

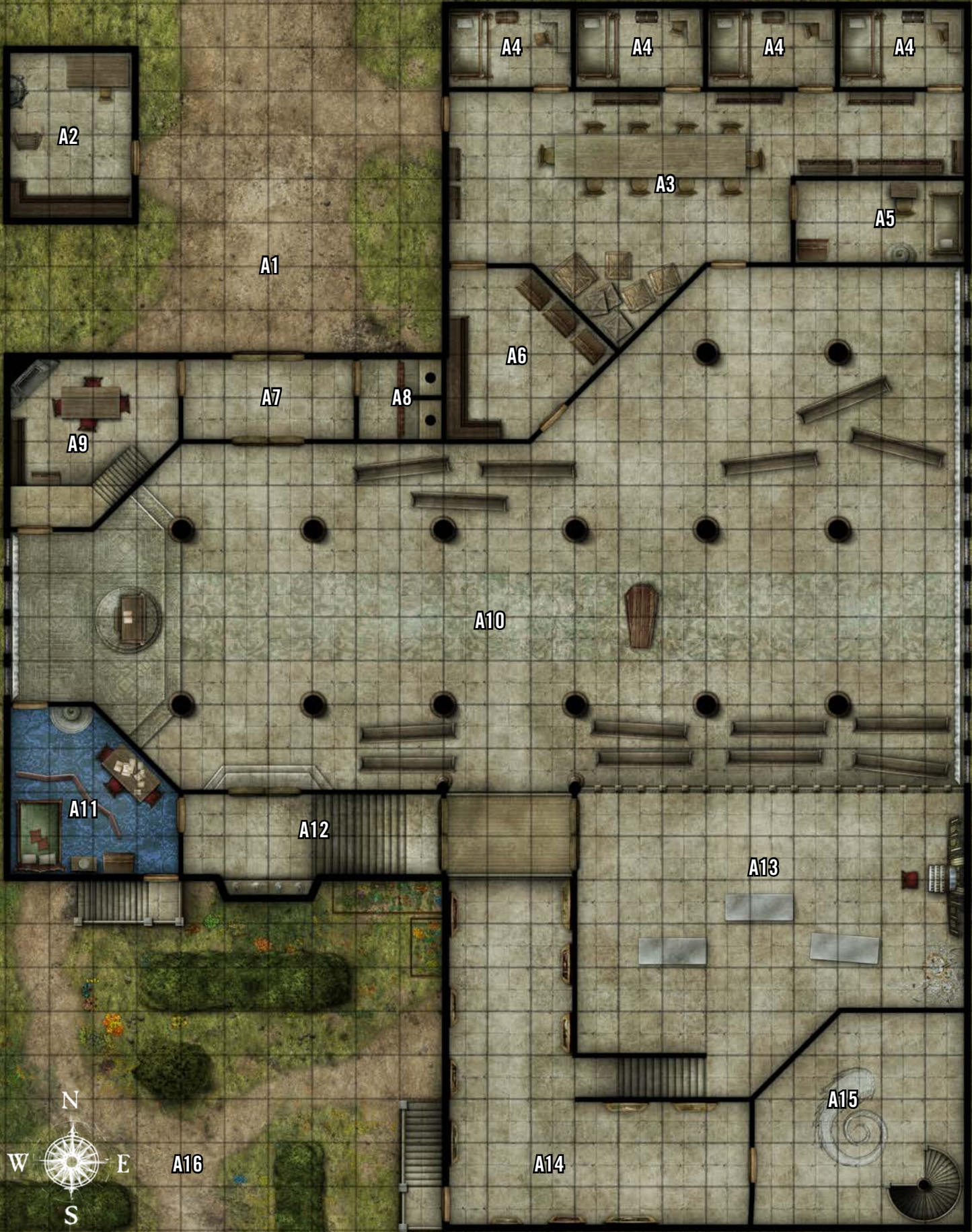
SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER®

SHADOWS AT SUNDOWN

LANDON WINKLER

GRAND CATHEDRAL OF PHARASMA



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

PATHFINDER

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SHADOWS AT SUNDOWN

by Landon Winkler

CHAPTER 1: DEATH WALKS THE STREETS

CHAPTER 2: SECRETS IN GRAY

CHAPTER 3: SANCTUM OF BLOOD

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

by Landon Winkler

ITEMS AND REWARDS

KORVOSA AT A GLANCE

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SCARLET WALKER

VAMPIRE, STRIGOI

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ON THE COVER

When the sun sets over Korvosa, the monsters come out, as Seelah finds out on a just-after-sunset trip to the city's graveyard, depicted by artist Setiawan Lee.



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SHADOWS AT SUNDOWN

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Sightings of Queen Ileosa's ghost and the recent death of a local high priestess of Pharasma have the city of Korvosa on edge. Queen Cressida hires the PCs to investigate the sightings of her tyrannical predecessor, but as they investigate, the PCs discover a deeper conspiracy is afoot.

Chapter 2: Secrets in Gray20

The PCs turn their attention to the Cathedral of Pharasma, only to discover the church has fallen to the control of a cabal of ancient vampires who once served Runelord Sorshen.

Chapter 3: Sanctum of Blood.....40

The PCs pursue the vampires to their hidden underground lair, confronting them and defeating their attempt to bring Ileosa back to life as a pawn, while ultimately facing one of the city's most ancient enemies: the exiled infernal duke Lorthact.

RETURN TO KORVOSA

This adventure is set in the city of Korvosa, the largest city in Varisia and the setting of several previous adventures, including the classic Adventure Path Curse of the Crimson Throne. Players and Game Masters who are familiar with these adventures' plots will find much to enjoy in this adventure, which serves as a sort of sequel both to Curse of the Crimson Throne and the standalone adventure Academy of Secrets, although knowledge of these adventures is by no means required to enjoy Shadows at Sundown.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

- 11** The PCs begin this adventure at 11th level.
- 12** The PCs should reach 12th level before they investigate the mysterious events in the Cathedral of Pharasma in Chapter 2.
- 13** The PCs should be 13th level before they attempt to explore Aliriel's Sanctum in Chapter 3.

SHADOWS AT SUNDOWN FLIP-MAT

This adventure makes use of a custom Flip-Mat, available now everywhere you buy your games. Each side depicts an important location found in this adventure, and each map is also available in this book. There's no need to draw out these locations when you can pick up this Flip-Mat and have the work done for you!





CHAPTER 1 DEATH WALKS THE STREETS

Korvosa faced many threats over the centuries since its founding, but one of the most enduring and most sinister is the exiled infernal duke Lorthact. Once a high-ranking devil, Lorthact overreached in a plot to further his power at the expense of Eiseth, Queen of the Erinyes. Eiseth unleashed her loyal legions to destroy Lorthact, who fled across the planes in fear for his very existence. Lorthact spent the next few centuries in hiding, attempting to gather the souls he would need to buy his way back into Hell's nobility and, in so doing, to secure protection from Eiseth's wrath.

For most of his time on Golarion, Lorthact lived as Volshyennek Ornelos, the shadow master of Korvosa's infamous magic school, the Acadamae. There, he helped create a deadly contest known as the Breaching Festival, which (unknown to any but himself) served as a way to harvest the most promising souls of the

university's students. As decades grew to centuries and forced him to retreat further into the shadows to avoid suspicion—and to cede day-to-day control to new generations—Lorthact grew impatient.

When Queen Ileosa seized control of Korvosa in 4708 AR, Lorthact saw a chance to accelerate his plan. By serving as an unnamed backer in an infernal contract that granted Ileosa additional power, Lorthact hoped to leverage both her soul and fragments of all those who suffered under her rule to aid in his return to Hell. His plans were upended when heroes defeated Queen Ileosa and her soul became entangled in infernal bureaucracy, just out of Lorthact's reach.

A few years later, Lorthact suffered another setback when a different group of heroes won the Breaching Festival and exposed the truth of its diabolic nature. Lorthact was forced into hiding again, his power much

diminished by the damage done to the demiplane he'd built to harvest souls from the festival. Now reduced to a shadow of his former strength, he knows that it's more vital than ever to remain out of sight until he can recover his power.

In the years since the Breaching Festival disaster, Lorthact quietly searched for an opportunity to regain what he'd lost. Key to his plans was reclaiming control over Ileosa's soul. If he could wrest it from the infernal bureaucracy, he could use her legacy to regain his power and, in short order, use all of Korvosa as a bargaining chip to return to his proper place in Hell. Complicating his plans were legal minutiae in the infernal contract that would quickly alert his enemies, particularly Eiseeth, to his involvement if he took steps to take control of Ileosa's soul—a risk Lorthact couldn't chance as long as his power was so weak.

Lorthact was still searching when an unexpected opportunity presented itself. When Runelord Sorshen abandoned the Eurythnian Vault deep under Korvosa to found New Thassilon, the minions and creatures she'd kept imprisoned in the deep underground chambers were set free. Most of these creatures fled, eager to put as much distance as possible between themselves and Sorshen, fearing a potential change of heart from the notoriously mercurial runelord. But some remained, including an ancient, deadly strigoi vampire named Aliriel.

Aliriel found her way into the city above. Night after night, she studied its citizens and explored its shadows, swiftly learning about this new world in which she found herself. She made a surprising discovery during these explorations: a vial of preserved blood drawn from none other than Queen Ileosa. Using ancient magic and eldritch devices Sorshen left in her dungeons, Aliriel used this vial of blood to perform an astonishing feat: She rebuilt Ileosa's heart, and established a tenuous link between the necromantically infused organ and Ileosa's soul in Hell.

Aliriel knew Ileosa's legacy remained strong in Korvosa. If she could rebuild the queen's body, free her soul from Hell, and bring her back to life, the restored queen would be in her debt—a powerful puppet the vampire could use to establish her own domain. Rebuilding the body was not the challenge of this task; what stumped Aliriel was the task of slipping the soul from Hell's clutches. When she stole a collection of documents, including the only existing copy of Ileosa's infernal contract, she drew Lorthact's attention.

Lorthact extended an offer to Aliriel: He would help her navigate the complexities of the infernal contract that keeps Ileosa's soul trapped in Hell; in return, once Aliriel uses Ileosa to gain control of the city, she will

allow Lorthact full control over the Acadamae so he can build a version of the Breaching Festival to gather souls at an even greater rate than before. Aliriel would do well to not fully trust Lorthact, for the exiled infernal duke intends to use Ileosa's soul for his own purposes—to aid in sacrificing all of Korvosa, Aliriel included—in his bid to return to Hell.

As this adventure begins, Aliriel is well on her way to rebuilding Ileosa's body and preparing to retrieve the former queen's soul from Hell to bind it into her new flesh. Between arduous necromantic rituals to grow new body parts, clandestine meetings with diabolic bureaucrats from Hell, and secret conferences with Lorthact to refine her ritual's methods, the strigoi vampire has made progress. As Ileosa's soul gets closer to freedom, the ritual began to manifest unexpected side effects. Two weeks before this adventure begins, phantasmal visions of the dead queen began appearing around Korvosa, causing rumors to spread of the evil queen's imminent return from death.

The citizens of Korvosa are already reeling, for a prominent local—Keppira d'Bear, Korvosa's bishop of Pharamasma—died only four days ago. As the city gears up for a grand funeral ceremony, and as manifestations of Ileosa's "ghost" continue to appear, the citizens edge toward panic, and the truth of Aliriel's—and Lorthact's—plot comes dangerously close to discovery.

STARTING SHADOWS AT SUNDOWN

Shadows at Sundown makes some assumptions about prominent NPCs in the city of Korvosa, including the fact that the city's current queen is Cressida Kroft, who served as the commander of the guard in the previous era under Queen Ileosa's rule. It's possible that players in your group have also played through previous adventures set in Korvosa, such as the *Curse of the Crimson Throne* Adventure Path or the standalone adventure *Academy of Secrets*. In such a case, you should alter the NPCs in this adventure as you see fit to mesh more elegantly with your table's established canon for Korvosa.

It's possible that PCs from previously played Korvosa adventures are still in the area, in which case, you might need a reason why these established, higher-level PCs aren't in this adventure. The characters might already be helping the queen with other endeavors, such as a diplomatic mission to a new potential ally in New Thassilon or Ravounel. They might be on an extended vacation somewhere far from Varisia. They could be retired or even dead. If those previous heroes are at or below 11th level, consider having the players of those characters adapt their characters to play in this adventure!

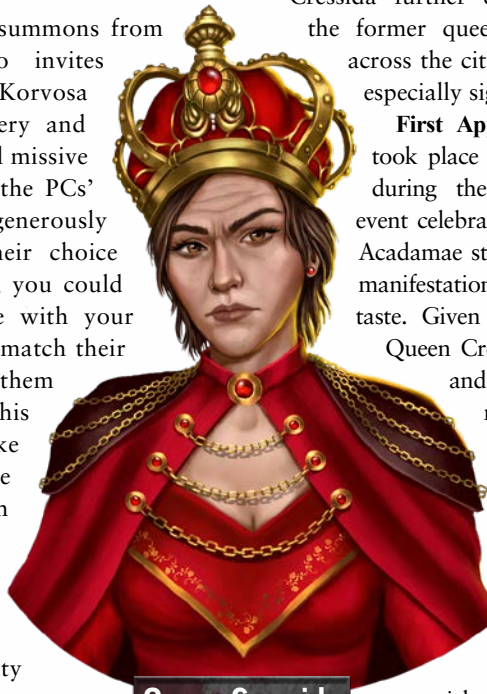
The Queen's Summons

This adventure begins with a summons from Queen Cressida Kroft, who invites the adventurers to Castle Korvosa to address an alarming mystery and growing fear. The queen's initial missive makes it clear she's aware of the PCs' reputations and intends to generously reward their assistance in their choice of coin or magic. If you wish, you could generate a summons to share with your players that you've tailored to match their previous exploits, showing them why they've been chosen for this mission. You should also make sure the players—and thus the PCs—know that Korvosa's high priestess of Pharasma, Bishop Keppira d'Bear, died a few days before the adventure began, especially if their PCs are from Korvosa or have been in the city for some time before this adventure begins. If they're newcomers to the city, you can adjust the queen's dialogue below as needed to convey this news to the players.

A pair of castle guards usher the PCs into the castle. Queen Cressida meets them not in the castle's throne room, but in a spacious, well-lit room anchored by a broad, polished, round table. A detailed map of Korvosa spreads across the table with tidy stacks of documents collected along the edges. Cressida invites the PCs arrive to join her at the chairs surrounding the table. Have Cressida thank the PCs for answering her summons and acknowledge their previous triumphs before she moves on to the reason she's called upon them.

"The situation is a bit delicate, and it's come at an inopportune time. I'm sure you're familiar with the legacy of the city's previous ruler, Ileosa. Well, recently, an alarming number of sightings of her ghost—or specter, or phantom—have been reported throughout the city. Old fears and hatreds linger, and these rumors are stirring them all back up. At first, we thought it was a student prank or the ravings of a drunk that grew out of control, but the most recent manifestation appeared here in Castle Korvosa.

"Normally, I'd look to the church of Pharasma for help in a situation like this. But since we just lost Bishop Keppira a few days ago, the church has its hands full planning today's funeral procession as an event worthy of her memory. So, here we are. Will you investigate these disruptions and track down their source? You will, of course, be well compensated for your services."



Queen Cressida

Cressida further explains rumored sightings of the former queen's ghost have been reported across the city, but four particular events are especially significant.

First Appearance: The first appearance took place two weeks ago in Kendall Plaza during the Crimson Festival, an annual event celebrating Queen Ileosa's downfall. An Acadamae student took responsibility for this manifestation, claiming it was a joke in poor taste. Given the other sightings since then,

Queen Cressida doubts the student's claim and can't help but wonder why he made the confession if, indeed, it was false.

Second Appearance: The second credible sighting occurred on the Jeggare Bridge to Old Korvosa seven days ago—a site where Ileosa's Gray Maidens maintained a guard post once the northern island's other bridges were burned during the previous queen's rule.

Third Appearance: The third report of Ileosa's ghost took place five days ago in Longacre Building, Korvosa's courthouse and jail, and the building Ileosa turned over as a headquarters for her Gray Maidens.

Fourth Appearance: The most recent appearance occurred in the throne room in Castle Korvosa only two days ago. A ghostly image of the late queen appeared on the Crimson Throne itself as writing in blood manifested on the walls. The chamber has been avoided since the event.

Other Appearances: You can add additional sightings of the ghost as you see fit—if you do so, make sure that Queen Cressida brings these additional sightings to the PCs attention at this time.

Treasure: Queen Cressida insists the heroes receive payment for their work. She offers them each 1,000 gp up front to cover any preparations they need to make, and she arranges for them to lodge in Castle Korvosa's barracks if they don't already have a local base from which to work. In addition to this payment, she will award them an additional 1,500 gp if they discover the source of the manifestations, or 3,000 gp if they also successfully eliminate it (with evidence, of course).

Assuming the party agrees to her offer, Cressida gives them a royal writ explaining they have her authority to investigate all matters related to Queen Ileosa and her supposed ghost sightings. She explains they might not want to use it if they want to keep a low profile, but it could open some doors if necessary.

BEGINNING THE INVESTIGATION

The PCs begin by investigating one of the four sightings of Ileosa's ghost shared by Queen Cressida, but other events soon draw their attention. In time, their findings—and information learned from events that occur during the investigation—should push the PCs toward a visit to the Acadamae or the not-quite-abandoned inn Whitecaps, where additional clues eventually lead the PCs to explore Korvosa's Gray District. There, they can uncover the truth behind the city's latest mystery.

Attention Points

At several points during this chapter, the PCs have opportunities to Gather Information to learn more about the mystery or to scavenge for rumors. Doing so can earn the PCs valuable clues, but keep in mind they aren't the only ones interested in the strange events happening around town. Whenever a character attempts a Gather Information check while investigating a sighting, they automatically gain 1 Attention Point (this increases to 2 Attention Points on a critical failure to Gather Information but is reduced to 0 Attention Points on a critical success).

Using the queen's royal writ to gain access tends to attract attention as well; each time the PCs use the writ, they can attempt a DC 11 flat check to avoid attention; failing this check gains them 1 Attention Point.

A character who has the Discreet Inquiry feat (*Advanced Player's Guide* 204) reduces all Attention Points earned by 1 (to a minimum of 0) when they Gather Information (they also earn only a single point if they critically fail a Gather Information check).

Once the PCs realize their investigations are drawing attention, a character can use the following activity to Spread Disinformation to deflect attention.

SPREAD DISINFORMATION

EXPLORATION SECRET

You spread falsehoods through the city's rumor mill to reduce attention your party has received while investigating. After spending four hours on this activity, attempt a DC 28 Deception check. Attention Points can never be reduced below 0.

Critical Success Reduce Attention Points by 2.

Success Reduce Attention Points by 1.

Critical Failure Increase Attention Points by 1.

Attention Effects

As the PCs attract attention, certain events trigger as a result. Some of these are relatively harmless and may even provide new clues or introduce potential allies. If the PCs continue to gather attention, they'll eventually

A SUSPICIOUS DEATH

The timing of Bishop Keppira d'Bear's death is likely to intrigue players, and her death is indeed linked to the strigoi vampires: She was murdered by Aliriel and transformed into a strigoi four days before this adventure begins. The PCs will have many opportunities to learn the truth of this in Chapter 2, but when this adventure begins, they should be more focused on investigating Ileosa's ghost. With the aid of dominated priests, Aliriel took great steps to keep suspicion away from the church; so far, no one doubts that Bishop Keppira, who served as Korvosa's high priestess of Pharasma for nearly half a century, died of natural causes in her sleep.

If the PCs insist on visiting the cathedral immediately, you can move directly to Chapter 2 of this adventure. Without performing a thorough investigation beforehand, they may find themselves in over their heads, as a significant amount of experience points can be earned by investigating the sightings—XP that will certainly help them face the threats they'll encounter once they confront the strigoi.

attract the wrong kind. The first time the PCs reach any of the following Attention Point thresholds, the indicated event takes place at some point in the next 8 hours. The exact timing for that event is left to you to determine, as feels most dramatic for your game.

3 Attention Points: Conspiracy theorist Saliah Nightfoot contacts the PCs (**Event 2**, page 12); this event occurs only once.

6 Attention Points: The Gray Maidens approach the PCs (**Event 3**, page 13).

9 Attention Points: Toff Ornelos, headmaster of the Acadamae, contacts the PCs to arrange a meeting (**Event 4**, page 14).

12 Attention Points: The PCs encounter Ileosa's manifestation (**Event 5**, page 14). As long as attention points remain at this level or higher, the Cathedral of Pharasma is on high alert (see Chapter 2).

15 Attention Points: A strigoi and her dominated minions ambush the PCs soon after nightfall by (**Event 6**, page 14).

21 Attention Points: Scarlet walkers ambush the PCs (**Event 7**, page 15).

XP Award: If the PCs start Chapter 2 with fewer than 12 Attention Points, grant them 120 XP for managing to attract only potentially helpful attention during their investigations. If they start Chapter 2 with fewer than 6 Attention Points, grant them an additional 60 XP, and another 60 XP if they start with fewer than 3 Attention Points.

Chapter 1:

Death Walks the Streets

Chapter 2:

Secrets in Gray

Chapter 3:

Sanctum of Blood

Adventure

Toolbox

The Rumor Mill

The streets of Korvosa are rife with rumors about recent events, but Queen Ileosa's legacy still hangs heavy over Korvosa, so getting locals to talk about these events isn't easy. A successful DC 28 check made after Gathering Information for 2 hours is enough to learn one of the following rumors, determined randomly by rolling 1d10 (on a critical success, roll 1d10+4 instead).

SHADOWS AT SUNDOWN RUMORS

d10	Rumor
1-2	"Queen Ileosa escaped Hell, and she's come back to Korvosa as a ghost, but I heard someone from the Acadamae say what we really have to worry about are the devils that'll come looking for her!" (False.)
3-5	"Ileosa's gone. If she were really coming back, don't you think her ghost would have been more destructive and obvious? No, these 'ghost sightings' are hoaxes or pranks." (False, with a fairly equal distribution between placing blame on pranksters from the Acadamae and fearmongering about the manifestations being created by Queen Sorshen or one of her minions.)
6	"There's no way that Bishop Keppira is actually gone. I heard she faked her death when she learned that Ileosa was trying to come back, and now she's gone undercover to fight against the queen's ghost! That's why the church was closed for so long after she 'died,' so the priests would have a chance to get their story straight while the high priestess gets to work protecting us all!" (False.)
7	"Have you seen them? Gray Maidens? I'm not buying the line that they're just people in costume from the Crimson Festival. The Maidens are coming back, and they must have something to do with Ileosa's ghost!" (Partially true—there are Gray Maidens in town, but they have nothing to do with the cause of Ileosa's spirit manifesting in the city.)
8	"Ghost or not, you can't deny the fact that we've had more people going missing at night lately. The city guard is either unable or unwilling to help. I think the ghost is just a distraction while someone or some thing is at work!" (True.)
9-10	Create a special rumor for the PCs that pushes them toward an area they haven't investigated yet. If they've exhausted all other sites and events in this part but haven't learned of the link to the Gray District, they should learn a rumor of your design that leads them here.

Additional Clues

If the PCs are particularly creative, they might look for clues using methods not covered in this adventure. If they do so, try to roll with it and give out information as you see fit. For example, if the PCs attempt to contact local folk-hero Blackjack for help (see "Speaking of Blackjack... below), that infamous vigilante might simply have a letter delivered to the PCs directing them to seek out the Gray Maidens in North Point. Or if the PCs use *talking corpse* or other magic to contact the dead, those clues could even push them toward investigating the Gray District. In the end, as long as the PCs learn enough that they know that something is afoot in Korvosa's cemetery district, how they get there is largely irrelevant. Just make sure to reward them with enough XP for their outside-of-the-box thinking so that when they explore the cathedral, they'll have reached 12th level!

In addition, keep in mind that some of the minor clues about the nature of the danger that faces Korvosa are more about foreshadowing and less about propelling the PCs forward. During this adventure, if the PCs make a realization about the situation that helps to focus the adventure's themes (such as a player realizing that Ileosa's "ghost" is only seen after dark), congratulate the players and award them some XP—20 points is a good number for these minor revelations, but you can use this method to grant the party a few additional XP here and there if they've done a good job investigating but haven't quite hit level 12 by the time they're ready to start Chapter 2.

Speaking of Blackjack...

Korvosa's most infamous folk-hero is Blackjack, a legendary masked vigilante who's fought for Korvosa's downtrodden for ages. Few, if any, know the hero's true identity, and it's impossible to predict where or when they might appear. In fact, Blackjack is not one person but dozens over the years—a persona handed down from one person to the next along with the gear and ideals that embody the hero.

Recent events have drawn Blackjack's attention, but the folk-hero is well aware that their presence draws attention and lends importance to a situation. Given their prominent activity during Ileosa's reign, they have chosen to lie low during current events lest they inadvertently turn the public's rising concern into an all-out panic. However, their information network is vast and they might show up with a clue in the PCs' time of need.

Blackjack's been paying particular attention to the vampires' attempts to silence people drawing too much attention to the Ileosa sightings, and the clue they're

most likely to send to the party is someone they've learned might be the next victim. This clue takes the form of a note left in the dead of night, pinned to a door with one of their signature daggers with a stylized "B" engraved in the pommel. The note simply states the threatened party's name and where they can be found. The most likely person to be in this scenario is the conspiracy theorist Saliah Nightfoot (page 12), but it could be almost any named citizen in the city, depending on where the PCs should be looking next.

THE SIGHTINGS

Details on the sightings are presented below.

Sighting 1: Kendall Plaza

Kendall Plaza, one of the city's numerous open spaces at the intersection of prominent streets, is southwest of Castle Korvosa. The plaza is one the sites for the city's annual Crimson Festival: a celebration of Ileosa's defeat. During the weeklong event, people burn wooden statues of the dead queen in effigy in each of Korvosa's squares, while games, festival stalls, and eateries fill the surrounding plazas. Ileosa's ghost first appeared before a throng of partygoers during the burning of the Kendall Plaza effigy about a month ago. Most of the witnesses have since returned to their daily lives, but rumors still fly around the square—and the city.

Characters who succeed at a DC 23 check to Gather Information about the sighting learn that Ileosa appeared a few minutes after sundown, away from the most crowded venues, where she seemed to be watching vigils for the fallen with a smug grin. On any result other than a critical failure, the characters learn that a student named Caelios Inivorum took the blame for the sighting and vanished not long after confessing. Any attempt to learn more by asking around fails to provide any more than a suggestion to visit the Acadamae. On a critical success, the PCs not only learn about Caelios's confession, but also obtain the address of his apartment in the Acadamae.

XP Award: Grant the PCs 80 XP for investigating the plaza and learning more about Caelios.

Sighting 2: Jeggare Bridge

The island of Old Korvosa is separated from the main city by a canal called the Narrows. During the height of the blood veil plague, numerous wooden bridges over the Narrows were burned to quarantine Old Korvosa, leaving the stone Jeggare Bridge as the only connection to the mainland. Most of the wooded bridges were rebuilt, but Jeggare Bridge remains culturally significant: During Ileosa's reign,

this bridge was blockaded and guarded by Ileosa's Gray Maidens to further isolate the island. Large sections of the island were destroyed during Ileosa's reign, but since her downfall, Old Korvosa has been on a slow mend. Today, significant portions of the island have been rebuilt by a colorful community of Varisians, Shoanti, and others looking to embrace the rich diversity of Korvosa's culture—helped in part by Queen Cressida's decision to grant significant portions of the neighborhood to the Sklar-Quah who once called the land here home.

Ileosa's spirit appeared for an hour on Jeggare Bridge, the longest reported sighting so far. A successful DC 26 check to Gather Information here confirms the sighting took place shortly before sunrise, when bridge traffic was increasing for the day. Those who remembered the troubles of a decade before were too frightened to cross paths with the ghost and fled. Some Old Korvosans have been unwilling to leave the island since.

A character who succeeds at a DC 23 Perception check at Jeggare Bridge notices a reserved Shoanti with stylized white tattoos lingering near the Old Korvosa side of the bridge—an individual who seems particularly interested in the PCs' actions. This is **Shakkah Water-Finder** (N nonbinary human merchant 4), a member of the Sklar-Quah Shoanti. They are willing to speak with anyone who approaches politely, but convincing them to speak about the sighting of Ileosa in particular takes some effort. They openly engage with anyone who is Shoanti or Varisian, or anyone who shows them the queen's paperwork. Otherwise, a character must succeed at a DC 23 Diplomacy check to recall the correct etiquette to appeal to a Shoanti for assistance.

Should the PCs fail this check, or if any of them are rude or hostile, Shakkah tersely insists they're awaiting the return of kin who have gone missing. If the PCs gain their cooperation, Shakkah admits they grew intrigued once they realized the PCs were investigating the ghost sighting. Shakkah relates their belief that the ghost of Ileosa was an illusion created to harass the residents of Korvosa, perhaps at the urging of hidden agents of the Gray Maidens. A character who succeeds at a DC 28 Diplomacy check or leverages the queen's writ can convince Shakkah to bring the party to meet with the elders.

Shakkah brings them to an open area in eastern Old Korvosa, where nearly an entire city block is populated with hide yurts and a broad firepit instead of the stone and wooden buildings found elsewhere. The Shoanti diplomat who represents this neighborhood is an elderly man named **Thousand Bones** (CG male human

shaman 8), who recalls both the heroes who defeated Ileosa (thus making it possible for the Sun Clan to return to their ancestral lands) along with the brutality of how her agents worked to scour non-Chelaxians from the city through violence, plague, and terror.

After Shakkah introduces the PCs and relates their goal, Thousand Bones reiterates their belief that the appearances of Ileosa's ghost are falsehoods and frightening hoaxes engineered by holdouts who long for a return to Ileosa's rule. As proof, he says the Gray Maidens became active in the city a week after the first sighting, even as the outlawed mercenaries attempt to keep a low profile. Thousand Bones doesn't know the vanishings are due to strigoi predations. If the PCs follow his advice to start looking in the district of North Point, where the Gray Maidens once kept their headquarters, they'll have an easier time contacting the Gray Maidens (page 13).

XP Award: If the PCs secure a meeting with Thousand Bones, grant them 80 XP.

Sighting 3: Longacre Building

Longacre Building is an imposing edifice along the main road in the North Point neighborhood. It serves as both a jail and a courthouse, and most official city records are stored here. The PCs can persuade the two city guards at the entrance to assist in their investigation with a successful DC 28 Diplomacy or Deception check, or by presenting the queen's writ. Once their cooperation is secured, the guards answer whatever questions the PCs pose, and can escort them to any records or people they want to see. During her reign, Ileosa seized the building for the Gray Maidens. If the PCs ask about Ileosa's infernal contract, the guards awkwardly remind them that this particular document and several others were stolen recently. If specifically asked about the hauntings, the guards admit one of the researchers reported such an occurrence in the stacks. They've limited knowledge of this event to curtail growing panic.

Stolen Documents: Longacre archivists compiled a record of the stolen materials. Most of the texts dealt with Infernal law and contracts, and included Ileosa's infernal contract with a devil named Sermignatto. The archivists tell the PCs there's a reward of 2,500 gp for the stolen documents. They can inform the PCs about the contract's contents, revealing it granted Ileosa substantial infernal power by binding a heretical devil to her soul, under the stipulation that in time, her actions would drag the entire city of Korvosa to Hell. While the contract was between Ileosa and Sermignatto, a mysterious passage near the end of the contract implied the presence of a mysterious backer

behind the contract. Only Ileosa and Sermignatto knew this backer's identity; speculation about the backer is so widespread that no additional significant clues about it can be deduced. Even among the archivists in Longacre, debates about the nature of this backer bear no workable clues.

Sightings of Ileosa: Ileosa's ghost appeared late one night among the collection of documents that kept details of her reign. Only one clerk saw the event: **Bika Hoffinbritter** (NG female gnome clerk 4), a middle-aged gnome woman tasked with examining the documents to see if any needed restoration or additional preservation. If the PCs speak with her, Bika can provide the PCs with the above details on Ileosa's contract, accompanied by a haphazard lecture on the dangers of looking too hard into the affairs of devils. Among all the witnesses to Ileosa's manifestation, Bika's recounting is by far the most detailed. Once the PCs hear it, they gain a +2 circumstance bonus on all checks made to resolve any encounters they have later with all haunts associated with Ileosa's manifestation, including Perception DCs, checks to disable them, and saving throws against their effects.

Treasure: If the PCs recover the stolen documents from area **A11** and return them, the staff at Longacre reward them with a payment of 2,500 gp.

XP Award: If the PCs hear Bika's detailed description of the haunt, they earn 80 XP. If they recover the stolen documents from area **A11** and return them, they earn an additional 80 XP.

Sighting 4: Castle Korvosa

The throne room is designed to command attention. The stone walls bear mosaics, frescos, and hanging tapestries of silk and gold thread, while stained glass panels depict monarchs of the city's history. In the eastern corner stands a great stone fireplace in the shape of a huge, ancient tree, though no fire burns amid the stone tree's roots. The focus of the room is an ornate iron throne standing on a low dais at the far end of the room, bedecked with crimson velvet silks and cushions, though the throne looks a bit dusty and the cushions appear unused.

Queen Cressida can describe the scene that transpired here. Queen Ileosa's ghost appeared two hours after sundown, sitting on the long-unused Crimson Throne, and gestured forward as though ordering her Gray Maidens to attack. During the apparition, bloody text appeared on the room's walls, and agonizing pain and overwhelming fear wracked the guard's body. The ghost and bloody writing faded quickly, and the nervous guard's description of the

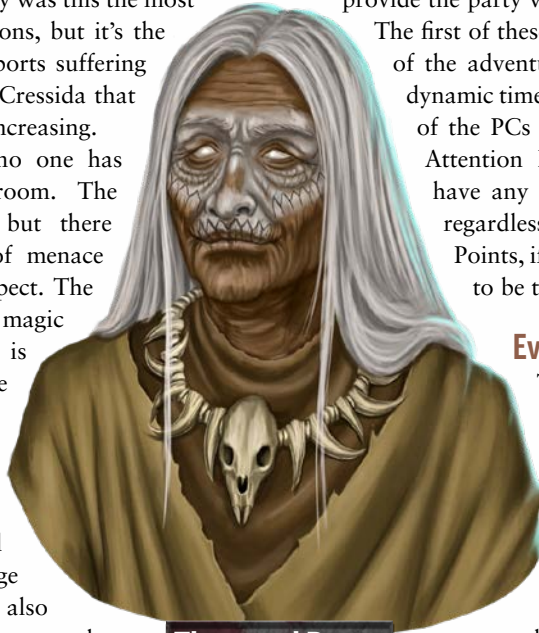
writing makes it seem as if the text was written in Infernal. The guard couldn't read the writing, so its message is unknown. Not only was this the most recent of Ileosa's manifestations, but it's the first one where a witness reports suffering agony from it, suggesting to Cressida that the power of these events is increasing.

Since the manifestation, no one has returned to the throne room. The chamber feels abandoned, but there are no particular feelings of menace or oppression one might expect. The Crimson Throne itself is not a magic item; the legend of its curse is merely that: a legend. If the PCs ask Cressida why the Crimson Throne is unused, she notes the legend—those who sit upon it will not live to see an heir and will die unnaturally before old age claims them—but Cressida also admits that as a former city guard officer, she eschews the trappings of royalty and views her royal title more as an office than an identity. If the PCs inspect the throne, they find only a few harmless, dark-red spiders that scurry away when the cushions are disturbed.

By closely examining the walls and succeeding at a DC 28 Perception check, PCs can make out faint traces of the bloody Infernal writing that appeared on the walls during the ghost's appearance; a critical success allows a PC to recognize several words. Alternately, a spell like *read aura* heightened to 6th level (to allow the character to target all the faint auras rather than just a few) or *true seeing* allows a PC to see these words automatically. At this point, a successful DC 25 Society or Religion check recognizes the language fragments as likely coming from a diabolic contract. If none of the PCs understand Infernal, a character who can see the message can copy enough of it by hand for later translation; this meticulous process takes 4 hours to complete and requires a successful DC 25 Legal Lore or Society check.

After Ileosa's defeat, all in Korvosa knew she had signed an infernal contract to gain diabolical power. Her copy of the contract was preserved at Longacre Building (page 10) but recently was stolen. A PC who succeeds at a DC 23 Religion or Society check to Recall Knowledge knows this information, but they can learn it as well from Queen Cressida if they ask.

XP Award: Grant the PCs 80 XP if they discover the nature of the writing on the walls.



Thousand Bones

EVENTS

As the PCs investigate the sightings, certain events can provide the party with additional clues or danger.

The first of these events occurs on the first day of the adventure, while the others occur at dynamic times chosen by you within 8 hours of the PCs reaching a specific amount of Attention Points (page 7). Feel free to have any of these events occur as well, regardless of accumulated Attention Points, if you feel the event makes sense to be triggered by game play.

Event 1: Funeral Procession

The first day of the adventure is the day the church of Pharamasma conducts the funeral procession for Bishop Keppira d'Bear. Since the whole of Korvosa benefited from the bishop's good works—not least of which were her efforts during the blood veil plague—thronges of citizens, regardless of faith, attend the procession through every major neighborhood in Korvosa. The procession returns to the cathedral, where the body will lie in honor for viewing.

The procession is a somber affair. A half-dozen Pharasmin priests dressed in dark mourning vestments and veils that leave no flesh exposed pull an elaborate open carriage bearing the bishop's casket. A PC who makes a successful DC 18 Religion or Pharamasma Lore check to Recall Knowledge realizes these priests have taken a vow of silence to honor their leader's passing.

Following the priests is a contingent of vocal mourners from a variety of organizations across the city: representatives of other faiths, officers from the city guard and the Sable Company, high-ranking courtiers and envoys, leaders of various city factions, and a pair of heavily armored Hellknights of the Nail. Behind them trails a long crowd of citizens, from wealthy merchants and well-dressed nobles to destitute folk dressed in rags. The procession lasts from sunrise to sunset.

The mourners are eager to reminisce about the bishop, and to spread rumors about recent events. As such, the PCs can Gather Information while attending the procession without earning Attention Points.

The priests at the head of the procession are all dominated and under strigoi control, and the casket is empty, although the PCs are unlikely to discover this without risking the ire of the entire procession.

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Any attempt to interrupt or interrogate a priest automatically earns the PCs 4 Attention Points. In the unlikely event that the PCs expose the empty casket, the outraged priests break their silence to explain her body is undergoing a cleansing rite at the cathedral under the observation of acting bishop Abridan. A growing number of mourners take offense at any priest who breaks their silence, as tradition holds that no priest may speak during the procession. See Chapter 2 for more details on the situation among the priesthood.

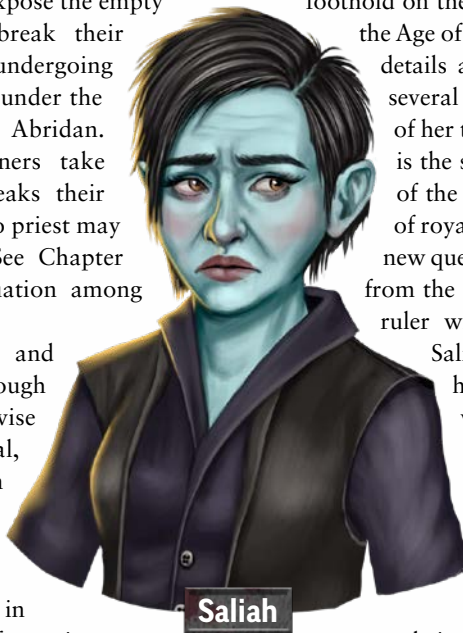
Starting the next day, and continuing until the PCs earn enough Attention Points or otherwise disrupt things at the cathedral, Bishop Keppira's body lies in honor in the cathedral. Visitors may pay their respects from mid-morning to mid-afternoon.

XP Award: If the PCs take part in the processional and Gather Information, grant them 80 XP.

Event 2: A Theory of Tyrants

Saliah Nightfoot (CG female halfling duskwalker investigator 5) is a corpse-pale halfling from the nation of Ravounel. Her adoptive family lived in the shadow of imperial Cheliah. She's long been fascinated and horrified by how the machinations of Hell leverage souls to increase Asmodeus's power over the Great Beyond, particularly in ways that go beyond the simple transformation of petitioners into devils. She dedicated her life to studying these infernal phenomena, and her investigations recently brought her to Korvosa. When sightings of Ileosa's ghost began less than a week after her arrival, she decided she was drawn to the city to untangle a deep mystery.

Saliah has kept a low profile so far, so it's unlikely the PCs will find her on their own. Instead, once the PCs attract enough attention (either by accumulating 3 Attention Points or as the result of some in-play event you decide would alert Saliah), she seeks out the PCs. Saliah was staying at a plain inn called Bard's End in East Shore. She keeps this information to herself at first, instead approaching the PCs elsewhere in the city. It's likely she has heard of the PCs' previous adventures as well; this, plus her eagerness to share her theories, overcomes her initial fear that talking too much could draw unwanted attention. She barely waits to make introductions before she inundates the PCs with her theories in a somewhat airy tone.



Saliah's central (and outlandish) hypothesis is that Hell has released the souls of dead tyrants to gain a foothold on the Material Plane since the dawn of

the Age of Lost Omens. She's uncertain of the details at the moment, but she points to several events in recent decades as proof of her theory. Her primary bit of evidence is the sudden and absolute rise to power of the Thrunes in Cheliah. After decades of royal infighting, it's clear that Cheliah's new queen, Abrogail II, somehow benefited from the direct assistance of Abrogail I, the ruler who first bound Cheliah to Hell.

Saliah also investigated a series of hauntings in the city of Kintargo, where tyrant Barzillai Thrune is said to haunt the city. She sees the appearances of Ileosa in Korvosa as a similar phenomenon. "Time and time again, we see the legacies of infernal tyranny along the west coast of Avistan

cast their diabolic shadow—these can't all be coincidences!" she breathlessly claims.

Although she approached the PCs, Saliah doesn't entirely trust them yet. If the PCs convince her they're allies (either by Lying with a successful DC 22 Deception check or by Making an Impression with a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check), she opens up; otherwise, she has second thoughts and simply warns them to take care before bidding farewell.

The duskwalker collected a fair amount of information, but much of it reiterates what the PCs could otherwise gather by visiting the locations of the four sightings. You can use Saliah to coax the PCs toward one of the locations they've yet to explore. More importantly, Saliah's warning can remind the PCs to take care when Gathering Information. She noticed shadowy figures following her on recent nights and suspects these stalkers to be associated either with New Thassilon or the Gray Maidens. She also mentions that she hopes to use a *call spirit* ritual to contact souls brought directly to Hell without being judged, on the theory that by bypassing the regular route to the afterlife, these spirits could have key information about infernal machinations. This final tidbit is intended to get the PCs thinking about using similar tactics (see page 38 at the end of Chapter 2).

Saliah ends the meeting with the PCs by urging them to share any information they find about Ileosa. At this point, she lets them know she's staying at Bard's End in East Gate. If the PCs visit her there, you can use her as a source for more clues to redirect wayward

investigations back to the plot. At your option, if the PCs visit her room after they've begun Chapter 2, they could be ambushed by a group of strigoi who finally tracked her down. In which case, Saliah becomes an unfortunate victim the PCs might rescue later in the adventure.

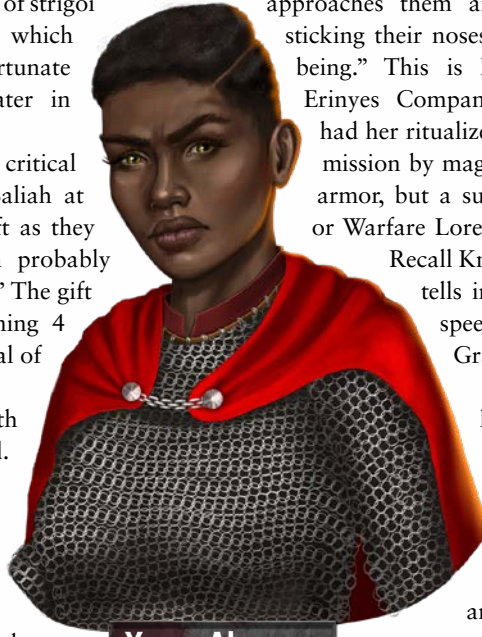
Treasure: If the PCs achieve a critical success in their attempt to put Saliah at ease, she presents them with a gift as they part company, saying, "You can probably make better use of this than I can!" The gift is a small leather satchel containing 4 doses of silversheen and a single vial of *good-aligned* oil.

XP Award: Parties that talk with Saliah receive an 80 XP story award.

Event 3: A Gray Confrontation Trivial 11

Hardened survivors and devoted, dispassionate warriors, the Gray Maidens were Ileosa's personal guard and carried out many of her atrocities throughout the city. At the end of Ileosa's reign, the Gray Maidens' leaders were defeated, and the new regime banned the organization from Korvosa. The survivors splintered into factions, of which one of the most prominent is the Erinyes Company. Officially in service to Abrogail II, Imperial Majestrix of Cheliix, and dedicated to the powerful infernal Queens of the Night, the Erinyes Company believes its ultimate goal is to reclaim Korvosa in Ileosa's name.

When word of Ileosa's ghostly manifestation in Kendall Plaza (sent by dutiful informants) reached the Erinyes Company in Cheliix, a small contingent of Gray Maidens snuck into Korvosa, arriving just a few hours after Ileosa's second manifestation on Jeggare Bridge. The leader, Yniesse Zenderholm (page 35), is a passionate devotee of Eiseth who received a charge from her patron to seek out the infernal duke Lorthact, Eiseth's treacherous ex-partner. After months of painstaking research, Yniesse pieced together enough details about recent events in Korvosa (particularly the disastrous Breaching Festival a few years past) to suspect Lorthact had some hand in shaping the city's history. Ileosa's manifestations gave Yniesse the excuse she needed to return to her hometown with several of her agents. None of these agents realize their commander is more interested in Lorthact than a possible return of their beloved leader, but now that Yniesse is missing, the remaining agents are nervous and desperate.



Xarva Almaxus

Creatures: Soon after the PCs earn 6 Attention Points, a dour woman dressed in ragged armor approaches them and warns the PCs to "stop sticking their noses where they have no business being." This is Xarva Almaxus, one of the Erinyes Company Gray Maiden agents. She had her ritualized facial scars removed for this mission by magic and isn't wearing her iconic armor, but a successful DC 23 Korvosa Lore or Warfare Lore, or a DC 28 Society check to Recall Knowledge, allows a PC to notice tells in her stance, mannerisms, and speech patterns that she's received Gray Maiden training.

Despite her bluster, Xarva isn't looking for a fight. In fact, she's desperate enough to look for outside aid. Upon learning the PCs are investigating Ileosa's manifestations, she decided to approach them and size them up. If they are cowed by her and back down, she writes them off as unhelpful; if they stand up for themselves or ask her if she's a Gray Maiden, she backs down. Xarva skirts the truth by saying that she came to Korvosa a few weeks ago and never served Ileosa as a Gray Maiden (having been recruited into the Erinyes Company only five years ago).

Xarva's initial attitude is Unfriendly. If the PCs can make her Indifferent, she'll nod briskly and consider her warning delivered before leaving them. If she's made Friendly or Helpful, she admits she's part of a larger group that came to Korvosa to investigate rumors of Ileosa's return, but "unexpected developments" put their investigation on hold. A PC who makes a successful DC 25 Perception check to Sense Motive can confirm that she seems nervous about asking for help but that her concerns seem legitimate—she's not trying to trick the PCs. If she's made Friendly, Xarva invites the PCs to meet her sisters at Whitecaps to discuss how they can work with the PCs. Otherwise, she promises to send them a future invitation to talk—an invitation that comes in 1d4+2 days if the PCs don't reach Whitecaps on their own before then.

If the PCs attack her or make her Hostile, she attempts to flee to the district of North Point and, eventually, back to Whitecaps (page 18). If the PCs capture or kill Xarva, they may find it more difficult to secure the aid of the Gray Maidens later.

Note that at this time, Xarva is not wearing her armor and is armed only with her magic longsword.

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XARVA ALMAXUS

CREATURE 6

Captain of the guard (*Gamemastery Guide* 234)

Initiative Perception +15

AC 18

XP Award: Grant the PCs 80 XP if they navigate this encounter without resorting to combat.

Event 4. Meeting Request

If the PCs accumulate 9 Attention Points, they attract the notice of one of Korvosa's most powerful citizens: Toff Ornelos, headmaster of the Acadamae. Toff has his own reasons to be intrigued by current events, as well as his own reasons to avoid tipping his hand. Once

he realizes the PCs might be on to something, he's familiar enough with the PCs to use *sending* to contact one of them and to take them into his confidence. Which PC receives Toff's *sending* is up to you, although he prefers those with arcane knowledge and skill.

"I am Headmaster Ornelos. There are greater perils facing Korvosa than ghosts. Meet me at Caelios's apartment on the Acadamae grounds. We have much to discuss."

Allow the PC to reply as they wish, but after this message is sent, Toff will await them at Caelios's apartment. At your option, Toff may use additional *sendings* to put the PCs at ease or to reply to questions they might ask, but he prefers they meet in secret at Caelios's apartment before getting too far into the discussion.

Event 5: The Queen's Manifestation

The first three manifestations of Queen Ileosa were frightening but ultimately harmless. As work proceeds deep below Korvosa to wrench her soul free from Hell, and as the underlying fear in the city grows stronger,

more dangerous manifestations of the deposed tyrant appear. The first of these hazardous manifestations targeted a hapless guard in Castle Korvosa a few days before this adventure begins. Soon after the PCs accumulate 12 Attention Points, they encounter the next. At your discretion, the PCs may encounter this manifestation more than once. Each time they do, try to set up the event so it takes place in a tense situation, such as while the PCs are investigating a supposed site of a haunting or while they're traveling the city streets. In any case, this event can take place only at night.

Hazard: As the PCs attract attention to themselves by investigating the sightings, fragments of Ileosa's soul become increasingly capable of directing these manifestations. This is little more than a spiritual reflex and not a purposeful act by Ileosa, but the PCs aren't likely to know that.

ILEOSA'S FIFTH MANIFESTATION

HAZARD 11

RARE **HAUNT**

Stealth DC 33 (master)

Description Mist coils from the ground, perhaps through a sewer grate or from cracks along a basement foundation, quickly forming into the ghostly image of Queen Ileosa.

Disable DC 33 Religion (expert) to exorcise the manifestation, or DC 36 Intimidation (trained) to stand one's ground without showing fear.

Queen's Laugh ☞ (divine, emotion, enchantment, mental)

Trigger A living creature moves within 10 feet of where the manifestation will appear; **Effect** Ileosa laughs, becoming more substantial as bloody, spectral bodies appear to pile under her feet. Each living creature within 30 feet of the area must attempt a DC 30 Will save.

Critical Success The creature takes no damage.

Success The creature takes 5d10 mental damage as false memories of being tormented and persecuted under Ileosa's rule tear through their mind.

Failure As above, but the creature takes 10d10 mental damage and becomes stupefied 1 until the next sunrise from the overwhelming nature of the false memories.

Critical Failure As failure, but the creature becomes stupefied 2 instead. In addition, the creature continues to see dead, bloody bodies crawling from the ground during times of stress, causing them to treat all ground as difficult terrain during combat. This hallucination persists as long as the character remains stupefied from the hazard.

Event 6: Vampire Ambush

Moderate 11

Since emerging from the dungeons below Korvosa, the strigoi Aliriel worked to keep her presence, and that of her minions, hidden from discovery. As the PCs investigate the situation in Korvosa, they attract

Ileosa's Manifestation

her attention. This event takes place once the PCs accumulate 15 Attention Points, but this hit squad can ambush the PCs at any point you feel they've warranted violence. The attack takes place at night, while the PCs are either resting or out investigating some of the nocturnal sightings of the queen.

Creatures: A strigoi servant named Sevasha—a recent addition to Aliriel's slowly growing army (and the only servant she's created since emerging from her sanctum)—leads a group of dominated city guards in an ambush against the PCs. They attempt to sneak up on the party, using Stealth for their initiative rolls. The guards are dominated by Aliriel but were ordered to obey Sevasha's commands. The guards fight until slain, moving in to engage the PCs in melee while Sevasha fires arrows upon the party from a vantage point like a nearby rooftop. She avoids melee combat at this time, as she's under orders to not directly engage the PCs. She flees if her minions are slain, and the PCs should encounter her again at a location of your choosing within the Cathedral of Pharasma in Chapter 2.

The dominated guards were in the wrong place at the wrong time, patrolling Gray District, when Aliriel ambushed and subsequently dominated them. If the PCs capture a guard and remove the domination effect, the guard becomes terrified of the "shadow woman." The guard can't give any further description, other than her eyes seemed to look "directly into my soul." The PCs might start to investigate Gray District after hearing this (see Chapter 2); alternately, if Sevasha flees, the PCs might track or follow her to the Cathedral of Pharasma.

SEVASHA CREATURE 10

Strigoi servant (page 25)

Initiative Stealth +23

DOMINATED GUARDS (4) CREATURE 7

LN Gang leaders (*Gamemastery Guide* 249)

Initiative Stealth +13

Event 7: Scarlet Ambush Severe 12

If the PCs accumulate more than 20 Attention Points, Aliriel realizes they're a potential threat to her plans and has one of her strongest allies, the dero ghoul Ibrique (area **B7**), teleport two deadly minions to the PCs' proximity. These are the two scarlet walkers from area **B2**: enormous, spider-like monstrosities from the nightmare realm of Leng. These creatures were often called to serve in Thassilon, and Aliriel hopes that even if they don't kill the party, the encounter will deflect investigations away from her and toward a potential link with New Thassilon.

The scarlet walkers function equally well during night or day, and Aliriel informs them that once they perform this task, they're freed from her servitude. The PCs have attracted enough attention that Aliriel need only make a successful DC 32 Society check to know where the party is located, and she directs Ibrique to teleport the two scarlet walkers into that vicinity. If she fails this check, the scarlet walkers appear close enough to the PCs that they hear the ensuing panic on the streets as the enormous monsters begin to violently search for them, allowing the PCs the chance to reverse the ambush. Otherwise, the scarlet walkers appear in the PCs' vicinity and can roll Stealth for their initiative (at a -4 circumstance penalty unless Aliriel was critically successful on her Society check). In any event, Ibrique retreats immediately to area **B7**.

Freed from servitude once they begin the attack, the scarlet walkers fight until one of them is slain, at which point, the other flees the city once it's reduced to fewer than 75 HP. If the scarlet walkers are defeated here, they are not encountered later in area **B2**.

SCARLET WALKERS (2) CREATURE 12

Page 57

Initiative Perception +23

THE ACADAMAE

The Acadamae is a wizard's college renowned throughout the Inner Sea region for its studies of conjuration magic. When it was originally established, this focus was primarily on infernal conjurations, but the school branched out significantly into other areas of study. The walled campus, built atop the highest hill in the city, is widely considered one of the cornerstones of Korvosa.

While to date there have been no sightings of Ileosa at the Acadamae, the PCs might find themselves visiting the campus for two reasons. The first is if they're independently investigating the student who pled guilty to creating the first Ileosa illusion at Kendall Plaza; the second is to meet with Headmaster Toff Ornelos.

Investigating Caelios

Caelios Inivorum became infamous on campus after he confessed to creating illusions of Ileosa at the Kendall Plaza celebration, and then even more so when he vanished a few days later. If the PCs ask around, they find many students and teachers regard Caelios as a stain on the Acadamae's reputation, with most assuming he fled the city or went into hiding. A successful DC 28 Gather Information check (or presentation of the queen's writ) is required to get any

CAELIOS'S FATE

In his guise as Volshyenek Ornelos, Lorthact bribed Caelios into his confession. The first manifestation of Ileosa's spirit in the city above surprised both Lorthact and Aliriel, and the exiled devil panicked, fearing the manifestation would attract the wrong attention. He chose Caelios as a patsy and approached him one night with an offer: if Caelios admitted to creating the ghost as a prank, his tuition as well as any fees associated with the confession would be paid in full.

Caelios accepted the offer but wasn't prepared for the social backlash from fellow students. When the second sighting of Ileosa took place, Caelios decided to officially recant his confession. Before that recantation could be processed, Lorthact destroyed the unfiled paperwork and gave Caelios to Aliriel. Not powerful enough to be turned into a proper strigoi servant, Caelios instead became a vampire's meal; Aliriel disposed of his body in area **C8** (page 48).

usable information—namely, a day after the university levied some hefty fines on Caelios for his prank and asked him to deliver a public apology, he vanished. His campus apartment was locked up, pending either his return or the results of an investigation. A critical success on this check attracts Headmaster Toff's attention. He greets the PCs at Caelios's apartment as detailed below if they visit it; if not, he uses *sending* to invite them for a chat (page 17).

Tracking down Caelios's apartment is a simple matter of either asking around or researching the publicly accessible student housing records at the Acadamae.

Visiting Caelios's Apartment

Caelios's apartment is located in one of the dormitory buildings on the western side of campus grounds. The door to his ground-floor apartment is locked, and a small sign affixed to the door reads: "Contact Administration for Entry." The Acadamae wants Caelios, should he return, to present himself to the school's administration. If the PCs request a key to his apartment, they can convince the clerk on staff that they have permission to access the apartment (with a successful DC 28 Deception check), sweet-talk the clerk (with a successful DC 30 Diplomacy check), or browbeat them into handing the key over (with a successful DC 23 Intimidation check; this also earns the PCs 1 Attention Point). Presenting the queen's writ gets the PCs the key as well. In all cases, the PCs are expected to return the key within a few hours. If they fail to do so, they earn 1 Attention Point.

The PCs could also Pick the Lock with a successful DC 28 Thievery check to enter the apartment or use magic to secure entry. If they're particularly noisy and obvious about their attempts to get into the apartment, they earn 1 Attention Point. If things escalate to a confrontation with campus security, the PCs earn 2 more Attention Points before the whole scene attracts Toff's attention, who teleports in and takes over the situation. (After dismissing the guards, he invites the PCs into the apartment to chat as detailed under "Meeting with the Headmaster.")

If the PCs come to the apartment specifically to meet with Toff, they find the door unlocked.

Clues: The apartment looks lived-in but tidy. A search reveals no indication that Caelios packed up and left, nor are there any signs of a struggle. A successful DC 26 Perception check made during the search reveals a false bottom in the nightstand. Within is Caelios's spellbook—a sure sign that the student wizard's disappearance wasn't something he planned.

Caelios was a 7th-level wizard, but his spellbook is sparse, containing mostly spells he learned during his studies with a few additional notes. Among the spells contained in the spellbook are *comprehend language*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *dimension door*, *dispel magic*, *floating disk*, *fly*, *levitate*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *read aura*, *slow*, *stinking cloud*, *summon construct*, *summon elemental*, and *unseen servant*. Attentive PCs note there are no spells in this book that would allow Caelios to create an illusion of Ileosa.

Notes within the spellbook detail methods of attracting a house drake as a familiar; traditionally, students at the Acadamae take imps as familiars, but Caelios was part of a trend that favors Korvosa's house drake as a wizardly companion. Rules for this special familiar appear on page 53, should a PC wish to take one on for themselves.

The most important clue in the spellbook is a drawing. Caelios doodled extensively in the margins of his spellbook, but one sketch on the book's last page stands out: a detailed image of an elderly man with penetrating eyes, a long thin beard, and a wooden staff carved with strange runes that look almost, but not quite, like characters in *Infernal*. A brief caption scribbled nearby asks in Common, "Who is he? Why did he ask me to take the blame?" A PC who succeeds at a DC 23 Academia Lore or Korvosa Lore check, or a DC 28 Society Lore check, feels a nagging familiarity at the sketch. With a critical success, they recognize the old man as the original founder of the Acadamae: Volshyenek Ornelos.

XP Award: If the PCs discover Caelios's spellbook, grant them 120 XP.

Meeting the Headmaster

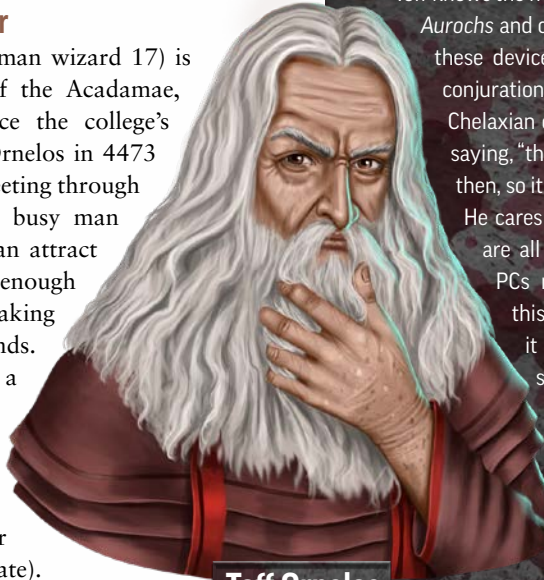
Toff Ornelos (LN male human wizard 17) is the current headmaster of the Acadamae, a hereditary position since the college's founding by Volshyenek Ornelos in 4473 AR. Attempts to secure a meeting through normal methods with the busy man should fail, but the PCs can attract his attention by earning enough Attention Points or by making a scene on Acadamae grounds.

Once he agrees to a meeting, Toff suggests it take place clandestinely at Caelios's apartment. He greets the PCs briskly, thanking them for their discretion (if appropriate). He fears the sightings they're investigating point to a much different peril to Korvosa than the return of a defeated tyrant.

Toff is quite anxious. He knows his great-uncle Volshyenek, who feigned his death over a century before but still controls the Acadamae from the shadows, is up to something. After nearly losing his Acadamae position in the wake of the disastrous Breaching Festival, Toff has kept a low profile while looking for a way to finally wrest control of the university away from his apparently immortal great-uncle. He doesn't know Volshyenek is the exiled infernal duke Lorthact, but Toff believes the source of Volshyenek's power and longevity comes from infernal dealings. In fact, he suspects Volshyenek is the unnamed third party in Ileosa's contract, but he hasn't acted on this suspicion for fear of tipping his hand.

Toff wants Volshyenek out, but he doesn't want to risk making a personal move to do so. He fears any misstep might finish the job the previous disaster started, and he could be forced from the Acadamae entirely. Instead, he plans to manipulate the PCs into investigating further, hoping they'll uncover evidence of Volshyenek's involvement in Ileosa's manifestations.

As the meeting begins, Toff asks the PCs what they've learned. Use this portion of the meeting to have the players review their discoveries and focus their investigations. Depending on the timing of this meeting (which could take place after the PCs investigate the Gray District or the Cathedral of Pharsma in Chapter 2) and what the PCs say, Toff reacts differently. If you feel the PCs are progressing



Toff Ornelos

RETURNING THE HORN

Toff knows the fraught history of the *Horn of the Sun Aurochs* and can share tales of how Shoanti used these devices to great effect against diabolic conjurations who worked for the original Chelaxian colonists in the area centuries ago, saying, "this device worked well against devils then, so it should help you today just as well."

He cares little that these cultural treasures are all but lost to the Sklar-Quah. If the PCs mention something to him about this he just shrugs and says, "Return it to them if that bothers you, but I suggest waiting until after you're done with it."

If the PCs return the horn to the Sklar-Quah (page 9), the Shoanti are astounded and grateful. Thousand Bones allows the PCs to use the horn for this adventure, but if they return it to his people, he rewards the PCs with other magic items: give each PC a permanent 10th-level item that supports their character's themes.

In addition, grant the PCs 120 XP if they return this ancestral treasure to the Shoanti.

well in their investigations, Toff nods and commends them on the job well done, and encourages them to keep at it. If the PCs are faltering, Toff can suggest a new avenue of exploration, likely sending them to contact the Gray Maidens.

Each PC involved in the conversation with Toff should attempt a DC 33 Arcana or Occultism check, or a DC 28 Academia Lore or Hell Lore check. If any PC achieves a success, their manner of speaking and apparent education impress Toff enough that he takes them a bit further into his confidence: He fears these ghost sightings are orchestrated by a mysterious group that has the support of someone powerful at the Acadamae or perhaps even Hell itself. If the PCs point out that Toff is the headmaster and best suited to oust an undesirable element from the school, he brusquely notes that his role at the Acadamae is not as "all powerful" as one might suppose. If a PC achieved a critical success at any of the above checks, he admits his great-uncle, Volshyenek Ornelos, is still very much alive and has been the true power at the Acadamae since he founded it. Toff bitterly admits he is little more than a figurehead, and as such, he must step carefully in this investigation. If the PCs can expose

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his great-uncle's role, Toff can make his move and, for the first time since its foundation, the Acadamae will be in the hands of "someone trustworthy and capable of guiding it into a brighter future."

If the PCs discover Caelios's spellbook and show or mention the illustration of the strange old man to Toff, he's visibly startled as he recognizes Volshyene. If he hasn't revealed his fears to the PCs already as mentioned above, he does now. He lets the PCs keep the spellbook, assuming he can secure it if he needs it later.

Toff is a powerful wizard, but recent events have left him exceptionally timid. If at any time the PCs seem like they're not interested in his aid—or worse, become confrontational—he teleports to safety, hoping that if he leaves the PCs alone, they'll inadvertently help him out.

Treasure: If the PCs leave the meeting on amicable terms, Toff repeats his desire to remain behind the scenes, but also tells the PCs he doesn't intend to leave them without support. He hands the party a *type II bag of holding* containing several items that could be useful, especially if his fears of diabolic manipulation prove true. He can explain what all these tools are to save the PCs from Identifying Magic. The *bag of holding* contains a standard-grade silver +2 *striking longsword* (adjust the type of weapon to match ones used by PCs; Toff explains that silver weapons will come in handy if the PCs confront devils, not realizing they'll be just as helpful against strigoi), eight doses of silversheen, eight *greater healing potions*, two *panaceas*, a *wand of sending* (Toff notes that *sending* is the easiest and safest way to contact him), and an item he "requisitioned" from one of the Acadamae's storage vaults: a *horn of the sun aurochs* (page 53). Toff explains this item was recovered in the city's early days from a Shoanti cairn. It's been gathering dust in an Acadamae vault for centuries, but its ability to damage devils and other evil foes should be helpful for the PCs. The items in the *bag of holding* (including the bag itself) are gifts; Toff does not expect their return.

If the PCs need to speak with him in the future, Toff tells them to ask for another meeting via *sending*, after which Toff can cast *dream council* to meet with the PCs in private. You can use these meetings to provide advice to the PCs if they get stuck, but Toff's patience is limited; if you feel the PCs are relying too much on his aid, he has no qualms about denying their request.

XP Award: If the PCs meet with Toff, grant them 60 XP. If they impress him with their comportment, grant them an additional 60 XP.

WHITECAPS

Whitecaps is an abandoned building in the North Point neighborhood. Once one of the city's oldest surviving inns, the building was well past its prime even before a series of recent thefts drove the owners of the ramshackle structure to give up and leave the city the year after Ileosa's defeat. When no one claimed the property in the months that followed, its ownership reverted to the city.

The Gray Maidens needed somewhere secure but unassuming to hide while they pursued their investigations, and Whitecaps, with its relatively secure basement, fit their needs perfectly. Once the PCs hear rumors of Gray Maidens in Korvosa, they can attempt a DC 30 Gather Information check to learn more. If the PCs captured or killed Xarva Almaxus earlier (page 14), the remaining Gray Maidens heighten their security, and Gather Information check DCs to learn more about them increase by 5. On a successful check, the PCs learn enough information to direct them to North Point. On a critical success, the PCs narrow their search to Whitecaps. If the PCs already focused their search to North Point, this instead becomes a DC 25 check to Gather Information; on a successful check, the PCs narrow their search to Whitecaps.

Creatures: A few nights after the Gray Maidens arrived in Korvosa, Yniese Zenderholm went on a "personal errand" and failed to return. Since then, the remaining four Gray Maidens have grown increasingly nervous.

When the PCs arrive at Whitecaps, the Gray Maidens are desperate enough to request aid. They realize Yniese used the rumors of Ileosa's manifestations as an excuse to return to Korvosa to pursue her own unknown agenda. Vioor Vandrun, Gavrielle Cennawen, Brenwyn Thase, and Xarva Almaxus (assuming the latter wasn't captured or killed) reveal themselves to the PCs, clad in their iconic armor, soon after the PCs begin to search the abandoned inn.

Unless the PCs are openly hostile, the Gray Maidens hope to use the legacy of their armor to leverage fearful respect from the PCs, but they remove their helmets as they greet the party to show the PCs they wish to talk rather than fight. If the PCs prefer a fight, the four don their helms and defend themselves, fighting to the death.

If the PCs speak with the Gray Maidens, they admit they came to Korvosa to investigate the rumors of their founder's possible return. None of them have actually ever been to the city. Yniese recruited all four to the Erinyes Company in the past few years; she was the only one who served Ileosa. They believe the

sightings of Ileosa are legitimate manifestations of her soul attempting to return to life but haven't been able to investigate since their leader's disappearance.

None of them know the real reason Yniesse came to Korvosa, but they do know she went missing after she headed into Gray District to "pay respects to a relative among the dead." The Gray Maidens assumed Yniesse wanted to visit the graves of perished family or friends she left behind, but their visit to the cathedral the day after she vanished yielded no clues. Yniesse left for the Gray District the night before Bishop Keppira's death was announced. The acting bishop informed them that Yniesse had indeed visited a few graves before heading north an hour after sundown. The Gray Maidens blame their own training, which is more martial than investigatory in nature, and hope the PCs might fare better.

If the PCs ask for Yniesse's surname, the Gray Maidens reveal it to be Zenderholm. A PC can recognize the name with a successful DC 12 Korvosa Lore or a DC 18 Society check to Recall Knowledge (this check is automatic if any PC is a Korvosan native): one of the city's most famous politicians, Zenobia Zenderholm, supposedly succumbed to blood veil during Ileosa's reign. A critical success on either check is enough to recall the heroes who defeated Ileosa discovered Zenobia did more than perish from blood veil: She returned as an undead monster who worked with the Gray Maidens in Longacre Building, only to be defeated during a raid on that establishment.

In return for any news about their missing leader, the Gray Maidens promise to leave Korvosa quietly. The PCs may not trust Gray Maidens to make good on such promises, and may be wary of allying with enemies of the city, but the information about the Gray District can push them toward the next step of their investigation.

ERINYES COMPANY AGENTS (4) CREATURE 6

Captain of the guard (*Gamemastery Guide* 234)

Initiative Perception +15

Treasure: If the PCs defeat the Gray Maidens in combat and search the hideout below Whitecaps, they discover a thick, untitled book filled with prayers to Eiseth. Yniesse's notes in the margins can inform the PCs that she intended to visit the Cathedral of Pharsma. The PCs also may salvage any gear from defeated Gray Maidens.

XP Award: If the PCs make peaceful contact with the Gray Maidens and learn about the link to the Gray District, grant them 120 XP.

Using the Gray Maidens

Unlike their role in the Curse of the Crimson Throne Adventure Path, the Gray Maidens aren't intended to play the role of enemies in this adventure. Players familiar with the Adventure Path may be predisposed to treat the Erinyes Company as foes, and if you suspect this might be the case, consider having the Gray Maidens approach the PCs not in their iconic armor on the first meeting, or to be particularly friendly and obviously helpful from the start.



Gray Maiden

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CHAPTER 2

SECRETS IN GRAY

The PCs' investigations should lead them to the Gray District and the Cathedral of Pharasma. The cathedral temporarily suspended funeral services since the bishop's death, and visitors to the Gray are very few. The area remains dark and quiet at night, ideal for those who wish to lurk and plot unseen. Traditionally, patrolling Pharasmins limit criminal activity among the tombs, but today, the cathedral has fallen to an unexpected enemy.

Alirielle chose the Cathedral of Pharasma as her base of operations years ago after she emerged in Korvosa via a ghoul-dug tunnel below the site. She bided her time, studying her foes from the shadows until she gathered enough allies and was ready to strike. Her assassination of Bishop Keppira was a risky but bold move, and it paid off—she and her strigoi allies managed to dominate enough of the other priests to

seize control of the cathedral in a single night. Two acolytes and a visitor holed up in a still-secure chamber in the catacombs below, which remains a nagging concern for Alirielle. These holdouts haven't mounted much of a resistance, though, and she's increasingly confident they won't matter in the long run.

The PCs, on the other hand, are an increasing concern.

WHAT'S A STRIGOI

As this adventure progresses, the PCs will eventually come to realize that they're facing a cabal of vampires, but these aren't the standard moroi vampires. Strigoi are similar in many ways, but lack some of the more well-known disadvantages possessed by moroi vampires—in particular, they aren't repulsed by religious symbols. As the adventure progresses, the PCs will learn more about strigoi capabilities in play,

but if they attempt to Recall Knowledge about them, remember that these are rare creatures and that the DC for learning information about them should be adjusted by +5. A critical failure to Recall Knowledge is most likely to result in the PC mistakenly assuming that what they face are typical moroi vampires.

EXPLORING THE GRAY

The PCs might not immediately seek out the Grand Cathedral of Pharasma when they first turn their attention to Korvosa's graveyard district, but instead might decide to explore the Gray itself and seek more clues. You can use this opportunity to direct the PCs toward the cathedral, of course, but if they haven't quite yet reached 12th level, this also gives you a chance to include an extra encounter or two to help them gain enough XP to be able to face the challenges that await them in the cathedral itself.

Exploring the Gray during daylight remains relatively safe, but the PCs should soon note just how deserted the graveyard district is. A successful DC 10 Korvosa Lore or a DC 15 Society Lore check to Recall Knowledge is all that's needed to notice this strange lack of visitors to the graveyard. Let the PCs make of this what they will, but the emptiness of the Gray is little more than a side effect of the peoples' growing fear and discomfort.

After sundown, though, the Gray can become much more dangerous. Listed below are some ideas for encounters to vex and challenge a group of 11th level PCs—if your PCs are 12th level, then the severity of these encounters drops by one.

Another Manifestation (Trivial 11) If the PCs haven't yet encountered the fifth manifestation of Ileosa (page 14), they can do so at any time of day as they wander the Gray.

A Friend in Need (Low 11) The sound of a familiar voice crying out in pain or horror should compel the PCs to investigate—when they do, they find an NPC they've met earlier in this adventure (pick one that you feel they've formed a bond with) being attacked by a pair of profane ghouls (page 33). These ghouls are amusing themselves by tormenting and frightening the NPC to “flavor” the meat, but if the PCs don't intervene they'll slay the NPC soon enough. These ghouls flee to the warrens below the Gray (they're not part of those the PCs encounter in the catacombs below the cathedral) if reduced to 20 Hit Points or less. The NPC, if rescued, admits that they had become intrigued by the PCs' investigations and had been following them, only to get in over their heads here in the graveyard. Now, the NPC wants only to be escorted back to safety in the city to the north, but while the

CALLING FOR HELP

Once they realize the Cathedral of Pharasma has fallen, the PCs might turn to Queen Cressida for aid. If they do, Cressida asks the PCs to continue their attempts to save the church but is hesitant to send the guard to aid them. With foes as dangerous as the strigoi, she knows she'd likely be sending the guards to their doom. Instead, she authorizes city resources to aid the PCs in recovering from forays into the cathedral; the next time the PCs retreat, they can recover from their fight more quickly. The point here is to keep the PCs on the front line, as they're the ones who have the best chance against the vampires, but to not make them feel like the city is willfully ignorant or unsupportive of them.

Cressida advises the PCs to keep the situation to themselves as long as possible to avoid sparking panic. If word gets out that vampires control the Cathedral of Pharasma, feel free to have the PCs face additional complications, such as political unrest or panicked merchants refusing to do business. Gather Information DCs increase by 5, as locals are reluctant to talk when they're frightened.

PCs accompany them, you can use this opportunity to fill them in on some new clues or advice gathered by the NPC that could point them toward the cathedral as the logical next point of their investigations into the mystery.

Scarlet Walker (Low 11) While exploring the graves, the PCs attract the attention of a scarlet walker that's been called in by Aliriel to patrol the Gray after sunset. This scarlet walker is in addition to those that now dwell in the catacombs below the cathedral in area B2, and spends its days hiding in a partially completed vault in the southeast section of the district. Under the cover of night, the scarlet walker ventures out to patrol, but if word spreads about the situation in the cathedral, Aliriel might throw caution to the wind and allow the extraplanar monster to wander the graveyard in full daylight, knowing full well that the sight of the giant spider-like creature might distract the city a precious few additional hours she might need to complete her plans.

Strigoi Patrol (Moderate 11) The PCs encounter a trio of strigoi servants (page 25) while exploring the Gray. These three vampires are disguised as mourners, and claim to have lost track of time and ask the PCs to escort them back home in Old Korvosa to the north. The strigoi servants hope to lure the PCs far from the Gray before ambushing them at some point elsewhere in the city, but if they're found out before they can

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spring their attack they reveal their true nature on the spot. If one of these strigoi servants is reduced to 20 or fewer hit points, they all assume shadow form and attempt to flee back to the cathedral. These three strigoi aren't part of those stationed at the cathedral, but in fleeing there they can certainly lead the PCs to the focal point of this chapter!

GRAND CATHEDRAL OF PHARASMA

Since its creation, the expansive cemetery of the Gray has been safeguarded by an ornate, gothic cathedral to Pharasma. For decades, Bishop Keppira d'Bear led the church with compassion and gentle but firm action, and her death is a loss for nearly everyone in the city, regardless of faith.

The cathedral closed its doors after the bishop died, ostensibly as part of the funeral preparations for the esteemed servitor of the goddess. Visitors are still welcome to pay their respects to the bishop from mid-morning to mid-afternoon (with the exception of the day of the funeral procession, when the building was locked all day and the undead Bishop Keppira awaited her casket's return, biding her time with Aliriel in area **B7** below). All other services are canceled except for taking in bodies—and only during the restricted open hours—as death waits for no one. The priests claim to preserve the remains in the catacombs until the cathedral resumes normal funeral services in “a few more days.” In fact, they unceremoniously give these remains to the ghouls below for disposal.

A map of the Grand Cathedral of Pharasma appears on the inside front cover of this adventure.

Cathedral Features

The grand cathedral is a sturdy building made of hewn stone blocks. A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Athletics check can Climb The building's interior or exterior walls; the walls are Hardness 14, HP 56 (BT 28).

All the doors in the cathedral can be locked. Unless otherwise noted, these are reinforced wooden doors (Hardness 15, HP 60 [BT 30]), and it takes a successful DC 30 Thievery check to Pick their Locks. The exterior doors to areas **A3**, **A11**, and **A14** are locked at all times. The main doors through area **A7** are open from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M. only.

The cathedral's few stained-glass windows can be easily broken. Heavy white curtains cover all the windows as part of the mourning process whenever a member of the clergy perishes; they also prevent anyone peeking in and keep sunlight off any vampires within during the day. A character can yank down a 5-foot square of adjacent curtains as an Interact action and can catch a strigoi off guard. The strigoi can attempt

a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid being caught in sunlight in this way and must critically succeed at the save if they are in a square directly adjacent to a suddenly removed curtain. This DC increases by 2 for every 5 feet of missing curtains in a room. Once the curtains are opened or removed, a vampire cannot approach within 5 feet without being automatically exposed to sunlight and must make a successful Reflex save when moving through any other part of the room.

Areas within the cathedral are lit by lanterns during the day, but all light sources are extinguished at night. Those who require light to see are allowed only candles or other sources of dim light.

If the PCs visit the cathedral and ask the dominated priests any questions, they are told to speak to acting bishop Abridan, who will meet with the PCs in the cathedral's meeting room (area **A9**).

High Alert

The descriptions of the encounter areas within the Cathedral of Pharasma assume the PCs haven't attracted too much attention to themselves. If the PCs have 12 or more Attention Points, the cathedral goes on high alert, causing certain changes to some of the encounters as indicated in the text.

As long as the cathedral remains on high alert, it is closed to the public at all hours, and all internal doors are locked to increase security. Anyone who approaches the cathedral attracts the attention of the groundskeepers at area **A2** and is told gruffly to leave at once so the priests can perform “private mourning rites” for an undisclosed amount of time. Each time the PCs visit the cathedral during high alert and speak with the groundskeepers in this way, they gain 2 Attention Points. If the PCs engage in combat against the cathedral's denizens or are seen attempting to force entry into the building, give them 4 Attention Points or immediately set their Attention Point total to 15, whichever results in a higher score.

A1. Entry

Trivial 12

The Cathedral of Pharasma overlooks acres of squat mausoleums, weathered monuments, and grave markers from its commanding point within the Gray District. The dark stone blocks of its high walls give it a somber appearance, despite the elegant lines of its construction and the intricate stained glass windows. A twenty-foot-wide cobblestone path leads to the main entrance, while a smaller stone outbuilding sits nearby. Carvings of the Lady of Graves flank the ornate main double door to the south, while a smaller, plain door offers entry to the cathedral's northern wing.

As long as the cathedral is open for mourners, people patiently queue in this area to pay their respects to the bishop. Two dominated priests stand before the doors, allowing groups of no more than a dozen at a time into the cathedral to “minimize disruptions to the clergy’s mourning process and the rituals required to select a new high priest.” If a dead body is delivered, the priests explain the body will be preserved magically until regular funeral services resume “soon.” These bodies are delivered to area **A15**, and a strigoi from area **A12** delivers the bodies to the ghouls in the crypts below.

At all other times, this area is empty. Anyone who lingers in this area at such times may draw the attention of the groundskeepers (see area **A2**).

PRIESTS OF PHARASMA (2)

CREATURE 6

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Initiative Perception +14

A2. Groundskeepers' Cottage

Low 12

This sparse room is a combination of home, workshop, and storage space. A wooden loft provides a sleeping area above a simple kitchen and living space along the northern half of the building. The southern end holds shelves of supplies, gardening and masonry tools, and other materials for maintaining the cathedral and its grounds.

The Pharasmins indirectly employed a large number of groundskeepers whose duties ranged from landscaping to patrolling and guard duty, but these workers have been put on furlough until “the mourning process is complete.” This is somewhat unusual, and the Gray District grows increasingly overgrown and unkempt as the days go on, but it hasn’t yet raised concern.

Creature: Before Aliriel took over the cathedral, the leader of the groundskeepers lived here with her husband; they were among those who were slaughtered the night Bishop Keppira was slain. To keep up appearances, Aliriel installed a pair of raja rakshasas to play the parts of the elderly dwarven groundskeeper, Tileah, and her Varisian husband, Joskt. The rakshasas, Ninmoor and Vedrial, came to Korvosa nearly a year ago to reclaim the power once held in the city by its most infamous rakshasas, the Arkonas. While those particular fiends were exposed during Ileosa’s reign, news of how long they’d maintained power in the city while masquerading as humans was known among other rakshasa clans, and Ninmoor and Vedrial are eager to rebuild from the Arkona ashes.

Until they were discovered and recruited by Aliriel, the two rakshasas weren’t sure how to claim that power. By aiding Aliriel, the rakshasas enjoy a twofold glory: they participate in a wonderfully blasphemous plot that delights their disdain for religion and look forward to positions of power under the city’s new rule.

In their guise as married groundskeepers, the rakshasas have so far avoided suspicion, if only because employees who would have noted differences in their behavior were all slaughtered during the night of the bishop’s murder.

If the cathedral isn’t on high alert, the rakshasas remain in the cottage during viewing hours but take shifts watching area **A1** at all other hours. If they notice the PCs, both rakshasas emerge in their dwarf and human guises to inform the PCs the cathedral is closed, and visitors may return to mourn the next day. If the PCs attempt to Coerce the rakshasas but fail at the DC 30 Intimidation check, the rakshasas feign fear and concede to the PCs’ demands, only to slip away to inform Aliriel. They prefer to wait for the PCs to be engaged in a fight with other guardians before joining the fight in their true forms.

If the cathedral is on high alert, one of the rakshasas stays on guard here while the other relocates to area **A16**.

If they’re attacked, or if the PCs discover their true nature, the rakshasas eagerly lash out in combat, rolling Deception for initiative. Once either rakshasa is reduced to fewer than 40 HP, both attempt to flee, repaying Aliriel’s decision to not dominate them with cowardice.

If the PCs can capture one or both and compel them to talk, the rakshasas inform the PCs the cathedral has fallen and no one in the city has noticed. They haven’t been allowed in the structure, nor do they know what sort of guardians lie within, but they warn the PCs “a powerful woman named Aliriel runs the place now.” They suspect she’s a vampire or some sort of spellcaster, as they know she’s kept the priests controlled via domination.

RAJA RAKSHASAS (2)

CREATURE 11

Elite raja rakshasas (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 275)

Initiative Deception +25

XP Award: If the PCs get information from the rakshasas, grant them an additional 20 XP as well as the award for defeating them.

A3. Refectory

This spacious living area is comfortable but not luxurious. Matching doors line the northern walls at regular intervals.

Other doors open to the east and west, and two doors lead south. The furnishings include a long table, comfortable chairs, several shelves of well-worn books, and, in a large triangular alcove to the south, several crates, barrels, and storage containers.

While the cathedral is large, it traditionally maintained a modest number of less than a dozen live-in priests. This spacious room is a shared living area used primarily for meals and relaxation.

Treasure: The books on the shelves are mundane religious texts, but a Search of the storage containers to the south with a successful DC 31 Perception check reveals a floor tile subtly marked with Pharasma's spiral. Under the tile is a cache of healing materials that was hidden for emergencies. Within the cache are 3 *greater healing potions*, a set of *marvelous medicines* in a sleek black bag, a *scroll of raise dead* heightened to 7th level, and a *panacea*.

A4. Priest Cells

Trivial 12

A simple bunk bed occupies this frugal bedroom. Sparse trunks and cabinets provide space for personal belongings.

Three of these modest rooms house two each of the cathedral's six live-in priests, with the fourth easternmost room housing a pair of acolytes (both of whom are currently trapped in area B3). Aliriel dominated the priests and replenishes this effect as part of their daily preparations by staring into each of their eyes in turn in area A10.

Creatures: The priests are here when the cathedral isn't open to the public; otherwise, they stand in areas A1 or A10 to direct visiting mourners. The priests venture out only to secure supplies or to visit the garderobe, following Aliriel's orders to "meditate and reflect upon the nature of life and death." If asked while dominated, they claim Abridan Ashau issued these orders.

If attacked, the priests attempt to flee to area A10 to beg Abridan to save them. Otherwise, they ask the PCs to leave the cathedral and let them return to their mourning. None have any prepared spells; Aliriel ordered them to expend this energy and not prepare new spells during daily preparations to "keep themselves humbly empty in this time of grief."

A priest's domination can be removed with *dispel magic* or similar methods (DC 34 to counteract). Alternately, if the PCs prevent Aliriel from re-dominating the priests in the hour just before sunrise, the priests recover from the spell's duration naturally. Physically removing a priest from the cathedral and

keeping them elsewhere also works, but until the *dominate* ends, the priest tries to obey the command to gather in area A10 during the pre-dawn hour.

Any priest freed from domination breaks down in sorrow and relief. After they recover, they eagerly provide the PCs the following information:

- The night that Bishop Keppira died, senior priest Abridan woke the priests a few hours before dawn and brought into the grand hall. A half-dozen supernaturally strong men and women restrained them while another stranger—an elegant woman whose shadow seemed strangely mobile—stared deep into their eyes. All the strangers were fanged, and even as the priests succumbed, they realized the strangers were vampires.
- The shadowy woman told them Bishop Keppira died and Abridan served as bishop now. She also said the two acolytes were "excused from service" and released, but the priests don't believe this. The day before Bishop Keppira died, a visitor spent time with the bishop doing some sort of research; that visitor returned a few hours after sunset and asked for an escort to visit several graves in the Gray. The acolytes were assigned as her escort. As far as the priests know, neither the visitor nor the acolytes returned to the cathedral, and they fear all three have been slain or turned into vampires.
- None of the priests were allowed to see Bishop Keppira's body until noon the next day, when the announcement of the high priest's death was made public. None of the priests were allowed to closely examine her remains. Only Abridan has handled the body directly.
- While the priests correctly surmise the shadowy woman and at least some of her minions are vampires, none of them know about strigoi. Abridan is acting strangely, and the priests suspect his servitude to the shadowy woman is much worse than domination. The priests fear Abridan betrayed the church.

PRIESTS OF PHARASMA (6)

CREATURE 6

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Initiative Perception +14

XP Award: Each priest the PCs manage to free from domination earns the party 10 XP.

A5. Elder's Chambers

A single bed sits against the far wall of this plain bedroom, further decorated by a functional armoire, a simple writing desk, and a small shrine to Pharasma.

This room was traditionally used by the cathedral's second-in-command. When Abridan became acting bishop, he moved into area **A11**, leaving this room empty and unremarkable.

A6. Sacristy

The atmosphere in this room is markedly solemn; a hint of incense lingers in the air, and a small font stands in the southwestern corner. Carved cedar armoires line the northeastern wall, and matching cabinets and shelves hold books, cups, bowls of incense, a stylized hourglass, jars of sand, an ornate decorative dagger, and other objects used in worship services.

The priests used this room to prepare for worship services; the cabinets and armoires hold formal vestments and various objects used in worship. The small font in the corner is a polished marble bowl with a blue spiral—Pharasma's religious symbol—inlaid along the bottom, but it is currently empty of holy water, something that a successful DC 20 Religion check notes is quite unusual.

Treasure: A *moderate* *thurible of revelation* hangs among many similar non-magical tools. The ritual dagger is a fancy-looking, standard-grade silver dagger. The bowls of rare incenses are suitable for ritual magic and worth 800 gp in all.

A7. Vestibule

Trivial 12

Double doors open to the north and south of this room, each carved to form a large spiral when closed.

Creatures: This room remains empty during the day, but a pair of strigoi in shadow form guard the room at night. The vampires remain hidden along the edges of the room in this form as the PCs move through, and then creep along to follow them using Stealth. A strigoi that is spotted flees to area **A10**; otherwise, they sneak along to observe the PCs, returning to their physical bodies to join any fight that takes place elsewhere in the cathedral.

STRIGOI SERVANTS (2)

CREATURE 10

RARE LE MEDIUM SHADOW UNDEAD VAMPIRE

Perception +20; greater darkvision

Languages Common, Necril, Shadowtongue, Thassilonian

Skills Acrobatics +21, Athletics +21, Deception +19, Stealth +23

Str +5, **Dex** +7, **Con** +5, **Int** +3, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3

Items +1 leather armor, +1 striking longsword, shortbow (20 arrows)

AC 30; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +21, **Will** +18

HP 130, coffin restoration, fast healing 10, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyze, poison, sleep; **Resistances** all physical 10 (except silver or weapons shedding bright light); **Weaknesses** strigoi weaknesses

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ claw +21 (agile, magical), **Damage** 2d8+8 slashing plus Grab

Melee ♦ longsword +22 (versatile P), **Damage** 2d8+8 slashing

Ranged ♦ shortbow +23 (deadly d10, range 60 feet),

Damage 1d6+8 piercing

Divine Innate Spell DC 27; **5th** *levitate* (at will)

Drink Essence ♦ (divine, necromancy) When drinking essence, the strigoi servant regains 13 HP.

Sneak Attack The strigoi servant deals 1d6 extra precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Shadow Form ♦ (concentrate, divine, shadow, transmutation)

A8. Garderobe

A simple bench privy with privacy curtains and a washstand allows residents and visitors to attend to their needs in this restroom.

Nothing sinister awaits the PCs here, nor are there any clues hidden within.

A9. Meeting Room

A staircase ascends along the edge of this comfortable lounge. Four leather armchairs cluster around a low table. A modest fireplace stands in the corner opposite the stairs. Over the mantel, an elaborate macrame tapestry of gray wool depicts Pharasma's spiral. Much of the western wall is filled with shelves of ledgers and documents.

This space is used for meetings with important guests, whether to arrange elaborate funeral services, set up midwife appointments, or schedule higher-level spellcasting services. Ledgers and documents on the western shelves contain exhaustive details of Korvosa's burials and funerals since its foundation. The room remains empty for the most part, but the PCs may be brought here to meet with the acting bishop, Abridan.

During daylight hours, Abridan meets with the PCs alone. If the PCs meet with him after dark, the two strigoi from area **A7** join him in shadow form, ready to defend him if necessary. Abridan's attitude is somber but pleasant during any talk here. He willingly answers the PCs' questions, primarily with lies and misdirection. He insists Bishop Keppira died

of natural causes and waves away concerns about the priests acting strangely. His primary goal is to keep the PCs from investigating the cathedral further. He leans into rumors about Ileosa's ghost, suggesting the PCs seek out agents of New Thassilon or the Gray Maidens as likely sources for this fearmongering. He promises that once the cathedral resumes normal activities, he will investigate the matter himself if it hasn't been resolved.

If the PCs confront him about lying, Abridan grows frustrated and invites the PCs to leave if they're going to disrespect him and his faith. Confronting him with proof about the vampire presence in the cathedral shocks him, and he requests the PCs give him until the next evening to process this news, promising to meet with them to discuss further actions. If the PCs agree and leave, the cathedral goes on high alert (increasing Attention Points to 20), and if the PCs return for a meeting with him as scheduled, they find the front doors to the cathedral open but its denizens ready for trouble, with an ambush prepared in area **A10**.

If the PCs attack, Abridan raises the alarm and retreats to area **A10**, where his allies await.

A10. Grand Hall

Moderate 12

The cathedral's grand hall soars with a vaulted ceiling supported by tall marble columns. White drapery covers the looming stained glass windows along the eastern and western walls. To the south, a fifteen-foot-wide hallway leads south under a wooden catwalk that connects to a choir loft to the southeast overlooking the worship space. Pews that normally line the hall are pushed aside, forming a wide avenue toward the east, where a polished redwood casket sits atop an iron frame, sticks of incense burning from various points around the entire macabre display.

Creatures: During the day, the grand hall contains up to a dozen citizens paying respects to Bishop Keppira. The mourners are quiet, although an occasional wail of anguish peals out. Four of the cathedral's six priests silently attend the mourners, while an equally quiet Abridan watches from the upraised pulpit to the west. An impassive-looking human guard clad in plate armor stands nearby. This guard is a glabrezu demon named Tungort, conjured in by Aliriel via *planar binding*. Tungort enjoys helping to deceive a city of mourners, and working with a priest so treacherous to his faith appeals to the demon even more.

If the PCs have more than 6 Attention Points (and they don't bother trying to disguise themselves or use stealth to avoid notice), Abridan invites the PCs to meet with him in area **A9**.

The most tragic creature in this room is Bishop Keppira. To prevent her from being brought back from death or communicated with from beyond the grave, Aliriel transformed Keppira into a strigoi servant. Aliriel ordered her newest pawn to remain in her coffin and remain motionless, like a corpse. For now, Keppira helps Aliriel the most by remaining "dead."

No one is allowed to touch or closely examine Keppira's body. If a PC attempts to examine her body and is noticed, Abridan barks orders to the PCs to leave before their blasphemies damn their souls. If the party continues to oppose him, mourners leave or beg the PCs to comply—this earns the PCs 4 Attention Points. If combat results, the mourners and dominated priests panic and flee. Abridan calls for the three strigoi in area **A12**, and then joins Tungort in attacking the PCs. Tungort avoids showing his true form until all the citizens are gone.

If the cathedral is on high alert, or if it's not during visiting hours, this room is empty except for Tungort, the three strigoi from area **A12**, and Bishop Keppira. The strigoi and Tungort attack the PCs on sight. A fight against Tungort and the three strigoi servants is a Severe 12 encounter. Since the strigoi in area **A7** and Abridan in area **A11** (or potentially even Keppira) are likely to join the fight, this encounter could escalate to even greater difficulty.

Bishop Keppira was a 13th-level cleric in life, but she's lost her Pharasma-granted powers in undeath. She functions instead as an elite strigoi servant in her current state. She remains motionless unless she takes any damage or a PC realizes she's not quite dead. Then she attacks and fights until reduced to 10 HP or less, and she attempts to return to her coffin so that if she's rendered unconscious, she'll have a chance to revive in an hour.

ABRIDAN ASHAU

CREATURE 10

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Perception +18

TUNGORT

CREATURE 13

Glabrezu (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 79)

Initiative Deception +30

PRIESTS OF PHARASMA (4)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide 213

Initiative Perception +14

BISHOP KEPPIRA D'BEAR

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM SHADOW UNDEAD VAMPIRE

Female strigoi (page 58)

Perception +20; greater darkvision

Languages Common, Necril, Shadowtongue, Thassilonian
Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +23, Deception +22, Stealth +22

Str +6, **Dex** +7, **Con** +5, **Int** +3, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +5

AC 31; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +24, **Will** +22

HP 150, coffin restoration, fast healing 10, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyze, poison, sleep; **Resistances** all physical 10 (except silver or weapons shedding bright light); **Weaknesses** strigoi weaknesses

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ claw +22 (agile, magical), **Damage** 2d8+8 slashing plus Grab

Divine Innate Spell DC 27; **5th** *levitate* (at will)

Blasphemous Invocation ♦♦ (divine, necromancy, negative) While Bishop Keppira D'Bear lost her spellcasting abilities and other clerical powers upon being transformed into a strigoi, Urgathoa is pleased with the development and granted the fallen bishop a boon. In time, and if she's allowed to continue her undeath, the bishop may well regain many of her spellcasting powers as a cleric of Urgathoa, but until that time she can draw upon this connection to the goddess of undeath to utter a blasphemous invocation. When she does so, shadows within a 20-foot emanation from Bishop Keppira twist, writhe, and animate before lashing out. All living creatures in the area must attempt a DC 30 Fortitude save. Bishop Keppira cannot use Blasphemous Invocation again for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 5d6 negative damage.

Failure The creature takes 10d6 negative damage and is slowed 1 as their own shadows animate and pull against them.

Critical Failure The creature takes 20d6 negative damage and is slowed 2 as their won shadows animate and pull against them.

Drink Essence ♦ (divine, necromancy) When drinking essence, Bishop Keppira D'Bear regains 15 HP.

Shadow Form ♦ (concentrate, divine, shadow, transmutation) As strigoi.

STRIGOI SERVANTS (3)

CREATURE 10

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Initiative Stealth +23

XP Award: If the PCs discover Bishop Keppira is undead, grant them 80 XP. If they take these findings to Queen Cressida, she prefers to keep the information quiet so the bishop's good works won't be overshadowed by the ignominy of her demise. See "Concluding the Adventure" on page 51 for further ramifications,

including what might happen if the PCs seek to bring Keppira back to life.

A11. Bishop's Quarters

Trivial 12

This living space is large and borders on luxurious. Plush blue carpet softens the floor, while a small shrine to Phasmas stands along the northern wall next to a door. A second door opens in the eastern wall, while a heavy door secured with a rough oak bar leads south. Three chairs surround a broad desk strewn with several piles of paperwork. Standing screens offer privacy to a bed, broad armoire, and small washstand.



Vampire Keppira

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The presiding bishop traditionally resides in these comfortable quarters. The door to area **A16** is kept locked.

Creatures: Acting Bishop Abridan Ashau spends his time in this room when he's not presiding over the 6 hours of public mourning in area **A10**. If the PCs enter during the day at other hours, they find Abridan studying Keppira's copious notes and journals. If they arrive during the night, Abridan is either studying or sleeping.

Abridan served as second-in-command under Bishop Keppira. He grew frustrated as the "old lady" kept on going, denying Abridan his glorious right to play

the role of high priest for Korvosa like his father—Keppira's predecessor—did. As years became decades, Abridan grew bitter. His faith turned into frustration as he began to believe Pharasma was deliberately granting Keppira a life long enough for Abridan to die before he could become the city's bishop.

When Aliriell revealed Keppira's death, Abridan saw a chance—granted not by Pharasma, but by Aliriell—and he immediately pledged his service to the vampire, begging for eternal life and to run the church as its bishop for a time. The priest's blasphemous betrayal delighted Aliriell, and while she keeps Abridan dominated to ensure his loyalty, Abridan's choices were of his own free will.

If the PCs enter, Abridan angrily demands they leave his room at once. If the PCs do so, he takes a few rounds to compose himself before stepping out to calmly invite them to speak with him in area **A9**. If they refuse, he grows increasingly frustrated and again demands they leave. If the PCs refuse again, he calls for the guards in area **A12** to escort the PCs from the cathedral. If combat results, Abridan brings Tungort into the fight as well.

In combat, Abridan relies on his ability to Trick Items to use scrolls and his staff to heal Tungort or to attack the PCs. If he's reduced to fewer than 50 HP, Abridan flees. He wants nothing more than to start a new life, perhaps as a cleric of Urgathoa, if she'll have him. He'll fear reprisals from Aliriell as long as he believes she continues to exist.

If the PCs capture him, his initial attitude is Hostile, but he'll talk once the dominate effect is removed and they successfully Coerce him (or Request information from him if they can make him at least Friendly). If Aliriell realizes Abridan's betrayal, she sends strigoi to murder him. How much he tells the PCs is up to you; at the very least, they should learn there are holdouts in the crypt (area **B3**), and Aliriell only visits the cathedral during the hour before dawn to keep her minions dominated.



Abridan Ashau

ABRIDAN ASHAU

CREATURE 10

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Male human ex-cleric

Perception +18

Languages Common, Requian, Shoanti, Varisian

Skills Deception +22, Diplomacy +18, Medicine +20, Religion +18, Society +17

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

Items +1 explorer's clothing (vestments of Pharasma), major staff of healing (6 charges; Trick DC 30), scroll of blindness (Trick DC 20), scroll of crisis of faith (Trick DC 20), 4 scrolls of heal (heightened to 5th level; Trick DC

26), *scroll of flame strike* (Trick DC 26), 3 *scrolls of sound burst* (heightened to 4th level; Trick DC 23), religious symbol of Pharasma, key ring (contains keys that unlock all doors in the cathedral)

AC 28; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +15, **Will** +18

HP 190

False Faith Abridan is an ex-cleric. While he's lost the magical abilities that come from his connection to Pharasma, he can still use the *major staff of healing* or any of his scrolls by tricking the item. Since he can't cast spells, he can't recharge his staff, and uses its remaining charges only as a last resort.

Marked by Urgathoa ♦ (divine, evil, necromancy)

Trigger Abridan dies before he's had a chance to atone for his blasphemies or has become an actual cleric of Urgathoa; **Effect** Urgathoa watched Abridan's fall from grace, and if he dies before he finishes his conversion, her disappointment causes his body to decay as if he had been dead for a week. This process also causes all living creatures within 30 feet to take 11d6 negative damage (DC 33 basic Fortitude save). If steps are not thereafter taken to prevent his soul from returning (such as by casting *gentle repose* on the partially decayed corpse), Abridan rises as a dybbuk (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 88) on the site of his death a minute after the next sundown and seeks revenge on the PCs for killing him.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ staff +16 (two-hand d8), **Damage** 1d4+4 bludgeoning

Divine Rituals DC 29; *call spirit, rest eternal*^{APG}

Trick Item ♦ (manipulate) Abridan attempts to trick his staff or a scroll by attempting a Religion check against the item's Trick DC listed above.

Success For the rest of his turn, Abridan can spend actions to activate the staff or scroll as if he could normally use it.

Failure Abridan can't use the item or try to trick it again this turn, but can try again on subsequent turns.

Critical Failure Abridan can't use the item, and can't try to trick it again until his next daily preparation at sunrise.

Treasure: A search of the large stack of notes that Abridan was researching reveals most of them are mundane documents regarding the running of the cathedral. These documents include some worn religious texts that contain everything needed to learn the following rituals: *atone, call spirit, commune, consecrate, rest eternal* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 244), and *resurrect*.

An oversized leather document case seems out of place among these notes, its front emblazoned

ENCOUNTERING ALIRIEL EARLY

This adventure assumes the PCs don't encounter Aliriel until they begin exploring her domain in Chapter 3, but the PCs could encounter her early by visiting the cathedral an hour before sunrise, when she arrives via the catacombs to re-dominate the priests. If the PCs attempt a confrontation here, with so many of Aliriel's allies nearby, the PCs likely get in over their heads. If needed, let Aliriel be too arrogant to take part in the battle, perhaps casting a spell or two before she abandons the fight with a terse command to her minions to "deal with these worms—I've more important duties below" before retreating to her sanctum. Such an encounter causes the PCs to gain 10 Attention Points.

Aliriel's full statistics appear on page 47.

with the Korvosan coat of arms. Inside this case are documents stolen from Longacre Building, including a copy of Ileosa's infernal contract. Several documents contain recent notes in Thassilonian in the margins. If the PCs can read these notes, they learn whoever was writing them (Aliriel) was using the contract to discover what happened to Ileosa's soul, and if it is possible to contact it. The notes suggest a *call ritual* spell could, in theory, be used in conjunction with Ileosa's contract to try to contact both her soul and that of the devil Sermignatto—the one with whom the contract was made.

Aliriel gave these documents to Abridan for safekeeping, an act Abridan believes proves her growing trust and reliance on his aid. In fact, Aliriel hopes those who might discover them will assume her pawn was behind the theft instead of her.

See "Speaking with Spirits" on page 38 if the PCs attempt to use the contract in a similar manner.

XP Award: If the PCs prevent Abridan from becoming a dybbuk, either by keeping him alive and helping him atone or by preventing his remains from becoming undead, grant them 120 XP.

A12. Hall of Relics

Low 12

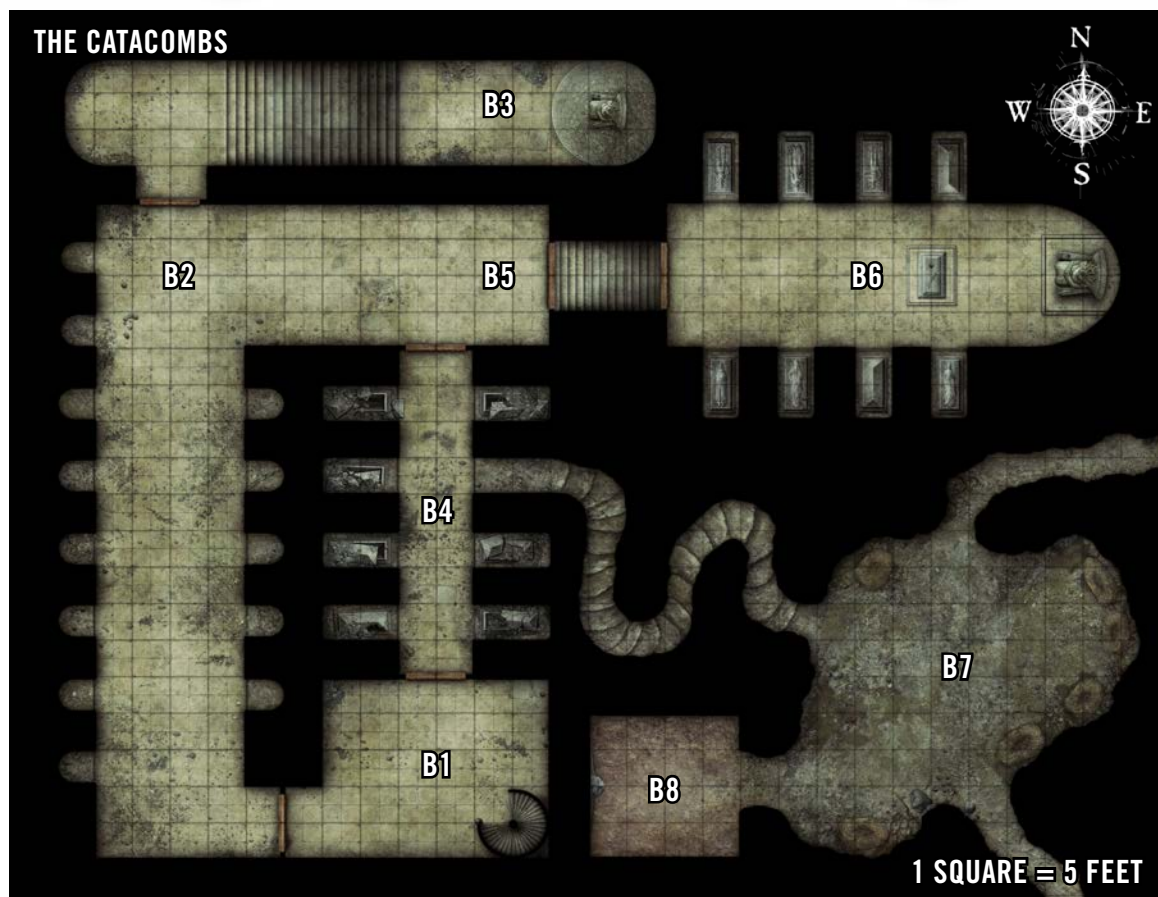
Four displays stand along the southern alcove of this wide, windowless hall, each featuring an engraved silver plaque. The first plaque sits below a heavy-looking tome, its cover bound in platinum. The next plaque is mounted on the wall above a waist-high column, atop which sits a glass case displaying a human skull. The third plaque adorns a glass case that holds a length of worn linen, while the final plaque sits below a weapon display upon which rests a dagger. An ornate double door stands in the

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northern wall. Doors lead east and west, with stairs leading up to the eastern door.

Creatures: A trio of strigoi servants stand guard here at all times—seemingly silent honor guards for the displayed relics—ready to aid Abridan if he calls for them. They avoid combat if possible, but if it's inevitable, they try to push into area A10 to get Tungort's aid.

STRIGOI SERVANTS (3)

CREATURE 10

Page 25

Initiative Stealth +23

Treasure: This reliquary enshrines several items sacred to the local congregation. Characters who loot these treasures may find themselves facing alignment or social repercussions at your discretion. An examination of the relics can provide clues that something strange is happening in the cathedral.

The first display is labeled “The Bones Land in a Spiral.” This religious text was brought here hundreds of years ago from a Pharasmin church in Cheliax that has long since burned down. The book is worth 500

gp on the illicit market, but selling it would invite retaliation from the church.

The second display is labeled “Skull of Saint Ilsynor, First Pharasmin of Korvosa.” A character who examines the skull through the glass and makes a successful DC 20 Medicine check notes the skull looks much fresher than one that should be hundreds of years old. Aliriel replaced the original with a skull snatched from the ossuary below. The skull of Korvosa's first Pharasmin bishop is now in the clutches of the dero ghoulish Ibrique (area B7).

The third plaque reads “Swaddling Cloth of Tothalus.” A successful DC 20 Korvosa Lore, Religion, or Society check made to Recall Knowledge recognizes the name as that of a local champion of Pharasma who gained fame as an adventurer a century ago. (Feel free to swap this name with that of a PC who served Pharasma in a previous Korvosa-based campaign, if you wish.)

The final plaque identifies the dagger in the case as the “Dagger of the Faithful Defense.” A successful DC 20 Korvosa Lore or Religion check is enough to recall legends of this magic dagger, a blade said to be able to strike devastating blows against undead. The dagger on display is not that weapon; Aliriel hid the

original dagger in the study of her sanctum (area C7). The dagger on display is a fine weapon worth 30 gp for its artistry but is not magical.

A13. Choir Loft

Only a stone railing separates this loft from the worship hall it overlooks. The mahogany pipes of a modest organ span the eastern wall. Along the south wall, hooks hold dozens of matching gray robes, while the center of the area contains a trio of wooden operating tables. A double door stands in the western wall, and a discreet, narrow staircase leads to the main floor, while to the southeast sits a small pile of refuse.

This loft was used during morning and night worship services, where a choir of devoted and talented laypeople gathered to sing hymns and dirges. The tables in the middle of the room allowed priests to prepare bodies for burial while surrounded by hymns to the Lady of Graves.

The pile of refuse in the southeast corner (out of sight from those in the grand hall below) consists of the smashed fragments of all the lanterns and mirrors that once decorated the cathedral.

A14. Hall of Remembrance

Somber murals, tapestries, and portraits, each depicting a different individual wearing silver spiral amulets, bedeck the walls of this wide hallway.

While most interments involve carrying the deceased into the Gray to be buried, favored and particularly beloved priests of Pharasma are instead borne through this hall and laid to rest in the crypts beneath the cathedral. The artwork along the walls here depicts various priests and champions who were granted this honor.

The northern portion of this hallway leads under a wooden walkway that connects areas A12 and A13. The door to area A16 is locked at all times.

A15. Crypt Antechamber

Moderate 12

A carved spiral adorns the floor of this antechamber, its tail touching a spiral staircase leading down through the stone floor. A mound of cloth lies heaped against the northern wall.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Religion or Society check to Recall Knowledge identifies the cloth to the north as burial shrouds traditionally used to transport bodies from their place of death to the cathedral.

The vampires discard the shrouds when they give the bodies to the ghouls below.

Creature: The spiral stairs lead into the catacombs, a place now almost entirely claimed by the strigoi's allies. Aliriel conjured a nikaramsa asura named Alamair to serve as a guardian here. Alamair maintains invisibility on herself as she watches for intruders to eviscerate, rolling Stealth for initiative. Her primary goal is to prevent anyone from entering the stairwell, so she focuses her attacks on those foes as appropriate. If she's reduced to 50 HP or fewer, Aliriel has given the asura permission to flee to the catacombs to regroup. Alamair does so via *dimension door* to area B7, where she uses her magic to recover and fights at Ibrique's side.

ALAMAIR

CREATURE 14

Female nikaramsa asura (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 24)

Initiative Stealth +25

A16. Garden

The southern courtyard of the cathedral is a small garden. Herbs and vegetables grow near the walls, while flowers and decorative foliage line a spiral walking path for meditation and reflection.

The paths lead toward the massive graveyards of the Gray to the south and east. Both cathedral doors are locked at all times. If the cathedral is on high alert, one of the rakshasas from area A2 relocates here and takes on the appearance of a gardener. He redirects the PCs to the main entrance if he spots them entering through one of these doors. If that fails, he casts *shadow blast* to inflict sonic damage on the PCs—a tactic that also serves as an alarm and quickly brings his companion rakshasa from area A2 to join the fight.

If you wish, you can use one of the four optional encounters mentioned at the start of this chapter under "Exploring the Gray" to take place here in this garden, giving the PCs one more encounter to navigate, perhaps, before they turn their attentions to the more dangerous perils that lurk in the catacombs below ground.

THE CATACOMBS

When they were first constructed centuries ago, the catacombs beneath the Pharasmin cathedral were sealed against undead incursions. Over the years, Pharasmin priests and champions of Korvosa were laid to rest here, their bones preserved and protected against desecration. Recent events have begun to erode these wards away.

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The walls of the catacombs and the tunnels beyond are hewn stone, and doors are made of reinforced wood. The entire place is unlit.

B1. Catacomb Entrance

Trivial 12

This unlit room is clean and unadorned. The sturdy walls of this rectangular room are well maintained, but recent gouges and brownish-red stains mar the dark stone of the floor. Rounded archways in the north and west walls house double doors engraved with broad spirals. The door to the north hangs partially open, and a faint, cool draft carries the scent of earth and dust.

The spiral stairs in the southeast corner lead to area **A15**.

Hazard: Ibrique constructed a trap in the floor of this room, infusing it with a reservoir of negative energy. The trap is intended as much to alert the catacomb inhabitants of intruders as it is to cause harm.

LIFE-DRAINING THUNDER

HAZARD 13

MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 35 (expert)

Description Thassilonian runes set with onyx erupt with negative energy and thunderous roars at the presence of a living creature.

Disable DC 35 Thievery (master) to destroy the key rune, DC 37 Arcana (master) to harmlessly discharge the

runes, or *dispel magic* (7th level; counteract DC 31) to counteract the trap

Thunderous Lifedrain ⤿ (necromancy, occult, sonic)

Trigger A living creature approaches within 5 feet of either double door; **Effect** All living creatures in the room take 9d6 negative damage and 9d6 sonic damage (DC 33 basic Reflex save).

B2. Ossuary

Moderate 12

Curved alcoves line the walls of this wide, L-shaped corridor, each bearing neatly stacked, aged bones. Some have been disturbed and scattered across the floor, and most show signs of having been gnawed.

Profane ghouls treated the remains stored here as a buffet until the ossuary's most recent inhabitants moved in.

Creatures: The immense, spider-like monstrosities known as scarlet walkers often served Thassilonian wizards as agents, minions, and allies. Soon after she took control of the cathedral, Aliriel conjured two of these creatures from Leng to serve in the ossuary, knowing that having allies who weren't bothered by sunlight would be valuable, while also appreciating the scarlet walkers' affinity for blood. The scarlet walkers to lair here, with the command to watch over the door at area **B5** and to slaughter anyone attempting to escape from the room beyond.

The scarlet walkers and the ghouls don't get along, so any fighting here won't draw attention from the denizens to the east. If the PCs defeated the scarlet walkers earlier, then the profane ghouls from area **B4** moved into this roomier chamber to guard the doors to the east.

SCARLET WALKERS (2)

CREATURE 12

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Initiative Perception +23

B3. Defaced Shrine

This room may have once given the impression of stepping into a starlit night sky, but no longer. The walls and ceiling are frescoed with a rendering of the cosmos, while to the east, stairs spanning the width of the hall descend to an elaborate statue of a woman seated upon a throne, an hourglass in hand. All the decor is marred by gouges that appear to have been inflicted by claws.

Something defaced the room to an exacting detail that preserves just enough of what was once depicted here so it can be recognized under the blasphemous vandalism.



Profane Ghoul

This shrine was once devoted to Pharasma's cosmic role as the final judge of the dead, sending each soul to its final resting place, but Aliriel and her minions defaced the shrine soon after taking control of the cathedral, hoping that doing so would lessen the wards preventing them from entering area **B6**. When she realized she'd wasted their time, Aliriel instead ordered her scarlet walkers to watch over the entrance to area **B6**, taking solace in the hope that those who held out within would eventually die of starvation.

Pharasma's Blessing: Fully repairing this shrine would take months, but if the PCs spend at least 8 hours cleaning up the place and preparing it for repairs, and do so in an appropriately reverent way with a successful DC 25 Religion check or a DC 20 Pharasma Lore check (reduce these DCs by 5 if any PC is a worshipper of Pharasma, and by an additional 5 if the PCs freed Bishop Keppira from her vampiric doom), then all the PCs gain Pharasma's minor boon (or her moderate boon on a critical success)—see page 39 of *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* for details on these boons.

B4. Crypts

Moderate 12

This ten-foot-high corridor smells of damp, earthy air. Alcoves stacked three high along the walls once held stone sarcophagi, each carved with reliefs of whip-poor-wills, spirals, hourglasses, bones, and other Pharasmin motifs. These houses of the dead are smashed and defiled. Blocks of broken sarcophagi have been stacked here and there to form crude chairs or dining tables, their tops strewn with gnawed fragments of bone and scraps of leathery flesh.

This area is where more notable Pharasmins were laid to rest, but all that remains are smashed sarcophagi and bits of corpses the ghouls haven't bothered to scrape up and eat. Each of the burial niches is 2-1/2 feet high. One of the lowermost alcoves along the east wall is where the ghouls broke into the crypts from below, and their claw-carved tunnel winds deeper into the ground beyond. A Medium or Small character must crawl to navigate this tunnel to area **B7**.

Creatures: Four ghouls who have grown metaphysically fat gnawing old clerical bones and chewing ancient priestly leather hold court here. Their ripe repast has done nothing for their emaciated frames, but access to the sacred bones—along with secrets whispered to them by their leader, Ibrique—helped the ghouls grow much more powerful than normal. They squat on sarcophagus fragments while speaking in Necril about grisly philosophies and unsettling questions about the meaning of undeath.

The ghouls can be reasoned with, even if the Pharasmins might not approve. Their loyalty lies with Ibrique, not with Aliriel, and they tell the PCs "if you bring us skulls from beyond the impossible door," the ghouls will tell them a secret. The skulls they want are in the warded crypt (area **B6**). If they think it'll help, the ghouls point out "living folk fled into hiding in there. They're too alive to be tasty, but maybe you would like to save them?"

If the PCs bring the ghouls one skull each from that room (an act that won't sit well with some faiths, particularly that of Pharasma), the ghouls happily accept the gifts. Before scampering off through area **B7** into sprawling warrens below the Gray, they warn the PCs the one who caused the problems here is an ancient vampire named Aliriel who comes and goes through holes in the "Runelord's eyes down below" (area **B8**) by turning into a shadow.

If the PCs refuse the grisly task, the ghouls shrug and attack, eagerly predicting how flavorful the PCs' meat might taste after a week or three of ripening. If three of the ghouls are slain, the fourth flees to area **B7** to fight alongside Ibrique.

PROFANE GHOULS (4)

CREATURE 10

RARE NE MEDIUM GHOUL UNDEAD

Variant ghouls (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 168)

Perception +19; darkvision

Languages Common, Necril

Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +17, Religion +19, Stealth +20

Str +3, **Dex** +6, **Con** +5, **Int** +3, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +5

AC 30; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +22, **Will** +19

HP 180, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

Speed 30 feet, burrow 10 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +22 (finesse), **Damage** 2d10+7 piercing plus 2d6 negative and profane paralysis and ghoul fever

Melee ♦ claw +22 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d6+7 slashing plus 2d6 negative and profane paralysis

Ghoul Fever (disease) As ghoul, but DC 29.

Profane Paralysis (incapacitation, necromancy, occult) Any living, non-elf creature hit by the profane ghoul's attack must attempt a DC 29 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is slowed 1.

Failure The creature is paralyzed. It can attempt a new save at the end of each of its turns, and the DC cumulatively decreases by 1 on each such save.

Profane Whispers ♦♦ (auditory, mental, necromancy, occult) The ghoul whispers profane secrets of undeath. Living creatures within 10 feet of the ghoul take 2d8 persistent mental damage. Those with ghoul fever must also succeed at a DC 29 Will save or have the disease

advance one step. The profane ghoul can't use Profane Whispers again for 24 hours.

Scuttle (move) ♦ The profane ghoul crawls on all fours, moving up to half its Speed. This movement doesn't trigger reactions.

Treasure: The profane ghouls found a string of *greater holy prayer beads* among the crypts but weren't sure what to do with it, so they tossed the potent item into one of the alcoves. PCs can discover it during a Search with a successful DC 25 Perception check.

B5. Sealed Door

The face of this sturdy stone double door is inlaid with a series of spiraling runes worked in silver. All around the edges of the door's frame, deep scratches indicate something tried to claw around the door. The claw marks fade as they near the door, as if the stone itself has healed the damage.

While much of the cathedral and crypts have fallen to the strigoi, the wards that protect this door and the crypt beyond remain strong. The silver runes in the door are in Requian and consist of a repeated phrase: "The Lady's servants need only show their faith to gain entry to this sacred space."

Given time, Aliriel could certainly force her way through this door into the chamber beyond, but she knows those trapped within aren't going anywhere, and the idea of them slowly starving within the crypt appeals to her sadistic nature.

While Pharasma is an impartial goddess, she knows the PCs serve her interests in opposing those who have taken the cathedral. If they approach the sealed door after the guardians in area **B2** are defeated, the runes glow blue, and the door unlocks and opens quietly, closing once the PCs have passed through. They'll continue to open and close for the PCs as long as they continue to oppose Aliriel.

B6. Warded Crypt

The north and south walls of this wide crypt feature two rows of alcoves stacked one atop the other, sixteen alcoves in all. A dozen alcoves contain stone sarcophagi. At the far end of the room stands a small stone altar bearing an hourglass, a water font, and a gently curved dagger; a statue of Pharasma seated upon her throne looms just beyond. The air in the room is stale.

The most secure room in the cathedral serves as the final resting place for regional bishops. Bishop Keppira

should have been interred in this chamber, joining the cathedral's previous dozen bishops at rest here. Instead, this heavily warded crypt is a panic room for three individuals who barely escaped the strigoi.

This entire room is protected by a *consecrate* ritual that, after several generations of devout renewal and worship, became permanent as the result of Pharasma's favor. The effect functions as a permanent *consecrate* ritual heightened to 10th level that prohibits dead bodies within from rising as undead. It also prevents enemies of Pharasma's faith from entering the room unless they are invited in, or unless a creature within the room attempts a hostile act against an enemy of Pharasma while within the crypt (such as by attempting a ranged Strike through an open door against a target in area **B2**). In the latter case, the ward immediately vanishes, and the character who caused its collapse is afflicted by Pharasma's moderate curse (*Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 39).

Creatures: On the night Aliriel murdered Bishop Keppira, two acolytes escorted a visitor in the Gray. Yniesse Zenderholm lost her family during Ileosa's rule, including her great-aunt Zenobia, and she wanted to visit a dozen or so graves before she got to the work that brought her to Korvosa. The three were out well after midnight as emotions overwhelmed Yniesse, causing her to question her loyalty to Ileosa's memory, and Erinyes Company entirely.

When the trio returned through the cathedral garden (area **A16**) and entered area **A14**, they saw Aliriel, some of her vampiric allies, and one of the scarlet walkers. When a second scarlet walker in the garden prevented them from fleeing the cathedral, the acolytes led Yniesse to this crypt, and the three barely avoided the profane ghouls that were already pilfering bones from sarcophagi.

When this adventure begins, the three have been holed up for four days and grow increasingly desperate as they hope for rescue. Water wasn't an issue, as the acolytes can cast *create water*, but food is a problem. Air is an issue as well, with the trio managing to stave off slow suffocation by periodically opening the doors at area **B5**, only to close them after a few rounds once the guardians in that room take note.

Don't worry about tracking daily starvation damage. If the PCs take more than 2 weeks to reach this point, the acolytes, a young man named Riodh Kavindiel and a Thassilonian immigrant named Kamurien, have starved. After 1 additional week, Yniesse starves. Whether or not any of them resort to cannibalism before then is for the GM to decide.

Those who still live are fatigued when the PCs enter the crypt. As the doors open, Yniesse prepares for a fight but backs down quickly once she realizes the

PCs aren't vampires. The captives are ecstatic to have allies and the potential to escape. They might need to be fed before they can offer much additional information.

The Pharasmins are horrified by what's happened and implore the PCs to make things right. Apart from the tale of how they ended up here, they have no further insights.

Yniesse spent time reconsidering her motives. Her return to Korvosa awakened a powerful mix of nostalgia for her hometown and shame for her actions during Ileosa's reign. Other times, she sifted through what she knows and suspects about Lorthact's presence in the city. Before her disastrous trip to the Gray, she researched the birth and burial records of the Ornelos family—the lineage of the Acadamae's headmasters—suspecting the school's association with diabolism had ancient ties to Lorthact's influence. While researching the burial records with Bishop Keppira, they noted strange discrepancies in the burial records for the Acadamae's founder—in particular, no official gravesite for Volshyenek exists. Keppira suggested it was likely a paperwork error, but Yniesse suspects Volshyenek brokered a deal with Lorthact.

If the PCs share what they've learned (particularly if they do so with the information from area B7), this additional information only strengthens Yniesse's convictions. She wants to return to Whitecaps to make sure her followers are safe and to convince them there may be a better way to use their training. The PCs can use Whitecaps as a safe hideout, but the Gray Maidens are not likely to be much aid in the dangers the PCs will face in Aliriel's Sanctum.

Before she parts ways with the PCs, Yniesse offers a key bit of advice: if the PCs discover her theories are fact and face Lorthact, they can likely distract or frighten the cowardly devil by confronting him with Eiseth's wrath. Threatening to reveal his presence to the church of Eiseth is potentially enough to have a debilitating effect on him.

YNIESSE ZENDERHOLM

CREATURE 7

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +16

Languages Common, Infernal

Skills Athletics +17, Crafting +12, Intimidation +14, Religion +12



Yniesse Zenderholm

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

Items lesser sturdy shield (Hardness 10, HP 80, BT 40), +1 glamered Gray Maiden plate, +1 longsword, composite shortbow (20 arrows)

AC 25; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +11, **Will** +14

Attack of Opportunity ⚡

Shield Block ⚡

HP 120

Speed 20 feet

Melee ⚡ longsword +18 (versatile P),

Damage 1d8+7 slashing

Ranged ⚡ shortbow +11 (deadly d10, propulsive, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), **Damage** 1d6+6 piercing

Erinyes Fury ⚡⚡⚡ **Requirements**

The Erinyes Company agent is suffering from persistent damage; **Effect** The agent makes a Strike. If it hits, it deals an additional 1d6 points of persistent damage; the type of this extra damage is the same as the persistent damage from which they're suffering. The agent can choose to

instead have this persistent damage be lawful or evil damage. This counts as two attacks when calculating their multiple attack penalty.

ACOLYTES OF PHARASMA (2)

CREATURE 1

UNCOMMON N MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

N clerics of Pharasma

Initiative Perception +7

Languages Common, Varisian

Skills Crafting +5, Diplomacy +4, Occultism +5, Religion +7, Society +5

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

Items dagger, religious symbol of Pharasma

AC 15; **Fort** +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +9

HP 16

Speed 25 feet

Melee ⚡ dagger +4 (agile, finesse, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+2 piercing

Ranged ⚡ dagger +4 (agile, finesse, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+2 piercing

Divine Prepared Spells DC 17, attack +9; **1st** *create water*, *heal* (×2), *mending*; **Cantrips** (1st) *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *light*, *prestidigitation*, *read aura*

Cleric Domain Spells 1 Focus Point, DC 17; **1st** *healer's blessing* (Core Rulebook 393)

XP Award: The PCs earn 20 XP for each character they rescue from starvation here, and an additional 20 XP for securing Yniesse's aid.

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B7. Ghoul Nest

Severe 12

A narrow flight of stairs opens into the northwest portion of a damp cavern. The stone walls of this cavern bear countless scratches and gouges that speak to its creation by digging claws rather than natural formation. The floor underfoot is rough and uneven, with small piles of rubble or dirt heaped here and there. Tangles of tree roots dangle from cracks in the ceiling. Claustrophobic despite its size, the cavern is littered with gnawed bones. Heaps of dry leaves, tattered rags, and worn hides form a half-dozen crude pallets near the walls. A pair of claw-dug tunnels lead to the northeast and southeast; to the southwest, the cave breaks into an ancient-looking room.

Ghouls dug this cavern long ago on their first attempt to dig into the Pharasmin crypts. Fear of Pharasmin reprisal prevented them from digging the last few feet into area **B4**, but they uncovered remnants of an ancient Thassilonian ruin at area **B7**. The two tunnels leading east eventually connect to more extensive ghoulish warrens and dero tunnels that have long existed below the Gray District, despite years of attempts to curtail these infestations. These tunnels lead to areas unlikely to provide much challenge for 12th-level characters and are beyond the scope of this adventure.

Creatures: Aliriel uses this chamber to trade with Ibrique. At Aliriel's urging, Ibrique told her ghouls to continue digging toward area **B4**, promising there would be no Pharasmin presence to prevent them robbing the crypts. In return, Ibrique taught Aliriel about today's Korvosa and got the strigoi oriented in the new world.

When the PCs arrive, this chamber is occupied by Ibrique and three of Aliriel's strigoi servants. If a ghoul from area **B4** fled here, then all the undead in this room are prepared for a fight. Otherwise, Ibrique performs an atonal concert on a homemade flute carved from a long-dead Pharasmin's femur for the strigoi audience.

As with many dero, Ibrique remains driven by an innate need to overcome her weakness to sunlight. For many years, Ibrique dissected subterranean creatures that lacked this debilitating weakness to learn how they endured the sun's rays. She deliberately infected herself with ghoul fever in an attempt to gain the ghouls' relative immunity to sunlight. Her experiment was only partially successful; though she's not as vulnerable as she once was, she still isn't comfortable in the light of day.

Seeing the abilities her ghoul kin gained from consuming bones stolen from the Pharasmin catacombs inspired Ibrique to revisit her studies. By eating enough bones of holy people, she hopes to gain

full immunity to sunlight. The ghouls brought her several bones to no effect, and she has urged them to bring her the holiest bones they can find.

When Aliriel gave the skull of the first Pharasmin bishop of Korvosa to Ibrique, she cemented the dero ghoul's loyalty to her cause. Ibrique considers the strigoi an extension of her undead family. Before she eats her prized skull, she intends to meditate and focus her mind into a state where her corrupted undead soul will be more receptive to absorbing the saint's legacy. She also fears that breaking the skull into bite-sized portions will let its "magic leak out" and reduce its effectiveness; she has been researching magic that will allow her to grow large enough to eat the skull in one bite.

Ibrique is happy to carry on a conversation with those she captures—she has a guilty pleasure for "talking to her food." If the PCs interrupt her concert, she plays the role of a shocked and scandalized bard, ordering the strigoi to "defend my honor by eating these vagrants who dare disrupt my song!" Ibrique joins the fight as well, although she prefers to hang back and use magic while the strigoi engage the PCs in melee. The undead here fight until they are destroyed.

IBRIQUE

CREATURE 13

UNIQUE CE SMALL GHOUL UNDEAD

Female variant dero ghoul (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 168)

Perception +18; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Necril, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +27, Crafting +25, Deception +24, Occultism +25, Performance +24, Stealth +27

Str +4, **Dex** +8, **Con** +5, **Int** +6, **Wis** -1, **Cha** +5

Items +1 resilient leather armor

AC 35; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +28, **Will** +21

HP 200; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** vulnerable to sunlight

Vulnerable to Sunlight Ibrique takes 20 damage for each hour she is exposed to sunlight.

Speed 25 feet, burrow 10 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +27 (finesse), **Damage** 3d10+10 piercing plus 2d6 negative and profane paralysis and ghoul fever

Melee ♦ claw +27 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 3d6+10 slashing plus 2d6 negative and profane paralysis

Occult Innate Spells DC 33, attack + 25; **7th** *sound burst*; **6th** *modify memory*, *phantasmal killer*, *teleport*; **5th** *dimension door*; **4th** *confusion* (×3); **2nd** *darkness* (at will); **Cantrips** (7th) *daze*, *ghost sound*, *telekinetic projectile*

Cytillish Stare ♦ (concentrate, incapacitation, mental, visual) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Ibrique focuses her gaze on a creature she can see within 30 feet. The target is dazzled for 1 round and must succeed at a DC 33 Will save or be confused for 1 round.

Ghoul Fever (disease) As ghoul, but DC 33.

Profane Paralysis (incapacitation, necromancy, occult) As profane ghoul (page 33), but DC 33.

STRIGOI SERVANTS (3)

CREATURE 10

Page 25

Initiative Perception +19

Treasure: Ibrique keeps her treasure in a leather sack next to the saint's skull. This sack contains Aliriel's gift of gemstones worth 1,200 gp in all, and a few offerings from her ghouls: a *fade band talisman*, a 6th-level *wand of overflowing life* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 265), and a set of *greater goggles of night*.

XP Award: If the PCs return the saint's skull to its resting place in area A12, grant them 80 XP.

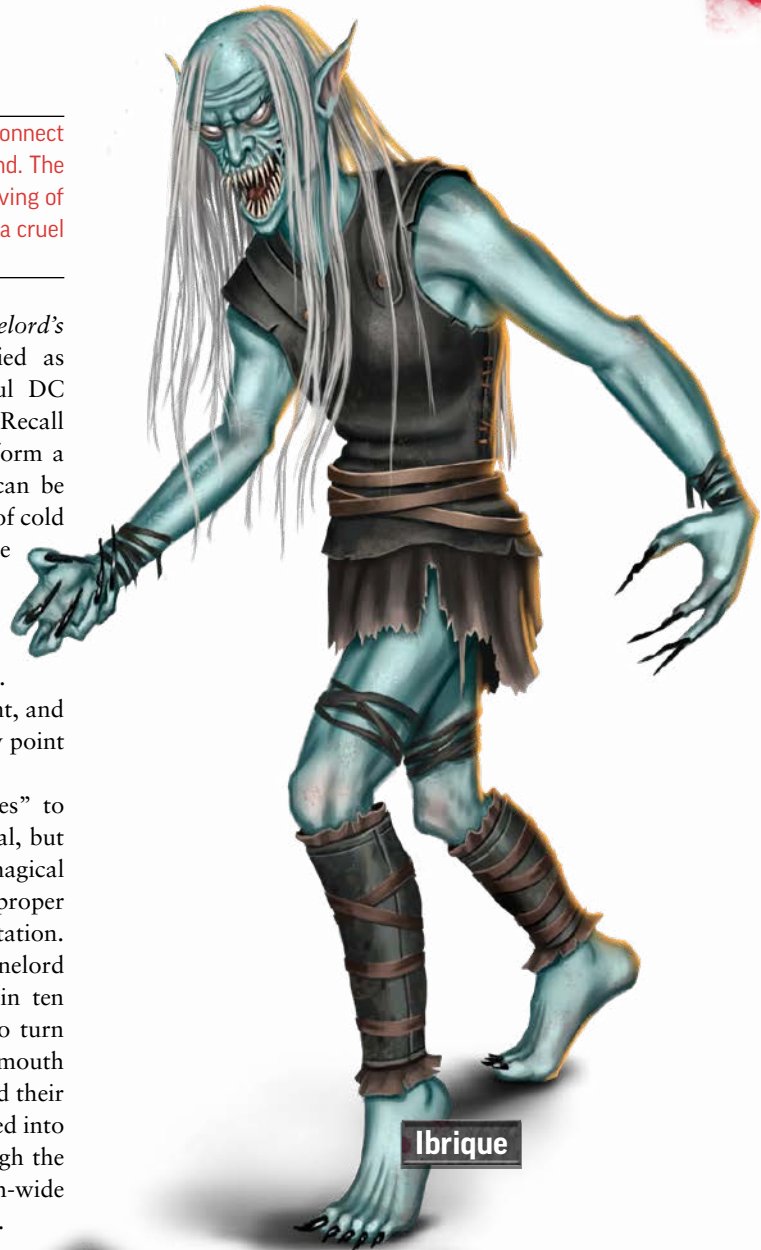
B8. Runelord's Breath

The eastern wall of this room has fallen away to connect the ancient stone chamber to the larger cave beyond. The wall to the west is decorated with a six-foot-tall carving of a beautiful woman's face, her lips parted slightly in a cruel smile.

The face on the wall was known as the *Runelord's Breath* in Sorshen's time. It can be identified as depicting Runelord Sorshen with a successful DC 20 Thassilon Lore or DC 25 Society check to Recall Knowledge. The carving's slightly parted lips form a three-inch gap through which a dark tunnel can be seen leading deeper into the earth. A faint draft of cold air occasionally moves into this tunnel. This face (and many others like it buried throughout the region) once served as a ventilation shaft for the Eurythnian Vault—the underground complex of which Aliriel's Sanctum is but a small part. Aliriel first came to the surface through this vent, and soon after encountered Ibrique, her first friendly point of contact with the new world.

The process by which the carving “breathes” to draw fresh air to the lower chambers is magical, but Aliriel isn't aware the face possesses another magical capability. To a character who knows the proper password, it also serves as a method of transportation. Speaking the phrase, “Consume me, Runelord Sorshen” in Thassilonian while standing within ten feet of the carved face causes the face's eyes to turn and gaze upon the speaker. A moment later, the mouth opens and inhales, transforming the speaker and their carried gear into mist. The speaker is then inhaled into the mouth and, after a minute of vertigo through the darkness, is transported 3,000 feet down a 6-inch-wide ventilation shaft to area C1 of Aliriel's Sanctum.

A character who studies the carving can attempt a DC 30 check to Identify Magic. A success reveals both functions of the *Runelord's Breath*, but not the phrase to activate it. A critical success reveals this phrase. Characters without the password can use the Trick Magic Item feat to activate the *Runelord's Breath* with a successful DC 30 Arcana check. Barring these methods, the PCs can research this obscure Thassilonian construction to learn Sorshen often used devices like these—magical portals meant not so much to provide security to her domain as they were to humiliate those who used them. A character who makes a successful DC 30 Thassilon Lore check to Recall knowledge realizes this. Alternately, a character



Ibrique

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who spends 8 hours Investigating with books on the subject (from either Castle Korvosa's libraries or libraries at the Acadamae) can attempt a DC 32 Arcana or Occultism check to discover the phrase.

If the PCs don't figure out how to activate the *Runelord's Breath*, they can use methods similar to those employed by Aliriel to move along the tunnel. The distance is too vast for a 5-minute spell like gaseous form to be a viable option. *Wind walk* works but is likely out of reach for 12th-level characters. If the PCs use *shadow walk* to travel this route, they experience the vent shaft as a vast tunnel that resembles an enormous petrified throat that goes on for what appears to be 300 feet before depositing them in area C1. A Tiny character can navigate the tunnel as well, so any spell or effect that allows for that size change and lasts long enough to navigate 3,000 feet suffices. Other spells or effects can work if you wish.

XP Award: Grant the PCs 80 XP the first time they navigate the *Runelord's Breath* to Aliriel's Sanctum.

SPEAKING WITH SPIRITS

Speaking with the departed is one way the PCs can learn additional information in this adventure. Doing so isn't required to progress in the plot, but the information recovered can help PCs prepare for what's to come or fill in plot points that may have gone unnoticed. A spell like *talking corpse* can give the PCs one way to speak with the dead, but in two particular cases—Ileosa and Sermignatto—no corpses are available for this spell. In this case, *call spirit* (using Ileosa's contract as that ritual's requirement for a connection to the spirit in question) will work.

You can use these spells and rituals to give the PCs clues or information they may have missed, but if they seek to communicate with Keppira, Ileosa, or Sermignatto, consult the following entries.

Unless otherwise indicated, a *call spirit* ritual requires successful DC 32 checks.

Contacting Keppira

Attempts to contact Keppira's spirit via a spell like *talking corpse* or *call spirit* fail as long as she remains undead. If Keppira is destroyed in her vampire form, her soul is released into the River of Souls and swiftly travels to the Boneyard to await judgment, during which time her spirit willingly responds to *call spirit* attempts. *Talking corpse* or *call spirit* can confirm vampires infiltrated the cathedral and—at your option—could reveal Aliriel's name, but Aliriel didn't include Keppira much in her plans.

XP Award: The PCs earn 20 XP if they speak to Keppira's spirit.

Contacting Ileosa

If the PCs attempt to use *call spirit* to contact Ileosa, an unexpected result occurs. On a critical success, the PCs fail to contact her spirit but realize something more important—that Ileosa's soul is in a strange transitory state of some sort between Hell and the Material Plane, and that the manifestations in the city are metaphysical “echoes” of this event. Furthermore, the ritual reveals to the PCs that whatever or whoever is causing this strange state to afflict the queen's soul is somewhere relatively close—certainly somewhere in or perhaps below Korvosa. Finally, the PCs realize that had they not achieved this critical success, a particularly dangerous manifestation of Ileosa would have attacked them.

On any result of success or worse, that manifestation appears at once—a more dangerous version of the manifestation the PCs may have encountered before. The PCs have a chance to detect this hazard before it fully manifests, giving the party one chance to attempt to disable it.

ILEOSA'S SIXTH MANIFESTATION

HAZARD 13

RARE HAUNT

Stealth DC 37 (expert)

Description Ileosa manifests as a crimson ghost and reaches out as if to receive a gift from the ritual's primary caster.

Disable Religion DC 37 (expert) or DC 40 Occult (trained) to reverse the ritual's power.

Queen's Laugh ☞ (divine, emotion, enchantment, mental)

Trigger Someone attempts to contact Ileosa with *call spirit* and achieves any result other than a critical success to cast the ritual; **Effect** Ileosa closes her fingers and attempts to pull the primary caster's heart from their chest. The primary caster must attempt a DC 33 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature takes no damage.

Success The creature feels Ileosa's hand grip and tug at their heart; they take 25 negative damage, and then the manifestation vanishes.

Failure As success, but the creature takes 50 negative damage and becomes drained 1 as they momentarily see their heart appear in Ileosa's hand before the manifestation vanishes.

Critical Failure The creature takes 75 negative damage and becomes drained 2. If this reduces the target to 0 Hit Points, the target dies instantly. For a brief moment, the victim's heart appears in Ileosa's hand before the manifestation vanishes. If the victim is slain by this hazard, their heart drops to the ground with a splat, pulsing its final beats after the manifestation vanishes.

Contacting Sermignatto

The best use of *call spirit* and the contract is to attempt to contact the devil Sermignatto. Known also as the Leech Master, Sermignatto was a powerful, three-headed, worm-like fiend known as a belier devil. He served Runelord Sorshen, among others, thousands of years ago. Since Thassilon's fall, he meddled in countless mortal lives, finally settling upon Queen Ileosa as an ideal project. Sermignatto presented Ileosa with the infernal contract to provide her with diabolical power. When he was slain during the final days of Ileosa's rule, Sermignatto's spirit was drawn into Hell to begin the painful process of being recycled into the infernal quintessence of that plane. Using *call spirit* on Sermignatto requires a DC 35 check. A critical failure on this check results in three munagola devils (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 66; a moderate 12 encounter) appearing and attacking the PCs for meddling in infernal matters.

If the ritual is a success, Sermignatto's spirit answers; the use of the contract as a point of connection negates the spirit's option to resist the ritual. He appears as three distorted faces that seem to be merging into a red-hot wall of iron hooks and blades, representing his slow but inexorable assimilation into one of the countless defensive walls in the depths of Dis. Even so, Sermignatto tries to manipulate events to his advantage. He asks for the PCs' souls in exchange for information, largely out of habit, but his demands are hollow; he has no capacity to claim a soul, but may provide cryptic or incomplete answers out of spite. What information the characters gain depends a great deal on what they ask.

Sermignatto is the only one who knew the mysterious backer behind Ileosa's infernal contact was Lorthact. He originally swore to not reveal Lorthact to anyone as long as he lived, but that time has long passed. The idea that Lorthact may soon be free from his exile while Sermignatto remains doomed infuriates the dead devil. If asked, he gleefully reveals Lorthact's name.

Beyond this key piece of information, Sermignatto has little more to reveal. His tenuous connection to Ileosa remains strong enough that he can confirm her soul is still in Hell, but he can feel it being drawn to the Material Plane. He suspects Lorthact (or the "unnamed backer" if the PCs haven't yet asked about their identity) is

involved, but through a proxy, for Lorthact's fear of attracting Eiseth's attention has long prevented him from taking such brazen actions on his own. Sermignatto remains ignorant of Lorthact's proxy. If asked, he cackles and offers teasing taunts that "surely you'll find them soon, if they haven't found you already!"

XP Award: The PCs earn 20 XP if they speak to Sermignatto's spirit. Once they learn Lorthact was the third party involved in the contract, award them an additional 40 XP.

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Sermignatto's Spirit



CHAPTER 3 SANCTUM OF BLOOD

While defeating the villains who claimed the Cathedral of Pharsma is a significant step toward saving Korvosa, the PCs must confront Lorthact and Aliriël in an ancient dungeon once ruled by Runelord Sorshen to stop Lorthact's plot. In a sublevel of the much larger Eurythnian Vault, the PCs learn the horrific truth of the plot to return Ileosa from Hell and back to Korvosa.

The ancient and intelligent Aliriël arrogantly believes her sanctum is too difficult for the PCs to reach, but she doesn't know the *Runelord's Breath* can be used to travel directly into the Eurythnian Vault that houses her sanctum. Of course, the PCs may not know this, either. The goal is to make the players feel accomplished when they discover the use of the *Runelord's Breath* spell in area **B8**, not to punish them for bad rolls. Give the PCs a chance to

discover the entrance. If they're stumped, Toff Ornelos can offer a bit of advice or provide a book on ancient Thassilon that, after a day's study, reveals the needed phrase. Once the PCs arrive in the dungeons, they can use magic like *teleport* to come and go as they wish, or use the magical elevator in area **C3** to quickly travel to Castle Korvosa.

ALIRIËL'S SANCTUM

The dungeon complex in which Aliriël spent the past several thousand years, and where she now rebuilds Ileosa's body, is one subsection of a larger dungeon complex known as the Eurythnian Vault: a sprawling, four-level dungeon hundreds of feet below Castle Korvosa. Here, Runelord Sorshen hid in in the Eye of Desire on the Eurythnian Vault's lowest level, and here her inactive *runewell of lust* remains.

Aliriel's sanctum is one wing of the Eurythnian Vault's uppermost level. Several other wings, each once ruled by a different vampiric ally of Runelord Sorshen, comprise the remainder of this level, but none of these domains connect directly to each other. When Sorshen abandoned the Eurythnian Vault, she released these vampires and their minions from servitude. They flee the region rather than risk Sorshen's return, but Aliriel remained. The contents and dangers in the other wings of this level, and greater dangers that doubtless remain in the lower levels of the Eurythnian Vault, are beyond the scope of this adventure, but could serve as an exciting place to set future adventures.

The map of Aliriel's Sanctum appears on the inside back cover of this book.

Sanctum Features

Aliriel's sanctum is located about 500 feet below the Grand Mastaba, the pyramid upon which Castle Korvosa sits. Ceilings are 8 feet high in 5-foot-wide passageways and 12 feet high in 10-foot-wide passageways, but their height varies widely in larger rooms as indicated in the text. The walls are fitted stone and doors are reinforced with iron; all of these, as well as the furnishings within, are protected by ancient Thassilonian preservative magic. The magic doesn't give the features additional strength or hardness but vastly slows the advance of time; these features appear decades old despite being over 10,000 years old. Unless otherwise indicated in the text, the chambers within Aliriel's sanctum are unlit.

Sorshen left specific defenses of each of these wings to the vampires who ruled them. Over thousands of years, Aliriel ensured that her sanctum is well protected. The following three protections persist within the sanctum as long as the paradox engine that powers them in area C5 remains closed.

- The masonry of the walls is strengthened magically, increasing the walls from the strength of masonry (Hardness 14, HP 56 [BT 28]) to that of iron (Hardness 18, HP 72 [BT 36]). In addition, the walls are imbued with an effect similar to *ghost touch* runes, which prevents the passage of incorporeal creatures.
- Any attempt to use a scrying effect to look into the dungeon, or a teleport effect with a destination inside the dungeon, requires a successful DC 32 check using a skill associated with the spell's tradition (Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion). On a failed check, the spell is automatically countered; on a critical failure, the spell is countered, and the caster takes 8d8 mental damage. A character in the sanctum can scry on or teleport to locations outside the sanctum normally.

- The dreams of any creature who sleeps within the sanctum twist and warp into nightmares featuring pursuit by shadowy monsters. Any creature who sleeps in the sanctum must attempt a DC 31 Will save against the effects of a *nightmare* spell; on a critical success, the creature is immune to this effect thereafter.

The entire dungeon is suffused with a low, ominous sound, as if a distant but immense heart beats somewhere within the surrounding stone. This sound comes from the magical process of the blood machines in area C9 as they work to rebuild Ileosa's body. The sound grows louder as the PCs approach that area, but it remains constant and unnerving throughout areas C1–C8.

C1. Collapsed Chamber

Trivial 13

This room's original purpose is hard to discern, as most of the floor and walls collapsed into a sprawling, rubble-filled pit. To the north and west, jagged ledges 20 feet above the ruined floor each give access to an ornate double door framed in worked stone, while to the northeast, a ten-foot-wide, five-foot-tall passageway slopes downward. Overhead, much of the chamber's original construction appears intact, featuring an inverted model of a strange, gothic city with miniature spires and towers extending into the room like tiny stalactites.

If the PCs traveled the vent from area B8, they emerge from the 3,000-foot journey through a ragged hole in the southern wall of the room. Characters who used *Runelord's Breath* return to physical form in midair, falling 20 feet onto the rocks (a successful DC 20 Reflex save allows a falling PC to Grab the Edge of the narrow ledge under the vent opening). The walls of the room remain rough, with plenty of handholds, and can be Climbed with a successful DC 20 Athletics check.

The preservative magic of the stone beneath this section of the dungeon failed, when Sorshen abandoned the Eurythnian Vault, and thousands of years of erosion occurred in an instant, turning the floor into a 20-foot-deep rubble pit. A character who Searches the rubble below the point where the vent from B8 emerges finds crumbled fragments of what was once a matching *Runelord's Breath*. Characters who used this method to reach the sanctum must find another way back to the surface.

Originally a worship space for the strigoi who lived here, this room featured a reminder of their original home on the Shadow Plane—the stygian but magnificent hanging city of Fvalthahalia—before it

was destroyed by Zon-Kuthon thousands of years ago. The top third of the room's walls are set with smoky quartz and obsidian mosaics in abstract swirls. A character who succeeds at a DC 30 Arcana or Religion check to Recall Knowledge recognizes the art as an impression of a location on the Shadow Plane, while a critical success confirms it depicts the mythical city of Fvalthahalia—tantalizingly referred to in some obscure texts as the “cradle of vampirism.” Characters who study the carving from below and succeed at a DC 30 Perception check note tiny carvings of runes running along the perimeter of the inverted city carving. On a critical success (or if the PCs can reach the ceiling to study the lettering closely), a character who can read Shadowtongue notes these runes repeat, “We Remember Fvalthahalia—Fvalthahalia Remembers Us.”

Hazard: The carving of Fvalthahalia is imbued with psychic energy after centuries of nostalgic admiration by the strigoi who spent so long imprisoned in this vault. This energy reacts quickly to the presence of creatures who do not have a supernatural link to the Shadow Plane.

BROODING FVALTHAHALIA

HAZARD 13

UNIQUE MAGICAL

Stealth DC 37 (master)

Description Tiny black flames mirror living creatures' movements in the city above as scraps of shadow patrol the streets—flames that notice intruders in their “sky” below and reach out to the intruders “above” with a deafening violence that incidentally alerts several of the vault's denizens to the intruders' presence.

Disable DC 40 Thievery (master) to adjust the model so its attention is focused inward, DC 37 Occultism (expert) to cause the accumulated psychic energy to discharge harmlessly, or *dispel magic* (7th level; counteract DC 32). A character who sneaks through the room with a DC 32 Stealth (expert) check avoids triggering the hazard, but this does not disable it.

Call of Fvalthahalia ☞ (abjuration, occult) **Trigger** A creature without supernatural ties to the Shadow Plane enters the room (creatures like fetchlings or divine spellcasters who worship Zon-Kuthon represent two examples of creatures who won't trigger this hazard); **Effect** The flickering dark flames on the city's streets flare up and the sound of an entire city populace screaming an alarm fills the room. All creatures in area **C1** take 18d6 sonic damage (DC 33 basic Fortitude save), and all strigoi from Aliriel's Vault immediately know intruders have been spotted in this room. Any strigoi in area **C2** quickly investigate and attack the PCs on sight.

Reset 1 hour

C2. Strigoi Crypt

Low 13

A half-dozen ten-foot-wide alcoves, each containing a pair of ancient stone sarcophagi, extend from the walls of this room. The lid of each sarcophagus depicts a carving of a reclining figure, its mouth open in a silent scream. Each of these open mouths are actual holes in the stone lid. At the western end, the hall widens into a larger chamber, its walls adorned with iron shackles hanging from metal rings driven into the stone wall.

The secret door on the northwestern portion of this wall can be discovered with a successful DC 31 Perception check. The manacles along the walls nearby once held living prisoners the strigoi used as food, draining them to the precipice of death over and over. If any NPCs were taken by strigoi during this adventure, they are found here; otherwise, the manacles hang empty.

Creatures: A dozen strigoi servants shared this room for thousands of years: dutiful minions Sorshen gave to Aliriel as part of their bargain. Of these dozen, eight accompanied Aliriel to the surface. The remaining four emerge quickly to attack the PCs if the hazard in area **C1** is triggered. Otherwise, the strigoi lie within. If they hear the PCs moving through the room, they emerge through the open mouths of their sarcophagus lids in shadow form to attack.

STRIGOI SERVANTS (4)

CREATURE 10

Page 25

Initiative Perception +20

C3. Blood Machinery

Moderate 13

Tall, clustered columns of dark granite rise to an elaborate fan-vaulted ceiling eighty feet overhead, making this enormous chamber seem impossibly vast. Elaborate, pointed arches frame alcoves to the east and west, while similarly adorned double doors stand in the northern, western, and southern walls. Wide steps descend from the eastern half of the room into the larger western half, where a massive pillar of greenish-gray stone supports the ceiling above. What appears to be an empty door frame leading to nothing has been carved into the base of the pillar's eastern face.

The most astounding sight in the room is the series of immense glassy spheres amid a tangled frame of metal and glass tubing that stands to the east. Within the spheres surges and bubbles an astounding amount of what appears to be blood that, even as portions are siphoned into tubes that run along the walls and occasionally vanish into the stone, is constantly replenishing its volume from the larger metal casing the entire contraption sits upon.

The secret door in the north wall to area C7 can be discovered with a successful DC 36 Perception check.

Blood Elevator: The stone pillar in the western portion of the room is hollow—part of a magical transportation system that connects this wing of the Eurythnian Vault to a larger shaft in the center of the level, off the map to the north. While other stone tubes branch off this central shaft to connect to other wings of this level, transportation from this room is possible only to what was once the main entrance to the vault, some 500 feet above. A character who examines the empty door frame on the pillar's eastern face can see a faint indentation in the stone—Sorshen's ancient rune of lust. Further inspection reveals faint smears of blood on the rune.

A character who traces this rune with blood from a living mortal triggers the device, causing the wall to fade and reveal a large circular opening within, with a second rune of lust on the wall opposite. Tracing this second rune with blood causes the exit to area C3 to revert to stone and then transforms all creatures in this area, along with their gear, into blood that is then siphoned through a series of tiny holes in the ceiling 50 feet above to be expelled and returned to physical form with no apparent harm in the dungeon of Castle Korvosa above. The whole process is unsettling but harmless, and once the trip is made from below, the PCs can return to this room from Castle Korvosa above by tracing the rune of lust in blood anywhere on the face of the stone pillar in the dungeon. Aliriel knows this route to the castle, and blood smears on the runes indicate she used the route recently. On one such trip, Aliriel discovered the vial of Ileosa's blood the queen had hidden away for plans known only to herself. Aliriel avoids using this route for fear of drawing attention.

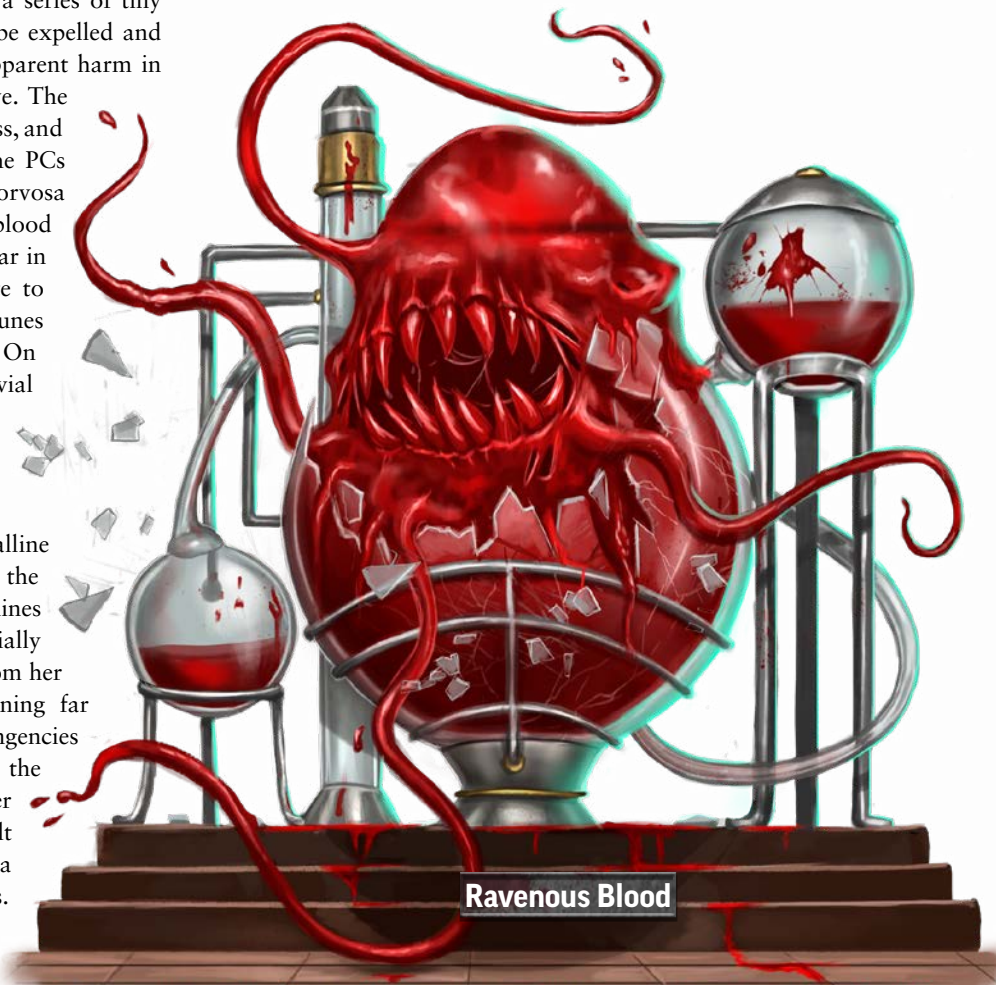
Blood Machinery: The crystalline machinery in the eastern portion of the room is one of many ancient machines throughout the Eurythnian Vault initially meant to waken Runelord Sorshen from her slumber. Runelord Karzoug's awakening far to the north triggered ancient contingencies Sorshen put in place and reactivated the machines. The vampires and other denizens in the Eurythnian Vault repurposed the blood machines in a number of creative and unsettling ways.

This particular machine constantly creates fresh blood. A vampire can

drink this blood to sate their hunger, but the blood tastes stale and unsatisfying—the vampire equivalent of survival rations. More importantly, Aliriel uses this machine to generate vast amounts of blood to fuel the machinery in area C9, where the reconstruction of Ileosa's body nears completion. A character who succeeds at a DC 33 check to Identify Magic can determine the machine is used to generate blood, and that this blood is being siphoned off to the north. A critical success also allows the PC to note the blood churning within the machine seems strangely “alive.”

The blood machinery can be destroyed by enough damage (Hardness 10, HP 100 [BT 50]), but once it breaks, the blood within is released (see “Creature”). If the machinery is destroyed, then the challenges the PCs eventually face in area C9 are somewhat lessened.

Creature: One of two strigoi progenitors who serve Aliriel stands watch over this room's important machinery. This creature is named Braadu, a hulking vampire who spent most of the past several centuries stalking these halls looking for any evidence of intruders. Braadu guards the blood machinery with



an obsessive focus, knowing these machines are key to Aliriel's plans. He does his best to prevent the PCs from damaging the machinery, focusing his attacks on anyone who attempts to do so, even at the expense of his own well-being.

If the blood machinery is broken, the blood within surges from its container and coagulates into a shuddering, ravenous mound of animated blood that immediately seeks to consume any creatures it encounters. The ravenous blood functions as an elite carnivorous blob, except instead of inflicting additional acid damage with its pseudopod Strikes, Constrict actions, and Engulf actions, this damage is persistent bleed damage. The ravenous blood can't damage items due to its lack of acid-generating capabilities.

The blood makes no distinction between living or undead foes, but the sound of the battle is sure to alert Aliriel in area C7. Once the fight sounds like it's over, she comes to investigate the room in 1d3 rounds (see area C7 for her stats and interactions with the PCs).

BRAADU

CREATURE 13

Male strigoi progenitor (page 61)

Initiative Perception +23

RAVENOUS BLOOD

CREATURE 14

Elite carnivorous blob (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 6, 195)

Initiative Perception +25

C4. Emptied Archive

Low 13

The walls of this long hall are lined with book-laden shelves, reaching from the floor to the vaulted ceiling twenty feet above. Alcoves in the walls hold statuary, works of art, and other artifacts, though some of the statues are strangely generic, and some of the art seems unfinished or partly erased.

Nearly every page of the thousands of books in this library are blanked out, removing records of events no living creature remembers. Most titles are removed, reducing what might have been a priceless window into Thassilon to a collection of blank books with ancient bindings. Only a few occasional facts remain: events or facts significant enough to persist through the ages have little nutritional value to the extraplanar pests that infest this hall.

The secret doors in this long hall can be discovered with a successful DC 31 Perception check.

Creatures: When Sorshen left the vault and the wards protecting the dungeon faltered, it wasn't long before a group of Astral predators of knowledge invaded this area. Originally numbering a dozen, these loreavor ennosites consumed all the secrets in what

was once an extensive collection of memoirs written by thousands of Sorshen's servants over her long rule. What remains is only information about Thassilon and Sorshen that can be found in any collection on the topic.

The loreavors have gone without food for some time, and their one attempt to explore elsewhere ended in disaster when half their number were savaged by strigoi. The vampires leave the loreavors alone here, figuring their presence works as an added layer of security.

Loreavors search for any unique facts they can consume. They aren't particularly aggressive, and their initial response to anyone entering the hall is to hide and observe silently. If any characters linger in this hall, the loreavors help themselves to a delectable memory or two, and they confront any characters who examine the books and art in this archive without permission. If the heroes communicate with the Astral beings, they can arrange access to the archive's remaining contents with a successful DC 28 Diplomacy check or by offering some of their own memories in exchange.

LOREAVORS (6)

CREATURE 9

Page 56

Initiative Stealth +19

Treasure: The surviving books contain a standard overview of Thassilonian history, magic, commerce, and culture, but this lore is scattered randomly across thousands of tomes. It would take a scribe years to collate the information together, only to find nothing new can be learned from the results. A character who spends 8 hours searching through the books can attempt a DC 33 Perception check to discover one of several rituals that remain hidden among the texts, these entries being indigestible to the loreavors: *create undead*, *geas*, *imprisonment*, *inveigle*, *planar binding*, and *teleportation circle*^{APG}. Notes on the *create undead* ritual include a substantial discussion of strigoi, including their abilities, their vulnerabilities, and the author's hope to discover the ritual to conjure one from the Shadow Plane to bind it to the caster's soul and thus create a strigoi progenitor. The ritual to do so is not present in this book.

Most of the artwork is eaten away and without value, with one exception: a *marble elephant wondrous figurine* sits on one shelf, its magical nature rendering it distasteful to the loreavors.

C5. Paradox Engine

Low 13

A cube of red stone and black metal measuring several feet across floats a foot off the ground in the center of this room.

Ornate runes embellish the black metal plates, but the entire device lacks any sort of seam, hinge, catch, or lock.

This cube's design was based on an ancient, magical Thassilonian parlor puzzle known as a *paradox box*—containers featuring sliding slats that allowed letters of a word to be rearranged into anagrams. By solving the anagram puzzle, one could open the box to access its contents. A successful DC 28 Thassilon Lore or DC 30 Arcana or Occultism check to Recall Knowledge notes the similarities. This cube is no mere puzzle box, but a hazardous engine used to power the defenses within the walls of the sanctum.

Hazard: As long as the paradox engine remains unopened, the defensive effects in the dungeon persist (see page 41). Unlike a typical paradox box, which normally has enough room on its face for a single word, the paradox engine's sides contain enough space for an entire verse. Translated from Thassilonian, the verse, which is repeated on every side, reads “Eurythnian shadows forever outshine Azlanti light.” Once correctly solved, the runes instead translate as “Azlanti shadows wither and die before Eurythnian light.”

PARADOX ENGINE

HAZARD 14

UNIQUE COMPLEX MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth +0

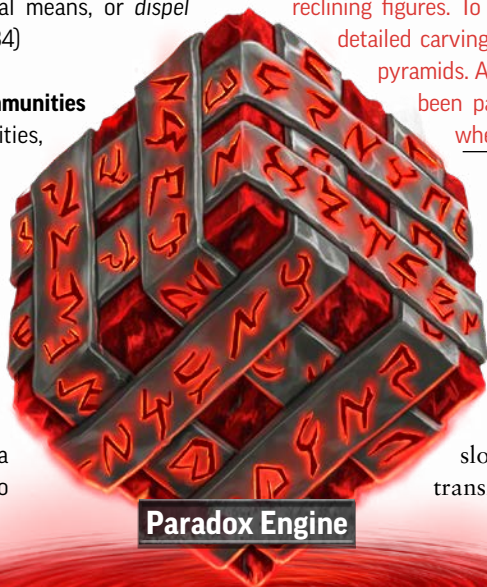
Description All six sides of this adamantine-reinforced box are covered with Thassilonian runes. Touching a rune allows one to exchange its position with another.

Disable Thievery DC 41 (expert) to feel the subtle vibrations when moving a rune to shift into the right position, or Thassilon Lore DC 33 (expert) or Society DC 38 (master) while being able to read Thassilonian to work out the anagram puzzle using traditional means, or *dispel magic* (7th level; counteract DC 34)

AC 36; Fort +28, Ref +22

Hardness 24; **HP** 90 (BT 45); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Slicing Shadows ☞ (arcane, conjuration) **Trigger** The paradox engine is damaged, or a creature fails a check to disable it; **Effect** Slats on the sides of the box open to release beams of razor-sharp freezing darkness that swipe throughout area **C5** and extend 10 feet south into area **C4**; all creatures in this area who lack the Shadow trait take



Paradox Engine

5d6 slashing damage and 5d6 cold damage (DC 34 basic Reflex save).

Routine ◆◆◆ (arcane, conjuration) The slicing shadows congeal into the form of what appears to be the upper half of a skeletal, cowled humanoid: an owb prophet (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 197). This owb prophet is a creation of the paradox engine and does not have a forsaken patron. While the owb prophet is active, the paradox engine no longer uses its Slicing Shadows reaction; instead, the owb prophet focuses its attacks on creatures that attempt to damage or deactivate the engine. If the owb prophet is destroyed, the paradox engine's disable DCs and Hardness are reduced by 5. It thereafter functions as a simple hazard with the Slicing Shadows reaction, and resets after 1 round.

Reset The paradox engine deactivates 1 minute, and its owb prophet returns to its interior after all creatures leave the area, but resets immediately thereafter.

Treasure: If the PCs manage to deactivate or destroy the paradox engine, they not only remove the wards that infuse the walls, but they can access a magical vestment that has been stored inside the engine. This elegant gown, a near-perfect copy of Sorshen's favored attire in shades of gray rather than red and silver, functions as +2 resilient greater shadow explorer's clothing.

C6. Progenitor Crypt

Moderate 13

Clustered columns and gracefully pointed archways adorn the walls of this chamber. A double door stands in the southern wall, while two more stand in alcoves to the east. Facing these two doors on the opposite wall are two additional alcoves, each of which frame a large stone sarcophagus with lids carved in the shape of screaming reclining figures. To the north, the walls each depict a detailed carving of a cityscape made of spires and pyramids. A block of stone that appears to have been partially carved into a statue looms where these angled walls converge.

The northern end of the room originally held a statue of Sorshen, but the statue was unceremoniously hurled into the rubble of area **C8** once Sorshen left. Aliriel replaced the statue with a fresh block of stone, and work slowly proceeds on this block's transformation into a new statue of Aliriel.

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Creatures: The sarcophagi in the alcoves are similar to those found in area C2, but each of these belongs to a strigoi progenitor: Aliriel's most powerful undead minions. Braadu guards the machinery to the south in area C3, but the other works on Aliriel's statue. This ancient vampire long since abandoned much of their personality and identity, and refers to herself only as the Keeper—what they were keeping is forgotten as well. The strigoi's focus of the past several years is the slow creation and perfection of Aliriel's statue, a creation they believe she can use as an enhanced body that will turn aside all weapons and allow her to move in full sunlight once they finish their work.

Accompanying the Keeper is an arcane living rune crafted by Sorshen to protect the vampires' crypt. The ancient vampire has worked with this rune for so long that they now think of the rune as a pet. The rune follows the Keeper's instructions and lead in combat; if the PCs provide any indication of their presence in the dungeon (such as setting off the alarm in area C1, or engaging in combat in areas C3 or C8), the Keeper orders the rune to apply a *glyph of warding* at each entrance to trap intruders.

If Aliriel is in her crypt (area C7) during combat here, she relocates to area C9 to prepare for intruders.

THE KEEPER

CREATURE 13

Agender strigoi progenitor (page 61)

Initiative Perception +23

ARCANE LIVING RUNE

CREATURE 13

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 163

Initiative Perception +25

C7. Aliriel's Crypt

Moderate 13

This small chamber holds a broad stone table and a luxurious padded armchair. Books and scrolls cover nearly the entire surface of the table, and fill shelves built into the walls. In a wide alcove to the east sits an elegant stone sarcophagus decorated with inlaid gold and carvings of an unsettling spired cityscape.

The secret door in the south wall can be discovered with a successful DC 36 Perception check.

Creature: During the ten thousand years between Earthfall and Sorshen's dismissal, each of the strigoi masters trapped here dealt with the isolation in different ways. Braadu endlessly patrolled the halls for imagined intruders to slaughter. The Keeper obsessed over shedding their memories and focusing on centuries-long artistic exploration. Aliriel devoted herself to intellectual pursuits. She transformed her

crypt into a study, selecting the most interesting tomes from the archives (area C4) and even writing several dozen works herself. These books—primarily focusing on the nature of life, death, and the transformation of souls into new forms of life in the Outer Planes—played a key role in developing Aliriel's latest pursuit: restoring Ileosa to life as her pawn to claim Korvosa for Aliriel.

When the PCs first enter the sanctum, there's an equal chance Aliriel is here, studying her texts, or in area C9, observing the final stages of Ileosa's reconstruction. She relocates to area C9 if she realizes the PCs have invaded (either after the alarm at area C1 is triggered or after hearing combat in an adjoining room). If caught off-guard here, she congratulates the PCs on their tenacity and stealth, observing they'd make amazing allies. She offers them jobs as her personal guardians, researchers, and assassins once she seizes control, promising them positions of power.

Aliriel eagerly boasts of her plans and shares her audacious plot. She's confident she can defeat the PCs herself if necessary. If the PCs continue to engage her, use this opportunity to reveal as much of the adventure's plot as you wish. The one element she won't share is Lorthact's role, because she wants the PCs to think she's the sole mastermind behind all this. She also doesn't trust the exiled devil and fears if she says too much about him, he might abandon her, or worse, attempt to destroy her.

If asked about Sorshen, Aliriel is dismissive and curt, confirming Sorshen has nothing to do with current events. She even suggests the once-great runelord lost much of her power, along with her taste for domination and rule. Aliriel and the other strigoi were once among Sorshen's most pampered allies. Like Aliriel, many of these vampires were also powerful necromancers, spellcasters capable of complementing Sorshen's magic with spells from other traditions. Their aid, Aliriel points out, was key to Sorshen maintaining her thousands-year rule as the only runelord of lust. That Sorshen abandoned all she'd worked for still rankles Aliriel. Vengeance against Sorshen—making her into a pawn—remains Aliriel's deepest goal, but is not one she reveals.

If she feels the PCs are readying to attack, Aliriel attempts to cast *dominate* on one of them, and then reverts to shadow form and retreats to area C9. If the spell succeeds, she orders a dominated PC to attack their allies. After the dominated PC attacks an ally, they get a new save at the end of each of their turns even if they critically failed their initial save, but Aliriel hopes this distraction lasts long enough to aid her escape.

Aliriél's spellbook is hidden in a secret compartment inside her sarcophagus—a successful DC 33 Perception check reveals it. This spellbook, titled *Shadows at Sundown*, is a *major Endless Grimoire* (*Secrets of Magic* 162) that contains all the spells Aliriél has prepared, plus any additional spells you wish to introduce into your campaign. If a character transfers their spellbook's contents into *Shadows at Sundown*, the grimoire's title changes to match the character's spellbook's title if they so desire.

ALIRIEL

CREATURE 15

UNIQUE LE SHADOW UNDEAD VAMPIRE

Female human strigoi necromancer (page 58)

Perception +27; darkvision

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal, Jotun, Necril, Shadowtongue, Thassilonian, Varisian

Skills Acrobatics +27, Arcana +29, Athletics +25, Deception +27, Occultism +27, Society +25, Stealth +29, Thassilon Lore +29

Str +6, **Dex** +8, **Con** +4, **Int** +8, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +6

Items *bracers of armor type II, ring of wizardry type IV*

AC 37; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +29, **Will** +27

HP 210, coffin restoration, fast healing 15, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyze, poison, sleep; **Resistances** all physical 15 (except magical silver weapons or magical weapons shedding bright light); **Weaknesses** strigoi weaknesses

Slip Into Shadows ⤴ (abjuration, divine)

Trigger Aliriél succeeds at a save against an effect that is not a darkness or light effect; **Effect** Aliriél disappears into shadows at the last moment, critically succeeding at the save instead.

Shadow Escape ⬠

Speed 25 feet, fly 25 feet

Melee ⬠ claw +29 (agile, magic), **Damage** 3d10+12 slashing plus Grab

Wizard Spells Prepared DC 36, attack +28; **8th** horrid wilting, maze; **7th** dispel magic, eclipse burst, magic missile; **6th** baleful polymorph, vampiric exsanguination, wall of force; **5th** cloudkill, mind probe, sending, shadow walk; **4th** dimension door (×2), grim tendrils (×2), nightmare; **3rd** blindness, mind reading, slow (×2); **2nd** deafness, mirror image, spectral hand; **1st** ray of enfeeblement (×2), true strike; **Cantrips** (8th) chill touch, detect magic, electric arc, mage hand, prestidigitation

Wizard School Spells 3 Focus Points, DC 36; **8th** call of the grave (Core Rulebook 406), overstuff (Core Rulebook

394), take its course (Core Rulebook 397)

Rituals DC 33; *call spirit, create undead, planar binding*

Create Spawn (divine, downtime, necromancy)

Domain of Dusk [two-actions] (conjunction, divine, shadow) 8d6 negative damage (DC 34 basic Fortitude save).

Dominate ⬠⬠ (divine, enchantment, incapacitation, mental, visual) DC 34

Drink Essence ⬠ When drinking essence, Aliriél regains 21 HP.

Shadow Form ⬠ (concentrate, divine, transmutation, shadow)

Thassilonian Necromancer Aliriél cannot cast abjuration or enchantment spells.

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Aliriél

Treasure: The stacks of documents and books found here will take several hours—perhaps days—to study and examine, but with the exception of Lorthact’s role (the exiled devil is referred to only sporadically here, and always as “my new ally” or “my earnest collaborator” or the like), the PCs should be able to discern much of Aliriel’s plot—especially her goal to resurrect Ileosa as her pawn, and her frustrations about how the side effect of Ileosa’s soul manifesting periodically in the city revealed hints of her plot to her enemies before she could complete her goals. All these notes are written in Thassilonian.

Amid these notes are several additional treasures, including a half dozen soul gems (*Bestiary* 71) worth 500 gp each that Aliriel used as paperweights (whether or not these gems contain souls of note is up to you). Aliriel absconded with the cathedral’s funds, keeping this collection of coins worth 2,800 gp in an unlocked coffer under the desk. This coffer bears Pharasma’s symbol and should be obvious to most PCs that it belongs to the church; if the PCs attempt to return the funds, any surviving priests offer the PCs 2,000 gp of these coins as reward.

Additional books here include dozens of more recent texts stolen from the city. Aliriel used these to familiarize herself with the modern world, as her copious notes reveal. A significant amount of these books include details of Ileosa’s reign, taking particular note of her cruelty and vanity. A page in this stack lists the queen’s personality traits and concludes Ileosa is “a fitting replacement for the failed Runelord Sorshen, and someone infinitely easier to control.”

Dozens of other books detail various aspects of Infernal law, the transition of souls through the afterlife, and the nature of undeath. This collection is worth 600 gp in all. If used as reference while Investigating any of these topics, this collection grants a +2 item bonus on checks made to Recall Knowledge.

A successful DC 32 Perception check while Searching the room reveals a dagger tossed into a corner under several stacks of books. This is a +2 *greater striking greater disrupting dagger* with a bone hilt and a blade engraved with a spiral motif. Aliriel hid this Pharasma relic from area A12 to prevent it from being used against her or her minions.

C8. Waste Room

Low 13

The original floor extends only a few feet past the arched doorway in the western wall. Beyond that, the polished stone has fallen into a deep sinkhole. To the east, a narrow ledge of shattered rubble twenty feet below the original floor connects to a five-foot-high tunnel to the south.

Tiny rivulets of blood drip slowly down the shattered walls. The sinkhole drops a further forty feet from this ledge into a foul slurry of rubble, pools of clotting and rotting blood, corpses, and a broken stone statue of a beautiful woman.

The strigoi use this chamber as a garbage pit. As with area C1, the floor of this area (once a small suite of rooms for use by Sorshen or other visitors) collapsed when Sorshen abandoned the vault. The blood dripping from the walls seeps from broken tubes running from the blood machinery that, despite numerous attempts to patch, stubbornly continue to seep. The broken statue of Sorshen was once located in area C6. Among the dead are the remains of many who went missing recently in Korvosa; their bodies bear wounds from strigoi bites. One of these unfortunates was Caelios, the Acadamae student who initially took the blame for Ileosa’s appearance. If the PCs use a spell like *talking corpse* on his body, they may be able to learn of his final days, including the fact that he was killed by Volshyenek Ornelos (note that Caelios does not know Volshyenek’s true identity).

The walls of this chamber can be Climbed with a DC 30 Athletics check. The refuse itself is difficult terrain, and any character who begins their turn within 10 feet of the filthy floor must succeed at a DC 31 Fortitude save to avoid becoming sickened 1 (or sickened 2 on a critical failure). This is a disease effect.

Creatures: Runelord Sorshen made extensive use of conjured demons, and while the majority of these fiends returned to the abyss, a pair of omox demons instead settled into this foul pit, wallowing in the constant seepage of blood. The slimy demons are an upsetting shade of rusty brown, and are licking runoff from the walls when the PCs arrive—an arrival that shocks them out of years of distraction. They attack the PCs, fighting to the death.

OMOX DEMONS (2)

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 63

Initiative Perception +22

Treasure: A Search of the rubble and a successful DC 30 Perception check uncovers a long-forgotten *dancing weapon rune* in the mess.

C9. Construction Hall

Severe 13

Elaborate clustered columns and ribbed vaults of the ceiling, combined with thick red carpet running from the southern doorway, draw attention to a richly engraved, red stone doorway in the northern wall—a doorway that appears to be filled with a smooth mass of stone emblazoned

with a single, sinuous rune. To the east and west are fifteen-foot-wide alcoves whose pointed archways stretch nearly forty feet overhead. While the western alcove is empty, the eastern one contains a grisly apparatus of metal framework, smoldering incense burners, glass tubes filled with blood, glowing crimson crystals, and strips of raw flesh—all arrayed around a coffin-like enclosure. Reclining within is a red-haired woman's partial corpse, the torso open to reveal its missing organs. All that remains is a slowly beating heart, its pulse filling the room with a low, rumbling repetition, as if from the heart of a titan as it struggles to return to life.

This sumptuous chamber originally served Sorshen as a place to address Aliriel and the other strigoi, but also as an access point to the rest of the Eurythnian Vault. The stone wall in the alcove to the north features the rune of lust; as with the rune in area C3, anointing the rune with blood causes the wall to fade, allowing access to area C10. The wall returns to stone at the end of any round no creature remains in area C10.

The grisly apparatus to the east is a machine Aliriel constructed with Lorthact's aid to rebuild Ileosa's body from a vial of her blood. The hollow shell of a body in the machine is instantly recognizable as Ileosa. A PC who investigates the machinery and makes a successful DC 33 check to Identify Magic understands the purpose of the device: to restore Ileosa to life while siphoning her soul from Hell through tiny metaphysical cracks in the legalese of her Infernal contract. A successful check reveals the process is near completion; you can inform the PCs that had they taken another day to reach this point, the process would be finished.

Creatures: Aliriel likely awaits the PCs in this chamber. If she hasn't met the PCs yet, she offers employment as detailed in area A7. If she fled here from a previous encounter, she attacks the PCs on sight. If slain, she flees to her sarcophagus in area A7, and if the PCs don't pursue her to finish the job, she'll seek vengeance against them, especially if they destroy her work here.

Unbeknownst to Aliriel, Lorthact frequently visited this chamber during Ileosa's regrowth. If he is present when her soul finally rejoins her new body, he can snatch control of the reborn queen from Aliriel. Interference of the paradox engine annoyingly caused periodic failure to Lorthact's observations, but he could usually force his scrying through the sanctum's defenses. Now that they're so close to Ileosa's restoration, Lorthact maintains a magical eye on the proceedings here at all times.

Once Lorthact notices the PCs in the room, he's forced to act. He hopes Aliriel can defeat the PCs, but after 1 round of combat, he begins to doubt her ability and

manipulates the machinery from afar to quicken Ileosa's restoration. Roll initiative for Ileosa's shell at the start of the second round of combat by having the shell attempt a Fortitude save to set her initiative rank check; on her action that round, Ileosa's shell lurches in the frame as her mouth opens in a silent shriek that reveals vampiric fangs. She spends this round thrashing in the machine, tearing loose from her bindings to drop onto the floor. She joins the fight on her action in round 3.

When she sees this, Aliriel cries out in Infernal, "You fool! Not yet! You'll ruin it! I've got this under control!" The strigoi must make a DC 40 Will save at the start of her next turn after Ileosa's shell animates. If she fails the save, she realizes Lorthact has more power over the situation and is rushing her work, distracting the strigoi enough that she becomes slowed 1 (slowed 2 on a critical failure). Thereafter, Aliriel works to defend the shell, focusing her attacks on those who threaten it. If the PCs destroy Ileosa's shell, Aliriel shrieks in frustration and focuses her attacks solely upon the PC who dealt the final blow.

Ileosa's shell isn't fully infused with the queen's soul, but she has a vague impression of what's going on. The tantalizing peek through the boundaries between realities offers her hope of escape—one she'll take if the shell is destroyed.

ILEOSA'S SHELL

CREATURE 13

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM UNDEAD

Perception +24; greater darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Elven, Giant, Infernal, Shadowtongue, Thassilonian, Varisian (can't speak any languages)

Skills Acrobatics +24, Athletics +27

Str +8, **Dex** +5, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +0

Escape From Hell (auditory, divine, emotion, fear, mental, necromancy) When Ileosa's shell is reduced to 0 HP, the hollow corpse immediately melts into a pool of blood, at the center of which lies her still-beating heart. A moment later, a crimson ghostly shape—Queen Ileosa's soul—rises from the heart. After the soul shrieks in relief at escaping from Hell, it rises through the ceiling and vanishes while the heart dies and rots. All creatures within 30 feet of the shell when this occurs must attempt a DC 30 Will save.

Critical Success A living creature becomes invigorated and elated by the sense of freedom from Hell, and becomes quickened for 1 minute. The creature can use the extra action each round only for Strike and Stride actions. An undead creature gains no benefit.

Success As success, but the creature can use the extra action only for Stride actions.

Failure The creature becomes frightened 1.

Critical Failure The creature becomes frightened 2.

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AC 34; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +26, **Will** +24

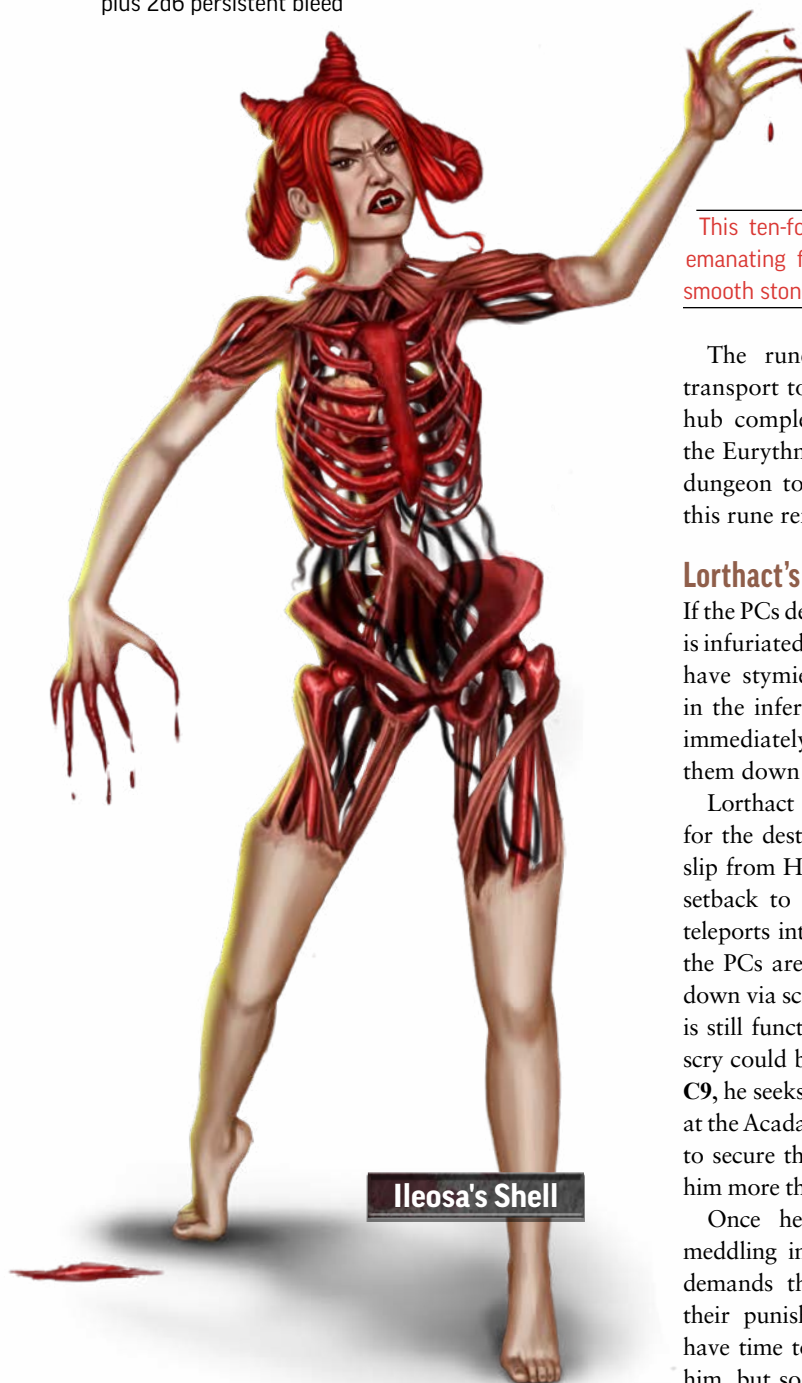
HP 235, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, mental, paralyzed, poison, unconscious;

Resistances physical 10 (except silver); **Weaknesses** bleed 10

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ fangs +29 (magic), **Damage** 3d12+8 piercing plus 2d6 persistent bleed and blood feast

Melee ♦ claw +29 (agile, magic), **Damage** 3d8+8 slashing plus 2d6 persistent bleed



Ileosa's Shell

Blood Feast When a creature takes damage from a fangs Strike, the creature must succeed at a DC 33 Fortitude save or become enfeebled 1 (enfeebled 1 and drained 1 on a critical failure). The shell becomes quickened for 1 round, and can use the extra action only for fangs Strike actions against a creature that is taking persistent bleed damage. Further damage dealt by the shell increases the enfeebled condition by 1 on a failed save, to a maximum of enfeebled 4.

ALIRIEL

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Initiative Perception +27

CREATURE 15

C10. Teleportation Chamber

This ten-foot-square vestibule glows with a rosy light emanating from a glowing rune inscribed on a wall of smooth stone filling the archway to the north.

The rune on the northern wall once allowed transport to other wings on this level, or to a central hub complex that connected to the lower levels of the Eurythnian Vault. Unless you wish to expand this dungeon to present adventures of your own design, this rune remains inactive.

Lorthact's Wrath

Severe 13

If the PCs defeat both Aliriel and Ileosa's shell, Lorthact is infuriated. For the third time in a decade, adventurers have stymied his plans to restore his rightful place in the infernal hierarchy. His patience snaps, and he immediately confronts the PCs, intending to strike them down for their actions.

Lorthact is compelled to attack out of frustration, for the destruction of Ileosa's Shell allows her soul to slip from Hell and beyond Lorthact's grasp. This third setback to his plans causes him to lash out, and he teleports into area C9 to attack the PCs in this fury. If the PCs aren't there, Lorthact attempts to track them down via scrying. Remember that if the paradox engine is still functioning, Lorthact's attempts to teleport and scry could be hindered. If he fails to teleport in to area C9, he seeks out a *scroll of teleport* among the holdings at the Acadamae to use it instead. How long it takes him to secure the scroll is up to you, but it shouldn't take him more than 10 minutes to find what he's looking for.

Once he arrives, Lorthact accuses the PCs of meddling in affairs beyond their comprehension and demands they lay down their arms and submit to their punishment. PCs who disarm themselves may have time to coax some of his plans and secrets from him, but soon discover their punishment is execution.

If combat begins during this scene, Lorthact can roll Intimidation for initiative to represent his gloating over the PCs' doom.

In combat, Lorthact focuses on casting offensive spells and striking at spellcasting PCs with his *staff of power*. If reduced to fewer than 100 Hit Points, Lorthact attempts to flee; if he escapes, he abandons Korvosa entirely and seeks a new city in a distant land in which to hide. Whether or not Eiseth, her cult, or the PCs track him down to finish the job is left to you to determine. In any case, Korvosa is freed from his influence whether he flees or is slain. Note that Lorthact does not attempt to destroy his *staff of power* regardless of his situation, as doing so would risk his own death and deprive him of his most powerful remaining belonging.

LORTHACT

CREATURE 16

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Initiative Perception +27 or Intimidation +31

Invoking Eiseth

Lorthact continues to live in fear that Eiseth, Hell's Valkyrie, might discover he yet lives. A character can confront Lorthact with threats by reminding him what Eiseth is likely to do to him if she discovers where he has been hiding all this time by Invoking Eiseth in his presence.

INVOKE EISETH ◆

AUDITORY | CONCENTRATE | EMOTION | LINGUISTIC | MENTAL

Frequency once per round; **Effect** You attempt to demoralize Lorthact by invoking his nemesis. Attempt a DC 33 Deception, Intimidation, Performance, or Religion check. Regardless of your result, Lorthact is temporarily immune to your further attempts to Invoke Eiseth for 10 minutes, though not the attempts of others.

Critical Success Lorthact becomes frightened 2 and slowed 1.

Success Lorthact becomes frightened 2.

Failure Lorthact becomes frightened 1.

Critical Failure Your floundering attempt backfires and instead amuses Lorthact; he is temporarily immune to all attempts to Invoke Eiseth until the end of your next turn.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With Aliriel defeated, and Lorthact slain or forced into a humiliating flight from Korvosa, the PCs are poised to report their success to the queen. Cressida is immensely satisfied with their success and immediately arranges for delivery of payment for the job. She also offers to congratulate them publicly if the characters are comfortable with her doing so; in this case,

WHAT IF?

If the PCs fail to prevent Aliriel and Lorthact's plans, Korvosa's future is in your hands. You can decide the attempt to return Ileosa to life backfires, potentially releasing her into the world elsewhere as a vampire queen. Or, you can allow the audacious plan to succeed. Queen Cressida is Ileosa's first victim, and Ileosa's return to rule over Korvosa sends shockwaves throughout Varisia and beyond. Lorthact betrays Aliriel soon after, destroying the strigoi while using his triumph to earn his way into Hell once a new wave of blood veil and a small army of undead Gray Maidens sweeps through Korvosa, leaving thousands dead. Opposing Queen Ileosa at this point should be an adventure only the highest level PCs should dare attempt.

another round of celebrations kicks off in the city, and the heroes are added to the roster of famous figures celebrated during each year's Crimson Festival.

Cressida omits some of the details from the public story; she would rather not shame the Church of Pharasma or the memory of Bishop Keppira d'Bear by letting this recent disgrace become public knowledge. She hopes the adventurers will help her preserve the memory of good deeds done, but she accepts their decision if they choose to make the full story known. Whether or not Keppira wishes to come back from death or was judged by Pharasma is left to you to decide; for the moment, the Cathedral of Pharasma does its best to return to normal. In time, a new high priest will arrive to take Keppira's place, possibly a PC cleric of Pharasma.

With Lorthact either defeated or driven from Korvosa, Toff Ornelos takes full control of the Acadamae. True to form, he downplays the PCs' role and denies having ever met them if they confront him. He's unlikely to steer the Acadamae into more savory grounds, and may become an antagonist in his own right. However, Toff can help the PCs understand Lorthact's role in Korvosa over the past few centuries.

The realization that not all of Sorshen's one-time minions abandoned the Eurythnian Vault concerns some. What dangers remain within those abandoned chambers are left to you to determine. Sorshen is unlikely to return to Korvosa to tidy up her mess unless a group of PCs travels to New Thassilon to seek her aid.

Not all of Korvosa's past is laid to rest: when Queen Ileosa's soul escaped Hell, it went... somewhere. She doesn't remain in Korvosa, but the returned tyrant will doubtless surface again.

Somewhere out there, a new vampire queen has come to Golarion.

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GRAY MAIDEN PLATE

These suits of faceless full plate were first designed and distributed under Queen Ileosa's rule, but today, each new suit of this infamous style of plate armor is made by a Gray Maiden herself or a new member's sponsor.

HORN OF THE SUN AUROCHS

Sklar-Quah Shoanti first crafted these instruments to serve not only as instruments to honor the sun, but to aid them in battles against those whom the sun's rays scour or who use darkness to their advantage. Most of these magic horns were lost or destroyed after Chelaxian colonizers drove the Sklar-Quah from their ancestral lands during the foundation of Korvosa.

HORN OF THE SUN AUROCHS

ITEM 13

RARE EVOCATION MAGICAL

Price 3,000 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

A *horn of the sun aurochs* grants a +2 item bonus to Performance checks when played as an instrument.

Activate Interact ♦♦♦; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The horn is clearly audible for hundreds of feet, but within a 20-foot emanation, the sound causes agony in those who wish harm upon the user; the horn also sheds bright light in that area and dim light to the next 20 feet. Enemies of the user in this area take 7d6 sonic damage and 7d6 good damage (basic DC 30 Fortitude save). Creatures that are specifically vulnerable to sunlight are also frightened 1 if they fail this save or frightened 2 on a critical failure. This activation also attempts to counteract any darkness or sleep effects in the area (+23 counteract check).



Horn of the Sun Aurochs

HOUSE DRAKE FAMILIAR

House drakes are specific familiars (*Advanced Player's Guide* 147). They are loyal and friendly, but prefer to be treated as equals rather than pets.

HOUSE DRAKE

UNCOMMON DRAGON

Required Number of Abilities 6

Granted Abilities darkvision, flier, manual dexterity, speech

Breath Weapon ♦♦ (arcane, conjuration, mental) The house drake breathes a 10-foot cone of silver mist. Each creature in the area must attempt a Will save against your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher. A creature that fails its save is stupefied 2 for 1 round. The house drake can't use Breath Weapon or Silver Infusion for 1d4 rounds.

Silver Infusion ♦♦ (arcane, transmutation)

Your house drake breathes on one of your weapons. Until the start of your next turn, that weapon counts as silver instead of its normal material for any physical damage it deals. The house drake can't use Breath Weapon or Silver Infusion for 1d4 rounds.

Tenacious Mind Once per day, as long as your house drake took no actions on the previous round, you gain the following.

Ferocious Will ⤵ (abjuration, arcane, mental) **Trigger** You succeed at a saving

throw against a magical mental effect; **Effect** You send a blast of magical feedback at the effect's source, dealing 2d6 mental damage (basic Will save against your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher) to that creature. On a failed save, the creature is also slowed 1 for 1 round.

Heavy Armor	Price	AC Bonus	Dex Cap	Check Penalty	Speed Penalty	Strength	Bulk	Group	Armor Traits
Gray Maiden Plate (level 2)	35 gp	+6	+0	-3	-10 ft.	16	3	Plate	Bulwark



KORVOSA

The land upon which Korvosa stands has been home to humanity for over ten thousand years. The site is an ideal location for a city, as the point where the Jeggare River meets Conqueror's Bay grants access to both fresh water and ocean trade routes. High sea cliffs along the western coast defend the site against invasion and weather while sheltering the docks along the riverside to the east.

The to live here were Varisians and Shoanti. The Varisians freely roamed the rich terrain west of the Storval Plateau, while the Shoanti Sklar-Quah (or Sun Clan) settled permanently here, claiming the site as sacred. After Emperor Xin was betrayed, Runelord Sorshen built the capital of her domain here—including the Grand Mastaba, a massive, flat-topped pyramid of black stone. When her nation fell in the catastrophe of Earthfall, the Sklar-Quah resumed their vigil over the site. They remained for thousands of years until Chelaxian conquerors forced them from their homes again and established a colony called Fort Korvosa. Despite frequent and bitter conflict with the displaced Shoanti, and unabashed discrimination against Varisians and most nonhumans, the settlement grew; Korvosa has since declared independence from Chelixa and is now the largest city-state in Varisia.

Roughly a decade ago, Queen Ileosa brought the city's racial tensions to a head when she introduced the blood veil plague in an attempt to purge non-Chelaxians from the city and secure her control over the region. The city rebelled, and Ileosa met her downfall at heroes' hands, but only after plunging the city into chaos and strife. The years since have been marked by reform and rebuilding, championed by the new queen: former guard captain Cressida Kroft. Queen Cressida worked to rebuild relations with the Sklar-Quah and scorned Varisian population through grants of property and other reparations. Not all of Korvosa's citizens agree with the queen's ideals, however, and antagonism between Chelaxians and native groups continue to be a point of tension in the city.

The city maintains an overlapping patchwork of cultures that combine urban sophistication with echoes of Korvosa's roots as a frontier town. Security in the city is similarly divided, with responsibilities



KORVOSA

LN CITY

A gateway for trade that bears scars of a bloody past.

Government Queen (constitutional monarch)

Population 15,250 (79% humans, 6% dwarves, 4% elves, 3% halflings, 3% half-elves, 2% gnomes, 3% other)

Languages Common, Shoanti, Varisian

Religions Abadar, Asmodeus, Pharasma, Sarenrae, Shelyn

Threats crime family violence, Ileosa loyalists, Lorthact's machinations, underground dangers

Arcane Learning Although Acadamae is the most notable college in Korvosa, smaller schools also teach arcane arts. Many graduates remain in the city, leading to a thriving trade in arcane items and information. Arcane scrolls and wands of up to level 13 are often available in shops, along with many other components and ritual ingredients.

Cressida Kroft (LN female human soldier 9) former guard field marshal and reluctant queen

Toff Ornelos (LN male human wizard 17) calculating headmaster of the Acadamae

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split between the street-level Korvosan Guard, the Sable Company of hippogriff-mounted marines, and periodic support from the secretive Hellknight Order of the Nail. The city boasts renowned educational institutions—not least of which is the illustrious Acadamae wizards' college—while crime families wage a vicious war to control the city's criminal underworld. Dwarves from the allied city of Janderhoff cross paths with elven ambassadors from the Mierani Forest and gnomes hailing from near and far.

Korvosa is divided into several districts. Old Korvosa and East Shore are separated from the city by the Narrows of St. Alike and the Jeggare River, respectively. North Point is the oldest section of mainland Korvosa, but the city has since spread to encompass the Heights, Midland, and South Shore, with its burial grounds located in the Gray. If you wish to expand this adventure, additional details about the city of Korvosa can be found in *Pathfinder Chronicles: Guide to Korvosa*. Although this book presents the city as it stood before Ileosa rose to power, many of the finer details still suffice for play.



A ONE-WAY JOURNEY

When a loreavor is “born,” it gains the ability to cast *plane shift* once as an innate spell that affects itself only and does so to travel to another plane—typically the Material Plane—when it senses a particularly enticing collection of unprotected secrets or artwork.

The GM might determine a loreavor encountered on the Astral Plane might not have used this spell yet, affording it a one-time method of escaping conflict if a battle goes against it.

ENNOSITE, LOREAVOR

Rarely, when an ioton (the lowliest ennosite, *Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 92) leeches a particularly secretive thought, it can choke to death on the secret, only to be born from its previous body into that of a loreavor: an ennosite whose existence is shaped around the consumption of secrets and artistry.

Loreavors sip at secrets throughout their lives and are instinctively drawn to obscure information. Their hunger places them firmly at odds with scholars and historians alike. Living victims lose memories; written texts become blank books. Loreavors’ favorite sites are ruins and ancient libraries, but they can also survive on banal secrets of everyday life as well. While the creatures are secretive, typically staying out of sight and fleeing danger, they become aggressive when their favored food sources are threatened.

A loreavor appears as a 3-foot-long, pale, wormlike creature with dozens of half-formed faces growing from its segmented body. Trapped in an area without secrets to eat, a loreavor won’t starve and can live for years.

LOREAVOR

CREATURE 9

RARE N SMALL ASTRAL

Perception +19; **thoughtsense** (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common; *tongues*

Skills Acrobatics +19, Arcana +17, Occultism +21, Society +17, Stealth +19

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

Thoughtsense The loreavor senses all non-mindless creatures at the listed range.

AC 28; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +21, **Will** +19

HP 155; **Resistances** mental 10

Reconstruct Spell ☞ (divination, mental, occult) **Trigger** A creature within 30 feet attempts and fails to Cast a Spell while stupefied;

Effect The loreavor gains use of the failed spell as an occult innate spell. It can cast that spell once; if the spell is of a higher level than half the loreavor’s level (5th level or higher for most loreavors), the loreavor must succeed at a flat check with a DC equal to 5 + the level of the spell it is attempting to cast; on a failure, the spell fails, and the loreavor becomes stupefied 1 for 1 minute. If the spell isn’t cast within 24 hours, or if the loreavor uses Reconstruct Spell again before casting the spell, the spell is lost. No more than one loreavor can reconstruct a given spell this way.

Speed 20 feet, fly 20 feet

Melee ♦ touch +19 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d10+7 mental plus search memory

Ranged ♦ mind bolt +21 (range 60 feet), **Damage** 2d12+4 mental

Occult Innate Spells DC 28; **4th** *modify memory* (at will); **Constant (5th)** *tongues*; **Cantrips (5th)** *mage hand*

Search Memory (divination, mental, occult) When the loreavor damages a creature with its touch Strike, the creature must succeed at a 28 Will save or become stupefied 1, or stupefied 2 on a critical failure.

Redact (occult, transmutation) By spending an hour in contact with a non-magical document or piece of artwork no larger than 1 Bulk, a loreavor can consume either a few words from the text or render the artistry of the work more mundane. Doing so heals the loreavor of 4d8 HP. Words fade from the text, leaving an obvious blank space behind, while artwork is reduced in worth by 10% of its original value. A loreavor can consume incidental text in this manner from a spellbook but cannot consume actual spells recorded in the book. The loreavor can’t use Redact for 24 hours.



SCARLET WALKER

During the height of Thassilon's power, agents of Runelord Karzoug and Runelord Sorshen often called scarlet walkers to Golarion from Leng. Although these elephant-sized monstrosities largely despise other inhabitants of Leng, some swallow their pride to work alongside the denizens of Leng or Leng ghouls in exchange for passage into the waking world.

SCARLET WALKER

CREATURE 12

RARE LE HUGE ABERRATION DREAM

Perception +23; **bloodsense** 60 feet, **darkvision**

Languages Aklo, Infernal; **telepathy** 300 feet

Skills Acrobatics +25, Arcana +22, Athletics +22, Blood Lore +26, Intimidate +23, Medicine +23, Occultism +24, Stealth +25

Str +6, **Dex** +7, **Con** +5, **Int** +4, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +4

Bloodsense The scarlet walker can sense living creatures with blood in their veins, as well as undead that feed on blood (such as vampires).

AC 33; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +25, **Will** +21; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 225; **Immunities** cold; **Weaknesses** electricity 10; **Resistances** poison 10

Blood-Draining Gaze (aura, necromancy, occult, visual) 20 feet. When a living, non-scarlet walker creature ends its turn in the aura, it must attempt a DC 29 Fortitude save to prevent thin streams of blood from streaming from its eyes and into the eyeless pits in the scarlet walker's face. On a failed save, the victim becomes drained 1 (drained 2 on a critical failure) and sickened 1 from the pain.

No Breath The scarlet walker doesn't breathe and is immune to effects that require breathing (such as an inhaled poison).

Speed 30 feet, climb 30 feet; *air walk*

Melee ♦ claw +24 (magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d6+12 piercing plus 2d12 persistent bleed

Melee ♦ tentacle +24 (agile, magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d8+12 bludgeoning plus paralysis

Occult Innate Spells DC 32; **6th** *feeblemind*, *true seeing*, *vampiric exsanguination*; **5th** *mind probe*, *sending* (×3), *subconscious suggestion*; **4th** *confusion* (×3); **Constant (6th)** *air walk*, **Cantrip (6th)** *daze*

Eerie Flexibility The scarlet walker can fit through tight spaces as if it were a Medium creature. While Squeezing, it can move at its full Speed.

Paralysis (incapacitation, occult, necromancy) Any living, non-scarlet walker creature hit by a scarlet walker's tentacle Strike must attempt a Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is slowed 1 for 1 round.

Failure The creature is paralyzed for 1 round, and is then slowed 1 for 1 round after recovering.

Critical Failure As failure, but the paralysis doesn't automatically end after 1 round. The creature can attempt a new save at the end of each of its turns, and the DC cumulatively decreases by 1 on each such save.



POOLS OF BLOOD

In the ragged valleys and badlands of their home plane, Leng, scarlet walkers build grisly cities of braided flesh and coagulated blood. There, they spend their days gathering and discussing the values and uses of all types of blood and meat. Some who have looked upon the roiling blood pools of Leng whisper of similarities to the *Everdawn Pool* and wonder if these creations were the true inspirations for the infamous *runewells* of Thassilon.

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STRIGOI SERVANTS

When a strigoi creates a spawn from a creature that's not powerful enough to play host to a strigoi progenitor, the resulting strigoi is often referred to simply as a strigoi servant. Statistics for a typical strigoi servant appear on page 25 of this adventure. Strigoi servants who escape servitude work hard to establish their own power, but rarely escape the mindset of existing only to serve their creator.



Strigoi Servant

VAMPIRE STRIGOI

The oldest of all vampires are the strigoi. They predate ancient nosferatus and view moroi as infantile children, yet their own origins are so far lost to the ravages of time that few today have heard of them and fewer still know their true nature. Many of the oldest tales about vampires trace back to the strigoi, and nearly every other vampire carries traits that ultimately have their roots in these powerful, ancient creatures.

Strigoi, in their true form, are bodiless creatures native to the Shadow Plane that are incapable of interacting with the physical world, existing only as pure forces of malevolence. When this malevolence is invited into a physical body by method of ancient rituals, though, a strigoi becomes much more dangerous. This requirement—that a living creature perform a rite of their own free will to draw the strigoi into their soul—may well be the source of a moroi's compulsion not to enter a home without first being invited.

Some myths point to Urgathoa as the source of the ritual that allowed spellcasters to become strigoi, while others suggest the method was spread by the cult of Zura. Whatever the source, this long-lost ritual was no gateway to power, but instead a trap that allowed the strigoi to inhabit the shadows and souls of once-living hosts. In so doing, they found a way to exist in the world of flesh and blood. The presence of a strigoi within the shadow of a living host causes sickness and swift death, after which the strigoi bonds with the host's soul and becomes one with the body. Thus did the first of their kind invade the world of the living, and thus did the first vampires walk the night.

Starting Level	HP Decrease	Fast Healing/Resistance
8-14	-40	10
15+	-60	15

CREATING A STRIGOI

A creature of 8th to 12th level can become a strigoi servant (see page 25 of this adventure for the typical statistics for a strigoi servant); only 13th-level or higher creatures can become strigoi progenitors. A creature below 8th level infected by a strigoi becomes a free-willed moroi vampire instead (indeed, it is from this method the first moroi eventually came into the world). You can turn an existing living creature into a strigoi using the following steps.

Increase the creature's level by 1 and change its statistics as follows:

- It gains the shadow, undead, and vampire traits, and almost always becomes evil.
- Increase AC, attack bonuses, DCs, saving throws, and skill modifiers by 1.
- Increase damage with Strikes and other offensive abilities by 1. If an ability can be used only a small number of times, increase the damage by 2 instead.
- The strigoi gains fast healing and resistance to all physical damage except from silver weapons or weapons that shed at least 5 feet of bright light (such as a lit torch or a weapon targeted by the *light* spell, but not a *flaming weapon*) based on the table below. These abilities are the reason the strigoi has fewer HP.

Starting Level	HP Decrease	Fast Healing/Resistance
8-14	-40	10
15+	-60	15

Basic Strigoi Abilities

All strigoi gain the following abilities. If the base creature has any abilities that specifically come from it being a living creature, it loses them. It also loses any traits that represented its life as a living creature, such as human and humanoid. You might also need to adjust abilities that conflict with the strigoi's theme.

Greater Darkvision

Negative Healing

Immunities death effects, disease, paralyze, poison, sleep

Coffin Restoration (divine, necromancy, negative) As with moroi vampires, a strigoi isn't destroyed at 0 HP. Instead, it falls unconscious and loses fast healing. If its body rests in its coffin for 1 hour, the strigoi gains 1 HP, after which its fast healing begins to function normally.

Strigoi Weaknesses All strigoi possess the following weaknesses:

- **Revulsion** Strigoi are uncomfortable near mirrors or sources of bright light. Only a strigoi's shadow reflects in a mirror, and this often compels them to cover or destroy mirrors in their presence rather than risk their true nature being displayed. A strigoi can't voluntarily come within 10 feet of a brandished mirror or source of bright light. To brandish a mirror or light source, a creature must Interact to do so for 1 round (similar to Raising a Shield). If the strigoi involuntarily comes within 10 feet of a brandished mirror or light source, it gains the fleeing condition, running from the brandished object until it ends an action beyond 10 feet. After 1 round of being exposed to the subject of its revulsion, a strigoi can attempt a DC 25 Will save as a single action, which has the concentrate trait. On a success, it overcomes its revulsions for 1d6 rounds (or 1 hour on a critical success). A strigoi can move normally around mirrors or bright light sources that are not brandished, although doing so causes them discomfort that can be noticed with a successful Perception check to Sense Motive.
- **Sunlight** When exposed to direct sunlight, a strigoi immediately becomes unconscious and falls to the ground. It appears to be dead: it doesn't breathe, its body temperature matches its surroundings, and it doesn't react to pain or other stimuli. A successful Perception check against the strigoi's Reflex DC is enough to note one anomaly: the shadow cast by its "dead" body shifts and moves slightly, its edges twisting and active. Spells like *detect evil*, senses like lifesense, and the "corpse"

taking damage from positive energy still function normally, and could reveal the truth without needing a successful Perception check. Viewing the "corpse" in a mirror's reflection can also reveal the truth, for only the body's shadow reflects. While in sunlight and unconscious, the strigoi loses its resistance to physical damage. If the strigoi takes enough damage that it would be reduced to 0 Hit Points, its body quickly decomposes, and the strigoi is destroyed.

- **Water Revulsion** A strigoi cannot cross a significant source of running water (such as a creek, river, or waves on a seashore). A strigoi capable of flight can cross running water provided it approaches no closer than 10 feet to the liquid's surface. If forced into running water against its will, the strigoi becomes slowed 2 and gains the fleeing condition as long as it remains in the water. At the end of any turn in which the strigoi remains in running water, it must succeed at a DC 5 flat check or be destroyed.

Levitation ♦♦ (divine, evocation, shadow) Strigoi can cast *levitate* at will as a divine innate spell; when they do so, they appear to ascend or descend on a coiling mass of shadows.

Claws If the creature had hands, its shadow solidifies around the fingers when it attacks, granting it a claw Strike that deals slashing damage, and has the agile and magic traits. The damage caused by its claws should be roughly the same as the moderate Strike damage for a creature of its level (*Game mastery Guide* 65).

Drink Essence ♦ (divine, necromancy) **Requirements** A grabbed, paralyzed, restrained, unconscious, or willing creature is within the strigoi's reach; **Effect** The strigoi sinks their fangs into the targeted creature to drink its blood and draw out its vital essence. This requires an Athletics check against the creature's Fortitude DC if the creature is grabbed and is automatic for any of the other conditions. The creature becomes drained 1 and stupefied 1, and the strigoi regains HP equal to 10% of their maximum HP, gaining any excess HP as temporary Hit Points. Drinking Essence from a creature that's already drained or stupefied doesn't restore any HP, but increases either the creature's drained condition value or its stupefied condition value by 1 (whichever value is lesser is increased; if both values are equal, then the strigoi chooses which condition to increase the value of).

A victim's drained condition decreases by 1 per week. A blood transfusion, which requires a successful DC 20 Medicine check and sufficient blood or a blood donor, reduces the drained value by 1 after 10 minutes.

A victim's stupefied condition decreases by 1 per day after performing daily preparations. If the daily preparations are done in full sunlight, the stupefied condition is removed entirely.

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STRANGE WOUNDS

Iconic puncture marks on the neck of a victim drained of blood are well known to vampire hunters, but the wounds left by strigoi are stranger. When a strigoi feeds on a living victim, the site of the wound becomes bleached of color, wrinkled, and strangely cold to the touch. These conditions fade if the wound heals; if a strigoi feeds enough to cause death by the drained condition, a creature leaves behind a withered gray husk of a bloodless body. Full autopsies on those slain in this manner reveal yet another unsettling curiosity: the brains of such victims are smooth, gray ovoids, the folds and fissures of gray matter fused together into a featureless mass.

IN SHADOWS

In their true form as a shadow without a body, a strigoi is capable of thought and emotion and can communicate with the shadowy forms of other strigoi, but lacks any way to interact with the physical world. Countless strigoi exist in this manner on the Shadow Plane, patiently waiting for the ritual that allows mortals to invite them into reality to be discovered again.

STRIGOI AND THE SUN

As long as they're not in shadow form, strigoi are more inconvenienced by sunlight than they are harmed by it, but being rendered unconscious certainly puts them at a disadvantage. As long as they're in an area where there's little risk of direct sunlight, such as being inside a room without exterior windows or doors, or in an underground area, some strigoi remain active during the day, only retreating to their coffins in emergencies. In so doing, these strigoi have further blended into society—there may be more of them than suspected!

Grab The creature's claw attacks gain Grab. When it uses this ability, its shadowy claws seem almost to latch on to any shadows cast by the grabbed creature.

Shadow Form ♦ (concentrate, divine, shadow, transmutation) The strigoi reverts to pure shadow and absorbs its body and its gear into the darkness, or it shifts back to its physical form. In shadow form, the strigoi gains a climb Speed equal to its land Speed and can move through any gap that isn't airtight. However, it can only move along solid surfaces that aren't highly reflective, not liquid or mirrored surfaces. If the surface it's on is destroyed, the strigoi returns to physical form and is stunned 1. The strigoi loses fast healing while in shadow form but can remain in shadow form indefinitely.

A strigoi that is exposed to sunlight while in shadow form becomes slowed 2 and must attempt a DC 16 flat check at the end of each of its turns. If it fails this flat check, it is destroyed, the shadow vanishing with a blood-curdling wail.

Strigoi Progenitor Abilities

Powerful strigoi that form from the fusion of a strigoi from the Shadow Plane and a living host gain additional abilities as detailed below. A creature below level 13 is not a significant enough host to become a strigoi progenitor.

Resistances The strigoi progenitor resists all physical damage except magical silver weapons or magical weapons that shed at least 5 feet of bright light.

Fly Speed Instead of being able to *levitate* at will, a strigoi progenitor gains a fly Speed equal to their land Speed. When a strigoi progenitor flies, it manifests batlike wings made of shadow.

Create Spawn (divine, downtime, necromancy) As true vampire (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 319), but the victim must have been slain either by Domain of Dusk or Drink Essence. A victim that is 8th level or higher becomes a strigoi servant, while a lower-level victim instead becomes a moroi vampire (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 319).

Shadow Escape ♦ **Trigger** The strigoi is reduced to 0 HP; **Effect** The strigoi uses Shadow Form. It can take move actions to move toward its coffin even though it's at 0 HP. While at 0 HP in this form, the strigoi is unaffected by further damage. Once the strigoi reaches its coffin, or if it hasn't done so within 2 hours, it automatically returns to its physical form, unconscious.

Domain of Dusk ♦♦ (conjunction, divine, shadow) With a wave of its hand, the strigoi calls forth vile ruination from the surrounding shadows, causing coils of darkness and shadowy bats, rats, and wolves to lash out at living targets in a 30-foot emanation. Living creatures in this area take 1d6 negative damage +1d6 per 2 levels possessed by the strigoi (basic Fortitude save against the DC of the strigoi's level [*Core Rulebook* 503]). A creature that fails this save is also dazzled for 1 round (or blinded for 1 round and then dazzled for 1 round) by the darkness. The strigoi progenitor can't use Domain of Dusk for 1 minute.

Dominate ♦♦ (divine, enchantment, incapacitation, mental, visual) As true vampire (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 319).

Drink Essence As a typical strigoi, but the victim is drained 2 and stupefied 2 instead of 1.

Strigoi Progenitor

The most powerful strigoi are those intentionally summoned into the bodies of willing hosts in times long past. As the rites to do so are lost to time, very few strigoi progenitors exist today. Those who do trace their lives back well over ten thousand years ago to Thassilon, Azlant, or similar ancient empires. A strigoi progenitor may appear to possess the vitality of the living,

yet closer inspection reveals sharp fangs, the faintest smell of decay, and the strange and unsettling shifting of their shadow. In life, this example strigoi progenitor was a powerful oracle and advisor in Runelord Sorshen's nation of Eurythnia.

STRIGOI PROGENITOR

CREATURE 13

RARE LE MEDIUM SHADOW UNDEAD VAMPIRE

Perception +23; greater darkvision

Languages Common, Necril, Shadowtongue, Thassilonian

Skills Acrobatics +25, Arcana +23, Athletics +25, Crafting +23, Deception +26, Religion +22, Stealth +27, Thassilon Lore +24

Str +8, **Dex** +8, **Con** +5, **Int** +5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +5

Items +1 resilient studded leather armor, religious symbol

AC 34; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +26, **Will** +22

HP 180, coffin restoration, fast healing 10, negative healing;

Immunities death effects, disease, paralyze, poison, sleep; **Resistances** all physical 15 (except magical silver weapons or magical weapons shedding bright light); **Weaknesses** strigoi weaknesses

Shadow Escape ◆

Speed 25 feet, fly 25 feet

Melee ◆ claws +25 (agile, magical), **Damage** 3d8+14 slashing plus Grab

Divine Spontaneous Spells DC 33, attack +25; **7th** (2 slots) *eclipse burst*, *ethereal jaunt*, *finger of death*; **6th** (3 slots) *blade barrier*, *spirit blast*, *true seeing*, *vampiric exsanguination**; **5th** (3 slots) *flame strike**, *gentle repose*, *sending*, *tongues*; **4th** (3 slots) *dimensional anchor*, *divine wrath**, *remove curse*, *talking corpse*; **3rd** (3 slots) *blindness*, *chilling darkness**, *fear*, *heal*; **2nd** (3 slots) *comprehend language*, *dispel magic**, *see invisibility*, *undetectable alignment*; **1st** (3 slots) *command*, *harm**, *ray of enfeeblement*, *sanctuary*; **Cantrips** (**7th**) *detect magic*, *divine lance*, *message*, *read aura*, *shield*, *sigil*

*Spells marked with an asterisk are signature spells; the strigoi progenitor may heighten these spells freely (*Advanced Player's Guide* 71).

Oracle Mystery Lore (*Advanced Player's Guide* 77)

Oracle Revelation Spell DC 33; **7th** (1 Focus Point) *brain drain* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 230)

Rituals DC 33; *create undead*, *planar binding*

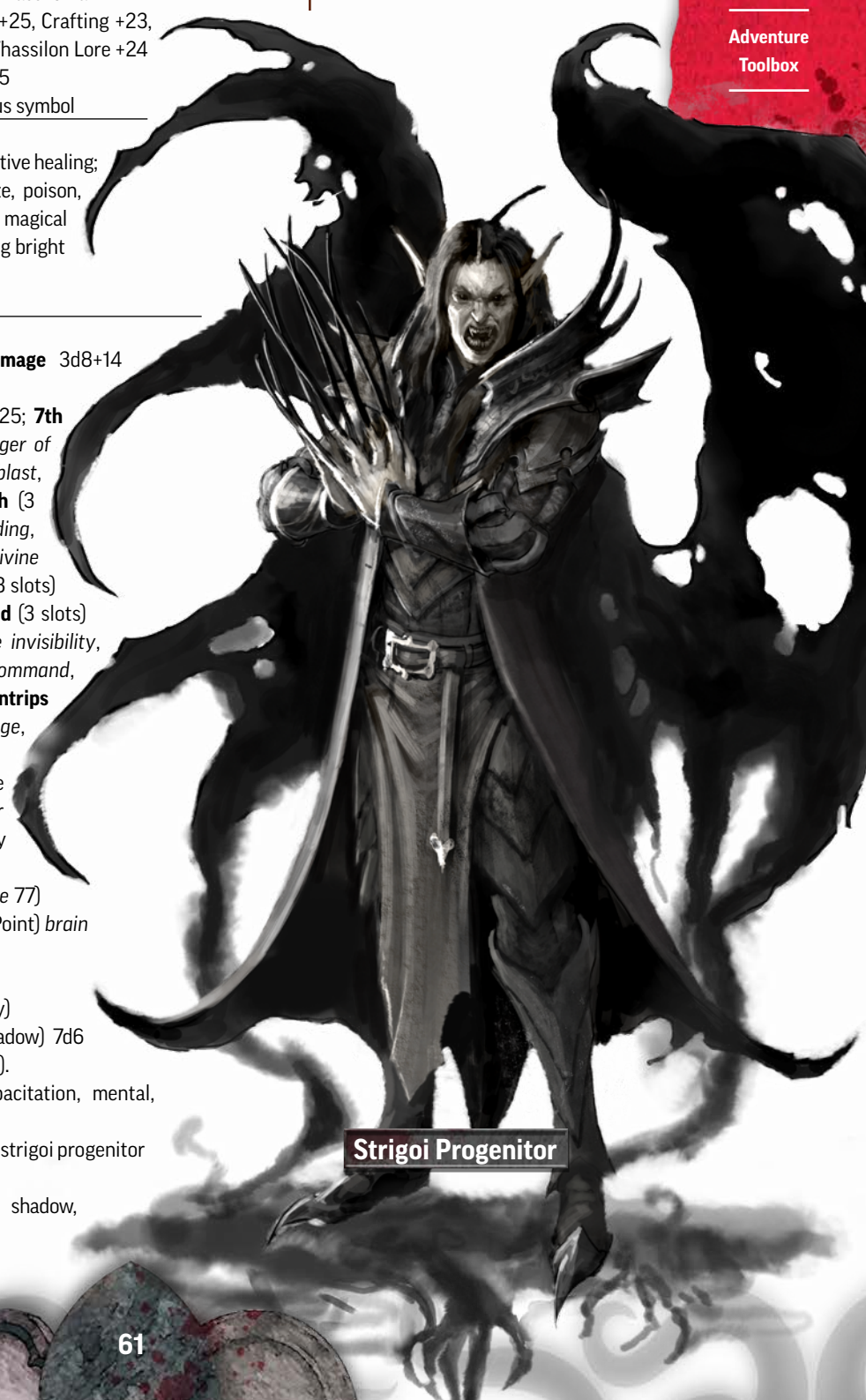
Create Spawn (divine, downtime, necromancy)

Domain of Dusk ◆◆ (conjuraton, divine, shadow) 7d6 negative damage (DC 31 basic Fortitude save).

Dominate ◆◆ (divine, enchantment, incapacitation, mental, visual) DC 33

Drink Essence ◆ When drinking essence, the strigoi progenitor regains 18 HP.

Shadow Form ◆ (concentrate, divine, shadow, transmutation)



Strigoi Progenitor

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OTHER NAMES

Lorthact has used many names, and those who research him might come across references to names besides Volshyenek Ornelos. Lorthact has also been known as the Unraveler, the Dwimmerlaik, the Ur-Magius, and the Diabolus Mystere.

LORTHACT

Once, Lorthact was a darling of the powers of Hell, an infernal duke beholden to no single archdevil and rumored to have the favor of the god Asmodeus himself. But Lorthact was not satisfied in his station—like so many devils—and concocted a plan to reverse roles with Eiseth, one of Hell's Queens of the Night. Lorthact hoped to gain control of the erinyes armies of Hell and a substantial portion of Dis, while Eiseth would take the role of his consort.

Eiseth uncovered the plot, and Lorthact found himself the target of her legendary fury. His allies and patrons abandoned him, unwilling to bring Eiseth's wrath upon themselves, and Lorthact fled Hell entirely. He leapt from plane to plane, unable to find refuge until at last he slipped Eiseth's pursuit by hiding as a mortal in the city of Korvosa.

Korvosa proved a fruitful haven and hideout for Lorthact. He quickly found a mortal powerful enough to further his ambition but foolish enough to bargain with him: Volshyenek Ornelos. It wasn't long before Lorthact replaced the man, and for over a century, Lorthact led the Acadamae directly.

When Volshyenek's identity drew too much attention from Eiseth's minions, he faked "Ornelos's" death and continued to direct the wizards' college from the shadows until today. He collected souls over the years—primarily through an elaborate hoax known as the Breaching Festival—hoping to eventually rebuild his name and reputation in Hell's hierarchy, but patience was never one of Lorthact's virtues.

His attempts to quicken the process have backfired twice in recent years, both as the direct result of adventurers accidentally interfering with his plots. In the years since these risky failures, Lorthact sacrificed much of his infernal power to maintain his metaphysical secrecy from Eiseth. Now but a shadow of his former power (already much reduced from his original strength as an Infernal Duke), Lorthact is risking everything in a final attempt to regain an edge by supporting the strigoi progenitor Aliriel, planning to betray her and claim complete control over Ileosa's soul once she returns to life.

LORTHACT

CREATURE 16

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM DEVIL FIEND

Perception +27; greater darkvision

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Azlanti, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Ignan, Infernal, Jotun, Shoanti, Thassilonian, Undercommon, Varisian; telepathy 300 feet, *tongues*

Skills Academia Lore +32, Acrobatics +28, Arcana +30, Deception +33, Diplomacy +31, Intimidation +31, Legal Lore +30, Occultism +30, Religion +27, Society +30, Stealth +32

Str +6, **Dex** +6, **Con** +6, **Int** +6, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +9

Items staff of power

AC 38; **Fort** +28, **Ref** +30, **Will** +25

HP 300; **Immunities** divination, fire; **Weaknesses**



good 15; **Resistances** mental 15, physical 15 (except silver)

Divination Immunity As a side effect of existing slightly outside the normal time stream, Lorthact is difficult to detect via divination spells and abilities. These effects function as though Lorthact and items he carries are not present, and those specifically targeting him, such as *scrying*, fail entirely unless the source of the divination is a higher level than Lorthact—in which case they succeed only if the caster succeeds at a DC 16 secret flat check.

Speed 25 feet, fly 20 feet

Melee ♦ *staff* +32 (two-hand d8, versatile Piercing), **Damage** 3d4+14 bludgeoning plus 2d8 mental plus thought theft

Melee ♦ *claw* +30 (agile, magical), **Damage** 3d4+14 slashing plus 2d8 mental plus thought theft

Arcane Innate Spells DC 37, attack +29; **8th** *dispel magic*, *maze*, *suggestion*; **7th** *divine decree* (lawful or evil), *magic missile*, *teleport*; **6th** *dominate* (×2), *feeblemind*, *scrying* (×3), *slow*; **5th** *dimension door* (at will); **Constant (8th)** *tongues*; **Cantrips (8th)** *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *message*, *produce flame*, *read aura*

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 37, attack +29; **8th** *horrid wilting*; **7th** *shadow blast*; **6th** *phantasmal killer*; **5th** *magic missile*; **4th** *invisibility*; **3rd** *mind reading*; **2nd** *mirror image*; **1st** *ray of enfeeblement*

Arcane Absorption ♦♦♦ (arcane, enchantment, manipulate, mental) **Requirements** Any creature adjacent to Lorthact is stupefied, capable of casting prepared arcane spells, and is either immobilized, unconscious, or willing; **Effect** Lorthact attempts to drain a 1st- through 8th-level prepared spell from the target, who can resist with a successful DC 37 Will saving throw. On a failure or against a willing target, the prepared arcane spell is transferred from that creature as if it were cast, and Lorthact immediately prepares that spell in the same level slot. If he already had a spell prepared in that slot, the previously prepared spell is lost. That creature is then immune to Arcane Absorption for 24 hours.

Arcane Spellcaster As long as Lorthact has one arcane spell prepared in this way, all arcane spells are on his spell list, which allows him to activate items such as scrolls, wands, and staves. He can recharge his staff of power as a prepared spellcaster by using his arcane spell slots. He has one spell slot to prepare arcane spells of each level from 1st to 8th, and can prepare any Common arcane spell in these slots during his daily preparations. The spells listed above represent those he most typically prepares, but given time, he can adjust this selection as needed for the task at hand.

Scholastic Masquerade ♦ (arcane, concentrate, polymorph, transmutation) Lorthact takes on the appearance of Volshyenek Ornelos or reverts to his true form. In Volshyenek's form, he loses his fly Speed and claw Strikes, doesn't inflict additional mental damage with his Strikes, and reduces his AC to 34. He gains a +4 status bonus on Deception checks to appear human in this guise.

Staff of Power Lorthact's staff of power is tipped with a pair of metal tines that grant the weapon the versatile piercing trait.

Thought Theft (curse, divine, enchantment, mental) Any creature that takes mental damage from Lorthact's claws or staff must succeed at a DC 37 Will save or become stupefied 1 (stupefied 2 on a critical failure). Further mental damage dealt by Lorthact increases the value of the stupefied condition by 1 on a failed save to a maximum of stupefied 4. Whenever Lorthact causes a creature to become stupefied in this way, he absorbs some of those thoughts and gains a +1 status bonus on all Will saving throws and Intelligence-, Wisdom-, or Charisma-based skill checks until the end of his next turn.

LORTHACT'S CULT

Lorthact's cult is incredibly small. Even in his reduced state, he can still grant spells to his few remaining clerics (none of whom appear in this adventure). His symbol is a staff wrapped in scrolls.

Edicts learn arcane secrets, take from others what you cannot make yourself, rule from the shadows

Anathema reveal your actual identity, share power with the weak

Follower Alignments LE, NE

DEVOTEE BENEFITS

Divine Font *harm*

Divine Skill Arcana

Favored Weapon staff

Domains magic, time, trickery, tyranny

Cleric Spells 1st: *magic missile*, 3rd: *slow*, 6th: *feeblemind*

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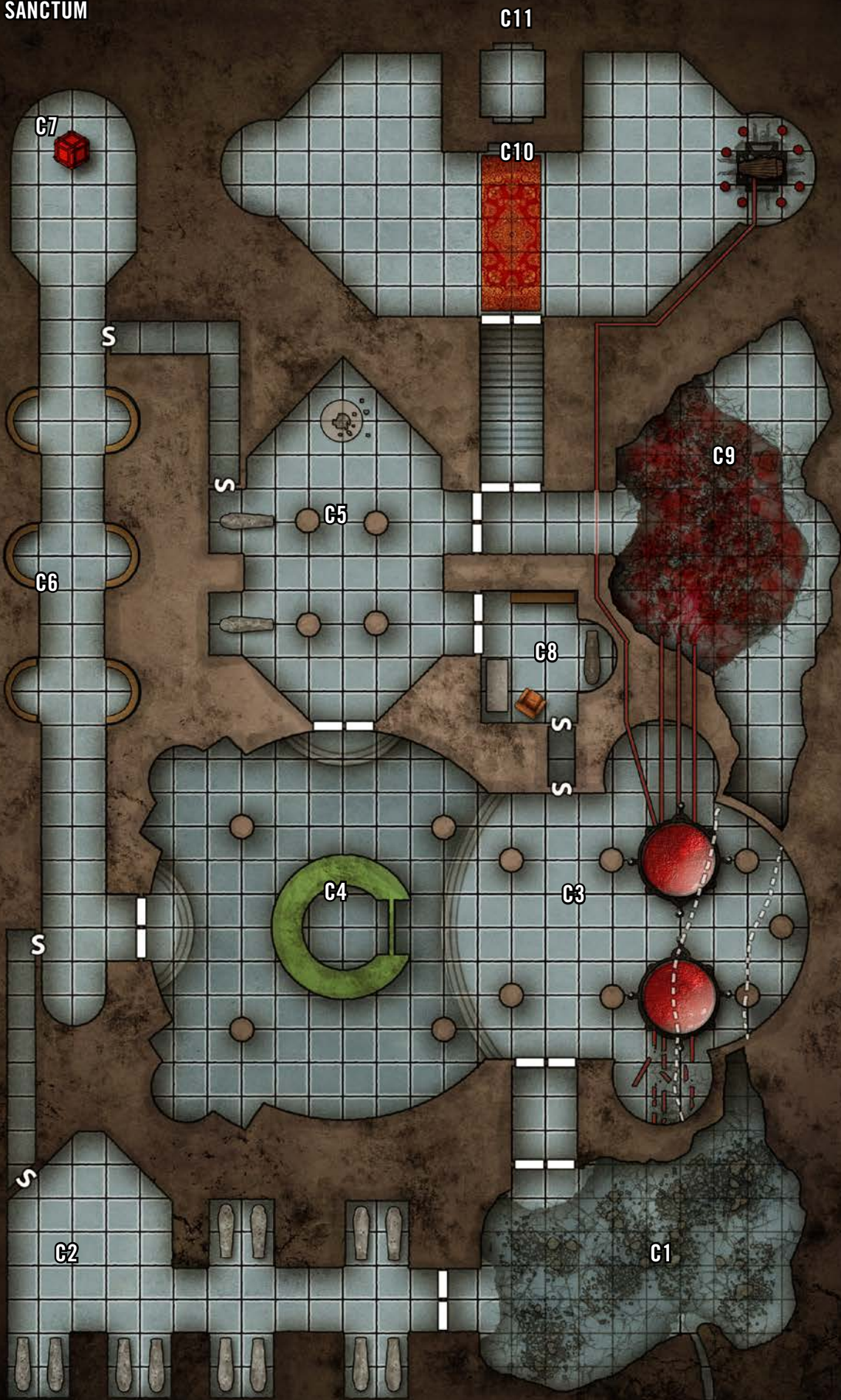
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