

# PATHFINDER<sup>TM</sup>

ADVENTURE PATH \* PART 1 of 6



## Legacy of Fire HOWL OF THE CARRION KING

Adventure by Erik Mona  
New Fiction by Elaine Cunningham





*In the beginning, when Rovagug perfected the way of destruction, the lands were littered with the dead. Crows, maggots, beetles, worms, and the other crawling things of the earth complained to Rovagug.*

*"You destroy and maim too quickly!" they cried. "We cannot devour all the meat you give us! Please, destroy the people of the earth more slowly."*

*"What?" shouted Rovagug, in a voice that toppled pillars. "My glorious destruction shall never cease nor slow!"*

*Yet in the dark, delighting in the destruction god's slaughter, watched Lamashru, the Mother of Monsters, and she heard the base things cry. In those black days when all the land was covered with death and all the air stank, she watched as a few tribes of men, her followers and devout worshipers, ate the flesh of corpses as the crows did, plucking out eyes, savoring the bloodiest cuts. To these cannibals she led packs of hyenas, and their ways became as one. Of those louse-ridden beastmen rose the first gnolls, half-hyenas who love the stench of carrion and praise each corpse as an offering to their dark mother. And the demon queen delighted in her own perversion and reveled in these monsters' terrible howling songs.*

*Born of devastation, and insanity, and the corrupt of soul, the man-beasts spread upon the world, and where they prowled they indulged in their hunger for murdered flesh. Surely, they are to be despised by any sane god, and so we make ceaseless war on those who seek to feed on the bodies of heroes and innocents. And somewhere in the madness between the stars, the Mother of Perversion and the Mistress of Insanity still laughs her wicked laugh, as her ravening spawn, the bone gnawers and carrion eaters, grow fat off our flesh.*

*Gnolls are among the first abominations, and their death is a blessing. Remember this when their laughter haunts your steps.*





# **PATHFINDER**<sup>TM</sup>

ADVENTURE PATH PART 1 of 6



*Legacy of Fire*

## **HOWL OF THE CARRION KING**



# PATHFINDER™

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## Genie War

Once upon a time, the “Genie War” Adventure Path was going to be the follow-up to *Dungeon* magazine’s Savage Tide Adventure Path. Then things got crazy, and I transitioned from being editor-in-chief of a monthly magazine to editor-in-chief of a monthly book. The concept of a mass combat Adventure Path involving legions of wish-slinging genies got put on the back burner while we effectively “reset” the Adventure Path concept back to a baseline. Rise of the Runelords, as the launch product for an untested new line of game products, had to appeal to the most classic of the classic tropes of the game—dungeons filled with goblins, giants, dragons, and evil wizards. With each Adventure Path to come after, we started to get more and more experimental, and as we realized that *Pathfinder* wasn’t going to be a flash in the pan, that it was, in fact, going to exceed even our best hopes, my thoughts turned more and more frequently to that old idea about the genie wars.

And now, with the launch of *Pathfinder*’s fourth Adventure Path, *Legacy of Fire*, those genie wars are finally here! Of course, as Wes and I started working out the plot to this Adventure Path, we quickly realized that the story we wanted to create wasn’t the one about the actual Genie War itself, but rather the fallout from that war. Which is

handy, since it lets us dodge the bullet for at least 6 more months before we trick ourselves into having to design mass combat rules to go along with an adventure.

*Legacy of Fire* is going to be a relatively large departure for *Pathfinder* as well—not only are we changing locations (we’re leaving Varisia behind completely!), but a lot of the themes you’ll be seeing in *Legacy of Fire* are going to be new ground as well, I hope. We’ll still have some of the dark and grisly elements, of course (this is *Pathfinder*, after all!), but there’s going to be a lot more high fantasy and romance and mythic themes as well. This time, the big bad end guy isn’t out to rule the nation or become immortal or blow up the world—he’s just looking to impress the girl he’s in love with. That “girl” happens to be Ymiri, the Queen of the Inferno, and the things that impress her are armies and monstrous strength, but at its heart, *Legacy of Fire* is just about a lonely genie looking for a little love.

### *Tricking Erik Mona*

Of course, *Legacy of Fire* gave me a chance to see something else I’ve been wanting for a long time—beyond simply a bunch of genies and Ray-Harryhausen-inspired battles and all sorts of wishes gone wrong. It marks the first appearance



in *Pathfinder's* pages of Erik Mona as an adventure writer. He's written a few things for *Pathfinder* before, of course, and you can see his advice, guidance, and influence behind the scenes of pretty much every volume, but he proved to be pretty tough to assign an actual adventure to. Turns out, he's been there before—he wrote the debut installment for *Age of Worms*, “The Whispering Cairn,” which went on to give that Adventure Path an excellent launch and become one of *Dungeon's* best-loved adventures. Yet Erik would be the first to tell you that it wasn't a particularly easy thing to create. He had so many cool ideas and plans and plots that it was impossible to fit them all into one adventure, and he's also got one of the most impressive drives to turn over well-proofed final drafts I've seen in any game designer. And while I as the editor certainly appreciate getting a well-written and well-edited adventure, it took its toll on poor Erik's sanity. Enough that “The Whispering Cairn” was the last adventure he wrote for a long, long time.

Originally, I had planned on writing “Howl of the Carrion King” myself, just as I'd planned on writing the launch adventure for *Second Darkness*, “Shadow in the Sky.” But as it works out, developing and editing and wrangling Adventure Paths takes a lot of work, especially when the unexpected strikes—the last adventure in *Second Darkness* had a particularly traumatic time of it, and although I was able to secure Brian Cortijo's more-than-able assistance in getting that adventure written (thanks again, Brian!), bringing Brian up to speed and then creating stat blocks and the lead-in and conclusion of *Second Darkness* pretty much took all of my free time away. Free time I'd set aside to write “Howl of the Carrion King.”

So when Boss Mona came back to the Editorial Pit with his publisher hat on and asked me, “James, are you really going to be able to write this adventure on time?” I was forced to admit that I wasn't. And luckily for me, instead of getting out the punishment kit, he took off his publisher hat and put on his designer hat and said, “Can I write it then?” I said yes, both relieved to be out of the line of fire and excited that he was finally going to write an adventure for *Pathfinder*. If I'd known that all it would take was a near-nervous-breakdown to get him to write an adventure, I suspect we would have seen an Erik Mona adventure in *Pathfinder* a lot sooner than volume #19!

Anyway, his adventure ended up being more than I'd hoped for. Even though he had only a few weeks to write it, and had to make his ideas mesh well with the art we'd already ordered for the adventure (based on the vague outline of an adventure I'd thrown together), I think he's

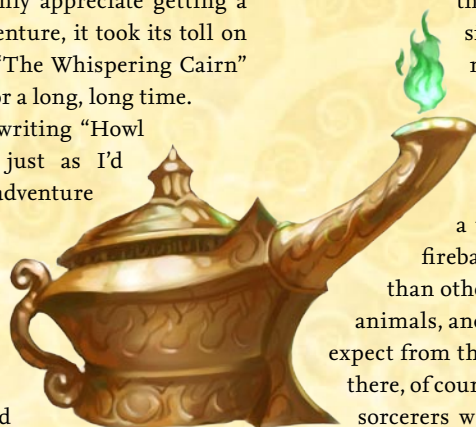
created something that's even better than “The Whispering Cairn.” And it's got some elements I envisioned back when I was going to write it, though it's not that adventure. It's better. A lot better.

## Final 3.5

There's one more thing worth mentioning about *Legacy of Fire*—it's going to be the last *Pathfinder* Adventure Path that uses the 3.5 rules. Starting in August, with *Pathfinder* #25, we'll be switching over to the upcoming *Pathfinder* Roleplaying Game rules. Of course, the good news for fans of 3.5 is that one of the goals for the *Pathfinder* Roleplaying Game is backwards compatibility. You'll be able to pick up *Pathfinder* #25 and use it in a 3.5 game with minimal fuss—

the layout of the book won't be changing significantly, stat blocks will look pretty much the same, and there won't be any enormous changes to the world of Golarion at all. In fact, for the PCs and NPCs who dwell in Golarion and live the stories we play, they won't notice a thing. There'll still be wizards flinging fireballs, elves finding secret doors more often than other folk, gnomes chatting it up with small animals, and everything else you've come to love and expect from the game. There'll be differences here and there, of course—cleric domains will work differently, sorcerers will have more choices for their magical heritages, and raging barbarians will be a lot more unpredictable, for example—but the underlying structure of the rules won't be changing.

At this point, the plan is to have a free conversion booklet online at [paizo.com](http://paizo.com) to help people navigate the new rules and to become familiar with how things work, either to learn the new game or to use *Pathfinder* to continue an existing 3.5 game. In the meantime, head on to [paizo.com](http://paizo.com) and check out the Beta Playtest for the new game if you haven't already. The rules are a free download, and there's already tens of thousands of gamers testing them out, helping us to make the right decisions for what we hope will be a strong backbone to keep telling *Pathfinder* stories for many years to come!



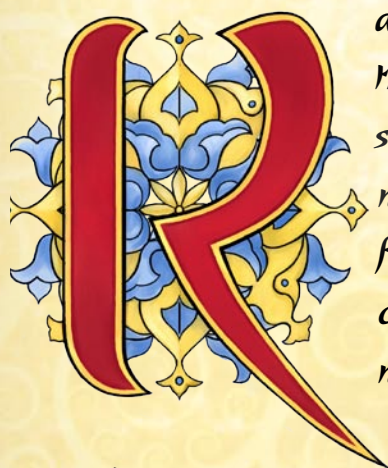
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Legacy of Fire: Chapter 1

## Howl of the Carrion King



*arapesh is a land of magic, and no magic is more potent than wishcraft. When wishes are abused, reality itself shudders as destiny is forced to reweave along paths it never meant to take. One such manifestation of ruptured fate is the Legacy of Fire, a series of events set into motion centuries ago by an efreeti prince named Jhavhul that only now are nearing their explosive end. Jhavhul's tale, along with an outline of the entire Legacy of Fire Adventure Path, appears on page 88—read this outline first before you take your first step into this new campaign—but for the heroes destined to star in this campaign, it begins (and shall end) in the shadow of Pale Mountain.*



# Howl of the Carrion King

## Adventure Background

The wishes unleashed over the ages by two genies in particular, the efreeti Jhavhul and the djinni Nefeshti, have warped the Pale Mountain region, twisting fate and contorting coincidence to keep alive both a terrible beast and a heroic protector. Not far from Jhavhul's old temple, these tangled strands have ensnared a young merchant princess named Almah, who seeks a new future for the ruined battle market village of Kelmarane at the foot of the Brazen Peaks. Most importantly, the wishes have subtly warped the weave of the world to put a handful of adventurers on a trail to Kelmarane. It is these adventurers—not any genie—who will tread the path of fate at its most treacherous juncture, and it is they who will ultimately chart the course of history.

The mysterious Pactmasters of Katapesh, masked rulers of this mercantile desert kingdom, desire to bring the abandoned battle market village of Kelmarane back into the economic fold. To this end, they recently assigned Almah the task of scouting out the village, clearing it of malign influence, and getting it working again. The PCs are to serve as Almah's agents in this affair.

In the years since Kelmarane was left to ruin, the little town has become a haven for gnoll slavers, human bandits, and disreputable brigands from the rough-and-tumble northlands. The gnolls pose a particular problem, as all of the local packs cower under the claws of the Carrion King, a legendary gnoll sovereign who rules from a stronghold on Pale Mountain—the ruins of Jhavhul's ancient House of the Beast. This unity of purpose poses a significant threat to the Pactmasters, who rely upon open trade from the neighboring nation of Osirion to thrive.

But the heart of Kelmarane's darkness lies not in the breast of its gnoll occupants, but instead in the tainted soul of their most unlikely leader. This stranger came to Kelmarane in the shape of a man, but he was something more than a man. Wielding a massive axe of alien design and bearing a haughty demeanor that hardly acknowledged the gnolls, the stranger slew the previous chieftain in single combat, more out of absent curiosity than to neutralize a worthy foe.

The stranger was Kardswann, one of Nefeshti's Templars of the Five Winds. Drawn to the region on a circuit of sites monitored by his genie mistress, Kardswann soon became bored with the tribe, opting instead to explore the rest of Kelmarane. The ruined church at the edge of the village intrigued him almost immediately. Behind a curious magical seal that held no power over a creature capable of becoming ethereal at will, Kardswann found an unanticipated evil that corrupted even his righteous soul, just as it had corrupted the entire village of Kelmarane

decades earlier, before it was sealed within the crypt by the agents of the Pactmasters who secretly pacified and abandoned the village when its citizens fell under the sway of a cruel cult dedicated to an ancient evil—an insidious daemon called Xulthos

Kardswann is now controlled by this evil, and has fallen from the graces of his mistress. Now mortal, he leads his adopted gnoll tribe in service to the Carrion King of Pale Mountain, attracting bandits from throughout the north to a reborn bazaar in the run-down battle market of Kelmarane. Meanwhile, in an abandoned monastery consumed by the same darkness that swallowed the village, the remnants of another Templar of the Five Winds—sustained through the ages and through two deaths by his loyalty to Nefeshti—bides its time until it can act in its own subtle way, bending probability, chance, and reason to ensure that the genie's wish of eternal loyalty comes true.

## Adventure Summary

As the campaign begins, the player characters are mercenaries heading out into the northern scrublands of Katapesh on the camels of a patron named Garavel, the major domo of a merchant princess named Almah. Perhaps the characters are runaway slaves seeking a better tomorrow and the freedom a woman of Almah's station can grant. Other characters might be traveling merchants looking to make a powerful ally, criminals forced into a service to Garavel as punishment, or simple desert scum in search of adventure. The *Legacy of Fire Player's Guide* presents several possible options for PCs to join Garavel's caravan, but in the end it doesn't matter who they are or where they come from—events have conspired to mire them here, on the edge of nowhere, at the border between cracked-dirt scrubland and the treacherous Brazen Peaks.

"Howl of the Carrion King" is presented in five parts. In Part One, the player characters meet their patron, the merchant princess Almah, and get to know her party of guards, mercenaries, and associates while solving what appears to be a murder mystery. In the course of their investigations they discover the devious pugwampis, jackal-headed gremlins that trail ill fortune like a shadow.

In Part Two, the PCs track the pernicious pugwampis to an abandoned monastery of Sarenrae, a forlorn hilltop ruin overlooking the village of Kelmarane a few miles in the distance. Seeking a sturdy base from which to launch attacks upon the gnolls and brigands infesting Kelmarane, Almah asks the PCs to clear the monastery of its inhabitants so that her party may take up residence in the defensible ruin.

Part Three involves scouting out the village of Kelmarane, including forays into nearby farms, shrines, and locations of interest. Eventually, the PCs might venture into Kelmarane itself and brave its many dangers. Almah urges



## Resolving Campaign Traits

If you're using the *Legacy of Fire Player's Guide* and your players have selected campaign traits for their characters, they'll likely seek resolutions to their specific situations during the course of this adventure. Listed here are likely ways these resolutions can come about.

**Earning Your Freedom:** Almah, as a representative of the Pactmasters, can grant any slave his or her freedom, and she certainly does so during the course of this adventure, likely at the climax, but perhaps before if a good and dramatic opportunity for you to stage the event arises.

**Seeking Adventure:** If the PC manages to rescue the bard Felliped from the stables (area **B4**), or if they take extensive notes on the Templars of the Five Winds, his place among the Pathfinders is assured—his venture captain even waives the repayment of his *wayfinder*.

**Reclaiming Your Roots:** The PC should find a grave in the cemetery with a headstone that gives his parent's name. If you're feeling particularly mean, one of the undead in the crypt below the church could have a familiar face.

**Gnoll Killer:** The act of defeating the gnolls of Kelmarane should satisfy this character, but you'll probably want to hint that other gnoll packs still exist, and that their leader, the Carrion King, is still out there.

**Missionary:** If the PC worships Sarenrae, restoring the monastery or the old church should bring this character's goals to a close. Otherwise, consider changing Zastoran's faith to match the PC's faith, and using him to help the PC set up a new church in Kelmarane.

**Finding Haleen:** Haleen can be found in area **C83** of the battle market; once she's reunited with the PC, she'll team up with the PCs and help them defeat Kardswann and reclaim Kelmarane—this, to Haleen, is a much better way to set about earning the money to pay off her debts.

them to make quick strikes into the village, investigate the ruins, and free Kelmarane of malign influence.

Kardswann's gnoll tribe and associated hangers-on dwell at the heart of Kelmarane, in the village's ancient battle market. In order to liberate the town, these gnolls must be defeated. Part Four details the battle market and its inhabitants, including the misguided genie who stands at the center of the village's recent intrigue.

Part Five involves the PCs' investigation into the malign spirit controlling Kardswann, a disgusting daemon sealed in the crypt of a ruined church decades ago by the soldiers of the Pactmasters of Katapesh. With the gnolls defeated, Almah uses a special key to grant the PCs access to the crypt so that the evil pall over Kelmarane might be lifted once and for all.

Throughout "Howl of the Carrion King," the PCs will progress from 1st to 5th level. They should hit 2nd level as they near the end of Part Two, and should hit 3rd level by the time they've explored much of Kelmarane and are finally reaching the battle market. They should not enter the crypt under the church until they are 4th level.

## Templars of the Five Winds

Throughout the adventure, the PCs will find hints regarding an ancient order known as the Templars of the Five Winds. When such an event occurs, give the PCs an opportunity to make a Knowledge (religion), Knowledge (history), or bardic knowledge check to learn more about the group.

**DC 13:** The Templars of the Five Winds were a group of five powerful genies from antiquity. They have not been heard from in centuries, but travelers in the northern reaches of Katapesh and the southern bounds of Osirion still sometimes attribute miracles or victories to their guidance.

**DC 16:** Legend tells that the Templars of the Five Winds defeated a great evil hundreds of years ago near Pale Mountain in the Brazen Peaks, a pinnacle not very far from the village of Kelmarane. Each Templar was associated with a specific aspect of the wind, and each wielded a distinct, highly potent magic weapon.

**DC 20:** The Templars of the Five Winds were said to be particular enemies of the cult of Rovagug, god of destruction, and many tales of their triumphs recount battles against the spawn of that vile religion. The templars themselves are jann, mortal genie-spirits dedicated to no particular element. For some reason, these jann cannot die, though none have been seen in centuries.

**DC 25:** The Templars of the Five Winds served a powerful djinni princess named Nefeshti, a great genie noble whose designs upon Osirion and Katapesh have had good and bad consequences. The *Song of Edrehu* suggests that the Templars' immortality came from a powerful *wish* uttered by Nefeshti in antiquity, stating that so long as the warriors retained her favor, they would live forever. This result also grants the names and associated weapons of the five Templars, but not the additional information given for each Templar mentioned below.

- **Davashuum (The Jackal's Price, The Final Wish):** Davashuum is an amoral and deadly creature that served Nefeshti as an executioner and, in dire extremes, as an assassin. He represents the fury of winds from all directions and wields a powerful quarterstaff.
- **Kardswann (Howl of the Carrion King):** A scout and traveler of the planes, Kardswann's weapon is an elaborate greataxe, and he represents the south wind, the most well-traveled and worldly of the winds. He is currently under the mental



# Howl of the Carrion King

domination of Xulthos, a daemon imprisoned in the crypt below Kelamarane's ruined church of Sarenrae.

- **Pazhvann (The Jackal's Price):** Pazhvann is Nefeshti's advisor and spiritual guide. He represents the east wind, upon which the whispers of the gods and the advice of elders is carried. His weapon is a tremendous burning flail.
- **Vardishal (Howl of the Carrion King):** A general of Nefeshti's armies, Vardishal's spirit resides in the monastery laboratory. He wields whatever weapon is favored by his new host, and in life he represents the north wind, a wind said to carry the battle cries of all armies.
- **Zayifid (House of the Beast):** Nefeshti's spy and diplomat, Zayifid was a messenger and spy. He represents the west wind, upon which secrets thought hidden were carried. His weapon is a delicate but razor-sharp scimitar.

## PART ONE: THE SULTAN'S CLAW

Before play begins in earnest, tell the players that their characters have been traveling together for more than a week on a dreary camel caravan from the town of Solku to an unknown location in the northern scrublands of Katapesh. The man who hired them is Garavel, the no-nonsense major-domo of a merchant princess awaiting them at their destination. In the distant haze to the west, the PCs can just make out the immense outline of Pale Mountain looming over the mid-evening horizon like a tombstone. Give each player a chance to describe his character, what he looks like, how he acts and so forth. Everyone has had a few days to get to know one another, and this is a good way to engage the players from the very start.

Once each player has had a chance to talk a bit about his character, tell the players that they are nearing their destination. As soon as the craggy tree appears over the next hill, it becomes obvious why it is called the Sultan's Claw. With five immense, mostly leafless branches, the growth looks more like a giant skeletal talon than a thing of living wood.

As the PCs top the last rise, a caravan of a half-dozen wagons and a large tent clustered around the distinctive tree comes into view. Camels in a nearby pen prance in agitation, and a clutch of confused goats and livestock wander the grounds around the wagons. Perhaps a dozen men and women rush around the campsite, chasing down an animal or hastening toward the center of the cluster, near the Sultan's Claw, with pails of water in their hands. One of the wagons is on fire!

Lush orange and red flames engulf an elaborate wooden wagon emblazoned with painted moons and stars. A gout of smoke pours from an open door, and as you approach an ill wind blows a number of colorful fortune-telling Harrow cards from inside the wagon. Pick one of the PCs—the one

who in your estimation is the most mystical. One of these singed cards blows directly at that PC, catching against his chest in a burst of orange cinders. It is the Cyclone, signifying a force that tears through whatever it meets at the behest of an intelligent being. The card portends war, arson, and destructive plans. As the PCs' eyes shift their focus from the Cyclone back to the wagon, the whole of the Sultan's Claw erupts into brilliant flame.

The central flap of an elaborate tent flies open and a regal woman who can only be Almah steps out into the firelit night. "Douse that flame!" she shouts to the men surrounding the wagon before turning in your direction. "Ah, Garavel!" she says. "And just a moment later than the nick of time, as usual." Looking specifically past her major domo and directly at the PCs, Almah barks out a simple order before running off toward the fire: "Find some way to help!"

Faced with an immediate crisis, the PCs have an opportunity to assist in a number of skill-based challenges that serve to get the dice rolling right away and to introduce key members of Almah's party. The players will get to know these characters a lot better in the scenes to come, but right now dealing with the fire is everybody's first priority.

Give each PC the opportunity to help in one of the following ways:

**Put Out the Fire:** Almah, Garavel, and four soldiers dressed in the distinctive red chitin-plate armor of the Pactmaster Guard run back and forth between the burning fortune teller's wagon and an uncovered wagon about 20 feet away. The latter contains a huge barrel holding enough drinking water to serve the entire campsite for a week. At present, it will take the six NPCs 10 rounds to quench the fire using the pail-by-pail method. There are more buckets to be grabbed by the player characters, and each PC assisting in this manner reduces the number of rounds it takes to put out the fire by 1. A DC 20 Strength check allows a character to carry the entire water barrel over to douse the fire, which puts it out in a single round.

PCs who assist Almah, Garavel, and the guards impress these NPCs enough to shift their starting attitude from indifferent to friendly in future encounters. Those who destroy the party's water supply receive grudging thanks for putting out the fire, but NPCs who closely witnessed their act of brave stupidity will be unfriendly to them in future encounters.

**Pull Wagon Out of the Way:** Four burly mercenaries struggle with an enclosed wooden wagon within feet of the burning wagon, hoping to move it to safety before an errant spark causes it too to burst into flame. This will occur 6 rounds after the PCs arrive unless they successfully haul it out of the way. Moving the unhitched wagon requires a DC 26 Strength check. The four mercenaries each attempt a DC 10 Strength check (each mercenary has a +1 bonus to this check) to aid a PC attempting to move the wagon,



potentially adding as much as +8 to the check. Assuming the wagon is rescued in time, the mercenaries thereafter are friendly toward and PCs who helped them.

**Heal Wounded Firefighters:** A red-headed halfling cleric, Father Zastoran, kneels next to two severely burned mercenaries who tried to enter the burning wagon. Father Zastoran is tending to a badly wounded mercenary called Trevvis, but he is unable to focus on his second patient, a female sworder named Kallien, who lies near death from terrible burns and smoke inhalation. Any magical healing is sufficient to stabilize Kallien, who is currently at -6 hit points and counting. A DC 15 Heal check is also sufficient to stop Kallien's decline. In future encounters with Father Zastoran, Trevvis, and Kallien, these NPCs have an initial attitude of friendly to any PCs who successfully kept Kallien from dying.

**Deal with Frightened Animals:** A modest collection of pigs, goats, and sheep accompanies Almah's party on the journey to Kelmarane. The flaming wagon has unsettled these creatures, which somehow escaped from their pen in the confusion surrounding the fire's outbreak. The middle-aged human camel driver and his wife do their best to wrangle the panicking animals, but their efforts are quickly being overrun by the chaos of the situation.

Five animals must be calmed in order to keep them out of danger and out of the way. Calming a panicked animal requires a DC 20 Handle Animal or wild empathy check. If the PCs manage to make 5 successful checks before the fire is quenched, the camel driver and his wife have a friendly attitude toward them in future encounters. Despite a completely successful outcome, the camel driver is for the moment completely distraught, as his favorite goat, Rombard, has gone missing in the chaos.

**Ad Hoc Experience Award:** If the PCs manage to stop the fire before it spreads, award them experience as if they had defeated a CR 1 creature.

## Almah's Party

The group of people Almah has gathered to aid her in retaking the village includes the PCs and (now that the astrologer Eloais is dead) 16 other characters—Almah's major domo Garavel, an expert on gnolls named Dashki, a cleric of Nethys named Zastoran, four soldiers, six mercenaries, a pair of camel drivers, and Almah herself. Full stat blocks for most of these NPCs are not provided,

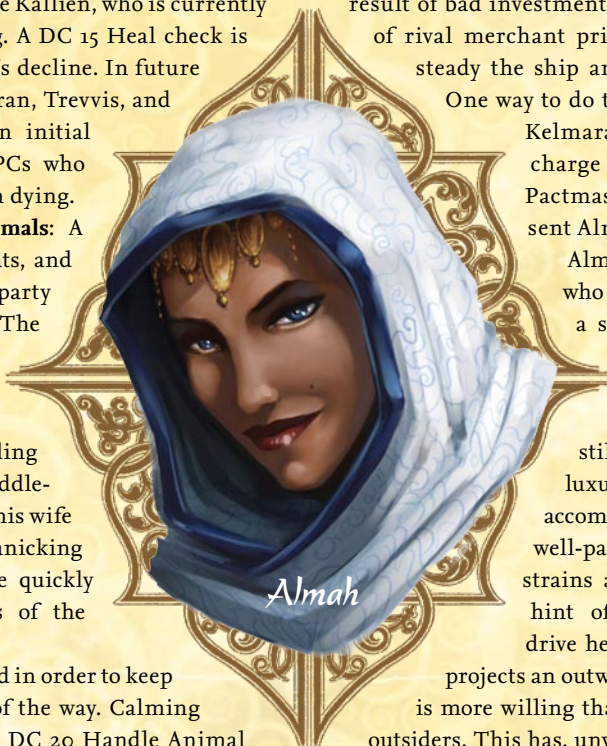
but their class, race, and level are given in the event you wish to develop them into characters more likely to fight at the PCs' side.

**Almah Roveshki (LN Female human expert 4/fighter 1/rogue 1):** Almah is a beautiful young merchant princess, the latest in a long line of wealthy agents of the Pactmasters of Katapesh. Her family, originally from Varisia far to the north, has dwelt in Katapesh for several generations now. Unfortunately, her family has been down on its luck for most of those generations as a result of bad investments and the economic intrigues of rival merchant princes, but Almah is ready to steady the ship and rebuild her family legacy.

One way to do that is to rescue the village of Kelmarane, which used to be in the charge of her family ages ago. The Pactmasters want it back, so they have sent Almah to make it so.

Almah is a canny competitor who knows that she will not get a second chance to impress her mysterious superiors. Thus she has thrown everything into this expedition. She still manages to maintain the luxury of her position (perfumed accommodations, the finest silks, well-paid mercenaries), but the strains are starting to show, and the hint of desperation has begun to drive her decision-making. While she projects an outward atmosphere of control, she is more willing than ever to trust the counsel of outsiders. This has, unwittingly, made her something of an easy pawn of Dashki and his secret allies. Dashki's encouragement brings Almah closer to achieving economic stability and the salvation of her family name, so she is blind to the scout's many failings.

If the PCs ask Almah about Kelmarane, she replies, "Long ago, the village was one of several in the Uwaga Highlands of the Brazen Peaks situated around a battle market, a huge arcade that attracted merchants, gladiators, actors, musicians, and customers from throughout Katapesh and neighboring Osirion. Then, about 20 years ago... it fell, and the Pactmasters abandoned it to ruin. Rumors of plagues and evil curses abound, but in truth no one really seems to know why the village died. About 2 years ago, a pack of gnolls called the Kulldis tribe inhabited the battle market and claimed Kelmarane as its own. The Pactmasters want the village back, and it's up to us to deliver it to them." A DC 20 Sense Motive check is enough for a PC to get a hunch that Almah may know more about the doom that came to Kelmarane, but for now, she doesn't wish to speak





# howl of the carrion king

on the subject. She'll have more to say once the PCs have liberated most of the city, as detailed in Part Five.

**Garavel (LN Male human fighter 3):** With a lantern jaw and short black hair, the dashing Garavel looks more like a swordsman than an accountant and business expert, yet it is he who oversees much of Almah's personal business. A strange metal bolt protrudes from the left side of his skull, a sign of his direct servitude to the Pactmasters and a magical method of keeping his emotions in check while he engages in important business matters on their behalf. He often hides this bolt by wearing a plain white keffiyeh over the head—this metal bolt is a *Pactmaster's favor*, and apart from ensuring loyalty and preventing emotional outbursts, the device grants Garavel a +4 resistance bonus on saving throws against mind-affecting effects (but at the cost of never being able to gain the benefits of a morale bonus of any sort). A DC 15 Spot check is enough to notice the bolt while he wears his keffiyeh.

Occasionally, Almah uses Garavel to do “dirty” work involving swordplay and skullduggery, always managing to keep herself removed from the lowest of her own dealings. Garavel's years of service to Almah have instilled a noble sort of love for her—an emotion he is forbidden from expressing thanks to the spirit-hampering influence of the magical bolt. He and Almah share quarters, but there can be nothing sexual about their relationship.

**Dashki (Gnoll Expert):** Many members of Almah's party suspect that Dashki may have set the fire. He has drawn attention to himself with his generally rude attitude, his obvious attraction to the merchant princess (who considers him so far below her league that she hasn't noticed, even if everyone else has), and his rough-hewn, almost feral manners.

Almah hired the mangy, dart-eyed Dashki weeks ago in Solku, while investigating the land granted to her by the Pactmasters. Since Kelmarane was said to be under the control of gnolls, she needed an expert who could explain what she was up against and provide an edge in any possible negotiations with the creatures. Largely due to Dashki's animated first-hand accounts of gnoll savagery, Almah has given up on the idea of diplomacy, but she keeps him around because she trusts his advice, despite his eccentricities.

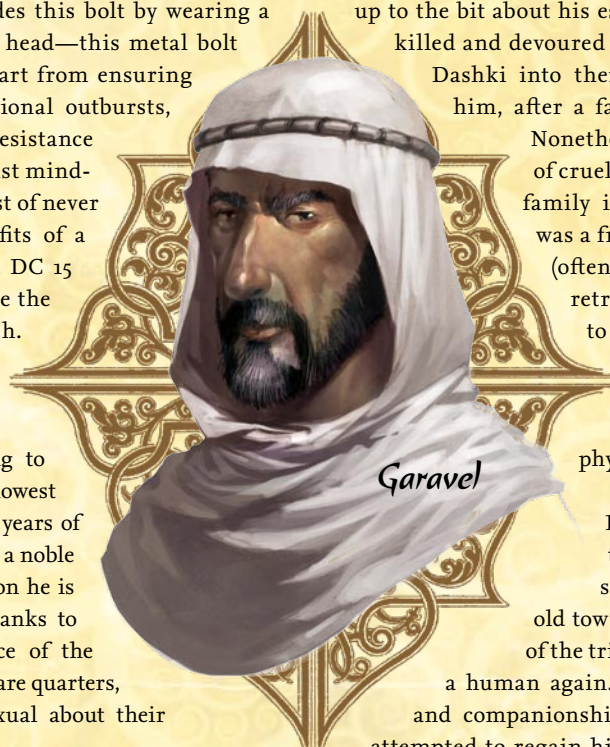
Anyone who spends any time with Dashki immediately notices that his powerful body odor betrays a man with a

very loose relationship with hygiene. He dresses in filthy rags and walks with a slight limp due to an old injury (a gnoll once tried to chew off his left leg at the thigh), propping himself up with a gnarled wooden staff. A DC 10 Spot check during mealtime reveals that the gnoll expert ravenously shoves food into his mouth with his grubby hands, an animalistic display that grossly offends anyone of culture or refinement.

If the PCs can make Dashki at least friendly, he'll share his story with them (see sidebar). His story is true up to the bit about his escape. In fact, the gnolls who killed and devoured his father adopted the young Dashki into their hunting tribe and raised him, after a fashion, as one of their own. Nonetheless, Dashki suffered years of cruel abuse at the hands of his new family in the Three Jaws tribe. He was a frequent target of humiliating (often violent) practical jokes, and retreated into a stage of savagery to preserve himself. Eventually, the impersonation became the truth, and Dashki became a gnoll in all but physical form.

Then, a few years ago, Dashki's chieftain decided to turn the young human into a spy operating from within his old town of Solku. They cast him out of the tribe until he learned to become a human again. Seeking to regain the trust and companionship of his pack-mates, Dashki attempted to regain his humanity. When the gnolls did not respond—indeed almost disappeared into the mountains—he turned against them, siding with the only person in life he could ever trust: himself. In revenge he acted as a regional scout, leading teams of hunters and government men into the wilds to reclaim lands lost to gnoll incursions. That's how he met Almah, working from a stall in the markets of Solku, eager for coin on the edge of desperation.

Three weeks ago, Dashki's eldest gnoll “brother” from the old tribe appeared from the foothills. He slew Dashki's clients—a pair of wealthy hunters from Avistan looking for an eccentric pelt to add to the collection—and welcomed him, at long last, back into the tribe. The chieftain had heard rumors about the Pactmasters' increased interest in the gnoll-lost lands. His particular interest, Kelmarane, was currently under the control of Kulldis tribe, but would make an excellent addition to the holdings of the Three Jaws. The gnolls encouraged Dashki to stay with Almah and await further instructions.





## Dashki's Story

"Almah hired me about a month ago to tell her all about the gnolls living in these hills. Gnolls killed my mother and grandfather when I was a boy. They put fire to our village and slew hundreds. Somehow I escaped with my father to the town of Solku, not far from here. It was a long time ago, I've forgotten most of what I saw. Terrible things. But I find it's the sounds that stay with me. The shrill howls and barks—hundreds of them at once—that sounded deliriously close to an audience. Laughing at us.

"Father raised me to know everything about the gnolls, their customs, their language. So as better to track them down and wipe them out. All of them. Together we scouted out their lairs, studied their tribes, listened to them speak until we could understand what they were saying. They're not dumb animals, you know. Not like you might think. In some ways they're even smarter than us.

"Dad didn't survive our first raid on a gnoll camp of the Three Jaws tribe. I saw them fall on him like hyenas on an abandoned kill, slathering themselves in his blood and innards. I can still hear the tear of his scalp and the sound of his bones against frenzied teeth. Against this scene I was forgotten. Ignored.

"I escaped, and I carry on the work of my father."

hypnotic to watch. His loyalty to Almah is fleeting, and he only remains at her side as long as his true masters, the Three Jaws gnolls, will it.

**Morale** Dashki knows the value of cowardice, and if reduced to less than 5 hit points, he flees combat to hide in the hills, eventually seeking out his Three Jaws contacts to seek aid and revenge.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 10, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +2; **Grp** +2

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Stealthy, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting

**Skills** Hide +9, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (local) +3, Knowledge (nature) +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Spot +6, Survival +6

**Languages** Common, Gnoll, Kelish

**SQ** wild empathy +1

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds* (2); **Other Gear**

+1 leather armor, masterwork scimitar, masterwork dagger, longbow with 20 arrows

**Father Zastoran (N Male old human cleric of Nethys 3):** Zastoran hails from the coastal capital of Katapesh. A cleric of Nethys, the god of magic, Zastoran joined up with Almah years ago when she was just starting out in business, and has been her personal physician and spiritual advisor ever since. Zastoran is a friendly, chatty chap who misses the comforts of his home city and who naturally gravitates toward good conversationalists with interest in culture and the arts.

Zastoran's small wagon contains an enormous chest that holds dozens and dozens of potions, an entire stock of medicinal supplements and

magical aids meant to protect Almah's band and the early settlers who will flock to Kelmarane once it has been liberated of gnoll influence. Despite this, he is loath to give out his potions and treats the loss of each as more serious than the injuries that they heal. In such cases Father Zastoran is full of patronizing advice about how the PCs can be more careful to avoid injuries in the future. Because of his collection and obsession with

## DASHKI

CR 2

Male ranger 2

CN Medium humanoid

**Init** +6; **Senses** Listen +6, Spot +6

### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13  
(+3 armor, +2 Dex)

**hp** 12 (2d8)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.

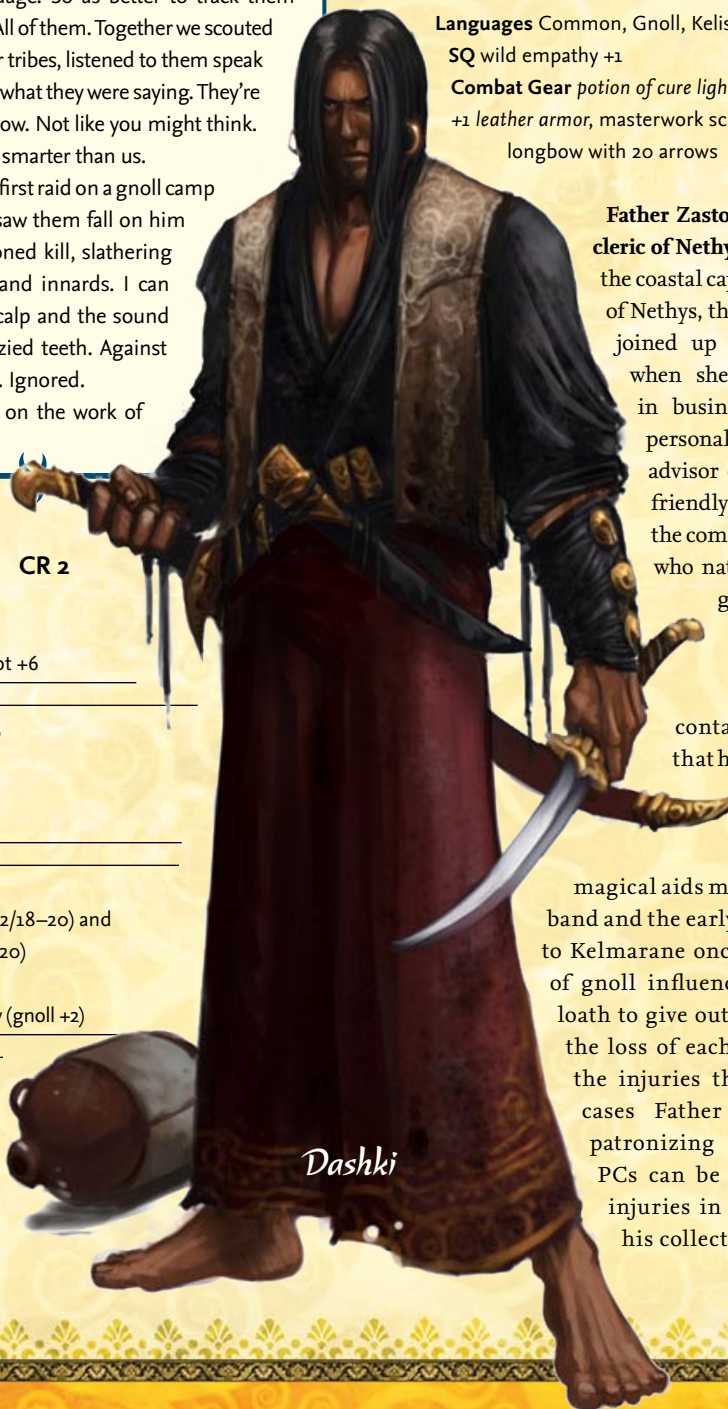
**Melee** mwk scimitar +3 (1d6+2/18–20) and  
mwk dagger +3 (1d4+1/19–20)

**Ranged** longbow +4 (1d8/x3)

**Special Attacks** favored enemy (gnoll +2)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Much of Dashki's limp is feigned; in battle, he's quite nimble and quick, employing a scimitar and dagger fighting style that's really rather



Dashki



# howl of the carrion king

alchemy, Zastoran is quick to befriend any PC with similar interests.

Zastoran is particularly adept at avoiding combat—but then, he's not included in this adventure to give the PCs a direct hand. His role is to provide healing in the form of spells and potions. He can cast 2 *cure moderate wounds*, 3 *cure light wounds*, and 4 *cure minor wounds* in a day, and does so at no charge as the PCs require. His potion collection is large but limited to *potions of cure light wounds*, *cure moderate wounds*, *delay poison*, *lesser restoration*, and nonmagical holy water. At Almah's urging, he only charges the PCs half price for the potions (but does so begrudgingly)—it's fine to simply assume he always has enough on hand to sell to the PCs what they can afford if you don't want to set a hard limit to his resources.

**Caravan Guards (Human warrior 2):** Two categories of guards are part of Almah's party—loyal personal guards assigned to protect her by the Pactmasters themselves, and mercenaries she hired at Solku to bolster her group's strength. All of these guards are second-level human warriors, but the two groups are quite different in personality.

The four personal guards are named Fixx, Keldon, Podarn, and Vodrave. Like Garavel, they serve the Pactmasters of Katapesh. It just so happens that they have been assigned to protect Almah, but she does not have direct control over them. The vigilant guards have little sense of humor, are not particularly communicative, and never really treat the player characters as anything other than a potential threat to Almah.

There are six mercenaries—three men (Trevvis [the nominal leader], Utarchus, and Dullen) and three women (Kallien, Brotis, and Yesper). They are a disreputable lot, thick with soiled armor and greasy hair, a distinct contrast to the well-mannered, meticulously attired soldiers who guard Almah at all times. Although they act the part, the mercenaries are nowhere near as tough as they appear or portray themselves to be. At the beginning of the adventure their bluster is fairly intimidating, but as the PCs defeat more and more monsters the mercenaries begin to appear like the middling battlefield pawns that they are. All the while, however, the mercenaries firmly believe themselves to be the PCs' superiors, treating them accordingly.

**Camel Drivers (LN human commoner 2):** This friendly, late middle-aged human couple tends the dozen-or-so animals kept by Almah's band as food or transportation.

The merchant princess hired them from the nearby town of Solku. Everyone seems to like the man, Hadrod, and his wife, Hadrah, who also help cook the camp's meals and take care of many additional menial tasks. Both are tremendous gossips and make a game of keeping tabs on everyone in the camp. The arrival of a new group excites both of them almost more than the recent commotion, and Hadrod and Hadrah pepper the PCs with questions about their backgrounds, clothes, and interests while they attempt to conduct their interview, making it somewhat unclear who is running the interrogation.

## Investigating the Fire

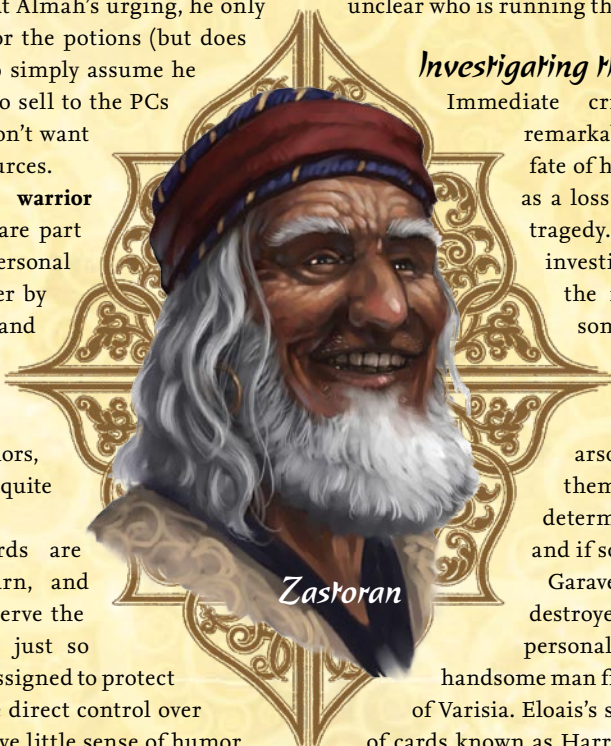
Immediate crisis aside, Almah shows remarkably little concern over the fate of her astrologer, treating it more as a loss of resources than a personal tragedy. She asks Garavel to lead an investigation into whether or not the fire might have been set by someone in her camp. Since the PCs also were not around when the fire broke out (and are thus unlikely potential arsonists in her eyes), she asks them to help her major domo determine if there is a mystery afoot, and if so, to solve it.

Garavel tells the PCs that the destroyed wagon belonged to Almah's personal fortuneteller Eloais, a handsome man from Almah's distant homeland of Varisia. Eloais's specialty was a divinatory deck of cards known as Harrow, a few cards of which litter the ground outside the burned-out wagon.

Physical examination of the ruined wagon reveals sooty ashes, a few broken bottles or potion vials, a cracked nonmagical crystal ball, and several pools of melted wax where candles must once have stood. Eloais's charred skeletal form remains near the center of the wagon. A DC 20 Search check reveals no signs of struggle or violence, suggesting that the fortune-teller was killed by the fire itself or from inhaling the smoke the fire caused. Sneaky characters searching the wreckage can harvest 55 gp in assorted blackened coins. Searching characters may make a DC 16 Spot check to notice the gnoll expert Dashki lurking a short distance away, watching them from behind the corner of a nearby wagon.

## Interviews

An obvious place to investigate the fire, and one both Almah and Garavel suggest if the PCs don't think of it, is to speak with everyone else in the party. Not only is this





good advice, but it works very well to introduce the PCs to the NPCs they'll be spending their time with during this adventure. Of the NPCs, only Garavel knows the PCs. The other NPCs have starting attitudes of indifferent to the PCs (save Dashki, who starts as unfriendly); these starting attitudes may have been adjusted depending on the actions the PCs took during the fire. Each NPC is willing to give the PCs a certain amount of information, but only if they're made friendly do they divulge the information listed at the end of the following sections.

When playing out these interviews, use the NPCs' descriptions on the preceding pages to liven things up; the players should ask their questions, not just roll Diplomacy checks and wait for you to feed them a few lines of information, after all.

**Almah:** Almah hired Eloais in Solku about a month ago to read his cards for her—she hasn't visited the land of her ancestors, but having a harrower at her side felt "right." She's hesitant to reveal what his readings told her. She isn't convinced the fire was arson, but if it was, she hopes the PCs find out who started the fire quickly. She does seem somewhat distraught at Eloais's death—if asked, she bitterly asks the PC how they would feel if one of their friends burned to death. Almah doesn't realize that Dashki is obsessed with her, but if told about it, she grows thoughtful. She admits that Eloais and she didn't have a romantic relationship, but she did spend a lot of time with the Varisian—time that could well have made Dashki jealous. (Friendly: Almah tells the PCs that Eloais's readings had grown increasingly grim, and that his last reading centered on an auspicious card, the Cyclone, portending death by fire and schemes by powerful evil. When Almah asked if that indicated something about Kelmarane, he said, "Yes, but the village is only a small part of something much larger, something he called the Legacy of Fire." Almah isn't sure what he meant by "Legacy of Fire," alas. With as little information as the PCs have at this point, no further Knowledge checks can reveal anything more, aside from the fact that no "Legacy of Fire" figures in prominent tales or legends.)

**Garavel:** Almah's major-domo has strong suspicions of how the fire started, but does not believe it would be proper for him to voice them at this time. The Lady Almah has asked for an unbiased investigation, after all. (Friendly: Garavel sighs, then indicates that he has never trusted Dashki, and if anyone in the group were to be revealed as an arsonist and murderer, Dashki would be the least surprising to him.)

**Caravan Guards:** Almah's personal guard were all standing guard at her tent when the fire started—none of them saw anything suspicious at the astrologer's wagon, but one did catch a glimpse of Dashki trying to hide behind a tree nearby; "It was clear that he was trying to get

a look into Almah's tent. That boy is obsessed with her." This places Dashki quite some distance from the wagon when the fire started, evidence in favor of his innocence. (Friendly: no additional information.)

The mercenaries were enjoying themselves around the feast-fire, finishing off dinner with a sturdy drink. They weren't too fond of Eloais and thought of him as a weakling. If they ask about Dashki, the guards confirm that he wasn't at the feast-fire with them, and one muses that he was probably spying on Almah—his obsession with the merchant princess is something of an open secret, with only Almah seemingly being oblivious to his attentions. None of the mercenaries has a high opinion of Dashki. (Friendly: The mercenaries make a few lewd and suggestive comments about the relationship they suspect Eloais had with Almah, and wonder if Dashki might have burned the astrologer's wagon to "get rid of the competition.")

**Zastoran:** The cleric was reading a book by the fire-pit, but the mercenaries were being too loud for him and he'd just stood up to return to his wagon when the fire started. He can attest that all six of the mercenaries were at the fire-pit and nowhere near the astrologer's wagon when the fire broke out, and that Dashki was not. He thought Eloais was a charlatan and that Almah is better off now without his attention, but admits she did seem quite fond of him. He finds Dashki to be unsettling, and his obsession with Almah somewhat disturbing; "No one with healthy desires skulks around a pretty woman the way he does; who knows what a scoundrel like him is capable of?" (Friendly: Zastoran admits that while he thought Eloais was a fake, he did appreciate his conversation; "Not a one of these others here can discuss the poetry of Bellianais or the music of far-off Absalom. Eloais was well traveled and intelligent. I will miss him.")

**Camel Drivers:** The camel drivers are excitable and prone to finishing each other's sentences. Hadrah was the first to notice the fire, but she and her husband were distracted by trying to get their animals under control soon thereafter. Hadrod in particular seems on the verge of tears—his favorite goat Rombard went missing during the chaos, and he fears the worst. The two thought that Eloais was "nice enough for a foreigner," but didn't really understand his talk of "Cyclones and Fiends and Uprisings." But Lady Almah's trust in the astrologer was good enough for them to know he was a good man. Asked about Dashki, their expressions darken but they refuse to say more. (Friendly: In a conspiratorial tone, Hadrah whispers, "We knew Dashki a bit from back Solku-way. Used to take rich folk into the scrublands to hunt up gnolls like trophies. Most people here don't trust him, especially the way he leers at Lady Almah with his mouth all watering like at the smell of a fresh steak. Maybe he done it to Eloais, to remove a rival for Lady Almah's attention?")



# howl of the carrion king

**Dashki:** The strange gnoll expert should quickly become the prime suspect, but even though he seems suspicious, he is innocent of this particular crime. If accused of arson and murder, he loudly proclaims his innocence—perhaps a bit too loudly, but he is innocent all the same. He claims to have been finishing up dinner by the campfire when the wagon went up, but in fact he was spying on Almah at the time—Dashki has become obsessed with the beautiful woman, and it is this secret that makes him nervous during the interview process. As the interview progresses, he grows more and more frustrated, crying out, “No! I had nothing to do with the fire! How do we even know the fire was set? That idiot burned a hundred candles in his wagon. Perhaps he just got unlucky. We’re in gnoll country. It was probably pugwampis.”

If asked about pugwampis, Dashki is grateful for the change of subject and says, “Terrible critters what crawled up from the Darklands below the earth. ‘Jackal rats,’ some folks call ‘em, on account of their pointed little heads. They worship gnolls as gods and infest their communities like rats. Wherever pugwampis go, bad luck is sure to follow. The gnolls hate pugwampis because of it, and try to kill them all the time. But they always come back. Perhaps their bad luck caused the fortune-man’s candles to start a fire? Yes, pugwampis. I am certain it was pugwampis.”

No PC has ever heard of pugwampis, and nor has any member of Almah’s party. Unfortunately, all of them will become quite familiar with them in the very near future. (Friendly: Dashki breaks down and admits that he may be “a bit too fond” of Almah, but continues to plead his innocence regarding the fire.)

## Concluding the Investigation

After Garavel has introduced the PCs to every member of Almah’s party and they have had a chance to examine Eloais’s wagon and the animal pen (which gains them nothing), the major domo takes them back to Almah’s tent for them to render their final judgment. The circumstances and attitudes of the others seem to damn Dashki, but Almah is unwilling to convict the gnoll expert without more concrete evidence.

No one at the camp, including the PCs, have ever heard of the “pugwampis” that are central to Dashki’s theory of what may have transpired, and a few members of the camp (if asked) suggest that the whole thing may be a lie. Almah, on the other hand, is a bit more trusting.

“If my expert is correct,” she says, “the hills around here should be crawling with these pugwampis, or at least some sign of their passage. If what Dashki says is true, it should be easy for him to find one and bring it back to me.”

The merchant princess turns to the PCs. “As he is, however, our best suspect in this affair, it would not do to send him out into the darkness alone. I’m afraid that your

investigation is not yet at an end. Go out into the desert with Dashki and find me one of these pugwampis.”

## Pugwampi Hunt (EL 1)

Setting out into the scrubland hills north of the Sultan’s Claw, the PCs search about in darkness for signs of the pugwampis. Despite the outlandishness of Dashki’s tale, he is in fact telling the truth. The mischievous gremlins have left plenty of evidence of their passing. Almah will accept nothing short of a captured pugwampi or its carcass, however, so the investigation eventually leads more than 100 yards from the encampment at the Sultan’s Claw.

This scene works best when the GM ratchets up the creepiness even while setting up what is bound to be one of the most humorous encounters in the adventure. The hunt takes place in the rugged hills at night. In order to negotiate the rocky terrain and its many painful cacti, PCs must rely upon darkvision or a light source such as a torch. As the hunters proceed into the wilderness, play up the uneven shadows cast by torches. Phantom creatures haunt the underbrush—or at least seem to until closer inspection reveals nocturnal birds or rodents. Dashki tells the PCs that they’re looking for a little humanoid creature that’s much smaller than a halfling, with light fur, dirty claws, and a tiny jackal head.

A DC 15 Search check in this area reveals dozens of small footprints leading to and from the camp at the Sultan’s Claw, finally retreating into the darkness of hill country. Sure enough, a character with the Track feat can also detect the hesitant tread of the camel driver’s missing goat, which appears to have been pulled away against its will to the northwest. If no PC has this ability, Dashki himself points out the tracks, which soon become obvious to even unskilled investigators.

After following the trail for several hundred feet, explain to the players that each character feels an inexplicable rise in the natural tension of the environment, as if they expect something terrible to happen even though nothing about the terrain has changed. Soon thereafter, a sound not unlike the brief cry of a human child comes out of the darkness ahead. A DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check determines that the sound must be coming from the lost goat, though the timbre of the cry makes it sound as if the creature is in pain. As the PCs progress toward the sound, the local cacti grow more and more intense, until the hunters find themselves at the edge of a dense thicket of the prickly plants. The sound of the bleating goat is now obvious to everyone—and it seems to be coming from somewhere deep within the cacti.

The cactus forest, though very wide, is not so terribly deep. Only 25 feet separate the PCs from the trapped goat, but the thickness of the growth requires 3 rounds of careful maneuvering before a PC makes it to the other side.



With a DC 12 Search check, a PC whose light source or vision can reach that far can spot Rombard the goat, tethered to a scrub bush by a hairy, knotted length of rope. If the PCs carry light sources or are particularly noisy, the goat's tiny bleats erupt into full-fledged brays of fear as it tugs in vain at the rope around its neck. Movement through the cactus thicket requires a DC 15 Balance check to avoid the large spines that fill the area. Failure indicates that the character takes a point of damage from the quills. Remember that characters who attempt to move at full speed while balancing take a –5 penalty on their checks. A character that simply barrels through the field at full speed without trying to avoid the cacti takes 1 point of damage per 5 feet traveled.

Unfortunately for the PCs, the entire area is within the unluck radius of a hidden pugwampi, meaning their jaunt into the pointy cacti will be a lot more difficult than they think. Once the first Balance check is made, ask the exploring character to roll another d20, and use the lowest result. Play up failed Balance checks by describing the character's plunge into sticky quills as a series of extremely unlucky events—stepped-on shoelaces, helmet visors slipping down at inopportune moments, robes or dresses getting snagged on foliage, etc. Be sure to say “Oh, how unlucky!” with each mishap. By the end of “Howl of the Carrion King,” the PCs will grow to hate the pugwampis, and this is the all-important scene that sows the seeds of that hatred to come. Play it up for all it is worth.

Once the cactus patch has been navigated, the PCs emerge on a thin strip of open land at the edge of a 15-foot-wide ravine. A casual glance down the edge reveals a huge multi-armed, wickedly barbed cactus dominating the ground 10 feet below the ledge, almost directly below where the sad little goat Rombard has been lazily tied to a scrub bush. He's covered with cactus quills and has only 3 hit points. Rombard doesn't stay still, making it difficult to free the goat. Untying the squirming goat requires a DC 15 Use Rope check. A failed check means that the goat begins racing around the character in circles, entangling him in the rope. The character must immediately make a DC 15 Balance check to avoid losing his balance and tumbling over the ravine and into the arms of the enormous cactus below, a fall that causes 1d6+2 points of damage. Alternately, a slashing weapon can be used to cut the rope, and while the goat's frantic movements make the rope a tough target

(AC 15), any hit on it with a slashing weapon cuts the goat free. Of course, both of these checks are also subject to the unluck aura of the nearby pugwampi. If Rombard is cut loose, he immediately bolts for the Sultan's Claw, but in his panicked flight through the cacti he's certain to take enough damage to fall unconscious. A DC 15 Handle Animal or wild empathy check is enough to calm the goat so that he can be freed with ease.

**Creature:** The pugwampi itself hides behind a rock 5 feet from the goat; a successful Spot check (against the pugwampi's Hide check) reveals the creature's hiding spot. It wields a rusty dagger even though it has a crude bow strapped across its back, and has spent the last several minutes using *Speak with Animals* to tell Rombard all sorts of horrific things it's planning to do to the goat before cooking him for dinner. If the pugwampi is spotted, or as soon as Rombard is freed, the creature emits a shrill yell of outrage and attacks.



Rombard

## PUGWAMPI CR 1/2

hp 3 (see page 83)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The pugwampi tries to shatter a weapon wielded by the closest PC on the first round, then runs circles and shoots at PCs with his bow in the following rounds, giggling and shrieking the whole time.

**Morale** If the pugwampi is harmed, it attempts to flee, but in its panic it merely impales itself on a cactus as it does, leaving the PCs with a handy corpse as proof of its existence.

### STATISTICS

**Gear** dagger, shortbow with 20 arrows, a dozen singed Harrow cards (evidence that this pugwampi was indeed in the astrologer's wagon when the fire started)

## ROMBARD

CR 1/6

Frightened goat (use stats for donkey, MM 272)

hp 11 (currently 3)

**Development:** Back at the Sultan's Claw, Almah awaits word from the PCs. Bringing back the corpse of the pugwampi is enough to clear Dashki's name, and the successful conclusion of the investigation shifts Almah's attitude toward the PCs from indifferent to friendly. Under no circumstances does Almah allow a living pugwampi to survive in her camp. After studying such a creature for a few minutes, she orders Garavel to put it out of its misery. Dashki lays claim to the pugwampi corpse and fashions a tiny noose for it to hang from the end of his staff. Almah



# howl of the carrion king

muses that there must be more of the creatures living nearby, and comments that the Sultan's Claw is obviously too exposed a location. She knows that a monastery to Sarenrae stood near the village of Kelmarane, and that the ruined building would make a much better base of operations for the coming battle for the gnoll-held village—yet chances are good that the monastery is far from abandoned.

In any event, the matter solved, Almah is open to discussing the terms of the PCs' employment. She offers them 200 gp each, and while that may seem like a bargain at the beginning of the adventure, some PCs might try to sweeten the deal. A successful DC 20 Diplomacy check is sufficient to get Almah to increase the per-person reward to 500 gp. Failure on this check by more than 10 or repeated attempts to increase the amount automatically result in Almah's attitude toward the tightwad decreasing by one step.

**Ad Hoc Experience Award:** For solving the mystery of the fire, award the PCs XP as if they had defeated a CR 2 creature. If they also manage to return Rombard alive to the camel drivers, award them additional experience as if they had defeated a CR 1 creature.

## PART TWO: THE OLD MONASTERY

About a mile from the Sultan's Claw stands the abandoned Monastery of St. Vardishal, a forlorn edifice once holy to the faith of Sarenrae, goddess of redemption and the sun. In the 2 decades since a mad cult from Kelmarane invaded and put its monks to death, the place has stood as an empty ruin, a reminder of a brief era in which civilization tamed the Uwaga Highlands.

Today, the monastery is home to a tribe of pugwampis, gremlins who worship the village gnolls of Kelmarane as gods. Because the pugwampis bring terrible luck wherever they roam, the gnolls hate them and try to drive them out of the village each time the little creatures attempt to deliver tribute or pay homage, so the gremlins instead infest the monastery and honor their deities from afar.

In order for Almah and her party to claim the old monastery as a home base from which to launch attacks on the gnolls of Kelmarane, the PCs must explore every room of the place and rid it of the fell creatures that currently call it home. In addition to the pugwampis, these include a tribe of baboons loyal to the gremlins, a giant bird living in the monastery's overgrown cloister courtyard, a clutch of thirsty stirges, and worse.

The most powerful threat in the monastery is in fact its greatest defender, the essence of Vardishal himself, a Templar of the Five Winds slain in antiquity in the original battle against the efreeti Jhavhul and his terrible forces.

Today Vardishal exists only as the merest imprint of his original spirit, a dull sentience inhabiting a patch of mold in the monastery's abandoned alchemical laboratory. Kept alive, after a fashion, by Nefeshti's immortality-granting wish, the loyal servant hopes to find a new vessel for its soul, that its eternal vigil over the evils of Pale Mountain might begin again.

Most of the monastery's walls remain intact, though a few of its towers have collapsed and gaping holes mar most of the structure's ceilings. Most wooden structures have rotted away and nature has begun to intrude upon the monastery's interior. Some of the old red and orange tile work remains intact, but where walls and ceilings have fallen the decoration has cracked and faded. Since most creatures ignore the pugwampis, the gremlins seldom post effective guards and almost never patrol their headquarters. Most dwell within a nest in the rafters of the monastery's chapel merrily giggling their gremlin giggles and singing their gremlin songs.

## A1. Ruined Nave

Scrub brush and a light, patchy carpet of weeds invade the monastery through two huge fallen sections of the western wall. The exposed nave beyond is a huge hallway littered with bits of debris ranging from tiny rocks to enormous sections of collapsed masonry. Most of the roof above the long promenade is gone, but several jagged pillars remain.

The pugwampis do a particularly poor job of guarding the nave, although its role as a thoroughfare from the chapel to the rooms of the southern wing means that small groups of pugwampis and baboons traffic the area several times a day. After the PCs have set up shop in the monastery, the ruined nave is the most likely spot from which the building will be attacked by wandering monsters.

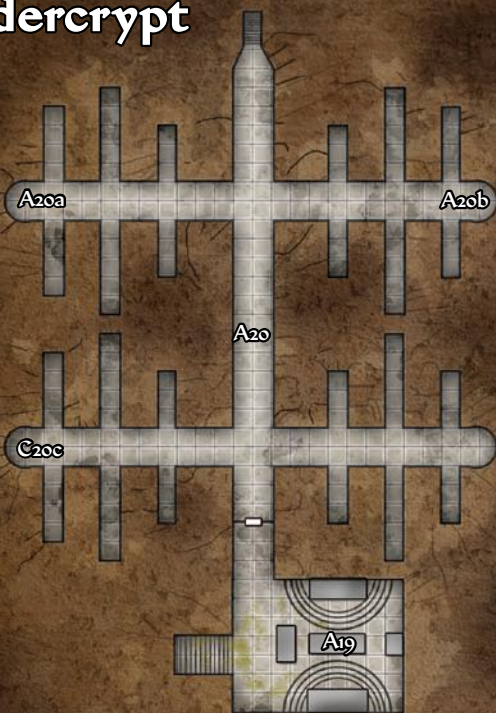
**A1a.** This debris-laden chamber once held a shrine and wooden altar, but all of that was smashed decades ago by vandals. The ceiling here has remained intact over the years, helping to preserve a huge bas-relief statue of a muscular humanoid man with a pointy beard gesturing toward a huge mountain in the background, his face a picture of mortal concern. A DC 10 Knowledge (local) check reveals that the mountain in the background is Pale Mountain, largest of the Brazen Peaks and the site of many fell legends. A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check reveals that the bearded figure is depicted in a manner similar to the way in which the faith of Sarenrae depict their saints, but this is not one of the more frequently honored saints of that faith. A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check is sufficient to identify the image as of very obscure regional saint named Vardishal.



## The Old Monastery



## Undercrypt



## Chapel Upper Works



One square = 5 feet



**A1b.** A similar statue adorns the eastern wall of this chamber, in this case with the bearded figure appearing on a hilltop to a group of robed pilgrims. The being holds up his hands, palms out, in a sign of peace. Though many of the faces and limbs on the bas-relief have been worn down or cut away, the expressions of those range from beatific to horrified. A secret door between the figure's legs leads to the monks' contemplative garden in area **11**. Discovering the secret door requires a DC 14 Search check.

A crude stone stele that seems to have been erected more recently than the abandonment of the monastery stands here as well. Its graven inscription reads: "A ghost of unholy mien was purged from this place by Theodephus Estrovan, servant of Aroden, 4691 AR."

## A2. Chapel (EL 2)

A short set of wide ceremonial steps leads down to a cavernous chapel in which the congregants would gather for sermons in happier times. The vibrant orange and red starburst of Sarenrae still stands behind a film of rusted rainwater and dirt along the north wall overlooking the collapsed altar. Between the stairs and the altar stand dozens of old marble benches, many overturned and even more broken into two or more pieces. A wide walkway bisects the pews, leading directly to the raised altar. Here and there a few clumps of the original red carpet along this thoroughfare hang on against rot and neglect.

Above the center of the chapel, dangling about ten feet from the floor, hangs a cluster of gnoll skulls in various stages of decay. Strung together like a ghoulish candelabra of twine and bone, the boulder-sized ornament hangs from the wooden rafters about twenty feet above the ground.

The rafters and upper works of the monastery's chapel are detailed in the key for area **A3**, and this complex encounter will run much more smoothly if you familiarize yourself with both locations prior to play. The rafters themselves can be reached via a rickety (but safe) wood and iron ladder at area **A2a**.

Any PC who takes more than a single round to examine the room notices that the ceiling rafters in the southeast portion of the chapel upper works have been papered over like a wasp's nest in an interwoven mish-mash of soiled tapestries, tablecloths, altar runners, and other bits of salvaged cloth, creating a sort of hanging "tent" in the rafters above. A DC 12 Spot check allows a PC to note movement on the fabric, as if by the passage of tiny feet over the hanging cloth from above.

The rope that suspends the gnoll-skull chandelier winds up to the rafters above, then across to the southwest to area **A3a** above. The rope is AC 11 and has 3 hit points—if destroyed, the gnoll-skull chandelier and its tiny occupant falls 10 feet to crash on the floor below. A creature

underneath can make a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid being struck by the falling object for 1d4 points of damage.

**Creatures:** Unless the PCs are taking pains to be stealthy, they'll be noticed immediately by the pugwampis infesting this room and the rafters above. When the little gremlins do notice them, the knotted rope suspending the gnoll-skull candelabra jerks and jumps as a runty little creature dressed in crude furs scrambles from far above to gain a foothold on the swaying skulls. This is one of several pugwampis that lie in wait in the room. With a squeaky laugh, this gremlin casts a rude gesture in the PCs' direction, signaling the attack to the other pugwampis in the rafters above.

Although individual pugwampis aren't very dangerous, in large numbers like those found here, they can be quite frustrating and even deadly. In all, there are nearly two dozen pugwampis living in the old monastery (including the chieftain), but at any one time, many of them are out scrounging for food or cavorting in other parts of the monastery. The first time the PCs enter the chapel, they should face six pugwampis; although technically this is an EL 2 encounter, the pugwampis are relatively weak creatures who should be more interested in tormenting the PCs than actually killing them—play them as pests, not menaces. Parties ill-equipped with ranged attacks would be well advised to retreat and rethink their plans. This initial encounter is designed to make a lasting impression of how annoying pugwampis are and to get the PCs thinking early on in the campaign that not every fight should be a straight-up melee affair.

Note that the rafters above are 20 feet high; rather than go through complex math to determine which of the pugwampi unluck auras extend to the floor below, it's easiest to simply assume that the overlapping unluck auras affect all creatures in the room. They do not pursue the PCs out of this room, and as long as there are enough pugwampis remaining in the "pool" they can replenish the four stationed here with ease.

### PUGWAMPIS (6)

CR 1/2

hp 3 each (see page 83)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** These pugwampis lurk in the rafters above, one on the gnoll-skull chandelier, three at area **A3a** and two at **A3b**. They fire their arrows down at targets below, using their tiny daggers only if cornered.

**Morale** These pugwampis flee if confronted in melee, or if they take any damage, seeking shelter in area **A3e**.

**Treasure:** At the center of the grisly jumble of gnoll skulls, nestled within a mostly dried excised gnoll lung, is an uncut garnet worth 150 gp. An examination of area **A2b** reveals the torn-out pages of a copy of *The Birth of Light*



and *Truth* (Sarenrae's holy book) strewn about the altar, which has been smeared with excrement. Any character who attempts to clean up the mess or reconsecrate the altar attracts the notice of Sarenrae. This manifests in the form of a personal *bleed* effect that lasts 6 hours each time the character spends more than 10 minutes praying at the altar. This notice of Sarenrae comes into play later, in the graveyard of Sarenrae's church in Kelmarane, so be sure to keep a note of which characters helped to restore the altar to honor. A total salvage of the chapel turns up 47 gp worth of assorted religious objects, loose coins, and random trinkets.

## A3. Chapel Upper Works (EL 4)

A thin balcony overlooks the chapel floor some twenty feet below. Two rows of tall-backed wooden choir chairs dominate the southern reach of the balcony, which hugs the chapel's concave walls. The balcony falls away—collapsed for a span of perhaps fifteen feet—just on the other side of the choir area. To the east, rickety time-worn wooden rafters stretch across the whole chapel. Two huge sections of these rafters have been engulfed in a sort of nest comprised of a patchwork of random bits of cloth.

The tactical complexity of the chapel rafters takes some effort to pull off effectively, but with the unluck aura of the pugwampis, the necessary preparation time will pay off enormously. Before the campaign begins, take some time to draw out the balconies and rafters on a battle grid such as Paizo's GameMastery Flip-Mats. This will facilitate play once the fighting begins, and since the unlucky PCs are going to be falling through broken rafters, drawing things out beforehand gives the players the chance to move their characters into danger without you lifting so much as a finger to get them to do it. Step on a weak spot in the rafters? Oooh, bad luck for you! Even if you do not usually run combats on the grid, at least take some time to draw out the rafter and balcony network so that the players understand exactly what they are dealing with.

Note that a fall from up here—and there will likely be plenty—causes 2d6 points of damage on impact.

**A3a.** The ladder from area **A2c** leads up to the choir balcony. The rotting wooden “booths” are inscribed with religious symbols, but the whole apparatus is in terrible shape and literally crumbles to the touch. It is from here that the gremlins fire their arrows into intruders on the ground floor. Should intruders reach the balcony, the pugwampis panic and scream in order to alert their brethren throughout the monastery to the dangers imposed by the player characters. The rope that supports the gnoll-skull chandelier at **A2a** is tied off to the southwestern rafter near the edge of the balcony; it can be untied with a DC 14 Use Rope check.

**A3b.** Exposure to the elements and the passage of years have rendered the once sturdy wooden rafters crisscrossing the chapel upper works treacherous. Weighing less than a dog, the pugwampis have nothing to fear from a collapse, but the player characters are a different story. Small creatures have a 25% chance per round of breaking a beam, while Medium creatures have a 75% chance per round of doing so; larger creatures automatically break beams they walk on. A broken beam results in a 20-foot fall; if a creature is adjacent to another beam or balcony, it can attempt to leap onto it with a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid the fall (but note that this might simply put the target at risk for breaking a new beam).

**A3c.** The floorboards at this location are rotten; chances for breaking them are equal to those for the beams in area **A3b**.

**A3d.** An ornate window (no glass) opens in the northern wall here. From this point, the ruined village of Kelmarane is visible a mile and a half to the north over the rugged hilltops.

**A3e.** This is the pugwampis' main lair, knit together like a nest composed of interwoven tapestries, sackcloths, sheets, blankets, and other bits of loose cloth. Similar material has been used to create “walls” along the north and west sides of this habitat, as well as along the rafters between areas **A3e** and **A3f**. The “chamber” within is redolent of body sweat and liquid waste. Any pugwampis that fled from a battle in the chapel cower here; although they walk freely on the cloth floor, any Small or larger creature that tries the same rips through and falls.

**A3f.** The gremlin chieftain, a pudgy creature named Mokknokk, lives in this “chamber,” spending most of his time seated upon a crude throne fashioned from the ruined choir seats near the east wall. Hideously lazy, Mokknokk prefers to let his minions do his work, including defending the lair if needed. He's attended at all times by a pair of pugwampis, and only if they're defeated in combat does the king heft his magic warhammer (a weapon he took from a gnome and that he wields clumsily in both hands) and charge his foes.

If the PCs manage to kill at least 8 pugwampis, King Mokknokk gathers a pair of pugwampis to his side and bravely clambers down from his perch here and begins scouring the monastery for the PCs. If they don't defeat the pugwampi king here, feel free to have them ambushed by him at any other location in the monastery.

### KING MOKKNOKK

CR 3

Male pugwampi fighter 2 (see page 83)

NE Tiny Fey

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Listen** –3, **Spot** +5

**Aura** unluck (20-ft. radius)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 14, flat-footed 17



# howl of the carrion king

(+5 armor, +2 Dex, +2 size)

**hp** 20 (3 HD; 1d6+2d10+6)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3

**DR** 2/cold iron; **SR** 7

## OFFENSE

**Spd** 20 ft.

**Melee** +1 *Small warhammer* +2 (1d6–1/×3)

**Ranged** longbow +6 (1d4/×3)

**Space** 2 1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 1st)

At will—*prestidigitation*, *Speak with animals*

1/day—*shatter* (DC 10)

## TACTICS

**During Combat** King Mokknokk targets a foe's shield with his shatter ability, then runs in and attempts to break shins and bash kneecaps with his magic hammer. He resorts to attacks with his longbow only as a last resort when he can't engage a foe in melee—this somewhat foolhardy tactic has been misinterpreted by the other pugwampis as bravery, thus ensuring Mokknokk's claim to the throne until he attacks a foe he can't defeat.

**Morale** Of the pugwampis, only King Mokknokk lacks an inborn sense of cowardice. He fights to the death.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 7, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +2; **Grp** –8

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (warhammer)

**Skills** Bluff +3, Craft (trapmaking) +4, Disable Device +4, Hide +18, Ride +6, Spot +5

**Languages** Gnoll, Terran

**Gear** breastplate, +1 *Small warhammer*, longbow with 20 arrows

## PUGWAMPIS (2)

**CR** 1/2

**hp** 3 each (see page 83)

## TACTICS

**During Combat** These pugwampis fear King Mokknokk more than most other deaths, and do their best to prevent any creature from approaching their master.

**Morale** As long as Mokknokk is alive and in sight, these pugwampis fight to the death. As soon as their king is dead or elsewhere, though, they flee as soon as they take any damage at all.

**Treasure:** Secreted under the chieftain's makeshift throne is a small padded chest containing a *phylactery* of faithfulness and a *ring of feather fall*.

## A4. North Cloister

A sweeping bas-relief sculpture along the north wall depicts five bearded, larger-than-life humans riding the wind with triumph carved upon their faces. Though some of their arms and hands are missing, each is clearly meant to wield a distinctive weapon. One of the five warriors holds a large axe, while another holds a fragment of what must once have been a regal staff. In the distance, an ominous mountain looms over the quintet. East of the wall decoration, two open arches lead into small rooms off the north wall. The south wall is little more than a series of open arches that look out into an open-air courtyard.

A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the five figures as legendary genies known as the Templars of the Five Winds. The stone carving bears a name for each genie, engraved near their feet. They are, from left to right, Kardswann, Pazhvann, Vardishal, Zayifid, and Davashuum. The latter wields the broken staff, while Kardswann wields the strange axe (with which the PCs will become very familiar in time). No other weapons can be seen on the other damaged statues. Any PC who viewed the bas-reliefs in areas **A1a** or **A1b** recognizes Vardishal as the same figure depicted there.



## A5. East Cloister

The eastern cloister walk abuts what must be the outer wall of the monastery itself. The lengthy wall bears a marred sculpture depicting the five figures from the north cloister mural in battle against numerous creatures of evil demeanor. Several of the creatures appear to be composed at least partly of fire, while others are much more difficult to define, being outright monsters of unknown origin or unusual warriors with weapons bonded into their flesh like organic tools. In the background Pale Mountain looms large, and over it two titanic figures lock in a deadly wrestler's embrace. One has the demoniac visage of a noble efreeti, while the other is a gorgeous woman who could only be a djinni princess. Opposite the sculpted wall, a series of open arches leads out into an open-air courtyard.

A DC 17 Knowledge (history) check reveals that this sculpture depicts the great wars of genie vs. genie that cast the Pale Mountain region into chaos hundreds of years ago.



## A6. South Cloister

An open arch along the southern wall at the eastern end of the corridor leads off into darkness, while a series of archways lines the north wall, looking in on the monastery's massively overgrown courtyard. The southern wall bears a bas-relief sculpture in the form of a triptych. In the first scene, a heroic-looking bearded figure takes leave of four similarly attired companions, who rise off into the heavens, leaving him to stand vigil over the large mountain in the background. The next scene depicts the bearded figure in battle with a flaming half man, half snake creature wielding a spear. The fire spirit transfixes the bearded hero with the spear, seemingly striking a killing blow. In the final scene, the hero appears twice—once on the ground with a wound in his back and once standing over this form, looking down upon it sadly.

Comparison of the bas-relief with others in the sequence clearly shows that the bearded figure here is the central figure in all of the carvings, including those found in areas A1a and A1b, and that the entity's name is Vardishal.

## A7. West Cloister

The outer wall of the west cloister passage bears a massive carving. The central figure—the heroic man with the pointed beard—preaches to a variety of human clerics from throughout the long history of the monastery. The first image depicts the figure manifesting in a spiritual manner to a small group of pilgrims of Sarenrae. Another shows the figure conversing with a man in religious finery while the monastery itself is being constructed in the background. Thereafter follows a procession of similar poses, each depicting a visit by the bearded man and the leader of each era of the temple. The depictions of these clerics often also bear an identifying inscription, complete with dates that span the last several hundred years. The most recent carving is from thirty years ago, and while ample room remains for additional carvings on the west wall, the last thirty feet or so are completely blank.

Two open arches on opposite ends of the west wall lead out into the ruined nave.

The bas-relief here has suffered the most damage of any along the cloister walk. In particular the clerics of Sarenrae have been particularly ill-treated, with some of their names and the dates of their reign completely pried away or scratched into oblivion. Their physical forms bear other obvious signs of abuse, with a few gouges in faces and chests that clearly seem to have been created with strong intent to vandalize. These defacements are tangible reminders of the battle with Kelmarane's twisted cult of Sarenrae that finally brought the monastery to ruin 2 decades ago.

## A8. Courtyard (EL 3)

Huge branches and overgrown weeds clog the central open-air courtyard of the monastery's cloister walk. In better times, the monastic priests would have contemplated the open space while circling the cloister, but today it is barely possible to see a few feet into the tangled mess, let alone all the way to the opposite cloister walk. Here and there the brush thins out enough that a dedicated explorer might be able to create a sort of passage, but mostly it is an impassable mess.

Movement through the courtyard counts as difficult terrain due to the undergrowth.

**Creature:** The sticks and branches comprise the nest of a huge vulture-like bird called a geier (pronounced GYRE, rhymes with tire), a Katapeshi carrion bird well known for both its size and aggressive nature. The creature has many nests in the region, so the bird often goes days or even weeks without returning to the monastery. The pugwampis have learned how to tunnel into the nest in order to steal the giant bird's eggs when it is away, a recurring annoyance that sets the enormous bird on edge every time she returns. She is away when the PCs first visit the monastery, and returns the fourth day after Almah's party inhabits the ruin (see page 31).

### GEIER

CR 3

Advanced vulture (*Nyambe: African Adventures* 234)

N Large animal

**Init** +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +3, **Spot** +10

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 15, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 13

(+2 **Dex**, +4 **natural**, −1 **size**)

**hp** 38 (4d8+20)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

**Defensive Abilities** disease resistant

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 15 ft., **fly** 40 ft. (average)

**Melee** bite +7 (1d8+7)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The geier focuses its attacks on anyone that it catches in its nest or it sees handling its eggs; otherwise it attacks the closest target.

**Morale** The geier fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 14, **Con** 20, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 4

**Base Atk** +3; **Grp** +12

**Feats** Alertness, Hover

**Skills** **Listen** +3, **Spot** +10

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Disease Resistant (Ex)** Vultures gain a +4 racial bonus on saving throws against diseases.



**Treasure:** At the center of the nest is a small clutch of three geier eggs, each large as a watermelon and white with irregular bright red speckles. A geier egg can fetch up to 50 gp, or the hatchling can be raised as an animal companion or cohort, with the egg hatching within a month and the bird growing to full maturity in just 3 years.

The courtyard also holds a far more important treasure buried 3 feet down in a location near the center of the open space. It remains today exactly where it fell from the hands of a seemingly slain Vardishal hundreds of years ago. The best (and probably only) way to discover Vardishal's fallen weapon is to learn of it via possession by the moldspeaker (see area A19). The weapon—called *Tempest* in some of the wall frescoes—is left intentionally untyped, to best match the interests and strategies of the player infested with the moldspeaker. If that character is built to use swords, *Tempest* is a sword of the type already favored by the PC. If the character wields a staff, it's a staff. If the character prefers unarmed strikes, *Tempest* is a magic-infused scarf that can be wrapped around the fist to gain the benefit of weapon qualities and enhancement bonuses. The point is that this magic weapon should be one that the moldspeaker already favors.

In the hands of a character of 1st to 4th level, *Tempest* operates as a +1 weapon of the appropriate type. From 5th to 7th level, it becomes a +1 frost weapon. The sword becomes a +2 frost weapon when wielded by a character of 8th to 9th level, a +2 fire outsider bane frost weapon at 10th to 11th level, and a +2 fire outsider bane icy burst weapon at 12th level and higher. *Tempest* has additional qualities when used directly against Jhavhul and his favored minions, as detailed in the last adventure in the Legacy of Fire Adventure Path, and is a minor artifact. Genies and similar creatures immediately recognize *Tempest* as having been forged in the Elemental Planes of the raw stuff of creation. Characters who wield the weapon may garner unique responses from Templars of the Five Winds to be encountered later in the Legacy of Fire Adventure Path. These characters recognize the weapon as having once belonged to a lost comrade, and may treat the wielder differently than just any mortal.

## A9. Vestibule

This small antechamber was a place for reflection before the monks gathered in the chapter house at area A10. Carvings of religious significance to the cult of Sarenrae line the walls, but none seem to involve Vardishal or help in any way to lessen the mystery of the abandoned monastery.

## A10. Chapter House (EL 2)

This austere octagonal chamber has a tall roof and an aerie of leering gargoyles perched atop each point where a wall meets

another wall. An unholy stench of rotting meat, dried blood, and animal excrement hangs heavy in the air, no doubt from the fine crust of gore, animal carcasses, matted leaves, and guano covering the floor.

A secret door in the southwest wall leads to the secret garden in area A11; it can be discovered with a DC 18 Search check.

**Creatures:** This octagonal chamber was once used as the gathering place of the monastery's monks, who discussed the affairs of the day here before continuing their contemplative studies elsewhere. Today, it is a nest for a clutch of blood-sucking stirges. The ravenous little creatures dwell in the tall, pointed roof 20 feet above the floor, preferring to roost in darkened corners where the shadows are at their thickest. Occasionally, the jackal-rats bring the stirges captured animals on which to feed, a steady source of blood that keeps them hanging around and friendly enough. This was to be the destiny of poor Rombard, whom the PCs hopefully rescued from a most dreadful fate—if they did not, they find his body here.

## STIRGES (3)

CR 1/2

hp 5 each (MM 236)

**Treasure:** Strewn about the floor are 43 gp worth of loose coins, a *chime of opening* with four charges remaining, and a fine silver bowl worth 75 gp.

**Development:** After the monastery has been cleared, Almah's mercenaries claim the chapter house as their personal domain, grumbling that Father Zastoran and the guards have already taken all of the good rooms with reliable roofs.

## A11. Secret Garden

Looming walls with no apparent doors enclose this small roofless garden. Monks must once have come here to relax and contemplate the ways of nature, but any order they might have brought to the place all those years ago is almost impossible to notice now, as a wild cacophony of multicolored scrub plants and desert weeds have almost completely overgrown the space.

A secret door built into the west wall leads to a well-hidden section of the wall fresco in area A1b, while another on the opposite wall leads to the chapter house at area A10. From this side, discovering the doors requires a DC 10 Search check. Both doors are so overgrown with vines and creeping weeds on the garden side that opening them requires a DC 14 Strength check. Clearing this foliage takes about 5 minutes per door, after which the doors can be opened with no penalty.



## A12. Shrine to Vardishal

The brightly painted walls of this small chapel, probably meant for personal prayer and reflection, stand out as unusually garish for the otherwise reserved architecture notable elsewhere in the monastery. On the walls, numerous rectangular wooden plates traced in gold filigree depict a strapping warrior battling creatures of fire, riding a chariot on the wind, and engaging in other acts of noble heroism. It is the same figure depicted elsewhere in the monastery, but the sheer number of images here suggest that this shrine was especially important to the clerics who honored him as a saint of Sarenrae. Perhaps a quarter of the gold plates have been pried away or hacked apart by long-absent vandals.

Opposite the door, dominating a section of the north wall, stands a man-sized statue of the warrior, its face marred by what look like numerous blows from an axe. The statue holds both hands in front of him, bent at the elbow, palms up, as if expecting an offering. Several deep rents from similar axe blows make it clear that someone tried to hack the arms from the statue decades ago, but was unable to do so.

This small, contemplative chapel is dedicated to Vardishal, a once-immortal warrior slain hundreds of years ago in a great battle near this spot. Pilgrims of Sarenrae who settled in the region about 200 years ago were drawn here by a goodly spirit, the ghost of a noble warrior who manifested here occasionally to make pronouncements and speak omens. Most of these involved the evil cult of Rovagug and the threat posed by Pale Mountain's denizens. Some aspect of the traumatic death that turned Vardishal into a ghost in the first place kept him from clearly communicating his warnings, but the flock of Sarenrae took the inchoate pronouncements of the benevolent spirit as a reminder to dedicate themselves to vigilance of their land, and especially to close monitoring of the ominous white mountain on the horizon.

The pilgrims erected their monastery to honor their own god, of course, but they maintained this chapel, built on the spot of the ghost's most frequent manifestations, to honor him as a symbol of their mutual struggle against evil. The walls of the shrine make out in filigreed religious iconography the bare bones of what the Sarenrae clerics were able to determine about the past of their ghostly benefactor. Careful study of these runes and graven images over the course of 12 hours clearly reveals that the central devotional figure of the shrine was a tall, apparently human warrior named Vardishal, and that this figure served in ancient times with a quintet of genies known as the Templars of the Five Winds.

The unusual statue of Vardishal masks the hidden door to the monastery's undercrypt. With a DC 20 Search

check, grooves in the floor at the statue's base indicate that it can be pivoted to the side—doing so (requiring a DC 14 Strength check) causes a hidden door in the north wall to open, revealing a flight of stairs that leads down to the undercrypt.

**Treasure:** The gold plating on the walls here can be scraped off with a lot of work over several days, resulting in 148 gp worth of gold dust and fragments.

**Development:** After Almah's party inhabits the monastery, Dashki immediately claims this room as his private domain. He doesn't care about the mystery of Vardishal (and only grudgingly allows curious PCs a chance to enter and study), and he knows absolutely nothing about the secret door. All he cares about is the glow of the gold in the walls and the fact that the shrine is one of the few rooms in the monastery with an intact roof. PCs who quietly enter the shrine from the other side of the secret door likely catch Dashki in the act of defacing the wall plates by scraping the filigree off with a knife. Within a week, the gnoll expert has harvested all the gold from the room.

## A13. Southern Hallway

This large but plain interior hallway leads to the various chambers of the monastery's southern wing. A weatherworn statue of a winged woman stands in the middle of the hall.

Enormous holes in the ceiling make it an unpleasant place in the rare instances of desert rainstorms, and a few are large enough to allow access to the geier that lairs in area A8. The statue itself is of Sarenrae. The door to area A15 hangs open, and if the PCs are noisy or bring light into this room, the denizens of A15 hear and come rushing out to investigate the intrusion.

## A14. Library

A sagging wooden balcony overlooks this large room, which must once have been the monastery's library. An overpowering odor of musty, rotting paper and old leather fills the air here, and hundreds of books—most too damaged even to open without destroying them—litter the floors. Empty bookshelves line the walls of both levels.

**Treasure:** Although most of the books here crumble at a touch, one book (Search DC 16 to locate) is very well preserved. This unusual book is called *Courts of Stone and Flame*, and is a treatise on genies of the elemental planes. When consulted before making a Knowledge check related to geniekind, the book grants a +4 bonus to the check. The nonmagical tome is worth 300 gp to a collector. Any character who spends more than a day studying the book



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learns the names of all five of the Templars of the Five Winds, their associated weapons, and the aspect of wind with which they are associated. The book also contains a brief entry on Jhavhul, who is listed as a shamed member of the efreet nobility of the City of Brass, a famed location on the Plane of Fire. The entry suggests that he ventured to the Material Plane in search of an army and a legacy to raise his standing, during which time he and his armies warred against the Templars of the Five Winds, but that he was never seen in the City of Brass again.

**Development:** Despite the smell, the library is the largest intact room in the monastery, a fact that does not escape Almah's attention. When her party moves into the ruin, the merchant princess immediately claims the library as her own and moves in with Garavel and her guards. One guard stands outside her door at all times, while another patrols the balcony, bow in hand, keeping a watch over the room.

## A15. Deanery (EL 2)

The door to this room hangs open, allowing the denizens easy access into the hallway beyond if they hear intruders.

Five austere beds line the north wall of this humble office and living quarters. A dented metal chest rests at the foot of each bed, and a simple mosaic pattern of red and orange glass chips

brings some color to the wall. A layer of grime and filth coats many of the surfaces in this small room, and the redolent stench of dirty fur hangs heavy in the air.

Long ago, this chamber was the sleeping quarters and office of the monastery's senior priests. All of the dented chests are empty.

**Creatures:** Today, this room is home to the remainder of the small tribe of baboons kept as guardian beasts by the pugwampis. The baboons appreciate the hunks of meat and fruits the jackal rats toss them, and treat the gremlins as members of their own tribe. They ferociously attack any non-gremlins who pass by the open door of their lair, potentially drawing the attention of the pugwampis in the kitchen next door.

**BABOONS (4)**  
hp 5 each (MM 268)

CR 1/2

**Development:** After the caravan party moves into the monastery, Almah's guards claim this chamber with a great deal of authority, trying to position themselves as closely to their charge as possible. With her own safety at stake, Almah orders PCs interested in staying in this room to find somewhere else.



## A16. Kitchen (EL 2)

Beyond a doorless arch appears to be a large kitchen complete with walls lined in shelves and cupboards, a huge central table, and an enormous oven against the north wall. Several drawers and cupboard doors stand askew, and the floor here is a jagged field of broken glass, smashed pottery, bits of sharp stone, jagged bones, and discarded cutlery.

**Creatures:** Three pugwampis—the nominal chefs of their tribe—lair in this room, making havoc of the place and doing their best to cook tasty treats for their brethren. At the first sign of intrusion by the PCs, they retreat farther into the room and take cover behind the shelves, peppering their enemies with as many arrows as possible. The littered floor here counts as difficult terrain, and each round a PC stands upon it he must make a DC 12 Reflex save or take 1d3 points of damage from some uncomfortable jagged bit biting through a boot or scratching an ankle. The unluck aura of the pugwampis make this even more treacherous. PCs wishing to avoid the dangerous floor might hop up on the table or shelves, but the unluck aura strikes here as well, and PCs who fail a DC 15 Balance check take a rough tumble onto the very floor they were hoping to avoid, suffering 1d6 points of damage in the process.

### PUGWAMPIS (3)

hp 3 each (see page 83)

CR 1/2

**Development:** After Almah's party moves into the monastery, the camel driver and his wife take up residence in the kitchen, doing their best to provide tasty provender to the merchant princess and the other members of the group.

## A17. Mess Hall

Three long wooden tables and dozens of chairs that once lined this mess hall are in shambles, mostly rotted away with the passage of years. Light shines through several large holes in the ceiling, illuminating a closed door on the east wall.

**Development:** If the PCs do not wrangle for a specific room in the monastery once Almah's party moves in, this is one likely area for them to camp. The partially collapsed ceiling means more exposure than they might prefer, but no one else claims the chamber, leaving it to the PCs if they want it.

## A18. Dormitory (EL 1)

Ten bunk beds in various stages of disrepair fill this chamber, which must once have been a dormitory for students. The roof is mostly intact, and an open arch in the north wall leads to a large hallway.

The east and west walls both bear sturdy wooden doors leading to other rooms, and an open arch in the southeast corner of the room leads into a darkened antechamber, perhaps a large closet.

The door in the eastern wall is unlocked, but a profuse growth of fungus from the laboratory on the other side effectively bars all but the most determined openers. Shoving the door open despite the years-deep fungal bed on the other side requires a DC 20 Strength check. The door has a hardness of 5 and 50 hit points. It leads directly to a mold-encrusted stairway that opens into the underground laboratory at area A19.

Despite appearances, the mold crowding the door is not harmful. A successful DC 14 Knowledge (dungeoneering) or Knowledge (nature) check reveals that the distribution of the mold is extremely curious and far less random than what might appear unadulterated in the wild. The strange distribution is due to the fact that the mold in this area is suffused with the last remnants of Vardishal's life essence, kept active through death, undeath, and exorcism by the reality-warping powers of Nefeshti's bygone wish of immortality for her loyal templars. The mold is indeed trying to escape, and the intrusion of the PCs represents the best chance at freedom the genie-lord's mold-essence has received in decades.

The small room off the southeastern wall is the lowest (and now only) chamber in what was once a 40-foot-tall tower. All of the wooden floors and the old ladder that used to comprise the tower jumble the floor here in a collapsed mess. The roof of the tower fell years ago, leaving it open to the sky.

**Creature:** The ruined tower is now the lair of a giant wolf spider—the arachnid is nocturnal and spends its days hidden high up on the wall in a nook, coming out at night to hunt. If the PCs don't notice on their first pass through the monastery, it could well become a surprising pest or menace to whomever chooses this room as their quarters.

### GIANT WOLF SPIDER

CR 1

Medium monstrous hunting spider (MM 288)

hp 11

**Development:** With a sturdy roof and a central location, the dormitory makes an ideal temporary home for the PCs. Garavel even goes so far as to recommend that they take this room, partly because he wants to keep them close for protection and partly because he doesn't yet fully trust them and wants them within eyesight of Almah's guards.

## A19. Laboratory (EL 2)

This chamber seems to be an enormous laboratory. Against the north and south walls are two identical daises raised about five feet



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from the laboratory floor, each accessed by a wide set of curved stairs. Atop each dais is a wide workbench covered in a bewildering series of glass beakers, tubes, alembics, athanors, and other alchemical tools. Some of these containers are filled with a murky green substance.

A massive mold-encrusted basalt table dominates the entrance of the room, flanked by two small tables to the east and west containing surgical tools and sheaves of old parchment. The walls of the subterranean lab were clearly fashioned from the living rock under the monastery, but carefully cut mold-encrusted tiles line the floor, interrupted occasionally by metal drains the size of dinner plates.

**Creatures:** Characters who approach the glass apparatus on the north or south walls receive a DC 20 Spot check to notice the liquid within quivers ever so slightly. Characters with the appropriate skill may substitute Knowledge (nature) for Spot if they wish. Both series of tubes and beakers contain an ooze—a slime mold, the most significant manifestation of Vardishal's indomitable will. Once the PCs are spread out throughout the lab, the slime molds splash out of their tubing and jars to attack the nearest PC. The slime molds look like sloppy, near-liquified plant matter festooned with tiny mushrooms and patches of sickly green and mustard-hued mold. During the battle, they take every attempt to use the laboratory's drainage system to reposition themselves for effective fighting. Slime molds can move from drain to drain by counting the squares between them as regular movement. As this movement takes place below the floor, it does not provoke attacks of opportunity. A broken pipe jutting from the wall near the door to area 20 makes an excellent locale for a surprise slime-gusher that coats a PC in disgusting ooze.

## MEDIUM SLIME MOLDS (2)

CR 1

Variant slime mold (*Tome of Horrors II* 149)

N Medium ooze

**Init** +0; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; **Listen** -5, **Spot** -5

### DEFENSE

**AC** 10, **touch** 10, **flat-footed** 10

**hp** 8 each (1d10+3)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +0, **Will** -5

**Immune** critical hits, fire, flanking, mind affecting effects, paralysis, poison, polymorph, sleep, stunning, visual effects

### OFFENSE

**Spd** 20 ft.

**Melee** slam -3 (1d6-3 plus fungal rot)

**Special Attacks** engulf

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The slime molds ooze up PCs' legs, attempting to force their way into a character's mouth or nose. Any character affected by the slime mold's fungal rot disease or engulf attack must make a successful DC 18 Fortitude save. The first character

## The Moldspeaker

The semi-sentient mold in the monastery's basement has taken on an imprint of Vardishal's personality, and the infection in one PC's wounds has spread that imprint to the PC. This character immediately gets the impression that he or she should dig in a certain spot under the thicket in the cloister courtyard at area 8. This turns up an old weapon that coincidentally matches the PC's favorite weapon type, and it scales in power throughout the Adventure Path to become more effective against Jhavhul and his favored minions.

When the PC wields this weapon, a patchy, uneven growth of mold appears on his weapon hand up to his elbow, and the PC sometimes has flashes of Vardishal's memories. This effectively grants the character a +1 bonus on all Intelligence-based skill checks. The power of the weapon and the physical effect of the manifestation increase in potency as the PCs goes up in level, and future events might trigger hints of memories from Vardishal's life. The character does not become Vardishal, but some element of the genie's conscience exists within him, particularly when the weapon is wielded. The overwhelming desire of the character, the moldspeaker, is to wield this weapon in battle against the hated efrete Jhavhul. Not all of this backstory will be evident at first, but rather develops as play goes through the six Legacy of Fire adventures.

The moldspeaker's influence is a chaotic and good effect, despite the sinister nature of the mold. It has no impact on the PC's alignment and shouldn't harm him in any other way—the moldspeaker is meant to be a story element that will be carried throughout the Legacy of Fire Adventure Path. If the PC absolutely doesn't want this role, the effect can be removed with a *dispel chaos* or *dispel evil* spell, but doing so robs the PCs of what could be an important resource.

to fail such a check becomes the moldspeaker (see sidebar), and is infused with the life-essence of Vardishal. If this occurs, the now-mindless slime molds continue to attack until slain.

**Morale** The slime molds fight until destroyed.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 5, **Dex** 10, **Con** 16, **Int** —, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +0; **Grp** -3

**SQ** camouflage

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Camouflage (Ex)** A slime mold at rest looks like a normal patch of fungus. It's a DC 20 Spot check to notice it before it attacks. A character with ranks in Knowledge (nature) or Survival can use one of those skills instead of Spot to notice the ooze.

**Engulf (Ex)** A slime mold can wrap a creature of up to one size smaller in its body as a standard action. The slime mold attempts a grapple that does not provoke an attack of



opportunity. If it wins the check, it establishes a hold and deals slam damage each round the hold is maintained. Attacks that hit an engulfing slime mold deal half their damage to the monster and half to the engulfed victim.

**Fungal Rot (Ex)** Fungal rot causes a darkening of the skin and small patches of fungus and mold to sprout at random locations on the victim's body. A slime mold inflicts this disease on any creature it damages. A creature can attempt a DC 11 Fortitude save to resist the disease. The incubation period is 1 day, and when it inflicts damage, fungal rot causes 1d3 Constitution and 1d3 Strength damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Treasure:** A sheaf of paperwork on the eastern table flanking the basalt block contains several alchemical formulae of great value to an alchemist. These include instructions covering the construction of *restorative ointment* and *marvelous pigments*, making the papers worth up to 300 gp to the right buyer.

**Development:** After the slime molds have been defeated and Almah's group moves into the monastery, Father Zastoran transplants his impressive potion collection to the laboratory, intrigued by the glass apparatus and alchemical implements discovered there. If the slime molds were defeated before a moldspeaker was chosen, some element of Vardishal's essence remains even in the light dusting of mold that remains after Zastoran's cleaning efforts. The cleric does his best to scour the room of remaining mold, but enough remains on the central slab to pose a risk to anyone who lies upon it (such as PCs injured below 0 hit points). Such characters must make a DC 18 Fortitude save to resist becoming infected by the moldspeaker, as detailed above. Only one PC can be infected in this way, so if the battle with the slime molds already infused a player character with the essence of Vardishal, lying upon the slab poses no additional risk.

## A20. Undercrypt

The monastery's undercrypt is a series of ten-foot-wide rough-hewn passages dug in a double-cross formation. The main thoroughfare runs north to south, with two similar east-west passages crossing the main hall about fifty feet apart. An eerie silence pervades the cool subterranean funerary network, which must contain the bodies of scores—if not hundreds—of honored worshipers of Sarenrae in shallow niches carved into the walls of the east-west passages. Many of these skeletal remains have been roughly tossed from their niches, and countless bones and skulls line the floor.

Not all of the bones here were looted in the attack by the Kelmarane cultists 20 years ago. In fact, some of the bones belong to those cultists, as the crypt was the site of the final

battle between the uncorrupted monastery clerics and the enraged followers of the village flock. Even a casual look at the remains littering the floor shows signs of the struggle. Some skeletons lie jumbled up against a wall where they fell, their skulls crushed by the blow of a weapon. Many wear the faded orange robes of monastery clerics, often with signs of crippling injuries suffered at the hands of their betrayers. Yet a few valuable still remain.

**A20a.** A pile of skeletons bearing terrible broken bones lies at the terminus of this passage. A +1 *mace* is still clutched in the bony grip of a skeleton here.

**A20b.** A corpse of a man in yellowing leather armor—clearly not a member of the monastic community—lies at the end of this passage. He wears a suit of masterwork leather armor and bears a +1 *dagger*.

**A20c.** Buried under a jumble of bones at the end of this passage is a small teak box emblazoned with the holy symbol of Sarenrae. The box contains a wooden holy symbol of Sarenrae suspended from a silver chain and a fully charged *brooch of shielding*.

## Claiming the Monastery

When the PCs have cleared out the monastery and are confident its dangers are handled, proceed with Part Three. Award the PCs XP as if they had defeated a CR 3 creature in combat for this achievement.

## PART THREE: KELMARANE AND ENVIRONS

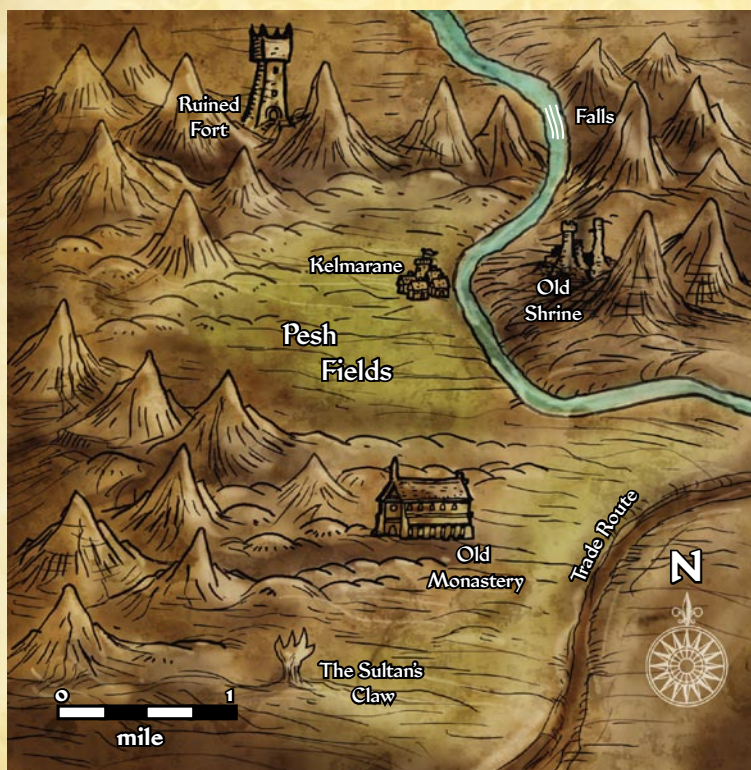
With the PCs safely ensconced in the old monastery, they now have a relatively safe headquarters from which to launch forays and attacks on the conquered village of Kelmarane. Almah and the rest of her party remain in the monastery awaiting the PCs' reports. Clearing the village means neutralizing the threats in Kelmarane's battle market and ruined church of Sarenrae (Parts Four and Five, respectively), but those are not the only threats in the region the PCs must deal with before their deed is done. This part details additional perils and opportunities for adventure the PCs might find elsewhere in Kelmarane, in the surrounding environs, or even "back home" at the abandoned monastery itself. Use the details presented here as you wish to liven up the adventure and to provide additional experience for the PCs as needed—they should be 4th level before attempting Part Four and 5th level before attempting Part Five.

## Six Days in the Kelmarane Hinterlands

This section presents a day-by-day overview of events at the monastery and in Kelmarane over the first 6 days after Almah's party moves in. These are meant to spice up



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## Kelmarane Environs

The region immediately surrounding Kelmarane is dominated by rugged, craggy hills and stony badlands. Several areas surrounding the ruins feature in this adventure, but those listed below do not—these notes can be used to expand the adventure as you see fit.

**Ruined Fort:** Currently the campsite for several gnolls of the Three Jaw tribe (see page 32), two hidden dungeon levels below are infested with undead.

**Old Shrine:** Once a shrine to Nethys, this site is the lair of an eccentric hermit—see this volume's Set Piece adventure for more details.

**Falls:** This magnificent 80-foot waterfall is thought by the gnolls to be haunted, but is in fact the lair of a reclusive nixie sorcerer named Beshvi who values her privacy.

play between forays into the village as well as to suggest a larger world outside the confines of the adventure's dungeon locations.

**Nightly:** Every evening around midnight the PCs hear an almost impossibly loud, yelping howl that seems to come from the roof of the largest structure in Kelmarane, the huge round citadel known as the battle market. A minute or two later, a faint, similar call can be heard from the distant Pale Mountain, a call-and-response that must be some form of long-distance communication between gnoll tribes. Dashki identifies the call as the infamous Howl of the Carrion King, a nightly message from the ruler of the Kuldis tribe in Kelmarane to agents of the gnoll monarch in an unknown hidden base on Pale Mountain.

**Day 1:** Almah convenes her entire party in the monastery chapel and sets out her plan. After everyone has settled into their new accommodations, the PCs are to make a scouting mission into the outskirts of the village in an attempt to gauge the forces defending Kelmarane. She warns them not to attempt to fight their way to the battle market, where she presumes the gnoll tribe has set up shop, as preliminary intelligence suggests that the forces there are sufficient to overwhelm the PCs in the case of an all-out attack. Rather, Almah encourages guerilla strikes into the town, taking out its defenders a few at a time and exploring the ruined buildings on Kelmarane's lower

slopes. She is open to alternative plans from the PCs, but refuses any that involve the members of the Pactmaster Guard and doesn't intend to waste her mercenaries lightly. They are, after all, her only hope should the PCs fail. She places a rotating shift of guards (and PCs if they're interested) at area **A3d** to keep a constant watch on Kelmarane. As the PCs set out for their first scouting mission, they pass the guards, who have piled the soiled mattresses from area **15** in the nave and set the odious things on fire.

**Night 1:** Characters on watch over Kelmarane may make a DC 20 Spot check to notice the distant, flickering flames of the Three Jaws tribe, which currently inhabits an old fort in the hills north of Kelmarane.

**Day 2:** A lone pugwampi survivor returns to the monastery. The pugwampi poses little danger to Almah's party, but its appearance raises hackles and the PCs will need to scour the monastery for the menace.

**Night 2:** Dashki sneaks away from the monastery to report to his Three Jaws gnoll allies camped out at the ruined fort in the foothills of the Brazen Peaks north of Kelmarane. He narrowly escapes the dustdigger that dwells beneath the poppy fields between both locations, and in the commotion the tiny pugwampi corpse and its makeshift noose come loose from his staff. Allow PCs interacting with Dashki on the following days to make a DC 15 Spot check to notice the absence of the battle trophy,





which Dashki attempts to Bluff away, saying that he threw it into a fire after he got sick of looking at its ugly face.

After night 2, a PC walking through the pesh fields can attempt a DC 15 Spot check. Those who succeed find something most unusual near the periphery of the cleared section at the center of the fields—Dashki's hanged pugwampi. If confronted about this and shown the desiccated little gremlin corpse, the gnoll expert admits to nocturnal wandering, but does not give up his cohorts in the northern hills.

**Day 3:** Anyone watching Kelmarane from area **A3d** notices some unusual activity at noon. A group of six gnolls leads a human prisoner from the battle market to the open square west of the battle market. There, they stake the man to the ground and pull out his intestines and inner organs with red-hot iron tongs. The screams of the man echo as far as the old monastery, and 30 minutes later, after the man finally dies, the gnolls leave the body for the vultures. This man was Andrus, a 3rd-level human fighter who formerly led an adventuring party called the Lions of Senara (a gold lion's head cloak clasp worth 15 gp can be found among his tattered belongings). The Lions came to Kelmarane about a week ago following tales of treasure in the ruined church of Sarenrae, but they soon fell victim to Kardswann's gnolls. They've been cajoled and tortured every day since, and only a few members remain. One badly wounded survivor, an old bard called Felliped, is hiding out in a ruined building in Kelmarane (see page 35).

**Night 3:** Tonight the gnolls decide to have some fun with another captured member of the Lions of Senara. This time it's likely the PCs will have an opportunity to upset their festivities, as instead of torturing the poor lout right next to the battle market, they instead lead him all the way through Kelmarane and into the pesh cactus fields not far from the old monastery. The gnolls lead their bound prisoner to a large cleared area in the middle of the pesh cactus fields, where they force him to his knees. Thereafter, the gnolls each use an oversized staff to beat the ground, hoping to summon the creature that dwells beneath the fields.

If the PCs leave the monastery at once, they should be able to reach the gnolls and their victim at about the point the dust digger finally awakens and approaches as well. The PCs have 4 rounds to rescue the prisoner before the large starfish-shaped creature emerges from below the field to swallow the man whole.

The captive member of the Lions of Senara is **Oxvard** (LN male human cleric of Abadar 4). The man has only 5 hit points and no spells remaining, and quickly befriends his rescuers. He tells his saviors that he came to Kelmarane with five other members of his party, explorers from the distant nation of Cheliax seeking treasure in the far-off deserts of Katapesh. He's already seen several of his companions murdered by the foul gnolls, but believes



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that his friend Felliped may yet live. Felliped escaped the gnolls recently, but Oxvard suspects his friend hasn't been able to escape the village entirely and has been forced to hide out in one of the ruined buildings. The Lions of Senara were imprisoned on the first of three floors in the battle market, and Oxvard knows relatively little of the place's interior layout.

## DUST DIGGER

CR 4

N Large Aberration (*Tome of Horrors Revised* 176)

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; **Listen** +5, **Spot** +5

### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16

(+7 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 34 (4d8+16)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +4

### OFFENSE

**Spd** 10 ft., burrow 10 ft.

**Melee** 5 tentacles +5 (1d6+3)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** improved grab, sinkhole, swallow whole

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The dust digger attempts to use its sinkhole ability at the start of combat, then uses its tentacles to fight off anyone who attempts to rob it of its meal.

**Morale** If reduced to 15 hit points or less, the dust digger vomits up anyone it's swallowed and attempts to flee into the field to hide and heal.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 10, **Con** 18, **Int** 2, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +3; **Grp** +10

**Feats** Alertness, Skill Focus (Hide)

**Skills** Hide +0 (+8 in sandy terrain), **Listen** +5, **Spot** +5

**SQ** earth glide

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Earth Glide (Su)** A dust digger can glide through sand, loose soil, or other loosely packed earth as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or signs of its presence. A *move earth* spell cast on an area containing a burrowing dust digger flings the creature back 30 feet, stunning it for 1 round unless it succeeds on a Fortitude save.

**Improved Grab (Ex)** To use this ability, the dust digger must hit with a tentacle attack or use its sinkhole ability. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it establishes a hold, it can try to swallow the victim on the following round.

**Sinkhole (Ex)** A buried dust digger can deflate its body as a standard action, causing the sand above it to slide toward its maw. A creature standing on a space occupied by a buried dust digger when it deflates is immediately subjected to the dust digger's improved grab.

**Swallow Whole (Ex)** A dust digger can try to swallow a grabbed opponent up to one size smaller than itself by making a successful grapple check. Once inside a dust digger, a creature takes 1d6+3 points of bludgeoning damage plus 1d8 points of acid damage per round. A swallowed creature can climb out of the dust digger with a successful grapple check, after which it must make a second grapple check to get free. Alternatively, a swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 10 points of damage to the dust digger's interior (AC 13). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out.

**Day 4:** On the fourth day after the PCs liberate the old monastery, one of its original inhabitants returns to its lair. This is the geier who dwells in the open courtyard in area A8. The creature attacks anyone in its nest, and if it finds any of its eggs missing or destroyed, it goes on a wild rampage that will not end until it has been slain.

**Night 4:** As evening dawns, Almah seeks out a mystically inclined character and asks them if they can perform some sort of divination for her about the future. If the PC takes her request seriously, such as by making a Profession (astrologer) check, casting *augury*, or the like, Almah's attitude toward that PC shifts one category toward helpful. She also raises the party's overall reward for completing their mission by 300 gp.

**Day 5:** Around midday, the peryton lairing in area B6 passes by on a circuit of the nearby lands and spies some members of Almah's party. It circles three times above the monastery, some 30 feet in the air, before returning to the roof of the battle market, where it passes on its intelligence to Kardswann. If the PCs attack the peryton, it does not linger—it flies directly to the Battle Market to report to Kardswann.

**Night 5:** Any characters on watch near the monastery around midnight see a line of five torches slowly making their way toward the monastery from the direction of Kelmarane. As the group approaches, it becomes clear that the torches are held by gnolls! The creatures appear to be heavily armed with curved swords and bows, but they keep their weapons sheathed at their sides and backs. Though the PCs probably don't know it, the gnolls are not from the tribe inhabiting Kelmarane, but rather are rivals from the Three Jaws tribe, and Dashki has been expecting them.

In case the PCs ready an attack, Dashki appears seemingly out of nowhere, rushing between the two groups and yelling frantically at the PCs: "Do not attack! These are not the gnolls of Kelmarane! They come with a proposal of peace!"

One of the gnolls, a scruffy and ragged creature larger than the others and evidently their leader, steps forward from his peers, his hands held up in a sign of nonviolence. In feral Common, he barks out a greeting: "Hold your weapons! I am Hargk, and I bring word from Narg, chieftain



of the Three Jaw pack! Our brother Dashki says you mean to kill the gnolls of Kelmarane. We are here to help.”

A DC 15 Sense Motive check reveals that the gnoll is disgusted by the words it has apparently been ordered to deliver, but that the very fact it has said them suggests that the gnolls can probably be trusted—for now.

Hargk offers the services of himself and his four companions to help the PCs destroy the hated Kuldis tribe. “We have fought them for many years,” says Hargk. “And now they let themselves be ruled by one who is not a gnoll. Their ways disgust us, and we wish to see them swept from the town. We will slay their leaders and eat their young together!” (Hargk and his gnolls are all typical members of their species; see MM page 130 for details.)

What happens next is really up to the PCs. If the group consults Almah, she grudgingly agrees to trust Dashki, claiming that the scout has never betrayed her before. She stipulates, however, that the Three Jaws gnolls may not stay anywhere near the old monastery, and that any cooperation must occur within the confines of Kelmarane, not here. She takes a favorite PC aside and offers this warning: “I may trust Dashki, but I do not trust these gnolls. When your job in Kelmarane has ended, I want you to kill them. If this means that Dashki must also fall to the sword, so be it.”

If the PCs decide to team up with the gnolls, they receive a potent ally that will help them in the final fights against Kardswann and his forces in the village. Feel free to provide the players with the gnolls’ statistics and let them take charge of their actions during the siege of Kelmarane. The gnolls will not allow themselves to be sacrificed foolishly, but their savagery means they easily fall into violent fights that could very well spell their end. They never flee from a fight once it has been engaged.

After the genie and his gnolls have been defeated, the Three Jaws gnolls look for a way to betray the party, even calling in chief Narg and the reserves still stationed at the old shrine northwest of Kelmarane if necessary. They are, at best, disturbing allies, prone to devouring their defeated foes and attacking anyone in the battle market, whether foe or potential friend. They seem to have a violent sort of camaraderie with Dashki, whom they treat roughly, like the adopted low-breed that he is. The gnoll expert seems used to this rough treatment, even basking

in it, and any fight against the Three Jaws gnolls is also a fight against Dashki.

If the PCs forge an alliance with these gnolls, award them XP as if they had defeated a CR 3 creature.

**Day 6:** Almah urges an all-out attack on the gnolls in Kelmarane unless the PCs seem to already be making good progress toward liberating the village.

**Night 6:** The remaining members of the Kuldis tribe, led by the dominated genie Kardswann, attack the old monastery in force. If the battle is incredibly lopsided, use Almah’s guards to slow down the villains, cutting down a few before dying themselves in order to make the battle more survivable by the PCs. Almah immediately rushes to the laboratory and the protection of Father Zastoran, fleeing with him to the monastery undercrypt, where they make their final stand.

## Kelmarane Hinterlands

In addition to the Sultan’s Claw and old monastery, several of the locations on the Kelmarane Environs map deserve further discussion.

**Ruined Fort (EL 6):** A broken, heavily eroded statue of Sarenrae stands some 30 feet above a small clearing, her eyes cast in the direction of the old monastery. Nearby are the ruins of an old fort. Dashki’s allies in the Three Jaws tribe currently camp here, awaiting a time to strike the village once the PCs have sufficiently weakened its defenses. Narg, chieftain of the tribe, rules a small detachment of warriors here—Narg is a creature known as a flind (a smarter subrace of gnoll). The first group approaches the PCs at the monastery on Night 5, and is detailed above. Another detachment, led by Narg himself, remains stationed here.

### NARG

Male flind fighter 2

hp 40 (use stats for Ugruk on page 46)

CR 3

### GNOLLS (4)

hp 11 each (MM 130)

CR 1

**Pesh Cactus Fields (EL 4):** Once one of Kelmarane’s major resources, the pesh cacti that grew in the fields south and east of the village have withered away, leaving dusty fields of grit and sand in its wake. For many years, these fields have been the hunting ground of a large creature



Narg



called a dust digger, a starfish-like monster that burrows into the sand and lies in wait for unsuspecting prey to walk over it, at which point it bursts up from the sand to grab at its food-to-be. The gnolls know about the dust digger and take great delight in forcing unruly slaves out into the fields with the promise that if they can reach the far side, they can go free. To date, no slave has made it. If the PCs attempt to cross the pesh fields at any time, they'll swiftly attract the dust digger's attention as well.

**Old Shrine:** Sarenrae is not the only deity whose followers have dwelt in this region—before even the old monastery was built, a small shrine to Nethys stood on the hills overlooking the area. This centuries-old structure is in much worse shape than the old monastery, and has been abandoned for much longer. It's served recently as the lair of a somewhat deranged hermit named Haidar, a not-quite-human the Kulldis have learned to leave alone. This ruined fort and its denizen are detailed in this volume's set piece adventure on page 62.

## Observing Kelmarane

So long as the PCs remain outside the confines of Kelmarane, they can learn much by simply observing the village and watching the comings and goings. You may wish to show the players a copy of the village map as you outline the results of their reconnaissance. The following pieces of intelligence can be learned with a single day of observation from a vantage point (such as the one provided in area A3d).

- Every few hours, a patrol of four gnolls wanders through the ruins, but these patrols do not follow any schedule.
- A ruined structure at the foot of the hill seems to contain a large beast. It's impossible to make out details, but a squad of about a half-dozen gnolls armed with swords and crossbows brings large hunks of meat to this location three times per day.
- Once every other day at noon, a group of four gnolls bearing a fat goat walks down the road from the battle market to the ruined mill. They emerge a few minutes later without the goat. The gnolls are delivering a daily treat to the peryton that lives in the old mill to ensure its continued alliance.

## Locations in the Village of Kelmarane

Aside from the battle market and ruined church of Sarenrae, most of the structures in Kelmarane are abandoned ruins. Assume that unkeyed areas on the village map are completely empty. Most lack roofs or sturdy walls, as shown on the map, but others are solid enough to provide temporary hiding places for the PCs to rest and regroup. Despite their relative worthlessness, the ruined buildings pose a risk to the Kulldis tribe in that they give cover to those who might attack Kelmarane.

To this end, Kardswann called upon the aid of one of the Carrion King's priests from the House of the Beast to use a *lesser planar ally* spell to summon a disgusting guardian demon from the Abyss to wander the streets, attacking anyone who does not belong to the tribe.

For every 10 minutes the PCs spend exploring the ruined town, roll 1d10. On a result of a 1, they have an encounter with a patrol. Most of these patrols are groups of four gnolls, but if the PCs are at least 3rd level, the first patrol they encounter is with the demonic guardian of Kelmarane. This creature is a schir, a 7-foot-tall humanoid fiend with the head and twisted horns of a goat, and it attacks without mercy, howling into the sky to give warning to its companions that interlopers have invaded the town. Most inhabitants of the battle market are used to the creature screaming about every desert rat or nightbird that alights in the town, so they pay its howls little attention. The guards in area B9 step up their vigil of the road leading up the hill, however, so the alarm does not completely fall upon deaf ears.

## KEZURKIAN

CR 5

Schir (*Book of Fiends* 67)

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *see invisibility*; **Listen** +7, **Spot** +15

### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, **touch** 12, **flat-footed** 17

(+2 Dex, +7 natural)

**hp** 39 (6d8+12)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

**DR** 5/cold iron or good; **Immune** disease, electricity, poison;

**Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 14

### OFFENSE

**Spd** 60 ft.

**Melee** +1 *halberd* +11/+6 (1d10+5/x3 plus disease) and gore +4 (1d6+4)

**Special Attacks** charge 3d6+3, *summon demons*

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th)

At will—*arcane lock*, *expeditious retreat*, *jump*, *protection from good*, *see invisibility*, *tongues*

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Kezurkian maintains *expeditious retreat*, *jump*, *protection from good*, *see invisibility*, and *tongues* at all times.

**During Combat** Kezurkian opens an attack with a charge, then focuses its attacks on any particularly religious-looking foes. He uses his great speed and high Jump check to leap over ruined buildings if necessary to confront foes who try to use the terrain to their advantage. Kezurkian is hesitant to fall back on calling on aid with his *summon demons* ability, and attempts to so only if reduced to fewer than 8 hit points.

**Morale** Kezurkian is bound by magic to defend Kelmarane, and fights to the death as a result.

**Base Statistics** **Spd** 30 ft.; **Skills** Jump +12



## The Ruins of Kelmarane



One square = 15 feet



# howl of the carrion king

## STATISTICS

**Str** 17, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 6, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +6; **Grp** +9

**Feats** Power Attack, Run, Weapon Focus (halberd)

**Skills** Balance +11, Climb +12, Intimidate +7, Jump +44, Listen +7, Spot +15, Survival +7

**Languages** Abyssal; telepathy 100 ft., *tongues*

**Gear** +1 halberd

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Charge (Ex)** A schir that makes a charge attack with its gore deals 3d6+3 points of damage if it hits. A schir may move up to three times its speed as part of a charge.

**Disease (Su)** Schir are very filthy and disease ridden. Using this to their advantage, schirim continually lick the blades of their halberds, coating their weapons with disease-ridden spittle. A creature struck by a schir's halberd must make a DC 18 Fortitude save to avoid contracting demon fever (incubation period 1 day, damage 1d6 Con; when damaged, the victim must make a second Fortitude save or 1 point of the Con damage is Con drain instead).

**Summon Demons (Sp)** Once per day a schir can attempt to summon 1d3 schirim with a 20% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

**B1. Ruined Slave Market (EL 3):** Fire claimed much of this building ages ago, leaving behind only a partially collapsed shell. An old ruined sign bearing the legend “—AVE MARKET” hangs above the gaping entrance on the north side of the building. The ashy, ruined slave market is now home to a single enormous snake—a deadly venomous giant mamba that the gnolls have learned to give a wide berth.

## GIANT MAMBA

Huge viper (MM 280)

**hp** 33

**B2. Warthog Lair (EL 4):** This building must have once been a gatehouse at the base of the hill, but it no longer provides any barrier to travel up the road—all that remains of its gate being a crumbling stone arch. An immense and quite foul-tempered warthog named Old Bonegrinder, the mascot of the Kulldis tribe, lairs in the northern section of this ruined gatehouse. Because the entire western wall has fallen away, the creature is able to keep a constant vigil on the road leading up the village's central hill. At the sign of any trespassers who are not accompanied by members of the Kulldis tribe, the Old Bonegrinder leaps out of hiding and savages the interlopers. It is this beast that the PCs may have observed the gnolls throwing meat to during their observation of Kelmarane.

## OLD BONEGRINDER

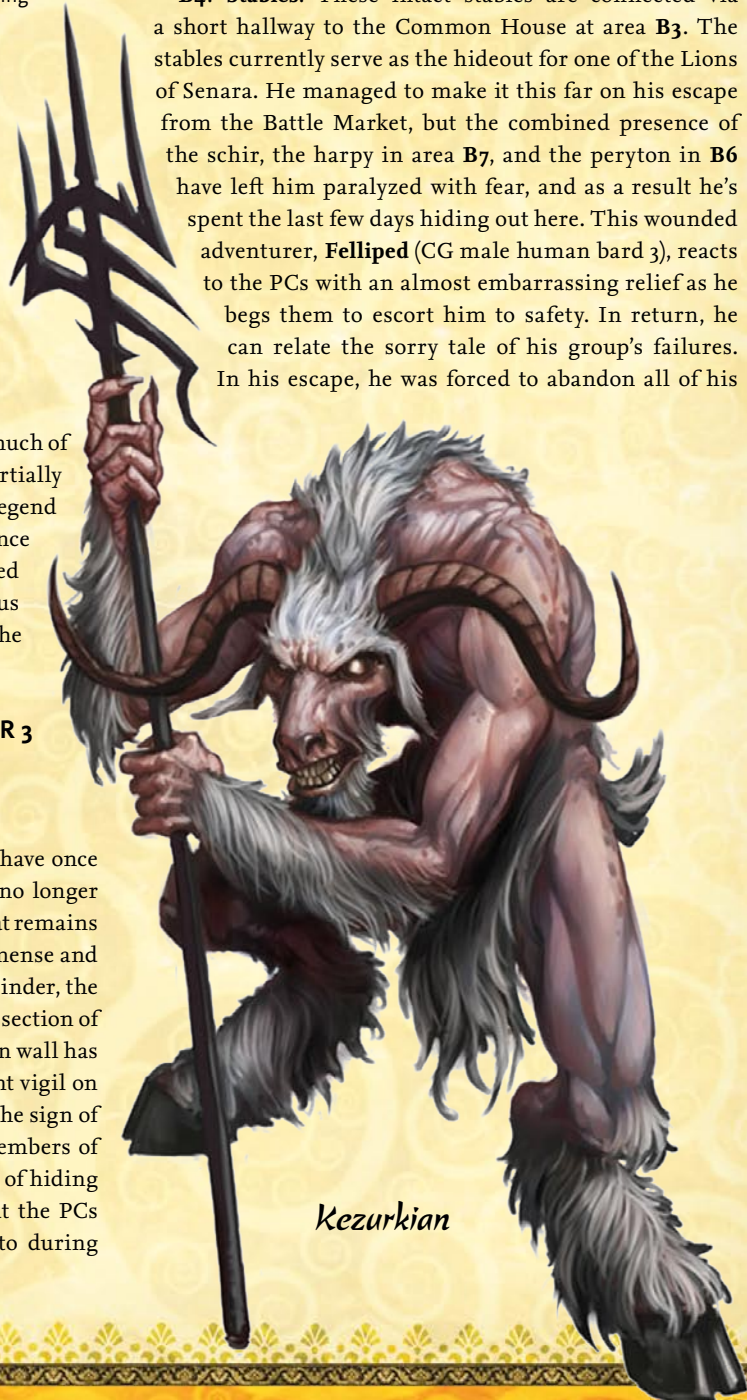
Dire boar

**hp** 52 (MM 63)

**CR** 4

**B3. Common House:** This largely intact building once served as an inn for visitors to Kelmarane who were unable to afford the plush accommodations of the upgrade hostels next to the battle market. Despite its sturdy walls and generally sound construction, none of Kelmarane's current inhabitants have chosen to live within the inn, making it an ideal resting place for invaders unable (or unwilling) to flee the village.

**B4. Stables:** These intact stables are connected via a short hallway to the Common House at area **B3**. The stables currently serve as the hideout for one of the Lions of Senara. He managed to make it this far on his escape from the Battle Market, but the combined presence of the schir, the harpy in area **B7**, and the peryton in **B6** have left him paralyzed with fear, and as a result he's spent the last few days hiding out here. This wounded adventurer, **Felliped** (CG male human bard 3), reacts to the PCs with an almost embarrassing relief as he begs them to escort him to safety. In return, he can relate the sorry tale of his group's failures. In his escape, he was forced to abandon all of his





gear, but managed to scavenge an old helmet, a leather breastplate, and a rusty spear to defend himself—poor weapons and armor against the denizens of the village. If the PCs can outfit him, he'll agree to accompany the PCs on their forays into Kelmarane, especially if he thinks they might be able to rescue his captured friends (all but one of whom has already been killed). Alternatively, the wounded adventurer in the ruined fort is an ideal organic way to introduce a replacement player character for a PC who has been killed or a way to introduce a new player character into the campaign.

Felliped is a member of the Pathfinder Society, a loosely organized group of archeologists and explorers who travel the world looking for secrets and valuable artifacts. He explains that his organization believes that fabulous treasure has been hidden behind the magically sealed vaults of Kelmarane's ruined church of Sarenrae, and tries to engage the PCs in his mission to locate that treasure and send a catalog of their finds back to his masters in the society. Should you wish to involve the Pathfinders in your Legacy of Fire campaign, Felliped makes an ideal contact who will serve the PCs well throughout their careers, providing information and help when they need it most. He remains forever grateful of their timely rescue, and does what he can to remain a helpful ally for the rest of his days.

**B5. Wharfmaster Manor:** This handsome, three-story mansion has a splendid view of Kelmarane's dock and the tannery and mill across the river. Anyone hiding out here and spying on the latter locations can easily track the movements of the harpy and peryton living in those two buildings. After the village has been cleared of gnolls, Almah grants the Wharfmaster Manor to the PCs as part of their reward.

**B6. Mill (EL 4):** The wheel of this roofless mill still turns with the flow of the river, but it has not been used for its intended purpose in decades. It is currently the lair of a peryton that the gnolls have befriended. If encountered here, the creature defends its lair ferociously—it has grown accustomed to this den now that the gnolls feed it regularly. Buried in the debris that comprises the peryton's nest is a +1 *longsword* and a *ring of jumping*, although the ring is so mud-caked, a DC 20 Search check is required to locate it.

## PERYTON

hp 42 (see page 86)

## CR 4

**B7. Tannery (EL 4):** The harpy Undrella, Kardswann's sometimes consort, spends most of her days and nights slaving over a half-dozen cauldrons previously employed by Kelmarane's tanner. She treats this place as her personal alchemy workshop, mixing together foul unguents composed of loose body parts, narcotic oils, blood, and less savory substances. Her time in Kelmarane predates that of the Kulldis tribe by some 3 years, and her arrangement with Kardswann is one of convenience rather than of passion.

If the PCs encounter her in her lair, she attempts to parlay with them, offering them an edge over the gnolls if they prove their worth by bringing her the head of the giant mamba from area **B1**. "Bring me the snake's head for my stew," she says with a crooked-toothed grin, "and I'll betray my lover for you!"

Undrella believes herself to be a stunning beauty, and is shocked that someone might find her unattractive. If the PCs show any signs of being open to her alliance, she approaches them brazenly, favoring discussion with the most attractive male. As she explains that the current Kulldis chieftain, a genie named Kardswann, slew

the old chief about 2 months ago,

she traces the cheek of her favorite PC with a talon-like fingernail, getting close to seductively smell his scent. She further explains that the genie "walked through the magic-sealed door" leading to the ruined church crypt, after which he was clearly under the control of some evil entity.

"He is cruel to me," she says, batting her crusty eyelids. "I want you to kill him."

If the PCs return with her desired ingredient and promise to let her live in the tannery after they have driven out the gnolls, Undrella gives them a two keys—one that opens the battle market's north door at area **B9**, and another that opens the locked hallway and cells at area **B6**. She further tells them that the smugglers currently visiting the battle market have only a tenuous allegiance to Kardswann, and that they might be convinced to sit out any battle with a sufficient gift and a promise to let them live. If the PCs wish, Undrella is willing to show her good faith by warning these smugglers and keeping them out of the final fight.

In addition to the two keys, which Undrella keeps hidden at the bottom of a particularly murky cauldron, the harpy has a golden necklace worth 130 gp and a *ring of the ram* (37





# howl of the carrion king



charges). She also carries a battle market key (see page 39). She does not hesitate to use the latter in combat, taking to the air and pounding her enemies with force. If the PCs wound Undrella to below 20 hit points, she flees the battle market and warns Kardswann of their approach. Almah grudgingly allows the creature to live in the tannery if the PCs ally with her, but the merchant princess asks them to keep a close watch on “the monster.” If the PCs ally with Undrella, award them XP as if they had defeated her.

## UNDRELLA

Female harpy

hp 31 (MM 151)

CR 4

**B8. Trade Alliance Guildhall:** This stately building once served as the office of Katapesh’s Trade Alliance, a guild of merchants organized to corner trade on certain commodities and set prices on others. A few weeks after the PCs liberate Kelmarane the first representatives of the guild arrive from the capital city and begin to restore the building to its original function.

**B9. Watch Gatehouse (EL 5):** A gnoll ranger accompanied by a pack of hyenas dwells within this intact gatehouse, which includes a sturdy bridge overlooking

the road up the hill toward the battle market and ruined church. At the first sign of trouble, the gnoll releases the hyenas, expecting his pets to do his dirty work. If this is unsuccessful, he blows a warning through a tube connected to the trumpeting statue of Sarenrae on a huge pillar that abuts the guardhouse. The resulting sound alerts everyone in Kelmarane that an attack is in progress, preparing them for what is to come. Thereafter, he rushes out of the gatehouse to attack the PCs.

## GNOLLS (2)

hp 11 each (MM 130)

CR 1

## HYENAS (4)

hp 13 each (MM 274)

CR 1

**B10. Palace:** Like most battle market towns on the western border of Katapesh, the merchant princes of Kelmarane were expected to maintain a posh palace ready for instant inhabitation should a Pactmaster come calling on business. Though the 20 years since the revolt of the cult of Sarenrae have not been kind to the palace, it remains one of the most intact structures in the village. Kardswann himself holds the key to its



immense double-doors, awaiting a time when the new market has attracted enough brigands that he will be able to move from his quarters in the battle market to his rightful throne in the palace.

The Pactmaster Guard secured all of the palace's valuables decades ago, so despite the fact that it looks like it might house a great deal of treasure, it is largely abandoned. The lock on the front doors requires a DC 35 Open Locks check to bypass.

**B11. Battle Market:** This structure is presented in detail in Part Four.

**B12. Haunted Church:** Most of the walls of this forlorn ruin still stand, but the interior walls have been demolished and gutted. Several skeletons litter the structure's interior, including about a dozen garbed in the red-chitin livery of the Pactmaster Guard. The rest appear to have been clerics of Sarenrae or even common citizens, though the past 20 years have rotted away most of the skin and clothes worn by the corpses. Ash and fire stains the interior walls and ceiling throughout most of the structure, and signs of violent battle are everywhere.

Near the center of the church stands a forlorn stairwell that leads down to a heavily barred door. A strange metal plate with a glowing series of irregularly etched lines mars the surface of the door, casting the stairs in a dull red illumination. This is the *interdict seal* placed on the door by the Pactmaster Guard to keep the daemon Xulthos imprisoned in the crypt below. This seal functions similarly to an *arcane*

*lock*, save that it cannot be removed via a *knock* spell or by *dispel magic*. More powerful magical effects (such as *break enchantment* or a *rod of cancellation*) could remove the seal, but the only likely way the PCs can get into the chambers beyond is by using the *interdict key* possessed by Almah. Once the battle market has been cleared, the merchant princess gives the PCs the key and asks them to destroy the menace haunting Kelmarane once and for all.

The ruined church undercrypt is described in detail in Part Five.

**B13. Church Cemetery (EL 4):** The cliffside behind the ruined church overlooks the fields west of Kelmarane through a ruined series of pillared arches. Across a short yard stands a column about 10 feet tall, upon which stands a splendid statue of Sarenrae with both arms upraised to the heavens. In the shadow of this statue are five graves marked with the life-sized statues of holy warriors. Remarkably, what appears to be a human man garbed in the fine robes of Sarenrae kneels before these graves, muttering a quiet series of prayers.

This creature is Halruun, the old high priest of Sarenrae who first fell victim to the ministrations of Xulthos decades ago. The tainted cleric turned his congregation to hatred and murderous evil, and as a result he was one of the first villains slain by the Pactmaster Guard in the final assault on the village.

Death was not to be his final punishment, however, for as a formerly goodly cleric who fell to evil, his soul was cursed to return to the world as an undead creature known as a *huecuva*. During the day, Halruun hides his true form with *disguise self*.

The gnolls have learned to avoid this part of town and its eerie caretaker. As the PCs approach, the cleric stands and turns toward them, a friendly smile marking his dark-skinned, handsome face. "Welcome..." he says with a grin. Then his features seem to melt away, leaving a hideous skeletal face garbed in a grubby, fire-stained robe. "...to my church," he finishes. "Your souls will feed the greatest heroes of Kelmarane!"

Halruun has no obvious treasure. However, any character who helped to restore the monastery altar of Sarenrae gets a feeling during the battle that the goddess herself watches over him or her. Any such character brought to negative hit points in the fight is automatically stabilized, and such characters also automatically save against the *huecuva's* disease. If such characters later pray



Halruun



# howl of the carrion king

to the statue of Sarenrae overlooking the cemetery, they receive a +1 inherent bonus to Wisdom. This effect only occurs once per character, and only to characters who pray before the statue and who also helped to reconsecrate the monastery altar. All other characters praying to the statue receive a one-time *bless* effect that lasts 4 hours.

## HALRUUN

CR 4

Male advanced elite huecuva (*Tome of Horrors Revised* 238)

CE Medium undead

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +4, Spot +4

### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15

(+4 Dex, +5 natural)

**hp** 39 (6d12)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +7

**Defensive Abilities** +2 turn resistance; **DR** 5/magic and silver;

**Immune** undead traits

### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** claws +8 (1d4+6 plus disease)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th)

3/day—*disguise self*

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The huecuva retains only a few shreds of its previous intellect—basically enough to give its short speech to the PCs before it attacks, and to recall its hatred of the servitors of Sarenrae. Anyone who openly wears Sarenrae's symbol or colors (orange and yellow) finds themselves to be the favored target of the undead priest.

**Morale** Halruun fights to the death.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 4, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +3; **Grp** +7

**Feats** Alertness, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (claws)

**Skills** Disguise +2 (+12 with disguise self), Hide +13, Listen +4, Spot +4

**Languages** Common

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Disease (Ex)** Filth Fever—claws, DC 15 Fortitude save, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Charisma-based.

the savage humanoids and barbarians of the nation's interior was the creation of numerous battle markets in small villages throughout Katapesh. Each battle market was a multi-level bazaar, tavern, and entertainment arena designed to keep traders safe from brigands and spread wealth to the impoverished folk of the heartland. One such battle market stood at the heart of the village of Kelmarane.

Months ago the call went out that the new chieftain of the Kulldis tribe sought to reopen Kelmarane's market as a haven for gnolls, bandits, and other folk not usually welcome in the cosmopolitan bazaars of Katapesh. As a result, a small gathering of disreputable merchants has moved into the edifice, and coins once more trade hands in the battle market of Kelmarane. Because Kardswann and his tribe are expecting visitors, the battle market is far easier than the PCs might expect to infiltrate. In fact, once they make it past the guardians on the road leading up Kelmarane's hill, the PCs can simply walk in the battle market's front door, even if Kardswann suspects the PCs are enemies (since here, at the seat of his power, the genie feels safe enough to handle the PCs).

The battle market is a three-story circular stone fortress with massive doors at each of the four cardinal direction points. The east, north, and west doors remain closed and locked, while the southern doors stand wide open, awaiting new customers to Kardswann's revived market. A large skylight about 30 feet wide allows the sun to light the building's interior, while torches in sconces along the walls illuminate the battle market in the evenings. Climbing the 60-foot-tall exterior requires three successive DC 15 Climb checks—once the roof is reached, it's relatively easy to lower oneself through the skylight and onto the observation deck at area C15. Aside from this roof portal, the battle market contains no windows leading to the outside. There are no toilets in the battle market, so visitors often relieve themselves in the ruins outside or in an abandoned corner of one of the many unused interior chambers.

**Battle Market Locks:** Many of the doors in the battle market are locked, but these locks are old and decrepit. Unless otherwise noted, these locks can be picked with a DC 15 Open Lock check. Keys for the locks in the battle market are carried by Kardswann, his flind advisor Ugruk, the harpy Undrella, and any paying guests of area C8.

**Abandoned Stores:** Open arches along the east and west walls of this spacious chamber lead to what must once have been a permanent shop. Empty shelves line the interior walls, and numerous partially collapsed and destroyed crates lie heaped on the floor. These chambers, marked on the map with an "S," were once used as permanent storefronts, and have been long abandoned.

## PART FOUR: THE BATTLE MARKET

Centuries ago, when the mysterious Pactmasters first came to Katapesh from parts unknown, they sought to create an economic empire that could bring goods from the western nations of Osirion, Thuvia, and Rahadoun overland to the rich coasts of northeastern Garund, from whence they could easily reach the fabulous markets of the Distant East. One method they used to calm



## Battle Market

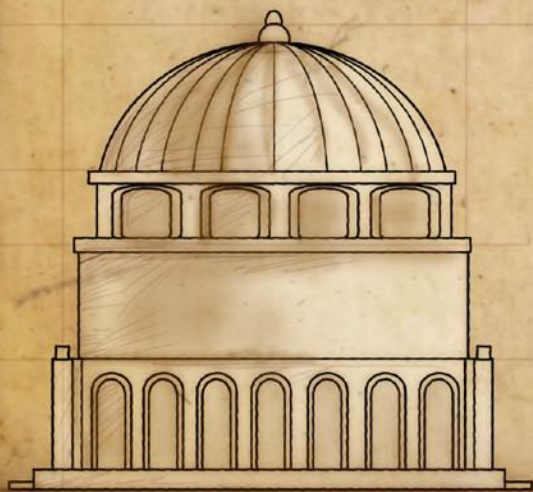
Ground Level



Level 2



Side View



Level 3



One square = 5 feet



# howl of the carrion king

## *The Kuldis Gnolls*

The primary inhabitants of the battle market are the gnolls of the Kuldis tribe, but other creatures dwell here too. Some of these other creatures are disreputable merchants who have set up shop in the market, some are smugglers and con-artists seeking a quick payday, and some are combatants who seek glory, fame, and riches on the market's battle stage (area C3). Unique denizens of the market have their own stat blocks presented where they are most likely to be encountered.

The bulk of the Kuldis gnolls are standard members of their race, savage humanoids armed with battleaxes and shortbows and armored with heavy steel shields and leather armor. In all, the Kuldis pack numbers 29 strong (26 standard gnolls, a cowardly "bartender" named Kurellak, Ugruk the flind, and Kardswann himself). The gnolls generally break into small packs of four each, and can be encountered in the Kelmarane hinterlands, the ruined village itself, or here in the battle market. Keep track of how many the PCs slay, since that number should reduce the total remaining here.

## *C1. South Entrance (EL 1/3)*

An enormous set of double doors stands wide open, revealing a torchlit passage beyond. About fifteen feet within the hall, on the left, stands a sturdy wooden door. Across the hall is another open passage leading east, curving with the contours of the battle market. The central hall proceeds perhaps fifty feet before opening into a large well-lit cavernous chamber that seems to be centered around a huge circular stage.

This entrance is left open all hours of the day and night, except in the case of an all-out attack on the ruins by the PCs and their allies. In such a case, the doors can be closed and locked (DC 15 Open Lock).

In Kelmarane's past, all four entrances to the battle market were kept open, but Kardswann now keeps only this southernmost entrance unlocked for security reasons. The other exterior doors are locked (DC 15 Open Lock), but can be unlocked with any battle market key carried by numerous NPCs in the area.

**Creature:** A goblin clad in a colorful jester's outfit is posted at this entrance at all hours. The tired creature is Jank, an odds-and-ends peddler who came to the market about a month ago and was subsequently adopted by Kardswann as his major domo. Kardswann doesn't let the goblin take breaks, and Jank tries to catch a few hours of sleep here as he can when the genie's not looking—he's certainly too craven to ask for a more lenient schedule. The fawning, sycophantic manikin offers the PCs his genuine greeting, hoping to lure them to the stage for a brief discussion with the "Mouth of the Carrion King"

(Kardswann), who sits on his throne on the observation deck at area C15. "Welcome, welcome!" the goblin rasps, jangling a short wand topped with a series of tiny bells. "You have been expected! The Mouth of the Carrion King seeks an audience with you immediately! This way, this way!" he says, beckoning toward the central chamber and the wooden stage.

It's possible (perhaps likely) that the PCs simply charge in with their swords swinging. In this case Jank flees with a shriek and the entire structure erupts into chaos. The goblin and his master are hoping for a more civilized outcome, however, and should the PCs approach without hostility, Jank does nothing to betray them (at least until they are standing on the battle stage).

### **JANK**

Goblin (MM 133)

hp 5

CR 1/3

## *C2. Stairs*

Two sets of stairs lead up to a second floor landing on either side of the battle market. The inside walls of both landings are open to the main outer ring of the structure's second level.

## *C3. Battle Stage (EL Variable)*

The battle market's four entry halls lead into a huge arena-like room dominated by a massive circular wooden stage, its surface smeared and sticky with blood. Two rows of terraced benches surround the stage, which is bathed in natural light from a large open circular hatch in the citadel's roof far above. Torches illuminate a darkened gallery of compact market stalls in the eastern half of the first floor's inner wall. A raised platform along the northwest curve of the inner wall sports four round tables, several wooden chairs, and a long bar stocked with numerous bottles of distilled spirits.

About twenty feet above is an open balcony, beyond which lie a series of small rooms on an upper floor of the market. Several rows of empty bleachers peer down from the edge of the balcony. Twenty feet above the second floor a half-circle balcony marks the highest of the citadel's terraces. Three thrones look down from this vantage, each positioned to give a commanding view of not only the stage below but the entire market.

This central platform serves the battle market as an arena—in Kelmarane's day, the stage saw mock battles, contests, performances, and all matter of entertainment. Under the gnolls' watch, though, the entertainments offered here are much more violent and brutal. Many thugs, savages, and hopeful warriors have gravitated to the region and regularly pit their lives against other foes (some volunteer, some supplied by Kardswann) for chances at riches and glory. As long as the PCs behave themselves and stay off the stage,



they'll be free to move about the battle market relatively uncontested. As soon as they pick a fight, or worse, as soon as they step onto the stage, things quickly get dicey.

Make sure to familiarize yourself with the occupants of the surrounding areas, particularly the occupants of the bar at area C5 and the stalls at area C4. If the PCs step up onto the stage (either on their own or after following Jank's request), they quickly become the center of attention—all of the surrounding humanoids grow silent with an expectant excitement, assuming the PCs are the latest entertainment.

Moments after the PCs step onto the stage, a figure seated in the largest throne up in area C15 above stands—a 7-foot-tall armored bald human man armed with an enormous greataxe. The man stands and speaks down to the PCs with a booming voice that echoes throughout the entire structure.

*Kardswann*



"I am Kardswann, Mouth of the Carrion King, Chieftain of the Kuldis Tribe and master of this village. Tell me, what business brings you to Kelmarane?"

If the PCs have been sneaking into town and picking off his gnoll patrols one-by-one, Kardswann already has a good idea what the PCs want, but he is eager to hear it directly from their mouths. If the PCs claim to be interested in trade, the genie warns them that so long as they keep their weapons to themselves, they are welcome to enjoy the hospitality of the battle market. If they wish to negotiate or demand that the gnolls abandon Kelmarane, he toys with them for a while, refusing to leave his perch 40 feet above the battle stage. When he tires of this, he says:

"Enough!" Kardswann yells. "I tire of your disruption. It is time that this battle stage be put to use." The chieftain raises both arms into the air. "Honored guests," he roars. "I offer you 500 pieces of gold for each of the strangers' corpses!"

Things go bad quickly from this point, but the PCs have the inherent disorganization of the denizens of the battle market on their side. Not everyone in the building attacks them at once—some prefer to watch the fight to gauge the PCs' strengths, and plan on stepping in to attack once the PCs are tired and wounded. Others simply don't have an interest in taking part in the battle. But many jump at the chance to earn some of Kardswann's promised gold.

When the battle breaks out, Jank immediately flees to area C11 on the second level. The bartender, Kurellak, will not fight under any circumstances and is not above begging for his life should the PCs dispatch the opposition.

Kardswann has little interest in remaining behind to watch the battle, leaving Ugruk behind to watch the event and alert him if the PCs do anything unexpected as the genie leaves the observation balcony for the market guard headquarters in area C12. There he warns his personal guard of the fight brewing on the main floor, casts his preparatory spells upon himself, and eventually leads his guards to a final confrontation with the PCs.

If Kardswann issues his bounty for the PCs' bodies, the battle likely develops as outlined here. Try to space out the appearance of these adversaries by a few rounds so as not to overwhelm the PCs. If, on the other hand, the PCs make short work of their enemies (or you expect them to based on prior experience), have all of the enemies pile on at once.



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**Round 1:** Hurvank the Strangler (see area C8d) is first to reach the stage—he fights barehanded, and is able to barrel up onto the stage from the bar almost immediately as a result.

**Round 3:** The bugbears (see area C5) at the bar take a few rounds to gather their weapons and finish their drinks before bounding up onto the stage to join the fight.

**Round 5:** The patrol of gnolls from area C7 joins the fray.

**Round 6:** The gnolls in area C11 join the fight from the balcony above, firing arrows down on the PCs if they remain on stage, or moving to a position to do the same if the PCs can't be fired upon from the balcony.

**Round 8:** The three smugglers are an optional foe—whether or not the smugglers attack is up to you. This adventure assumes that the smugglers simply watch the entertainment and do not take part, as combat is not where they excel. If you think the smugglers would make interesting NPCs after the PCs have settled Kelmarane, they decide to play it safe and not to attack the PCs. Otherwise, the smugglers join the fray on this round.

**Round 10:** If the PCs haven't defeated the schir demon, it enters the battle market at this point, roars, and charges into the fray; it doesn't care about the gold, but the sound and smell of battle have aroused its bloodlust. If the PCs are having problems, the demon could attack indiscriminately, giving the PCs a chance perhaps to flee as the other combatants are suddenly forced to defend themselves from a crazed demon.

## C4. Market Stalls

The 10 small stalls east of the battle stage were designed to hold the wares of traveling merchants drawn to the battle market by crowds and coin. Most of the floors of these stalls are strewn with debris, but the stalls in C4a, C4b, and C4c contain an assortment of goods displayed on wagons or spread out upon blankets on the floor. Statistics for the stalls' proprietors are provided in area C5, since the three smugglers spend most of their time getting drunk in the battle market's bar, anxiously awaiting customers who never seem to come. Of course, they can see their stalls from area C5, and if anyone starts poking around, the proprietor is swift to appear.

**C4a:** This stall, managed by the male human smuggler Gorundal, contains one of every piece of adventuring gear listed in the PH. Most of the items are slightly damaged or of shoddy construction.

**C4b:** This stall contains several small racks displaying thin vials filled with multi-colored liquids, crumbs of tarry resin, or bits of colorful plants. All of these are addictive narcotics, ranging from pesh to flayleaf to shiver. Consult page 54 of the *Pathfinder Chronicles Guide to Korvosa* for details, or improvise statistics of your own for these quasi-legal substances. The proprietor of this "shop" is a

twitchy human female smuggler named Kalyx. All told, her stash is worth 450 gp.

**C4c:** The blankets lining the floor here display at least three of all of the "special substances and items" listed in the PH, from acid to tindertwigs. The proprietor is a rail-thin male human smuggler named Juluce. His inventory is worth 550 gp.

## C5. Tavern (EL 7)

A long bar with a huge collection of varicolored glass bottles against the outside wall perches upon a raised section of the main chamber here. The south and east walls are solid, but the curved inner line of the room on the map depicts where the raised floor begins and ends. The tavern contains four tables with chairs for drinkers not interested in the battle at the center of the room. Food smells rise from behind the bar, filling the battle market with the redolence of cooking meat.

**Creatures:** A one-eyed, cowardly gnoll named Kurellak plays at bartender here, although his skills are mostly limited to simply taking money and handing over bottles of cheap wine, ale, and beer stolen from elsewhere. His standard customers are a trio of surly bugbears who moonlight as brigands and three human smugglers who maintain stalls in area C4.

Unless offered a bounty by Kardswann, the ruffians dwelling in the bar do not attack the PCs unprovoked. The smugglers treat them as potential customers, engaging them in chatter and attempting to lead them to the stalls in area C4 in hopes of making a sale. These three smugglers are named Gorundal, Kalyx, and Juluce—all three of them are second-level human experts, but since they're unlikely to be brave enough to fight, no stats are given for them.

The extraordinarily gruff bugbears don't appreciate the company of strangers. They're here to watch their champion, Hurvank the Strangler, defeat all challengers on the battle stage. It's been 2 weeks since the last challenge, and the bugbears are beyond bored. Kardswann continues to hint that "it would be very dangerous" for them to leave, so they remain in the battle arena, unsure of their fate.

**BUGBEARS (3)**  
hp 16 each (MM 29)

CR 2

**KURELLAK**  
Gnoll "bartender"  
hp 11 (MM 130)

CR 1

## C6. Secure Passageway

Several chambers line the inside wall of this passage, including a market guard outpost, various prison cells, and the private quarters of the traveling gladiators who



visit the battle market. All doors leading to and from this passage are kept locked.

## C7. Guard Chambers (EL 4)

**Creatures:** The battle market's primary security patrol of four gnolls spends most of its time in this chamber, rotating with the three gnoll patrols in Kelmarane and the environs and the two groups in areas C11 and C12. The doors on the north and south wall are opened with the same key that allows access to area C6 and the other chambers off that hallway.

### GNOLLS (4)

hp 11 each (MM 130)

CR 1

**Treasure:** If any PCs are captured during the course of the adventure, the gnolls keep their gear in a closet in this chamber. The closet also includes the gear of the slain members of the Lions of Senara. In total, the trove contains: a *ring of protection* +1, a *cloak of resistance* +1, masterwork chainmail, a +1 *dagger*, a *wand of bull's strength* (8 charges), 4 applications of *silversheen*, an *amulet of natural armor* +1, a *cloak of Charisma* +2, and *slippers of spider climbing*. Additionally, the closet contains the cleric Oxvard's (see page 30) +1 *splint mail* and cold iron heavy mace. If these are returned, the surviving members of the Lions of Senara willingly turn over the gear of their dead companions to the PCs.

## C8. Prison/Gladiator Cells (EL Variable)

These small quarters are meant to house prisoners or traveling gladiators—Kardswann prefers gladiators since he can charge them rent. Each features a bed and a desk. Kardswann occasionally pits the prisoners and gladiators against one another, an event that may give imprisoned characters an opportunity to escape.

**C8a–C8c:** If the gnolls capture any PCs in the course of the adventure, they are imprisoned in one of these cells.

**C8d:** This room houses the ogre wrestler Hurvank the Strangler. The leader of the three bugbears in area C5, Hurvank has claimed this room for himself, although he spends most of his time in the tavern since he finds this room to be a little too cozy for his frame. His bugbear toadies get to sleep on the floor of the battle market or bar or wherever they can find the space. Hurvank has made a fair amount of money from his wrestling bouts with prisoners and captured beasts on the battle stage, but he fears his fame in the battle arena is waning ever since he lost a bout against the swashbuckler Haleen several days ago. Ever since, he's been plotting a way to kill Haleen, but his newfound fear of her swift blade has so far made every plan he's come up with to kill her crash before he's gotten the plan off the ground. He may ask the PCs to do his dirty

work for him, promising them 100 gp in return for the deed (a promise he full well intends on not keeping).

### HURVANK THE STRANGLER

CR 2

Male ogre

hp 29 (MM 199)

#### OFFENSE

**Melee** unarmed strike +7 (1d4+5)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Hurvank likes to feel his foe's last gasp at life, and fights unarmed as a result. He prefers to attack foes who aren't heavily armored, but note his Morale below.

**Morale** Until recently, Hurvank was a blustery and fearless beast, but his recent humiliating defeat in a fight against Haleen has given him a fear of agile opponents. He normally fights to the death, but if faced with a foe who uses Combat Expertise or Weapon Finesse, he panics and flees if he ever fails to hurt the foe after 2 rounds of attacks, or if he takes more than 10 points of damage from such a foe. If he flees, Hurvank does not return to the battle market, but he certainly hides out in the surrounding wilderness and makes plans to ambush and murder his new enemy if he gets the chance.

#### STATISTICS

**Feats** Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike

**C8e:** This room houses the swashbuckler Haleen. Gruff and eager to prove her battle prowess, the swordswoman has become friends with the smugglers in area C5, but she is her own woman and prefers to travel alone. Haleen was recently forced to flee from her home town after an unfortunate series of events left her owing a lot of money to a local criminal. She wandered the wilds for some time before finally coming to Kelmarane, and hopes now to earn back the 2,000 gp she owes without having to resort to selling her heirlooms (her buckler and rapier) by fighting for gold in the battle market. So far, she's managed to defeat every foe Kardswann's arranged for her to fight, thanks to a combination of skill, speed, and luck; her latest triumph over the ogre Hurvank has left the creature dangerously humiliated, and she's now worried that he's planning to kill her. She's spent much of her free time lately hiding out in here as a result, unaware of the fact that her defeat of the bugbear has left him even more afraid of her than she is of him.

If the PCs agree to help her deal with Hurvank, Haleen could well develop into a loyal friend. Alternatively, she may already be tied to one of the PCs; she might be a missing sister one of the PCs is looking for (see the sidebar on Resolving Campaign Traits on page 8 for more details). In either case, exact details on Haleen's history and goals are left vague so you can tailor her to fit the specific needs of your campaign.



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## HALEEN

Female human fighter 4

CN Medium humanoid

Init +3; Senses Listen -1, Spot -1

### DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16

(+4 armor, +3 Dex, +2 shield)

hp 34 (4d10+8)

Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +0

### OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +9 (1d6+4/19-20)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Haleen relies on speed and style in combat. She generally uses Combat Expertise to its full potential—she hits less often, but is much harder to hit in return, and often uses this technique to force her enemies to get impatient and make foolish tactical errors. Haleen is a patient fighter.

**Morale** Haleen is no coward, but neither is she foolish. If faced with a foe she can't seem to hurt, or if reduced to 10 or fewer hit points, she flees.

### STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10

Base Atk +4; Grp +5

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Specialization (rapier)

**Skills** Intimidate +7, Jump +6, Perform (dance) +3, Tumble +6

**Languages** Common, Gnoll, Kelish

**Gear** chain shirt, +1 buckler, +1 rapier, battle market key, 320 gp

## CR 4

alchemical apparatus against the west wall—the infusium—is a maze of glass beakers connected by rubber tubes. Seven of these tubes project from the apparatus, ending in syringe-like needles.

**Creature:** The harpy Undrella currently administers the infusium, filling it with concoctions she brews in her cauldron vats in Kelmarane's old tannery. If the PCs haven't already defeated her, there's a 50% chance of encountering her here.

## UNDRELLA

hp 31 (see page 37)

## CR 4

**Treasure:** The infusium is a bulky but potent magical device, a sturdy creation that has weathered the decades since Kelmarane's original abandonment quite well. The device functions as a masterwork alchemical laboratory, granting a +2 competence bonus on Craft (alchemy) checks made to utilize it. Up to seven potions may be poured into the device's seven reservoirs for storage. As a full-round action, a character may inject one of the stored potions directly into his bloodstream, doubling the potion's duration. Up to seven characters may use the infusium at the same time (although each requires a separate potion dosage). The infusium itself is extremely valuable, worth 8,000 gp to the right alchemist.

The device weighs 900 pounds, however, making it difficult to move.

After Almah's party moves into Kelmarane, Father Zastoran becomes obsessed with the infusium, setting up shop in the storefront and selling his potions to the new citizens of the village.

Currently, the infusium holds the following potions: *mage armor*, *magic fang*, *blur*, *cat's grace*, *invisibility*, *spider climb*, and *haste*. These potions can be extracted from the device with a successful DC 10 Profession (alchemist) check. Failure indicates that the potion is ruined.

## C11. Guard Station (EL 4)

**Creatures:** This guard station, complete with card table and chairs for lounging, watches over the interior stairs to the battle market's uppermost floor. The door is generally kept locked. If the goblin major domo Jank fled the ground floor, he makes his final stand with the guards in this room after knocking frantically on the door for several seconds.



## C9. Orchestra/Balcony Seating

Four rows of raised wooden bleachers are positioned to offer an excellent view of the battle stage on the ground floor, about twenty feet below. A thin walkway bisects the stalls, separating what must have been general seating to the east from seating designed to accommodate a small orchestra. A few large drums with moldering skins stand at the forefront of this section, the only signs of the music that must once have filled the battle market.

**Treasure:** A DC 22 Search of the orchestra bleachers reveals a tiny silver masterwork flute worth 130 gp that's so far gone unnoticed under the largest of the moldering drums.

## C10. Infusium

This strange shop is the largest storefront in the second floor arcade, and the only one currently in use. A bizarre



## GNOLLS (4)

hp 11 each (MM 130)

CR 1

## C12. Market Guard Headquarters (EL 4)

**Creatures:** This large room is the headquarters of the market guard. Kardswann's personal guardians spend their days here. Their orders are to hold this room against intruders at all costs. Because of this, they seldom venture into the lower levels when the citadel is under siege. Instead, they flip over the table to create cover and prepare for enemies ascending the stairs from the guard station below.

## GNOLLS (4)

hp 11 each (MM 130)

CR 1

## C13. Guard Quarters

Open arches lead from the market guard headquarters to these small chambers, bedecked with bunks suitable for up to eight resting gnoll guards. A small wardrobe in each room contains a variety of worthless personal gear.

## C14. Outer Hallway

The construction in this part of the battle market is of markedly higher quality than that found elsewhere in the building. An elaborate mosaic traces an intricate geometric pattern on the floor, and frescoes of slaves harvesting pesh fields adorn the walls. A huge open arch in the middle of the inner wall leads to the observation platform in area C15, and the passage terminates at an ornate door leading to area C16.

## C15. Observation Platform (EL 7)

**Creatures:** Kardswann, Undrella, and the sub-chieftain Ugruk often sit upon the three thrones perched at the edge of this wide observation chamber. A short railing protects observers from toppling off the platform and falling 40 feet to the battle stage below. A curved wall running from the floor to the ceiling blocks view of the thrones from the hall at area C14. Three pillars on either side of the curved wall make it very difficult to approach the thrones without being detected.

If the PCs make it through the battle market undetected (either via stealth, fast talking, or other methods) to reach this location without starting a fight, Kardswann, Undrella, and Ugruk are encountered here. Up here, face-to-face, it's actually possible to reason with Kardswann and temporarily erode the domination effect the daemon Xulthos has been using to control the genie—but only if one of the PCs has become the moldspeaker. When this character draws near to Kardswann, he feels Vardishal's influence inside his mind swell up, infusing that PC with a sense of bitter disappointment at Kardswann's fall from

Templar glory. That PC has an urge to identify himself as Vardishal and to admonish Kardswann from wandering off the path of the Templars of the Five Winds. The PC can then attempt a special DC 25 Diplomacy check as a standard action (gaining a +2 bonus to the roll if he wields *Tempest*)—other PCs can attempt to aid this roll if they admonish Kardswann as well. If the roll is a success, a strange look of confusion clouds Kardswann's expression. His entire body begins shaking, as if he were struggling to control his actions. He furrows his brow and speaks through clenched teeth: "You... must... destroy... Xulthos. Below the... below the ruined church. Cannot hold on. Bind me or cut me... within an inch of death... His will is so much stronger than mine... Do it! Do it *now*!"

At this point the PCs must slay or subdue Kardswann within 3 rounds, or the will of Xulthos once again takes over. The PCs' best option is probably to stabilize Kardswann between 0 and -10 hit points. In this case he can do nothing to harm them. If they simply tie him up, he eventually breaks free and makes a return appearance in the climactic encounter of the adventure. If the PCs leave NPCs to guard Kardswann in this case, the genie subdues them. Whether or not they survive is a matter of whether or not you want the NPCs to play a continuing role in the campaign. If so, they are merely wounded severely when Kardswann inevitably breaks free.

## UGRUK

CR 3

Male flind fighter 2

CE Medium humanoid (gnoll)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Listen** +2, **Spot** +1

### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16

(+5 armor, +1 Dex, +1 natural)

**hp** 40 (4 HD; 2d8+2d10+20)

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +1, **Will** -1

### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** flindbar +10 (1d6+5)

**Ranged** dagger +4 (1d4+5/19-20)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Ugruk's intellect has always given him an edge over the other gnolls, and when Kardswann slew the previous chieftain, the flind was quick to seize the opportunity and ingratiated himself into the genie's good graces. He's enjoyed the position of sub-chief ever since. In combat, he wields a flindbar—a pair of iron bars connected by a length of chain. This is an exotic light melee weapon that grants its wielder a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls made to disarm an enemy, and Ugruk is fond of this tactic—especially if he can kick a disarmed weapon off the edge of the balcony.

**Morale** Ugruk is among the bravest of gnolls in the tribe—he fights to the death.



# howl of the carrion king

## STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 12, **Con** 20, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +3; **Grp** +8

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (flindbar)

**Skills** Intimidate +3, Listen +2, Spot +1

**Languages** Gnoll

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of expeditious retreat*; **Other Gear** masterwork breastplate, masterwork flindbar, 5 daggers, *ring of feather falling*

## KARDSWANN

CR 6

Male janni fighter 2

CE Medium outsider (native)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +11, Spot +11

## DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16

(+5 armor, +3 Dex, +1 natural)

**hp** 70 (8 HD; 6d8+2d10+32)

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +8, **Will** +6

**Defensive Abilities** elemental endurance; **Resist** fire 10

## OFFENSE

**Spd** 20 ft., fly 15 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** +1 *lawful outsider bane greataxe* +14/+9  
(1d12+8/x3)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th)

3/day—*invisibility* (self only), *plane shift*,  
*speak with animals*

2/day—*change size* (DC 14)

1/day—*create food and water* (CL 7th), *ethereal jaunt* (for 1 hour)

## TACTICS

**During Combat** Kardswann may only be a shadow of his former glory, but he is still a formidable fighter and a dangerous foe. He generally saves his change size abilities to use against foes to make them smaller, and prefers using his axe and attempting bull rush to try to force a foe off the ledge. The flimsy railing is enough to grant foes who he attempts to use this tactic on a +2 circumstance bonus to resist his bull rush attacks.

**Morale** As long as Kardswann remains under the control of the daemon Xulthos, he fights to the death. If the PCs manage to break through this control, he reacts as detailed above. In either event, he does not use *plane shift* or *ethereal jaunt* to effect an escape.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** 18, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +8; **Grp** +13

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe)

**Skills** Appraise +12, Concentration +14, Craft (armorsmithing) +12, Craft (weaponsmithing) +12, Escape Artist +10, Intimidate +10, Listen +11, Move Silently +10, Ride +13, Sense Motive +11, Spot +11

**Languages** Celestial, Common, Terran; telepathy 100 ft.

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds (2)*; **Other Gear** masterwork breastplate, +1 *lawful outsider bane greataxe*

## UNDRELLA

CR 4

Female harpy

**hp** 31 (MM 151)

## C16. Master's Anrechamber

This decadently decorated chamber is part of the residence of the battle market master, and is currently home to Kardswann and (sometimes) Undrella. Three chairs sit next to a blazing fireplace, and a curtain hides a private bedroom in area C17. After the PCs have cleared the battle market, Almah claims these chambers as her personal domain.



Ugruk





Undrella

key, and urges them to purge the evil from the ruined church's crypt as swiftly as possible. The final mission to do this comprises the final act of the adventure.

## PART FIVE: THE DAEMON'S DEN

Kelmarane's untimely death two decades ago came not from the gnolls who use the ruined village today, nor from the warring clans of genies who used the region as a battleground long ago. Rather, it was the folly of the village's elder priest, a man named Halruun, who was misled by what he thought was a traveling seer named Xulthos. At the time Kelmarane was in the grip of a terrible plague, and Xulthos's arrival coincided with the contagion's end. In fact, this was mere coincidence, but Xulthos used this coincidence to become Halruun's trusted advisor. Unfortunately for Halruun and Kelmarane, Xulthos was in fact a vile insectoid fiend called a glomeray and an agent of the Horseman of War. Xulthos had long traveled the deserts of Northeastern Garund, seeking out old battlegrounds to bask in. The daemon believed that battlegrounds were not chosen randomly—that these sites were "right" for war and with the correct manipulations, could be used to ignite new bloodshed. At Kelmarane, the daemon felt the echoes of Jhavhul's battles in the ancient past, and hoping to "reignite" this battleground, his treacherous and sinister advice and increasing magical control over Halruun planted seeds of violence in Kelmarane's citizens. In but a few months, where sickness once threatened the village, now murder and cruelty seemed the new plague. Yet just as Kelmarane's citizens seemed finally about to band together to turn their murderous ways on nearby settlements, the Pactmasters' soldiers rode in and defeated the town. Xulthos assumed his true form in an attempt to fight back, but the Pactmasters responded by sealing the daemon in the crypt under the town church. Finally aware of how he had been used, Halruun drank poison to end his life (only to rise as a huecuva some time later), and the Pactmasters left the village to ruin. Until Kardswann's intrusion into the crypt, Xulthos had waited patiently, but now the daemon feels that his wait is nearing its end—with the gnoll tribes of the Carrion King, it hopes finally to have its new war.

Almah knows only a few hints of what occurred in Kelmarane, but she does know that a foulness is imprisoned in the crypts below the old church, and that exorcising this taint should be the final step in cleansing the village. She fears correctly that what waits below the church represents the greatest danger, and although the Pactmasters have

### C17. Master Bedroom

Kardswann sleeps in this opulently decorated chamber.

**Treasure:** A chest hidden under the bed contains four large garnets worth 400 gp each and 3,459 gp in assorted coins.

### Victory in the Battle Market!

With Kardswann's defeat, the gnolls panic—their flight from Kelmarane is swift. Likewise the bugbears and other undesirables—only those NPCs who have established allegiances with the PCs remain after the genie's defeat. The battle market clear, Almah and her party are free to move into Kelmarane. Once they receive word that Kardswann and the Kuldis gnolls have been defeated, they venture from the old monastery to the battle market and begin to evaluate it for eventual habitation. If she has not already done so, Almah grants the PCs the *interdict*



# howl of the carrion king

given her the key to open the crypt, she would prefer to wait until the rest of Kelmarane is tamed before taking the PCs aside and telling them the following.

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“About twenty years ago, Kelmarane’s priests of Sarenrae fell under the sway of something... *foul* from the Great Beyond. The creature took control of the high priest and eventually turned the people of Kelmarane to madness. Soldiers of the Pactmasters pacified the town and left it in ruin, but they were never able to root out the evil, and instead locked it in the crypt of the village church. Now, after all these years, that evil must have waned, and you should be able to defeat it once and for all. I’ve been provided with an *interdict* key that will get you through the seal. With the final defeat of the fiend within, Kelmarane will truly be free.”

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Almah will not grant the PCs the *interdict* key (a metal plate with a handle on one side and a series of grooves and prongs on the other that interlocks with the *interdict* seal on the portal in the church ruins) until the PCs have defeated Kardswann and liberated the battle market. Under no circumstances will she grant them the key if they are lower than 5th level, instead suggesting that they take out dangerous creatures in the wilderness (see the regional encounter chart in the Bestiary) to hone their skills before taking on the creature. She knows nothing else about the monster haunting Kelmarane and can provide no more information on the topic.

The upper ruins of Kelmarane’s ruined church of Sarenrae are detailed in areas **B12** and **B13** in Part Three. Matching the ridges of Almah’s *interdict* key with the glowing series of irregular etched lines on the *interdict* seal at the barred door to the church’s crypt causes the red glow to fade, as the key and the seal fuse together. Thereafter the door can be opened easily, revealing more stairs leading down area **D1** below—the start of a small crypt carved into the stone under the village. The crypt itself is unlit, and the air stale and cold.

## D1. Antechamber (EL 5)

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The stairs lead to a rounded stone-walled chamber with a featureless door in the north wall. A ten-foot-diameter circle of mortared stones at the center of the room marks a well that descends even deeper into the earth. Next to the well, on a small pedestal, is a large gong. A short stick capped with a round pad of moldering leather dangles from a cord attached to the gong platform.

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The door in the north wall cannot be opened by any physical means (though *knock*, a *chime of opening*, or similar magic is sufficient to force it to slide into the ceiling). The well drops 30 feet before ending at a thick stone plug

that appears to be the bottom unless a DC 20 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) or Search check is made to detect a thin gap between the bottom of the shaft and the “floor,” as if the bottom may have slid out from the side of the shaft. Liquid that is poured here swiftly vanishes through this gap. The same magical means used to bypass the door will work here as well, but no physical means will get the shaft to clear. Hitting the gong causes the door to slide into the ceiling and the “floor” of the well to slide into the side of the shaft at the same time. Faint rumbling can be heard from both locations.

With the false bottom withdrawn, the well descends a total of 60 feet before opening into area **D4**.

**Creature:** The route into the deeper crypts is still protected by a guardian bound into service decades ago by the priesthood of Sarenrae. Seconds after the gong is rung, a gout of pinkish, swirling vapor rushes out of the well, coalescing into three man-sized shapes—roiling fiery forms of beautiful winged angels with fire for wings and hair. Although these creatures may look like agents of Sarenrae, they are in fact simply fire elementals that have been bound into forms pleasing to the eye by the long-dead founders of the church. The elementals immediately attack any creatures in the room, but if someone strongly presents a holy symbol of Sarenrae to them, the elementals immediately cease their attacks and remain motionless until the symbol is no longer in sight. Banging the gong again while the elementals are unleashed causes the door to the north and the plug in the well to grind back into place—doing so forces the elementals back into stasis in the well, but also heals them of any damage and lingering effects.

### MEDIUM FIRE ELEMENTALS (2)

CR 3

hp 26 (MM 99)

## D2. Main Crypt

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The walls of this large, rough-hewn chamber contain several niches for burials. Shrouded corpses, most reduced to skeletons decades if not centuries ago, pack the niches from floor to ceiling. A raised dais in the center of the room bears a ceramic cask with an elaborate topper capped by a figurine of Sarenrae.

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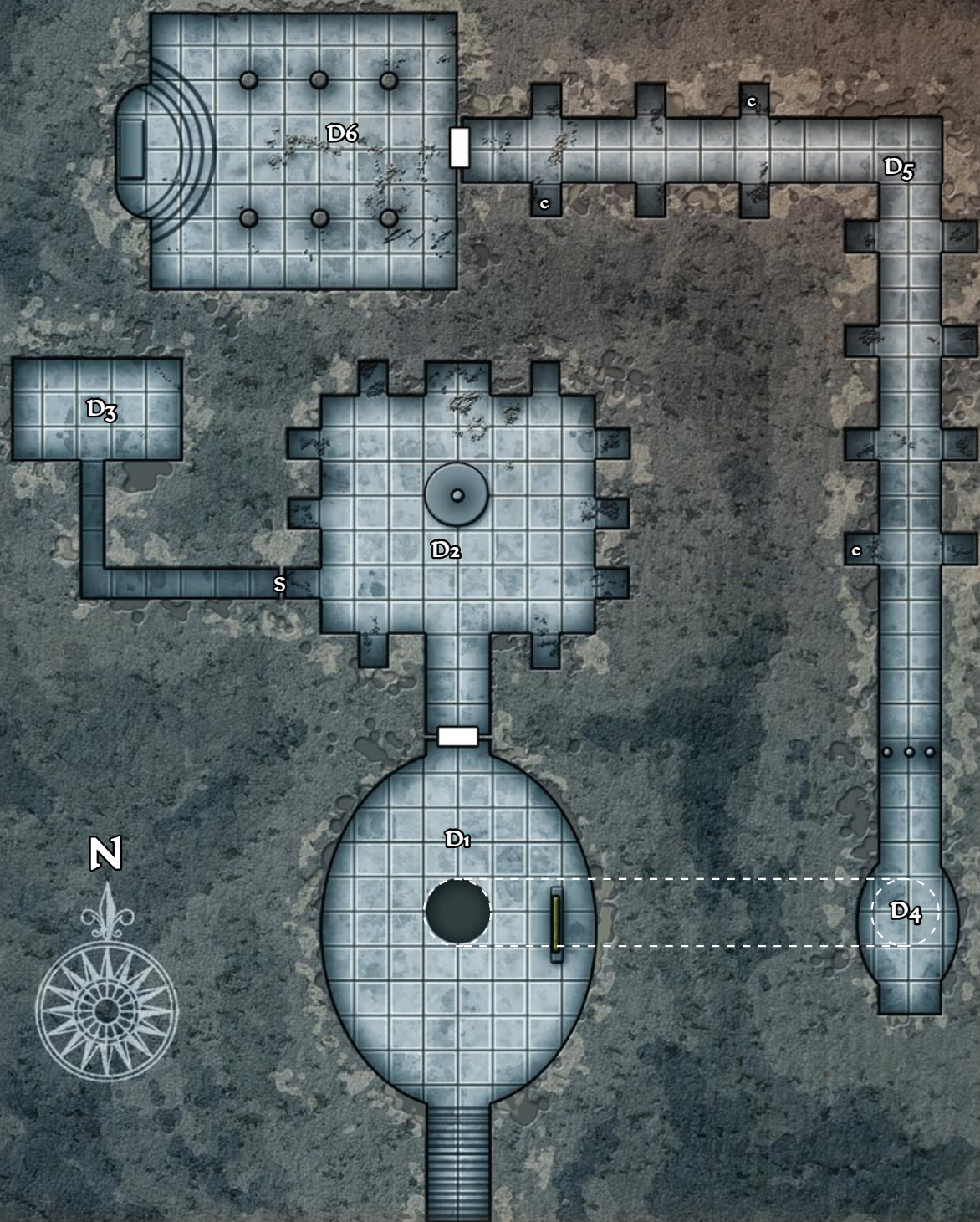
A secret door in the southwest niche (Search DC 18) leads to a worked stone tunnel leading to area **D3**.

**Treasure:** The ceramic cask contains the ashes of the first cleric of Kelmarane’s church of Sarenrae. It also contains an *elemental gem* (fire) buried within the ashes. There is no way to open the cask without shattering it, an act that spills age-old dust all over the room.

The corpses here occasionally were buried with minor valuables. Looting the entire chamber takes 3 hours, but



## Ruined Church Crypt



One square = 5 feet



# howl of the carrion king

any good character automatically recognizes this as an evil act of desecration in a holy place dedicated to a goddess of redemption and healing. If any characters who received Sarenrae's Wisdom blessing in area **B13** participate in looting the corpses here, they immediately lose the inherent bonus and take an immediate -1 inherent penalty to Wisdom (no save). Looters can harvest 629 gp worth of funerary trinkets.

On the other hand, if the remains of the huecuva Halruun are brought down here and placed in one of the niches, a relieved, thankful sigh echoes through the chamber. All characters in the room gain the benefits of an aid spell for 1 hour (CL 10th). In addition, the *elemental gem* in the cask suddenly appears in one of the pockets of the character most responsible for seeing that Halruun's remains were so honored.

## D3. Reliquary

This plain stone-worked chamber once stored the church's valuable religious artifacts. It's been ransacked somewhat, but some lesser treasure still litters the floor.

**Treasure:** These items include a *phylactery of faithfulness*, a *periapt of wisdom +2*, a *necklace of fireballs (type III)*, and a *lesser strand of prayer beads*.

Looting the treasures here has the same repercussions as doing so to the treasures in area **D2**, although at the end of the adventure, these treasures may become rewards for PCs who manage to resist the urge to take them.

## D4. Old Crypt Antechamber

The chute leading from area **D1** emerges into this rough-hewn chamber. To the north, an old rusty portcullis blocks the route further; the mechanism to raise and lower it has long since broken, so the portcullis must be wrenched open or lifted with a DC 20 Strength check, or battered down by force (hardness 8, hp 40). *Knock* or similar magic also causes the portal to grind open.

## D5. Old Crypt (EL 6)

Niches along this rough-hewn hallway contain burials of ancient church dignitaries.

The western crypt passage ends in an elaborate stone door bearing a life-sized symbol of Sarenrae, except that where the symbol's head should be is nothing but a blackened scorch mark. The door stands very slightly ajar.

**Creatures:** The corruption brought to this place by Xulthos has animated three interred priests into undead monstrosities known as coffer corpses. With their brittle skin and ragged clothing, the creatures look a bit like

zombies, but they possess none of the dull-witted sloth of their less powerful cousins. When the PCs reach the corner where the crypt passage turns to the west, the coffer corpses animate and attack from the niches marked with a C on the map.

### COFFER CORPSES (3)

CR 3

*Tome of Horrors Revised 69*

CE Medium undead

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +4, Spot +3

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18

(+5 armor, +1 Dex, +3 natural)

**hp** 16 (2d12+3)

**Fort** +0, **Ref** +1, **Will** +4

**Defensive Abilities** deceiving death, +2 turn resistance; **DR** 5/magic and bludgeoning; **Immune** undead traits

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 15 ft.

**Melee** slam +4 melee (1d4+4)

**Special Attacks** death grip 1d4+4, fear, improved grab

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The coffer corpses are fast and not completely mindless, but neither are they creative in their tactics. Their voices grate like stone as they attack the nearest targets, whispering in Osiriani, "Stay with us... stay forever with Xulthos..."

**Morale** The coffer corpses fight until destroyed.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 6, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +1; **Grp** +4 (+8 when using death grip)

**Feats** Toughness

**Skills** Intimidate +5, Hide +2, Listen +4, Spot +3

**Languages** Osiriani

**Gear** chainmail

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Death Grip (Ex)** A coffer corpse deals 1d4+4 points of damage per round with a successful grapple check. Because the coffer corpse grasps the victim's throat, a creature in its death grip cannot speak or cast spells with verbal components. A coffer corpse gains a +4 racial bonus on grapple checks once it establishes its death grip.

**Deceiving Death (Ex)** In any round in which a coffer corpse is struck for 6 or more points of damage (whether the damage bypasses the creature's damage reduction or not), the creature slumps to the ground, seemingly destroyed. If it has fastened its death grip on a victim, it releases its hold when it falls. A DC 20 Sense Motive check sees through the ruse (necromancers gain a +2 competence bonus on this check). On its next turn, the coffer corpse rises again as if reanimated, triggering its fear ability.

**Fear (Su)** A creature viewing a coffer corpse rise after it uses its deceiving death ability must make a DC 13 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.





The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Improved Grab (Ex)** To use this ability, a coffer corpse must hit an opponent of its size or smaller with its slam attack. It can then make a grapple check as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can use its death grip.

## D6. Funerary Chamber (EL 7)

This chamber is the den and prison of the daemon Xulthos, and as such, the creature has wrapped several illusions around the chamber to create a lair more to his liking rather than spend the decades trapped in a funerary chamber devoted to Sarenrae. When the PCs first enter the room, read them the following description.

This chamber stands in stark contrast to the craftsmanship of worked stone of the rest of the crypt—instead, here looms a vast cavern. The air is damp and cold, and moist, writhing roots hang down from the ceiling twenty feet above. Puddles of reeking fluid dot the floor, and at the far end a jagged upthrust lance of stone rises from the ground to form a steeply-sloped platform.

The illusion is in fact *hallucinatory terrain*—any character who directly interacts with the illusion more than just standing within it receives a DC 17 Will save to see through the trickery to the room's actual contents, described below.

This is a large worked chamber perhaps forty feet square. Two rows of three marble columns flank the main walkway leading from east to west. A series of low, curved stairs at the opposite side of the room leads to a large concave recess in the western wall, with an elaborate throne perched at the top of the stairs.

**Creature:** Standing upon the upthrust stone shelf (or seated on the throne if any PC sees through the illusion) is a towering muscular man wielding an immense axe—to all appearances, Kardswann. Of course, in truth this is the daemon Xulthos wearing an illusory disguise of his dominated quarry. As the PCs enter the room, “Kardswann” chuckles with a dry, inhuman laughter and speaks with a croaking rasp that sounds nothing like the genie’s actual voice.



# howl of the carrion king

"Many years have I languished in this foul place, trapped here by the wards placed by your Pactmasters. Endless decades have I endured the whispering spirits of the wholesome dead, cursing my captors, hating the world I could no longer corrupt. When the Templar came eight weeks past he walked through the walls. The red-men's seal remained intact. But you, you have broken the seal, and my long captivity is finally at an end. But before I go, I will kill you one by one until the last of you willingly allows himself to be my slave." The genie rises from his throne. "Which one of you, I wonder, shall that be?"

Xulthos leaves little option but combat. After 20-some years, it has finally come to this, and he cannot resist an opening act of violence against his accidental liberators.

If the PCs left the true Kardswann bound in the battle market, he escapes from his bonds to make a climactic appearance when Xulthos is reduced to half of his hit points. No matter his wounds, the corrupted and now fully-dominated Templar of the Five Winds launches an all out attack to defend his puppet master and slay the enemies of the daemon. A DC 20 Sense Motive check is sufficient to detect anguished contortions on the genie's face, as if he is struggling not to follow Xulthos's commands, but is powerless to do so.

In his true form, Xulthos appears as an immense insect-like fiend, with huge claws, a multi-eyed face with slavering mandibles, and a long serpentine tail tipped with chitinous blades. His wings are nearly transparent, and he moves with an almost hypnotic grace, his wings droning and light reflecting off his carapace in a dazzling display. Xulthos is a more powerful variant of the standard glomeray daemon—larger and with more potent spell-like abilities than normal. He is a unique servitor of the archdaemon Szuriel, the Angel of Desolation and Horseman of War. If he survives this encounter with the PCs, Xulthos fully intends to start up his warmongering where he left off—it's up to the PCs to prevent this from occurring.

## XULTHOS

CR 7

Male unique advanced glomeray (*Book of Fiends* 103)

NE Large outsider (daemon, evil, extraplanar)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +14, Spot +14

**Aura** drone (50-ft. radius)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 15, flat-footed 16

(+2 deflection, +3 Dex, +4 natural)

**hp** 95 (10d8+50)

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +10, **Will** +8

**Defensive Abilities** dazzling colors; **Immune** acid, poison; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10

### OFFENSE

**Spd** 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)

**Melee** bite +15 (2d6+6/19–20) and

2 claws +13 (1d6+3) and

tail +13 (2d6+3)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th)

At will—*dancing lights*, *hypnotism* (DC 15)

3/day—*charm person* (DC 14), *color spray* (DC 14), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 15), *misdirection*

1/day—*hallucinatory terrain* (DC 17), *veil* (self only, DC 19)

1/week—*charm monster* (DC 17)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Xulthos opens combat with *hypnotic pattern* spells, hoping to distract some of the PCs. He continues to use this tactic until the PCs manage to engage him in melee, at which point he sheds his illusory disguise and attacks. His spell-like abilities are subtle, and generally not that well-suited toward combat—Xulthos knows that characters who were able to defeat Kardswann are unlikely to be affected by *hypnotism* or *color spray*, and he's already used his *charm monster* for the week to renew his control over Kardswann (although if the PCs take more than a few days to reach this encounter after they defeat Kardswann, feel free to give Xulthos back his once-a-week *charm monster*). Instead, he relies on his drone, dazzling colors, and formidable melee attacks to win the battle.

**Morale** When reduced to 20 hit points, Xulthos attempts to flee into area D5 and thence to the shaft leading to the outside world. Unless the PCs can prevent this flight, the daemon survives and even thrives in the deserts and cities of Katapesh. All along he plots his revenge on the PCs, which you should play out at a surprising and opportune time later in the campaign. Because Xulthos is capable of dominating and impersonating anyone, he could be any NPC at any time.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 21, **Dex** 16, **Con** 20, **Int** 18, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +10; **Grp** +19

**Feats** Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Multiattack

**Skills** Appraise +17, Bluff +16, Concentration +18, Diplomacy +18, Escape Artist +16, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (religion) +17, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Listen +14, Spot +14

**Languages** Abyssal, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

**Gear** *amulet of mighty fists* +1, *ring of protection* +2

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Dazzling Colors (Ex)** A glomeray's exoskeleton reflects light in a dazzling display, making it hard to watch for long. Opponents suffer a 10% miss chance to all attacks made against it and take a –1 penalty on attack rolls while looking at the daemon.

**Drone (Su)** The beating of a glomeray's wings creates an irritating distraction. All foes within 50 feet of a glomeray must make a DC 18 Will save or be confused for as long as they remain in the area of effect. Those who save take a –1 penalty on all attack rolls, skill checks, and saving throws while in the area. Plugging



one's ears allows a target to attempt an additional saving throw against the effect at a +2 circumstance bonus. This is a mind-affecting sonic effect. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the Kulldis tribe defeated, the battle market liberated, and the daemon Xulthos destroyed or fled into the desert, Kelmarane is once again ready for habitation. Almah grants the PCs their agreed upon award, and names each of them "Knight Protector of Kelmarane," welcoming them to remain in the town as its rightful heroes.

The PCs may need to negotiate with Almah regarding the fate of certain disreputable survivors such as the gnoll bartender Kurellak, the smugglers, and especially Undrella, who takes a disturbing liking to the PCs and demands that she be allowed to continue her alchemical work in the village tannery. The merchant princess is willing to trust the PCs' judgment in these matters, granting them the Wharfmaster's Manor in part so they can keep an eye on Undrella's workshop.

Surviving members of the Lions of Senara decide to remain in Kelmarane and may make excellent future companions or even cohorts for characters who elect to take the Leadership feat. Felliped in particular is happy to indoctrinate any members of the party in the ways of the Pathfinder Society, should you decide you'd like to involve that group in your campaign.

If the PCs managed to leave Kardswann hovering between life or death before they descended into the ruined church crypt or if they slew Xulthos before killing Kardswann in the final battle, the genie regains his senses and is horrified by what he has been forced to do. He stoically asks forgiveness for his actions, and says that he must take leave of Kelmarane to notify his mistress, the djinni princess Nefeshti, of events here. He must also tell her about the moldspeaker and the fate of their fallen comrade Vardishal. Ramifications of Kardswann's survival and redemption are explored in later adventures in this Adventure Path.

Over the following weeks and months, scores of merchants and settlers arrive and the work of rebuilding the village begins in earnest. Some of these merchants bring magical gear with them that the PCs may be interested in buying with the loot gained in their recent exploits. By the end of a year, Kelmarane is a thriving village with a population of nearly 500 souls (and a 200 gp limit for purchasing goods).

Yet despite the turn of events for the better, rare are the nights that pass for Kelmarane's new keepers that are not punctuated by distant howls. The Carrion King still lives, and soon, his attention shall fall upon Kelmarane!

## A Year in Kelmarane

"Howl of the Carrion King" ends with the PCs as heroes of the community they helped to save from oblivion. Their best reward comes in the form of a full year of downtime, during which each PC may choose to concentrate his efforts on one focus in or around Kelmarane or on other adventures, which will grant him a benefit in the future. Some likely choices are:

**Administration:** The PC befriends Garavel and gains Almah's absolute trust. This gains the PC the personal notice of the Pactmasters of Katapesh, a boon that will come into play in a later adventure.

**Business:** The PC opens a business in Kelmarane. This is easiest if the business is located in the battle market, which soon draws traffic from the northern trade routes, but the PC can choose to set it up wherever he wishes. Over the year, a battle market business returns 3,000 gp worth of profit. A business situated elsewhere in Kelmarane brings in 1,500 gp.

**Church of Sarenrae:** The PC receives the rank of Abbot-Protector of Kelmarane's Sarenrae community, and is treated as an authority second only to the high priest, who soon arrives from the coast (and who plays an important role in the next adventure). This NPC begins play with a friendly attitude toward the character. Furthermore, the PC is given one of the relics from area D3 as a reward for his devotion.

**Crime:** The PC befriends the surviving smugglers, Undrella, or crooked merchants who arrive with the first wave of settlers, gaining information on the criminal network of Katapesh that will come in handy in a future adventure. In addition, this character treats Kelmarane's gp limit as 400 gp rather than 200 gp.

**Explore Personal Mystery:** The PC spends the off-year focusing on a personal mystery. Answer any one question the player has about the character's past or fate, or tailor a special campaign segment featuring this mystery. You don't need to handle this at the table in front of the other players. Perhaps an email or special one-on-one session is called for. In the latter case, keep it short and tightly focused on the mystery at hand, and avoid setting up a parallel campaign in which one player gets significantly more attention than the others.

**Moldspeaker:** The PC who has become infused with the moldspeaker is free to choose any focus for the yearlong sabbatical, but if he or she chooses to explore her moldspeaker powers, the character learns how to manifest *Tempest* out of mold-dust, even though the weapon is not otherwise present. This effect lasts for 3 hours per day, and does not work if the actual weapon is within 30 feet. If the weapon is later brought within 30 feet, the mold replica disintegrates and cannot be summoned until the following day.



# Howl of the Carrion King



**Patrol Kelmarane Hinterlands:** Although the Kuldis tribe has been soundly defeated, they were but one of the numerous gnoll tribes in the Pale Mountain region. As the months pass after the reclamation of Kelmarane, it becomes obvious that many of the other tribes in the region aren't too happy with having humans as new neighbors. News and rumors of periodic attacks on caravans by gnolls (and even some bold minor attacks on Kelmarane itself) can serve to keep things on their edge over the year. A PC who decides to spend his time patrolling Kelmarane and the environs (perhaps with Dashki as a guide) gets into regular skirmishes with small groups of gnolls. There's no need to play out these combats—you can assume that the PC in question survives each with little more than a few bumps and cuts. The PC is rewarded for his efforts by Almah, in any event, with regular monthly payments of 250 gp.

**Personal Romance:** The PC chooses an NPC on which to focus his or her romantic attention. This is a difficult affair if the selected PC is Almah. Garavel is too devoted to his mistress, and seems annoyed by the attention. The smugglers or Lions of Senara make ideal candidates, as they are tabulas rasa on which to build a desirable character. Don't forget that opposites attract, so a good/

evil relationship is not out of the question. As more settlers move into Kelmarane, the PC's options for romance increase significantly. The character's romantic interest can be treated as a cohort for the PC, although should remain under GM control.

**Rebuild:** The PC spends a year rebuilding the ruined structures of Kelmarane. In the effort, he comes across a forgotten magic item of his choice, worth up to 2,500 gp.

**Research:** Characters who spend the year investigating the frescoes in the monastery and ruined church, learning the history of Kelmarane, and interviewing its inhabitants learn a great deal about the recent events. Feel free to fill the player in on any aspect of the backstory of "Howl of the Carrion King" he may have missed while playing the adventure. He gains a +2 circumstance bonus in the future whenever he makes a skill check to uncover additional bits of lore concerning the Legacy of Fire.

**Travel:** While traveling the lands away from Kelmarane, the PC comes is exposed to all manner of customs and sights. He can pick a single skill in which he already possesses at least one rank; he gains a +1 circumstance bonus to that skill check from now on.





## Gnolls of the Brazen Peaks

Raiders and warriors, thieves and murderers, gnolls prey upon the spoils of other races—their refuse, their castoffs, and their vulnerable. Gnolls are often likened to hyenas, but with intelligence and the ability to walk on two legs. This comparison is both succinct truth and deadly understatement. Like the beasts they resemble, gnolls survive off the scraps of those greater than themselves, opportunistically preying upon the weak while cowering before the powerful. Unlike base beasts, though, gnolls know the value of organization, the inevitable deadliness of prolonged attacks, and the might of their own tribes. In others, gnolls see only the potential for prey and exploitation, and those too canny to serve as today's meal might still serve as tomorrow's feast.

In the shadow of Pale Mountain, gnoll savagery takes on a new dimension. Here, secreted among the dusty foothills and shadowy crags, the beastmen gather in bands of dirty, brutal curs, seemingly with few greater aspirations beyond their next meal. These gnolls are filthy wretches who demonstrate the horrors of inbreeding,

seclusion, and murder, ravenous beasts that covetously guard the barren territories they claim as their own. Feared and loathed even by others of their kind, the gnolls of Pale Mountain embrace their brutality with the spread of a savage cult among their people: worship of the Rough Beast, Rovagug.

Throughout Golarion, gnolls typically worship Lamashtu, who is often credited with raising them up from mere beasts. In the Pale Mountain region, the Carrion King—a merciless warlord sworn to Rovagug's bloody religion—revels in the debauchery and savagery of his minions' fear and faith, exulting as they raise icons to the god of wrath and howl his name as they ride to slaughter. As the Carrion King's power grows, more and more tribes fall beneath his influence, sharing in the spoils of his savage rule and adopting the ways of his mad god. Now all of Pale Mountain quakes with bloodcurdling howls, but whether the gnolls of the Brazen Peaks will turn upon themselves or strike from their lairs, bringing new war upon unprepared Katapesh, none yet know.



*Dearest Caroline,*

*I have arrived at Pale Mountain, and it's as forlorn and beautiful as they say. Disrupting my cataloging of the scenery is the looming gnoll menace. Locals have warned me about the four main tribes that roam the area and present a very real threat to my person. I need to look out for the savage Three Jaws, the secretive Circle, the fearful Al'Chorhaiv, and the sharp-eyed Wormhollow, as well as scattered others near Kelmarane. Although they're all separate tribes, they are somehow united under something called the "Carrion King." I'm not sure what that refers to, but I'm sure I'll find out as I venture closer to the peak. If you don't hear from me in a month, assume the worst. As always, love, Montesque.*

*—Last Correspondence of Montesque Hal, Naturalist*



## TRIBES OF THE CARRION KING

From his throne upon Pale Mountain's slopes, the Carrion King commands hundreds of gnolls, his emissaries and slaves having compelled or subjugated numerous tribes of slaving warriors into his service. Among the ramshackle hordes, bands of raiders and slavers, and lone murderers, four noteworthy tribes have come to serve the cruel warlord. Each known and feared in its own right, these four tribes existed before the Carrion King's rise to power, having shared and warred over Pale Mountain for decades. Now they find themselves allies but, even under the claws of their brutal master, the resulting peace is a weak and little-enforced thing.

Of the tribes serving the Carrion King, each possesses a similar structure. A strong leader commands the activity of the whole pack, organizing hunts, placating the tribe's deities, and leading them in preparations for raids and inevitable intertribal skirmishes. Even in this time of supposed truce between rival tribes, bloody conflicts are not uncommon. As individual tribes prove too small to sustain prolonged battles there might be weeks without any direct conflict, but a season cannot go by upon Pale Mountain without groups of gnolls dying in the jaws of enemy tribes. The Carrion King punishes conflicting tribes—often with murder and impossible commands—but such castigations are swiftly forgotten as rivalries and slights stir the embers anew.

Presented here are the four greatest tribes in the service of the Carrion King. While each vies for power over one another—and possibly over the Carrion King himself—each also has its own objectives and desires to gain from allegiance to their vicious warlord.

### *Al'Chorhaiv*

The fate of the Al'Chorhaiv tribe changed during a nighttime thunderstorm. It began when Vaskjaw, the tribe's white-crowned leader, stumbled from his harem pavilion, his belly distended and shuddering like a frog's bladder.

A labored and gurgling moan grated from his clenched teeth as his limbs flailed like a dropped marionette. A moment later the old chief collapsed and the rest of the tribe hurried to surround him, his writhing form illuminated by bursts of harsh light in the driving rains. His eyes widened underneath the lightning flashes and his lips curled back in pain so terrible none could forget the sound of his cracking, clenched fangs. No one dared touch their leader out of abject fear and revulsion. Then, with a widening of eyes and a simple, sick pop, all life fled the old hunter. All was silent for a moment, and even the thunder seemed to pause as gnoll looked to gnoll, knowing that bloodshed always marks the passing of a leader. It was Vaskjaw's corpse that broke the silence, his broken jaws falling open, spilling the fragments of yellow teeth into the mud. Slowly, from pale lips, crooked legs picked their way out of the dead chief's mouth and the opalescent form of a *vhagshea*—a deadly div blood scorpion—crawled forth into the rain. Shocked, few noticed the naked form of Ahrikvask the Foot Washer, third wife of Vaskjaw, stride from the harem pavilion. At her passing, the mud swirled with blood, fat drops slipping from her long knife and draining from the severed heads of Dhorhaalva and Jhokgral, Vaskjaw's first and second wives. Standing over the soaked body of the dead old gnoll, Ahrikvask threw her dagger down, impaling the scorpion there. Lifting the still squirming arachnid upon her knife, the gnoll concubine devoured the deadly insect in a swift series of small bites. Looking to the tribe's eldest members, most skilled hunters, and deadliest warriors, the bloody gnoll threw down the heads of her mistresses and claimed her kill: "By my venom the feeble have fallen," she said. "Follow me now, or suffer far worse a death." With her words, young scorpions crawled from the usurper and the assembled gnolls drew back in fear. None of the Al'Chorhaiv defied their new chieftain.

**Symbol:** Lengths of intestine hanging from a hyena skull.

**Size of Tribe:** 46 gnolls and countless scorpions.



**Leader:** **Ahrikvask** (NE female gnoll druid 5, rogue 3), a deceptive murderess and master of scorpions who proves immune to most forms of venom.

**Notable Members:** **Isvhag**, a large monstrous scorpion, travels alongside the chieftain, serving as her companion and occasional enforcer; **Vamaag** (CE female gnoll adept 9), former sacred mother in the service of Lamashtu, silent opponent of the chieftain.

**Territory:** A nomadic people, the Al'Chorhaiv recognize no territory. They roam anywhere they can find meat, be it giant insect, highlands animal, or that of another humanoid race. Currently they range through the

mountain passes of the Brazen Peaks near Pale Mountain, though they occasionally descend when food grows scarce or to raid.

**Lair:** The Al'Chorhaiv live in the open and are fearless, thus they have no centralized lair or specific defenses. They're light sleepers and their watches have served them well enough over the years. Since Ahrikvask's ascent to chieftain, deadly *vhagshea* scorpions infest the tribe's stopping points and frequently aid in warding off intruders.

**Society:** The Al'Chorhaiv live to serve their mistress Ahrikvask. While life under the tribe's former chieftains was brutal, fraught with lean times and arbitrary violence, Ahrikvask and her scorpions have ushered in a time of both fear and bounty. Although the infestation of poisonous arachnids unnerves the entire tribe, all can agree that times haven't been better. Food proves more readily available—even if it is just the meat of giant insects and poisoned beasts—and the other gnoll tribes of the region fear the supposed scorpion-lovers, telling tales of their venomous mistress and the tribe's immunity to even the most deadly poisons. In addition, Ahrikvask extols faith in a kind of morbid naturalism and the will of savage natural forces. While such faith angers many more traditional members of the tribe who cling to Lamashtu's perverse tenets, those who have spoken out in the defense of the old ways have been found dead, riddled with stings and leaking deadly venoms.

**Service to the Carrion King:** The Al'Chorhaiv know much of the land around Pale Mountain, and it's said that Ahrikvask's insects bring her news from even farther afield. The Carrion King's minions regularly come among the Al'Chorhaiv seeking news of the surrounding lands, exotic poisons, and use of their skills as deadly archers and assassins.

**Adventure Hook:** Vamaag, the former spiritual leader of the Al'Chorhaiv, plots to claim leadership of her tribe. She seeks the most deadly poison in Katapesh or beyond, planning to challenge the tribe's leader to imbibe it with her. While Vamaag can rely on her magic to cure herself of the poison, Ahrikvask's strange beliefs should result in the chieftain's painful death. As the gnoll leader proves strangely immune to most forms of poison, though, Vamaag travels far searching for agents capable of fetching her a deadly—preferably extraplanar—toxin. She willingly pays in gemstone fetishes for venoms that prove their lethality.

## The Circle

Secreted highest upon Pale Mountain lairs the Circle tribe of gnolls, engaged in a sacred duty given to them by the Carrion King himself. Their task is simple: construct the greatest weapon Pale Mountain has ever known for the greater glory of Rovagug. At least, this is what most people believe—no one aside from the Carrion King and



*The Witch*



his minions knows for certain what the reclusive gnolls are doing up there, and the gnolls themselves do nothing to illuminate their secret plans.

In truth, the gnolls possess little actual engineering, smithing, or arcane talent with which to create anything, much less a weapon of such destructiveness as to please the god of devastation. Instead, they stumbled upon ancient ruins near the mountain top which they now excavate—if “excavate” can be applied to their wanton destruction of an entire slope as they search for an amulet that their leader, the mysterious figure known only as the Witch, claims rests there. The Circle’s scaffolding-strewn dig site led to rumors that the gnolls were constructing something, which the tribe has encouraged.

**Symbol:** Anything representing a simple circle. The amulet the tribe searches for supposedly looks like a gold disc, which they recreate in their symbol.

**Size of Tribe:** 38 gnolls, 9 flinds, numerous trained wild dogs, and nearly two dozen slaves of varying races.

**Leader:** The Witch (LE female human cleric of Rovagug 6), an emissary of the Carrion King and supposed seer of the god of disaster.

**Notable Members:** **Badilur** (CE male flind fighter 4), the Witch’s slavemaster and chief enforcer; **Lakkickkish** (CE male gnoll fighter 3), a cowardly warrior who dreams of finding the treasure his tribe seeks and using it to overthrow the Witch and the Carrion King himself; **Purkor** (CN male gnoll rogue 3), a scheming gnoll who doesn’t realize he possesses the amulet for which his tribe searches.

**Territory:** The Circle makes its semi-permanent home high on the slopes of Pale Mountain. Most of the steep slopes the tribe occupies host shallow mines and the ruins of collapsed dig sites.

**Lair:** Aside from those who must descend the mountain to hunt, the gnolls rarely leave their crude tent village or the deep caves where the Witch performs strange ceremonies in worship of Rovagug. Nearby, a jagged stone palisade surrounds the tribe’s largest dig site, which serves both as workplace and prison for numerous slaves. Patrols of gnolls and their constantly hungry dogs make the rounds of the dig site, eager to catch any prisoner who even looks like he harbors the notion of escaping.

**Society:** The Circle passes each day digging deeper into the mountainside in search of its prize. All members are somehow involved in the task, whether directly digging, hauling the debris, or supporting the pack by hunting for food. Their awkward, inexperienced mining has led to numerous casualties over the course of the past 8 months, including a landslide that killed a dozen tribe members and almost half of the group’s prisoners. Although devoted to finding the deadly arcane amulet she swears lies within the area, the Witch grows more despondent and meditative every day, having expected to discover the relic long ago. That her

## Lesser Tribes of Pale Mountain

Along with the larger tribes tenuously united under the bloody banner of the Carrion King, dozen of smaller tribes, warbands, and groups of raiders obey the gnoll warlord’s call. Listed here are but a handful of diverse groups of hunters, murderers, and thieves moved by the Carrion King’s claw.

**Al’Vohr’s Hunters:** This band of six accomplished gnoll hunters follow the flind Al’Vohr, a living legend in the Pale Mountain region who supposedly single-handedly slew a roc in its sleep and fed upon its eggs—some claim he was a normal gnoll before, and that the experience made him grow into a flind. Al’Vohr and his followers are skilled trackers who enjoy ambushing their prey at night.

**The Ghulveis:** The remnants of a gnoll tribe of the same name, the Ghulveis were afflicted with a terrible, flesh-wasting disease said to be punishment from Lamashtu for their weak fertility. Now only five gauze-wrapped flinds and a pack of mangy hyenas—who lick their masters’ wounds—remain. The Carrion King employs the leper-like gnolls as threats, sending them among those who displease him.

**The Sordaiv:** This isolated, inbred tribe of human nomads has long been estranged from the other wanderers of central Katapesh, believing some great wrong was committed against them in the distant past. Numbering no more than 20 ash-robed raiders, these dull-witted but skilled desert trackers now lend their services to the Carrion King.

**Wyrmslaves:** These 18 gnolls were once of the Al’Drogat tribe, but their people were wiped out by the fat behir Lazzairhage. While the behir claims the gnolls as slaves, several of his servants are considerably more cunning than he is. Thus, the gnolls have convinced him to join in the plots of the Carrion King.

god has not sent her any new visions in months and kept the nature of the amulet hidden from her has started to undermine her sanity.

**Service to the Carrion King:** When the Witch appeared before the Carrion King, telling him of their shared faith and her visions of a powerful weapon, the gnoll warlord eagerly granted the strange human the resources she sought to find the unholy relic. Thus the Witch took command of a legion she came to call the Circle. Months have passed since then, and the human’s search has yielded little fruit. The Witch knows the Carrion King’s patience might expire at any moment and fears his warriors coming to claim her head. Thus, every day her demands on her tribe and its slaves become more desperate and hopes to actually discover the amulet grow less unlikely.

**Adventure Hook:** Months ago, the gnoll Purkor found a hunk of green rock with a sun-like semicircle extending from it. Not knowing what it was but suspecting its value, he



hid it away, eager for a chance to trade it to another tribe or flee to Katapesh and sell it there. What Purkor doesn't know is that within the rock rests the amulet for which his tribe's leader searches and a power beyond his understanding. When Purkor finally does flee the Circle, the Witch's agents give chase, following their mistress's all-too-true delusion that he knows something of the amulet. When Purkor runs into the PCs, he begs for their aid against his former kin, and might even trade them his treasure in exchange for protection.

## Three Jaws

The barely remembered lore of the Three Jaws tribe speaks of a time when the gnolls were led by three warriors, brothers of peerless skill and savagery among all the tribes. Supposedly the Three Jaws conquered all the gnolls of Pale Mountain, drove the other races from the surrounding Uwaga Highlands, and took hundreds of slaves. How long ago this time of gnoll glory was or how it ended none—not even the Three Jaws—can say. Today, the members of the Three Jaws view themselves as the elite of the local gnoll tribes.

While their skill as warriors and berserkers is impressive, little in the lands or wealth they hold distinguishes them from the

other gnolls of Pale Mountain. Only the appearance of Three Jaws warriors sets them apart, the tribe's members having a long tradition of adorning themselves with trophies and precious ornaments collected from their fallen foes through piercings, skin pockets, and similar painful disfigurement. Their current leader, Hakkur, wears the crown of his father through his shoulder and four bejeweled rings in his face—items many whisper grant him all manner of magic protections.

**Symbol:** This pack doesn't bear a standard so much as living “banners” of their tribe. They typically adorn themselves with objects from defeated enemies. Ears are the most heavily pierced, usually with fangs, claws, and bits of weapons seized from fresh kills.

**Size of Tribe:** 25 gnolls, 11 flinds, 6 goblin slaves, 15 guard hyenas.

**Leader:** **Hakkur** (CE male flind barbarian 5), brutal hulking chieftain and slayer of death worms.

**Notable Members:** **Chinew** (CE male gnoll barbarian 2), hunt leader and second-in-command; **Lakkur** (CE female flind barbarian 1, cleric of Rovagug 3), Hakkur's sister.

**Lair:** A small collection of huts built by the Three Jaws spans the banks of a cascading feeder stream that runs from the upper reaches of Pale Mountain. Patrols of warriors guard the encampment, while groups of hunters prowl the nearby slopes—the Three Jaws make little distinction between intruders and prey. Within the camp, chief Hakkur makes his home in a grim tent crafted from sewn-together animal pelts and the skins of intruders. To the chieftain's pride, the skins of his father and younger brother provide the door flaps to his home. Outside, Hakkur keeps the cramped hut of his six remaining goblin slaves. He once had 10, but in the 4 months since the goblins' capture several have died from the poor conditions, the tantrums of gnoll warriors, and battles they engage in for the chieftain's entertainment.

**Society:** Three Jaws life revolves around hunting trophies, with the term “hunting” referring to ambushing and killing any humanoid they encounter—but other gnolls and, in particular, members of the Circle tribe are prized above all. Hakkur organizes daily hunting parties, usually sent forth under the command of the tribe's second, Chinew. When the Three Jaws discover and murder a beast or foe, they quickly strip the body of its distinctive adornments, fangs or teeth, and weapons. Then, back home, warriors often pierce their bodies with their new trophies.

**Treasures:** Each warrior of the Three Jaws has precious metals and gems affixed to his body worth a total of about 5 gp. The warriors carry such adornments not as currency but as trophies of their past kills and for the flashy sparkle. Gold teeth or earrings still bearing a scrap of tattered





# gnolls of the brazen peaks

skin make far more impressive trophies than otherwise indistinguishable fangs or fingers.

**Service to the Carrion King:** Known as deadly warriors, the Three Jaws serve at the forefront of the Carrion King's legions. Their self-inflicted deformities strike fear in the hearts of their enemies and other tribes of gnolls. When a tribe under the Carrion King's command displeases him, it's often a member of the Three Jaws he sends to exact punishment.

**Adventure Hook:** The Three Jaws tribe has a reputation for savagery and making attacks on non-gnoll communities throughout the Pale Mountain region. In recent months, though—owing to the support offered by the Carrion King—the merciless raiders have become increasingly deadly. While striking back against the gnolls might prove a daunting task, many mercenaries have come to the region to do battle, rumors of the copper and precious jewels the gnolls weave into their flesh inspiring the greed of many sellswords. Unfortunately, the Three Jaws prove dangerously capable of defending their trophies.

## Wormhollow

Kikkling the Slight killed the pack leader of the Wormhollow tribe—a monstrous flind called Ghaldahag—in his sleep 3 years ago. He quickly claimed that he did so with Lamashtu's blessing, though since his tribe has joined the ranks of the Carrion King, he claims the assassination was actually Rovagug's will. In truth, the rest of the pack cared not one way or the other about what god slight and seemingly sickly Kikkling followed, for his rule has proven far less severe and significantly more beneficial than their past leader's. A toady and false zealot, Kikkling the Slight opportunistically panders to the Carrion King, sending regular, needless tributes to the warlord while seeking out word of other tribes who denounce the worship of the god of wrath. From their cavernous lair—one of the oldest gnoll holdings near Pale Mountain—the Wormhollow gnolls follow Kikkling's whims, watching for signs of dissension and faithlessness in their fellows.

**Symbol:** Pyramidal pile of bone-white rocks.

**Size of Tribe:** 45 gnolls, 4 flinds, 6 gnoll slaves.

**Leader:** **Kikkling the Slight** (NE male gnoll rogue 7), deceitful sycophant of the Carrion King.

**Notable Members:** **Korkor** (NE male gnoll rogue 3), inquisitor; **Sinview** (CE female gnoll ranger 3), stalker and spy; **Glos** (NE male gnoll cleric of Rovagug 4), eldest faithful of the god of wrath.

**Territory:** The Wormhollow tribe controls a shallow cave system that winds through the base of Pale Mountain. None outside of this tribe know how deep the caves go, and other tribes believe the caverns bore all the way into the land of the dead. The truth is far less dramatic, but the Wormhollow gnolls enjoy the fear and awe their eerie

home lends them. Members of the Wormhollow tribe rarely venture outside the caves except to hunt and spy upon their supposed allies.

**Lair:** The entrance to the Wormhollow tribe's domain is the largest cave entrance on Pale Mountain. An opening in the cliffs on the mountain's lower western slopes bears the crudely sculpted visage of a snarling hyena or gnoll. Within lies a cramped and heavily trapped cavern leading to a constantly manned guard post and the main hall of the Wormhollow tribe. Within this trapped corridor, the gnolls keep two giant solifugid "guard dogs," huge spider-like desert insects with a hunger for hairless flesh. In the caverns beyond lie numerous chambers, including the cave of Kikkling (high on the wall of the main room) and a large shrine once dedicated to Lamashtu and reconsecrated to Rovagug. Beyond lie caves that wind to hidden escape routes, though one tunnel hides a crevice known only to Kikkling that leads all the way to the Darklands.

**Society:** The Wormhollow tribe used to be the most secretive of all tribes around Pale Mountain. With the coming of the Carrion King, though, their white-dyed fur and squinty eyes have become synonymous with deception and fanaticism—if not for Rovagug than for the Carrion King himself. Scouts of the Wormhollow tribe regularly make their ways among the disorganized lesser tribes and warbands of their warlord's horde, seeking to garner their tribe leader's and the Carrion King's favor by rooting out the lazy and unfaithful, or simply the weak. Not powerful warriors or great hunters, the Wormhollow gnolls seek to elevate themselves above the other tribes through information, falsehood, and perceived loyalty.

**Service to the Carrion King:** The Carrion King realizes that Kikkling panders to him, but the praise and tribute pleases him. He also enjoys the fear the Wormhollow tribe provokes in the other tribes, increasing fear of the warlord but deflecting anger and resentment toward Kikkling's people. The Wormhollow gnolls also possess useful skills as spies and liars, services at which few other gnoll tribes excel and which the Carrion King readily takes advantage of in his deals with distant tribes and keeping tabs on the hordes of the Red Sultana—another gnoll warlord—to the south.

**Adventure Hook:** The other gnolls have grown tired of the Wormhollow tribe's endless scrutiny and accusations. Drovoag the Lamé was driven from his tribe when Kikkling's spies accused him of worshipping old demons. He encounters the PCs in their travels and begs for their help in infiltrating the Wormhollow caves, destroying their shrine to Rovagug, and leaving a message that the god is displeased with Kikkling. The gnoll ranger knows a back way into the tribe's caves, but the way is infested with the eggs of giant solifugids. In return for their aid, Drovoag offers to show the PCs the way to the hidden caves where the Wormhollow tribe stores its ancient treasures.





## The Refuge of Nethys

Approximately 1,200 years ago, the Priesthood of the All-Seeing Eye built a monastery amid the isolated badlands south of Osirion. Worshipers of Nethys, god of magic, they honored their conflicted deity there for centuries, until other holy places rose to prominence. Abandoning the isolated site, the monks sealed its lower level and the place was largely forgotten.

That changed a few months ago, though. Nomads passing through the northwestern Uwaga Highlands encountered a strange hermit living amid the limestone ruins known as the Refuge. Soon after the desert wanderers refused to sell the seemingly mad recluse supplies in exchange for Osirian gold, they were set upon by a fierce Katapeshi leopard, which killed several of their number and sent others running. After that, rumors began spreading of the lunatic and his savage beast.

The desert dwellers don't suspect the madman's origins, though. Once he was Haidar Yunan, Falcon Emir of Ipeq, a respected military advisor to city's leaders; however,

upon receiving the gift of an accursed punching dagger he contracted lycanthropy. Becoming a massive wereleopard, the nobleman slaughtered his own household, then fled to hide his guilt.

Drawn to the lost shrine of Nethys by either happenstance or destiny, Haidar discovered the hidden passage into its depths. Within, tormented by his conscience, his curse, and the secrets of an ancient priesthood, Haidar spiraled into madness, slowly consumed by the beast he had become. At this same time tales spread of a terrible new predator prowling the hills near Kalmerane and of an Osirian noble who has gone missing in the region. All signs point toward the stranger in the badlands, and suggest that his madness might hide a far greater menace.

"The Refuge of Nethys" is a site-based adventure for four 3rd-level characters. In addition to working as a stand-alone adventure, it can be used to supplement this month's Adventure Path installment, "Howl of the Carrion King," or other desert campaigns.



*Few understand the mysteries of the All-Seeing Eye, for their path is one of madness. Worshiping Nethys, a god driven to court destruction by his own dire knowledge, the priests skirt insanity as they pierce the veils of ignorance sheltering humanity from secrets the mind cannot fathom. Even the sect's patriarchs cannot truly understand the depths of their god's desires, nor do they wish to. They leave such questions to the Nethysian Seers, prophets driven to gibbering dementia by the visions burned into their minds. To unlock the inner depths of magic is to risk one's soul.*

—The Lore Scrolls of Muayid'im



## IN THE ADVENTURE PATH

GMs seeking to incorporate this Set Piece into the month's adventure, "Howl of the Carrion King," should have little trouble doing so. There are a number of natural places for its inclusion. The most obvious is probably in Part Three, when the PCs have time to explore the region around Kelmarane. Tales of strange happenings, ravenous predators, and a weird hermit who's taken up residence in the ruined shrine to the east of town all might serve to draw the PCs' curiosity. At the same time, characters who venture farther afield might discover the Refuge of the All-Seeing Eye hidden among any of Katapesh's deserts, mountains, or highlands if they take time to wander as per the suggestions in the Concluding the Adventure section. The Refuge of the All-Seeing Eye is the "Old Shrine" noted on the map of the Kelmarane region on page 29. If one of the PCs' allies—most likely Alma or Garavel—requests the party investigate the strange ruins near Kelmarane, they offer goods or gold worth approximately 900 gold pieces.

Those who seek to learn more about the shrine can turn up some or all of the following information by making a Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), or Gather Information check among the townsfolk. Each result notes which check might reveal the related information.

### Check

DC	Result
16	<i>Shrine of Magic:</i> Hundreds of years ago reclusive priests of Nethys, the god of magic, built a monastery in the nearby hills where they could study forgotten and dangerous magics. The shrine has been abandoned and ruined for centuries. (Any check.)
18	<i>Holy Smoke:</i> The Refuge of the All-Seeing Eye, as it was known, was built in a place where the breath of Nethys was said to seep from the ground, inspiring all who drew near with visions from the god of magic. (Any check.)
20	<i>The Newcomer:</i> Large predators, desert lions, giant spiders, and jackals have long dwelled near the shrine, though recently nomads have encountered a strange hermit wearing fine but tattered clothes dwelling within the ruins. (Gather Information or Knowledge [local].)

- 20 *Double-Bladed Magic:* Aside from properties of the strange smoke, the Refuge of the All-Seeing Eye was built in a remote location so the priests of Nethys could study the dualistic nature of magic. The upper floor of the monastery was devoted to magic's protective and creative aspects, while a hidden lower floor protected secrets of destructive magic. (Knowledge [history].)

## THE REFUGE OF THE ALL-SEEING EYE

The Refuge of the All-Seeing Eye hides among the badlands of the Brazen Peaks, about a mile east of Kalmerane. See this month's adventure and *Pathfinder* #20 for more details on traveling in the Pale Mountain region.

The party might also encounter the crazed hermit Haidar wandering the hills, hunting for food or just walking in his dejectedness (see area 10). Unless the players deliberately provoke him, let them encounter Haidar in a relatively lucid, helpful mood (which gradually darkens as they near the Refuge).

### 1. Approaching the Ruins

Harsh winds whisper through the badlands, their cruel touch withering all but the hardiest of desert life. Dust and bits of debris dance across the ground, carried by the scorching breezes. Ahead, the ruins of ancient walls sprawl along the eroded bed of a long-dried wash. Two towering statues rise from the scree, their features sand-blasted into anonymity.

Crumbling after centuries of neglect, the ancient monastery's walls loom 20 feet high. Elaborate friezes once covered the battered limestone, but scouring winds have destroyed many of the ancient carvings.

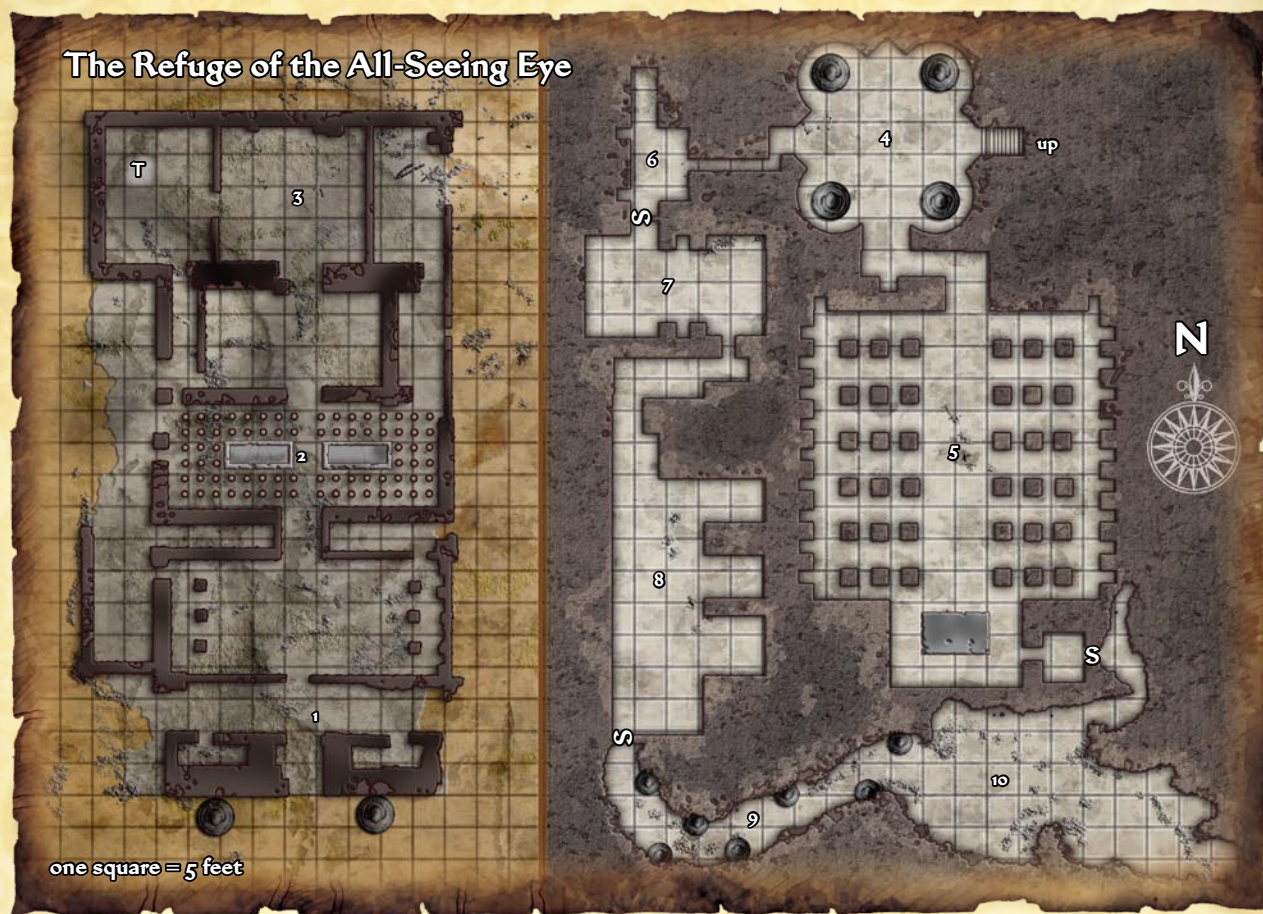
West of the temple, mostly buried ruins sprawl for hundreds of yards, mute testimonies to what once must have been impressive structures. Too tight for Medium creatures, even Small creatures must make a DC 12 Escape Artist check to navigate the shaft.

### 2. The Chambers of Offering (EL 4)

Beyond the outer ruins, a wide doorway leads into a forest of stone pillars: the roofless, colonnaded hall of a temple interior.



## The Refuge of the All-Seeing Eye



The breeze here carries a pungent stench of decay. Two rectangular depressions run across the pillared hall's rubble-strewn floor, perhaps once filled with water, but now choked with thorny desert weeds.

Reflecting pools once decorated this chamber. Conjured by ancient magic, tiny amounts of water still trickle into the pools, frequently attracting local beasts to lap at the rivulets of cool liquid. Those who cast *detect magic* notice a faint aura of conjuration magic emanating from worn fountainheads at the outside edges of both basins.

**Creatures:** Four giant tarantulas lurk high on the walls in the hypostyle hall. These monsters have already tangled with Haidar, who has eluded these four and killed a fifth.

### GIANT TARANTULAS (4)

Medium monstrous hunting spiders  
hp 11 each (MM 288)

CR 1

**Treasure:** A choker (from area 7) hid treasure beneath a flagstone here. A DC 21 Search check notices the cache. The treasure includes a golden pectoral (worth 1,350 gp), a copper mask symbol of Nethys (worth 30 gp), 82 tarnished

silver pieces, and an intricate bronze scarab that functions as a *wand of open/close* with 14 charges.

### 3. Sanctuary of Bright Magic

A sense of restrained power permeates the dusty air of this dimly lit sanctuary, the only roofed portion of the ruin. On the walls, carvings celebrate a radiant figure. At his mighty command, legions of elementals build entire cities, raging seas calm, and enemies are brought to accord. Four falcon-headed statues guard a chamber to the west. Between them, a broad flagstone cants up into the air, a trapdoor no longer secret.

This room once served as one of the monastery's primary sanctuaries to the god of magic, though most of the religious trappings are long gone or eroded. Those who make a DC 18 Knowledge (religion) check can still recognize the depictions of Nethys and perhaps even his herald, the cloud-like being known as the Arcanotheign. Entering the sanctuary triggers a lingering magic effect (see sidebar).

The western chamber once held a secret entrance to the lower level of the Refuge, but time destroyed its bronze mechanism, making it exceedingly difficult to open and close.



A successful DC 20 Strength check raises the slab, revealing a shaft descending 30 feet to a sloping rise at the easternmost part of area 4. Bas-relief sculptures of ancient gods cover the sides of the shaft, requiring only a DC 10 Climb check to descend. At the base of the shaft lies a shattered stone slab. Decorated with celestial eagles, this platform once levitated along the shaft.

## 4. Chamber of Choices (EL 3)

Ceramic lamps burning with cadaverous blue flame light this wide, high-ceilinged chamber. To the southwest, a baboon-headed figure crouches menacingly. A stern-looking pharaoh stares across at it from the northeast. Carved folds of well-sculpted cloth enshroud the northwest statue, and in the southeast niche, the pharaoh is again depicted, his face scarred and twisted with anger. Three arches lead from the chamber, the fragments of shattered doors dangling on ancient hinges.

This chamber once served as the main entry hall of the monastery's lower floor, a level dedicated to the unstable and often dangerous facets of Nethys's nature. The doors here fell apart long ago, but those who investigate the timbers by making a DC 18 Search check notice that many seem to have been ripped apart or trod upon by something with great claws. As for the statues, a successful DC 18 Knowledge (religion) check identifies them as lesser-known spirits of destructive magic. Examining them more thoroughly likely springs the ancient trap protecting each.

**Trap:** In character with the dangerous natures of the four arcane spirits depicted here, anyone who dishonors the statues by touching them sets off a blast of deadly magical fire.

### FIREBURST STATUES

CR 3

Type magic; Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26

#### EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset automatic

Effect spell effect (burning hands, CL 5th, 5d4 fire; DC 11 Reflex save half damage)

## 5. Sanctuary of Inner Darkness (EL 2)

A foul, metallic miasma assails the nostrils here. This vast chamber is clearly some sort of ominous worship hall. Frescos upon the walls and dozens of columns depict the terrifying power of magic, as radiant figures destroy entire worlds. Massive pillars support the chamber's lofty ceiling, each covered with complex glyphs and designs. Between each column, glass lamps hang from chains of green copper, radiating pallid, bluish lights that pulse and flicker in unison. At the room's southern end, the temple's alabaster altar gleams in the erratic blue light, its pedestal carved in the shape of winged, scale-covered bulls.

## Lingering Magic

Millennia ago, all manner of spells filled the temple of Nethys, amazing its visitors. These spells have faded, becoming mere shadows of the awe-inspiring arcana that once ruled here. Even supposedly "permanent" spells have grown unreliable over the past centuries. Use these following manifestations to recreate the effects of failing and half-functional magical effects within the Refuge of Nethys. GMs might roll on the following table once every half hour the PCs spend exploring, when encounters call for such a roll, or whenever they please.

### 1d10 Spell Manifestation

- 1 *Melody:* A muted *ghost sound* recreates a lonesome piping from a nearby chamber.
- 2 *Pool of Shadow:* An incomplete *darkness* spell causes a veil of shadows to waver in an archway.
- 3 *Glowing Globes:* Light green orbs of *dancing light* whirl around the characters, bursting like bubbles if touched.
- 4 *Scorching Arcs:* Bright discharges arc between dueling sorcerers in an ancient wall carving. Those touching the display suffer 1 point of electrical damage. A small heap of dead insects lies beneath.
- 5 *Guardian Blade:* Once part of a shattered idol or wall carving, an animated arm feebly bangs its cracked stone khopesh against the floor.
- 6 *Ancient Wine:* An *unseen servant* brings one of the characters a chipped ceramic cup, half-filled with silt.
- 7 *Sage Advice:* A magic mouth on the wall offers timeworn epigrams in Osiriani. While its advice is rather general, those who understand might assume deeper meaning in such suggestions as "Bathe thy feet within the sacred waters."
- 8 *Fixer-Upper:* Scattered stones reform into an archway, carved with a vulture motif. They sink down again if touched.
- 9 *Silken Curtains:* Curtains materialize over nearby doorways. Shimmering with ancient goldwork embroidery, these *minor images* evaporate after 1 minute.
- 10 *Bitter Incense:* Once used to repel evil spirits, the harsh scent of bitterbark caused by a *major image* incense wafts past.

Grim and disturbing, this temple represents the darker side of magic, the unchecked power that possesses the god-king Nethys in his destructive aspect. In this place, the priests of the All-Seeing Eye celebrated magic's destructive potential, even as they hardened themselves against power's allure. The lanterns here remain alight through the effects of numerous *continual flame* spells.



The carved designs upon the pillars are no mere decorations: arcane casters examining them can tell that they form a sort of ancient magical formula. Any arcane spellcaster who spends an hour in study here can make a DC 21 Spellcraft check to discover and decipher one of the following spells: *burning hands*, *color spray*, *continual flame*, *grease*, *shocking grasp*, or *sleep*. The character can then attempt to copy the spell as if it were another wizard's spellbook. Repeat searches can reveal additional spells.

A small chamber rests at the southern end of the hall. Once a vestry, the chamber now stands open and barren. Those who make a DC 20 Search check here discover that the rear wall pivots, opening into a crumbling cavernous hall leading to area 10.

**Trap:** Perfectly clean and polished, the altar bears the power to immediately summon a supernatural asp if anyone but a cleric of Nethys approaches within 10 feet. The serpent uncoils from among the scaly sculptures of the base, viciously attacking any transgressors.

**ALTAR OF FANGS** CR 2  
Type magic; Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** proximity (alarm);

**Reset** automatic (1 hour)

**Effect** spell effect (summon monster II, CL 3rd, summons one fiendish Medium viper)

## 6. The Guardians of Lore (EL 4)

The floor of this chamber is covered with centuries of untouched dust. Along the walls, cobwebs cover gruesome fresco work depicting unworthy souls dismembered by demonic sphinxes. In the west wall, a pair of niches hold painted statues of gynosphinxes, glaring with wooden menace from beneath layers of ancient filth. A third niche stands empty to the south, while a fourth filled with rubble lies to the north.

The southern niche is more than it appears. An *illusory wall* covers the back of the niche, hiding a plaster-covered door there. A DC 27 Search check detects

the door, but any search of the area notices flakes of plaster scattered on the floor with no corresponding cracks visible in the wall. The *illusory wall* requires a DC 17 Will save to disbelieve.

When the temple was in use, the northern corridor led to chambers used for magical research. Those wishing to expand the adventure might allow player characters to dig past the collapse and explore further.

**Creatures:** Placed here to protect the temple's secrets, the animate gynosphinx statues lurch forward to attack anyone entering the area unless someone present carries a holy symbol of Nethys.

### WOODEN SPHINXES (2) CR 2

Medium animated objects

hp 31 each (MM 13)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The statues only pursue intruders past their chamber if someone outside the room damages them. In that case, they attack until no active opponents remain visible. Their forms grant them no special attacks typical to animated objects.

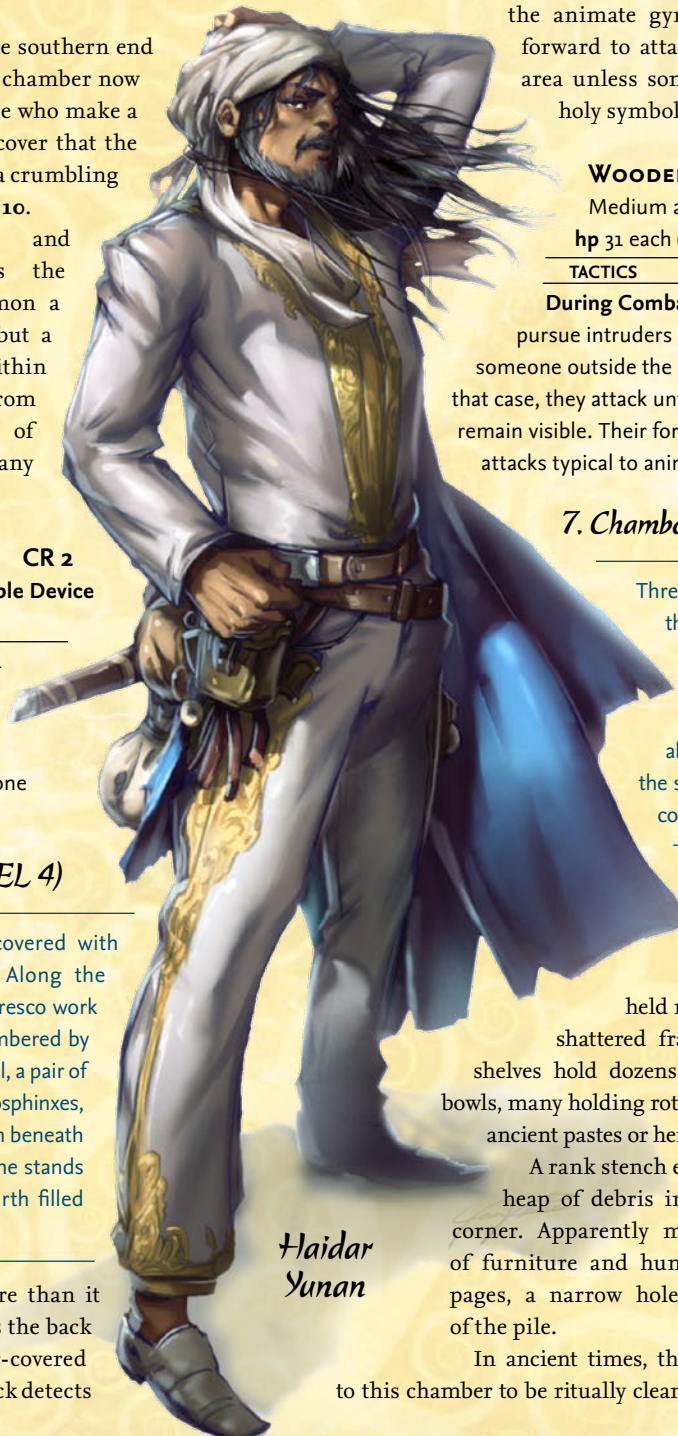
## 7. Chamber of Ablution (EL 5)

Three spacious tubs dominate this room, with large terracotta braziers placed between them. Narrow vents lead into the ceiling above each brazier, evidently the source of the sand and grit covering the floor.

Warped and decrepit racks stand along the walls, the amphorae they once held now lying on the floor in shattered fragments. Sagging stone shelves hold dozens of small clay jars and bowls, many holding rotted or dusty remnants of ancient pastes or herbs.

A rank stench emanates from a strange heap of debris in the room's northwest corner. Apparently made from broken bits of furniture and hundreds of torn papyrus pages, a narrow hole leads into the center of the pile.

In ancient times, the Nethysian Seers came to this chamber to be ritually cleansed and anointed before



Haidar Yunan



braving the House of the All-Seeing Eye (area 10). Temple servants bathed and shaved the priests while intoxicating vapors readied their minds to receive visions.

**Creatures:** Three chokers dwell here, snarling and cuffing one another. Normally solitary, these aberrations periodically gather to mate and squabble over territory. None of these chokers wants to give up the ruins as their hunting grounds, though, so they've stayed together for weeks, arguing and fighting. A fourth choker had been with them, but it failed to avoid the giant tarantulas. Since then, the others argue endlessly about which one should go look to see if the spiders have left. While they prefer to spend their time ambushing game near the ruins, the spiders frighten them too much. The heap of debris serves as a semi-shared nest.

## CHOKERS (3)

CR 2

hp 16 each (MM 34)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** These creatures can barely stand each other; they don't coordinate their attacks.

**Treasure:** A DC 16 Search checks reveals a collection of old coins and trinkets worth 164 gp in the chokers' nest. Additionally, those who make a DC 16 Craft (alchemy) or Knowledge (arcana) check in addition to a DC 14 Search check discover ancient jars on the shelves filled with dry but still potable ancient potions. By simply adding water, two *potions of bless*, a *potion of clairvoyance*, and a *potion of see invisibility* are restored.

## 8. The House of Life

Reeking of dust, this ransacked room appears to have been some sort of scriptorium. Slate-topped tables and cedar-wood stools lie overturned and broken amid the cracked remains of scroll cases and rolls. Three wings lead to the east. In them, decrepit scroll racks of dry-rotted cedar lean haphazardly against the walls, their contents dumped out. Flecks of papyrus carpet the floor, a library of ancient lore laid to waste.

This chamber was the Per Ankh, where holy texts were written and copied. The chokers ransacked the room, destroying invaluable lore in their greedy search for gold or gems. Hundreds of scrolls were shredded as bedding for the nest in area 7. No scraps survive with any legible writing.

A massive basalt plaque dominates the southern wall of the chamber, surrounded by images of the god-king Nethys on the deck of a river barque. Osirian inscriptions on the ominous southern portal alternate between descriptions of the positive and destructive properties of magic. A DC 20 Search check reveals that it blocks the way

## The Breath of Nethys

The Nethys worshipers of the All-Seeing Eye had a reason for building their monastery in such a secluded locale. From this isolated outcropping leaked a strange gas that caused those who breathed it to experience lucid visions. Believing these hallucinations to be signs from the god of magic, the monks called the gas the Breath of Nethys and indulged in its powers to bring them new insights into the ways of magic.

The breath of Nethys boosts magical abilities, allowing spellcasters within the mist to cast as if they were two levels higher. In addition, it unleashes visions hidden in the recesses of the mind. Upon entering an area filled with the breath of Nethys, a creature must make a DC 16 Fortitude save or be affected as per the spell *confusion* for the next 5 minutes as they experience vivid hallucinations. Even after failing a save against the gas, a confused creature may make a DC 15 Concentration check to ignore the *confusion* effect for that round and act normally.

to another chamber. This barrier requires spellcasting to bypass. The plaque only moves if targeted by a spell of any type. Upon being affected, the eyes of Nethys on the stone glow for 3 minutes, during which time the plaque rises out of the way. Alternatively, the plaque can be broken apart (hardness 8, hp 40).

## 9. Gauntlet of the Archmagi (EL 2)

A winding corridor stretches ahead, clouded with phosphorescent gray mist. Statues stand rigidly along the meandering hallway, each clad in the trappings of a powerful mage or priest. Thick tendrils of pearlescent vapor hiss forth from their open mouths, weaving through the air like translucent alien vines before reluctantly dispersing. A susurrus of whispers can faintly be heard from the statues, the sounds of forgotten tongues trapped in time.

These statues depict early leaders of the All-Seeing Eye. Those near them hear whispered questions in Draconic and Osirian ("Who were you?" "What is his task?" "Where is your power?"). As the statues speak, vapor puffs from their still lips, a magical manifestation called the breath of Nethys that supposedly opens casters' minds to hidden levels of reality, but disorients and confuses those not prepared for it.

### THE BREATH OF NETHYS

CR 2

**Type** mechanical; **Search** DC 0; **Disable Device** DC 18

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic

**Effect** gas; multiple targets (all in area 9); never miss; onset delay (1 round); poison (see The Breath of Nethys sidebar)



## EN-NEBI, BLADE OF THE LEOPARD

**Aura** moderate transmutation; **CL** 9th

**Slot** —; **Price** 10,302 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

### DESCRIPTION

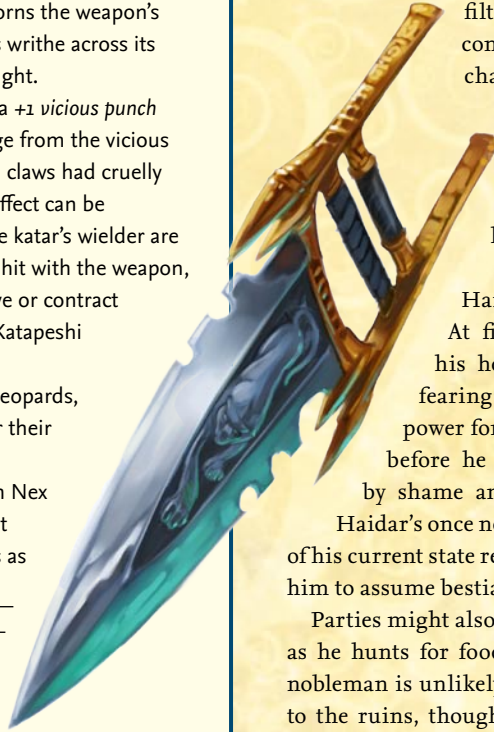
Crafted in Katapesh some 300 years ago, En-Nebi is a katar some 15 inches in length. An embossed image of a ferocious Katapeshi leopard adorns the weapon's hilt, while strange shadowy patterns writhe across its damascened blade, even in strong light.

In combat, En-Nebi is treated as a +1 vicious punch dagger. As it strikes, the extra damage from the vicious property manifests as if a great cat's claws had cruelly raked the victim's flesh. While this effect can be unnerving, the consequences for the katar's wielder are even worse: if he confirms a critical hit with the weapon, he must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or contract a form of lycanthropy, becoming a Katapeshi wereleopard lycanthrope.

Easily twice the size of common leopards, Katapeshi leopards are infamous for their savagery. Now extremely rare, these massive creatures once ranged from Nex to Thuvia (same stats as tigers). Treat Katapeshi wereleopard lycanthropes as chaotic evil weretigers (MM 172).

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *bestow curse*, *summon monster IV*; **Cost** 5,151 gp, 412 XP



while others “traveled through time and space” aboard the barque of Nethys, chronicling their visions in the House of Life (area 8).

As area 9, this chamber is filled with the breath of Nethys.

**Creatures:** Haidar the Accursed spends his days here, lost in delusions. He who was once the Falcon Emir has become a broken vagabond, wrapped in filthy robes. His sanity shattered, Haidar convinced himself that this magical chamber can somehow restore his life and reputation, if only he learns to understand its powers. Other times, the Emir loses himself in the past, in comforting visions of his family or the court of the Sheikh.

Determined characters might recall Haidar to reality, but doing so is perilous. At first, he begs for information about his homeland, but soon grows paranoid, fearing the PCs plan to seize the shrine's power for themselves or take him back to Ipeq before he can redeem himself. Overwhelmed by shame and bestial hunger, little remains of Haidar's once noble nature. Determined that no word of his current state reach Ipeq, the beast within him drives him to assume bestial form and attack.

Parties might also encounter Haidar outside the shrine as he hunts for food. Outside the shrine, the deranged nobleman is unlikely to seek a fight. Upon drawing close to the ruins, though, he becomes paranoid of strangers and flees here to defend this chamber against intruders.

Haidar's normal and hybrid statistics are presented here as he is unlikely to transform into a leopard during the course of the adventure. If he does, see the weretiger tiger form on page 174 of the MM for approximate stats.

## 10. House of the All-Seeing Eye (CR 5)

A vast cavern looms ahead, its outlines obscured by eerie vapors. Foul with the scent of ancient decay, these noisome mists crawl unnaturally along the chamber's irregular floor. Unnerving outlines rise among the strange miasma, then fade back into nothingness as quickly as they appeared. An ancient barge dominates the chamber, hanging unsupported in the air. Little more than a skeleton of scorched spars and torn planks, portions of the ancient vessel flicker and fade, almost as unstable as the shifting vapors around it.

In the center of this room levitates an ancient wooden representation of the Barque of Nethys, a craft upon which the monks of the All-Seeing Eye believe their god traveled the multiverse. Those deluded by the mists see the barge as a splendid vessel, afloat on a sea of cloud. In this strange chamber, Nethysian Seers once communed with (hallucinatory) servants of the god-king Nethys,

## HAIDAR THE ACCURSED

**CR 5**

Male human lycanthrope (Katapeshi wereleopard) aristocrat 2 (MM 174)

**CE** Medium humanoid (shapechanger, afflicted)

**Init** +1; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +7, **Spot** +6

### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 12, flat-footed 18

(+5 armor, +1 Dex, +2 natural)

**hp** 44 (8d8+8)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 vicious punching dagger +7 (1d4+2d6+1/x3)

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Haidar has little control over his lycanthropy, so any injury will likely force him into leopard form. If Haidar anticipates an imminent attack, he draws the punch



dagger *En-Nebi* and assumes hybrid form.

**During Combat** Haidar seldom uses sound tactical judgment, targeting opponents based on his mood. In leopard form, he also enjoys toying with opponents, maiming them and then letting their allies heal them so he can maul them again.

**Morale** If reduced to 10 or fewer hit points, Haidar tries to escape his enemies. If encountered in area 10, he flees toward the upper shrine, hoping to hide there.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 13, **Dex** 12, **Con** 11, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 9

**Base Atk** +5; **Grp** +6

**Feats** Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Natural Attack (claws)<sup>B</sup>

**Skills** Balance +5, Bluff +4, Hide +5 (+12 in near rock or sand), Listen +7, Move Silently +10, Spot +6

**Languages** Common, Osiriani

**SQ** alternate form, lycanthropic empathy

**Combat Gear** *potions of cure light wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +1 chain shirt, *En-Nebi* (see sidebar), 450 gp

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Alternate Form (Su)** Haidar can shift into animal form as though using the polymorph spell on himself. His gear is not affected, he does not regain hit points, and only the specific animal form (Katapeshi leopard) can be assumed. Haidar also can assume a bipedal hybrid form with prehensile hands and animalistic features. Changing form requires a standard action. If slain, Haidar reverts to humanoid form.

**Curse of Lycanthropy (Su)** Any humanoid or giant hit by Haidar's bite attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or contract lycanthropy. Katapeshi wereleopards are based on the stats for weretigers, but are chaotic evil.

**Lycanthropic Empathy (Su)** In any form, Haidar can communicate and empathize with normal or dire leopards. He receives a +4 racial bonus on checks when influencing the animal's attitude and allows the communication of simple concepts and (if the animal is friendly) commands.

**Skills** Haidar has a +4 racial bonus on Balance, Hide, and Move Silently checks. This Hide bonus improves to +8 for Katapeshi leopards, and thus Haidar, in rocky or sandy terrains.

## HAIDAR THE ACCURSED (HYBRID FORM) CR 5

Male human lycanthrope (Katapeshi wereleopard) aristocrat 2 (MM 174)

CE Large humanoid (shapechanger, afflicted)

**Init** +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +7, Spot +6

## DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14

(+3 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 60 (8d8+24)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +7

**DR** 5/silver

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 vicious punching dagger +12 (1d4+2d6+7/×3) and bite +6 (2d6+3), or 2 claws +11 (1d8+7) and bite +6 (2d6+3)

**Special Attacks** curse of lycanthropy

## STATISTICS

**Str** 25, **Dex** 16, **Con** 17, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 9

**Base Atk** +5; **Grp** +12

**Feats** Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Natural Attack (claws)<sup>B</sup>

**Skills** Balance +7, Bluff +4, Hide +6 (+14 in near rock or sand), Listen +7, Move Silently +12, Spot +6

**Languages** Common, Osiriani

**SQ** alternate form, lycanthropic empathy

**Combat Gear** *potions of cure light wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +1 chain shirt, *En-Nebi* (see sidebar), 450 gp

**Treasure:** A pair of battered saddlebags hold Haidar's remaining treasures: 343 remaining gold pieces, a set of battered ceramic idols representing his family's protective spirits, a torn and bloodstained silk veil, and ragged clothing.

**Ad Hoc Experience Award:** Should the PCs merely subdue Haidar and actively seek to cure his lycanthropy, award them experience for a CR 6 encounter.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure concludes once the player characters overcome the mad emir and discover the secrets of the shrine. The consequences of their deeds depend on their motivations: perhaps they learn of Haidar's relations in Ipeq and seek a reward or return to Kelmarane, confident that they've made the region safer. Some might wish to investigate how the accursed dagger came into Haidar's possession, potentially motivating a follow-up adventure as the party seeks the subtle foe who overthrew the Falcon Emir. Still other parties might be contacted by priests of Nethys who seek to learn more of the monastery before they attempt to restore the old structure.

Characters should be wary, though, as there is a substantial risk that they might contract lycanthropy, if not from Haidar's attacks, then from use of his accursed dagger. GMs should allow such unfortunates ample opportunity to seek a cure for their condition. Although some players might want to keep the powerful werebeast form, they eventually face the consequences of becoming a bloodthirsty, chaotic evil monster, confronting the rest of the party with new challenges and adventures as a result.





## Double Dealings

The old wooden tub had been built to hold a vineyard's harvest, so it was plenty big enough for me and the three other women who'd been herded into one of the blue "specialty goods" tents in the heart of Katapesh's marketplace. A faint odor of soured grapes rose from the tub, but after three days of forced march, water of any sort was welcome. The other women soaped and scrubbed with obvious pleasure, forgetting for the moment that they were slaves, or soon would be.

I waved away the eunuch's offer of scented soap and sank below the surface. There I stayed until one of the guards, fearing that I sought to drown myself and thus deprive his master of my slave price, hauled me up by my ears.

If I were the type to scream with pain, this would have warranted a shriek that would deafen banshees. Elven ears are damnably sensitive. I could hardly fault the man for making use of such convenient handles, but I could make him pay for the foolishness of dragging me up face to face.

My short-arm jab caught him just under the chin and sent him staggering away from the tub, his last, shattered

breath rattling in his throat. The other guard scowled and drew a short, curved sword from his belt. My fellow captives shied away, huddling together as they put as much space between them and me as the tub allowed.

"Do you know how long a crocodile can hold its prey underwater?" I bared my teeth at the guard in a reptilian smile. "Would you care to find out?"

Before he could respond, the tent's entrance curtain parted. Long shards of late afternoon sunlight stabbed into the tent as a tall female gnoll, thin as a racing whippet and furred the dusty gold of a sandstone wasteland, pushed her way inside.

"Leave her be," she demanded.

My defender's voice held all the music of a crate being dragged across gravel. Gnolls are not fashioned for human speech, but they can shape words around their natural sounds. In doing so, they speak two tongues at once; their yips and snarls and howls carry meaning amongst themselves that is hidden from their human listeners. But Ratsheek speaks only in a growl, the better



to hide her moods and purposes. Small wonder her tribe doesn't trust her. Even so, she handles most of their business affairs, for she deals easily with humans. The gnolls see this as another cause for suspicion. They are more right than they know.

The guard kept coming. Ratsheek stepped between us and swatted his sword arm out wide. "I said, leave her be," she snarled. "This woman is Channa Ti. She is a druid, worth more than the other three combined."

The eunuch—who'd retreated behind the high-heaped wardrobe table at the first hint of violence—lowered the large perfume bottle he'd hoisted in his own defense. Doubt creased his chubby face as he studied me.

"The elf-blooded make poor slaves," he said, repeating conventional wisdom, "and though I've served my master faithfully for twenty years, I have yet to find a buyer for any druid."

"So?" The gnoll's sneer bared fangs. "Twenty years a merchant, and you've never put camel fat in a crock and sold it as butter?"

"I'm an honest man," he protested, splaying a hand over his heart.

"An honest merchant who traffics with gnoll slavers?" scoffed Ratsheek. "A rare beast indeed! The Ruby Prince should hear of this. He'll want you stuffed and mounted in his trophy hall to keep company with his blue narwhal and black unicorn."

The argument and insults went on, but I didn't care to listen. I dipped back under the water, and this time the guard let me be.

Water does more than cleanse me; it heals small hurts and strengthens the magic I can call. Every now and then a child is born with a particular affinity for one of nature's elements. I am a creature of water. This is either exceedingly handy in a desert clime or of no use whatsoever, depending upon whether I wish to drink or to fight.

I had need of water, of healing. It is impossible to fight a tribe of gnolls and come away unscathed, even if the gnolls mean to capture you rather than kill. New knife cuts and claw marks scored my arms, erasing the thin white scars left by the blood-oath Ratsheek and I had sworn years ago—two desperate slaves, working together to escape. We'd had a friendship of sorts. I'd never really trusted Ratsheek, but neither did I expect her to hunt me, kill my companions, and return me to the nightmare we'd escaped.

I climbed out of the tub. Some wounds are beyond water's power to heal.

The other women had been readied for auction. A green-haired gnome, a rarity in these lands, wore the amber-hued shift of a master brewer. The last two women, though less exotic, were obviously with child. No surprise there—wet nurses were valuable slaves.

The gnoll nodded in approval at the younger woman's red-brown complexion, the mark of Osirion's ruling cast. She moved on to the next slave, seized her chin with a black-taloned hand and turned her face this way and that. A sly smile curled up along her muzzle.

"Dust this one's face with henna powder. No reason why they both can't fetch top price."

Ratsheek's smile grew as she paused before me, the black tip of her nose only a hand span from my face. Since gnolls, like most other canines, pant rather than sweat, they generally smell better than humans—except, of course, for their breath. The charnel stench made my stomach lurch and twist. I distracted myself with a fantasy of tying that muzzle shut and staking the gnoll out in the desert sun to simmer in her own foul juices.

My thoughts must have shown on my face, because the smile dropped off Ratsheek's muzzle so quickly I expected to hear it shatter on the floor.

She turned to the eunuch. "Dress this one in blue silks and all the cheap silver jewelry you have. Paint her eyes with kohl and silver dust. She'll sell as a water witch. The more exotic she looks, the better price she'll fetch."

"But she's a half-elf!" he shrieked, raising both hands and shaking them as if imploring the gods to intervene.

"So cover her ears with a turban and none need know. Find me one human who isn't worried about the drought, or fearful of worse to come. Once her master learns what she can do, half-elf or not, he'll be thrilled."

"Or dead," I said pleasantly.

Ratsheek shrugged. "That works, too. Dead men seldom seek refunds."

This reasoning calmed the merchant considerably. I dressed in the clothes he handed me: loose pantaloons, a tiny vest, and a silk turban, all in silvery shades of blue. I expected the traditional slave sandals, hobbled together with a length of chain, but Ratsheek gave me my own boots back. They were the finest things I owned, eelskin tanned a pale gray. Wearing them, I could run as swiftly as falling rain.

The moment this thought took shape, I darted for the curtained door and out into the marketplace. I am not one to allow much daylight between idea and action. Sometimes this is a flaw; today it served me well.

The two gnoll slavers stationed outside the tent yipped in surprise as I pushed past. I leaped off the terrace to the street below, rolling as I hit the awning shading a jeweler's display. I landed in a crouch, my half-hearted attempt at a turban unfurling around my shoulders.

Shouts of alarm and protest rose on all sides, but I could still hear the snap of canvas behind me as Ratsheek stormed out of the slaver's tent.

"The perfume sellers!" For once Ratsheek's voice abandoned its mood-veiling growl, rising into a hunting



howl that rang with gnoll sincerely. "Head her off, or we'll never find her scent!"

I cursed under my breath and changed my course. Sometimes Ratsheek was far too clever.

There was but one path to take. A tall Mwangi man wearing a thief-stopper's red vest blocked it, his mahogany arms thick with muscle and spread wide. Hesitation flickered in his eyes—I am often mistaken for a Mwangi woman—then turned to outrage when he noted my elven ears.

I didn't slow down or try to avoid him. As his arms closed around me, I brought my knee up, hard. He grunted out a curse and his grip relaxed for a moment, long enough for me to pull a knife from his sash and let myself fall to the ground.

Men expect struggle, but a sudden shift to dead weight generally takes them by surprise. Before he could adjust his grip I'd already rolled aside and gotten my feet beneath me.

The aisle between the fruit merchant stalls was narrow and crowded. I shoved aside an urchin who was covertly filling his pockets with kumquats. He stumbled and dropped a handful of stolen fruit. The merchant bellowed with rage at the revealed theft. Leaning over his table, he seized a handful of the boy's hair and began to shake him, looking for all the world like a sewer dog who'd gotten hold of a rat.

I used the distraction to snatch up a hooded cloak some merchant had hung on a basket hook. Swirling it over my shoulders, I set off at a brisk pace. I followed the aisle around a sharp turn—where it ended at a tall stone wall.

"Winter melons?"

I glanced at the old woman in the last stall and shook my head at the fuzzy green fruit she held in her hand.

"Fresh dates?" she persisted. "Figs? Or perhaps some incense to burn in yon temple?"

The cant of her head drew my eye into her shop. Her tent framed a narrow wooden door set into the wall. She cleared her throat and reached for a bell pull...

...which led up to an unusually large and sonorous gong.

Knowledge and cunning glinted in the old woman's eyes as she regarded me. She gave the alarm pull a significant little shake and lifted one eyebrow in challenge.

I gritted my teeth and stripped several of the rings from my hands. "Temple incense, please."

She examined the cheap jewelry, sent me a glance heavy with reproof, and handed me a single stick of incense. She kept her hand on the bell pull until I passed through the door.

Taloned hands seized my borrowed cloak and shut the door by slamming me up against it. For one brief, stunned moment I stared into Ratsheek's face.

"You weren't chasing me," I said as realization took hold. "You were *herding* me."

The gnoll smirked and cast a glance over her shoulder. "Didn't I tell you she was clever?"

"You did indeed. Well done. Oh yes, very well done."

I could hear the smile in the man's voice, which was thin and lightly accented, precise to the point of being prissy. When he stepped into view, he proved a good match for it. My would-be master was a small man, his beard neatly trimmed and oiled, dressed in pristine white under the knee-length, embroidered purple vestments of a Vudrani cleric.

Ratsheek released me. As the cleric dropped a small bag into her outstretched hand, I reached for the knife I'd taken from the Mwangi thief-stopper. I'd been a slave once, and had no intention of repeating the experience.

"Oh, there's no need for that, dear lady. None at all." The cleric spread his hands palms-out and inclined his head in a polite little bow. "You misunderstand this transaction.

Ratsheek has accepted an introduction fee, nothing more.

The amount she accepted to arrange this meeting is far less than you would have fetched at auction, but far more than Ratsheek's portion of that would have been. So we are all happy, are we not?"

He beamed at me, obviously expecting me to share the sentiment. I wasn't happy, not by a long road, but I'll admit to being curious. But I held my tongue until Ratsheek had



*What kind of man is  
Vanir Shornish?*



left and shut the door behind her. "You said something about an introduction."

The man bowed again. "I am Vanir Shornish, a humble visitor from Vudra. Your name is known to me, as is your reputation."

Well. In my experience, that was seldom good news.

"What do you want?"

Judging from his startled expression, he was not accustomed to plain speaking. "It is a sensitive matter, you understand. Discussing it in public would not be prudent."

I glanced pointedly around the walled garden. Not counting the statues, we two were the only inhabitants.

"My room in the temple guesthouse is ideal for our purposes," he went on, gesturing to the round white tower rising from the north corner of the garden.

A room in the temple guesthouse—now, that was interesting. The Vudrani worshipped many gods, most of them minor powers with regional portfolios. Many people from Katapesh and Osirion found their religion trifling, even amusing. I was of a different mind. A jungle is full of colorful little lizards and brightly colored birds, gaudy and harmless, but only a fool would suppose nothing deadlier could live among the trees. The elves of the Mwangi Expanse are given to proverbs, and one came to mind now: *The unseen serpent boasts the deadliest venom.*

"Which god does Vanir Shornish serve?"

"I might ask the same of Channa Ti," he replied, favoring me with a smile that was oily enough to grease a caldron. "Druids are clerics of nature, are they not? You are an honored colleague, and a kindred spirit. I would wager much gold on this."

"You already have."

He laughed delightedly. "So I did. It's settled, then."

I did not fail to notice that he'd sidestepped my question, nor did I ignore the skin-crawling aversion this man was beginning to inspire in me. But I let him lead me to the guest tower and up a winding stair to a third-floor room. After all, he did save me the time and trouble of killing whoever bought me at the slave auction. I could at least hear him out.

Whoever Vanir Shornish might be, he was important or wealthy enough to rate a lavish room. My eyes went first to the tall windows, noting the sturdy iron rods that secured the draperies at top and bottom. Fine carpets covered the floor and softened the white stone walls. The bed was heaped with pillows and discretely tucked into a curtained alcove, giving prominence to the low table and the refreshments it held. This was clearly a room meant more for business than pleasure, which suited me perfectly.

The floor cushions piled by the table shifted and a strange, small creature crawled from its makeshift nest. I blinked with astonishment at a tiny blue elephant,

no bigger than a lap dog, that yawned widely and then stretched itself like a sleepy cat.

Vanir beamed with pride. "You are admiring Janu, I see. He is wonderful, is he not?"

"What corner of the Impossible Kingdoms did *that* thing come from?"

The cleric's smile never faltered. "We have many such creatures in my native land. The Vudrani are fond of companion animals. Surely you, a druid, would understand that?"

"Most druids would. A few of us are bound to elements rather than animals."

"Water," Vanir said, nodding. "So I have heard. How fortunate I am to find someone so uniquely suited to my purpose."

I gestured for him to continue, but he had turned away and was stooping to pick up the little elephant. He rose, cuddling the beast against his shoulder, and offered it a sugared almond. The elephant's tiny blue trunk curled around the treat and tucked it into its mouth. Crunching happily, the creature rubbed its head against Vanir's shoulder and raised adoring eyes to his face.

The man chuckled and tickled the elephant behind one ear. "Charming, is he not?"

"If you say so. Why am I here?"

Vanir set down the elephant and skimmed his fingers over the pattern of light and dark wood inlaid into the table's surface. A hidden drawer slid open. He took from it a scroll, which he unrolled and handed to me.

The parchment was old and strange, some sort of map surrounded by tiny runes. I am no scholar and had no hope of reading the scroll, but I knew the nature of that parchment the moment my fingers touched it. Only whaleskin was this strong and elastic. Neither parchment nor the ink upon it could be damaged by water, and under any conditions such a document could last a very long time. And old it undoubtedly was, for despite its durability, this type of parchment had gone out of favor several centuries past. Gham Banni, the Pathfinder venture-captain to whom I reported, once told me that any such scroll was probably ancient, of evil origins, or both.

Only the merfolk knew the secret of tanning whaleskin into parchment that could outlive centuries, and it had been long years since honest folk learned that a deal made with mermaids was no simple thing. They deemed it their right to demand a favor from anyone who used or even carried their goods. Such favors usually resulted in bloodshed and sunken ships. No honest man would be willingly beholden to a mermaid, and any wise ship captain would toss anyone carrying such a map into the sea—*after* dumping a load of bloody chum to draw sharks.

I handed the map back to Vanir. "I'll be going now."



"Oh, surely not! No Pathfinder would turn away from a chance to explore Xanchara."

I laughed in his face. A moment passed before I noted his wounded expression and realized he was quite serious.

Everyone has heard tales of an ancient city somewhere off the coast of Osirion, but few people give the tales much credence.

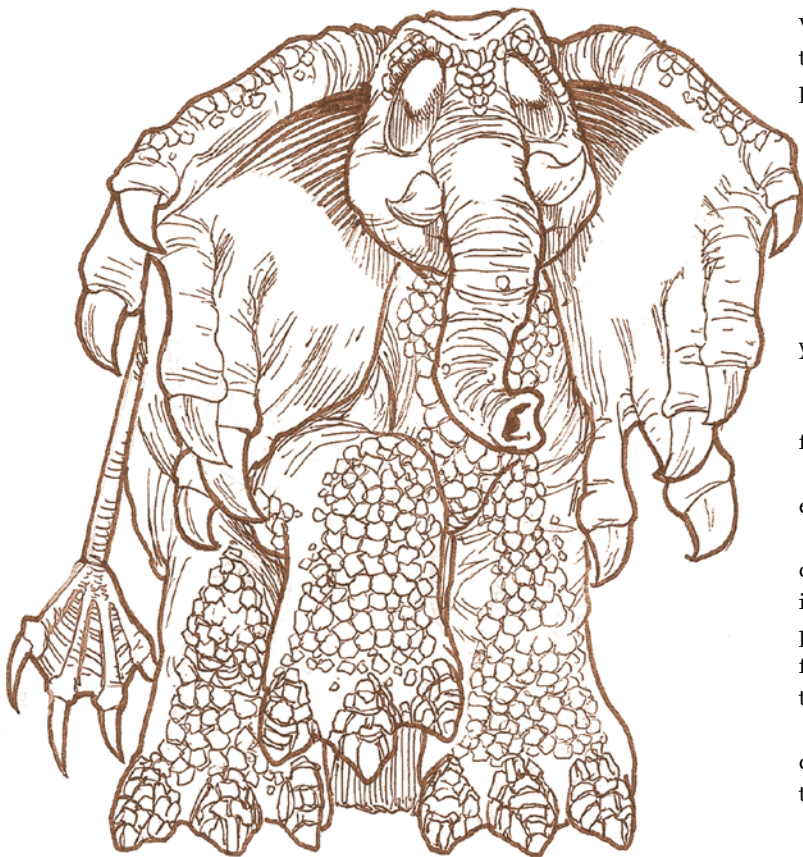
"You believe Xanchara existed."

"I do. And so, my dear lady, does Gham Banni."

He reached into a hidden pocket and produced a smaller scroll, this one fashioned from fine papyrus in the pale green hue Gham favored. The writing was unfamiliar, but that was of little significance. Gham Banni was a noted scholar who attracted many students, some of whom acted as his scribes. But the sigil burned onto the bottom of the page was undoubtedly his.

I should say a word about Gham Banni's sigil. Like many important men, his name held considerable power. In order to protect it, Gham Banni's personal rune was carved into a signet ring which could never be removed from his hand, nor could it be duplicated by means magical or mundane. The magic that burned the sigil onto parchment without heat or flame would be buried with him.

*Janu is anything but common.*



"The esteemed Gham Banni urges you to take on this task," Vanir said. "He goes on at length about your mission as a Pathfinder, and the opportunity to explore so renowned a site. He fully supports my quest, which is to recover a rare artifact and object of veneration among my people: the Reliquary of the Drowned God. It was stolen many years ago by people not unlike you Pathfinders, and brought to the great library of Xanchara. Thanks to this map I recently acquired, I believe it can be found."

"I can read," I snapped.

He held up both hands in a placating gesture and let me get on with it.

As it happened, Vanir's summary hit the mark squarely enough. I lowered the parchment and considered the cleric for a long moment.

"I have concerns."

"As would any reasonable person. Please, name them, so that I might set your mind at ease."

The utter absurdity of this claim shackled my tongue for a long moment. Judging from the Vudrani's confident smile, he truly believed he could sing this tale into a soothing melody.

As I shook my head in wonderment, my gaze fell upon the little blue elephant. "To start with, why would you keep such a creature? It's an abomination, a thing outside of the natural order."

"What civilized man does *not* improve upon nature?" Vanir countered. "In my country, magic and alchemy aid in the breeding of many wondrous beasts. Janu is a charming pet, but he is nothing beyond the common way."

As if to underscore its master's point, the elephant rolled over onto its back, waving its tiny, flat-footed legs in the air like a puppy that wanted its belly scratched.

The beast actually fluttered its eyelashes at me, flirting like a courtesan. I have seen street performers display more subtlety.

I dragged my gaze back to Vanir Shornish. "You enjoy your pet's company?"

"Oh yes, very much."

"Take him everywhere, do you? And you speak freely in front of him?"

Puzzlement began to gather around the Vudrani's eyes. "Yes..."

I crouched down to pat the little creature, taking note of how its eyes narrowed. With my free hand, I reached into a hidden pocket in my boot. This held a mixture of powdered herbs, one of the few useful things I had learned from the elf who'd sired me. As I rose and stepped away, I tossed a pinch of the herbs at the elephant.

The air in the room was suddenly thinner, colder, and crackling with the sort of energy that preceded a giant thunderclap. Vanir's "pet" shrieked like an angry demon...

Which made perfect sense, given its true form.



If a jungle bat and a mantis held an orgy to honor the ugliest demon lord ever to walk the planes, the resulting offspring might resemble Vanir's imp. The only thing remaining of its elephant form was the color of its hide. Membranous blue wings beat the air, holding aloft a vaguely man-shaped creature. Its wizened face was twisted with fury, and a hissing snarl bared long, sapphire-hued fangs.

"One of your Vudran 'gods,' Vanir?" I inquired.

The cleric made no response; he stood staring at the imp in an attitude of reverent awe—or, possibly, abject terror.

"Who are you to speak of gods?" demanded the imp.

"Druids are priests without gods, as impotent as warriors without weapons."

As it happens, the imp wasn't far wrong about the weapons. I pulled the only one I had—the Mwangi man's knife—and put all my strength into the throw.

Faster than I would have thought possible, the imp tucked one wing and rolled under the spinning knife. The little demon spiraled to the floor and landed in a crouch, one hand splayed for balance, then leaped into the air and flapped up to perch on the iron curtain rod. Its wings spread wide, preparation for a diving attack.

Lacking other weapons, I picked up Vanir Shornish in a wrestler's carry and threw him onto the table. Wood shattered, and so did the awe that held the cleric in thrall. As he scuttled away like a panicked crab, I picked up a table leg and lofted it like a club.

Janu swooped, I swung. Imp and wood met with a satisfying thud. The creature flew backward, wings folded together like praying hands, and slammed into a wall. It slid down slowly, leaving a stream of bubbling ichor on the tapestry. Again it landed in a three-point crouch, ready to spring.

I advanced, club ready to bat the creature out of the air again. The imp surprised me by coming up in a sprint. It ran for the window and leaped onto the low sill.

Janu sent me a mocking smile and pointed to the evening sky, where the planet Aucturn shone bright on the horizon and the rising moon, thanks to dust raised by violent *khamsin* storms, was the color of a bloody coin.

"The *khamsin*," said the imp, echoing my thoughts with eerie precision. "Know this, water witch: Air and dust elementals are not the only creatures who feel the power of Aucturn's alignment. You will learn this."

With that cryptic promise, the creature winged out into the gathering night.

Silence lingered for the space of several breaths.

"Thief! Cheat!" howled Vanir as he crawled out of his hideaway. "Spawn of a poxed whore and a rabid jackal! I'll kill the wretch who sold me a demon! I'll slit his throat! I'll flay him for boot leather! I'll... I'll... I'll report him to the merchants' guild!"

## REVEAL TRUE SHAPE

**School** Divination; **Level** Brd 2, Clr 2, Drd 2, Sor/Wiz 2

### CASTING

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, M (a pinch of rare herbs worth 50 gp)

### EFFECT

**Range** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Target** One creature

**Duration** 1 round/level

**Saving Throw** Will negates; **Spell Resistance** Yes

### DESCRIPTION

You reveal the true form of a magically disguised or transformed creature, whether the target's transformation is physical (such as *polymorph*) or illusory (such as *disguise self*). The spell does not force the creature into its true form, but rather creates a perfect illusion of the creature's true form that overlaps it and hides the disguised form completely, making the true form visible to all observers. For the duration of the spell, if the target changes shape or uses illusion to disguise its appearance, observers can still see its true form, though once the spell runs out any illusions or shape changes made by the target in the meantime immediately take effect. This spell does not reveal invisible creatures, overcome effects such as *blur* and *displacement*, or penetrate mundane disguises.

"Or you could just give me his name."

He quieted, cocked his head, and considered. "That would be easier," he admitted.

"Tell me."

Vanir did, with admirably concise language. He answered the questions I put to him and mostly told the truth.

"Did this merchant know of your plan to recover the reliquary before he sold you the 'elephant,' or after?"

For the first time Vanir hesitated. "He is a wine merchant, among other things," he said sheepishly, "and generous with his samples. I am not altogether clear on the events of that evening."

"Do you remember what you paid for the imp?"

Vanir considered. After a moment his brows flew up. "Now that I think on it," he marveled, "my purse was missing no great sum, nothing that might explain such a purchase."

I nodded, expecting this. Stooping, I plucked the whaleskin parchment from the ruin of the table, then rose to offer the cleric my hand and my bond. His face brightened, and he clasped my hand with both of his.

"I will find your reliquary," I promised.

And in doing so, I vowed, I would discover who else might be seeking it, and to what purpose.





## Bestiary: Creatures of Karapesh

A host of deadly beasts and cruel creatures born of folktales from across the world come to life in this month's entry into the *Pathfinder* Bestiary. From Europe come tales of gremlins, mischievous menaces with a penchant for destruction and cruel trickery. Whispered warnings from Central America caution against chupacabras, the elusive goat-suckers that prey upon herd animals and sometimes such beasts' unwitting keepers. From the Middle East come the dorus, the least of the divs, a new race of fiends to terrorize those too foolhardy to fear the desert night. And from the lost continent of Atlantis flaps the heart-hungry peryton, eager to terrorize any who fall beneath its unnerving shadow. Although each beast might be spawned from mere myth and legend, the danger they pose to unsuspecting adventures proves all too real.

While the majority of this month's monstrosities stem from the pens of the *Pathfinder* staff, this marks the bestiary debut of Adam Daigle, who this month and every month for the rest of *Legacy of Fire* Adventure Path

brings us a deadly new div, revealing the secrets of these fiends of Persian myth.

### WANDERING MONSTERS

Death comes swiftly to the foolish and the weak in the shadow of the Brazen Peaks. Ravenous lions, patient jackals, deadly snakes, stubborn birds, and scorpions grown to monstrous sizes stalk those reaches, beasts that see travelers as just another flavor of prey. As if the dangers of the natural world weren't enough, rocs, ankhegs, griffins, and other strange beasts inhabit the land, endlessly scouring the region for ways to sate their monstrous hungers. And giving cruel thought to deadly savagery, tribes of gnolls, gargoyles, and harpies also claim territories among the hills, exacting lethal punishment upon all trespassers.

The random encounter table here presents a variety of beasts and deadly creatures that inhabit the lands around Kelmarane. Aside from the living threats in the area, the land itself often proves dangerous. GMs might pepper



*It was just after twilight when we heard the ruckus out behind the barn—where we penned the bucks from our herd of Katheer Roamers. Half the flock was already over the fence and runnin' loose by the time I got out there, scared crazy and rushin' every which way. In all the dust and bleats and goat noise I could hardly tell what was what, but something chilled me and I snatched up a pitchfork as I turned the barn corner. And right there, hunkered down over our prized billy, Rutger, was somethin' like I never seen. All scales, and teeth, and big ol' spines, it was like a mean mama dew lizard learned to walk. With nasty claws it had broke Rutger straight in half, and hunched right over him while it sucked down his insides. I must have made some sound, 'cause the thing started and looked right up at me with eyes red and mean as hot coals. And then I saw it wasn't alone.*

—Silver Elmendor, Former Capriculturist

their encounters with some of the features of hills or mountain terrain detailed on page 89 of the DMG, while the violent duststorms detailed on page 94 might also make memorable encounters. Alternatively, GMs seeking deadlier encounters should refer to the wandering monster table for Pale Mountain and the surrounding locales found in *Pathfinder* #20's gazetteer of those lands.

## THE DIVS

Legacy of Fire draws from a variety of inspirations, from stories like those of Aladdin and Sinbad, to the tales of *One Thousand and One Nights* and the legends of Iran, Iraq, Ancient Persia, and lands throughout the Middle East. From this mythic tradition come stories of divs, terrifying monstrosities that exist to torment mortals, destroy their works, and sow discord. Featuring prominently in Persian lore—most famously in the story of *Rostam and the Div-e Sepid* (*Rostam and the White Div*) from the epic poem the *Shahnameh*—divs harbor a villainous reputation, not unlike the giants of Norse myth or oni of Japanese folklore.

Similar to the daemons that already exist in the *Pathfinder* cosmology, divs number far fewer but pose a more subtle threat. Where daemons seek to slaughter mortals, divs ruin lives, prolong suffering, spread torment, and defile love. They care nothing for collecting souls, preferring their victims suffer long, pain-filled lives, their behavior suggesting some nameless grudge against mortalkind. This vindictiveness is reflected in most divs' hatred of deities, especially good-aligned gods, whose sanctuaries and worshipers they go out of their way to despoil.

Expect to encounter a host of malicious and manipulative divs over the next several months as the *Bestiary* details a new member of this race of fiends in every volume of *Legacy of Fire*, culminating in Ahriman, the terrifying lord of the divs and the very spirit of destruction, in *Pathfinder* #24.

## Random Encounters Around Kelmarane

d%	Encounter	Avg. EL	Source
1–3	1 giant fire beetle	1/3	MM 285
4–5	1 human skeleton	1/3	MM 225
6–9	1 pugwampi	1/2	<i>Pathfinder</i> #19
10–13	1d4 baboons	1	MM 268
14–15	1 camel	1	MM 270
16–17	1d2 eagles	1	MM 272
18–20	1 Medium viper	1	MM 280
21–23	1 choker	1	MM 34
24–26	1 dire bat	2	MM 62
27–30	1 div, doru	2	<i>Pathfinder</i> #19
31–34	2d4 goblins	2	MM 133
35–37	1 jackalwere*	2	ToHR 403
38–42	1d4 krenshar	2	MM 163
43–45	1 ankheg	3	MM 14
46–47	1d4 blink dogs	3	MM 28
48–51	1 chupacabra	3	<i>Pathfinder</i> #19
52–54	1 giant eagle	3	MM 93
55–58	1d2 hippogriffs	3	MM 152
59–61	1 Large scorpion	3	MM 287
62–64	1d2 lions	3	MM 274
65–66	1d4 Large vipers	3	MM 279
67–68	1 centipede swarm	4	MM 238
69–71	2d6 stirges	4	MM 237
72–74	1d2 griffons	4	MM 139
75–77	1d4 giant eagles	5	MM 93
78–80	1 dire lion	5	MM 63
81–85	2d6 gnolls	6	MM 130
86–87	1d4 harpies	6	MM 150
88–91	2d8 hyenas	6	MM 274
92–93	1 lamia	6	MM 165
94–95	1 dragonne	7	MM 89
96–97	1d6 gargoyles	7	MM 113
98–99	1 shedu*	7	ToHR 312
100	1 juvenile blue dragon	8	MM 72

\* From the *Tome of Horror Revisited*.





## CHUPACABRA

This lizard-like creature stalks forward upon two spindly legs, stepping with soundless, predatory care. Finely scaled skin stretches tight over its lithe body, giving the reptilian thing a lean, starved appearance, its thin arms reaching before it, long, clawed fingers gripping in anticipation. Between jaws filled with tiny, vicious teeth darts a thick, serpentine tongue, and dozens of thin black quills run from the back of its head to the base of its lashing tail.

### CHUPACABRA

CR 3

Always N Small magical beast

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +7

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13

(+3 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size)

**hp** 30 (4d10+8)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** bite +6 (1d4+1) and

2 claws +1 (1d3)

**Special Attacks** chupar, improved grab, pounce

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Chupacabras prefer to prey upon the weak and slow, often watching potential prey from hiding for long

minutes before rushing forth to attack.

**During Combat** Preferring to attack by surprise, chupacabras race from hiding and pounce upon their prey, attempting to make use of their chupar ability.

**Morale** A lone chupacabra that has drained blood flees as soon as it is damaged. Those in groups or still hungry fight until reduced to 10 or fewer hit points.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 13, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 3, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +4; **Grp** +1

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative

**Skills** Hide +11 (+15 amid tall grass or rocks), Jump +9, Listen +2, Move Silently +7, Spot +7

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** warm hills and plains

**Organization** solitary, pair, or gang (3–7)

**Treasure** none

**Advancement** 5–7 HD (Small), 8–10 HD (Medium)

**Level Adjustment** +3

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Chupar (Ex)** A chupacabra can suck blood from a living victim by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, dealing 1 point of Constitution damage each round the pin is maintained. Upon successfully draining blood, a chupacabra is invigorated, gaining a significant boost in speed for 10 rounds similar to the spell *haste*. An invigorated chupacabra can still drain blood—and in so doing increase the length of its invigoration—but gains no additional effects. An invigorated chupacabra's statistics change as follows: **AC** 17, touch 15; **Ref** +8; **Spd** 60 ft.; **Melee** 2 bites +7 (1d4+1) and 2 claws +2 (1d3); Jump +21.

**Improved Grab (Ex)** To use this ability, a chupacabra must hit with both of its claw attacks. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can use its chupar attack. A chupacabra can use either its Strength modifier or Dexterity modifier for grapple checks, whichever is better.

**Pounce (Ex)** If a chupacabra charges a foe, it can make a full attack.

**Skills** Chupacabras have a +4 racial bonus on Hide, Jump, and Move Silently checks. In areas of tall grass or rocky terrain, the Hide bonus improves to +8. Chupacabras can use their Dexterity modifier instead of their Strength modifier for Jump checks.

Opportunistic, desert-dwelling stalkers and scavengers, chupacabras stalk arid reaches and the fringes of civilization, endlessly hunting to sate their thirst for blood. Spry and stealthy, they prefer to keep to areas of high grass and protective rock, their slightly reflective scales allowing them to blend in well with such surroundings. Upon spotting vulnerable or unsuspecting prey, they burst from cover and leap upon their victims, slashing viciously with their long claws and biting with powerful jaws, seeking to drink of the warm gore tenuously



restrained within. With a preference for lone travelers and farm animals, chupacabras leave little evidence of their presence, only the blood-drained husks of their meals revealing the extent of their hunting grounds.

A typical chupacabra measures nearly 5 and a half feet from muzzle to tail tip and stands just under 4 feet tall, though some have been reported to grow to the height of an adult human. Slightly built and light of bone, most weigh close to a hundred pounds.

## Ecology

Although skittish creatures, chupacabras have an undeniable thirst for blood, drawing the majority of their requirements for water and sustenance from the fluids of smaller animals. Cautious predators, they hunt primarily by night and avoid groups of animals or creatures larger than themselves, preying mostly upon rodents, foxes, and young deer. In areas where settling humanoids create farms and ranches on or near chupacabra hunting grounds, though, the sly beasts prove much bolder. Able to climb or leap most fences, chupacabras eagerly feast upon penned or stabled animals, drinking to contentment and then departing without a trace, leaving behind only bloodless carcasses. A well-fed chupacabra exhibits much greater energy than a hungry one, its meal granting it a burst of speed it often uses to escape angry animals or protective farmers.

Chupacabra young are exceedingly rare. Although these hunters are more likely to cooperate than compete during hunts and generally prove congenial toward others of their kind, they mate rarely and only during the hottest summer months. This occasionally leads a female to lay a single large, spongy egg late in winter, that a few short weeks later hatches into a small, black-scaled chupacabra babe. Young are born nearly dehydrated, and a mother readies for her child's hatching by trapping unconscious or incapacitated prey within her cave so the babe can feed immediately upon hatching.

## Habitat & Society

Preferring warm, arid lands with plentiful grasses and rocks to hide among, chupacabras lair in shallow caves they enlarge by digging out with their powerful back legs. They prefer these caves to be naturally camouflaged within canyons and cliff walls, but might drag decaying foliage to cover more obvious hollows they find near convenient sources of food. Chupacabras have also been known to lurk beneath stilted homes and in abandoned buildings or ruins on the outskirts of villages, sleeping within during the day and preying upon the community's animals by night.

Although chupacabras are typically solitary to avoid competing for limited food sources, in bountiful areas

## A Modern Legend

When tales of the chupacabra first arose is a matter of debate, with stories of strange animal sightings and UFO visitations in Central America, Mexico, and the southern United States arising in the 1950s. Yet the first reports to truly fit what would become the *modus operandi* of the chupacabra dates back to 1975, when the Puerto Rican town of Moca suffered from a rash of strange attacks on pets and farm animals. Although the culprit was never seen, the way the animals had all been drained of blood led to warnings of *El Vampiro de Moca*. In 1995, the death of several sheep—each found bloodless and bearing three strange, circular puncture wounds—began a rash of unexplained animal attacks throughout Puerto Rico. As more and more animals turned up dead, sightings of the infamous *chupacabra*—from the Spanish words *chupar*, “to suck,” and *cabra*, “goat”—began to spread. While eyewitness sightings of the creature vary, the beast is often described as a small, scaled creature that combines the features of canine, kangaroo, and lizard with large eyes, long quills, a forked tongue, and sometimes wings. In 1995 more than 1,000 animal deaths in Puerto Rico were blamed upon chupacabra attacks, and since then sightings of the legendary creature have been reported across North and South America and continue to this day.

small gangs of hunters might form. These groups work well together, becoming bold enough to attack larger groups of animals and more dangerous prey. Stories of chupacabras attacking travelers or laying siege to farmhouses typically stem from the hunting practices of such gangs. In areas quickly settled by ranchers or herdsman, whole communities might be attacked as local chupacabras descend upon the newly introduced food sources—animal and humanoid alike—like giant, hissing locusts.

## Variant Chupacabras

Some frontiersmen tell of chupacabras gliding through the sky and attacking upon powerful reptilian wings. Usually sighted near mountainous regions and areas where unexplainable lights from the sky regularly visit, these airborne chupacabras prove much bolder than their land-bound cousins and have been known to carry off sheep, kidnap children and small humanoids, and attack even full-grown and well-armed adults. A winged chupacabra has a fly speed of 60 feet with average mobility, which increases to 90 feet after the creature has fed. A winged chupacabra's CR is the same as a normal chupacabra.





## Div, Doru

A disembodied and bestial countenance composed of lashing hair and curling horns hangs in the air at shoulder level. An air of constant whispers issues from its muttering lips as the creature floats quietly forward. The creature's fanged mouth stretches open for a bite, and then it vanishes.

### Div, Doru

CR 2

Always NE Tiny outsider (div, evil, extraplanar)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness, telepathy 100 ft.;

**Listen** +7, **Spot** +7

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 15, flat-footed 15

(+3 Dex, +3 natural, +2 size)

**hp** 13 (3d8)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4

**DR** 5/cold iron or good; **Immune** fire, poison; **Resistance** acid 10, electricity 10; **SR** 10

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** bite +9 (1d4–1 plus poison)

**Space** 2 1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th)

At will—*detect good*, *detect magic*, *invisibility*

2/day—*charm person* (DC 13), *minor image* (DC 13)

1/day—*suggestion* (DC 15)

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Dorus shun direct combat and prefer to remain hidden. If combat is inevitable, a doru becomes invisible and then casts *minor image* to create a distraction. If threatened by

a group, a doru might choose to use its *suggestion* ability to avoid combat altogether.

**During Combat** Dorus try to attack from the cover of invisibility. Once its target is distracted, a doru either bites or attempts to charm its enemy. If there are multiple foes, a doru uses its *suggestion* spell-like ability to encourage them to abandon the combat. Any round a doru is not actively biting or using a spell-like ability against a foe, it takes the opportunity to become invisible.

**Morale** Cowardly and weak, dorus flee once they have taken more than 5 points of damage, and will fight further only if their master or a greater div that summoned them push them to do so.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 8, **Dex** 17, **Con** 10, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +3; **Grp** –6

**Feats** Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (bite)

**Skills** Bluff +8, Hide +17, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Knowledge (the planes) +3, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +6, Spot +7

**Languages** Common, Abyssal, Celestial, Infernal

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** Abaddon

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** none

**Advancement** 4–6 HD (Tiny)

**Level Adjustment** — (Improved Familiar)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Poison (Ex)** Injury, Fortitude DC 13, initial and secondary damage

1 Wis. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Dorus resemble monstrous disembodied heads. Their hair is wild and tangled and multiple pairs of horns sprout in wicked curves framing their faces. They have wide, flat noses with flaring nostrils set between fiery red eyes. Sharp bestial fangs fill their wide mouths, an asset they use to deadly effect, despite their cowardice when it comes to combat. They almost always fly, silently floating at head level for whatever creature they address, though sometimes—largely to disturb their victims—they roll across the ground in a disturbing, bouncing gait, horns clacking as they go.

Most dorus are approximately 16 inches tall and about as wide, being slightly larger than a normal humanoid head. An average doru weighs about 10 pounds.

## Ecology

Dorus are the most minor of the divs. They serve as the messengers and servants of those in greater standing in their race's power structure. Among their own kind, dorus are little more than peons serving masters of greater



power, yet they are terrifying and strange to mortals. They delight in whispering in the ears of impressionable mortals and spreading lies to perpetuate petty hatred and destructive agendas, the sly tongues of dorus having corrupted both princes and paupers for eons.

Lacking any manner in which to carry or manipulate items aside from their mouths, dorus normally neither carry nor keep any treasure. The fineries that they do maintain, gifted to them by their masters, are limited to decorative beads strung in their hair, ornaments adorning their curving horns, or piercings in their ears and lips.

While dorus are outsiders and do not have to sleep or eat, they choose to do so often. Even for such small creatures, dorus prove gluttonous when it comes to food and often choose very refined meals. A doru serving a wealthy arcane spellcaster frequently stays around not only for the pact made, but also for the meals provided. They are especially fond of rare meats and seafood, preferring shellfish above all else. Like many divs, the doru loves to sleep. They are perfectly capable of staying awake indefinitely, but when not occupied with any of their duties, they want nothing more than to lounge about in a comfortable pile of silken pillows. While sleeping, doru snore loudly—a trait that often bothers mortals who call them as familiars.

## Habitat & Society

Although dorus are most frequently encountered either on their home plane of Abaddon or on the Material Plane, they make use of their stealth to visit other planes to glean secrets. Their small size and relatively low threat allows them to even make long forays into good-aligned planes.

As many divs have some manner of esoteric weakness in their personality, dorus obsess over secrets. While their size and abilities make them perfectly suited to the role of spies and messengers, it is their undying curiosity that motivates them to perform these duties. If a doru suspects a creature of possessing a secret it could either sell or trade to a higher-up, its sly spies or jealously bargains to obtain the hidden knowledge. This is how many end up in servitude in the first place, and it is not uncommon for a doru to be a double or even triple agent, serving multiple masters at the same time, desperately trying to satisfy them all. Only the most cunning dorus can maintain this charade for very long, and this tendency often leads to their downfall.

Typically found alone, dorus work behind the scenes following orders from their masters. Behind the veil of illusion and their natural invisibility, dorus might infiltrate nearly anywhere. Greater divs commonly keep a number of dorus near them as slaves. Thus most dorus

## The Nature of Divs

Divs are a race of fiends native to Abaddon that exist only to cause harm and destruction. They are closely related to daemons and the other fiends of the Outer Planes, though many planar scholars who have studied the matter believe them to be descended from the spirits of the first evil genies. These creatures vary in power, yet all have similar traits that link them. Recorded in ancient texts and passed through oral tradition, stories of divs describe them as engineers and architects, building bridges, bathhouses, and domiciles, yet as the world aged and the intelligent races spread across its surface, these creatures assumed first a confrontational role and gradually a destructive one. Now divs loathe all mortals and seek only to ruin their works, preferring to do so through the manipulation of mortal hands.

Divs commonly speak Abyssal, Celestial, and Infernal.

**Div Traits:** A div possesses the following traits (unless otherwise noted in the creature's entry).

—Immunity to fire and poison.

—Resistance to acid 10 and electricity 10.

—**See in Darkness (Su)** Some divs can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, even that created by a deeper darkness spell.

—**Summon (Sp)** Some divs share the ability to summon others of their kind (the success chance and type of divs summoned are noted in each monster description).

—Telepathy.

serve as watchmen, spies, and advisors, keeping their more powerful fiendish masters apprised of situations in their realms. In addition, dorus convey messages and try to corrupt other intelligent beings for their lords. Even if they cannot sway the creature fully themselves, they attempt to weaken the creature's will and make them more malleable for greater corruption. The first step is always the most difficult.

## Doru Familiars

In addition to serving greater divs, dorus can act as familiars to sorcerers and wizards who have taken the Improved Familiar feat. Oral traditions have placed many dorus as tutors for mortals honing their spellcasting ability. Ancient texts write that dorus eavesdrop near the heavens, learning the tricks to spellcasting so that they might return to the Prime Material Plane and teach this knowledge to their mortal masters—sometimes to the righteous rage of celestial sages.

For the purposes of the Improved Familiar feat, dorus are neutral evil and may be summoned by arcane spellcasters of level 7 or higher.





## GREMLINS

Infamous for their mischievousness, their nasty senses of humor, and their destructive natures, gremlins rightfully earn their reputations as cruel pranksters and sadistic saboteurs. Ranging in size from a relatively towering 3 feet in height down to barely over a foot tall, numerous types of gremlins stalk the world's dark and unseen reaches. They tend to linger near thin spots in reality between Golarion and the mysterious First World, and the smaller a gremlin is, the stronger his ties to this realm of the fey remain. The sinister-looking gremlins known to dwarves as jinkins have eerie powers that grant them the ability to weave mayhem and even curses into complex magical or technological devices. The oft-cursed pugwampis spread misfortune by virtue of their mere presences and delight in seeing others come to harm. The insect-like vexgit exult in ruin—the more complicated the tool, structure, or mechanism, the more they revel in scrapping the work. The following are but three types of gremlins that lurk on the fringes of civilization, though more are known to exist and likely even stranger breeds remain unknown.

## GREMLIN, JINKIN

*Tattered ears like those of an oversized bat crown a miniature humanoid body bristling with nimble claws, rigid spines, and sharp scales. Smiling a maniac grimace, the lean little horror displays a mouth full of needle-like teeth as its glowing, pupilless eyes flicker in some kind of crazed anticipation.*

### JINKIN

CR 1

Usually CE Tiny fey

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Listen +6, Spot +6

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 16, flat-footed 14  
(+4 Dex, +2 natural, +2 size)

**hp** 3 (1d6)

**Fort** +0, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4

**DR** 5/cold iron; **SR** 15

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 40 ft.

**Melee** short sword +6 (1d3–4/19–20) and bite +1 (1d2–4)

**Space** 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +1d6, tinkering

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 1st)

At will—*prestidigitation*

1/hour—*dimension door*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Jinkins hate fair fights. They prefer to sneak into their enemies' dwellings and use their tinkering ability to curse the most precious or dangerous-looking weapons they find there. Alternatively, they'll sometimes curse the targets of their malice while they sleep.

**During Combat** Whenever possible, jinkins enter combat by sneak attacking a foe. In groups, the sadistic gremlins delight in sneak attacking an enemy and fleeing, allowing an ally to make its own sneak attack when the victim searches for its first attacker.

**Morale** If damaged, jinkins typically shriek and make a single retributive attack before fleeing.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 3, **Dex** 19, **Con** 11, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +0; **Grp** –12

**Feats** Dodge, Weapon Finesse<sup>B</sup>

**Skills** Bluff +6, Craft (trapmaking) +6, Disable Device +6, Escape Artist +8, Hide +16, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Spot +6

**Languages** Terran

**Gear** short sword

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any underground

**Organization** solitary, pair, mob (3–7), or band (8–18)

**Treasure** standard



**Advancement** by character class; **Favored Class** rogue

**Level Adjustment** +2

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Sneak Attack (Ex)** This functions identically to the rogue ability of the same name.

**Tinkering (Su)** A group of 6 jinkins, working together over the course of an hour, can create an effect identical to *bestow curse* on any living creature. This functions at CL 6th, and the target creature must either be willing or helpless (but still gets a saving throw to resist). The save DC is set by the jinkin with the highest Charisma score, and is equal to 14 plus that Charisma modifier. Alternatively, these 6 jinkins can attempt to infuse a magic item with a curse. The nature of this curse is determined randomly; half the time the curse simply makes the magic item unreliable so that there's a 20% chance each time it's used that it does not function, but the remainder of the time the curse creates a randomly determined drawback (roll on the drawback table on page 273 of the DMG to determine its nature). A jinkin can take part in a tinkering only once per day, and may only tinker with a creature or object that isn't already cursed. Once a tinkering curse is in place, it is permanent until removed. All jinkin tinkering functions as a 6th-level curse.

Sneaky and sadistic, jinkins are deadly gremlins that inhabit the depths of the Darklands. Well acclimated to the dark, they often hide in cramped quarters and attack larger creatures when they're dangerously positioned. Jinkins delight in little more than pushing a passerby into a bottomless cavern or trapping a much larger creature beneath rocks and nibbling its fingers off. Jinkins also hold dangerous grudges, and one might follow a creature that supposedly slighted it for weeks, looking for an opportunity to take revenge. Should the target possess a magical item, a jinkin relishes the opportunity to tinker with it, performing an innate magical rite that throws the item powers into chaos. Dwarves in particular hate jinkins, with numerous tales in their folklore telling of tragedy at the hands of the gremlins.

The average jinkin stands almost 2 feet tall and weighs about 13 pounds.

## GREMLIN, PUGWAMPI

*As if the world's most revolting lapdog had somehow learned to walk on its back legs, this sickly canine creature slinks forward carefully, its filmy white eyes darting this way and that. Clothed in filthy rags, the nasty-looking little thing snarls and yelps as it clutches an oversized dagger with seemingly murderous intent.*

### PUGWAMPI

Always NE Tiny fey

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Listen** -2, **Spot** +6

**Aura** unluck (20-ft. radius)

### DEFENSE

**CR** 1/2

## Gremlin, Mite

Averaging 2 feet in height, the largest of the gremlin races are mites, tunnel-dwelling thieves and dangerous squatters. They are universally hideous, and dwarves are fond of saying the mites dwell in the darkest tunnels because they simply can't stomach the sight of each other's faces. The tunnels mites dwell in are typically abandoned mines, lonely dungeons, or forgotten passageways, all constructed by other creatures and exploited by the lazy gremlins. While they have no skill at creating their own homes, mites take to crafting traps with cruel genius, and areas overrun by the sadistic freeloaders often bristle with simple but deadly traps and noisy alarms. When mites do attack—either to ambush and rob passersby or to defend their homes—they overwhelm foes by swarming over them, stabbing and cutting with their tiny knives in a bloodthirsty frenzy. Mites prefer the worship of archdevils, particularly Mammon or Dispat, who embody the gremlins' avarice and deceptiveness. Statistics for mites appear on page 266 of the *Tome of Horrors Revisited*.

**AC** 13, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 12

(+1 Dex, +2 size)

**hp** 3 (1d6)

**Fort** +0, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

**DR** 2/cold iron; **SR** 7

### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** dagger +3 (1d2-4)

**Ranged** shortbow +3 (1d3/x3)

**Space** 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 1st)

At will—*prestidigitation*, *speaking with animals*

1/day—*shatter* (DC 10)

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Surprisingly patient for gremlins, pugwampis often create lairs in dangerous places—under rickety bridges, in bramble patches, near cliffs—for the sole purpose of imperiling those who pass by using their unluck aura. They try to stay out of sight, but keep vantages from which they can enjoy their victims' torments.

**During Combat** Pugwampis always prefer to fight in precarious settings, relying on their unluck aura to end combat prematurely. If forced to do battle, they make quick use of their *shatter* ability, then try to strike from hiding and goad their foes into dangerous situations or places where they know help waits.

**Morale** Total cowards, pugwampis flee upon taking the slightest damage.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 3, **Dex** 13, **Con** 10, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6





Mean, dog-faced, and cowardly, nothing—not even other gremlins—likes pugwampis. Notoriously unlucky, these gremlins take disproportionate amounts of enjoyment from the accidents and missteps of other creatures, often going to great lengths to manufacture the perfect deadfalls or stumbling blocks. They then wait nearby, both to laugh at inevitable mishaps and to make sure their personal unluckiness passes off to their victims. At some point in the distant past, pugwampis became enamored with gnolls, seeing in the beastmen a kindred form and thus aspiring to the height and deadly prowess of the savage warriors. Gnolls, for their part, hate pugwampis even more than other creatures, mostly due to the gremlins' weakness and sickening fawning, though they'll rarely keep the gremlins around just to torment them. Pugwampis live in caves close to the surface and occasionally venture forth to find victims upon which to inflict their sick senses of humor.

Pugwampis, on average, reach heights of close to 2 feet and generally weigh about 11 pounds.

**Base Atk** +0; **Grp** –12

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse<sup>®</sup>

**Skills** Bluff +2, Craft (trapmaking) +4, Disable Device +4, Hide +17, Ride +5, Spot +6

**Languages** Gnoll, Terran

**Gear** dagger, shortbow with 20 arrows

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** tropical hills

**Organization** solitary, pair, pack (3–7), or tribe (8–36)

**Treasure** standard

**Advancement** by character class; **Favored Class** druid

**Level Adjustment** +3

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Unluck (Su)** A pugwampi radiates an aura of unluck to a radius of 20 feet. A creature in this area must roll 2d20 whenever a situation calls for a d20 roll (such as an attack roll, a skill check, or a saving throw) and must use the lowest of the two results generated. This is a mind-affecting effect that does not work on animals, other gremlins, and gnolls. Any character that gains any sort of luck bonus (such as that granted by a *luckstone* or *divine favor*) is immune to the pugwampi unluck aura.

**Skills** A pugwampi gains a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks, but is somewhat hard of hearing and has a –4 penalty on Listen checks (which is why they always scream and yell at the tops of their tiny lungs).

## GREMLIN, VEXGIT

*With a head like an angry crustacean, this fierce little humanoid clacks and rattles within a cockroach-like carapace of greasy plates. A tiny mouth of sharp, spidery teeth flexes between two large, beetle-like mandibles, and behind the thing lashes a long, grossly segmented tail. Most unnerving, though, is the well-used spiked metal hammer the bug-creature wields, hefting the miniature weapon with what appears to be considerable skill.*

## VEXGIT

**CR 1**

Usually LE Tiny fey

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1

## DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 13, flat-footed 16

(+1 Dex, +4 natural, +2 size)

**hp** 8 (1d6+5)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3

**DR** 5/cold iron; **SR** 11

## OFFENSE

**Spd** 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee** maul +0 (1d6–2) and bite –2 (1d3–4)

**Space** 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** speedy sabotage, wrecking crew



## Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd)

At will—*prestidigitation*, *snare*  
1/hour—*rusting grasp*

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** Vexgits delight in ending fights before they begin, devising deadly traps from sharpened metal or setting up ruinous cave-ins. They often make use of their *snare* spell-like ability to assure victims get snagged in the optimal spots for deadly traps or their own cruel weapons.

**During Combat** Having a particular favor for their miniature mauls, vexgits act bold, climbing to menace foes from unusual angles. They also delight in using their *rusting grasp* ability to destroy armor and weapons capable of harming them.

**Morale** Like all gremlins, vexgits are ultimately cowards. They typically try to climb into small nooks or hide amid large machines if confronted by a foe capable of doing them harm.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 6, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +0; **Grp** –12

**Feats** Toughness, Weapon Finesse<sup>B</sup>

**Skills** Appraise +5, Climb +6, Craft (trapmaking) +5, Disable Device +9, Hide +13 (+17 amid metal or stone), Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +5, Move Silently +1, Open Lock +5,

**Languages** Terran

**Gear** maul (same stats as warhammer)

## ECOLOGY

**Environment** underground or urban

**Organization** solitary, pair, crew (3–6), or shop (8–20)

**Treasure** no coins; standard goods; double items

**Advancement** by character class; **Favored Class** rogue

**Level Adjustment** +2

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Speedy Sabotage (Su)** Vexgits are exceedingly adept in disassembling machinery, reducing even complex devices to trash with shocking speed. When using the Disable Device ability, these gremlins treat all devices as being one category simpler for the purposes of determining how long it takes to use the skill. Thus, difficult devices are treated as tricky, tricky devices are treated as simple, and simple devices can be dismantled as a free action.

**Wrecking Crew (Su)** A group of up to 6 vexgits can work together to dismantle a single device. This ability functions like the aid another action, but a single vexgit can receive help from up to 5 other vexgits, granting it up to a +10 bonus on its Disable Device or Open Locks check.

**Skills** A vexgit gains a +4 racial bonus on Disable Device checks, as well as a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks in areas primarily made of metal or stone. The rustle of its carapace imposes a –4 penalty on Move Silently checks (no matter how hard it tries, a vexgit can never fully silence the skittering scrape of its rough armored plates). In addition, a vexgit has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

## GREMLIN BELL

**Aura** faint abjuration; **CL** 2nd

**Slot** none; **Price** 400 gp; **Weight** —

## DESCRIPTION

From rural villages to bustling cities, many blame even the slightest misfortunes on the depredations of gremlins. Regardless of whether such creatures are truly to blame for a community's problems, many shrines and hedge wizards sell tiny charms to their neighbors, talismans meant to ward off lesser evils: *gremlin bells*.

Crafted from bronze, brass, or countless other semiprecious metals, these miniature bells—no more than an inch tall—hang from delicate chains or short silken cords and ring with a tinny tinkling. Typically affixed over doorframes or to precious objects, when rung frequently these ornaments supposedly ward off gremlins and protect those nearby from ill fortune. And unlike most such folk magic, expertly made *gremlin bells* actually work.

*Gremlin bells* have two uses. First, they irritate gremlins. Any gremlin that comes within 20 feet of a *gremlin bell* cannot make use of any of its supernatural abilities and becomes uncomfortable, typically seeking to leave the area (though it is not compelled to do so). Secondly, once per day a *gremlin bell* can be purposefully rung. All gremlins within 20 feet who can hear the chime must make a DC 16 Will save or be sickened for the next 5 minutes.

## CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *protection from evil*;

**Cost** 200 gp, 16 XP

Maniacally destructive little brutes, vexgits delight in scrapping and sabotaging, the larger and more complicated the target, the better. While one of these spiteful gremlins might delight in trapping someone behind a door with a jammed lock or sneakily removing all the nails from a small boat, it's when groups of vexgits get together that they're truly dangerous. In such instances, the portcullis of a vexgit-infested gatehouse turns into a deadly weapon, while a clock tower becomes an avalanche of gears waiting to topple. Thus, engineers of all walks pass warnings of masterful constructions destroyed by these unruly gremlins, with many blaming their greatest failures on such tiny saboteurs. Like most gremlins, vexgits live underground, but cities and the devices they find there fascinate them, often drawing mobs of the dangerous fey to city sewer tunnels and abandoned warehouses.

Vexgits typically stand 1 and a half feet tall and weigh approximately 16 pounds.





## PERYTON

A menagerie of bestial features combine to form this vicious creature. From the body and forelegs of a powerful stag issue sharpened hooves, powerful black wings, and the taloned haunches of a gigantic bird of prey. Its head combines the features of deer and wolf, a set of sharp horns arching over bloodstained jaws. Most unnerving is its shadow, though, which spills forth in the shape of a human figure.

### PERYTON

CR 4

Always CE Medium magical beast

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Listen** +10, **Spot** +10

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14

(+3 Dex, +4 natural)

**hp** 42 (5d10+15)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

**DR** 5/magic

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** gore +8 (2d4+3/18–20) and  
2 hooves (1d4+1)

**Special Attacks** augmented critical, shadow mark

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Perytons strike by surprise if possible, swooping down quickly from cliffs or cloudy skies. When hunting through the open air, they circle like vultures, choosing their prey and using their shadow mark in preparation for their strike.

**During Combat** Preferring to make swooping charges as they enter battle, perytons focus upon one target, attacking voraciously until their victim is dead, making as many attacks as possible in the hopes of using their augmented critical ability. Should a target prove resistant to a peryton's attacks, it takes to the air again, either to flee or to choose another target.

**Morale** Brutal predators, perytons fight viciously even when wounded. Only if they're reduced to 5 or fewer hit points do they attempt to flee.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 17, **Dex** 16, **Con** 17, **Int** 11, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +5; **Grp** +8

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (gore)

**Skills** **Listen** +10, **Spot** +10

**Languages** Azlanti

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary, pair, or flock (3–8)

**Treasure** standard

**Advancement** 6–8 HD (Medium), 9–15 HD (Large)

**Level Adjustment** +2 (cohort)

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Augmented Critical (Ex)** A peryton's gore attack threatens a critical hit on an 18–20. If a peryton kills a humanoid foe with a critical hit, it can tear out the victim's heart with its wolf-like teeth as a free action. Any creature that witnesses this savage event must make a DC 13 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1 round. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Shadow Mark (Su)** As a free action, a peryton can make a ranged touch attack by flying over a humanoid target—the maximum range of this attack is 300 feet. If the peryton hits, its shadow transforms to match the shadow of the creature struck. Once a peryton has established this link, it gains a +2 morale bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls made against that target, and every time the peryton hits that target with an attack, the creature must make a DC 13 Will save or become frightened. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Bizarre, savage creatures, perytons combine the features of ominous birds of prey, mighty stags, and ravenous wolves. Stealing the features of a lean buck for its body, forelegs, and jagged antlers, a peryton's wings, hindquarters, and razor-sharp talons are those of some mighty avian predator. Below eyes burning with endless



hunger sprouts a wolf's muzzle, filled with shearing, bloody teeth, stained by gory evidence of the beast's insatiable appetite for warm hearts. Strangest, though, is the creature's shadow, which light reveals to be not that of a winged quadruped, but a humanoid silhouette.

A typical peryton measures 4 feet long and 4 and a half feet tall, though the beasts' forward-pointing antlers often make them appear even taller. Their wingspans commonly reach over 11 feet wide and they weigh, on average, between 240 and 380 pounds.

## Ecology

Perytons stalk any beasts weaker than themselves, from the smallest lizards to stags and wolves to even other monstrous creatures. Humanoids are their favored prey, though, as these winged murderers have morbid taste for the warm hearts of such creatures. Rumors hold that in the moments after a peryton eats a humanoid's heart its shadow changes from that of a human into a more natural shape, and that during this time the monster is somehow more vulnerable. There is some truth to this, as the creatures grow slightly sluggish after gorging on humanoid hearts, but this state never lasts for long and perytons typically withdraw from danger once they've feasted. Some scholars familiar with the ancient legend of the peryton's creation (requiring a DC 20 Knowledge [history] or bardic knowledge check) suggest that in the moments after devouring a heart the beasts have some recollection of their own lost mortal lives, but most naturalists and those who have hunted perytons view such imaginings as romantic nonsense.

The most unusual feature of a peryton is its shadow, a human-shaped figure that defies all conventions of light and shape. Obviously magical, the unnatural effect unnerves most who look upon it and suggests the beasts' cursed origins. Regardless of what perytons once were, though, they now breed true and are a viable species unto their own. After their violent mating ritual—which often ends in death for the male—a female peryton lays a single foot-tall black egg, which 7 months later hatches into a squirming and furless pink fledgling.

## Habitat & Society

For centuries scholars believed that perytons possessed only a bestial level of intelligence but could blather human-like sounds. In deadly truth, perytons prove more intelligent than many humans and speak a dialect of the ancient Azlanti tongue. While capable of organizing, the limitations of their forms and a widespread loathing of others of their kind prevent the creatures from becoming a more organized threat. Although adult male perytons often attack one another on sight, small family groups occasionally form around a strong female. A flock usually

## Myth of the Peryton

In the final days before the Age of Darkness, before the heavens cried devastation upon the world, the people of Azlant went about their lives unaware. Yet, when the half-mad old sage Osein stared upon the motions of the stars, he prophesied doom. Although he tried to warn his people, the residents of Gibrav mistrusted the strange old hermit and cast him outside the town's walls for his raving.

As the red star of ruin grew brighter in the night sky, Osein wandered the forests in helpless frustration. Eventually he lay down to sleep his final sleep, but no sooner had he begun to doze than he awoke to the sound of his name. Standing over him loomed a strange animal, a stag with a long black beard and antlers like a jagged crown. The stag spoke in Osein's voice and told him how his people might avoid the coming ruin. Afraid but hopeful, old Osein rushed back to Gibrav.

While his neighbors slept, the sage snuck into town and—as the stag had told him—opened wide the three great gates guarding the community. No sooner had he done so than the animals of the forest began to pick their way from the shadows. First rats and weasels skittered through the gates, and the old man waited in wonder. Then came hawks and bats, and the animals drew close to the stone homes. Next came fox and deer, and the beasts pushed open doors and prowled through windows. Then stalked wolves and cougars, and the people of Gibrav began to scream in their beds as the massacre ensued. Horrified, Osein rushed to the bearded stag, but the devil Barbatos only laughed, and in the bellies of beasts the people of Gibrav never faced the devastation of the falling star. Yet it's said that the souls of Gibrav live on, devil-cursed and terrible, amalgams of their beastly murderers that hunger for blood and cast the shadows of men, true *perytons* from the Azlanti word meaning “damned.”

consists of this alpha female, two or three weaker females, and a half-dozen young. While males are typically driven off after a year, females who swear allegiance to the alpha are allowed to stay among the group—and those who don't are driven off or killed. Males will occasionally attack such groups in an attempt to spirit off a mate. Those who are rebuffed usually return with victims, hoping that an offering of a living heart might attract a consort. While lone perytons roam along shores and through mountainous areas, flocks prefer to nest on high cliffs and broken, deserted lands overlooking bodies of salt water. Flocks consider all land within sight of their lairs to be their territory, violently attacking any creatures that draw near.



## Fire in the Blood

Hundreds of years ago, the efreeti Prince Jhavhul sought to impress Ymeri, Elemental Queen of the Inferno, and offered himself as her consort.

She rebuffed him with hardly a thought, observing how he was a simple prince with no army and but a fragile genie's body to offer her. Humiliated and enraged, but more determined than ever to win Ymeri's favor, Jhavhul decided to raise an army and become the monster she wanted as a lover.

Jhavhul traveled to the Material Plane in order to impress his cruel mistress, but once there he was swiftly captured and imprisoned by a wizard-priest named Ezer Hazzebaim. With Jhavhul's forced assistance, the human mystic and his army of slaves and servitor spirits scoured the northern deserts in search of the corpse of Xotani the Firebleeder, one of the monstrous Spawn of Rovagug. The discoverer of the Firebleeder's grave, legend said, could reincarnate himself in the form of that great, devastating beast. All it would take was 1000 wishes, less than a year's work for an enslaved genie like Jhavhul.

Before the ancient wizard-priest discovered Xotani's final resting place, however, his control over Jhavhul slipped. Ezer narrowly survived the resulting battle, abandoning his plans and army by escaping to the Plane of Fire. Jhavhul led his newfound army on a bloody crusade across the northern deserts to celebrate his victory, and continued his former master's search for the Firebleeder's corpse, for if he could take on Xotani's traits, surely he would be irresistible to Ymeri. Building on Ezer's research, Jhavhul located the Firebleeder's immense remains in a large cavern deep beneath the Brazen Peaks.

In order to infuse himself with the power of the Firebleeder, Jhavhul needed to expend 1,000 wishes to ready the transformation. This he could not accomplish alone.

Jhavhul knew he must put his own wishes in the mouths of mortals. So he settled in to become the ruler of a temple devoted to Rovagug, a place that came to be known

as the House of the Beast. Over the course of a single season, weird castles appeared in the Brazen Peaks, men transformed into legendary creatures, and others swam in piles of coins that appeared out of thin air. Some gained immortality while others reunited with never-were sweethearts or old lovers miraculously returned to life. In each case, Jhavhul's wishes nudged the multiverse, smudging destiny and reweaving fate.

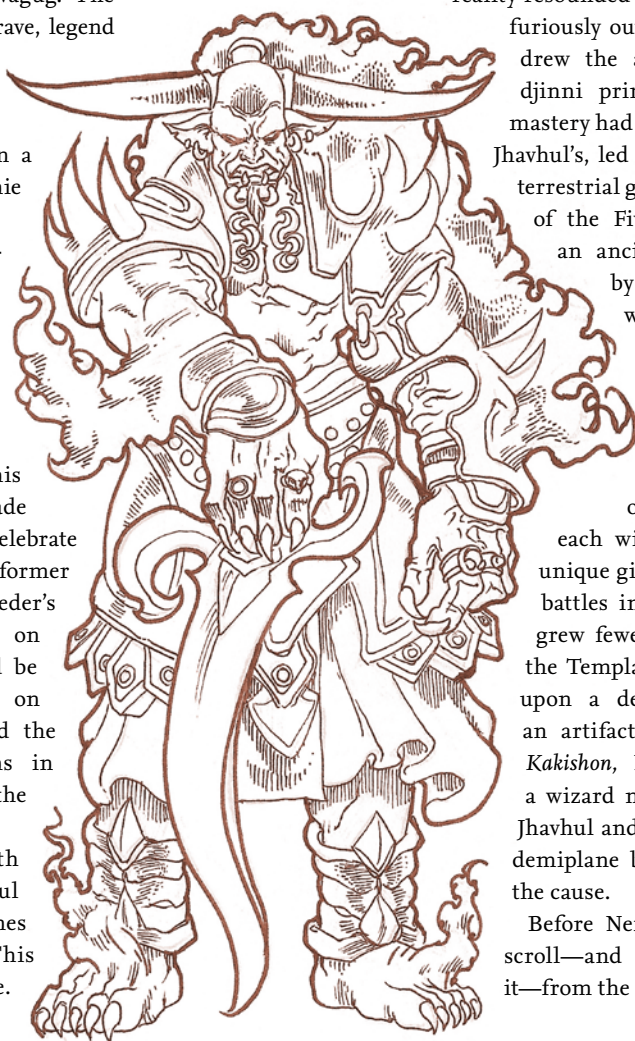
Genies wise in the way of wishcraft learn to sense the ripples of fate, hearing in their flow an ethereal symphony. To a trained ear, Jhavhul's blunt manipulations of reality resounded like an orchestra playing furiously out of tune. The cacophony drew the attention of Nefeshti, a djinni princess whose own wish-mastery had gained her a force to rival Jhavhul's, led by a quintet of powerful terrestrial genies called the Templars of the Five Winds. According to an ancient wish put into play by Nefeshti, her templars would live forever so long as they retained her favor. But even immortality couldn't hold back the sheer outlandish grandeur of an army of self-created supermen, each with its own imaginative, unique gift of fate. After a series of battles in which Nefeshti's forces grew fewer and fewer in number, the Templars of the Five Winds set upon a desperate strategy. Using an artifact known as the *Scroll of Kakishon*, Nefeshti's human lover, a wizard named Andrathi, trapped Jhavhul and his forces in a forgotten demiplane by sacrificing himself to the cause.

Before Nefeshti could reclaim the scroll—and those trapped within it—from the field of battle, the ancient

### Spoiler Warning!

What follows is both the background and the outline for the Legacy of Fire Adventure Path.

If you intend to play in this campaign, be warned! The contents of these two pages spoil the plots of the upcoming adventures as thoroughly as possible!





parchment fell into the hands of one of Jhavhul's lowest assistants, a craven gnoll cleric named Shirak. She knew that if she kept the map safe, someday she or one of her ancestors could release the efreeti prince and be greatly rewarded. When Nefeshti arrived on the scene, Shirak had long since fled back to the depths of the House of the Beast to hide the *Scroll of Kakishon*, and ever since, the Templars of the Five Winds have kept vigil for even the slightest hint of their old enemy's return.

## *Howl of the Carrion King*

by Erik Mona

**Pathfinder #19, Levels 1–4**

The PCs join Merchant Prince Almah Roveshki in a noble quest to reclaim the ruined village of Kelmarane from the savage gnolls who have claimed it as their own. During the adventure, the PCs discover the gnolls are led by a corrupted janni—a fallen member of an ancient order known as the Templars of the Five Winds. When one of their own becomes the unwitting host for a second fallen member of the same mysterious order, the PCs become caught up in a series of events that will come to be known as the Legacy of Fire.

## *House of the Beast*

by Tim Hitchcock

**Pathfinder #20, Levels 5–6**

Tipped off by a mysterious traveler named Zayifid (in truth a disguised and disgraced Templar of the Five Winds), the PCs travel up the slopes of Pale Mountain and to the House of the Beast to confront the Carrion King himself. Yet deep inside the ruins, the PCs learn that there is more hidden within the ruined temple than a ruler of gnolls—for in the House's deepest level lies the *Scroll of Kakishon*, the artifact used to imprison Jhavhul so long ago. Yet can the PCs secure the scroll for themselves before the treacherous Zayifid can claim it for his own dark purposes?

## *The Jackal's Price*

by Darrin Drader

**Pathfinder #21, Levels 7–8**

The PCs own the *Scroll of Kakishon*, but they are not the only ones who seek to control the potent artifact. In order to find a scholar with the knowledge and resources to unravel the scroll's mysteries (and perhaps find a buyer for the great treasure it holds), the PCs travel to the bustling city of Katapesh, only to run afoul of one of that city's most notorious criminals, a man named Father Jackal. When Father Jackal's agents steal the scroll and abduct the PC's ally, a sage named Rayhan, they must track down the perpetrators before they can learn its secrets.

## *The End of Eternity*

by Jason Nelson

**Pathfinder #22, Levels 9–10**

The secrets of the *Scroll of Kakishon* are revealed! Yet when the PCs attempt to open the portal to the world held within the map, something unforeseen occurs. Instead of a gentle portal into paradise, a violent explosion of magic transports the PCs into Kakashon and strands them on a remote isle in the mystic realm—at the same time releasing Jhavhul and much of his army into the city of Katapesh! The PCs must find their way out of the demiplane within the map—but can they survive the wrath of the ragtag remnants of Jhavhul's army and at the same time face the malevolent protean guardians of the End of Eternity?

## *The Impossible Eye*

by Greg A. Vaughan

**Pathfinder #23, Levels 11–12**

The PCs finally escape Kakishon—only to emerge into a mysterious dungeon. Soon the PCs learn that they have become trapped in Jhavhul's own estate in the legendary City of Brass, and that Jhavhul has taken up his old quest to awaken and become the new Firebleeder! As they search for escape, the PCs learn much of Jhavhul's plans and weaknesses by exploring his home—and even encounter the efreeti's old enemy and master, Ezer Hazzebaim, who in his attempt to find revenge against Jhavhul has become a prisoner as well. The key to freedom lies in a magical mirror stolen long ago from the Sultan of the City of Brass called the *Impossible Eye*, a device hidden somewhere within Jhavhul's palace. Yet as the PCs finally recover the *Impossible Eye*, the sultan himself sends a dragon minion to reclaim the prize!

## *The Final Wish*

by Rob McCreary

**Pathfinder #24, Levels 13–14**

The PCs return to Katapesh to find that Jhavhul has traveled to Pale Mountain and claimed the village of Kelmarane as his own. After liberating the village once again (although this time from an army of wish-fueled genies and warriors), the PCs discover that Jhavhul is dangerously close to the final wish—the one that will awaken the spirit of Xotani the Firebleeder and transform the efreeti into a new spawn of Rovagug. That this act could cause Pale Mountain to transform into a devastating volcano and spells doom for Kelmarane. There's also no telling what a titanic transformed Jhavhul could do to Katapesh in order to prove his love for Ymiri. The PCs must delve deep into the fiery chambers hidden deep below Pale Mountain to confront Jhavhul at Xotani's Grave in order to prevent the advent of a terrible new elemental war!



## VALEROS

MALE HUMAN FIGHTER 1

ALIGN NG INIT +6 SPEED 20 ft.

DEITY: Cayden Cailean

HOMELAND: Andoran

### ABILITIES

14	STR
15	DEX
12	CON
13	INT
8	WIS
10	CHA

### DEFENSE

HP 11  
AC 17  
touch 12, flat-footed 15  
Fort +3, Ref +2,  
Will -1

### OFFENSE

Melee longsword +4 (1d8+2/19-20)  
Dual Wielding longsword +2  
(1d8+2/19-20) and  
short sword +1 (1d6+1/19-20)  
Ranged short bow +3 (1d6/x3)  
Base Atk +1; Grp +3

### SKILLS

Climb	+1
Intimidate	+4
Ride	+6
Swim	-4

### FEATS

Improved Initiative, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword)



**Combat Gear** alchemist's fire; **Other Gear** chainmail, longsword, short sword, shortbow with 20 arrows, backpack, rations (2), silk rope, 1 gp

Born a farmer's son in the quiet Andoren countryside, Valeros spent his youth dreaming of adventure and exploring the world. For the past several years, he's been a mercenary with the Band of the Mauler, a guard for the Aspis Consortium, a freelance bounty hunter, and hired muscle for a dozen different employers. Gone is his youthful naivete, replaced by scars and the resolve of a veteran warrior. While noble at heart, Valeros hides this beneath a jaded, sometimes crass demeanor, often claiming that there's no better way to end a day's adventuring than with "an evening of hard drinking and a night of soft company."

## KYRA

FEMALE HUMAN CLERIC 1

ALIGN NG INIT -1 SPEED 30 ft.

DEITY: Sarenrae

HOMELAND: Qadira

### ABILITIES

13	STR
8	DEX
14	CON
10	INT
15	WIS
12	CHA

### DEFENSE

HP 10  
AC 15  
touch 9, flat-footed 15  
Fort +4, Ref -1  
Will +6

### OFFENSE

Melee scimitar +1 (1d6+1/18-20)  
Ranged light crossbow -1  
(1d8/19-20)  
Base Atk +0; Grp +1

### SKILLS

Concentration	+6
Heal	+6
Knowledge (religion)	+4

### FEATS

Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency (scimitar)



**Gear** chain shirt, heavy wooden shield, scimitar, light crossbow with 10 bolts, backpack, rations (6), silver holy symbol, 12 gp

Kyra was one of the few survivors of a brutal raid on her hometown, and on the smoking ruins of her village she swore her life and sword arm to Sarenrae. Possessed of a fierce will, pride in her faith, and skill with the scimitar, Kyra has traveled far since her trial by fire. She lost her family and home that fateful day, yet where another might be consumed by anger and a thirst for revenge, Kyra has found peace in the Dawnflower, and in the belief that, if she can prevent even one death at evil hands, her own losses will not have been in vain.



# pre-generated characters

## MERISIEL



FEMALE ELF ROGUE 1

ALIGN CN INIT +3 SPEED 30 ft.

DEITY: Calistria

HOMELAND: Varisia

### ABILITIES

12	STR
17	DEX
12	CON
8	INT
13	WIS
10	CHA

### DEFENSE

HP 7  
AC 15  
touch 13, flat-footed 12

Fort +1, Ref +5,  
Will +1; +2 against  
enchantment

Special Qualities low-  
light vision, trapfinding;  
Immune sleep

### OFFENSE

Melee rapier +1 (1d6+1/18–20)  
Ranged dagger +3 (1d4+1/19–20)  
Base Atk +0; Grp +1

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

### SKILLS

Disable Device +3  
Hide +7  
Listen +7  
Move Silently +7  
Search +5  
Spot +7  
Tumble +7

### FEATS

Dodge



**Combat Gear** acid, alchemist's fire (2), thunderstone; **Other Gear** leather armor, rapier, daggers (6), backpack, grappling hook, hooded lantern, oil (5), rations (3), silk rope, thieves' tools, 25 gp

Merisiel's life experiences have taught her to enjoy things to their fullest as they occur, since it's impossible to tell when the good times might end. Never the sharpest knife in the drawer, Merisiel makes up for this by carrying at least a dozen of them on her person. She hasn't met a problem yet that can't, in one way or another, be solved with things that slice. While she's always on the move and working on her latest batch of plots for easy money, in the end it comes down to being faster than everyone else—either on her feet, or with her beloved blades. She wouldn't have it any other way.

## EZREN



MALE HUMAN WIZARD 1

ALIGN NG INIT -1 SPEED 30 ft.

DEITY: Atheist

HOMELAND: Absalom

### ABILITIES

11	STR
9	DEX
12	CON
16	INT
15	WIS
9	CHA

### DEFENSE

HP 5  
AC 9  
touch 9, flat-footed 9

Fort +3, Ref -1,  
Will +4

### OFFENSE

Melee cane +0 (1d6)  
Ranged light crossbow -1  
(1d8/19–20)  
Base Atk +0; Grp +0

Spells Prepared (CL 1st)  
1st—*mage armor*, *sleep* (DC 14)  
0—*daze* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *light*

### SKILLS

Appraise +7  
Concentration +5  
Knowledge (arcana) +7  
Knowledge (geography) +7  
Knowledge (history) +7  
Spellcraft +7

### FEATS

Combat Casting, Great  
Fortitude, Scribe Scroll



**Combat Gear** *scroll of burning hands*, alchemist's fire (2); **Other Gear** cane (as club), dagger, light crossbow with 20 bolts, backpack, rations (6), scroll case, spellbook, spell component pouch, 35 gp

Born to a successful spice merchant in one of Absalom's more affluent districts, Ezren's childhood was pleasantly safe. This changed when his father was charged with heresy. Ezren spent much of his adult life attempting to prove his father's innocence, only to discover his father was guilty. The revelation shook Ezren's faith in family and church to the core and he abandoned both, setting out into the world to find a new life. Ezren fell naturally into the ways of wizardry, and swiftly became a gifted spellcaster.



## Next Month in PATHFINDER™



### House of the Beast

by Tim Hitchcock

From his lair high upon Pale Mountain's forlorn slopes, the savage Carrion King prepares his gnoll legions for war. But within his dreaded citadel, the accursed House of the Beast, sleeps a deeper and more terrible evil. Can the PCs hope to fight their way through the legions of the gnoll warlord to confront the dreaded tyrant himself? And what greater menace, kept hidden from the world for centuries, struggles for release from the infamous House of the Beast?

### In The Shadow of Pale Mountain

by Steven Kenson

At the heart of the Brazen Peaks rises Pale Mountain, a barren spire of treacherous cliffs and pallid stone. Around the ominous peak lies a land of danger and mystery, a region long deserted and only now coming back to the ambitious attentions of Katapesh's people. Learn of the environs surrounding newly retaken Kelmarae, the beasts that endlessly menace the region, and what other dangers lie in the shadow of Pale Mountain.

### Sarenrae

by Sean K Reynolds

Gaze upon the wonders of the Dawnflower and seek comfort from her healing hand. Learn the ways of Sarenrae, flame-haired goddess of healing, honesty, redemption, and the sun, and take up arms in defense of the weak alongside those who flock to her shining banner.

### And More!

In the caves near Pale Mountain burns a raging fury—quench an immortal evil or become kindling in a new Set Piece adventure. Plus: There's a murderer on the loose, and Channa Ti is the prime suspect. Discover the truth in next month's Pathfinder's Journal by Elaine Cunningham.

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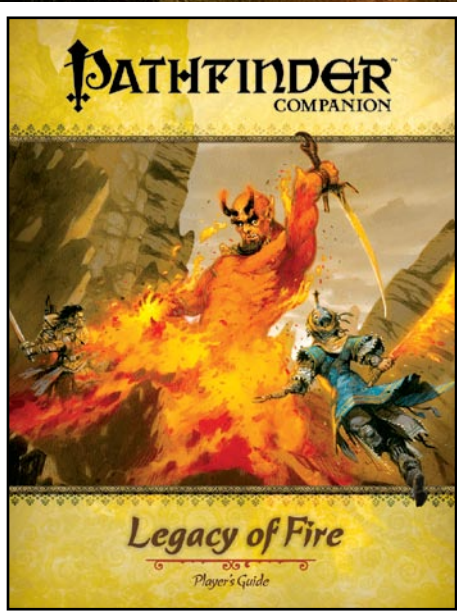
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*In the earliest days, when the gods shaped the heavens and the earth, light flowed through the spheres into the world and all things were new. The gods made the genies, the first people, then the dragons and all the creatures of the earth. The gods were very pleased with themselves.*

*Or rather, most of them were. Rovagug saw the creation of things, and at first he smiled, for he was newly risen as well. But then he gazed upon the land, and felt an itch to scratch the stones, to see what was inside a genie. His thousand feet must have claws of adamantite for a reason, and like a jackal with a bone, Rovagug tore and chewed and howled and spit, as if the earth were his to despoil.*

*The other gods looked on, and spoke the first divine anger.*

*"How dare he destroy what we have made? Why does he kill and claw and break the shining harmonies of creation? We must stop him."*

*The gods spoke to Rovagug of peace. He ignored them, and vomited forth the bones of a forgotten race.*

*The gods spoke to Rovagug of beauty and the harmony of new-made creatures. He ignored them, and tore open the sky with stones hurled from the heavens, setting fires across the world.*

*The gods tried to pull Rovagug away as he climbed to the heavens, clawing at the moon. He turned and snapped at their hands. His teeth ripped the robes of Sarenrae, and shattered the shield of Abadar, and devoured the weak among the gods' servants.*

*The gods' new rage made their former anger seem as nothing; they gathered their strength and fought Rovagug in a fury, and they were all cast down.*

*No fury can stand before wrath, and nothing can destroy destruction.*







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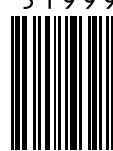
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