

SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER®



SKY KING'S TOMB

ADVENTURE PATH

CULT OF THE CAVE WORM

By Scott D. Young

THOSE LEFT BEHIND

Ancient lore says that some dwarves didn't answer the call of the Quest for Sky and chose to remain in the depths. They suffered loss and hunger. They felt that Torag and their kin betrayed them. They claimed their kin stole their wealth and escaped to the surface, abandoning them to die. Hearing the cries of those dwarves, the foul god Droskar, Master of the Dark Furnace, offered his embrace. The cruel taskmaster would provide for those left behind, but they would toil under him eternally.



PATHFINDER

AUTHOR

Scott D. Young

ADDITIONAL WRITING

Vanessa Hoskins

DEVELOPERS

John Compton, Adam Daigle, and Vanessa Hoskins

DESIGN LEAD

Michael Sayre

EDITING LEADS

Avi Kool, Patrick Hurley

EDITORS

Patrick Hurley, Avi Kool, Zac Moran, Ianara Natividad, Solomon St. John, and Simone D. Sallé

COVER ARTIST

Mirco Paganessi

INTERIOR ARTISTS

Wilmar Ballespi Escarp, Rael Dionisio, Ivan Koritarev, Rob Lazzaretti, Iliana Naydenova, Mirco Paganessi, Darko Stojanovic

ART DIRECTION

Sonja Morris

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Adriana Gasperi

PUBLISHER

Erik Mona



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Cult of the Cave Worm

by Scott D. Young

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by Scott D. Young

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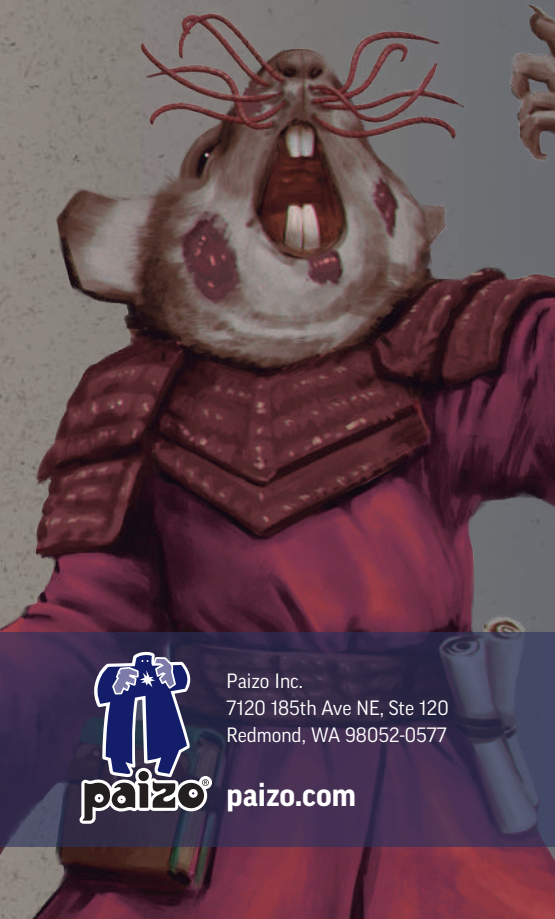
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CONTENT WARNING

While *Pathfinder Adventure Path #194: Cult of the Cave Worm* contains typical Pathfinder action and adventure, it also includes content related to financial exploitation and systematic creditor abuse. Before you run this adventure, understand that consent from everyone at the table, including players and the Game Master, is vital to a safe and fun play experience. You should talk with your players before beginning the adventure and modify descriptions or events as appropriate.



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CULT OF THE CAVE WORM

CULT OF THE CAVE WORM

Chapter 1:
Candlestone
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Chapter 1: Candlestone Cult 4

Finding Taargick's tomb requires tracking the elusive crimson worm that lairs there. Seeking a cult dedicated to the beast, the PCs travel to the Court of Ether, a subterranean fey city whose sinister queen is equally eager to find (and destroy) the cult. The PCs must infiltrate the cult and steal an occult map they've devised for locating the crimson worm.

Chapter 2: On the Trail of the Worm 20

A cave-in triggered by their clash with the cult leaves the PCs stranded, forcing them to navigate unfamiliar tunnels back to Highhelm. Yet the hryngar sorcerer Narseigus, another hunter of Taargick's tomb, traveled here recently. As the PCs uncover their new rival's machinations, they realize the tomb represents more than a cultural treasure; it's a catalyst for imminent war

Chapter 3: City of Toil..... 42

To uncover Narseigus's plans and how to stop him, the PCs infiltrate Hagegraf, a dangerous hryngar city where toil and exploitation are commonplace. Only by locating and breaking into the sorcerer's private residence can the PCs uncover his greater plan, track the Avernal Worm, and escape to rally dwarven allies to stop Narseigus.

DARKLANDS DENIZENS ARE PEOPLE TOO

While running an adventure in the Darklands, it's important to remember that the people who populate this subterranean realm are not inherently evil or brutish. They come from cultures that have adapted to a harsh and unforgiving environment. Sometimes, that makes them quick to judge or quick to exploit an available resource before it becomes scarce.

Though these creatures do sometimes perform evil actions, it's important to acknowledge the difference between a complicated, unforgiving society and the evil acts of an individual. While fey are capricious, only a few of them are truly evil. While hryngar society focuses on toil, taxes, and a toxic labor culture, only those hryngar who willingly and knowingly cause harm are villainous. Roleplaying these creatures as complex individuals will result in far better stories for your game.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Cult of the Cave Worm" is designed for four characters. Characters should level up between chapters.

- 5** The characters begin this adventure at 5th level.
- 6** The characters begin Chapter 2 at 6th level.
- 7** The characters reach 7th level just before entering Hagegraf in Chapter 3.
- 8** The characters advance to 8th level at the end of this adventure.





CHAPTER 1: CANDLESTONE CULT

Through communing with spirits and recovering his clan dagger, the PCs hope to locate, access, and discover the secret tomb of dwarves' first great king, Taargick. Unfortunately, beyond a cryptic clue that "the worm knows the way," the trail is cold. This refers to the fabled crimson worm Zogototaru who befriended High King Taargick ages ago, rarely being seen before retreating to unknown depths for hibernation. Finding the beast requires exceptional means.

Fortunately, the PCs aren't alone. They've recruited Jirelga, a deep gnome guide who's listened for cave worm rumors ever since Zogototaru destroyed her village. That same rampage drew the crimson worm to the Court of Ether, a city of evil fey built among stalactites. Though its ruler, the imperious nymph

Queen Frilogarma, eventually chased Zogototaru off, inhabitants marveled at the beast's strength. Never in recent memory had any force seriously challenged the untouchable ruler, and as a result dissidents began questioning Frilogarma's hegemony and even revering the cave worm as a divine liberator. Years of infighting and failed coups eventually drove the cult into hiding. It's now just local trivia—dangerous trivia that few dare mention aloud. Jirelga heard about the cult, though she's not dared infiltrate the unfriendly city alone.

The cult's silence ended recently when the hryngar sorcerer Narseigus arrived. Equally interested in finding Zogototaru, he helped cultists steal a magical map from Queen Frilogarma's palace, hoping it could help him locate Taargick's tomb. The heist succeeded,

but the alliance failed. Once they had the map, the cult chased Narseigus off and began attuning the map to the sacred worm. Hoping to steal it for himself, Narseigus has recruited a band of ulat-kinis to subdue and rob the cult, delivering the map to him in the hryngrar city of Hagegraf.

Darklands Voyage

The PCs begin in the sky citadel Highhelm, where they recently raided a thieves' hideout and learned of the crooks' ongoing schemes. Yet their main objective was exonerating Jirelga, who was imprisoned on false charges to draw attention from the real criminals. With proof in hand, they only needed to confront the treacherous jailor Baelim to free Jirelga.

PREPARATIONS

In the previous adventure, the PCs made a short foray into the Darklands to recover high king Taargick's clan dagger, introducing them to some underground perils while staying close to home. Their next objective involves a much longer voyage and greater preparation.

Jirelga tells the PCs that she believes the Cult of the Cave Worm has information on Zogototaru, the worm who knows the way to King Taargick's resting place. However, the cult is located at the Court of the Ether, a two-week journey from Highhelm. Her many recommendations for the journey are tailored to each PC's needs. She suggests lightweight, flexible armor and small thrusting weapons for use in the many narrow tunnels, enough food for the trip, water for three days (there will be places to refill), artificial light for those without darkvision, rope, climbing gear, antitoxin in case of attack by venomous creatures, and lots of healing resources. She also notes the value of cold iron weapons in combating fey, but also that many fey will react unkindly to those openly wielding such weapons. The Court of Ether will have markets, though the products available could be more eclectic than practical.

Finally, Jirelga reminds the PCs that the Darklands coddle nobody. It's possible they'll encounter threats they can't handle, in which case they need to be ready to run or hide. For PCs not trained in Stealth, Jirelga recommends bringing a magical contingency that might help them sneak or escape in an emergency.

SETTING OUT

Once the PCs are prepared, Jirelga leads them into a twisting network of narrow tunnels that snake downwards beneath Highhelm. After leaving Highhelm, the days quickly settle into a routine of silent marching through the dark, punctuated by occasional detours or stealthy retreats from dangers that Jirelga detects. Camp food is cold, since fire would attract too much attention, and bedding and clothing are often damp from the ceaseless dripping of water from the walls and ceilings of most caverns.

HOSTILE TERRITORY

With Jirelga as their guide, the PCs make good time. However, 10 days into the voyage, the group enters a morlock colony's territory that wasn't here when Jirelga last used this route. By the time she realizes this, the party is too deep into the territory to backtrack safely. Jirelga urges caution and quiet, hoping that they can sneak through without incident. Her plan mostly works. Eventually the morlocks notice the PCs, beginning a day-long pursuit as the PCs overcome obstacles and delay their pursuers. Jirelga rebuffs plans to fight; a colony can have

CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

The PCs travel with Jirelga, a deep gnome they recently exonerated, deep into the Darklands. They seek answers about a mysterious cult who may have information about the worm that knows the location of Taargick's tomb. They must navigate the complicated Court of Ether, a small fey kingdom ruled by the cruel and fickle Queen Frilogarma. Once they discover the cultists' location, the players must confront them and discover what they know about the mysterious worm.

FEY GAMES

Fey are tricky creatures, who often see everything as some sort of game or entertainment. When losing one of their games, a well-intentioned fey might turn a person's skin purple or cause their nose to grow several inches. However, most of the fey in the Court of Ether are cruel and sadistic. They're more likely to pluck an eye from someone who loses one of their "games."

While in the Court of Ether, play up the whimsical and sadistic nature of these fey. Juxtapose the silly games and sing-song disposition with a darker subtext. This should create the appropriately creepy atmosphere.

CULT OF THE CAVE WORM

Chapter 1:
Candlestone Cult

Chapter 2:
On the Trail of the Worm

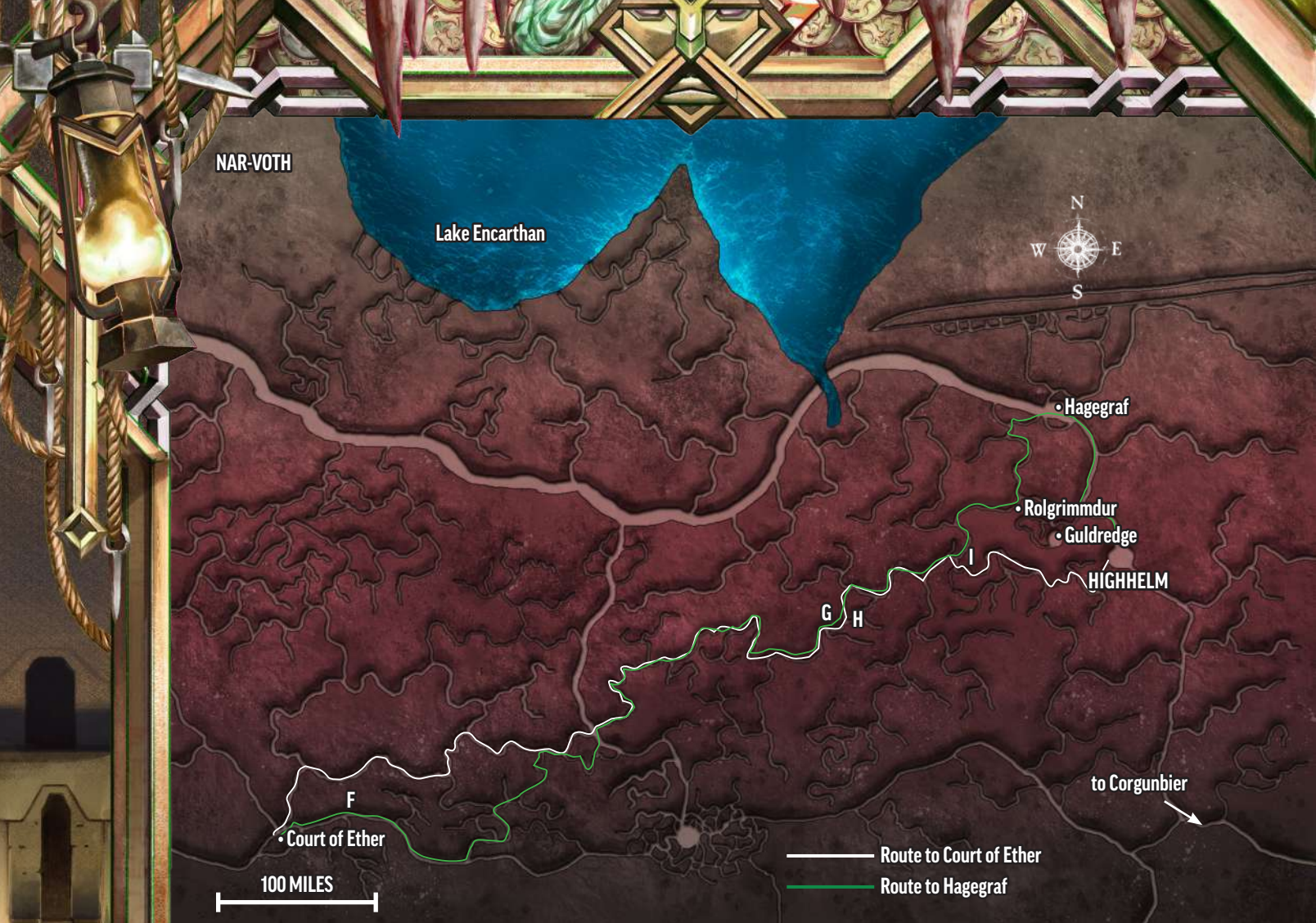
Chapter 3:
City of Toil

Cave Worm Ecology

Hagegraf

Adventure Toolbox





hundreds living nearby, and staying still just gives them time to muster in overwhelming numbers.

This sequence uses the Victory Points subsystem from the *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* on pages 148–150 to track the PCs’ progress as they overcome various obstacles, rather than mapping every twist and turn. Each obstacle presents a threshold representing the number of Victory Points needed to overcome the challenge. The obstacle also lists recommended skills and check DCs to earn points, though consider the PCs’ creative alternatives in resolving checks. Action progresses in phases. During each phase, Jirelga and each PC can attempt a check to earn Victory Points. If their point total equals or exceeds the threshold value at the end of a phase, the group prevails and moves on. If they don’t have enough points, they spend an additional phase overcoming the obstacle. Keep track of the number of phases the group needs to complete the pursuit, as the total determines how safely they escape.

The PCs can rest for 10 minutes without drawbacks once, after which each additional 10-minute rest period increases their next check to overcome an obstacle by 1.

MORLOCK SCOUTS

OBSTACLE

Threshold 4; Overcome DC 18 Stealth, DC 20 Athletics, DC 22 Deception

Jirelga realizes a morlock patrol is nearby. She shepherds the PCs through a jagged detour, hoping to avoid notice long enough to get a head start on pursuers.

TOXIC FUNGI GARDEN

OBSTACLE

Threshold 4; Overcome DC 18 Cave Lore, DC 20 Acrobatics, DC 20 Nature, DC 20 Survival, DC 22 Fortitude

Special If the PCs don’t overcome this obstacle in a single phase, each PC must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or become drained 1 from the poison.

A carpet of mushrooms, slime molds, and fungal blooms covers the cavern. Traveling here requires careful balance, the knowledge of what to avoid, or the hardiness not to care.

TIGHT SQUEEZE

OBSTACLE

Threshold 4; Overcome DC 16 Acrobatics, DC 20 Reflex, DC 22 Athletics

The tunnel narrows to a tight passage that requires extended shimmying to navigate. The tunnel is wider near the ceiling, for those able to climb there.

WANDERING OOZE

OBSTACLE

Threshold 4; Overcome DC 19 Cave Lore, DC 20 Occultism, DC 21 Perception, DC 22 Stealth

Special If the PCs don't overcome this obstacle in a single phase, they encounter and fight three gray oozes (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 194), after which they move to the next obstacle.

Puddles of water in the tunnel ahead conceal gray oozes. To avoid becoming dinner, the PCs must spot the oozes, sneak past, or know how to lure the oozes away.

CAVE BEETLE SWARM

OBSTACLE

Threshold 4; Overcome DC 18 Nature, DC 20 Survival, DC 21 Intimidation, DC 22 Stealth

Special A PC able to communicate with insects or influence animals (such as with Wild Empathy) can instead attempt a DC 16 Diplomacy or Intimidation check.

Thousands of scavenging beetles inhabit the caves ahead—enough to overwhelm larger prey. The PCs might identify areas the beetles avoid to sneak past, even spooking the swarm to flee.

The PCs also have a special opportunity: if they earn 6 or more Victory Points before overcoming this obstacle, they rile the beetles in a way that chases off morlocks. In this event, reduce the PCs' total number of phases needed by 2 for the purpose of calculating the pursuit's outcome.

SHEER CLIFF

OBSTACLE

Threshold 4; Overcome DC 18 Athletics, DC 20 Crafting, DC 22 Perception

Were they not in a rush, this precipitous incline wouldn't present a serious challenge. However, the PCs need to scale it quickly, potentially spotting or carving out handholds to aid their ascent.

ESCAPE!

After overcoming the sheer cliff, the PCs reach the Endless Gulf's outskirts, where morlocks dare not pursue. Any morlocks still chasing the PCs howl in frustration before withdrawing. Tally the number of phases the group used to overcome the five obstacles.

3–5 Phases: The group easily escapes, avoiding serious damage or embarrassment.

6–7 Phases: The group escapes, though not without mishaps. Each PC takes 5d6 damage from the ordeal. In addition, several fey witnessed the PCs' antics; their unflattering stories filter to the Court of Ether, increasing each PC's checks to influence fey there by 1 until they've completed one of the local events.

8+ Phases: As 6–7 phases, plus a team of morlocks outflanks the PCs just before they reach safety. The PCs encounter six morlocks (*Bestiary 2* 174), which ambush them in a 15-foot-wide tunnel.

A LONG, LONG FALL

The bludgeoning damage dealt by falling all the way down the Endless Gulf is fatal, and even if survived somehow, a PC would be stranded miles below the surface. For most groups, this lethality isn't fun, so it's important to provide as many ways of avoiding this fate as there are ways to slip over the edge.

Grab an Edge: Setting the Reflex DC to 15 to Grab an Edge (*Core Rulebook* 472) reflects the platforms' rough edges while providing a generous DC to avoid death.

Hero Points: Remember that a PC can avoid death by spending all their Hero Points (*Core Rulebook* 467).

Indebted Rescue: With so many flying creatures nearby, airborne fey might swoop to a falling PC's rescue in exchange for a costly favor.

Candlestone Caverns

Among the largest caverns in all of Nar-Voth, Candlestone Caverns are a labyrinth of limestone beneath northwest Andoran. Its largest cavern is even deeper than it is long, plummeting several miles before terminating in Sekamina, the Darklands layer below. Ruling this realm is Queen Frilogarma, a lampad queen (*Pathfinder Bestiary 3* 189) who settled here after being exiled from the First World ages ago. The Court of Ether, her stronghold and settlement built amid the stalactites, became a refuge for sinister fey.

That sense of safety shattered when the Avernol Worm Zogototaru tunneled nearby. Enraged by the Court of Ether's sentries, Zogototaru damaged what she could reach before withdrawing. Repairs are slow, made slower by a worrisome cult fascinated by Zogototaru's power, which seemed to eclipse even the might of Queen Frilogarma. The queen's perspective shifted from chagrin to outrage when cultists infiltrated her palace and stole a priceless map in the hope of tracking down the Avernol Worm. The two parties now cautiously await an opening: the cult to perform necessary rituals and the queen to raid the event and crush its leaders.

This creates useful opportunities for the PCs, who need that map and might benefit from a powerful patron in an unfriendly city. As the party approaches the outskirts of the Gulf (area A1), read or paraphrase the following.

Thousands of lights from lanterns and fungi flicker across a vast cavern like stars in the night sky. No ground is visible; the cavern stretches to imperceptible depths, with only narrow ledges tracing along the cave's edge. Yet a city thrives here, built amid the immense stalactites. Platforms bolted to stalactites' sides access residences tunneled directly into the



CANDLESTONE CAVERNS



rock, with rope bridges connecting the inverted towers. Few residents rely on these paths, and the city is abuzz with flying creatures. Land-bound visitors aren't so lucky, needing to pass through a small fortress built on the nearest ledge.

Recent damage ruins the sense of splendor. Several of the stalactites show signs of impact, with the lower half of one snapped off entirely. Work crews busily repair the damage.

After sharing the view for a moment, Jirelga mutters, "It's not half so beautiful once you're twice as close," and acknowledges that she can only escort the PCs partway before her presence will be more dangerous than helpful. If asked, she clarifies that deep gnomes and the Court of Ether have a long, sour history. According to legends, deep gnomes even left the First World specifically to track, monitor, and foil Queen Frilogarma after she was exiled here. The queen resents them just as much.

The Endless Gulf

Among the largest caverns in Nar-Voth, the Endless Gulf is more like an underground ravine that plunges a mile or more. The common theory is that it extends into the next lowest Darklands layer, Sekamina. In fact, it stretches all

the way into the lowest layer, Orv, not that many dare descend to the bottom to verify it.

The fey city the PCs seek occupies a forest of immense stalactites at the other end of the cavern. A ledge traces the Endless Gulf's northern edge, widened over the millennia to accommodate the few travelers who approach on foot. The ledge varies between 10 and 40 feet in width, averaging 20 feet.

A1. GIANT BAT ROOST

MODERATE 5

A short distance into the cavern, the ledge becomes speckled and eventually outright caked with a white crust. Jirelga draws weapons, announcing quietly that this much guano means giant bats are nearby. Cautiously, she urges the group onward.

Creatures: Flocks of giant bats hunt throughout the Endless Gulf, and a small community regularly roosts about 150 feet overhead. Hearing prey, they descend to investigate with echolocation before diving in to snag a meal. This brief reconnaissance is barely enough time for a PC with Wild Empathy or a similar ability to negotiate with the bats for safe passage. During combat, a bat fights until reduced to 9 HP, at which point it flees.

ELITE GIANT BATS (4)

CREATURE 3

N LARGE ANIMAL

Perception +13; echolocation (precise) 40 feet, low-light vision

Skills Acrobatics +10, Athletics +10, Stealth +10

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

Echolocation A bat can use its hearing as a precise sense at the listed range.

AC 20; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +10, **Will** +9

HP 45

Wing Thrash **Trigger** An adjacent enemy damages the bat; **Effect** The bat makes one or two wing Strikes—one against the triggering creature and one against another adjacent creature.

Speed 15 feet, fly 30 feet

Melee **◆** fangs +12, **Damage** 1d10+6 slashing

Melee **◆** wing +12 (agile), **Damage** 1d6+6 piercing

Treasure: Although the bats don't collect valuables, a past victim tried to hide in a wide crack in the wall, succeeding only at heaving his backpack here before being snatched and eaten. The backpack contains 24 sp, 8 gp, and an alabaster comb worth 22 gp.

A2. REDCAP PATROL

SEVERE 5

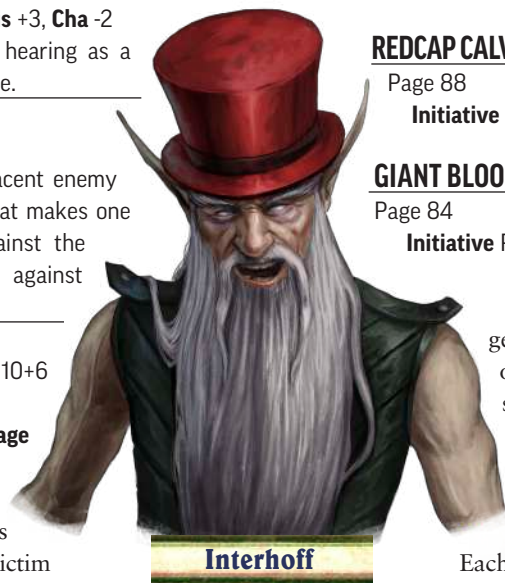
While the Court of Ether's redcap guards act with restrained professionalism in the city limits, they act more like raiders when on patrol. As the PCs and Jirelga traverse the 20-foot-wide ledge toward the city, a band of redcaps mounted on giant bloodseekers spots them and approaches for violent fun.

Creatures: Whereas most redcaps wear simple caps drenched in their victims' blood, Interhoff, this patrol's leader, proudly sports a grungy crimson top hat. Like other redcaps, these three delight in tormenting others. They begin the encounter zipping past and taunting the PCs, hoping for screaming terror, a bribe, or both. Interhoff then escalates by hovering and pretending to listen to his bloodseeker, loudly sympathizing that the creature hasn't fed recently. With this flimsy justification, he and his companions attack.

The redcaps favor hit-and-run tactics for the first several rounds, aiming to recover a few Hit Points while out of reach. After a few rounds (or if at risk of falling if the PCs are targeting their mounts), the other two redcaps abandon caution and charge in as Interhoff continues skirmishing. If reduced to 10 HP while their mount lives, a redcap mounts up and flees.

Interhoff doesn't stay long. Any attack or effect that reduces him to 40 HP also knocks his hat off his head,

sending it tumbling into the ravine. He frantically chases after it, ultimately failing to recover the hat and returning in shame to the city. A dejected Interhoff features in a later encounter (page 13).



Interhoff

REDCAP CALVARY (3)

CREATURE 5

Page 88

Initiative Perception +14

GIANT BLOODSEEKERS (3)

CREATURE 2

Page 84

Initiative Perception +10

Treasure: In addition to their gear, one of the redcaps carries an ornate silver pin with dark gems set in the end. A DC 20 Darklands Lore or Nature check or a DC 22 Society check identifies this as the emblem of the Queen's Guard of the Court of Ether. Each pin is worth 25 gp.

The Court of Ether

After the fight with the patrol, Jirelga tells the PCs that this is where they must part ways, else they risk being ostracized by association with her. Before parting, she tells them she believes the best way to get the information they need is to infiltrate the Cult of the Cave Worm.

The Court of Ether is divided, both by station and function, into two areas: the Upper and Lower Courts. The Upper Court is composed of the upper levels of platforms and stalactites near the ceiling of the Endless Gulf; these areas have few walkways or ladders, catering to the flying fey who comprise most of the inhabitants.

The Lower Court is much more accessible. The Walker's Gate bridges the city to the cavern's edge, Bottom Feeder's provides lodging to foot traffic, the Ethereal Market sells countless oddities, and residences are interspersed across various levels connected by walkways. Both practically and by custom, non-flying visitors aren't welcome in the Upper Court.

At the city's center stretches the largest stalactite, which houses Queen Frilogarma's palace. Connected to the Lower Court by an elegant walkway, most of the Queen's entourage remain on the higher levels to avoid interruptions from wingless inhabitants.

This adventure features specific portions of the city, leaving other areas unexplored. There's far more to the Court of Ether for a GM to add their own ideas, leads, and side quests.

The investigation's discoveries and leads appear on page 11.



THE COURT OF ETHER SETTLEMENT 9

CE CITY FEY MAGICAL

Subterranean city of corrupted fey

Government Queen Frilogarma (overlord)

Population 5,120 (64% gremlins, 21% redcaps, 11% pixies, 2% kobolds, 2% other creatures)

Languages Draconic, Sylvan, Undercommon

Religions Eldest (especially Count Ranalc and the Lantern King)

Threats Darklands monsters, chaotic fey, Cult of the Cave Worm

Queen Frilogarma (NE female lampad monarch) overlord of the Court of Ether

Meltek Blackscale (LE female kobold barkeep) public face of Bottom Feeder's Inn and Tavern

Veavieve (CE female leprechaun occultist) secret leader of the Cult of the Worm

B1. ENTRANCE PLATEAU

The ledge winds upward to a narrow plateau, half natural rock shelf and half excavated into the cavern wall. Inside the wide recess, several merchants have set up an improvised shop, and they visibly perk up at the sight of newcomers. The ruins of a once-grand stone bridge no longer connects the plateau to a gatehouse built into the nearest stalactite; a rickety rope walkway now spans the expanse.

A ysoki manages the small caravan here, having spread some of his limited wares upon blankets on the ground. His unburdened pack animals, cave lizards the size of mastiffs, contentedly munch on grain to one side. A sign propped to one side boasts "Famous Acquisitions and Curiosities," though there's a conspicuous blank in front of the phrase where someone's name would have appeared.

The sandy-furred ratfolk unwisely accepted a satyr merchant's apparent generosity: the satyr Garphinollo (page 16) offered valuable goods for the ratfolk's good reputation, which the latter assumed meant the goods were a gift granted out of admiration. In fact, the satyr magically stole the ratfolk's name and years of mercantile goodwill, causing the name to disappear from his signage and others' memory. The ratfolk formerly known as Cadji knows what he accidentally gave up, but he can't just re-learn his name; he needs the satyr to reverse the deal and whatever fey magic was involved.

In the meantime, he's a bumbling, apologetic mess who can sell the PCs an array of common 1st-level gear and common alchemical consumable items up to 4th

level. He also has a low-grade cold iron longsword, 20 low-grade cold iron arrows, and a low-grade cold iron dwarven war axe for sale, though he doesn't reveal this information until he feels he can trust the PCs. He freely shares his recent misfortunes, and he hopes the PCs might track down and negotiate with the satyr on his behalf. If they agree, he provides the PCs what the satyr gave him: a curvy brass flute that functions as a *magic wand of faerie fire* but requires two hands to play and activate.

B2. THE WALKER'S GATE

Torches glowing with violet flame cast cool light from the walls of this small stalactite-mounted fortress. A rope bridge leads from the ledge to the main door, which is flanked by identical statues of a regal nymph. Rickety wooden gates block the various doors and perches that emerge from the stalactite at various levels.

The statues depict Queen Frilogarma, the ruler of the Court of Ether. The rope bridge connects the ruined stubs of a demolished stone bridge that once crossed the expanse before its collapse a decade ago. The rope bridge that began as a temporary solution has become a permanent feature, given the apathy of the city's many flying citizens.

At any time, roughly 15 redcaps guard this small fort, with a few stationed just inside the main door. They investigate if someone knocks or if they hear travelers struggling on the bridge (they enjoy watching others stumble across). There's no law guaranteeing or prohibiting entrance into the city, so the redcaps enjoy roughing up visitors for amusement before eventually letting them pass. For the PCs, this means verbal abuse and paying 10 gp per PC as a bribe unless they can discourage the redcaps. This uses the influence subsystem (*Gamemastery Guide* 151–153), and the PCs have two social rounds (15 minutes each) to influence the redcaps before the fey lose patience and demand payment.

REDCAP GUARDS

CE SMALL FEY

Bored and sadistic guards

Perception +12

Will +10

Discovery DC 18 Nature, DC 20 Perception

Influence Skills DC 20 Medicine (vividly discussing anatomy), DC 21 Athletics (physical competition), DC 21 Performance, DC 22 Deception, DC 22 Intimidation, DC 22 Thievery (stealing a hat; see below), DC 24 Diplomacy

Influence 3: The redcaps find the PCs amusing enough to halve the entrance fee. This threshold also lets the PCs challenge two redcaps to a group duel without provoking the whole outpost; by winning, the PCs enter without any fee.

Influence 6: The PCs are so charming or fierce that the guards usher them through, free of charge.

Resistances Anyone openly wearing a good deity's sacred symbol or referencing such faiths earns disgusted snarls, increasing the next Influence check's DC by 2.

Weaknesses News of Interhoff's lost hat has already spread, and these redcaps find it hilarious. The first time a PC confirms they knocked off Interhoff's hat, reduce the associated check's DC by 3.

Personality Raucous, bloodthirsty, irreverent

Special Stealing one of the guard's hats carries high risks and rewards, as returning the cap in a charming way lets other redcaps laugh at their comrade's expense. Successfully stealing a hat lets a PC attempt a second Influence check with a +4 circumstance bonus by returning the hat. Failing the Thievery check reduces the PCs' Influence Points by 1, and critically failing reduces the Influence Points by 2. This theft only works once, after which the redcaps aren't amused.

Creatures: By earning at least 3 Influence Points, the PCs can challenge the redcaps to a mostly friendly duel. Two redcaps rise to the challenge.

REDCAPS (2)

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 278

Initiative Perception +12

B3. BOTTOM FEEDER'S

A series of dilapidated buildings jut from a large stalactite as if impaled by the stone. Windows emit some of the only warm-colored light in the city, and the music emanating from within seems calm and collected compared to the din of nearby markets. A sign above the entrance features a catfish with enormous whiskers and a pair of legs protruding from its closed mouth.

After the great earthquake of 4510 AR sent fractures through this stalactite, local fey relocated to safer spires. Taking advantage of the vacancies, an extended kobold family moved in, stabilized what they could, and opened Bottom Feeder's, a tavern named as much for its dubious property value as for the wingless clientele it attracts. Generations later, **Meltek** (LE female kobold innkeeper) and her family operate and maintain the place. The co-owner and occasional bouncer **Pheargas** (CN male leprechaun) has remained

a fixture for centuries, demanding no return on his investment beyond free drinks.

Bottom Feeder's provides as safe a refuge as the PCs are likely to find in the Court of Ether. Meltek offers suitable rooms for 5 sp a person per day, and she's a good source of local lore to focus the PCs' investigations. That said, she cautions the PCs about investigating cave worms and cults; both have politically dangerous associations that might spook locals if not handled carefully. She was a child when Zogototaru attacked here, so she admits others would know more.

In fact, Meltek knows one valuable lead: Pheargas. However, she prioritizes the safety of her family, establishment, and partners over some strangers' curiosity, so she doesn't volunteer this information until the PCs have completed at least two other leads. An insistent PC can convince her to share this information beforehand by making assurances and succeeding at a DC 21 Diplomacy check. In either case, she stresses that it's a serious matter for Pheargas, and she'll kick them out if they terrorize him.

Meeting Pheargas is detailed on page 12.

Investigating the Cult

The cult's existence isn't common knowledge in the Court of Ether. The average citizen only knows that there are a few doomsayers and street prophets espousing nihilist views, and most of those disappear when the queen's guards show up. Most don't investigate further, not wanting to get in trouble.

Those the PCs help in the events that follow tend to repay the favor by sharing what they know about the cult or introducing the PCs to a capable informant. There are four such cult leads, which the PCs learn in the order presented. At minimum, the PCs need to learn three of these leads, letting them learn of the upcoming cult event (and likely earning a mitflit's help smuggling them there).

Cults and Coups: The cave worm cult is such a dangerous topic because it tried to overthrow Queen Frilogarma a decade ago. The coup failed—violently—yet the fact that an uprising happened at all was practically unheard of. The common assumption is that declaring cult affiliation paints a target on the speaker. An enemy of the cult might earn the queen's approval, but it would be a delicate negotiation.

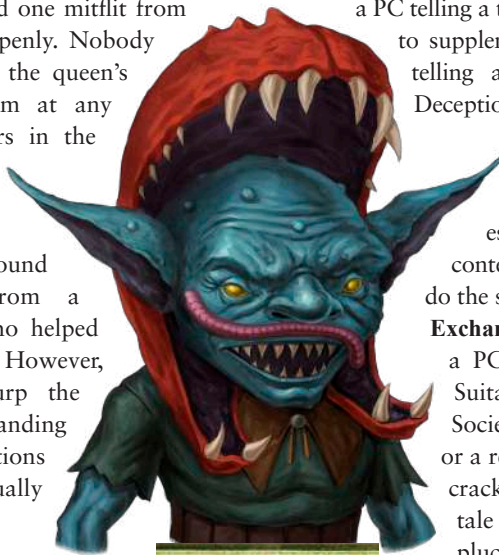
Recruitment: A few months ago, the cult stole something powerful from Queen Frilogarma, and the cult has leveraged this victory to attract new followers. Exactly who is part of the cult is secret, yet almost everyone knows someone they suspect of joining.



Nobody wants to ask too many questions, though; accusations could summon the queen's wrath.

Yakazak: Cult membership is a dangerous secret. Somehow, this hasn't stopped one mitflit from proclaiming his allegiance openly. Nobody dares speak to him, fearing the queen's enforcers might execute him at any moment, catching bystanders in the crossfire. Securing this lead lets the PCs begin A Mighty Mitflit (page 14).

Infighting: The cult's newfound influence partly stems from a powerful hryngar visitor who helped execute the recent theft. However, that hryngar tried to usurp the cult, upsetting the long-standing cult leaders. Opposing factions clashed for control, eventually chasing out the hryngar.



Yakazak

EVENT: TRADING FABLES

Wizened and wry, **Pheargas** (CN male leprechaun) is a treasure trove of local lore somewhat added by ale and age. He's a fixture and longtime patron of Bottom Feeder's, where he regularly nurses a drink, plays darts, and makes chitchat. However, the local cult's recent revival dealt the upbeat leprechaun an emotional blow when his granddaughter Veavieve became indoctrinated and practically vanished from his life. He's one of the PCs' best resources for cult lore, yet he's one of the most obstinate informants.

In general, the tavern's owner, Meltek, shields Pheargas from anyone who'd bring up the cult. However, once she warms to the PCs, she introduces them to Pheargas. The leprechaun's sleepy demeanor vanishes when the PCs ask about the cult, his eyes flaring excitedly with green light.

"Aha, a story! A story you're seeking, eh? Can't ask for a tale without trading one of your own!" He bounces in his seat, sporting a grin that's equally mischievous and eager. "Tell a story of yourself, and I'll tell one of my own." He chuckles, barking, "A fight of fables, an arena of anecdotes, a tussle with tales—the first move's yours, stranger!"

Nearby patrons chuckle in good humor at the challenge. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception or Society check recognizes that, not only has the leprechaun challenged them to a friendly storytelling competition, but also that it might be the most comfortable way for him to speak about something traumatic. The contest involves four exchanges of

tales, though you might add additional exchanges for a larger group so that each PC can participate. Each exchange involves Pheargas prompting a type of story, a PC telling a tale, that PC making a DC 20 check to supplement their tale, and then Pheargas telling a story of his own. In general, Deception and Performance are excellent skill check options, and each exchange recommends other skills that might fit. Pheargas escalates and exaggerates more as the contest progresses, expecting the PCs to do the same.

Exchange 1—Origins: Pheargas prompts a PC to regale him about their past. Suitable skill checks might involve Society to draw on historical intrigue or a relevant Lore skill. Pheargas shrugs, cracks his neck, and responds with a tale of his own, telling of how he was plucked from sunless soil like a winter turnip, trained in the arts of song by nine beautiful naiads who oversaw nine enchanted rivers, and then became forever lost from that paradise when he wandered out to see what laid beyond.

Exchange 2—Fear: With his previous tale, Pheargas shows that mundanity has no place in this contest. He challenges the PCs to share a tale to spawn a thousand nightmares. Other suitable skills include Intimidation to be fearsome, Religion to draw on primordial myth, or Occultism to speak of unspeakable horrors. Pheargas listens intently, responding with appreciative yelps before sharing his own tale. He tells of a forgotten Tane, one of the behemoths of the First World. Known as the Velkenndr, tales of it terrified villagers who dared not tread beyond their settlement for fear of being eaten. Yet, they were doomed already: they lived not in the wilds but inside the Velkenndr's vast stomach, too scared by a fate they'd already suffered to dare escaping.

Exchange 3—Deeds: The leprechaun admits something more upbeat would be welcome, and he calls on a PC to tell a tall tale of their own heroism. He expects exaggeration that borders on the mythological without seeming arrogant, and acting out the tale is a plus. Thus, skills like Acrobatics or Athletics are appropriate. Pheargas responds with a tale of becoming lost and arriving at Cynosure, Desna's divine realm among the constellations. After sharing afternoon tea with the goddess, he mused that if travelers could navigate by stars, none would ever be lost. Delighted, Desna agreed, so Pheargas physically shifted the North Star to Cynosure, convincing that star to remain there

by beating it in a contest of riddles. Despite this gift, Desna turned down Pheargas's marriage proposal, so he fled underground so as not to be reminded of his unrequited love.

Exchange 4—Compliments: Anyone can boast about themselves. Pheargas challenges a PC to instead compose some tribute to him, their competition. Good skills include Diplomacy to praise him or Nature to draw upon fey lore in clever ways. Pheargas beams at the performance (even if the PC roasts him in good humor). As the tale ends, though, he hesitates, becomes sheepish, and then visibly droops. "Kind words, kind words, yet even kind words can't buoy a heart anchored by sadness," he admits before breaking convention and telling a different kind of story.

He tells of a talented leprechaun full of cunning and charm who lived amid darkness even her joy couldn't outshine. Crushed by an oppressive regime, she sought refuge and support from a grandfather too deep in his ways and deep in his cups to stand up for her or help her find greener pastures. So when the earth shook and a cave worm roared defiance against an immortal tyrant, his granddaughter embraced a new role model: the beast. It's now been months since his granddaughter last visited. To Pheargas's chagrin, he admits the story doesn't have an ending yet. Did the beast consume her, body and mind? Is there a tale of redemption to tell? He shrugs somberly, not knowing what else to say beyond congratulating the PCs on a contest well fought.

The PCs can ask additional questions, which the leprechaun answers vaguely, again couching information as a story to distance himself from the painful subject. Primarily, he knows through his granddaughter's involvement that the cult experienced a resurgence recently, and that it's planning some kind of gathering that he has no interest in attending.

Treasure: If the PCs succeeded at half or more of the storytelling checks above, Pheargas undoes his necktie and offers it to them as a token of appreciation. It's a *caterwaul sling*.

EVENT: INTERHOFF'S NEW HAT

This event can occur at any time as the PCs explore the Court of Ether, interrupting their investigation.

Losing their hat distresses any redcap, but Interhoff's loss of his fabulous hat is a personal tragedy. Ever

since fleeing the PCs, Interhoff has suffered the ridicule of his peers for losing the hat he'd so obnoxiously boasted about. The PCs encounter a pack of redcaps teasing him in the market. Interhoff



Queen Frilogarma

clutches a plain cap, and he makes a flimsy attempt at bravado about how he's going to make it the best cap.

When he spots the PCs, his face contorts with a mix of hatred and shame.

It quickly transforms into a sly grin, and he announces, "It will be the best, because it'll be dipped in Cap-Killer's blood!"

The gathered redcaps fall silent, each taking a few steps back and looking around warily. One of hecklers asks Interhoff how he's going to kill Cap-Killer, and in response, he snags the closest

PC by the arm and boasts, "I've already gathered a hunting party!" This appeases the other redcaps. They pessimistically wish him luck, as if sure he'll be dead soon. Interhoff grins confidently as his detractors leave, then asks the PCs when they can start.

By now, everything's happened quickly, and Interhoff hasn't even asked the PCs' permission to hunt something they've likely never heard of. He responds to their likely protests or questions below.

Why us? "Because you owe me a new hat!" He bares his teeth in a menacing smile, adding, "You can help me make a new hat with something else's blood, or I can mark you for murder and dip my hat in one of your corpses."

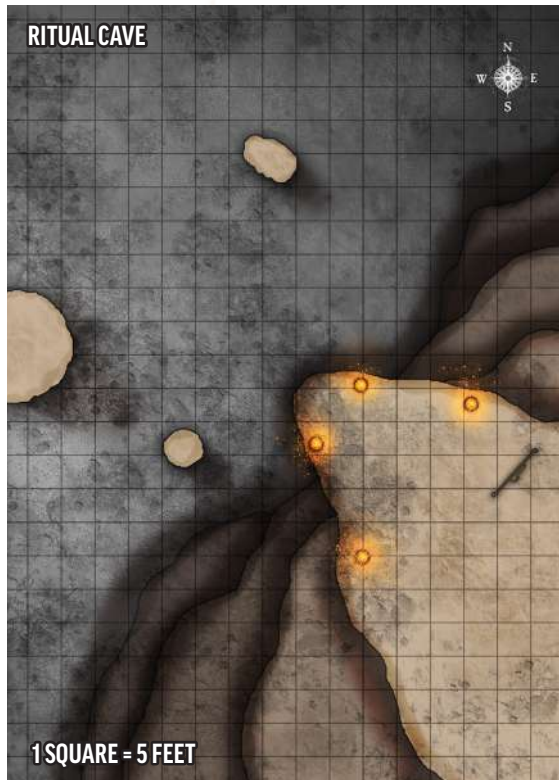
What's in it for us? Interhoff scoffs. "Beyond staying alive?" He thinks a moment, adding, "Help me out, and I can pay you. Maybe get you some information? I know lots of folks, and they'll listen once I have a great hat."

What's a Cap-Killer? "Not so loud!" hisses the redcap. "It's a serial killer. Kills redcaps, bleeds them, and leaves their hatless bodies for others to find. I'm pretty sure it lives in the roosts. Could be a rogue bat, a vampire, or something worse. We kill it, though, and we'll be famous."

Into the Roost

If the PCs refuse, Interhoff stamps his boots in rage before stomping off, swearing revenge. He later ambushes the PCs with another redcap, hoping to kill them and make a replacement hat.





If the PCs agree with Interhoff's plan, he leads them across several bridges to the main roost for giant bats, located in one of the outer stalactites. The irregular cave spans roughly 150 feet in diameter, with a ceiling about 30 feet high. Bats with wingspans ranging from 5 to 20 feet hang from the ceiling, with some clinging to stalactites that leave the bats nearly touching the floor. Interhoff encourages the PCs to look around for signs of the Cap-Killer.

Clues: The Cap-Killer is a pairaka div, a shapechanging fiend that loathes the color red. It hides here disguised as a Medium bat, periodically leaving to hunt redcaps and their infuriating headgear. Toward the back of the cave, a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check can find a messy pile of nine mangled hats looted from redcaps, as well as several flasks (see Treasure). These caps are all shredded and a PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Nature or Survival check realizes the damage doesn't match what a bat's feet or teeth might inflict. The hats also don't have fresher blood on them, suggesting the damage happened after the hats were stolen.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Perception or Nature check also notes that, though most of the bats huddle together as expected, a few are isolated, as if unwelcome by the roost. Critically succeeding at the check doesn't pierce the div's disguise outright, but it does notice that there's no fresh guano beneath the disguised div.

Creatures: While the PCs explore, the div plies Interhoff with telepathy and *suggestion* (he fails his save). Wouldn't it be smart to kill a PC and make a new hat while they're distracted, the fiend suggests. With each passing minute, Interhoff fidgets with his scythe more and more, maneuvering to stalk a PC. Once the pairaka thinks Interhoff is suitably convinced, it drops to the floor and takes its natural form to attack the PCs. Interhoff at first attacks the PCs to fulfill the suggestion. However, once convinced that the pairaka is the Cap-Killer, he spends a round shaking off the enchantment and then helps the PCs kill the div.

PAIRAKA

Pathfinder Bestiary 370

Initiative Perception +15

CREATURE 7

INTERHOFF

Redcap (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 278)

Initiative Perception +12

CREATURE 5

Development: If Interhoff survives, he eagerly dips his hat in the pairaka's blood. The hat turns a sickly blue rather than red, which Interhoff finds off-putting until he realizes how unique his hat will be as a result. He conveys half-hearted apologies to the PCs if he attacked them. And true to his word, he later connects them with friends who can provide one of the key rumors. If the PCs killed Interhoff, other redcaps don't blame them; in fact, in exchange for hearing what happened, these redcaps help connect the PCs to the same rumor Interhoff would have provided.

Treasure: The pairaka's stolen treasures include a lesser elixir of life and a moderate eagle-eye elixir. As a bonus, Interhoff gives the PCs his own ill-gotten gains, which includes 37 gold coins of Andoran make and a grimy strand of *holy prayer beads* he eagerly off-loads.

EVENT: A MIGHTY MITFLIT

The PCs learn of this lead as one of their cult discoveries.

Even among gremlins, mitflits' self-esteem is abysmal. Even when the cave worm cult began recruiting, **Yakazak** (NE male mitflit enthusiast) assumed he wouldn't be welcome. However, he's since inferred that through the cult, anyone can harness the overwhelming might of a cave worm—even him! The possibilities have intoxicated him. He's created his own crimson worm outfit and excitedly parades around the Court of Ether, telling anyone who'll listen about the cult he knows little about. Almost everyone avoids him, worried that he's a lightning rod for Queen Frilogarma's inevitable wrath. This avoidance vexes Yakazak, playing to his self-loathing. If he could show them the cave worm

CULT OF THE CAVE WORM

Chapter 1:
Candlestone
Cult

Chapter 2:
On the Trail
of the Worm

Chapter 3:
City of Toil

Cave Worm
Ecology

Hagegraf

Adventure
Toolbox

strength he's been promised, surely everyone would appreciate his evangelism!

Few residents feel safe discussing Yakazak, so the PCs learn of him through a cult discovery. After that, he's easy enough to track down, as crowds warily part around him. Acknowledging the gremlin immediately earns his attention and proselytization. If the PCs hope he'll tell them everything about the cult, they're mistaken. Its leaders know how poorly Yakazak would keep secrets, so he's been told nothing of substance other than that there's an upcoming cult gathering that he can attend. To him, this just indicates he needs to prove himself. Until then, he makes up increasingly absurd claims to appease the PCs' curiosity—lies they can identify with a successful DC 14 Perception check.

Not to be discouraged, Yakazak has a plan. He wants to show everyone how strong Zogototaru's blessing has made him, but nobody's accepted his challenge to prove it (or if they have, he believes they cheated). He wants the PCs' help in arranging a contest, display, or other event that will highlight Yakazak's newfound power. If they do, he promises to sponsor them as new cultists and bring them to the upcoming gathering.

Creating a Contest: Yakazak has more delusions than muscle mass; he's a typical mitflit lacking significant athletic abilities. Fortunately, the Court of Ether loves a good show, so the PCs have many options for masterminding a contest that could favor Yakazak. So long as the crowd seems impressed, he's easily convinced that he's the source of their amazement. Let the PCs devise the event as they please. Whatever its form, the event presents three challenges or complications that the PCs must resolve with a DC 20 skill check, using the basic Victory Point mechanic (*Gamemastery Guide* 148) to measure their success. The PCs' VP total after the three challenges shapes how the contest concludes. Consider slightly adjusting the check DC above based on how effective the PCs' strategy might be.

Drawing a Crowd: Few are willing to stick around Yakazak, so drawing a crowd for any contest takes effort. The PCs might loudly boast of an imminent spectacle, using Deception, Diplomacy, or Performance. They might assemble signs, a tent, or a stage with Crafting to give the event gravitas. Using Society, they could also plan the location and time to maximize the crowd size. Even concealing Yakazak with a Stealth check and revealing him only at the last minute could work.

Building Excitement: It takes time for intrigued fey to gather, and the PCs need to keep the crowd interested while hyping the contest. If the plan involves Yakazak eventually wrestling one of the PCs to submission, that

PC needs to show off their own strength with an Athletics check. Alternatively, a PC might boast about Yakazak's personal transformation with a nonsensical display of jargon (using Medicine or Nature). Likewise, a talented ringmaster could keep the audience entertained with raw charisma and a Performance check.

Featuring Yakazak: At last, it's time for Yakazak to show off, and he needs a PC's help to seem suitably mighty. A PC might convince everyone (including Yakazak) of his strength with a Deception or Performance check, or even an Acrobatics check to pretend to be hurled by the mitflit.

Concluding the Contest: After the three challenges, tally the PCs' Victory Points. If they earned 4 or more VP, the crowd is convinced of Yakazak's strength (or at least so impressed by the event's production value that they applaud anyway). Yakazak beams at the praise and decides the PCs are his best friends. Not only does he help them track down another cult lead and later guide them to the cult gathering (once he receives news of where it's happening), but he also follows them around loyally.

If the PCs earned 3 or fewer VP, the crowd seems skeptical. What's more, two earth elementals watching the show are offended, feeling this was a cheap display of what real strength looks like. They glide forward to belittle Yakazak in Terran, helpfully translated by a bystander. Believing himself super strong, he responds by throwing a dart at one of the elementals (or throwing insults, if the PCs restrain him). Rather than explode from the force, the elemental raises a fist to obliterate the offending gremlin.

Though a PC who speaks Terran might be able to diffuse the situation, this development likely begins combat. The elementals only attack Yakazak if nobody else is fighting them. Yakazak spends the encounter taunting and stabbing the elementals ineffectually. If Yakazak dies, the elementals meld into the stone and depart. If the PCs defeat the elementals, Yakazak happily shares credit for the victory, assisting the PCs from then on as if they'd earned 4 or more VP.

LIVING AVALANCHES (2)

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 146

Initiative Perception +12

Treasure: The event's onlookers assume the PCs are busking and toss assorted wealth to them depending on how well they performed. If the PCs earned at least 2 VP, they earn 132 sp. If they earned at least 3 VP, they also receive a *fear gem* and 7 gp. If they earned 4 or more VP, the amount of gold they earn increases to 20 gp.



EVENT: A RATFOLK'S REPUTATION

The PCs learn of this lead from the nameless ysoki merchant outside the Court of Ether.

Whether by design or happenstance, fey bargains sometimes transfer intangible assets like a memory or the ability to see the color blue. In the case of the ratfolk merchant Cadji, he lost his identity in his deal with the satyr Garphinollo. In an instant, Cadji couldn't remember his own name (and can't retain it even if reminded), and bystanders suddenly afforded the satyr all the mercantile goodwill that Cadji had worked hard to earn. The satyr now known as Cadji revels in the prosperity it's brought him over just a few days.

The PCs can find him operating a busy stall in the Ethereal Market, the city's bazaar that corkscrews up and down a stalactite. The satyr laughs off any demands he give back the identity. Why surrender such a delightful prize? Instead, he upsells eclectic curios that seem unsettlingly compelling thanks to his stolen charisma. It's soon apparent that the PCs need a strategy other than negotiation.

Garphinollo's happy because his new life as a beloved merchant is fun. By ruining his experience, his new reputation, his inventory, or a combination of these, he can quickly be made to regret his deal. The PCs might claim to have suffered misfortune from his merchandise, loudly slandering Cadji's name and attracting fey bystanders who love contributing to local drama. Alternatively, the PCs might stumble into the stall, knocking over displays in a convincing show of buffoonery. Even posing as tax collectors and boring the satyr with accounting protocols can work. Anything might work, short of blatant vandalism or robbery, which attracts guards who chase off (or skewer) the PCs.

Whatever their strategy, the PCs need to succeed at three DC 20 skill checks as part of their plan. Failing two checks causes the satyr to see through their ploy, and he chases them off. The PCs can try again the following day, but botching this second attempt makes Garphinollo stubbornly keep the identity out of spite. If the PCs' plan works, the satyr despairs and seeks some way out of his new job; he accepts the wand as a refund to return the identity, or a PC can convince him to let them keep the wand with a successful DC 18 Diplomacy check.

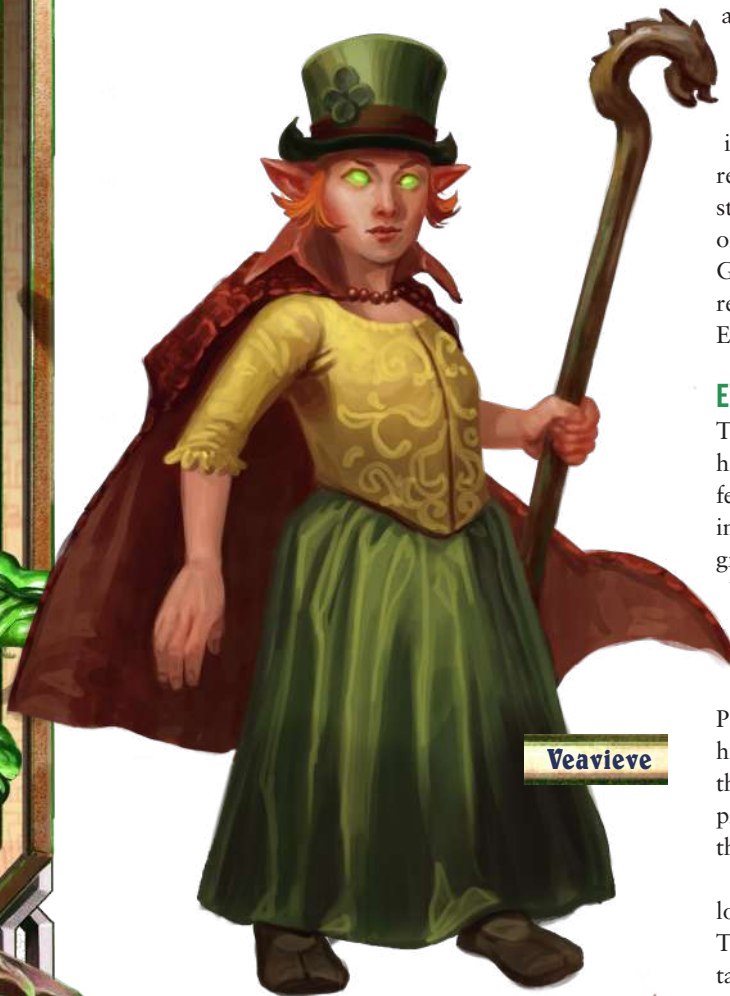
Development: If the satyr renounces Cadji's identity, the ysoki's memories and relationships are restored. Not only does he offer the PCs 50 gp of store credit as thanks, but also he provides them one of the cult discoveries he learned before meeting Garphinollo. If the PCs succeeded by ruining Cadji's reputation, he's eventually chased from the Court of Ether by vengeful fey.

EVENT: A NUGLUB'S HUMOR

The Court of Ether attracts macabre fey, and few have a more sinister sense of humor than **Zeevu** (CE female nuglub; *Bestiary* 2 135). Her idea of humor involves pushing travelers into chasms, bullying other gremlins, and gathering blackmail on neighbors.

Understandably, she's not popular. Yet, there's no denying she's well-informed, and she can provide some additional leads about the cult. She insists on talking business at eye-level, which involves most PCs needing to stoop, sit, or even grovel to meet her hunched gaze evenly. After learning a little about what they want and who they are, she establishes her simple price: commit a dangerous prank on some third party that makes her laugh aloud.

She prefers the PCs concoct their own prank so long as they let her know when and where to observe. The PCs might combine this with one of their other tasks, such as ruining the mitflit Yakazak's homemade



Veavieve

cult outfit or delivering the wrong reputation to the merchant Cadji. Alternatively, the PCs can torment a stranger or even deceive Zeevu to make it seem like they pranked someone without inflicting actual harm. Whatever the case, this should include two successful DC 20 skill checks, such as Deception, Intimidation, Stealth, or Thievery.

Treasure: In addition to conveying a cult lead, Zeevu gives the PCs a *necklace of fireballs I* as a parting gift. She mistakenly believes it's a cursed item. If the PCs accept the gift but correct her assumption, she becomes furious and stomps away.

An Audience with the Queen

Queen Frilogarma is both cognizant of the PCs' arrival in the Court of Ether and underwhelmed by them—that is, until their reputation grows and her spies report the PCs' interest in a local cave worm cult. The cult's recent theft has earned them her ire and curiosity. She believes the cult poses no real threat, despite not knowing exactly what they've planned. Even so, she wants her property returned, the cult investigated, and its leaders punished. Her usual agents are either giggling sycophants or murderous redcaps, so she's open to recruiting strangers with a hint more subtlety.

Securing an Audience: Meeting the queen isn't possible at first. One of the PCs' early rumors notes that the cult is a dangerous topic in the palace, and the queen's courtiers seem unable to resolve some issue with the cult. This can provide the PCs a reason to visit the palace and offer their services. However, their relative obscurity and audaciousness initially irks Frilogarma, increasing the skill check DCs by 2 in the subsequent encounter.

Once the PCs have completed three of the local tasks, Queen Frilogarma dispatches a sprite emissary to find them. The sprite conveys that his queen knows of their search for the cult, and they're invited to the palace if they wish the queen's wisdom and favor. This approach doesn't adjust the skill check DCs.

THE PALACE

Queen Frilogarma resides in a palace built around and through the central stalactite of the city. From there, it serves as a useful landmark and reminder to all of their sovereign's authority. Whether the PCs are invited or not, a pair of redcap guards escorts them, muttering cheerfully that they hope the PCs somehow offend the queen and die horribly for everyone's amusement.

The throne room's ceiling sparkles with incandescent stars crisscrossed by scintillating auroras, resembling an arctic

night's sky. Redcap guards snap to attention, gripping polearms with restrained malice. Courtiers ranging from sprites and gremlins to centaurs and elementals converse along either side of the hall, with countless sprites clambering and flitting among the columns.

An eerily beautiful nymph sits confidently on the throne. Her skin almost blends into the stone, yet her eyes glow with fierce intensity. She beckons to approach. "Welcome to my Ethereal Court, strangers. I am Frilogarma, Queen of the Endless Gulf. Approach and speak."

Whether she knows the PCs' intentions or not, Frilogarma wants the PCs to speak so she can judge their character. Once the PCs mention Zogototaru or the local cult, nearby courtiers fall silent, and a wave of muted panic spreads across the hall. Frilogarma leans back, glances at the gathered courtiers, and remarks, "Oh, that pesky cult. Just the thought of them brings a tear to my eye." The courtiers, knowing how infectiously painful a lampad's weeping can be, need no further encouragement; virtually everyone bows and makes excuses to leave, nearly crushing each other as they flee. Even the guards position themselves as far from the throne as possible. The Queen nods mischievously, noting that now they can talk about the cult without risk of eavesdroppers.

She prompts the PCs to speak openly about what they've learned of the cult and what they need from their visit to the Court of Ether. So long as they don't seem like fanatics, she shares her own complaint and desire. Like most lampads, she often reflects others' emotions, so her demeanor softens or sharpens to parallel the PCs' own behavior.

"Some years ago, the Avernal Worm rampaged here. I chased it away, though not quickly enough for my fickle followers' liking. That worm inspired an inept resistance movement that I quashed. Even so, this 'cult of the cave worm' persists. They recently stole from my palace with outside help, and the success has reinvigorated them to concoct a new wave of hapless plots.

"You are free to investigate further and learn what you will. Yet, perhaps you have greater ambitions: as agents of my vengeance. My desire is that the cult leaders be punished, my property returned, and my curiosity about their activities sated, in that order."

She awaits the PCs' response, giving them time to discuss among themselves and ask questions. Her compensation is her assistance and favor. If asked, she acknowledges that her own minions are ill suited to the task. She hardly begrudges the PCs' turning



down the opportunity; she simply warns them against causing trouble in her city and curtly dismisses them.

If they accept, she grants a favorite PC her Inspiration (*Bestiary* 3 190) before conveying the cult's local history and misdeeds with a sense of derision. She then provides the PCs with two of the cult rumors, prioritizing the mighty mitflit lead if the PCs haven't already learned it, and suggests they try infiltrating the cult.

Confronting the Cult

A day after the PCs help Yakazak, the gremlin receives his invitation to the gathering. The event's held in a cave outside the city's limits, which the PCs passed through on their way to the Endless Gulf. On learning where to go, Yakazak seeks out the PCs, encouraging them to travel with him as soon as possible. If the PCs did not befriend the mitflit, they might learn of the event's location and timing through other means, such as from Queen Frilogarma (who knows of the event but wants the PCs as agents) or by Pheargas doing detective work of his own and asking the PCs to investigate.

The cave is a knot of descending tunnels that intersect, eventually opening into a larger space interspersed with pools, stalagmites, and crevasses. At its far end, the water runoff drains into an underground lake. Nearby, accumulated minerals have created a natural stage with slick terraces that mimic stairs up either side. The cult has set up its ritual on this stage, and a throng of fey surround it, talking excitedly.

Infiltration: Although Yakazak can get the PCs to the event, he doesn't have enough authority to escort them to the stage or shield them from scrutiny. It should be made clear that it would be extremely advantageous for the PCs to infiltrate the cult and sabotage the event before combat begins.

This adapts the Influence subsystem (*Gamemastery Guide* 151–153), using it to present two different scenes that the PCs can infiltrate. The PCs have four rounds (15 minutes each) to navigate the cult. At first, only the Cultist Crowd is available, representing the crowd the PCs—masquerading as dedicated disciples—have to push through as they make their way to the stage. Upon earning 2 Infiltration Points from the crowd, the PCs can also access the Ritual of the Worm, where they can ascend the stage under the pretense of helping untangle a deeply flawed ritual.

Both groups present ways the PCs can defuse the cult's power, helping them in the combat that follows. After all, there are three different factors convening to cause chaos: Queen Frilogarma's guards (who've secretly shadowed the PCs), the flawed ritual, and Narseigus's raiding party of ulat-kinis who will approach from the nearby lake.

CULTIST CROWD

CE MEDIUM

Impatient fey cultists seeking diversion

Perception +12

Will +10

Discovery DC 24 Perception, DC 22 Religion, DC 23 Society

Influence Skills DC 18 Deception, DC 19 Occultism (read cult behavior), DC 20 Acrobatics (to weave through the crowd), DC 20 Performance (lead chants), DC 21 Stealth (explore restricted areas), DC 22 Diplomacy, DC 22 Intimidation

Infiltration 2: The PCs learn the cult leaders began some cave worm ritual, which involved the crowd chanting. The ritual leaders stopped partway through, though. Did something go wrong? There's a rumor that they'll restart soon. Learning this lets PCs infiltrate the Ritual of the Worm.

Infiltration 4: Exactly what the ritual should achieve has spread by word of mouth, changing with each telling. The consensus is that the ritual will contact and summon the Avernus Worm to the Court of Ether. Cultists speculate that this would destroy Queen Frilogarma, cause the cave worm to shower its followers with gifts, or both.

Infiltration 6: The PCs have made an impression, choosing either to instill doubt in some of the cultists or convince some cultists to view the PCs as authorities. This reduces the cultist troop's starting Hit Points to 60..

Resistances The fey here resent Queen Frilogarma's rule. Speaking positively of her regime increases the next Influence check's DC by 2.

RITUAL OF THE WORM

OCCULT

Impatient fey cultists seeking diversion

Perception +12

Will +10

Discovery DC 18 Nature, DC 18 Occultism, DC 20 Perception

Influence Skills DC 18 Occultism, DC 19 Nature, DC 20 Thievery, DC 21 Arcana, DC 21 Deception

Infiltration 1: The PCs learn more about the *everywhen map*, a potent relic stolen from Queen Frilogarma. Once attuned to a creature—and it's recently been attuned to the Avernus Worm—the map can display a tangle of the many paths the creature has traveled.

Infiltration 4: The PCs have adjusted the ritual sufficiently that it will backfire spectacularly in one of several ways: it causes an explosion that deals 10d6 fire damage to Veavieve, it makes her enfeebled 2 for 1 hour, or it animates her cloak, which tangles her limbs and makes her clumsy 2 until she Escapes it (DC 25).

Background As part of his attempted takeover, Narseigus developed a ritual to summon and control the Avernus Worm, using the stolen *everywhen map* as a focus. After Veavieve and her followers chased him out, she salvaged the unfinished ritual script as best she could. However,

the ritual is flawed. At best, it might summon and enrage Zogototaru. At worst, it might backfire spectacularly. The leprechaun realized something was amiss partway through, and she's open to experts helping troubleshoot the ritual. This lets PCs feign help, swap out key reagents, or even tweak the ritual's design to change its outcome.

Special If the PCs' Infiltration Point total for this challenge would fall below 0, Veavieve recognizes their attempts to sabotage the ritual. She immediately begins combat.

RITUAL AND RUIN

After four rounds of infiltration (or earlier, if the PCs are discovered), the cult's leader and Pheargas's granddaughter, Veavieve, restarts the ritual. The ritual falls short of her expectations—possibly with explosive results, depending on the PCs' tampering. Queen Frilogarma's guards, having the proof they need, now spring their trap, attacking and arresting cultists at the entrance of the cave. Realizing she's been betrayed, Veavieve accuses the PCs of treachery and hefts her club, not giving up without a fight.

Creatures: Veavieve and any PCs who successfully contributed to the Ritual of the Worm challenge begin on the stage, whereas other PCs begin amid the crowd. While most of the fey scatter, not wanting to face the queen's wrath, a large contingent converges to attack the PCs. Apply any hindrances the PCs might have earned from their infiltration. Unsure who to support, Yakazak rushes onto the stage, waiting for some indication of who his real allies are.

Mentioning Pheargas at any point during the battle rattles Veavieve, allowing a PC to Demoralize her using Diplomacy in place of their Intimidation modifier. If Demoralized and urged to return to Pheargas, Veavieve flees once reduced to 20 Hit Points, throwing off the *Avernal Cape* in disgust.

VEAVIEVE

CREATURE 6

UNIQUE CE SMALL FEY

Perception +14; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Sylvan

Skills Acrobatics +14, Deception +15, Cave Worm Lore +15, Nature +12, Performance +18, Thievery +12

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

Items *Avernal Cape* (page 77), shillelagh

AC 24; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +17, **Will** +11

HP 100; **Resistances** fire 5

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ shillelagh +15 (shove), **Damage** 2d8+6 bludgeoning

Primal Innate Spells DC 18, attack +10; **2nd** *illusory creature*, *illusory object*, *invisibility* (self only); **1st** *color spray*, *shillelagh*, *ventriloquism*; **Cantrips** (3rd)

dancing lights, *dirge of doom*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *telekinetic projectile*

CULTIST TROOP

CREATURE 5

NE GARGANTUAN FEY TROOP

Perception +15; low-light vision

Skills Athletics +14

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

AC 21; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +12, **Will** +11

HP 90 (16 squares); **Thresholds** 60 (12 squares), 30 (8 squares);

Weaknesses area damage 5, cold iron 5, splash damage 2

Troop Defenses (*Bestiary* 3 306)

Speed 25 feet; troop movement

Form Up ♦

Troop Movement Whenever a troop Strides, it first Forms Up as a free action to condense into a 20-foot-by-20-foot area (minus any missing squares), then moves up to its Speed. See *Bestiary* 3 for further details.

Wild Swing ♦ to ♦♦♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The cultists chaotically swing their weapons—from pixies' tiny rapiers to redcaps' scythes—at each enemy adjacent to the troop (DC 22 basic Reflex save), dealing a small amount of damage to the troop at the same time. The damage depends on the number of actions.

♦ 1d12+1 slashing damage to enemies and 1d4 slashing damage to the troop

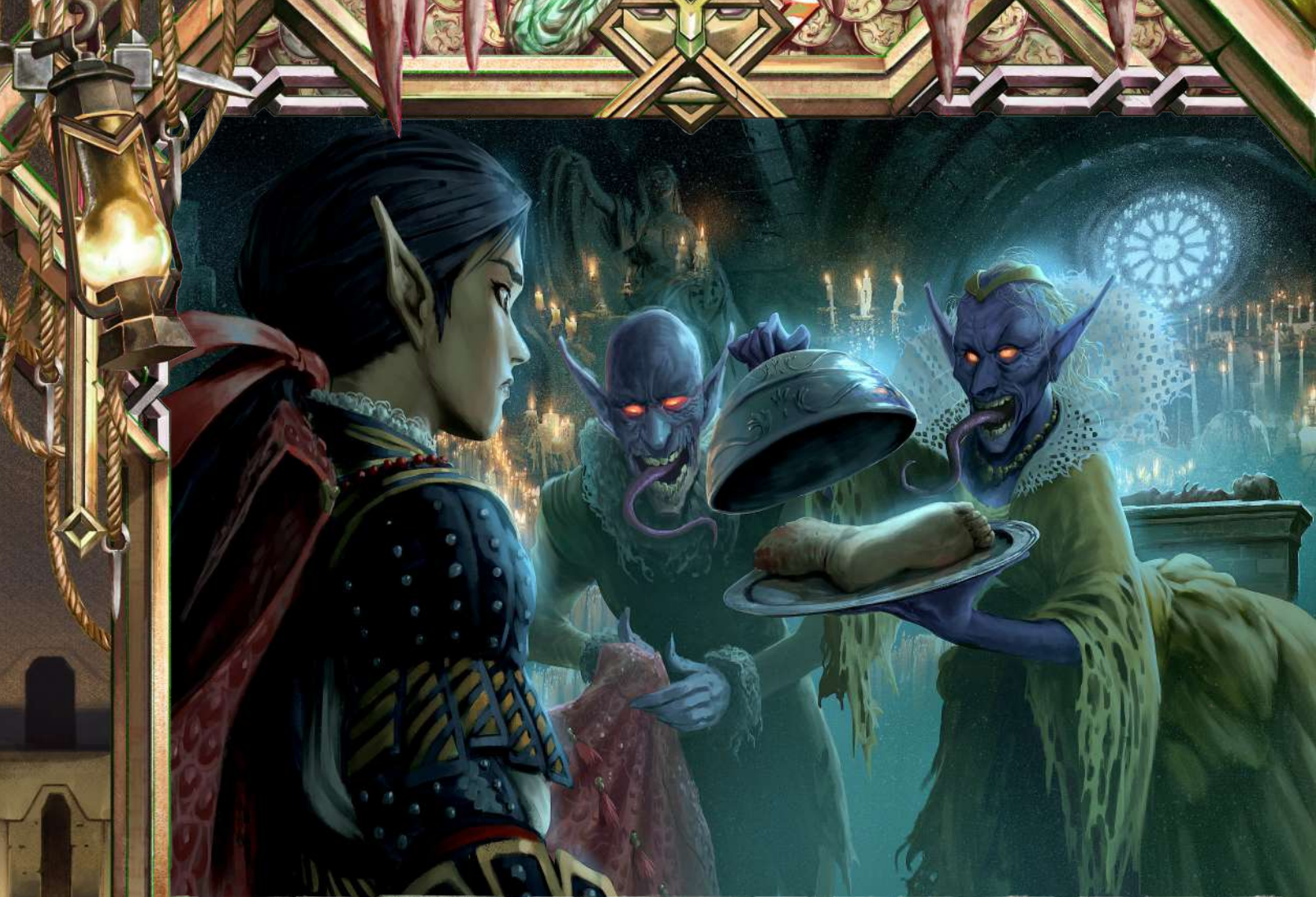
♦♦ 2d12+1 slashing damage and 1d4+2 slashing damage to the troop

♦♦♦ 2d12+5 slashing damage and 2d4 slashing damage to the troop

Development: After four combat rounds, or one round after Veavieve is defeated, the *ulat-kinis* arrive and activate a device Narseigus gave them. It creates an earthquake, raining debris onto the crowd. The *ulat-kinis* wait for falling rocks to kill everyone so that they can sift through the wreckage, retreating if they see survivors.

The cave-in has several effects. First, it collapses several of the cave's passages, forcing the queen's guards to retreat and sealing the route to Highhelm, forcing the PCs to find a different way out—through the lake. Second, it deals 8d6 bludgeoning damage to each creature in the area (DC 20 basic Reflex save), with signs that debris will continue falling. This ends the combat, but not before the PCs each have a chance to perform one more activity. A PC could flee, gaining a +4 circumstance bonus to their save DC. They could recover Veavieve's gear or the *everywhen map*. They could even use this opportunity to drag an incapacitated Veavieve to safety, ensuring she survives the experience and perhaps reunites with her grandfather. If present, Yakazak grabs the map if no PC does so, grabbing the cloak instead or just fleeing otherwise.





CHAPTER 2: ON THE TRAIL OF THE WORM

The earthquake that disrupted the cult's ritual was no natural event, but the final act in a drama between erstwhile allies who both sought the Avernal Worm's favor for their own selfish reasons. The hryngar sorcerer Narseigus first came to the Court of Ether months ago to seek out the Cult of the Worm because he wanted to know what wormcaller secrets they might have uncovered. When he arrived, Narseigus was somewhat disappointed to find a motley group of nihilists mostly uninterested in the majestic tradition of wormcalling. Only the cult's leader, the leprechaun Veavieve, seemed to have any understanding of the true nature of the Avernal Worm and the power whoever commanded it would wield. For their part, the Cult of the Worm members

mostly saw Narseigus as an arrogant newcomer who wanted to seize control of their group and twist their agenda to his own purpose.

As Narseigus tried to recruit other cult members to his point of view, he realized that, despite being nothing more than a doom cult, its members had acquired an impressive knowledge of the Avernal Worm's travels and tunnels in the region, and had created a ritual they believed could summon Zogototaru to a location to accept sacrifice and grant boons. Cult members had even located a relic that could help track the beast to its lair—the *everywhen map*—a magical map that could show every location a specific creature had ever been. Unfortunately, this useful item was locked securely

away in one of Queen Frilogarma's treasuries, and it was here that Narseigus found a use for the fey cultists.

The wily sorcerer convinced the Cult of the Worm to join him on a raid of Queen Frilogarma's storehouses, in return for which he would use his significant magical abilities to attune the map to the Avernal Worm and aid them in their summoning ritual. The cult agreed, and in a short time the queen's treasury had been pilfered of many items better left locked away.

In addition to the map, the thieves carried off several powerful magical items, including a strange device of crystal and wire. Narseigus recognized it as a damaged xiomorn device known as an *earthquake cannon*, which the strange elementals would use to clear debris and create large caverns. Although its power source was depleted, Narseigus managed to jury-rig the device to operate (only once more) using a trio of *earth elemental gems*.

Narseigus then attuned the *everywhen map* to the Avernal Worm using a small piece of the creature's tooth he had recovered from the ruins of Guldredge. The map immediately showed an immense crisscross of tunnels stretching throughout Nar-Voth, but they all lead to an area very near the active magma chamber Avernakkus, found near the base of the Kor Well. The lair of Zogototaru was likely found in that area, and therefore so was the lost tomb of the Sky King Taargick.

The sorcerer planned to use the war with Highhelm as a diversion, but now he found an even better use for the army he had recruited. He would marshal them in Drootorca Cavern and have them tunnel through the few hundred feet of solid rock into the Kor Well, long-sealed by the dwarves of Rolgrimmdurr at its upper level. The armies would swarm upward and seize the dwarf outpost, while Narseigus would descend to the well's bottom and find Avernakkus. In the confusion of the battle, there would be no one to stop him from finding both the Avernal Worm's lair and the lost tomb of the sky king. Except, of course, the worm cultists he had left back in the Court of Ether.

While Narseigus's armies gathered, the hryngar returned to the Court of Ether to find that Veavieve was preparing to invoke the summoning ritual and call Zogototaru to the Endless Gulf. Under pretense of offering his expertise to the cult, Narseigus was surprised to discover that the ritual actually had a chance of successfully contacting the worm, which would completely ruin his carefully-planned foray into the Kor Well. The ritual—and the Cult of the Worm—must not be allowed to continue.

To cover his planned departure before the ritual, Narseigus confronted Veavieve and demanded the honor of being the primary caster. Veavieve refused and the two argued bitterly in front the cult members. Finally, Narseigus appeared to relent and left the Court of Ether never to return. Veavieve and her followers went back to preparing for the ritual, believing that the pushy hryngar was no longer their problem.

They were incorrect.

Narseigus contacted one of the many allies he had been recruiting, a sect of ulat-kinis who lived near the court and had already pledged allegiance to him. He instructed them to take the *earthquake cannon* and use it during summoning ritual to kill the cult leader and steal the *everywhen map*. Narseigus then departed for Hagegraf to put the final part of his plan in motion. War would come to the hated dwarves, and

CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

In the wake of the Cult of the Worm's destruction, the PCs discover that a hryngar named Narseigus is responsible. After celebrating the end of the cult with Queen Frilogarma and the Court of Ether, the PCs head back through Nar-Voth. They follow Narseigus's trail, meeting some of the Darklands denizens he recruited and met along his travels.

As the PCs continue to cross paths with creatures who had dealings with the hryngar, they discover that Narseigus is recruiting an army, but with what target in mind?

Along their travels, the PCs encounter ulat-kinis, cavern trolls, caligni, ghouls, morlocks, and a dark naga, but the real threat is yet to come. They follow the sorcerer all the way to his home city of Hagegraf, hoping to learn some of his dark secrets.

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he would find the Sky King's tomb and learn what secrets King Taargick had to communicate with the Avernal Worm all those centuries ago. Armed with that knowledge, Narseigus would commune with the worm himself, and then become the most powerful wormcaller of the age.

Following Narseigus' orders, the group of ulat-kinis spied on the lake and waited until the cult had gathered. Soon after the ritual had begun, they triggered the *earthquake cannon*, sending a wave of force through the cavern and collapsing the ceiling. Most of the cultists and a few ulat-kinis were killed in the cave-in, which stopped the summoning ritual. Shocked and dazed, the surviving ulat-kinis limped back to their camp (in area **D**) to celebrate their pyrrhic victory and await further instructions.

Meanwhile, Narseigus is traveling back to Hagegraf, stopping along the way to meet with envoys of various humanoid tribes he has recruited, leaving traces the PCs can follow to learn about this hryngar sorcerer who fancies himself a wormcaller of old.

Earthquake Fallout

After claiming the *everywhen map* from the Cult of the Worm at the end of the last chapter, the PCs find that the map of the Avernal Worm's tunnels is incredibly complex and will require expert study to decipher. The only person they know who could understand it is buried under tons of rock, and the tunnel that leads to their home is likewise buried and impassable.

While the PCs might return to Queen Frilogarma, she has no interest in helping them further and pushing may lead her to blame the PCs for the damage the quake caused to her realm (see Reputation with Queen Frilogarma, below). While Bulgra Veldollow, their patron in Highhelm, might be able to help them decipher the map, the route has been blocked by the earthquake. The journey here only took a couple weeks because they had an expert guide, but the journey back will take twice as long and the PCs will be exposed to all of the dangers Nar-Voth has to offer.

Finally, the PCs may have sought out further information on the mysterious hryngar while infiltrating the Cult of the Worm. A hero who learns the name Narseigus and succeeds at a DC 20 Society or Darklands Lore check will recognize it as the name of a royal sorcerer in the hryngar city of Hagegraf, a personal advisor to King Orgukagen himself! Anyone they speak to in Queen Frilogarma's court can also provide this information. This may lead the PCs to

choose to head directly to Hagegraf as their next step. As the capital of the hryngar nation, Hagegraf certainly has the resources to decipher the magical map, but with one of the King's inner circle involved, the city may be deadly to those who oppose Narseigus and seek the Sky King's tomb. Still, the route to Highhelm and to Hagegraf lie together for many hundreds of miles, so such a decision can be deferred for now.

Reputation with Queen Frilogarma

If the PCs cooperated with the queen's forces to disrupt the Cult of the Worm, she rewards them before they leave her demesne. They are summoned to the palace and made knights of the Ether Court with much fanfare. Though the celebration is a raucous affair, astute PCs can notice a tension in the air with a successful DC 18 Perception check. Queen Frilogarma is frustrated by the damage caused to her palace and the surrounding area, and isn't sure whether to blame the cult or the PCs. Whenever she addresses the PCs, nearby fey grow tense or excited, as befitting their nature, in anticipation of her turning to slaughter the PCs on the spot. Ultimately, she hasn't made up her mind and allows the celebration to continue, so long as the PCs aren't foolish enough to press their luck.

The PCs' new "Knights of the Ether Court" title improves their Reputation in the Court of Ether by +5, but reduces their reputation with any non-fey denizens of Nar-Voth by -2. They're granted the right to wear the queen's livery, and each PC is given a jeweled clasp of silver—a Token of Queen Frilogarma, which marks them as a knight of the Ether Court (and is worth 100 gp each if the PCs decide to sell them). However, the token comes with a hidden cost: Queen Frilogarma uses these tokens as foci for her enchantment and divination spells, causing creatures who roll saves against such spells to get one degree of success worse than what they rolled.

Traveling Up and Out

To reach Hagegraf (or Highhelm) the PCs must navigate the tunnels past the lake and find a way around the earthquake area. A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Survival check can determine that the only way around the earthquake collapse zone is through a tunnel on the far side of the lake at the ritual site. The lake is 25 feet deep at its far end, so the PCs will either need to procure a boat, swim, or fly across to access it. The tunnel winds up and around the earthquake area and opens into a warren of small, interconnected caves leading through the fungal forest, where the fey tend to release failed bloodseeker breeding experiments; and

then through the camp of the ulat-kinis, Narseigus's allies who caused the earthquake.

FUNGAL FOREST

LOW 6

The tunnel widens slightly here, while the ceiling suddenly rises over one hundred feet. The way ahead is obscured by stands of tree-like mushrooms which grow in patches along the floor and lower walls of the cliff face. The air here smells earthy and refreshing, compared to most of Nar-Voth.

The fungal "trees" stand between 5 and 10 feet high, with broad, thick caps. Tucked into the gills of some of the mushroom caps are the bones and partially drained corpses of bats, cave spiders, and the occasional humanoid.

Creatures: The fungal forest is the primary habitat of bloodseekers released by the Ether Court's breeders for lacking attributes they valued. Generations of bloodseekers have now claimed this forest as their own, forming a symbiotic relationship with the forest as the carcasses of their prey feed the fungal trees. The bloodseekers make nests in the gills of the mushroom trees, occasionally bringing their food up to feed their young. The Ether Court doesn't mind, as these feral bloodseekers act as natural deterrents to any enemies that may want to approach from that cavern.

The bloodseekers hate smoke and prefer to avoid creatures standing in smoky areas. If the PCs envelop themselves in smoke for 3 rounds, the bloodseekers retreat to find easier prey.

BLOODSEEKER SWARMS (4)

CREATURE 3

Page 84

Initiative Stealth +12

Treasure: A recent victim of the bloodseekers lies on the cave floor, mostly intact: a deep gnome scout's corpse wearing a suit of +1 *shadow studded leather armor*. Removing it from the corpse takes 5 rounds (the task made somewhat easier by its missing head and neck), which will definitely attract nearby bloodseekers.

WHISPER STREAM

One of the many groups Narseigus has recruited to his cause is a group of ulat-kinis, fish-like humanoids that were once controlled by the insidious alghollthu. This group is unusual in that it is not the remnants of a scattered tribe or family clan, as most groups of ulat-kinis have been since the aftermath of the alghollthu war. The group that follows Ulgat Goll is gathered along religious lines, disciples of a teacher

who promises conquest through self-perfection. They established the village of Whisper Stream to follow those beliefs away from other ulat-kinis who disagree with their religion.

None of Ulgat's followers realize that he's not as he seems. Ulgat is a slime puppeteer (page 82) able to adopt the shape of a creature he has consumed. The puppeteer infiltrated a tribe of ulat-kinis, then ambushed the real Ulgat, who was a master in kirtanang, a form of unarmed combat that eschews manufactured weapons in favor of flowing slashes with claws that work equally well on land and in water.

This sect of followers broke away (or were driven away, depending on who you ask) from their clan. Although most of Ulgat's followers don't understand his motives, they are fiercely loyal to their leader and will fight to the death to defend him.

Two ulat-kinis are suspicious of the charismatic Ulgat: a psychic named Illisshu and Ulgat's second-in-command, Gizmirr. Illisshu has been looking for allies to uncover the truth behind Ulgat, whom she believes to be under an enchantment or some sort of imposter. She's tried to convince Gizmirr, the battle leader and mentor to young ulat-kini warriors, but he favors isolation over investigation. While Illisshu actively seeks allies to uncover the truth, Gizmirr is content to keep his distance and watch how things unfold.

D1. Tunnel Watchpost

TRIVIAL 6

As the PCs approach this settlement, they cross through an empty tunnel enchanted with Illisshu's *alarm* spell, which mentally alerts her to their presence. As long as they activate the spell, Illisshu becomes aware of them and casts *clairvoyance* on them. She sends a *message* to the wisest-looking PC, who hears a voice in their mind saying, "Outsider, are you friend or foe? All is not as it seems here: a hidden master pulls the strings. Swim carefully, and watch where you send ripples. Visit me in the second tent on your left." The opening to Whisper Stream is a short distance ahead. When the party decides to continue, read or paraphrase the following.

The tunnel is wet and slippery, with enough aquatic detritus to suggest that a flood struck recently. Fish bones, shells, and the teeth of creatures of various sizes lay in piles in corners and behind ridges in the floor. To the east, the tunnel widens into a larger cavern. Several deep, croaking voices can be heard from a distance.

Creatures: Two ulat-kini hunters, Sessikon and Turslesh, stand by the cave entrance. They're more

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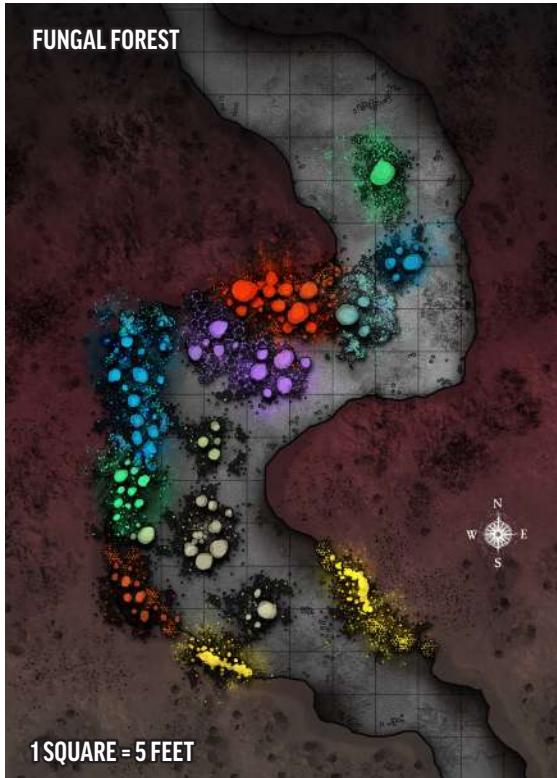
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interested in the distant conversation and celebration than in watching for intruders (each takes a -5 circumstance penalty to Perception DCs if the PCs attempt to Sneak up on them). If alerted, the ulat-kinis nervously question the PCs, weary to follow Ulgat's orders to "slay any who come here," as the PCs outnumber them. If the PCs attack, they attempt to retreat and call for help. Otherwise, they converse with the PCs, trying to learn all they can about them before reporting them to Ulgat. Sessikon is suspicious of visitors so soon after using the *earthquake cannon*, while Turslesh is hopeful that these visitors bring much needed trade to the village.

Illisshu (area **D4**) watches from nearby shadows, Hiding (DC 22 Perception) and judging the PCs for their actions. She hopes to learn more about these strange visitors. If they're needlessly violent, she considers them enemies and joins with the ulat-kinis against them, making this a Moderate encounter. Otherwise, she goes back to her tent to avoid any implications that she invited the uplanders. If a hero succeeds at a DC 22 Perception check, they spot her Hiding. If caught, she sends a *message* to peaceful PCs, asking them to make no mention of her, but to find her in her tent, the second on the left.

SESSIKON

Female ulat-kini (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 12)

Initiative Perception +6

CREATURE 2

TURSLESH

Male ulat-kini (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 12)

Initiative Perception +6

CREATURE 2

Development: As long as the PCs are peaceful, Sessikon and Turslesh let them pass, but Sessikon reports to Ulgat, telling him that outsiders have entered the encampment.

If the PCs are violent, Illisshu (area **D4**) immediately joins the fight. They make enough noise that a new group of ulat-kinis from the surrounding tents arrive to investigate the commotion at the start of round 2 and each subsequent round, starting with each of the Common Tents (area **D3**), followed by Gizmirr and Ol' Pokey (area **D5**), with Ulgat and his tent arriving last at the start of round 6. If an ulat-kini is brought below 30 Hit Points, they retreat, evacuating the village if needed.

D2. Cavern Common Area

The cavern roof rises suddenly, forming a large open area under a natural chimney in the rock above. A half-dozen hide shelters stand clustered in the center of the cave, dripping wet and encrusted with greenish algae. A small pool on the northern wall has no obvious source, but the ripples on its surface indicate an underground connection to flowing water.

From here, the sounds of intense conversation can be heard from the largest tent in the encampment, a yurt to the south. A hero who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check can pick out a conversation in Undercommon between an authoritative voice and a subservient speaker. The conversation originates in front of Ulgat's yurt (area **D6**), where several ulat-kinis have recently returned from their raid on the ritual site, having successfully used the *earthquake cannon* Narseigus gave them to destroy the cult's leaders. They converse in Undercommon instead of their native Alghollthu, as Ulgat wants to ensure they can communicate with the rest of Narseigus's army when the time for war comes. Every so often one of the ulat-kinis will lapse into their native tongue, only to be harangued by Ulgat to "speak the tongue of the hryngar!"

Development: If the PCs make a lot of noise here, Ulgat sends two ulat-kini initiates from his yurt (area **D6**) to investigate but otherwise continues to question the remainder of the raiders.

D3. Common Tent

Trivial 6

Each of these crude tents is little more than several ratty hides sewn together and thrown over a rough frame made of wood and bone, supported by several apparently

discarded tridents. Inside, piles of rags seem to form sleeping nests for human-sized creatures.

Creatures: Each tent is home to a pair of the ulat-kini warriors who follow Ulgat's banner. Like all the ulat-kinis in Ulgat's sect, these creatures eschew manufactured weapons in favor of the ancient kirtanang style of unarmed combat.

The initiates in these tents were not part of the raiding party that went to the ritual cave. They remain quiet and try to catch the discussion going on in the yurt from a distance. If the PCs attempt to engage them in conversation, one will politely listen while the other continues eavesdropping on Ulgat and the raiding party.

A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Diplomacy check can get the initiate to open up about Ulgat's decision to leave their settlement, his alliance with a hryngar named Narseigus, and that the majority of the ulat-kinis care more about following their ancient traditions and escaping the influence of the tyrannical algholthu than they do following Ulgat specifically.

ULAT-KINI INITIATE (2)

CREATURE 4

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Initiative Perception +10

Development: If the PCs attack the warriors, combat occurs the way it is described in area D1, with Sessikon and Turslesh joining in immediately, followed by Illisshu, then the other Common Tents.

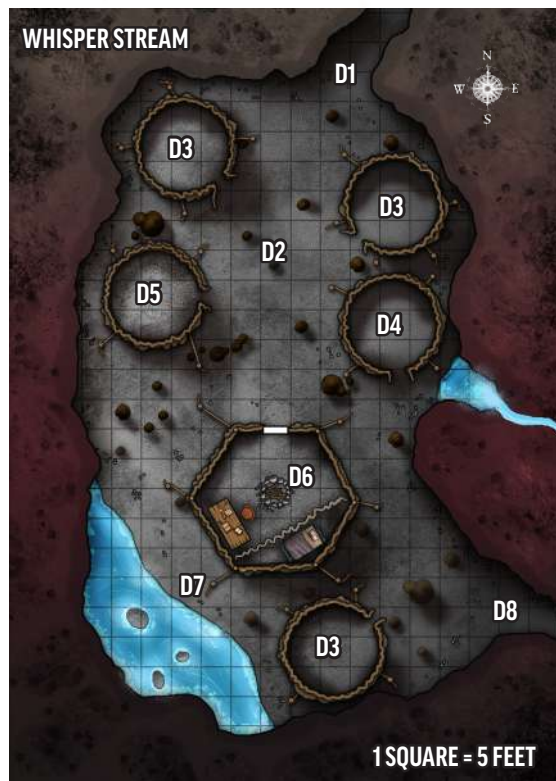
D4. Mystic's Tent

Low 6

This tent is decorated with crude pictograms of finned humanoid with tridents swimming away from massive eel- and whale-like creatures.

This is the home of the ulat-kinis' psychic, a mindreaver named Illisshu. She doesn't agree with the group's cooperation with Narseigus, but ceased her vocal opposition ever since Gizmirr seemed to accept the plan. She remains with the group to watch over him, hoping he stays safe and doesn't get swept up in Ulgat's influence. She's a cautious person, who avoids taking action against anything but a direct threat. Her tent is also filled with shells, shiny rocks and other various trinkets, a by-product of her habit of collecting things. Whenever she speaks of Gizmirr, she gets a wistful, longing look in her eyes.

Creatures: Illisshu uses her spells to detect and reach out to the PCs (area D1) before meeting them. If they attack her kin unprovoked, she responds in



kind. Otherwise, she invites them in to talk about the recent developments. She tells the PCs of her suspicions that Ulgat is not as he seems: he prefers to speak Undercommon rather than the tongue of their ancestors (Algholthu), he no longer trains new recruits in kirtanang, and he has aligned himself with the hryngar Narseigus. She begs the PCs to discover what's going on, claiming powerlessness.

ILLISSHU

CREATURE 7

Female ulat-kini mindreaver (page 83)

Initiative Perception +14

Resistances acid 5

Treasure: Illisshu wears a *ring of energy resistance (acid)*, which she gives to the PCs if they defeat Ulgat and free her people from his machinations.

Development: If Ulgat is defeated before the PCs speak with Illisshu, she's thankful for their intervention and willing to negotiate a reward for them. Illisshu knows everything that the other ulat-kinis know, and also that Narseigus left the camp only days ago, bound for Hagegraf.

D5. Novice-Master's Tent

Low 6

This tent contains a large sleeping mat in the center. The shells of countless small crustaceans litter the floor.

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This is the hut of Gizmirr, Ulgat's second-in-command and assistant teacher of initiates. A devotee of kirtanang, Gizmirr was the first to follow Ulgat's teachings and quickly proved himself to be a gifted teacher and recruiter of others. When Ulgat began to treat with Narseigus, Gizmirr found himself questioning his master's motives. Had the hryngar ensorcelled Ulgat, compelling him to join a war that didn't concern his people? As time went on and Narseigus's influence increased, Gizmirr's doubts grew. He finally confronted his master with his concerns and was rebuffed. He now feels stuck between his desire to do the right thing for the village and stand against fighting in this war, and his loyalty to the master who once gave him purpose.

Creatures: Gizmirr has been meditating in his tent day and night, accepting only the company of his pet eurypterid, "Ol' Pokey." He feels he can trust no one anymore and is unfriendly toward the PCs. Due to his paranoia, he becomes hostile if the PCs fail any Charisma-based checks against him while he's unfriendly. If the PCs can Make an Impression enough to make him helpful, he joins them in confronting Ulgat. If asked about Illisshu, the ulat-kini's fins turn a deeper shade of blue and he quickly changes the subject.

Gizmirr's pet spiny eurypterid, Ol' Pokey, takes up most of the tent, leaving only enough space for Gizmirr's sleeping mat. This is fine with Gizmirr, as he enjoys cuddling with her.

GIZMIRR **CREATURE 5**

Elite ulat-kini initiate (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, page 83)

Initiative Perception +12

OL' POKEY **CREATURE 5**

Spiny eurypterid (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 97)

Initiative Perception +10

Development: Gizmirr was privy to Ulgat's initial meetings with Narseigus, and suspects that the hryngar is starting the war only as a means to an end. Gizmirr doesn't know exactly what this end is, but he knows it involves a cave worm the sorcerer seems to worship like a god, a huge fire-breathing beast called Zogototaru. Gizmirr knows that Narseigus was once friends with the Cult of the Worm but then grew jealous of them, and the last time he was here, he gave Ulgat the *earthquake canon* and ordered him to destroy his "rivals for the worm's affections." This plan never sat right with Gizmirr.

Treasure: In thanks for their help freeing the village from Ulgat's influence, Gizmirr gladly gifts the PCs five large garnets worth 25 gp each; they were gifts to him from Narseigus to try and buy his support.

D6. Ulgat's Yurt **Severe 6**

Note that this can be a deadly combat if the PCs just charge in and attack. Once the alarm is raised, the PCs could face the full ulat-kini force at once. Some level of subterfuge or drawing out of enemies is a good idea. If the ulat-kinis hear noise outside the tent, Ulgat dispatches two of the initiates to investigate (a trivial encounter), making the encounter inside the tent moderate.

Larger than the other tents here, this hexagonal yurt seems somewhat sturdier from the outside. The



doorway is framed by broken and bent tridents, and the entrance is covered with a colorful mosaic of fish scales and coral pieces. A tattered curtain blocks off a small section near the back. A heavily scratched and dented desk sits along the southeast wall. A low-burning fire in the center of the tent keeps the space warmer than the damp cavern outside, while the smoke rises through a hole in the ceiling.

Ulgat lives here and governs the village with this, the largest tent, as his seat of power. For the past several months, Ulgat has passed the instruction of his acolytes in the ways of kirtanang to ulat-kinis who have already mastered the techniques, insisting that, “The teaching must flow from fish to guppy.” In reality, a slime puppeteer murdered and subsumed the real Ulgat and does not know the fighting style.

The ulat-kinis under his command do not know of his deception, and believe their old master’s recent personality shift come from settling into an older age. If they were to find out he was an ugothol spy, they’d turn against the impostor.

Creatures: The slime puppeteer Ulgat is here, interrogating his subordinates on their successful raid to disrupt the Cult of the Worm’s ritual. If the PCs burst into the tent, Ulgat immediately calls for the ulat-kinis to defend him and continues shouting for others to come to his aid. He attempts to avoid combat in favor of letting his followers perish for his safety. Unless Ulgat’s shouting can be stopped or suppressed, other ulat-kinis from the village arrive at the end of round 2, as described in the Development section of area D1. Illisshu only joins the battle if the PCs haven’t visited her tent to speak with her.

If any PC wields a weapon or casts a spell that deals fire damage, Ulgat immediately becomes frightened 1 and orders his subordinates to attack that PC. Once Ulgat’s Stinky Sweat is activated (by taking fire damage), a PC can identify him as a slime puppeteer with a successful DC 26 Occult check to Recall Knowledge. If Ulgat is reduced below 60 hit points, he ends his Mimic Form ability and flees into the Darklands rather than be killed. Once his true form is revealed, all ulat-kinis in the area become stunned for 1 round, and then fight only to defend themselves, taking no offensive actions as they try to come to terms with their master’s true form. Once Ulgat flees or is defeated, any remaining ulat-kinis surrender.

ULGAT

Male slime puppeteer (page 82)

Initiative Perception +14

ULAT-KINI INITIATE (4)

CREATURE 4

Page 83

Initiative Perception +10



Ulgat

Treasure: A large wooden crate contains 12 tridents and 6 steel bucklers, all with Hagegraf makers’ marks; Narseigus brought these to arm the ulat-kinis, not realizing this group eschewed weapons. Ulgat’s treasure horde, such as it is, also includes 170 gp worth of uncut semi-precious stones and 3 chunks

of silver worth 10 gp each.

Development: Any captured ulat-kinis refuse to speak as long as Ulgat’s true form is concealed, but if the PCs expose him, his former minions become more cooperative. If the PCs are allied with Illisshu, she speaks for the village. All of the ulat-kinis know that Ulgat is working with a hryngar called Narseigus, who has convinced Ulgat to join his army for a “great war” against someone. They also know that Narseigus provided Ulgat with a strange device of wires and crystals and taught him how to use it to make the ground shake; he also brought crates of weapons and armor that Ulgat accepted but no one in the camp wishes to use. Ulgat sent a group of initiates to the nearby lake with the earthquake device, instructing them to activate it when the fey gathered and began to chant, then return home with the *everywhen map*, if possible. They did so, causing a massive earthquake that collapsed the ritual cavern and caught several of their team in the magical backlash; only three survived to return with the device to report to Ulgat. The device no longer functions since three of the large brown crystals attached to the device shattered when it was activated (these were the *earth elemental gems* activating and funneling their energy to power the device).

With Ulgat revealed, any remaining ulat-kinis realize they’ve been used by the hryngar and the slime puppeteer. They plan to return to their family groups throughout the region, ignoring Narseigus’s call to muster at the Kor Well and posing no further threat to the PCs or their allies. Illisshu thanks the PCs for their help and gives them her *ring of energy resistance (acid)* if she has not already done so. If the PCs ask about the



path ahead, she tells them of Gritt, a cavern troll who enjoys engaging travelers in trade (**Event 2**).

D7. Stream

Low 6

The stream's water is as clear as crystal, making it difficult to determine its depth. The water flows from east to west, creating faint ripples on the surface, but its source isn't visible.

This is an exposed part of a subterranean stream which slowly flows into the ritual cave. The water is 15 feet deep and very cold, but a PC can Swim through with a successful DC 10 Athletics check. Creatures submerged suffer from the effects of mild cold temperature (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 517) until they can dry out and warm up (such as by resting beside a campfire or using a magical aid such as *endure elements* or *prestidigitation*).

Creatures: Several giant crayfish lurk at the bottom of the pool. They washed down from the recent flood and are hungry from a lack of natural food sources in this cavern. They ignore intruders unless their pool is disturbed, but once provoked will pursue prey onto land and throughout the cavern.

GIANT CRAYFISH (4)

CREATURE 3

Elite giant crab (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 6, 55)

Initiative Perception +10

Treasure: Wedged at the bottom of the pool is a green jade amulet carved into the shape of a serpent's face. If recovered, the amulet is worth 45 gp.

D8. Exit Tunnel

This tunnel leads out of the cavern and toward Hagegraf.

Back Through the Darklands

The PCs now know that someone named Narseigus supplied the ulat-kinis with the means and the motivation to disrupt the Cult of the Worms' ritual. They may have also learned that Narseigus is a hryngar sorcerer and royal adviser to King Kurindey Orgukagan of Hagegraf; if not, a PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Darklands Lore or Society check can recall this information. (On a critical failure, they recall that Narseigus is the name of a legendary hryngar lich reputed to dwell beneath Hagegraf.)

From the information gleaned from the ulat-kinis, Narseigus is only a day or so ahead of them and headed back toward Hagegraf. Tracking him through the Darklands would be next to impossible,

if not for the fact that the PCs know where Narseigus is likely headed.

IN PURSUIT

Whether the PCs return to Highhelm or pursue Narseigus toward Hagegraf, their route is the same for many weeks of travel. Without Jirelga to guide them, the return journey becomes much more dangerous. Use the map of Nar-Voth on page 6 to track the PCs' progress. Each day of travel requires a successful DC 20 Survival roll to avoid getting lost, and a second check at the same DC to successfully forage for food if they don't have enough supplies.

There are two types of encounters which occur during the PCs' journey: encounter sites and events. Encounter sites are marked on the map and occur when the PCs reach that location. Events can happen any time the GM feels they're appropriate. Try to avoid having the PCs face too many encounters without a chance to rest, but also don't space everything out so that they're always at their best.

EVENT 1: HIDDEN ALLY

At some point on the PCs' journey to Highhelm, they pick up a tail. Gendal Vissij, a caligni assassin who enjoys shadow puppets and theatricality, happens across their path and takes an interest in the PCs—especially any who are of ancestries not commonly found in the Darklands. Gendal is indifferent toward the PCs but curious about them. He follows them for a day or so, trying to remain at a distance and out of sight, but a hero can sense his presence with a successful DC 20 Perception check, or fully spot him with a critical success. When the party makes camp for the night, the assassin creeps closer in order to overhear their conversations. If spotted, Gendal retreats into the shadows and tries to evade combat.

After several days of this behavior, Gendal will approach the PCs' camp as they prepare a meal and introduce himself. He says he's heading to Hagegraf for "vacation," but a PC who succeeds at a DC 23 Perception check realizes that he's lying. A PC trained in Darklands Lore or Society knows that for most caligni, taking a "vacation" to a hryngar city would be quite odd.

If the PCs are able increase his attitude to friendly, Gendal tells them the truth: he's running from his settlement and looking to start his life over in Hagegraf. Caligni assassins are affected by an illness called Shadowfade (page 85 sidebar), and Gendal has recently been experiencing the first, most mild effects. He's decided to see what joy he can get from his life

before the illness consumes him. While Gendal and the PCs are traveling a similar route, Gendal still prefers to travel alone, as he has trouble relaxing around other creatures.

If the PCs are able to increase his attitude to helpful, Gendal offers to aid them if they encounter anything in the Darklands they can't handle. A character can call for Gendal during an encounter with a single action that has the auditory trait; Gendal appears at the end of the character's next turn and acts immediately after that character. Once the encounter is resolved, Gendal winces in pain and clutches his side. He states that the Shadowfade is getting worse, and excuses himself, saying he'll have to hurry to Hagegraf to find a healer there who has worked with this malady before. Gendal insists on traveling alone, and can no longer be called on for aid.

GENDAL VISSIJ

CREATURE 8

Male caligni assassin (page 85)

Initiative Stealth +20

EVENT 2: BLOCKED TUNNEL

LOW 6

This event can occur at any point in the journey, but likely closer to Whisper Stream.

A ten-foot-wide boulder blocks the tunnel ahead. Its rough surface is filled with various mineral inclusions, mostly jagged green crystals.

The boulder is actually Gritt, an enterprising cavern troll. He huddled in the tunnel, and fell asleep with his back to the PCs. The PCs can recognize him with a successful DC 20 Perception check, though he remains asleep unless disturbed by loud noise or physical contact.

Gritt is smarter than most cavern trolls, which is still not very smart. However, one day a group of mitflits came across him in a narrow tunnel, cowered, begged for their lives, then offered him several shiny rocks to be allowed passage. Since that time, he regularly waits in tunnels for travelers and demands payment for passage.

Gritt encountered Narseigus recently, traveling with a few morlocks who seemed to be his allies, but the hryngar killed one of the morlocks and gave it to the troll in exchange for safe passage. Gritt found this to

be a reasonable deal, and plans on asking the same price from all other groups of travelers he meets from now on.

Creatures: If the PCs initiate combat while Gritt is still asleep, the troll rolls Perception with a -4 circumstance penalty for being asleep. He fights ferociously, but surrenders when reduced below 40 hp. After surrendering he will let the PCs travel past him for free for thanks to "the good exercise." He's still willing to barter, though he's unfriendly from being attacked.



Gritt

GRITT

CREATURE 7

Elite cavern troll (*Bestiary* 2 6, 265)

Initiative Perception +16

Treasure: Gritt carries a dirty sack with all of his possessions: 85 sp, 209 cp, a half-eaten cave scorpion claw, a *battered silver tray*, a *bloodletting kukri*, an *iron cube*, a *shark tooth charm*, a *bloodseeker beak*, and half a morlock corpse that is disturbingly fresh. Gritt doesn't know what any of these items are, but thinks they're neat. The *battered silver tray* is page 2 of *Kalmaug's Journal* (page 77), but the engraved dwarven writing is still legible.

XP Award: PCs who barter passage from Gritt earn XP as if they had defeated him in combat.

Gritt the Merchant

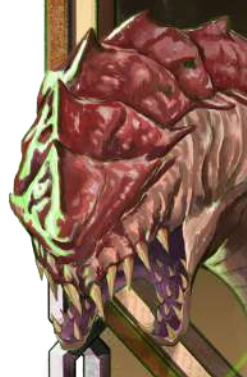
If the PCs decide to wake Gritt up and talk with him, he's indifferent to them and willing to barter for passage, or to trade for any of the items in his collection (see Treasure). To successfully make a trade, a PC must succeed at a DC 20 Diplomacy check to Request and offer something that might appeal to Gritt. PCs gain a cumulative +1 circumstance bonus (maximum +4) on this check for dangerous objects, shiny objects, objects he can eat, and for each attitude step increased above indifferent. For example, a dagger is both deadly and shiny, granting a +2 circumstance bonus on the trade. If Gritt becomes unfriendly, all Requests suffer a -2 circumstance penalty.

EVENT 3: THE QUEEN'S HUNTERS

SEVERE 6

This event should happen toward the end of the PCs' journey, at a time when they have most or all of their resources at hand.

Back in the Court of Ether, Queen Frilogarma has completed her investigation of the earthquake that destroyed the Cult of the Worm and damaged some



of her city. She has found enough evidence to paint the PCs as agitators, while naturally deflecting the blame from herself. Whether the PCs accepted her aid or not, she's worked herself into believing they caused the havoc, then escaped with the *everywhen map*.

She first casts *scrying* on the PCs to locate them as they travel over the course of several days. The PCs attempt secret DC 28 Will saves against the queen (if any of the PCs are wearing a *token of Queen Frilogarma*, remember to account for its effects.) After locating them, she sends two of her most loyal followers to locate and capture the PCs.

Creatures: Grelten is a member of Queen Frilogarma's court, but rarely engages with the other fey. However, when the queen wants someone personally brought before her, she calls on his services and sends him with her finest redcap jockey and his thoroughbred giant bloodseeker. Grelten has orders to capture the PCs so they can be interrogated. If the PCs fail to overcome this encounter, they'll have opportunities to escape their captors and continue their journey.

GRELTEN **CREATURE 7**

Male stygira (*Bestiary 2 255*)

Initiative Perception +17

ELITE REDCAP CAVALRY **CREATURE 6**

Page 88 (*Bestiary 6*)

Initiative Perception +16

ELITE GIANT BLOODSEEKER **CREATURE 3**

Page 84 (*Bestiary 6*)

Initiative Perception +12

Treasure: Grelten wears three *fleshgems* (*Lost Omens Grand Bazaar 110*) that he uses to see through: one on the back of each hand, and a third on his forehead.

ALL THAT GLITTERS **MODERATE 6**

The route east from the Endless Gulf is a well-maintained and relatively flat tunnel 20 feet wide, with none of the narrow branches and vertical passages of the tertiary tunnels.

Another side tunnel branches off from the main route. Loose material sits piled at the side of the road, as if cast off from an excavation.

If the PCs are traveling with a light source, they spot the glint of gold from the pile as soon as it enters the range of their light, otherwise they can make out the

valuables as soon as they're within 10 feet of them using darkvision. The pile is made up of gold and silver jewelry and gem-studded objects of every description: statues, goblets, crowns, amulets, bracelets, and the like. A PC who Searches or Investigates the pile of objects notices flecks of both fresh and dried blood on various pieces of jewelry.

Creatures: The pile is the bait set out by a pair of bauble beasts who enjoy luring travelers to their lair to steal their valuables and then slaying them to prevent discovery. They have managed to compel some of the ghouls (area F) to bring them valuables, including page 7 of the *Kalmaug's Journal* (page 77).

The beasts remain hidden (Stealth DC 24) in the side passage, waiting for travelers to try on the jewelry and become enchanted. If travelers instead collect the jewelry without trying it on, Borblia reveals herself, insulted that the PCs won't try on the jewelry. She's also willing to negotiate with the PCs, or at least keep them distracted for long enough for Bolgob to become impatient and attack.

If Borblia can't convince a hero to put on a tiara or necklace, Bolgob ambushes them from the shadows using his bite and philanthropic bile to achieve the same results. The bauble beasts fight until they have been reduced to less than 25 Hit Points and then flee or bargain for their life.

BOLGOB **CREATURE 6**

CE male bauble beast (*Bestiary 3 28*)

Initiative Perception +13 or Stealth +14

BORBLIA **CREATURE 6**

LE female bauble beast (*Bestiary 3 28*)

Initiative Perception +13 or Stealth +14

Treasure: The glittering pile in the main road is imitation jewelry created by the bauble beast, which could be sold by unscrupulous characters for 300 gp, but most buyers would be able to detect them as forgeries. The creature's actual treasure is in a small cave off the main road, where several stone plinths and platforms display a variety of bejeweled statuettes and jewelry worth 200 gp. Among them is page 7 of *Kalmaug's Journal* and a half eaten morlock.

Ghoulish Gourmands

A century ago, a cult of Kabriri, the demon lord of ghouls, started in this area of Var-Noth, possibly as some sort of sick joke from the Ether Court fey. The living creatures of the area retaliated against their violently aggressive recruiting tactics, and the cult's influence shrunk until it was no more than a handful of

CULT OF THE CAVE WORM

Chapter 1:
Candlestone
Cult

Chapter 2:
On the Trail
of the Worm

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City of Toil

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members. These days, the members keep to themselves and only occasionally venture from their home in search of tasty new experiences. They've developed something of a sophisticated palate and eat "lesser meats" only out of survival. Due to their strange obsession with "sophistication;" they're quite friendly.

F1. GUARD SKELETON

LOW 6

This section of tunnels take on a fouler smell, the air heavy with the stench of decay. As the tunnel turns, an intricately carved stone door embossed with dozens of skulls stands to the north. The main tunnel ahead is collapsed from a small cave-in.

Several decades ago, the Cult of Haute Cuisine became tired of would-be adventurers interrupting their dinner parties. They slew a cave giant, animated his remains, named him "Derv," and chained him outside their abode. Over time, the cult has become quite affectionate toward Derv. They've started to occasionally find "toys" for him to play with, such as a lost mitflit or a sprite from the Court of Ether.

The entrance to their lair is marked by a grand stone door adorned with toothy skulls. According to the cult, this decoration is to create a welcoming atmosphere compared to the "drab tunnels of the Darklands." The skull door is a 10-foot-wide, 15-foot-tall unlocked stone door.

Creature: The skeletal hulk of a long-dead giant stands in front of the elaborately skull-carved door, its bony tibiae chained to the wall. It attacks all living creatures, functioning as a guard-creature for the Cult of Haute Cuisine.

"DERV"

CREATURE 7

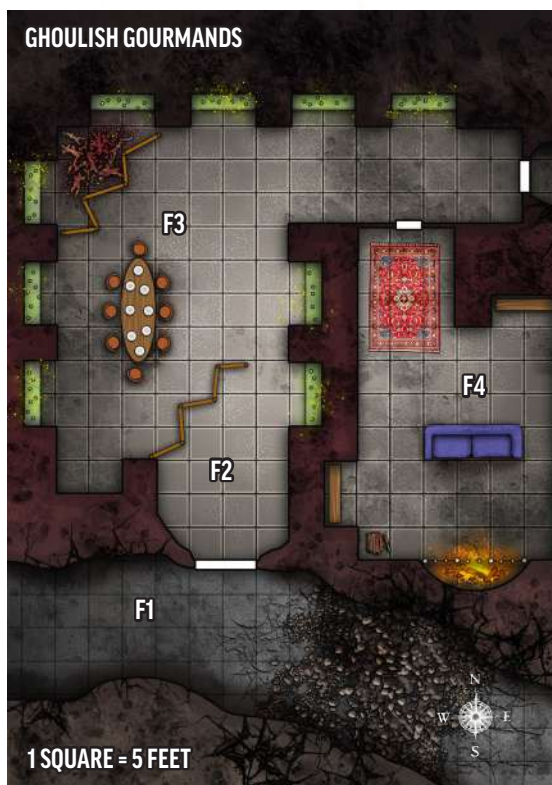
Skeletal hulk (*Bestiary* 299)

Initiative Perception +16

F2. GRAND ENTRANCE

This room extends to the north but is interrupted by a stained dressing screen, its faded, painted images of elves and spiders just barely visible behind numerous brown splatters. The screen ends before the eastern wall, allowing travel to the room beyond. On the east wall, an alcove holds several small candles, glowing with a green light. A large stone door exits to the south.

This area is the front entrance to the Cult of Haute Cuisine's headquarters. The priests of Kabriri have placed a stolen dressing screen across the room as a partition wall. While the screen blocks sight, it does



little to block the sound of gnashing teeth and tearing of flesh coming from the ghouls' dining table (area F3). Pushing over the dressing screen is trivial.

Treasure: The candles in the alcove are *everburning candles*, a variant of *everburning torches* that only shed dim light in a 10-foot radius and are worth 1 gp each. There are seven candles in each of the nine alcoves (63 total).

F3. HAUTE GHOULS

SEVERE 6

This large chamber must have once been a crypt, with burial alcoves built into the walls. The alcoves have been converted to shelving units, most displaying an array of green candles, while others have been carved out and replaced with ancient bookcases full of tomes. To the south, a stained dressing partition divides the room between the southern door and a long stone dining table on the west side of the room, complete with eight stone chairs. Another partition blocks the northwest corner. The room continues to the east along the north wall, ending in another door to the east, and one to the south.

Creatures: A cult of Kabriri took over this cavern a century ago, choosing to eschew ghoule society and gather based on their shared love of luxury and culinary variety. They now refer to themselves as the Cult of Haute Cuisine, and are always in search of new



types of decaying flesh for consumption (the menu of Darklands denizens is so last season). Only five cultists remain; the four seated at the table are Kamari, Teldon, Barsuflious, and Shalina, who does most of the talking. The fifth member is Grimwarden Yimraan, a recluse who prefers to study in his quiet library.

When the PCs arrive, the priests of Kabriri are seated around the dining table, feasting on the corpse of a munavri (*Bestiary* 3 180) covered in phosphorescent moss. Upon seeing the PCs, they cheerily invite the new “guests” to dinner. The ghouls’ starting attitude depends entirely on how interesting they think the PCs might be to eat. If any PC has an uncommon ancestry, the ghouls are unfriendly unless quickly convinced not to consume their newfound friends. If any PC has a rare ancestry, the ghouls are hostile, salivating at the thought of a new meal. Regardless of their true attitude, the ghouls act friendly. Read or paraphrase the following.

A throaty feminine voice rises from the far side of the room, its sound wet as if from a mouth half-full.

“Welcome, esteemed guests,” it says. “I am Shalina, and it is a pleasure to have you for dinner; we hope Derv didn’t give you too much trouble.” A loud swallow and muffled burp echo off the cavern walls as the humanoid rises from their seat. The creatures are all dressed in what might have been fine fashion decades ago, their grayish skin pulled tight over bones that protrude at odd angles. Shalina’s tongue is at least a foot long, and whips out to clean the corners of her mouth.

The ghouls weren’t expecting to see the PCs but understand it would be rude to continue eating without inviting their guests to join, and half hope the PCs will become ghouls themselves to help grow the cult’s numbers. They don’t immediately attack the party—they have plenty of food stockpiled and are more interested in conversation than combat. They ask polite questions of the PCs such as “Where are you from, uplander?” and “Would you like to join us for a meal?” If asked about the books or bookcase, they become interested and are willing to converse on nearly any subject of lore. A hero can attempt a DC 20 check to Recall Knowledge or a DC 16 Cooking Lore to Make an Impression on the ghouls.

If the ghouls become hostile, most likely because a PC has a rare ancestry, they attempt to charm the

party into letting their guard down before they attack, attempting to leave PCs with uncommon and rare ancestries alive to consume later.

In the event that the ghouls become friendly with the PCs, they allow them to travel through the area without fuss but remind the party that it’s polite to bring a gift when calling on friends, such as a fresh corpse or blood that’s been preserved and aged in a gently burned oak barrel.

PRIEST OF KABRIRI (4) CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Book of the Dead 104

Perception +13



Treasure: The selection of arcane treatises on the bookshelves is in poor condition, being stained by blood and various other fluids (the ghouls tend to read as they eat). Even in such poor condition the books are worth a total of 50 gp. A plain changing screen in the northwest corner masks the ghouls’ larder. There’s 23 gp in assorted jewelry spread throughout the corpses.

Development: When Narseigus passed this way, he had little patience for talkative ghouls and killed two of their number out of spite before continuing on. The ghouls recall the “nasty rude dwarf,” and will compare any dwarf PCs with Narseigus while conversing or during combat. If the PCs manage to befriend the ghouls, they reveal that Narseigus used the spell *magic missile*, could spray worms from his mouth (actually the *vomit swarm* spell), and that his arms were able to stretch to unnatural lengths while fighting with his hammer.

Befriended ghouls also warn the PCs of their master, Grimwarden Yimraan, who likes to read in quiet in his personal study (area F4). However, they also mention that the most interesting books and artifacts in their collection can be found in his library. If Yimraan engages the PCs in combat, the cult flees from the chamber, hoping to avoid their master’s ire.

XP Award: If the PCs resolve this encounter peacefully, award them XP as if they’d defeated the ghouls in combat.

F4. HOT-HEADED GHOUL

MODERATE 6

While the stone door to this room isn’t locked, Yimraan likes to keep the hinges very squeaky so he knows when one of his cultists enters to disturb his reading. PCs attempting to Sneak into the room take a

–4 penalty to Stealth checks unless they do something about the squeaky hinges first.

This quiet study might be considered lavish for a reading room constructed from an old crypt. A threadbare rug lays before the stone door to the north, while a moth-eaten velvet couch stands in front of a broad fireplace on the southern wall, complete with giant bat-skin rug. The roaring flame illuminates various bookshelves recessed into alcoves in the walls.

Grimwarden Yimraan is frustrated he can't get the cult to take the worship of Kabriri seriously. He has shouted himself hoarse several times trying to get them to act like proper ghouls and has all but given up this past decade. He passes the time reading in his extensive library, only leaving to eat his fill from the cult's larder and perhaps scream at the cultists to vary the monotony of his days. When particularly bored, he hunts morlocks in the nearby caverns.

Creatures: Yimraan sits on the velvet couch reading one of his books while chewing on a meaty femur. Unless the PCs succeed at a DC 23 Stealth check to Sneak into the room, Yimraan hears them and assumes more of his kind have entered to pester him. He calls without rising, "Get out, unless you've come to tell me that you wish to behave like proper ghouls." The PCs have one opportunity to attempt a DC 23 Deception check to mimic the voice of a cult member. If they succeed, Yimraan ignores them and continues to focus on his book, allowing them to Search the room uninterrupted. Otherwise, he rises from his seat and vows to kill the uplanders.

YIMRAAN

CREATURE 8

Male ghoulish cadaverous rake (*Book of the Dead* 72, 78)

Initiative Perception +16 (+18 to initiative)

Treasure: Most of Yimraan's books are mundane, but quite old and rare. The collection as a whole is worth 250 gp but consists of 50 Bulk worth of books. Amid this collection is a *Festrem Mortu* grimoire containing the following spells: *animate dead* (1st and 2nd)^{APG}, *create food*, *cup of dust*^{G&M}, *fear*, *feast of ashes*^{G&M}, *grim tendrils*, *invisibility*, *negate aroma*, *noxious vapors*^{APG}, *telekinetic maneuver*. He also has pages 8 and 9 of *Kalmaug's Journal*.

MORLOCK AMBUSH

MODERATE 6

The cavern widens with a ledge along the wall running parallel to the path below. The air is very still and stagnant with the faint smell of offal and rotting meat.



Creatures: Narseigus ordered a group of morlock scouts to watch this pass, along with several others nearby, and ambush anyone trying to follow him. The morlocks slide down on scree from the ledge above, trying to surround and take down the weakest looking opponents first.

MORLOCK (8)

CREATURE 2

Bestiary 2 174

Initiative Stealth +9

Development: Morlocks rarely travel in small groups without nearby allies, and this group of raiders is no exception. As soon as half of their number are defeated, one of the morlocks blows a horn made of the shell of an ancient shellfish. The echoing call is answered from half a dozen places to the west and south, and the PCs hear unmistakable sounds of a morlock horde gathering for the attack. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check can determine that there are several dozen morlocks coming at the very least (the actual number is well over a hundred). It should be clear to the PCs that they can't stand against so many for long.

Flight from the morlocks is handled using the Chase rules from the *Gamemastery Guide* (page 156), with the PCs facing a sequence of obstacles. At each obstacle, the PCs must earn a certain number of Chase Points (CP) to be able to progress to the next.

During each "round" of the chase, each hero can attempt a check to overcome the obstacle. Several possible choices are given along with the DC required to succeed, but the GM should encourage players to come up with clever ways to use other skills as appropriate. The PCs might also have a spell, ability, or magical item that seems like it would work, earning one or more CP as you see fit (or even automatically bypassing the obstacle).

After each hero has acted, the morlock horde automatically advances forward by one obstacle if the PCs advanced, but remains where they are if the PCs didn't advance. The morlocks aren't actually trying to catch them, but to herd them into the caverns which lead to area H. If a hero seems curious about the

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CITY OF THE SNAKE QUEEN

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

progress of the morlocks matching their own, allow them a secret DC 16 Perception check to determine that the morlocks seem to be maintaining their distance rather than trying to catch up.

For this chase, Chase Points are earned as a group, representing characters helping each other to overcome obstacles. After each round, make sure to describe the slaving horde of morlocks howling and brandishing weapons at them, with faster scouts running along both sides to prevent them from outflanking the main horde.

STALAGMITE CAVERN

OBSTACLE 3

Chase Points 4; **Overcome** DC 14 Acrobatics to maneuver around the stalagmites without slowing down, DC 16 attack roll with a bludgeoning weapon to clear your path, DC 18 Nature or Survival to determine the easiest path.

The cavern floor is a maze of stalagmite columns which slow your progress.

CHASM

OBSTACLE 5

Chase Points 2; **Overcome** DC 20 Athletics to leap across, DC 22 Perception or DC 18 Underground Lore to find the nearest crossing, DC 24 Crafting check to create a makeshift bridge from nearby materials.

A deep chasm cuts across your path.

MORLOCK JUNK TRAPS

OBSTACLE 6

Chase Points 5; **Overcome** DC 18 Thievery to disarm a trap, DC 20 Athletics check to throw debris to trigger the traps harmlessly, DC 22 Acrobatics check or Reflex save to make it through unscathed.

The path before you is strewn with deadly traps made of junk and scavenged debris.

Escaped: Once the PCs overcome the third obstacle, they arrive at the City of the Snake Queen (area H). The morlock horde pulls up short and doesn't enter the cavern, instead clustering just outside the entrance, where they block the way and listen to hear what happens when their goddess deals with the interlopers. If the PCs were able to outrun the morlocks, they arrive before the sound of the horde can alert the undead in the city. They gain a +2 circumstance bonus to their first initiative roll in that area.

City of the Snake Queen

The ruins of the ancient dwarven outpost of Kheth Soldur lie beneath the caves and caverns claimed by the morlock horde. It was built by Kalmaug, a priest of Trudd, during the Quest for Sky. Once Taargick and his forces reached the surface, this fortress became one of the lowest maintained points

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along the Road to Sky, occupied by a token force of Kalmaug and his followers to guard the lower flank of Taargick's new kingdom. The outpost remained in dwarven hands for a century until a few decades after Kalmaug's death. A legion of ghouls spreading the teachings of Kabriri overran the outpost, and the dwarves pulled back toward the surface, leaving this portion of Nar-Voth behind.

The ghouls used the outpost to nip at the heels of the dwarves for decades before finding themselves between the hammers of the expanding hryngar society and the anvil of surface dwarves. They eventually left for other regions with easier prey. Kheth Soldur passed between many hands, including a dark naga named Voxnia whose rule ended when a hryngar mage turned her to stone. Eventually, the ruins were overrun by a horde of morlocks—until recently. Gronaut, a morlock shaman, discovered how to restore the statue of the dark naga to flesh. Upon awakening, the naga used powerful magic to slaughter the morlocks, causing the few survivors to bow to her in awe. At first, Voxnia was happy to have a plethora of morlock servants and snacks, but lately she has grown weary of their constant ceremonies and pitiful offerings. They're so numerous that she finds it difficult to leave gracefully without the tedious task of murdering them all.

Those morlocks originally killed by Voxnia have been either raised as undead or incorporated into her new nest. The surviving morlocks have decided that getting eaten by their queen isn't the best use of their lives, and they've started to corral living creatures to her. The PCs are their most recent targets.

H1. ENTRANCE CAVERN

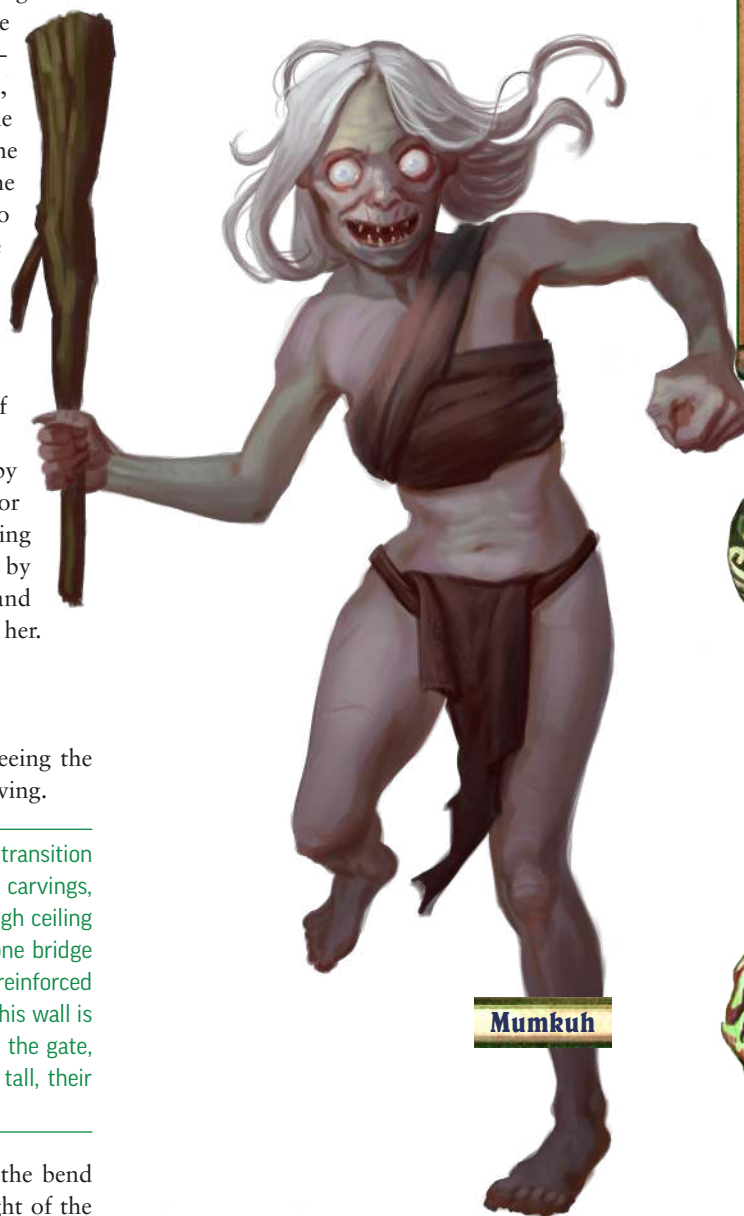
As the PCs bypass the last obstacle while fleeing the morlock horde, read or paraphrase the following.

As the tunnel rounds a bend, the cavern walls transition suddenly from rough stone to heavily worked carvings, with square pillars and archways holding up a high ceiling over a well-set stone road. A thirty-foot-long stone bridge leads over a dark chasm, ending in two massive, reinforced stone doors in a twenty-foot high outpost wall. This wall is complete with battlements and towers. Flanking the gate, two statues of grim dwarves stand twenty feet tall, their shields forming the sides of the gateway.

Creatures: The pursuing morlocks round the bend and go eerily silent as soon as they catch sight of the

dwarf gate, stopping their chase and watching. Some prostrate themselves in apparent obeisance, calling out in fearful voices about "an offering" and "the snake queen." The air is heavy and oppressive, and the cavern brings whispered echoes of prayers from the dozens of morlocks blocking the only exit other than the bridge and gate ahead.

The morlocks have delivered the PCs to the gate of their queen's palace, and they remain there in order to hear the sounds of her meal. If the PCs elect not to enter the dwarven outpost, the morlocks will cautiously advance in an attempt to herd them through the entrance. There are over a hundred morlocks in the



Mumkuh

horde, and they remain for several days to see what boon their queen bestows upon them for this sacrifice. After a few hours with no apparent action, they squat in the cavern outside, posting guards and waiting for the screaming to begin.

If the PCs try to sneak or fight their way out, let them try, but the sheer number of enemies makes it a difficult proposition. Once the PCs provide proof that they've slain the Snake Queen, the morlocks run in fear, terrified of the PCs and their (apparent) godlike power.

H2. THE SHIELDGATE

TRIVIAL 6

A battlemented walkway passes over a deep moat, beyond which two squat towers, each thirty-feet high, flank the massive stone gate into the fortress. Each tower bears relief carvings in the likenesses of dwarven warriors, each carrying a massive tower shield of reinforced stone that serves as the doors into the outpost. The shields now hang slightly askew, leaving a narrow entrance between them into the gatehouse tunnel beyond.

The heavy stone doors are attached to a counterbalanced mechanism, allowing them to be opened with relative ease. Opening the doors requires a PC to succeed at a DC 24 Athletics check, or the cooperation of at least two medium creatures. When a door opens, the "tower shield" swings back up into place in front of one of the towers; the mechanism that guides it moves both shield-doors simultaneously. The locking portion of the mechanism is broken beyond repair, but the morlocks managed to get an old counter-siege trap working.

Trap: The carved shield-doors hide a cylinder of stone suspended between the walls. A lever inside the southern tower manually releases the column, which rolls down the slight slope of the bridge, smashing any intruders standing on it. Gronaut and Mumkuh are hiding on the southern outpost tower (area H3) waiting for the PCs to open the shield-doors. When they do, the PCs pull the lever on the mechanical trap and roll initiative against the PCs.

ROLLING STONE CYLINDER TRAP

HAZARD 6

UNCOMMON COMPLEX MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 28 (trained)

Description A 10-foot-long, 5-foot-thick column of stone thuds to the ground, just in front of the bridge. It immediately starts to roll down the bridge, quickly picking up speed.

Disable DC 25 Thievery check to create a wedge to immobilize the column, DC 21 Athletics check to

immobilize the column until the end of the creature's next turn, a creature can Climb over an immobilized column with a successful DC 18 Athletics check.

AC 21; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +11

Hardness 14; **HP** 58 (BT 29); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Speed 20 feet (west only)

Drop and Roll **Trigger** A lever at the top of the south tower is pulled; **Effect** A thick column of stone drops from above the gate, then uses crushing roll. The rolling stone cylinder trap rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action) The rolling stone cylinder trap uses Crushing Roll.

Crushing Roll **Requirements** The rolling stone cylinder is not immobilized; **Effect** The rolling stone cylinder trap moves its Speed west along the bridge. Creatures it moves past or lands on take 5d6 bludgeoning damage and are forced to move west to the first available space (DC 27 basic Reflex). Creatures who critically succeed at the Reflex save are not damaged but are still moved west. If the rolling stone tries to move into a non-creature obstruction, such as a wall or barricade, it deals bludgeoning damage to the obstruction and only continues moving if the obstruction is destroyed, otherwise the trap stops.

H3. OUTPOST TOWER

MODERATE 6

Each of these octagonal towers reaches to the ceiling nearly fifty feet above. The upper reaches are pierced with crossbow slits and surrounded by a battlemented platform. The southern tower's platform is intact, but the northern one's western side has collapsed.

The doorways of both towers have been battered down, leaving gaping holes for entranceways on the east side of each. The insides are completely jammed with the rubble of the fallen upper floors; despite this obstruction a creature can reach the top of the southern tower by climbing a morlock-created ladder or by scaling the outer walls (DC 25 Athletics). Each tower contains a few scattered bones and scraps of leather and hide; a PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Medicine check can determine that most of the bones are from morlocks and the rest are too ancient and deteriorated to identify at all.

Creatures: Gronaut, a morlock shaman turned skeletal mage, spends most of his time atop the southern tower talking with Mumkuh, a morlock zombie lord. Both are honored to be such important servants of Her Royal Highness, the Snake Queen Voxnia, but they wish she hadn't brutally murdered them and animated their corpses.

The pair of undead morlocks have found an ancient dwarven springald and managed to repair it, as well as craft some passable ammunition. When they heard the horde of morlocks coming with fresh food for their queen, they prepared the springald to fire at today's lunch. When the PCs open the main gate, they pull the lever for the rolling stone cylinder trap and get ready to aim and launch the device. Once they've fired, the siege engine jams. Gronaut spends an entire round trying and failing to fix the springald, then stays on the top of the tower and casts spells at the PCs. Mumkuh descends the tower's ladder (which takes three Climb actions) and goes to the keep (area H5) to release her troop of morlock zombies!

SPRINGALD ITEM 7

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GRONAUT CREATURE 5

Male skeletal mage (*Book of the Dead* 148)

Initiative Perception +9

MUMKUH CREATURE 5

Female elite zombie lord (*Book of the Dead* 172)

Initiative Perception +15

Unkillable Mumkuh is nigh unkillable. She loses her weakness to slashing and gains resistance 3 against all damage, and she gains weakness 6 to critical hits.

Melee ♦ club +14, **Damage** 1d6+10 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ club +14 (thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 1d6+10 bludgeoning

Zombie Commander Mumkuh can use Command Zombie on up to 16 zombies at once, enough to control an entire shambler troop.

Treasure: The springald has several low-quality replacement parts; it's only worth 100 gp if dismantled and sold. There are 10 springald arrows worth 5 gp total. Attached to the springald is a *grim trophy* talisman in the form of a morlock poppet made from morlock bones. The undead pair kept it here "for the aesthetics."

H4. OUTER COURTYARD

Geometric stone blocks interlock to form a pathway through this open courtyard. Ruined buildings and collapsed rubble ring the edges of the yard, as if this cavern was struck by a mighty earthquake in the distant past and never fully recovered. The air is even heavier here than it was outside the gate, and it carries the pungent scent of rotting refuse and decay.

The stench comes from a troop of mindless zombies stationed in the old keep (area H5) after Queen Voxnia complained about their foul odor.

H5. KEEP TRIVIAL 6

Both the east and west doors that open into the keep are barred from the outside with old dwarven war axes; a single Interact action is required to remove each axe barring the door. Once unbarred, the shambler troop (see Creatures) opens the door and emerges.

This stone building is heavily reinforced with iron on the side facing the gate, as if it were designed to break the tide of an invading army. Battlements ring the upper level, somewhat damaged in places.

Once a guardhouse and checkpoint for the dwarves defending the outpost, this place has been resettled and looted many times over the years, by hryngars, morlocks, xulgaths, and various beasts and vermin. Each removed more of the interior until it became unstable and collapsed. It's now mostly filled with rubble.

Creatures: Currently, the barracks is inhabited by a smelly troop of shambling morlock zombies, created by Queen Voxnia after she impulsively slaughtered them. She's ordered Mumkuh to look after them and keep them stored in here for later use, so as to not fill the cavern with their stench.

SHAMBLER TROOP CREATURE 4

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Initiative Perception +7

Putrid Stench (aura, olfactory) 15 feet. The zombies' rotting flesh is particularly malodorous. A creature that enters the area must attempt a DC 19 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature is sickened 1, and on a critical failure, the creature also takes a -5-foot status penalty to its Speeds for 1 round. While within the aura, the creature takes a -2 circumstance penalty to saves to recover from the sickened condition. A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune to all zombies' putrid stench for 1 minute.

Development: After the PCs move to the east of the keep, they hear a clear voice emanating from the buildings in that direction, "Hurry up, it's not like I have an eternity to wait! Is it your goal to make me suffer?" The disembodied voice belongs to Voxnia the dark naga (area H10) who's calling out to her morlock servants from her open balcony door using her *bullhorn* cantrip. She's getting impatient for them to bring her a meal. If asked about her request later when she's impersonating

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a dwarven ghost, she plays it off as “frustration derived from centuries of powerlessness.”

H6. FOUNTAIN

A multi-level stone fountain stands dry and quiet amid the crumbling outpost. A number of round objects line the edges of the fountain's lower level, arranged in a ragged row facing the main gate. To the east, two sets of stone steps lead up to a grand building protruding out of the cracked cavern wall.

The round objects are the severed heads of some of the morlocks who were present when Voxnia was unpetrified. While the PCs might suspect the heads to be undead creatures, they're merely trophies put on display by the naga as she tried to keep her chaotic and unfocused servitors in line.

Treasure: One of the morlock heads wears a *demon mask*, which didn't help its owner when Voxnia went on her rampage. PCs who Search the fountain discover, under a layer of dried mud and sand at the bottom of the fountain, the fountain surface is still inlaid with a few flecks of silver and a handful of semi-precious gems, which have remained undiscovered since the time of the dwarven Quest for Sky. Their market value as commodities is 30 gp, but they would be worth 10 times that to a historian or collector of antiquities.

H7. STAIRCASE

SEVERE 6

The wide stone steps are in remarkable shape, leading up to a carved set of stone doors adorned with glyphs of hammers, anvils and other dwarven symbols. Scattered across the stairs are at least a dozen headless corpses of morlocks, mostly decayed but intact.

When the ghouls overran this area, this outpost was quickly overrun. The inhabitants were slaughtered, eaten, and many transformed into ghouls themselves. The souls of these lost dwarves permeate the very stone of the staircase where many of them lost their lives.

Creatures: A few millennia ago, these steps were the scene of a major battle between the dwarven rear guard and invading ghoulish hordes. A squad of soldiers insisted on staying behind to slow the ghouls down, allowing the rest of the dwarves to escape up the Road to Sky. These soldiers, in their fervor, swore oaths to protect this place until dwarves returned to reclaim the outpost. Four such dwarven soldiers still linger as ghosts. When the haunt (see

hazards) activates, they emerge from the steps and roll initiative, perceiving any living creatures as a “foul ghoul invader.” They shout taunts and swear oaths to never fall, all while battling the PCs.

If a PC with a dwarf ancestry asks or orders these ghosts to stand down, and succeeds at a DC 22 Diplomacy or Intimidation check, the ghosts halt their assault and the haunt's screams are reduced to dreadful moaning. The ghosts interrogate the PCs to ensure that the following concerns are met:

- The PCs have the authority to command them.
- The outpost is safe from enemies.
- The PCs promise to bring word of their sacrifice to the survivors so they're not forgotten.

A PC can address one of the spirit's concerns with a successful DC 22 Deception or Diplomacy check, even if they're not a dwarf; dwarves gain a +2 circumstance bonus to these checks. Once two of the three concerns are addressed, the spirits salute the PCs and pass on to the River of Souls. Once the ghosts are convinced to leave, the Angry Dead (see Hazard) follows. A PC invested in the *Uniter of Clans* (*Mantle of Gold* 84) can use its ancestor's call gift to grant the dwarf trait to their allies, allowing the spirits to perceive them as fellow dwarves.

GHOST SOLDIER (4)

CREATURE 4

Ghost commoner (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 166)

Perception +10

Hazard: The spirit of despair that the last dwarves were consigned to still lingers, waiting for dwarven reinforcements to arrive and save them. They scream in terror and anger at any who approach.

ANGRY DEAD


HAZARD 6

UNCOMMON COMPLEX HAUNT

Stealth +18 (expert)

Description The faces of the original dwarven inhabitants of the city appear in the stone and scream in anger.

Disable DC 23 Religion (trained) to ritually pray for the dead or DC 25 Occultism (trained) to exorcise the spirits' anger; a dwarf succeeds at a DC 22 Diplomacy or Intimidate check, asking or ordering the spirits to stand down.

Howl of Agony  (auditory) **Trigger** At least two living creatures step on the staircase; **Effect** Dozens of mouths open on the stairs and eastern wall doors of the chamber and howl in anger and misery. Creatures in the area are deafened for 2 rounds and frightened 2 unless they succeed at a DC 27 Fortitude save. Creatures who critically fail are deafened for 1 minute and frightened 3. The haunt then rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action) The faces continue to scream, dealing 5d6 sonic damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save) to all living creatures within 20 feet of the steps. On a critical failure, a creature takes double damage and is deafened for 1 round. Deaf creatures are immune to this effect.

Reset The haunt deactivates 1 round after all living creatures leave the area. After 1 hour, the haunt reactivates. If the haunt is disabled by a dwarf succeeding at a Diplomacy or Intimidate check, the haunt is destroyed.

Development: The haunt's screams alert Voxnia and she prepares to greet guests (area H10).

H8. GRAND HALL

Once a grand entrance hall, this room collapsed into ruin long ago. The eastern and northern ends are covered in piles of rubble from collapsed upper floors. The arched ceiling overhead holds the remnants of iron chandeliers and faint signs of once-beautiful bas-reliefs on the ceiling. On the west wall stands a worn stone throne surrounded by carved runes and images of a dwarf with a short beard. Above the throne is an empty alcove in the wall with a small stone plinth. An intact stone door stands in the western wall, and on the west and south walls of the southern corridor.

With a successful DC 15 Religion check to Recall Knowledge, a PC can identify the stone throne and associated images as belonging to Trudd, the Mighty. Trudd is the youngest son of Torag, and is the dwarven god of bravery, strength, and defense. He's often left behind to guard his father's halls while Torag is absent, and his shrines are oft found in remote outposts and fortifications. When the outpost was built by the dwarves along the Road to Sky, the throne would remain empty out of respect for Trudd. Since then, occupying forces have used it as a literal throne for the usurping rulers of this fortress.

The alcove above the stone throne once held *Kalmaug's Journal*, a recreation of the famous dwarf's journal on engraved silver plates. Once the outpost was sacked, the plates were separated and used for bartering. They now are scattered throughout Nar-Voth; see page 77 for more information on this relic.

H9. RUINED BARRACKS

Little more than rubble can be found in this chamber, though the bed frames bolted into the stone walls suggest they were once barracks. Moving through this room without alerting Voxnia requires at least half of the PCs to succeed at a DC 18 Stealth check to Sneak.

Otherwise, she hears them coming and prepares for their arrival (area H10).

The door to the west leads to a small balcony, and another door leads north, into the outpost. The balcony stands on solid stone, 10 feet over the cavern floor. The door to the southwest exits into the main cavern.

H10. NAGA NEST

MODERATE 6

Whatever this room once was, it's now dedicated to death. Bones lay strewn around the chamber, many collected into a vast basin, like a nest for a massive bird. One door exits to the hall, while the western door opens to a balcony.

Creatures: The dark naga Voxnia makes her lair in the southern end of this chamber, at once absolute ruler of her domain and frustrated prisoner within it. Having scared all living morlocks from the outpost, she now finds herself alone with her thoughts between the howls of the morlocks outside, who bring her food, sacrifices, and the occasional shiny item of value.

Voxnia has already scoured all of the accessible areas of the dwarven citadel and has become bored with her existence here. However, she fears trying to leave the morlocks without some sort of distraction—there are just too many for her to handle if things turn violent.

If alerted by the haunt on the main steps (area H7) or PCs traveling through the barracks (area H9), Voxnia hides behind the bone nest along the northern wall and casts *invisibility* on herself. When the intruders enter, she casts *animate dead* to summon a wight (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 332), which appears as a dwarf warrior whose black beard and hair trail off into wisps of dark vapor. She sends the wight to attack while conversing with her "guests," trying to convince them that she's an ancient dwarf matriarch whose soul is trapped and that only purging the morlock menace can release her. PCs who succeed on a DC 26 Perception check see through her deception, at which point she maneuvers into position invisibly, casts *blink*, and Strikes the weakest looking PC.

Once discovered, Voxnia starts using her spells in combat, trying to catch as many foes as possible with *grim tendrils* and *sanguine mist*. If reduced to below 40 Hit Points, Voxnia casts *sanctuary* on herself and tries to bargain, offering the treasure she has collected from her explorations in exchange for her life.

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VOXNIA

CREATURE 8

Female elite dark naga (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 242)

Initiative Stealth +21

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 26, attack +18; **4th** (4 slots) *animate dead*^{APG}, *grim tendrils*, *sanguine mist*^{SoM}; **3rd** (4 slots) *blindness*, *fear*, *rouse skeletons*^{SoM}; **2nd** (4 slots) *invisibility*, *soothe*, *resist energy*; **1st** (4 slots) *gravitational pull*^{SoM}, *sanctuary*, *true strike*; **Cantrips (4th)** *bullhorn*^{SoM}, *daze*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*

Treasure: Voxnia has collected a sizable hoard, both from looting the dwarf citadel and from the offerings provided by the morlocks. Piled haphazardly in the southern corner of the room are 123 gp worth of loose coins (copper, silver, and gold), a suit of +1 *low-grade cold iron splint mail* with a *ready* rune etched into the gorget, a *spellguard shield*, and assorted gems, jewelry,

weapons, and art objects worth a total of 200 gp. She also has multiple pages of *Kalmaug's Journal* (page 77) scattered around her horde; when combined, they almost complete the first chapter of the journal but are missing pages 2, 7, 8, and 9. These pages can be found in nearby areas of Nar-Voth (pages 29, 30, and 33) but might require some backtracking if the PCs didn't pick them up on the way here.

H11. ONWARD AND UPWARD

This passage leads beyond Kheth Soldur to a major crossroads (area I). While the PCs could avoid Voxnia and continue onward, several morlocks block this path forward. Once the PCs have slain the dark naga and bring proof of her death, the morlocks run in fear from such powerful villains who could slay their almighty queen!

CROSSROADS

This is where the PCs must decide if they're returning to Highhelm or following Narseigus to Hagegraf. The route to Highhelm turns southeast, leading upward and eastward to connect to the same tunnel they left by. The road to Hagegraf requires a diversion straight north to the legendary Long Walk just a few miles west of the city gates.

While the PCs might decide to take a detour back to Highhelm to trade with vendors and report to Bulgra Veldollow, doing so delays their arrival at Hagegraf. When speaking with Bulgra, she listens to what the PCs have to say and responds that she'll consider their findings but is most interested to hear about Narseigus. She urges the PCs to travel to Hagegraf and learn more about the sorcerer, hoping they can uncover whatever insidious plot he has devised.

Once the PCs are ready to travel to Hagegraf, they catch up with a merchant caravan just before reaching the Long Walk.

Merchant Caravan

As the PCs approach the Long Walk on their way to Hagegraf, they overtake a sizable trade caravan composed of kobolds and xulgaths, apparently bound for the city. The caravan is stopped in the middle of the road as the leaders argue. Tension between the kobolds and xulgaths is palpable, as if a brawl might begin at any moment. Read or paraphrase the following.

Ahead, the road is partially blocked by a trade caravan that has stopped in the middle of the road. A



Voxnia

trio of pack lizards stand in the road, piled high with bags and crates, while several xulgath drovers stand idly by. A kobold wearing well-made clothing yells angrily up at a rugged xulgath, with a half-dozen kobold warriors adding their voices in support. The xulgath tries to reply to the kobold but is interrupted by their continued tirade. A lanky human leans against one of the lizards, patiently listening to the arguments and looking annoyed.

Creatures: **Draxacca** (N male kobold merchant), the nominal leader of this motley band of merchants, is fed up with his partners, **Chalmer Vasa** (LE male human Chelaxian negotiation specialist) and **Truki the Pale** (NE female xulgath beastmaster). The three and their caravan are bound for Hagegraf and debating whether to break camp or press on to the city. Their cargo of iron ore is packed on three pack lizards (giant monitor lizards, *Bestiary* 229), and they're accompanied by xulgath and kobold bearers, a dozen each.

The group is heading to Hagegraf in search of cargo contracts—the xulgaths have a large stock of pack lizards and want to sign on with a merchant house in Hagegraf. The kobolds are more interested in selling their ore and purchasing quality weapons and trap-making materials, while Chalmer Vasa seeks whatever route will bring the biggest profit at the least effort. The three are far too busy arguing to notice the PCs initially.

If the PCs listen without making themselves known, they can learn a few useful pieces of information about Hagegraf.

- Truki has a contact in the court of King Orgukagan, a minor functionary who deals with external trade. She has offered the xulgaths their top choice in contracts if they sign up immediately on arrival.
- Draxacca knows of a group of kobolds living in the city, who are open to business dealings with outsiders and rumored to be some of the finest trapsmiths in Nar-Voth, but they'll be more eager to sell their wares if they have to sit and wonder if the caravan will show up.
- Chalmer is the only one of the three who has been to Hagegraf before. He knows that business is busy enough in the hryngar city and none of this arguing matters.

Unless the PCs intervene, Truki the Pale loses her patience and bites Draxacca, then a brawl breaks out between the two sides. Chalmer avoids the conflict if at all possible but won't hesitate to join the winning side. An intervening PC could stop the violence at any time with a successful DC 22

Diplomacy or Intimidation check. Once the PCs have the caravan's attention, they can offer to help settle their agreement (either decision is fine) with a successful DC 22 Deception, Diplomacy or Merchant Lore check. The caravan leaders appreciate the PCs' assistance and offer to travel with them.

Development: If the PCs don't intervene, Truki the Pale kills Draxacca, and his xulgaths drive the kobolds off. Chalmer remains with Truki, and the group continues to Hagegraf.

Draxacca carries a leather satchel containing permits for importing goods into Hagegraf and a purse of 75 gp to cover the tariffs and import fees for the caravan's goods. If the PCs align themselves with the caravan, they can slip into Hagegraf without additional trouble.

Once this encounter is concluded, the PCs are free to travel the Long Walk.

THE LONG WALK

The rough tunnel emerges into a roadway unlike any other tunnel. A cobbled road, flat and straight and a full 40 feet across, heads east and west from the intersection. The edges of the road are lined with short stone walls like those on a typical bridge over a river. The ceiling is vaulted and at least 25 feet above the road level. Outside the road, the tunnel walls are rough and vary in width, sometimes opening into large caverns and sometimes right to the edge of the road wall. In certain places, the floor drops away, the road being supported on huge columns that reach down into the depths.

As the PCs continue to the east they pass a series of small guard posts built into the northern wall, which double as toll booths. A few miles further east, they see a huge set of stone gates standing open. Through the gates, the lights of a major underground metropolis twinkle in the darkness.

The Long Walk is the best roadway in Nar-Voth, rivaling any surface road and level for miles. The Walk begins at the hryngar capital of Hagegraf, the city visible to the east, and winds more than a thousand miles, passing under the dwarfish city of Janderhoff in Varisia before ending under the orcish capital of Urgir. The hryngars of Hagegraf maintain and patrol the road, and they charge heavy tolls for its use. Despite these tolls, the road is full of traffic: hryngar patrols, xulgath, kobolds, orcs, and humans move goods and people in both directions.

Once the PCs move onto the Long Walk, travel becomes much faster, and they can reach the city gates in a few hours. Their time in Hagegraf is covered in Chapter 3.





CHAPTER 3: CITY OF TOIL

Those dwarves who defied Torag's prophecies and spurned the Quest for Sky found themselves isolated and vulnerable deep in the Darklands. Despite their reservations, they grimly followed in the other dwarves' footsteps and accepted aid from the sinister god Droskar, turning this population into the hryngars known today. However, hryngars stopped short of the surface. Instead, they created their own tunnel empire, partly built upon the abandoned fortifications left by the Quest for Sky vanguard centuries earlier. Hagegraf is one such city, a hryngar bastion anchoring one end of the tunnel highway called the Long Walk. Hagegraf is also where the PCs must travel if they're to learn about Narseigus, uncover his plans, and locate High King Taargick's tomb. In this chapter, the PCs also learn about a gathering army that threatens not just the tomb, but also a dwarven surface city!

Exploring Hagegraf involves numerous considerations and perils, detailed in the following sections. The PCs' first encounter, Cruel Customs, involves entering the city and begins on page 48.

Chapter Objectives

The PCs don't have a contact or quest-giver to keep them focused in Hagegraf, so it's important to remember their objectives here to maintain momentum.

Gather Information: At this point, Narseigus and his objectives appear murky. The PCs need to identify informants, earn their cooperation, and learn their foe's next steps. See Investigation on page 44.

Decipher the Map: The *everywhen map* doesn't include instructions; if they didn't have it translated in Highhelm, the PCs will require local help to operate it. See The Lighted Lamp on page 48.

Infiltrate Narseigus's Home: Later in their investigation, the PCs learn of Narseigus's penthouse and break inside to uncover his plans. See area J on page 55.

Avoid Notice: The PCs need to accomplish their goals without drawing dangerous attention to themselves, and that requires disguises, subtlety, or a fearsome reputation. See Awareness on page 45.

Navigating Hagegraf

Hagegraf is a bastion of hryngar power and philosophy, which is to say it's a dangerous, oppressive city that few PCs would visit willingly. A detailed gazetteer of Hagegraf appears on pages 69–75, and this section summarizes key features needed for running this adventure.

Layout: Hagegraf is divided into three main sections. The Forge District in southern Hagegraf is a sea of workshops dotted with factories that tower over the smoggy streets like craggy islands. The Crescent arcs around most of the city's perimeter (save the southern Forge District), containing markets, fungus farms, and rickety housing erected with no sense of zoning laws or building codes. At the city's core stands the Clock Quarter, whose grander buildings house corporations, political

CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

The PCs travel to Hagegraf, one of the largest hryngar cities in Nar-Voth, in hopes of uncovering information about the sorcerer Narseigus and his plans. While there, the PCs must evade the notice of hryngar officials, find allies to work with in uncovering the sorcerer's plot, and get their magical map deciphered.

The PCs eventually discover Narseigus's penthouse suite in the most secure portion of the city. There they discover the extent of his obsession with the Avernal Worm, just how far he'll go to achieve his goals, and about the vast army he has gathered to assault Rolgrimmdur.

CULT OF THE CAVE WORM

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administration, magical elites, and other influential inhabitants. Though it's no longer exclusive to hryngars, anyone traveling to the Clock Quarter is subject to heavy scrutiny and can even be turned away if they lack business inside.

Toil: Guided by the god Droskar's grim edicts, hryngars expect everyone to be busy and vaguely productive at all times. They've created a strong labor culture to support these expectations. Loitering for long periods earns derision and suspicion, whereas anyone carrying a heavy load blends right in. Labor-saving devices hold some value, yet for the most part hryngars would rather throw more labor at a problem than innovate a long-term solution.

Taxation: Hagegraf oppresses their inhabitants less through violence and more through fees. Entering the city has a fee. Leaving the city has a fee. Causing a disturbance has a fee. Paying a fee can have a tax, and so on. Society itself is designed to wring as much wealth and productivity out of its inhabitants as possible, funneling each coin upwards for crown and country. During this adventure, several encounters levy a specific fee, tax, or tariff on the PCs, and they can expect to pay 10–20 gp each while in Hagegraf (more if they defy the tax collectors). This chapter's treasures partly make up for that loss. The PCs are likely to encounter the tax collector Four-Tooth while in Hagegraf (page 46).

Exploitation: For all their toil, a hryngar's greatest source of wealth is their subordinates. Whether they have someone financially in their debt or just claim a percentage of everything their students and children produce, hryngars develop complex webs of obligation that they often force on others. This also means murder is rare in Hagegraf, as most inhabitants would rather ruin a rival to legally seize their labor and assets. So long as a subordinate provides proper tribute, a hryngar usually doesn't care what else they do. As they explore Hagegraf, the PCs interact with various NPCs trapped in this debt network and desperate to get out.

The need for profit and the closed environment encourage price gouging. In general, the cost of services and goods is 20% higher than usual in Hagegraf. During a day of shopping, a PC can attempt a DC 20 Deception or Intimidation check to fast-talk or browbeat a merchant into selling a good for the standard list price. If the PC fails, they can try again the following day or accept the inflated price.

Non-Hryngars: Hagegraf boasts a modest population of vulgaths, kobolds, orcs, caligni, and other creatures, but the vast majority are hryngars. Anyone who doesn't resemble one of these common minorities draws attention—mostly curiosity, but also potentially harassment and exploitation by authorities. Surface dwarves aren't banned outright, yet they're extremely rare and prime targets for prejudice. As a result, most visitors disguise themselves as a local ancestry. More information appears in the Awareness section on page 45.

GM Advice: Hagegraf is oppressive and unpleasant, and conveying that to the players through descriptions, obstacles, and fines supports the narrative. Yet be cognizant of your players' limits; everyone's gaming to have fun! Particularly regarding hryngar prejudice, consider discussing the issue with your players beforehand and employing a tool for responsible play (*Core Rulebook* 485).



Dhorri

BASE OF OPERATIONS

Given Hagegraf's danger, the PCs need a place to rest, retreat, and reconnoiter while they're here. The Silent Forge is a decommissioned workshop-turned-inn operated by **Dhorri** (N female caligni activist), a proprietor who shields visitors as best she can without outright defying Hagegraf's laws. It's a well-known hangout for foreign traffic, so the PCs quickly learn of it by word of mouth. Dhorri doesn't ask too many questions of the group at first. However, as they gain Awareness Points, Gather Information, or volunteer information, she learns more about their objectives and can keep an ear open for rumors to help them maintain momentum with their investigation. She's also a good source for information, if the PCs need to turn to someone for help. In addition, she provides comfortable room and board for 5 sp per person per day (almost a criminally low rate in a hryngar settlement).

INVESTIGATION

The following summarizes leads and information the PCs discover while in Hagegraf. In general, investigating a lead introduces the PCs to an important NPC, a challenge, and new information that advances the investigation. They start with no leads, requiring they start by Gathering Information to learn rumors and identify other leads. As they discover leads, the PCs can pursue them in any order, though securing a meeting with Bronwyl is easiest once the PCs have pursued other leads first.

HAGEGRAF LEADS

Lead	Contact	Location	Summary
Gather Information	None	Any	Gather preliminary information about Hagegraf and Narseigus (see below)
Cartographer	Durruzzin	Crescent	Find someone to decipher the <i>everywhen map</i> (see The Lighted Lamp on page 48)
Military Movements	Rorbek	Crescent	Learn about Hagegraf's upcoming military plans (see Rorbek's Smithy on page 50)
Strange Artwork	Jhebek	Forge District	Uncover Narseigus's magical obsession (see The Infinite Quarry on page 51)
Arcane Discontent	Bronwyl	Clock Quarter	Discover Narseigus's political machinations from his rival, and learn about his penthouse laboratory (see Bureau of Magic on page 54)

AWARENESS

Although Hagegraf allows (and exploits) visitors, the PCs' presence and activities draw increasing scrutiny from passersby, opportunists, and spies. The GM tracks this through Awareness Points (AP), applying various conditions or events as the AP total reaches certain thresholds. Although PCs earn AP individually, their earned AP applies to the whole group.

Gaining Awareness Points

There are three typical ways that PCs might gain AP. In most cases, PCs can avoid gaining AP in that situation by Avoiding Notice or attempting Hagegraf Infiltration.

Investigating: When a PC Gathers Information or performs other investigations that involve interacting with many people, they earn 1 AP unless they Avoid Notice. A group of PCs shouldn't earn more than 2 AP for any one attempt at investigation, no matter how many might fail to Avoid Notice; this helps less subtle PCs participate without feeling like they're always endangering the mission. PCs with the Streetwise skill feat automatically Avoid Notice when using Society to Gather Information.

Accessing Areas: Hagegraf limits travel into certain areas, with guards questioning or even searching those seeking entrance. Entering Hagegraf itself might earn the PCs AP (See Cruel Customs, page 48) and each PC must Avoid Notice to avoid earning AP when entering the Clock Quarter. With Dhorri's help, they may be able to Forge Documents that allow them to travel without scrutiny.

Being Disruptive: The PCs are adventurers. They're going to get into trouble and occasionally roll initiative—all without necessarily earning AP. However, especially disruptive or destructive activity like causing property damage, creating explosions, loudly blaspheming Droskar, fomenting revolution, or causing other exceptional disruptions can absolutely earn AP at the GM's discretion.

HAGEGRAF INFILTRATION

As part of another activity, you deflect scrutiny while exploring Hagegraf, such as by maintaining a disguise, blending into the crowd, leveraging your street smarts, scaring others into minding their own business, or even just carrying something heavy—in Hagegraf, few question those who visibly toil. Attempt an Athletics, Deception, Intimidation, Religion, Society, or Stealth check. The default DC is 21, except where specified by an encounter.

Critical Success You do not earn AP for the activity. One ally of your choice treats the result of their check to Avoid Notice as one step better.

Success You do not earn AP for your activity.

Failure You earn 1 AP.

Critical Failure You earn 2 AP.

Awareness Point Effects

When the party's AP total reaches the thresholds on page 46, the growing scrutiny introduces new challenges and encounters. It's important that the players have a glimpse into how this scrutiny affects them so that the PCs can adjust their tactics. For example, NPCs might admit they've already heard about the PCs, a PC might overhear gossip about themselves, or the PCs might spot a growing number of conspicuous hryngars innocently shadowing them. Give them ample warning so they might throw suspicious hryngars off their trail.

This adventure doesn't present more severe Awareness Point consequences after the PCs earn 18 AP. If it suits your campaign, you might create a loose timer once the PCs reach that threshold, giving them limited time to finish their business in Hagegraf before authorities decide to arrest, kill, or chase them out of the city. Balance this potential threat against ensuring the PCs are able to learn what they need to continue the adventure. This should be a ticking clock to apply pressure on the players, rather than a punishment as a result of poor dice rolls.



AWARENESS POINT EFFECTS

AP	Effect
4+	The PCs receive increased scrutiny. The DC of Hagegraf Infiltration checks increases by 2.
7+	The PCs attract a local tax collector's attention, triggering Event 1: Four-Tooth (below).
10+	A Droskari priest condemns a PC's perceived trespasses, sentencing them to an exhausting debate and triggering Event 2: Punitive Debate (page 47).
14+	Wary of the PCs' conspicuousness and surveillance, either Jhebek or Rorbek leaves, negating any favors they owe the PCs. The PCs receive a letter, detailed in Event 3: A Summons (page 48).
18+	Hryngar surveillance peaks. Add one Hagegraf royal guard (page 86) to any encounter with hryngars in this chapter.

EVENT 1: FOUR-TOOTH

MODERATE 7

Upon earning 7 Awareness Points, the PCs earn a visit from **Four-Tooth** (NE male hryngar enforcer), Hagegraf's most infamous tax collector. Four-Tooth is a master of identifying victims he can bully into paying exorbitant fees for petty crimes—most based on real Hagegraf laws, though he's relentless in stacking fees. The dour official smiles rarely except when a victim protests; his grin grows with each sign of resistance, revealing one stained silver tooth in his otherwise healthy smile at a time until he's baring all four. Once that happens, he's committed to financially ruining his victim.

Four-Tooth and two city guards confront the PCs, and Four-Tooth begins enumerating the party's recent crimes (real or imagined) and the fees associated with each. He also slaps on a few insultingly punitive fees, such as administrative fees, a "wearing a sword on the wrong side" tax, and anything else that strikes his fancy. Likely ways the PCs can resolve the encounter follow.

Paying Four-Tooth: His initial assessment totals about 40 gp. If the PCs pay promptly, he slowly counts the money while assessing the PCs to see if he can demand more. His decision is simple: yes. He tacks on an addition fee of 1d8 gp unless a PC convinces him to stop with a successful DC 23 Deception or Intimidation check. Each time he demands more money, the DC decreases by 2.

Discouraging Four-Tooth: The PCs might outsmart or scare off Four-Tooth, convincing him to leave without their money. This is a short social encounter divided into four challenges, each involving a DC 23 skill check that one PC can attempt. If a PC succeeds at the check, they reduce their fees at the end of the encounter. If they fail, Four-Tooth sees through the ploy, and his smile grows by one silver tooth. Each challenge lists likely skills to use, though other skills (especially Lore skills) might apply.

- **Disruptive Math** (Arcana, Deception, Performance): Four-Tooth does his calculations aloud and doesn't write much down, so disrupting his concentration flusters him and makes him lose count.
- **Excuses** (Deception, Religion, Society): Whether they're citing legal loopholes or insisting they already paid a particular fee, the PCs can attempt to overwhelm Four-Tooth with reasons not to pay.
- **Menace** (Athletics, Intimidation): Four-Tooth is a capable brawler and bully, but he doesn't like a fair fight. Through body-language and threats, the PCs convince him he shouldn't risk his health or career by being too greedy.
- **Outrage** (Athletics, Intimidation, Performance): Four-Tooth expects quiet submission, and he becomes uncomfortable if a victim's antics draw a crowd.

After attempting all four checks, Four-Tooth demands the adjusted payment: 15 gp for each check the PCs failed. If they refuse, he and his cronies attack.

Stealing from Four-Tooth: The PCs have one clean opportunity to Steal their money back from Four-Tooth before he reaches a guard outpost. With a critical success, a PC can steal both the bag containing their money as well as Four-Tooth's own money pouch (containing 78 sp and 44 gp). If he notices the theft, Four-Tooth has his guards attack.

Resorting to Violence: Four-Tooth enjoys a brawl. He fights eagerly until reduced to 30 Hit Points or otherwise convinced he can't win, at which point he flees and avoids the PCs for the rest of the adventure.

FOUR-TOOTH

CREATURE 7

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM DWARF HRYNGAR HUMANOID

Perception +15; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon

Skills Accounting Lore +17, Athletics +14, Deception +15, Intimidation +17, Society +12

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

Items +1 *spiked chain*, chain shirt, bag containing 78 sp and 44 gp

AC 25; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +13, **Will** +15

HP 120; **Resistances** poison 5

Attack of Opportunity ⤴

Speed 20 feet

Melee ⚔ *spiked chain* (disarm, finesse, trip) +18, **Damage** 2d8+9 slashing

Occult Innate Spells DC 21; **4th** *blood vendetta*^{APG}; **2nd** *paranoia*; **Cantrips (4th)** *sigil*

Jaws ⚔ (attack) **Requirements** Four-Tooth has a creature grabbed or restrained; **Effect** Four-Tooth makes a jaws unarmed Strike against the grabbed or restrained target with an attack modifier of +19 that deals 1d8+5 piercing

damage, deals 3d6 poison damage, and exposes the target to the sewer haze disease (*Gamemastery Guide* 119).

Slashing Snare **◆◆** Four-Tooth can Step and then make a spiked chain Strike. If it hits and deals damage, he can attempt an Athletics check to Grapple the target. Both attacks count toward his multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after he's made both attacks.

Snagging Chain Four-Tooth can use a spiked chain to Grapple with the Athletics skill even if he doesn't have a free hand, and he adds the weapon's item bonus to attack rolls to the Athletics check.

HAGEGRAF ROYAL GUARDS (2) CREATURE 5

Page 86

Initiative Perception +16

XP Award: If the PCs end the encounter with Four-Tooth and lose less than 40 gp, they earn XP as if they defeated the tax collector and guards in combat.

EVENT 2: PUNITIVE DEBATE

Upon earning 10 Awareness Points, a priest of Droskar decides to discipline the PCs using one of Hagegraf's oldest punishments: never-ending debate. Typically reserved for the criminally idle, this punishment involves the accused publicly defending themselves, their beliefs, and more before a Droskari priest and heckling crowd. As an act of devotion, the priest twists all arguments to shame and frustrate the criminal, forcing them to toil with words if they refuse to toil with their hands. Typically, the punishment ends only once the criminal passes out from exhaustion.

After learning about the PCs' antics, Ekrnan confronts a PC in public (ideally a PC who has earned several AP), accuses them of various petty crimes, and challenges them to argue their innocence immediately. Another PC can intervene on the target's behalf, at which point Ekrnan pivots to harangue them instead; this redirection works only once.

This event uses the influence subsystem (*Gamemastery Guide* 151–153), during which the PC Ekrnan debates can Influence and Discover as normal, while other PCs present can only Discover. The encounter is broken into 4 rounds of 1 hour each, ending early if the PC's Influence Point total reaches 4.

EKRANAN

NE MEDIUM DWARF HRYNGAR HUMANOID

Female vindictive cleric of Droskar

Perception +13

Will +15

Discovery DC 24 Perception, DC 22 Religion, DC 23 Society

Influence Skills DC 21 Religion (arguing faith), DC 22 Fortitude (outlasting Ekrnan), DC 23 Deception (setting verbal traps), DC 23 Performance (orating confidently), DC 24 Diplomacy, DC 25 Intimidation

Influence 4 Ekrnan realizes how dangerous her victim might be, and she worries about losing face or even losing her recent promotion if embarrassed further. She arrogantly excuses herself and retreats. Reduce the PCs' AP total by 2, as bystanders become wary of crossing them. The PCs earn 30 XP for defeating a cleric of Droskar at a debate.

Resistances As far as she's concerned, Ekrnan is the law. Appeals to justice, law, or local authorities earn her and the crowd's derision, increasing the next Influence check's DC by 2.

Weaknesses Ekrnan exploits her status to avoid heavy labor, so her hands lack the callouses so common in Hagegraf. She's not guilty about it, but she does fear being shamed publicly. The first time a PC cites this in an argument, reduce the associated check's DC by 3.

Background Ekrnan has worked hard and racked up debts to earn her position, and she takes every opportunity to bully others now that she has the authority to do so. She's not the most faithful cleric, craving Droskar's prestige more than she embraces toil.

Appearance Ekrnan proudly wears Droskar's favored colors: gray robe, several dull orange sashes, and her deity's fiery sacred symbol. When speaking, she enjoys eliciting bystanders' support and sermonizing passionately to drown out counterpoints.

Personality Petty, dogmatic, performative

Ending the Debate: Unless scared away before ending the fourth round, Ekrnan debates the PC to the point of exhaustion, exposing them to the curse of malingerer's malaise; the PC gains a circumstance bonus to the saving throw equal to the Influence Points they managed to earn (maximum +3). She spends a few minutes shaming the PC as an example to the crowd on how to behave, then triumphantly strides away.

MALINGERER'S MALAISE

CURSE 7

CURSE MAGICAL NECROMANCY

This curse channels Droskar's disdain for anyone who avoids work or can't endure toil, condemning them to forever be tired.

Saving Throw DC 26 Will; **Effect** Whenever you rest for 8 hours, you must succeed at a DC 17 flat check or gain no benefits from having rested and become fatigued. If you were already fatigued, you become doomed 1. If you critically fail the flat check and were already both fatigued and doomed, increase the value of your doomed condition by 1.

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EVENT 3: A SUMMONS

Upon earning 10 Awareness Points, a deep gnome child runs up to one of the PCs and pulls on their clothing to get their attention. The child asks, “Would you like to see a neat trick?” Regardless of the answer, the child pulls a small sealed scroll from their pocket and gives it to the PC, saying, “My boss wants to see you. People don’t usually say no to her. You’d better hurry before she charges you a fine.”

The official-looking note is from Bronwyl Holloward, an Assistant Superintendent of Magic. It insists on a meeting with the PCs “at their convenience” and lists an address in the Clock Quarter.

If the PCs ignore the note, another is delivered by official courier one hour later. If they ignore the courier, a unit of four Hagegraf royal guards comes to collect them 30 minutes after that. The guards won’t take “no” for an answer.

Cruel Customs

Hagegraf’s monitoring of the PCs begins the moment they approach the city gates.

An enormous stone gate house fills the roadway ahead, its two giant stone doors standing partially open. From the battlemented walkway and tower roofs, hryngar soldiers peer down on all who would enter the City of Toil. From beyond the gates, the unmistakably music of hammers ringing on metal of a hundred forges fills the air.

Hagegraf closely controls who comes and goes—not just for security, but also for profit. Gate guards search visitors and their baggage to calculate an entrance fee, usually neglecting to mention the exit fee that often doubles that rate. Bankrupt visitors often find themselves trapped in the city, forced to work off their unexpected municipal debt. Hagegraf’s competent security effectively ensures that the PCs must pass through the gates. A daring infiltration over the walls would be extremely risky and is beyond this adventure’s expectations.

Calculating Fees: Each PC owes 1 gp as an entrance fee. Another 1 gp is applied to “strange” animals, including most companion creatures that don’t resemble livestock or draft animals; those mundane exceptions are instead taxed at 1 sp each. Although the hryngar arcanists on duty don’t identify each magic aura and item the PCs are carrying, they do study a few of the

stronger auras to assess security threats and additional fees. All the while, guards search a random assortment of containers for contraband and to calculate how much money they can overcharge.

In general, the guards charge the PCs about 3–5 gp each, dredging up increasingly absurd regulations to achieve and justify that number.

Reducing Fees: Each PC can attempt a DC 22 skill check to minimize the scrutiny and fees applied to them. This might involve hiding valuables through concealing them physically (Stealth) or arranging magic items so that one aura obscures others (Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion). A PC might fast-talk the guards (Deception), appear so important that searching them is a

political risk (Intimidation), or use other local laws as a shield (Society). Consider other strategies and skills the PCs concoct. Likewise, if a PC has an optimal ability for this situation (such as the Experienced Smuggler skill feat), you might allow them to make several skill checks to protect the whole group.

Use the following results for the skill checks.

Critical Success The PC deflects all but the smallest fees, paying only 1 sp to enter Hagegraf.

Success The PC’s ploy stymies the guards, reducing their fee to only 1 gp.

Failure The PC’s ploy fails, and their fee increases to 2d4+4 gp.

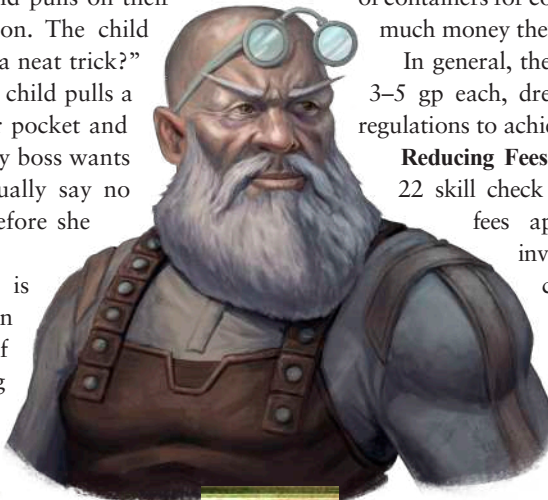
Critical Failure As failure, but the PC’s obstruction also earns the PCs 1 Awareness Point.

Caravan: If the PCs mediated the earlier caravan conflict and are traveling with Draxacca’s crew, the large group occupies much of the guards’ attention and limits how much scrutiny falls on the PCs. This reduces the skill check DC above to 19.

The Lighted Lamp

The PCs are likely to need the *everywhen map* decoded; they’ll need to find someone who can help them understand the map of Zogototaru’s tunnels. Most hryngars they ask about decoding a map will point them to the collector **Durruzzin** (LN male hryngar antiquarian), owner of The Lighted Lamp, a book and antique shop. Durruzzin is always interested in curious items and mysteries that need solving.

Durruzzin’s shop is full of curiosities created, both created locally and from other cultures, many of them cleaned, labeled, and kept in locked cases with glass lids. His collection includes an elven curve blade, nunchaku,



Durruzzin

and a red helmet that looks like the head of an insect. He also has all common grimoires up to 10th level available for purchase. Most of his inventory comes from hryngars who like to sell strange wares from outsiders that they couldn't unload on anyone else. Secretly, he tends to reverse-engineer particularly interesting magical items, then create his own versions to sell to other hryngars.

When presented with the map, he takes on the project for 50 gp, saying it would be an honor to work on such a rare piece of magic so he's giving the PCs a steep discount (this is a lie). He claims it will take him four days to do the work, but it takes him far longer (see Durruzzin's Progress). Since the map is of fey origin and the heroes don't have to reveal what creature it is attuned to, Durruzzin shouldn't become suspicious of the heroes' intentions, but that won't stop him from asking.

Durruzzin's Progress: Whenever the heroes check on Durruzzin's progress he tells them "just four more days." Durruzzin is secretly trying to reverse engineer the *everywhen map* without disrupting its magic, and he's having a difficult time doing so. If the PCs start to pressure Durruzzin to finish the work, or they visit him to check in a second time, their conversation gets interrupted by two caligni (see Creatures).

Creatures: Hoping they'd be more understanding than hryngar creditors, Durruzzin borrowed money and arcane goods from two caligni, Drasp and Skourne. They've been hounding him for repayment since—repayment he can't afford because his hryngar debts takes precedent in claiming funds. Durruzzin has limited options and hopes the *everywhen map* might give him some windfall.

Drasp and Skourne arrive at the shop with a greater shadow bound to their service. They're here for the coin, 500 gp worth. The two are determined to leave with a pouch of gold, Durruzzin, or the hryngar's blood on their hands. If the PCs are willing to pay Durruzzin's debts, the caligni leave in peace, otherwise they'll have to either defend the antiquities dealer or let the caligni take him away and find someone else to decipher the map (which probably involves going back to Highhelm). The two caligni can be convinced to leave and come back next week with a successful DC 27 Diplomacy check to Make a Request, or a successful DC 21 Intimidation check to Coerce them into leaving.

DRASP AND SKOURNE

CREATURE 6

CE female and male caligni callers (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 341)
Initiative Perception +11

GREATER SHADOW

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 289

Initiative Perception +14 or Stealth +20

Development: Once Durruzzin has had the *everywhen map* for at least four days and the PCs have dealt with the caligni, Durruzzin is appreciative and quite excited. He has understood more of the map's contents than the heroes might have wanted. Read or paraphrase the following.

Durruzzin walks over to a large table with the *everywhen map* spread out, the corners held down by heavy books. "Such a fascinating piece! And I believe I understand it completely! It can be attuned to a specific creature through a bit of magical trickery, and once attuned, it shows every location that creature has ever been. Wonderful!" The hryngar shakes his head in amazement.

He points to the central mass of lines on the map, clustered so tightly they overlap.

"This map must've been made by a surface dweller, because as much as it functions for those that live in Nar-Voth, the crossing tunnels and different elevations seem to have confused it. But no worry! I've compared it to my own maps and... I have uncovered what it shows!"

Durruzzin moves to a large wall map of Nar-Voth, where he has hung a traced copy of the *everywhen map*'s lines. "It took a while to get the scale right, let me tell you! But here it is. This map shows us several tunnels that don't follow the known geography of Nar-Voth, so whatever it is makes its own tunnels without regard for existing roads. It might be a cave worm, but you'd better pray to Droskar it's something safer.

"I could see that the trails center on Avernakkus, the magma chamber to the south. So whatever it is lives in or near that chamber. That got me thinking it was a rare fire-breathing crimson worm, so I started looking at reports of such beasts throughout history. Luckily there aren't many around here. Well, except for—but no, that one's supposed to be a myth."

If pressed about the "myth," Durruzzin gladly continues, as if waiting for them to ask. If they don't ask, he starts prompting them to ask about the legendary, mythical crimson worm.

"There's a legendary crimson worm called the Avernal Worm that is rumored to keep its lair in Avernakkus. No one I know has ever seen it, lucky for us! Cave worms are bad, and crimson worms are worse." Durruzzin stops and considers. "I assume you're big game hunters tracking down the Avernal Worm to slay it. No matter to me. But, if you're interested, I may have a buyer for this map. One of my clients, an advisor to the king himself, is very interested in cave worms, and would probably pay good money for it. Now, I don't know Narseigus very well, he's an infrequent customer, but I know a colleague who could probably arrange an introduction if you're interested?"

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Durruzzin knows nothing about Narseigus's plans, just that he's very interested in cave worms and would likely be interested in a map like this.

As the PCs leave the shop, Durruzzin calls out to them, "You know I'm owed a percentage of whatever you find since I helped with the map, right?"

Rorbek's Smithy

In Hagegraf, earning wealth is often less about what you toil on than who toils for you. For an expert smith like **Rorbek** (LE female hryngar smith), taking on apprentices means claiming a percentage of their future earnings—a fair price for their education, by hryngar standards. Thus, when Narseigus offered lucrative metalworking contracts and lured away all her students, Rorbek watched helplessly as her figurative retirement plan walked out the door. Future earnings aside, it's also drained her workforce, creating a huge backlog of projects she has to do herself. When the PCs meet her, she's battering through projects alone at breakneck speed and with minimal quality control.

She has little time for distractions, so the PCs must shout if she's to hear them between hammer strokes. Once she realizes the PCs are investigating Narseigus, she pauses long enough to spit and remark:

"He's ruthless, influential, and can ruin anyone he doesn't like. He's the best and worst that Hagegraf has to offer. Learning much more than that will get you in trouble." She hefts her hammer and stokes the forge before adding, "Trust me."

Rorbek's ominous warning clearly conveys that Narseigus harmed her in some way. Whether the PCs press about Narseigus or ask about what he did to her, she pauses quizzically, confused as to why they'd risk knowing more. With a shrug, she makes the best of a strange visitation; she jams her current project back into the coals, motions to the empty workstations, and barks, "I've no time for talk—not if I'm doing ten hands' labor alone. Clear my schedule, and I'll share what I can."

HELPING RORBEK

If they want Rorbek's assistance, the PCs need to complete her apprentices' three abandoned projects or maintain the forge so she can focus on difficult tasks. This sequence is divided into three (possibly four) phases, during which each PC can attempt a check to contribute to one of the tasks. A project is considered complete once the PCs have completed its main tasks. The three projects also have a bonus task—additional labor that causes the end product's quality to exceed local standards.

Skill checks use the basic Victory Point mechanic (*Gamemastery Guide* 148) and each step requires 1 or 2 Victory Points to complete. Except where noted, the PCs need to complete the tasks in the order listed. If a PC earns more points than are necessary to complete a step, they can attempt a second skill check to perform one of the project's remaining tasks.

As with most skill-based challenges, consider allowing creative uses of alternate skills or even saving throws to complete a project, especially if the PCs aren't trained in any of the called for skills.

AXE HEADS APLENTY

Main Task 1: Pouring Iron DC 21 Athletics; **Threshold 1**

Main Task 2: Sharpening and Fitting DC 21 Crafting, DC 23 Survival, or DC 24 Perception; **Threshold 2**

Bonus Task (any phase): Reforging Failure Earn an additional VP for either main task.

Fungus farmers placed an order for replacement hatchets needed to harvest larger mushrooms, and Rorbek's apprentice prepared only half the axe heads. The PCs need to heat and carefully pour molten iron from a cauldron-sized crucible. Once those cool, the PCs can polish, sharpen, and fit the blades to handles. Unfortunately, the apprentice's axe heads are shoddily made, so excelling at this project requires melting them down and recasting them correctly. A PC trained in Crafting or who is a master in Perception notices these imperfections at a glance.

GREMLIN TRAPS

Bonus Task: Correcting the Design DC 20 Nature or DC 22 Cave Lore; **Threshold 1**

Main Task 1: Building Pieces DC 21 Crafting, DC 23 Athletics, or DC 24 Survival; **Threshold 1**

Main Task 2: Assembling Traps DC 20 Trap Lore, DC 21 Thievery, DC 22 Survival, DC 23 Crafting; **Threshold 2**

Like any city, Hagegraf attracts gremlins. One of Rorbek's apprentices created plans and a half-assembled prototype for a gremlin-catcher, resembling a bear trap. Interested customers have already ordered a dozen! The PCs need to create the numerous components, then meticulously assemble the traps. Ideally, a PC first reviews the blueprints and realizes that these traps have numerous design flaws, including not being sized properly for gremlins in the first place.

RORBEK'S ASSISTANT

Main Task (any phase): DC 20 Labor Lore, DC 21 Athletics, DC 22 Performance, DC 23 Crafting, or DC 23 Fortitude; **Thresholds 1, 3, 5, 7**

Bonus Task: Pacing Rorbek DC 20 Labor Lore, DC 21 Medicine, DC 22 Diplomacy, DC 24 Intimidation; **Threshold 1**

When not working on a project, a PC can help Rorbek at her forge by maintaining the bellows, shoveling coal,

refilling barrels, cleaning up, or even maintaining a repetitive work chant. Upon first reaching each of the four listed VP thresholds for the main task, the PCs buy Rorbek enough time that she succeeds at any one skill check for any of the other three projects.

By the time the PCs arrived, Rorbek had already worked several consecutive shifts, and the three phases the PCs have to work on projects represents the time remaining before she risks passing out. By completing the Pacing Rorbek task, a PC convinces her to take a break, eat something, and recharge enough that the PCs gain an additional phase to complete the projects.

TASKMASTER'S CHAINS

Main Task (any phase): Bending

Chain DC 21 Crafting, DC 22 Athletics, DC 24 Thievery; **Threshold** 3

Bonus Task (any phase): Inscribing Medallions DC 21 Religion or DC 22 Crafting; **Threshold** 1

Droskar's priests enjoy jewelry made with thick chains, and one of the apprentices completed only a few links of a special commission: a belt of silver chain with decorative medallions inscribed with scenes glorifying Droskar. At minimum, the PCs should shape the silver chain and baubles. The more artistry they can afford for the medallions, the better.

Note that some PCs might balk at manufacturing paraphernalia for an evil faith. Those same PCs might enjoy decorating the medallions with blasphemous or subversive iconography that's only apparent on close examination. Attempting this increases the bonus task's check DC by 2.

WRAPPING UP WORK

After three phases (or four, if a PC convinced her to rest), an exhausted Rorbek announces an end to the workday and trudges over to review the PCs' work. For any project where the PCs completed the main tasks but not the bonus task, she nods at the finished product, ambivalent but acknowledging that it suffices. For any project where the PCs completed both the main and bonus tasks, Rorbek displays genuine pleasure at the quality, even nearly losing a finger to a gremlin trap. Incomplete projects barely earn a glance; she shifts those to one side while mumbling about finishing them tomorrow.

Rorbek's Information: If the PCs completed at least one project, she thanks them for the help and shares what she knows about Narseigus.

"Narseigus? Phah! He's lived in Hagegraf for years, far as I can tell, but he was an inconsequential scholar. He only recently snagged the king's ear, apparently had something

sweet to say, and became the king's top advisor in record time. About that time, I started receiving weapons orders—way more than usual, and my neighbors received similar work orders. That already says 'we're raising an army,' but half the weapons either weren't sized for hryngars or were designs not often wielded around here. My guess is Hagegraf's equipping mercenaries, client tribes, or the like—and a lot of them!"

"It's good money, at least." Rorbek acknowledges, "but Narseigus apparently needed smiths for other projects. As soon as the weapons were ready, he posted lucrative openings that lured all my apprentices away, and they've just... disappeared!" She slaps an anvil angrily, adding "Those were my investment, blast it, and I want them back!"

Rorbek's interest in her apprentices is more financial than fraternal. Though she doesn't know exactly where he lives or operates, Rorbek knows that Narseigus now resides in the Clock Quarter. She can't get revenge directly, but if the PCs want to pursue him soon, she can get them into the Clock Quarter with less scrutiny by sending them as delivery personnel, complete with official paperwork. Calling in this favor enables each PC to automatically succeed at their skill check to enter the Clock Quarter without gaining Awareness Points. This boon functions once and affects only PCs who are traveling together.

Treasure: As a thanks for helping her out, Rorbek drops a runestone with a *resilient* armor rune onto the floor. She says, "oops, must have fallen out of a crate," and deliberately turns her back so they can take it.

The Infinite Quarry


When they gain the Strange Artwork lead, the PCs learn that Narseigus commissioned a mysterious statue from a sculpting workshop in the Forge District. The workshop isn't hard to find, though the PCs quickly learn the Infinite Quarry is primarily an art school. Its proprietor, **Tralginfad the Lesser** (LE male hryngar artist) earns a handsome wage by commanding a percentage of each student's future earnings—so much that he can afford a genie assistant. As the PCs arrive, Tralginfad is lazily patrolling the main studio, scowling and critiquing the work of 40 exhausted students.

On realizing he has visitors, he pompously strides over to introduce himself and ask what the PCs need. His neutral demeanor evolves into a scowl as he realizes the



Jhebek





PCs aren't here to sign up for classes or commission an expensive statue. He's particularly sour about strangers trying to pry client information out of him. With a successful DC 20 skill check (likely Crafting, Deception, or Diplomacy), a PC can convince Tralginfad to give a tour, show off samples, or otherwise keep talking; in this case, he does provide enough context clues to confirm that Narseigus was a client. Unless paid up-front for an equally amazing statue commission (350 gp or more) or magically coerced without alerting bystanders (+15 Will save modifier), he offers no more help.

Fortunately for the PCs, one bystander has valuable knowledge and reason to work with them. The genie **Jhebek** (LN male jabali) signals the PCs shortly after they speak to Tralginfad. Jhebek observes most of the Infinite Quarry's business, including Narseigus's special project. This information isn't free; Jhebek needs the PCs to secure his freedom first.

For all his stoic poise, Jhebek emotionally relays the tale of his recent captivity. Like many jabalis, or earth genies, he adores games of chance. However, a reckless bet against a hryngar gambler bankrupted him, and he exchanged years of service to pay off the debt. The gambler, Quolko, has rented Jhebek out to others in Hagegraf since, stealing most of the jabali's earnings as interest and trapping him in an unjust cycle of servitude. The current assignment is the most galling. Jhebek's role at the Infinite Quarry isn't to create beautiful statues; it's recycling students' crude projects back into pristine blocks with *stone shape*, ready to be carved again. Yet not only is Jhebek honor-bound to fulfill his debt, Quolko also possesses the genie's bracelet, which serves as a focus for keeping Jhebek bound to this plane. If the PCs secure Jhebek's bracelet and freedom, his information will be theirs.

Quolko still resides in Hagegraf, though the PCs will need to track him down.

A GENIE'S FREEDOM

Quolko (NE male hryngar mastermind) doesn't hide, but neither does he advertise his whereabouts. Locating him requires a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check to Gather Information. At this point, the aging hryngar has trained and monetized so many subordinates that he commands a large network of professional talent, making him a one-man temp agency who takes a steep cut of anything his associates earn. He spends much of his time cutting deals, reviewing reports, and interviewing talent from a rickety pavilion in the Open Market. To find him, PCs are advised to look not for him but for his pet chimera. The story of how he captured the beast is inconsistent, yet with this monster hunkered nearby, few dare threaten him. He wears

dozens of rings, bangles, and other accessories, flaunting his wealth while knowing nobody dares rob him.

Quolko is busily reading when the PCs approach, giving them a skeptical look before blandly asking "Hiring yourselves out, or hiring my talent?" Once it's clear the PCs are interested in Jhebek, he sets aside his reports and tries to clarify what they want. Unfortunately, the combination of the genie's abilities, debts, and current assignment to the Infinite Quarry mean that buying Quolko's stake in Jhebek is ludicrously expensive: 1,000 gp, though a PC could talk him down to 650 gp with a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check. Either sum might barely be within the PCs' means. Fortunately, there are gambling and combat alternatives.

Gambling with Quolko

As he watches the PCs hesitate about the high price, Quolko keeps the conversation going by asking about them. "Who am I dealing with who needs a jabali this much?" He judges and files away whatever the PCs tell him, likely coming to the conclusion that they are both capable and not yet under his control. If the PCs don't propose gambling for Jhebek's freedom, Quolko eventually suggests it. The stakes are easy enough: if a PC wins, Quolko erases Jhebek's debt. If the PC loses, they enter Quolko's downline, owing him both 15% of their lifetime gross earnings and an upcoming professional favor. If a PC agrees, Quolko hails a notary to write, witness, and stamp a contract, as well as oversee the game. The competition slowly draws a crowd of onlookers eager to watch Quolko demolish the new challengers.

Even though only 1–2 PCs participate in the game, there are ways for other PCs to participate in the encounter by studying Quolko's gameplay, reviewing his deceptive contract, or befriending the chimera.

Quolko gives each participant 10 tokens for bidding, rattles off a confounding summary of the rules, and starts the game. Although you could run this gambling sequence round-by-round, for the sake of brevity, it's best to present it in three phases. This lets everyone attempt a few skill checks.

Deceptive Contract: Quolko's offer of Jhebek's freedom has a dangerous loophole—without his bracelet, Jhebek is trapped on this plane and would remain indebted. A player might remember this condition on their own, their PC insisting on the bracelet being part of the deal; if they forget, a PC can sense Quolko is hiding something about the stakes with a successful DC 23 Perception check, or they might spot that issue with the terms with a successful DC 23 Arcana or Nature check or relevant Lore

check. Quolko shrugs, pulls one of his bracelets off his arm, and places it on the table, agreeing to the term. However, the bracelet isn't Jhebek's! If the PCs asked the genie for the bracelet's description, they know this immediately. Otherwise, they can spot that something's not right with a successful DC 25 Perception check, or a DC 23 Arcana, Crafting, or Nature check.

If caught in both these deceptions, Quolko presents the correct bracelet and doesn't attempt further contract trickery. Reviewing these terms happens before the game begins.

The Game: Quolko's favorite game is Old Chimera, played with three six-sided dice and a deck of harrow cards. It's complicated, with each player drawing four cards, offering an initial ante, rolling the dice, raising the stakes, and then using their dice results to bid on drawing more cards. The goal is to have the highest-scoring combination of cards, all while bluffing about what cards they might have. The game condones minor cheating, like drawing too many cards or nudging a die, but getting caught might mean forfeiting the round.

Each phase, a PC attempts a check to play the game, before which they have the option make another check to cheat. Scoring the game uses the basic Victory Points system (*Gamemastery Guide* 148).

Cheating: A PC can cheat during the game with a DC 23 Deception, Games Lore, or Thievery check. If they succeed, they roll 1d4 and add the result as a circumstance bonus to their next gameplay check below. If they fail, they roll 1d4 and subtract the result from their next gameplay check, instead. If other PCs create a compelling distraction, consider granting a cheating PC a circumstance bonus to this check.

Playing the Game: Each gambling PC attempts a DC 25 Deception or Game Lore check to determine how well they play the game during that phase, earning or losing Victory Points as a result. A PC untrained in those skills can instead attempt a DC 13 flat check, relying more on luck than skill.

Scoring the Game: After three phases, Quolko ends the game with the equivalent of 2 Victory Points. Any PC whose total is 3 or higher beats Quolko at Old Chimera and wins the hryngar's stake (see Sore Loser, below). A PC with 1 or fewer VP instead loses to Quolko, who gloats about his victory. If two PCs played, it's possible to have one PC win the bet while another PC loses to Quolko. If all participating PCs have 2 VP, there's no winner, and Quolko suggests another round to break the tie. Even if the PCs lose, combat is an option (page 54).

Quolko's Cheating: Each round, Quolko finds a new way to cheat, such as by upsetting a die or extracting extra cards from his sleeve. A PC can spot this trickery with a successful DC 25 Perception check

or DC 23 Games Lore check, and a PC who spends the phase doing nothing but watching Quolko gets a +4 circumstance bonus to the check. With a success, the PC catches Quolko's ploy, which he sheepishly undoes, reducing any PC's check DC to play the game by 2 that phase; this increases to 4 for a critical success.

Captive Chimera: As Quolko plays Old Chimera, his pet chimera looks on with disdain, its green dragon head occasionally muttering something snide in Draconic. With a successful DC 20 Perception check to Sense Motive, a PC can note the chimera's resentment towards Quolko. With a successful DC 23 Perception check or DC 20 Medicine check to study the chimera, one reason becomes clear: scars across his body indicate a history of abuse, and his wings have been clipped to limit his flight. While chimeras aren't particularly intelligent, Quolko neither speaks nor acknowledges Draconic, instead treating the thinking creature as an animal.

During a phase, a PC can converse with **Phlegelothrin** (CE male chimera) in Draconic to Make an Impression on the indifferent creature (DC 24 Diplomacy). He has simple desires: find a way out of Hagegraf, ideally after biting off Quolko's face. However, past escape attempts haven't gone well (as evidenced by his hobbled wings), so Phlegelothrin is wary of trying again. If made friendly, a PC can Request (DC 24) his help in fighting or scaring Quolko; reduce this DC by 2 if he is helpful.

A friendly chimera also allows a PC to treat his wounds, which uses a phase's actions. With a successful DC 20 Medicine check or by restoring at least 20 Hit Points with a single effect, a PC can soothe the wounds, improving the chimera's attitude by one step and repairing his wings enough for a brief flight. Even if befriended and healed, the chimera is a sadistic, cantankerous creature who likely won't be a long-term ally.

Quolko doesn't like people tampering with his pet. Anyone healing Phlegelothrin or speaking extensively with him must succeed at a DC 18 Deception or Stealth check to avoid Quolko noticing and yelling at them until they stop—perhaps giving other PCs a chance to cheat at the game.

Sore Loser: If the PCs didn't catch Quolko's deceptions with the game's contract, he admits defeat graciously, knowing the PCs have won nothing of value. However, if they demanded the right stakes beforehand and beat him outright, Quolko deploys his last weapon: whining. He loudly complains about illegal cheating, interference, obscure local ordinances, or anything else to weasel out of paying what's owed. Unless convinced to pay up by a PC with a successful DC 23 Diplomacy or DC 18 Intimidation check, Quolko disappears into the encroaching crowd of sympathizers. If he does disappear, the PCs can track

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him down with another successful DC 20 check to Gather Information later, by which point the cornered hryngar admits defeat and pays up.

Fighting Quolko

Quolko primarily relies on his pet chimera to maul anyone foolish enough to attack him. He batters enemies with his hammer and spells while directing Phlegglothrin into melee. If the chimera is incapacitated, Quolko tries to escape or bargain for his life, unless he thinks he can still win the fight.

If the PCs befriended Phlegglothrin and have Requested his aid, the chimera turns on Quolko when combat begins, terrifying the hryngar. Even if not befriended, the chimera enjoys including Quolko in the path of his breath weapon when possible.

QUOLKO

CREATURE 6

Hryngar forgepriest (page 87)

Initiative Perception +13

PHLEGGLOTHRIN

CREATURE 8

Chimera (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 63)

Initiative Perception +16

RETURNING TO JHEBEK

If the PCs secured Jhebek's freedom—requiring both the genie's bracelet and either Quolko's demise or a formal agreement to release his captive—they earn the jabali's hearty thanks and support. He intends to lurk near Hagegraf for several more days so he can repay the PCs. He painlessly pulls a ruby fragment from his shoulder, then whispers to it before handing it to the PCs. If a PC holds it and beseeches Jhebek's assistance as a 2-action *command*, the jabali appears before them to aid with a simple task of their choosing. He might help with a combat encounter or use his earth magic to carve an entrance into a building or collapse part of a structure as a distraction. He asks that the PCs not ask him to take extraordinary risks, particularly not that would ensure his capture by different hryngars. After providing the PCs a fair service, he wishes them well and gives them the enchanted ruby and three mundane rubies, also pulled from his body, worth 50 gp each.

Bureau of Magic

When they gain the Arcane Discontent lead, the PCs learn that Narseigus's meteoric rise in influence displaced several of King Kurindey Orgukagan's closest advisors. The most bitter of these is **Bronwyl Holloward** (NE female hryngar wizard), recently demoted to assistant superintendent of magic so that Narseigus could claim her previous title. Learning about Bronwyl is only the first step, however; she's consistently busy, especially as she works overtime for an eventual bid to win back her superintendent job. She also lives and works in the Clock Quarter, which limits non-hryngar traffic. There are two likely approaches to meeting Bronwyl, detailed below.

Requesting an Audience: Even if they've discovered her as a lead, the PCs can't easily waltz in and talk to an assistant superintendent of magic. Doing so involves two steps. First, the PCs must travel to the Bureau of Magic in the Clock Quarter, which risks earning Awareness Points for entering a heavily monitored area. They might bypass this once by making a local delivery for Rorbek (page 51).

Second, the PCs need to convince the bureaucrats at the bureau's front desk to schedule a meeting with Bronwyl. This requires a successful DC 28 Deception, Diplomacy, or Intimidation check, reduced by 2 for each of the other three leads the PCs have completed. Critically failing the check or failing three times convinces these employees to kick the PCs out, earning the party 1 Awareness Point for their trouble. They can try again the next day. If they succeed, the bureaucrats make inquiries and secure the PCs a brief meeting later that day.

Bronwyl's Request: If they've acquired 14 Awareness Points, Bronwyl has already learned of the PCs and sent them a covert invitation to meet. Said invitation characterizes the PCs as magical miscreants voluntarily reporting for reprimand, reeducation, and a monetary penalty. In this case, one of the gate guards escorts the PCs directly to the Bureau of Magic.

MEETING BRONWYL

Before meeting Bronwyl (especially if she sent them a letter), her assistants escort the PCs into an antechamber to have their auras read and to place their magical equipment in a wheeled, locked, lead-lined chest that will



accompany them. They insist on this, noting that sensitive magical experiments in the building must be shielded from outside enchantments. They dutifully record every piece of equipment, give the PCs a copy of the record, then lead them to Bronwyl's office.

Despite her recent demotion, Bronwyl Holloward still commands considerable influence in Hagegraf. Narseigus is her bitterest rival, having recently displaced her, and she's eager to ruin his reputation so she can become the king's advisor once more. The PCs represent capable, deniable, and disposable assets for stealing Narseigus's research and ruining her enemy. That said, she adopts a neutral tone with the PCs, not wanting to betray her interest and lose an advantage in negotiation. The aging woman reclines casually in her chair as the PCs arrive, tapping her fingers on a hammer at her waist with impatience.

"I am Bronwyl Holloward, superintendent of the Bureau of Magical Arts," she declares regally. "You are strangers to Hagegraf, yet you have already gained my attention. Explain yourselves. Speak quickly... but also speak freely. You are in no danger from me."

She prompts them to make their case and investigates their interest in Narseigus once he's mentioned. Her inquiries pivot to the PCs' interests and intentions toward one of Hagegraf's leading citizens, as well as what they've learned so far. Her main motive is assessing their goals and reliability; so long as they show enmity toward Narseigus, they're suitable for her purposes. On the off chance they successfully Lie (DC 25 Perception), convincing her they're allied with Narseigus, she adapts her strategy: she feigns concern about her sorcerous colleague, wanting someone to investigate his home to ensure he's alive. The following is her proposal to Narseigus's foes.

"We are of similar minds. We both admire Narseigus's ambition and recent accomplishments, and we'd both be happier conveying that praise over his dead body. He is a nuisance who has upset my own ambitions, and I want to see him fail—in any way that doesn't ruin Hagegraf. If we're to do that, we need to know what he has planned and what magic he's mastered. That's locked up inside a penthouse given to him by King Orgukagan. One of his colleagues couldn't be seen breaking in without ruining her career, and larcenous strangers would no doubt fall victim to the magical traps Narseigus uses. But together? Perhaps we can both win."

A PC who succeeds at a DC 27 Perception check judges that, although Bronwyl is sincere about collaborating, she's already thinking about how to

conceal her involvement to avoid political backlash. She answers questions about herself and Narseigus as honestly as she dares so long as she believes the PCs are being honest with her. Likely questions and her responses follow.

How can you help us? Bronwyl unpins three ruby-studded silver pendants from her coat. "Each of these carries an antimagical contingency that should dull or even dispel incoming magic. The enchantment only lasts a few days while I'm within a few miles. I can also provide you his address, which isn't common knowledge, and I can draw away a few guards. Anything beyond that is your responsibility."

How do we break in? "If you're glib, you might talk your way past the guards. There's also a large rooftop patio and several buildings nearby that aren't watched so well, if you don't mind heights. Expect some amount of resistance."

What should we look for inside? "Narseigus should have a sizable book collection—worth a search. Any ritual paraphernalia you recover or study would be useful. Look for upcoming plans, conspicuous journals, maniacal rants written in blood on the walls... figure it out."

Where is Narseigus? "He's gone. Left a few days ago along with a brigade of hryngar guards. Thanks to his poisoned words, King Orgukagan won't share where his pet is headed."

What keeps you from betraying us? Bronwyl laughs. "In Hagegraf? Nothing. And if you're thinking of betraying me, it would be strangers' words against mine in a university filled with battle mages. Better to work together."

So long as the PCs agree, she hands them the pins and encourages them to break in within 48 hours while the pins' magic lasts (see page 56 for how the pins operate). If they don't agree, she makes one more attempt to convince them before sighing and dismissing them. Now that they know what they're looking for, the PCs could track Narseigus's address by Gathering Information (DC 25); however, Bronwyl dispatches spies to shadow them, increasing their AP by 2.

NARSEIGUS'S PENTHOUSE

As one of many perks of King Orgukagan's favor, Narseigus received a penthouse apartment in Hagegraf's Clock Quarter. He used only a small part as his residence, converting the rest into research and ritual space for his ongoing rediscovery of wormcalling magic. The sorcerer departed several days ago, and he's now miles away overseeing a growing army that the PCs will confront in the next Adventure Path volume. He's traveled light, though. Left behind are



NARSEIGUS'S PENTHOUSE



texts, treasures, and abandoned experiments that can provide the PCs a clear idea of Narseigus's schemes and perhaps how to stop him. After meeting with Bronwyl, the PCs learn of and can infiltrate this apartment.

Features: Though sturdy, this building's fragile facade has chipped and pitted, making it somewhat easy to climb (DC 18 Athletics); interior walls are smoother (DC 25 Athletics). The apartment's scale suits Medium creatures, though it is scaled for dwarves, with 7-foot ceilings likely feeling claustrophobic to humans.

The living room (area **J3**) and library (area **J6**) each have extensive skylights, which merge with the living room's other windows to create a wide expanse of glass. A skylight can support a Small creature and might withstand a light-footed Medium creature briefly, yet anyone forcibly moved onto a skylight crashes through it, falling 10 feet into the area below.

Traps: The apartment has been rigged with several magical traps in areas **J1** and **J6**. When a PC wearing one of Bronwyl's pins attempts a saving throw against either the invertebrate infiltrator trap's (page 57) routine or the mist projector trap's (page 59) icy mist, the pin

activates automatically, letting the PC attempt the save twice and use the higher result; this is a fortune effect. After activating, the pin's protective magic dissipates.

BREAKING IN

Not only is the apartment in the Clock Quarter (risking Awareness Points to enter the district), but the building also boasts defenses to deter thieves. The penthouse apartment perches 60 feet above street level, capping off a tower of offices and apartments with shops on the ground floor. Beyond flight, there are two ways that the PCs can likely access the penthouse: the ground floor (emphasizing social skill) or the roof (emphasizing sneakiness and physical prowess).

Both methods are structured loosely for this adventure, providing space for improvisation or even an expanded infiltration (*Gamemastery Guide* 160–165). In general, either method should involve approximately one DC 21 skill check per PC to Infiltrate Hagegraf. This potentially earns the PCs more Awareness Points, and some checks (such as jumping between buildings) might have more dire consequences for failure.

Ground Floor: Several guards—use the Hagegraf royal guard on page 86—casually patrol the building, focusing their attention on public areas and entrances.

Just entering the building's shops doesn't raise suspicion. However, accessing restricted areas might mean bribing a guard (Diplomacy), leveraging a cunning disguise (Deception), unlocking interior doors (Thievery), or creating a distraction (Performance). With this route, the PCs enter the apartment through area **J1**.

Rooftop: Nearby buildings employ far less security, and the PCs can access one, ascend the stairs, and find some way to bridge a path to the penthouse's patio. This might require climbing to an advantageous position (Athletics), scrambling across a rope spanning an alley (Acrobatics), evading bystanders (Stealth), or tricking their way into private areas (Deception). With this route, the PCs enter the apartment in area **J8**.

J1. HALLWAY

LOW 7

Stone tiles, cool both in color and to the touch, cover the floor in this hall. A door to the west leads into a storage room that contains an assortment of folding metal chairs, tables, and crates of thin gray towels. The door to the east accesses a small ballroom; it and the storage room belong to one of the businesses downstairs and are unrelated to this adventure. Only the door to the north accesses Narseigus's apartment. All three doors are constructed from thick fungal plywood reinforced with metal (Hardness 15, HP 60, BT 30). Bashing down a door doesn't necessarily attract attention from below, but it does alert and worry Salgamin in **J2**. After repeated banging on the door, he opens it from inside to investigate.

Trap: Narseigus's experiments bordered on body horror, and he channeled his test subjects' fear into an occult trap that projects that same fear onto unwanted visitors. This functions as the confounding betrayal haunt with the exceptions below.

INVERTEBRATE INFILTRATOR TRAP

HAZARD 8

COMPLEX MAGIC OCCULT TRAP

Variant confounding betrayal (*Gamemastery Guide* 80)

Description Allies appear to shed their skin, transforming into either giant worm monsters or masses of wriggling worms.

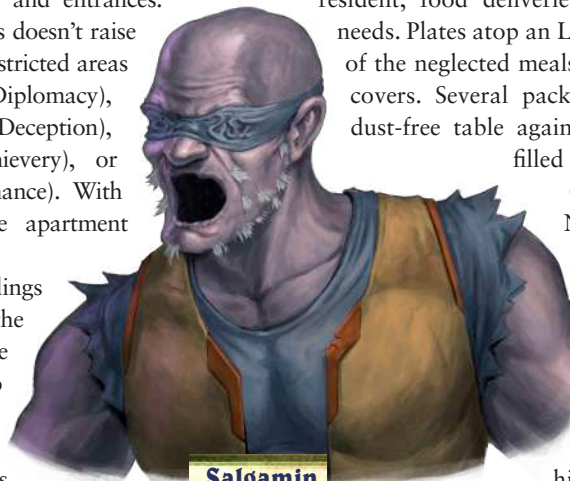
Disable DC 28 Thievery (expert) twice to suppress the trap's trigger, or DC 28 Occultism (expert) to create a ward against the trap's mental effects.

J2. WAITING ROOM

LOW 7

This antechamber accommodates guests awaiting the resident, food deliveries, and other less-private needs. Plates atop an L-shaped table faintly stink of the neglected meals concealed by their silver covers. Several packages are stacked on the dust-free table against the southern wall, all filled with everyday items.

Creature: Most of Narseigus's test subjects definitely died. The same wasn't true for Salgamin, a budding hryngar arcanist who latched onto Narseigus, hoping to be carried along with his dramatic rise to power.



Salgamin

He withstood the experiments better than most, enduring horrific pain and energies that eventually extinguished his life from the inside out. That power preserved some of his consciousness when he spontaneously reanimated as a bodak and (at his master's insistence) donned a blindfold to continue serving here. He ascribes his strange physiology the to experiments' side effects, not realizing he's undead.

Narseigus periodically suffered visitors, and he didn't even tell Salgamin of his departure from Hagegraf. Thus, when he encounters the PCs, the traumatized Salgamin assumes they might be approved guests—or even Narseigus himself. At first, Salgamin is a handy NPC who knows little yet strives to be hospitable, enabling the PCs to exploit his helpfulness. His Perception DC for Deception checks to Impersonate or Lie to him is reduced by 10 (to DC 17), though this reduction decreases by 2 each time the result of such a Deception check is a success or failure. A critical success doesn't change his Perception DC, and on a critical failure he becomes so doubtful that he removes his blindfold to get a better look, beginning combat as his Death Gaze activates.

Salgamin can talk in general terms about Narseigus, his experiments, and his demeanor. He also knows about the trap in area **J6** (though not how to disarm or avoid it), warning the PCs as they enter that room. However, Salgamin is also a fearsome threat who might unmask and join other encounters in the apartment, turning moderately dangerous fights into a severe or even extreme encounter. Embrace this suspense when it happens, yet be prepared to have Salgamin withdraw out of terror at what he's become if his impact proves to be overwhelming.



SALGAMIN

Bodak (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 42)

Initiative Perception +17

J3. LIVING ROOM

Sofas, chairs, low tables, and well-stocked sideboards provide a comfortable space for leisure and entertainment. The furniture has a faint layer of dust, suggesting Narseigus barely used this area.

Creature: Loud noises here likely attract Salgamin from area J2.

J4. OBSERVATION ROOM

This spare dormitory's wide bed has been fitted with leather straps and chains designed to restrain even a powerful humanoid. The withered corpse of a hryngar lies on the bed, its limbs so shrunken that they've nearly

CREATURE 8

fallen free of the restraints. After completing any rituals or other experiments in area J7, Narseigus would move his test subjects here for further observation. Nearly all died here, either expiring from trauma or sometimes melting into puddles of worms.

Creature: This last victim's spirit lingers here as a specter, hoping most of all to choke Narseigus as revenge. However, she hasn't fed since becoming undead, and she springs on any living prey who explores this area. If she sees Salgamin with the PCs, she berates him for haplessly escorting strangers. Unless a PC successfully Lies to reassure Salgamin as an action or reaction before the beginning of the specter's next turn, a perplexed Salgamin removes his blindfold in response.

SPECTER

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 248

Initiative Perception +15

CREATURE 7

J5. BEDROOM

This bedroom's disheveled state preserves a rough timeline of Narseigus's personal transformations, increased obsession, and waning interest in keeping tidy. More mundane features include an unkempt bed, scattered clothing (some with odd rips and stains), half-closed drawers. More worrisome are signs of Narseigus's physical transformations: brittle flakes of shed exoskeleton crunch underfoot, the bedsheets are heavily scuffed as if rubbed against coarse rocks, purple stains spatter various surfaces, and parallel gouges mar one wall.

PCs can study the room's contents, attempting a DC 22 Medicine check, DC 23 Survival check, or DC 25 Perception check to piece together more of Narseigus's recent work. With a success, they draw three conclusions. First, the curvature of the exoskeleton fragments convey that they flaked off a large invertebrate a few feet wide. Second, the stain patterns accompany the exoskeleton fragments, as if shedding the fragments caused the creature to bleed this fluid, specks of which also appear among the bedsheets. Third, the gouges in the wall resemble bite marks, and these marks are all about 3 or 4 feet off the ground.

J6. LIBRARY

MODERATE 7

Shelves made of surface-grown wood wrap along the corners of this library. A skylight above and a broad stained-glass window depicting a fierce, hammer-wielding dwarf let in Hagegraf's minimal light. Books, maps, and scrap paper litter a wide table at the center of the library.



Glass Golem

The library's contents represent an eclectic array of genres, with most of the books predating Narseigus's occupation and going ignored by him. He cleared a few shelves for his own books, most of which now occupy the southwest shelves and the table; see Texts, below.

Hazard: Narseigus was fiercely protective of his research and commissioned a trap that could kill intruders without destroying the room. The entire northeast bookshelf is rigged to trigger when touched—no problem for Narseigus, as none of the books he cares about are there. However, this has left a thin layer of dust on the unused shelves.

Creature: The stained-glass window depicts the dwarven god Droskar looming over a miniaturized Hagegraf, judging his followers below. In this window, Droskar isn't just a terrifying deity; he's also a glass golem that emerges and fights off any unsanctioned visitors who linger in the library for more than a few rounds.

Upon peeling itself from the window frame and jumping to the floor at the beginning of combat, the golem's mass shakes the room slightly. Make a DC 11 flat check. If successful, the impact jostles and triggers the nearby trap. Attempt an additional DC 16 flat check to trigger the trap whenever it's within a creature's reach and they critically miss with a melee attack.

GLASS GOLEM

CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 131

Initiative Perception +14

MIST PROJECTOR TRAP

HAZARD 7

COLD TRAP WATER


Stealth DC 23 (expert)

Description Hidden jets expel gas that quickly freezes, causing limited damage to nearby books.

Disable DC 27 Thievery (expert) to deactivate the trap without its control key or DC 26 Crafting to create and apply a chemical that neutralizes the gas.

AC 25; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +10

Hardness 15; **HP** 60 (BT 30); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Icy Mist  (cold, water) **Trigger** The northeast bookshelf is touched; **Effect** Freezing mist fills a 30-foot cone originating from the room's northeast corner. Creatures in the area take 5d8 cold damage (DC 25 basic Fortitude). Creatures who fail or critically fail the saving throw take 2d8 persistent cold damage for up to 3 rounds. The affected area is filled with mist that functions as *obscuring mist* for 3 rounds.

Reset 8 hours

Texts: PCs who Search the library identify key texts that Narseigus studied to better understand his plans. These

are summarized below with the texts' languages noted in parentheses. Translating enough of a text to paraphrase its contents takes at least an hour of Deciphering Writing (DC 25 Occultism or Society).

Avernakkus and Environs (Undercommon): This bundle of papers is a copy of a field notebook and the half-finished manuscript intended for publication, both by a deep gnome spelunker and volcanologist named Orluda. The text's main objective is mapping tunnels in Nar-Voth to survey how volcanic activity has reshaped ancient caverns and pathways.

Behemoths Below (Dwarven): This collection of papers and scraps contains esoteric writings from various hryngar sages over the past millennium. These present a magical technique called worm-calling, developed by hryngars to channel cave worms' strength or even seize control of the beasts. However, the authors often note that this connection travels two ways; a cave worm's ferocity can overwhelm a worm caller's body or mind, turning them into an animalistic berserker. A few other authors seem to think this is an advantage, not a risk. With further study, a PC could use these documents to access the worm caller archetype (page 80).

Mysteries of the Worm (Aklo and Undercommon): Much of this loosely bound book's contents apparently date to before Earthfall, with the editor insisting much of it stems from ancient serpentfolk investigations into the Vault Builders and their involvement in cave worms' creation. The esoteric text regularly posits how rituals might transform other tiny creatures into titans.

Maps: In addition to the books, the PCs can study the various maps here, which depict several tunnel networks underneath the Five Kings Mountains. Narseigus's annotations not only indicate a cavern called "Drootorca" that's near the dwarven city Rolgrimmdur, but he's also marked Hagegraf and various areas populated by xulgaths, caligni, trolls, and other Darklands inhabitants. Calculations near each region seem to indicate how many days it might take to travel from each settlement to Drootorca Cavern.

Taken in conjunction with the clues in the rest of the apartment, this research gives the PCs enough information to work out Narseigus's intention to control the Crimson Worm and attack Rolgrimmdur with his gathering army.

J7. RITUAL CHAMBER

MODERATE 7

Narseigus emptied the apartment's master bedroom and turned it into a workshop for his experiments in worm-calling magic. His modifications give it the appearance of a temple, complete with a wide ritual circle and a cave worm statue that barely avoids scraping the ceiling. Heavy curtains cover the

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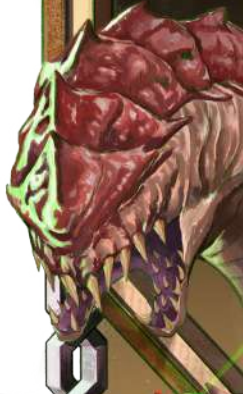
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windows. Various stains discolor the floor, left from the sorcerer's dissections and unethical procedures.

Creatures: Few hryngars could stomach Narseigus's experiments—unlike Holen and Vurgunal, a pair of kurobozus who delighted in his work and goaded him toward increasingly extreme methods. Formerly hryngar monks and iconoclasts, these undead would have preferred corrupting other monks, yet they find Narseigus's worm calling a fascinating substitute. The PCs are little more than playthings for the pair to enjoy with conversation, temptation, and eventually evisceration. Either at their command or upon sensing shed blood, the cave worm statue animates to crush intruders alongside the kurobozus, potentially creating a bone worm swarm as well.



Crimson Worm Statue

Like the specter in area J4, the kurobozus belittle Salgamin about being a hapless tour guide for traitors (a single action), insulting and goading the unaware bodak into removing his blindfold. Unless a PC successfully Lies to reassure Salgamin as an action or reaction before the beginning of the specter's next turn, a perplexed Salgamin removes his blindfold.

CRIMSON WORM STATUE

CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON N LARGE CONSTRUCT MINDLESS

Perception +13; darkvision

Skills Athletics +17

Str +6, **Dex** +2, **Con** +6, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -5

AC 26 (22 when broken); construct armor; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10

HP 100; **Hardness** 8; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious

Construct Armor Like normal objects, a crimson worm statue has Hardness. This Hardness reduces any damage it takes by an amount equal to the Hardness. Once a crimson worm statue is reduced to less than half its Hit Points, or immediately upon being damaged by a critical hit, its construct armor breaks and its Armor Class is reduced to 22.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +19 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d12+6 piercing

Melee ♦ tail +19 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+6 bludgeoning

Thrash ♦♦ The crimson worm statue makes a Strike against each creature in its reach. It can strike up to once with its jaws and any number of times with its tail. Each attack counts toward the worm's multiple attack penalty, but the multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after it makes all its attacks.

Vomit Worms ♦♦ (conjunction) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The statue disgorges a bore worm swarm into an adjacent 10-foot-by-10-foot space. Creatures in the swarm's area are immediately affected by the bore worm swarm's Swarming Bites, after which the bore worm swarm rolls initiative and acts independently before disappearing after 1d6 minutes.

BORE WORM SWARM

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 36

Initiative Perception +12

KUROBOZUS (2)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 157

Initiative Perception +14

J8. ROOFTOP PATIO

A broad rooftop patio crowns the penthouse, with exclusive access to the apartment below. The exterior door to the stairs is unlocked, as is the storage room to the south. Safety rails suitable for a dwarf (but awkwardly low for taller humanoids) surround the patio, keeping anyone from casually walking off the edge or onto the skylights.

Creatures: In Narseigus's absence, several guards periodically enter and use this patio as a vantage point for spying on residents and rooting out miscreants. Most of their attention is focused on the streets below or the game of cards they periodically return to play. If the PCs sneak in from a nearby building and start the infiltration here, these guards bark a warning and strike with lethal force. Initially, they try to limit collateral damage, though after testing the PCs' strength, a hryngar doesn't hesitate to push an intruder off the patio and onto a skylight.

If the PCs approach from area **J1** instead, these guards don't necessarily notice the PCs until they're exploring area **J3** or **J6**, at which point a guard might spot them through a skylight. Once alerted, the guards grab their weapons and sneak downstairs, hoping to catch the PCs by surprise.

HAGEGRAF ROYAL GUARDS (2) CREATURE 5

Page 86

Initiative Perception +16

HRYNGAR KING'S AGENTS (2) CREATURE 5

Page 86

Initiative Perception +12

BRONWYL'S ARRIVAL SEVERE 7

Whether she's coordinated timing with the PCs, relied on her own spies, or magically tracked them using the pins she gifted them, Bronwyl gradually concocts a plan: let the PCs break into Narseigus's apartment and find evidence, then she can lead guards to arrest (or kill) the thieves. This, she concludes, would remove the PCs from the picture, let her investigate Narseigus, and do it all while appearing to be a hero to Hagegraf. As the PCs are wrapping up their infiltration—ideally after they have a chance to patch their wounds following combats here—Bronwyl approaches from area **J1** with several guards. If the PCs try to report their findings, she listens enough to learn the important discoveries, but she cuts them off if they start talking about any prior connection with the assistant superintendent. To prevent herself from being associated with the PCs, she loudly accuses them of breaking and entering, homicide, and any other plausible crimes.

MODERATE 7

In the unlikely case they concede, Bronwyl's posse aims to strip the PCs of their weapons and Narseigus's notes before escorting them to a remote prison for eventual execution. More likely, the PCs resist arrest, realizing their former ally has betrayed them. Bronwyl fights until reduced to 25 Hit Points, at which point she tries to escape with *dimension door*. Her guards fight to the death, more afraid of the hryngar justice system than the PCs.

BRONWYL HOLLOWARD CREATURE 8

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM DWARF HRYNGAR HUMANOID

Perception +15; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Petran, Undercommon

Skills Arcana +18, Athletics +14, Deception +17, Diplomacy +13, Occultism +16

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

Items +1 striking light hammer, scroll of *dimension door*

AC 25; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +13, **Will** +17

HP 135; **Resistances** poison 8

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ *light hammer* +18 (agile, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 2d6+5 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ *light hammer* +18 (agile, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 2d6+5 bludgeoning

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 26, attack +20; **4th** *dispel magic*, *weapon storm*; **3rd** *fireball*, *invisibility sphere*, *locate*; **2nd** *acid arrow*, *knock*, *see invisibility*; **1st** *longstrider*, *true strike* (×2); **Cantrips (4th)** *detect magic*, *electric arc*, *produce flame*, *shield*

Occult Innate Spells DC 26; **2nd** *blood vendetta*^{APG}, *paranoia*; **Cantrips (4th)** *sigil*

Wizard School Spells 2 Focus Points, attack +20; **1st** *hand of the apprentice* (Pathfinder Core Rulebook 407)

Tormenter Bronwyl deals an additional 2d6 mental damage with weapon Strikes against creatures that are fatigued, stupefied, or have persistent damage.

HAGEGRAF ROYAL GUARD CREATURE 5

Page 86

Initiative Perception +16

HRYNGAR KING'S AGENT CREATURE 5

Page 86

Initiative Perception +12

CONCLUSION

The PCs are now aware of Narseigus's plans to gain control over the Avernal Worm, and of signs that point to an army massing below Rolgrimmudur. They need to report to their contacts in Highhelm before it's too late!

CULT OF THE CAVE WORM

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CAVE WORM ECOLOGY

Cave Worms

The following are excerpts of notes from Glix Smockerplaid, svirfneblin scholar.

Among the largest predators on (or under) Golarion, cave worms invoke terror by their very nature. Omnivorous, able to burrow through nearly any terrain, and able to swallow a giant whole, such beasts are the stuff of nightmares. Most people know little of the different types of cave worms beyond the common rock worms of Darklands tales, but a variety exist, including a rare glacial worm that bores under the ice at the planet's poles. Few researchers know more, as cave worms are difficult to study in their native habitat, and captive or recently deceased specimens are quite rare. I've spent over a century compiling accounts of these subterranean burrowers.

While bold adventurers delving into the Darklands may occasionally discover and benefit from the tunnels left by these masters of excavation, few encounter the excavator itself and live. Recorded here are the salient facts, compiled by me, in the most complete collection of knowledge of these rare, monstrous, and amazing creatures.

ORIGINS

The first cave worms likely evolved from tiny worms that inhabited the surface soil early in the Age of Creation, long before humanoid life existed. They may have been among the first forms of organic life indigenous to the planet. These worms, at most a few inches long, fed on the soil and minerals of the surface much like today's earthworms. Driven by surface threats or drawn by unclaimed territory, some descended into the Darklands, where the strange radiation likely encouraged mutation and growth.

However, these first Darklands cave worms reached a length of only several feet where they adapted to live on a diet of talc and other soft minerals.

But could mutation and nutrition account for the titanic worms of today? Possibly! The Age of Creation was vast, affording these worms eons to evolve on their own. Another leading theory points to selective breeding, specifically by the so-called Vault Builders who transformed Orv into controlled ecosystems and self-contained biological experiments—much

as surface folk bred wolves into such a delightful array of wondrous dogs. Whether nature or nurture was responsible, cave worm fossils demonstrate that their size, toughness, and environmental adaptability exploded in these new biomes.

Ah, but why breed bigger and better cave worms? Some researchers claim that they were specifically bred to expand the Darklands, or perhaps even to carve out Orv itself. But which came first, Orv or the worm? Nevertheless, when the Vault Builders abandoned Golarion,

these carefully cultivated ecosystems fell to ruin, their worm denizens left to fend for themselves. The worms spread unchecked throughout the Darklands, creating a network of tunnels—literally carving a path for the diaspora of other species.

A few millennia after this, other peoples had begun to populate Golarion, both in the Darklands and on the surface world. They provided an excellent source of protein for the ever-growing cave worms. It is likely that the cave worm species reached the physical limit of its size early in the Age of Legend; I've uncovered fragmentary reports that predate Earthfall describing monstrous burrowing worms that seem to be comparable with today's living specimens.

"IT STARTED AS A GLORIOUS DAY. THE ETHEREAL MARKET WAS ABUZZ, MUSIC IN THE AIR... AND THE SPRITES WERE PARTICULARLY MISCHIEVOUS THAT DAY. WHEN THE SHAKING STARTED, I LAUGHED, AS I BELIEVED THEY HAD COME UP WITH AN EXTRA-SPECIAL PRANK. WHEN PIECES OF THE CEILING STARTED FALLING, I WASN'T SO SURE. THEN I SAW THOSE CIRCLES OF TEETH COME OUT OF THE HOLE, AND THEN I WAS ON FIRE. ALL IN ALL, NOT A GREAT DAY."

— WILTATHEED, GNOME TINKERER AND EYEWITNESS TO A CRIMSON WORM ATTACK ON THE COURT OF ETHER

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ECOLOGY

A cave worm is one of the largest predators on the planet. An adult rock worm specimen weighs approximately 20 tons—as much as three elephants—and can stretch 80 feet long. The largest crimson worm ever encountered was estimated to top 30 tons. The sheer energy of something that large moving through the earth below the surface makes an impact on the surrounding terrain. The passage of a cave worm near the surface is likely responsible for many reported minor earthquakes outside of known seismic zones.

Although they prefer meat, cave worms can synthesize the minerals and nutrients found in whatever material they burrow through; rocks, vegetation, and detritus make up a large portion of their normal diet. Worms often prefer softer minerals when available, leaving more dense stone and ore behind. This helps expose ore to reckless prospectors who dare to excavate a lode before the hungry worm returns, though even with the supportive structures of dense stone left behind, seismic shifts can sometimes occur as the rock settles in the worm's wake. A cave worm's selective mineral palette also extends to its digestive system, which often has to process and excrete material swiftly when the worm is burrowing. The droppings left behind often contain chunks of valuable ore.

A cave worm tends to spend several weeks eating, followed by several months laying in a torpor in its lair, digesting its meal to fuel its next ravenous rampage. While awake, a cave worm will continuously eat to generate the energy it needs to function, and eating means moving. This is why cave worms rarely destroy an entire settlement, but simply pass through it for some quick protein before moving on. Once the worm has had its fill, it will travel back to its lair for another months-long nap.

Every few hundred years, the mating instinct takes hold, urging a cave worm to seek a meat and iron-rich diet. They attack humanoid settlements with increased frequency, and few targets are so tasty as armor-clad warriors. This additional energy allows them to find another cave worm for the complex and lengthy mating process. Adults are hermaphroditic, but they cannot reproduce alone, which presents an obstacle for the solitary cave worm. If the worm cannot find a suitable mate, they hibernate for years to burn off their instinctual binge.

“THAT MOST ANCIENT AND DESTRUCTIVE OF EARTHLY CREATURES, SWOLLEN WITH CONSUMED LIFE, GROWS MONSTROUS IN LIGHTLESS PLACES. SILENTLY IT DIGS, UNDERMINING OUR WORKS AND PATIENTLY AWAITING THE DAY IT COMES FOR EACH OF US. THE CONQUEROR APPROACHES, THE WORM’S TRIUMPH NEARS, OBLIVION AWAITS.”

**— MYSTERIES OF THE WORM,
TRANSLATED FROM THE
ORIGINAL AKLO**

To reproduce, two worms seek each other out, mate (each fertilizing the other), and then they part. Each worm then creates a stony protein shell around the fertilized ovum. Each of these cocoons contains thousands of ova, which gradually develop over the following millennium. In instances where environmental change threatens the cocoon, fetal development accelerates; the cocoon often spills out several hundred underdeveloped offspring in just a few days.

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of cave worm ecology is that there is only one species of cave worm. In 2849 AR, a munavri scholar named Myztak used magic to discover a common lineage between different types of cave worms.

He proved two cave worms of different subspecies can mate, and their litter will not necessarily be the same sub-species as either parent. Cave worms adapt to the environment that they hatched in, and since a cocoon of cave worm eggs can lie dormant for a thousand years, conditions may change before the eggs hatch.

The eggs hatch into the cave worm varieties best suited to their environment. A rock worm parent could mate with an azure worm and give birth to crimson worm babies if the eggs were deposited in a place of great heat, such as near magma, or to white worm babies if the eggs were deposited near a glacier. In general, most cave worms remain in a single type of environment, and most often produce the same kind of spawn.

Usually the worms hatch together as a brood, remaining together until the local food supply is exhausted before turning on each other. About a dozen surviving cave worms reach adulthood, but sometimes the baby worms will leave the nest early enough that about a hundred worms will result from a single brood (to the dismay of any nearby settlements).

SOCIETY

It may seem strange to think of cave worm society, but the creatures are not mindless as is commonly assumed. Only humanoid bias dictates that we rate a creature's intelligence and worth based on its ability to communicate with us. Cave worms can communicate with each other quite well, through chemicals created in their skin that can be detected by the skin receptors of another worm, sometimes decades after the initial worm's passage. In this way, cave worms stake out their territory, and also mark how close they are to the peak of their reproductive cycle. This allows

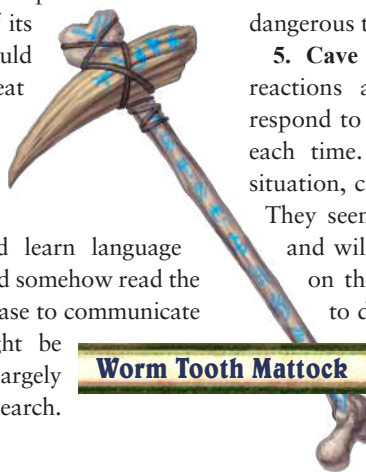
a long-distance communication of sorts between specimens. Even though a cave worm almost always travels alone, it may share information and even form relationships with other cave worms.

An interesting side effect of the chemical receptors built into a cave worm's skin, coupled with the far-reaching range of a typical worm, is that a cave worm essentially "learns" a great deal about the creatures that lived and events that occurred in the areas it tunnels through. It's theorized that, if communication could be established, a cave worm could reveal many secrets lost to history through this incredible sense of chemical memory. Since cave worms are effectively immortal unless slain by environmental change or violence, each creature knows a detailed history of its home range, if only we could retrieve and understand it.

There are few recorded examples of meaningful communication with cave worms. Telepathy seems to provide no useful information, and other magical means are limited by the worm's lack of verbal organs. Only the crimson worm, with its fiery breath, has even the approximate ability to generate sounds approaching speech. By modulating its breath weapon over the rows of teeth and cilia of its upper throat, a crimson worm could theoretically speak, albeit with great difficulty. They also show increased intelligence over other worms, further increasing the likelihood of eventual communication. In practice, a crimson worm would learn language slowly, if at all. If other species could somehow read the chemical signatures the worms release to communicate with their own kind, more might be learned. This field of study is still largely untapped and worthy of further research.



Cave Worm Scat



Worm Tooth Mattock

CAVE WORM HABITS

While powerful, cave worms attract their share of hunters. Some hunters only seek to protect their communities; others hunt for the ultimate trophy. Many uninformed hunters have spent their last few minutes slowly dissolving alive in a worm's gullet, but a wise hunter first learns their quarry's oddities to increase their chances of survival.

1. Cave worms like to eat. A cave worm can be diverted away from a single individual by presenting it with a more enticing opportunity: a group of individuals. In most cases the worm will opt to make a meal of the larger group.

2. Cave worms can see. Contrary to popular belief, worms have eyes and can see quite well at shorter range, but their vision is restricted to a 45-degree arc on either side of their head, with the bulk of their body blocking most vision to the sides and behind. As a result, cave worms rely mostly on their skin, which lacks the eyes' acuity but can sense vibrations at great distances. This helps cave worms track potential prey, which canny spelunkers can exploit with decoys that create the rhythmic vibrations of traveling creatures.

3. Cave worms can be attracted (and repelled) by scent. Noxious oils can repel worms, and therefore fetch high prices from subterranean settlements. However, nobody quite agrees on which oils work best. Hucksters sometimes promote untested formulas, and anything harvested from Orv is assumed to be most effective.

4. Cave worms poop gold. Some ores—including gold and silver—are indigestible to cave worms, and so are excreted whole. Worms tend to expel waste when they're resting, just before beginning another foray. Tracking a worm to its nest and waiting for it to leave is an efficient way to retrieve whatever valuables it consumed in its last rampage, and is certainly less dangerous than confronting the beast directly.

5. Cave worms are not stupid. Many of their reactions are instinctive; a cave worm tends to respond to the same stimulus with the same reaction each time. However, when presented with a new situation, cave worms are remarkably able to adapt. They seem to understand three-dimensional space, and will burrow under an obstacle to reach food on the other side. Cave worms also seem able to distinguish between large and small groups of creatures, and to remember the paths they took in previous forays.

CAVE WORMS ON GOLARION

The presence of a cave worm has a major impact on the ecosystem of a region, to say nothing of the effect it has on settlements. Proximity to a destructive hunter that can lay waste to a city in an afternoon makes any region an uncertain place to settle. Yet groups are often unaware of the risk, choosing where to establish a nation while the worm hibernates, or when an egg that has laid dormant for thousands of years is getting ready to hatch. There is also some benefit to settling in a region where a connected network of tunnels has already been excavated, and many species choose to settle in the hopefully abandoned routes these creatures leave in their wake.



The giant crimson worm Zogototaru makes her lair deep beneath the Five Kings nation in the magma reservoir of an ancient volcano. Its resemblance to Hell's first layer earned the volcano the name Avernakkus, and with her fiery breath, Zogototaru's best remembered as the Avernak Worm. Zogototaru is one of the oldest cave worms on the planet, having lived for thousands of years before Earthfall.

In the barren wastes of eastern Varisia's Cinderlands, Shoanti nomads tell stories of a crimson worm they call Cinderlaw. This worm occasionally burrows out of the earth to bask on the scorched mud flats during the heat of summer, prompting some Shoanti to make sacrifices to the worm to invoke its favor. Others use it as a test of their bravery, approaching as close as they dare to the massive creature as it sleeps in the sun.

Tar-Baphon's *Radiant Fire* devastated Lastwall, yet a cave worm cocoon survived a short distance under the city of Vigil, and the energy from the blast spurred its hatching. At least one gray worm emerged from this clutch of eggs, but a second worm also survived—a rare variety affected by the positive energy of the *Radiant Fire*. While more study is needed, it seems that two equal and opposite worms survived and continue to hunt each other under the wreckage of Lastwall, causing minor quakes in their pursuits.

Hryngars in Nar-Voth have a surprising connection to cave worms. Having decided not to join the Quest for Sky, they were suddenly surrounded by enemies, both ancient and left in the wake of the ascending dwarves. In order to survive against the orcs, morlocks, ghouls, and deros suddenly looking to expand, they needed a new ally, and fast. Most chose to petition Droskar for aid, but some hryngars sought power of their own to protect their homes. A powerful hryngar mage, whose name has been lost to history, managed to use magic and skill to commune with cave worms and eventually befriend them. While they never fully tamed the beasts, these early "worm callers" were able to recruit the powerful cave worms to aid them against their enemies. Hryngar history tells of cave worms fighting alongside their forces. However, as Droskar tightened his hold upon hryngars, this tradition was branded a heresy and nearly lost to time.

VARIATIONS

Each cave worm is a distinct creature, having adapted since its birth to deal with the environment it finds itself in. The chronicles that purport to classify these creatures into a few types are relatively simplistic. Each worm may have abilities and behaviors different from another that appears identical to it. Still, this classification system is a useful first step.

The most commonly known cave worm is the rock worm. This burrowing menace is the least dangerous of the cave worms, but it most often tunnels near the surface and so is typically encountered by surface scholars. Its giant maw and poisonous stinger make it a powerful threat to any community.

Azure Worm

Cave worms that hatch underwater become azure worms (*Bestiary 57*), aquatic versions whose brilliant blue ichor is a source of some of the finest blue dyes and inks found on Golarion. These worms normally seek out deep waters, but occasionally tunnel into air-filled areas of the Darklands, bringing doom to anyone not prepared for the sudden submergence of their community.

Crimson Worm

The deadliest cave worms commonly seen on Golarion are those that hatch near volcanic vents or portals to the Elemental Plane of Fire. These become the dreaded crimson worms



Glacial Worm

(*Bestiary* 58), with fiery breath and maws to rival any dragon. Luckily, crimson worms are among the most territorial of creatures, so there's rarely more than a single survivor from any brood.

Glacial Worm

Cave worm eggs that lie dormant for a long period may experience significant climactic shift. If the temperature falls below freezing, the worms may hatch as glacial worms, also called white worms. These creatures immediately migrate as far north as possible, seeking the glaciers or icebergs that will nourish and house them. Glacial worms lack stingers, as liquid venom is less effective in cold temperatures. Occasionally, such creatures are carried far south on icebergs that have carved off the main ice sheets of the polar regions.

GLACIAL WORM

CREATURE 16

UNCOMMON N GARGANTUAN AMPHIBIOUS ANIMAL

Perception +22; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 100 feet

Skills Athletics +34

Str +10, **Dex** +0, **Con** +8, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -1

AC 36; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +22, **Will** +22

HP 370, cold healing; **Immunities** cold; **Weaknesses** fire 15

Cold Healing When a glacial worm is in extreme cold or surrounded by ice, it gains fast healing 10. When struck by a magical cold effect, a glacial worm regains Hit Points equal to half the cold damage the effect would otherwise deal.

Inexorable The glacial worm recovers from the paralyzed, slowed, and stunned conditions at the end of its turn. It's also immune to penalties to its Speeds and the immobilized condition, and it ignores difficult terrain and greater difficult terrain.

Leech Heat (aura, cold) 30 feet. A glacial worm's intense cold absorbs heat. Creatures that start their turn within the area take 3d6 cold damage (DC 34 basic Fortitude save).

Shake It Off **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger** The glacial worm would be affected by a condition or adverse effect (such as *baleful polymorph*); **Effect** The glacial worm negates the triggering condition or effect. Effects from artifacts, deities, or a similarly powerful source can't be avoided in this way.

Speed 40 feet, burrow 40 feet, swim 20 feet

Melee **◆** jaws +32 (deadly 2d12, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d12+13 piercing plus Improved Grab

Melee **◆** body +30 (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d8+12 bludgeoning plus 1d6 cold

Fast Swallow **Trigger** The worm Grabs a creature; **Effect** The worm uses Swallow Whole.

Swallow Whole **◆** Huge, 3d8+12 bludgeoning plus 2d6 cold, Rupture 28

Thrash **◆◆** The worm makes a Strike once against each creature in its reach. It can Strike up to once with its

jaws and any number of times with its body. Each attack counts toward the worm's multiple attack penalty, but the multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after it makes all the attacks.

Gray Worm

One subspecies that some call unnatural is the gray worm. It is theorized that these cave worms hatched near the corpses of thousands of graves, perhaps deep in the layers of the Darklands that once held large populations at the moment of Starfall. The negative energy associated with the collective extinction of so much life has warped these worms so that they embody the misery and death caused by the cataclysm. They are unique among cave worms in that they prefer not to swallow prey alive, but to eat only dead flesh.

GRAY WORM

CREATURE 11

RARE N GARGANTUAN BEAST

Perception +19; blood scent, darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 100 feet

Skills Athletics +24, Survival +19

Str +7, **Dex** -1, **Con** +7, **Int** -3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -1

Blood Scent The gray worm can smell blood in the air from up to 1 mile away, or in the earth from up to 1,000 feet away.

AC 28; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +16, **Will** +19

HP 248, negative healing (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 305);

Weaknesses positive 10

Inexorable As glacial worm.

Shake It Off **↻** As glacial worm.

Speed 20 feet, burrow 40 feet

Melee **◆** jaws +24 (deadly 1d10, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d10+10 piercing plus 2d6 persistent bleed

Melee **◆** stinger +24 (deadly 1d10, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d8+10 piercing plus paralysis

Melee **◆** body +22 (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d8+9 bludgeoning

Paralysis (incapacitation, occult, necromancy) Any living creature hit by a gray worm's stinger Strike must succeed at a DC 27 Fortitude save or become paralyzed. It can attempt a new save at the end of each of its turns, and the DC cumulatively decreases by 1 on each such save.

Thrash **◆◆** As glacial worm.

Given that all of these diverse creatures hatch from generic cave worm eggs, it is entirely possible that "hybrid" cave worms may exist. For example, it is possible for worms other than the crimson variety to develop a breath weapon, and the type and effect of their venom can vary widely between individuals. The sample size of cave worms available for study is far too small to draw definite conclusions about a true system of classification.





HAGEGRAF

City of Toil

The Five Kings mountain range is the center of dwarven culture in Avistan. Based around the former Sky Citadel of Highhelm, the dwarves inhabit the mountains from their lofty peaks to deep caverns and tunnels near their very roots. Yet beneath the Five Kings Mountains are kingdoms and peoples known to surface dwellers, but often misunderstood as their cultures and traditions are marred by xenophobia and surface elitism. These are the caverns and tunnels of the Darklands where the first dwarves originated, and where their cousins, who call themselves hryngars, still dwell. Hagegraf is the hryngar capital, a former dwarven city remade by hryngars' endless construction under the teaching of their new patron: the Dark Smith, Droskar.

Built in the Age of Legend before Earthfall triggered the dwarven Quest for Sky, Hagegraf is one of Golarion's oldest cities still occupied by its original builders, although it has not been a continuous occupation. Hryngars in Hagegraf have become one of the major forces in the Darklands realm of Nar-Voth, building their capital city into a center of trade and industry that have few rivals under Golarion. It is said that one can navigate Nar-Voth based upon the hammerfalls that ring throughout the tunnels and the smell of Hagegraf's forge-furnaces, which burn endlessly in emulation of their god's ever-laboring realm. The southern end of the cavern city is wreathed in a foul-smelling smog that rises to a natural high point and escapes into nearby tunnels called the Charred Warrens.

These tunnels are regularly scrubbed by re-educational labor sent to change out the "smoke nets," large damp sails used to trap smoke. The best source of fresh air is in the northern districts where towering pillars of devil's ivy cling to the cavern walls and help purify the air. While the ivy thrives with little care, despite the dim light of the city and minimal groundwater, licensing fees on these plants keep them in only the very best homes and districts.

Hagegraf has increasingly become more accepting of non-hryngar residents, making it a new market and destination for explorers. For those with the courage to face the journey and the coin to pay the taxes,

HAGEGRAF

SETTLEMENT 16

LE **METROPOLIS**

City of toil, capital of the hryngar nation, and the center of Droskar worship on Golarion.

Government King Kurindey Orgukagan (monarch)

Population 34,200 (77% hryngar, 8% xulgath, 5% half-orc, 3% caligni, 7% other)

Languages Dwarven, Undercommon

Religions Droskar (official state religion); secret cults of Brigh, Shelyn (outlawed)

Threats Darklands creatures, excessive taxation, and violent rebel attacks

Tax and Toil Hagegraf is a city of unending labor for citizens, and taxes, tariffs, and tolls for residents and visitors. Cost of living for characters visiting Hagegraf is doubled. Characters who become citizens of Hagegraf spend their downtime working for the state at 25% of normal income.

Prejudice Hryngar NPCs begin with an attitude one step worse than usual toward non-hryngar characters, and two steps worse than usual toward dwarf characters.

Bronwyl Holloward (LE female hryngar wizard) superintendent of the Bureau of Magical Arts

Dhorri (N female caligni activist) proprietor of the Silent Forge and activist for rights and reform in Hagegraf

Golki (N male leaf leshy gardener) royal gardener personally responsible for all public devil's ivy installations

Kilken the Daring (NG nonbinary half-elf firebrand) graffiti artist and secret leader of the Church of Shelyn in Hagegraf

King Kurindey Orgukagan (LE male hryngar monarch) king of Hagegraf and (honorary) high priest of Droskar

Narseigus (NE male hryngar wormcaller) sorcerer and advisor to King Orgukagan



Hagegraf provides a new metropolis to explore and a secure base for those delving deeper into the Darklands. Many discover that you can find almost anything you need here, if you're willing to pay the price. Often this price doesn't come weighted in gold, but in future undisclosed favors and a percentage of your findings.

HISTORY

Hagegraf is an ancient city, dating back to the days before Earthfall, when the dwarves who would become hryngars lived in harmony with their kin. When the followers of Torag began their Quest for Sky, there were some who ignored the call to migrate and chose to remain in Nar-Voth. While they tried to carry on as they had for millennia, their numbers were too few to defend the nearly empty dwarven cities from incursions by other Darklands creatures. The remaining population of Hagegraf managed to fend off major invasion attempts by both morlocks and ghouls, but by -5100 AR, they were reduced to living in a single quarter of the city. Beset on all sides by powerful foes, the dwarves abandoned Hagegraf and became nomadic wanderers. This situation played out all across Nar-Voth, and the number of dwarves who remained underground dwindled over the next hundred years.

After years of wandering the Darklands, fleeing from one overwhelming foe after another, the few surviving dwarves listened to whispers and promises from the banished dwarven god Droskar, who offered them a chance to save their civilization from destruction. Droskar told these dwarves how he was abandoned by the rest of the dwarven pantheon, same as the dwarves still living underground. They listened, and they obeyed. Under Droskar's tutelage, the remaining dwarves of Nar-Voth became hryngars, infusing themselves with magic that drained their color, leaving their hair white and skin ashen. They bolstered their armies with spiders and beetles Droskar taught them to tame. Within a few decades, hryngars were once again a force to be reckoned with in Nar-Voth, and they began to reclaim their lost territory.

In the late 15th century AR, a hryngar army under Taskmaster-General Gromdaer Akrizoth marched on the ruins of Hagegraf and drove the morlocks and ghouls from the city, the first former dwarven city



Kurindey Orgukagan

reclaimed by hryngars. Gromdaer rededicated the city to Droskar and set its people to work rebuilding its former glory. In celebration of their victory, his subjects constructed a massive clock tower and cathedral to Droskar. Named the Akrizoth Horologe and built using secret knowledge from Droskar's realm, the complex clock hands measure not only time, but also set the standard against which the output of Droskar's forges were measured.

In the millennia since its rededication, Hagegraf has grown into a major metropolis and the capital of the hryngar nation in Nar-Voth. Never again has it suffered under the weight of an invading army, and it serves as the center of hryngar efforts to expand their influence. In the first decade of his reign, King

Gromdaer began construction of the Long Walk, an artificially widened natural cavern and the only true highway in Nar-

Voth. It soon became a major trade route running from Hagegraf in the east to the hryngar stronghold of Fellstrok in the west. To this day, it is kept largely free of danger by patrols from Hagegraf.

In recent years, Hagegraf has become more open to non-hryngars who are looking for steady work. The city has a strong manufacturing sector, and hryngar-made weapons, armor, and tools are in high demand both across the Darklands and on the surface world for being cheap and effective, if not attractive. Iron and silver are refined in Hagegraf and made into goods that are transported via the Long Walk to subterranean and surface markets across Golarion. Job openings are often plentiful, as business leaders tend to expand operations when an abundance of workers join their team.

GOVERNMENT AND LEADERS

Hagegraf, and the hryngar nation in general, is an autocracy—power rests nominally in a hereditary monarch who rules with complete power. In practice, the clergy of Droskar exercise great influence on Hagegraf's policies, backed by the implicit threat of their removal of Droskar's support, and the monarch's honorary role as a High Priest of Droskar. This tenuous balance has on more than one occasion resulted in political upheaval; several hryngar monarchs who didn't listen to their religious advisors has suddenly passed away under mysterious circumstances. The rulers who have chosen to share power with the

clergy are the ones who have lived long enough to accomplish great deeds; those who sought to enact their own vision over the priests' have wasted lifetimes on internal problems.

The monarch of Hagegraf is also the symbolic ruler of the hryngar nation, although in truth their rule extends as far as the Long Walk and no farther. While every hryngar in Hagegraf owes dues and taxes to royalty, rumors circulate that the king sends tribute to another entity. Some of the rumors name Droskar himself, while others speculate about a cadre of Droskar forgepriests pulling the strings. Nevertheless, it just proves that in hryngar society, you always owe something to someone.

All monarchs of Hagegraf are measured against the first hryngar king, Gromdaer Akrizoth, who reclaimed the city from ghouls and morlocks. Gromdaer ruled for 150 years before disappearing on an ill-fated expedition into Sekamina to punish a serpentfolk collective that was interfering with the construction of the Long Walk. After a decade-long squabble between Gromdaer's many heirs (during which the High Priests of Droskar acted jointly as Steward), Gromdaer's daughter Aktaelin was crowned as Hagegraf's first queen.

Aktaelin's reign outlasted her father's, and saw the completion of many of the works her father started, including the Long Walk. However, Gromdaer still gets the credit for these projects because he was considered their owner. The original engineer of the Long Walk was likely an ambitious noble, but since the king owned their design, their name never made it into the official records.

The current king, Kurindey Orgukagan, gets far less praise than his predecessor, who died of an unnamed magical disease that left only dust behind. This strange occurrence, in conjunction with Kurindey's terrible policy decisions, has left the Droskar clergy threatening to pull support if for no other reason than to distance themselves from what they view as an inevitable failure. His response has been to call for conquest, and his plan to subdue Nar-Voth continues to grow. Rumors abound that the city's military forces are expanding, and that far more weapons are being stockpiled than even the massive Hagegraf army can use. The king has secretly sought allies among his Darklands neighbors, but what target he may have in mind is unknown, perhaps even to him.

GEOGRAPHY AND DISTRICTS

Hagegraf sits within an enormous cavern that stretches under the western edge of the Five Kings mountain range near the dwarven kingdom's border with Druma. The city's architects incorporated the cavern's natural

rock formations into its early design, carving the first structures into the rock and connecting stalactites and stalagmites with great towers that stretch from floor to ceiling. When hryngars reconquered the city, Undercommon became the official language of Hagegraf, and most dwarven carvings were removed as an unwelcome reminder of times long gone. The city has the overall look of a dwarven metropolis, but without the runic carvings and historical treatises on every stone pillar and lintel.

As the city grew, rings of towers and walls, including on the ceilings, were erected to keep invaders out, giving the city a concentric layout. The edges of the cavern were expanded and excavated as the city grew during its first life as a dwarven stronghold. When hryngars reclaimed the city, they renovated as many of the buildings as possible, changing the aesthetics to remove any reminder of their dwarven kin. Hagegraf today is made of dwarven stone overlaid with hryngar metal.

Hagegraf is divided into three basic areas. The Clock Quarter is named after the famed Akrizoth Horologe and includes the central plaza and markets within the inner wall. The Crescent includes the north,



Horologe

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east, and west areas between the inner and outer walls. The southern area between the inner and outer walls is the Forge District, with walls separating it from the Crescent to contain the smoke and soot.

The Clock Quarter includes the broad central plaza and Iron Market, where large-scale trade between nations is conducted, as well as the floor-to-ceiling stalactite towers where the richest merchants and noble houses dwell. Until recently the Clock Quarter was closed to non-hryngars, but a decree by King Orgukagan has opened even this hryngar sanctuary to trade by all sentient beings, upsetting many elitist hryngars who live there. The Clock Quarter also houses the palace of the king and the Ashen Cathedral, the center of Droskar worship on Golarion.

The Crescent hosts open mercantile areas clustered near each of the major city gates; residential areas fill in the gaps. This is where most visitors stay and conduct their business while they're in Hagegraf.

Goods of nearly every kind can be found for sale in the Crescent's markets, and few items are illegal to sell there—provided the proper permits and licenses are paid for. Most things also require a license to purchase (all conveniently included in the price, of course).

In the northeast, farms of edible fungus grow near the walls. Stables for the spiders and cave beetles can be found near the Long Walk gate in the southeast, near the Forge District. Hryngars use these critters as beasts of burden, guard animals, or steeds in times of war.

The entire southern end comprises the Forge District, where the fires of industry burn throughout the endless night of the Darklands. Several hand pumps, fed from a river flowing under the city, provide the forges with water. The smiths are reckless with the runoff, allowing contaminated water to flow through the city streets and out through a small port in the southern wall. Flooding is common.


Outside the walls of Hagegraf proper are clusters of buildings and warehouses owned by the various mercantile interests of Nar-Voth. To avoid the high property taxes inside the city, many Darklands nations established outposts adjacent to Hagegraf, and these areas have become informal embassies between hryngars and many of their neighbors. Various xulgath houses have outposts here, as do caligni and urdefhans. Even a small delegation of merchants from the nightmare realm of Leng occupy more-or-less permanent abodes on the outskirts of the city, a sign that Hagegraf's renown as a center of trade has reached even the farthest ears.

Crumbletown, while not an official district, is the name given to the collection of rapidly built tenements in Hagegraf's eastern Crescent district.

This neighborhood looks wildly different from one decade to the next as buildings tend to deteriorate at such a rapid pace; landowners find it's cheaper to raze them and rebuild than to keep repairing them.

ADVENTURERS IN HAGEGRAF

Visitors to the city usually arrive via the Long Walk, the main artery of trade and travel through Nar-Voth. The Long Walk's eastern end terminates in Hagegraf's central plaza, but travelers will be stopped before they even enter the city's walls by the patrolling customs inspectors. Visitors must submit to random inspections even after paying the entry toll, which is charged per head and per wagon with several additive fees as required. For example, some ancestries must pay an additional "patience tax" against any future trouble; dwarves pay double. Visitors are not told of



Hryngar Guard

the exorbitant exit toll, which must be paid before a visitor leaves the city, a measured control against the emigration of a valuable workforce.

Non-hryngar visitors are subject to routine surveillance and random inspections by groups of roving tax collectors. It is vitally important to get a receipt for all fees paid, lest the inspectors force one to pay again (plus a fine for failing to maintain proper records of transactions). Often the license for owning a good is purchased at the same time as the item itself, so carrying around a weapon purchased outside the city might be subject to confiscation, but a weapon purchased inside the city is fine as long as you have the receipts. Punishment for repeated transgression is harsh, and many an adventurer has become indebted to Droskar and the forgepriests for failing to maintain their paperwork in Hagegraf.

Long-term visitors to the city are not encouraged, so most adventurers should consider Hagegraf a place to do specific business and then move on. Those who remain without obvious need engender suspicion, both among the constabulary and the local populace. Because they consume resources, such as water and air, visitors are required to pay a “toil tax,” or show proof of employment as businesses are required to pay this tax for their employees. In some cases, vigilante groups may form to turn strangers out of town if they overstay their welcome, particularly if they continuously pay the toil tax to avoid honest hard work.

With all of the expenses in Hagegraf, the opportunities can be just as rich. Because of all the trade, a collector might find rare treasures for sale to the highest bidder. A merchant might get a deal on surplus goods, ready to ship out to eager buyers, if they have the right connections. Even the few resistance cells around the city, fighting against the yolk of Droskar, need weapons and provisions. But one should beware getting too tangled in the complex web of hryngar finances, or they might never find a way out.

CULTURE

Hryngar culture is based around Droskar’s doctrines of pride in one’s labor—everyone works for the glory of the Dark Smith and the betterment of the hryngar people. This results in a culture of laborers who define themselves by their jobs above all else, and believe that working is the meaning in life and being idle is a waste of time. Everyone in the city owes tribute to their superiors for their successes and gains monetary dues from those underneath them in the social strata. In this way, wealth climbs to the top, benefiting the royalty and Droskar’s clergy, all for the glory of He Who Gives Purpose.

Those at the bottom of the socioeconomic structure, often called “ingot workers” after the forge workers whose sole job is to smelt ingots, commit to daily labor to provide for themselves and their families. They take pride in their work, often using impressive-sounding titles to convince themselves of their own importance within the hierarchy, such as “metallurgical reclamation specialist” instead of “scrap metal scavenger.” Ingot workers often labor until the ends of their lives, with just enough of them climbing up the metaphorical ladder and becoming artisans to give the rest hope.

The artisans of Hagegraf are slightly better off. They still labor long hours, but their work makes up the major exports of Hagegraf, so the supervisors value the lives of these trained workers. Artisans who overproduce often get their supervisors recognized for fine management skills, recognition that occasionally trickles down to them, making the extra effort worthwhile.

Business owners and guild masters, who share a major take in merchant organizations or production guilds, respectively, are seen as those who truly have Droskar’s blessing. Their oversight of the laborers under them earns them wealth and social status, though heavy tribute is still paid to the king and the clergy of Droskar.

Droskar’s worship is strictly regimented, designed to function around the long working hours, and all citizens are expected to participate. While many hryngars are fervent believers in Droskar’s philosophy, there is a growing number who see religion as rote tradition with little relevance to the real world. From these ranks come the various dissidents and heretics who advocate for change—usually only for a short period before disappearing.

Crime in Hagegraf is often punishable by fine. Those who cannot pay, or who are repeat offenders, are assigned civic work duties to pay off these fines (with a respectable amount of interest accrual, of course). Loitering is a serious crime in Hagegraf, and those with too much free time are often “invited” to civic work duties to put their idle hands to use. This encourages most hryngars to develop side jobs, both as a way of earning extra income and to avoid loitering offences. “Find work or Droskar finds it for you,” as they say.

Interestingly, Hagegraf’s strict laws on loitering have subtly encouraged a thriving street performance and underground art scene, especially among non-hryngar citizens. Droskar demands serious effort in any skilled craft or creation, and recent interpretations by the priesthood have included the creation of

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music and telling of oral tradition in this definition. Many citizens have avoided a charge of loitering with a well-timed story or quick melody on a flute. Other street artists also flourish in the seedier areas of Hagegraf, unable to afford their own studio spaces and living hand-to-mouth in the market districts, selling paintings, hand-lettered poems, crude sculptures, and other artistic creations to visitors. Especially popular is a pamphlet titled “A Guide to the Akrizoth Horologe” which explains the history of the legendary clock in intricate (and inaccurate) detail.

HAGEGRAF LAW

While many of Hagegraf’s regulations are designed to bring in revenue to the city in the form of taxes and trade, there are some activities that receive special punishments. Serious crimes in Hagegraf include those typical for any city: murder, theft, extortion, and treason are all harshly prohibited (though murder is sometimes the easiest way to gain socioeconomic advancement). Unemployment is also a crime in Hagegraf, typically punishable by a fine, and eventually with civic work assignments. If you can’t find a job in Hagegraf, the government will find one for you.

The hryngar judicial system is built on re-educational punishment rather than torture or capital punishment. Offenders are assigned to supervised civic labor and governmental housing, where they can help improve life for all citizens, and continue doing so until they convincingly admit their error in trying to subvert Droskar’s plan for his people. These jobs are usually brutal applications of physical labor, often where a mechanical, alchemical, or magical solution would be far more efficient, but also more expensive. Most residents feel that putting criminals to work not only saves money, but shows reverence to Droskar.

Heresy is also a serious offense and, to hryngars, this means both speaking ill of or undermining Droskar’s faith, or practicing any other faith that does not recognize Droskar’s superiority. Those found practicing divine or primal magic are subject to sanctioned debates with Droskar clergy in matters of theocracy. These debates inevitably continue, sometimes for hours, until the offender admits Droskar’s superiority over their “lesser” god. This usually results in the offending priest violating their own god’s anathema and requiring atonement. Visitors quickly learn to worship in secret, and keep their faith to themselves.

The complicated tax structures require paying dividends to citizens who provided one with training, including prior employers, teachers, parents, and the church of Droskar. Each of these relationships is highly regulated, and skilled accountants (who also earn a

percentage of each client’s gross income) are highly valued in hryngar society. Incorrectly paying dividends results in steep fines and interest.

GAZETTEER

- A. Akrizoth Horologe:** One of the wonders of the Darklands, this massive clock is set into a tower that stretches from the floor to the ceiling of the great cavern housing the city. The complex series of gears and springs that drives the clock’s six hands are tended to by a sect of the priesthood that shuns outsiders. The clock reads time as reckoned by the sun’s passage over the city of Highhelm, and also tracks a series of other intervals said to relate to the output of hryngar forges. The priests of Droskar use this complicated device to measure the output of Droskar’s worldly minions, and to exhort the faithful to greater productivity. In recent years several pilgrims of Brigh have visited the Horologe, but the secretive clock keepers turn them away without exception by order of the king.
- B. Anvil Gate:** The northernmost gate is fashioned in the shape of an anvil. Several fortified towers look over the two roads that lead through Sparks and into the city proper.
- C. Ascending Gate:** The southeastern gate and the tenements nearby are named after the gentle slope leading up toward the surface. Most hryngars scorn this gate, and the road beyond it, since it leads to Highhelm.
- D. Bureau of Toil and Taxation:** This government building deals with the paperwork around kingdom and personal income. There are taxes, tariffs, tolls, dues, dividends, and license fees for everything—just existing in Hagegraf has a cost that must be paid in coin or in proof of labor in an approved industry. Thus, poor folk who enter Hagegraf, or who are convinced to come by misleading promises, often become indebted laborers, having to work dozens or hundreds of hours to pay off their entrance and exit taxes plus the expenses for living.
- E. Elemental Spring:** This large reservoir is connected to an underground chamber that once housed a permanent portal to the Elemental Plane of Water and provided all of Hagegraf with water both for drinking and for quenching hot metal in the many forges. When the remaining dwarves were driven out of the city millennia ago, the portal’s magic faded, and it now provides only a trickle compared to its initial capacity. Manually pumping water from this portal is a frequent civic labor assignment, a tiring task that typically burns out workers faster than they can pay off their debts.

CULT OF THE CAVE WORM

Chapter 1:
Candlestone
Cult

Chapter 2:
On the Trail
of the Worm

Chapter 3:
City of Toil

Cave Worm
Ecology

Hagegraf

Adventure
Toolbox

F. Forge District: A mirror of what the faithful believe Droskar's Ashen Forge looks like, this huge area echoes with the sounds of hammers, the hiss of steam, and the roar of the massive furnaces. Each forge is also a consecrated chapel to Droskar, and many of the artisans here hold minor stations in the clergy as well. Toxic runoff from the forges pools in the streets before draining through a network of narrow pipes to the outside.

G. Iron Market: Hagegraf's large-scale trade market and commodities exchange looks more like a series of ambassadors' mansions than a place of commerce. Elegant stone buildings, fortified with iron, line the broad streets. The market is heavily guarded both by Hagegraf constabulary and private security, and visitors are admitted only upon proof of business within the district. Non-hryngars are provided an escort (paid for by the visitor) for their entire time in the Iron Market, and must depart before the curfew bell or face arrest and summary sentence to re-educational labor.

H. The Lighted Lamp: This surprisingly well-stocked bookstore and curiosity shop is run by **Durruzzin the Sage** (LN male hryngar librarian), who serves as a freelance philosopher, researcher, and acquirer of unusual lore. The main floor is lit by lanterns inside and out for comfortable reading, while the private library above is windowless to avoid advertising when it's in use. Durruzzin has knowledgeable contacts throughout Hagegraf and beyond, allowing him to research nearly any topic given enough time. He is more interested in his research than in matters such as ancestry, faith, or politics, and thus is friendlier than most hryngars, especially to well-educated visitors.

I. Long Gate Square: This is the most heavily defended gate into Hagegraf, and the most commercial. Temporary vending stalls and carts fill this square as bustling merchants hope to get their wares to visitors before anyone else. The Long Walk begins to the west.

J. The Long Walk: This subterranean highway begins in Hagegraf, separated from the city by a mechanically operated gate that's 30 feet tall. Guard barracks and stables surround the gate, allowing hryngar forces to patrol the Long Walk or deploy to defend the gate from invasion. The gates are normally open, and most visitors to Hagegraf come this way, paying the entrance tax per person and wagon.

K. Palace of Nine Hammers: The palace of the monarch of Hagegraf was built by the nine lords who lead the army that reclaimed Hagegraf for the

hryngars. Built around the largest natural pillar in the cavern, it stands alone as a symbol of hryngar greatness. The lower floors are dedicated to trade and a public museum of hryngar accomplishments, while the middle and upper levels are for royal business only.

L. Reptilian Warrens: Many of the city's xulgath citizens are forced to live in this area adjacent to the forges, where their aroma is masked by the smell of the furnace fires. Initially a slum, xulgaths have been slowly working to improve their community with the resources they have available.

M. Silent Forge: This small tavern is one of a few that caters to non-citizens, and acts as a combination speakeasy and safe house for those who run afoul of the intricacies of Hagegraf taxation law. **Dhorri** (N female caligni activist) takes in those who would be re-educated by the state, paying their fees and allowing them to work off their debt to her instead of to Droskar. The authorities have, so far, been unable to prove she is doing anything illegal, but watch the location regularly.

N. Slime Gate: Named after the xulgaths who live just outside the gate in the Reptile Warrens, this gate is all but abandoned by the citizens of Hagegraf, leaving the security, maintenance, and fee collection to the xulgaths who live there.

O. Sparks: This small settlement is just outside of the Anvil Gate. It's popular with visitors who prefer to skirt the reach of hryngar laws.

P. Stone Market: This Hagegraf market is always open and composed of semi-permanent metal buildings designed and built for each storefront's purpose. A regular grid of walkways offers views of the large windows and open patios of shops in all directions. Almost any item can be procured here for the right price—even those items considered illegal in other places. Nearly every item requires a permit or license to possess, a tariff to pay, or a tax to submit, raising the effective cost of all goods by 20%. Every block of shops contains a permit office for collecting fees, and permit officers walk the market at all hours.

Q. The Tempered Cathedral: This massive forge is also a temple dedicated to the evil god Droskar, and houses the clergy and administrators of Droskar's faith.

R. Worksong Stage: This amphitheater hosts rotating hryngar choirs that perform during the long workdays. Choirs are often from the priesthood, but private groups are occasionally invited to join the concert rotation. Chants sung here are carried throughout much of the city, setting the pace for manual laborers in many industries.



ADVENTURE TOOLBOX

CULT OF THE CAVE WORM

Chapter 1: Candlestone Cult

Chapter 2: On the Trail of the Worm

Chapter 3: City of Toil

Cave Worm Ecology

Hagegraf

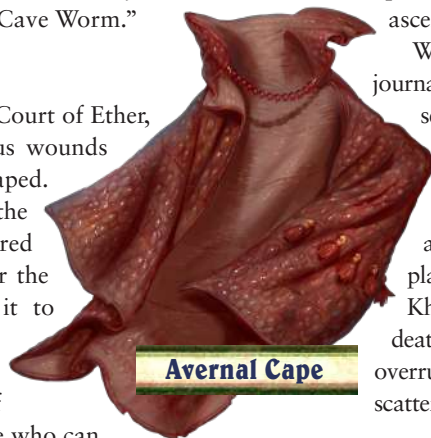
Adventure Toolbox

Relics

The following new relics (*Gamemastery Guide* 94-105) appear in “Cult of the Cave Worm.”

AVERNAL CAPE

When Zogototaru attacked the Court of Ether, the city’s defenses dealt grievous wounds to the cave worm before it escaped. Fey who would later form the Cult of the Cave Worm recovered a scrap of cave worm hide after the battle, trimming and tanning it to create a durable cape. While it’s a prestige accessory for the cult, the cape contains a fragment of Zogototaru’s ferocity for anyone who can unlock its power.



Avernal Cape

AVERNAL CAPE

ITEM 5

UNIQUE ABJURATION EARTH INVESTED MAGICAL RELIC

Aspects beast, fire

Usage incorporated into armor; **Bulk** L

Made from preserved crimson worm hide, this thick leather cape can deflect incoming blows without serious damage. It functions as a dueling cape (*Advanced Player’s Guide* 249) and while moved into a protective position, it also grants you fire resistance equal to twice the relic’s number of gifts.

Forming the Bond While wearing the cape, you defeat a foe and spare their life.

Advancing the Bond Befriend beasts and terrify foes with your physical presence and prowess.

Minor Gifts feral claws, flare bolt, heat haze,

Major Gifts form of fury (snake form), searing wave

KALMAUG’S JOURNAL

Kalmaug was a cleric of Trudd and an explorer. He was a contemporary of King Taargick and stayed behind to run Kheth Soldur, one of the lowest Road to Sky outposts. This small fort also served as a bastion

against the dwarves’ growing number of enemies, who attempted to attack them from behind as they ascended towards the surface.

While alive, Kalmaug wrote several journals describing his various explorations, secrets he’d learned, and even new spells he’d invented. After his death, his followers decided to preserve his collected journals by copying them onto a series of engraved silver plates. These plates were a historic relic that stayed in Kheth Soldur for decades after Kalmaug’s death. They were lost when the outpost was overrun by ghouls, and several pages were scattered throughout Nar-Voth.

KALMAUG’S JOURNAL

ITEM 5

UNIQUE DIVINATION GRIMOIRE INVESTED MAGICAL RELIC

Aspects celestial, earth

Bulk 1

This grimoire is constructed from individual tarnished silver plates, bound together to form a fine book. Each “page” contain engraved maps, accounts of sites in Nar-Voth, and daily journals. Throughout the journal, spells and notes are inscribed on the margins and within the text. When Chapter One is completed, this grimoire contains the following spells: *allfood*, *deep sight*, *fate’s travels*, *glowing trail*, *know location*, *stonesense*, *wanderer’s guide*.

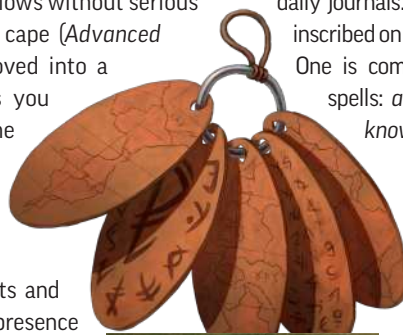
If you use the grimoire during your daily preparations and are capable of preparing spells of the appropriate level, when you cast a non-damaging spell prepared from this grimoire, you can Step or Stride up to half your Speed after Casting the Spell. To scribe additional spells into the grimoire, you must provide additional silver plates at the cost of 10 gp per spell when Learning the Spell.

Forming the Bond The PCs locate and bind together the silver plates for Chapter One (pages 29, 30, 33, and 40).

Advancing the Bond Locate additional chapters of the journal and bind them together.

Minor Gifts ease burden, word of faith

Major Gifts underground bounty



Kalmaug’s Journal



Items

The heroes may find the following new items in “Cult of the Cave Worm.”

BLOOD BOMB

ITEM 1+

UNCOMMON ALCHEMICAL BOMB CONSUMABLE SPLASH

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activate \blacklozenge Strike

This flask is full of shrapnel and anti-coagulants designed to make targets bleed out. It deals 1 slashing damage, the listed persistent bleed damage, and the listed slashing splash damage. Many types grant an item bonus to attack rolls.

Type lesser; Level 1; Price 4 gp

It deals 1d6 persistent bleed damage and 1 slashing splash damage

Type moderate; Level 3; Price 11 gp

You gain a +1 item bonus to attack rolls. The bomb deals 2d6 persistent bleed damage and 2 slashing splash damage

Type greater; Level 11; Price 275 gp

You gain a +2 item bonus to attack rolls.

The bomb deals 3d6 persistent bleed damage and 3 slashing splash damage

Type major; Level 17; Price 2,750 gp

You gain a +3 item bonus to attack rolls. The bomb deals 6d6 persistent bleed damage and 4 slashing splash damage

EVERYWHEN MAP

ITEM 8

RARE DIVINATION INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 500 gp

Usage held; Bulk L

The map changes based on the creature who invests it, showing every path the creature has ever traveled in their lifetime.

The map doesn't distinguish between current or past locations. It can be tricked into revealing the path of a different creature if a piece of that creature (such as hair, bone, or skin) is used with a successful DC 24 Trick Magic Item check.



Everywhen Map

FESTREM MORTU

ITEM 6

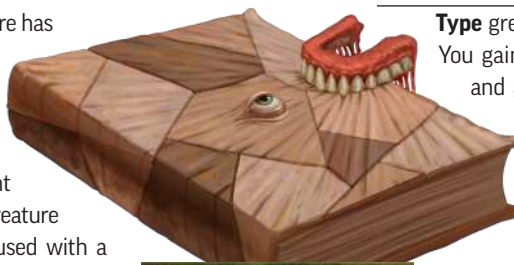
UNCOMMON CURSED GRIMOIRE MAGICAL NECROMANCY

Price 230 gp

Bulk L

The book's cover is a patchwork of tanned humanoid skin that reeks of rotting meat. The longer a living creature studies this book, the more the scent of decay appeals to them.

Activate \blacklozenge (concentrate, necromancy); Frequency once per day; Trigger Your last action was to cast a necromancy



Festrem Mortu

spell prepared from this grimoire; Effect You draw negative energy from the triggering spell. You gain 10 temporary hit points that last for 1 hour.

Special If this grimoire is used to prepare spells five days in succession by the same caster, that caster is subjected to the curse of the ravenous (Gamemastery Guide 116).

PREY MUTAGEN

ITEM 1+

RARE ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE ELIXIR MUTAGEN POLYMORPH

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activate \blacklozenge Interact

A mixture of fey blood and rare ingredients give you incredible speed but also cause you to become particularly attractive to predators.

Benefit You gain a status bonus to your speed and are able to use the following reaction:

Timely Dodge \blacklozenge Trigger You are targeted by a Strike; Effect You dart aside, gaining a circumstance bonus to AC, then Step after the Strike resolves.

Drawback The range at which creatures can detect you with scent or tremorsense doubles. Animals and beasts gain a +2 circumstance bonus to attack rolls against you.

Type lesser; Level 1; Price 4 gp

You gain a +10 status bonus to your Speed and gain a +1 circumstance bonus to AC when using Timely Dodge. The duration is 1 minute.

Type moderate; Level 3; Price 12 gp

You gain a +20 status bonus to your Speed and gain a +2 circumstance bonus to AC when using Timely Dodge. The duration is 10 minutes.

Type greater; Level 11; Price 300 gp

You gain a +30 status bonus to your Speed and gain a +3 circumstance bonus to AC when using Timely Dodge. The duration is 1 hour.

Type major; Level 17; Price 3,000 gp

You gain a +40 status bonus to your Speed and gain a +4 circumstance bonus to AC when using Timely Dodge. The duration is 1 hour.

THUMPER SNARE

SNARE 3

RARE AUDITORY CLOCKWORK CONSUMABLE MECHANICAL SNARE TRAP

Price 10 gp

This small box contains a clockwork mechanism that rhythmically thumps the ground, allowing creatures with tremorsense to detect it at up to double their usual range. The mechanism can be wound to thump anywhere from 1 round to 1 minute before falling into useless components.

Spells

The heroes may find the following new spells useful in the Sky King's Tomb Adventure Path.

ALLFOOD

SPELL 2

UNCOMMON TRANSMUTATION

Traditions arcane, divine, primal

Cast 1 minute (somatic, verbal)

Range touch; **Targets** 1 unattended non-magical object of 1 Bulk or less

You transform one object into an edible substance that any living creature can chew, swallow, and safely digest. This *allfood* always has a bland taste and slightly gooey consistency, regardless of its original nature. One bulk of *allfood* provides enough sustenance to feed one Medium creature for a day.

After 1 day, if no one has eaten the *allfood*, it reverts to its original form. Most Small creatures eat one-quarter as much as a Medium creature and most Tiny creatures eat one-sixteenth as much, while most Large creatures eat 10 times as much, Huge creatures need 100 times as much, and so on.

Heightened (+1) Double the maximum bulk (to a maximum of 256 bulk at 10th level).

DEEP SIGHT

SPELL 3

RARE DIVINATION

Traditions arcane, divine, occult, primal

Cast >>> somatic, verbal

Duration 1 hour

Your eyes darken until they become entirely pitch black. You grant yourself the ability to see in the darkness. You gain darkvision. If you already have darkvision, you gain greater darkvision.

Heightened (7th) The duration is until the next time you make daily preparations.

FATE'S TRAVELS

SPELL 3

RARE NECROMANCY

Traditions divine, occult

Cast 1 minute (material, somatic, verbal)

Range touch; **Targets** 1 corpse

Saving Throw Will

You get a vision of the creature when it was alive, and its last 10 minutes of travel. This vision gives you a clear impression of the route it took and locations it visited, if any, but not any creatures or hazards in those areas. This information is enough to automatically succeed at Tracking the creature over that distance.

Heightened (6th) Your vision covers the creature's last hour of travel, and you gain an impression of the hazards, creature types, and number of creatures it encountered along the way, as well as a clear impression of how it died.

GLOWING TRAIL

CANTRIP 1

UNCOMMON TRANSMUTATION

Traditions arcane, divine, occult, primal

Cast >> somatic, verbal

Duration 1 hour

Your movements leave a vague glowing path behind you, like a misty echo of your presence. While your form is not discernible, your size is. This path hangs in space and is not anchored to any surface, so it tracks your movement through the air. The path fades after 10 minutes. You can Dismiss this spell at any time, but the path fades normally.

The path can be visible or invisible. While visible, it appears as a faintly glowing mist in a color of your choosing but sheds no light beyond its area. While invisible, you can still detect the path, but it gives off no light.

Heightened (3rd) The *glowing trail* fades after 1 day.

Heightened (5th) The *glowing trail* fades after 1 week.

Heightened (7th) The *glowing trail* fades after 1 month.

Heightened (9th) The *glowing trail* fades after 1 year.

KNOW LOCATION

SPELL 1

RARE DETECTION DIVINATION

Traditions divine, occult, primal

Cast 1 minute (somatic, verbal)

Range 1 mile

Duration until the next time you make your daily preparations
You create an invisible anchor at a location within range (even if it's outside your line of sight or line of effect), as long as you can identify the location by its appearance (or other identifying features). You innately know the direction towards that location, including relative depth, but not the distance.

Incorrect knowledge of the location's appearance usually causes the spell to fail, but it could instead lead to an unwanted location or some other unusual mishap determined by the GM. This spell doesn't help you find a suitable route to the location nor assist you in overcoming obstacles on the way there.

Heightened (3rd) The range is 10 miles.

Heightened (5th) The range is 100 miles.

Heightened (7th) The range is planetary and you can create an anchor at a location you've viewed with *scrying* or similar effects.

STONESENSE

SPELL 4

RARE DIVINATION

Traditions arcane, divine, primal

Cast >>> somatic, verbal

Duration sustained up to 1 minute

You gain tremorsense as an imprecise sense to a range of 100 feet, but you can only sense vibrations through natural stone (not masonry, adobe, or any other manufactured edifice).



Worm Caller Archetype

You follow the ancient hryngar tradition of the worm caller—mystics who can call upon the strength and destructive force of the mighty cave worms that inhabit the Darklands. You can manifest worms to attack your enemies, draw upon their senses and resistances, summon one to do your bidding and, eventually, become a worm yourself.

WORM CALLER DEDICATION

FEAT 2

RARE ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisites trained in Nature or Cave Worm Lore

You pledge yourself to understanding and emulating one of the most powerful creatures of the Darklands: the mighty cave worm. You gain the following action.

Shake It Off **◆** (fortune, primal) **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger** You fail or critically fail a saving throw against a condition or adverse effect (such as *baleful polymorph*); **Effect** You reroll the triggering save and use the better result.

Special You can't select another dedication feat until you have gained two other feats from the Worm Caller archetype.



WORM SENSE

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Worm Caller Dedication

You emulate the senses of the cave worm. You gain darkvision and tremorsense as an imprecise sense within 5 feet.

The range of the tremorsense increases to 10 feet at 8th level and to 15 feet at 12th level.

WORMSKIN

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Worm Caller Dedication

Your flesh grows thick and bloated, protecting you against harm. You gain resistance equal to half your level versus one of the following types of damage, chosen when you take the feat: fire, cold, or bludgeoning. This choice cannot be changed.

When you're unarmored, your flesh gives you a +2 item bonus to AC with a Dexterity cap of +3. You can apply with armor potency runes and property runes directly to your flesh, though excruciatingly painful.

Special You can take this feat up to three times, each time selecting a new damage type from the list.

INEXORABLE

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Worm Caller Dedication

You imbue yourself with the resilience of the cave worm. When you gain the paralyzed, slowed, or stunned condition, roll a DC 15 flat check. On a success you ignore the condition.

When using Worm Form (page 81) you are immune to penalties to your Speed and the immobilized condition, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to your Fortitude or Reflex DC against attempts to Shove or Trip you, and you ignore difficult terrain and greater difficult terrain.

WORM'S FEAST **◆◆**

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE CONJURATION PRIMAL

Prerequisites Worm Caller Dedication

Frequency once per day

You call forth a brood of infantile cave worms to feast on your enemy's flesh. Choose a creature within 30 feet; the creature must attempt a Fortitude save. At 8th level and every 2 levels above that, the persistent piercing damage taken on a failure increases by 1d6.

Critical Success The worms writhe away harmlessly.

Success The target takes 2d6 piercing damage and 2d6 persistent piercing damage.

Failure The target takes 6d6 piercing damage and 2d6 persistent piercing damage.

Critical Failure As failure, plus the target is flat-footed as long as it takes persistent piercing damage.

WORM EMPATHY

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Worm Caller Dedication

You can connect with cave worms (and other worm-related creatures, at the GM's discretion) on a rudimentary level. You can use Diplomacy to Make an Impression on cave worms and to make simple Requests of them. In most cases, the cave worm's starting attitude is indifferent and they will give you time to establish contact.

AZURE FINS

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Worm Caller Dedication

When submerged in water or another liquid, you form small fin-like arms along your body, granting you far greater maneuverability while swimming. You gain a swim Speed equal to your land Speed. Furthermore, while swimming on the surface of a liquid, you can Leap out of the liquid and do not fall until the end of your turn, allowing you to spend the rest of the turn above the surface.

CALL WORM SPIRIT

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE CONJURATION PRIMAL

Prerequisites Worm Caller Dedication

Frequency once per day

You call forth a ghostly manifestation of the worm spirit. Choose an intersection on the ground within 60 feet; the ghostly maw of a worm emerges from the ground, attacking all creatures in a 10 foot burst. Each creature in the area must attempt a Reflex save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target takes 1d10+13 bludgeoning damage as it is battered by the worm's body.

Failure The target takes 3d10+15 piercing damage as it is bitten by the worm. The target is immobilized until the end of its next turn.

Critical Failure As failure, but the damage increases to 6d10+30 and the target is knocked prone.

TUNNEL

FEAT 10

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Worm Caller Dedication

You gain a burrow speed of 10 feet.

CRIMSON BREATH

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE EVOCATION FIRE PRIMAL

Prerequisites Worm Caller Dedication

Frequency once per day

You gain a fire breath weapon similar to that of a crimson worm. You breathe a blast of flame in a 30-foot cone that deals 12d6 fire damage to all creatures in the area (basic Reflex save). This damage increases by 2d6 at 14th level and every 2 levels thereafter.

VENOMOUS TOUCH

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Worm Caller Dedication

You've learned to channel the sting of the worm. You gain *purple worm sting* as an innate primal spell that you can cast once per day.

WORM FORM

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE POLYMORPH PRIMAL TRANSMUTATION

Prerequisites Worm Caller Dedication

You take on the form of a purple worm or transform into a humanoid-worm hybrid, retaining your own head but with a worm's body, transforming into a Huge battle form. You must have enough space to expand into or the ability is lost. While in this form, you gain the animal trait. You can Dismiss the form.

You gain the following statistics and abilities regardless of which battle form you choose:

- AC = 20 + your level. Ignore your armor's check penalty and Speed reduction.
- 40 temporary Hit Points.
- Darkvision.
- One or more unarmed melee attacks specific to the battle form you choose, which are the only attacks you can Strike with. You're trained with them. Your attack modifier is +25, and you use the listed damage. Melee attacks are Strength based (for the purpose of the enfeebled condition, for example). If your unarmed attack modifier is higher, you can use it instead.
- Athletics modifier of +30, unless your own modifier is higher.

You also gain specific abilities based on the type of monster you choose:

Purple Worm Speed 40 feet, burrow 30 feet, swim 20 feet; **Melee** \diamond jaws (deadly 2d10, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d10+15 piercing; **Melee** \diamond stinger (agile, poison, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d12+15 piercing plus 2d6 persistent poison; **Melee** \diamond body (reach 15 feet) **Damage** 1d10+13 bludgeoning

Hybrid Speed 40 feet; **Melee** \diamond stinger (agile, poison, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d12+15 piercing plus 1d6 persistent poison; **Melee** \diamond body (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d10+13 bludgeoning; **Hybrid Caster** You retain the ability to speak, and can cast spells as long as they don't have somatic or material components.

CALL THE WORM

FEAT 18

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Call Worm Spirit

You gain *summon animal*, heightened to 9th level, as an innate primal spell that you can cast once per day, but can only summon a purple worm. At 20th level, you can summon an *elite purple worm* instead.





PUPPETEER VARIATIONS

The slime puppeteer is only one attempt at creating a terrestrial spy; the alghollthu created countless more. It's challenging to tell how many of their kind survived until the modern day. Some slime puppeteers traded the sensitivity to hot environments for cold. Others were massively enlarged, targeting various giant communities. There are even rumors of elemental-infused slime puppeteers capable of infiltrating the elemental planes, but so far no solid evidence has been presented to recognized scholars.

Alghollthu

The alghollthu that ruled Golarion for millennia created numerous hideous creatures using torturous processes and magic; many yet survive.

SLIME PUPPETEER (UNGOTHOL)

Early in the alghollthu's attempt to control the sapient creatures of Golarion, they created the ungothol to feed them information. These slime-covered creatures would infiltrate humanoid settlements and send back information to their masters using powerful telepathy. Over centuries, the slime puppeteers proved inferior compared to the more versatile faceless stalkers.

Slime puppeteers disguise themselves as their humanoid meals. They envelop their target, killing it, then the puppeteer's skin and the corpse's skin both become gelatinous and merge. The puppeteer's form replaces the outer layer of the corpse's body, while long, wiry tendrils implant themselves in the corpses' nervous system. The result is a nearly-perfect copy of the dead creature, now controlled from within by the sinister alghollthu agent. The slime puppeteer can speak using the dead creature's voice, though without the original creature's language or memories.

SLIME PUPPETEER

CREATURE 6

RARE CN MEDIUM ABERRATION

Perception +14; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common, Undercommon; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +14, Deception +16, Religion +10, Society +13, Stealth +16

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

Telepathic Bond (telepathy) A slime puppeteer maintains a strong telepathic bond with the alghollthu that created it. This bond has planetary reach, but the puppeteer is blind and deaf while accessing this bond.

AC 24; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +14, **Will** +10

HP 95

Stinky Sweat (aura, olfactory) 10 feet. When a slime puppeteer takes fire damage, they form a layer of pungent slime on their skin that remains until washed away. While the layer is present, creatures adjacent to the slime puppeteer must attempt a DC 24 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature is sickened 1. A creature that succeeds at its save is immune to the puppeteer's sweat for 1 minute.

Speed 10 feet, fly 30 feet, swim 30 feet

Melee ♦ tail +15 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d6+7 piercing plus 2d6 poison

Melee ♦ wing +15 (agile, nonlethal), **Damage** 1d4+7 bludgeoning

Envelop ♦ (attack, incapacitation) The puppeteer wraps their body around an adjacent target (DC 24 Reflex negates). The target is restrained and the puppeteer is immobilized. The puppeteer can make only tail Strikes against the restrained creature and can only engulf a single Medium or Large creature. The puppeteer can end an Envelop as a free action.

Mimic Form The puppeteer can take on the form of a corpse they have enveloped. This takes one hour, during which time the puppeteer can't move or attack and has an AC of 16. Once the target's form has been taken, the puppeteer cannot use its Envelop, fly speed, and swim speed abilities until Mimic Form ends. The puppeteer only has access to their wing Strike while using Mimic Form. The puppeteer can end Mimic Form as a three-action manipulate activity.

ULAT-KINI INITIATE

Several groups of ulat-kinis have rediscovered the ancient way of kirtanang, a martial art from that uses broad, flowing motions of the claws.

ULAT-KINI INITIATE

CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON LE MEDIUM AMPHIBIOUS HUMANOID

Perception +10; darkvision

Languages Algholthu, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +11, Intimidation +8, Stealth +11 (+13 while swimming)

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

AC 21; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +13, **Will** +8

HP 60; **Resistances** cold 5

Speed 20 feet, swim 40 feet

Melee ✦ claw +15 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d8+5 slashing

Melee ✦ fangs +13, **Damage** 2d4+5 piercing plus 1 persistent bleed

Flurry of Claws ✦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The ulat-kini initiate makes two claw Strikes against a single target.

Kirtanang The initiate's Strikes take no penalty from passing through water.

ULAT-KINI MINDREAYER

When not being controlled and manipulated by algholthus, ulat-kinis have found they can develop formidable psychic powers. Those who master this craft are dubbed “mindreavers” by their awestruck kin.

ULAT-KINI MINDREAYER

CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON LE MEDIUM AMPHIBIOUS HUMANOID

Perception +14; darkvision

Languages Algholthu, Undercommon; telepathy 30 feet

Skills Intimidation +15, Occultism +15, Stealth +12

Str +1, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +6

Items *pendant of the occult*

AC 22; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +12, **Will** +16

HP 100; **Resistances** cold 10

Speed 20 feet, swim 40 feet

Melee ✦ claw +14, **Damage** 1d6+3 slashing

Melee ✦ fangs +12, **Damage** 2d4+3 piercing

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 22; **4th** (2 slots) *clairvoyance*, *seal fate*^{APG};

3rd (2 slots) *agonizing despair*^{APG}, *phantom pain*, *sculpt sound*^{APG}; **2nd** (3 slots) *blood vendetta*^{APG}, *soothe*, *telekinetic maneuver*; **1st** (3 slots) *alarm*, *déjà vu*^{APG}, *ill omen*^{APG}; **Cantrips (3rd)** *daze*, *guidance*, *message*, *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*

Psychic Daze ✦✦ (mental, psychic) The mindreaver targets one creature within 120 feet and violently intrudes into their mind. The target attempts a DC 22 Will save.

Critical Success The target creature is unaffected.

Success The target creature gains weakness 1 to mental damage for 1 minute. If they already have weakness to mental damage, the value of the weakness increases by one.

Failure The target creature takes 2d10 mental damage and gains weakness 1 to mental damage for 1 minute. If they already have weakness to mental damage, the value of the weakness increases by one.

Critical Failure As failure, except the target's weakness to mental damage increases by 2.



ULAT-KINI CULTURE

The creatures who surface humanoids consider scum still hold grand empires beneath the waves. While some ulat-kinis still revere the algholthu who created them and others have learned to hate their creators, there are ulat-kinis who have found a new way forward. They have developed their own culture outside of algholthu influence, founding new underwater traditions and creating new cultural standards.





BLOODSEEKER BREEDS

While the giant bloodseeker has the most notoriety for its size and use as a cavalry mount, other breeds have been created by determined ranchers. These including the long-haired bloodseeker, bloodseeker retriever, and the difficult-to-contain burrowing bloodseeker. Each of these recognized breeds can be submitted to the annual Court of Ether Bloodseeker Show, where breeders enter their prized, expensive, and well-trained bloodseekers in hopes of gaining the elusive “Best in Show” award.

Bloodseeker

Decades ago, the Court of Ether bred bloodseekers as show animals, thinking them adorably ugly. Generations later, the insects have become gigantic. Visitors to the Court are impressed by how the bloodseekers to hover in place, fly through hoops, and only drink the blood of specific creatures.

GIANT BLOODSEEKER

The Court of Ether breeds bloodseekers to enormous sizes to serve as cavalry mounts for their non-winged warriors. These bloodseekers serve as capable mounts—at least until they detect the scent of blood.

GIANT BLOODSEEKER

CREATURE 2

UNCOMMON N MEDIUM ANIMAL

Perception +10; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Skills Acrobatics +9, Athletics +7

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

Blood-Crazed If the bloodseeker starts its turn within 60 feet of a creature with bleed damage, it must attempt a DC 11 flat check. On a failure, the bloodseeker attempts to move adjacent to the bleeding creature and Strike it with its proboscis. The bloodseeker gains a +4 circumstance bonus to attack rolls against this target.

AC 19; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +11, **Will** +6

HP 25

Speed 10 feet, fly 40 feet

Melee ♦️ barbed leg +11 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d4+3 piercing plus Grab

Melee ♦️ proboscis +7, **Damage** 1d6+3 piercing plus Blood Drain

Blood Drain ♦️ **Requirements** The bloodseeker’s last action was a successful Strike with its proboscis against a target with blood; **Effect** The bloodseeker sucks blood from that target, dealing 2d4 damage, and the bloodseeker gains temporary Hit Points equal to the damage dealt. The target becomes drained 1.

Grab ♦️

BLOODSEEKER SWARM

The Court of Ether release the less useful, smaller breed of bloodseekers into the Endless Gulf, where they form into dangerous swarms of the insatiable devourers. This has led to a dangerous new game, Seek-a-Bang, where fey mounted on giant bloodseekers throw thunderstones at swarms of their mounts’ smaller cousins and see how many they can kill with a single throw. So far, the fatalities are few enough to be acceptable.

BLOODSEEKER SWARM

CREATURE 3

UNCOMMON N MEDIUM ANIMAL SWARM

Perception +8; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Skills Acrobatics +12, Stealth +12

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

AC 20; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +12, **Will** +6

HP 36; **Immunities** precision, swarm mind;

Weaknesses area damage 6, splash damage 3;

Resistances bludgeoning 3, piercing 5, slashing 5

Speed 10 feet, fly 30 feet

Blood Draining Bites ♦️ Each creature in the swarm’s space takes 1d6 piercing damage plus 1d6 persistent bleed damage and is drained 1. A successful DC 20 Reflex save reduces the piercing damage by half and negates the bleed damage and drained condition.

Caligni

Calignis often get stereotyped as murderers, but the title of assassin is one of the rarest in their society. Caligni settlements go decades without having offspring born with enough potential. However, once a child shows they have “the gift,” the settlements leaders might give the babe to the owb, who mold and shape the child into an instrument of shadows and death.

CALIGNI ASSASSIN

Lauded and shunned, caligni assassins often become unwitting pawns in clashes between caligni settlements or between rival factions of caligni society.

CALIGNI ASSASSIN

CREATURE 8

RARE NE MEDIUM CALIGNI HUMANOID SHADOW

Perception +14; greater darkvision

Languages Caligni, Shadowtongue, Shae, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +20, Athletics +15, Deception +13, Intimidation +15, Occultism +13, Stealth +20

Str +3, **Dex** +6, **Con** +4, **Int** +3, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1


Shadow Shift Caligni assassins are concealed in dim light or darkness even to creatures that can see clearly in those light levels.

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

Items leather armor, +1 striking spiked gauntlet, throwing knives (4)

AC 27; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +18, **Will** +12

HP 135


Countershadow  (darkness, occult) **Trigger** A creature within 60 feet casts a light spell; **Effect** The caligni assassin attempts to counteract the triggering spell. Caligni assassins automatically recognize light spells.


Death Umbral Shroud (darkness, occult) When a caligni assassin dies, their body disintegrates into a veil of supernatural darkness for 1 round. A 4th-level *darkness* spell appears, centered on the assassin's location, with a counteract DC of 23.

Deny Advantage The assassin isn't flat-footed to creatures of 8th level or lower that are hidden, undetected, flanking, or using surprise attack.




Light Blindness

Speed 40 feet


Melee  *spiked gauntlet* +21 (agile, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 2d4+9 piercing plus Umbral Veil

Ranged  *throwing knife* +19 (agile, finesse, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d4+9 piercing

Quick Draw

Shadow Leap    (darkness, occult, teleportation) **Requirements** The assassin is in dim light or darkness; **Effect** The assassin vanishes into shadow, appearing in a square of dim light or darkness within 60 feet. If the assassin appears adjacent to a creature, they can Strike that creature, otherwise the assassin can Hide.

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

Umbral Veil  (darkness) **Requirements** The assassin's last action was a successful melee Strike; **Effect** The assassin extends a tendril of shadow to obscure the target's vision, blinding them for 1 round (DC 23 Will negates). On a critical failure, they're blind for 1 minute. Creatures with greater darkvision are immune to this ability.



SHADOWFADE

Caligni assassins gain their power from an infusion of planar essence directly from the Netherworld, which the owb help them develop into powerful abilities. This comes at a cost: all caligni assassins eventually succumb to an affliction known as shadowfade. This magical malady causes the caligni's body to painfully warp when concealed in shadows, as the plane's ability to create twisted reflections of reality changes their physical form directly.

Sometimes a caligni assassin will flee home and strike out on their own to avoid becoming a twisted tool for their greedy leaders. Such freelancers are in high demand for those seeking a fatal solution to their own political problems.





UPWORLDER PREJUDICE

Many upworlders' only experience with denizens from the Darklands come from Darklands raids. This has unfortunately caused many on the surface to believe that all Darklands peoples are murderous, which, of course, isn't the case. The Darklands are a harsh realm, and the people who live there have adapted to survive in an unforgiving environment that rewards the strong and punishes the meek. Yet despite this, there are still rich cultures and compassionate beings below the surface of Golarion.

Hryngar

Hryngars descend from dwarves who did not undertake the Quest for Sky and remained denizens of the Darklands. Most now worship Droskar, god of toil.

HAGEGRAF ROYAL GUARD

While the city guards patrol the Long Walk, the royal guards protect King Orgukagan and the royal family, as well as important royal interests.

HAGEGRAF ROYAL GUARD

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON LE MEDIUM DWARF HRYNGAR HUMANOID

Perception +16; darkvision, iron mind

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +13, Diplomacy +10, Intimidation +10, Society +10

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

Items chain mail, guisarme, light hammers (2), simple manacles and key

AC 22; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +11, **Will** +14

HP 90

Iron Mind Royal guards automatically disbelieve all illusions of 2nd level or lower.

Light Blindness

Stop Right There! **Trigger** A creature within the royal guard's reach uses a move action; **Effect** The royal guard Strikes the creature. On a success the target's action is interrupted; on a critical success the target is also knocked prone.

Tight Formation While adjacent to another royal guard, each royal guard gains a +2 circumstance bonus to their Fortitude and Reflex DCs against attempts to Shove, Trip, or Tumble Through them.

Speed 20 feet

Melee **◆** guisarme (reach, trip) +15, **Damage** 1d10+6 slashing plus Knockdown

Ranged **◆** light hammer (agile, thrown 20 feet) +13, **Damage** 1d6+6 bludgeoning

Occult Innate Spells DC 21; **2nd** *blood vendetta*^{APG}, *paranoia*; **Cantrips (3rd)** *sigil*

Brutal Beating A royal guard deals an additional 1d10 precision damage to prone creatures.

Knockdown **◆**

HRYNGAR KING'S AGENT

Involved in both domestic security and international espionage, the agents of King Orgukagan's secret police are skilled at capturing enemies for interrogation, infiltrating rival organizations, and fighting without weapons. When the king takes special interest in a project, event, or individual, he sends one of his specially trained agents to handle the situation.

HRYNGAR KING'S AGENT

CREATURE 5

RARE LE MEDIUM DWARF HRYNGAR HUMANOID

Perception +12; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +13, Athletics +13, Deception +16, Intimidation +14, Stealth +13

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


Items bola^{APG} (2), hand crossbow, dagger, average manacles with keys, *spellstrike ammunition* 1 (2); *sleep*, *command* ["drop prone"]

Lie to Me A king's agent uses their Deception DC when someone tries to Lie to them.

AC 21; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +14

HP 78




Counter Feint  **Trigger** A creature fails to feint the king's agent; **Effect** The creature is flat-footed against the next melee attack that the king's agent attempts before the end of their next turn.

Light Blindness


Speed 25 feet

Melee  fist +13 (agile, finesse, nonlethal), **Damage** 1d6+4 bludgeoning



Melee  dagger +13 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+4 piercing




Ranged  hand crossbow +13 (range 60 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d6+2 piercing

Ranged  dagger +13 (agile, finesse, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d4+4 piercing

Ranged  bola +13 (nonlethal, ranged trip, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d6+4 bludgeoning

Occult Innate Spells DC 21; **2nd** *blood vendetta*^{APG}, *paranoia*; **Cantrips (3rd)** *sigil*

Nerve Strike   The king's agent Strikes with their fist. If they hit, the target is paralyzed until the end of the agent's next turn (DC 19 Fortitude negates).

Quick Arrest    **Requirements** The hryngar king's agent is holding manacles and is adjacent to a creature who is immobilized, paralyzed, or unconscious; **Effect** The hryngar king's agent applies the manacles.

Sneak Attack The hryngar king's agent deals an additional 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

HRYNGAR FORGEPRIEST

Abandoned by their cousins, the surface dwarves, hryngars were saved by Droskar, who taught them to work hard and give no quarter. Now, that hardness is the sword and shield by which the hryngar rule their kingdoms. The forgepriests proselytize Droskar's teachings and punish heretics for any defiance.

HRYNGAR FORGEPRIEST

CREATURE 6

LE MEDIUM DWARF HRYNGAR HUMANOID

Perception +13; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven, Undercommon


Skills Athletics +11, Intimidation +13, Religion +15, Society +11

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

Items chain mail, +1 *striking returning light hammer*

AC 23; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +11, **Will** +15


HP 99; **Resistances** fire 5

Toil is Strength  (misfortune) **Trigger** A creature within 30 feet would succeed at a save against a spell or ability that causes the immobilized condition; **Effect** The target must reroll the triggering saving throw and use the worse result.

Light Blindness



Speed 20 feet

Melee  *light hammer* +14 (agile, magical), **Damage** 2d8+5 bludgeoning

Ranged  *light hammer* +12 (agile, magical, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 2d8+5 bludgeoning

Divine Prepared Spells DC 21; **3rd** *agonizing despair*^{APG}, *crisis of faith*, *fear*; **2nd** *charitable urge*, *mending*, *see invisibility*; **1st** *command*, *detect poison*, *magic weapon*; **Cantrips (3rd)** *daze*, *detect magic*, *prestidigitation*, *read aura*, *shield*

Occult Innate Spells DC 21; **2nd** *blood vendetta*^{APG}, *paranoia*; **Cantrips (3rd)** *sigil*

Hammerfall   The forgepriest tosses their hammer up to 30 feet. Where the hammer lands, molten metal erupts from the ground in a 10 foot radius dealing 6d8 fire damage to creatures in the area (DC 21 basic Reflex save). Creatures who critically fail also take 1d8 persistent fire damage. The forgepriest can't use Hammerfall again for 1d4 rounds.



HIGHHELM PROPAGANDA

Upworlders often believe that hryngars make shoddy weapons and armor, but this is propaganda spread by dwarves on the surface. Any proud hryngar knows that if you work hard enough on a project, it will come out just as well as crafters who rely on clever secrets and modern techniques. Therefore hryngar-made products often have fewer aesthetic elements in their design. Their creations tend to focus more on pure function.





THAT BLOODY HAT

Even when a redcap isn't taking persistent bleed damage, their red caps drip crimson, soaked in the blood of their enemies. This is more than enough to provoke creatures who react strongly to the scent of blood. Creatures with scent treat a redcap as a creature taking persistent bleed damage.

Redcap

In the Ether Court, redcaps train to ride giant bloodseeker specially bred to be mounts. While their fey cousins outside the court see this as folly, redcap courtiers consider riding bloodseekers a noble sport.

REDCAP CAVALRY

Whomever first imagined putting a fey with a bloodsoaked hat on a giant blood-crazed insect certainly had a sense of humor, but that didn't stop the redcaps from trying to domesticate and train giant bloodseekers. Although a flying cavalry was Queen Frilogarma's goal, her court ended up accidentally inventing redcap racing. In this sport, one redcap with a freshly soaked cap is swung around a racetrack by a giant arm while several other redcaps on giant bloodseekers fly after them. The "bait" redcap doesn't usually survive, but they are the center of attention for about two minutes.

REDCAP CAVALRY

CREATURE 6

UNCOMMON CE SMALL FEY

Perception +14; low-light vision

Languages Common, Sylvan, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +14, Athletics +17, Intimidation +13, Nature +13, Performance +11

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

Red Cap (necromancy, primal) A redcap's woolen hat is dyed with the blood of its victims. If the redcap loses its cap, it no longer benefits from fast healing and takes a -4 status penalty to its damage rolls. It can create a new cap in 10 minutes, but that cap doesn't grant its powers until the redcap has turned it red with Blood Soak. A cap has no benefit for creatures other than the redcap who made it.

Not My Cap! (auditory) **Trigger** Their bloodseeker mount fails their blood-crazed flat check; **Requirements** the redcap is mounted on a giant bloodseeker; **Effect** The bloodseeker may reroll the flat check.

Items iron boots, red cap, scythe

AC 23; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +14, **Will** +11

HP 75 (fast healing 10); **Weaknesses** cold iron 5, divine revulsion

Divine Revulsion (emotion, fear, mental) If a redcap sees a creature brandish a religious symbol of a good deity (which requires an Interact action by that creature) or use one to cast a divine spell, the redcap must attempt a DC 21 Will save. It then becomes temporarily immune to all brandished religious symbols for 10 minutes.

Critical Success The redcap is unaffected.

Success The redcap is frightened 2.

Failure The redcap gains the fleeing condition for 1 round and is frightened 4.

Speed 50 feet

Melee scythe +17 (deadly d10, trip), **Damage** 1d10+11 slashing

Melee boot +15 (agile, versatile B), **Damage** 1d6+9 piercing

Blood Soak (manipulate) The redcap dips its cap in the blood of a slain foe. The foe must have died in the last minute, and the redcap must have helped kill it. The redcap gains a +4 status bonus to damage rolls for 1 minute.

Flyby Swing **Trigger** The redcap's bloodseeker mount moves away from a creature within the redcap's reach; **Requirements** The redcap is mounted on a giant bloodseeker; **Effect** The redcap Strikes the creature with their scythe.

Sprite

The fey of the Ether Court in the Darklands have evolved somewhat differently from the First World kin that exiled them, becoming more cruel and less mischievous than is typical for their kind.

ETHER SPRITE

The excitable sprites of the Ether Court prefer to frolic, drink, insult each other, and perform improv comedy.

ETHER SPRITE

CREATURE -1

N **TINY** **FEY**

Perception +5

Skills Acrobatics +4, Diplomacy +4, Performance +6, Stealth +4, Thievery +4

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

Items rapier

Natural Glow (light, primal) An ether sprite sheds light as a torch. The sprite can suppress this glow by spending a single action with the concentrate trait.

AC 14; **Fort** +1, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3

HP 8; **Weaknesses** cold iron 1

Speed 10 feet, fly 40 feet

Melee ✦ rapier +6 (deadly d8, disarm, finesse, magical), **Damage** 1d6-2 piercing

Ranged ✦ luminous spark +6 (fire, light, magical, range 20 feet), **Damage** 1d4 fire

Hilarious Insult ✦ (auditory, emotion, linguistic, mental) The ether sprite taunts a creature within 30 feet and rolls Performance against the target's Will DC. On a success, the target is confused until the end of their next turn.

ETHER SPRITE SWARM

One ether sprite is quite enough for most, and can be tiresome for even the fey. When a group of them get together, it's outright bedlam.

ETHER SPRITE SWARM

CREATURE 3

N **LARGE** **FEY** **SWARM**

Perception +9; low-light vision

Skills Acrobatics +9, Diplomacy +9, Performance +11, Stealth +9, Thievery +9

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

AC 19; **Fort** +5, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7

HP 32; **Immunities** precision, swarm mind; **Weaknesses** area damage 6, cold iron 3, splash damage 3; **Resistances** bludgeoning 3, piercing 5, slashing 5

Rowdy Clamor (auditory, aura) 20 feet. The sprite swarm creates a din by laughing, taunting, and insulting nearby creatures. Creatures in the area are deafened.

Speed 10 feet, fly 40 feet

Luminous Pattern ✦✦ The sprites glow brightly, flying in a shifting pattern of light. All creatures within 20 feet become dazzled for 1 minute (DC 16 Will negates).

Spark Bombardment ✦ The sprites hurl luminous sparks at a creature within 20 feet dealing 5d4 fire damage (DC 20 basic Reflex save).

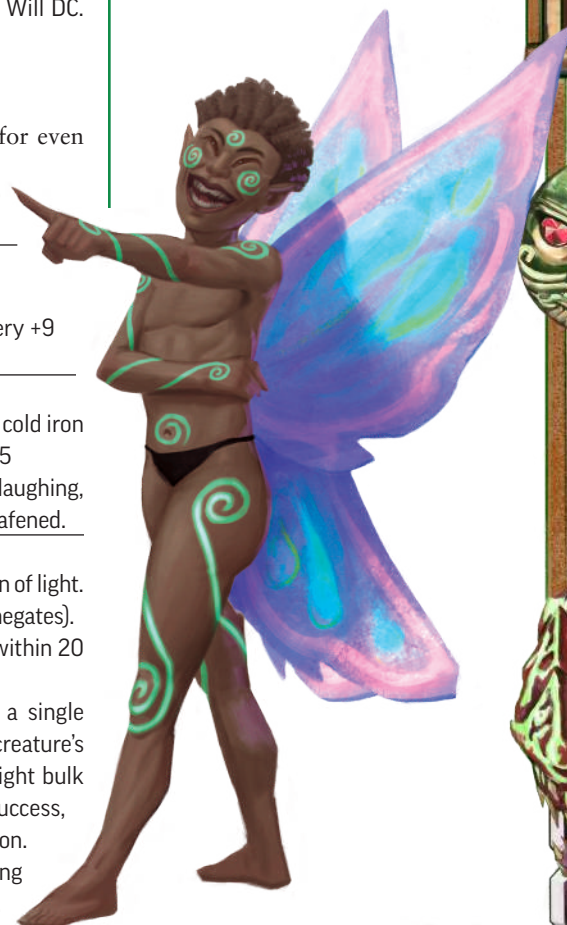
Swarm Steal ✦✦ The sprites rummage through the possessions of a single creature within its space, attempting a Thievery check against the creature's Reflex DC. On a success, the sprites take one item of negligible or light bulk that the creature is carrying but not holding or readied. On a critical success, the item can be one that is held or readied, such as a weapon or potion.

Swarming Needles ✦ The sprites numerous rapiers deal 2d6 piercing damage to each enemy in the swarm's space (DC 20 basic Reflex save).



SPRITE COLLECTIONS

Ether sprites have a reputation for being thieves. In truth, they're generally curious about the world and simply have a tendency to walk away with objects that don't belong to them, not understanding the concept of ownership. As a result, ether sprites tend to have small interesting objects in their possession, such as talismans or gemstones.



Next Month

HEAVY IS THE CROWN

by Jessica Catalan

To preserve Taargick's tomb and save a dwarven city, the adventurers must infiltrate, splinter, and sabotage the gathering legion. Only in the midsts of this chaos can they catch up to their rival at the tomb itself.

RETURN TO THE DARKLANDS

Explore the depths of the Darklands in this overview of the Darklands' dangers and inhabitants.

FELGUNN

Learn more about the fabled dwarven realm and explore its vibrant and eclectic current inhabitants.

ADVENTURE TOOLBOX AND MORE!

The Sky King's Tomb Adventure Path concludes! This volume's toolbox contains new rules and dangerous monsters for your party to face. Don't miss out on a single Adventure Path volume—visit paizo.com/pathfinder and subscribe today!

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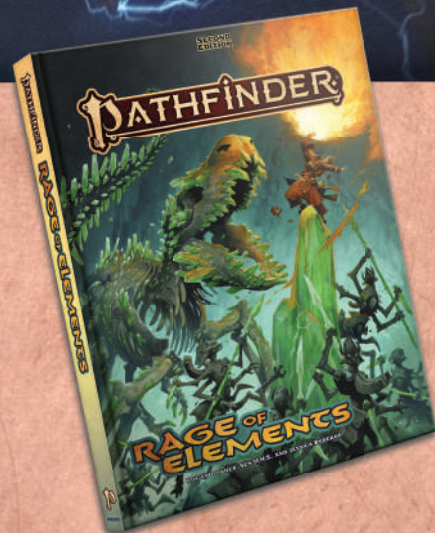
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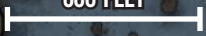
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