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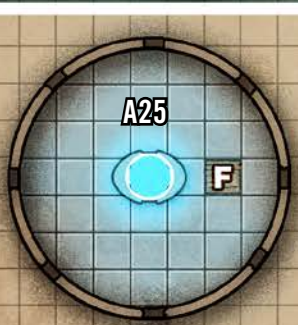
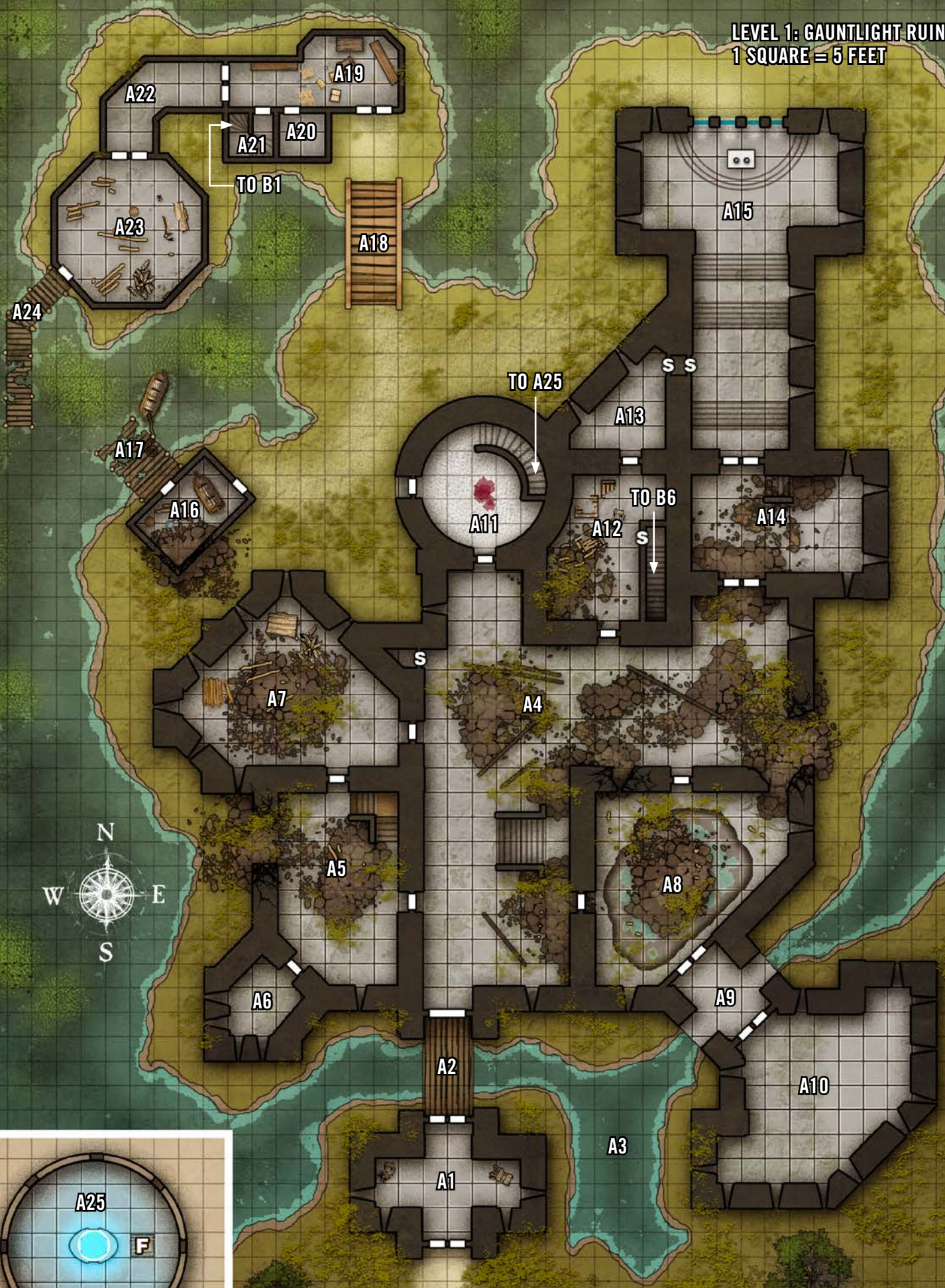
Abomination Vaults

ADVENTURE PATH

RUINS OF GAUNTLIGHT

By James Jacobs

LEVEL 1: GAUNTLIGHT RUINS
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



PATHFINDER

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Content Warning

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



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RUINS OF GAUNTLIGHT

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CHAPTER 1: A LIGHT IN THE FOG..... 4

Wrin Sivinxi, one of Otari's most enigmatic citizens, suspects something dangerous grows in the nearby ruins of Gauntlight Keep and asks the heroes to investigate. The heroes explore the ruined manor and its strange lighthouse, leading to their discovery of a heretofore unknown complex below the ruins.

CHAPTER 2: THE FORGOTTEN DUNGEON..... 18

Gauntlight's dread beam animates the dead in Otari's graveyard, and the heroes must help quell the undead uprising. Now certain that *Gauntlight* poses a danger to the town, the heroes return to face a cult of morlocks who revere the site's one-time ruler, Belcorra, as their "Ghost Queen."

CHAPTER 3: CULT OF THE CANKER.....34

The heroes explore a sprawling library now inhabited by a group of scholarly and sinister ghouls who call themselves the Cult of the Canker. The heroes might also follow the trail of the long-dead hero, Otari Ilvashti, who got trapped within the Abomination Vaults.

CHAPTER 4: LONG DREAM THE DEAD.....52

The heroes delve into Belcorra's old chambers to stop *Gauntlight's* immediate threat. After the heroes encounter the ghost of Otari Ilvashti, they receive a dire warning about what lies even deeper in the Abomination Vaults.

IN THE VAULTS

The Abomination Vaults contain a large number of encounters, including fights, hazards, and even some roleplaying opportunities or puzzles that the heroes must solve to progress. While each level of the Abomination Vaults is built with the assumption of a group of heroes at a particular level, each stage has more than enough encounters for a party to level up. Part of the joy of a large dungeon crawl is the exploration of every nook and cranny, and a party who extensively explores every encounter might gain enough experience points to reach 5th level well before the end of this adventure—and that's fine! Some later encounters challenge a 5th-level party well enough—the heroes might have to retreat, rest, and recover less often. That said, if you want a slower-paced game, Abomination Vaults works well with a slow Advancement Speed (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 509).

Story-based progression can be tricky for a giant dungeon crawl since the heroes can move between dungeon levels via multiple routes. Rather than automatically allowing the heroes to level up simply because they reach a lower dungeon level more efficiently, consider requiring them to complete specific milestones to level up, as detailed in the Advancement Track.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Ruins of Gauntlight" is designed for four characters with each dungeon level's encounters keyed to a specific character level.

- 1** The heroes begin this adventure at 1st level.
Milestone: The heroes advance to 2nd level after clearing out most of the upper level, including Gauntlight Keep's cupola.
- 2** The heroes should be 2nd level before the "Deadtide for Otari" event.
Milestone: The heroes advance to 3rd level after defeating the Ghost Queen morlocks.
- 3** The heroes should be 3rd level upon entering the library.
Milestone: The heroes advance to 4th level after defeating the Cult of the Canker.
- 4** The heroes should be 4th level upon entering Belcorra's Retreat.
Milestone: The heroes advance to 5th level after speaking with Otari's ghost.

The heroes should reach 5th level by the end of the adventure.



CHAPTER 1: A Light in the Fog

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

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

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

So warns a popular nursery rhyme among the parents in the town of Otari, as they often sing the melodious but unsettling poem to their children at night to

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

Or so the citizens of Otari believe.

While many old legends about Belcorra are true (she did practice cannibalism, for example, but didn't limit

her diet to foolish children), the belief that she's no longer a danger is false. Two years ago, on the 500th anniversary of the most significant event of her life—her family's exile from Absalom for abhorrent rites—Belcorra's spiteful ghost awoke deep beneath Gauntlight Keep. The lighthouse and surrounding ruins presented only the highest level of a vast complex Belcorra had stocked with malicious and malignant creatures: her Abomination Vaults. Belcorra's spite has festered in the intervening centuries, and she hungers for revenge, not only against Absalom for destroying her family, but also the town of Otari and its founders—the heroes who killed her. Belcorra bides her time while she rebuilds, reenergizing the dread *Gauntlight* and reasserting her dominance over the feral and forgotten monsters of the Abomination Vaults!

Getting Started

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

Of course, you don't have to start this campaign on the literal front porch of the dungeon—if you wish, you can ease the heroes by roleplaying their initial encounter with Wrin (perhaps as she gives them an astrology reading), or after the heroes spend time in town involving some last-minute shopping or a trip to a tavern. In this case, consult the Otari gazetteer on page 64 or Wrin's entry on page 90, but the fun doesn't truly begin until the heroes head up the Gaunt Trail to the foreboding ruins in Fogfen!

Gauntlight Ruins Features

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

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

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

With the exception of *Gauntlight* (area **A25**), the upper levels of Gauntlight Keep collapsed long ago, even falling to the ground floor in places. Areas denoted as rubble on the map of Gauntlight Keep are open to the sky above and considered difficult terrain. Where the roof hasn't caved in, ceilings are 10 feet high unless otherwise noted. The only illumination

CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

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

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

CHAPTER 1 TREASURE

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

- +1 *morningstar*
- +1 *rapier*
- 1st-level *wand of heal*
- black adder venom
- caltrop snare
- *channel protection amulet*
- lesser comprehension elixir
- lesser darkvision elixir
- lesser skeptic's elixir (page 78)
- minor elixir of life
- *minor healing potion*
- *scroll of restore senses*
- spear frog poison
- spike snare
- *wolf fang*

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comes from whatever sunlight filters in through the constant fog. The doors on this level are all cracked and rotten except where indicated; handling them with any amount of force causes them to split or simply fall off their hinges with a wet splintering sound.

Gauntlight is magically protected from damage, as described on page 77. This protection has bled into the surrounding ruins somewhat, slowing the usual rate of decay over the past 500 years. Nevertheless, time is inexorable, and the rest of the ruins have suffered in the passage of centuries.

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

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

The map for this level appears on the inside front cover of this adventure.

A1. DAMP ENTRANCE

LOW 1

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

Once the primary entrance to Gauntlight Keep, this one-story outbuilding is constructed of sturdy stone. The opaque sheets of dusty cobwebs function as a drop ceiling at a height of 7 feet, leaving a 3-foot space between the cobwebs and the stone ceiling above. The Mudlicker mitflits have rigged a slipshod network of

soggy ropes and planks in the space above the cobwebs to clamber around on; a successful DC 12 Perception check can spot this feature through the webbing, and a critical success also reveals a 3-foot-diameter hole in the roof in the northwest corner, which the gremlins use to come and go. A successful DC 15 Nature check to Recall Knowledge identifies the deposits of gray material as mitflit dung. Apparently the mitflits use this room as a latrine as well as an advance guard station.

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

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

MITFLITS (3)

CREATURE –1

Pathfinder Bestiary 192

Initiative Stealth +5

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

A2. DECREPIT DRAWBRIDGE

A wooden drawbridge, its timbers gray with age and decay, spans the 20-foot gap between the outbuilding and sprawling ruin on the island. Rusty iron chains hang from

the ruin's northern wall to the drawbridge's southern side. The chains look ready to fall apart, giving the drawbridge's structural integrity an extra layer of dubiousness.

True to appearances, the drawbridge isn't safe to cross, especially now that the mitflits have further weakened the structure with some clever undercutting to its supports. The heroes can spot the sabotage with a successful DC 5 Perception check. A Small or smaller creature can cross the bridge safely, but Medium creatures must cross one at a time or the bridge collapses with a groaning crash, which dumps everyone on the bridge into the 4-foot-deep water. A creature near the ends of the drawbridge when it collapses can Grab an Edge (DC 10 Reflex save) to avoid falling in. Once the bridge has collapsed, a character can attempt a DC 10 Athletics check to Climb up to area **A1** or **A4** on either side. Of course, once the bridge collapses, the slurk in area **A3** quickly comes to investigate.

A3. SLURK POND

LOW 1

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

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

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

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

BEYOND GAUNTLIGHT

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

SLURK

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 301

Initiative Perception +6

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

A4. MAGGOT TRAINING HALL

MODERATE 1

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

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

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WANDERING MONSTERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

MITFLITS (3)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 192

Initiative Perception +4

MUDLICHER MAGGOT

CREATURE 0

Giant maggot (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 120)

Initiative Perception +3

A5. MAGGOT STABLE

LOW 1

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

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

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

MUDLICHER MAGGOTS (2)

CREATURE 0

Giant maggots (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 120)

Initiative Perception +3

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

A6. FLY PEN

MODERATE 1

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

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

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

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

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

GIANT FLIES (2)

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 120

Initiative Perception +8

A7. DINING ROOM

LOW 1

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

Hazard: Not all the haunts plaguing *Gauntlight*

are direct echoes of Belcorra's legacy. This room served as the communal hall for the Stonescale kobolds before a violent coup tore the group apart. The kobold spirits linger here to this day.

STONESCALE SPIRITS


HAZARD 2

COMPLEX HAUNT

Stealth +11 (trained)

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

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

Confusing Confrontation  (emotion, enchantment, fear, mental) **Trigger** A creature enters a square either fully or partially filled with rubble in the middle of the room; **Effect** Six ghostly kobolds surge out of the rubble with eerie yowls. Each creature in area **A7** must attempt a DC 18 Will save with the following results. The haunt then rolls initiative.

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

Success The creature is frightened 1.

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

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

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

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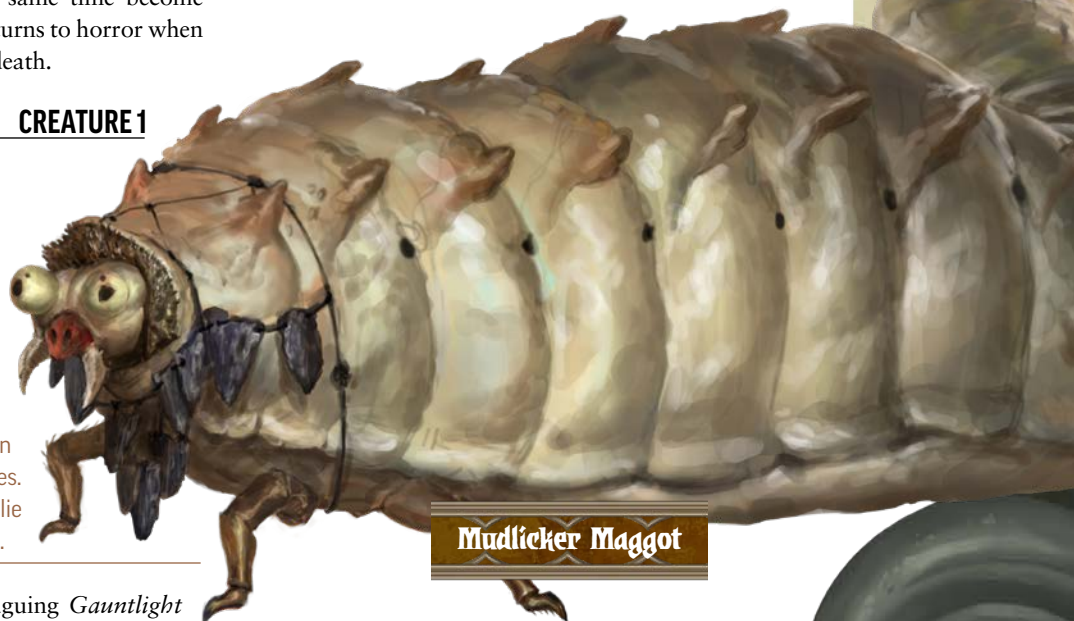
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Mudlicker Maggot

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

Treasure: With a successful DC 20 Perception check, heroes Searching this room find many tiny bones scattered in the rubble. Thirty minutes of work can uncover six kobold skeletons. Destroying the bones or removing them all from this room permanently disables the haunt. Among the bodies characters can find 3 gp, 20 sp, a box with components for a caltrop snare, a *wolf fang*, and a vial of black adder venom with the word "YUM" clumsily written on it.

A8. SINKHOLE

MODERATE 1

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

Almost the entire ceiling of this room has collapsed, while below, the floor has crumbled into a 10-foot-deep sinkhole filled with rubble, mud, and glistening patches of fungus. Evidence of ancient damage—burn scars and acid scorch marks—decorate the walls and much of the rubble.

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

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

Creatures: Four Mudlicker mitflits clamber and scurry around amid the rubble in the sinkhole. They're supposed to be gathering mushrooms and grubs but are currently wrestling over who gets to snack on a particularly bright blue grub. The mitflits take a –2 penalty to Perception checks rolled for initiative as a result of their distraction unless the heroes take pains

to announce themselves before attacking. The mitflits hurl darts at the heroes from below, but a mitflit who runs out of darts or takes any damage focuses on Climbing out of the pit and then running away to warn Boss Skrawng in area **A10**.

MITFLITS (4)

CREATURE –1

Pathfinder Bestiary 192

Initiative Perception +2 (+4 if not distracted)

A9. WALKWAY

A 15-foot stone walkway spans a narrow stretch of swamp water, connecting the ruined keep to a large stone outbuilding. Double doors block each end of the walkway. Standing before the southeast door is a seven-foot-tall skeleton dressed in armor made of gnarled roots, bones, and rusted metal. The skeleton clenches a morningstar in one weathered hand with the weapon's heavy, spiked tip resting on the walkway at the skeleton's feet.

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

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

A10. MUDLICHER THRONE ROOM

SEVERE 1

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

The mitflits chose these old barracks for their commander, Boss Skrawng, to use as a throne hall. Boss Skrawng's fragile throne requires constant upkeep, a task two mitflits perform when they aren't sleeping in the filthy nests here.

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

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

Boss Skrawng knew that it was just a matter of time before heroes from Otari challenged him in his domain, but he seems surprised that it happened before he actually did anything to the town. Unlike the other mitflits, Boss Skrawng speaks Common, and he imperiously demands to know why the heroes have come to bother him *before* he attacked Otari. If he realizes the heroes didn't come to confront him, he pathetically backpedals, insisting that he has no plans to attack and that he's harmless and friendly. He punctuates this reversal by using his trident to scatter the map of Otari at his feet. Canny heroes who can Lie to Boss Skrawng about their reasons for being here can talk to him and perhaps find out some of what he knows about Gauntlight Keep (page 12), but it doesn't take long before Boss Skrawng's negligible bravery and greater impatience prompt him to begin his assault on Otari by attacking the heroes.

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

BITE BITE

CREATURE 1

Giant solifugid (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 246)

Initiative Perception +7

MITFLITS (2)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 192

Initiative Perception +4

BOSS SKRAWNG

CREATURE 1

UNIQUE LE SMALL FEY GREMLIN

Male mitflit gang boss (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 192)

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

Languages Common, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +7, Diplomacy +4 (+10 vs. arthropods), Nature +5, Stealth +7, Thievery +7

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

Self-Loathing (emotion, mental) As mitflit.

Vermin Empathy As mitflit.

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

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

HP 24; **Weaknesses** cold iron 3

Speed 20 feet, climb 20 feet

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

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

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

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



Boss Skrawng

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SIDE QUESTS

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

Spear Frog Poison (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 15 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d4 poison damage (1 round); **Stage 2** 1d6 poison damage and enfeebled 1 (1 round)

Vengeful Anger (emotion, mental) As mitflit.

What Boss Skrawng Knows: If the heroes can get Boss Skrawng to talk, he can provide useful information. He knows about all the dangers in areas **A1** to **A10**, the giant scorpion in **A14**, and the “swamp dragon” that lives under the boathouse (area **A16**). He also knows about the “bogeys” in the keep, warning the heroes about the haunts in area **A7** and the glowing “ghosts” in area **A15**. He never visited the outbuilding on the island to the northwest, but mentions that a boat full of people came to visit it a week ago. They went into the swamp dragon’s cave while the dragon was out, but the dragon returned soon thereafter; Boss Skrawng assumes the people got eaten.

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

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

Boss Skrawng can provide a crude map of the first level and a partial map of the second if the heroes can successfully Request or Coerce the favor from him and supply him with the means to do so. A bribe of at least 20 gp automatically gets Boss Skrawng feeling helpful enough to provide these maps. His map of the first level omits areas **A12** to **A13**, areas **A19** to **A23**, area **A25**, and all of the secret doors. His map of the second level appears much less complete and only shows the

areas once dwelt in by the Mudlickers: areas **B8** to **B14** and areas **B16** to **B19** (although he warns the heroes that a swamp dragon lives in the cave at area **B19**).

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

A11. GAUNTLIGHT BASE

MODERATE 1

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

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

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

During daylight hours, the fresh blood has periodic ripples; its slick, red surface appears like the top of a deep pool, but it’s harmless. At night, the bloodstain acts as the hazard described below.

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

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

BLOOD OF BELCORRA

HAZARD 3

COMPLEX HAUNT

Stealth +23 (expert)

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

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

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

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

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

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 1d8 negative damage.

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

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

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

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 1d10 bleed damage.

Failure The creature takes 1d10+6 bleed damage.

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

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

A12. BELCORRA'S OFFICE

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

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

Treasure: A hero Searching the desk notes a hidden drawer that has fallen partially open, revealing a few still-potent alchemical elixirs Belcorra stashed here: a lesser comprehension elixir, a minor elixir of life, and a lesser skeptic's elixir (page 78).

A13. BELCORRA'S SANCTUM

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

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

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

A14. SCORPION KENNEL

MODERATE 1

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

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

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Although the tangles of moss growing on the skull carvings seem like part of the overgrowth prevalent throughout the ruin, they belong to the original design. The mossy skull is the religious symbol of the Nhimbalothe, the Outer God of ghosts, despair, swamps, and will-o'-wisps, whom Belcorra reveres as her patron. Nhimbalothe's lore is rare and hidden, however, so a hero must succeed at a DC 25 Religion check to Recall Knowledge to identify the mossy skull as Nhimbalothe's symbol. Although fledgling heroes might not recognize evidence of Nhimbalothe, Wrin Sivinx in town knows of the sinister Outer God and can enlighten the heroes if they report their findings to her.

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

GIANT SCORPION

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 285

Initiative Perception +9

A15. NHIMBALOTH SHRINE

SEVERE 1

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

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

The corpse to the south lies slumped next to the secret door leading to area A13. Once a human man, this thief snuck into the temple through the secret doors from area A13 months ago in search of a treasure, only to find himself outclassed by the corpselights lurking

in this room. He perished just before could reopen the secret door to escape. The thief left the door slightly ajar with the rotating skull that opens it still slightly turned, so the heroes can easily spot this secret door.

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

CORPSELIGHTS (2)

CREATURE 2

Page 82

Initiative Perception +7

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

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

A16. RUINED BOATHOUSE

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

The campfire's remnants hint at the presence of a group of thieves from Otari—a band from Crook's Nook (page 71) who came here a few weeks ago after hearing rumors of treasure stashed in a cavern under the island. They entered area B19 below only to get in over their heads when the morlocks imprisoned them.

A17. RUINED PIER

Much of this wooden pier has collapsed into the swamp, leaving about ten feet of moldy, soggy boards slumped

against ancient wood pilings. A rowboat tied to a piling looks much more recently built.

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

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

An opening under the pier leads to area B19. At your discretion, the river drake Freznelkesh might venture out to hunt and spot the heroes while they're nearby.

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

A18. APPRENTICE ISLAND

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

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

A19. SPOOKYWISP

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

TRIVIAL 1



Tangletop

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

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

Creatures: Today, a mischievous brownie named Tangletop—a puckish fey whose eponymous blonde hair stays in a constant state of frizzy disarray on his head—occupies this chamber. Despite his comical appearance, Tangletop fancies himself something of a spooky sort of fey. As soon as he notices the heroes approaching, such as if they try to Force Open the door, he quickly slips into hiding under the desk before using *ventriloquism* to call out in a deep voice. He claims to be a dangerous “wispy-ghost” named “Spookywisp.” He then uses *dancing lights* to create what he hopes the heroes believe is a will-o'-wisp, floating the light up in the air and using *ventriloquism* to cast his voice from the light.

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

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

TANGLETOP

CREATURE 1

Male brownie (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 44)

Initiative Stealth +9

Side Quest: If the heroes speak to Tangletop, either in person or via his persona as Spookywisp, the brownie explains to them that he wants the “shiny” in the room to the southwest. He warns the heroes that a mean, blank-faced doll will try to stop

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them from getting the “shiny,” but he promises to tell them three secrets he has learned about the area if they bring him the “shiny.” Asked to describe the “shiny,” Tangletop frustratingly says, “You’ll know it when you see it!” Pressed further, he rolls his eyes and describes it as a “sparkling glowing tube that I want, want, want!”

The “shiny” refers to the bejeweled spyglass kept on display in area **A23**. If the heroes retrieve and hand it over, the brownie reveals what he recently learned from the books here. First, this building used to belong to someone named Volluk Azrinae. Second, Volluk was an apprentice to someone else named Belcorra, and even though this Volluk seemed mean and dangerous, Belcorra seemed much worse! Finally, the spooky magic lighthouse can do more than just shine an eerie light; it can also shoot a beam full of ghosts (this last description is Tangletop’s interpretation of the second painting in area **A22**, but it isn’t far from the truth).

A20. REPAIR STORAGE

Shelves laden with tools, lumber, and planks line the walls of this 10-foot-square room.

These supplies were used for upkeep throughout the upper works of Gauntlight Keep. Volluk formerly functioned as a groundskeeper and managed repairs, and he often called upon Belcorra’s other servants as needed for these jobs.

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

A21. STAIRWELL

Moss and fungus coats these stairs, which lead down to area **B1**. From the state of the growth, clearly no one has gone this way for a long time.

A22. HALL OF PORTRAITS

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

The 5-foot-tall paintings along the wall have sustained irrevocable damage over time and due to moisture dripping down from leaks in the roof above.

The first portrait depicts the city of Absalom in flames with ghosts rising from its streets. It bears a bronze plaque that reads, “So Shall the Fools Suffer.”

The second portrait depicts Gauntlight Keep as it

appeared before its upper floors collapsed, and its lighthouse emitting a pale blue light in which ghostly faces sneer and grimace. Its bronze plaque reads, “Let the Light Shine Forever.”

The third portrait, now shredded, once depicted Volluk, but he destroyed it after becoming a worm that walks. Its plaque reads, “The Artist at Work.”

The fourth and final portrait depicts a smirking woman dressed in a long, green gown—an image of Belcorra herself. Its plaque reads, “The Lady of the Light.” Long ago, Volluk scratched the following sentences, written in Aklo, into the stone next to this last painting: “I serve you still! You shall be avenged!”

A23. LENS WORKSHOP

MODERATE 1

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

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

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

Creatures: Volluk created several constructs to aid him and his mistress in their day-to-day jobs, but the raven-headed, raven-winged soulbound doll he called Mister Beak was his favorite. Neither the most powerful nor the most helpful, Mister Beak held the soul of his devoted servant, a goblin named Borbo, a fact that ensured the construct’s place at Volluk’s side. Today, Mister Beak remains abandoned here, waiting forever for a creator who moved on to other tasks and an entirely new body. Mister Beak hasn’t lost hope, and when the heroes enter the room, he stands up from the slumped mound in the room’s center and asks in a warbling voice, “Is Master Azrinae coming back?” Regardless of the heroes’ answer, Mister Beak realizes none of them are its creator; it then leaps into the air on flapping wings to attack in a frustrated fury, fighting until destroyed.

Mister Beak is an elite soulbound doll. Apply the elite adjustments on page 6 of the *Pathfinder Bestiary*

to the soulbound doll statistics on page 304 of that book. As noted below, Mister Beak can also fly.

MISTER BEAK

CREATURE 3

CE elite soulbound doll (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 304)

Initiative Perception +10

Speed 20 feet, fly 20 feet

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

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

A24. OLD PIER

LOW 1

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

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

Creatures: A single flickerwisp dwells amid the rotting ruins of this old pier. When it notices the heroes, it begins to glow and writhe, appearing alternately as a string of flickering fireflies or a rippling ribbon of light just above the gaping hole in the pier. Anyone who steps onto this section of the pier runs the risk of falling through, and the flickerwisp quickly attacks anyone who gets stuck in the mud. It fights to the death.

FLICKERWISP

CREATURE 2

Page 83

Initiative Perception +9

A25. GAUNTLIGHT CUPOLA

MODERATE 1

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

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

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

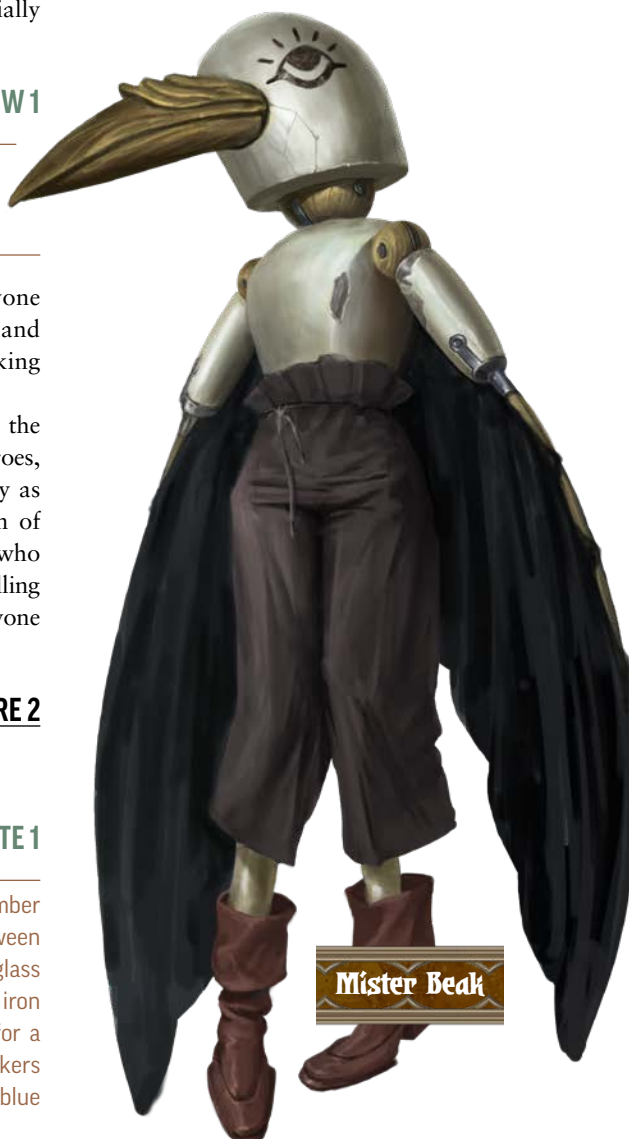
This encounter can repeat as often as the heroes continue to trigger and defeat the haunt in area A11 below, but it doesn't occur more than once per night.

VAMPIRIC MIST

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 278

Initiative Stealth +10



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CHAPTER 2: The Forgotten Dungeon

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

Deadtide for Otari

Gauntlight is not yet fully functional, but enough of its magical power has been restored that Belcorra activates it as a test firing before proceeding with the more-involved process of restoring the artifact to full use. She targets Otari's graveyard, animating the dead within it. The ghost then watches through

Gauntlight's lens, but she can't do much beyond observe, limited as she is to the site of her haunting deep in the Abomination Vaults. Read or paraphrase the following to begin this event.

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

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

As the dead are buried, it takes most of them some time to dig free. Although the heroes might hurry directly to the graveyard given the sinister implications

of the eerie light, you can still run these events as written if the heroes first take some time to tend to their wounds or otherwise delay. If the heroes take more than a couple of hours to arrive, town guards have already erected a barrier around the cemetery but are afraid to enter the grounds for fear of the occasional shuffling corpse that pulled itself free sooner than the others. Dealing with the undead should fall to the heroes; if they aren't self-motivated to enter the graveyard and act the part of heroes, feel free to have an official like Captain Longsaddle, Mayor Oseph Menhemes, or Vandy Banderdash ask them to deal with the situation. If the heroes continue to hesitate, the undead might become a bigger problem.

OTARI GRAVEYARD

SEVERE 2

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

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

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

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

SKELETON GUARDS (5)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 298

Initiative Perception +2

Unarmed These skeletons are unarmed and fight only with their claws.

ZOMBIE SHAMBLERS (3)

CREATURE -1

Pathfinder Bestiary 340

Initiative Perception +0

ABOMINATION'S ARRIVAL

MODERATE 2

Belcorra watches with amusement from afar as the heroes deal with the undead. As soon as that fight ends, though, she decides it's time to test

CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

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

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

CHAPTER 2 TREASURE

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

- +1 warhammer
- +1 weapon potency rune
- 1st-level wand of magic missiles
- fear gem
- lesser healing potion
- low-grade silver sword cane
- mesmerizing opal
- retribution axe
- shining sling bullets (5)
- slick armor rune
- type I necklace of fireballs
- wayfinder

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LEVEL 2: SERVANTS' QUARTERS

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

T = TRAP



Gauntlight's primary function: teleporting monsters in among her enemies. Belcorra takes a moment to order her apprentice Volluk to bring one of the scalathraxes from area **D10** into area **D9**. This delay grants the heroes a few minutes to recover from their previous fight. She then focuses *Gauntlight's* beam upon the heroes' location to transport the creature there (page 77). The baleful light's illumination raises gooseflesh on those it touches and scatters any remaining guards in a panic.

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

SCALATHRAX

CREATURE 4

Page 86

Initiative Stealth +13

DYING LIGHT

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

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

Servants' Quarters Features

The first underground level of the Abomination Vaults once served as the quarters for Belcorra's servants.

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

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

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

The Servant's Quarters map appears on page 20.

B1. STAIRS UP

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

B2. VOLLUK'S WORKSHOP

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

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

Volluk Azrinae once used this chamber as his personal workshop. The worktable in front of the tank holds the bulk of Volluk's notes. A hero Investigating these notes who succeeds at a successful DC 12 Arcana or Occultism check to Recall Knowledge learns that the workshop is devoted to both construct construction

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and necromancy. A critical success on this check also reveals the workshop's emphasis is transferring mortal souls, including into a construct or a swarm of vermin.

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

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

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

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

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

- The location of the secret door in this room.
- The existence of a secret treasure stash behind a loose brick in the wall in his old room (area **B4**).
- Master Volluk was a "powerful mastermind

drow occultist artist craftsman" who had a relationship with a "book lady down below" and who worked for "Mistress Belcorra, who is very frightening and absolutely none of my business."

- Master Volluk is vain as well as cruel. If the heroes present a nice image of Volluk (such as a painting) to him and then threaten to destroy it, Volluk will lose his composure and likely make a tactical error the heroes can capitalize upon. Unfortunately, the only painting of Volluk

Borbo knows about is the one in area **A22**, and it's destroyed. In fact, only one image of Volluk remains in the Abomination Vaults today, in area **C36**.

Once the heroes have learned all of his information, Borbo pitifully asks to be released. If the heroes smash the soul focus gem, Borbo's soul is freed. For this act of compassion, Pharsasma grants the hero who destroyed the gem a favor in the form of a momentary, prophetic glimpse of their fate. This allows that hero to gain a +2 status bonus to a single check, which they can apply even after they determine the check's result. The hero has 1 month to use this boon.



B3. VOLLUK'S CHAMBERS

This room shares features of a bedroom and a study, although the decor is devoid of any touches of personality, as if anything of sentimental value had been removed.

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

B4. BORBO'S ROOM

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

This room once belonged to Volluk's goblin servant Borbo, but it's been abandoned since the goblin

gave up his life to become Mister Beak. The clothing matches that worn by Borbo's corpse in area **B2**. The barrel once contained dozens of pickles, but today the brine inside has long since evaporated and the pickles have rotted away.

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

B5. VOLLUK'S MACHINE

MODERATE 2

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

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

The stairs to the south lead down to area **C7**.

Creatures: One of Volluk's last creations remains here, a horrific undead guardian created from a giant leech. Volluk called the creature the "bloodsiphon" and was amused at how the thing shriveled up yet remained mobile and violent if denied the blood it craved but no longer required to sustain its life. The bloodsiphon appears to be a giant log of desiccated flesh until anyone disturbs it or approaches within 10 feet, at which point it lurches forth and attacks. It pursues foes throughout areas **B1** through **B5** but not beyond.

BLOODSIPHON

CREATURE 4

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM AMPHIBIOUS UNDEAD

Perception +10; tremorsense 30 feet

Languages Aklo (cannot speak any language)

Skills Athletics +12

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

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

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

Death Burst (aura, necromancy, occult) When the bloodsiphon dies, its body explodes in a cloudy red burst

of necrotic dried blood in a 20-foot area. Creatures in range must attempt a DC 21 Reflex save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 2d6 negative damage.

Failure The creature takes 4d6 negative damage.

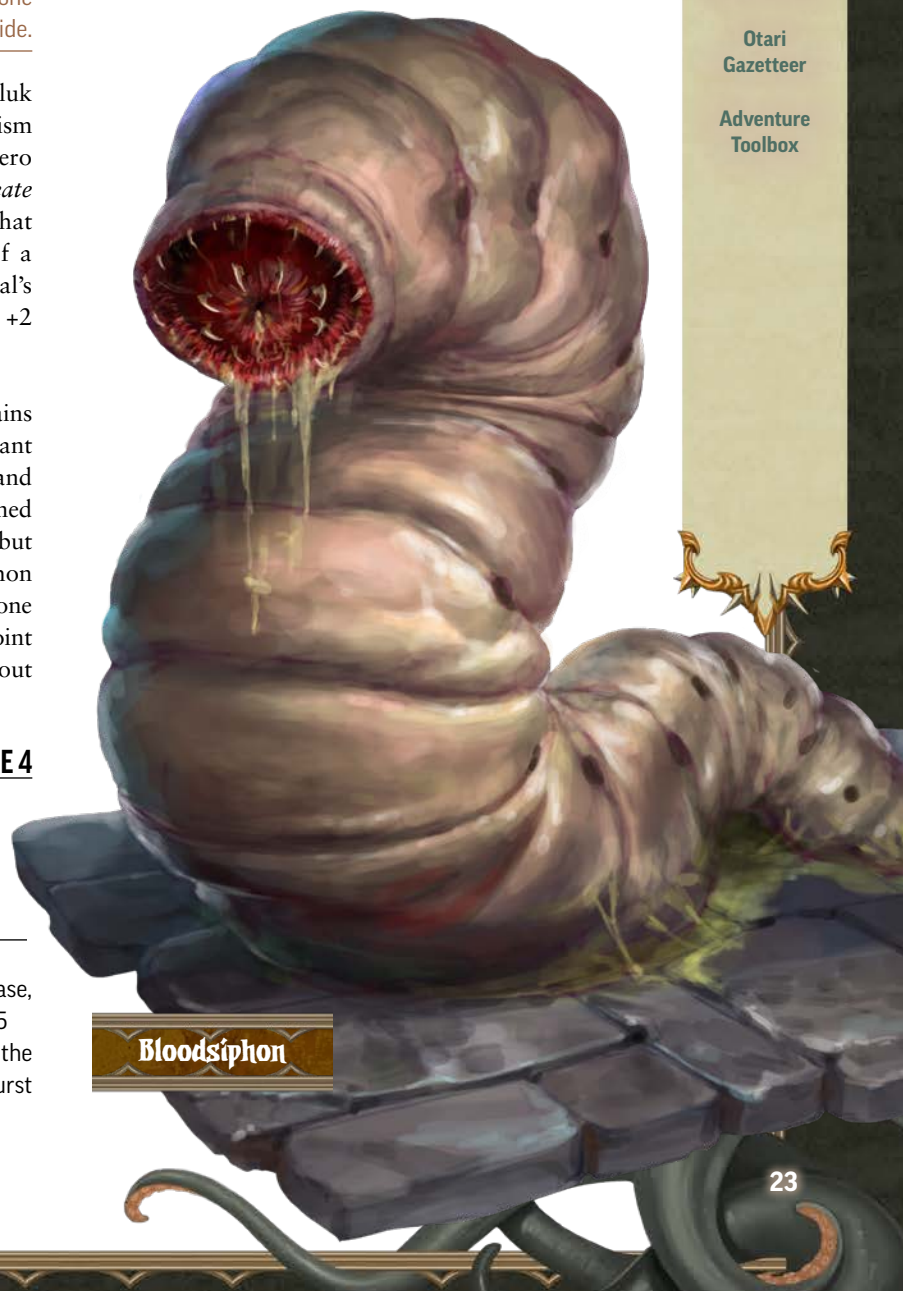
Critical Failure The creature takes 6d6 negative damage and is enfeebled 2 for 1 hour.

Speed 10 feet, swim 20 feet

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

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

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



Bloodsiphon

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

B6. ABANDONED GUARD POST

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

Belcorra's lackeys once waited here to perform any tasks she might need. The secret door to the east that leads to area **B21** is relatively easy to discover from this side of the room, as the middle chair leans against a section of the wall that pivots slightly outward. The heroes can discover this secret door with a successful DC 12 Perception check, although they notice it automatically if they move the middle chair.

Stairs beyond the north door lead up to area **A12**.

B7. MEETING ROOM

A long wooden table sits in the center of this room, surrounded by several wooden chairs. Only the chair to the north seems particularly comfortable, although its cracked leather padding is mostly decayed.

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

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

B8. SERVANTS' ROOMS

SEVERE 2

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

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

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

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

MORLOCK SCAVENGERS (4)

CREATURE 1

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Initiative Perception +6

B9. OLD OFFICE

MODERATE 2

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

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

Creatures: Graulgust commanded a pair of Ghost Queen morlocks to guard this room, but they're more interested in tinkering with the broken clockwork assistant the majordomo left behind. Their distraction gives them a -2 penalty to initiative checks. They fight any intruders, flanking foes when possible.

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

MORLOCKS (2)

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 174

Initiative Perception +5 (+7 while not distracted)

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

B10. TRAPPED HALL

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

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

Hazards: Four spike launcher traps have been hidden in the walls of this room, activated by nearly invisible trip lines, each made from a fine cord of morlock hair stretching across the room 1 foot off the ground. Any morlocks encountered in this room can move through the room without triggering the spike launchers, as they are very familiar with the trip lines' locations, but other creatures must notice each line first before avoiding it. One cord crosses each pair of north-to-south squares.

SPIKE LAUNCHERS (4)

HAZARD 0

MECHANICAL TRAP


Stealth DC 19

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

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

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

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

Spike  **Trigger** A creature crosses one of the trip lines; **Effect** A spike launches along the trip line's path against the triggering creature, making a ranged Strike.

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

B11. WASHROOM

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

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

B12. GRAULGUST'S THRONE ROOM

SEVERE 2

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

Creatures: Graulgust, the self-styled king of the Ghost Queen morlocks, has chosen the majordomo's old bedroom as his throne room. He's rebuilt the older furniture in this area into an immense throne of sorts, and he's attended at all times by a morlock servant tasked with sharpening Graulgust's fingernails and toenails, rubbing his feet, feeding him worms, or whatever else Graulgust demands. Now and then, Graulgust leaves his throne room to patrol the

Ghost Queen's domain and to check up on the Ghost Queen's shrine (area B14), but the first time the heroes visit the dungeon, they encounter him here. Graulgust fancies himself something of a worldly diplomat, but since he speaks only Aklo and Undercommon, communication with the heroes may be difficult. If he can't establish communication, Graulgust grows annoyed and sends his morlock servant to fight the heroes. Graulgust steps into the fight only once his servant is slain or if he's attacked directly. If he is reduced to 30 Hit Points, he spends an action to howl for his pet grothlut in area B13. If the slithering monster still lives, it comes to its master's aid as soon as it can through the tunnel to the southwest.

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

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

During this time, the heroes can speak to Graulgust and learn a bit more about the Abomination Vaults. The morlocks haven't explored the northern part of this level, but he can inform the heroes of the secret door to area B15 and provide a scribbled map of level three (including areas C1, C6, C10, C11, C15,

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and C33). If asked about deeper levels, Graulgust grows silent, saying “You are of the surface and do not deserve to know of our homeland.” At your discretion, if the heroes use mind control or other coercive methods, they might force Graulgust to divulge more information about deeper levels of the Abomination Vaults, but note that the morlocks left them a while ago and much has changed since Belcorra’s return.

Graulgust never speaks the Ghost Queen’s name aloud, and if the heroes speak the name “Belcorra” in

his presence, he shrieks in anger and warns the heroes never to say her name again. If they do so, he attacks.

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

GRAULGUST

CREATURE 4

Male morlock cultist (page 85)

Initiative Perception +11

MORLOCK

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 174

Initiative Perception +7

B13. GROTHLUT DEN

LOW 2

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

Creatures: This cavern is the result of years of erosion, and its damp, earthy environs make it a perfect home for the morlocks’ recently acquired pet, a grothlut fleshwarp. Graulgust rescued the grothlut from a cage deeper in the Abomination Vaults, and the aberration dotes on the morlock the way a loyal dog adores its master. It attacks anyone who enters this cave other than Graulgust, fighting to the death.

GROTHLUT

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 158

Initiative Perception +5

B14. SHRINE OF THE GHOST QUEEN

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

The Ghost Queen morlocks erected this shrine too honor Belcorra, but as the morlocks fear the ghost as much as they revere her, they only rarely spend time



Graulgust

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in this room. They enter only to provide periodic sacrifices—the latest of which was one of the thieves from Crook’s Nook. The body is that of a human man, with a bird tattoo on his right shoulder that marks him as a member of the Osprey Club (with a successful DC 16 Society check to Recall Knowledge, a hero identifies the mark as signifying membership in the thieves’ guild).

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

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

Treasure: While the dead thief has no treasure on him, the morlocks have left a few valuable offerings strewn around the base of the statue, including a bloodstone worth 10 gp, a softly glowing +1 *weapon potency rune*, and a sickly green *fear gem*.

B15. CRYPT

This five-foot-wide hallway features three alcoves along each side. Stone sarcophagi stand upright within each. A door leads to out to the north.

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

Creatures: Today, the majordomo

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

MAJORDOMO

Pathfinder Bestiary 289

Initiative Stealth +14

CREATURE 4

B16. PANTRY

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

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

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

B17. LEVEL TWO PORTAL CHAMBER

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

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

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

The *awaken portal* ritual required to reactivate this *teleportation circle* is recorded in a folio in area C35. Each linked *teleportation circle* must each be individually reactivated



MODERATE 2

Majordomo

with this ritual, though, before they can be used—the heroes must therefore physically travel to each portal chamber they want to connect to the network.

Other portal chambers in this adventure are located at areas **C16** and **D5**; others exist in the deeper levels.

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

B18. RUINED BOAT LAUNCH

At the north end of this small cave, the mouth of a swampy, flooded cavern yawns. A few ruined rowboats lie in heaps

on the floor of this cavern, strewn next to tangled coils of rope. Remnants of a pulley system hang from the ceiling.

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

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

B19. FLOODED CAVERN

LOW 2

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

During the day, muted sunlight filters into this cavern from an exit to the northwest, but even on rare sunny days, the overhanging pier at area **A17** and thick tangles of dangling roots keep this room dim.

The water in the cavern is, on average, 10 feet deep.

Creatures: A river drake named Freznelkesh has dwelt in this cavern for nearly 2 years. She's careful to limit her hunting to Fogfen, so no one in Otari knows she exists. She was out hunting when the Crook's Nook thieves came through, but she returned soon after and cut off their easy escape route (leading to their eventual capture by the morlocks).

Freznelkesh is likely to be sleeping in the water in the middle of the cavern, and she swiftly wakes up if she hears the splashing of potential food swimming above.

The drake is aggressive but not suicidal; if reduced to fewer than 10 Hit Points, she flees and doesn't return for a few days. She pursues foes that flee into area **B18** or out into the swamp, but she learned the hard way about the dangerous mold at area **B20** and won't pursue potential prey there.



Freznelkesh

FREZNEKESH

CREATURE 3

River drake (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 131)

Initiative Stealth +9

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

B20. MOLDY BEACH

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

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

BROWN MOLD

HAZARD 2

Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide 77

Stealth DC 21 (trained)

B21. PROCESSIONAL

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

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

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

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

B22. WORKSHOP

SEVERE 2

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

This long room smells of rust and grime. Stacks of splintered furniture, pieces of weapons and armor, frayed coils of rope, jagged shards of metal, and other bits of trash lie in heaps along the walls of the room. A cold, unlit forge sits in an alcove to the west. To the north, several heavy timbers are wedged up against a door to keep it shut.

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

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

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

MORLOCK ENGINEERS (2)

CREATURE 3

Page 84

Initiative Perception +8

B23. WELL

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

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

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

B24. PRISON

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

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The foul odor is due to the room's use as a prison. Of the four thieves who stole into the dungeon from Crook's Nook, only three survive—Gorul Vettors, Shad Nunder, and Ziskilly Theed. (If you need statistics, use the prisoner on page 215 of the *Gamemastery Guide*.) All three are clad in rags and are suffering from malnutrition and fear. Each bears a bird tattoo on the right shoulder that indicates membership in the Osprey Club (with a successful DC 16 Society check to Recall Knowledge, a hero identifies the tattoo's significance).

The thieves recount their harrowing time as the prisoners of the morlocks if asked, and are eager to be led out of the dungeon. They thankfully accept their gear (from area **B23**) if offered, but really only want to return to Otari. If the heroes lead them up to the surface, the thieves can safely return to Otari on their own; otherwise, chances are good that a dire fate meets them. On the other hand, Yinyasmera pays well for their rescue; see area **A17** for details.

B25. CLEANING SUPPLIES

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

If the heroes make too much noise in here, the devil in area **B27** immediately comes to investigate.

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

B26. CLOCKWORK STORAGE

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

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

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

B27. ZOZZLARIN'S ROOM

LOW 2

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

Creatures: Belcorra used several bound devils as minions and guardians, mostly in lower levels of the Abomination Vaults. The lesser of the two devils she assigned to the upper levels is a hapless zebub named Zozzlarin. A chubby, fly-bodied devil, Zozzlarin is bound to this level as an eternal janitor. Zozzlarin is contractually required to spend 18 hours each day in this room, and he's done his best to paint the walls to remind him of home. For the other 6 hours each day, he's compelled to buzz out into the surrounding complex to clean and dust. Thanks to Belcorra's cruel sense of humor, Zozzlarin is required to spend at least 3 of those hours cleaning the dusty walls and floors of the dungeon with his tongue, but to the hopeless zebub, this indignity is nothing compared to the fact that he's been forced to live here on the Material Plane for much longer than his bargain originally required.

The frustrated Zozzlarin is quick to attack the heroes as a result; the conditions of his imprisonment allow him to defend the dungeon from above-ground intruders. If reduced to 10 or fewer Hit Points, though, the devil begs for his life, offering to share a "special memory" as a reward. If the heroes agree, the zebub uses his *Infernal Eye* ability to reveal a significant event he witnessed many years ago: Otari's flight through the dungeon to hide out in area **B28**. Zozzlarin doesn't know this memory's significance, but it's the most recent memory he has of other surface dwellers, so he assumes the heroes are interested. A successful DC 16 Society or relevant Lore check is enough for a hero to recognize the famous adventurer, who was thought to have been killed long ago in the clash against Belcorra.

ZOZZLARIN

CREATURE 3

Male zebub (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 272)

Initiative Perception +12

B28. HAUNTED WASHROOM

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

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

B20, only to be confronted by an angry and oversized chuul. He discovered the secret door in area **B32** and fled deeper instead.

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

The ghostly energies react to the presence of the heroes. The first time the heroes see the glowing energy, it slithers into letters to read, "I was Otari... save me from below!" A moment later, the words slide off the wall and form a green ribbon of light that slithers across the floor like a serpent with a speed of 20 feet. The heroes can follow this ribbon, which lasts for only minutes, to area **B32**, where it slips under the secret door and fades away. The next clue of Otari's path is in area **C3**.

This spectral manifestation can appear once per day.

B29. HALL OF HATRED

LOW 2

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

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

Hazards: In addition to displaying some of her fantasies about Absalom's destruction, Belcorra had Volluk rig several traps in the hall to punish intruders. One trap is linked to each diorama (see the map on page 20).

DOOMS OF TOMORROW (5)

HAZARD 3

MAGICAL TRAP


Stealth DC 20 (expert)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reset Each trap resets automatically after 1 hour.



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B30. WAR ROOM

SEVERE 2

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

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

in her plans, but the spiderwebs in this room obscure this illusion.

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

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

MIMMIVIX

CREATURE 3

Male web lurker (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 325)

Initiative Perception +10

DREAM SPIDERS (2)

CREATURE 0

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 249

Initiative Stealth +7

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

WEB LURKER NOOSES (2)

HAZARD 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 325

Stealth DC 22

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



Mimmivix

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

B31. RECEPTION ROOM

LOW 2

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

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

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

SKELETAL GIANT

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 299

Initiative Perception +7

B32. SECRET STAIRS

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

B33. PUNISHMENT ROOM

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

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

B34. ELEVATOR DOWN

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

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

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

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

B35. GAUNTLIGHT BASEMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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CHAPTER 3: Cult of the Canker

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

Library Features

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

The Cult of the Canker is the most widespread faction active in the library. Originally a collection of librarians, caretakers, and scribes, this loyal staff stubbornly kept working after Belcorra died, focusing their research on finding a way to restore their leader to life. When food stores ran low, rather than risk alerting

the Roseguard by making potentially public forays to the surface, the researchers turned to cannibalism. There were plenty of other servants to eat, after all, in the conveniently nearby servants' quarters. The onset of ghoul fever tore quickly through their ranks, but the researchers were so obsessed that they barely noticed. The scholars' research now has a distinctly ghoulish bent: they work to gather enough "cankorous flesh" to fuel Belcorra's full resurrection. The fact that the ghouls' hunger often compels them to feed on the flesh they are trying to collect has certainly slowed their progress, but it hasn't slowed their zeal.

The map of the library level appears on page 36.

C1. VISITOR'S READING ROOM

TRIVIAL 3

This large, cross-shaped chamber contains several long couches, the leather cushions that once adorned them

cracked with age. Dead plants lie slumped in planter boxes along the walls, and a long-dry fountain depicting a lighthouse stands in the middle of the room.

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

The stairs beyond the door to the east lead up to area **B16**.

Heroes can discover the secret door to the south with a successful DC 27 Perception check. It's concealed behind a heavy sofa.

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

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

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



Augrael

AUGRAEL

CREATURE 3

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM GHOUL UNDEAD

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

Perception +8; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Necril, Undercommon

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

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

Light Blindness

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

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

Speed 30 feet, burrow 5 feet, climb 20 feet

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

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

Consume Flesh ♦ (manipulate) **Requirements** Augrael is adjacent to the corpse

CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

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

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

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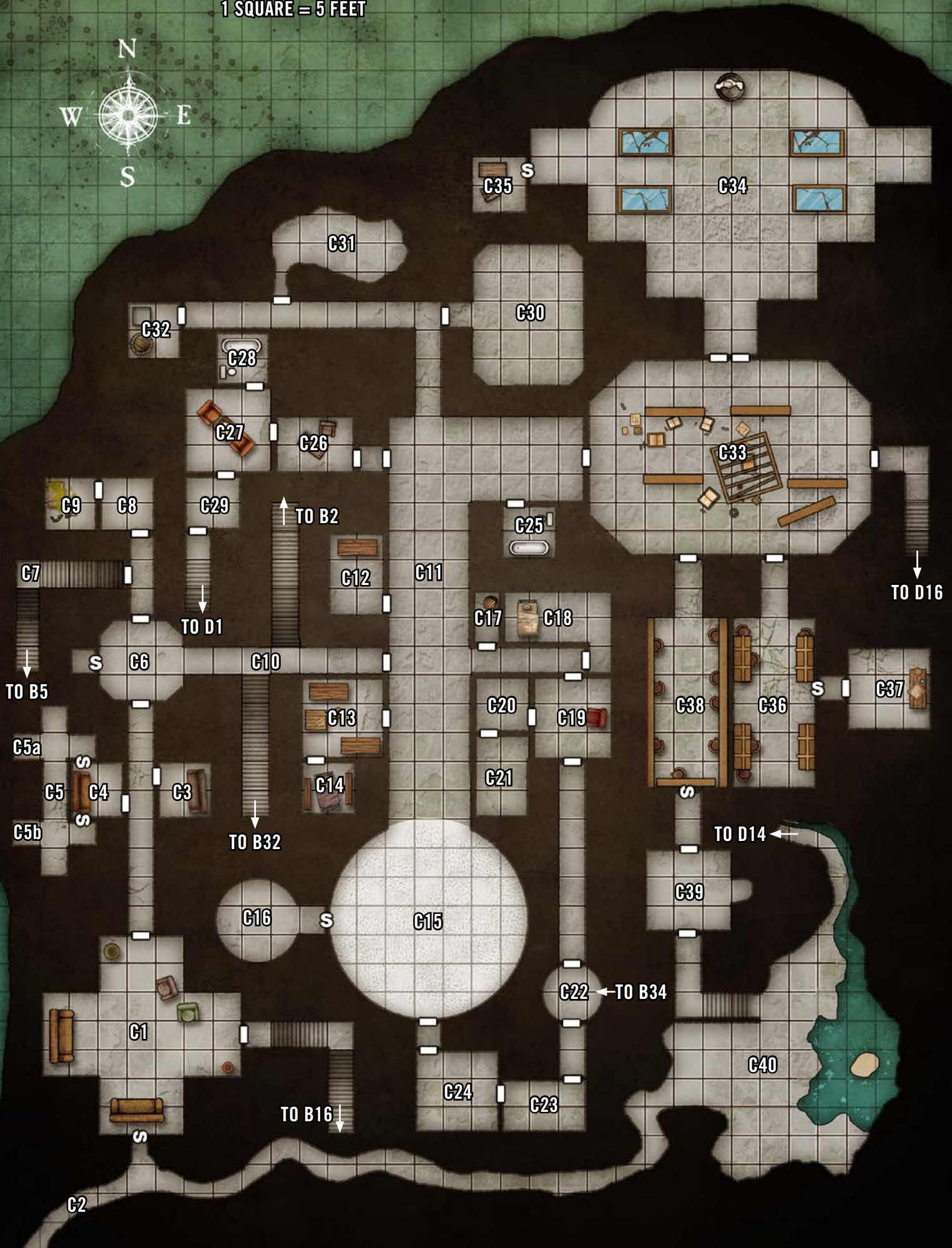
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CHAPTER 3 TREASURE

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

- +1 chain shirt
- +1 low-grade silver hatchet
- +1 striking pick
- barkskin potion
- crafter's eyepiece
- everburning torches (2)
- lesser bravo's brews (2)
- lesser healing potions (2)
- moderate skeptic's elixir (page 78)
- scroll of hypercognition
- scroll of mending
- staff of necromancy
- *The Whispering Reeds* (page 78)
- ventriloquist's ring
- wand of quench (Advanced Player's Guide 223)

LEVEL 3: LIBRARY
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



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

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

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

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

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

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

C2. TUNNEL TO OTARI

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

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

C3. HAUNTED READING ROOM

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

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

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

A moment later, the words slide off the wall and slither away. If the heroes follow, the ribbon creeps back up to area C6 and then past the stairs at area C10.

Here, the ribbon hesitantly climbs the northern stair only to turn around and quickly slither further east. The ghostly light enters area C11, curls onward to C33, and then though the eastern door and down the stairs before fading. The heroes can pick up the final clue of Otari's path in area D16.

This spectral manifestation can appear once per day.

C4. NOT-SO-PRIVATE READING ROOM LOW 3

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

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

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

WATCHING WALL HAZARD 4

COMPLEX HAUNT

Stealth +12 (expert)

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

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

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

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

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

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature becomes frightened 1 and feels

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like someone or something is watching them for as long as they remain frightened.

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

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

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

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

C5. SPYING HALL

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

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

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

Both secret doors are obvious from this side.

C6. GUARD ROOM

LOW 3

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

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

Creatures: Belcorra originally bound a trio of eerie, octopean water elementals called mist stalkers into this room to serve as guardians. Otari killed two of them years ago, but one remains. The monster can see through the mist it generates with ease, and as soon as it identifies intruders, it solidifies the mist and then

moves to attack, fighting until destroyed. It pursues foes that flee, but it doesn't leave sight of this room.

MIST STALKER

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 114

Initiative Perception +13

Treasure: The secret alcove to the west once served as an emergency cache of supplies for the guards on this floor. Most of the supplies were raided during the chaos following Belcorra's death, but a few items of use remain, including two lesser bravo's brews, two *lesser healing potions*, a moderate skeptic's elixir (page 78), and a *barkskin potion*.

C7. STAIRS UP

These stairs ascend to area **B5**.

C8. KORLOK'S POST

MODERATE 3

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

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

She never did.

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

KORLOK

CREATURE 5

Male barbazu (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 88)

Initiative Perception +13

Side Quest: The devil is patient and willing to speak to the heroes for a few minutes if they wish. His initial attitude to the heroes is indifferent, but if they can improve this attitude (most likely with a successful DC 21 Diplomacy check to Make an Impression, but you might decide that other checks—such as a Deception

check to Impersonate or to Lie—also appease Korlok), Korlok admits his frustration. He knows Belcorra is dead, but without access to his contract, he can't study it for a loophole. He suggests a trade—he'll let the heroes go just this once, but the next time they return he will arrest them if they don't present him with his contract. He isn't sure where the paper is stored, but suspects it's hidden somewhere in the library.

If the heroes present the contract, Korlok studies it and discovers that his service was meant to end if 99 weeks and 99 days passed without a new order from Belcorra. Before he vanishes back to Hell, the thankful devil explains that he knows of other devils in the Abomination Vaults: a zebub janitor on the level above and a contract devil named Urevian on a lower level (who has several other devils in his command). Korlok has nothing but scorn for the zebub, but he says that Urevian is shrewd but well-known for keeping his word. Urevian plays a large part in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #164: Hands of the Devil*.

C9. PRISON

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

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

C10. TWIN STAIRWELLS

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

C11. MAIN LIBRARY

MODERATE 3

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

The books kept here cover a wide range of subjects, and the Cult of the Canker keep the stacks organized. A hero with the luxury of pursuing these tomes for 8

hours learns the library's organization and gains a +1 item bonus to checks to Recall Knowledge on regional history, arcane topics, or occult topics when using the Investigate exploration activity here.



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The signs here are all in Undercommon. The one above area C15 to the south reads, “Reading Room.” The ones over the smaller doors are labeled as follows: area C12 is “Repair Storage,” area C13 is “Workroom,” area C17 is “Safety” with a carving of leaping flames, area C18 is “Personal Quarters,” area C19 is “Scrivener’s Office,” area C26 is “Belcorra’s Office,” the hallway leading to areas C30 to C32 is “North Wing,” and area C33 is “Restricted Collection.”

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

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

GHOULS (4)

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary 169

Initiative Perception +7

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

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

XP Award: If the heroes deliver at least 12 Bulk of books to Morlibint, they complete the side quest and gain the moderate XP award (30 XP). They can still sell him more books, if they find them.

C12. REPAIR MATERIALS

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

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

C13. LIBRARIAN’S WORKROOM MODERATE 3

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

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

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

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

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

JARELLE KALDRIAN

CREATURE 5

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM GHOST INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Female human ghost librarian (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 166)

Perception +12; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Necril, Undercommon

Skills Library Lore +15, Stealth +14

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

Site Bound (area C13)

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

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

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

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

Speed fly 25 feet

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

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

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

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

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

C14. LIBRARIAN'S BEDROOM

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

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

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

C15. GAUNTLIGHT READING ROOM MODERATE 3

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

As in area B35, the ribbon of sickly light is a manifestation of *Gauntlight's* growing power. This room once served as a reading room for library staff, as well as a place where they could directly evaluate *Gauntlight's* energies. This eerie light churns in a 5-foot-diameter burst at the room's center. Any living

creature ending its turn in it takes 4d6 negative damage (DC 18 basic Reflex save) and undead creatures regain the same amount. As long as *Gauntlight* remains at its low-level activation, the light continues to churn, but if the heroes rescue Lasda Venkervale from area D9, the ribbon winks out.

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

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

CANKER CULTIST

CREATURE 3

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM GHOUL UNDEAD

Ghoul zealot (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 168)

Perception +11; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Necril, Undercommon

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

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

Items 2 lumps of decayed flesh strung on a necklace

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

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

Speed 30 feet, burrow 5 feet

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

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

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

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

Ghoul Fever (disease) **Saving Throw** DC 20 Fortitude; **Stage 1** carrier with no ill effects (1 day); **Stage 2** 2d6 negative damage and regains half as many Hit Points from all healing (1 day); **Stage 3** as stage 2 (1 day); **Stage 4** 2d6 negative damage and gains no benefit from

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healing (1 day); **Stage 5** as stage 4 (1 day); **Stage 6** dead, and rises as a ghoul the next midnight

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

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



Canker Cultist

GHOULS (2)

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary 169

Initiative Perception +7

C16. LEVEL THREE PORTAL CHAMBER

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

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

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

C17. FIREFIGHTING SUPPLIES

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

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

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

C18. TEMPORARY BUNKS

LOW 3

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

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

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

GHOULS (3)

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary 169

Initiative Perception +7

C19. SCRIVENER'S WORKSHOP

MODERATE 3

While this room may have once served as a writing studio, today its condition has been all but obliterated by dozens of tiny swatches of skinned flesh marked with tattoos. Judging by the workspace on the table in the middle of the room, these tattoos have been placed postmortem, with a swath of pale skin stretched over the desk sporting a half-completed image of a sinister woman.

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

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

ALLER ROSK CREATURE 5

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM GHOUL UNDEAD

Male ghoul tattoo artist

(Pathfinder Bestiary 168)

Perception +15; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Necril, Undercommon

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

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

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

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



Aller Rosk

Speed 30 feet, burrow 5 feet

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

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

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

Ghoul Fever (disease) As Canker cultist (page 41), but DC 22.

Paralysis (incapacitation, occult, necromancy) As Canker cultist (page 42), but DC 22.

Swift Leap ♦ As Canker cultist (page 42).

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

C20. SCRIVENER'S OFFICE

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

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

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

C21. FOOD STORAGE

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

Five dead morlocks are stored here, their flesh decomposing (aging, to the ghoul palate) somewhat slowly in the cool room temperature. There's nothing of interest in here, but the filthy conditions expose any hero who Searches the room to blueblisters, a flesh-eating bacteria that ghouls find savory. A hero who succeeds

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at a DC 18 Medicine or Nature check realizes the danger these infected bodies pose.

BLUEBLISTERS

DISEASE 3

DISEASE **VIRULENT**

This flesh-eating disease causes prominent and painful blue blisters on the skin and gums. You can't reduce your sickened condition while afflicted with blueblisters. **Saving Throw** DC 17 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 day; **Stage 1** sickened 1 (1 day); **Stage 2** sickened 1 and drained 1 (1 day); **Stage 3** sickened 2 and drained 1 (1 week); **Stage 4** sickened 2 and drained 2 (1 week)

C22. ELEVATOR UP

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

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

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

C23. GHOUL GARDEN

LOW 3

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

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

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

WEAK VIOLET FUNGI (2)

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 6, 286

Initiative Perception +6

C24. CANKER SHRINE

MODERATE 3

Whatever this room's original use, today it serves as a horrific shrine. A rotting heap of fleshy material that seems to be composed of equal parts eyes, mouths, and skin lies in a stinking mound in the middle of the room, surrounded

by two dozen tiny humanoid effigies crafted out of small bones and tangles of knotted hair.

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

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

CANKER CULTISTS (2)

CREATURE 3

Page 41

Initiative Perception +11

C25. WASHROOM

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

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

C26. BELCORRA'S OFFICE

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

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

The western door is locked, and the lock plate is engraved with a stylized open book. This decoration matches the image on one of the keys in area **A13**. The keyhole is large enough to look through, but it's impossible to see anything in the room other than to identify that the room is also brightly lit.

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

C27. BELCORRA'S READING ROOM MODERATE 3

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

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

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

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

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

Creatures: The room's comforts are wasted on the current occupant, a lurker in light named Shimmergrin who recently slipped into the brightly lit room to satisfy their own curiosity. The creature sits awkwardly in one of the oversized (for them) chairs in the room as they focus on balancing a book a little bit too large for them to handle. They periodically cackle and titter over the book as they annotate its text with a colorful quill. They've become distracted by the grisly descriptions of ritual sacrifice in an illustrated copy of a text called

Pathways of the Worm and angrily attack if interrupted. If brought below 20 Hit Points, the fey uses *dimension door* to flee to area **C26** (although they can't do so if the heroes have doused that room's illumination) and flit away. They plot revenge against the heroes, most likely by allying with the ghouls in area **C33**.

LURKER IN LIGHT

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 169

Initiative Perception +13

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

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

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

C28. PRIVATE WASHROOM

The bathtub and commode in this room are surprisingly clean.

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

C29. ABANDONED GUARD POST

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

C30. SIEGE CASTLE HISTORY

SEVERE 3

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

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

The sculpture is of Absalom, depicted with heavy damage in several areas. With a successful DC 20 Society check to Recall Knowledge, a hero can confirm that the

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damage roughly matches what the city was said to have suffered over the centuries from all of the siege attempts it repelled, up until about 500 years ago (it doesn't include more recent attacks, such as the Red Siege, the Siege of the Ravenous Raja, or the Black Echelon Uprising).

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

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

WOOD GOLEM

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 130

Initiative Perception +12

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

C31. UNFINISHED LIBRARY

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

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

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

C32. FURNACE ROOM

LOW 3

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

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

dangerous. Originally, the refuse would be loaded into the metal bin; once the hatch was closed, powerful fire magic incinerated the contents, and the ashes were then scooped out and dumped in the swamp.

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

VENGEFUL FURNACE

HAZARD 4

COMPLEX **HAUNT**

Stealth +15 (expert)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

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

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

Critical Failure As failure, but stupefied 2.

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

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

Damage 2d6 fire plus 2d6 mental and burn knowledge

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

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

C33. RESTRICTED COLLECTION

SEVERE 3

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

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

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

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

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

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

CANKER CULTIST

CREATURE 3

Page 41

Initiative Perception +11

GHOULS (4)

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary 169

Initiative Perception +7

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

C34. TEMPLE OF THE CANKER

MODERATE 3

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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NHAKAZARIN

CREATURE 5

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM GHOUL UNDEAD

Female ghoulish cult leader (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 168)

Perception +10; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Necril, Undercommon

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

Occultism +11, Religion +10, Stealth +11

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

Items staff of necromancy



Nhakazarin

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

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

Speed 30 feet, burrow 5 feet

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ghoul Fever (disease) As Canker cultist (page 41), but DC 22.

Paralysis (incapacitation, occult, necromancy) As Canker cultist (page 42), but DC 22.

Swift Leap ♦ As Canker cultist (page 42).

The Statue: Note the condition the heroes leave the statue in, as the statue might cause them problems in the next adventure.

C35. SECURE COLLECTION

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

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

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

The stack of loose papers and scrolls contain a wealth of information about *Gauntlight* (page 77). These papers are written in Aklo; sorting and then reading them takes 8 hours, after which the reader can learn about *Gauntlight*'s functions as if they had fully researched the artifact.

Treasure: A folio containing several esoteric diagrams is sandwiched between several books on teleportation on the north shelf. The folio details Belcorra's series of linked *teleportation circles* to quickly move around the Abomination Vaults, and it notes the importance of using the *awaken portal* ritual (page 79) to activate them should time or mischance deplete them of power. The *awaken portal* ritual is included here.

The largest book in the room, on the southern shelf, is a rare text called *The Whispering Reeds* (page 78). This magical book describes 77 supposed encounters with the Outer Goddess Nhimbalothe, and how each encounter left physical or mental scars. The book is heavily annotated in Belcorra's hand, particularly in areas where themes of Nhimbalothe as an "eater of ghosts" play into the parables and tales.

C36. SCRIPTORIUM

SEVERE 3

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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CHANDRIU INVISAR

CREATURE 6

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM GHOST INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Female drow ghost administrator (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 166)

Perception +17; darkvision

Languages Common, Elven, Undercommon

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

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

Site Bound (area C36 and C37)



Chandriu Invisar

AC 23; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +17, **Will** +11

HP 64, negative healing, rejuvenation; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistance** all damage 7 (except force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Rejuvenation (divine, necromancy) To put Chandriu to rest permanently, a hero must convince her to stop pining over Volluk with a successful DC 21 Diplomacy check. Regardless of the result of this check, Chandriu flies into a rage and attacks, but if the Diplomacy check is successful, she is slowed 1 for 10 rounds while she fights. If defeated while she is slowed, she is put to rest.

Speed fly 25 feet

Melee ♦ ghostly hand +16 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 3d8+4 negative

Despairing Cry ♦♦ (auditory, divine, emotion, enchantment, mental) Chandriu wails in despair at her loss and betrayal, forcing each living creature within 30 feet to attempt a DC 24 Will save. On a failure, a creature becomes slowed 1 (slowed 2 on a critical failure) for 1 round as they are overcome with sadness over their own missed opportunities. On a success, a creature is temporarily immune to Chandriu's Despairing Cry for 1 minute.

Treasure: There are 1 Bulk of books here to gather for Morlibint. In addition to these books, the three mentioned in the note in area B3 (*What The Worm Knows*, *Grave Feasts*, and *Secrets of the Skull*) are located here as well. Morlibint has no interest in these three grim treatises on necromancy, but they can be sold for 8 gp each to someone other than Morlibint.

A search of Chandriu's remains reveals that her +1 *chain shirt* is in good condition. The object she clutches is a framed portrait of Volluk Azrinae. The portrait captures the drow's beauty as well as his imperious, vain smirk, both qualities Chandriu adored. His name appears on a tiny gold plaque at the portrait's base. The work of art has endured the passage of time quite well and is worth 10 gp, but it may be more immediately valuable to the heroes as a way to fight against Volluk (area D8). A hero who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check while Searching the remains spots a tiny iron key beneath them; this key unlocks the cabinet in area C37.

C37. SECRET SCRIPTORIUM

A worktable covered with blank scrolls and papers sits against the eastern wall of this room, while to the north stands a cabinet with several closed drawers.

There are five locked drawers in the cabinet; each can be opened by a hero using the key from area C36, succeeding at three DC 20 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock, or with a successful DC 16 Athletics check to Force it Open. Several books are stored within—copies of texts produced by scribes and once intended for sale or as gifts to Belcorra's allies in other lands, all of whom are now dead. These books consist of 2 Bulk for Morlibint, though.

Not all of the scrolls on the desk are blank; one tucked beneath the others is an infernal contract. This contract was meant to be stored deeper in the Abomination Vaults, but it never quite made it there. A character who can read Infernal and takes 10 minutes to look over the contract learns that this is the devil Korlok's contract that binds him as a guardian. A hero who succeeds at a DC 18 Perception or Society check, or who is trained in Legal Lore, notes a loophole that can release the devil if it's brought to his attention (see area C8).

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

C38. AUTHORS' HALL

MODERATE 3

Long shelves with several chairs drawn up to them ring this room on all sides, save the north. Rancid stains of old blood and decay cake the shelves and floor.

Belcorra's scribes once used this room to pen new works. The Cult of the Canker now use it as a place to store victims of ghoulish fever until they die and arise as ghouls. There are no bodies stored here now, but the heroes can find ample evidence of the suffering and death that has occurred here.

A hero who Searches the south wall and succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check finds a section of shelving that folds down to allow access to a secret door leading to area C39.

Creatures: A pair of ghoulish cultists are having a spirited debate on whether or not flesh "ripened" by violet fungi tastes better than naturally decayed meat. They're distracted enough that they don't overhear the sounds of combat in area C33, but they quickly attack any intruders they notice.



Volluk Azrinæ Portrait

CANKER CULTISTS (2)

CREATURE 3

Page 41

Initiative Perception +11

C39. GUARD ROOM

A small alcove, its floor decorated with a silvery circle of inlaid runes, sits in the eastern wall of this empty room.

This room once housed a bound devil who served as one of Belcorra's guardians, but this creature's contract expired long ago, releasing her back to Hell.

The alcove to the west is a nonfunctional *teleportation circle* that, once restored via *awaken portal*, transports those who use it to area C5b.

C40. SUBTERRANEAN POOL

MODERATE 3

The dripping, sloshing sound of water fills this large cavern chamber. The air is cold and damp, and to the east sits a sizable pond. A lazy rivulet of overflow trickles to the north down a sloping tunnel, while a five-foot-diameter opening gapes in the ceiling above the center of the pool.

The pool here is 5 feet deep and was once used as a source of drinking water for these levels; the hole in the ceiling 15 feet above leads up 25 more feet to the well in area B23, while the downward sloping tunnel to the north leads to area D14.

Creatures: A gibbering moulder has dwelt in this cavern for decades. It periodically crawls along the tunnel to area C2 to hunt bats and rats, but spends most of its time floating in the pool. It immediately attacks intruders and pursues foes as best it can. The monster doesn't differentiate between the heroes and other denizens, so a canny group might lure the gibbering moulder into a fight against ghouls, morlocks, or other creatures.

GIBBERING Moulder

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 176

Initiative Perception +15

Treasure: Heroes Searching the pond discover 190 cp and 64 sp under the well opening. These offerings were tossed here by superstitious servants ages ago.

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CHAPTER 4: Long Dream the Dead

The fourth level of the Abomination Vaults is one of the smaller ones overall, yet it's among the finest, as it once served as Belcorra's personal retreat.

Belcorra's Retreat Features

Ceilings in this level are 10 feet tall in halls and 15 feet in rooms. Unless otherwise indicated, rooms are unlit. The doors are iron-banded wood; ephemeral spirits gently shut any door left open for more than a minute.

The map for this level appears on the inside back cover of this adventure.

D1. BELCORRA'S DINING ROOM

MODERATE 4

A pair of brightly glowing chandeliers illuminates a long banquet table surrounded by luxurious, high-backed chairs. The table is still set as if for a grand meal, but some of the place settings are scattered and toppled, as are a few of

the chairs. Four skeletons in tattered finery are scattered about the room, some of them clutching their own necks.

When the Roseguard attacked Gauntlight so many years ago, Belcorra was dining here with representatives of a now-extinct Absalomian thieves' guild whom she was courting as potential allies. When word came that the Roseguard seemed unstoppable, Belcorra took no chances. She politely excused herself, bade her guests finish their meal, and magically commanded her chef to poison them all and murder the other servants before taking his own life.

Stairs beyond the north door lead up to area C29.

Creatures: The guests died in excruciating pain, then later became havens for corpselights seeking hosts. When a living creature other than Volluk enters this room, the corpselights within the skeletons begin to glow, and then the skeletons stagger to their feet

and attack. Each time a corpselight is forced into wisp form, it flees to one of the adjoining rooms (areas **D2**, **D3**, or **D6**) to claim another corpse and return to the fight.

CORPSELIGHTS (4)

CREATURE 2

Page 82

Perception +7

Treasure: A search of the guests' remains reveals 48 gp, a *bracelet of dashing*, and a *viper arrow*.

D2. KITCHEN

A strange, squat cast-iron stove with no chimney sits in the southwest corner of this room, while to the north, a large oak table covered with cooking utensils sits against a wall. A skeletal body slumps at the base of the cupboards along the western wall.

The cast-iron stove in this kitchen is a minor magical item that transmutes smoke welling up from its fire into clean air, but it's built into the stone of this room and far too heavy to be worth the trouble of moving. The body was once Belcorra's cook, who died by suicide after carrying out Belcorra's magical commands to poison the guests and kill the other servants.

A hero who Searches this room and succeeds at a DC 19 Perception check spots a secret door to the north. Some cooking utensils are affixed to the wall; manipulating them in the correct order opens the secret door.

D3. STORAGE

The walls of this chamber are lined with cupboards, shelves, and cabinets. A few barrels sit in the middle of the room. Two skeletons lie slumped near the barrel.

The skeletons were two other servants who retreated to this storage room before being murdered by the chef. Nothing of value remains.

D4. WINE CELLAR

A tall wine rack, its bottles thick with dust after so many years, stands against the north wall.

Treasure: Nearly all of this wine has gone bad, but a successful DC 18 Society check is enough to note three valuable bottles worth 20 gp each.

D5. LEVEL FOUR PORTAL CHAMBER

The walls of this chamber are decorated with twisting runes carved into the wall and filled with dull, silvery metal. The floor and ceiling are almost completely covered with large, polished metal discs.

This room contains an inert *teleportation circle* like the ones in area **B17** and **C16**. This *teleportation circle* must be reactivated with the *awaken portal* ritual hidden in area **C35** to connect it to other portal chambers.

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

CHAPTER 4 SYNOPSIS

The fourth level of the Abomination Vaults was designed as a retreat for Belcorra to relax and to rever her uncaring deity Nhimbalo. No faction of significance holds sway over Belcorra's Retreat today. Instead, several powerful individuals claim separate portions of this level. While they don't present a threat in numbers, these creatures are the most powerful foes the heroes will face in this adventure. The most significant ally the heroes can acquire is the ghost of Otari Ilvashti, the fallen hero who gave the town of Otari its name.

Environmental Cues: Cool but comfortable temperature, fine furnishings that are old yet luxurious, haunted house effects such as closing doors or sliding chairs, profusions of fungi, smells of dust and faint spices, spectral visions of rooms as they looked 500 years ago.

CHAPTER 4 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 4 are as follows.

- +1 ghost touch whip
- +1 striking composite longbow
- +1 striking katars (2)
- +1 studded leather
- bracelet of dashing
- dagger of venom
- holy prayer beads
- lantern of empty light (page 78)
- lesser mistform elixir
- minor sturdy shield
- scroll of comprehend languages
- scroll of paralyze
- scroll of worm's repast (page 80)
- sneaky key
- viper arrow

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D6. WASHING ROOM

A dusty metal washtub with a small skeleton lying inside sits next to a low shelf in this room.

As the guests in area **D1** were dying of poison, one of them managed to stab a halfling servant who staggered into this large dishwashing tub and died. If the skeleton is disturbed, the tub momentarily appears to be clean and filled with soapy water before returning to its actual dusty state. The scent of harsh dish soap clings for a minute before fading.

D7. DISPOSAL ROOM

LOW 4

An open metal hatch lies in the floor against this room's east wall. Storage bins sit to the north and south, each heaped with old bones, broken tools, and lumps of stone.

Several bones in one of the trash bins belong to a human, which a hero Investigating the bones can easily determine. A servant slipped against a trash bin and died here 2 days before Belcorra's last meal in area **D1**. The other servants simply hefted her body into the bin.

The hatch opens into a long chute that leads to the disposal pond at area **D17**. Anyone who enters the chute swiftly slides down to the pond in a rough trip that deals 3d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 20 basic Reflex save) upon landing. Anyone in the chute who doesn't want to slide down can arrest their fall with a successful DC 18 Reflex save to Grab an Edge or with a successful DC 18 Acrobatics or Athletics check to brace in place. In either case, a successful DC 18 Athletics check is required to safely traverse the chute.

Creatures: The spirit of the servant who accidentally died here has returned as a poltergeist wracked with indignation. It's lurking here, invisible, but it doesn't attack until it's spotted or someone approaches the lip of the chute. It hurls debris from the trash bins or uses *telekinetic maneuver* to Shove foes into the open hatch. It fights until destroyed but can't leave this room. The poltergeist can be put to rest by disposing of its remains in a respectful manner, such as cremating them or saying a word of blessing over them.

POLTERGEIST

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 264

Initiative Stealth +14

D8. LOUNGE

SEVERE 4

The walls of this large chamber are hung with grisly paintings depicting various spectral beings cavorting

among ruined neighborhoods, overgrown swamps, and foggy graveyards. Three large overstuffed chairs pair with small end tables, upon which sit empty wine glasses. To the south stands a cluttered writing desk with its own chair, while a large iron tub to the west is visible between standing screens depicting shadowy marshes.

This large lounge once served as a place for Belcorra to relax, but today it functions as a den for her one-time apprentice, the drow Volluk Azrinae. Most papers on the desk are Volluk's disjointed notes. More usefully to the heroes, the papers also include detailed blueprints of the top three levels of the Abomination Vaults, including all secret doors.

A hero Searching the room and who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check finds the secret door in the east wall: a lifelike graveyard painting that swings outward. Every 10 minutes or so, a faint scream issues from the other side of the secret door, though it sounds like it's emanating from the picture. After the first scream, the DC to find the secret door drops to 12.

A hero Searching this room who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check locates an iron key hidden in one of the desk's legs; it opens Lasda's manacles (area **D9**).

Creatures: Unlike most of the denizens who dwelt in the Abomination Vaults in Belcorra's day, Volluk is still alive—after a fashion. After feeding himself to a vat of ritually prepared leeches, he lives on as a hideous worm that walks. Volluk resembles a roughly drow-shaped mass composed of thousands of slithering leeches. He's been working with the voidglutton that now dwells in Belcorra's old chambers (area **D20**) to restore *Gauntlight*, but he is frustrated that Belcorra's ghost doesn't speak to him directly. Being forced to do his mistress's bidding through the will of the voidglutton galls the proud occultist.

Volluk is reading at his desk when the heroes first arrive. As soon as he notices the heroes' intrusion, he rises up—a squirming, awful mess—and demands to know who they are and why they've come. He has little interest in constructive discourse, but if the heroes let him talk, he can use Intimidation to roll initiative.

VOLLUK AZRINAE

CREATURE 7

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM ABERRATION SWARM

Male worm that walks occultist (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 296)

Perception +15; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Aklo, Common, Elven, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +17, Crafting +15 (+17 when painting), Deception +15, Intimidation +17, Occultism +17, Religion +15, Stealth +15

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +2, **Int** +6, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

AC 25, all-around vision; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +17, **Will** +15

HP 85, fast healing 7; **Immunities** disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, swarm mind, unconscious; **Weaknesses** area damage 7, splash damage 7; **Resistances** physical 7

Discorporate As worm that walks, but slow-moving leeches give the heroes 2 rounds, rather than 1 round, to dispatch the fleeing vermin before they escape

Hateful Memories (enchantment, emotion, mental, occult, visual) If Volluk can see an accurate depiction of his former appearance as a living dwarf at the start of his turn, he must attempt a DC 28 Will save or become filled with self-loathing and become slowed 1 for 1 round.

Speed 10 feet, swim 25 feet

Melee ♦ tendril +18 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+8 persistent piercing damage

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 25, attack +17; **4th** (3 slots) *dimension door*, *suggestion*, *worm's repast* (page 80); **3rd** (4 slots) *bind undead*, *mind reading*, *paralyze*, *phantom pain*; **2nd** (4 slots) *comprehend language*, *illusory disguise*, *mirror image*, *vomit swarm* (Advanced Player's Guide 227); **1st** (4 slots) *alarm*, *grim tendrils*, *mindlink*, *unseen servant*; **Cantrips (4th)** *daze*, *light*, *mage hand*, *read aura*, *shield*

Divine Innate Spells DC 25; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *faerie fire* (at will); **Cantrips (4th)** *dancing lights*

Rituals *animate object*, *create undead*

Squirming Embrace ♦ Volluk Strides, ending his movement sharing a space with a creature, and deals 3d8 piercing damage to the creature. The creature can attempt a DC 23 basic Reflex save.

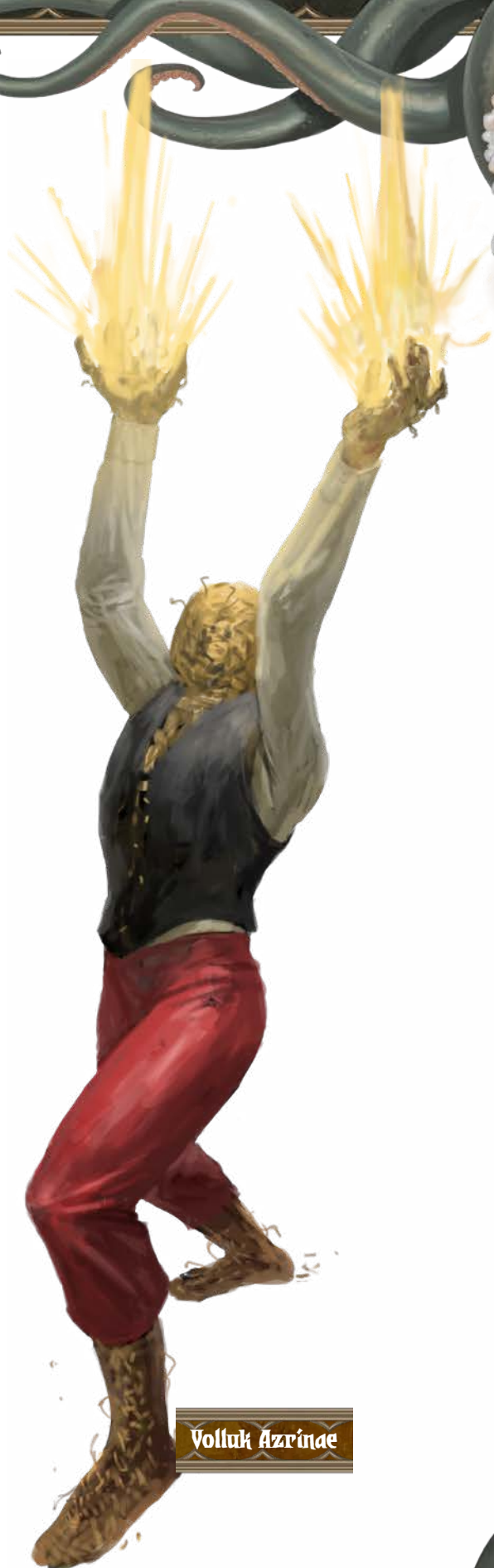
Swarm Shape ♦ (concentrate) Volluk collapses into a shapeless swarm of leeches. He drops all held, worn, and carried items. While discorporated, he can't use attack actions and can't cast spells, but he can move through areas small enough for his individual leeches to fit without having to Squeeze. He can use the same action to coalesce back into his normal form.

Treasure: Among Volluk's papers are a *scroll of comprehend language*, a *scroll of paralyze*, and a *scroll of worm's repast* (page 80). A *lantern of empty light* (page 78) sits on the writing desk. Volluk takes this lantern on his journeys above ground, where he's unknowingly spawned the rumors of the lantern-carrying stranger.

D9. LASDA'S LAMENT

MODERATE 4

The walls of this circular chamber are smooth and gray. A flickering, nauseating ribbon of pale blue light churns in the center of the room. Where the light touches the ceiling, the stone bubbles as if it were infected flesh. Below, the light bathes a screaming, thrashing dwarf bound onto a metal table, his body covered in blisters.



Volluk Azrinæ

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As in area **B35**, the ribbon of light is a manifestation of *Gauntlight's* growing power. This eerie light churns in a 5-foot-diameter burst at the room's center. Any living creature ending its turn in it takes 5d6 negative damage (DC 18 basic Reflex save) and undead creatures regain the same amount.

In order to reactivate *Gauntlight* for its test firing on Otari's graveyard, Volluk and the voidglutton needed a living creature as an anchor for the light. While others who touch the light suffer negative damage, the light simultaneously heals its anchor as swiftly as it harms them, keeping the person in a perpetual state of endless agony.

This victim is a dwarf named **Lasda Venkervale** (LG male dwarf bartender 2), once the bartender at the Rowdy Rockfish in Otari. Volluk abducted Lasda just over a year ago for nefarious experiments while the dwarf was on one of his customary predawn walks from the Rockfish up to the graveyard. Volluk kept Lasda a prisoner in area **D11** for many months and, impressed by the dwarf's hardiness, decided to use him as *Gauntlight's* anchor.

Creatures: The heroes can't focus on rescuing Lasda without first defeating a will-o'-wisp that has been gorging itself on Lasda's terror. It is invisible when the heroes first arrive, but it flares up in an angry blue glow as soon as the heroes attempt to aid the dwarf. It pursues foes who flee and fights to the death.

WILL-O'-WISP

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 333

Initiative Stealth +16

Side Quest: To remove Lasda from the terrible ribbon of energy, the heroes must first unlock the four manacles that bind him. The key to these manacles can be found in area **D8**, or the heroes can succeed at three DC 22 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock on each manacle. Unless the heroes have some means of working on the locks from a distance, each round a hero works to unlock a manacle (by the key or otherwise), that hero is exposed to the ribbon of necromantic energy.

Once freed and removed from the energy ribbon, Lasda recovers his mobility after 2d4 rounds of gasping for breath. Lasda can tell the heroes the harrowing tale of his imprisonment and give a partial description of areas **D1** to **D11**. The heroes may have heard of Lasda's

disappearance if they've spoken to his worried mother, Brelde, at the Rowdy Rockfish. If the heroes return Lasda to the Rowdy Rockfish, his mother is overjoyed and presses upon the heroes a family heirloom, a *minor sturdy shield* emblazoned with an angry-looking rockfish, as a reward.

Removing Lasda from the ribbon of light causes the necromantic energy here and in areas **B35** and **C15** to vanish. While this prevents Belcorra from firing *Gauntlight's* beam upon Otari again, the reprieve is only temporary. As the heroes will learn from Otari's ghost, Belcorra continues to prepare *Gauntlight* for its true purpose far below.

In addition, once Lasda is removed, the haunts on the upper four levels of the Abomination Vaults do not reset if they are deactivated or defeated. These effects return if both Volluk and the voidglutton survive and they are given several days to find and install a new victim. If they do so, this should be an NPC whose kidnapping spurs the heroes into action!



Lasda Venkervale

D10. SCALATHRAX PEN

MODERATE 4

The floor of this rough-hewn cavern is strewn with bones and scraps of metal and cloth.

All three irregular, rocky passages out of this area end in secret doors. All three secret doors are obvious from within the cavern.

Creatures: This cavern once merely connected the southwestern and northeastern wings of the level, but it now serves as a pen for a trio of scalathraxes. One of these has already been transported from area **D9** via *Gauntlight's* beam to Otari (page 21), but the other two remain here, awaiting a time when Volluk decides to test *Gauntlight* again. They are poorly fed and attack the heroes on sight, pursuing them relentlessly.

SCALATHRAXES (2)

CREATURE 4

Page 86

Initiative Perception +11

D11. TORTURE CHAMBER

MODERATE 4

Three five-foot-square iron cages, the bars lined with spikes on the inside, hang from chains in the middle of this room.

Blood-crusted manacles dangle from chains on the west wall. A stout wooden table with more manacles anchored to it stands in the southwest corner, and on it sits a whip made of blood-red leather with a silver handle.

Here, Belcorra imprisoned and tortured those lacking the qualities she sought for fleshwarping experiments or arena battles in the levels below. Once she was satisfied her prisoners had nothing left to offer, or once she grew bored, she sent them to area **D13** for sacrifice. The dwarf bartender Lasda inhabited the central hanging cage for many months.

The northern cage has silver-lined runes carved into its exterior. This cage is the destination of the inactive *teleportation circle* in area **C5b**. It can be restored with the *awaken portal* ritual; if so, it makes a useful way to imprison anyone pushed into the alcove in area **C5**.

A hero who Searches the table and succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check spots a hidden switch on its underside that opens the secret door to the south.

Creatures: An evangelist velstrac named Vulgrist has been bound here by Belcorra's magic for centuries. The interminable years instilled a sense of listlessness and ennui in the torturer and she rarely even moves about the room. Her hope of cruel amusements was briefly rekindled when she had Lasda to toy with, but she'd only just begun a few months of laying the groundwork for his torment when he was taken away. Her ennui has returned even stronger than before.

At first, Vulgrist can hardly stir herself to bother with the heroes. She morosely invites them to depart this chamber and never return. There's no trick here—if the heroes simply leave at once, the velstrac lets them go. If they persist or question her, she sighs in frustration and attacks; she has no interest in talking. She fights until destroyed but doesn't leave this area. With all the manacles present here, Vulgrist can use her animate chains ability from anywhere in this room.

VULGRIST

CREATURE 6

Female evangelist velstrac (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 282)

Initiative Perception +13

Treasure: The whip is a +1 *ghost touch whip*. It was once one of Vulgrist's favorite weapons, but she doesn't use it any longer.

D12. THE GHOSTWALK

MODERATE 4

The ceiling of this wide hall rises to a height of twenty-five feet. Stone sarcophagi carved with tormented, emaciated figures stand upright in alcoves along its walls. To the

northeast, a fifteen-foot-wide portion of the wall has crumbled away into a series of ledges that drop down into a cavern. Eerie blue lights glow to the north and south—the light to the south is brighter and constant, while the light to the north flickers softly.

This long hallway served as a gruesome trophy hall. With the exception of the two northernmost alcoves and the alcove leading to area **D10**, each sarcophagus



Vulgrist

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contains the defiled remains of one of Belcorra's enemies, stripped of gear and put on display. As soon as anyone steps up to a sarcophagus, its stone lid becomes transparent, providing a view of the long-dead body within. Each corpse is dressed in rags and marked with obviously fatal wounds. Most of these are the remains of long-dead heroes with no significant relation to the story of the Abomination Vaults Adventure Path. The corpses here used to be linked to enslaved ghosts that guarded the hall, but their undead presences have been inadvertently drawn into the magical wall at the south end of this hallway.

A large flight of stairs to the south leads down to the fifth level of the Abomination Vaults and is described in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #164: Hands of the Devil*. For now, progress to this level is blocked by a shimmering wall of ectoplasm. Now and then, silently shrieking ghosts flit through the swirling mist of this wall. The stairwell beyond remains visible yet tauntingly inaccessible. This wall acts as a *wall of force* heightened to 9th level and has been forged from the agonized souls of the heroes displayed throughout this hallway—they are the trapped ghosts who silently cry out in agony within the wall. This wall's creation was an unintended side effect of *Gauntlight's* test firing after it had lain dormant for so long. For now, though, the wall blocks progress deeper into the dungeon. Only the icons of Belcorra's killers can bring it down, as the ghost of Otari Ilvashti in area **D18** can explain, though only one icon can be found in this adventure.

The secret door in the alcove, which leads to area **D10**, is built into the back of the only empty sarcophagus. A hero who Searches the empty sarcophagus and succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check discovers the latch to swing the sarcophagus open like a door.

The collapse in the northwest wall leads to a series of 5-foot-high ledges that drop down to area **D14**.

Creatures: The two northernmost sarcophagi contain traitorous apprentices transformed into cairn wights. If anyone approaches within 15 feet of them, both lids pop open and the cairn wights emerge to attack. They relentlessly pursue foes through this level.

CAIRN WIGHTS (2) CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 292

Initiative Stealth +12

D13. UPPER TEMPLE OF NHIMBALOTH SEVERE 4

This vast octagonal chamber is mostly empty. The walls are carved and painted to resemble a sprawling graveyard half-sunken into a swampy morass, yet all the graves in the mural are open and empty. Carved images of shrieking

ghosts parade upward and into the hungry pupil of a malevolent eye at the apex of this room, thirty feet above. A circular fifteen-foot-diameter platform sits in the middle of the room, raised three feet off the surrounding floor. The platform supports an altar stone made of an irregular slab of rock marked by seven deep indentations, almost as if a huge, seven-fingered hand had gripped the stone with enough force to leave grooves behind. Now and then, a faint blue light flickers and pulses inside one of these indentations. Small objects lie heaped atop the altar.

A successful DC 25 Religion check to Recall Knowledge identifies this chamber as a shrine dedicated to Nhimbalothe, the Outer God of despair, ghosts, and swamps. Her shrines are often empty of additional furnishings such as statues or benches, symbolizing the emptiness of death itself. Worshipers typically kneel or prostrate themselves on the stone floor while priests lead sermons and sacrifices at the altar.

The entire shrine is infused with an overwhelming sense of despair and hopelessness. Any living creature who enters this room must succeed at a DC 22 Will save or become frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure). A living creature can't reduce its frightened condition while in this chamber. A critical success grants the creature temporary immunity for 24 hours.

Creatures: A hero who succeeds at a DC 16 Perception check from the room's entrance identifies the objects on the altar as four severed hands. These undead guardians scuttle forth and attack when the heroes enter this room. When the hands animate, four flickerwisps slither out from indentations on the altar's sides and join in their attack. The flickerwisps and crawling hands do not pursue foes from the shrine room. If no foes are present, they return to their original places on the altar. They fight until destroyed.

FLICKERWISPS (4) CREATURE 2

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Initiative Perception +9

ELITE CRAWLING HANDS (4) CREATURE 0

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 6, 56

Initiative Perception +7

Lights from the Altar: The altar produces a new flickerwisp each day at dusk, but no more than four flickerwisps can exist in this chamber at one time. The malevolent aura and flickerwisp generation persist until the heroes place the four Roseguard icons atop the altar stone, as directed by Otari's ghost (area **D18**). At this point, the frightening despair in the room ends and the altar produces no more flickerwisps.

D14. PAVILION

SEVERE 4

This immense cavern is cold and damp. Water drips from condensation above into a large, still lake. Thick patches of moist mushrooms, some nearly four feet tall, grow along the western shore of the lake, while a narrow trickle of water feeds in from a tunnel to the south. A thirty-five-foot-long pavilion made of stone stands in the middle of the lake, elevated ten feet above the water level by more than a dozen stone columns. The entire pavilion is encrusted with damp, pale fungus. Two stone bridges arch from the pavilion—one connecting it to a door set in the northern wall and another to a door to the east. A faintly flickering campfire burns in the middle of the pavilion, its smoke curling to the ceiling.

The fungus growing here may look ominous, but it is harmless. The lake has steep banks that drop away into a nearly uniform depth of 15 feet.

Belcorra built this pavilion as a place to meditate. The denizens of the Abomination Vaults don't visit here, as the lingering presence of Otari's ghost in area **D18** subconsciously influences them to stay away. Living creatures (such as the pavilion's current inhabitants) don't feel these influences.

Creatures: A grizzled, feral-looking man lives in the pavilion. He is Jaul Mezmin, a violent criminal and murderous werewolf wanted in the town of Otari for the slaying of several locals 30 years ago. Jaul's last victim was a woman named Ayla Lathenar, wife of Keeleno Lathenar, the owner of the Otari Market. Jaul hid in plain sight as one of the druids of Stone Ring Pond while he committed his murders, but when he was found out, he escaped capture by leaping from the Otari cliffs into the sea. The tides pulled him into sea caves, leaving him nearly drowned, but over the following weeks he recovered and found his way here.

Jaul's been living here ever since. His skin is pasty and pale, and he reeks of mushrooms and sour sweat. Cave crickets make up the bulk of his diet. His only companions over the years have been a series of loyal wolves; when one perishes, Jaul simply makes his way out through the caves to bond with another. At first, he made plans to return to Otari, but after living in this cave for so many years, Jaul knows no other life.

The heroes disrupt that life, though. When Jaul notices them, he staggers up to the edge of his pavilion and howls and barks wildly to warn them away. The wolf at his side accompanies his howls with its own. A hero who succeeds at a DC 27 Society check to Recall Knowledge realizes this man is the killer who disappeared from Otari a generation ago. At your

discretion, a hero familiar with Jaul's legacy treats the result of this check as one degree of success greater than the rolled result.

If the heroes attack Jaul or attempt to enter his pavilion, he assumes his hybrid form and attacks. If the heroes hang back, he continues to bark and howl until someone can calm him down. As soon as the heroes successfully use any skill with the linguistic trait on Jaul (such as to create a convincing Lie, use Diplomacy to Make an Impression, or try to Coerce him), he stops howling and blinks several times as he remembers that he can talk as well. A few moments later, he calls out in a halting voice, warning the heroes that this is his territory and they are not welcome. His initial attitude is hostile, and if the heroes try to talk to him too much he grows frustrated and uses his magic to attack from afar. Depending on the questions the heroes ask, Jaul may reveal his name or who he is, but it's likely only a matter of time before the paranoid werewolf loses patience and attacks.

If Jaul is reduced to 30 or fewer Hit Points, he begs for mercy and promises to give the heroes a reward if they spare him. This reward is Ayla's necklace. Heroes who show Jaul mercy can get him to talk further; Jaul is somewhat familiar with the eastern half of this level (areas **D14** to **D19**). For example, he can warn the heroes of the shadowy ghost on the island to the south (area **D18**) and tell them that if they enter the "nightmare stairs" to the north (area **D19**), they'd do well to keep their eyes closed if they want to ever escape them. If the heroes spare Jaul, he uses the sea caves to emerge near Otari and flees the region entirely. Whether or not he takes up his murderous ways is left for you to decide.

JAUL MEZMIN

CREATURE 6

UNIQUE **NE** **MEDIUM** **BEAST** **HUMAN** **HUMANOID** **WERECREATURE**
Male human werewolf stalker (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 330)

Perception +14; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Common; wolf empathy

Skills Acrobatics +12, Athletics +15, Deception +12, Nature +14, Survival +14

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

Items +1 striking katar (2), bejeweled necklace worth 10 gp featuring a porpoise and the engraving, "Ayla, My Beloved"

Wolf Empathy (divination, primal) Jaul can communicate with lupines.

AC 24; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +14, **Will** +16; +1 status vs. poison

HP 120; **Weaknesses** silver 7; **Resistances** poison 3

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ katar +17 (agile, deadly d6, magical, monk), **Damage** 2d4+7 piercing

Melee ♦ claw +16 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+7 slashing

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Melee ♦ jaws +16, **Damage** 2d8+7 piercing plus curse of the werewolf

Primal Prepared Spells DC 24, attack +15; **3rd** heal, lightning bolt, wall of thorns; **2nd** heal, summon animal, water breathing; **1st** feather fall, grease, magic fang; **Cantrips (3rd)** acid splash, detect magic, produce flame, tanglefoot

Animal Order Spells 1 Focus Point, DC 24; **3rd** heal animal (Core Rulebook 399)

Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, polymorph, primal, transmutation) As werecreature (Pathfinder Bestiary 329);

human with fist +16 for 1d6+7 bludgeoning, or wolf with Speed 40 feet and jaws with Knockdown.

Curse of the Werewolf (curse, necromancy, primal) This curse only affects humanoids; **Saving Throw** DC 23 Fortitude. On each full moon, the cursed creature must succeed at another Fortitude save or turn into a werewolf until dawn. The creature is under the GM's control and goes on a rampage for half the night before falling unconscious at dawn.

Moon Frenzy (polymorph, primal, transmutation) When a full moon appears in the night sky, Jaul must enter his hybrid form, can't Change Shape thereafter, becomes Large, increases his reach by 5 feet, and increases the damage of his jaws by 2. When the moon sets or the sun rises, Jaul returns to humanoid form and is fatigued for 2d4 hours.

Wolf Coordination Jaul's Strikes deal 1d6 extra damage to creatures within his wolf's reach.

JAUŁ'S WOLF

CREATURE 4

UNIQUE N MEDIUM ANIMAL

Male wolf (Pathfinder Bestiary 334)

Perception +11; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Acrobatics +9, Athletics +11, Stealth +11, Survival +9

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

AC 21; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +9

HP 60

Speed 35 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +13, **Damage** 2d6+7 piercing plus Knockdown

Jaul Coordination The wolf deals 1d6 extra damage to creatures within Jaul's reach.

Side Quest: The heroes can bring Jaul in, dead or alive, to Otari for a 50 gp bounty. If the heroes don't realize who he is right away, allow a hero who looks over the inscription on his necklace to attempt a DC 18 Society check (DC 13 if the hero is affiliated with the Otari Market). On a success, the hero recognizes the name as Ayla Lathenar, the dead wife of the Otari Market merchant, Keeleno Lathenar. Approaching Keeleno with proof that the werewolf is dead—as the bitter man won't accept his wife's murderer remaining alive—earns the heroes a 20 percent discount for all purchases at the Otari Market for life.

D15. TWISTING TUNNEL

Several slippery ledges lead up and out of area D14, joining a small complex of caverns that stretches

Jaul Mezmin

between Fogfen and the coast. It was via these tunnels that Jaul Mezmin arrived, and he uses them today to hunt for food. The tunnels connect to the coastline west of Otari in a sea cave that's underwater even at low tide. The actual contents of these caverns are beyond the scope of this adventure, but they likely contain other predators and dangers. You should feel free to expand them if the heroes wish to explore them and are in need of additional XP.

D16. HAUNTED STAIRS

A staircase leads upward from this narrow landing. The south wall, facing the stairs, flickers and glows with ribbons of eerie green luminescence.

These stairs lead up to area C33.

During his flight through the Abomination Vaults, Otari Ilvashti made one of his final stops on this staircase. He waited here for only an hour to patch some wounds and regain his courage, then moved on through the door to area D14, hoping to find an escape route. Unfortunately, he never made it to the sea cave exit, for the enormous otyugh that dwelt in the cavern in those days attacked him at once. Otari was forced to flee south and made it to area D18. The otyugh was too large to reach him there, but too stubborn to leave, and it's there that Otari finally perished.

As in areas B28 and C3, Otari's spiritual energy remains here. When the heroes reach this point, another message manifests in the glowing light on the wall: "*Gauntlight* is a weapon, built to raze Absalom—it must be brought down!" After the message is read, the words slide down into a writhing ribbon of footprints that leads into area D14, then makes a panicked twisting route down through area D17 and into area D18.

This spectral manifestation can appear once per day.

D17. DISPOSAL POND

A rusty metal chute protrudes from the ceiling to the west here, coming to an end over a pool of slimy water. A huge mound of fungus lies under the tube against the west wall, resting in a strangely monstrous shape.

This chute leads up to area D7, but it is slick and requires a successful DC 18 Athletics check to Climb. Characters who are dumped into the pool of water here find it cold and unpleasant, but it's only 3 feet deep.

Fortunately, the immense otyugh once kept here for trash disposal purposes died long ago. Its strangely preserved body lies encased in fungus under the pipe. Anyone who examines the remains of the Huge otyugh can identify it with a successful DC 23 Occultism check to Recall Knowledge.

D18. OTARI'S DOOM SEVERE 4

The water in this area is dark but only 3 feet deep.

A low rocky isle rises less than a foot above the surrounding water here, its surface covered with a fine layer of pale green mushrooms and mold.

A human skeleton dressed in rotten leather armor and clutching a rapier lies in a heap at the center of the isle.

The skeleton on the island was once Otari Ilvashti. He survived the battle with Belcorra and a desperate flight through the upper levels of the Abomination Vaults only to become trapped here by the immense otyugh waiting in area D17. Already weakened from his ordeal before contracting filth fever from the fight with the otyugh, Otari lingered on the tiny islet only 2 days before he perished.

Today, his spirit lingers on, both in the form of the strange warnings on the walls throughout the Abomination Vaults and also as a ghost consumed by two linked desires—vengeance on Belcorra and fear that *Gauntlight* may yet be used to harm his hometown of Absalom. As the heroes draw near, Otari's ghost rises up from his skeleton, appearing much as he did during the late stages of filth fever, albeit with a transparent green shade (page 88). Otari can't leave this area, and since the heroes are the first potentially helpful adventurers to visit his haunted remains, he is eager to provide what aid he can—see page 88 for the crucial information he can provide.

Creatures: Before Otari can speak to the heroes, a will-o'-wisp and two flickerwisps that have tormented him for years dart forth to protect their fear-laden victim. Otari can do little more than warn the heroes about the "Eyes of the Empty Death" before they swoop forth to attack.

Once combat begins, Otari provides what aid he can. The aberrations long ago learned to stay out of the ghost's reach, but Otari makes Infested Shadow Strikes against them by momentarily possessing the heroes' shadows.



Otari Ilvashti

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Once the wisps are defeated, Otari provides the heroes with much more information—see page 88 for the details Otari imparts.

WILL-O'-WISP

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 333

Initiative Stealth +16

FLICKERWISPS (2)

CREATURE 2

Page 83

Initiative Perception +9

Treasure: Otari encourages the heroes to claim and use his gear once he's done speaking with them. His infiltrator thieves' tools are one of the four icons required to overcome the barrier in area **D12**. His other gear consists of a *dagger of venom*, a *sneaky key*, and +1 *studded leather armor*.

D19. THE FOREVER STAIRS

The walls of this five-foot-wide hallway shimmer and ripple with faint whorls of pale blue energy. A staircase to the west leads upward, and the one to the east leads down. Both the ascending and descending stairs reach small landings.

While at first glance this hallway might seem unremarkable, it should quickly become clear that something truly strange is going on once the heroes start to travel it. The hallway loops back upon itself; for example, if the heroes choose to go clockwise, the stairs will always lead upward, but they end up at the same place they started after making a complete circuit. Belcorra created this distorted spatial effect in the early days of her construction of the Abomination Vaults as she was experimenting with several magical methods of delivering her monsters directly into the streets of Absalom. While she ultimately abandoned spatial warping as too inefficient to be used on a sufficiently large scale, she kept this warped square hall as a sort of "moat" around her personal quarters.

The outside doors to areas **D13** and **D14** are always present, but the alcove and door to area **D20** are concealed by an illusory wall created by a 5th-level *illusory object* spell. The Will DC to disbelieve the illusion is 26, but the heroes might find the wall in other ways. A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check while Searching the north hallway or a DC 20 Arcana or Occultism check while Investigating the north hall identifies anomalies in the blue energy that indicate something unusual about that section of the wall.

XP Award: Grant the heroes 30 XP the first time they manage to reach area **D20**.

D20. BELCORRA'S SUITE

EXTREME 4

These four angled rooms have identical basic descriptions; adjust the following as needed to account for the location of any doors in the room. Area **D20d** also features a plain stone archway in one wall filled with blank stone. This is an inactive portal to the depths of the Abomination Vaults.

A pair of doors provide exits from this room, one of which is set a foot higher than the room's dusty floor on a semicircular step.

When Belcorra first began construction of the Abomination Vaults, these chambers served as her personal suite. She lived here for many years as she oversaw the construction of the dungeons both above and below, but once the project was complete, she abandoned this home for one even deeper underground. She moved her belongings deep below as well, leaving these chambers abandoned and empty, but when she became a ghost, her spiritual energy reacted in much the same way Otari's did by manifesting lingering images within these rooms where she spent so many hours.

As a result, each time the heroes step into one of these four rooms, they are greeted with a brief ghostly image of the room as it once was. Each time, they also see a vision of Belcorra herself within the room. Descriptions of each room's visions are given below, but chances are good that the heroes won't have time to study the scenes at first—see Creatures below.

D20a: This room was once a comfortable sitting room with two chairs and a low end table between them. In the brief vision, Belcorra is meeting with the drow Volluk (as he was in life, as a drow). Although the image has no sound, Belcorra is speaking animatedly about something, and Volluk is listening attentively.

D20b: Originally a lounge with two plush divans, this room flashes an image of Belcorra relaxing while reading a large tome. A hero who succeeds at a DC 18 Perception check sees that the book is titled *The Whispering Reeds* (this book is currently in area **C35**).

D20c: A well-set table reveals this to have once been Belcorra's private dining room. In the image, she sits alone at the table, drinking a glass of wine and enjoying an elegantly plated roast arm that looks disturbingly human.

D20d: Belcorra's bedroom features a large bed along the west wall. The stone archway to the north shimmers as a portal opens and Belcorra steps through with a cruel smile on her lips and blood on her hands.

Creatures: A powerful and horrific entity known as

a voidglutton has dwelt within these chambers since Belcorra abandoned them. Unlike many of Belcorra's minions, the voidglutton came to her of its own free will, drawn from across the dimensions by echoes of Nhimbaloth's presence. It volunteered to aid Belcorra as a guardian of the upper shrine (area **D13**), but once she relocated her personal effects to deeper within the Abomination Vaults, it took over these rooms. It basks in the latent fears and pains of the dungeon's haunts and ghosts.

When Belcorra rose as a ghost, the voidglutton took note and visited her, learning of her plans to reactivate *Gauntlight* and realizing it would take time to awaken the dormant artifact. The voidglutton helped her refine the plans to testing *Gauntlight*, and has recently done so with Volluk's aid (as the heroes experienced at the beginning of Chapter 2). Since then, the voidglutton has lurked here, understanding that it's just a matter of time before Belcorra contacts it again to enact the next stage of her plan.

The voidglutton moves from room to room in this area, as it finds the echoes of Belcorra's spirit soothing. It therefore has an equal chance of being in area **D20a**, **D20b**, **D20c**, or **D20d** when the heroes arrive. It notes the heroes' intrusion immediately, however, and swiftly moves to confront them. The creature has no interest in negotiation; it attacks at once and fights to the death, but it doesn't pursue heroes who flee these rooms. If the voidglutton clearly has the upper hand over a group of intruders, it might offer to let most of them flee if they leave it a single survivor to torment to death over a few months.

VOIDGLUTTON

CREATURE 8

Page 87

Initiative Perception +18

D21. TROPHY VAULT

The walls of this octagonal chamber are sheathed in a foul-looking moist webbing made of stringy, semi-transparent slime. The bodies of three creatures have been mounted on the walls in this webbing, as if on display: a lavender-skinned elf, the legless body of a spider-like humanoid, and a hideous humanoid with transparent flesh.

Belcorra took all of her treasure with her when she left, but the voidglutton has used this place as a den for many years and has placed a few of its favorite trophies here—bodies of creatures whose minds it fed upon and found to be particularly delightful, along with some of their potent gear and treasures. The bodies themselves are encased on the walls by

the voidglutton's ectoplasmic webbing and must be cut free before they can be searched. Once freed, the bodies swiftly begin to decay, no longer held in stasis by the effects of the voidglutton's webs.

Treasure: The upper torso of a drider from the fleshwarping labs on the sixth level of the Abomination Vaults carries a vial with a *lesser mistform elixir*. A drow outcast from the outpost of Yldaris on the ninth level of the Abomination Vaults wears a strand of *holy prayer beads* on one wrist. The body of an urdefhan from the ninth level of the Abomination Vaults carries a +1 *striking composite longbow* in a case.

Concluding the Adventure

"Ruins of Gauntlight" doesn't have a specifically scripted end, but as the heroes explore the first four levels of the Abomination Vaults, they should learn three key pieces of information: that Belcorra has returned as a ghost, that she intends to use *Gauntlight* to attack Absalom, and that they can open the way to the levels below by placing four icons once carried by the Roseguard upon the altar in area **D13**. The heroes might complete several other side quests along the way. Even after the heroes open the way to the lower levels, they could still have areas in the upper four levels left to explore.

Of course, word should spread through Otari that the heroes have discovered a sprawling dungeon below the ruins of Gauntlight Keep. At your option, locals in Otari might approach the heroes with new requests. Some of these side quests await discovery as the following adventures play out, but feel free to invent new side quests of your own, particularly if the players are ready to press into the deeper levels but aren't yet 5th level. Perhaps Oseph Menhemes asks the heroes to create detailed maps of the dungeon levels for display in his museum-mansion, or maybe Vandy Banderdash offers healing supplies in exchange for exorcising all of the lost souls and ghosts from the dungeon. Certainly Wrin's curiosity about the Abomination Vaults continues, and while her claustrophobia prevents her from joining the heroes, she asks them to update her with tales of their adventures, promising new discounts on items she purchases from traders in return for their entertaining stories.

But for now, the upper levels of the Abomination Vaults have been explored. If the heroes wish to proceed deeper, and if they hope to stop Belcorra from her nefarious plan, they'll need to gather up the three remaining Roseguard icons. This quest is more complicated than it initially appears, and kicks off the next adventure in the Abomination Vaults Adventure Path, "Hands of the Devil."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Otari at a Glance

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

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

GAUNTLIGHT KEEP

OTARI

400 Feet

FOGFEN

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

TO ABSALOM

TO FARMLANDS



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

Exploring Otari

Significant locations in Otari are detailed on the following pages and correspond to the numbers on the map on page 66. Unlabeled buildings are wooden homes whose inhabitants work for nearby businesses or for one of the town’s three lumber concerns.

Many significant locations end with a stat block that summarizes the site’s name, general function, and level (for the purpose of determining any necessary values associated with it, such as the highest level task available to Earn Income). This stat block also notes the site’s address, wares and services for sale there (such as spellcasting services), and information about the most significant NPC who lives or works at the establishment. The NPC’s initial attitude condition to the heroes is also listed, along with DCs most likely to be useful when interacting with the NPC.

LOCATION SUPPORT

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

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

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

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

OTARI

N TOWN

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

Government Mayor (elected leader)

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

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Halfling

Religions Cayden Cailean, Erastil, Gozreh, Sarenrae

Threats aberrant horrors, eerie hauntings, kobolds, smugglers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE ROSEGUARD

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

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

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

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

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

1. THE GIANT'S WHEEL

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

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

THE GIANT'S WHEEL

LUMBER MILL 5

EMPLOYER

Address 10 Miller's Road

Klorte Hengus (LN male half-orc foreman 5, Indifferent, Perception DC 20, Will DC 20). If the heroes earn the support of the Giant's Wheel, Klorte allows them to Earn

Income using Survival by patrolling the flume's length. If you choose, encounters with local wildlife might liven up a shift of flume-walking. If Klorte warms to the heroes, he might even gift them one of his old +1 hatchets.

2. LOADING FLUME

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

3. MENHEMES MANOR

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

Oseph does his best to keep his roles as businessman and politician separate, devoting the mornings to work as a public figure and the afternoons to managing his company, Otari Lumber.

MENHEMES MANOR

MANOR 4

EMPLOYER

Address 10 Highside Road

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

4. WRIN'S WONDERS

This curio shop bears no sign, but locals know it as Wrin's Wonders: a place to marvel at whatever strange new trinkets and offerings its equally strange owner might have come across. The structure consists of a ring of what appear to be standing stones arranged in a 60-foot-diameter circle surrounding a 15-foot-high dome of wooden beams covered with triangular pieces of canvas. Closer inspection of the standing "stones" reveals that they are also made of wood frames and canvas, cleverly painted to resemble granite. The area between the central dome and the surrounding circle is a collection of other dome-shaped tents used to store the shop's wares. When it's not raining, the fabric of

these domes is pulled aside so shoppers can admire what's for sale in the light of the sun—or the moon, for that matter, as Wrin's Wonders is always open.

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

More information about Wrin appears on page 90.

WRIN'S WONDERS SHOP 5

DISCOUNT LIBRARY LODGE

Address 60 Osprey Street

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

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

Spellcasting Wrin's spellcasting services are available, but she's limited to the spells listed in her stat block (page 90).

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

5. GALLENTINE DELIVERIES

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

GALLENTINE DELIVERIES COURIER 4

EMPLOYER GARRISON

Address 120 Roseguard Road

Wares stabling, transportation (caravan or carriage)

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

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

6. BLADES FOR GLADES

Otari's primary smithy specializes in the construction of saws, axes, and other tools used in the lumber trade. The current owner of Blades for Glades is a bitter man named Carman Rajani, who boasts of being descended from one of Otari's founders, Vol Rajani. He hopes to supplant Oseph Menhemes as the town's mayor someday, but after losing four mayoral elections in a row despite his pedigree, Carman is planning other ways to seize his birthright. (Carman makes his move during the start of the second adventure in the Abomination Vaults Adventure Path.)

BLADES FOR GLADES SHOP 5

DISCOUNT EMPLOYER WORKSHOP

Address 50 Ilvashti Street

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

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

7. ODD STORIES

A three-story stone tower rises from the back half of this one-floor wooden bookstore. A sign above the front door depicts a stack of open books with lines of magical energy rising from the pages. While the shop's owner is indeed a wizard, Morlibint had the sign commissioned in an attempt to portray the power of imagination within the fanciful fiction works and anthologies that are his specialty. Morlibint sells other texts as well, although he leaves the nonfiction curation to his husband Carlthe, whose expertise makes Odd Stories the primary source of textbooks and teaching tools for Inkleholtz's educational pursuits (see Inkleholz Manor on page 72). Morlibint has bright red hair that he keeps closely cut to his scalp. Despite his perpetual scowl, he warms quickly to the presence of other scholars and wizards, for he's always excited to "talk shop."

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ODD STORIES

SHOP 4

DISCOUNT LIBRARY

Address 100 Roseguard Road

Wares books, formulas, arcane and occult scrolls

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

Morlibint (LN male human wizard 4, Indifferent, Perception DC 17, Will DC 19). Odd Stories automatically supports heroes seeking books on Morlibint's behalf (see Side Quest on page 40).

8. OTARI GARRISON

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

OTARI GARRISON

BARRACKS 4

EMPLOYER GARRISON

Address 20 Drake Street

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

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

9. FARMER'S GUILD

This building and its nearby yards provide stables, auction houses, livestock pens, butcher shops, and a guildhall for the region's farmers. Otari's Farmer's Guild handles the distribution of goods from the various nearby farms and ranches, ensuring that the members are paid well for their toil while saving them

the trouble of having to spend too much time on deliveries of goods in town. The guildhall maintains a dozen rooms that are free of charge to visiting farmers, but available for rent to others. The current guildhead is a business-minded halfling woman named Jala Highstepper who maintains a shrine to Erastil in the side yard. She's not a cleric herself, and hopes someday to convince a visiting priest of Erastil to settle in Otari and take up the mantle of representing the regional farmers, despite the fact that she's done an admirable job of it herself so far.

FARMER'S GUILD

GUILDHALL 2

EMPLOYER HOUSING

Address 70 Roseguard Road

Wares lodging, animals

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

10. CROW'S CASKS

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

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

CROW'S CASKS

TAVERN 4

CHURCH DISCOUNT EMPLOYER PARLOR

Address 10 Shrike Street

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

Magiloy (CG female tengu brewer 4, Indifferent, Perception DC 21, Will DC 17). If Crow's Casks supports the heroes, Magiloy might hire them as taste testers—a job that's quite a bit more harrowing than one might expect. A taste tester can Earn Income using Fortitude saves, but on a critical failure, something they've tasted sits poorly and the hero becomes stupefied 1 for 24 hours.

11. CROOK'S NOOK

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

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

CROOK'S NOOK

INN/TAVERN 5

DISCOUNT EMPLOYER HOUSING PARLOR

Address 10 Wisp Street

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

Yinyasmera (CN female human smuggler 5, Indifferent, Perception DC 22, Will DC 20). If the heroes return Yinyasmera's missing "employees" (see area **A17**'s Side Quest on page 15), Crook's Nook supports them as long as they keep quiet about the Osprey Club. If Crook's Nook supports the heroes and they express interest in illicit work, Yinyasmera suggests minor crimes against visitors (pickpocketing, petty burglary, con games, and the like). This allows the heroes to Earn Income using Thievery, but on a critical failure, their actions are spotted and Yinyasmera cuts them off from future jobs. Further legal woes might arise for the heroes as well, at your discretion.

12. OTARI MARKET

One part open-air farmer's market, one part log-cabin trading post, the Otari Market is a gathering place for locals and a one-stop shop for all manner of general goods. Tended by a dour, humorless man named Keeleno Lathenar, Otari Market is open every day from dawn to dusk, with one exception: Keeleno closes the market down on every Gozran 5th in honor of his dear departed wife, Ayla, who was

mauled to death 30 years ago. The killer turned out to be a werewolf druid named Jaul Mezmin, whom Keeleno believes remains at large to this day. Keeleno remains bitter and fearful toward druids, particularly those who worship at Stone Ring Pond.

OTARI MARKET

SHOP 2

DISCOUNT EMPLOYER

Address 80 Menhemes Street

Wares food, adventuring gear, simple weapons, light armor

Keeleno Lathenar (N male human market owner 2, Indifferent, Perception DC 14, Will DC 14). The Otari Market won't support the heroes if any of them are known to be (or profess to be) druids. The Otari Market otherwise automatically supports heroes who return Ayla's necklace to Keeleno along with evidence of Jaul's death (see area **D14**'s Side

Quest on page 60). If the Otari Market supports the heroes, they can stand guard over the market and Earn Income using Intimidation. At your discretion, a minor encounter with a cutpurse or other petty crook might take place during a work shift.

13. OTARI FISHERY

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

OTARI FISHERY

GUILDHALL 3

EMPLOYER PARLOR

Address 10 Fisher Street

Wares beverages, meals, transportation (sailing ship)

Tamilly Tanderveil (NG female human harbor warden 3, Friendly, Perception DC 18, Will DC 16). Once the heroes earn the support of the Otari Fishery, they can help keep the town's pier in repair or work aboard a fishing vessel. They can Earn Income using Crafting, Nature, or Sailing Lore.



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THE STONESCALE WARRENS

When the Stonescale kobolds took over Otari, they used the buildings above as a sort of camouflage, living in an extensive network of tunnels that connected many of the buildings below ground. Today, this network is a complicated tangle of flooded or collapsed tunnels. Thieves and smugglers from the Osprey Club use some, while others have become the dens of monsters. One tunnel leads all the way to the Abomination Vaults; see area **C2** on page 37.

14. RUINS OF THE THIRSTY ALPACA

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

15. INKLEHOLTZ MANOR

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

INKLEHOLTZ MANOR

MANOR 4

EMPLOYER

Address 75 Wisp Street

Aymora Inkleholtz (NG half-elf lumber magnate 4, Friendly, Perception DC 17, Will DC 19). If Inkleholtz Manor supports the heroes, Aymora offers them work in a classroom she maintains in town. This allows the heroes to Earn Income

using Lore associated with one of the four disciplines that the Inkleholtzes hope to foster in the local children: literature, mathematics, science, and history.

16. CHERTEL MANOR

Wrab Chertel is the current patriarch of one of Otari's three lumber concerns, Chertel Timber. The Chertels are struggling with a combination of poor management, labor disputes in distant lumber camps, and difficulties with financing. Wrab suspects the other companies of meddling in his business and sabotaging both lumberjack morale and equipment alike; in truth, the Kortos Consortium is behind Wrab's woes. By forcing Chertel into desperate hiring, the Kortos Consortium has managed to place an increasing number of its own agents in Otari.

CHERTEL MANOR

MANOR 4

EMPLOYER

Address 5 Zarmavdian Street

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



Brela Venkervale

17. THE ROWDY ROCKFISH

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

ROWDY ROCKFISH

INN/TAVERN 3

HOUSING PARLOR

Address 50 Zarmavdian Street

Wares beverages, meals, lodging

Brela Venkervale (LG female dwarf innkeeper 3,

Indifferent, Perception DC 16, Will DC 20). The Rowdy Rockfish automatically supports the heroes if they bring Lasda home (see area **D9**'s Side Quest on page 56).

18. DAWNFLOWER LIBRARY

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

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

DAWNFLOWER LIBRARY

TEMPLE 5

CHURCH **DISCOUNT** **LIBRARY**

Address 10 Dawnflower Street

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

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

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

19. STONE RING POND

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

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

About 5 years after Jaul's disappearance, an idealistic gnome druid named Worliwynn heard of Jaul's rampage and came to Otari specifically to repair the damage the werewolf had done to the Gozrens' reputation and guide locals interested in living in greater harmony with the land. A generation later, Worliwynn has been largely successful, with the significant exception of still-grieving Keeleno Lathenar. Worliwynn shares more than grief with Keeleno. She also suspects that Jaul survived his fall from the cliff. She patrols the Otari hinterlands nightly, vigilant for any sign that Jaul might have returned to his old hunting grounds.

STONE RING POND

TEMPLE 4

CHURCH **LODGE**

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

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

Worliwynn (NG female gnome druid 4, Friendly, Perception DC 19, Will DC 21). Stone Ring Pond automatically supports the heroes if they deliver justice to Jaul Mezmin (see area **D14**'s Side Quest on page 60), whether by killing or capturing him.

20. OTARI GRAVEYARD

Looming over the western cliffside and crowned by a grove of scraggly trees that no living person in town can remember ever having borne living leaves, the Otari Graveyard is tended by the Dawnflower Library acolytes. A wooden stairway ascends the cliff face from the library below, but most priests prefer to take the half-hour walk through town to tend the graves. Cremations and burials at sea have become more popular in Otari, so burials in the graveyard tend to be the province of older families who value tradition. While the graveyard itself is spooky and unsettling, it doesn't have any undead problems within its boundaries—at least, not until the *Gauntlight* shines upon it again during this volume's adventure!

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

Belcorra's History

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

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

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

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

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

A DUNGEON FULL OF MONSTERS

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

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

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

BELCORRA'S RISE

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

against Absalom and the heroes who vanquished her. The Roseguard are long dead, but the town they founded remains, and the icons representing their adventuring careers (page 88) now have the power to penetrate Belcorra's protections.

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

Campaign Timeline

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

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

Abomination Vaults Summary

A summary of the Adventure Path's adventures follows.

RUINS OF GAUNTLIGHT

By James Jacobs

Pathfinder Adventure Path #163, Levels 1–4

When the mysterious *Gauntlight*, an eerie lighthouse located inland from Otari, glows with baleful light, the people of Otari suspect trouble. The town's newest heroes must venture into the ruins around the lighthouse—and delve into the dungeon levels far beneath it—to discover the evil that *Gauntlight* holds. Hideous monsters, deadly traps, and mysterious ghosts await the heroes.

HANDS OF THE DEVIL

By Vanessa Hoskins

Pathfinder Adventure Path #164, Levels 5–7

The Abomination Vaults sprawl far beneath *Gauntlight*, and it's time to take weapons, torches,

and wits into the deeper dungeons. Here, vile fleshwarper labor to create perfect specimens for their long-dead leader, and a powerful devil still labors to raise an army of the dungeons' feral and fractious monsters. An unlikely ally can reveal the secrets of the Abomination Vaults, but his price is steep and must be paid in blood.

EYES OF EMPTY DEATH

By Stephen Radney-MacFarland

Pathfinder Adventure Path #165, Levels 8–10

The deepest levels of the Abomination Vaults contain massive caverns and a relic left behind by one of the Outer Gods. The heroes must negotiate the ruthless politics of insular drow, undead gnomes, vampiric urdefhans, and stranger creatures to gain the tools they need to vanquish Belcorra Haruvex. Yet the undead sorcerer grows in power, and the heroes must put her to rest before she claims the full might of her malevolent patron.

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Artifacts and Items

The following new items appear in “Ruins of Gauntlight” and impact the entire Adventure Path.

GAUNTLIGHT

ITEM 20

UNIQUE ARTIFACT MAGICAL NECROMANCY

Gauntlight is much more than a 115-foot-tall lighthouse rising from the heart of an old ruin in Fogfen—its pale stone walls extend far below the ruins, passing through eight different dungeon levels and finally terminating at the ninth level below the surface, where its deep foundation centers on an ominous chamber where, long ago, Nhimbalothe herself once physically brushed against this world. Once she finished its physical construction, the sorcerer Belcorra Haruvex used this spot as a source of power to infuse the walls, floors, and ceilings of each of *Gauntlight*'s levels with eldritch power. The lens at the apex of the lighthouse would have, in time, been able to focus this lingering eldritch energy into a powerful beam, but Belcorra's plans were cut short before she could replace the mundane lenses with dangerous magical ones.

As an artifact, *Gauntlight* can't be damaged by normal means. Its walls are impenetrable and impervious to any attempt to breach them by anybody except for followers of Nhimbalothe. They block effects that allow temporary passage, such as *passwall*, and also create a barrier against dimensional travel. The walls attempt to counteract teleportation effects and planar travel into or out of areas within *Gauntlight* and efforts to summon creatures into

the area (using a +37 counteract modifier); this effect does not stop a summoned creature from departing when the summoning ends.

In *Gauntlight*'s current state of diminished functionality, it can be activated only in the two ways below. By swapping in a series of magical lighthouse lenses that focus Nhimbalothe's baleful gaze—lenses so powerful that even Belcorra takes special care with them—the artifact gains significantly greater power, including the ability to reach all the way to Absalom and to activate its effects every minute. These lenses are described in “Eyes of Empty Death,” the third adventure in the Abomination Vaults Adventure Path.

To activate *Gauntlight*, a creature must be in the deepest portion of the artifact (this chamber is in the Temple level and is presented in “Eyes of Empty Death”). From this point, a creature can observe the world outside remotely through *Gauntlight*'s lens, including any area *Gauntlight*'s beam can reach.

Activate ♦♦♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per month; **Effect**

A pale blue beam shines from *Gauntlight*'s lens and illuminates a 30-foot-radius burst centered on any point within 1 mile. The light saturates the region, causing any corpses in the area or within 10 feet of the surface of the illuminated area to animate as level –1 undead (typically as skeleton guards or zombie shamblers). Once animated, the undead remain active until slain. Until then, they remain uncontrolled and are driven only by the desire to slaughter the living. If *Gauntlight* is fully

restored, the undead instead animate as any Common undead of 15th level or less, as the user wishes.

Activate ♦♦♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per month; **Effect** A pale blue beam shines from *Gauntlight's* lens and illuminates a 30-foot-radius burst centered on any point within 1 mile. The user chooses one creature of 4th level or less that is physically located within *Gauntlight*; this creature is then teleported to any point within this illumination radius. If *Gauntlight* is fully restored, any number of creatures within *Gauntlight* of 15th level or lower can be transported. This is a teleportation effect.

Destruction If Belcorra's ghost is permanently destroyed, *Gauntlight* loses all of its magical properties and collapses in on itself all the way down to its base, leaving an incredibly deep pit in the Fogfen.

LANTERN OF EMPTY LIGHT

ITEM 6

RARE ENCHANTMENT MAGICAL

Price 240 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

It's said that the pale blue light of this eldritch lantern shines from another dimension or even is linked, somehow, to the glow of a ghost when it is consumed by the Outer Goddess Nhimbaloth. A *lantern of empty light* is not intrinsically an evil item, though it remains a favored tool of those who would manipulate the minds of others for sinister reasons. It can be used as a normal bull's-eye lantern, but prolonged use tends to instill in the user a vague sense of being watched by unseen eyes.

Activate ♦♦♦ Interact (emotion, visual); **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You direct the lantern's light upon a single living creature within 60 feet. That creature must attempt a DC 20 Will save to resist the light's effects.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected and realizes that you attempted to mentally influence them with the light.

Success The creature is unaffected but thinks the light was harmless, unless it knows the true nature of the lantern already.

Failure The creature becomes fascinated by the lantern's light, and remains fascinated as long as you Sustain the Activation, up to 10 minutes.

Critical Failure As failure, but you can Sustain the Activation for up to 1 hour. When the effect ends, the fascinated creature remembers any events that took place while fascinated only as indistinct, dream-like memories.

Activate ♦♦♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You direct the lantern's light upon a single incorporeal

undead creature within 60 feet to siphon away some of the creature's essence, dealing 4d8 positive damage to the creature (DC 20 basic Will save).

SKEPTIC'S ELIXIR

ITEM 1+

UNCOMMON ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE ELIXIR

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Activate ♦ Interact

This elixir sharpens your mind and allows you to see through lies, falsehoods, and magical trickery. You gain an item bonus to Perception checks and Perception DCs to notice falsehoods, whether they're spoken lies or written deceit. You gain this same item bonus to Will saves.

Type lesser; **Level** 1; **Price** 4 gp

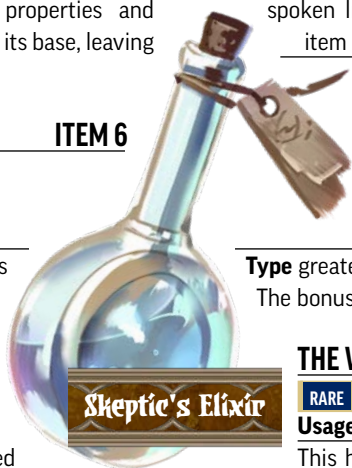
The bonus is +1, and the duration is 1 minute.

Type moderate; **Level** 6; **Price** 50 gp

The bonus is +2, and the duration is 10 minutes.

Type greater; **Level** 11; **Price** 300 gp

The bonus is +3, and the duration is 1 hour.



THE WHISPERING REEDS

ITEM 10

RARE ARTIFACT DIVINATION OCCULT

Usage held in 2 hands; **Bulk** 2

This hefty tome was compiled centuries ago by an anonymous author who sought to collect all parables, myths, stories, and encounters with the Outer Goddess Nhimbaloth. According to the introduction, the author's original intent was to create a work that foes of the Empty Death could use to fight against her influence, but as

one reads through the book, it becomes apparent that the opposite effect has been achieved—by compiling these stories, the author inadvertently generated a work that made it easier for Nhimbaloth to influence the world. Those who venerate the Empty Death seek copies of this book to use as a guide and religious text, while those who don't know better and peruse the book as though it were merely an anthology of stories find themselves unwittingly falling prey to Nhimbaloth's cult or agents of the entity herself. Those who study from *The Whispering Reeds* for too long are often cursed to rise as ghosts after death—though their existence never lasts for long, as they are inevitably consumed

by Nhimbaloth.

If a character understands the dangers of this book, however, moderated use can stall or even prevent such a fate from befalling them. If a character takes special



Lantern of Empty Light

care, they can even potentially use *The Whispering Reeds* for its original purpose—as a weapon against the cult of Nhimbalo. Using the text too often or leveraging some of its more powerful effects, however, causes the user to feel an ominous chill. In these cases, the user is exposed to the tome's curse, Empty Death (see below).

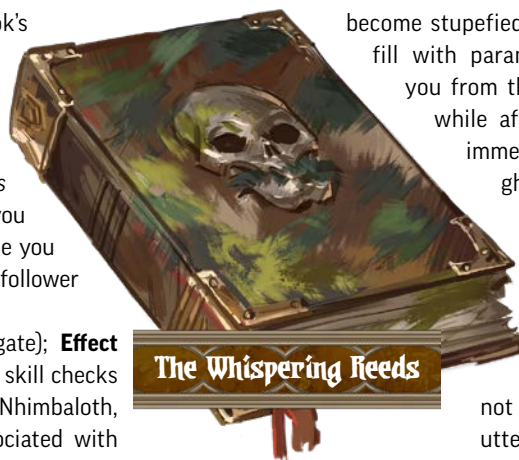
The anonymous compiler wanted to produce an enormous print run of *The Whispering Reeds*, but after the initial run they realized the danger and scuttled those plans, instead attempting to destroy those copies already created. This crusade caught the attention of Nhimbalo's cult, who swiftly assassinated the compiler. Fewer than two dozen copies of this rare tome are believed to still exist. The book's sinister nature causes all attempts to transcribe it to fail, resulting in bodies of gibberish, nonsense text.

The Whispering Reeds provides several abilities, but you can't activate any of them while you are stupefied unless you are a follower of Nhimbalo.

Activate 10 minutes (Investigate); **Effect** You gain a +2 item bonus to skill checks to Recall Knowledge about Nhimbalo, her faith, or creatures associated with her (such as incorporeal undead, vampiric mists, wisps, and other incorporeal creatures associated with death). Each time you use this ability after the first in a 24-hour period, you are exposed to the Empty Death.

Activate ♦♦ command, Interact; **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** You read aloud a phrase from the book and target a single incorporeal undead creature within 30 feet. That undead creature takes 5d6 positive damage (DC 27 basic Will save) as portions of their incorporeal being are consumed in patches of seven equally spaced holes. Each time you use this ability after the first in a 24-hour period, you are exposed to the Empty Death.

Activate ♦♦ command, Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You invoke a tale from *The Whispering Reeds* that parallels the situation, environment, or creatures nearby. Eerie mists and indistinct whispers rise in a 20-foot emanation around you, and clusters of seven perfectly spaced divots manifest in the ground, vegetation, and flesh of creatures in the emanation other than yourself and up to three creatures you designate at the time of activation. Creatures afflicted with these divots suffer from agonizing mental anguish in the form of crippling despair and take 4d6 mental damage (DC 27 basic Will save). The mists, whispers, and strange divots fade away at the end of the round, but any creature that takes mental damage from the



effect also takes a -1 penalty to saving throws against effects with the emotion trait for 1 minute. You are exposed to the Empty Death each time you use this ability.

Activate Cast a Spell; **Frequency** three times per day; **Effect** You cast one of the following spells at the lowest level possible (unless otherwise specified): *crushing despair* (one target within 30 feet only), *fear* (3rd), *paranoia*, or *phantasmal killer*. You are exposed to the Empty Death each time you use this ability.

Empty Death (curse, necromancy, occult) **Saving Throw** DC 27 Will; **Effect** If you activate *The Whispering Reeds* and are not a worshipper of Nhimbalo, you become stupefied 2 for 24 hours as your thoughts fill with paranoia that something is watching you from the other side of death. If you die while affected by the Empty Death, you immediately become a chaotic evil ghost. Every 7 days that pass after you become a ghost, you must succeed at a DC 2 flat check—failure indicates that you are consumed by Nhimbalo. A creature whose ghost is consumed in this way does not travel to the River of Souls and is utterly annihilated; this creature can only be restored to life via a 10th-level spell effect or ritual like *wish*.

Destruction Copies of *The Whispering Reeds* have no special protections and can be destroyed like any regular book, but doing so exposes the one who destroyed the book to the Empty Death.

Rituals and Spells

The heroes may find the following new ritual and spell useful in the Abomination Vaults.

AWAKEN PORTAL

RITUAL 3

RARE **CONJURATION**

Cast 1 hour; **Secondary Casters** up to 5

Primary Check Arcana or Occultism (trained); **Secondary Checks** Arcana or Occultism (whichever is used for the primary check)

Range 10 feet; **Target** 1 portal

You attempt to reactivate a dormant gate, portal, or *teleportation circle* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 244) by infusing it with magical energies. This ritual must be successfully performed twice, once at each location the portal connects. While the *teleportation circles* and portals found in the Abomination Vaults require no additional cost to awaken, other portals might require rare items or specific materials as a cost for this ritual

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at the GM's discretion—some portals might even be so powerful that this ritual cannot awaken them at all.

The DC required to successfully awaken a portal varies based on the strength and distance between its end points. For the portals found in the Abomination Vaults Adventure Path, the DC varies according to the dungeon level on which it is located. Use the DCs by Spell Level section of Table 10-5 on page 503 of the *Core Rulebook* to determine the DC for a portal, using the dungeon level in place of spell level. Thus, activating the portal on the first level of the Abomination Vaults requires a successful DC 15 check, while activating the portal on the fourth level requires a successful DC 23 check.

Critical Success You awaken the portal. If its other side is awakened, the portal can be used normally and won't

deactivate naturally. If its other side is not awakened, this side remains awakened for 1 year, possibly allowing you enough time to find and awaken the connecting portal.

Success As critical success, but if the portal's other side is not awakened, this side remains awakened for only 1d6 days before it fades and falls dormant again.

Failure You fail to activate the portal, and magical backlash leaves you stupefied 1 for 24 hours.

Critical Failure As failure, but in addition, a hostile creature is drawn through the portal and immediately attacks anyone present. The creature drawn through the portal varies, according to the portal's nature; in the Abomination Vaults, the creature conjured depends on the dungeon level where the ritual was attempted, as listed below.

First Level vampiric mist (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 278)

Second Level scalathrax (page 86)

Third Level gibbering moulder (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 176)

Fourth Level will-o'-wisp (*Bestiary* 333)

Fifth Level soul eater (*Bestiary* 2 247)

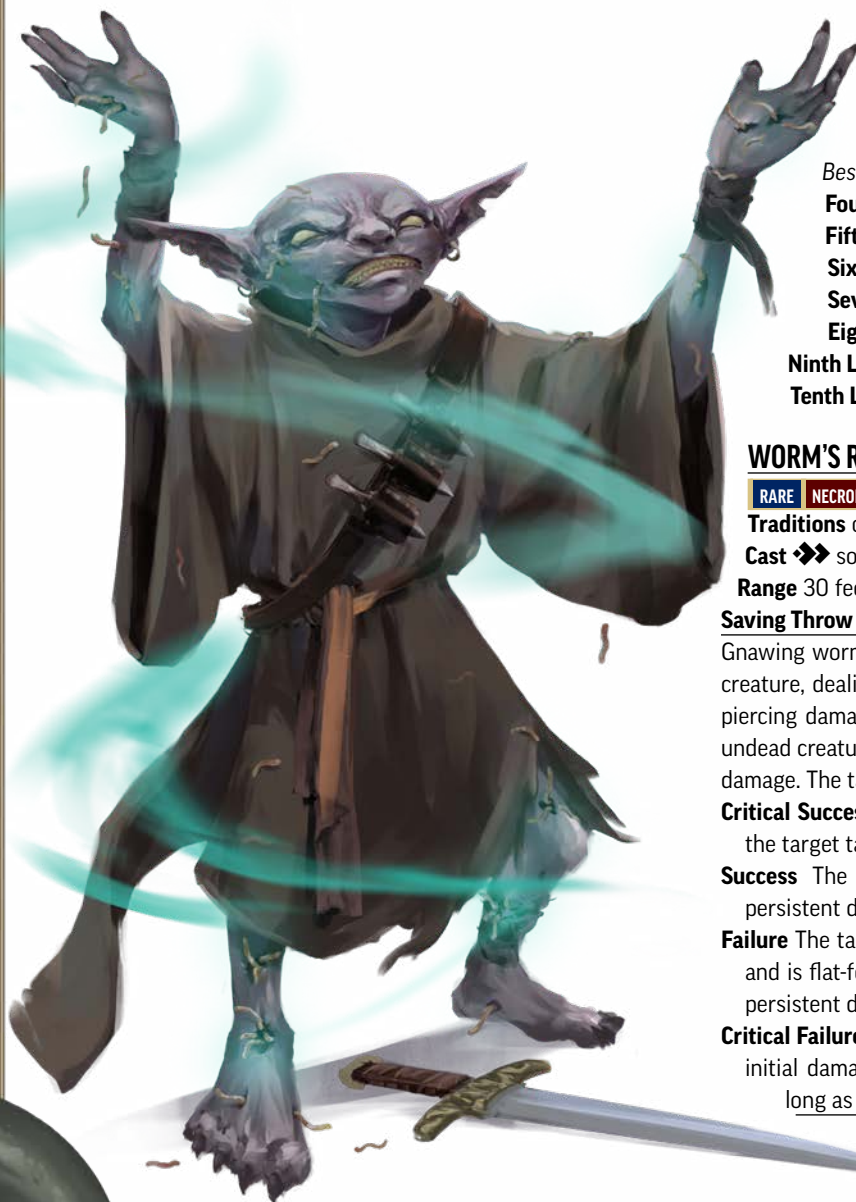
Sixth Level voidglutton (page 87)

Seventh Level dread wraith (*Bestiary* 2 298)

Eighth Level ghost mage (*Bestiary* 167)

Ninth Level gosreg (*Bestiary* 2 133)

Tenth Level shining child (*Bestiary* 292)



WORM'S REPAST

SPELL 2

RARE **NECROMANCY**

Traditions occult, primal

Cast ◆◆ somatic, verbal

Range 30 feet; **Targets** 1 corporeal creature

Saving Throw Fortitude; **Duration** see below

Gnawing worms materialize within the flesh of the target creature, dealing 4d6 piercing damage and 1d6 persistent piercing damage. If the target is a non-skeletal corporeal undead creature, you deal an extra 2d6 persistent piercing damage. The target must attempt a Fortitude save.

Critical Success The worms writhe away harmlessly and the target takes no damage.

Success The target takes full initial damage but no persistent damage, and the spell ends immediately.

Failure The target takes full initial and persistent damage and is flat-footed due to the pain for as long as it takes persistent damage.

Critical Failure As failure, but the target takes double the initial damage and is also slowed 1 by the pain for as long as it takes persistent damage.

Heightened (+2): The initial and persistent damage increase by 2d6 and 1d6, respectively.

Ghost Hunter Archetype

Ghosts have a wide range of capabilities and features—no two ghosts are exactly alike, as the nature of their abilities depends as much upon who they were in life as on how they died. Haunts, the spectral phenomena remaining in a site of death or powerful emotions, are related to but distinct from ghosts.

The ghost hunter knows that ghosts and haunts share many features. By focusing on these similarities, they can track down, confront, and defeat all manner of unquiet souls, helping them to find peace and move on to the afterlife.

GHOST HUNTER DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites Trained in Occultism or Religion

You have focused your training on hunting and defeating ghosts, spirits, and all manner of haunts. Pick Spirit Lore or Haunt Lore; you become trained in this skill. If you were already trained in both skills, you become trained in a new Lore skill of your choice.

Choose two cantrips from the occult spell list. Each cantrip must have the divination, enchantment, or necromancy trait. You can cast these spells as innate occult spells. You gain access to the Cast a Spell activity if you didn't have it already. You're trained in occult spell attack rolls and spell DCs. You can usually replace material components with somatic components, so you don't need a spell component pouch. Your key spellcasting ability for these spells is Charisma.

Special You can't select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the ghost hunter archetype.

GRAVE'S VOICE

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ghost Hunter Dedication

You can use your choice of Spirit Lore or Haunt Lore to Make an Impression or Request things of incorporeal creatures. At the GM's discretion, an incorporeal spirit might be willing to hear you out.

INVESTIGATE HAUNTING

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ghost Hunter Dedication

You are skilled at noticing the telltale signs of ghosts and hauntings. Even when you aren't Investigating in exploration mode, you get a check to Recall Knowledge about incorporeal undead and haunts active in the area. You also gain a +2 circumstance bonus to skill checks to disable haunts.

SPIRIT SPELLS

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ghost Hunter Dedication

Your ability to confront incorporeal menaces develops into full-fledged spellcasting. Choose a 1st-level occult spell. You can Cast this Spell as an innate occult spell. At 6th level, you gain a 2nd-level occult spell, and at 8th level, you gain a 3rd-level occult spell. Each of these spells must have the divination, enchantment, or necromancy trait. You can cast each of these spells once per day.

GHOST STRIKE

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ghost Hunter Dedication

Once per day, you can infuse a weapon you are carrying with magical energies that allow it to strike true against incorporeal undead. The weapon gains the effects of the *ghost touch* property rune for 10 minutes.

At 10th level, you can apply this effect to two weapons instead of one.

PEER BEYOND

FEAT 8

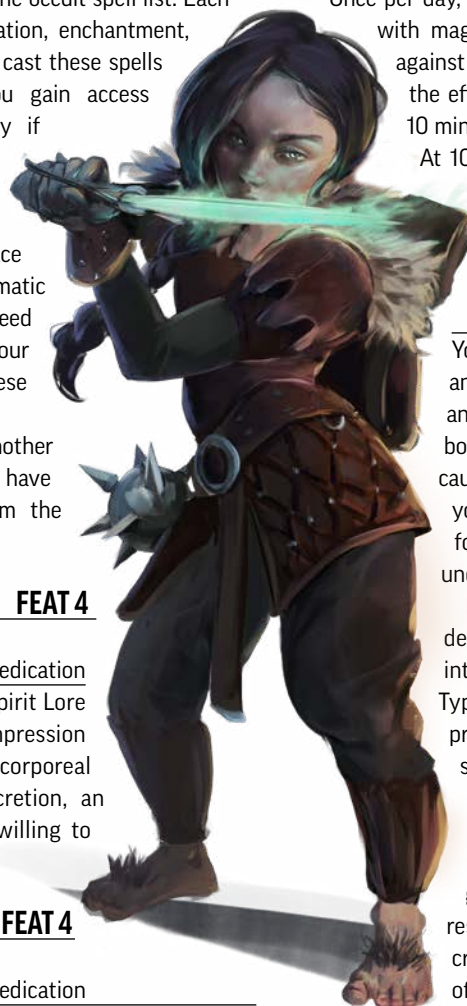
ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Ghost Hunter Dedication

You have uncanny insight into the way ghosts and haunts manifest, manipulate the mind, and rejuvenate. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to saving throws against mental effects caused by incorporeal undead and haunts, and you can roll a Spirit Lore or Haunt Lore check for initiative if you know that an incorporeal undead or a haunt is present.

If you are present when a spirit or haunt is defeated, you instantly gain a flash of insight into how it can be permanently put to rest. Typically, this flash manifests as a vision that presents a quick scene closely linked to the source of the spirit or haunt's creation.

Attempt a Spirit Lore or Haunt Lore check, respectively, with a DC appropriate for the spirit or haunt's level. On a success, you gain a hint about how to put the spirit to rest or permanently disable the haunt; on a critical success, you learn the exact method of doing so.



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LARGER CORPSELIGHTS

A typical corpse light can animate only a Small or Medium corpse, but particularly powerful corpse lights can inhabit larger bodies. Their basic abilities remain the same, but the damage they deal and the DC of their Death Light increase as appropriate for their increased level.

Corpse Light

A will-o'-wisp that starves to death might rise as a cold, blue, glowing sphere of spongy wetness—a corpse light. A corpse light instinctively seeks out a host corpse to dwell within, as its physical form quickly deteriorates if not hidden within a dead creature.

CORPSELIGHT

CREATURE 2

RARE CE MEDIUM UNDEAD

Perception +7; corpse sense (precise) 30 feet, darkvision

Languages Common, Necril

Skills Athletics +7, Intimidation +8, Stealth +8

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

Corpse Sense A corpse light can sense dead bodies within range. This is a precise sense that functions through solid barriers less than 5 feet thick.

AC 17; **Fort** +5, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

HP 40, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fear, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Weaknesses** bludgeoning 5 (in skeletal corpses) or slashing 5 (in fleshy corpses)

Sunlight Powerlessness A corpse light exposed to sunlight is stunned 2 and clumsy 2, and cannot Claim a Corpse.

Wisp Form When a corpse light is reduced to 0 Hit Points while merged with a corpse, it is instead reduced to 1 Hit Point as the corpse collapses to the ground and the corpse light emerges in its wisp form. While in wisp form, a corpse light is Tiny and can take no actions other than Claim Corpse or Fly. A corpse light that starts its turn in wisp form must attempt a DC 16 flat check at the end of its turn; if it fails, it loses 1 Hit Point. A corpse light reduced to 0 Hit Points while in wisp form is destroyed.

Speed 25 feet, fly 25 feet (wisp form only)

Melee ♦ jaws +10, **Damage** 1d8+6 piercing

Melee ♦ claw +10 (agile), **Damage** 1d6+6 slashing

Claim Corpse ♦ (necromancy) **Prerequisites** The corpse light is in wisp form and is adjacent to a Medium or Small corpse that hasn't been claimed by a corpse light in the past 24 hours; **Effect** The corpse light merges with the corpse, causes the corpse to Stand, and regains 3d6 Hit Points.

Death Light ♦♦♦ (emotion, fear, mental, necromancy, occult)

Prerequisites The corpse light is in a corpse; **Effect** The corpse light emits a sickly blue beam of light from its mouth and eyes in a 20-foot cone. All living creatures in this area must attempt a DC 18 Fortitude saving throw. If at least 1 creature fails its save, the corpse light regains 2d6 Hit Points, gaining any that exceed its maximum as temporary Hit Points that last for 1 minute. The corpse light can't use Death Light again for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 1d6 negative damage.

Failure The creature takes 2d6 negative damage and is frightened 1.

Critical Failure The creature takes 4d6 negative damage and is frightened 3.



Flickerwisp

The dancing, twisting flickerwisp is a less powerful but no less malevolent type of will-o'-wisp. Like their more dangerous kin, flickerwisps prefer to haunt lonely swamps or stretches of lonely rivers or creeks, particularly near the shorelines where they can pass themselves off as nothing more than a small gathering of fireflies. A flickerwisp's body is a 3-foot-long length of hair-like fibers that flashes and pulses with ribbons and points of eerie yellow light as the creature flits through the air.

While a flickerwisp can taste fear, and finds the flavor delectable, it does not feed on this emotion. Instead, flickerwisps subsist on confusion and doubt. The sense of unease a traveler exudes when they become lost in the woods is flickerwisps' favorite repast. They can sip from this sense of disorientation without betraying their presence or harming their prey. Eventually, the flickerwisps grow too hungry and are compelled to flit closer, confuse their prey, and glut on the raw emotions. Flickerwisps do their best to swoop away before death occurs, and the most skilled of these tormentors can keep a chosen meal alive for days, sipping from confusion in small doses.

FLICKERWISP

CREATURE 2

UNCOMMON CE SMALL ABERRATION AIR

Perception +9; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common

Skills Acrobatics +8, Deception +7, Intimidation +5, Stealth +8

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

AC 20; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

HP 18; **Immunities** magic

Glow (aura, light) 5 feet. A flickerwisp is itself naturally invisible, but glows with pale yellow light, casting bright light in the aura and making it visible.

Innocuous A flickerwisp's appearance registers strangely in the minds of creatures who are confused. A creature with the confused condition never targets a flickerwisp with attacks unless the creature has been damaged by the flickerwisp's shock ability within the last 24 hours.

Magic Immunity A flickerwisp is immune to all spells except *faerie fire*, *gust of wind*, *magic missile*, and *maze*.

Speed fly 25 feet

Melee ♦ shock +11 (magical), **Damage** 1d8+2 electricity

Consume Confusion ♦ (concentrate) **Frequency** once per round;

Requirement A creature within 15 feet of the flickerwisp is confused; **Effect** The flickerwisp feeds on the creature's confusion, even as its flashing body and disjointed gyrations cause existing confusion effects to persist. It regains 1d4 Hit Points, and if the creature's confused condition has a limited duration, it lasts 1 additional round.

Flicker ♦♦ (emotion, enchantment, mental, visual) The flickerwisp churns and flits in the air around an adjacent creature's head, and its length flashes and sparkles in a bewildering array of distracting pulsations. The creature must succeed at a DC 18 Will save or become confused for 1 round (2 rounds on a critical failure). On a critical success, the creature is temporarily immune to Flicker for 24 hours.



EMPTY CARESSES

Just as the cult of Nhimbalothe regards will-o'-wisps as their goddess's eyes, their teachings hold that flickerwisps are the gentle caress of her touch. To them, the confusion imposed by a flickerwisp is akin to opening the mind to the goddess's presence, and many cultists of the faith keep flickerwisps around to use in much the same way other faiths use incense or intoxicants to achieve deeper religious ecstasies.

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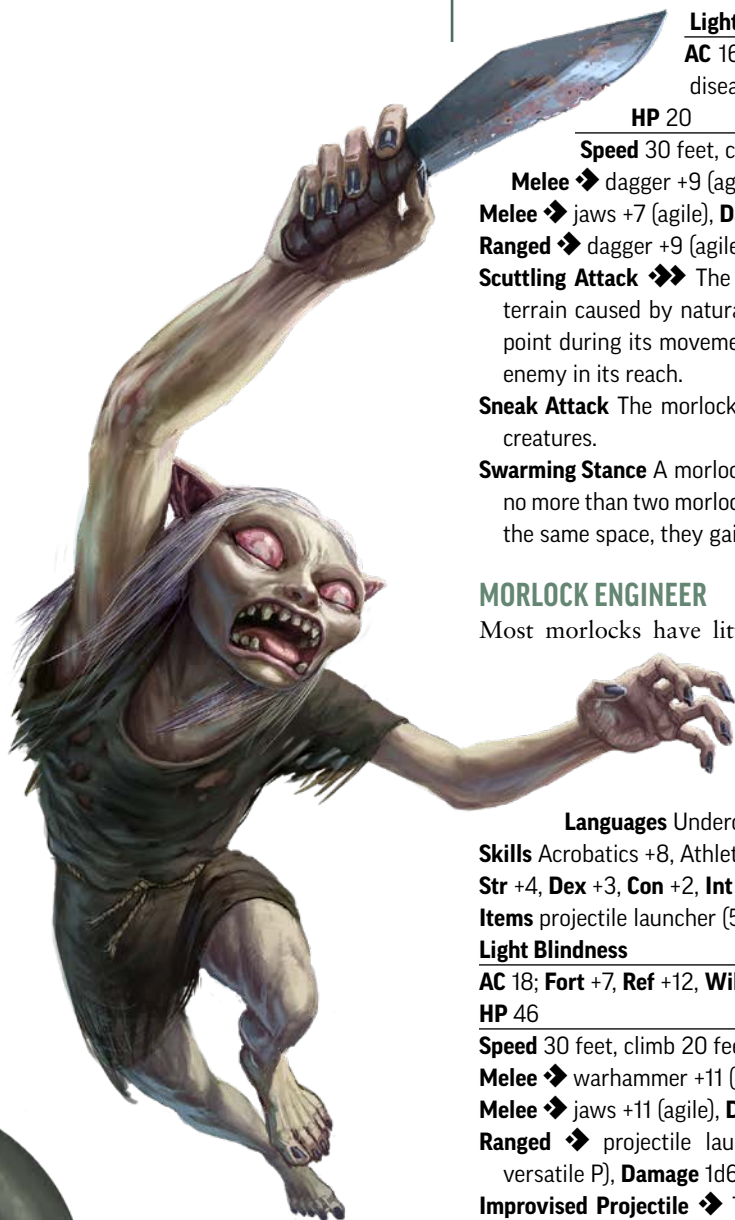
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MORLOCK MACHINES

Morlock engineers are talented at figuring out ancient machinery or damaged constructs, but don't keep notes or record their techniques. As a result, a morlock enclave might well be defended by strange, ancient mechanical hazards or constructs that treat morlocks as allies, even though none of the morlocks can say who built the machines they use.



Morlock

Morlocks originate from humans long lost to the surface world. They have an affinity for machinery, scavenging, and strange occult behaviors.

MORLOCK SCAVENGER

The morlock scavenger is a lankier, smaller version of a typical morlock. Their stature allows them to wriggle into areas other morlocks can't access.

MORLOCK SCAVENGER

CREATURE 1

CE SMALL HUMANOID MORLOCK

Perception +6; darkvision

Languages Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +5 (+7 Climbing), Stealth +7

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

Items dagger

Light Blindness

AC 16; **Fort** +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +6; +2 status to all saves vs. disease and poison

HP 20

Speed 30 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ dagger +9 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+2 piercing

Melee ♦ jaws +7 (agile), **Damage** 1d4+2 piercing

Ranged ♦ dagger +9 (agile, thrown 10 ft., versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+2 piercing

Scuttling Attack ♦♦ The morlock scavenger Strides twice, ignoring difficult terrain caused by natural cavern features like rubble or stalagmites. At any point during its movement, the morlock can make a melee Strike against an enemy in its reach.

Sneak Attack The morlock deals an extra 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Swarming Stance A morlock can share the same space as another morlock, but no more than two morlocks can occupy the same space. When morlocks share the same space, they gain a +1 circumstance bonus to attack rolls.

MORLOCK ENGINEER

Most morlocks have little talent for crafting, but a rare few have an uncanny knack for tinkering.

MORLOCK ENGINEER

CREATURE 3

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM HUMANOID MORLOCK

Perception +8; darkvision

Languages Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +8, Athletics +9 (+11 Climbing), Crafting +10, Stealth +10

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

Items projectile launcher (5 handfuls of junk), warhammer

Light Blindness

AC 18; **Fort** +7, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10; +2 status to all saves vs. disease and poison

HP 46

Speed 30 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ warhammer +11 (shove), **Damage** 1d8+6 bludgeoning

Melee ♦ jaws +11 (agile), **Damage** 1d4+6 piercing

Ranged ♦ projectile launcher +10 (deadly d8, range increment 50 feet, versatile P), **Damage** 1d6+6 bludgeoning

Improvised Projectile ♦ The morlock engineer quickly crafts an improvised

projectile from objects it carries or that are readily accessible in adjacent squares. Where unusual materials are available, an improvised projectile might deal damage other than bludgeoning or piercing—for example, a morlock engineer by a campfire could build a projectile that deals fire damage.

Sneak Attack The morlock deals an extra 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Swarming Stance As morlock scavenger.

Uncanny Tinker ♦♦ The morlock engineer tinkers with an adjacent construct or mechanical hazard. They attempt a Crafting check against the construct's or hazard's Fortitude DC. The morlock can't get an outcome better than failure if the target's level is more than double the morlock's. This ability reflects hasty battlefield repairs; once a construct or hazard regains Hit Points from this ability, it can't do so again until it's been Repaired.

Critical Success The target regains 8d6 Hit Points and a +1 circumstance bonus to attack rolls for 1 minute. Alternately, the morlock can deal 8d6 damage (bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing, as chosen by the morlock engineer) to the construct or hazard.

Success As critical success, but the target regains 4d6 Hit Points or the morlock deals 4d6 damage.

Critical Failure The morlock injures themselves, taking 3d6 damage (typically bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing, but potentially a different type at the GM's discretion).

MORLOCK CULTIST

Morlocks who serve as priests in their conclaves usually dabble in eerie occult magic.

MORLOCK CULTIST

CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON CE MEDIUM HUMANOID MORLOCK

Perception +11; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +10, Athletics +11 (+13 Climbing), Crafting +11 (Repair only), Occultism +13, Stealth +11

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

Items club

Light Blindness

AC 21; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +11, **Will** +11; +2 status to all saves vs. disease and poison

HP 58

Speed 30 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ club +11, **Damage** 1d6+5 bludgeoning

Melee ♦ jaws +11 (agile), **Damage** 1d4+5 piercing

Ranged ♦ club +13 (range increment 10 feet), **Damage** 1d6+5 bludgeoning

Occult Innate Spells DC 21, attack +13; **2nd** *mirror image*, *phantom pain*, *telekinetic maneuver*; **1st** *bane*, *grim tendrils*, *ray of enfeeblement*; **Cantrips** *daze*, *ghost sound*, *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*

Occult Attack ♦♦ The morlock cultist Strides up to half its speed, ignoring difficult terrain caused by natural cavern features like rubble or stalagmites. At any point during its movement, the morlock cultist can Cast a Spell that normally takes two actions or fewer to cast.

Sneak Attack The morlock deals an extra 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.



MORLOCK CULTS

Morlocks led by cultists don't always follow an established religion, in part because their insular background limits contact with the rest of the world. In many cases, a morlock cult worships some figure from the group's past, be it a revered (or more often, feared) ancestor, or even the strange machines or statues left behind from a mysterious civilization that once ruled the place where the morlocks now live.



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SCALATHRAX OIL

Scalathrax oil is a valuable alchemical component, but it's difficult to harvest and preserve. By spending 10 minutes and succeeding at a DC 21 Crafting check, a character can extract 1 Bulk of scalathrax oil worth 20 gp from a recently killed scalathrax. If scalathrax oil is used to Craft an alchemical item that deals fire damage or would benefit from the slippery quality of the oil, the crafter gains a +1 item bonus to their Crafting check. Scalathrax oil can be used as lantern oil, though it's often considered too valuable for such a mundane use.

Scalathrax

These slippery, scaly horrors dwell in remote cave networks in the Darklands, preferring to nest in narrow fissures. When on the hunt, they flick barbs from their long legs, or spray down their foes with a clear, toxic oil. The same oil coats the scalathrax's body, all of which is quite flammable—whether it's coating a victim or the scalathrax itself.

While a scalathrax appears feral, it's more intelligent than it seems and is capable of speaking in a wet, slithery voice. The vast majority of scalathraxes are foul-tempered and quick to anger, and most of them enjoy killing. It's possible to forge an alliance with a scalathrax, but doing so requires either constant bribes of new creatures to kill or a particularly intimidating personality—scalathraxes often respect bullies, seeing in them a mirror of their own cruel values.

SCALATHRAX

CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON NE MEDIUM ABERRATION

Perception +11, darkvision

Languages Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +11, Stealth +13

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

AC 21; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +13, **Will** +9

HP 60; **Weaknesses** fire 5; **Resistances** poison 5

Oily Scales A scalathrax constantly sweats a glistening oil that makes it exceptionally slick. It treats the results of Acrobatics checks to Squeeze or of any skill check to Escape as one degree of success greater than the rolled result. A scalathrax loses this benefit for 1 minute after it takes any amount of fire damage.

Speed 25 feet, climb 25 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +13 (finesse), **Damage** 2d8+5 piercing plus scalathrax venom

Ranged ♦ leg quill +13 (range increment 20 feet), **Damage** 2d4+5 piercing

Scalathrax Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 21;

Maximum Duration 6 rounds; **Stage 1** clumsy 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** clumsy 1 and slowed 1 (1 round); **Stage 3** clumsy 1 and slowed 2 (1 round)

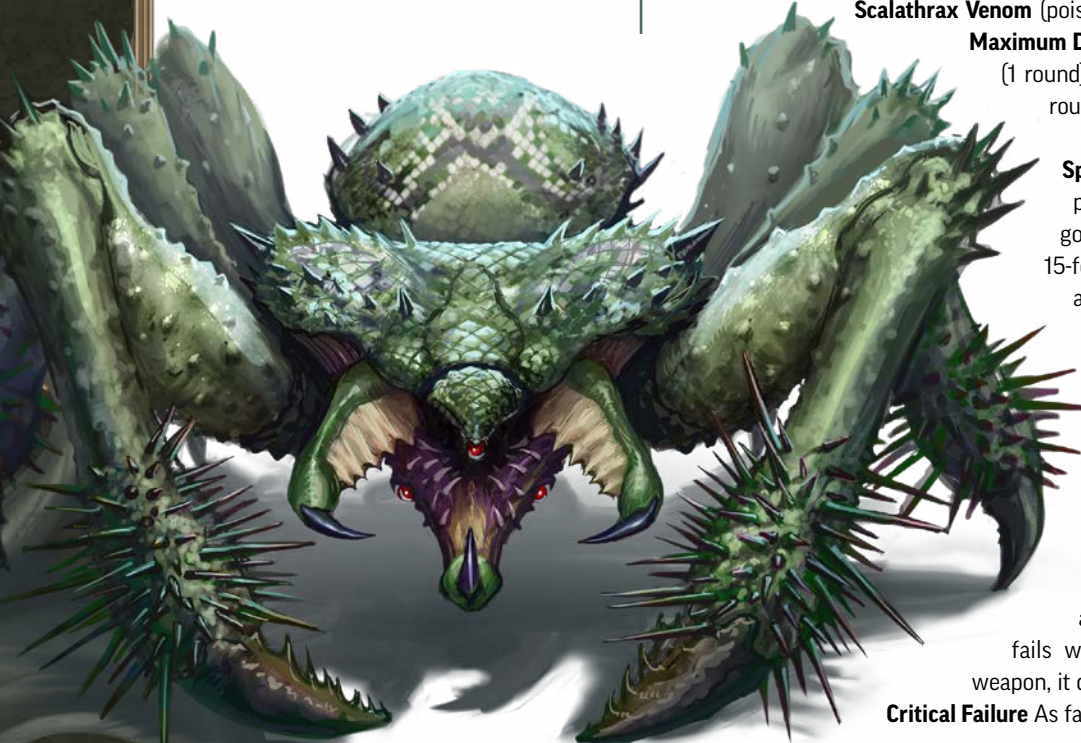
Spray Toxic Oil ♦♦ (conjuration, primal) The scalathrax disgorges a gout of toxic oil from its mouth in a 15-foot cone. Creatures in the area must attempt a DC 21 Reflex save. The scalathrax can't use Toxic Oil Spray again for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes 1d8 poison damage.

Failure The creature takes 2d8 poison damage. For 1 minute, the creature gains weakness to fire 5, and whenever the creature critically fails with an attack roll with a wielded weapon, it drops the weapon.

Critical Failure As failure, but 4d8 poison damage.



Voidglutton

A voidglutton is a powerful type of will-o'-wisp that haunts a site where misery dwells—such as a graveyard, prison camp, or recent battlefield. A voidglutton appears as a seething sphere of glowing eyes swirling around an empty black vortex 4 feet wide. From within this vortex extend long, semi-transparent tendrils that end in seven-fingered, needled hands.

VOIDGLUTTON

CREATURE 8

RARE CE MEDIUM ABERRATION AIR

Perception +18, darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common

Skills Acrobatics +18, Deception +15, Intimidation +15, Occultism +18, Stealth +18

Str +0, **Dex** +6, **Con** +3, **Int** +6, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3

AC 30; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +18, **Will** +16

HP 90; **Immunities** magic

Glow (aura, light) 30 feet. The tips of a voidglutton's fingers and its seven eyes glow, casting bright light in the area and making it visible if it was invisible.

Magic Immunity A voidglutton is immune to all spells except *faerie fire*, *glitterdust*, *magic missile*, *maze*, and spells with the light trait.

Speed fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ claw +20 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d6+2 piercing plus 4d6 force and fearful strike

Ranged ♦ ectoplasmic web +20 (range increment 10 feet), **Effect** ectoplasmic web trap

Occult Innate Spells DC 26; **4th** *darkness* (at will)

Consume Light ♦ (darkness, evocation, occult)

Trigger The voidglutton casts *darkness*;

Effect The voidglutton extinguishes its Glow as part of Casting the Spell. It becomes invisible as long as it remains in the area of *darkness*. If the voidglutton uses a hostile action, its invisibility ends as soon as the hostile action is completed.

Ectoplasmic Web Trap (conjuraton, occult)

A creature hit by the voidglutton's ectoplasmic web trap is immobilized and stuck to the nearest surface until it succeeds at a DC 26 check to Escape. Ectoplasmic Web Trap can immobilize incorporeal creatures.

Fearful Strike (emotion, fear, mental, occult)

When the voidglutton damages a creature with its claw Strike, the creature must succeed at a DC 26 Will save or become frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure).

Feed on Fear ♦ (concentrate) **Frequency** once

per round; **Requirement** An enemy is affected by a fear effect or has the frightened or dying condition, and is within 25 feet of the voidglutton;

Effect The voidglutton feeds on the creature's terror.

It regains 3d4 Hit Points and its Glow reignites if it had been extinguished. It cannot use Consume Light again for 1d4 rounds, as it is too glutted on fear to suppress its Glow.



AGENTS OF EMPTY DEATH

As with will-o'-wisps and their less powerful kin, flickerwisps, voidgluttons are associated with the Outer Goddess Nhimbaloth. Her cultists see voidgluttons as roving incarnations of her hunger and have been known to offer themselves up to voidgluttons as prey in order to achieve religious insights. Most who attempt this get a closer look at death than they intended.

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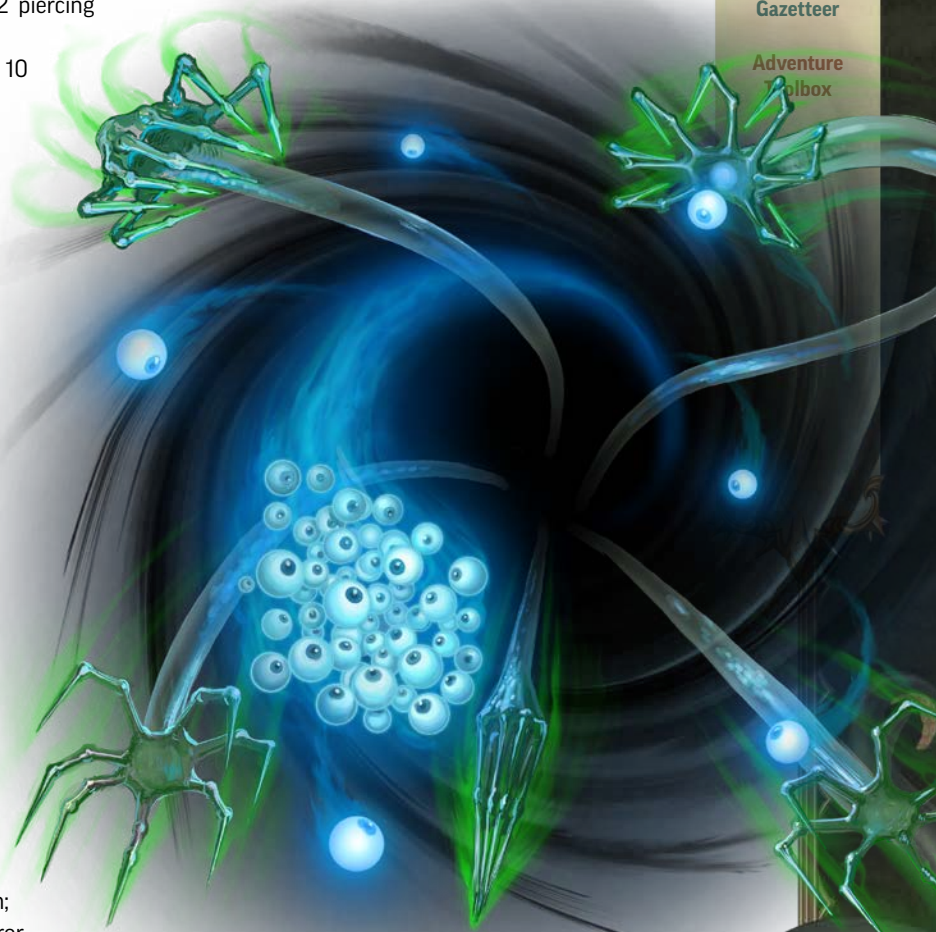
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Otari Ilvashti

Restless Spirit with Valuable Clues

Otari Ilvashti recalls little of his life. His time as a child growing up in Absalom and his adventures with the other members of the Roseguard have dwindled to distant but pleasant memories. His fear of the devastation Belcorra plans to unleash upon Absalom is what keeps him shackled to this world as a ghost.

When the Roseguard fought Belcorra in Gauntlight Keep, she unleashed a powerful magical explosion that collapsed the room where the fight took place. Belcorra and three heroes avoided the collapse and fought on—to Belcorra’s ultimate defeat—but the rogue Otari was caught beneath the collapse. His companions assumed he was pulverized, but Otari had fallen into a level beneath Gauntlight Keep that none of the Roseguard knew existed. Otari desperately wanted to escape to the surface and share his discovery, but Belcorra’s minions forced him to flee ever deeper into the vaults, until finally he was cornered in a dead-end cave by an immense otyugh that left him trapped and suffering from filth fever. Otari died in that deep cave, but his ghost lingers on.

Campaign Role

Otari’s role is to present the tasks necessary to reach the lower levels of the Abomination Vaults described in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #164: Hands of the Devil*. Once the heroes encounter Otari’s ghost and drive off the wisps that torment him, he relates his tale of woe. He has difficulty remembering much of his life, but becomes very emotional if he learns that the Roseguard survived and named their town after him.

While Otari’s information about the dungeon is centuries out of date, his supernatural link to the Abomination Vaults affords him glimpses into the inner workings of the dungeon and its key players. As Otari speaks to the heroes, make sure he conveys the following key points of information to them, either in the form of answers to questions or volunteered information.

- Belcorra harbored a grudge against Absalom and intended to use her sinister lighthouse,

Gauntlight, as a weapon against the city. The Roseguard never discovered its actual use, other than that it had something to do with the ability to transport creatures across significant distances and could animate the dead with its light. None of the other Roseguard members knew about the Abomination Vaults beneath *Gauntlight*. Otari learned about them only in his last few days alive.

- Some property of the Abomination Vaults increases the manifestation of ghosts, spectral undead, and haunts within their domain. Otari initially believed this was a side effect from *Gauntlight*, but has now come to suspect a link to a much more ancient and ominous source deep below this level. He knows nothing of Nhimbaloth, but if the heroes tell him of the Outer God, he suspects her influence is the source.
- Belcorra herself is now a ghost, although she cannot move far from the site to which she is anchored. Otari can sense her somewhere deep underground and is also aware that the range of her movements is slowly expanding.
- Otari suspects Belcorra intends to fully reactivate *Gauntlight* and use it to begin her long-delayed attack on Absalom. She must be put to rest before she can finish this task. Otari isn’t sure how to stop her, but believes that clues await discovery in the deeper levels of the Abomination Vaults.
- Finally, Otari feels the barrier in area **D12** blocking progress deeper into the Abomination Vaults. He understands that it is powered by the souls of Belcorra’s defeated enemies. Fortunately, he also understands how to take the barrier down. The Roseguard were the adventurers who finally killed her, and their psychic resonance can drop the barrier. The heroes must find and place four icons the Roseguard once held dear onto the altar in area **D13** to do this. Otari’s thieves’ tools are here with his bones and serve as his icon. The other icons are the brooch belonging

to the cleric Aesephna Menhemes (which bears the religious symbol of her god, Erastil), the spellbook belonging to the wizard Zarmavdian, and the trusty longsword of the fighter Vol Rajani.

Once the heroes take on the burden of facing and defeating Belcorra and open the way to the deeper levels of the Abomination Vaults, Otari's soul is free to travel to its final reward. You should ensure he has imparted all of the above information to the heroes before he fades away.

If you wish, though, you can put a darker spin on things—rather than have Otari's spirit achieve freedom, it could instead be captured by the temple of Nhimbalothe at the bottom of the Abomination Vaults. In this case, the heroes should learn about Otari's fate through a vision or nightmare, or perhaps even see his tormented ghost pulled downward against his will. Otari's ghost remains trapped until the heroes finally defeat Belcorra.

OTARI ILVASHTI

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE CG MEDIUM GHOST INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Male ghost adventurer (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 166)

Perception +18; darkvision

Languages Common, Elven, Gnomish

Skills Acrobatics +18, Society +18, Stealth +20, Thievery +20

Str -5, **Dex** +6, **Con** +0, **Int** +4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

Site Bound (area D18)

AC 25; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +20, **Will** +17

HP 120, negative healing, rejuvenation; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistance** all damage 10 (except force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Rejuvenation Securing the four icons of the Roseguard and placing them on the altar in area D13 allows Otari to move on to the afterlife.

Speed fly 25 feet

Melee ♦ ghostly hand +19 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 3d6+6 negative

Filth Fever (disease) The sickened and unconscious conditions from filth fever don't improve on their own until the disease is cured. **Saving Throw** DC 25 Fortitude; **Stage 1** carrier with no ill effect (1d4 hours); **Stage 2** sickened 1 (1 day); **Stage 3** sickened 1 and slowed 1 as long as the affected creature remains sickened (1 day); **Stage 4** unconscious (1 day); **Stage 5** dead

Infested Shadow ♦♦ (conjuration, divine, teleportation) Otari fades away, momentarily emerges from the

shadow of another creature within 30 feet, and makes a ghostly hand Strike against a single target within reach of this creature (but not against the creature whose shadow he infests). On a successful Strike, the target is also flat-footed until the start of Otari's next turn. Otari then reappears at his starting point. The creature whose shadow Otari infests is exposed to filth fever.

Sneak Attack Otari deals 2d6 extra precision damage to flat-footed creatures.



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Wrin Sivinxí

Helpful Patron Haunted by Spectral Visions

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

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

She opened her shop, Wrin's Wonders, 4 years ago. In that time, she's become part of the community, even if many of its citizens regard her as a good-natured eccentric. Sales of the strange and bizarre aren't brisk in the small town, but that's no matter to Wrin—she's patient and has enjoyed her time in Otari so far. One day, she hopes to make enough money to fund a trip west, for she's heard tell of an abandoned observatory in the small town of Crookcove on Ravounel's southwestern coast that she hopes to purchase and transform into a temple devoted to the Cosmic Caravan. But for the time being, she's content to stay in Otari and sleep under the stars.

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

Campaign Use

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

As the campaign progresses, Wrin can help the heroes in other ways, such as by performing astrology readings for the heroes to aid them in their explorations. While she won't give her store's wares away for free, her establishment is the best place to buy and sell the odd magical treasures heroes tend to find and crave. Wrin can also introduce the heroes to the wonders of the spirit world—her tutelage unlocks the ghost hunter archetype (page 81). Despite the claustrophobia she suffers, if the heroes find themselves in over their head in the Abomination Vaults, you can have Wrin face her fears to brave the dungeon and mount a rescue. Of course, you shouldn't use Wrin in this capacity except as a last resort to keep the campaign from reaching an untimely end!

WRIN SIVINXI

CREATURE 5

UNIQUE CG MEDIUM ELF HUMANOID TIEFLING

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

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

Languages Aklo, Common, Elven, Sylvan, Varisian

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

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

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

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

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

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

HP 75

Speed 25 feet

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Failure No reading.

Critical Failure Wrin brushes against hostile spiritual forces, and cannot Read the Stars for 1 week.



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HANDS OF THE DEVIL

by Vanessa Hoskins

The adventurers can now access the central levels of the Abomination Vaults, but danger awaits! Evil fleshwarpers create new, abhorrent life, and a powerful devil seeks agents to snare a soul and escape a contract.

AMONG THE WILL-O'-WISPS

by Amber Stewart

Learn the history and secrets of the malevolent and enigmatic will-o'-wisps, who lead travelers to their doom!

WARPERS OF FLESH

by Quinn Murphy

Fleshwarps are creatures born of abominable alchemy and sinister magic. Learn the secrets of those who craft these uncanny aberrations!

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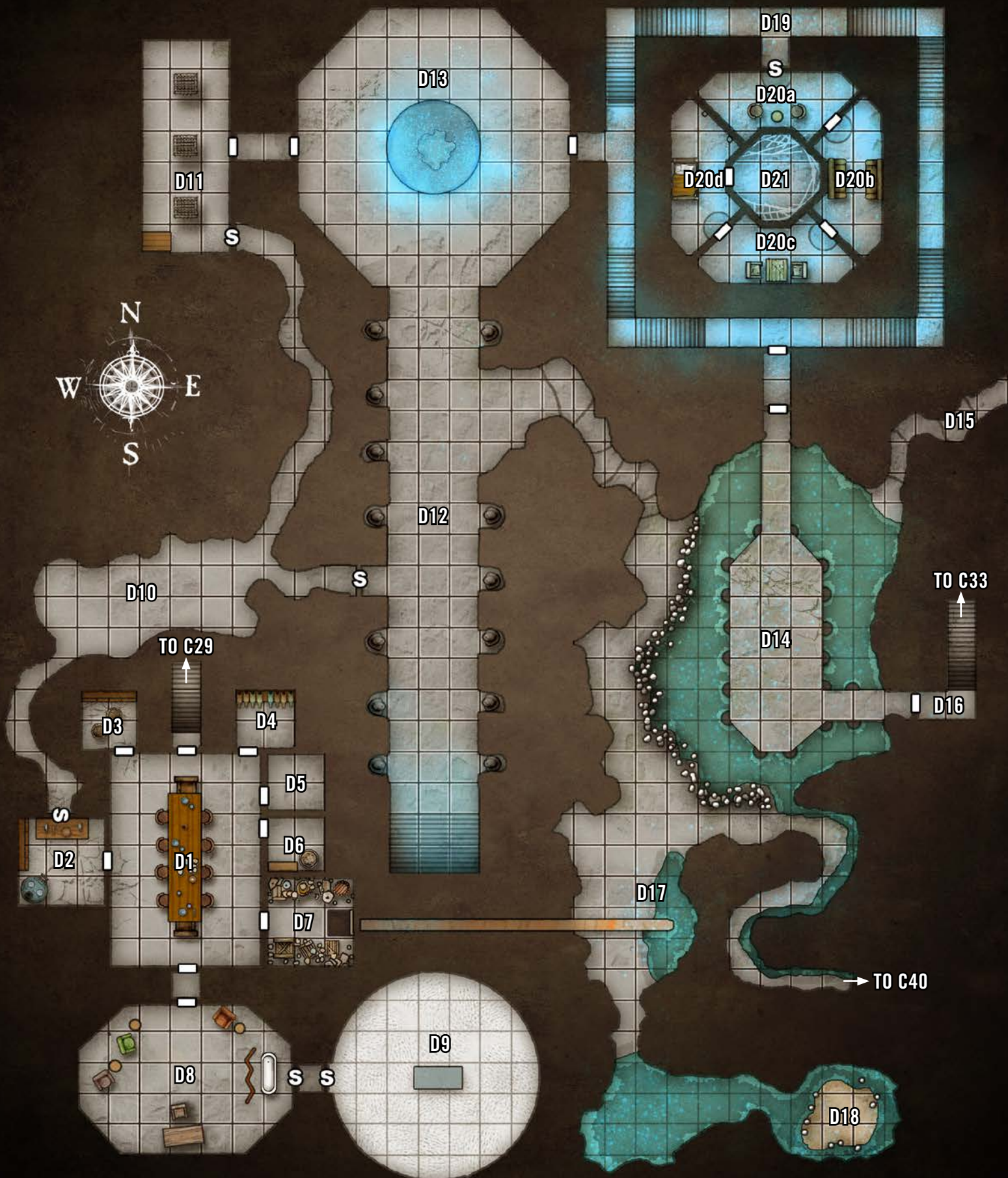
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