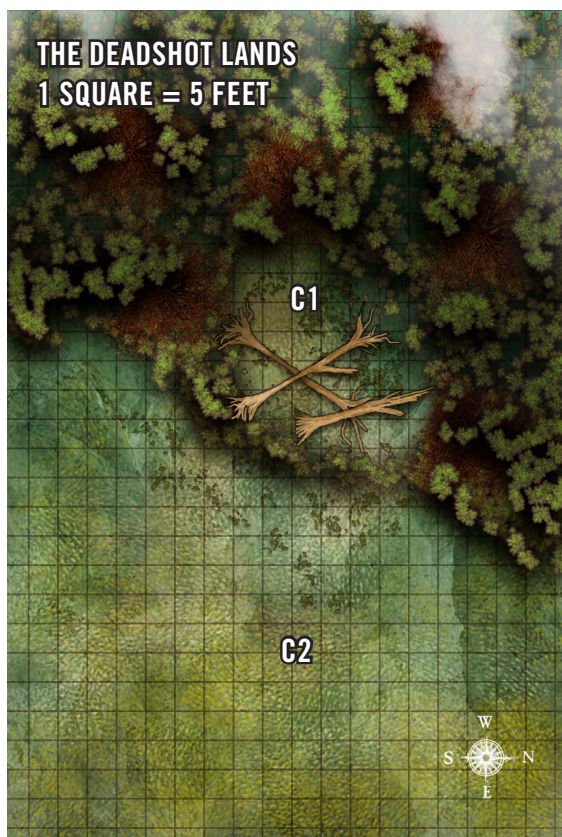
Chapter 1:
Luck of the Draw

Chapter 2:
Scattered Stories

Chapter 3:
Queen of the Storval Stairs

The Harrow Court

Adventure Toolbox



Skawnak doesn't suspect the PCs are Mivanian agents, thanks to his experience with their minions' methods, but he's certainly not ready to openly embrace these strangers as friends. When he demands the PCs identify themselves, give the characters a chance to do just that. Depending on how they do so, they'll need to either Lie (DC 24 Deception), Make an Impression (DC 20 Diplomacy), or Coerce (DC 24 Intimidation) Skawnak. His initial attitude is indifferent.

Skawnak is flabbergasted at any claims the PCs have of hailing from the Inner Sea region—in a way, he's more accepting of an explanation that they're visiting from a demiplane. He's also something of an expert in sussing out Mivanian machinations, which certainly helps the PCs establish their good intentions. The other rebels are plainly in awe of the PCs' timely and obviously magical arrival, but Skawnak does his best to remain unruffled and put on a calm demeanor, so as to keep his soldiers' confidence.

As long as he's satisfied that the PCs aren't here to do him or his soldiers harm, Skawnak informs them that they're behind enemy lines—he and his soldiers are preparing to cross the open fields to the west, hopefully without being spotted by the enemy's airborne patrols. If he's made helpful, he'll even reveal to the PCs that the reason they're hoping to cross the field unseen is

because they're smuggling weapons to allies to the east a few miles away. The problem facing the rebels is that there's more aerial activity over the field than they'd anticipated, and they're at a loss as to how to make it across the open terrain without getting caught.

Skawnak doesn't know anything about the Harrow and hasn't seen any Harrow cards, but if the PCs mention *The Big Sky*, he points suspiciously at the bright blue sky above the plain. "That's the biggest sky there is, and our enemies command it."

REBELS (15)

CREATURE 3

Human and tengu trackers (*Gamemastery Guide* 219)

Initiative Perception +13

SKAWNAK

CREATURE 4

UNIQUE NG MEDIUM HUMANOID TENGU

Tengu bounty hunter (*Gamemastery Guide* 227)

Initiative Perception +14

Languages Abyssal, Elven, Halfling, Razatlani, Sylvan, Taldane, Tengu

Mivanian Ambush

Creatures: Before the PCs get too far into their conversation, a band of Mivanians who have been tracking the rebels through the forest finally pinpoint their location, approaching from the north on the ground (rather than from above—the direction the rebels have been more closely watching). This group consists of four tengu soldiers and their commander, Raskus—a brutal and scarred tengu with glorious wings. Each Mivanian carries a strange *spike launcher* gun made from manticores parts called a *beastgun* (*Pathfinder Guns & Gears* 154). They seek to kill everyone present, preferably from a distance. They take turns activating their *spike launcher's* volley of spikes while the others fire at anyone hampered or immobilized by that shot. Utterly devoted to the Windborne Theocracy, all of the Mivanians fight to the death.

The rebels know that they're severely outclassed by these soldiers, and take cover in the deadfall as the ambush begins, relying upon the PCs to save them.

RASKUS

CREATURE 10

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMANOID TENGU

Male tengu commander (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 310)

Perception +18; low-light vision

Languages Abyssal, Razatlani, Tengu

Skills Acrobatics +21, Athletics +19, Intimidation +19, Religion +18, Stealth +21

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

Items +1 leather armor with Mivanian insignia, manacles,

spike launcher (20 spikes; *Pathfinder Guns & Gears* 156), +1 striking *rapier*

AC 29; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +21, **Will** +18

HP 175

Snap Shot **Requirements** Raskus holds a loaded *spike launcher*; **Trigger** A creature within 30 feet of Raskus uses a move action, makes a ranged attack, or leaves a square during a move action it's using; **Effect** Raskus attempts a *spike launcher* Strike against the triggering creature. This Strike doesn't contribute to his multiple attack penalty, and his multiple attack penalty doesn't apply to this Strike.

Speed 25 feet, fly 25 feet

Melee *rapier* +22 (deadly d8, disarm, finesse, magical), **Damage** 2d6+11 slashing

Melee beak +21 (finesse), **Damage** 2d4+11 piercing

Ranged *spike launcher* +22 (backstabber, fatal d12, kickback, magical, range increment 120 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 2d8+9 piercing

Divine Innate Spells DC 26; **4th** *blindness*, *earthbind*

Go for the Eyes **Trigger** Raskus critically hits with a beak Strike; **Effect** Raskus attempts to peck out his victim's eyes. The target must attempt a DC 29 Fortitude save.

Success The target is unaffected.

Failure The target is blinded for 1 round.

Critical Failure The target is blinded until healed to its maximum Hit Points.

Opportunistic Attack Raskus's Strikes deal an additional 3d6 damage to any foe that has a reduction to its Speed, is blinded, or is immobilized.

Quick Spiker Raskus requires only 1 action, rather than 2 actions, to reload a *spike launcher*. He can change his grip on a *spike launcher* easily, improving its fatal aim d12 trait to fatal d12. (These changes are incorporated into its ranged Strike, above.)

MIVANIAN SOLDIERS (4)

CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM HUMANOID TENGU

Tengu soldier (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 310)

Perception +17; low-light vision

Languages Abyssal, Razatlangi, Tengu

Skills Acrobatics +17, Athletics +18, Intimidation +15, Stealth +17, Survival +15

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

Items leather armor bearing Mivanian insignia, manacles, *spike launcher* (20 spikes; *Pathfinder Guns & Gears* 156), +1 striking *rapier*

AC 27; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +15, **Will** +13

HP 140

Snap Shot As Raskus.

Speed 25 feet

Melee *rapier* +19 (deadly d8, disarm, finesse, magical), **Damage** 2d6+10 slashing

Melee beak +18 (finesse), **Damage** 2d10+10 piercing

Ranged *spike launcher* +18 (backstabber, fatal d12, kickback, magical, range increment 120 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 2d8+7 piercing

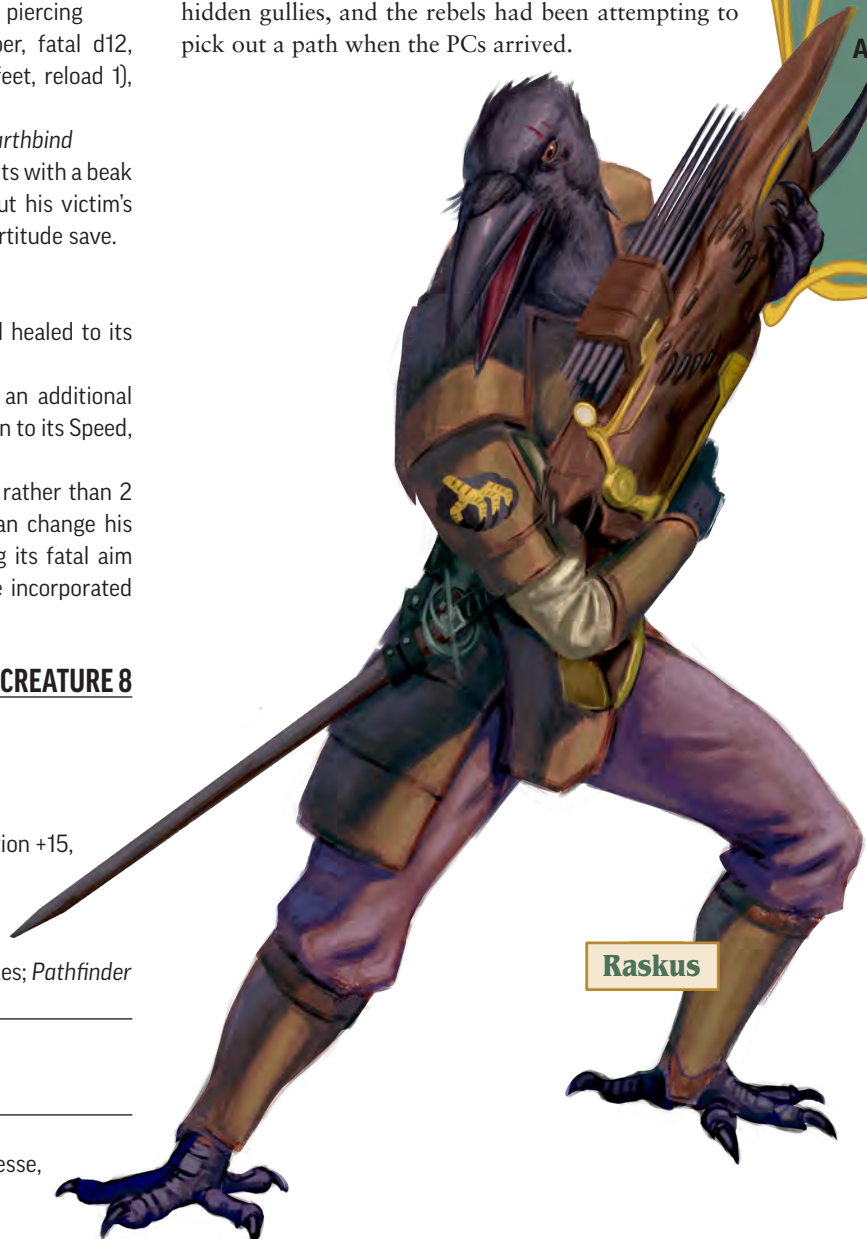
Go for the Eyes As Raskus, but DC 26.

Quick Spiker As Raskus.

Treasure: The rebels would gladly take the Mivanians' *spike launchers*, but they don't mind if the PCs take any (or all) of them as spoils of their victory.

Plotting the Crossing

After the fight, Skawnak presents the rebels' key problem: none of them have crossed this plain before. They know the grasses conceal a veritable maze of hidden gullies, and the rebels had been attempting to pick out a path when the PCs arrived.



Raskus

Skawnak asks if the PCs can help them identify a route from the forest's edge. He's convinced that Mivanian patrols from substantially higher in the air will spot them if they don't have a safe path. Careful observation of the grass and the wind reveal the network of hidden gullies, most of which lead to dead ends but some of which lead to a deeper, safer gully a few miles away.

Determining a safe way for the rebels to cross the plains requires three successful secret checks. Any combination of DC 32 Perception checks, DC 30 Nature checks, or DC 28 Survival or Plains Lore checks suffices. If the characters think to get a higher view (such as from the forest treetops) or use divination magic to help, they gain a +1 circumstance bonus to their checks (although Skawnak doesn't want them to venture into the plains until they've plotted a route). Ask the players which characters are making which checks and secretly note how many of the checks succeed—each PC gets one opportunity to attempt such a check. If the PCs use a tactic that can ensure stealth across the plains (such as with enough *invisibility* effects) or that allows the rebels to bypass the 2,000-foot-wide distance entirely (such as by using *teleport*), they automatically earn 3 successes regardless of their skill check results.

XP Award: Award the PCs 20 XP for each successful check to plot a route across the plains, to a maximum of 60 XP.

C2. PERILOUS PLAINS

MODERATE 12

Regardless of the number of successes the PCs attain, Zashuvin soon spots the player characters thanks to her connection to *The Big Sky*. She and two vlocks under her command cast *dimension door* to arrive near the PCs, as they seem to be the biggest threats present, but the timing of when they attack (as well as the rebels' fate) depends on the number of successes the PCs achieved.

1 success or less: The rebels are spotted soon after they enter the plains, and become directly involved in the fight.

2 successes: The rebels get a head start. If the PCs are accompanying them, they become directly involved in the fight. If the PCs stayed behind, the rebels are attacked (and are likely slaughtered) if the PCs don't defeat Zashuvin and her vlocks.

3 or more successes: The rebels hunker down and hide or make it to safety. The PCs are still attacked by Zashuvin and her vlocks, but the rebels themselves escape notice and are never in any danger, regardless of the fight's resolution.

Creatures: The vlocks swoop into melee right away,

alternating their spore clouds and stunning screeches with melee attacks, while Zashuvin hangs back in the air, 30 feet from the ground, and casts spells such as *fear* and *divine lance*. If the fiends notice the rebels, the vlocks focus on them at the start of combat and attempt to use a Dance of Ruin on them, but if the PCs focus their attacks on the vlocks, the demons abandon this tactic and treat the PCs as the primary targets, attacking rebels when the opportunity presents itself. All of the fiends fight to the death.

ZASHUVIN

CREATURE 11

Female hurlilu (page 88)

Initiative Perception +21

Items *The Big Sky*, ruby religious symbol of Pazuzu worth 750 gp

VLOCKS (4)

CREATURE 9

Pathfinder Bestiary 78

Initiative Perception +18

XP Award: When the characters claim *The Big Sky* from Zashuvin, award them 60 XP. If at least half of the rebels survive, grant them an additional 30 XP. In any event, Skawnak is eager to put some distance between the site of this conflict and his group, and so he bids the PCs luck before hastening to the east toward their still quite distant destination.

The Juggler

When the PCs peer through the Arch of Keys, they look out over a forested mountainside with an ocean on the horizon. A PC who studies the plant life and terrain visible can attempt a DC 25 Nature or appropriate Lore check to identify the region as the Terwa Uplands in the Mwangi Expanse. A critical success allows the player character to pinpoint the location as being near the peak of Mount K'Walter, the second-highest peak in the Terwa Uplands. Once the PCs step through the portal, being able to get a full 360-degree view of the region reduces this to a DC 15 check. A PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Religion check notes that K'walder is sacred to Balumbdar the World-Shaker, the god of great size, megafauna, and strength.

SHRINE TO BALUMBDAR

From a daunting mountainside elevation of thousands of feet, an ocean studded with islands commands the view to the west, while to the east stretches out an expanse of thick jungle. The slope below hosts a cloud forest, its trees poking up through a layer of swirling mist, while a narrow path winds down and out of view into the fog.

The Choosing

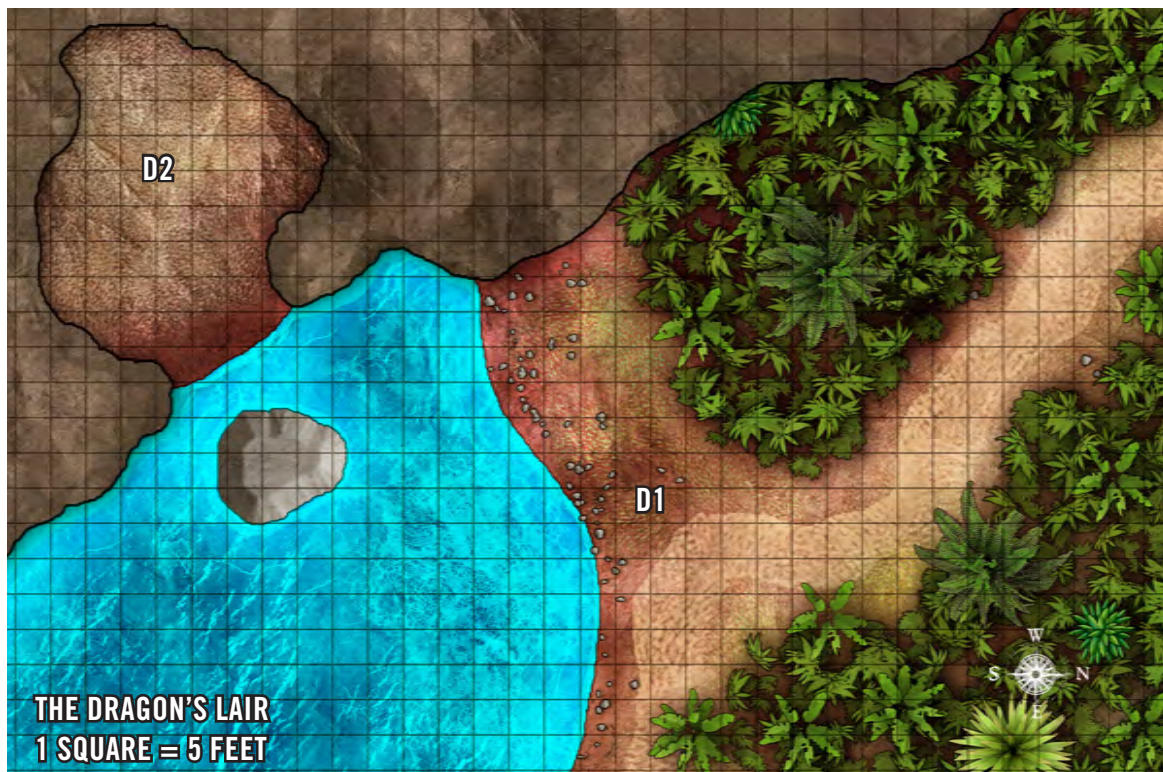
Chapter 1:
Luck of the Draw

Chapter 2:
Scattered Stories

Chapter 3:
Queen of the Storval Stairs

The Harrow Court

Adventure Toolbox



Once the PCs step through the portal and look around, they'll swiftly discover that the portal itself manifested in the mouth of a cliffside cave entrance, with the peak of Mount K'walder looming high above. Once the portal vanishes, they can see that the cave entrance leads into an enormous space inside the mountain. This cathedral-like space stretches in a rough circle about 100 feet in diameter. Its smooth walls run in irregular arcs punctured by fissures and sporadic shafts that allow the daylight in so that the whole is well lit. Much of the wall space features huge, simple murals in bright colors, mostly of megafauna and towering trees against a backdrop of high mountains. A portrayal of Balumbdar himself as an immense, heavily tattooed, brown-skinned man with thick muscles, rolls of fat, and a pleasant expression covers the wall opposite the cave entrance. The shaft of light illuminating the wall makes Balumbdar look even bigger, tricking the eye to make him look larger than even this massive cavern could contain. A second shaft of light falls on a stone altar directly in front of this dynamic portrait. Slowly gyrating through loops in the air above the altar is a single object: *The Juggler*.

A successful DC 15 Religion check to Recall Knowledge identifies the imagery on the walls and confirms this cave as being a shrine to Balumbdar. The shrine itself is occupied by a single man named **Blegkenu the Pious** (N male Mbe'ke dwarf ascetic 11).

As the shrine's keeper, he welcomes visitors in his quiet, warm voice, apparently not startled or unsettled at the brief appearance of a strange portal at the entrance to his shrine. At least as wide as he is tall, Blegkenu claims to be "the largest dwarf in the Terwa Uplands." Dressed in sandals and a thin, sky-blue tunic tied with a rope, Blegkenu seems impervious to the somewhat chilly temperature within the shrine.

Blegkenu offers visitors water and lumpy biscuits the size of coconuts. He's happy to talk about himself, Balumbdar, and the harrow card that slowly turns above the altar. While he's not a spellcaster, and thus can't provide much in the way of magical support, he's very well-versed in his faith and has an extensive knowledge of the region—if the PCs haven't figured out where they are, he can inform them. Blegkenu speaks slowly, as though carefully considering his words. Likely questions the PCs pose, along with Blegkenu's replies, are as follows.

Who are you? "Well, they call me Blegkenu the Pious. I'm not saying I deserve that name, but that's what they call me. It's because I live up here in this shrine day and night to pay homage to my god, Balumbdar. I never forsake him."

Who is Balumbdar? "Why, he is the god of huge things! He protects the biggest animals, the highest peaks, the tallest trees, the largest boulders. He Who Is Massive understands the significance of weight and

strength, the might that comes from size alone. The elephants and dinosaurs and other enormous beasts are sacred to him, as are great mountains and massive trees.” (Balumbdar is further described on page 134 of *Pathfinder Lost Omens Mwangi Expanse*.)

How long have you lived here? “Oh, I don’t know exactly—three decades? Four? I imagine some of you weren’t even born when I first ascended this sacred peak.”

Did you build this shrine? “No, it existed long before my time. I have only improved it by smoothing the walls and painting them and adding some of the gaps so the light can shine in. My masterpiece is this portrait of Balumbdar.”

Why do you have that card? “It appeared here! I found it there above the altar one morning several weeks ago. It’s very magical—and I suspect it has powers far beyond floating in circles! I’ve been seeking the prayer that will bring it to life. But look! See how immense the juggler on the card is? Look at the size of the things he tosses about so casually! What could this be but a sign from the World-Shaker? Marvelous! This juggler must be a herald of my god. I just need the right prayer to bring him forth.”

Can we have the card? “Well, you could try to take it, but I don’t know that you’ll have much luck.” (Indeed, the Juggler card is impossible to claim. While it appears to float weightlessly, its weight is extraordinary, and attempts to pick it up or move it fail as though it were extraordinarily heavy. Any attempt to block its path above the stone simply causes the card to change its course—or simply to float in place. Despite its apparent weight and mass, the card won’t actually damage anything that gets in its way or attempts—and fails—to move it.)

What would it take for us to get the card? “I’ve been thinking a lot about that. Surely you recognize the card for what it is—a card from the Harrow. This card in particular, it’s from the suit of Keys. A key must be the key, wouldn’t you think? I think if I had a big key, especially a certain very specific key, I could complete my prayer. At that point, it wouldn’t matter whether I had the card or not, and I suppose you could take it.”

The Dragon’s Key

Blegkenu’s theories and personality may come off to the PCs as a bit eccentric, but there’s more to his theory than

mere guesswork. Once he mentions the “big key,” he reveals to the PCs that he’s seen just such an enormous key not so long ago. The good news is that the key isn’t far, but the bad news is that the key is part of the

hoard of a nefarious cloud dragon who lives in the valley to the south. This dragon, Blegkenu explains, is named Sedisserax. Exiled from the dwarven sky citadel of Cloudspire years ago after she destroyed several historical statues and relics, the dragon’s spent the last several decades “moping and fuming” in her remote lakeside lair. Blegkenu knows the route to her lair and admits he’s visited Sedisserax several times: “She may be bitter and cantankerous, but she’s majestically massive and gloriously gigantic, and has given me many insights

into the lifestyles of larger life over the years.” Blegkenu warns the PCs that Sedisserax is vicious and spiteful, and usually eats those who travel too close to her valley—she’s traditionally suffered Blegkenu’s visits because the dwarf never approaches too closely, is properly respectful, and (Blegkenu suspects) because she’s guilty about her past and sees the chance to speak to a dwarf as, perhaps, an opportunity to find forgiveness. Each time he visited her, he noted a singular element of her treasure—an immense key “almost as large as my arm.” The dragon grew angry when, on his latest visit, Blegkenu asked to examine the key. She attacked him in response, and while Blegkenu thanks “Balumbdar’s mercy” for his fortunate escape, he’s positive that he’s no longer welcome in her lair. If the PCs could secure that enormous key and bring it back here for him to meditate upon, Blegkenu is certain the mystery of the card will be revealed.

Characters who succeed at a DC 25 Arcana, Nature, or relevant Lore check recall that a large number of cloud dragons make the Terwa Uplands their home. Each dragon takes a particular valley for their own, usually nesting in the tallest tree or near a mountain pool. Most of them are allies and friends of the Mbe’ke dwarves, so Sedisserax’s crimes must have been shocking and severe to merit banishment. On a critical success, the PC recalls hearing something of those crimes—destruction of sacred relics simply to get to the “treasures” she was convinced were hidden within. There were no such treasures inside the destroyed relics, but when the rulers of Cloudspire confronted her, she reacted with violence and was driven from the sky citadel.



Blegkenu

Blegkenu notes that Sedisserax's attitude has earned her trouble, and he's long suspected her end would come in the form of a group of dragonslayers. If the PCs can secure the enormous key without killing her, that's fine, but the dwarf warns the PCs that he'd be shocked if the dragon stops to talk before she tries to eat the PCs.

When the PCs are ready to set out, Blegkenu gives them directions to Sedisserax's lair. "Follow the trail from my cave down the mountainside until you reach a lake. The trail heads off to the east from there, but to the west, along the lake shore, is a cave entrance—her home." These simple directions are more than enough, but it's still a 2-hour hike down the mountainside to the lake in question. In the time since his last visit, though, Sedisserax has encouraged some additional guardians to take up residence upon the lakeshore, potentially giving the PCs a nasty surprise as they arrive at area **D1**.

D1. LAKESHORE

LOW 12

The thick, squat trees of this bowl-shaped valley grow densely together. A deep blue lake lies here, the trail turning upon reaching its shore and winding off to the east. A cliff rises from the lake's western shore, and a large cave entrance is visible at the base. A jagged rock protrudes from the lake's surface not far from the cave entrance.

Creatures: After she grew enraged at Blegkenu's last visit, Sedisserax lured a trio of dangerous plants to her lakeshore from deeper in the jungle to serve as guardians and organic alarms. These three flowering vine-like plants grow among the foliage on the lakeshore and are known as oppalis. The luck-eating plants rise up to attack anything that approaches the lakeshore, using Stealth to roll initiative. The sound of their trumpet blasts is more than enough to alert Sedisserax, who reacts as detailed below in area **D2** once the PCs defeat the oppalis, which fight until they are destroyed.

OPPALIS (3)

CREATURE 10

Page 89

Initiative Stealth +23

D2. SEDISSERAX'S LAIR

MODERATE 12

Creature: Sedisserax spends most of her time coiled among her treasures at the back of her cave, but the sound of combat at area **D1** is more than enough to alert her. She doesn't join a fight in progress against the oppalis, but instead watches from the darkness within the cavern, observing the PCs and their tactics

and actions until they attempt to approach the cave or make it apparent that they're here looking for her or something in her hoard.

Sedisserax is not inclined to talk. She instead hurtles from her cave as dramatically as she can to perch atop the rock protruding from the lake. She shrieks, "Thieves and trespassers! You will pay with your lives!" as she attacks, seeing in their equipment wonderful new treasures to add to her hoard.

Sedisserax opens combat with her breath weapon, then launches into melee; she loves the feel of tearing flesh beneath her claws. The dragon is overconfident but not suicidal; if reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points, she uses Cloud Form and flees, hiding in the valley mist until the PCs go away. If the cost of her survival is the loss of her hoard to the PCs, that's a price she's willing to pay.

As she's initially hostile, it's unlikely that the PCs have the time to use Diplomacy to strike up a conversation with the dragon. Magic or mercy might make a difference here; if she tries to flee but is unsuccessful, she gives up her hoard (key included) in return for her life. Sedisserax has long felt guilt at how she left things with Cloudspire, and at your option, the way in which the PCs treat her if they spare her life may well have unexpected results (see Treasure below).

SEDISSERAX

CREATURE 14

Female adult cloud dragon (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 90)

Initiative Perception +28

Treasure: Sedisserax's horde contains an eclectic variety of treasures. Many belonged to the dwarves of Cloudspire, and a few have monetary value: the cracked head of a dwarven statue, a tower shield bearing rusted patches in unusual shapes, and a massive iron key (6 Bulk) to a long-lost dwarven door. It is this key that Blegkenu is seeking, and coincidentally is one of the items the dragon stole from Cloudspire that earned her exile from the sky citadel. A PC who examines the key and makes a successful DC 35 Dwarven Lore (or other appropriate Lore) check to Recall Knowledge notes the ancient key's construction suggests its original use for a vast door found in a sky citadel. A critical success on the check allows the PC to recall a tale of a large key going missing from Cloudspire, but that the details of the event were hushed up.

In addition to the enormous key, the dragon's hoard consists of a suit of +1 *resilient standard-grade cloud dragonhide armor* (which protects against electricity damage). Fashioned from the skin of one of Sedisserax's enemies, it is her prized possession. The hoard also includes a +2 *striking darkwood club*, a greater tanglefoot

bag, a vial of *oil of repulsion*, a teak mask with a *scroll of mask of terror* scribed inside of it, a jeweled scepter worth 400 gp, a pair of gold goblets worth 375 gp each, and 312 gp, 6,802 sp, and 1,054 cp in coins.

If the PCs spare Sedisserax's life and they don't loot her treasure (apart from bringing the key to Blegkenu), the dragon eventually has a change of heart and extends a few tentative offers to Cloudspire to work at reparations for the damage she caused so long ago. At some point during the next adventure, after learning that her encounter with the PCs triggered her change of heart, representatives from Cloudspire seek out the PCs to thank them. How this plays out is left to you to determine, but the Cloudspire agents have more than thanks to offer the PCs: they bestow upon each PC a magic item gifted from the sky citadel's treasures. Tailor this choice to match each PC—the item in question

should be a permanent item of a level equal to the PC's level at the time –1. If the PCs ask, the Cloudspire representatives admit that the key Sedisserax stole was once used to lock a door deep under Cloudspire that sealed the way into the Darklands. The key itself is not much more than an historical heirloom at this point, for the dwarves of Cloudspire no longer fear the dangers that, long ago, attempted to pursue them upward from below. Still, they are grateful that Blegkenu eventually returned the key to the sky citadel and thank the PCs again for their role in its recovery.

RETURNING TO BLEGKENU

When the PCs return to the shrine to Balumbdar with the key, Blegkenu is quite pleased. While the PCs were gone, he embellished his massive painting of Balumbdar to be juggling the same items as seen on *The Juggler*. He's

convinced that the key is the vital component for his ritual to bring the great juggler, Balumbdar's minion, forth. As proof, he nods to the altar, where *The Juggler* now sits calm and motionless. He hasn't touched the card since it grew still, and now any player character can pick it up from the altar with no issue.

Blegkenu still intends to perform his ritual and invites the PCs to stay for it, but with the ritual being a multi-week event, the PCs probably have more pressing business.

Whether Blegkenu successfully summons one of Balumbdar's heralds, and what this herald might mean for the region, is beyond the scope of this adventure.

XP Award: When the PCs recover *The Juggler*, award them 60 XP.

The Trumpet

When the PCs peer through the Arch of Shields, they do so from what appears to be the top of a rubble-strewn hillside. A scree-covered slope angles steeply downward, with a ruined stone structure protruding from the rubble nearly 200 feet away, while beyond stretches a barren badland of jagged hills and twisted fissures. Now and then, strange monsters creep and flop and lurch across this landscape, scuttling from one fissure to the next. A character who studies this stark scenery can attempt a DC 25 Occultism check to identify the strange creatures as being a wide range of aberrations native to the Darklands, while a critical success on the check confirms that the region is Open Bridge—a land in southern Vudra that rose from the ocean at the dawn of the Age of Lost Omens, only to





become overrun by monsters. (Characters who are from or familiar with Vudra increase the result of their Occultism check by one degree of success.)

OPEN BRIDGE

The southernmost reaches of Vudra were once an archipelago of several bountiful islands, but the world-shaking changes that struck Golarion at the onset of the Age of Lost Omens did not pass this region by, resulting in the formation of a land bridge between the isles. It almost seemed as if the waters of the Obari Ocean itself were retreating when this bridge formed, yet surely the land must have risen as well. That all of this took place without significant impact on other shores (as one might expect such a tectonic upheaval to inflict) only deepened the mystery.

This newly formed peninsula became known as Open Bridge, and the people of southern Vudra expected a boom in trade and resources as a result of the ease in travel between what were once islands. Anticipation turned to horror when fissures on the peninsula spewed forth countless aberrations that swarmed out and overran many towns and trading posts, and then threatened to spill into greater Vudra. By working together, resolute soldiers and architects constructed massive walls and fortresses to keep the aberrations at bay. Providing vigilant soldiers for this wall is the duty of the local mahajanapadas, and it is one they perform with grim honor.

Over the century since Open Bridge became overrun with monsters, this fortification line has shifted many times. More often, the defenders have had to fall back, ceding territory to the aberrant hordes. Sometimes, however, the defenders can push forward to claim a ruined keep or establish a new defensive line atop a canyon edge or deep river.

A valiant officer named **Arraseesh** (LG nonbinary human captain 6) oversaw just such an attempt to claim a hill overlooking a rocky slope of scree. Not only did

this hill contain a natural rise serving as a battlement, but the unstable rocks could be tumbled down upon attacking aberrations with ease. Arraseesh sought permission to claim the hill from their superiors. They received a message that the mission was approved, but they failed to receive the follow-up message retracting the approval in light of new information about aberration horde movements. Arraseesh's surviving company of soldiers are now pinned down at the top of the hill. An attempt to retreat to an old ruin partway down the hill backfired horrifically, and their squad was attacked and devoured by monsters. Arraseesh alone survived that excursion, and has been trapped within the ruin ever since.

The PCs arrive from the Harrow Court at the top of the hill, amid the confused and desperate soldiers holding the line.

E1. HILLTOP BATTLEMENT

A ridge of jagged stone serves as a natural battlement at the edge of this hilltop. The ground on the other side is steeply slanted and strewn with scree. Armored soldiers look over the battlement with evident trepidation, while down below, roiling hordes of fleshy aberrations, from crawling globs the size of a human fist to bulbous, fleshy giants towering dozens of feet tall, rush back and forth between boulders and rents in the earth, as if unable to bear the light of the sun for too long.

When the PCs step through the portal, they arrive near the edge of the hilltop, immediately noting the muggy heat of the area and the low rumble of monstrous growls, slithering, and howling that rises up from the hillside below. The two dozen human soldiers stationed atop the hill behind the PCs are startled by the sudden arrival, but are quick to assume the PCs are reinforcements in the form of an adventuring party—the use of such bands of

mercenaries to aid in dealing with the monsters of Open Bridge is relatively common.

The PCs are approached by the ranking officer, a harried sergeant named **Japulipel** (LG female human soldier 5), who rushes over to the PCs to apologize for failure to follow the orders to retreat. Japulipel (along with all of the soldiers here) speaks Vudrani but not Taldane, which might pose a language barrier. Japulipel does speak Aklo and Undercommon—languages spoken by her enemies—but if the PCs can't establish communication, she groans in frustration and gestures frantically down the hill toward the ruined building at area **E2**, hoping the PCs get the idea and head downslope to provide aid.

If the PCs can communicate, Japulipel explains the mix-up in the orders and how her commanding officer, Arraseesh, went with a small group to attempt to take the ruined fortification on the hillside. She describes how a swarm of bhanyadas attacked the soldiers and tore most of the soldiers apart before they fell back, and since then she's seen enough activity down at the ruin to know that at least one person still lives. She doesn't change her stance if the PCs explain to her that they weren't sent as reinforcements, replying "Whatever your reasons for arriving here, you were sent at the right time!" She notes that the activity of the bhanyadas (creatures she can quickly explain basic details of to the PCs as if they'd critically succeeded at a Lore check to Recall Knowledge about them) indicates the swarming monsters are preparing for another assault, and time is obviously of the essence.

If the PCs ask her about *The Trumpet*, her eyes widen. She explains that Arraseesh found the card in their belongings some time ago, and decided to keep the curious object as it aided in their ability to react to danger. It also granted Arraseesh the ability to use a blast of sound once a day to damage foes—an ability they recently used against a bhanyada swarm (she points out the gory swath on the hillside near the ruins that remains as evidence). She's not sure of much more about the card, but the fact that the PCs asked about it makes her certain that they're destined specifically to rescue her commander.

E2. DOWNHILL PASSAGE

LOW 12

The slope isn't as safe as it looks. Characters on foot can either make the entire journey by scrambling and sliding down the loose scree and rubble on the hillside, or if they can reach one of the fissures along the hillside, can clamber along those jagged surfaces instead. A character on the hillside treats it as greater difficult terrain, and must succeed at a DC 16 flat check at the end of a round to avoid taking

2d6 bludgeoning damage from trips and falls and shifting rubble along the way. A character in one of the narrow rifts can instead Climb along the route with a successful DC 25 Athletics check. Doing so avoids the danger of taking damage from a flat check, but a critical failure on the Athletics check indicates a fall deeper into the fissure (roll 1d6 and multiply the result by 10 to determine the depth in feet of the fissure at that particular location).

Characters who use other methods to reach areas **E2**, such as flight or teleportation, can bypass the peril of traversing the slope, but the swarms that infest the hillside (see Creatures below) notice any newcomers to arrive at area **E2** and surge downhill to join any battle there 1d4+2 rounds after combat begins at the ruins.

Creatures: Two swarms of smelly, fleshy masses of bhanyadas burst up from below to attack the PCs midway down the slope, burrowing up from the rubble to roll initiative with Stealth. A swarm fights until it's destroyed.

BHANYADA SWARMS (2)

CREATURE 11

Page 85

Initiative Stealth +22

E3. HILLSIDE RUIN

MODERATE 12

A tumble of stones surrounds a circular foundation of what must have once been a taller tower. The ruins are filled with tumbled stones, many marked with weathered runes.

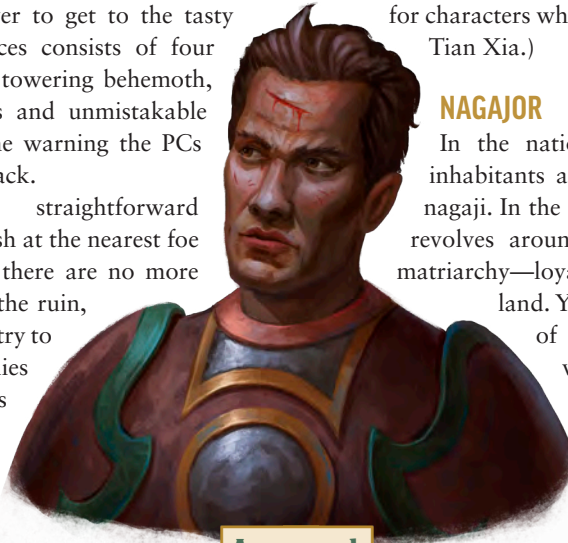
Arraseesh has been relying upon the tenuous security afforded by these ruins to hide from the bhanyadas that infest the surrounding terrain, but they know it's only a matter of time before the aberrations overwhelm their defensive position. After repelling the latest attack with a power afforded by *The Trumpet*, Arraseesh spent much of their time stacking stones over the bodies of their fallen soldiers, reasoning that the best use of the short time they might have left is to honor the sacrifice of the dead.

When the PCs arrive, Arraseesh draws their longsword but quickly realizes that the PCs aren't their aberrant enemies. Arraseesh speaks Taldane in addition to Vudrani and can thus communicate with the PCs more easily than Japulipel could. Arraseesh asks for aid in evacuating this site. They have already used *The Trumpet's* once-per-day activation. If asked where they found the card, Arraseesh says they found the card in their possession recently (at about the same time the PCs found their cards)—while they've used the card several times to their advantage, they've also

been haunted by a feeling that the card was not meant to be kept by them for long.

Creatures: Soon after the PCs meet with Arraseesh, a group of bhanyadas launch another attack on the ruins, more eager than ever to get to the tasty victims within. These forces consists of four scavengers chasing after a towering behemoth, whose earth-shaking steps and unmistakable odor of rot serve as all the warning the PCs need that they're under attack.

The bhanyadas are straightforward combatants who simply rush at the nearest foe and swipe at them. Once there are no more enemies within 30 feet of the ruin, they retreat to the ruin and try to hold it for their aberrant allies to arrive several minutes later. The bhanyadas fight until destroyed.



Arraseesh

ARRASEESH CREATURE 6

UNIQUE LG MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Nonbinary human captain of the guard

(Gamemastery Guide 234)

Initiative Perception +15

HP 95 (currently 15)

BHANYADA BEHEMOTH

CREATURE 12

Page 85

Initiative Perception +23

BHANYADA SCAVENGERS (4)

CREATURE 8

Page 84

Initiative Perception +17

Treasure: Arraseesh discovered a *marble elephant wondrous figurine* and a metal vial containing two doses of *greater healing potion* and a single dose of a *panacea* in the ruins. The vial containing the potions looks like intertwined serpents made of platinum with emerald eyes; the vial itself is worth 600 gp. Arraseesh intended to keep these treasures, but instead offers them and *The Trumpet* to the PCs as thanks for their timely rescue.

XP Award: Award the PCs 60 XP when they receive *The Trumpet* from Arraseesh. If Arraseesh survives and is reunited with their solders at the hilltop, award the PCs an additional 30 XP.

The Snakebite

When the PCs peer through the Arch of Tomes, they gaze into a 70-foot-wide jungle clearing in a dense, tropical jungle. A character who studies the plant life

visible can attempt a DC 30 Nature check to identify the species as being common to the southern reaches of the Tian Xia, and that the region is likely in the nation of Nagajor in Tian Xia. (Reduce this DC to 15 for characters who are from or are familiar with Tian Xia.)

NAGAJOR

In the nation of Nagajor, the primary inhabitants are reptilian humanoids called nagaji. In the nation's urban centers, society revolves around servitude to the ophidian matriarchy—loyalty to the nagas who rule the land. Yet beyond the cities and towns of the nation, vast reaches of wilderness sprawl where other organizations hold sway.

One such group is the Scaleseed Order—a group who works to protect nature from undead and other unnatural creatures. One isolated group of Scaleseeds, caught on the side of a volcanic range covered in dense jungles, learned that a vampiric threat named Kannijo has been feeding on the essence of those who lived in the region. The Scaleseeds quickly learned they lacked the skill to face Kannijo, and when their attempt to destroy the vampire succeeded only in drawing his attention, they began to despair. With their resources already depleted, the Scaleseeds regrouped in a jungle clearing where they decided upon a desperate gamble. Hoping that Kannijo had the same revulsion of rice that many of his vampiric ilk possess, the Scaleseeds have raised a ring of rice plants around their clearing, hoping to instill protective enchantments into it before Kannijo arrives to destroy them.

Kannijo is not a vampiric nagaji, as the Scaleseeds expected, but an undead spirit naga—a true abomination to their nation's fundamental traditions. Kannijo has been a jiang-shi vampire for longer than any of his neighbors on the mountain realize, feeding slowly on hermits and travelers no one would miss over the past several years. Kannijo is only a single victim away from consuming qi from a thousand victims, and as such is nearly ready to ascend to a more powerful type of vampire. When *The Snakebite* came into his possession, Kannijo took it as a sign to finally complete his ascension, even if it meant abandoning the subtlety that had kept him safe so far. He has thus begun the killing spree that has terrified the dwellers in the mountainous jungle (and, thus, the Scaleseeds).



MEETING THE SCALESEEDS

When the PCs step through the portal from the Harrow Court, they emerge into the southern side of a clearing within a sweltering jungle on the side of a vast mountain range (at area **F1**). On the opposite side of the clearing (near area **F2**), a group of five figures work diligently at siphoning magic into a handful of seeds to grow the last of a ring of rice plants that surrounds the clearing.

These five figures are the last of this band of Scaleseeds who remain. As night draws near (time this encounter so that sunset isn't far off), the Scaleseeds fear that their defenses won't last—if they can just make it through the night, they can retreat to safety and report to their superiors that Kannijo is a greater and more powerful threat than any of them feared. The fact that Kannijo is an undead naga shames and horrifies the nagaji, but they're also astounded by the magical power the vampire controls—including the strange card affixed to her head in place of the warped fulu that most jiang-shi possess.

As they complete the last of their rites to grow a rice plant in the last spot surrounding the clearing (using a variant form of the *plant growth* ritual altered to focus on a smaller scale than normal), the five Scaleseeds are unlikely to notice the PCs' arrival, but once the PCs make themselves known, the nagaji cry out in shock and assume defensive positions. As with many

other people the PCs have encountered, these nagaji do not speak Taldane, but if communication can be established, the Scaleseeds relax quite a bit. If the PCs can't establish communication, the nagaji do their best to communicate to the PCs (perhaps even by drawing pictures in the soil) that, come nightfall, a vampiric undead monster will be attacking, and that the PCs should prepare.

If the PCs can establish communication with the nagaji, the Scaleseeds visibly relax but remain vigilant and worried. They can explain what they've been doing, and that they hope to hold out for the night here in a ring of rice plants they hope will keep their foe at bay, and invite the PCs to stay with them.

"You should stay with us for protection, for once the sun sets, Kannijo hunts. We have come here to face Kannijo, to learn about him, yes, but hopefully to defeat him. Few live in this place, but we heard they had trouble, so we came to help. But what feeds nightly upon them is more than we were prepared for. Kannijo is beyond an atrocity. We had feared he was one of us, but spurned by death to feast upon the breath of the living, but we had no idea he was once one of our glorious leaders—a naga. We must report to our leaders of this development, but such a journey can't be made before nightfall. Please, help us to survive the night, and your place in the world beyond would surely grow the grander for your aid!"

A character who succeeds at a DC 25 Religion or Vampire Lore check to Recall Knowledge (or any character who has at least master proficiency in Religion) knows that rice is often viewed with revulsion by vampires, but that the minions they often employ do not share these weaknesses. If the PCs point this out, the nagaji forlornly note that Kannijo commands the inner violence of plants themselves, and they worry that his carnivorous plant minions may well be just the tool the vampire needs to bypass their defenses.

The Scaleseeds push back against any offers the PCs have to whisk them away to safety, noting that if they can learn more about Kannijo's power and weaknesses, they'll be able to bring greater forces against the vampire in the future. Yet it should be obvious to the PCs that the Scaleseeds are tempted by an offer for a quick escape. Before talk of escape goes too far, though, one of the Scaleseeds should mention to the PC that beyond being a jiang-shi naga, Kannijo's warped fulu is of a type they have never before encountered. They'll describe this "fulu" as being a stiff square of paper depicting a humanoid figure armed with green poison. If any of the Scaleseeds notes any Harrow cards the PCs carry, or if the PCs ask about

The Snakebite itself, the nagaji offer this information about the strange “fulu” in response. Make sure the PCs know that Kannijo possesses *The Snakebite* before they decide to simply abandon the area!

The Scaleseeds share two important pieces of information beyond the fact that the vampire is repulsed by rice. First, they tell the PCs that if they keep their mouth and nose covered and hold their breath, Kannijo will have difficulty spotting them unless he’s right next to them. Second, and perhaps more importantly, they explain that if he is destroyed, he won’t stay down—unless a significant amount (1 Bulk) of glutinous rice is scattered over his body, he’ll rise again within a minute of his destruction. The Scaleseeds have 4 Bulk of rice handy, fortunately, and any PC willing to carry 1 Bulk of the rice to be ready to finish Kannijo off is more than welcome to it.

With only a few hours before sundown, the Scaleseeds are eager to get back to the final act of performing their adjusted *plant growth* ritual, and invite the PCs to aid them. Even if the PCs don’t know *plant growth*, if they agree to aid, they can potentially make the ward function even better by undertaking the Aid Rice Ritual activity. Doing so builds up Rice Ritual Points that determine the strength of the ritual—the PCs begin with 1 Rice Ritual Point from the Scaleseeds’ effort, and can increase (or potentially decrease) this total by undertaking the following activity. Regardless of how many PCs take part, the rice ritual cannot have more than 7 Rice Ritual Points.

AID RICE RITUAL

CONCENTRATE | EXPLORATION

A character spends the last few hours before sundown aiding the Scaleseeds in preparing the ring of rice plants by attempting a DC 23 Farming Lore or Survival check, a DC 28 Nature check, or a DC 30 Religion check.

Critical Success The PCs gain 2 Rice Ritual Points.

Success The PCs gain 1 Rice Ritual Point.

Critical Failure The PCs lose 1 Rice Ritual Point.

SCALESEED NAGAJI (5)

CREATURE 7

RARE | N | MEDIUM | HUMANOID | NAGAJI

Nagaji naturalists (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 182)

Perception +15; low-light vision

Languages Draconic, Sylvan, Tien

Skills Nature +17, Religion +15, Survival +15

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

Items leather armor, +1 sickle

AC 23; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +13, **Will** +17

HP 115; **Resistances** poison 5

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ sickle +16 (agile, finesse, magical, trip), **Damage** 1d4+4 slashing

Primal Prepared Spells DC 25, attack +17; **4th** heal, speak with plants*; **3rd** dispel magic, heal, lightning bolt*; **2nd** acid arrow*, entangle*, restoration; **1st** heal, longstrider*, shocking grasp*; **Cantrips (4th)** disrupt undead, electric arc, know direction, light, read aura. * Indicates a spell that was previously cast earlier in the day.

Rituals DC 25; plant growth, reincarnate (*Advanced Player’s Guide* 242)

Slough Toxins ♦ As nagaji.



Scaleseed Nagaji

VAMPIRE SIEGE

Creatures: Kannijo isn't the only danger about to arrive, for as the Scaleseeds may have warned the PCs, the jiang-shi enjoys the servitude of dangerous plants. The undead spirit naga already knows where the Scaleseeds have made their desperate defense, for the presence of the rice plants within his domain create an impossible-to-miss mental beacon—a beacon he can home in on when teleporting. He arrives via that spell in the region within a few minutes of sundown, along with four giant flytraps that serve him without question. The sudden stillness of the early evening animal sounds in the region is the only warning the PCs get before Kannijo begins his siege.

Rice Ritual Effects

Fortunately for the PCs, the rice ritual does afford them protection from Kannijo—but unfortunately, the rice gives them no protection from the four giant flytraps that the vampire brought with him when he teleported into the area. The exact effect on Kannijo depends on how many Rice Ritual Points the PCs currently have.

4+ Rice Ritual Points: Kannijo is slowed 2 when he first enters the clearing. As long as Kannijo is within the clearing, he takes the effects of the weak adjustments detailed on page 6 of the *Pathfinder Bestiary*. He also feels revulsion from living rice plants, and at the start of his first turn, he must attempt a Will save against his bitter epiphany vulnerability (*Pathfinder Book of the Dead* 157).

1 to 3 Rice Ritual Points: Kannijo is slowed 1 when he first enters the clearing. A character can Interact with a living rice plant to brandish the plant and trigger his revulsion, but Kannijo can approach such a plant without penalty if it is not being brandished.

0 Rice Ritual Points: Kannijo suffers no penalties from the rice ritual.

First Wave

The assault on the clearing begins as Kannijo sends three giant flytraps into the clearing. The plants use Stealth for initiative, then enter the clearing at the three points marked **F3** on the map. A giant flytrap can destroy an adjacent rice plant by taking a single Interact action. Every two rice plants destroyed lowers the rice ritual's effectiveness by 1 Rice Ritual Point (thus, even if the PCs have achieved the maximum of 7 Rice Ritual Points, if all 14 plants are destroyed, the ritual effect ends). Since a giant flytrap fills a 15-foot space, on this first round each plant takes 1 action to move into a position where it is adjacent to two rice plants, then takes 2 Interact actions to destroy those

SEVERE 12

two plants. After this, a giant flytrap moves to the next closest plant and destroys it, then moves to the next one so that it's ready on the round following to destroy that plant.

Left unopposed, the giant flytraps can destroy the rice plants swiftly, but by attacking a plant, the PCs can distract them. If a flytrap takes damage from a creature within 15 feet, it automatically uses one of its actions that round to attempt a leaf Strike against that creature. If a flytrap is reduced to fewer than 80 Hit Points, it focuses entirely on PCs and no longer attempts to destroy rice plants.

A character who is adjacent to a rice plant can use a reaction to defend the plant when a giant flytrap takes an action to destroy it—in this case, the giant flytrap makes a leaf Strike against that character instead of destroying the rice plant.

The giant flytraps fight until slain.

GIANT FLYTRAPS (3)

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 160

Initiative Stealth +24

Second Wave

Kannijo prefers to wait until the rice ritual is completely ruined before moving in to attack, but if the PCs manage to defeat all three of his giant flytraps, the vampire grows frustrated and enters the clearing to attack, using *dimension door* to appear in the middle of the clearing. The horrific vampire appears as a pale spirit naga with milky white eyes and shreds of unshed skin hanging from his coils. When Kannijo moves, it is not with a serpent's sinuous grace, but with a series of awkward thrashing heaves and flops. Affixed to his brow is *The Snakebite*.

As he appears, Kannijo hisses out the following threat to the PCs.

"Nine hundred and ninety-nine breaths I have stolen. I have received this sign that my ascension is at hand. Who among you shall feed me your breath, this precious final gasp I require?"

Creatures: Kannijo's primary goal in this combat is to steal the breath of any living target by using Drain Qi. If he manages to kill a creature with Drain Qi, he immediately ascends in power to that of a jiang-shi minister (*Book of the Dead* 158). He'll focus this attempt on one of the Scaleseeds, knowing these nagaji are weaker than the player characters, but if the PCs intervene he's more than willing to shift his focus to one of them. Kannijo works to capture at least one of the characters (be it PC or Scaleseed) alive, but he

has no issue about slaying the rest. Any surviving giant flytraps continue to attack PCs, of course.

Kannijo fights until destroyed, at which point any surviving Scaleseed warns the PCs that the vampire will rise again very soon unless his body is sprinkled with at least 1 Bulk of glutinous rice. If he does rise again, Kannijo flees the mountain—whether he'll track down the PCs later in the adventure to seek revenge is left to you to determine, but in this event, *The Snakebite* falls from his brow before he flees.

KANNIJO

CREATURE 13

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM UNDEAD VAMPIRE

Male spirit naga jiangi-shi vampire (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 179, *Pathfinder Book of the Dead* 156)

Perception +23; breathsense (precise) 60 feet, darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Nocril, Tien

Skills Acrobatics +23, Athletics +23, Deception +25, Intimidation +25, Nature +23, Occultism +25, Stealth +25

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +3, **Int** +4, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +6

Breathsense 60 feet (precise). As jiang-shi.

Items *The Snakebite*

AC 34; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +25, **Will** +23

HP 180, fast healing 10, negative healing, one more breath;

Immunities death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, prone, sleep; **Resistances** physical 10 (except darkwood)

Jiang-Shi Vulnerabilities As jiang-shi.

One More Breath (divine, necromancy, negative) As jiang-shi.

Harrowed Fulu Unlike the typical jiang-shi, Kannijo's warped fulu has been replaced by a card from the *Deck of Destiny*—a replacement that has largely gone unnoticed by the vampire. Kannijo is immune to spells cast from a magic item without expending a spell slot, such as from a scroll or wand, and also gains the passive abilities granted from *The Snakebite* (but not its activation ability). A creature can Steal *The Snakebite* to remove it (DC 33). This immediately ends Kannijo's immunity to these effects, negates the card's passive effects, and removes Kannijo's fast healing. Kannijo can no longer use *The Snakebite* as its fulu, but can create a replacement warped fulu by spending 1 uninterrupted hour inscribing a strip of paper (or similar) with a writing instrument.

Speed 15 feet, swim 15 feet; rigor mortis

Melee ♦ fangs +26 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 3d10+10 piercing plus Grab and spirit naga venom

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 33, attack +25; **7th** (3 slots) *crushing despair*, *paralyze*, *phantom pain*; **6th** (4 slots) *dispel magic*, *phantasmal calamity*, *teleport*, *spirit*

blast; **5th** (4 slots) *black tentacles*, *dimension door*, *subconscious suggestion*, *synesthesia*; **4th** (4 slots) *clairvoyance*, *confusion*, *fly*, *modify memory*; **3rd** (4 slots) *clairaudience*, *dream message*, *mind reading*, *vampiric touch*; **2nd** (4 slots) *blur*, *humanoid form*, *mirror image*, *telekinetic maneuver*; **1st** (4 slots) *charm*, *command*, *grim tendrils*, *unseen servant*; **Cantrips (7th)** *daze*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *read aura*, *sigil*

Rituals DC 33; *inveigle*

Drain Qi ♦ (divine, necromancy) **Requirements** A grabbed, paralyzed, restrained, unconscious, or willing creature is within Kannijo's reach; **Effect** As jiang-shi.

Manipulate the Green Kannijo can use *inveigle* against plant creatures normally immune to mental effects, and can communicate with inveigled plant creatures as if under the effects of *speak with plants*.

Rigor Mortis As jiang-shi.

Spirit Naga Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 33 (34 against flat-footed targets); **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 2d6 poison damage and stupefied 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 3d6 poison damage and stupefied 2 (1 round)





Treasure: The Scaleseeds are grateful for the aid the PCs provided. If Kannijo was destroyed, the Scaleseeds thank them profusely and reward them with one of their greatest treasures—a *runestone* etched with a *fortification* armor rune. They also offer to teach the PCs either of the rituals they know before bidding their farewells and making their way back home to report the good news to their leaders.

XP Award: When the PCs recover *The Snakebite*, award them 60 XP. Award them an additional 30 XP if at least half of the Scaleseeds survive the night.

The Silent Hag

When the PCs peer through the Arch of Stars, they look out across a landscape of grassy, rolling hills, dotted here and there with copses of trees. An ancient road, its paving stones nearly overgrown with grass, winds off into the distance from the base of the portal's view. A character who studies terrain can attempt a DC 35 Hills Lore check to identify the region as likely being part of the land of Iobaria. (Reduce this DC to 25 for characters who are from or are familiar with Iobaria.)

IOBARIA

Places with strange connections to the Harrow exist all over the world, and one of these is an old carving depicting the Silent Hag deep in the wilds of Iobaria. *The Silent Hag* from the *Deck of Destiny* was drawn to this ancient monument and now rests within it. The Arch of Stars doesn't place the PCs as near to *The Silent Hag* as it does to other *Deck of Destiny* cards; a part of the Silent Hag's traditions include treacherous

secrets that must be discovered through insight, often involving strife.

The PCs step out of the portal into an area of hills covered with scrub and short grasses poking up between patches of earth laced with the remnants of past snowstorms. The PCs are in Iobaria, a rugged and untamed land east of the Inner Sea region. They are close to the eastern border of Brevoy, the nation that claims the plains to the west of the hills. The ancient road that leads east, away from Brevoy, is a remnant of the cyclops empire that once held sway over these lands. If the PCs look to the west, they'll see that they've appeared at the end of the road: no trace of it continuing further west remains apparent today.

G1. STONE TEETH PLAINS

TRIVIAL 12

This marks the point at which the PCs first appear in Iobaria after stepping through the Arch of Stars. Whether the PCs begin to travel in any direction or remain in the same area, they find themselves with company within about ten minutes. Plumes of dust indicate the approach of horses; a character who succeeds on a DC 25 Perception check notes that the six creatures approaching are centaurs (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 60), not horses—although this becomes obvious once the centaurs reach the PCs.

Creatures: Unlike the centaurs who dwell closer to Brevoy (who have an unfortunately violent history with humanity), these centaurs are more curious than hostile upon encountering the PCs. They approach with friendly caution, calling out to the PCs first in Sylvan, and then in Elven (the only two languages

these centaurs speak). If the PCs attack, the centaurs break off contact and flee. If communication can't be established, the centaurs speak quietly among themselves before retreating; they continue to observe the PCs from afar for a while but eventually lose interest. Without speaking to the centaurs, the PCs are on their own here—the road does point them in the right direction though!

The centaurs' leader, **Rohrry Gray-Eyes** (N female elite centaur), is stocky and short, with bright orange hair in a braided coil on the top of her head. She wears a breastplate covered with a repeating pattern of interwoven vines. Rohrry does her best to keep the encounter civil while she determines who is in charge of the party, addressing the perceived party leader with both firmness and respect when she tells them they are in the home of the Stone Teeth. She notes that the Stone Teeth have long protected and cared for these lands before asking what business the PCs have in their territory.

Rohrry has a starting attitude of indifferent and is quite curious to find out what the PCs have to say. Her Will DC is normally 21, but intruders make her uneasy, so the PCs' efforts at Diplomacy (or other interaction skills) use a Will DC of 26 instead. If the PCs insist that their stay is short or that they can sustain themselves during their stay, their Diplomacy checks to sway Rohrry's attitude gain a +1 circumstance bonus. If Rohrry's attitude becomes friendly, she answers the PCs' questions to the best of her ability. Possible questions and Rohrry's answers are as follows.

Do you have a harrow card? "I have no idea what that is."

Are there any magical areas or sites of interest around here? "There's the Maw of Karth, further east along the road. The Maw is a stone gate carved to look like a cyclops face. The road passes through its mouth on its route further east toward Finadar Forest. I'm told that the road ends at a place watched over by a great stone hag, but that's much further east than I've ever cared to go. The Maw draws many folk, including giants and trolls, so you'd best be careful if you travel there."

How far away is the Maw of Karth? Rohrry gives the PCs an accurate distance and direction, noting that the surest way to reach the Maw is to follow the ancient road.

Will you guide us there? Rohrry pauses and thinks, sizing up the PCs. "We have duties that don't lie that direction, but we can lead you to within sight of the

WHERE TO GO?

Unlike the other encounter locations in this part, the Arch of Stars does not place the PCs conveniently close to *The Silent Hag*. If the PCs don't follow the road toward area **G3** or don't speak to the centaurs at area **G1** and instead head off in other directions, feel free to have them encounter dangerous local monsters now and then (such as packs of chimeras or bulettes, goliath spiders, mammoths, or even a great cyclops), but when they sleep for the night, each PC has a compelling dream of following an ancient road toward the rising sun—a clue that their goal lies at the end of the old pathway. If they've wandered far astray, the easiest way to return to the road, is to return to the Harrow Court and step through the Arch of Stars again to return to area **G1**. You can even have the PCs automatically wake up back in the Harrow Court after this dream to ensure that they get the point.

Maw. Such service would require payment." Rohrry accepts any form of payment worth at least 50 gp to lead the PCs within sight of the Maw of Karth.

Is there a town or city near here? "If you are looking for a human settlement, no. The nation of Brevoy lies many days' travel west, and the few humanoid settlements you'll find closer by aren't likely to be friendly, nor to have much by way of gear or comfort for you. This is an old land, but it is also an empty one."



Rohrry Gray-Eyes

ROHRRY GRAY-EYES CREATURE 4

UNIQUE N LARGE BEAST

Female elite centaur (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 60)

Initiative Perception +11

CENTAURS (5) CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 60

Initiative Perception +9

XP Award: Grant the PCs 30 XP if they establish communication with the centaurs.

G2. MAW OF KARTH

MODERATE 12

A massive cyclops head looms over the ancient road, built up between two low hills. Rather than block the road's passage between the hills, the cyclops' yawning mouth forms a short tunnel through the carving, so that those who travel

the road are symbolically swallowed by the great one-eyed visage. Worn inscriptions encircle the carving's bulging eye.

Though difficult to discern due to their great age, the inscriptions, written in Cyclops, repeat the following: "I am the Maw of Karth. I speak to his strength and wisdom. I am a place sacred and terrible, of magic and of power. Here begins your journey."

Creatures: As the PCs approach, they automatically hear the sound of deep chanting coming from somewhere beyond the head. This chanting comes from two taiga giant sisters who are deep in meditation on the far side of the Maw of Karth. The giants, Erska and Yeska, have recently journeyed for days from the Ice Steppes on the northern edge of Iobaria on a pilgrimage to this ancient place, believing that it can help them attune to deep primal magic and assist them in recovering lost knowledge.

Although being interrupted at their meditations means they start with an unfriendly attitude toward the PCs, they don't relish getting into a fight, because entering combat disrupts their days-long meditative ritual and would require them to start it over again. The giants therefore engage in discussion with the PCs reluctantly if the PCs want to talk (provided the PCs speak Jotun or Sylvan, the only two languages the giants know), and give the distinct impression that they don't have a lot of patience for "wee folk." Erska observes to her sister that the fastest way to get rid of annoying strangers is simply to knock them unconscious, but Yeska tends to be a bit more reasonable in this regard.

The giants don't have *The Silent Hag*, nor do they know what the harrow is. However, if the characters describe what the card looks like, Yeska tells them that they passed a hill that had a similar image carved into it. The hill lies about a day's journey further along the road toward Finadar Forest.

If all else fails, the characters can also simply start walking northwest along the ancient roadway. They'll spot the hillside carving in area **F3** on their own.

In the event a fight breaks out despite the giants' reluctance, they first call upon their ancestral guardians and fight with their longswords. They flee the area around the Maw if both are reduced to fewer than 100 Hit Points.

TAIGA GIANTS (2)

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 126

Initiative Perception +23

Treasure: If the PCs fought the giants, the packs they've left behind contain food, some unusual relics

CREATURE 12

like carved bones, and a hide map showing interesting landmarks between the Ice Steppes and the Maw of Karth. One of these landmarks is a sketch of a hill that bears an appearance similar to that of the Silent Hag.

Remains of an older camp (from creatures much smaller than the giants) atop the northern hill that abuts the Maw contains some torn backpacks, spoiled food, and an intact *greater knapsack of halflingkind*. If the PCs don't specifically head up the hill to investigate, allow the characters a DC 35 Perception check to notice the old camp atop the hill as someone glances backward after leaving the area. The taiga giants consider this campsite unlucky and don't want anything to do with anything the PCs might find there.

XP Award: If the PCs get the information from the taiga giants without a fight, award them 80 XP as though they'd defeated the taiga giants in combat.

G3. CARVED HAG

While not nearly as obvious or massive as the Maw of Karth, the hillside into which the visage of the Silent Hag has been carved is easy to see once the party draws near.

A steep, bare hillside that at first seems to evince odd patterns of erosion reveals itself upon closer observation to have been carved to resemble a long, narrow face. Two small, shallow caves look out over the ancient road partway up the carved hillside, resembling nothing so much as empty eye sockets above a narrow spur of rock that evokes imagery of an almost beak-like nose. What appears to be a third cave sits near the ground, yet this stalactite- and stalagmite-adorned opening seems to have been blocked from within by an immense round boulder carved to resemble an eye.

The carving should be immediately recognizable to anyone familiar with the harrow as closely resembling a classic representation of *The Silent Hag*—others can recognize this connection with a successful DC 25 Occultism check. The site itself is quite ancient; while its builders are lost to the mysteries of time, their influence ensures that the hillside never becomes overgrown with foliage.

The face itself is 50 feet high. The two eye socket caves are empty, but an examination of the lower entrance confirms that it is indeed a cave that has been blocked from within by the round, carved boulder. A character can Interact with the 5-foot-diameter eye to rotate it a few feet within its mouth "socket," but the eye will only allow itself to be rotated enough so it appears to be looking in a slightly different direction before it quickly self-corrects to shift back to its neutral position, staring straight ahead.

Up close, the stalactites and stalagmites that decorate the lower cave are clearly carvings, not natural formations, meant to evoke the Silent Hag's sharp teeth. A player character who examines these teeth and makes a DC 30 Perception check notes faint traces of dried blood around the edges of some of the teeth where the stone presses to the eye just within.

If the PCs don't hit upon this themselves, a character who ruminates on the nature of the Silent Hag and succeeds at a DC 20 Harrow Lore check, a DC 25 Fortune-Telling Lore check, or a DC 30 Occultism check recalls that the Silent Hag is often invoked when forging blood pacts involving secrets. If a character anoints any of the "teeth" with fresh blood (requiring at least 1 point of slashing or piercing damage to the donor), the blood quickly seems to spread across the eye, giving it a glistening bloodshot appearance for 1 minute. During this time, any attempt to rotate the eye finds that the eye moves smoothly and freely. Rotating it upward, so that they eye's pupil slides beyond the upper lip of the cave, reveals a small hollow within the boulder—a hidden cache that once served the long-lost creators of the eye but has gone neglected for eons (see *Treasure* below).

A character can attempt to force the eye to rotate into this position without a blood offering, but doing so requires a successful DC 40 Athletics check. Alternatively, if the eye is destroyed (Hardness 20, HP 100) the hidden cache is revealed as well.

Treasure: In addition to *The Silent Hag*, the niche exposed by rotating the eye contains a stone coffer that holds 13 eye-shaped gemstones. Of these stones, a dozen are worth 50 gp each, while the thirteenth is an *eye of apprehension* talisman.

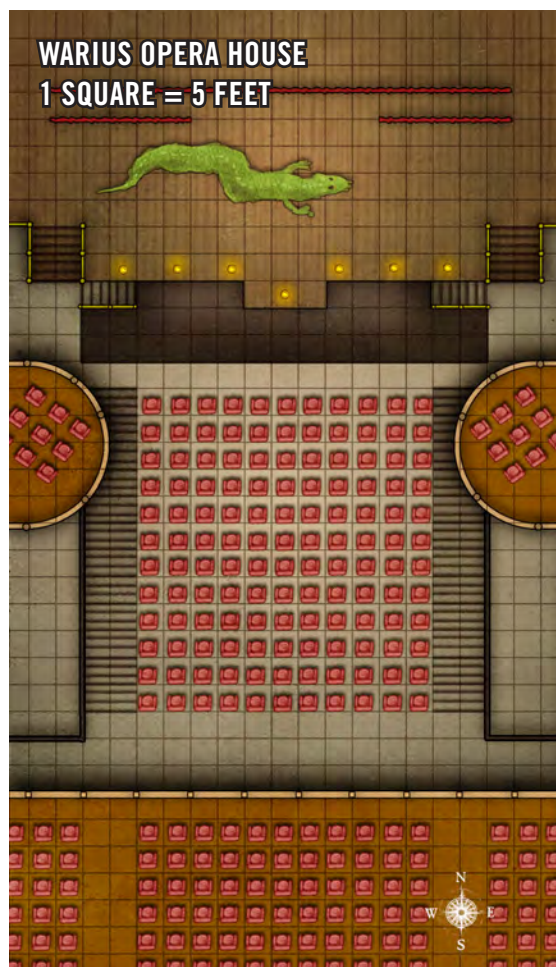
XP Award: Once the characters recover *The Silent Hag*, award them 60 XP.

The Theater

When the PCs peer through the Arch of Crowns, they see what appears to be a partially constructed balcony seating area with billowing red and black curtains, which obscure the view of the main theater beyond. A PC who studies the area, including the style of furnishings and the embroidery on the curtains, can attempt a DC 20 Performance check or a DC 25 Religion or Society check to confirm that the VIP box the portal opens into must be located within one of the many high-class opera houses in the nation of Cheliox.

WARIUS OPERA HOUSE

As soon as the PCs step through the portal, they'll hear the telltale murmuring of a large crowd just beyond the curtains. The portal deposits the PCs in



the western (and currently vacant) upper VIP box of the Warius Opera House in Cheliox's capital city of Egorian. Regardless of the time of day the PCs make this trip, they arrive in the middle of the venue's latest show—an opera called *Linnorm's Lost Legacy* that presents a revisionist history of how the first linnorm slain in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings was, in truth, slaughtered by an ancient ancestor of House Thrune (thus implying that the whole of this northern nation should belong to Cheliox).

While the VIP box the PCs have arrived in is vacant, the main floor of the opera house is packed—the only reason the VIP box the PCs step into is empty is because it's the site of a recent assassination, and has been closed for the time being out of respect to the minor nobleman who met his fate here only a few days prior. As soon as the PCs arrive, the tumultuous swell of an orchestra in full swing along with the sound of opera sung in Infernal becomes unmistakable. No one notices if the PCs open the curtains, for all eyes are on the group of magnificently clad adventurers onstage in a singing duel against an immense linnorm. The beast

The Choosing

Chapter 1:
Luck of the Draw

Chapter 2:
Scattered Stories

Chapter 3:
Queen of the Storval Stairs

The Harrow Court

Adventure Toolbox

MISSING CARDS

The Choosing assumes the PCs recover all six cards in this part of the adventure, but in some situations, they may miss a card. In such a case, the easiest solution is to assume that far-flung agents of the Prince of Wolves tracked down any cards the PCs missed during this part, and then allow them to recover those cards during Chapter 1 of the next adventure. Alternately, you could allow the PCs to use the Six Arches to return as often as needed to try to secure cards—a solution that affords you the opportunity to expand portions of this chapter into new encounters of your own design!

is crafted from a clever framework operated by several technicians, all obscured underneath the linnorm's deep green cloth exterior. Illusion spells further give the mechanical linnorm the appearance of life, but a DC 20 Perception check is enough for the PCs to note that it is but an elaborate special effect. The linnorm, as well as much of the stage scenery and the curtains that hang throughout the opera house, shimmers with a faint blue glow that gives the entire affair an appropriately chilly look reinforced by the fake snow that floats down from above and adorns the stage in periodic drifts.

A PC who makes a successful DC 20 Performance or Society check or appropriate Lore check recognizes the opera, recalling its notoriety outside of Chelax for its blatant attempt to appropriate the heritage of the Linnorm Kingdoms. The “hero” facing the linnorm is a fictional character, Alangus Thrune, who is presented by the play as an actual historical figure from Chelax who swept north to save the Ulfens from the notorious (also fictional) fire-breathing linnorm Bandraguzun. Regardless, the outrageous costuming of Alangus Thrune makes it difficult to look away.

At this point, have all the PCs attempt Perception checks. Whoever rolls highest notices something startling—Alangus Thrune's outfit incorporates among his unwieldy amount of “adventuring equipment” *The Theater* card, tucked into one of the many belt straps that adorn his leather armor.

The Firebrands' Debut: As long as the PCs remain in the VIP box and make no attempt to enter the theater itself or otherwise exit their balcony seating, the opera continues to play out, but as soon as the PCs are about to leave (or, at your discretion, as soon as feels dramatically appropriate), something monumental takes place. A masked, black-clad figure descends from the opera house's rigging, swinging

on ropes over the attendees to land upon the stage. She draws a flaming sword as she lands, then turns to face the crowd and cries out the following: “We, the Firebrands, proudly interrupt this program to bring you a dose of... liberation!” A moment later, with a swing of her sword, the Firebrand unleashes a blast of flame across the stage.

This whole thing is meant to be a distraction, for as the central Firebrand on stage does her thing, four more of the rebels quietly steal into the VIP box on the opposite side of the theater from the PCs in an attempt to abduct its important patron—a high-ranking officer in the Chelaxian navy, who the Firebrands hope will give them leverage over several atrocities currently playing out at the hands of the navy on the western coast of the nation.

But the fire quickly proves to be more effective than the Firebrands anticipated. Unknown to them, the method that the opera house's technicians used to give the decor the faint blue glow makes everything unusually flammable—not to mention all the material they used for the fake snow. What the Firebrands intended to be a showy blast of fire that would start a minor blaze onstage almost immediately explodes into a full-fledged inferno.

The crowd immediately panics, while the frightened actors onstage fall into a tangled heap of linnorm and limb. The Firebrands themselves, shocked by the sudden flames, abandon their attempt to abduct the naval officer and swiftly make their way down into the main hall to direct the crowds toward the exits to the south.

At this point, the PCs are free to act; have them and the Stage Fire all roll initiative to set things in motion. If a PC asks about the crowd below, it should be obvious that the fire is currently focused on the stage, and that the Firebrands' work to direct the panicked guests and orchestra members looks to be working well, even though the rebels are likely putting themselves in a position where they'll soon be arrested. On the stage, though, the fire is more intense, and Alangus Thrune's actor appears to be trapped by flames along with all of the technicians who were controlling the linnorm.

Flight and teleportation are swift routes to reach the stage, but barring these methods, a PC can grab one of the many ropes hanging from the opera's rigging to swing down to the stage from the VIP box.

SWING TO THE STAGE ♦♦♦

You find one of the hanging ropes from the opera house's rigging and swing onto the burning stage. Attempt a DC 30 Acrobatics check.

Critical Success You swing the distance with style and land anywhere on stage that you choose.

Success You swing down to the stage, landing anywhere adjacent to the fire that you choose, but take 4d6 fire damage in the process (DC 30 basic Reflex save).

Failure You swing down to the stage, landing in the square of fire that's closest to the point you swung from. You take 6d6 fire damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save).

Critical Failure Your grip on the rope slips, and you fall into the orchestra pit, taking 4d6 bludgeoning damage and 6d6 fire damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save). A DC 20 Athletics check allows you to clamber up from the orchestra pit onto the stage.

While *The Theater*, being an artifact, is in no danger of burning in the fire, and callous PCs can certainly wait for the actor to succumb to the flames before plucking it from his remains, kinder PCs won't want to leave the actors to die, and should take steps to fight the blaze. When the fire begins, there are six technicians trapped within the linnorm costume, while the panicked actor facing the linnorm cowers 10 feet to the east of the linnorm's head. All of these NPCs remain frozen in fear until directed to move by a visible character who achieves a DC 25 success with a Diplomacy or Intimidation check made as a single linguistic action, or until they are physically guided by a PC.

The actor and technicians alike are effectively immobilized with fear. Each is equivalent to a troubadour (*Gamemastery Guide* 237) if statistics are needed, but all lack the ability to cast spells.

Erupt in Flame When this encounter begins, the fire erupts in a ring that encircles the entire stage, as shown by the dotted outline on the map. The stage fire then rolls initiative.

Routine On its turn, the stage fire expands inward and outward by 5 feet, filling all adjacent squares with fire. Creatures within these squares take 4d6 fire damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save), as do any creatures that enter a burning square. This fire damage can be inflicted on a creature only once per turn.

In addition, a creature that ends its turn in a burning square takes 8d6 fire damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save); on a failed save, that creature also takes 1d6 persistent fire damage.

Ramifications: Neighborhood firefighting support from the immediate area responds relatively quickly, but if the PCs don't work to put out the fire themselves, much of the opera house is consumed in the blaze before the fire is contained. The fate of the overzealous Firebrands, as well as what might develop if Chelaxian officials encounter and confront the PCs, is beyond the scope of this adventure—strongly consider having the PCs automatically return to the Harrow Court as soon as they claim *The Theater* if they seem eager to remain on-site and you don't have additional encounters prepared.

XP Award: The PCs earn 20 XP for each endangered NPC among the actor and six technicians they rescue from the fire. If the PCs fully extinguish the fire, they earn an additional 20 XP. If the characters recover *The Theater*, award them 60 XP.

STAGE FIRE

HAZARD 12

UNCOMMON COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL FIRE

Stealth 0 (initiative modifier is +28)

Description Flames engulf the opera house's stage.

Disable Survival DC 27 to extinguish two adjacent squares of fire (with a critical success extinguishing four adjacent squares); any water spell (such as from *create water* or *hydraulic push*) cast at the fire extinguishes two squares automatically, or 2d4 adjacent squares if the caster of the spell achieves a DC 30 result with a spell attack roll; *quench* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 223) instantly extinguishes all fire within its 20-foot burst.



Burning Linnorm



Chapter 3: Queen of the Storval Stairs

Arodeth was raised from childhood to believe that she and the secret society whose leadership she inherited from her father—the Harbingers of Fate—could bring about Aroden’s return by ensuring the fulfillment of the prophecies from the *Book of 1,000 Whispers*. Her life since becoming the leader of the Harbingers has been an unending series of stinging losses, as time and time again, those prophecies didn’t come to pass—despite her agents’ best efforts. The Harbingers of Fate (along with the Band of Blades, the mercenary company who they often used as cover for their operations) grew increasingly worried as 4714 approached, for this year was supposedly when the last of the prophecies described in the *Book of 1,000 Whispers* would take place.

When the year passed without even a single prophecy coming true, Arodeth grew desperate for success. Even though the book’s implied timeline for the prophecies had already expired, she attempted no less a grandiose solution than to force fate back “on track” by attempting to manipulate time itself. Arodeth failed at this endeavor, too, and would’ve been destroyed but for the mercy of a group of heroes who rescued her from the brink of oblivion. This mercy might have saved her, but it also showed that her life had been a waste.

Thoroughly defeated, Arodeth disbanded the Harbingers of Fate and fell into leadership of the Band of Blades, leading them into self-imposed exile far from her homeland. The role of mercenary leader

wasn't anything near the vaunted position as head of a secret society dedicated to "set right the flow of fate," but Arodeth had no other options. She has struggled to keep the Band of Blades operating. Her inheritance ran out, money grew tight, and she was forced to take on more dangerous but lucrative opportunities.

Her most recent attempt to secure a source of income came from an ill-advised scheme to use the Band of Blades to hold the Storval Stairs, a massive flight of stairs that connect the Storval Plateau to the Varisian lowlands, 500 feet below to the west. The Storval Stairs were carved millennia ago, in the days of ancient Thassilon, and the numerous towering statues, lofty rooms, and hidden chambers along the stairs' length still carry that lost empire's grandeur and menace. The Shoanti people have protected these stairs for generations, but the Band of Blades ran them off and started collecting tolls from travelers. As the Storval Stairs is one of the only routes connecting Varisia to the Storval Plateau easily navigated on foot, the mercenaries found they could charge exorbitant fees—and simply murder the travelers who wouldn't pay what they demanded. The Band of Blades are finally making money again; their spirits are high, and they'll fight to defend their racket on the Storval Stairs.

Nevertheless, discontent within the Band of Blades lingers. Many of Arodeth's lieutenants are frustrated with her, but she has dealt with challengers looking to seize her power before. Many of these upstarts met their end at her hands. One of the potential challengers to her authority is Drustan, and Arodeth was only too eager to approve his recent request to pursue a "personal mission," figuring that she could take advantage of his absence to further cement her influence over the Blades that remain stationed at the Storval Stairs.

Even now her command is being subtly threatened by a creature under the guise of a gaunt banker from Garund named Ndede. Ndede presented himself to Arodeth as a capable financier, willing to invest in the Band of Blades because of his faith in their skills. Arodeth took his money and allowed him to join; to her surprise, the banker proved to be both handy in a fight and well-liked by his compatriots. Yet, Ndede has a secret; he isn't human at all, but a creature called a popobawa who feeds on despair. Ndede has taken Arodeth as his pet project, working hard to spiral her despondency and self-doubt into misery while magically charming the rest of her company so that he's welcome and trusted. Ndede has also positioned himself as caretaker of the company's wealth; once he has driven Arodeth to the edge of despair, Ndede intends to kill her, destroy all the funds, and thus drown the rest of the company in hopelessness as well.

Several cards from the *Deck of Destiny* have fallen into the hands of the Band of Blades. Arodeth received *The Rakshasa*, Ndede *The Liar*, and a stout mercenary captain named Endlo gained *The Publican*. None of them are really sure what the cards mean, although Arodeth wonders whether another opportunity to twist fate has fallen into her lap. She's looking for ways to control her own destiny again, and the PCs might be that opportunity. A fourth card, *The Locksmith*, is kept by one of the Shoanti who were forced out of the Storval Stairs. The remaining two cards (*The Fiend* and *The Mountain Man*) are destined to arrive at the Storval Stairs when Drustan returns to confront the Band of Blades—and by extension, the PCs themselves.

CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

The next batch of cards the Six Arches send the PCs after are located in Varisia. Here, Arodeth has headquartered the Band of Blades at the Storval Stairs and is extorting tolls from travelers. This puts her group in tension with the Shoanti people who usually protect the stairs and a gang of harpies who want to move in on the area. Just when the PCs manage to resolve these conflicts and meet with Arodeth, Lord Drustan launches his attack with a group of devil minions. If the PCs can overcome him, they gain the final cards that give them a third of the *Deck of Destiny*.

The Choosing

Chapter 1:
Luck of the Draw

Chapter 2:
Scattered Stories

Chapter 3:
Queen of the Storval Stairs

The Harrow Court

Adventure Toolbox

The Storval Stairs

Once the PCs have gathered the six initial cards revealed to them by the Harrow Court's Grand Hall (or have attempted to obtain them only to have some slip through their grasp), four of the arches refocus to the next location the PCs are fated to seek out—the Storval Stairs. The timing of this change should coincide with the PCs reaching 13th level as well, but consider giving them some time to rest, recover, and explore the Harrow Court before presenting them with this tantalizing new lead.

When the time is right, the Arch of Hammers and the Arch of Shields remain filled with mist, while the mist in the other four Arches (Keys, Tomes, Stars, and Crown) clears to present identical views—rolling grasslands that feature a magnificent view of an immense flight of stairs sized for giants ascending to the top of a 500-foot-high cliff. The stairs are flanked to either side by massive statues of an imperious bald man in robes clutching a book and a polearm. With a successful DC 20 Society or appropriate Lore check, a PC can recognize the location as the infamous Storval Stairs.

The Storval Stairs were constructed ages ago by enslaved giants during the days of ancient Thassilon, many centuries before Earthfall. When Karzoug, runelord of greed, became the region's ruler, he commanded that towering statues in his likeness be built along the stairs and had several nearby hidden chambers expanded to preserve magical secrets and lore. Everything here was constructed for use by giants, as well as smaller humanoids, and is lofty and imposing in scope. Due to powerful enchantments, the Storval Stairs and their associated chambers have resisted the decay of ages.

Today, the Storval Stairs serve as a vital trade route between the Varisian lowlands and the arid Storval Plateau. While many Shoanti who dwell in the region distrust visitors, those of the Shriikirri-Quah, the Hawk Clan, have traditionally been exceptions and serve as emissaries to the rest of the world. For centuries, the Shriikirri-Quah also guarded and maintained the Storval Stairs. While the Shriikirri-Quah have lost control of the stairs several times over the eons, these lapses have never lasted very long—even when the Storval Stairs' would-be conquerors were quite powerful. The stone giant wizard Mokmurian briefly

took command of the stairs just over a decade ago; more recently the hill giant Formoch, the self-styled "King of the Storval Stairs," tried as well.

Each time, it was never long before a group of adventurers arrived to help the Shriikirri-Quah take back the legendary site, and so while the latest loss to a group of mercenaries still stings, the leader of the local Shriikirri-Quah has faith that a new band of heroes will arrive soon—faith that has only been bolstered by the sudden manifestation among her gear of a card from the harrow: *The Locksmith*. Knowing this card represents the key to a new destiny, Shaldar Falls-Far eagerly awaits the next group of adventurers to arrive, knowing they'll be the "key" to longer lasting control over the Storval Stairs.



Shaldar Falls-Far

SHOANTI WELCOME

After the PCs step through the portal, regardless of which of the four active Arches they choose, they appear in the middle of a ring of hide shelters, almost as if they just stepped out of the large campfire that burns at the center of the camp. The campsite itself is occupied by a small group of Shoanti scouts led by Shaldar Falls-Far—most of their number have moved to more distant locations after losing control of the Storval Stairs, with Shaldar and her handpicked cohort remaining behind to watch and wait. They have a tenuous stalemate with the Band of Blades—as long as they don't approach the stairs, the mercenaries suffer the sight of their camp a few hundred feet to the west.

In addition to Shaldar, there are nine Shoanti scouts stationed at this camp. Shaldar has, for several weeks, done her best to keep morale up among her scouts, promising them that, just as before, adventurers will come and they shall be the "key" to victory. The PCs' arrival couldn't have come at a better time, for as they step out of the portal into view, Shaldar was losing an argument with her fellow scouts and was preparing to agree that it was time to abandon the camp for good.

As such, the scouts greet the PCs' arrival with a strange mix of relief and frustration. While they're glad to see proof of their leader's claims that adventurers would soon arrive, the fact that they had to wait this long can't be ignored. As such, the scouts quickly recover from the shock of the PCs' arrival to subside into what seems like sullen frustration, while Shaldar greets the PCs with open arms.

Shaldar's initial attitude is friendly, but as soon as she realizes the PCs possess other cards that match *The Locksmith*, she becomes helpful. Regardless, she invites the PCs to share a meal of stew and flatbread while they talk. She's eager to know why (and how) the PCs have come to the Storval Stairs, and as soon as Shaldar realizes they have ties to the harrow, she claps in delight and produces *The Locksmith* from a pouch. "I believe this is yours, then!" she says as she graciously hands the PCs the card. If the PCs ask how she came across the card, Shaldar admits she found among her belongings only a few days before she and her people were driven from the Storval Stairs by an evil group of mercenaries calling themselves the Band of Blades. She explains further how she believes the card serves as a sign of something greater and points to the fact that the PCs possessing more of these cards as all the justification she needs to give them *The Locksmith*.

Shaldar is eager to move on to the topic that really matters to her—dealing with the Band of Blades. She explains the value of the Storval Stairs and how the Shriikirri-Quah have traditionally guarded it from monsters (like giants and harpies) or brigands who would use it as a stronghold to extort travelers. The newest arrivals to seize control of the Storval Stairs, she explains, are a mercenary group called the Band of Blades. While most mercenaries wouldn't pose the Shoanti much of a problem, the Band of Blades is particularly powerful, as they work alongside giants and other creatures.

The Shoanti fled quickly when it became apparent that the Band of Blades outclassed them, but during that flight and in the weeks since spent spying from afar, they can tell the PCs that the Band of Blades consists of at least a dozen mercenaries and is allied with some powerful harpies and a stone giant. The mercenaries likely have other allies as well, she warns, lurking deeper in the underground chambers to the north or south of the stairs themselves.

Though Shaldar is frustrated that she and her scouts were so easily routed, she expresses gratitude for the PCs' arrival. She hopes the PCs can oust the bandits for the good of the Shoanti people and all those who travel the stairs in peace. She doesn't believe the mercenaries will listen to reason or depart peacefully, so a show of force—and certainly a show of force against their leader—might be the only way to get them to depart. Traditionally, Shoanti have avoided venturing far into the indoor, underground chambers of the Storval Stairs, less out of respect for Thassilon's legacy and more out of common sense—Shaldar warns the PCs that despite the stairs

being well traveled, some locations nearby likely hide dangerous hazards or guardians left over from Karzoug's time. She also informs the PCs that once they begin their assault on the Storval Stairs, she and her scouts intend to break camp and make their way back to the quah's heartlands in the plains to the southwest. Shaldar intends to report the latest development to her leaders, but she admits it will likely take several weeks before her people can send a more robust force back here. If the PCs can clear out the bandits by then, Shaldar is confident the Shriikirri-Quah will reward them well.

SHALDAR FALLS-FAR

CREATURE 6

UNIQUE NG MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Female human scout

Perception +13

Languages Common, Jotun, Shoanti

Skills Athletics +15, Nature +13, Stealth +13, Survival +11

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

Items composite longbow (20 arrows), moderate healing potions (2), hide armor, +1 longsword

AC 23; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +11, **Will** +13

HP 112

Attack of Opportunity ➤

Speed 20 feet

Melee ➤ longsword +15 (magical, versatile P), **Damage** 1d8+8 slashing

Ranged ➤ composite longbow +14 (deadly d10, propulsive, range increment 100 feet, reload 0, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 1d8+6 piercing

Hunt Prey ➤ (concentrate) Shaldar Falls-Far designates a single creature she can see and hear, or one that she's Tracking, as her prey. She gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to Seek the prey and to Survival checks to Track the prey. The first time she hits the designated prey in a round, she deals an additional 1d8 precision damage. She also ignores the penalty for making ranged attacks within her second range increment. These effects last until Shaldar Falls-Far uses Hunt Prey again.

Hunter's Aim ➤➤ (concentrate) Shaldar Falls-Far makes a ranged weapon Strike against her hunted prey. On this Strike, she gains a +2 circumstance bonus to the attack roll and ignores the prey's concealed condition.

SHOANTI SCOUTS (9)

CREATURE 3

Human trackers (*Gamemastery Guide* 219)

Initiative Perception +13

XP Award: If the PCs speak peacefully with the Shoanti, award them 30 XP. Grant them an additional 60 XP for gaining *The Locksmith*.

The Choosing

Chapter 1:
Luck of the
Draw

Chapter 2:
Scattered
Stories

Chapter 3:
Queen of
the Storval
Stairs

The Harrow
Court

Adventure
Toolbox

FEATHER TOKENS

All of the Band of Blades mercenaries carry a *bird feather token*. Beyond serving as a badge of membership, the mercenaries are expected to use these tokens to inform Arodeth of significant developments. While the tokens aren't that expensive to replace, over time, the mercenaries have grown hesitant to use them after one too many unjustified activations. As a result, a mercenary faced with the PCs won't immediately activate their token to send a warning to Arodeth, but if a combat lasts more than 1 round, one mercenary in the group does so. If the resulting sparrow makes its way to warn Arodeth (flying through narrow windows in ceilings if needed), she prepares for a confrontation.

STORVAL STAIRS FEATURES

While the Storval Stairs (areas **H1–H3**) are open to the air, the remaining areas are all indoors or underground, either built into the cliff itself or housed within side buildings. The exact approach the PCs take is left to them, as there are multiple entrances to these indoor areas, not all of which are accessible to each other. Many of these areas have potential entrances and exits in the form of high, narrow windows near the ceilings, in addition to the more traditional entrances via doors and passageways.

A character who scouts the Storval Stairs from the air might spot some of these narrow entrances—windows that allow light and airflow into the rooms below but aren't meant to serve as means of access. Areas **H9**, **H12**, **H13**, **H14**, and **H17** all feature narrow windows along rooftops protruding from the cliffside. A PC must succeed at a DC 30 Perception check to spot them from the outside. All of these windows are approximately halfway up the cliffside of the Storval Rise—an average distance of 250 feet above the ground below. A character who succeeds at a DC 25 Athletics check can scale the cliffside and the smooth walls of protruding structures, while entering through one of the one-foot-wide windows requires a Medium character to succeed at a DC 30 Acrobatics check to Squeeze through (or DC 20 for a Small character).

The entrances to areas **H9** and **H14** from area **H2** on the stairs themselves are obvious to anyone who observes the stairs from afar, as is the open colonnade providing access to area **H6**. The two towering statues of Karzoug that flank the lower stairs appear to be solid without any obvious openings, but an airborne character scouting the statues who succeeds at a DC

30 Perception check notes entrances at the nape of the neck that lead into areas **H4** and **H5**. A character at areas **H2** or **H3** or at a higher elevation can spot these obscured entrances from the ground by achieving a critical success at this Perception check.

Note that unless flying PCs take pains to be stealthy, any fly-over of the Storval Stairs is likely to attract the notice of those in areas **H1–H3** as well as the harpies who dwell in area **H5**. See those areas for the reactions the occupants might take in response to spotting adventurers flying around in the skies above the Storval Stairs.

Locations within the Storval Stairs are illuminated in a variety of ways—if no illumination is mentioned, assume the chamber is unlit. Ceiling heights are lofty unless noted otherwise, with most areas having a minimum of 20-foot-high ceilings and many having much higher ceilings. Doors are made of stone and, while quite oversized, are cunningly counterweighted so that they aren't difficult to open for Medium creatures.

The map of the indoor regions of the Storval Stairs appears on the inside back cover of this book, while an aerial view of the site appears on page 66.

H1. LOWER CHECKPOINT

MODERATE 13

The stairs descend a further 50 feet to the west beyond the border of the map down to the Varisian lowlands where Shoanti scouts led by Shaldar Falls-Far keep their campsite.

A row of boulders and a barricade of logs blocks the western end of this forty-foot-wide landing on the stairs. To either side, stone platforms look out over the landing below from a height of ten feet. Towering statues of the infamous runelord Karzoug loom just beyond these platforms, while the stairs themselves lead east, further upward to a larger landing.

The Band of Blades set up a blockade of boulders and timbers here to create a checkpoint for travelers seeking to use the stairs, taking tolls and then moving the wooden barricade between the boulders aside to allow passage. The toll for passage along the stairs is typically 50 gp per creature per one-way trip, up or down, but as detailed below, this charge can vary.

A character must succeed at a DC 20 Athletics check to climb up to the platforms to the north or south.

Creatures: The leader of this checkpoint team is a solid brute of a dwarf named Endlo Kiver. Endlo is a devout (if particularly cruel) follower of Gorum who likes to pick fights with anyone he thinks might be as strong as he is. He also has a habit of shouting rather than speaking most of the time, further enhancing

an already abrasive personality. Endlo has made an unlikely friend in Jargikka, a stone giant who has traveled the Storval Stairs many times and, rather than pay tribute to the mercenaries that now control it, offered to join them. Jargikka is smart enough to compliment Endlo's physique frequently, insisting (however falsely) that he's at least as strong as other stone giants she has known. For her part, Jargikka doesn't mind assuaging Endlo's ego to ensure she gets a cut of the band's profits. If the PCs claim to simply be seeking passage through the stairs, Endlo sizes them up and decides they look like folks who can pay the "premium" price of 200 gp per person—a tactic he uses now and then on particularly wealthy-looking groups. The tolls are placed in a nearby chest, the contents of which are transferred every evening to the group's treasury in area **H15**. When a group pays the toll, Jargikka moves the central barrier aside to allow passage before sliding it back in place.

Endlo recently had a strange card appear amid his possessions: *The Publican*. He doesn't know anything about the harrow or what the card might mean, but he's delighted by the card's alcohol-themed imagery. The image on the card looks nothing like him, but he's certain it's some sort of metaphysical self-portrait. He has made no secret of showing off his "surprising likeness" to everyone around. He has no idea that other magical cards have been found by two fellow Band of Blades members—and neither of them have been forthcoming about their discovery to him.

Endlo and Jargikka traditionally watch over this checkpoint during daylight hours, supported by four Band of Blades mercenaries (named Alucius, Grevery, Lodd, and Tamrin) who keep position in pairs on the platforms to the north and south. After dark, they all retreat to area **H14** to relax while a fresh quartet of Band of Blades mercenaries from area **H14** take up duty in their stead.

Endlo's initial attitude is hostile, but if he's made at least friendly, he'll agree to escort any who request an audience with his commander to Arodeth. A pair of mercenaries accompany him, and those they meet along the way (likely at area **H9** and **H12**) fall in step as well, so that upon reaching Arodeth in area **H13**, there will be quite a group at hand to fight back should things turn violent.

Endlo and Jargikka are quick to violence, especially if a group is disrespectful or attempts to bypass the barrier without paying the toll. This treatment extends to anyone they spot trying to fly above the barrier as well. Endlo prefers to fight up close in melee after casting *enlarge* on himself, while Jargikka prefers to

remain at a distance and fight with hurled rocks for as long as possible. The mercenaries on the platforms begin combat using their bows but effortlessly leap down to the platform to join in melee if more than two PCs make it past the blockade. The mercenaries fight to the death as long as Endlo is alive. Endlo and Jargikka retreat to area **H12** if either of them is brought below 30 Hit Points, ordering any surviving mercenaries to cover their retreat (which they do, but they panic and flee if brought below 20 Hit Points). Any fight that goes on for more than 3 rounds here also draws the attention of the harpies at area **H3**, who come to watch the fight but don't join unless they're attacked. The harpies in area **H5** might observe as well if the fight is particularly loud or flashy. If the PCs defeat Endlo and his allies, the harpies then swoop down to attack, hoping to pick off weakened adventurers.



Endlo Kiver

The Choosing

Chapter 1:
Luck of the Draw

Chapter 2:
Scattered Stories

Chapter 3:
Queen of the Storval Stairs

The Harrow Court

Adventure Toolbox

ENDLO KIVER

CREATURE 12

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Male dwarf zealot of Gorum

Perception +22; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven, Jotun

Skills Athletics +25, Intimidation +21, Performance +21, Religion +22, Survival +22

Str +5, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3

Items steel-colored *bird feather token*, +1 striking greatsword, +1 resilient *half plate*, *The Publican*, religious symbol of Gorum

AC 33; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +18, **Will** +23

HP 215; **Resistances** slashing 3

Juggernaut When Endlo rolls a success at a Fortitude save, he gets a critical success instead.

Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦♦ *greatsword* +26 (magical, versatile P), **Damage** 3d12+11 slashing

Divine Spontaneous Spells DC 30, attack +22; **6th** (3 slots) *heroism*, *weapon storm*, *zealous conviction*; **5th** (3 slots) *flame strike*, *harm*, *heal*; **4th** (3 slots) *air walk*, *dimensional anchor*, *enlarge*; **3rd** (3 slots) *chilling darkness*, *harm*, *remove disease*; **2nd** (3 slots) *death knell*, *resist energy*, *see invisibility*; **1st** (3 slots) *command*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *true strike*; **Cantrips (6th)** *chill touch*, *daze*, *message*, *sigil*, *stabilize*

Gorum's Hand Endlo deals an additional die of damage with greatswords (included in his Strike above), which also adds an additional die to his *weapon storm* spell.

Replenishment of War When Endlo damages a creature with a greatsword Strike, he gains 6 temporary Hit Points until the start of his next turn. If the Strike was a critical hit, he instead gains 12 temporary Hit Points.

Resolute Stance ♦♦ (stance) Endlo draws upon the might of stone to bolster his defenses. While in this stance, he gains a +2 status bonus to his AC and increases his resistance to slashing damage to 15, but he reduces his Speeds by 5 feet.

JARGIKKA

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE NE LARGE EARTH GIANT HUMANOID

Female elite stone giant mercenary (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 170)

Initiative Perception +18

BLADE MERCENARIES (4)

CREATURE 9

UNCOMMON NE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Human mercenaries

Perception +15

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +17, Athletics +20, Intimidation +16, Stealth +17, Survival +17

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

Items steel-colored *bird feather token*, +1 chainmail, +1 composite longbow (20 arrows), +1 striking longsword, signal whistle, steel shield (Hardness 5, 20 HP, BT 10)

AC 27; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +15, **Will** +17

HP 165

Bravery When the mercenary rolls a successful Will save against a fear effect, they get a critical success instead. When the mercenary gains the frightened condition, reduce its value by 1.

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Shield Block ↻

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦♦ *longsword* +19 (magical, versatile P), **Damage** 2d8+9 slashing

Ranged ♦♦ *longbow* +18 (deadly d10, magical, propulsive, range increment 100 feet, reload 0, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 2d8+9 piercing

Cat Fall The mercenary treats falls as 25 feet shorter.

Power Attack ♦♦♦ The mercenary makes a melee Strike. This counts as two attacks when calculating the mercenary's multiple attack penalty. If this Strike hits, the mercenary deals an extra die of weapon damage.

Ready Armaments ♦♦ The mercenary Interacts to draw or stow a weapon, then Interacts to draw or stow a weapon. The mercenary can instead Raise a Shield instead of either Interact action.

XP Award: Award the PCs 60 XP for recovering *The Publican*.

H2. COURTYARD

LOW 13

The stairs cut deep into the cliff at this point, and walls tower fifty feet or more overhead on either side. A massive landing, fifty feet to a side, offers a respite from the climb. Several twenty-foot-tall doorways are set into the walls—three to the north and one to the south.

Bloodstains and scorch marks mar the ground and walls here, as though fights on the landing were both common and recent. Several dead pack horses loaded with supplies lie in a heap to the southeast. Several jars once held in packs tied to one of the horse's saddles have tumbled free and broken spilling a wide pile of coarse white crystals.

The latest trader to run afoul of the mercenaries was ostensibly delivering jars of salt from Xin-Shalast to Magnimar, but the salt was only a ruse and the trader was, in fact, a smuggler. In truth, most of the jars contain necromantic components—the coarse salt is itself a preservative for corpses. Among the cargo are multiple old skulls harvested from deep in Xin-Shalast's ruins.

When the trader refused to produce the toll the Band of Blades demanded, they attacked him and the

three laborers who accompanied him, butchering them all. They took everything the trader had and left his dead horses and the cargo here to search it later; since the jar broke open to reveal coarse salt, they frankly don't have high expectations that the wagon contains anything of value. The harpies in area **H3** have since come down to take away the corpses to eat (leaving the horses behind), so no other bodies remain.

Creatures: The skulls in the jars contain the lingering essence of a powerful sorcerer from ancient Thassilon. They comprise a sorcerous skull swarm that had been quiescent for centuries, but the battle between the trader and mercenaries roused the swarm, and the harpies' plunder of the corpses awakened it further. Only chance has kept this swarm of animated skulls quiescent, but the first creatures to poke around the cart—likely the PCs (as the mercenaries and harpies don't see much value in the ruins)—cause the sorcerous skull swarm to burst out of several fragile clay jars and attack. The skull swarm fights until destroyed.

If this fight takes place before the PCs attract the attention of the mercenaries in area **H1** or the harpies in area **H3**, they're both drawn to this area to watch with amusement—the mercenaries then attack the PCs once this fight ends, followed in turn by the harpies.

SORCEROUS SKULL SWARM

CREATURE 14

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 245

Initiative Perception +24

Treasure: The wagon includes several crates of poor-quality salt used for corpse preservation, four jars of spoiled formaldehyde, and cleverly hidden in a secret compartment in one barrel's base (requiring a PC to succeed at a DC 30 Perception check to discover) is a *wand of vampiric exsanguination*. This wand appears to be made from a human rib, yet the bone appears smeared in dried blood that resists all attempts to clean. When the wand is used, this blood grows moist and drips, causing the wand's user to feel a brief and unsettling hunger for blood. This sensation is nothing more than a strange quirk, but at your discretion, excessive use of this wand could expose the user to the curse of vampirism.

H3. UPPER CHECKPOINT

LOW 13

A row of boulders and barricade of logs blocks the eastern end of this forty-foot-wide landing on the stairs, which continue up to the top of the Storval Rise to the east. Beyond that, the arid reaches of the badlands stretch out as far as the eye can see.

The Shoanti suspect that the harpies and mercenaries are working happily together, but this isn't entirely true. When the Band of Blades swept in to seize control of the Storval Stairs and turn it into a toll-collecting scheme, Queen Kawlinawak and several of her warbirds were already comfortably living in the ruin's upper reaches after the previous queen, Lareecan, was slain by Pathfinders. The harpies had little interest in bothering those who came and went along the stairs and, indeed, enjoyed periodic easy pickings of meals from some unlucky groups of travelers.

Arodeth contacted the harpies when she and her mercenaries arrived and offered them jobs—if the harpies would help watch over the stairs and support the Band of Blades, they would receive regular tithes of treasure from the tolls taken. At first, Queen Kawlinawak found this arrangement to her liking since she could simply relax in her nest in area **H5** while her warbirds did some idle guard duty, but as time went on, she and her warbirds have grown restless, believing that they should just take over the toll-taking operation for themselves. They haven't yet worked up the courage to betray the Band of Blades, but the PCs' arrival gives them a chance to watch, wait, and plot.

Creatures: During the day, three of Kawlinawak's warbirds stand guard here (at night, they swap out for the two warbirds found in area **H5**). These harpies do little more than order anyone who seeks passage down the stairs from the Storval Rise to stand and wait while they call up Endlo from area **H1** to take tolls, but they're also itching for a fight. Anyone they spot trying to break through the barricade or otherwise sneak in is fair game, and they attack at once. A harpy reduced to 30 or fewer Hit Points flees to area **H5**.

If a fight breaks out here and the mercenaries in area **H1** still live, they quickly move up the stairs to join the fight as soon as they notice trouble. Once they enter the fight, any remaining warbirds retreat to the cliffs above to watch and wait, curious to see if the mercenaries or PCs win, then swoop down to pick off the survivors.

HARPY WARBIRDS (3)

CREATURE 11

RARE **CE** **MEDIUM** **HUMANOID**

Variant harpy (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 204)

Perception +20; darkvision

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +21, Athletics +20, Intimidation +22, Performance +24

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



Queen Kawlinawk

Items +1 striking halberd, +1 composite shortbow (20 arrows)

AC 30; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +22, **Will** +20

HP 200

Attack of Opportunity ☞

Speed 20 feet, fly 60 feet

Melee ♦ halberd +23 (magical, reach, versatile S), **Damage** 2d10+11 piercing

Melee ♦ talon +22 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d4+11 slashing

Ranged ♦ shortbow +23 (deadly d10, magical, propulsive, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), **Damage** 1d6+11 piercing

Captivating Song ♦ (auditory, concentrate, enchantment, incapacitation, mental, primal) As harpy, but DC 29.

War Formation A harpy warbird deals an extra 2d6 damage with its melee Strikes to any creature that's within reach of at least one of the harpy's allies.

H4. NORTH KARZOUG STATUE

The domed ceiling of this circular room reaches a height of twenty feet, while a single, strange niche framed in silvery metal sits in the otherwise featureless west wall, directly opposite the only entrance into the chamber from the east.

Runelord's Glare: The niche in the wall is framed with a layer of silvery skymetal known as siccattite. This patch of metal is exceedingly hot and inflicts 1 fire damage to anyone who touches it. The niche itself appears to be capable of holding a crystal-shaped object, and any of the smaller crystals from area **H8** can be slotted into the frame

with ease as a two-action Interact activity with the manipulate trait.

The siccattite frame radiates transmutation and evocation magic and is essentially an immobile 13th-level magic item. With a successful DC 31 check to Identify Magic, a character can understand the function of the frame (although it doesn't reveal where the crystals required for its use are located, only that the frame requires some sort of crystal-shaped power supply). If a crystal from area **H8** is inserted into the frame, it flashes with orange light and then fuses into the frame. A moment later, the walls, ceiling, and floor of this chamber become transparent, providing a dramatic view of the Storval Stairs (and perhaps a moment of panic before those within the chamber realize it hasn't vanished). This view is one-way—the transmutation doesn't affect the exterior of the statue, which still appears solid and opaque. Only those inside this area can look through the transparent stone. The glowing orange gemstone is the only part of the room that remains visible, and a character adjacent to it can use the crystal to Activate Karzoug's Gaze.

ACTIVATE KARZOUG'S GLARE ♦♦

EVOCATION MANIPULATE FIRE

Requirement The siccattite frame has a charged crystal placed within it.

You touch the crystal within its siccattite frame and take 1 fire damage from the contact with the searing hot surface. You can then discharge the energy within the crystal (consuming the crystal in the process) to fire a beam of fiery energy from the tip of that statue's polearm, targeting any location aboveground on the Storval Stairs or within 400 feet of its bottommost step. An explosion of fire fills a 20-foot-burst at that location; all creatures in the area must attempt a DC 30 Reflex save. The transparency of the interior of the room ends at the end of your turn.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected
Success The creature takes 6d6 fire damage.
Failure The creature takes 12d6 fire damage and is knocked prone.
Critical Failure The creature takes 20d6 fire damage, takes 4d6 persistent fire damage, and is knocked prone.

H5. SOUTH KARZOUZ STATUE MODERATE 13

This circular room contains a malodorous collection of filth and partially-gnawed bones. A single arched opening allows entrance and exit to the east, while the domed ceiling reaches a height of twenty feet. The walls of the room are also caked in mud, but a patch of filth directly opposite the entrance is also covered by a rime of frost.

Creatures: The current queen of the local harpies, a lanky creature with a perpetual scowl named Kawlinawk, has claimed the interior of this statue's head as her nest. She bullies the harpies out of the choicest bits of jewelry and murders those who express any dissatisfaction with her leadership, but always keeps at least two of her warbirds here as guards or, more often, targets for her cruel insults. At night, the two warbirds here swap duties with the three posted to area **H3**.

Queen Kawlinawk attacks any intruders on sight and fights to the death to defend her home. While she and her warbirds don't maintain a vigilant watch of the skies above, they might take note of particularly flashy or noisy flying PCs. If combat erupts in areas **H1–H3**, they'll notice and keep a more vigilant eye out for the rest of the day. If the mercenaries at area **H1** and the warbirds at area **H3** are defeated, Queen Kawlinawk immediately confronts any flying characters she spots.

With her hostile attitude, it's unlikely the PCs will be able to receive Queen Kawlinawk's aid unless they attempt to establish communication with her before entering her home. Alternately, if the PCs manage to capture her alive, she'll consider allying with them. If the PCs can convince her that they have no lasting interest in "clearing out" the Storval Stairs, she might agree to help defeat the Band of Blades, but her promises shouldn't be trusted to last for long.

QUEEN KAWLINAWK CREATURE 13

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMANOID

Female harpy (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 204)

Perception +23; darkvision

Languages Common

Skills Acrobatics +24, Athletics +25, Deception +26, Intimidation +26, Performance +26

Str +6, **Dex** +5, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +7
Items +1 striking composite shortbow (20 arrows), +1 striking falchion, jewelry worth 150 gp

AC 34; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +25, **Will** +23

HP 240

Attack of Opportunity ➤

Speed 20 feet, fly 60 feet

Melee ➤ falchion +26 (forceful, magical, sweep), **Damage** 2d10+12 slashing

Melee ➤ talon +25 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 3d4+12 slashing

Ranged ➤ shortbow +25 (deadly d10, magical, propulsive, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), **Damage** 2d6+12 piercing

Captivating Song ➤ (auditory, concentrate, enchantment, incapacitation, mental, primal) As harpy, but DC 33.

Dread Cry ➤➤ (auditory, concentrate, primal, sonic) Queen Kawlinawk utters a screech in a 60-foot cone that harms her enemies but heartens her allies. The screech deals 14d6 sonic damage to non-harpy creatures in the area (DC 33 basic Fortitude save). Harpies in the area can instead use a reaction to Fly, Step, or Stride; one harpy in the area, of Queen Kawlinawk's choice, can instead use a reaction to Strike. Queen Kawlinawk can't use Dread Cry for 1d4 rounds.

War Formation Queen Kawlinawk deals an extra 2d6 damage with her melee Strikes to any creature that's within reach of at least one of her allies.

HARPY WARBIRDS (2) CREATURE 11

Page 53

Initiative Perception +20

Runelord's Glare: A siccative frame similar to the one in area **H4** sits in the west wall opposite this room's entrance, but this frame is caked over with filth covered by a thin layer of frost. If the frame is cleaned (a three-action Interact activity with the manipulate trait that causes 1 cold damage), it can be used in the same way as the one in area **H4**, except this frame is freezing cold to the touch and inflicts cold damage when used and activated.

Treasure: Although sifting through the pile of harpy waste is an unpleasant affair, a *major ring of cold resistance* adorned with a snowflake design is hidden beneath the old bones and rotting feathers.

H6. GUARDIAN MURAL MODERATE 13

This section of the ruins isn't directly accessible from the stairs themselves, and unless the PCs take note of the open colonnade providing access to this area while scouting the site out, they're unlikely to have their attention drawn here until they decipher the information about Karzoug's Glare in the records

room (area **H13**). The area into which the colonnade's arches open into is a precipitous drop of about 200 feet. During Thassilon's height, visitors to these chambers used flight or teleportation to come and go—PCs who lack these options can Climb instead (DC 25 Athletics).

The inner walls of a colonnade look out to the west across the Varisian lowlands, a two-hundred-foot drop just a step away through the arches. Within the room, carvings on the inner walls have almost completely eroded away save for a vivid mural on the east that depicts three writhing centipede-like creatures marching toward an oversized door to the northeast. Several old bloodstains spatter the floors and walls of the eastern portion of the chamber.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 34 Occultism check realizes that the squirming "centipedes" depicted in the mural are representations of mukradi on the march. With a successful DC 20 Medicine check, a PC confirms that the bloodstains are at least several weeks, even months, old. Characters who think to look on the rocks 200 feet below the archways find additional similar bloodstains. These stains are all that remain of the mercenaries whom Arodeth ordered to explore the area—they triggered the trap (as have so many others over the ages) and were swiftly slaughtered. The remains of the dead were cremated, as is the way for the Band of Blades to prevent corpses from telling tales.

The door to area **H7** is sealed with an ancient *lock* spell (heightened to 7th level). A character can Force Open the door with a DC 36 Athletics check or unlock it with a DC 36 Thievery check to Pick the Lock.

Hazard: The mural is more than a decoration—it's a trap containing a dangerous guardian, as PCs who read the research in the records room should know.

GUARDIAN MURAL

HAZARD 15

UNIQUE MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 40

Description One of the carvings on the mural suddenly animates and clambers out of the painting to become a real creature in the middle of the chamber.

Disable DC 35 Thievery (to deface the mural in precisely the right way to render it inoperable), or *dispel magic* (7th level; counteract DC 34) to counteract the mural

Summon Mukradi ➤ **Trigger** A creature attempts to open the door to area **H7**; **Effect** A living mukradi manifests in the 20-foot-square space indicated by the dotted outline on the map. Any other creatures in this area are knocked prone and pushed out of this square—those who succeed at a DC 40 Reflex save can choose to be

pushed north or south, while those who fail are pushed west, out of the room entirely down a 200-foot fall. These creatures can Grab the Edge with a successful DC 36 Reflex save. The mukradi then rolls initiative but vanishes completely after 1 minute.

Reset 24 hours

MUKRADI

CREATURE 15

Pathfinder Bestiary 239

Initiative Perception +24

H7. LOOK UPON LENG

MODERATE 13

Cobweb-shrouded murals on the walls of this high chamber depict a strangely unnerving landscape of a barren tundra. Ragged mountains loom in the distance, while the spires of barely visible ruins appear amidst the hazy foothills, all under a night sky that features an unusually large full moon. Stone doors lead out to the east and west.

This room chronicles some of the distant places the architect of the Storval Stairs hoped to explore once their conquest of the area was complete. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Religion check recognizes these murals as depicting the nightmare dimension of Leng, a realm within which the Runelord Karzoug and his followers brokered many an alliance. Originally intended to be a room used to commune with that plane's unpleasant but brilliant minds, the chamber is now little more than a dangerous place to linger.

The PCs feel a strange sensation of peace and relaxation as they enter this room, as if their minds and bodies instinctively identify it as a safe place to rest. While they're unlikely to be bothered by the Band of Blades or harpies here, the feeling of lassitude is false—a side effect of many centuries of proximity to the nightmares of Leng.

The door to area **H8** is sealed with an ancient *lock* spell (heightened to 7th level). A character can Force Open the door with a DC 36 Athletics check or unlock it with a DC 36 Thievery check to Pick the Lock.

Creatures: At the end of any round in which at least one creature remains in this room, attempt a DC 11 flat check. On a success, the murals on the walls change—several circular trapdoors open in the painting foreground. A character who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check noted what might be the tip of a spiny fingertip or perhaps leg brushing against some of the openings. Continue to attempt DC 11 flat checks at the end of any round in which at least one creature remains in the room. The second time you roll a success, the murals suddenly take on a lifelike

quality, and the room itself plunges in temperature to incredible cold (*Core Rulebook* 518) as Leng alters the reality within the chamber. The murals reset to their normal state as soon as any round ends in which no creatures remain in the room.

If any creatures remain in the room after the second successful flat check, two elephant-sized Leng spiders clamber out from the two nearest trap doors to scuttle into area **H7**. The spiders regard any characters within the room but don't attack—instead they speak in unsettling voices to offer an opportunity for “unbridled wonders and endless discovery.” Those who wish to accept the offer, the spiders claim, need only set aside their weapons, approach, and bow before one of the spiders. This offer is, of course, a blatant lie—the Leng spiders are attempting to lie to the PCs. Any character who falls for the offer feels Leng itself reach out and attempt to transport them into the nightmare realm. A PC can resist this effect with a DC 33 Will save—on a failure, they're transported to Leng, and a static image of the PC appears somewhere in the mural. This image remains until the PC escapes Leng or is slain. What adventures and dangers await PCs who are brought to Leng are subject to the GM's imagination—wise PCs decline the offer.

Of course, the Leng spiders don't suffer rejection well—they attack if no one in the room accepts their offer. A Leng spider reduced to fewer than 30 Hit Points attempts to escape back to Leng—to do so, it can merely “walk through” any of the walls in this room back into Leng, whereupon it vanishes.

At your discretion, a PC trapped in Leng can see through into this room, as if looking through a violent snowstorm—returning to area **H7** from Leng is possible with a successful DC 33 Will save, but on a failure, the creature takes 14d6 mental damage.

LENG SPIDERS (2)

CREATURE 13

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 157

Initiative Deception +22

H8. CRYSTAL REPOSITORY

MODERATE 13

Pale crystals the size of human arms grow in clusters along the walls and domed ceiling of this room. At the center, a half-dozen taller crystals protrude from the floor, their jagged tips arching outward like tusks—or ribs. The tip of each of these curving crystals flickers with an entrancing glow, while a spherical crystal bulb sits on the floor at the center of these growths.

A character who examines the crystals in this room and succeeds at a DC 30 Arcana or Occultism check

identifies them as quasi-magical growths extending into this reality from the Astral Plane and notes in particular that the glowing tips of the six central crystals seem to be infused with magical power. The original creator of this chamber cultivated these growths, as the glowing tips could be harvested to power a number of deadly defenses along the Storval Stairs. Today, only two of those defenses remain active (areas **H4** and **H5**).

Creatures: The original architects of the Storval Stairs didn't leave this crystal repository untended and bound a trio of shining children into the walls of this room. The presence of these creatures helps to maintain the link to the Astral Plane—as long as at least three of them remain here, the crystals remain healthy and, over time, regrow after harvesting (see “Treasure” below). The shining children also serve as guardians, though, and anyone who enters the room without proclaiming their allegiance to Karzoug reveals themselves to be an intruder and thus subject to immediate attack.

The shining children prefer to box in enemies with *wall of force* and unleashing *sunbeams* on them. While they fight, the shining children telepathically moan in Aklo about how “the architect shall come to reclaim their throne.” The shining children fight until destroyed.

SHINING CHILDREN (3)

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 292

Initiative Perception +23

Treasure: The bulk of the crystals here are unusual but relatively worthless, being the equivalent of low-quality quartz once harvested and taken from this chamber. The six glowing tips from the curving crystals in the center of the room are quite useful, for they can be used to power the defenses in areas **H4–H5**. An examination of a shimmering crystal tip reveals a delicate set of indentations that could damage the crystal if it's not harvested correctly. To remove a crystal intact, a PC must succeed at a DC 35 Crafting check or a DC 30 Disable Device check attempted as a three-action Interact activity with the manipulate trait. On a failure, the crystal is destroyed, but on a success, that crystal can be used to power one of the two defenses in the Karzoug statues. There are six crystals in all that can potentially be harvested—new ones won't grow as long as no shining children tend to them (and even when they're tended, it takes months for them to regrow).

The “crystal bulb” is a potent side effect of the many centuries of magical radiation within this

chamber. It can be retrieved with ease from the middle of the room, and functions identically to a *clear quartz crystal ball*.

H9. MESS HALL

LOW 12

The ceiling of this long hall reaches up thirty feet. A ring of stones surrounds a large campfire in the center of the room, while a cauldron set over the fire bubbles and emits a savory aroma. Three jury-rigged tables with equally shabby chairs stand elsewhere in the room, while to the east, several crates, bags, and barrels of foodstuffs are stacked against the walls.

The supplies to the east consist of several weeks of food and water. The mercenaries haven't noticed the secret door to area **H10**. If the crates and barrels are

cleared aside, it can be spotted by a character who succeeds at a DC 32 Perception check, but as long as the supplies remain in place, only a critical success at this check reveals the door's presence. Until recently, a long-lasting illusion hid the door to the west, but Arodeth dispelled this illusion soon after discovering it during her first visit to the Storval Stairs.

Creatures: The mercenaries eat in this room, taking turns preparing food. During the day, four Band of Blades mercenaries (named Thasker, Urwynn, Yoskun, and Zednaki) can be found here, relaxing with bowls of stew while they play (poorly) a game that uses a well-worn Harrow deck and complicated rules that the mercenaries are prone to revising and rebuilding every few games. If combat breaks out in area **H2**, the mercenaries are ready to face the PCs, otherwise they suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to Perception checks until they're aware the PCs have arrived. They fight until at least one of their number has fallen, at which point the survivors make a fighting retreat to area **H12** to join their allies there.

This room is empty after dark, and the four mercenaries found here are instead in area **H14**.

BLADE MERCENARIES (4)

CREATURE 9

Page 52

Initiative Perception +15

H10. SECRET ROOM

A thick layer of dust coats the floor of this room, and three of its corners are filled with heaps of indeterminate rubble. The air smells stale and clammy. The walls are thick and solid, and almost no sound can be heard beyond them.

This room, long forgotten by the occupants of the Storval Stairs (including its current inhabitants) was once an office used by a Thassilonian interrogator. The rubble in the corners is all that remains of the cages once used to detain suspicious travelers and of the interrogator's desk.

Treasure: A Search of the rubble in the southeast corner, where the interrogator's desk once stood, reveals a potent treasure left behind from long ago—a *major Endless Grimoire* (*Secrets of Magic* 162) with a cover emblazoned with runes in Thassilonian that read, "The Book of Beautiful Truths." Tucked into the back of the grimoire are two folded scrolls. The first contains the formula for a *rune of sin* (*Secrets of Magic* 165). The second scroll is a *scroll of demon form* (*Secrets of Magic* 99).



Blade Mercenary

H11. TRAPPED ATRIUM

The ceiling in this oval chamber rises forty feet and consists of dark stone embedded with crystal flecks that glitter like stars in the night sky. Exits lead out to the west and north. The floor of the room is swept clean, revealing a pattern of lines and rings.

This room is designed to mimic the night sky in the days of ancient Thassilon, with the floor patterns showing how the stars and planets move through the heavens. The flecks in the ceiling resemble stars, but dozens of the more brilliant sparkles are actually the crystalline points of long metal spikes retracted into the stone above.

Hazard: The trap in this room claimed the lives of four Band of Blades mercenaries soon after they first arrived at the Storval Stairs and impressed upon Arodeth the wisdom of proceeding carefully in exploring further—it's why she has been so deliberate in her investigations of areas **H6–H8**. The bodies of those slain by the trap were disposed of and the evidence cleared, and now the mercenaries know where to step in the room without triggering the trap's numerous pressure plates, leaving the defense in place to work against intruders.

If the PCs are being led by mercenaries to meet with Arodeth, they'll either show them the safe route through the room (if the mercenaries are at least friendly or magically controlled), or they'll try to trick the PCs into stepping into the room first to trigger the trap and use the chance to escape if they're assisting the PCs against their will but still capable of deception.

If a character knows where the pressure plates are located (as do the Band of Blades mercenaries), they can move through this room without triggering the trap, but the number of side steps, twists, and turns means that to do so, they treat this chamber as if it were greater difficult terrain.

FALLING STARS TRAP

HAZARD 15

UNCOMMON MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 40 (master)

Description Pressure plates in the floor cause crystal-tipped spikes to rain down into the room and explode.

Disable DC 40 Thievery (master) to disable enough pressure plates so the trap won't trigger

Rain of Stars ➤ **Trigger** Each time a non-flying creature enters a square in this room, roll a secret DC 6 flat check. On a failure, the trap triggers as the character steps on a pressure plate—the trap automatically triggers if a creature steps on either square just west of the hallway

leading to **H12**; **Effect** The trap makes a crystal spike Strike against all creatures in the room, then each creature in the room takes 6d10 piercing damage as the spikes explode (DC 36 basic Reflex save).

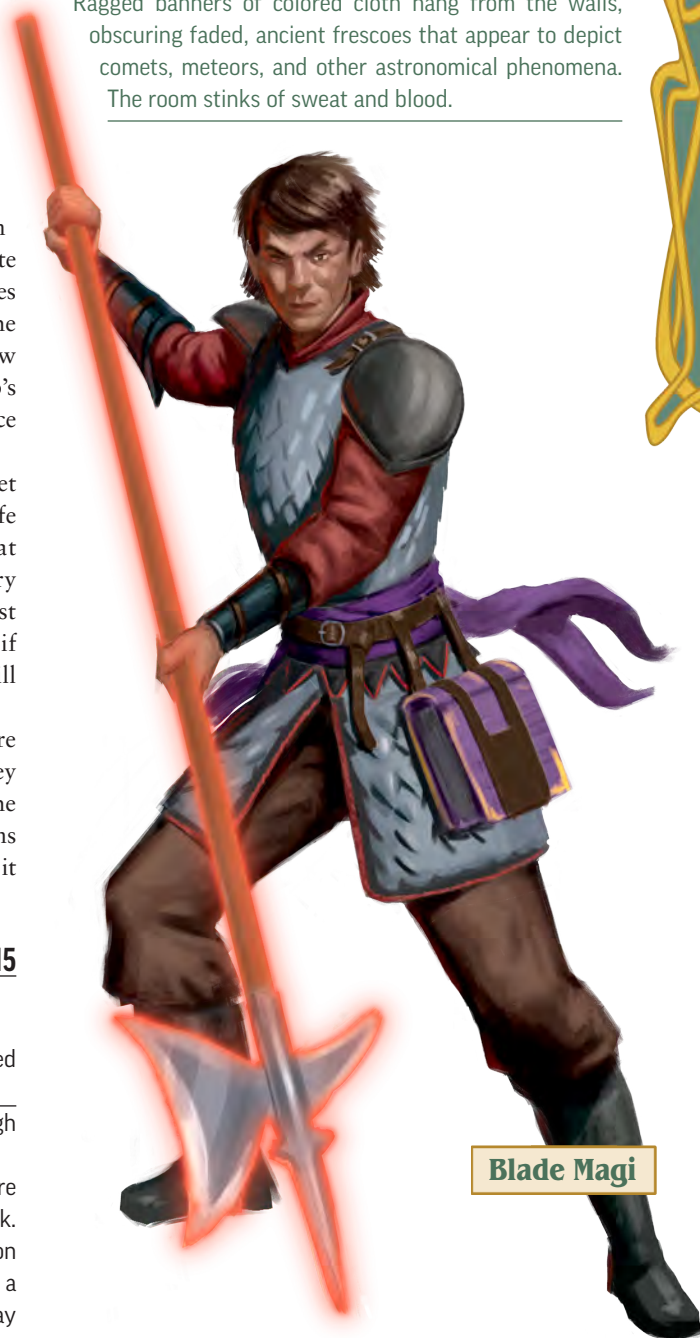
Melee ➤ crystal spike +34, **Damage** 2d12+26 piercing

Reset The trap's supply of spikes magically replenishes, and the trap resets after 1 hour.

H12. SPARRING HALL

MODERATE 13

The ceiling of this enormous chamber rises sixty feet high. Ragged banners of colored cloth hang from the walls, obscuring faded, ancient frescoes that appear to depict comets, meteors, and other astronomical phenomena. The room stinks of sweat and blood.



Blade Magi

The Choosing

Chapter 1:
Luck of the Draw

Chapter 2:
Scattered Stories

Chapter 3:
Queen of the Storval Stairs

The Harrow Court

Adventure Toolbox

Although contemplative astronomers once debated the movement of itinerant celestial bodies in this hall, the Band of Blades now uses this area for sparring practice. The banners are a ranking system to show which mercenaries have recently won bouts against the others.

Creatures: While this chamber is empty at night, during the day, six mercenaries are encountered here. Two are participating in a (nonlethal) grudge match against a third over a disagreement about kitchen duty. A fourth mercenary watches the fight with great amusement, as do a pair of magi who study under Arodeth. The mercenaries are named Orbenth, Palkri, Velber, and Vondo (Vondo is the one sitting out). The magi are siblings, Carbelda Omberran and her younger brother Tymost. Their sibling rivalry has driven them both to excellence in their studies, and each considers themselves to be Arodeth's successor as well as top apprentice.

The two magi are supposed to be watching the courtyard from the mess hall and know that they're shirking their duties; if they see intruders, they're quick to attack because they realize they'll be blamed for trespassers getting this far. The mercenaries happily put aside their rivalries in the face of danger. They try to flank foes when possible.

These mercenaries know that Arodeth will punish them harshly for failing to stop intruders right at her doorstep, so they fight to the death. However, as soon as this group is reduced to a single mercenary, that mercenary surrenders and offers to exchange information about Arodeth or even introduce them to her in exchange for their freedom.

If the PCs are accompanied by other mercenaries, they'll either be joined by those here as they head east to meet Arodeth or (if their guides are unwilling) move to rescue captured mercenaries by attacking.

BLADE MAGI (2)

CREATURE 11

UNCOMMON LE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Human magus (*Pathfinder Secrets of Magic* 35)

Perception +18

Languages Common, Draconic, Thassilonian

Skills Arcana +23, Athletics +22, Society +21, Survival +20

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

Items steel-colored *bird feather token*, +1 striking *halberd*, moderate *healing potion*, +1 *scale mail*, spellbook (contains all prepared spells)

AC 31; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +17, **Will** +20

HP 195

Attack of Opportunity ☞

Capture Magic ☞ **Trigger** The Blade magi succeeds at a save against a foe's harmful spell, or a foe fails a spell

attack roll against the Blade magi with a harmful spell; **Effect** The Blade magi enters their Arcane Cascade. If the Blade magi is already in Arcane Cascade, they gain a +2 status bonus to damage from Arcane Cascade until the end of their next turn.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *halberd* +23 (magical, reach, versatile S), **Damage** 2d10+11 piercing

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 30, attack +22; **6th** *baleful polymorph*, *chain lightning*; **5th** *dispel magic*, *vampiric touch*; **3rd** *haste*, *true strike*; **Cantrips (6th)** *acid splash*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *shield*

Magus Focus Spells DC 30, 1 Focus Point; **6th** *thunderous strike*

Arcane Cascade ♦ (concentrate, stance) **Requirement**

The Blade magi can enter this stance if their most recent action was to Cast a Spell or make a Spellstrike, but the Blade magi can remain in the stance even if they no longer meet the requirements; **Effect** When the Blade magi enters this stance and at the beginning of each of their turns while in it, the Blade magi gains 5 temporary Hit Points. While in this stance, the Blade magi's melee Strikes gain the arcane trait, deal an extra 2 force damage, and deal 4 splash force damage to foes adjacent to the target.

Spellstrike ♦♦ The Blade magi channels a spell into a melee Strike to deliver a magically charged attack. The Blade magi casts *acid splash*, *ray of frost*, or *vampiric touch*. The effects of the spell don't occur immediately but are imbued into the Blade magi's attack instead. The Blade magi makes a melee Strike, which gains the arcane trait. The spell is coupled with the attack, using the Blade magi's attack roll to determine the effects of both the Strike and the spell. This counts as two attacks for their multiple attack penalty, but the penalty isn't applied until after the magus has completed the Spellstrike. After using Spellstrike, the Blade magi can't do so again until they recharge this ability as a single action, which has the concentrate trait. The Blade magi also recharges their Spellstrike when they cast *thunderous strike*.

BLADE MERCENARIES (4)

CREATURE 9

Page 52

Initiative Perception +15

H13. RECORDS ROOM

MODERATE 13

This T-shaped room is lined with bookshelves. Rather than books, the shelves are instead filled with rows upon rows of narrow plates of stone or steel, stacked atop each other in messy piles. A table in the middle of the room holds stacks of these tablets, along with several notebooks and writing implements.

This room contains the knowledge of the now-forgotten architect of the Storval Stairs. The architect took many of their cues from learned astronomers of the day, aligning the direction of the stairs with certain cosmological portents. They expected to use the chambers they built around the Storval Stairs to rule the area afterwards, but Karzoug had other plans—he murdered them once their great architectural work was finished and eliminated their name and identity from all records.

The architect's knowledge—preserved here on hundreds of durable tablets of stone and metal—is mostly a jumbled collection of building plans, architectural truths, and half-formed prophecies about astronomical events and what they portend for Thassilon.

Creatures: Arodeth has been intrigued by the documents found here ever since she first discovered the chamber. It was also here that she first noticed that *The Rakshasa* had appeared in her possession—an event she swiftly interpreted as evidence that her new purpose could be found here at the Storval Stairs. Since settling in, Arodeth has spent nearly all her time here, sorting through the tablets. She has been dismayed to find that so many contain building plans, but she remains diligent and hopes to find something to tie the disparate prophecies together in a useful way. She jotted some of these clues in her notebooks, but they remain frustratingly sparse.

When the PCs first arrive here (regardless of time of day or night), Arodeth is at the end of the room furthest from the door, reading some of the tablets. Her bodyguard, Raflin Dorrum, and his pet aurumvorax relax near the room's entrance.

If the PCs are spoiling for a fight, the inhabitants of this room all work together. Arodeth and Raflin attempt to make a fighting retreat toward area H16, hoping to recruit any allies they encounter along the way. The sound of fighting in area H12 does little to alert them, though, as the regular sparring in that chamber often gets a bit loud.

Arodeth isn't looking for a fight, and even if the PCs arrive without an escort of guards, she's interested in speaking with them and invites them to join her at the table in the middle of the room. See Talking with Arodeth on page 62 for details on this conversation.

Note that a likely complication to any discussion with Arodeth is the fact that her favorite apprentice, Raflin, a man who has served as her personal

bodyguard for many months, is also currently dominated by the popobawa Ndede (area H16)—something Arodeth hasn't even suspected, much less discovered. Ndede's control over Raflin is particularly insidious, as he has convinced the Blade magi that Arodeth is unhinged and that Raflin would be a much better leader of the Band of Blades, should Arodeth continue to prove unfit for her leadership role.

Ndede's trickery has convinced Raflin to visit the disguised popobawa every night to take part in a repeating ritual that Raflin believes bolsters his courage and health; in fact, this "ritual" is merely another casting of *dominate* that Raflin willingly submits to. Among the many conspiracies Ndede has infected Raflin with is a belief that Arodeth intends to disband the Band of Blades to join a more successful organization, and when she does so, she'll take all of the group's

funds and resources with her.

As a result, Raflin is immediately suspicious of the PCs once they arrive and grows more so if they accept Arodeth's invitation to speak. If Raflin is still under the effects of the popobawa's *dominate* spell, the Blade magi accuses Arodeth of betraying the Band of Blades and attacks as soon as the conversation with Arodeth gets around to Ndede or if any PC proposes anything that he might interpret as an offer of an alliance. If he's no longer *dominated* (as will be the case if it's past 9:00 in the evening and they've killed or defeated Ndede already) but doesn't realize that Ndede is gone, he still accuses Arodeth of betrayal but stops short of attacking unless the PCs start a fight—in this case, the PCs might be able to coax the truth out of the hostile bodyguard. If Ndede has been defeated and Raflin learns of it, he quietly abandons the Band of Brothers and will be encountered at the end of the adventure, having joined forces with Drustan, no longer loyal to Ndede but doubly disappointed, ashamed, and suspicious of Arodeth for allowing a monster like Ndede to infiltrate the group.

If he attacks, Raflin's first action is to cast *baleful polymorph* on Arodeth to try to transform her into a newt, after which he focuses his attacks on the PCs. While this spell won't permanently transform her (since it's an incapacitation effect and Arodeth is higher level than Raflin), he hopes that she'll be at least distracted or temporarily transformed so he can



focus on the PCs. As long as she remains transformed or sickened from this spell, Arodeth does nothing but sputter in rage and (ineffectually) order Raflin to stand down; once she's no longer affected by the spell, she'll join the fight against the treacherous bodyguard on the PCs' side.

If reduced to fewer than 80 Hit Points, Raflin flees to area **H16** to warn Ndede (who rewards the bodyguard by killing him—his body can be found in area **H16** thereafter) or deeper into the Storval Rise to join Drustan if he knows Ndede is dead.

Raflin's pet aurumvoraxes are loyal to him, not to the Band of Blades. Once Raflin starts a fight, the aurumvoraxes gleefully attack whoever seems to be Raflin's enemies and fight to the death unless Raflin calls them off.

ARODETH

CREATURE 14

Page 90

Initiative Perception +22

RAFLIN DORRUM

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Male human Blade magi (page 60)

Initiative Perception +18

AURUMVORAX

CREATURE 9

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 29

Initiative Perception +18

Treasure: A character Searching the table in the middle of the room turns up a pair of metal plates that function as scrolls: a *scroll of flesh to stone* and a *scroll of magnificent mansion*. Additionally, a character who Searches the room finds one collection of bronze plates on which the formula for *ward domain* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 245) has been inscribed as well as a collection of blank mithral plates that, while they contain no information, are the equivalent of two mithral chunks.

Arodeth has collected several plates and tablets on the central table, finding them particularly interesting. A character who can read Thassilonian can spend an hour studying these tablets to learn that the two enormous statues of Runelord Karzoug on either side of the stairs are powerful weapons. The tablets describe special crystals—grown in a hidden chamber on the other side of the stairs—that, when socketed in place behind the statue's eyes, allow the statue to direct “beams of fire and ice to strike at foes below,” along with the following information.

- The route to the crystal repository lies beyond the locked doors in areas **H6** and **H7**; the notes

indicate that the mural in area **H6** is a trap and that the walls of area **H7** represent a thinning in the boundary between this world and Leng—these notes give the PCs a +4 item bonus to all attempted checks to discover and disable the trap in area **H6** and warns them against lingering too long in area **H7** lest they become lost in Leng.

- The crystals within the repository are attended by the “shining gardeners,” but the notes neglect to give any information about how to placate these creatures.
- The notes give the exact mechanics of how to Activate Karzoug's Glare in areas **H4–H5**.

If the PCs ally with Arodeth, she can explain this information to the PCs much more quickly but also warns them that she hasn't quite figured out how to safely investigate the chambers beyond.

Talking with Arodeth

Arodeth is an elderly woman whose once-imperious presence has almost entirely faded due to the many recent setbacks. She's willing to fight if necessary, but she would rather find out why the PCs have come here. Arodeth waves away suggestions that her Band of Blades must leave the Storval Stairs, as the location is both an ideal place for research and a lucrative opportunity. She's much more interested in the subjects of harrow cards, the Band of Blades, and Lord Drustan. She does her best to tease out what the PCs know and is as honest as necessary to get them to open up about these subjects.

Harrow Cards: Arodeth discovered *The Rakshasa* (which she knows indicates domination and mental control) among her gear soon after entering area **H13**. She knows that Ndede and Endlo recently discovered cards among their possessions as well—although Ndede hasn't yet told her which card he owns, she knows that Endlo has been bragging about *The Publican* recently. Arodeth can explain all these clues to the PCs if they're forthright with her. Otherwise, they can discover a page with these suppositions in her notes.

The Band of Blades: Arodeth admits that the Band of Blades is a large organization. Most of their powerful members are here at the Storval Stairs, but they have others operating across Avistan on various sanctioned missions. She has also heard reports that one of her mercenaries might have faced off against people matching the PCs' descriptions in Absalom, but she hasn't authorized any actions in Absalom. She hopes the PCs can shed some light on their encounter. If the PCs describe devils fighting alongside the mercenaries, or describe Vharnev the

Butcher specifically (who Arodeth knows does Lord Drustan's dirty work), she realizes that Drustan has been pursuing his own unsanctioned goals. This plainly makes her angry, as the organization is only hanging by a thread already, and rogue actions impair the group's survivability.

Lord Drustan: Arodeth knows that Lord Drustan is an angry and vengeful ex-noble. Although he has eschewed his native Cheliox, he maintains connections with several powerful devils. Arodeth admits that his undeniable might and leadership ability made him a valuable lieutenant despite his unpleasant demeanor and unsavory associations. It seems he has been pursuing his own goals, which, if she's being honest, doesn't surprise Arodeth much. Drustan isn't here, and Arodeth doesn't know where he is. The last she remembers, Drustan talked about some "like-minded seekers" who were looking for parts of some extraordinarily powerful artifact. Arodeth hasn't yet realized that this artifact refers to the *Deck of Destiny*; the characters can probably make this connection for her. If she realizes it, she opines that Lord Drustan is probably interested in securing the cards that have recently been found near the Storval Stairs. Arodeth is right; she warns the PCs that she expects Drustan to return from his travels at any moment—see "Drustan's Return" on page 66 for more details. At this point, she'll propose an alliance with the PCs. If they help her to confront Drustan, she'll give them *The Rakshasa* as payment. (Note that, if he hasn't already, this is the point at which Raflin accuses Arodeth of betrayal, as detailed on page 61.)

The Storval Stairs: Convincing Arodeth to give up her efforts to control the Storval Stairs is more difficult since she feels it's necessary for her mercenary company's survival and is intrigued by the site's mysteries. Even if she knows the PCs have defeated some of her mercenaries, she has reinforcements she can call in from across the Inner Sea. Despite her willingness to speak to the PCs, her initial attitude is indifferent. She can be convinced to seek other opportunities for the Band of Blades if the PCs can successfully Request this with a successful DC 37 Diplomacy check or if the PCs Coerce her into abandoning the site with a successful DC 35 Intimidation check. If the PCs Coerce her, she leaves at once with any remaining mercenaries, and the PCs must deal with Drustan on their own. If the

PCs exposed Ndede's true nature, though, she'll decide to abandon the Storval Stairs on her own once the confrontation with Drustan resolves.

XP Award: If the PCs negotiate with Arodeth, award them 60 XP, as though they'd defeated her in combat. If they convince her to leave the Storval Stairs, award them an additional 40 XP as well as XP for all the mercenaries she takes with her. When the PCs acquire *The Rakshasa*, award them 60 XP.

H14. BUNK ROOMS

LOW 13

Passages lead east and west from this central corridor to large rooms containing several bunks. The beds appear to be recently slept-in. The central area is entirely empty of furnishings. Doors exit to the north and the south of the chamber.

Sleeping pallets crowd the areas to the east and west; the confines are cramped, but the pallets are thick and comfortable.

A few personal goods and changes of clothes are neatly packed into satchels and traveling chests among the pallets, but none contain anything of value.

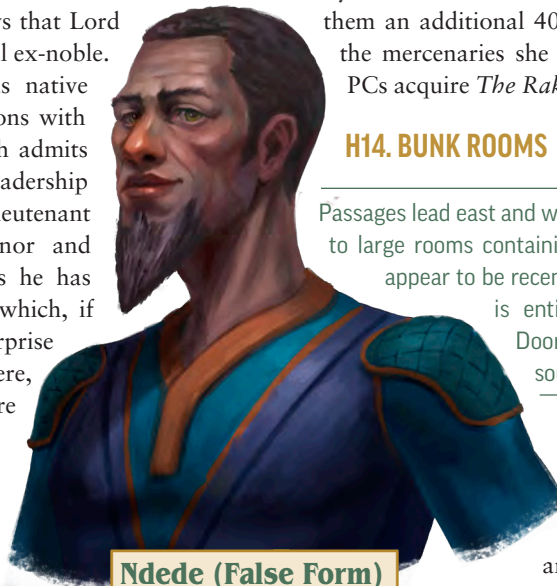
Creatures: The Band of Blades use the east and west portions of this room as barracks. During daylight hours, only four Band of Blades mercenaries (named Calth, Enavi, Jex, and Sarouph) are found here, dozing or otherwise relaxing. At night, these four mercenaries take up position at area H1 while the other mercenaries encountered throughout the complex return here to rest, making for a total of 12 mercenaries and two magi resting here. While resting, the mercenaries take a -4 penalty to initiative rolls to represent their grogginess. While a fight against a dozen mercenaries and a pair of magi all at once is technically an Extreme encounter, if the PCs surprise the mercenaries while they sleep, you should keep in mind that many of them won't be wearing armor—feel free to break the groups into more manageable encounters as you see fit, with the first one representing mercenaries who haven't yet undressed for bed and the second composed of those who join the fight after taking some time to wake up and don armor.

BLADE MAGI (0 OR 2)

CREATURE 11

Page 60

Initiative Perception +18



Ndede (False Form)

BLADE MERCENARIES (4 OR 12)

CREATURE 9

Page 52

Initiative Perception +15

H15. STOLEN TREASURES

The central chamber rises fifty feet to a cathedral ceiling. Three doorways provide exits from the room—one to the south and the others to the east and west. The door to the east is slightly ajar. The once-grand carvings decorating the walls of this room are blackened with thick layers of soot, and the worked stone tiles of the floor are chipped and covered with various carts, boxes, and barrels. All sorts of other loose trade goods lie haphazardly on the floor.



Ndede (True Form)

This is where the Band of Blades keeps the tolls and trade goods they extort from travelers. The containers are filled with things that the mercenaries think they might be able to use, such as whetstones or spare armor, but mostly goods they believe they can later sell. Any coins they take are stored here until the band's accountant, Ndede, gets around to tallying then storing the currency in a chest he keeps in his room. The mercenaries have a rule by mutual agreement that none of them can enter this room alone, so no one can be accused of stealing from the hoard.

Any significant sound in this chamber is likely to draw Ndede's attention from area **H16**; if he comes to investigate, he opens the door and, with surprising politeness, asks the PCs what they think they're doing. The PCs' encounter with Ndede is described in area **H16**, but he doesn't mind having it here.

Treasure: The mercenary company's treasure includes a *greater explosive arrow*, a neatly-packaged satchel containing all the components for a bleeding spines snare, four bolts of fine cloth worth 120 gp each, an ornate stool made of ebony and jasper worth 220 gp, nine boxes of gilt parchment worth 90 gp per box, and (spread through dozens of small pouches and containers) 458 gp and 3,390 sp. In addition, there's about 50 gp of miscellaneous trade goods and gear scattered throughout the area, but transporting all of this relatively mundane gear out of the room might not be worth the effort to the PCs.

Some of the chests filled with straw or paper also contain vials of alchemist's fire; there are two greater alchemist's fire and six moderate alchemist's fire. A character who finds these vials and succeeds at a DC 30 Crafting check realizes that they aren't part of the goods originally packed here but have been added later in a way that makes immolating the entire pile suspiciously easy.

H16. NDEDE'S ROOM

MODERATE 13

This stone chamber has been converted into a bedroom, although the heap of blankets sprawled at the far end of the room looks more like a nest than a bed. A mismatched writing desk and dresser stand on opposite sides of the doorway. The desk contains a variety of alchemical substances. A faint, unpleasant stink fills the air.

The bed, not the alchemical supplies, is the source of the stink, as Ndede likes to rest in his natural form, and the blankets have soaked up his stench aura. A PC can identify this lingering smell as evidence of some natural defense of a powerful creature with

a successful DC 36 Society or Perception check; a critical success reveals the smell is that of a popobawa.

Creatures: No one in the Band of Blades knows Ndede's secret—that he's a popobawa and not a talented human merchant—although Arodeth has begun to suspect that the accountant is hiding something. He's certainly the newest member of the Band of Blades, having been hired by Arodeth not long after she hit upon the idea of traveling to Varisia to charge tolls on the Storval Stairs.

Ndede prefers to spend time in this room, tinkering with his alchemical experiments and making adjustments to his complex plans to further demoralize Arodeth and the Band of Blades. His latest plots involve magical manipulation of her favorite apprentice, Raflin, and an end-game plan to destroy the mercenaries' hoard in a dramatic, demoralizing conflagration.

Ndede's first instinct upon encountering the PCs is to worm his way into their confidence and turn them against each other. He asks pleasantly what brought them here and expresses his hope that the other mercenaries aren't being "too much of a bother." He explains that he's the accountant for the Band of Blades and that his task is sorting and itemizing the treasures in the adjacent room, sighing as though he finds the task onerous and unpleasant. He asks why the PCs have come to the Storval Stairs; they don't seem like mere travelers to him.

If the PCs express a desire for the mercenaries to leave, Ndede chuckles and says that decision is up to their leader, Arodeth, and not him. If the PCs express interest in harrow cards, Ndede produces *The Liar* from a stack of notes on his work desk, shows it to the characters, and then makes a grand show of handing it to the PC who has done the least amount of talking or who seems least trusted by the others. He says, "I think we both know why *you* are the one who should be holding this particular card."

Ndede doesn't intend to let the PCs leave the Storval Stairs alive, but he doesn't mind if they leave him with an intent to go elsewhere in the area, such as to talk to Arodeth or to seek out other cards. In this case, he does what he can to monitor them with *clairaudience* and *clairvoyance*, working to secretly stoke any dissent within the group (such as by using Hallucinatory Haunting to engineer suspicious activities).

Once Ndede feels that he has pushed the PCs enough, or if he becomes worried they'll expose his true plans to the Band of Blades, he shifts to his true form and ambushes them. Ndede is a powerful foe, so be careful when combining his ambush with other encounters in the area—it's best if he jumps the PCs

between other fights rather than immediately after a battle. Ndede gives up and flees the Storval Stairs if reduced to fewer than 30 Hit Points.

NDEDE

CREATURE 15

Male popobawa (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 206)

Initiative Perception +25

Skills Ndede has Crafting +24 instead of a Lore skill.

Occult Innate Spells Ndede has already used his *dominate* spell today to maintain his control of Arodeth's bodyguard, Raflin.

Treasure: The alchemical equipment includes a vial of purple worm venom, a major antidote, and a major acid flask among a collection of unused supplies and reagents. In all, these supplies are worth 250 gp for the purposes of crafting alchemical items.

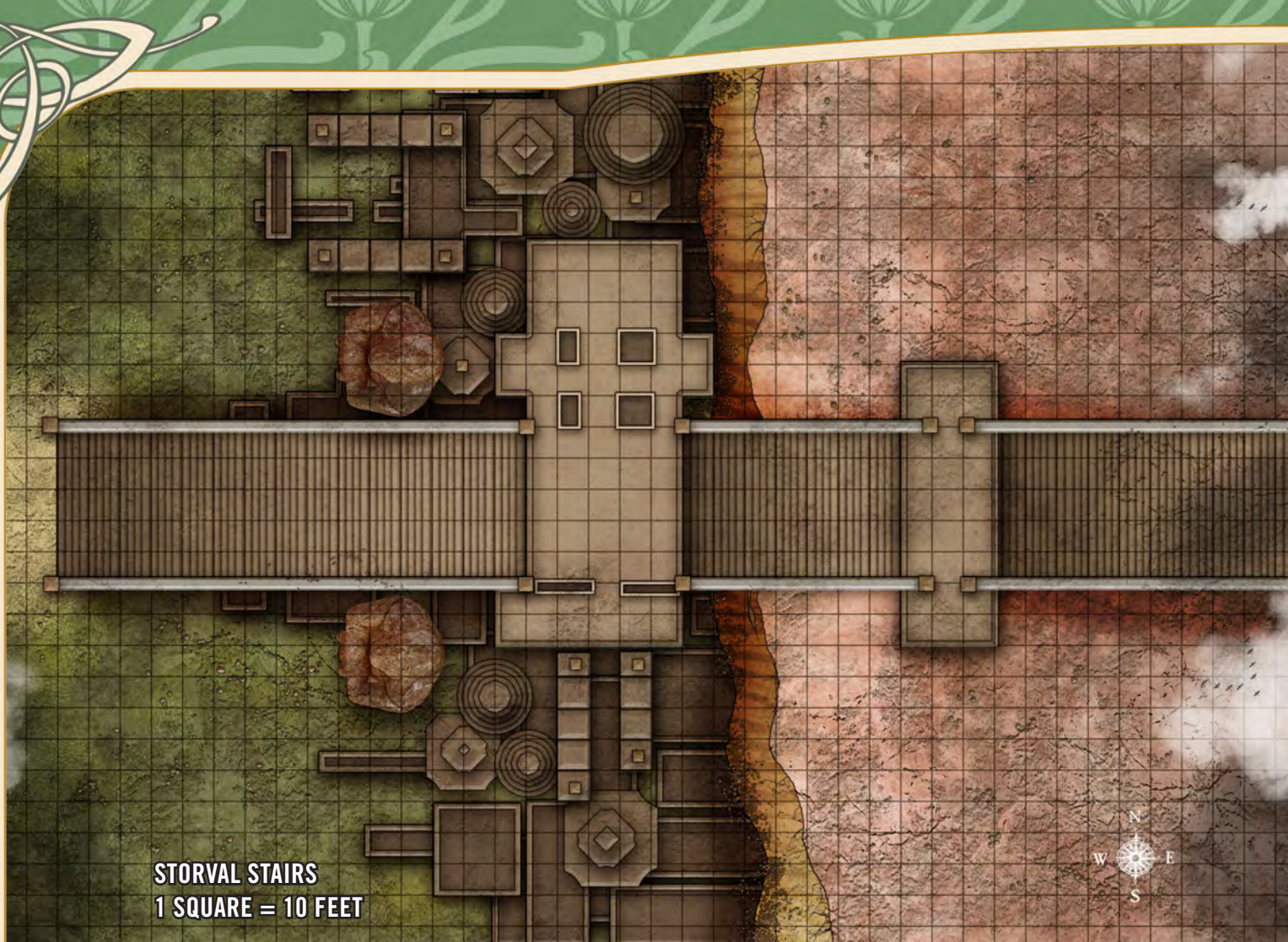
An obvious incongruity among the alchemical equipment is a single harrow card: *The Liar*, which showed up among Ndede's supplies. He doesn't know much history of the harrow and is at a loss for what its appearance means. He knows Arodeth is likely to find more significance in it, so he informed her that he has a card but not which one (even someone as unschooled in the harrow as Ndede realizes that a card called "the Liar" doesn't say good things about him). He hasn't bothered to invest the card and is more interested in using it to sow discord than using it himself.

XP Award: Award the PCs 60 XP for recovering *The Liar*.

H17. ARODETH'S CHAMBER

This room contains a comfortable looking bedroll and several open chests filled with clothes and books. The room appears to be lived in recently.

This is Arodeth's private room, although she's almost never here because of the research she's undertaking in the records room (area **H13**). The clothes belong to her, and the books are all treatises on Aroden and prophecies—Arodeth knows these books are all useless to her now, but she has carried the volumes for decades and can't bear to part with them now. Anyone who succeeds at a DC 30 Occultism, Society, or relevant Lore check (such as Aroden Lore or Prophecy Lore) understands the rough outlines of Arodeth's background: that she spent a great deal of time striving to make prophecies across the world come true with the goal of bringing about Aroden's return in 4714 AR, only to give up once that date passed and no return occurred.



STORVAL STAIRS
1 SQUARE = 10 FEET

Treasure: One of the chests contains a *greater clandestine cloak* that Arodeth uses for trips to urban locales but prefers not to wear here at the Storval Stairs due to its plain, unflattering appearance. At your discretion, if she suspects that someone like the PCs might be spying on her, she'll wear this magic item instead.

Drustan's Return

When the Unmatched's attempt to steal the *Deck of Destiny* backfired and the cards were scattered, the three villains fled the furious norns to regroup. While the other two members (Raven and the Prince of Wolves) went their own ways to seek the missing cards, Lord Drustan chose to return to the Band of Blades, hoping to use his mercenary allies to acquire the cards for himself. Upon learning that three of the cards had actually come into the possession of those allies, Drustan was convinced that his plan was destined for success. He immediately set out to follow up on a lead for *The Mountain Man*, telling Arodeth that he was hoping to recruit more like-minded giants to the Band of Blades. As he did, he also secretly ordered a Band of

Blades agent back in Absalom to chase down cards he suspected were located there.

Drustan's explanation never quite sit well with Arodeth, and if she learns more of what he has been up to, such knowledge confirms her worries. The timing of when Drustan returns to the Storval Stairs is left to you to stage, but it should occur not long after the PCs either secure all three cards or after they've arranged an alliance with Arodeth once she promises them *The Rakshasa*.

If the PCs discover the crystal ball in area **H8**, they might think to have Arodeth use it to attempt to scry Drustan. If they do so, and the attempt is successful, have them see that Drustan is drawing near to the Storval Stairs, approaching from the west. They might be able to learn a bit in advance about the diabolic aid he has with him, but at the very least, the ability to plan ahead should grant the PCs and any of their allies a +2 item bonus to their initiative roll when they start the first fight.

Quick-thinking PCs might even consider recruiting the Shoanti scouts to the battle as well, although against foes as powerful as Drustan, they aren't

likely to be much help in combat. Instead, consider having the Shoanti allies face off against other foes in the background while the PCs focus their efforts on Drustan himself.

DRUSTAN ATTACKS

SEVERE 13

Creatures: Always one for a dramatic entrance, when Lord Drustan returns from his successful mission to claim *The Mountain Man*, he approaches on horseback from the west at the base of the Storval Stairs, accompanied by a small band of loyal soldiers and a pair of executioner devils. He's unlikely to expect the PCs, and as such, he confidently approaches the stairs, intending to ride up to area **H2** to meet with Arodeth. As he does so, he calls out a brazen challenge to her, demanding she come speak to him in an arrogant tone. He hopes to use his allies to take both command of the mercenaries and *The Rakshasa* from her. If Arodeth is allied with the PCs, she encourages them to attack first, or even to set up an ambush—the *Runelord's Glare* at areas **H4** or **H5** would provide an excellent advantage if the PCs have learned about them.

Lord Drustan is a sneering bully who likes hearing himself talk; if the PCs engage him in conversation, his threats get more imperious and long-winded. He won't fall for any ruse for long and truly believes that the *Deck of Destiny* by rights should be his. The artifact's potential to control fate suits his domineering nature. He might even taunt the PCs by saying something like the following:

"Here's a secret about those cards you've collected for me ever since you made such a nuisance of yourself in Absalom. You can't hold them if you're dead. So you can either try to keep them, and die, or you can give them to the Unmatched, and die."

Try to have Drustan name-drop the Unmatched at least once during this fight, so that the PCs have a name to focus on as the next adventure starts. In any event, once combat begins, Drustan dismounts and focuses his initial attacks on Arodeth if she's present, or any PC that he realizes carries cards from the *Deck of Destiny* if not. He has no interest in taking prisoners and orders his minions to show no mercy. His soldiers use arrow volleys on foes at first but can charge up the stairs (treating them as difficult terrain) if needed. The munagola devils take to the air to fire upon foes

with their bows—if PCs are stationed in either of the Karzoug statues, the devils swoop up there first to take them out. Drustan and his allies fight to the death.

DRUSTAN

CREATURE 14

Page 92

Initiative Perception +25

MUNAGOLA DEVILS (2) CREATURE 11

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 66

Initiative Perception +24

CAVALRY TROOPS (2) CREATURE 9

Elite Hellknight cavalry brigade
(Pathfinder Bestiary 3 6, 44)

Initiative Perception +18

XP Award: Award the PCs 60 XP for each card from the *Deck of Destiny* they recover from Drustan.



Drustan

Concluding the Adventure

There are a total of 18 cards from the *Deck of Destiny* available for the PCs to discover in this adventure. Once they defeat Drustan, the adventure is over. Any cards that the PCs missed can either be added to encounters in the next adventure as you see fit, or you can have them end up in the hands of Raven herself, which means that the PCs will need to wait until the third adventure to get a chance to claim them.

Arodeth's fate, if she survives, is up to the PCs. If the PCs showed her understanding and kindness, the experience might even bring about a change of heart and result in her alignment shifting to lawful neutral—what role Arodeth might play for the remainder of *Stolen Fate* is left to you and the PCs to determine.

If they took part in the fight, the Shoanti scouts should mostly survive intact if the PCs won the battle. In any event, they're quick to retake control of the Storval Stairs once more. If the PCs show them how to use the *Runelord's Glare*, they look uneasily at each other, as if unsure about using such a powerful weapon from a sinister fallen empire. They resolve to take it up with the leaders of their Quah, but whether or not they ultimately embrace this ancient weapon is left for you to decide.

For now, the PCs have an opportunity to rest, learn about their new cards, and explore more opportunities in the Harrow Court. The six arches remain clouded, but they won't stay that way for long. Danger will find the PCs soon enough when the Prince of Wolves comes to call in "The Destiny War."



The Harrow Court

The Harrowing Three may have created the *Deck of Destiny*, but their focus on using it to set the future in stone distracted them from understanding the true scope of their accomplishment. By infusing each of the deck's 54 cards with raw quintessence scraped from all corners of the Great Beyond, they had unwittingly planted the seeds that would eventually grow into the demiplane known as the Harrow Court.

It wasn't until the cards of the deck were scattered and became individual artifacts that the potential for the Harrow Court became possible. The more each card of the *Deck of Destiny* ached to return to the fold, the more the quintessence within them began to build power. When one card from each of the deck's six suits were reunited, that power reached a mystical critical mass, resulting in the spontaneous creation of the Harrow Court—an event realized, at first, only by a precious few: the PCs themselves.

In this Adventure Path, the Harrow Court serves as a home base for the PCs. Once they trigger the demiplane's creation, they'll continue to unlock expansions to the realm as they discover cards and "add" them to the Court, incarnating the card into the demiplane to alter its reality. While there's an implied order to the elements added to the demiplane (reflecting the order in which the cards are discovered during the adventure), which cards and what order they're brought to the Harrow Court is left entirely in the PCs' hands.

Into the Court

The easiest way to enter the Harrow Court is to use the Enter Harrow Court activity—indeed, this is the only way to enter the demiplane the first time, for the PCs' arrival in the Harrow Court actually finalizes the creation of the demiplane. The act of investing a card from the *Deck of Destiny* and then bringing that card into the Harrow Court automatically activates that card's incarnation effect on the demiplane as well (see Epitomes on page 73). After this initial investiture, that incarnation effect persists even if the card doesn't remain invested over the course of the adventure.

Before one can use the Enter the Harrow Court activity, six cards—one from each suit—must be brought together. In "The Choosing," this event occurs automatically at the start of the adventure's second chapter. At this point, only the PCs can use a card from the *Deck of Destiny* to Enter the Harrow Court, as the demiplane's formation is inexorably linked to their souls and fates. This gives the PCs an advantage for a time—until the start of the second adventure in the Adventure Path, "The Destiny War," when their enemies discover there are other methods to gain entry into the Harrow Court.

ENTER THE HARROW COURT

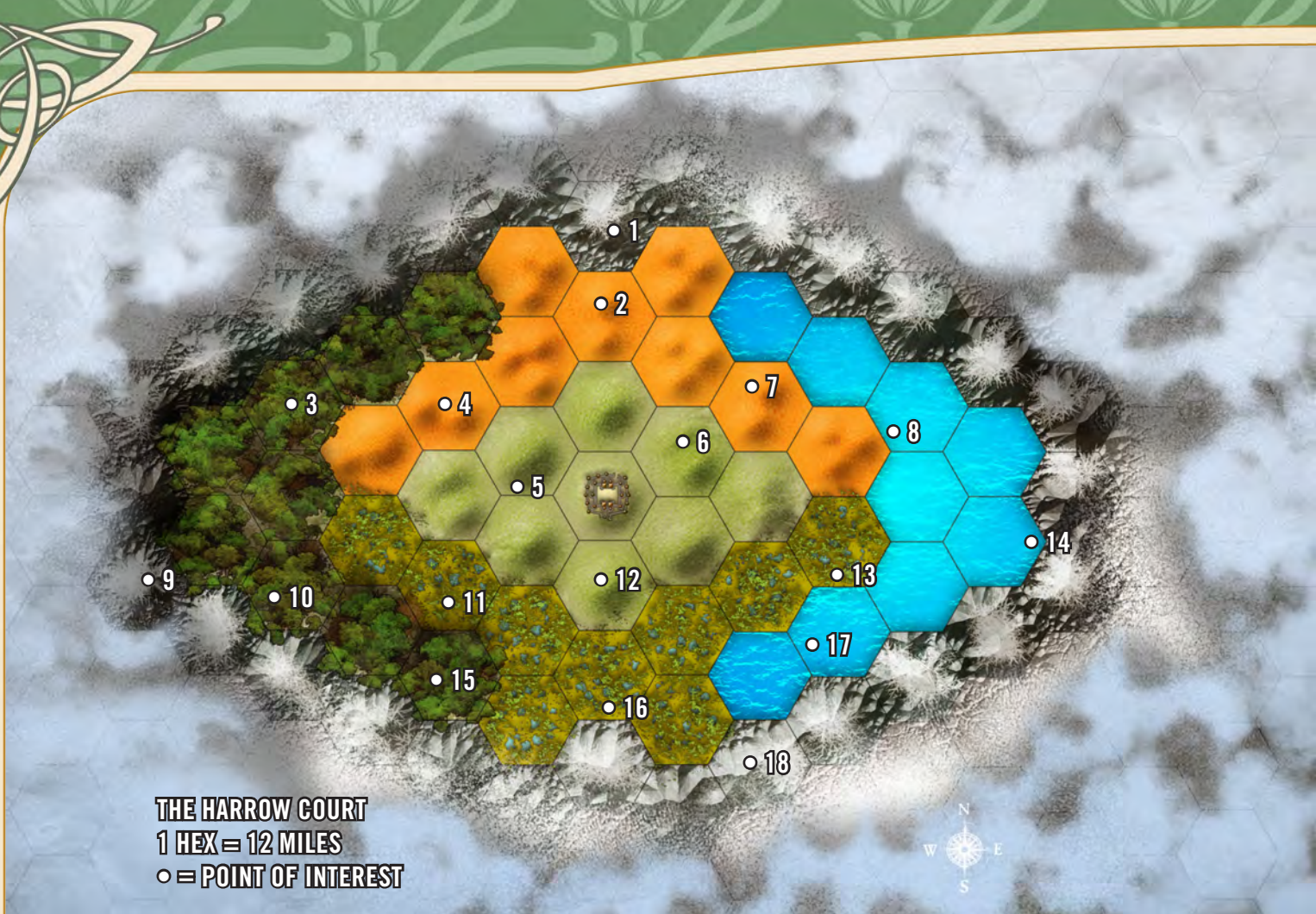
CONCENTRATION CONJURATION EXPLORATION MANIPULATION OCCULT
TELEPORTATION

You concentrate on a card from the *Deck of Destiny* that you have invested, focusing on it as if you were looking through a window rather than at a piece of artwork. After 1 minute, a stationary portal appears in the air in front of you, its edges resembling the quick riffling of a thick deck of cards. You and any other creatures you designate can pass through this portal to enter the Harrow Court, arriving in a fortress at the center of the demiplane known as the Harrowheart. (As you continue to epitomize more cards within the Harrow Court, you unlock new areas into which you can potentially arrive as well—but in this adventure, that ability won't yet be granted.) Once created, the portal persists for up to 1 minute or until you take an action with the envision trait to close the portal.

A character in the Harrow Court can use this activity to open a portal out of the demiplane, but this portal always leads to the same point in the multiverse they were at when they previously entered the Harrow Court (unless certain cards have been epitomized to allow more options).

HARROW COURT FEATURES

Once the Harrow Court has been created, it's possible for anyone to travel to the Harrow Court using spells such as *plane shift* or *gate*, but the newness of the plane and its obscurity means such methods are difficult. Traveling via *plane shift*, for example, requires the use of a tuning fork attuned to the Harrow Court. If



The Avalanche:

The Bear:

The Beating:

The Betrayal:

The Big Sky:

The Brass Dwarf:

The Carnival:

The Courtesan:

The Cricket:

The Crows:

The Cyclone:

The Dance:

The Demon's Lantern:

The Desert:

The Eclipse:

The Empty Throne:

The Fiend:

The Fool:

The Forge:

The Hidden Truth:

The Inquisitor:

The Joke:

The Juggler:

The Keep:

The Liar:

The Locksmith:

The Lost:

The Marriage:

The Midwife:

The Mountain Man:

The Owl:

The Paladin:

The Peacock:

The Publican:

The Queen Mother:

The Rabbit Prince:

The Rakshasa:

The Sickness:

The Silent Hag:

The Snakebite:

The Survivor:

The Tangled Briar:

The Teamster:

The Theater:

The Trader:

The Trumpet:

The Twin:

The Tyrant:

The Unicorn:

The Uprising:

The Vision:

The Wanderer:

The Waxworks:

The Winged Serpent:

the PCs wish to create such a tuning fork, they must succeed at a DC 30 Crafting check and expend 200 gp in raw materials. The check must be made while in the Harrow Court, after which the newly created focus can function for the casting of any *plane shift* spell to travel to the demiplane. Other methods to enter the Harrow Court exist—some of which the PCs may discover (or endure) as the Stolen Fate Adventure Path progresses (these methods are presented in the adventure text as they occur).

Once a character arrives in the Harrow Court, exit from the demiplane is possible via six portals found within Harrowheart or via plane traveling spells like *plane shift*. A character who arrives in the demiplane by using the Enter the Harrow Court activity can use that same activity to open a portal back to their initial point of entrance from the Material Plane. Certain card epitomes can provide additional options to exit the Harrow Court via this method, but until those cards are epitomized, using the Enter the Harrow Court activity only returns the traveler to their original point of departure from the previous plane.

THE HARROW COURT

PLANE

N FINITE

Category Demiplane

Divinities none

Native Inhabitants simulacra

The Harrow Court appears as an idyllic region that could have been plucked from the heart of Avistan. At the demiplane's center, a fortress known as Harrowheart sits atop a hill, which is in turn surrounded by a village and farmlands. To the north, the farmlands give way to barren deserts, while to the south they decline into a swamp. A vast lake lies to the east, and a dense forest grows in the west, while all around, towering mountains surround the realm, giving it the appearance of being nestled in a single vast valley. The sun rises in the east every morning at 6:00 AM and sets in the west every evening at 6:00 PM, splitting time into equal periods of twelve hour days and nights. The sky above appears normal (complete with moon and stars at night) but has an impassible barrier—the edge of the demiplane—at an altitude of 3 miles.

There are no dangerous monsters native to the demiplane. Certain downtime activities the PCs unlock might allow for the manifestation of more dangerous creatures, but these manifestations exist only in the context of the downtime activity itself. Until enemies invade the Harrow Court in “The Destiny War,” Encounter Mode isn't utilized to resolve situations within this demiplane.

The PCs are the only truly living things within the Harrow Court, but they're not alone. People and animals populate the fortress, surrounding village, and modest

farmhouses that dot the countryside, representing what appears to be a perfectly ordinary mix of both young and old from numerous common ancestries. Beyond the farmlands, simulacra of all kinds of wild animals populate the wilderness, yet they do not encroach upon the heartland of the demiplane. When the PCs first arrive in the Harrow Court, it is sparsely populated, but as they continue to expand the realm, its population grows as well.

These people and creatures are created by the *Deck of Destiny*, but they're not truly “alive.” Instead, they're more akin to simulacra. They possess full memories, relationships, and interests that seem legitimate—these citizens of the Harrow Court believe that they have always lived here and have memories that include lineages and traditions, yet they're not actual living creatures. In a way, the people of the Harrow Court offer the PCs a preview of what reality might be like if the Harrowed Three were to succeed in their goal—a world where everyone believes they have free will but are little more than props on a stage. All of these simulacra, be they citizens or wild animals, appear to live and even die as normal, but with each new sunrise in the Harrow Court, dead bodies fade and those simulacra wake as normal with no memory of their previous death as they continue to play out their constant but repeating role within the demiplane.

Once created, the Harrow Court and its simulacra persist, regardless of the fates of the PCs who epitomized their elements. If the *Deck of Destiny* is destroyed, the Harrow Court ceases to be as well; in this event, creatures visiting the Harrow Court are cast back to a location on their home plane that has some sort of nostalgic tie to their past, while any objects left behind are either destroyed or scattered across the Great Beyond.

EXPLORING THE HARROW COURT

The PCs can explore the demiplane as they wish, and can even make use of the demiplane as a place to rest, recover, and pursue Downtime activities. The map of Harrowheart provided here can be used to calculate travel times as needed when PCs pursue activities, particularly those tied to specific points of interest.

Harrowheart

Harrowheart is a sprawling complex featuring dozens of rooms—more than enough of each type to suffice for the PCs. No map of Harrowheart is provided. A PC can travel to any room in the castle within a few minutes. Feel free to create a map of the castle if you wish or allow your PCs to design one—but keep in mind that in the second adventure, “The Destiny War,” an assault on the Harrow Court takes place, and some sample maps of locations in Harrowheart are provided to resolve combats in that adventure.

EPITOMES BEYOND

The simulacrum-like natives of the Harrow Court, along with all of the materials and objects found within the demiplane, cannot exist beyond this realm. A simulacrum who leaves or is brought out of the Harrow Court immediately vanishes only to appear again in the Court with no memories of their failed attempt to leave. Likewise, objects and materials gathered in the Harrow Court vanish and return to their starting location if a character attempts to carry them off-plane. A player character who wishes to take advantage of the opportunities for crafting on the Harrow Court must supply their own raw materials brought in from any other plane for anything they build while in the court. Note that certain epitomes can introduce exceptions to these limitations, however.

With the exception of the Grand Hall (of which there is always only one in Harrowheart), the total number of each of the following types of rooms is always equal to the number of PCs in the party. If this number changes as the campaign progresses, Harrowheart's layout changes as well when no one is looking. As the PCs grow the court by incarnating more cards, each of the rooms is increasingly attended by droves of simulacra servants ranging from cooks to valets and more, all eager and ready to ensure the player characters' visits to Harrowheart are as comfortable as possible.

Bedrooms: These chambers are a perfect place to rest and relax. They can be outfitted as recovery rooms as well, to provide places for long-term rest or other medical care as needed.

Dining Halls: These chambers range from sprawling rooms capable of hosting galas to intimate nooks for single dining. Meals provided by cooks in adjoining kitchens are filling but not overly flavorful. While the materials used to cook these meals vanish like all other materials if taken from Harrowheart, the sustenance they provide is real—a character who eats and drinks in one of the castle's dining halls remains full and sated, even if they immediately leave the demiplane after finishing their meal.

Grand Hall: The grand hall occupies the center of Harrowheart. This is where the PCs arrive when they use the Enter the Harrow Court activity. Several doors provide access to other parts of the castle, but the most significant features of the grand hall are the six looming alcoves along its northern wall. The six arches over the entrances to these alcoves are adorned

with imagery associated with the six suits of the Harrow—hammers, keys, shields, tomes, stars, and crowns. These archways can be activated as portals to travel to points across Golarion where cards from the *Deck of Destiny* lie in wait—see Part 2 of this adventure for more details.

Training Rooms: The first time a training room is entered, it's empty, featuring only a single meditation mat lying on the center of the floor. A character who spends a minute meditating on the mat can adjust the room's contents to be a shrine, laboratory, library, dojo, garden, sparring hall, or any similar room that matches the themes of their class. The room thereafter can be used by any character of that class for the Retraining downtime activity. A character can adjust the room's contents to support a different class by meditating at the center of the room—provided the room isn't already in use.

Workshops: Harrowheart's workshops feature numerous tools and resources for creating a wide range of items, including magical items. The tools located in each workshop are of high quality and grant a +1 item bonus to any Crafting check made within. Raw materials must be provided by the crafter, of course, as no materials found within Harrowheart can exist outside the demiplane.

The Realm

Harrowheart is situated on a hill at the very center of the Harrow Court, surrounded by a small village in turn surrounded by farmlands and pastures. It's in this village that the simulacra who play the role of servants in Harrowheart "live," and all the food and drink served in Harrowheart's dining halls come from the surrounding farmlands. Beyond these fertile plains lie scorching deserts, trackless swamps, a deep lake, and a sprawling forest. Surrounding them all is a range of looming mountains.

The PCs are free to explore as they see fit, and as they epitomize more cards, the options and activities they can pursue in these terrains increases, but until those options are epitomized, there's not much more to do in the wilds surrounding Harrowheart other than sightsee.

In order to pursue activities in these outlying terrains, a PC must travel to the required terrain. Resolve travel using Exploration Mode, and use the map of the Harrow Court on page 70 to calculate time spent traveling. Sometimes, a PC may find themselves having to spend the night outside Harrowheart's comforts. In these instances, the character must use Survival to Subsist. (As with the dining rooms, sustenance gathered while Subsisting is filling, even while the

food itself cannot exist outside of the demiplane.) Each terrain entry below notes additional features a PC faces when traversing the terrain. The DC listed in parentheses after the terrain's name indicates the Survival DC to Subsist in that terrain.

Desert (DC 30): The desert is difficult terrain. Daytime temperatures are severe heat, while nighttime temperatures are mild cold.

Farmland (DC 10): Temperatures in the farmland are normal during day and night.

Forest (DC 25): The forest is difficult terrain. Temperatures are normal during day and night.

Lake (DC 25): Small boats and rafts are commonplace along the lake's shores. There's always an available watercraft within no more than a ten-minute walk along the water's edge. Temperatures here are normal during the day and mild cold at night.

Mountain (DC 35): The mountains are greater difficult terrain. Temperatures here are mild cold during the day and severe cold at night.

Swamp (DC 25): The swamp is greater difficult terrain. Temperatures here are mild heat during the day and normal at night.

Points of Interest

In each of the six terrains lie three points of interest; these are locations where certain epitomes manifest their associated activities. When the PCs epitomize such a card, they get to choose what point of interest in the appropriate terrain hosts that activity. Once this location is selected, it cannot be changed.

All points of interest are numbered, allowing you to track which ones are assigned to particular epitomes.

Epitomes

The defining characteristic of the Harrow Court are its epitomes—one for each card in the *Deck of Destiny*. Each of these epitomes helps to expand the demiplane by adding new opportunities to the realm. While the PCs themselves may experience the wonder and surprise at each new addition to the demiplane, the simulacra of the Harrow Court remember the new additions as if they had always been there, their memories updating and society adjusting as needed to incorporate the changes seamlessly.

ACTIVATING AN EPITOME

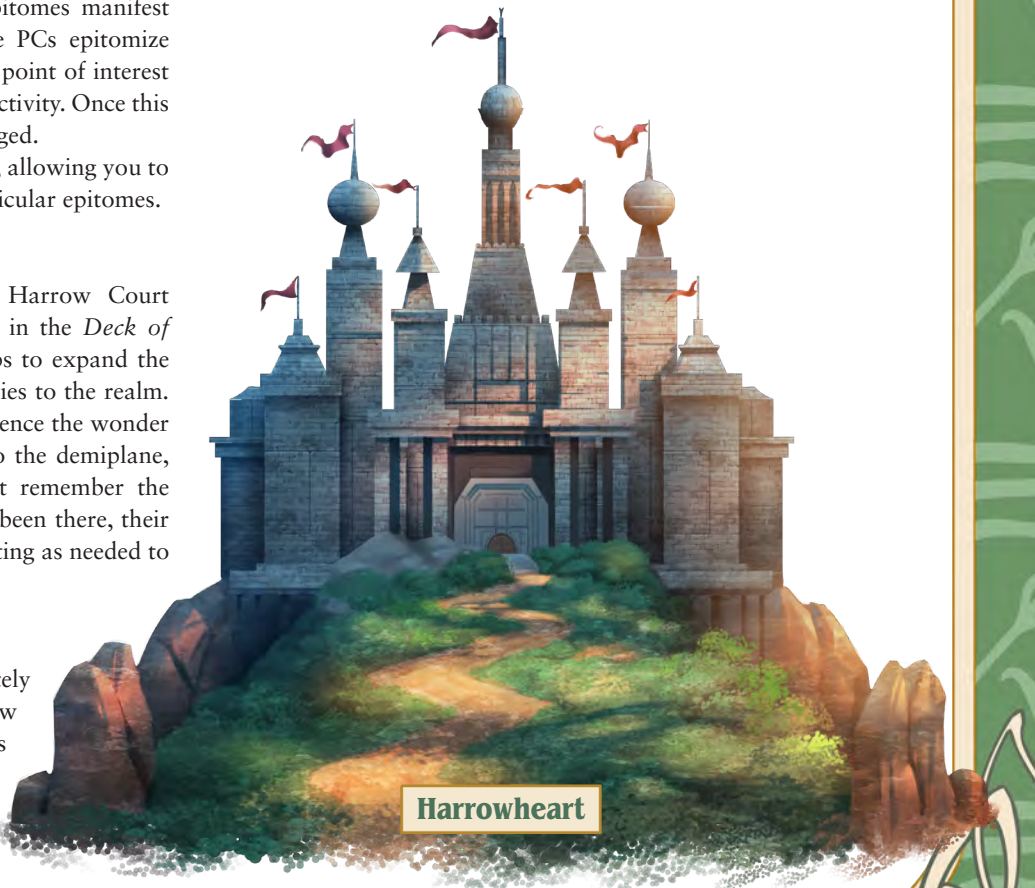
A card's epitome activates immediately as soon as it arrives within the Harrow Court, as long as the card itself is invested. Likewise, if a PC invests a card while within the Harrow Court, its epitome activates automatically.

TRACKING EPITOMES

As the PCs epitomize more cards, you'll need to track which epitomes manifest in the Harrow Court. One way to do this is to devote a Harrow deck to this task—when a card is epitomized, move it into a separate stack or collection from the rest of the cards. You can also use the map on page 70 of this volume, which includes spaces for the PCs track this information as they build the realm up with additional epitomes.

Once a card's epitome activates, the player characters immediately become aware of those effects, regardless of where in the Harrow Court the epitome manifests. An epitome remains active forever (or at least, until the Harrow Court's destruction)—there's no way to reverse an epitome once it takes place, although at the GM's discretion, an effect like a *wish* can reverse a single epitome of the caster's choice.

Specific effects for each card's epitome are detailed in the Adventure Toolbox beginning on page 75. Epitome effects for cards discovered in the next two adventures will appear in Adventure Toolboxes for those adventures.



Harrowheart



Adventure Toolbox

The harrow deck plays a prominent role in *Stolen Fate*, and you can incorporate an actual deck of harrow cards into your game to enhance your game play. While not required, a deck of harrow cards can not only add to the verisimilitude of your game, but provide players with a tactile reminder of the additional magic items at their characters' disposal by allowing them to keep a "hand" of invested cards from the *Deck of Destiny*.

The Deck of Destiny

When all 54 cards of the *Deck of Destiny* are gathered together, the deck gains additional powers and features. At the beginning of *Stolen Fate*, the cards have all been scattered. Details on the complete artifact's powers as a whole can be found in the third volume of *Stolen Fate*, *Pathfinder Adventure Path #192: The Worst of All Worlds*. Each individual card from the *Deck of Destiny* is itself an artifact, and as the PCs gather them together, they'll collect a growing number of resources that allow them to build their own "hand" of additional powers to aid them in their quest.

Each card from the *Deck of Destiny* is a 20th-level artifact that grants a passive boon and an activated ability. There's no need to Identify Magic once a character holds one of these cards in their hand—the function of the card is imparted automatically to a character as soon as a card is touched (although its epitome effect can only be discovered by being in the Harrow Court while the card is invested). Once invested, a card need only be carried on the PC's person to function or to grant them its activated ability, whether they hold the card in hand, carry it in a pouch, or tuck it into a boot, belt, or hatband.

A PC can have up to five cards from the *Deck of Destiny* at any one time, but regardless of how many cards they invest, the cards collectively count only as a single item. In effect, one to five cards comprise a single invested "hand" that grants numerous effects. In this way, as the PCs discover more and more cards, they can customize their hand as needed, swapping cards out each time they Invest an Item.

As detailed earlier in this adventure, the cards of the *Deck of Destiny* have an additional ability,

one that only manifests once a card from each suit come into the party's possession—the creation of the Harrow Court. This demiplane is detailed further in "The Harrow Court" article that begins on page 68 of this volume.

DECK OF DESTINY CARDS

The following 18 cards from the *Deck of Destiny* are present in this adventure. This includes the cards the characters have in their possession at the start of the campaign, as described in the *Stolen Fate Player's Guide* and the sidebar on page 7. Note that while each harrow card has an associated ability score and alignment, these qualities do not directly impact who can use the card.

Beyond its passive and active uses, each card has an epitome effect that describes what happens when that card is epitomized in the Harrow Court (page 73).

The individual cards of the *Deck of Destiny* cannot be destroyed, but a method for potentially destroying the entire deck is detailed in the third volume of *Stolen Fate*. Once the PCs discover individual cards, they'll find that lost or stolen cards inexplicably return to their possession within an hour. Cards that a PC gives away willingly do not return—at your discretion, the PCs can rediscover these cards in the possessions of other NPCs during the *Stolen Fate Adventure Path*. At the very least, they should rejoin the other cards at this campaign's climax, most likely in the possession of the PCs' final foes.

THE BIG SKY

ITEM 20

UNIQUE ABJURATION ARTIFACT HARROW COURT INVESTED MAGICAL

Usage carried; Bulk –

Suit Hammer (Str); Alignment chaotic good

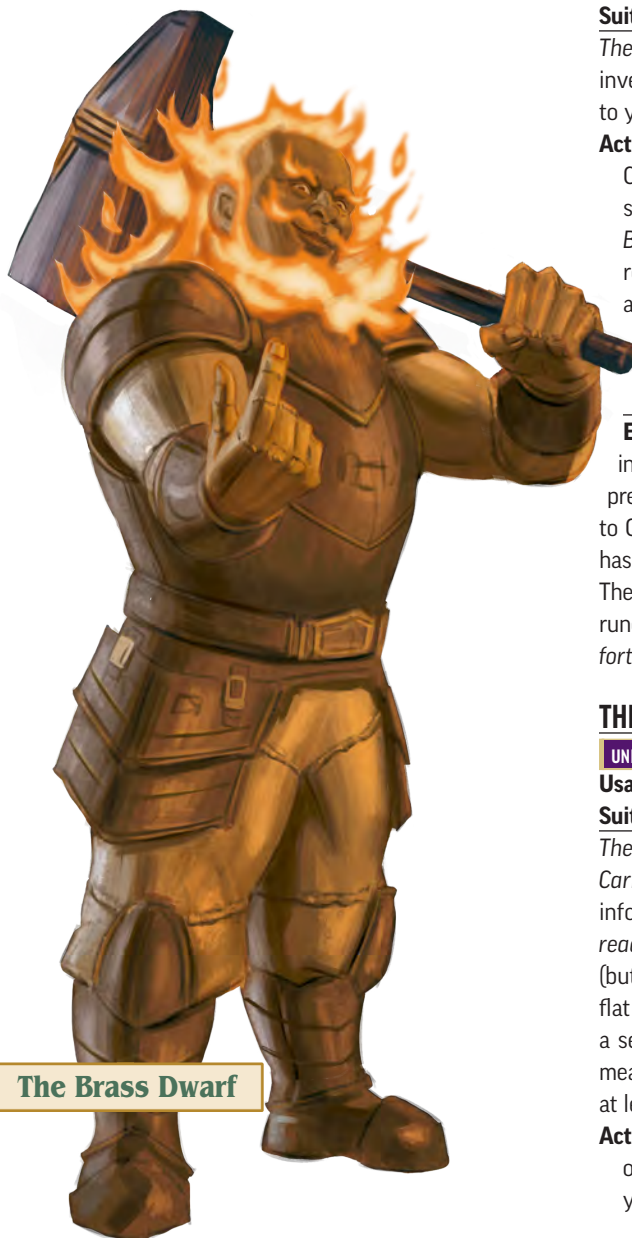
The Big Sky represents widespread change or liberation. As long as you have *The Big Sky* invested, you gain a +2 item bonus to Perception checks made while you are flying outside during the day and to any check made to Escape. The bonus increases to +3 if you are at least 17th level.

Activate ♦♦ envision; Frequency once per day; Effect

For 10 minutes, you and up to four creatures you touch ignore difficult terrain and effects that would give a

circumstance penalty to Speed. If you are at least 17th level, the targets also ignore greater difficult terrain.

Epitome When you epitomize *The Big Sky*, assign it to a point of interest in the Harrow Court's desert area. This marks the location of a sprawling expanse of sand that's been melted into a field of reflective glass that mirrors the sky above. The temperature here during the day is extreme heat—every 10 minutes, a creature in the region takes 2d6 fire damage. At night, the reverse holds true; the temperate here becomes extremely cold and inflicts 2d6 cold damage every 10 minutes. More astonishingly, this region has a supernatural ability to help a creature use their raw strength to break free from curses they're suffering from. Once per day, a character can spend an hour meditating here, enduring either the extreme heat



The Brass Dwarf

or cold, but at the end of that hour, the character can select one curse that they're currently afflicted by, then attempt an Athletics check against the curse's DC.

Critical Success The curse is counteracted.

Success The curse is counteracted as long as its level is equal to or less than the character's level.

Failure The curse is counteracted as long as its level is equal to or less than the character's level - 4.

Critical Failure The curse is not removed, and the character overextends themselves in the attempt, becoming enfeebled 3.

THE BRASS DWARF

ITEM 20

UNIQUE ABJURATION ARTIFACT HARROW COURT INVESTED MAGICAL

Usage carried; **Bulk** -

Suit Shield (Con); **Alignment** lawful neutral

The Brass Dwarf represents invulnerability. When you invest *The Brass Dwarf*, you gain resistance to fire equal to your level.

Activate ➤ **envision**; **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** Choose acid, cold, electricity, fire, mental, poison, or sonic. You can't choose the damage type for which *The Brass Dwarf* currently gives you resistance. You gain resistance to the damage you chose equal to your level, and you lose the prior resistance that *The Brass Dwarf* gave you. For 1 minute, you gain weakness equal to half your level to the damage type of the prior resistance.

Epitome A clockwork dwarf made of brass manifests in one of Harrowheart's workshops. The brass dwarf's presence and assistance increases the item bonus granted to Crafting checks in the workshop to +2. The brass dwarf has no name, but gracefully accepts any the PCs offer them. The brass dwarf knows the formulas for all *armor potency* runes, *resilient potency* runes, *energy-resistant* runes, and *fortification* runes—they can teach these formulas to the PCs.

THE CARNIVAL

ITEM 20

UNIQUE ARTIFACT DIVINATION HARROW COURT INVESTED MAGICAL

Usage carried; **Bulk** -

Suit Star (Wis); **Alignment** chaotic neutral

The Carnival represents false dreams. When you have *The Carnival* invested, your flat check DCs to obtain reliable information from divination effects (such as *augury* or *read fate*, or the activation of this card) are reduced by 2 (but not to less than 2). Casting a divination effect with a flat check, whether or not the flat check succeeds, gives a series of subtly different visions that don't confuse the meaning but make you stupefied 1 for 1 round. If you're at least 17th level, the flat check is instead reduced by 3.

Activate ➤➤ (divination, prediction) **envision**; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You peer into the future and witness yourself walking through a colorful but vaguely sinister

carnival, meeting a variety of strange people. One of these people looks more genuine than the others and resembles someone you're likely to meet for the first time in the next 24 hours (if anyone). This resemblance might be metaphorical, such a clown signifying someone who is silly or a stilt-walker representing someone who is tall. You also get a sense for whether this person can be trusted, should be distrusted, or neither, based on how they're most likely to interact with you and your allies. The GM decides who this new person might be, then rolls a secret DC 6 flat check. On a failure, the result is always "neither," making it hard to determine whether a "neither" result is accurate.

Epitome When you epitomize *The Carnival*, assign it to a point of interest in the Harrow Court's farmland area. This marks the location of a colorful, vibrant, and slightly off-putting fairground where festivals and celebrations are in constant swing. The simulacra who inhabit this carnival never leave and tend to subtly draw appearances and themes from potential foes the PC may face in their future. Once per week, a character can spend 8 hours at the fairground simply observing its participants—those who do can attempt a DC 28 Perception check.

Critical Success The PC observes some of the carnival performers and gains subtle clues as to the nature of a foe they will soon face. The GM chooses a specific, named enemy that the PCs are likely to face at some point in the current adventure they're playing. When the PC encounters that foe (as long as the foe isn't disguised), they automatically recognize them. At this point, the GM informs the PC that they recognize the foe from their visit to the carnival, and the PC learns information about the foe as if they had achieved a critical success in an attempt to Recall Knowledge against that target. Until the party encounters and defeats that foe, they cannot visit this carnival again to search for clues.

Success As success, but instead of granting insight into the nature of a specific foe, the GM chooses a generic monster that the PCs may soon face, selecting from standard monsters that might be encountered in the current adventure the PCs are playing. The information gained is equal to what the PC would have gained from a success by Recalling Knowledge about that monster.

Failure Apart from a vaguely unsettling feeling of being watched themselves, the PC learns nothing from their visit to the carnival.

Critical Failure Rather than noticing anything helpful, the PC emerges from their trip to the carnival with paranoid feelings of being watched by unseen eyes, and becomes stupefied 3.

THE EMPTY THRONE

ITEM 20

UNIQUE **ARTIFACT** **DIVINATION** **HARROW COURT** **INVESTED** **MAGICAL**
Usage carried; **Bulk** –

Suit Crown (Cha); **Alignment** lawful good

The Empty Throne represents great loss and wisdom from those who are now gone. As long as you have *The Empty Throne* invested, it grants you a +2 item bonus to Society and Lore checks made to Recall Knowledge regarding individuals who are no longer alive (such as checks to learn about Taldor's historical founder, but not to learn about its current empress). This increases to a +3 item bonus if you are at least 17th level.

Activate ♦ envision; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You overwhelm a target you can see within 60 feet with feelings of helplessness and loss. The creature must attempt a Will DC equal to your class DC.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target can't benefit from circumstance or status bonuses for 1 round.

Failure The target can't benefit from circumstance or status bonuses for 1 day, and the target's allies are unable to benefit from circumstance or status bonuses while within 15 feet of the target.

Critical Failure As failure, except the duration is 1 week.

Epitome When you epitomize *The Empty Throne*, assign it to a point of interest in the Harrow Court's lake area. This marks the location of a small rocky island atop which sits a mysterious empty throne. A character who travels to this island can perform a ritual of sacrifice before the empty throne in hopes of earning good fortune. To do so, the PC must offer valuables upon the throne that are worth 100 gp × the character's level, spend 1 hour meditating before the throne on the nature of loss, and then attempt a DC 30 Diplomacy check. Regardless of the check's result, the offering vanishes forever, and that PC cannot attempt a new offering until they gain an experience level and are no longer affected by their current offering.

Critical Success Once during the next month, you can reroll a failed or critically failed saving throw. This is a fortune effect.

Success As critical success, but you can only reroll a failed saving throw. This is a fortune effect.

Failure You gain no benefit from the meditation.

Critical Failure The next time you critically succeed at a significant or important saving throw, as determined by the GM, you must reroll that saving throw. This is a misfortune effect.

THE FIEND

ITEM 20

UNIQUE **ARTIFACT** **HARROW COURT** **ILLUSION** **INVESTED** **MAGICAL**
Usage carried; **Bulk** –

Suit Hammer (Str); **Alignment** lawful evil

The Fiend represents the inevitability of great calamities

and pervasive dangers. As long as you have *The Fiend* invested, when you repeat a non-Strike action you previously took in the same round, you gain a +2 item bonus to checks to perform that action. This increases to a +3 item bonus if you are at least 17th level.

Activate ♦♦ envision, Interact; **Frequency** once per day;

Effect You wave the card to create a vision of destruction around you; you cast *phantasmal calamity*, except the area is a 20-foot emanation. The level of the spell is one-half your level, rounded down (minimum 6th level), and the save DC is your class DC. You are immune to the effects of your own *phantasmal calamity*.

Epitome A new room manifests in Harrowheart—a conjuration chamber. Books and tomes stored in this room contain all the information needed to learn the rituals of *planar ally* and *planar binding*, and inscriptions carved into the floor of the conjuration chamber grant a +2 item bonus to skill checks made to perform either of these rituals. This increases to a +3 item bonus if the creature being conjured is a fiend.

THE JUGGLER

ITEM 20

UNIQUE ARTIFACT EVOCATION HARROW COURT INVESTED MAGICAL

Usage carried; **Bulk** –

Suit Key (Dex); **Alignment** chaotic good

The Juggler represents coordination and destiny. As long as you have *The Juggler* invested and you aren't carrying an item in two hands, you have a free hand (as you keep tossing the items in your hands back and forth, keeping one in the air at all times). You can use all items in your hands normally, so long as they can be used or wielded in one hand. If you can't act while you're carrying more items than your actual number of hands, you release all items you're holding or wielding. If you are at least 17th level, you instead have two free hands, as you can juggle an additional item.

Activate 2 Interact; **Trigger** an item of 1 Bulk or less falls within your reach, or an attacker fails an attack roll to hit you or a creature within your reach with a thrown weapon of 1 Bulk or less; **Effect** You grab the triggering item. If all of your hands are full (including any extra free hands from *The Juggler*), you must immediately release an item, which can include the triggering item.

Epitome When *The Juggler* is epitomized into the Harrow Court, a town square manifests in the village surrounding Harrowheart. Simulacra jugglers, as well as other types of street performers, can be counted on for entertainment at all times in the town square. A PC can spend 8 hours interacting with these entertainers to adjust their methods to match entertainment styles common to a specific city that they're familiar with by attempting a DC 30 Performance check. On a success, the entertainers take up that style, and as long as they continue performing in that city's style, a PC can use the Enter the Harrow Court

activity to open a one-way portal to a marketplace in that city. Switching to a new city requires another successful DC 30 Performance check and familiarity with that city.

THE LIAR

ITEM 20

UNIQUE ABJURATION ARTIFACT HARROW COURT INVESTED MAGICAL

Usage carried; **Bulk** –

Suit Crown (Cha); **Alignment** chaotic evil

The Liar represents obsession or treacherous love. As long as you have *The Liar* invested, it grants you a +2 item bonus to Deception checks to Lie. This increases to a +3 item bonus if you're at least 17th level. If the implausibility of your lies prompts a circumstance penalty to your Deception checks or an increase to your Deception DC, reduce that penalty or increase by half.

Activate ♦♦ envision, Interact; **Frequency** once per day;

Effect You touch a weapon and instill faithlessness within it. The weapon gains the *backbiting* curse (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 92). The curse lasts until you use this activation again. If you're at least 17th level, you can instead use this activation on a weapon within 30 feet. If the weapon is carried by a creature, it can resist the effect with a successful Will save against your class DC.

Epitome A liar moves in to the village surrounding Harrowheart, but this shifty simulacrum has little interest in deceiving the PCs. In fact, they eagerly offer their aid in the deceptive arts. A character who visits the liar's home can take advantage of their expertise and tools—doing so grants a +2 item bonus to checks made to Create Forgeries or to assume a disguise with Impersonate. The liar also knows how to cast the uncommon spells *discern lies*, *glibness*, and *zone of truth*, and can teach these spells to PCs.

THE LOCKSMITH

ITEM 20

UNIQUE ABJURATION ARTIFACT HARROW COURT INVESTED MAGICAL

Usage carried; **Bulk** –

Suit Key (Dex); **Alignment** lawful neutral

The Locksmith represents opening locks, including metaphorical locks such as unlocking fate. As long as you have *The Locksmith* invested, it grants you a +2 item bonus to Thievery checks to Pick a Lock. This increases to a +3 item bonus if you are at least 17th level.

Activate 2 envision, Interact; **Trigger** You would be afflicted by a curse or a disease; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You mimic the turning of a key in a lock and free yourself from your unpleasant fate. You attempt to counteract the triggering affliction, using half your level (rounded up) as the counteract level and a counteract check modifier equal to your class DC – 10.

Epitome A talented if somewhat shady locksmith moves into the village surrounding Harrowheart. This simulacrum is nameless, and the building they bring to the village is

more akin to a strange museum of obscure and unusual locks and keys (none of which, of course, have any use beyond being strange displays). Their equipment can't be removed from the museum, but PCs who bring devices and locks to this building can take advantage of their tools to gain a +2 item bonus to checks made to Disable a Device or Pick a Lock. The locksmith knows the formulas for how to create *chimes of opening*, *keymaking tools* (*Secrets of Magic* 186), *rings of maniacal devices*, *skeleton keys*, *traveler's any-tools*, and any other lock- or puzzle-themed magic item you might wish to include, and can teach these formulas to the PCs. Characters who use the locksmith's gear to craft such items gain a +2 item bonus on Crafting checks.

THE MOUNTAIN MAN

ITEM 20

UNIQUE ARTIFACT HARROW COURT INVESTED MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION

Usage carried; Bulk –

Suit Shield (Con); Alignment chaotic neutral

The Mountain Man represents creatures with incredible physical power. As long as you have *The Mountain Man* invested, it grants you a +2 item bonus to Athletics checks to Force Open, Grapple, Shove, or Trip. This increases to a +3 item bonus if you are at least 17th level.

Activate ➤➤ command, Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You bring the might of the mountain into your body. You cast 2nd-level or 4th-level *enlarge* upon yourself. If you're at least 15th level, the duration increases to 1 hour.

Epitome When you epitomize *The Mountain Man*, assign it to a point of interest in the Harrow Court's mountains. This marks the location of a remote cabin that serves as the home of a self-sufficient but very intimidating simulacrum who appears as a towering giant of a man. This hearty specimen welcomes visitors who bring stories of their accomplishments fighting monsters, as long as they're backed up by physical trophies. A character who visits the mountain man and presents to him a trophy harvested from a monster they fought and defeated can seek a reward. The trophy need not be much more than a horn or a claw, but should be something significant and identifiable from the defeated monster, and the PC presenting the trophy must have been involved in that monster's defeat. If the trophy is from a monster whose level is equal to or greater than the PC's level, the mountain man is impressed and rewards that PC with two consumable magic items, each of a level equal to or lower than the PC's level (the PC can request specific items, but the GM has final say in what items are offered). If the trophy is from a monster whose level is lower than the PC's level, the mountain man mocks the PC for being "proud of defeating a weakling" and offers no reward. Once a reward is given, the mountain man warns the PC, "Now don't you be going off to sell that thing for gold, and

don't even think of coming back for more rewards until you've used these all up!" The mountain man has an eerie ability to know if a PC hasn't used a current reward, or if they sold it for a profit—PCs who fit either category cannot receive new rewards from the mountain man on subsequent visits.

THE SILENT HAG

ITEM 20

UNIQUE ARTIFACT DIVINATION HARROW COURT INVESTED MAGICAL

Usage carried; Bulk –

Suit Star (Wis); Alignment neutral evil

The Silent Hag represents insight, treacherous secrets, and strife. As long as you have *The Silent Hag* invested, it grants you a +2 item bonus to Arcana, Nature, Occultism,



The Mountain Man

The Choosing

Chapter 1:
Luck of the
Draw

Chapter 2:
Scattered
Stories

Chapter 3:
Queen of
the Storval
Stairs

The Harrow
Court

Adventure
Toolbox

or Religion checks to Recall Knowledge—when you invest the card, choose which of these four skills gains the bonus. You can change the skill by investing the card again. This increases to a +3 item bonus if you are at least 17th level.

Activate  envision; **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect**

You choose to lose one of your senses and gain another until you use this activation again. Choose from one of the following:

- Your eyes are replaced by dark pits that see only death. You become blinded and gain lifesense, an imprecise sense out to 60 feet. Lifesense allows you to see the vital essence of living and undead creatures, distinguishing between the positive energy animating living creatures and negative energy animating undead creatures, much as sight distinguishes colors.
- Your ears close up then become covered with hairs that are sensitive to movement. You become deafened, but you can't be flanked.
- Your mouth seals over with flesh. You lose the ability to speak, but you do not need to breathe.

Epitome An unsettling statue of a crouching, eyeless hag with an open mouth manifests in a small chamber in Harrowheart. This mouth can accommodate most crystal balls. A crystal ball placed within the mouth is enhanced—its save DC increases by 1, its *scrying* activation can be activated three times per day instead of twice per day, and its effects can extend beyond the planar borders of the Harrow Court to target creatures on Golarion.

THE PALADIN


ITEM 20

UNIQUE ABJURATION ARTIFACT HARROW COURT INVESTED MAGICAL

Usage carried; **Bulk** —

Suit Hammer (Str); **Alignment** lawful good

The Paladin represents righteousness and resolute defense. As long as you have *The Paladin* invested, you gain the Shield Block general feat (*Core Rulebook* 266). If you already possess this feat, you gain an additional reaction at the start of your turn that can only be used to Shield Block.

Activate  envision; **Trigger** You fail or critically fail a saving throw; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** Adjust the result of your saving throw up by one degree of success.

Epitome A knighthood of paladins clad in shining armor manifests in the Harrow Court. In addition to providing additional defense to the demiplane (which will aid the PCs when the Harrow Court is invaded in "The Destiny War"), the paladins can teach the PCs the formulas for *sturdy shields*, *holy weapon* runes, and *axiomatic weapon* runes.

THE PUBLICAN

ITEM 20


UNIQUE ARTIFACT ENCHANTMENT HARROW COURT INVESTED MAGICAL

Usage carried; **Bulk** —

Suit Star (Wis); **Alignment** chaotic good

The Publican represents friendship, shelter, and insight.

As long as you have *The Publican* invested, treat critically failed checks made to Aid as regular failures instead. If you are at least 14th level, the circumstance bonus you provide for succeeding or critically succeeding at checks to Aid increases by 1.

Activate  envision; **Trigger** You improve a creature's attitude to you; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You improve the creature's attitude by an additional step more than you would normally. If you're at least 18th level, you improve the creature's attitude by two additional steps.

Epitome A tavern appears in the village surrounding Harrowheart, run by a jovial one-eyed bartender. The tavern is always bustling with a rotating cast of different patrons and performers. The bartender knows the *heroes' feast* ritual (*Advanced Player's Guide* 242) and can teach it to the PCs. Skill checks attempted at the tavern to perform this ritual gain a +2 item bonus. If *The Juggler* has been epitomized, and the town square is linked to a city, the patrons of this tavern trade gossip from that city as if they were citizens there, allowing a character to Gather Information in the tavern as if they were doing so on the streets of the linked city.

THE RABBIT PRINCE


ITEM 20

UNIQUE ARTIFACT DIVINATION HARROW COURT INVESTED MAGICAL

Usage carried; **Bulk** —

Suit Key (Dex); **Alignment** chaotic neutral

The Rabbit Prince represents the unreliability of hand-to-hand combat, and how even cunning foes can lose to lucky novices. As long as you have *The Rabbit Prince* invested, it grants you a +1 status bonus to attack rolls you make as a readied action.

Activate  (fortune) envision; **Trigger** You miss a creature with a melee weapon Strike; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** Reroll the triggering Strike with a +1 status bonus. If you hit, attempt a DC 15 flat check; on a failure, your weapon gains the broken condition (if your weapon is already broken, it's destroyed). If you're at least 14th level, this flat check is DC 10. If you're at least 17th level, this flat check is DC 5.

Epitome When you epitomize *The Rabbit Prince*, assign it to a point of interest within the Harrow Court's forest area. This indicates a section of woodland where the simulacra of the Harrow Court have reported sightings of an anthropomorphic rabbit. A PC can travel to this location and attempt to spot the elusive Rabbit Prince by spending 8 hours stealthily scouting the woods and attempting a DC 30 Stealth check, after which no one may search for the Rabbit Prince again for 1 week.

Critical Success You surprise the Rabbit Prince and he is impressed enough to gift you a +2 *striking weapon*. The specific type of weapon is up to you, but it must

be a common weapon. The Rabbit Prince is now on the lookout for your tricks, and you can never attempt this activity again.

Success You spot the Rabbit Prince for a moment, but he doesn't spot you. The next time you perform this activity, you gain a +4 circumstance bonus to your Stealth check.

Failure You do not spot the Rabbit Prince.

Critical Failure You don't spot the Rabbit Prince, but he spots you. He's insulted by your curiosity and triggers a trap that inflicts a serious wound upon you. You become clumsy 3 for 1 week or until the condition is removed via an effect like *restoration*.

THE RAKSHASA

ITEM 20

UNIQUE ARTIFACT HARROW COURT INVESTED MAGICAL NECROMANCY

Usage carried; Bulk –

Suit Book (Int); Alignment lawful evil

The Rakshasa represents domination of others to support your own schemes. When you invest *The Rakshasa*, identify a single willing creature within 30 feet as your pledged follower. If you're at least 15th level, you can have up to two pledged followers at once. At 18th level, you can have up to three pledged followers. If you have the maximum pledged followers active and select a new one, a previous pledged follower of your choice is no longer your pledged follower. You gain an item bonus equal to your current number of pledged followers to all Coerce attempts.

Activate ♦ **Frequency** once per minute; **Effect** You regain Hit Points equal to twice your level, and a pledged follower of your choice loses Hit Points equal to your level (no effects apply that would decrease this Hit Point loss). If this loss kills your pledged follower, you also gain temporary Hit Points equal to your level. The pledged follower is temporarily immune to this activation for 24 hours.

Epitome A simulacrum of a tiger-headed rakshasa moves into a decadent chamber in Harrowheart's basement. While sinister and prone to cruel comments, this rakshasa does not plot against the PCs and is content to idle away their time in their underground pleasure chambers. Once per day, a visitor to the rakshasa can pose them a question that they can use their Occultism +18 skill to attempt to Recall Knowledge about. The rakshasa also knows several uncommon spells and rituals that they can teach spellcasters—these spells and rituals all involve the intrusive manipulation of sapient minds. Among the spells it can teach are *dominate*, *mind probe*, *mind reading*, and *modify memory*; rituals it can teach include *geas* and *inveigle*. Feel free to add similar spells to this list as you see fit.

THE SNAKEBITE

ITEM 20

UNIQUE ARTIFACT HARROW COURT INVESTED MAGICAL NECROMANCY POISON

Usage carried; Bulk –

Suit Book (Int); Alignment chaotic evil

The Snakebite represents poison, assassination, and disharmony. As long as you have *The Snakebite* invested, it grants you a +2 item bonus to Deception and Stealth checks you make for initiative. This increases to a +3 item bonus if you're at least 17th level. The DCs of your poison effects have a +1 item bonus to targets that are flat-footed to you when you afflict the target with the poison (the DC retains this bonus for the target's subsequent saves against the affliction, even if the target is no longer flat-footed to you).

Activate ♦♦ **envision**, **Interact**; **Frequency** once per day;

Effect You cast *purple worm sting* on a creature within your reach, with a DC equal to your class DC.

Epitome When you epitomize *The Snakebite*, assign it to a point of interest in the Harrow Court's swamp. This indicates a region of swampland that has become particularly infested with poisonous creatures and plants. A character who travels to this area can attempt a Crafting, Herbalism Lore, Swamp Lore, or Underworld Lore check to attempt to harvest some of their chosen poison from the region while spending 8 hours there.

The DC of the check is equal to the poison's saving throw DC. Unlike most materials from the Harrow Court, poison gathered from this part of the swamp continues to exist for



The Rabbit Prince

1 week before vanishing, even if it's brought out of the Harrow Court.

Critical Success The PC gathers 3 doses of the poison.

Success The PC gathers 1 dose of the poison.

Failure The PC fails to gather any poison.

Critical Failure As failure, but the PC is also exposed to a dose of the poison they seek.

THE THEATER

ITEM 20

UNIQUE ARTIFACT DIVINATION HARROW COURT INVESTED MAGICAL

Usage carried; **Bulk** –

Suit Crown (Cha); **Alignment** neutral good

The Theater represents prophecy and how prophets can't change the unfolding pageantry of fate. As long as you have *The Theater* invested and as long as you are not already doomed, when you would gain the doomed condition, attempt a DC 10 flat check. On a success, you do not gain the doomed condition.

Activate ☞ (fortune) envision; **Trigger** You are targeted by a misfortune effect; **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** *The Theater* attempts to counter the misfortune effect before it affects you. It has a counteract level equal to your level divided by 2 (rounded up), and a counteract modifier of your Class DC – 10.

Epitome A resplendent theater manifests in the village surrounding Harrowheart. Every evening, a talented troupe of actors puts on a new play that, with the PCs' permission, recounts a previous set of encounters they experienced. A PC who attends one of these two-hour productions benefits from the troupe's uncanny ability to recreate their exploits and receives a +2 item bonus to checks to Recall Knowledge about topics associated with these encounters.

THE TRUMPET

ITEM 20

UNIQUE ARTIFACT EVOCATION HARROW COURT INVESTED MAGICAL

Usage carried; **Bulk** –

Suit Shield (Con); **Alignment** lawful good

The Trumpet represents timely warning. As long as you have *The Trumpet* invested, you (and only you) hear the sound of trumpets when you're about to be attacked. This grants you a +2 item bonus to initiative checks made with hearing-based Perception checks. This bonus increases to +3 if you're at least 17th level.

Activate ⚡ envision; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** A blast of inspiring noise erupts from the card in a 60-foot cone. Creatures in the area take 14d6 sonic damage (with a basic Fortitude save equal to your class DC). Creatures that fail the save are deafened for 1 round (1 minute on a critical failure). The damage increases to 16d6 if you're at least 13th level, to 18d6 if you're at least 15th level, to 20d6 if you're at least 17th level, and to 22d6 if you're at least 19th level.

Epitome Heralds outfitted with trumpets take up position on the battlements of Harrowheart. These heralds use their trumpets to raise the alarm should intruders enter the Harrow Court (an event that won't happen in this adventure—but that shall in the next one!). The heralds know the formulas for all manner of magical instruments, including *horns of blasting*, *horns of fog*, and *maestro's instruments*, and can teach these formulas to the PCs.

THE VISION

ITEM 20

UNIQUE ARTIFACT DIVINATION HARROW COURT INVESTED MAGICAL

Usage carried; **Bulk** –

Suit Book (Int); **Alignment** chaotic neutral

The Vision represents arcane knowledge. As long as you have *The Vision* invested, it grants you a +2 item bonus to all checks made to Identify Magic. This increases to a +3 item bonus if you are at least 17th level.

Activate ⬠ envision; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** A visible bolt of blue energy bursts from your head. Attempt to Recall Knowledge about a subject, rolling the check with the most appropriate Lore skill check. This check always resolves as if you were master in the most appropriate Lore skill to Recall Knowledge on the subject (or if you're at least 15th level, as if you were legendary in that Lore skill). If you're already master (or legendary) in that Lore, the result of your Recall Knowledge check is one degree of success better than it would otherwise be.

Epitome Harrowheart's workshops become enhanced. Any character may now use a workshop in Harrowheart to attempt to Borrow a Spell, Identify Alchemy, Identify Magic, or Learn a Spell. If they do so, they apply the workshop's item bonus to their skill check.

Optional Campaign Rules

The Stolen Fate Adventure Path makes significant use of harrow cards as a central plot element, and having an actual harrow deck on hand when you run the game can make for an even more immersive experience. Indeed, one of the primary plot points of Stolen Fate has the PCs tracking down the scattered cards from a mysterious and very powerful harrow deck. As the group discovers more cards, you can keep track of which ones they've recovered by keeping a stack of actual harrow cards to represent their discoveries.

Since each of these harrow cards grants additional powers if player characters invest them, having physical cards can help to remind players of their options and give Stolen Fate a truly unique feel.

If your table thinks it might be fun, though, you can include the harrow in another way—as

an element to give the PCs even more agency over their fates alongside the use of Hero Points. Keep in mind that the method of manipulating fate detailed below works best when you and the players are comfortable with improvisation and playing a bit fast and loose with the rules, all in order to present a more exciting story that feels like the PCs are indeed manipulating destiny rather than being stuck on a single fated path that they have no agency over. These optional rules aren't for everyone, so before you incorporate them into your table, make sure every player is comfortable with their inclusion in the game.

MANIPULATING FATE

If you choose to include this optional set of rules, at the start of each game session, shuffle a full harrow deck and deal one card, face down, to each player, instructing them to set that card aside and to not look at its face. At any time during the game session, any player can call upon fate itself—whether to help solve a vexing puzzle, succeed at an important task, avoid a looming grisly fate, or otherwise affect the immediate outcome of the situation at hand. When they do so, they turn their card over and reveal its face to everyone.

At this point, compare the card's suit to the PC's key ability and the card's alignment to the PC's alignment. The closer the card's suit matches to the PC's key ability and the closer its alignment matches the character, the more outrageous and unexpectedly effective the manipulation of fate should be. Conversely, if the revealed card matches to the PC's least important ability score or is an oppositional alignment, the manipulation of fate should be less profound and not as guaranteed to be successful. A player should never be penalized for flipping their card—even the worst possible card should have a minor benefit to the PC in some way.

Once a card is flipped, it's returned to the deck. Cards left unflipped at the end of a session are returned to the deck as well—a PC gains no reward nor suffers any penalty for not using a card during the game.

ADJUDICATING RESULTS

When it comes to interpreting how fate is changed in the PC's favor, the GM has a lot of leeway. Look at the card's art. Take into mind the card's name. Consider the card's suit and alignment. Use all of these elements as inspiration to describe, in the game, how chance shifts in the PC's favor. Examples of some potential ways to interpret and apply these results follow.

Merisiel just took a critical hit from a giant and was reduced to dying 2, but worse, it happened while she was hanging from a ledge over a pit of acid. To avoid falling 50 feet into a pit of acid while at dying 2, Merisiel's player flips their card.

Perfect Match: If the card is a perfect match (*The Rabbit Prince*, which matches Merisiel's alignment of chaotic neutral and her key ability score, Dexterity), the GM could state that the giant not only missed their attack, but that Merisiel was able to leap onto the giant's hand and spring off it to even greater safety on solid ground.

Neutral Match: If the card is a relatively neutral match (*The Owl*, for example, which is close to her alignment and matches neither her highest nor lowest ability score), the GM could reveal that Merisiel was wise enough to clamber up onto the edge of the pit the instant before she was struck by the giant, but then collapses unconscious at the pit's edge rather than falling.

Horrible Match: If the card is a horrible match (*The Forge*, which is opposite to her alignment and matches her least-important ability score), then perhaps she falls unconscious and lets go, but her armor snags and keeps her suspended just below the edge of the pit—she can be reached and rescued by her allies, but the damage to her armor leaves it broken in the aftermath.

Regardless of the card's nature, all three of the above card flips save Merisiel from taking a deadly plunge while unconscious into a pit of acid, with the perfect match allowing her to continue the fight, and the horrible match only barely saving her from sizzling doom.

Simulating Harrow Draws

If you don't have an actual harrow deck handy, you can simulate draws using the table below. Alternately, you can mark up a deck of regular playing cards with the names of each harrow card (in which case you'll need to include both jokers in your deck to have a full set of 54 cards to draw from).

ROLLING HARROW CARD DRAWS

d6	Suit	d10	Alignment
1	Hammers (STR)	1	Lawful Good
2	Keys (DEX)	2	Lawful Neutral
3	Shields (CON)	3	Lawful Evil
4	Books (INT)	4	Neutral Good
5	Stars (WIS)	5	Neutral
6	Crowns (CHA)	6	Neutral Evil
		7	Chaotic Good
		8	Chaotic Neutral
		9	Chaotic Evil
		10	Roll Again



TIED TO OPEN BRIDGE

Bhanyadas are almost never encountered outside the Open Bridge region in southern Vudra, as the magic of the Gbantibhu Pits beneath that region create them. Bhanyadas taken away from Open Bridge quickly decay into a repulsive slurry, although though it isn't clear whether their demise is due to being too far from the magical energies that animated them or too far from the masses of other bhanyadas that give them cunning and vigor.

Bhanyada

Gobbets of flesh left behind from an untidy meal or a surgical procedure typically rot away if left where they lie, but when steeped in areas of powerful lingering magic or eldritch radiation, these bits of loose tissue might achieve some measure of animation, perhaps sprouting thick limbs to move about or tiny, multifaceted eyes to see. Near the magic-suffused Gbantibhu Pits in the caverns located beneath southern Vudra, where ripples of magic are powerful enough to rend the air and transform stone, these tiny, rotting castoffs form into even larger amalgamations called bhanyadas.

BHANYADA SCAVENGER

Not much larger than dogs, the typical bhanyada scavenger is a warty, misshapen tangle of flesh that walks on stumpy legs, sometimes on two and sometimes on four. Plainly amalgamations of meat and gristle, few of which appear in the same color or texture, bhanyada scavengers have a horrifying mottled appearance. Their bulbous heads split into a maw with blunt teeth that shift about within their mouths to grind food. Bhanyada scavengers prefer living prey and usually hunt in numbers, often following in the wake of bhanyada behemoths to snatch up any scraps left behind.

BHANYADA SCAVENGER

CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON NE SMALL ABERRATION

Perception +17; darkvision

Languages Aklo (can't speak any language)

Skills Athletics +17, Stealth +18, Survival +17

Str +5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** -3, **Wis** +3, **Cha** -1

AC 26; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +18, **Will** +15

HP 150; **Weaknesses** slashing 10; **Resistances** bludgeoning 10

Extraneous Flesh ♦ **Frequency** three times per day; **Trigger** A Strike scores a critical hit on the bhanyada scavenger; **Effect** A critical hit might simply sever a component chunk that the bhanyada can lose without much harm. The bhanyada scavenger attempts a DC 11 flat check. On a success, it doesn't take any extra damage from the critical hit (although it takes other effects normally, such as critical specialization effects).

Odor of Rot (aura, olfactory) 10 feet. Creatures other than aberrations that enter or start their turn in the bhanyada's aura must succeed at a DC 23 Fortitude save or become sickened 1 (sickened 2 on a critical failure). A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune for 1 minute.

Speed 25 feet, climb 25 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +19 (agile, versatile P), **Damage** 2d10+8 bludgeoning

Change Posture ♦ The bhanyada changes between a bipedal and quadrupedal stance. In its bipedal stance, the bhanyada can't use Sudden Charge. In its quadrupedal stance, it loses its climb Speed.

Gnashing Bite ♦♦ The bhanyada's teeth shift in its mouth as it bites. The bhanyada makes a jaws Strike. On a hit, the target takes an additional 2d10 bludgeoning damage, and the target is slowed 1 for 1 round if the Strike dealt bludgeoning damage, or takes 1d8 persistent bleed damage if the Strike dealt piercing damage.

Sudden Charge ♦♦ The bhanyada Strides twice and makes a jaws Strike at the end of its movement.



Bhanyada Scavenger

BHANYADA SWARM

Bhanyadas without much cohesion between their fleshy components roil around one another in a ghastly swarm of malodorous gobs of flesh.

BHANYADA SWARM

CREATURE 11

UNCOMMON NE LARGE ABERRATION SWARM

Perception +20; darkvision

Languages Aklo (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +22, Stealth +22, Survival +18

Str +4, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** -1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

AC 30, all-around vision; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +22, **Will** +18

HP 175; **Immunities** precision, swarm mind; **Resistances** physical 10; **Weaknesses** area damage 10, splash damage 10

Extraneous Flesh As bhanyada scavenger.

Odor of Rot (aura, olfactory) As bhanyada scavenger, but DC 27.

Speed 25 feet, burrow 20 feet

Swarming Bites ♦ Each enemy in the bhanyada swarm's space takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save). On a failed save, a creature is also slowed 1 for 1 round.



BHANYADA FAMILIARS

A component of a bhanyada swarm makes a useful, if gruesome, familiar. A character who can take a familiar and who has encountered a bhanyada can choose a bhanyada familiar, which must have the burrower and darkvision abilities. The owner would be wise to anoint the familiar with perfumes or find other solutions to mask the unpleasant smell.

BHANYADA BEHEMOTH

The largest bhanyadas are made up of tens of thousands of component parts, all mashed together into a roughly humanoid shape that walks on stumpy legs. Bhanyada behemoths usually have at least four thick arms ending in meaty fists, although some behemoths have a profusion of hands sprouting from their torsos. A bhanyada behemoth's head is studded with tiny eyes all over its surface that observe the surrounding terrain and give information so the entire amalgamation can move in unison.

BHANYADA BEHEMOTH

CREATURE 12

UNCOMMON NE HUGE ABERRATION

Perception +23; darkvision

Languages Aklo (can't speak any language)

Skills Athletics +23, Survival +21

Str +7, **Dex** +2, **Con** +5, **Int** -3, **Wis** +5, **Cha** -1

AC 31, all-around vision; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +20, **Will** +23

HP 250; **Weaknesses** slashing 10; **Resistances** bludgeoning 10

Extraneous Flesh As bhanyada scavenger.

Odor of Rot (aura, olfactory) As bhanyada scavenger, but DC 29.

Catch Rock ↻

Speed 40 feet

Melee ♦ fist +26 (reach 10 feet, sweep), **Damage** 3d12+10 bludgeoning plus Grab

Ranged ♦ rock +26 (brutal, range increment 120 feet), **Damage** 3d6+10 bludgeoning

Lumbering Swings ♦♦ The bhanyada behemoth Strides and makes up to four fist Strikes at any point during that movement. Each Strike must target a different creature. The attacks take the normal multiple attack penalty.

Throw Rock ♦



Bhanyada Behemoth



MAKERS OF RUST

A ferrugon's *flesh to stone* and *wall of stone* innate spells result in rusted iron objects instead of stone. Since this iron is rusted and flawed, it shares the same physical statistics as the stone created by the spells themselves and is too low-quality to serve as a source for forging metal objects.

Devil, Ferrugon (Rust Devil)

Ram-headed devils with wings and flesh of rusted metal, ferrugons prefer temptation to fighting. They're forged from the souls of damned mortals who made others suffer through their creative work. They like to collect those of the same ilk, often by dipping the bodies of mortals they've driven to despair into molten metal to make horrifically malformed statues they add to their lairs.

FERRUGON

CREATURE 12

UNCOMMON LE MEDIUM DEVIL FIEND

Perception +22; greater darkvision

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal, Terran; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Athletics +25, Crafting +22, Deception +21, Intimidation +23, Religion +22, Stealth +23, Thievery +25

Str +7, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** +4, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +5

AC 33; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +20, **Will** +21; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 190; **Immunities** fire; **Weaknesses** good 10; **Resistances** physical 10 (except silver)

Metallic A ferrugon is a metallic creature and thus affected by effects such as *rusting grasp* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 223).

Vainglorious Whispers ⤴ (divine, enchantment, linguistic, mental) **Trigger**

A non-devil creature within 30 feet of the ferrugon succeeds (but doesn't critically succeed) at an attack roll, skill check, or saving throw; **Effect** The ferrugon whispers subversive messages to the triggering creature, causing it to become overly confident in its abilities, while in fact it becomes less accomplished overall. The target must attempt a DC 32 Will save. On a failure, the target gains a +2 status bonus to saving throws against fear effects but also takes a -2 penalty to all attack rolls and skill checks for 1 hour. During this time, the victim can't benefit from Aid reactions, use healing effects on themselves, or use Take Cover or Raise a Shield actions, as these actions seem unnecessary to the creature at this time. Similar defensive actions might not be available to the victim as well, at the GM's discretion. The target is then temporarily immune to Vainglorious Whispers for 24 hours.

Speed 25 feet, fly 40 feet

Melee ⬥ horn +25 (cold iron, evil, magical, shove), **Damage** 3d8+13 bludgeoning plus 1d6 evil

Melee ⬥ claw +25 (agile, cold iron, evil, magical), **Damage** 3d4+13 slashing plus 1d6 evil and ferrugon tetanus

Ranged ⬥ iron feather +23 (cold iron, evil, magical, range increment 40 feet), **Damage** 3d4+13 piercing plus ferrugon tetanus

Divine Innate Spells DC 32, attack +24; **6th** *flesh to stone* (target is transformed into rusty iron, not stone);

5th *creation*, *dimension door*, *shatter*, *wall of stone* (×3, wall is made of rusty iron, not stone); **4th** *dimension door* (at will), *rusting grasp* (×3, *Advanced Player's Guide* 223), *suggestion*

Rituals DC 32; *infernal pact*

Ferrugon Tetanus (disease) **Saving Throw** DC 32 Fortitude; **Onset** 1d4 days; **Stage 1** clumsy 1 (1 week); **Stage 2** clumsy 2 and can't speak (1 day); **Stage 3** paralyzed (1 day); **Stage 4** death

Sunder Objects When a ferrugon damages an item or structure, they deal an additional 2d8 damage to that item or structure.



Devil, Uniila (Cabal Devil)

Uniilas frequently join mortal cults, but not as leaders—instead, the uniila lurks behind the master or demagogue who leads the cult.

UNIILA

CREATURE 10

UNCOMMON LE MEDIUM DEVIL FIEND

Perception +21; greater darkvision

Languages Aklo, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +20, Arcana +23, Deception +22, Intimidation +20, Occultism +21, Religion +19, Society +21, Stealth +22

Str +3, **Dex** +6, **Con** +4, **Int** +7, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +6

Items +1 daggers (4)

AC 30; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +19, **Will** +21; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 155; **Immunities** fire; **Weaknesses** good 10; **Resistances** physical 10 (except silver)

Speed 25 feet, fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ *dagger* +23 (agile, deadly d10, evil, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+9 piercing plus 1d6 evil

Arcane Spontaneous Spells DC 29, attack +21; **5th** (3 slots) *crushing despair*, *dispel magic*, *shadow siphon*; **4th** (3 slots) *confusion*, *fireball*, *resilient sphere*; **3rd** (3 slots) *enthrall*, *lightning bolt*, *magic missile*; **2nd** (3 slots) *glitterdust*, *mirror image*, *touch of idiocy*; **1st** (3 slots) *illusory disguise*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *unseen servant*; **Cantrips (5th)** *chill touch*, *detect magic*, *message*, *ray of frost*, *shield*

Divine Innate Spells DC 29; **5th** *dimension door*; **4th** *blink*, *dimension door* (at will), *discern lies*, *invisibility*, *outcast's curse*, *read omens*

Rituals DC 29; *infernal pact*

Every Dagger ♦♦ **Requirements** The uniila wields four daggers;

Effect The uniila attempts a single dagger Strike against a target.

If this Strike hits, the uniila deals three extra dice of weapon damage.

Fearsome Magic ♦ (emotion, fear, mental, metamagic) **Frequency** Once per

hour; **Effect** If the uniila's next action is to cast a harmful spell, creatures who fail their saving throw against the spell are frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure), in addition to the spell's other effects.

Witch Token (one hour) (arcane, conjuration) **Frequency** Once per day; **Effect** The uniila creates a token in the shape of a piece of jewelry. When the *witch token* is invested by a mortal, all of the mortal's spells, except those cast at the highest level the mortal can cast, count as 1 level higher for the purpose of counteracting other spells and being counteracted. The creature can also Activate the *witch token* to Cast a Spell once per day. This spell is chosen from one of the uniila's arcane spontaneous spells of level 4 or lower when the uniila creates the token. While a creature has the *witch token* invested, it treats its saving throws against the uniila's spells as one degree of success worse, and the uniila always knows the distance and direction to the creature. A creature can't have more than one *witch token* invested, and an uniila can't have more than one *witch token* in existence. The uniila can destroy their *witch token* as a free action with the concentrate trait; if the *witch token* is invested when the uniila does so, the creature that has the *witch token* invested takes 9d8 mental damage (DC 29 basic Will save).



UNIILA OCCULTISTS

Some uniilas study occult magic, rather than arcane magic, to better manipulate mystery cults or eldritch cabals. These more subtle uniilas cast occult spells instead of arcane spells; they cast *augury* instead of *glitterdust*, *mind reading* instead of *lightning bolt*, *modify memory* instead of *fireball*, and *read aura* instead of *ray of frost*.



The Choosing

Chapter 1:
Luck of the Draw

Chapter 2:
Scattered Stories

Chapter 3:
Queen of the Storval Stairs

The Harrow Court

Adventure Toolbox



LILUS

The hurlilu is the weakest and smallest of the avian fiends collectively known as lilus. All lilus are chaotic evil fiends who can fly, are immune to disease, have mixed avian and humanoid appearances, possess darkvision and lifesense, and resist physical damage (except from cold iron). Most have a selection of primal innate spells (often including a primal version of *dimension door*).

Lilu, Hurlilu

Pazuzu's Abyssal realm of High M'Vania is perched on the edge of an impossibly tall cliff. The demon lord and his minions claim the air around the cliff, guarding it against enemies and usurpers alike. Hurlilus, resembling horned, humanoid hawks with blood-red taloned feet and wings in place of arms, patrol these skies at their lord's command. Yet, hurlilus are surly and rebellious by nature, preferring to lead rather than follow orders. They'd prefer to spend their time bullying smaller creatures in High M'Vania's vast cliffside cities, but they're unwelcome there and driven out when discovered by occupants with greater authority (or by those who want to earn greater authority).

Hurlilus make good guardians, particularly when they have leave to travel over great distances on patrol routes and can engage in spontaneous cruelty if the opportunity arises. However, they chafe in Pazuzu's service. Some forsake High M'Vania entirely and migrate to other parts of the Abyss, where they lead gangs of lesser fiends they've bullied into submission. A few hurlilus have made their way to Golarion, where they roost in aeries with subservient harpies, manticores, or other foul flying creatures. A dozen or so hurlilus serve high positions in the Mivanians, the brutal enforcers of the Halana Theocracy.

HURLILU

CREATURE 11

RARE CE LARGE FIEND LILU

Perception +21; darkvision, lifesense (imprecise) 120 feet

Languages Abyssal, Auran, Common; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +24, Athletics +20, Intimidation +22, Religion +21, Stealth +24

Str +5, **Dex** +7, **Con** +4, **Int** +3, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +5

Lifesense (divination, divine) A hurlilu senses the vital essence of living creatures within range.

AC 32; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +24, **Will** +21

HP 170; **Immunities** disease; **Weaknesses** good 10;

Resistances physical 10 (except cold iron), poison 10

Dominate the Air **Requirements** The hurlilu is flying; **Trigger** A creature within 30 feet leaves the ground using a fly Speed; **Effect** The hurlilu casts *earthbind* on the triggering creature.

Speed 25 feet, fly 60 feet

Melee beak +24 (evil, finesse, magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d10+11 piercing plus 1d6 persistent bleed

Melee talon +24 (agile, evil, finesse, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d6+11 slashing plus 1d6 persistent bleed

Primal Innate Spells DC 30, attack +22; **6th** *dispel magic*, *earthbind* (at will), *gust of wind*; **5th** *lightning bolt*, *wall of wind*; **4th** *dimension door* (at will), *fear* (at will); **Cantrips** (6th) *detect magic*, *produce flame*

Dive Bomb **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The hurlilu Strides using its fly Speed and makes a Strike at the end of that movement.

Flesh Tearer If a hurlilu critically hits a foe with a melee Strike, the foe's flat check to recover from any resulting bleed damage is DC 19 instead of DC 15.

Oppali

An oppali is a tenacious, twisting vine with white, trumpet-shaped flowers that grows in temperate and tropical regions. Stories passed down through generations refer to the oppali as a “bad luck vine” and warn against letting one take over a copse or garden, lest “your luck drain away like water down a hole.” This folklore contains more wisdom than most farmers or settlers realize.

Oppalis are usually 30 feet long, but they twist and coil on themselves so much that they occupy a space not much larger than a horse.

OPPALI

CREATURE 10

RARE N LARGE PLANT

Perception +19; low-light vision, soundsense (precise) 60 feet

Skills Acrobatics +21, Athletics +19, Stealth +21 (+23 in forests or jungles)

Str +5, **Dex** +7, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** -1

Soundsense An oppali's sense of hearing is a precise sense to a range of 60 feet.

AC 30; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +21, **Will** +17

HP 175; **Weaknesses** fire 10

Energizing Incompetence **Trigger** A creature within 30 feet critically fails an attack against the oppali; **Effect** The attack instead becomes a failure, and the oppali becomes quickened 1 for 1 round. It can use this extra action to Step, Stride, or Strike.

Speed 20 feet

Melee **◆** vine +23 (finesse, reach 15 feet, trip), **Damage** 2d8+11 bludgeoning plus drain luck

Ranged **◆** staccato blast +23 (range 60 feet, sonic), **Damage** 4d6 sonic

Drain Luck (divination, mental, misfortune, primal) A creature other than an animal or plant hit by an oppali's vine Strike must attempt a DC 29 Fortitude saving throw twice, taking the lower result as the actual result.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected and is temporarily immune to Drain Luck for 24 hours.

Success The creature takes 2d6 poison damage. Until the start of the creature's next turn, the creature must roll twice and take the worse result on all checks.

Failure The creature takes 2d6 persistent poison damage. For 1 round, the creature must roll twice and take the worse result on all checks.

Critical Failure The creature takes 4d6 persistent poison damage. For 1 minute, the creature must roll twice and take the worse result on all checks.

Trumpet Blast **◆◆** (evocation, primal, sonic) The oppali emits a massive blast of discordant noise that deals 9d8 sonic damage to creatures within a 60-foot cone (DC 29 basic Fortitude save). Creatures who fail the save are also deafened for 1 round. The oppali can't use its Trumpet Blast again for 1d4 rounds or until it takes at least 20 points of sonic damage from a single source (whichever comes first).



OPPALI TRUMPETS

An oppali's tough trumpets are useful for creating thunderstones. Incorporating crushed oppali trumpet into crafting the thunderstone grants a +2 item bonus to the Crafting check, provided that this material makes up at least half of the raw materials used for the thunderstone. With a successful DC 27 Survival check, a character harvests 5d20 gp of this raw material from a defeated oppali (double on a critical success, half on a failure, and none at all from a critical failure).



The Choosing

Chapter 1:
Luck of the Draw

Chapter 2:
Scattered Stories

Chapter 3:
Queen of the Storval Stairs

The Harrow Court

Adventure Toolbox

Arodeth

Disillusioned Mercenary Company Leader

Lord Garron of Cheliah was a wealthy noble and devoted follower of Aroden. Aroden's death in 4606 AR hit him doubly hard: he both lost the god he revered, and he lost his home when House Thrune rose up and seized power in Cheliah. Lord Garron became an exile, fleeing to Absalom with a significant portion of his wealth. There, he started anew as a mercenary, joining and then leading a group he called the Band of Blades.

Garron's life changed when he discovered a tome of prophecies, the *Book of 1,000 Whispers*. He believed Aroden's death had been a cosmic error, but by ensuring the prophecies in the *Book of 1,000 Whispers* came to pass, he believed he could correct the error and Aroden would return. The last of the prophecies in the book was to take place in 4714 AR, and the aging Garron knew he wouldn't see the glorious return come to pass. But his daughter, named Arodeth in honor of the dead god, would. Garron made sure to instill the importance of his work in her.

Arodeth grew up believing that fate held a special place for her, and she took to her father's cause with enthusiasm, preserving her father's fortune as leader of the amoral Band of Blades mercenary company. Outwardly, she styled herself as a vapid, pampered aristocrat who only directed the mercenary company she'd inherited on a whim. In truth, she used the Band of Blades as a cover for a mystery cult she led called the Harbingers of Fate. Mercenaries travel the world, after all, particularly when they'll work for any petty tyrant, so it was relatively simple to use them to help enact the cult's plans. There were so many prophecies to orchestrate that Arodeth had to rely upon trusted lieutenants to carry them all out (one of whom—Lord Drustan of Cheliah, the son of her father's friend—would ultimately prove less than reliable). The Harbingers of Fate achieved success after success, and the Band of Blades prospered.

Then time ran out in 4714 AR, and Arodeth's lifelong purpose proved fruitless. Aroden didn't return, and the prophecies went unanswered. Rather than face the enormity of her failure, Arodeth enacted a desperate gamble to steal a powerful artifact from the Pathfinder Society to turn local time backward to just before Earthfall, when Aroden still lived as

a human, and pull him to the present. However, the mission proved disastrous, leading to the deaths of many in the Harbingers of Fate and Band of Blades. Arodeth herself would've been lost in the past and perished during Earthfall if not for the efforts of some kind-hearted Pathfinders who took mercy on her and returned her to the present.

Today, Arodeth believes herself to be a failure twice over. The Harbingers of Fate disbanded, and she was left with only the Band of Blades. Rather than lose this group, too, Arodeth threw herself into leading them. She shed the ruse of an insipid aristocrat and now makes bold decisions to preserve the company and ensure its prosperity. She has faced too many failures and is determined not to lose again.

Arodeth is an elderly woman who works daily to keep her mind keen and muscles strong. Her dark hair has turned gray, and her face is weathered, but she retains the soft features and kindly eyes that encourage others to open up to her. Although she still likes to dress in aristocratic fashion, she never appears without a rapier at her side and is usually in the company of her mercenaries.

Campaign Use

Arodeth's Band of Blades has seized the Storval Stairs and serves as the PCs' antagonists in the climax of "The Choosing." Although Arodeth believes that holding the stairs is a critical source of revenue, she's willing to listen to the PCs and reconsider her position, potentially even abandoning the site and returning its control to the Shoanti.

Many people who receive cards from the *Deck of Destiny* believe themselves to be fated for greater things; it's the nature of the cards. Arodeth has chosen one of her apprentices, a man named Raflin Dorrum, as her pledged follower (page 61). Arodeth has seen perhaps too much of fate already, and she's willing to give up her card, *The Rakshasa*, more easily than others who have received them.

Arodeth hasn't forgotten how she benefitted from the kindness of adventurers in the past. If the PCs also treat her with kindness and respect, she might shift in alignment from lawful evil to lawful neutral at the adventure's conclusion.

ARODETH

CREATURE 14

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Female human magus (*Pathfinder Secrets of Magic* 35)

Perception +22

Languages Common, Draconic, Thassilonian

Skills Acrobatics +25, Arcana +25, Diplomacy +24, Fortune-Telling Lore +27, Intimidation +24, Occultism +27, Society +25

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

Items +1 glamerd resilient mithral chain shirt, +2 striking darkwood staff, material component pouch, greater pendant of the occult, *The Rakshasa*, spellbook (contains all prepared spells plus an additional 2d6 spells of the GM's choosing)

AC 35; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +24, **Will** +23

HP 255

Fated to Fail ⤿ (misfortune) **Trigger** A creature adjacent to Arodeth rolls a hit or critical hit with a melee Strike; **Effect** Arodeth attempts a Fortune-Telling Lore check against the triggering creature's Will DC. On a success, the attack is reduced by one degree of success (from a hit to a miss, or a critical hit to a hit).

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ **staff** +27 (agile, finesse, magical, two-hand d8), **Damage** 2d6+7 bludgeoning

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 34, attack +26; **7th** *dispel magic*, *prismatic spray*; **6th** *chain lightning*, *disintegrate*; **4th** *blink*, *slow*; **Cantrips (7th)** *chill touch*, *daze*, *electric arc*, *prestidigitation*, *produce flame*

Magus Conflux Spells DC 34, 2 Focus Points; **7th** *runic impression* (*Secrets of Magic* 143), *spinning staff* (*Secrets of Magic* 144)

Rituals DC 34; *legend lore*

Arcane Cascade ♦ (concentrate, stance) Lady Arodeth can enter this stance only if her most recent action was to Cast a Spell or make a Spellstrike, but she can remain in the stance even if she no longer meets the requirements; **Effect** While in this stance, Arodeth can Interact or Release to change her grip on her staff as a free action when she Strikes with the staff, including Strikes made in a Spellstrike. This happens before she rolls her attack roll. She can also Interact to change her grip on the staff as a free action triggered at the end of her turn.

Spellstrike ♦♦ Arodeth channels a spell into a melee Strike to deliver a charged attack. She casts *chill touch*, *disintegrate*, or *produce flame*. The effects of the spell don't occur immediately but are imbued into her attack instead. Arodeth makes a staff Strike, which gains the arcane trait. The spell is coupled with the attack, using Arodeth's attack roll to determine the effects

of both the Strike and the spell. This counts as two attacks for her multiple attack penalty, but the penalty isn't applied until after she has completed the Spellstrike. After using Spellstrike, she can't do so again until she recharges this ability as a single action, which has the concentrate trait. She also recharges her Spellstrike when she casts *runic impression* or *spinning staff*.

Twisting Tree As magus (*Secrets of Magic* 40). Arodeth's unique fighting style also allows her to add the finesse trait to any staff she wields in combat.



The Choosing

Chapter 1:
Luck of the Draw

Chapter 2:
Scattered Stories

Chapter 3:
Queen of the Storval Stairs

The Harrow Court

Adventure Toolbox

Drustan

Tyrannical Chelaxian Noble in Exile

Devil worshippers took control of Cheliah in the Thrune Rebellion, but diabolists are just as duplicitous with each other as they are to their enemies. Thirty years ago, when he was a child, Drustan's family was exiled from Cheliah on charges of "insufficient loyalty to her Infernal Majestrix Abrogail Thrune" and stripped of their holdings and possessions. Instead of enduring the punishment, his family fled to Molthune, taking a significant portion of their valuables and living as nobles-in-exile. Drustan's family never forsook their infernal loyalties, hoping to return to Cheliah some day after the rule of House Thrune had ended.

Drustan was raised with a strong sense of familial pride and diabolism, a combination that fed his narcissism and cruelty. He was able to abuse those around him just because of his wealth, and when his parents couldn't protect him from consequences, he turned to summoning devils to enforce his will. He became well known in certain infernal circles for inspiring terror and hopelessness in others. Devils gleefully aided him, not because they hoped to acquire his soul—it was already as good as theirs, anyway—but to perpetuate the evil he was enacting in the world.

When Drustan heard about the Harbingers of Fate, he was quick to join, using his family's history with the society's founder, Lord Garron, as leverage to bypass the normally lengthy process of proving oneself in the Band of Blades before ascending to the secret heart of the organization. Privately, Drustan believed that bringing back Aroden would mean that the once-dead god would owe him, and what better way to demonstrate domination over the universe than to have a god beneath your heel? Drustan played the part of a devoted, even unctuous member, rising to become one of Lady Arodeth's trusted lieutenants.

When the Harbingers of Fate failed and the group disbanded, Drustan insisted he would let the past go and focus on the Band of Blades, where Arodeth badly needed him. He also agreed that, like others in the Harbingers of Fate, he would destroy his copy of the *Book of 1,000 Whispers* as penance and to symbolize a new beginning. This was yet another smooth lie, and he destroyed a cleverly constructed decoy of the book instead. Drustan never intended to give up his efforts to bend fate to his whim and had increasingly become

obsessed with an even more ancient tool of prophecy than the book—the harrow.

After selling Arodeth on a mission to Varisia to recruit fresh Blades and scout out new opportunities, Drustan used the task as a cover to delve into the mysteries of the harrow. During this time, he had his first fateful encounter with the harrower Raven Nicoletta, and from her, the efforts of the Harrowing Three to create the *Deck of Destiny*. He joined her and helped to found the Unmatched, then convinced Arodeth to join him in Varisia, where she and the Band of Blades took up residence in the Storval Stairs; he hoped to take command of the mercenary group to aid his true goal. Then disaster struck, and the *Deck of Destiny* was scattered after a failed attempt to steal the cards, leaving Drustan with the single card he managed to swipe—*The Fiend*—before the Unmatched were forced to flee the norms' wrath.

With the *Deck of Destiny* scattered, Drustan scrambled to recover as many of the cards as he could before the norms reclaimed them. Upon learning that three other cards manifested among his previous allies in the Band of Blades, Drustan only grew more convinced of the divine mandate of his goal. Working with clues provided to him by Raven (who continued to seek the cards as well), he sent one of his agents to Absalom to follow up on rumors of a small concentration of cards found there while he investigated a bounty hunter in the Kodar Mountains, who Raven believed had discovered *The Mountain Man*. Drustan succeeded in this quest and is currently on his way back to the Storval Stairs, where he expects to meet with his agent Vharnev before attempting a coup to seize control of the Band of Blades.

Drustan is a tall, striking man, with straight black hair and an arresting gaze. He accents his armor with pentagrams, spikes, and expensive furs to try to "inferentially rededicate" the armor, which only creates a more terrifying look. Apart from his intimidating appearance on the battlefield, Drustan is a pleasant and talented conversationalist with a natural gift toward music. Yet, he deploys this personality only rarely, as he prefers to use his brutish minions and cunning devils to advance his plans.

Campaign Use

Drustan is one of the Unmatched. While he pursues one card, his agent Vharnev confronts the PCs at the start of this adventure. Drustan's confidence in his own abilities and those of his minions is a critical flaw—one that grants the PCs a chance to gather far more cards from the *Deck of Destiny* than him—but once he realizes his error at the end of “The Choosing,” he convinces himself that he planned this situation all along—to dupe a band of adventurers into gathering several cards so that he could take them for himself.

Drustan isn't likely to survive his confrontation with the PCs in this adventure, but if he does, his wounded ego drives him to vengeance at any cost.

DRUSTAN

CREATURE 14

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Male human tyrant

Perception +25

Languages Common, Infernal, Varisian

Skills Athletics +27 (+29 to Force Open, Grapple, Shove, or Trip), Deception +25, Intimidation +27, Performance +25, Religion +23, Society +23

Str +5, **Dex** +1, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +5

Items +2 *greater striking wounding bastard sword*, +1 *striking composite longbow* (20 arrows), +1 *resilient full plate*, *The Fiend*, *The Mountain Man*, *potions of flying* (3), *moderate sturdy shield* (Hardness 13, HP 104, BT 52), *virtuoso musical instrument* (lyre)

AC 36 (38 with shield raised); **Fort** +26, **Ref** +22 (+25 vs. damaging effects), **Will** +24

HP 255

Iron Command ⤵ (divine, emotion, enchantment, mental)

Trigger An enemy within 15 feet damages Drustan; **Effect** Drustan commands the triggering enemy to kneel before him in obedience. If they dare to refuse, they must pay the price in pain and anguish. The triggering enemy and each other enemy within 15 feet of Drustan must choose one of the following options.

- The enemy kneels, dropping prone as a free action.
- The enemy refuses, and Drustan deals 4 mental damage to the enemy (the triggering enemy instead takes 4d6 mental damage and 5 persistent evil damage).

Drustan also deals an additional 2 evil damage with his Strikes against the triggering enemy until the end of Drustan's next turn.

Speed 20 feet

Melee ⤵ *bastard sword* +29 (magical, two-hand d12), **Damage** 3d8+11 slashing plus 1d6 persistent bleed and 1d6 fire

Champion Devotion Spells DC 31, 2 Focus Points; **7th** *litany of depravity* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 228), *touch of corruption* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 229)

Divine Ally Drustan's divine ally is his bastard sword. He gains its critical specialization effect, and the weapon gains the *flaming* property rune.

Smite Good ⤵ Drustan selects one enemy he can see. Until the start of his next turn, his bastard sword Strikes against that foe deal an additional 6 evil damage. If the chosen enemy attacks Drustan before the start of his next turn, the duration extends to the end of that enemy's next turn.



The Choosing

Chapter 1:
Luck of the Draw

Chapter 2:
Scattered Stories

Chapter 3:
Queen of the Storval Stairs

The Harrow Court

Adventure Toolbox

Next Month

THE DESTINY WAR

by Chris Sims

With potentially a third of the *Deck of Destiny* now in the PCs' hands, their power over fate and the Harrow Court grows. Yet this success has not gone unnoticed, and another agent of the Unmatched, a man who calls himself the Prince of Wolves after one of the harrow's most famous apocryphal cards, leads his demonic minions against them in an invasion of the Harrow Court. After the Prince of Wolves's bold attack, the PCs must seek out and use another legendary artifact,

the *Deck of Harrowed Tales*, to retaliate and secure even more cards from the *Deck of Destiny*. Can the PCs stand against the Prince of Wolves in his deadly Abyssal fortress?

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