

SECOND EDITION

# PATHFINDER®



## Triumph of the Tusk

ADVENTURE PATH

### Destroyer's Doom

By Kendra Leigh Speedling



# Belkzen

50 MILES

Realm of the Mammoth Lords

Sarkoris Scar

New Thassilon

Dirt Sea

• WYVERNSTING

Tusk Mountains

Keening Hills

Kodar Mountains

Ustalav

• GENOTAPH

• BLISTERWELL

TORRENTMOOT •

Varisia

• URGIR

Mindspin Mountains

The Gravelands





# PATHFINDER

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# Destroyer's Doom

## Chapter 1: The Gathering Storm.....4

Ardax the White-Hair has gathered a coalition army to march against the orcs who betrayed Belkzen—and along the way, he plans to subdue one of the dreaded ancestor storms with the PCs' help! Afterward, the PCs must infiltrate the enemy capital of Wyvernsting. But to get there, they'll need to secure the Drowning Sand Hold's aid in crossing the Dirt Sea.

## Chapter 2: Under the Wyvern's Eye ..... 24

The PCs may have slipped inside Wyvernsting from its undefended docks, but they're now enemy spies operating in a hostile city preparing for a siege. While undercover, the PCs must undermine Wyvernsting's defenses by collaborating with sympathizers, dredging up secrets, and engaging in some good old-fashioned skullduggery. They'd better hurry—Ardax's army is already marching north, trusting that the PCs have succeeded.

## Chapter 3: Whispers of Death..... 46

A terrible omen interrupts the victory at Wyvernsting: the ancestor storm swiftly flying eastward into the Tusk Mountains as if called by an unseen master. Sensing great danger on the horizon, Ardax sends the PCs into the mountains to track the ancestor storms back to their source: a fallen god who once protected Belkzen.

## FAVORED OF NEW GODS?

The Godsrain dramatically changed Belkzen's pantheon, with a host of orcs stepping up to challenge and replace old gods (see pages 74–79). These new deities' faiths have few followers, yet this Adventure Path's events provide many opportunities for the rising pantheon to make its presence known—through divine intercession. As the PCs fight for Belkzen's future and impress specific deities through their actions, consider awarding them divine boons; more information about intercessions like boons appears on page 33 of *Pathfinder Divine Mysteries*. The following can inspire specific boons.

**Grask Uldeth:** The PC exhibits extraordinary charisma in the eyes of nearby orcs. Enemy orcs might kneel in awe or even join the PCs.

**Jukha:** The PC's allies follow their orders flawlessly and with uncanny coordination. The PC can temporarily communicate with megafauna.

**Mahja Firehair:** Divine fire bursts from the PC's eyes, mouth, and hair, burning away toxins and hostile magic. The PC's rebuke against cruel traditions causes orcs to cringe with shame and repentance.

**Uirch:** The PC's weapon or shield shelters nearby creatures from harm. Once, when the PC rolls a critical failure on a Will save, they get a success instead.

**Vulgren:** The PC's weapon repairs itself in a blur of whirring gears that add slashing damage to their Strikes. The PC's Strike or spell is thunderous, deafening, and frightens onlookers—especially undead.

## ADVANCEMENT TRACK

“Destroyer's Doom” is designed for four 9th-level characters.

- 9** The characters begin this adventure at 9th level.
- 10** The characters should be 10th level before beginning Chapter 2.
- 11** The characters should be 11th level before beginning Chapter 3.
- 12** The characters should be 12th level at the end of the campaign.

The PCs should reach 12th level by the time they complete the adventure.





## Chapter 1: The Gathering Storm

After taking charge to protect themselves and their fellow dignitaries when the Torrentmoot was cut short by invading undead, the PCs have earned positions as Ardash's trusted agents. In the course of their adventures they've helped stabilize Empty Hand's coalition, calmed an ancestor storm, and discovered the Unbroken Horn Hold has allied with the Whispering Tyrant. They also learned the presumed-slain orc deity Zagresh is somehow involved in the undead uprisings, and in their journey to Shoanti lands they gained new allies against this growing threat. Ardash's alliance is growing in strength, but Tar-Baphon's forces haven't been idle either: two key figures in Belkzen are aiding the Whispering Tyrant's schemes.

Not long after the assassination of Grask Uldeth, the Unbroken Horn Hold went through its own change of leadership. Chief **Hundux**, the long-standing leader of the Unbroken Horn, was overthrown in a coup led by an ambitious warrior named **Paskis Nine-Knives** (ruthless female orc rogue). Though Hundux always planned to conquer Urgir, the rebels grew impatient with his methodical approach which led to Paskis easily organizing her fellow disgruntled orcs against him. Paskis intended to march on Urgir at once, but the War of Immortals disrupted her plans. Toward the end of the war, Paskis's patron deity, Verex, was corrupted by Rovagug, preventing her from taking advantage of the upheaval. She knows she has limited time before Unbroken Horn loses patience with her as well.



When the Whispering Tyrant's agents reached out to her, Paskis saw an opportunity. She has no loyalty to Tar-Baphon, but views their bargain as her best chance at taking Urgir—and Belkzen—for herself. Unbroken Horn and Tar-Baphon's forces plan a two-pronged attack: Tar-Baphon's undead hordes will weaken the Empty Hand while Paskis unites other holds to overthrow Ardax's exhausted army. Once the conquest is complete, Tar-Baphon intends for Paskis to surrender Belkzen to him, keeping her as a puppet general. While Paskis is well aware the lich views her as a pawn, she's confident she can betray Tar-Baphon and keep power for herself.

Meanwhile Zagresh, a tattered remnant of his former self, plots in the northern Tusk Mountains. After being nearly destroyed by Grask Uldeth from beyond the grave, the remains of Zagresh's spirit fled to his worshippers in the Death Tower Hold. The hold's high priest **Ungukk Fleshdredge** (inscrutable male orc bones oracle) performed a powerful but costly ritual to bind Zagresh into a two-headed flesh construct he'd created known as the Carcass Man, a process which drained much of Ungukk's own spiritual power. Zagresh, seething at his downfall, is determined to restore his lost divinity.

Sensing Zagresh's return, Tar-Baphon contacted him, plying him with false condolences and promising aid if Zagresh and his followers allied with him. To that end, Zagresh and Death Tower helped Tar-Baphon channel necromantic power across Belkzen, commanding the resulting undead on his behalf. After he regains his divinity, Zagresh plans to end the partnership. Tar-Baphon, however, intends to consume Zagresh's remaining deific essence once his usefulness has run out, advancing his own plans for divinity.

## RETURN TO URGIR

With Ardax's forces ready to take the offensive, the PCs return to Urgir as the alliance prepares to march on Wyvernsting. They have a week of downtime before the war council to shop, check in with NPC allies, and perform other downtime activities. During this time, the PCs should get the sense that their status in Urgir has shifted. Before, they were viewed as coddled diplomats whose aid was considered with skepticism; now, they've proven their capabilities and are greeted with respect. Civilians might hustle for a glimpse of them, shopkeepers might offer discounts, warriors may wish to train with them, and NPC allies may seek them out for advice.

As the week comes to an end, the air thickens with tension as civilians worry about war and factions prepare for the council. PCs Gathering Information in

Urgir or otherwise interacting with its populace might hear the following rumors.

### URGIR GOSSIP

1d4	Description
1	"A team from Bloodied Gauntlet liberated a village near Skull Hill and slew the dullahan that had conquered it. I hear they're headed here for the war council."
2	"Just got a new shipment of weapons from Blisterwell. Glad they're our allies; those blades hold an edge like no other."
3	"Another of those storms swirled up over the Flood Road to the north, took out a whole supply caravan. The survivors said the ghosts were screaming that 'the Umbra will grind you to dust.'"
4	"Death Tower skirmishers and their skeletons keep popping out of the mountains to attack, but so far, we've crushed them every time."

### Event 1: A "Friendly" Challenge

On the fifth day of the PCs' downtime, they encounter four of Ardax's elite agents from the Bloodied Gauntlet Hold, led by a woman named **Nakasha** (swaggering female orc pugilist). If the PCs heard the rumor about a Bloodied Gauntlet team slaying a dullahan, they recognize the group as that same team.

Reeling from the death of Gorum, their hold's former patron deity, Nakasha and her friends have suffered some pointed jabs from those of other holds about his assassination. They resent the PCs—at least some of whom are likely outsiders to Belkzen—for attaining their peers' respect and are spoiling for a fight. Upon spotting the PCs, they seize upon the opportunity to confront them. Read or paraphrase the following.

Urgir's streets are bustling with activity and the tension of impending battle is in the air. The crowd parts around four sauntering orcs, all with two swathes of red tattooed across each cheekbone. Passersby murmur as they pass, giving them a wide berth.

"Got some time before the war council," says the woman leading the group, a muscular warrior with piercings along her ears. "Should resupply while we're here; I'm sure Ardax will have another mission for us soon. Hopefully they don't give all the good ones to the scrubs."

The group grunts derisively. The leader's judgmental eyes graze over and she abruptly shouts, "Aren't you those little adventuring diplomats? What are you looking at? You think you're strong enough to take on an orc of the Bloodied Gauntlet? Come on, we've got time to kill. Show us what you've got!"



**The Duels:** The group challenges the PCs to a contest of strength and endurance, choosing two from each party to face off one-on-one. Each set of combatants will engage in a one-on-one brawl while standing on hot coals, a traditional dueling method of Bloodied Gauntlet. These combats use the dueling rules (GM Core 202), with both occurring simultaneously. If the PCs try to talk the challengers down, they become even more riled, accusing the PCs of being cowards. The ring for this encounter is a square fighting pit, 20 by 20 feet.

The Bloodied Gauntlets don't want to kill the PCs, just take them down a notch, so damage dealt during the fight is required to be nonlethal. If the PCs attack with lethal force, however, they respond in kind. In this case, the fight is broken up by some of Ardax's lieutenants and the PCs take a -4 penalty to Influence checks during the war council, as the alliance members disapprove of the PCs trying to kill valuable allies.

The duels last until one of the two participants either yields or is knocked out by being reduced to 0 HP. Only melee Strikes and Athletics checks to Disarm, Grapple, Shove, or Trip are allowed. While most duels prohibit outside interference, the following reactions can be taken by non-participants; one non-competing Bloodied Gauntlet orc uses Fighting Spirit on an allied duelist each turn (both use the orc spinecracker statistics on page 88).

### FIGHTING SPIRIT

AUDITORY MENTAL

**Trigger** An ally participating in a duel attempts a melee Strike or Athletics check.

**Requirements** You aren't participating in the duel.

You rile your ally up for combat. You attempt a DC 26 Intimidation or Performance check; on a success, your ally gains a +1 circumstance bonus to melee Strikes and Athletics checks until the end of their turn (+2 on a critical success).

### WATCH OUT!

AUDITORY MENTAL

**Trigger** An ally participating in a duel attempts a check for initiative.

**Requirements** You aren't participating in the duel.

You call a warning to your ally about their opponent's movements. You attempt a DC 26 Perception check; on a success, your ally gains a +1 circumstance bonus to the triggering initiative check (+2 on a critical success).

**Hazard:** The combatants stand on hot coals during the duel, giving the challenge additional heat! Each combatant must attempt a DC 26 Acrobatics check to dance over the coals or a DC 23 Fortitude save to

withstand the heat at the beginning of their turn. On a failure, a creature takes 3d6 fire damage and must attempt a DC 23 Reflex save.

**Success** The creature is unaffected.

**Failure** The creature is clumsy 1 for 1 minute as their feet begin burning.

**Critical Failure** As failure, but the creature is clumsy 2.

If a creature's clumsy value reaches 5, they can no longer maneuver effectively and must forfeit. Creatures who use magical protections against fire, equipment preventing fire damage, or fly to avoid the coals also forfeit, though natural resistances aren't a disqualifier.

A creature who falls prone takes an additional 3d6 fire damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save). On a critical failure, the creature takes 1d6 persistent fire damage.

**Creatures:** Nakasha challenges the PC with the highest Strength, while the other combatant PC fights one of her companions, **Tregath**. Both are stubborn and continue the match until knocked out.

### TREGATH

### CREATURE 7

Male orc spinecracker (page 88)

**Initiative** Deception or Intimidation +14

### NAKASHA

### CREATURE 8

UNIQUE MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

**Perception** +11; darkvision

**Languages** Common, Orcish

**Skills** Acrobatics +16, Athletics +18, Deception +15, Gorum Lore +11, Intimidation +15

**Str** +6, **Dex** +4, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** 1, **Cha** +3

**Items** +1 striking handwraps of mighty blows, hide armor

**AC** 26; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +16, **Will** +11

**HP** 135

**Ferocity**

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** ♦ fist +19 (agile, finesse, nonlethal), **Damage** 2d10+6 bludgeoning

**Melee** ♦ iron sweep +19 (agile, finesse, nonlethal), **Damage** 3d8+6 bludgeoning

**Flurry of Blows** ♦ (flourish) Nakasha makes two unarmed Strikes. If both hit the same creature, combine their damage for the purpose of resistances and weaknesses.

**Flurry of Maneuvers** Nakasha can replace one or both of her attacks during a Flurry of Blows with Grapples, Shoves, or Trips.

**Ironblood Stance** ♦ (stance) Nakasha enters a stance of impenetrable iron. As long as she's in this stance, Nakasha can make iron sweep Strikes with her fists and gains resistance 2 to all damage.

**Powerful Fist** Nakasha's fist Strikes don't take penalties when making lethal attacks.



**Stunning Fist** (incapacitation) When Nakasha targets the same creature with two Strikes from her Flurry of Blows, she can try to stun the creature. If either Strike hits and deals damage, the target must succeed at a DC 23 Fortitude save or be stunned 1 (or stunned 3 on a critical failure).

**Proven Strength:** If at least one PC wins their duel, the Bloodied Gauntlets gain a grudging respect for the PCs and declare them worthy rivals, becoming friendly to them. If no PCs win, the Bloodied Gauntlets give them guff about being too weak for Belkzen politics and begin the war council indifferent to them. If the PCs refuse to duel, the Bloodied Gauntlets accuse them of cowardice and speak against their ideas during the war council; in this case, the PCs take a -2 circumstance penalty to influence Nakasha.

**Treasure:** If at least one PC won their duel, Nakasha unhooks a *Gorum's tear* (page 82) attached to her belt and tosses it to the victorious PC, declaring, "You've earned this." If both PCs won, she adds a pair of *armbands of athleticism*, stating they were an extra set the group had on hand.

**Reward:** For participating in the duels regardless of the results, award the PCs 80 XP.

## The War Council

The day of the war council dawns bright and sunny, and the PCs gather with the rest of Ardax's allies to plan their next move. Give the PCs time to settle in and greet those present. There are some familiar faces at the council, including the leaders of the major factions: Bravthur of the Jobbers, Kragga of the Provident, Mother Agwilend of the Reverent, and Urgurak Ironmouth of the Warmongers. Nakasha is in attendance as well, representing Ardax's strike teams.

The Shoanti also sent a representative; if the PCs gained the Lyrune-Quah ornamentation on the *sanguine klar* at the end of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #208: Hoof, Cinder, and Storm*, the representative is Tsiwak Eclipse Rider. If the PCs gained the Sklar-Quah ornamentation, the representative is Otehika Cinder Eater, who waves at the PCs with a cheeky grin.

When the council begins, read or paraphrase the following.

Within the Great Palace of Urgir, the council attendees gather in Ardax's war room, seating themselves around a large table. Empty Hand banners hang from the walls, though the banners of other allied holds have been added beside them. At the center of the table is a three-dimensional terrain map of Belkzen, with miniature troops arrayed upon it.

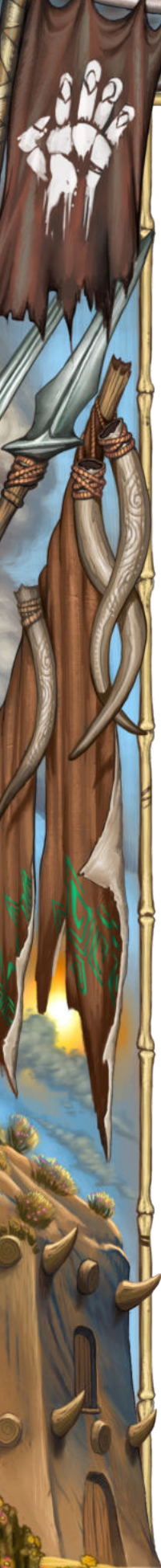
Ardax stands before the table, one brawny fist resting on the top of his chair. The murmur of conversation halts when he clears his throat, as those present turn their attention to him.

"Friends," he says, his voice rumbling through the room. "You all know why we're here. Unbroken Horn has turned its back on Belkzen, treating with the one who used our ancestors as battle fodder, and the undead continue to plague our lands. We *will* crush these foes, but to do so, we need to coordinate our strategy. I ask you all to lend your skills."

**War Plans:** Ardax believes it's now or never for the alliance to march on Wyvernsting to defeat Unbroken Horn and deprive Tar-Baphon of an ally. The flood months are dwindling, and time is running short to resolve the conflict before the holds lose their window







to hunt in preparation for the year's lean times. Furthermore, Ardax's command of the alliance is still uncertain; if he doesn't act soon, the fractious holds will splinter, returning to their territories to look to their own people.

Unfortunately, Wyvernsting is notoriously difficult to besiege and there's no easy way to move an army north. Most of the Flood Road is underwater and the dry areas are both haunted by an ancestor storm nicknamed Umbra's Last Stand and patrolled by enemy skirmishers. Accounting for these factors, Ardax has hatched a plan: first, the ancestor storm must be dispatched of by a mixed team of ritualists and warriors. Meanwhile, saboteurs will infiltrate Wyvernsting, weakening the city for the army's arrival. Once the groundwork is laid, Ardax will lead the army to Wyvernsting to crush the traitors.

**Two Routes:** The council agrees with the overall strategy, but there are a few details to work out. There are two branches of the Flood Road the army could take; the most direct route is to the west, between the main road and the Kodar Mountains, which would reach Wyvernsting sooner. However, the army would be more exposed on the wider road and pass through the site of the Battle of Screaming Tree, a haunted place full of suffering. The more cautious but longer route is to the east, circling past the Firewatch Peaks before tacking northwest to Wyvernsting.

Ardax favors the eastern route, believing it's better not to risk losing troops before the battle even begins as well as giving the infiltration teams more time to do their work. Urgurak disagrees, declaring that Unbroken Horn must be destroyed before they bolster their forces and implying the cautious route is cowardly. The council soon falls to arguing and Ardax asks the PCs to help him sway them to his plan.

Initially the other three faction leaders agree with Urgurak while the Shoanti representative agrees with Ardax. If Nakasha is friendly to the PCs, she also agrees with Ardax; otherwise, she begins on Urgurak's side.

**Influencing the Council:** During the war council, the army's route is put to a vote after a debate, requiring 5 of the 7 council members to concur on a plan. This debate uses the influence subsystem (GM Core 187). The PCs have 6 10-minute rounds to win enough votes to back Ardax's plan. If the PCs are on good terms with a faction leader, such as by supporting their ideas in the prior war council, they get a +1 status bonus on Influence checks against them. However, they take a -1 penalty to influence leaders they previously opposed or offended. The faction leaders, plus Nakasha, are detailed below.

## BRAVTHUR

LEVEL 9

MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

**Perception** +20

**Will** +18

**Discovery** DC 21 Mercantile Lore, DC 26 Perception, DC 24 Society

**Influence Skills** DC 21 Architecture Lore (to detail Wyvernsting's defenses), DC 24 Diplomacy, DC 24 Society (to emphasize the infiltration preparations' importance), DC 26 Intimidation, DC 28 Deception

**Influence 4:** Bravthur tells the PCs he'll think the matter over and eventually votes in favor of Ardax's plan.

**Influence 6:** Bravthur is impressed by the PCs and gifts them a gold necklace set with rubies worth 350 gp when the council adjourns.

**Concerns** Though Bravthur believes Urgurak's strategy is risky, he feels a quicker strike offers the best opportunity to capture Wyvernsting with its businesses and infrastructure intact, as the faster the army moves, the less likely Unbroken Horn will spot their approach.

**Resistances** Bravthur is aware his mercantile leanings are less popular among orc traditionalists, and those who dismiss the value of trade or question his strength increase the check's DC by 2.

**Weaknesses** Bravthur's fond of elven jewelry, and any admiration of his adornments or expression of similar interests decreases the check's DC by 2.

**Personality** amiable, chatty, confident

## KRAGGA

LEVEL 9

MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

**Perception** +21

**Will** +19

**Discovery** DC 21 Hunting Lore, DC 26 Perception, DC 24 Society

**Influence Skills** DC 21 Hunting Lore or DC 24 Nature (to emphasize the eastern route's terrain advantages), DC 24 Diplomacy, DC 28 Deception or Intimidation

**Influence 4:** Kragga indicates she'll mull things over and ultimately votes in favor of Ardax's plan.

**Influence 6:** Kragga tells the PCs they have her vote and gifts them four doses of *greater camouflage dye* (Pathfinder Treasure Vault 52) once the council adjourns.

**Concerns** While Kragga appreciates Ardax's skills, she's concerned that the Empty Hand is gaining too much influence over the other holds and hopes to support some healthy opposition to maintain a balance of power.

**Resistances** Kragga is allied with Ardax but views herself as a representative of the Provident first and foremost. Any appeals to loyalty to Ardax increase the check's DC by 2.

**Weaknesses** Kragga often speaks in folk wisdom or parables; those who use similar tactics decrease the check's DC by 2.

**Personality** down-to-earth, folksy, practical



## MOTHER AGWILEND

LEVEL 9

MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

Perception +23

Will +22

**Discovery Skills** DC 21 Orc Pantheon Lore, DC 26 Perception, DC 24 Religion

**Influence Skills** DC 21 Orc Pantheon Lore or DC 24 Religion (to appeal to Drethan religious principles), DC 24 Occultism (to detail the threats along the other route), DC 26 Diplomacy, DC 31 Deception or Intimidation

**Influence 4:** Mother Agwilend indicates she'll consider the PCs' words and votes in favor of Ardax's plan.

**Influence 6:** Mother Agwilend is impressed by the PCs, telling them they have her vote in addition to gifting them a *moderate healer's gel* (*Secrets of Magic* 168) after the council.

**Concerns** Mother Agwilend would normally favor the cautious route, but is concerned about the state of the Drethan temple in Wyvernsting as its high priestess was a known associate of Hundux.

**Resistances** As the former high priestess of Dretha, Mother Agwilend is a spiritual guide for Urgir, and those who seem impatient with her rhetorical questions increase the check's DC by 2.

**Weaknesses** Mother Agwilend's main worry is the safety of the Drethan temple in Wyvernsting, and those who assuage these concerns decrease the check's DC by 2.

**Personality** gentle, matronly, wise

## NAKASHA

LEVEL 9

MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

Perception +11

Will +11

**Discovery Skills** DC 21 Orc Pantheon Lore, DC 26 Perception, DC 24 Society

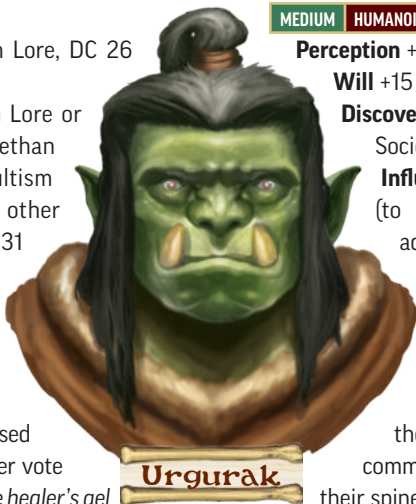
**Influence Skills** DC 21 Scouting Lore (to emphasize the value of extra time to investigate Wyvernsting), DC 24 Athletics (to settle the matter with an arm-wrestling bet), DC 26 Deception or Diplomacy, DC 28 Intimidation

**Influence 4:** Nakasha claps a PC on the shoulder and tells them they have her vote.

**Concerns** Nakasha's impulsive and keen on anything that'll get her into the fray sooner.

**Resistances** Still shocked by Gorum's death, Nakasha doesn't appreciate people bringing up her former deity. Doing so increases the check's DC by 2.

**Weaknesses** A PC who beat Nakasha in their duel decreases all influence checks' DCs by 2, as she respects their strength.



Urgurak

**Personality** brash, enthusiastic, temperamental

## URGURAK IRONMOUTH

LEVEL 9

MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

Perception +16

Will +15

**Discovery Skills** DC 24 Perception, DC 24 Society, DC 21 Warfare Lore

**Influence Skills** DC 23 Warfare Lore (to convince him of the route's tactical advantages), DC 26 Religion (to appeal to Gorumite principles of approaching a battle at full strength), DC 28 Deception or Intimidation, DC 33 Diplomacy

**Influence 4:** Urgurak chuckles at the PCs' attempts to win him over, commenting that at least they've got steel in their spines.

**Influence 6:** Urgurak respects the PCs' tenacity and gifts them a +1 *striking wounding bastard sword* after the council.

**Influence 8:** Urgurak begrudgingly admits the PCs might have a point and withdraws his opposing vote during the final tally.

**Concerns** Urgurak's main goal is crushing Unbroken Horn as soon as possible.

**Resistances** Urgurak knows how to spot flattery, often wielding it himself, and such attempts increase the check's DC by 2.

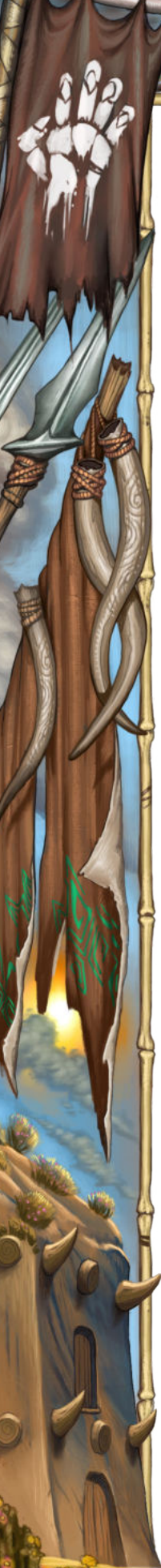
**Weaknesses** Urgurak initially reacts to direct challenges of his words with an ominous scowl, but if his challenger doesn't back down, he laughs, appreciating their courage. This decreases the check's DC by 2.

**Personality** bellicose, impatient, witty

**Outcome:** If the council votes for Ardax's route, the agents sent to Wyvernsting will have more time to prepare for the army and conduct sabotage missions, giving them an edge in sieging the city. If the vote goes for the faster, more exposed route, the slightly weakened army arrives faster and has the element of surprise, but any sabotage missions to weaken the city are hampered by time constraints.

**The PCs' Role:** Once the army's route is decided, Ardax briefs the PCs on their mission. Given their experience dealing with ancestor storms, he wants them to gain control over the one on the Flood Road. Then, they'll bear west of the main contingent and meet with the Drowning Sand Hold at their main encampment, Drowned Flotilla, to gain their aid in crossing the Dirt Sea. Drowning Sand loathes the Wingripper Hold, Unbroken Horn's allies, so





Ardax believes they'll side with him. Since the floods began however, Drowning Sand has been out of contact. Ardax hopes they'll join the assault and help transport the army. Once the PCs have secured Drowning Sand's assistance, he wants them to head to Wyvernsting as an infiltration team, meeting up with the team already there.

**Treasure:** If the PCs successfully champion Ardax's route during the council, he gifts them a *greater choker of elocution* that bears characters in Fey, Jotun, and Orcish. The choker is also enchanted to display Ardax's sigil when the command word of the wearer's choice is spoken, proving their status as one of his agents.

**Reward:** For participating in the war council and advocating for Ardax's plan, the PCs earn 80 XP.

## BREAKING UMBRA'S LAST STAND

Through compiling reports about the ancestor storm's traits and input from the Shoanti representative, it is believed that this ancestor storm can be stopped through a combination of rituals and shows of strength. To subdue Umbra's Last Stand, the PCs must navigate to its center and challenge manifestations of the storm's rage until the storm has calmed enough for them to take control.

The PCs are assigned a group of noncombatant ritualists who will accompany them on this mission. A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Orc Lore or DC 30 Society check recalls the following, or a ritualist can explain the history of the battlefield: The Umbra Legion was one of the armies pressed into service by the Whispering Tyrant to battle the Shining Crusade. They were led by Yagrekash, a powerful devotee of Zagresh.

When the Umbra was commanded to hold down Fort Whiteskull near Seraph's Ladder against a far superior force, Yagrekash knew the legion had no chance of survival. Still, the Umbra cut the enemy army down to nearly a quarter of its strength before the last orc fell. The fall of the Umbra Legion led to numerous orc battalions turning against Tar-Baphon and abandoning him en masse, seeing how little he valued their lives even when they were devoted to his will. Now the remnants of these fallen Umbra warriors who gave their all to an undeserving tyrant have coalesced into an ancestor storm that rages against all in its path, still convinced it's fighting a long-ended battle to defend the fort.

Encounters within the ancestor storm take place on open plains; use a map of your own design or a Flip-Mat with relevant terrain. When the PCs enter the area of the storm, read or paraphrase the following.

A cold fog rolls across the fields, the sky darkening along its path. Sounds of battle rise from the storm and the sun is blotted out by dangerous thunderclouds in unusual shades of black, green, and purple. The swirling mists quickly form into the outline of a ghostly legion of orcs a thousand strong. Howling furiously, the orcs charge forward to clash against a sea of unearthly figures that appear to be made of light shaped into knights clad in white and gold armor.

"The Umbra Legion will see you to a gruesome end, invaders!" screams the orc leading the charge, a muscular woman astride a black warhorse. Tattoos of skulls and severed heads wind along her bare arms and a symbol of Zagresh is etched into her greatclub. "For every drop of blood you've spilled in our lands, you'll pay with oceans of your own! Die, in the name of the Destroyer!"

**History:** Any PC trained or better in Society recognizes the armor on the knights made of light as that of the Knights of Ozem, meaning this battle occurred centuries ago during the Shining Crusade.

**Hazard:** Entering the battlefield where the Umbra Legion fell activates the army of mist, an outer layer of the ancestor storm that treats intruders as an enemy force. The haunt's routine takes the shape of a rushing group of enemy orcs barraging the PCs with pummeling attacks made of hail and ice.

### ARMY OF MIST

### HAZARD 9

UNIQUE COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL HAUNT OCCULT

**Stealth** +20 (expert) or *detect magic*

**Description** The wind intensifies and the seeping fog rushes forward in a stampede of ghostly orcs screaming wordless battle cries, weapons raised to slaughter their foes.

**Disable** DC 28 (expert) Occultism to funnel the magic powering the mist back into itself, or DC 30 (expert) Religion to exorcise some of the trapped souls and weaken the storm; three total successes in any combination are required to disable the haunt

**Battle Roar** 🗨 (auditory, sonic); **Trigger** A creature enters the haunt's area; **Effect** The orc warriors roar in fury, dealing 2d10+13 sonic damage (DC 28 basic Fortitude save) to all living creatures within the haunt, then rolls initiative. Creatures that critically fail their saves are frightened 1 until Umbra's Last Stand is quelled.

**Routine** (3 actions) The army of mist uses 3 actions to make frozen fists Strikes against three random creatures, favoring non-orcs or anyone who attempted to Disable it within the past round.

**Ranged** frozen fists +21 (cold, range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 2d10 bludgeoning plus 11 cold

**Reset** The haunt deactivates 1 minute after all creatures leave the area of Fort Whiteskull but resets immediately.



The army of mist resets 1 day after being disabled if the ancestor storm isn't put to rest.

## Reaching the Eye

Low 9

Once the hazard has been disabled, the army continues to battle its ghostly foes but ignores the PCs. The ritualists need to reach the eye of the storm in order to perform their ritual, but must contend with the fervor and chaos of ghostly combat delaying their journey. Read or paraphrase the following.

As the cries of battle drown out the rest of the world, a twisted shape emerges among the clashing foes. The tattooed woman walks forward and bows curtly to the magical projection of a gaunt undead figure with a horned helmet and burning red eyes.

"Hold the fort, Commander Yagrekash," the figure says in an echoing voice, arrogantly pointing a gnarled finger at the commander. "Give no ground."

"The Umbra Legion will fight to the last," Yagrekash growls, "but we can't hold against so many without reinforcements. Send more troops, or the fort will be lost."

The lich waves a dismissive hand. "If you can't hold it, you can slow them down." With that, he disappears. Yagrekash clenches her fists and stares at the empty air for a long, hard moment before turning to join the battle with a bloodcurdling cry of rage.

This encounter uses the Victory Point system (GM Core 184) for PCs to navigate the storm while avoiding the dangers of the battle. Each obstacle has a threshold of Traversal Points required to overcome it. Actions are made in phases, where each PC can attempt a check to earn Traversal Points. If their TP total equals or exceeds the threshold of the obstacle, they overcome the issue and continue on.

**History:** Any PC trained or better in Religion recognizes the undead figure who gave Yagrekash orders as Tar-Baphon.

**Environment:** The din of battle in Umbra's Last Stand is near-deafening, imparting a -2 circumstance penalty on Perception checks involving sound within the ancestor storm.

## INDISTINGUISHABLE HORDE

OBSTACLE 9

**Traversal Points 4; Overcome** DC 26 Survival or DC 28 Perception to determine a path through the battle.

The two armies clash in a cacophony of screams and clashing weapons, the throng of combatants so entangled that it's nearly impossible to move through them.

**Special** On a failure, the PC takes a -1 circumstance penalty to any checks to overcome the next obstacle.

## VIOLENT WAVE

OBSTACLE 9

**Traversal Points 4; Overcome** DC 26 Acrobatics to go with the flow of the charge, DC 28 Fortitude to physically resist harm.

The horde of raging orc soldiers rushes forward in a frenzied surge, threatening to trample anything in its path.

**Special** On a failure, the PC takes 2d10 bludgeoning damage.

## HOLY MISSION

OBSTACLE 9

**Traversal Points 4; Overcome** DC 26 Diplomacy to convince the spirits the ritual will harm Tar-Baphon, DC 28 Religion to soothe the spirits.

A squad of devout knights strides forward with their weapons at the ready, determined to slay the servants of their sworn enemy.

## CLEAR THE PATH

OBSTACLE 9

**Traversal Points 4; Overcome** DC 26 Athletics to push through, DC 28 Intimidate to order the soldiers away.

A large knot of soldiers clusters together in clumsy formation as they barrel through the enemy, blocking the way forward.

**Hazard:** When the PCs critically fail an attempt to pass an obstacle, Yagrekash appears before them believing they're soldiers under her command. She attempts to compel the PCs to join the battle against the crusaders, delaying their progress.

## TYRANT'S ORDERS


HAZARD 10

HAUNT OCCULT

**Stealth** +20 (expert) or *detect magic*

**Description** Yagrekash appears to berate weak soldiers for not doing their part.

**Disable** DC 28 (expert) Deception or Performance to feign joining the fray, or DC 30 (master) Religion to ward Yagrekash away; three total successes in any combination are required to disable the haunt

**Command of the Legion**  **Trigger** A PC critically fails a skill check to navigate the ancestor storm; **Effect** Yagrekash barks orders at the PCs to join the battle. All PCs must attempt a DC 27 Will save; orc and dromaar PCs take a -1 penalty.

**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected.

**Success** The creature is frightened 1 for 1 minute.

**Failure** The creature is compelled to join the Umbra Legion in battle, taking 2d12+13 mental damage.

**Critical Failure** As failure, but the damage is doubled.

**Reset** The haunt deactivates 1 minute after all creatures leave the area of Fort Whiteskull but resets immediately. Tyrant's orders resets 1 day after being disabled if the ancestor storm isn't put to rest.



**Finding the Eye:** The storm's center is marked by the crumbled remains of the doomed fortress once defended by the Umbra Legion. When the party reaches the eye, the battle parts around them as if the ruins are surrounded by an invisible barrier, allowing the Empty Hand ritualists to begin the ritual.

### Summoning the Umbra **Moderate 9**

In the relative peace of the eye of the storm, the ritualists are able to summon the first manifestations of the ancestor storm that the PCs must defeat. Read or paraphrase the following.

The ritualists spread herbs and draw lines of chalk in intricate patterns, chanting in rough harmony. The chant rises, merging with the clamor of battle and cries of pain from the ghostly combatants nearby. Out of the crowd of clashing soldiers emerge two large orcs armored in roiling mist. They move towards the ritual as if possessed, then immediately raise their weapons with a powerful cry.

**Creatures:** The ritual summons two graveknights as symbols of the Umbra Legion's devotion to bloodshed. Their armor is made of supernatural mist from the ancestor storm, and they wield greataxes instead of greatswords. They have little interest in the ritualists, only targeting them if there are no active combatants.

**Hazard:** The moment a creature rolls initiative to enter combat, the hateful influence of the raging storm of spirits around them attempts to infect them with an unrelenting bloodlust.

### WEAK GRAVEKNIGHTS (2)

### CREATURE 9

Monster Core 178-179

**Initiative** Perception +19

**Melee** ♦ *frost greataxe* +22 (cold, magical, sweep) **Damage** 2d12+8 slashing +1d6 cold

### UMBRA'S RAGE

### HAZARD 9

UNIQUE HAUNT

**Stealth** +20 (expert) or *detect magic*

**Description** The anger of the fallen Umbra Legion seeps into any creature entering combat.

**Disable** DC 26 Religion (expert) to exorcise the closest spirits or DC 30 Diplomacy (expert) to calm them down

**Curse of Eternal Battle** ⤿ (mental, occult) **Trigger** A creature enters combat while in Umbra's Last Stand; **Effect** The creature must attempt a DC 26 Will save as the rage of the surrounding orcs threatens to overwhelm them.

**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected.

**Success** The creature is stupefied 1 for 1 round.

**Failure** The creature is confused for 1 round.

**Critical Failure** As failure, but the creature is confused for 1 minute.

**Treasure:** When the graveknights are defeated, they disintegrate into a fine black salt; these distilled essences are useful in rituals of or against undeath and worth a total of 400 gp.

### Fury of War

### Severe 9

As the ritual reaches its peak the mists around the eye of the storm part, revealing new foes. Read or paraphrase the following.

As the ritual continues, time around the eye seems to move at a breakneck pace, speeding through the events of the past. Countless warriors fall as the battle rages on, the knights gaining ever more ground toward the fortress. The defenders fight viciously but, though corpses clad in shining armor litter the field, the orcs' numbers dwindle faster than they can slay the crusaders.

Time finally returns to its proper speed as Yagrekash fights from atop a mound of bodies, bloodied and battered.

Yagrekash



As the knights surround her, she howls in fury, bludgeoning several away before a sword finally runs her through.

"Death! Glory!" Yagrekash spits out. She turns to look at the ritual, her wounds disappearing as she raises her greatclub. Two skeletal silhouettes swoop down from above with haunting shrieks, silhouetting her with their massive wings, and she repeats with a snarl: "Death!"

**Creatures:** When the ancestor storm was created, it created an echo of Yagrekash to command her forces once more. Though this echo isn't the true Yagrekash, it shares her capabilities as well as her unbridled rage. Aiding her in the battle are two drake skeletons representing Tar-Baphon's influence when the spirits within this ancestor storm served him in life.

## DRAKE SKELETONS (2)

## CREATURE 8

Book of the Dead 148

Initiative Perception +14

## YAGREKASH

## CREATURE 10

Variant einherji (Pathfinder Bestiary 3 89)

**Perception** +17; darkvision

**Languages** Common, Orcish

**Skills** Athletics +25, Intimidation +21, Religion +18

**Str** +7, **Dex** +4, **Con** +6, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +3

**Items** +1 striking greatclub, +1 striking returning dagger

**AC** 26; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +16, **Will** +21

**HP** 175; **Resistances** piercing 10

**Ferocity** 2

**Mask of Pain** 2 (mental) **Trigger** Yagrekash succeeds at a Demoralize check; **Effect** The creature Demoralized takes 4d6 mental damage and is then temporarily immune to additional damage from Mask of Pain for 24 hours.

**Reactive Strike** 2

**Speed** 40 feet

**Melee** 2 greatclub +24 (backswing, shove), **Damage** 2d10+13 bludgeoning

**Melee** 2 fist +23 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+13 bludgeoning

**Melee** 2 dagger +24 (agile, finesse, versatile S, thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 2d4+13 piercing

**Champion Devotion Spells** DC 29, 2 Focus Points; **4th word of freedom**; **1st weapon surge**

**Challenge Foe** 2 Yagrekash challenges one creature she can see to single combat, attempting to Demoralize that target. This target remains her foe until it's defeated, it flees, or the encounter ends. Yagrekash gains a circumstance bonus to damage equal to her number of weapon damage dice against her designated foe but takes an equivalent circumstance penalty to damage against any other creature.

**Warmask of Power** (divine) Yagrekash's echo form retains her painted divine warmask dedicated to Zagresh,

allowing her to cast *sure strike* as an innate divine spell once per day.

**Treasure:** Yagrekash's body dissolves into mist when defeated, but she leaves behind an obsidian religious symbol of Zagresh worth 200 gp.

## Shouting Down the Tempest

Once the PCs defeat Yagrekash the ritual concludes, allowing them a chance to bring the storm under control. To do so, the PCs must reduce its Morale Points to 0, using the enemy Victory Points subsystem (GM Core 185). Each round until the PCs subdue the storm, they take 6d6 void damage (DC 26 basic Fortitude save) as the spirits lash out at them. Umbra's Last Stand begins at 6 Morale Points.

There are several methods of diminishing the storm's Morale Points. The PCs can attempt an attack roll against an AC of 26 to make a show of force against the encroaching spirits. Alternatively, they can attempt a DC 26 Athletics check to wrestle the spirits into submission or a DC 26 Intimidation check to demoralize them. As the Morale Point total decreases, the ghostly orcs of the legion gradually stop fighting and turn to face the PCs as though awaiting orders.

When the PCs subdue the storm, read or paraphrase the following.

As the mist dissipates, it forms into several fleeting images. The first scene shows an immense orc with skull-emblazoned armor; he's badly wounded and soon collapses, his spiked greatclub falling from his hand. A reddish wisp emerges from his body and flies off, passing over a rapidly shifting landscape as its travel takes it across Belkzen's terrain toward a distant mountain range.

The scene swirls and reforms, showing an orc priest with a skull tattooed over his face standing before a ritual circle, a two-headed figure made of stitched-together flesh restrained at its center. The priest finishes intoning his chant, and the red wisp floats into the mouth of one of the creature's heads. Its four eyes open, gleaming with reddish light as the creature snarls.

The final scene depicts the two-headed creature alone in a cavern, destroyed furniture and ceramics scattered around it. The creature growls as it paces, muttering curses under its breath. It abruptly stops in the middle of its destructive rage, tilting both of its heads to one side as an unseen voice whispers, "You wish vengeance, yes? Your power returned? Perhaps we can help one another. An alliance, like in the days of old..." The mists fade before the creature can respond, leaving only the open plains surrounding the Flood Road.





Any PC trained or better in Religion recognizes the slain orc in the first scene as Zagresh. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Society check or a DC 24 Orc Lore check identifies the priest's tattoos as those of the Death Tower Hold in eastern Belkzen. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Religion check or a DC 24 Lore check relevant to the Whispering Tyrant or Belkzen (at GM's discretion) recognizes the whispering voice as referring to Tar-Baphon's battle against the Shining Crusade, in which he conscripted many orcs.

Now that the ancestor storm is under control, the PCs can shepherd it back to Urgir and order it to await Ardax's instructions.

**Reward:** For subduing the storm, the PCs earn 80 XP.

## THE ROAD NORTH

The party returns to Urgir to report to Ardax the group's victory over the storm. While there, the PCs can take time to rest and restock supplies before moving on to their next mission. Their destination is Drowned Flotilla, an encampment about 150 miles northwest of Urgir on the edges of the Dirt Sea. Their mission is to meet with the leaders of Drowning Sand Hold and form an alliance that will help Ardax's army and its supplies travel across the treacherous Dirt Sea. Assuming the PCs make good time, the journey takes ten days as it's slower going in the swampy terrain than on the road.

The PCs and several other teams, including Nakasha's, fan out as they depart on their respective missions. Nakasha's team bids the PCs farewell, though whether this is a friendly send-off or a threat to not ruin the mission depends on how the PCs have interacted with them so far.

## On the Road

Travel along the Flood Road is mostly uneventful with the ancestor storm gone, but you can have the PCs run into some random encounters if they are lacking in XP. Use the table below to give them a random encounter by rolling 1d6 to determine what they come upon on their way to Drowned Flotilla.

### FLOOD ROAD RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Roll	Encounter	Threat
1	1 deinonychus ( <i>Monster Core</i> 69)	Trivial 9
2	4 great ironbills (page 86)	Trivial 9
3	4 wyverns ( <i>Monster Core</i> 131)	Low 9
4	2 desert drakes ( <i>Monster Core</i> 133)	Low 9
5	2 deinonychus ( <i>Monster Core</i> 69)	Moderate 9
6	2 war aurochs (page 87)	Moderate 9

**Deinonychus:** During the flood months, crocodiles and their massive cousins the deinonychus venture out from the swamps to catch nearby prey.

**Wyverns:** While wyverns aren't uncommon in the area, it's unusual for groups of them to patrol so far from their lairs. If the PCs get this as a random encounter, allow them to attempt the Recall Knowledge checks in Navigating the Swamps to realize the Wingripper Hold has likely clashed with the Drowning Sand Hold.

## NAVIGATING THE SWAMPS

The last three days of the journey require crossing the swamps surrounding the Dirt Sea. At the beginning of each of these three days, the PCs must attempt a DC 26 Survival or DC 28 Perception check to navigate the day's route. A PC who Scouts as their first exploration activity of the day can attempt a DC 26 Nature or Survival check to grant this check a +1 circumstance bonus. If the PCs fail a check to navigate, this adds an additional day to their travel time as they get lost or must reroute to avoid an enemy patrol. The PCs don't have to make further checks to navigate on these extra days, capping the number of additional days at three. At GM discretion, abilities or spells that aid travel or navigation might provide a bonus or remove the need for a check.

On their first day in the swamp, a PC who succeeds at a DC 24 Perception check spots the shadow of a wyvern flying overhead. If the PCs spot the wyvern,



they can attempt a DC 22 Society or DC 20 Orc Lore check to recall that the Wingripper Hold is known for flying wyverns into battle. Their presence this close to Drowning Sand lands likely means trouble.

#### EVENT 2: AMBUSH MODERATE 9

On the second day the PCs traverse the swamps, they reach the outskirts of the Keening Hills, a strangely verdant area compared to the surrounding terrain. Most orcs avoid the hills, since many who venture in don't return, and those who do rave about giant arthropods, eerie singing, and a black fluid leaking from the ground; a PC who succeeds at a DC 24 Nature check or DC 21 Orc Lore check knows these tales.

The PCs needn't venture into the Keening Hills proper but as they pass by, they hear a cry of pain from further ahead in the swamp. Read or paraphrase the following.

The source of the scream is apparent upon approach: an orc man menaced by the limbs of a monster lurking in the mud. Though similar to a crab in shape, the creature's head splits open into a horrific toothy maw and its four arms each have different looks. The man's longbow lies in the mud.

"Watch out!" he cries, upon noticing others approaching. "It'll lure you in too, if you're not careful! Be careful but please, help me!"

The swamp is greater difficult terrain; use the swamp map on page 14 for this encounter. The monster begins in the deeper portion of the swamp to the northeast. This section is twenty feet deep, requiring DC 20 Athletics check to Swim within it.

**Creatures:** The source of the Keening Hills' oddities is a runestone attuned to the realm of a qliphoth lord, sealed away by the Runelord Zutha after his experimentation with it resulted in the stone gushing uncontrollably with black liquid from the Outer Rifts. The antimagic fields containing the stone have weakened over the millennia, contaminating the area's groundwater with the "black water" and warping its wildlife to resemble creatures of the Outer Rifts. As a result, the planar barrier is thin within the Keening Hills, and qliphoth pass through here occasionally, drawn to the runestone.

There's only one gongorinan qliphoth attacking the orc, but this creature is a dangerous foe nevertheless. The orc, **Drasuk Snapwing** (canny male dromaar hunter), is a member of the Drowning Sand Hold. He was on a hunting expedition when he was lured by

the lurking gongorinan's eerie whimpers. Thinking the noise was someone in trouble, the man came to investigate only to be ambushed by the deceptive monster. Drasuk uses the hunter stat block (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 219) and has 45 remaining Hit Points when the PCs find him. The gongorinan has just grabbed Drasuk with a pincer, and if the PCs don't manage to distract the qliphoth by damaging it, Drasuk may be doomed. The qliphoth fights to the death.



Drasuk

#### GONGORINAN

#### CREATURE 11

Monster Core 281

Initiative Perception +20

**Drasuk's Information:** Drasuk thanks the PCs for their aid if he survives, asking what brings them here. If they indicate they're headed to meet with Drowning Sand, he laughs bitterly before explaining the situation.

As the floods began, Drowning Sand Hold was attacked by their old Wingripper foes, who overwhelmed them with aerial assaults and have taken control of Drowned Flotilla. The attack was led by Wingripper's leader, **Molog** (vicious male orc wyvern rider), who imprisoned Drowning Sand's leader, **Teyanko** (acerbic nonbinary orc warpriest) and its strongest surviving warriors to ensure the hold's compliance.

Instead of wiping Drowning Sand out, Molog has forced them to act as a supply line, ferrying equipment across the Dirt Sea under strict supervision by his wyvern riders. Drasuk suspects the Wingrippers have other backing as they seem unusually well-equipped and isn't surprised if the PCs tell him the attack was at the behest of Unbroken Horn. Drasuk explains that he and other warriors who escaped the Wingrippers are trying to fight back, although their small numbers and the hostage situation have prevented them from taking overt action. He can guide the PCs the remaining distance to Drowned Flotilla; this shortens the trip by one day if they failed an earlier check to navigate the swamp.

If Drasuk perished, the PCs can find a message on his body that summarizes the situation in the form of a report from a fellow rebel.

**Treasure:** If the PCs saved Drasuk, he gives them a *mat of resilience* and two *potions of swimming* in thanks; otherwise, they can recover these and his gear (of little value except for his +1 *composite longbow*) from his body.





## DROWNED FLOTILLA

Under Wingripper control, Drowned Flotilla has suffered a great deal. The hold's noncombatants keep their heads down, while a small band of warriors hides out in a cave near the encampment and does their best to sabotage the Wingripper forces, though they lack the numbers to challenge their tormentors on directly.

When the PCs near the encampment, read or paraphrase the following.

The scrubby trees of the swamps part, and the smell of damp earth becomes overpowering as the encampment of Drowned Flotilla comes into view. Squat buildings with thatched roofs stand upon stilts high above the flowing currents of the Dirt Sea. The various buildings are scattered around the settlement's center, intermixed with lean-tos and thick canvas tents on sturdy platforms. Wooden walkways extending between the encampment's buildings and platforms form pathways over the muddy quicksand below, crossing at strategically varying elevations to dilute the flow of traffic.

Several war banners fly atop the largest building in the center of Drowned Flotilla, each emblazoned with a wyvern. They appear to have been hastily placed and lean crookedly against the sky, casting misshapen shadows onto the world below. A wyvern in armored barding sits curled upon the roof of the tallest structure, yawning lazily.

The PCs might have advance warning about the situation from Drasuk but if not, their first glimpse of Drowned Flotilla is a clear indication this is no longer friendly territory. If they want Drowning Sand's help, they'll need to help the hold first.

### Assessing the Situation

Drowned Flotilla remains open to outsiders, so the PCs can blend in as long as they don't draw too much attention to themselves. Ferries are still running across the Dirt Sea, though the Wingrippers supervise the operations and keep the payments for themselves. The route to Wyvernsting is off-limits to all except the Wingrippers and the ferries.

If the PCs saved Drasuk, he leads them to the guerillas' hideout in a cave outside the encampment. Although the guerillas know they're no match for the Wingrippers in direct combat, some have been growing impatient and argue that if they can't retake Drowned Flotilla, they should die in battle and take as many Wingrippers with them as possible. Others, including Drasuk, have so far overruled them, arguing that sacrificing themselves for nothing would only doom the rest of the hold. With the PCs' aid, however, they stand a better chance at taking back their home.

Without Drasuk, the PCs can learn about the situation in Drowned Flotilla, including rumors of a band of guerillas fighting the Wingrippers, by Gathering Information; doing so requires a DC 26 Diplomacy or Intimidation check, as the Drowning Sand survivors are reluctant to talk to outsiders and risk attracting the Wingrippers' attention. The PCs can try again on a failure, but if they critically fail, their inquiries put the Wingrippers on alert, increasing the DCs of all subsequent Deception and Stealth checks within Drowned Flotilla by 2.

Tracking down the guerillas is more difficult, as the band has hidden itself well. Once the PCs are aware of the group, they can attempt a DC 26 Nature check to identify the caves as a likely hiding place or a DC 26 Survival check to Track. The guerillas are wary but not immediately hostile and stand down when the PCs explain their mission.

The guerillas have some suggested missions once the PCs make contact. They recommend the PCs lure away Molog first (**Mission 1**, below) before taking any overt action, and request they keep their activities within the encampment subtle until the hostages are freed (**Mission 2**, page 18). They currently have little to offer the PCs by way of reward but promise that the hold's leader, Teyanko, will gladly ally with Ardax once freed.

**Treasure:** To commemorate their alliance, the Drowning Sand guerillas gift the PCs a jug of *moderate bravo's brew*.

### MISSION 1: OLD HEROK

### MODERATE 9

A supply barge from Wyvernsting is due to arrive in Drowned Flotilla the day after the PCs learn of this mission. The guerillas suggest using this as an opportunity to lure Molog away from the encampment, dividing him from his forces. An unusual orm that Drowning Sand has dubbed Old Herok dwells in the Dirt Sea. The hold keeps him placated with offerings on their crossings. Hoping Old Herok might emerge to attack, Drowning Sand has "forgotten" to inform the Wingrippers about this. So far, Old Herok hasn't surfaced, but it's only a matter of time before he attacks a barge that dares ignore his presence. If the PCs lure Old Herok toward the supply barge, the guerillas believe the ill-tempered orm will attack it, prompting Molog to leave the encampment to investigate when the barge doesn't arrive.

The guerillas lend the PCs a sand skiff and give them directions to Old Herok's territory, as well as the barge's route. They also give the PCs some crates of fish to lure Old Herok out. Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs traverse the quicksand.



The quicksand of the Dirt Sea is deceptively still, stirred only by the poles of the sand skiff as it's steered along. The trail of rotting fish dumped behind the skiff carries a powerful stench, mixing unpleasantly with the earthy scent of the sands.

A ripple breaks the surface of the quicksand a little way behind the skiff. With no further warning, an immense serpentine creature rears its head above the surface, catching an entire crate's worth of fish in its jaws in a single snap. Its mottled brown scales blend in almost completely with the quicksand, its beady eyes fixed on the skiff. It coils upward then launches itself in pursuit of an easy meal.

This encounter uses the chase subsystem (GM Core 192), as the PCs lure Old Herok toward the approaching barge several miles away from Drowned Flotilla. They must overcome the following 6 obstacles within 6 rounds, or Old Herok catches up to them once they reach the barge.

### BREACH! OBSTACLE 9

**Chase Points 2; Overcome** DC 24 Survival check to maneuver through the sand eddies, DC 26 Athletics check to pole the skiff

Old Herok emerges in a cascading wave of sand, threatening to knock the skiff off course.

### DEEP SAND OBSTACLE 9

**Chase Points 3; Overcome** DC 24 Nature or DC 26 Perception to spot the danger and steer around, DC 26 Crafting to quickly fasten two poles together

The PCs' skiff encounters an area of sand too deep for their steering poles.

### LURE THE BEAST OBSTACLE 9

**Chase Points 3; Overcome** DC 24 Intimidation to shout loud enough to irritate Old Herok, DC 26 Performance to catch his attention

Old Herok begins to change direction, seemingly losing interest in the skiff.

### SANDWHIRL OBSTACLE 9

**Chase Points 2; Overcome** DC 26 Athletics to pole the skiff away, 28 Acrobatics to counterbalance and give the skiff momentum

A whirlpool of quicksand from Old Herok's movements risks dragging the skiff down with it.

### HAIL OF ARROWS OBSTACLE 9

**Chase Points 3; Overcome** DC 22 Warfare Lore or DC 24 Survival to discern a path through the arrow fire, DC 26 Stealth to conceal the skiff in the sand waves

**Special** Each round the PCs remain at this obstacle, they take 2d10+13 piercing damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save. Guards at the barge shoot at the skiff and the orm closing in behind it.

### SNAPPING JAWS OBSTACLE 9

**Chase Points 2; Overcome** DC 24 Nature to redirect the orm, DC 26 Intimidation to scare him away from the skiff, DC 28 Stealth to hide behind the barge

Old Herok takes a snap at the skiff as it reaches the barge.

If the PCs win the chase, they escape while Old Herok destroys the barge.

**Creatures:** If the PCs don't overcome the chase obstacles in time, Old Herok still destroys the barge but also attacks the party before they escape. Old Herok is a variant water orm known as a quicksand orm, adapted to live in the roiling sands of the Dirt Sea. The PCs don't get additional XP for fighting Old Herok.

The terrain for this encounter is open quicksand, and the PCs' skiff begins thirty feet ahead of Old Herok and the barge.

### OLD HEROK CREATURE 10

Variant water orm (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 289)

**Initiative** Perception +21

Old Herok has the following abilities instead of Water Travel:

**Quicksand Adaptation** Old Herok is immune to the effects of quicksand.

**Sand Skim** **◆◆◆** (primal) Old Herok can disintegrate into a coiled mass of sand rippling beneath the surface of quicksand. While in this form, he automatically succeeds at Athletics checks to swim and gains a +4 circumstance bonus to Stealth checks in quicksand. If a creature enters his space while in this form, he can revert to his normal form and attempt to Grab the creature as a reaction. Old Herok can remain in this form for 8 hours and can return to his normal form using a single action which has the concentrate trait.

**Hazard:** The waves of the Dirt Sea's quicksand sea are unlikely to pose a serious threat to the PCs but might complicate the situation if someone falls off the skiff. Escaping the quicksand requires an adjacent boat for the creature to pull themselves onto; a creature who does so escapes the hazard and is prone. Flying creatures can also escape if they can move above the quicksand.

### QUICKSAND HAZARD 3

GM Core 107

**Stealth** +12 (trained) (or -10 and no minimum proficiency if the surface is disturbed)





**Molog's Departure:** Once the barge fails to arrive, Molog leaves Drowned Flotilla the next morning to go investigate, later returning as detailed in **Molog's Return** (page 21).

**Treasure:** After Old Herok leaves, the PCs can salvage several crates of dried meats and hearty ales worth a total of 200 gp before the wrecked barge sinks beneath the quicksand. Additionally, a PC who succeeds at a DC 24 Perception check while gathering the crates spots a false bottom in one; the secret compartment contains two pouches of *moderate animal nip* (*Pathfinder Rage of Elements* 200).

**Reward:** For using Old Herok to lure Molog away, award the PCs 60 XP.

## MISSION 2: FREE THE HOSTAGES MODERATE 9

Drowning Sand's resistance against the Wingrippers is hampered by the imprisonment of its leader, Teyanko, and its strongest warriors on a barge near the Flotilla's outskirts. A devout follower of Varg, Teyanko recently overthrew the hold's former leader after growing disgusted with his indolence. They'd only been in charge for a few months before the Wingripper attack but have made the best of their position, using the hold's knowledge of the Dirt Sea as leverage to ensure the Wingrippers don't wipe out their hold. For now, they bide their time, awaiting an opportunity to strike back.

The barge is anchored to the south of the encampment, far enough away that a disturbance

won't immediately be noticed. Unless the barge capsizes, it takes several hours for the Wingrippers to realize something's amiss. Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs approach.

A long flat-top barge sits at the southern end of Drowned Flotilla, a single walkway leading to it over the quicksand. The barge's main deck is empty save for a few crates. A stairway leads down to its lower deck. The top of an enormous dull green turtle shell is visible within the quicksand next to the barge, the only trace of the creature as it awaits orders.

Use the prison barge map on page 18 for this encounter. The five prisoners are locked up in the lower deck, and the main deck is guarded by two Wingripper warriors, as well as a giant snapping turtle the Wingrippers keep plied with food. The turtle is trained to capsize the barge when the Wingripper guards give the order, drowning the prisoners in the Dirt Sea.

**The Direct Approach:** A frontal assault on the barge is doable, but risky. The Drowning Sand guerillas are aware of this, as the Wingrippers weren't shy about threatening to capsize the barge if there was trouble. The Wingripper guards don't give the order to capsize until they're safely on the walkway.

All isn't lost if the barge capsizes. A PC who dives into the quicksand can reach the barge's lower deck with a successful DC 20 Athletics check to Swim. It takes five rounds for the barge interior to fill with quicksand. Each hostage is held in a cage, requiring a DC 26 Athletics check to Force Open or a DC 26 Thievery check to Pick a Lock; on a critical success, picking the lock only takes one action. Quicksand survival techniques are one of the first things a Drowning Sand member learns, so they have no trouble making their way to safety once freed.

**The Stealthy Approach:** Alternatively, the PCs could sneak up on the turtle and lure it away from the barge; this requires successful DC 27 Stealth checks followed by a DC 24 Nature check. Creative use of magic or other abilities to assist can provide a circumstance bonus or even negate the need for a check, at GM discretion. PCs who found the *animal nip* in **Mission 1** may get the idea to use it on the turtle. Doing so removes the need for a Stealth check and allows them to attempt a Performance check to draw the turtle away instead of a Nature check if they wish; if the turtle critically fails its save against the *animal nip*, no check is needed. This grants the PCs XP as if they'd defeated the turtle in combat.

**Creatures:** When the PCs arrive, there are two Wingripper guards on duty alongside the trained turtle mentioned above.



## WINGRIPPER WARRIORS (2)

Orc spinecrackers (page 88)

**Initiative** Perception +12

## CREATURE 7

## GIANT SNAPPING TURTLE CREATURE 9

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 269

**Initiative** Perception +17

**Hazard:** The quicksand surrounding the barge is twenty feet deep.

## QUICKSAND

GM Core 107

**Stealth** +12 (trained) (or -10 and no minimum proficiency if the surface is disturbed)

**Hostages Freed:** Assuming the PCs save the hostages, read or paraphrase the following.

The Drowning Sand hostages gather on the walkway beside the barge, stretching out muscles stiffened by their long confinement. Though they're malnourished, bruised, and bloodied, none appear seriously injured. The prisoner with the worst bruises, a brawny orc with piercing gray eyes, steps forward.

"Varg be praised," they exclaim, wincing as they rub the chain marks on their wrists. "I don't know who you are or where you came from, but we appreciate the aid nonetheless." They offer a nod. "I'm Teyanko, leader of Drowning Sand. I gather you came here for your own reasons, so let's not waste time. Why are you here, and what can I do to assist? I always pay my debts."

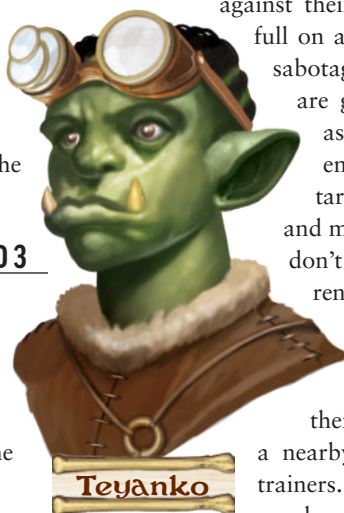
Teyanko listens to the PCs' account, not interjecting until they've finished. If the PCs ask them to support Ardax, they indicate Drowning Sand would be happy to add their banner, but gesture at the encampment with a dry comment, "As you can see, we're currently of little use to you."

Weakened by their ordeal, Teyanko and the warriors follow the PCs' lead, hiding out with the guerillas and laying low until the PCs make their move. Though Teyanko doesn't follow the PCs into combat, they are an 8th-level cleric and can support the party with castings of *stabilize*, *heal*, and *vital beacon*.

**Treasure:** Teyanko hid some of their possessions in their home when the Wingrippers attacked. In thanks to the PCs, they offer their *greater tracker's goggles* and a *moderate spiritual warhorn* (Treasure Vault 98) as a gift.

**Reward:** If the PCs saved at least half the hostages, award them 60 XP.

## HAZARD 3



## MISSION 3: WYVERN WRANGLING

LOW 9

With Teyanko and the other hostages rescued, the rebels can now prepare for more overt action against their oppressors. Before they attempt a full on assault, they suggest another mission: sabotage. The wyvern riders of Wingripper are greatly feared among the orc holds, as their speed and maneuverability enable them to rapidly strike numerous targets. Training wyverns is dangerous and more than half the Wingripper trainees don't survive the process; those who do are renowned for their cunning and cruelty.

Six wyvern riders are present at Drowned Flotilla, in addition to Molog. His lieutenants keep their wyverns in a makeshift roost atop a nearby hillside, watched over by wyvern trainers. Taking out the Wingrippers' flying cavalry would give the PCs and Drowning Sand an advantage in their fight.

When the PCs approach the wyvern roost, read or paraphrase the following.

Atop this mounded hillside is a hastily constructed tower, clumsily patched together with available wood and mud. Several wyverns roost on and around the tower, tethered with leather harnesses as they laze about and occasionally snap at birds flying above them. Various animal bones are scattered around the hill, as are the scant remains of an overly confident vulture. A strong stench rises from a pile of refuse to the tower's east.

**The Direct Approach:** The PCs could slay the trainers and free the wyverns, ensuring they won't be there to answer their riders' call. This approach is quickly noticed, however, and the Wingripper warriors go on high alert. They begin hassling civilians and threatening to start up executions, increasing the difficulty of skill checks in **Mission 4** by 2.

**The Stealthy Approach:** Alternatively, the PCs could lure the trainers away with a DC 26 Deception check to Create a Diversion. Other skills could also be used at GM's discretion. Once the trainers are gone, the PCs can negotiate with the wyverns. If they succeed at a DC 26 Diplomacy or Intimidation check to earn the wyverns' respect, or a DC 24 Nature check to offer a tempting bribe, the wyverns agree to dump their riders when the PCs give the signal. On a critical failure, the wyverns threaten to alert the trainers unless the PCs offer a substantial bribe. A PC who succeeds at this skill check gains access to the wyvern companion option detailed on page 81.

Destroyer's  
Doom

Chapter 1:  
The  
Gathering  
Storm

Chapter 2:  
Under the  
Wyvern's Eye

Chapter 3:  
Whispers of  
Death

Continuing  
the  
Campaign

Wyvernsting  
Gazetteer

Belkzen  
Faiths

Adventu  
Toolb x





**Creatures:** The wyvern roost is guarded by three Wingripper warriors responsible for wyvern training.

### WINGRIPPER WARRIORS (3) CREATURE 7

Orc spinecrackers (page 88)

**Initiative** Perception +12

**Treasure:** In addition to their gear, each wyvern trainer wears an ornate gold armband in the shape of a coiled wyvern worth 75 gp.

### MISSION 4: RAISING SPIRITS LOW 9

If all has gone well, the PCs have lured Molog away, dealt with the wyverns, and saved the hostages. As the guerillas prepare for battle, many of them express concern about the townspeople and ask the PCs to check on their family and friends. The mood in the encampment is grim, with the Drowning Sand denizens keeping their heads low. When the PCs report back, the guerillas suggest they boost morale by empowering the locals to set up their assault against the Wingrippers. The PCs and a few warriors are sent out to rile up Drowning Sand Hold in a stand to take back their home.

This mission uses the Victory Point system rules (*Pathfinder GM Core* 184) to raise morale despite the oppression of the Wingripper Hold. There are several obstacles the PCs must overcome to get the locals in fighting spirits and each obstacle has a threshold of Morale Points required to overcome it. Actions are

made in phases where each PC can attempt a check to earn Morale Points. If their MP total equals or exceeds the threshold of the obstacle, they overcome the issue and continue their mission. Keep track of the total number of phases to determine the starting conditions when the assault on the Wingripper occupiers begins.

### PATROLS OBSTACLE

**Threshold 4; Overcome** DC 24 Stealth, 26 Deception

Wingripper guards patrol the streets, keeping an eye out for dissension.

### CONFISCATED WEAPONS OBSTACLE

**Threshold 4; Overcome** DC 24 Thievery, DC 26 Stealth

All the weapons of the Drowning Sand Hold have been confiscated and locked away, leaving the civilians feeling helpless to act.

### MISSING LEADER OBSTACLE

**Threshold 4; Overcome** DC 24 Performance, DC 26 Diplomacy

The people are worried about the warriors taken hostage by the Wingrippers. They refuse to make a move without assurance of Teyanko's safety.

**Special** If this obstacle is completed in 1 phase, the DCs of the next obstacle are lowered by 2.

### ALERT GUARDS OBSTACLE

**Threshold 4; Overcome** DC 24 Stealth, DC 26 Deception, DC 28 Diplomacy

The Wingripper guards start to notice the gathering crowds and murmurs of rebellion.

### ENEMY BANNER OBSTACLE

**Threshold 4; Overcome** DC 24 Athletics, DC 26 Acrobatics, DC 28 Stealth

The banner of the Wingripper Hold flies high on the largest building of the encampment, casting a shadow of fear and oppression over the populace.

**Development:** When the Wingripper banner has been torn down, the rest of the warriors rush into the town center and battle begins! Tally the number of phases the group used to overcome the five obstacles to see how the fight starts off.

**3-5 phases:** The people of Drowning Sand Hold are inspired by the courage of the PCs and determined to take back their home, fiercely supporting the warriors in what ways they can. The Wingripper wyvern riders are off-guard for the first round of combat.

**6-7 phases:** The Drowning Sand civilians scatter to safety as the battle begins, leaving combat to the PCs and the guerilla fighters.



**8+ phases:** As 6-7 and the Wingripper wyvern riders get a +1 bonus to their Initiative, having noticed the signs of rebellion.

## LAUNCHING THE ASSAULT LOW TO SEVERE 9

Drowning Sand's warriors can handle the Wingripper rank and file as well as some of the wyvern riders. Use the Drowned Flotilla map on page 20 for these encounters.

Read or paraphrase the following as the battle begins.

As the wooden pathways and shallow quicksand of Drowned Flotilla become a battlefield, the clang of weapons rings through the air, intermixed with battle cries. Noncombatants shout encouragement and Wingripper banners are torn down with rebellious yells. A chant rings out: "For Drowning Sand!"

Although the Wingrippers invaders outnumber the inhabitants, the arrival of outsiders to aid them has given Drowning Sand new hope, and their warriors fight fiercely to reclaim their home.

**Creatures:** If at least half the hostages from **Mission 2** survived, they can handle most of the Wingripper wyvern riders in Drowned Flotilla and the PCs only need to fight two riders. If not, the PCs face four of the six riders, with Drowning Sand's surviving warriors taking out the other two. This encounter assumes the PCs removed the wyverns from the equation, possibly leading to a surprise for the Wingrippers as their mounts toss them off at the beginning of the battle.

## WINGRIPPER WYVERN RIDERS (2 OR 4) CREATURE 9

RARE MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

**Perception** +16; darkvision

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Orcish

**Skills** Acrobatics +20, Athletics +19, Intimidation +15, Nature +16 (+20 to Command their wyvern)

**Str** +5, **Dex** +6, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

**Items** +1 striking falchion, +1 composite shortbow, hide armor

**Wyvern Bond** A wyvern rider automatically succeeds at checks to Command an Animal for a wyvern they're mounted on. While mounted, the wyvern acts on their turn.

**AC** 28; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +21, **Will** +12

**HP** 130

**Ferocity** 2

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** ♦ *falchion* +20 (forceful, sweep), **Damage** 2d10+6 slashing

**Ranged** ♦ *composite shortbow* +22 (deadly d10, propulsive), **Damage** 2d6+9 piercing

**Terrifying Strike** ♦♦ (emotion, fear, mental) The wyvern rider attempts a weapon Strike against a target, shouting threats and curses. If it hits, the target must succeed at a DC 28 Will save or be frightened 2 (frightened 4 on a critical failure).

**Weapon Adept** ♦ The wyvern rider can Swap between their falchion and composite shortbow, then Strike with the weapon they switched to.

**Wyvern's Swoop** ♦♦ (flourish) **Requirements** The wyvern rider is mounting their wyvern; **Effect** The wyvern rider Commands their mount to Stride twice. At any point during this movement, they can Strike one enemy within reach or within the first range increment of their ranged weapon, with a +1 circumstance bonus to their attack roll. If they begin this movement at a higher point than their target, they deal an additional die of damage with this Strike.

**Reward:** If the PCs saved enough hostages to defeat four of the riders, they gain experience as if they'd defeated all four wyvern riders in combat.

## MOLOG'S RETURN

## SEVERE 9

Upon the wyvern riders' defeat the tide of the battle turns, giving Drowning Sand the advantage. Wingripper warriors begin to flee or surrender as Drowning Sand reclaims their home; however, they have one final challenge as Molog returns from his investigation of the missing barge. The timing of this event is flexible; if the PCs had a difficult time with the prior encounter, give them 10 minutes to rest before Molog's arrival. When Molog returns, read or paraphrase the following.

The sudden shadow of wings blots out the sun above as an immense wyvern swoops down toward Drowned Flotilla. Sitting astride the wyvern is an orc man in spiked plate armor. A banner emblazoned with a roaring wyvern face flies from his mount's saddle, waving tauntingly in the wind.

"You *dare* interfere with us, you worthless rats?" he snarls, his harsh voice cutting through the sounds of combat below. "Tell Ardax he can send as many lackeys as he wants, but he can't defeat Molog!" He pauses, then adds, "No, you won't be able to tell him. Because you'll be dead!"

**Creatures:** Molog is astride his wyvern, Bloodwing, a massive beast with a poison even deadlier than a typical wyvern. Identifying the PCs as the primary threat, he attacks them immediately. Molog fights to the death but if he's slain before Bloodwing, she attempts to flee the battle.



## BLOODWING

## CREATURE 9

UNIQUE HUGE DRAGON

**Perception** +18; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Languages** Draconic, Orcish

**Skills** Acrobatics +19, Athletics +21, Stealth +18, Survival +16

**Str** +6, **Dex** +5, **Con** +4, **Int** -2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +0

**AC** 27; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +20, **Will** +17

**HP** 155; **Immunities** paralyzed, unconscious

**Reactive Strike** ⤵

**Rider's Bond** Bloodwing acts on Molog's initiative while Molog is mounted. Molog automatically succeeds at attempts to Command her and doesn't need to spend actions to do so, but Bloodwing only has two actions per turn as long as Molog is mounted.

**Savage** ⤵ **Trigger** A creature grabbed by Bloodwing critically fails a skill check to Escape; **Effect** Bloodwing makes a stinger Strike against the triggering creature.

**Speed** 20 feet, fly 60 feet

**Melee** ⬥ fangs +21, **Damage** 2d12+9 piercing

**Melee** ⬥ claw +21, **Damage** 2d10+9 slashing plus Grab

**Melee** ⬥ stinger +20 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d6+9 piercing plus wyvern venom

**Powerful Dive** ⬥⬥ (move) Bloodwing Flies up to her fly Speed and must both move forward at least 20 feet and descend at least 10 feet. If she ends the movement within melee reach of at least one enemy her size or smaller, she can make a claw Strike against that enemy. If the claw hits, as a free action Bloodwing can either automatically Grab the target or knock it prone.

**Punishing Momentum** ⬥ **Requirements** Bloodwing grabbed a creature this turn using Powerful Dive; **Effect** Bloodwing can Fly at half Speed while holding the creature in her claws, carrying that creature along with her and dropping it at the end of her movement. Alternatively, Bloodwing can Strike the creature with her stinger with a +2 circumstance bonus.

**Wyvern Poison** (poison) **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 25; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 3d6 poison damage plus sickened 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 3d8 poison damage plus sickened 2 (1 round); **Stage 3** 3d10 poison damage plus sickened 3 (1 round)

## MOLOG

## CREATURE 11

UNIQUE MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

**Perception** +18; darkvision

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Orcish

**Skills** Acrobatics +20, Athletics +26, Intimidation +20, Nature +17

**Str** +8, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +3

**Items** +1 striking glaive, +1 composite shortbow, +1 half plate, standard of the primeval howl (Treasure Vault 116) painted with a wyvern

**AC** 32; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +19, **Will** +16

**HP** 225

**Frightful Standard** (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 30 feet, DC 27. As long as Molog remains mounted and his *standard* is intact, he has frightful presence against enemies within the aura.

**Ferocity** ⤵

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** ⬥ glaive +28 (deadly d8, forceful, reach), **Damage** 2d12+11 piercing

**Ranged** ⬥ composite shortbow +22 (deadly d10, propulsive), **Damage** 4d6+5 piercing

**Battle Cry** ⬥ **Trigger** Molog rolls initiative; **Effect** Molog attempts to Demoralize an observed foe.

**Trampling Charge** ⬥⬥⬥ (flourish) Molog urges Bloodwing forward, trampling enemies in their path. He commands her to Stride or Fly up to her Speed, moving through the spaces of any foes in his path up to Large size. Bloodwing deals damage equal to her claw melee Strike to each creature whose space they move through, subject to a DC 31 basic Reflex save. On a critical failure, the creature also becomes off-guard until the end of Molog's next turn. He can damage a given creature only once during this movement.

**Weapon Adept** ⬥ Molog can Swap between his glaive and composite shortbow, then Strike with the weapon he switched to.

**Wyvern's Swoop** ⬥⬥ (flourish) **Requirements** Molog is mounting his wyvern; **Effect** Molog Commands his mount to Stride twice. At any point during this movement, he can Strike one enemy within reach or within the first range increment of his ranged weapon, with a +1 circumstance bonus to his attack roll. If he began this movement at a higher point than his target, he deals an additional die of damage with this Strike.

## A Hold Reclaimed

Once Molog and Bloodwing are defeated, read or paraphrase the following.

With Molog fallen, the last of the Wingrippers break formation and retreat as Drowning Sand's forces pursue them. A triumphant cheer goes up across the encampment, finally free of Wingripper's oppressive grip. Teyanko climbs to the top of the encampment's largest lodge, raising their fist aloft.

"Let that be the fate of all who'd dare challenge Drowning Sand!" they proclaim. The gathered warriors roar in agreement, clapping friends on the back and wincing when enthusiastic palms hit fresh wounds.

"But we can't forget to thank our friends," Teyanko continues. "They aided us when we needed it and Drowning Sand is grateful. Tonight, we feast and celebrate! Tomorrow,



we answer our new allies' call! Come now friends, let's show these inlanders the true spirit of Drowning Sand!"

The entire hold prepares for a great feast to celebrate victory over the Wingrippers, setting up large pits for fires and breaking out casks of ale. The air is jovial as members of the hold are finally free to mingle as they please, the warriors reuniting with their loved ones and introducing the PCs to everyone they can.

## A GRAND HUNT

## MODERATE 9

As the guests of honor for this party, the PCs are given the privilege of hunting down the main course. One of the warriors suggests that they go find a palpares (page 85), an enormous chitinous insect with flesh that can be steamed like a crab's or liquefied into broth, making for a hearty meal perfect for large events. Hunting a palpares has the bonus effect of making journeys across the Dirt Sea safer, which will be helpful for Ardax's army.

The PCs are given a map of areas likely to be palpares lairs and sent out with a small group of warriors to assist them if things get too dangerous. A PC can make a DC 26 Nature or Survival check to track down a palpares large enough to make a main dish for the party; on a failure, the palpares is a bit small, to the bemusement of the Drowning Sand chefs. This encounter takes place on an open stretch of sand.

**Creatures:** A palpares has recently taken up residence not far from Drowned Flotilla. Amid the turmoil of the takeover, no one was able to deal with the predator or even knew how close it was to the encampment. With the encampment on lockdown, the palpares has been waiting patiently for prey to emerge from the settlement. As the PCs cross into its newly adopted hunting grounds, it emerges to attack.

## PALPARES

## CREATURE 11

Page 85

**Initiative** Stealth +24

**Treasure:** Amid the sands churned up by the palpares' attack is a gnawed orc corpse. Though most of their gear is chewed beyond usability, the corpse's hands wear an intact set of *greater healer's gloves* and a sapphire ring worth 150 gp.

## NEW ALLIANCES

As promised, Drowning Sand hosts the PCs for a raucous celebration with a feast of "mud bacon" hot pot and pit barbecues of unusual but tasty seafood, giving each PC enough leftovers to add 3 days worth of rations to their supplies. Teyanko promises the hold

will join Ardax's banner and ferry the coming army to Wyvernsting. If the PCs took any Wingripper members alive, they can obtain basic information about the current situation in the city with a DC 26 Intimidation check. This grants them a +1 circumstance bonus to attempts to Gather Information in Wyvernsting.

**Treasure:** In thanks for helping free Drowning Sand, Teyanko presents the PCs with a *greater staff of protection*, a *trident of lightning*, and an *iron medallion* during the celebration. The hold also shares the spoils they took from the ousted Wingrippers: mundane supplies, gear, and jewelry worth a total of 500 gp.



Molog





## Chapter 2: Under the Wyvern's Eye

After securing the Drowning Sand Hold's help, the PCs' new allies smuggle them across the Dirt Sea and toward Wyvernsting's docks. The small craft skims along the silt and mud before gradually reaching standing water closer to Wyvernsting and its docks. Along the way, Teyanko answers what questions they can. Likely queries appear below.

**Are there any allies in Wyvernsting?** "Unlikely. The Ice Tooth Hold is friendly and visits often in small groups. I think most withdrew when the undead started roaming."

**What's dangerous in Wyvernsting?** Teyanko reflexively laughs. "Everything? But some things are more dangerous than the rest. Haghill is where most of the Unbroken Horn gathers, so that will be very

dangerous. There are many giant beasts and actual giants. It's best not to provoke either."

**What can you tell us about Paskis?** "She's a tough fighter and made a name for herself before overthrowing the old leader, Hundux. Like Hundux, she wants the Unbroken Horn Hold to rule Belkzen. Unlike Hundux, she didn't waste any time making it happen. She's clever, fast on her feet, and quick with a necksplitter."

As Ardax explained, the city is difficult to besiege and the meeting place for several holds, so the PCs' job is to undermine the defenses and morale as much as possible to aid Ardax's incoming army.

If the PCs' travels in Chapter 1 went smoothly, they have 7 days (6 if the war council voted to take



the riskier route) to undermine Wyvernsting before Ardax's army arrives. However, if they were delayed in reaching Drowned Flotilla, they lose a day here per day of delay. Exploring Wyvernsting involves multiple sandbox encounters and potential complications, as the actions the PCs take are largely up to their own discretion. They need to complete their objectives without attracting too much notice or risk their invasion being revealed before it begins.

## NAVIGATING WYVERNSTING

Wyvernsting is a city devoted to war. Though not closed to outsiders, it's unfriendly territory for Ardax and his allies, so the PCs need to conceal their loyalties (and perhaps even their identities) while there. A detailed gazetteer of Wyvernsting appears on pages 68–73, and this section summarizes key features needed for running this adventure.

**Layout:** There are five main neighborhoods in Wyvernsting, as well as the northeastern outskirts of the city (known as the Dumps) and Fort Paskis (previously called Fort Hundux) near Darkwater Lake to the west. The city is surrounded by palisade walls designed to keep invaders out, with two inner walls encircling Fort Paskis and Hagtooth Hill, where Unbroken Horn's warriors live and train. The rest of the city, below those hills, includes of the Market, Wyvernsting's center of trade; Downside, where orcs from other holds or Unbroken Horn's lower ranks live; Backhill, home to most non-orc residents; and Stockside, hosting the city's megafauna stables.

**Non-Orcs:** Non-orcs are a minority in Wyvernsting, with most being giants and humans. Some non-orcs—generally merchants or animal experts—rise to respected positions, but the warriors of Unbroken Horn are exclusively orcs and dromaars. The district of Hagtooth Hill limits non-orc entry, requiring guests to be accompanied by an orc chaperone or prominently marked with a tattoo indicating they serve an orc household. Fort Paskis is the most restricted area of the city, even for orcs, with only Paskis's inner circle and elite warriors allowed on its hill.

**Avoiding Notice:** The PCs must avoid attracting too much attention so as not to tip off the Unbroken Horn Hold about the invasion. Depending on their strategy, they might use stealth, subterfuge, or fear to keep the hold off their trail. See Awareness below.

**GM Advice:** Wyvernsting is a rough place to live. Street brawls are common methods of settling disagreements, and there's little recourse for those at the bottom of the social hierarchy wronged by those at the top. Depicting the city as such can add to immersion and provide a

real sense of accomplishment once Ardax's army ousts the Unbroken Horn Hold. Above all, however, the game should be fun for all at the table. When delving into certain aspects, especially prejudice against non-orcs, consider discussing your players' preferences beforehand and using tools for responsible play (*GM Core* 7) to ensure everyone enjoys the game.

## Investigation

The following summarizes leads and information the PCs can discover in Wyvernsting. Finding leads gives the PCs ideas on objectives they can complete to weaken Wyvernsting's defenses. As advised, the PCs likely start by either finding a base or contacting with Nakasha's team, though they'll have to investigate the city to determine how to do so. The PCs can complete objectives in any order, assuming they've uncovered an objective's lead. See Gathering Intel on page 29.

## AWARENESS

The Unbroken Horn Hold doesn't expect trouble in their stronghold, so the PCs don't immediately attract attention. Once they begin their sabotage, though, blending in becomes increasingly difficult. The GM tracks this through Awareness Points (AP), with various events occurring as the AP total reaches certain thresholds. Earned AP applies to the entire group. There are several ways the PCs can gain or lose AP, detailed below.

**Completing or Failing Objectives:** Certain objectives might increase the PCs' AP total when completed or failed, as detailed within the objectives.

**Investigating:** A PC who Gathers Information to find leads earns 1 AP unless they successfully Infiltrate Wyvernsting (page 26). A group of PCs shouldn't earn more than 2 AP for any one attempt at investigation, no matter how many of them fail, to help less subtle PCs participate without feeling like they're endangering the mission. PCs with the Streetwise skill feat or Discrete Inquiry skill feat (*Pathfinder Player Core* 2 229) automatically succeed at Infiltrating Wyvernsting when Gathering Information.

**Operating Openly:** Each day in Wyvernsting after the PCs begin Gathering Information and attempting objectives, they must succeed at a DC 25 check to Avoid Notice or Impersonate to blend in if they haven't yet secured a base. On a failure, they gain 1 AP (2 AP on a critical failure).

**Shopping:** Each time the PCs buy or sell items with a level of 6 or higher, they gain 1 AP unless they also succeed at a DC 27 Deception check to Impersonate or DC 27 Intimidation check to Coerce merchants into keeping quiet. If the PCs shop through a local intermediary, they can avoid making this check.



The following activities help the PCs manage their AP within Wyvernsting.

### INFILTRATE WYVERNSTING

As part of another activity, you blend in while exploring Wyvernsting. This might involve disguising yourself as an orc or dromaar, blending in with the other residents, intimidating others into staying quiet about your activities, leveraging your street smarts, or appearing to have a job or role within the city. Attempt a DC 27 Athletics, Deception, Intimidation, Nature, Society, or Stealth check; relevant Lore skills might also apply, at the GM's discretion. You cannot use Infiltrate Wyvernsting as part of an activity where you also Sow Unease (page 28).

A PC gains a +1 circumstance bonus to checks to Infiltrate Wyvernsting if they're a dromaar, and the bonus increases to +2 for orc PCs.

**Critical Success** You do not earn AP for the activity. Reduce the number of AP your party earns during this activity by 1 (minimum 0 AP).

**Success** You do not earn AP for the activity.

**Failure** You earn 1 AP for the activity.

**Critical Failure** You earn 2 AP.

### LIE LOW

Your entire party hides out for one day, diminishing local suspicion directed at you and your activities. On a day your party Lies Low, you cannot Gather Information or attempt any objectives, though you can perform unremarkable downtime activities. At the end of the day, your party's collective AP total decreases by 2. (To benefit from this activity, all party members must Lie Low at the same time.)

### AWARENESS POINT EFFECTS

When the party's AP total reaches the thresholds below, Unbroken Horn forces grow increasingly suspicious, introducing additional complications. The GM can choose to share the party's exact AP total with the players or keep it abstract, but the players should have an idea of their Awareness level and how it impacts them so they can adjust their tactics as needed. For example, a PC Gathering Information might overhear gossip about their activities, or the PCs might be questioned by Unbroken Horn warriors as outsiders fall under increased scrutiny.

If the PCs rescue Nakasha's team in **Objective 2** (page 30), her group seeds false information around the city to redirect blame for the PCs' sabotage activities. Each day Nakasha's team spreads false information, they decrease the PCs' AP total by 1.

Events triggered by AP thresholds don't reoccur if the PCs decrease their total below that point and it increases again later, but static effects might come

and go. For example, if the PCs reach 15 AP, triggering increased scrutiny from merchants, then Lie Low for a day (reducing their total to 14), the increased prices effect won't resume until they have 15 AP again.

At 25 AP, the PCs' cover is irrevocably blown, and they're forced to flee Wyvernsting in the face of overwhelming opposition (see **Event 3: Blown Cover** on page 28).

### AWARENESS POINT EFFECTS

AP	Effect
5+	The Unbroken Horn Hold grows suspicious and the DC of Wyvernsting Infiltration checks increases by 2.
10+	The PCs attract attention from a group of Unbroken Horn raiders, triggering <b>Event 1: Wrong Neighborhood</b> (page 26).
15+	Scrutiny from the Unbroken Horn Hold increases, and Wyvernsting merchants grow reluctant to trade with outsiders without bribes, increasing prices in Wyvernsting to 150%.
20+	Unbroken Horn spies track the PCs back to their base, triggering <b>Event 2: Midnight Raid</b> (page 27).
25	The PCs are revealed as Ardax's agents, triggering <b>Event 3: Blown Cover</b> (page 28).

### EVENT 3: WRONG NEIGHBORHOOD **LOW 10**

Upon earning 10 AP, the PCs are challenged by a group of Unbroken Horn raiders who've noticed the newcomers. Read or paraphrase the following.

The crowded streets of Wyvernsting cast deep shadows throughout the day, making their alleys ideal for ambushes. The approaching orcs don't seem to care much for stealth, though, swaggering forward as they spot outsiders.

"You don't look like you're from around here," one of them says, spitting off to the side. "What're people like you doing in Unbroken Horn territory?"

The PCs can attempt a DC 27 Deception check to convince the raiders they belong or a DC 29 Intimidation check to make them back down. On a success, the raiders leave them alone; otherwise, they attack. Use the Wyvernsting streets map on page 28 if combat breaks out.

### UNBROKEN HORN RAIDERS (3) **CREATURE 8**

Orc raiders (page 88)

**Initiative** Perception +14

**Development:** Whether the PCs convince the orcs to leave them alone, spare a few, or kill them all and



signal to bystanders that this is what will befall anyone else who picks a fight with strangers, one of the PCs can choose to make a DC 27 Intimidation check at the end of the encounter. If the PCs made a special effort to terrify, shame, or even mutilate their foes, you might grant a small circumstance bonus to their check. If none of the PCs make this check, their brawl doesn't attract any special attention.

**Success** The PCs gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Intimidation checks and checks to Sow Unease for 1 day, but they gain 1 AP.

**Failure** The PCs gain 1 AP.

**Critical Failure** The PCs gain 2 AP.

## EVENT 4: MIDNIGHT RAID

LOW 10

Upon earning 20 AP, Unbroken Horn spies track the PCs to their base and set it ablaze while they're sleeping, hoping to eliminate them in one fell swoop. If the PCs set watches during the night, the PC on watch around midnight can attempt a DC 27 Perception check to spot the signs of fire, giving them 1 round to awaken their companions before the fire spreads with Growing Blaze (see below). Magical protections such as *alarm* or mundane traps could also provide advance warning. If the PCs don't have anyone on watch, each PC can attempt a DC 33 Perception check at the beginning of each round once the hazard activates; the DC decreases by 2 each subsequent round.

**Hazard:** The arsonists make their escape after starting the fire; chasing them down is beyond the assumed scope of this scene, for the PCs' focus is expected to be on saving their hideout. The blaze is structured as a complex hazard.

The fire's origin point depends on where the PCs are sleeping, as the arsonists start it in an unoccupied room of the stable. They choose one of the central stalls to the north if no PCs are there; otherwise, they pick the stall to the east or the tack storage room, setting the exterior wall ablaze. Use the abandoned stable map on page 29 to track the fire's spread. If all squares of the stable are on fire, the building is destroyed.

## NIGHTTIME CONFLAGRATION

HAZARD 11

COMPLEX | ENVIRONMENTAL

**Stealth** +23 (trained) (decreases by 2 each round the hazard is active) to smell the smoke and hear the crackling flames

**Disable** DC 27 Athletics to beat out the flames, DC 27 Crafting to rig up a firefighting device, or DC 27 Nature to cut off avenues of the fire's spread. On a success, one square of the fire is extinguished (two squares on a

critical success). Dousing a square in water, such as with *create water*, automatically extinguishes that square. When all squares are extinguished, the hazard ends.

**Growing Blaze** ➔ **Trigger** The arsonists set the fire; **Effect** The hay around the initial flames catches, setting two 5-foot squares in the affected room on fire. The hazard rolls initiative.

**Routine** (1+ actions) Each square of flames spreads to an adjacent square, taking one action per square. Creatures adjacent to the fire take 3d6 fire damage each round from the heat (DC 30 basic Fortitude save); a creature who fails their save is sickened 1 by the smoke (sickened 2 on a critical failure). If there are more than 10 active squares of flames, creatures adjacent to the fire instead take 6d6 fire damage each round (DC 30 basic Fortitude save), and a creature who fails their save is sickened 2



Unbroken Horn Orc





(sickened 3 on a critical failure). A creature standing in the flames takes 12d6 fire damage each round (DC 30 basic Reflex save); a creature who fails their save also takes 4d6 persistent fire damage.

**Fire's Aftermath:** If the PCs end the hazard before the fire consumes the stable, the building is singed but intact. However, if they fail to stop the fire, they lose their base and must find a new one. If the PCs allied with Delka, the Unbroken Horn Dissidents, or the Ice Tooth Hold, any of them might provide shelter. Otherwise, the PCs have to shelter in the streets or an inn without being noticed, which requires one PC to attempt a DC 29 Deception, Diplomacy, or Intimidation check to secure lodging. If they fail the check, they secure shelter but earn 1 AP.

#### EVENT 5: BLOWN COVER

**SEVERE 10**

Upon earning 25 AP, the PCs' cover is blown, and they've been identified as Ardax's agents! Use the Wyvernsting streets map on this page for this encounter.

**Creatures:** The next time the PCs venture out in public, they're set upon by a group of Unbroken Horn raiders with a mammoth in tow.

#### UNBROKEN HORN RAIDERS (4)

**CREATURE 8**

Orc raiders (page 88)

**Initiative** Perception +14

#### MAMMOTH

**CREATURE 10**

*Pathfinder Monster Core* 150

**Initiative** Perception +18

**Escape from Wyvernsting:** After the PCs defeat this group, they see dozens more guards closing in. It should be apparent that they have to flee, which they can do successfully so long as they don't dally or stand their ground. Even if they do attempt to fight more, leave openings for them to reconsider and escape later. Whatever the case, reaching 25 AP sets Wyvernsting on alert and loses the PCs 10 Sabotage Points (see below) as some of their activities are uncovered and fixed.

A PC can't reenter the city or complete any more objectives unless they succeed at a DC 32 Deception check to Impersonate or a Stealth check to Sneak. In this case, DCs to complete certain objectives may increase and the PCs may encounter more patrols at the GM's discretion, though more detailed consequences are outside the scope of this adventure.

#### Acts of Sabotage

As the PCs complete objectives, they earn Sabotage Points, using the Victory Points system (*Pathfinder GM Core* 184). The greater their Sabotage Point total before Ardax's army arrives, the better the PCs and their allies will fare in the final battle. Keep track of the Sabotage Points the PCs earn throughout the chapter, as this will determine their Sabotage Point Threshold at the end (detailed in the sidebar on page 41).

Although infiltrating a city typically requires stealth and subterfuge, this is Belkzen, and making a fearsome impression can be equally effective in deflecting unwanted attention. PCs who wish to take a less subtle approach can use the Sow Unease activity when attempting an objective, which can award more Sabotage Points in exchange for increasing their Awareness Points. This is a risky strategy, so the PCs should be aware they must carefully balance subtle strikes with flashier tactics.

#### SOW UNEASE

As part of another activity, you inspire dread in a way that bolsters your group's reputation, such as by intimidating onlookers, leaving corpses on display, or accomplishing your sabotage in a showy way. Attempt a DC 27 Intimidation, Underworld Lore, or Warfare Lore check. You cannot use Sow Unease on an activity where you use the Infiltrate Wyvernsting activity (page 26).

**Success** You earn 1 extra Sabotage Point for your activity, and your AP increases by 1.



**Failure** Your AP increases by 1, but you don't earn any extra Sabotage Points.

**Critical Failure** As failure, but your AP increases by 2.

## GATHERING INTEL

When the PCs arrive in Wyvernsting, they have few known objectives beyond their mandate to disrupt the Unbroken Horn Hold's army, as well as Ardax's advice to secure a base and make contact with Nakasha's team. From there, it's up to them to identify potential weak points to exploit.

The PCs can identify objectives by tracking down rumors about current events and Paskis's defenses in Wyvernsting's various neighborhoods. Doing so requires a DC 22 Diplomacy check to Gather Information; each neighborhood has also one or two alternative skills that can be used to Gather Information. A PC learns one of an area's leads (see Gathering Intel below) if they succeed, and two if they critically succeed.

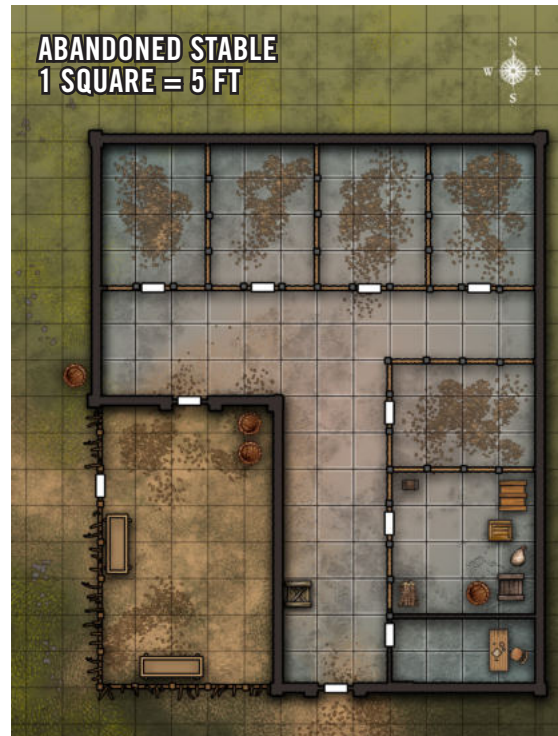
Location	Skill	Objective Leads
Backhill	Medicine	Objectives 4, 5, 7, 9
Downside	Intimidation	Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9
Hagtooth Hill	Deception, Military Lore	Objectives 2, 3, 6, 8
The Market	Mercantile Lore, Society	Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 8
Stockside	Nature, Stabling Lore	Objectives 1, 4, 6, 7, 9

Hagtooth Hill is more difficult to investigate without attracting attention, thanks to it being the Unbroken Horn Hold's base of operations. The checks to Gather Information there increase to DC 27, and the DC of checks to Infiltrate Wyvernsting (and thus avoid gaining AP) increases by 1.

## Objective 1: A Stable Sanctuary Low 10

The PCs' initial concern should be finding a base of operations, as they'd attract attention staying at one of Wyvernsting's few inns. Even once they find Nakasha's team, they should be aware it's best to spread out, so that if one team is compromise, the other won't be exposed.

When finding this lead, the PCs learn about an abandoned mammoth stable, Algid Fauna, near Stockside's outskirts. After neglecting proper pachyderm hygiene, the stable's owners failed to notice and quash a tick infestation before it grew wildly out of control. The arachnids swarmed, devouring the unfortunate animals, the owners, and several stablehands. Busy with wartime preparations,



Wyvernsting's forces decided to seal up the stable and its swarms rather than eradicating the ticks immediately. Now, few venture near the place. The speed with which the infestation erupted has also sparked rumors that the stables are haunted. If the PCs clear the infestation, the stable would make an excellent place to hide out.

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs approach the stable.

A well-trodden dirt path leads to the door of this imposing wooden stable, clearly built to hold creatures much larger than horses. Adjoining the building is a riding yard, fenced off with towering, interlocked metal spikes. The door is firmly boarded up, leaving not even a crack to peek through.

The boards on the stable doors and windows can easily be pried off from the outside. The ceiling inside the stable is 40 feet high.

**Creatures:** The horde of insects is a tick swarm, which has been busily devouring the remains of the mammoths. Its food is running out, however, and when the PCs enter, the swarm eagerly rushes out of the northeast corner stall and attacks.

## TICK SWARM

*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* (page 260)

**Initiative** Perception +18

## CREATURE 9

Destroyer's  
Doom

Chapter 1:  
The  
Gathering  
Storm

Chapter 2:  
Under the  
Wyvern's Eye

Chapter 3:  
Whispers of  
Death

Continuing  
the  
Campaign

Wyvernsting  
Gazetteer

Belkzen  
Faiths

Adventure  
Toolbox





**FORT HAGTOOTH PRISON**  
1 SQUARE = 5 FT

**Hazard:** The ticks aren't the only problem to contend with, as the rumors of the stable being haunted are correct. The spirits remaining aren't those of the humanoids, but of the slain animals, who stir as soon as the stable door opens, still desperately trying to escape. The haunt has no effect on the tick swarm.

## TRAMPLING LIVESTOCK

## HAZARD 9

### HAUNT

**Stealth** DC 20 (trained)

**Description** Several ghostly mammoths arise from the floorboards, pawing at the ground in terror before stampeding toward the door.

**Disable** DC 28 Religion to exorcise the animals' spirits, or DC 26 Nature or DC 24 Stabling Lore to soothe them

**Sudden Stampede** ⤵ (occult) **Trigger** The door to the stable opens; **Effect** The mammoth spirits activate in panic, materializing into physical forms as they stampede toward the door to escape. All creatures standing within 20 feet of the door take 4d10+26 force damage (DC 28 basic Reflex save).

**Reset** 1 day

Once the PCs deal with the tick swarm and the haunt, they've secured their base, though if they don't lay the haunt to rest permanently, it resets and reactivates when the door opens again the next day. Laying the haunt to rest requires spending one hour of labor and succeeding at one of the following checks

to calm or shepherd away the animal spirits: a DC 24 Stabling Lore, DC 26 Hunting Lore, DC 26 Nature, DC 28 Religion, or DC 28 Occultism check.

**Treasure:** Each of the blood-drained dromaars wears a silver bracelet worth 50 gp, and a rolled *explorer's yurt* is tucked in the corner of the tack storage room. If the PCs search the office, there's little of interest in the stable's ledgers, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Perception check while examining the desk finds the lockbox containing the stable's monthly profits, a total of 300 gp.

## Objective 2: Prison Break **Low 10**

Meeting up with the Bloodied Gauntlet team is more difficult than expected, as they're nowhere to be found if the PCs attempt to make contact. When finding this lead, the PCs hear about a recent capture of orcs from an enemy hold; the description of the group's leader matches Nakasha's. The PCs also learn the group is being held in Fort Hagtooth's prison, awaiting execution in two days. Fort Hagtooth isn't as impenetrable as Fort Paskis, but it's still heavily guarded, making a frontal assault unwise.

This encounter is a brief infiltration (*GM Core* 196) wherein the PCs must get inside the prison and rescue their fellow agents. They can use the activities detailed on pages 198–199 of *GM Core* if they want to make specific preparations. A PC who succeeds at an attempt to Gossip or Scout Location learns about the secret side door on the western side of the building, gaining one Sabotage Point they can use to overcome the Guard Post obstacle (page 31).

As the PCs approach, they see the following.

The complex of Fort Hagtooth sprawls over the southern side of Hagtooth Hill, enclosed by high metal fences. Within the complex, several stone buildings about one another as though they were blocks fitted together; the largest, at the center, is a three-story, hexagonal structure with small arrow slits for windows. The westernmost building, adjoining the main fort, is shorter, but has no less imposing of an air.

**Running the Prison Break:** Several obstacles are presented here for the PCs to overcome, but be flexible and adapt to your players' strategies, perhaps presenting alternative obstacles with similar DCs depending on their tactics. As capable adventurers, the PCs can get into the fort complex itself without difficulty.

If all goes well, the PCs can get in and out of the prison without drawing the rest of the guards in the fort down on them, as this would be an overwhelming



level of opposition. If things go poorly, however, the situation could quickly spiral out of control. Be cautious about sending too many combatants at the PCs at once, and consider alternatives to ramp up the tension without causing an impossibly lopsided combat, such as having guards arrive in waves and providing the PCs opportunities to escape.

This encounter uses Local Awareness Points (LAP), tracked separately from the Awareness Points the PCs earn throughout the rest of this chapter. LAP have their own effect on the PCs' infiltration. In addition, once the PCs conclude this mission, add half their LAP total (rounded down) to their overall Awareness Points (maximum 7). For the additional consequences that occur during the encounter based on the PCs' encounter AP, see below.

If combat breaks out in an area besides the cell block or interrogation room, the PCs' LAP increases by 1 every 3 combat rounds, although precautions such as *silence* or other strategies to keep the noise contained could mitigate or eliminate this, at the GM's discretion.

## LOCAL AWARENESS POINTS

LAP	Consequence
5	The guards grow suspicious. Increase the DCs for obstacles by 1.
9	When the PCs reach this tier, two Fort Hagtooth guards (see below) in the nearest area attempt to detain them.
13	When the PCs reach this tier, two more Fort Hagtooth guards move to detain them.
17	When the PCs reach this tier, a guard runs for reinforcements from Fort Hagtooth proper, and if the PCs don't escape the prison before 3 rounds have passed, a contingent of 10 guards blocks the front door, barring their exit.

## PRISON FEATURES

The prison is a squat, single-story building adjoining Fort Hagtooth, with a metal double door leading inside; this door is unlocked. The only windows in the prison, made of thick glass, are in the offices. Ceilings are 15 feet high. The prison's rooms are detailed below.

**1. Guard Post:** The prison's door opens onto a guard post, constantly guarded by two Fort Hagtooth guards. The door leading to the rest of the prison is locked, requiring a DC 27 Thievery check to Pick a Lock if the PCs don't fool the guards into letting them in; alternatively, they could take a key from a guard's body or Steal it with a DC 25 Thievery check.

**2. Interrogation:** The restraints on the chair in the corner, as well as the tools on the worktable, make this room's grim purpose clear. Two Fort Hagtooth guards

are here, "questioning" an unfortunate prisoner. The guards are used to sounds of struggle from this room and don't investigate them.

**3. Supply Room:** This room contains food and other supplies, but there's little of value for the PCs.

**4. Offices:** These offices contain simple wooden desks for the prison's officers; one Fort Hagtooth guard is working in each. Ledgers here show prisoners' rations are gradually decreasing, suggesting rationing across the city in anticipation of a siege.

**5. Mess Hall:** This mess hall is where the prison guards take their meals and relax on break. Five Fort Hagtooth guards are currently here.

**6. Hallway:** The prison's hallway is nondescript, save for a secret door to the west that the guards use to get in and out of the prison in emergencies. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check spots the secret door, though they might already know of it from their preparations. The secret door is locked from the outside, requiring a DC 27 Thievery check to Pick the Lock, but can be opened easily from the inside. If the PCs attempt to Pick the Lock from outside, make a DC 5 flat check every round; on a failure, two patrolling Fort Hagtooth guards notice them and move to attack, increasing their AP by 1 each round of combat.

**7. Cell Block:** Prisoners are held in this cell block, containing ten barred chambers; the door leading into the room is constructed of thick stone. Nakasha and her team occupy the cells to the south, and two Fort Hagtooth guards patrol the cell block's hallway. The stone walls muffle most sound here, unless it's extremely loud.

**Creatures:** The prison guards are adept at taking captives alive. While on duty, they operate in groups of two.

## FORT HAGTOOTH GUARDS (2)

## CREATURE 9

Orc hunters (page 89)

**Initiative** Perception +19

**Obstacles:** To rescue Nakasha's team, the PCs must overcome the following obstacles in the following order.

## GUARD POST

## OBSTACLE 10

**Infiltration Points** 2 (group); **Overcome** DC 25 Deception, DC 27 Society, or DC 29 Stealth; or defeating the guards in combat

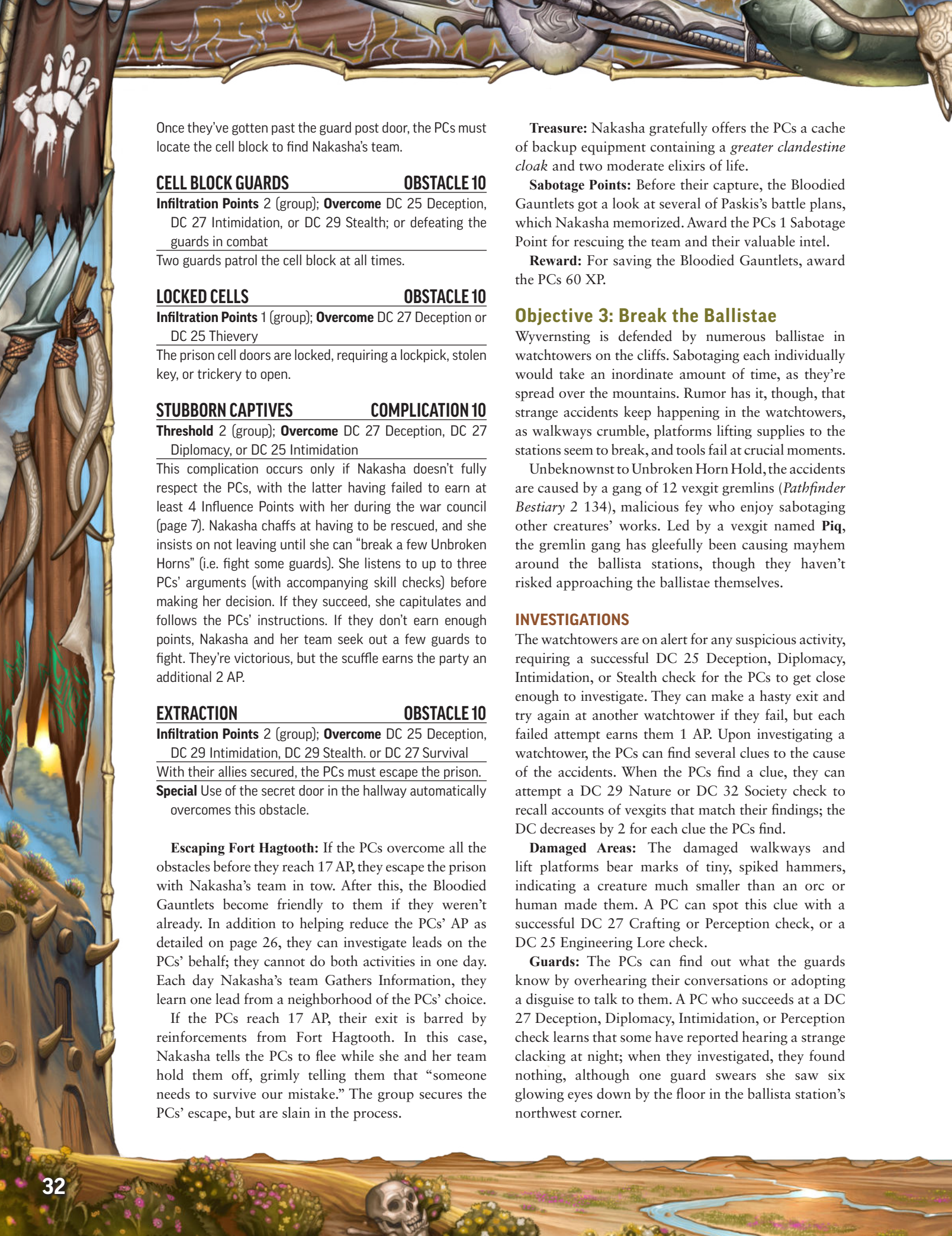
The way into the prison is watched by two guards, keeping an eye out for trouble.

## LOCATE CELLS

## OBSTACLE 10

**Infiltration Points** 1 (group); **Overcome** DC 25 Engineering Lore or Survival, DC 27 Perception





Once they've gotten past the guard post door, the PCs must locate the cell block to find Nakasha's team.

### CELL BLOCK GUARDS

### OBSTACLE 10

**Infiltration Points** 2 (group); **Overcome** DC 25 Deception, DC 27 Intimidation, or DC 29 Stealth; or defeating the guards in combat

Two guards patrol the cell block at all times.

### LOCKED CELLS

### OBSTACLE 10

**Infiltration Points** 1 (group); **Overcome** DC 27 Deception or DC 25 Thievery

The prison cell doors are locked, requiring a lockpick, stolen key, or trickery to open.

### STUBBORN CAPTIVES

### COMPLICATION 10

**Threshold** 2 (group); **Overcome** DC 27 Deception, DC 27 Diplomacy, or DC 25 Intimidation

This complication occurs only if Nakasha doesn't fully respect the PCs, with the latter having failed to earn at least 4 Influence Points with her during the war council (page 7). Nakasha chaffs at having to be rescued, and she insists on not leaving until she can "break a few Unbroken Horns" (i.e. fight some guards). She listens to up to three PCs' arguments (with accompanying skill checks) before making her decision. If they succeed, she capitulates and follows the PCs' instructions. If they don't earn enough points, Nakasha and her team seek out a few guards to fight. They're victorious, but the scuffle earns the party an additional 2 AP.

### EXTRACTION

### OBSTACLE 10

**Infiltration Points** 2 (group); **Overcome** DC 25 Deception, DC 29 Intimidation, DC 29 Stealth, or DC 27 Survival

With their allies secured, the PCs must escape the prison.

**Special** Use of the secret door in the hallway automatically overcomes this obstacle.

**Escaping Fort Hagtooth:** If the PCs overcome all the obstacles before they reach 17 AP, they escape the prison with Nakasha's team in tow. After this, the Bloodied Gauntlets become friendly to them if they weren't already. In addition to helping reduce the PCs' AP as detailed on page 26, they can investigate leads on the PCs' behalf; they cannot do both activities in one day. Each day Nakasha's team Gathers Information, they learn one lead from a neighborhood of the PCs' choice.

If the PCs reach 17 AP, their exit is barred by reinforcements from Fort Hagtooth. In this case, Nakasha tells the PCs to flee while she and her team hold them off, grimly telling them that "someone needs to survive our mistake." The group secures the PCs' escape, but are slain in the process.

**Treasure:** Nakasha gratefully offers the PCs a cache of backup equipment containing a *greater clandestine cloak* and two moderate elixirs of life.

**Sabotage Points:** Before their capture, the Bloodied Gauntlets got a look at several of Paskis's battle plans, which Nakasha memorized. Award the PCs 1 Sabotage Point for rescuing the team and their valuable intel.

**Reward:** For saving the Bloodied Gauntlets, award the PCs 60 XP.

### Objective 3: Break the Ballistae

Wyvernsting is defended by numerous ballistae in watchtowers on the cliffs. Sabotaging each individually would take an inordinate amount of time, as they're spread over the mountains. Rumor has it, though, that strange accidents keep happening in the watchtowers, as walkways crumble, platforms lifting supplies to the stations seem to break, and tools fail at crucial moments.

Unbeknownst to Unbroken Horn Hold, the accidents are caused by a gang of 12 vexgit gremlins (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 134), malicious fey who enjoy sabotaging other creatures' works. Led by a vexgit named **Piq**, the gremlin gang has gleefully been causing mayhem around the ballista stations, though they haven't risked approaching the ballistae themselves.

### INVESTIGATIONS

The watchtowers are on alert for any suspicious activity, requiring a successful DC 25 Deception, Diplomacy, Intimidation, or Stealth check for the PCs to get close enough to investigate. They can make a hasty exit and try again at another watchtower if they fail, but each failed attempt earns them 1 AP. Upon investigating a watchtower, the PCs can find several clues to the cause of the accidents. When the PCs find a clue, they can attempt a DC 29 Nature or DC 32 Society check to recall accounts of vexgits that match their findings; the DC decreases by 2 for each clue the PCs find.

**Damaged Areas:** The damaged walkways and lift platforms bear marks of tiny, spiked hammers, indicating a creature much smaller than an orc or human made them. A PC can spot this clue with a successful DC 27 Crafting or Perception check, or a DC 25 Engineering Lore check.

**Guards:** The PCs can find out what the guards know by overhearing their conversations or adopting a disguise to talk to them. A PC who succeeds at a DC 27 Deception, Diplomacy, Intimidation, or Perception check learns that some have reported hearing a strange clacking at night; when they investigated, they found nothing, although one guard swears she saw six glowing eyes down by the floor in the ballista station's northwest corner.



**Station Armory:** A PC examining the armory who succeeds at a DC 25 Warfare Lore check, or a DC 27 Perception or Society check, realizes several weapons are missing from the rack. According to the rack's scrawled labels, the missing weapons are all made of cold iron. (The vexgits disposed of them as a precaution.)

**Tracks:** A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Survival check or DC 27 Perception check spots several trails of tiny, clawed tracks in the dust near the tower's stone walls.

Though vexgits are unpleasant creatures and would pose no threat in combat to the PCs, canny PCs should realize that the PCs and vexgits have similar targets they want to destroy. Once the PCs identify the cause of the accidents, they can attempt a DC 27 Deception, Diplomacy, or Intimidation check to lure the vexgits out of hiding to talk. Alternatively, they can find the vexgits' lair in the station walls with a DC 27 Survival or DC 29 Perception check.

If the PCs fail to identify or locate the vexgits, the vexgits emerge to confront them, curious about the newcomers. In this case, the PCs only have two social rounds (see below) to win Piq over, as the vexgits are quick to scatter.

## NEGOTIATIONS

Once the PCs make contact with the vexgits, read or paraphrase the following.

Twelve small creatures emerge from the walls, their exoskeletons rattling softly. Six beady eyes gleam on each of their heads, and each carries a small hammer. They glance nervously at the watchtower door, keeping an eye out for the ballistae guards. One of them, several inches taller than the others, with a multilayered set of glasses on his snout, steps forward.

"Well!" he exclaims. "Outsiders, but they haven't come to squish—why not? They don't smell like the green ones out there. Who are you, and what do you want with Piq, un-gineer extraordinaire?" He strikes a dramatic pose, as though expecting admiration.

This encounter uses the Influence subsystem (GM Core 187), as the PCs negotiate with Piq. They have three social rounds before Piq and his companions decide this bout of sabotage is more trouble than it's worth and abandon the premises.

## PIQ

## LEVEL 10

UNIQUE TINY FEY GREMLIN

Devious "un-gineer"

Perception +15

Will +18

**Discovery** DC 22 Nature, DC 25 Society, DC 27 Perception

**Influence Skills** DC 25 Crafting, Engineering Lore, or Thievery (to admire his handiwork); DC 27 Nature (to offer an appealing bribe); or DC 29 Deception, Diplomacy, Intimidation, or Performance

**Influence 4** Piq agrees to help sabotage the ballistae, granting the PCs 1 Sabotage Point but is enticed by the prospect of mayhem and leaves clues about the PCs for the Unbroken Horn guards, gaining them 1 Awareness Point.

**Influence 6** Piq agrees to help sabotage the ballistae, granting the PCs 1 Sabotage Point, and calculates that interfering with them would be bad for his overall health.

**Influence 8** Piq is inspired by the PCs' backing to ambitious heights of destruction, granting the PCs 2 Sabotage Points.

**Resistances** Piq doesn't have a better nature to appeal to, so efforts to invoke honor, justice, or similar virtues increase the DC of a check by 2.

**Weaknesses** Though the ballistae present a tempting target, Piq and his gang have deemed them too risky to tamper with. If the PCs have a way of helping the vexgits' stealth, such as offering them an item to assist or a way to quiet their exoskeletons, this reduces the check's DC by 2.

**Background** More powerful than most of his kin, Piq is a malevolent little gremlin who delights in causing chaos. He fancies himself a "virtuoso" of sabotage and keeps a



Piq



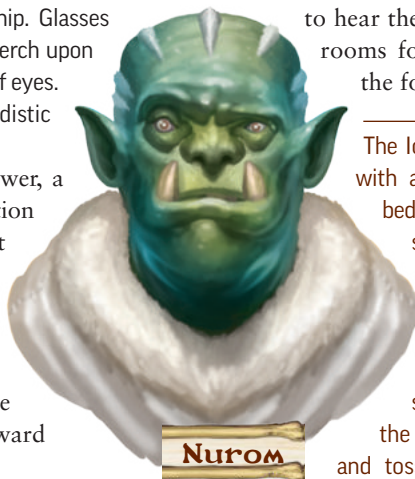
detailed log of all the malfunctions he causes so he can enact even better schemes in the future.

**Appearance** Piq dresses in practical leather garments, with an engineer's toolbag at his hip. Glasses with many dials for magnification perch upon his snout in front of his lowest pair of eyes.

**Personality** calculating, inquisitive, sadistic

**Treasure:** While in the watchtower, a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check spots a hidden compartment in the wall, containing six ballista bolts. Each bolt is enchanted to enhance its piercing capabilities and is worth 50 gp.

**Reward:** For allying with the vexgits to sabotage the ballistae, award the PCs 60 XP.



#### Objective 4: Ice Tooth Rescue

The Ice Tooth Hold has historically favored the Empty Hand Hold, but their lands are geographically cut off by the Unbroken Horn and Wingripper Holds. After the undead uprising at the Torrentmoot, they reluctantly cut a deal with Unbroken Horn to aid them in the conflict, for they doubted assistance from Ardax could make it through. To ensure Ice Tooth's cooperation, Unbroken Horn kidnapped several prominent Ice Tooth orcs' children, including the daughter of First Wrangler Kravog Tuskspear. The children were brought to Wyvernsting as "guests" of the hold.

Naturally, the Ice Tooth Hold isn't happy with this development. A group has come to Wyvernsting to monitor the situation, led by Kravog's brother, **Nurom Tuskspear** (shrewd male orc ranger). Worried about his niece and the other children, Nurom hasn't risked taking any direct action yet, but he's on the lookout for a chance to do so.

Finding this lead alerts the PCs to gossip about the Ice Tooth hostages and a newly arrived group of orcs poking around the Market. Traders from Ice Tooth Hold frequently travel to Wyvernsting, often with captive animals, furs, and ivory in tow. That said, most withdrew when undead began appearing, preferring to reunite with their hold farther north. Thus, Nurom's group has attracted some attention, but not so much that anyone's considered them worth reporting to Unbroken Horn investigators.

Finding the Ice Toths requires a successful DC 25 Diplomacy or Intimidation check to Gather Information; they're holed up in a cheap inn in the Market. Nakasha's group finds them automatically with a day's work, if the PCs set them to this task.

Upon meeting the PCs, Nurom and the other Ice Tooth members are initially wary, but soon recognize they don't belong to Unbroken Horn and are willing to hear them out; they lead the PCs up to their rooms for a discussion. Read or paraphrase the following.

The Ice Toths' rooms are small but well-kept, with a sitting room at the center of several bedrooms. As they enter, the group's leader, a stern orc clad in a thick white cloak, closes the door firmly behind him.

"I'm Nurom Tuskspear," he says, "brother to First Wrangler Kravog of the Ice Tooth Hold." He scowls, snatching a bundle of kindling from the basket near the sitting room's hearth and tossing it into the fire to punctuate the declaration.

"Whoever you are, you're not Unbroken Horn, or I wouldn't be talking to you," he adds, his eyes narrowing. "So. Let's talk."

Nurom relates what happened to the children, as well as what he's learned in his investigations. The children are being kept in a watchtower on the cliffs, guarded by a taiga giant whom Paskis has allied with. He hasn't dared risk their safety with a frontal raid, but the arrival of the PCs gives him an idea. If the PCs attack the watchtower, he and the other Ice Toths can sneak around the back of the tower and free the children while the guards are distracted. He assures them they'll be well rewarded. Once he learns of the PCs' mission here, he also gives his word that once the hostages are rescued, Ice Tooth Hold will join Ardax's banner.

#### TOWER APPROACH

#### TRIVIAL 10

The watchtower is on a cliff overlooking Wyvernsting, providing an excellent view of the nearby paths and ladders. Flying PCs can approach from an unexpected direction without risking being seen, but otherwise, PCs must attempt a DC 27 Deception check to Impersonate, Stealth check to Sneak, or Survival check to find a hidden path up the cliff. On a failure, the watchtower's defenders are ready for trouble and gain a +2 circumstance bonus on their initiative checks.

As the PCs approach the watchtower, read or paraphrase the following.

At the top of the cliffs, above the zigzagging walkways marching their way up the mountain's face, stands a fifty-foot-tall watchtower, offering a commanding view of



Wyvernsting below. The bottom levels are windowless, but its top is open to the sky. A dirt path leads up to the tower from the cliff stairs.

**Hazard:** As the PCs reach the watchtower, they encounter a trap designed to collapse the stairs under any ascending intruders.

## COLLAPSING CLIFF STAIRS


HAZARD 10

MECHANICAL TRAP

**Stealth** DC 32 (trained)

**Description** The stairs' supports are rigged to collapse if the trip wires are triggered, sending a 10-foot section of stairs tumbling down the cliff.

**Disable** DC 25 Crafting or Engineering Lore to shore up the supports, DC 27 Perception to notice the hidden bypass lever in the stair railing, or DC 29 Thievery to disrupt the connecting mechanism

**Structural Collapse**  **Trigger** The trip wires are pulled or severed; **Effect** The wires pull away the mechanisms supporting the stairs, causing them to collapse. Each creature standing on the affected area must attempt a DC 29 Reflex save.

**Critical Success** The creature jumps safely to the cliff and is unaffected.

**Success** The creature jumps to the cliff, but takes 10 bludgeoning damage from the leap.

**Failure** The creature falls to the next section of stairs, 100 feet down the cliff, and takes 50 bludgeoning damage. They can Grab an Edge to avoid falling.

**Critical Failure** As failure, but the fall distance is 200 feet, all the way down the cliff, dealing 100 bludgeoning damage.

## WATCHTOWER BATTLE

MODERATE 10

The PCs have no time to recover after reaching the cliff, as the tower's guards immediately notice them. While the PCs distract the guards, the Ice Tooth orcs break in through the watchtower's back door and usher the captive children to safety.

**Creatures:** An Unbroken Horn raider is stationed at the top of the tower, and a taiga giant patrols its ground floor. If the PCs triggered the trap, the encounter begins with the giant outside to intercept them and the raider already on the ground floor.

## UNBROKEN HORN RAIDER

CREATURE 8

Orc raider (page 88)

**Initiative** Perception +14

## YOUNG TAIGA GIANT

CREATURE 11

Weak taiga giant (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 6, 126)

**Initiative** Perception +21



**Treasure:** The supply crates and weapon racks in the watchtower contain mundane weaponry and survival gear worth 200 gp in total. Additionally, in thanks for their aid, Nurom gifts the PCs his *warden's signet* (*Treasure Vault* 151) and three bottles of mead worth 50 gp each.

**Awareness Points:** For attacking the watchtower, the PCs earn 1 AP.

**Sabotage Points:** When the PCs reconvene with the Ice Toths, Nurom thanks them effusively for their assistance, informing them that Kravog will gladly join Ardax's forces. Additionally, he and his team will remain in the city until the invasion, subtly chipping away at Unbroken Horn's forces. Award the PCs 2 Sabotage Points.

If the PCs haven't yet learned of **Objective 6** (page 37) or **Objective 7** (page 38), Nurom lets them know about these potential avenues of action.

## Objective 5: Provision Dissidents

Not all Unbroken Horn orcs approve of their hold's leadership and plans. In addition to the Hundux loyalists who escaped Paskis's purges when she usurped control, some just believe a unified Belkzen under Ardax offers the region its best chance for strength and stability. These dissidents have been slowly growing in number, spreading their ideas through broadsheets and scrawled graffiti, though they must maintain the utmost secrecy to avoid being found out and killed.

Destroyer's  
Doom

Chapter 1:  
The  
Gathering  
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The largest dissident group operates out of Blacktusk Tavern in Downside, led by a warrior named **Akija** (charismatic female orc rebel). A clever and skilled warrior who'd already distinguished herself in battle as a youth, Akija surprised the Unbroken Horn Hold by entering her adulthood as a woman, rather than a man as was expected of her at birth. Her tenacity soon quieted any detractors. She rose through the hold's loose military hierarchy to command her own unit, but she believes Belkzen would be stronger with a unified, diplomatic approach rather than constant infighting among holds.

Once the PCs hear rumors of Akija's group, they can find them at Blacktusk Tavern with a DC 29 Diplomacy check to Gather Information, DC 32 Deception or Intimidation check to trick or spook information out of those in the know, or a DC 25 Belkzen Lore, Orc Lore, or Underworld Lore check to make friendly contacts among sympathizers. If they fail this check, they can try again, but if they critically fail, they gain 1 AP. When the PCs meet with Akija, read or paraphrase the following.

Seated at a circular table in the corner of the rowdy Blacktusk Tavern is a muscular orc woman with her hair tied back, accompanied by several others. She looks up at the approach of newcomers, raising an eyebrow, and the conversation at the table dies away.

"You move with purpose," she observes, motioning to the empty chairs at the table. "And it seems your purpose is with me. What do you want?"

Akija is wary of spies and traps, making her initially reluctant to trust the PCs. Still, she recognizes that she needs more allies to oust Paskis. If the PCs present proof they're agents of Ardax, such as the *choker of elocution* they received at the war council, she gives them a chance automatically. Otherwise, each PC can attempt a DC 27 Diplomacy, Performance, or Society check to advocate for the groups to work together. If the PCs used Deception or Intimidation to find the dissidents, the DC of this check increases by 2.

Assuming the PCs win her over, Akija offers them a task. Paskis and the Unbroken Horn's elite warriors hoard food for themselves, leaving those outside their inner circle hungry. She asks the PCs to raid a supply warehouse in Hagtooth Hill holding these provisions; the dissidents can use these to provision themselves and distribute the rest to gain support in Wyvernsting.

The warehouse also contains a small armory, and the weaponry within would be a boon to the dissidents.

Akija advises the PCs to avoid an overt attack on the warehouse, instead raiding it either at midday or midnight when it's less guarded. These better match the times when guards enjoy a nap or take meal breaks. Attacking under cover of darkness on its own would be pointless; orcs' darkvision would spoil the typical nighttime advantage applicable to human settlements.

To raid the warehouse, the PCs must attempt skill checks to win Provision Points, using the Victory Points subsystem (GM Core 184). The more Provision Points they earn, the more food and weapons they obtain before sunrise. Each PC can make two attempts to earn Provision

Points, representing their efforts over the course of the night. To earn Provision Points, a PC must attempt a DC 27 skill check. These skill checks can vary depending on your players' tactics; feel free to adapt to their ideas. Suggested skill checks are Athletics (to move barrels and boxes quickly), Crafting (to construct conveyances for the supplies), Deception or Intimidation (to keep patrols away from the area), or Stealth (to sneak the supplies away). If the PCs use spells, magic items, or special abilities, at the GM's discretion, this could provide a +2 circumstance bonus.

**14+ Provision Points** The PCs earn 3 Sabotage Points.

**9-13 Provision Points** The PCs earn 2 Sabotage Points.

**4-8 Provision Points** The PCs earn 1 Sabotage Point.

**0-3 Provision Points** The PCs botch the raid. They earn no Sabotage Points and earn an additional Awareness Point as they're spotted in the attempt.

**Awareness Points:** Raiding the warehouse earns the PCs 1 AP.

**Development:** When the PCs meet up with Akija after the raid, as long as they earned at least 1 Sabotage Point, she agrees to ally with them; otherwise, she decides they'd be more of a liability than a benefit. If allied, Akija's group can assist in finding leads as detailed on page 29. Akija is aware of the lead to **Objective 8** (page 38), which she shares with the PCs. As Unbroken Horn members, the dissidents can also move more freely in Wyvernsting. They can buy or sell valuable high-level gear on the PCs' behalf without earning AP.

**Treasure:** If the PCs earned at least 2 Sabotage Points, Akija gifts them two greater alchemist's fires from the warehouse raid in thanks.





**Reward:** For redistributing the food and arming the dissidents, award the PCs 60 XP.

## Objective 6: Release the Beasts Low 10

The Unbroken Horn Hold uses megafauna and other fearsome beasts in war, either as mounts or as living battering rams loosed on the battlefield to trample their enemies. Wyvernsting also does a brisk trade in selling these creatures. These war beasts and megafauna are stabled in Stockside.

Riptooth Stables (page 73) houses specially trained bulls of Zagresh, the favorite mounts of the Unbroken Horn's elite warriors. The giant bovines are dangerous, difficult to train, and notoriously temperamental. If not properly controlled, they could do a lot of damage to their captors. However, they also pose a hazard to the PCs and surrounding residents. To accomplish this objective, the PCs must not only free the bulls, but guide their path to cause the maximum damage to the Unbroken Horn Hold forces.

To release the bulls of Zagresh from the stable, the PCs must first deal with or sneak past the stablehands, requiring a successful DC 27 Deception or Intimidation check to lure them away or a DC 25 Stealth check from each PC participating. If they fail, they can proceed with the encounter, but earn 1 AP. Next, they must attempt a DC 25 Stabling Lore or DC 27 Thievery check to exploit weak points in their restraints, or a DC 27 Athletics or Nature check to rile the beasts.

**Success** The PCs release all the bulls, sending them stampeding into the streets, and do so unnoticed.

**Failure** The PCs release all the bulls but are spotted and earn 1 additional AP.

**Critical Failure** The PCs release some of the bulls but are spotted before they can finish. They earn 2 additional AP and can only earn a maximum of 1 Sabotage Point from this encounter.

After the PCs release the bulls, read or paraphrase the following.

As the gates of the stable open, the massive bulls stampede through, gouging into the stable walls with the daggerlike points of their horns. In celebration of their sudden freedom—or perhaps in fury at their captivity—the herd bellows as one, charging down the winding streets. Passersby rush to get out of the way, jumping into alleyways, buildings, and anything else resembling cover to evade the stampede.

**Hazard:** Once the PCs free the bulls, they have a different problem: leading them on a rampage among

the rest of the stables while avoiding being trampled. This is structured as a hazard; once the PCs “disable” the stampede, they’ve successfully guided it on a tour of destruction through Stockside and out of Wyvernsting. If the PCs allied with Delka (page 38), they gain a +1 circumstance bonus to skill checks to disable the stampede. They have four rounds to guide the bulls out of Wyvernsting before the stampede escapes their control.

If unchecked, the stampede swerves out of Stockside and cuts a swathe through the Market before it escapes Wyvernsting. For the next two days, attempts to find leads take a –2 circumstance penalty, as the stampede is the main talk of the town, and many shops are closed; during this time, no items above level 5 can be bought or sold in Wyvernsting.

## BULL STAMPEDE


## HAZARD 11

### COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL

**Stealth** +23 (trained) to anticipate the herd's movements

**Description** Agitated aurochs trample through the streets.

**Disable** four DC 27 Athletics, Intimidation, Nature (expert), or Survival (expert) checks to guide the herd, find it paths through Stockside, or keep it in line.

**Rampage**  **Trigger** A creature frees the bulls from the stable; **Effect** The hazard rolls initiative as the bulls stampede.

**Routine** (1 action) The stampede advances, trampling everything in its path. Each creature attempting to control the stampede must attempt a DC 30 Reflex save or be caught up in the stampede, taking 2d12+15 bludgeoning damage; a creature who succeeded at a skill check to disable the hazard this round has a +1 circumstance bonus to the Reflex save.

**Critical Success** The creature takes no damage.

**Success** The creature takes half damage.

**Failure** The creature takes full damage.

**Critical Failure** The creature takes double damage and cannot attempt to disable the hazard next round, as they must spend it extricating themselves from the stampede.

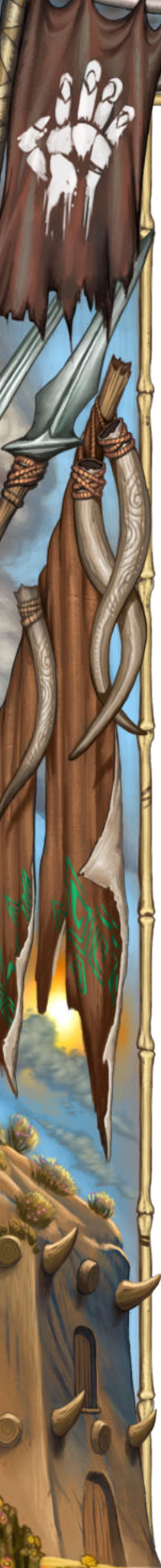
**Awareness Points:** For causing the stampede, the PCs earn 1 AP.

**Sabotage Points:** The PCs earn Sabotage Points equal to the number of successes they obtained on their checks to disable the hazard (to a maximum of 4), representing how well they guided the animals toward worthwhile targets.

## Objective 7: Shoulders of Giants

Much of the Unbroken Horn Hold's success in capturing megafauna in the Algid Wastes is due to their alliance with a small band of taiga giants,





skilled megafauna hunters led by **Delka the Thorn** (grizzled female taiga giant ranger). Delka's band was originally allied with Hundux, but stayed out of the fighting during Paskis's coup, viewing that as the orcs' business. Though they negotiated a new alliance once Paskis took control, rumor has it they might not be entirely pleased with the arrangement. Recently, they seem to be holding themselves aloof from her, sticking close to the Wrangling Grounds.

Delka and her band were indifferent to Hundux's plans to conquer Urgir, as long as he maintained his bargain in trading with them for the megafauna they caught. They've grown disenchanted with Paskis's leadership, however; Delka believes she's too reckless and preoccupied with the loss of her deity to be an effective strategist. Paskis, in turn, often ignores Delka's advice and sends out her own teams to catch megafauna, undercutting the giants. Though Delka hasn't yet seen a viable alternative to Paskis, she'd be open to one, assuming the PCs can win her over.

The taiga giants are a public presence in Wyvernsting and their training grounds are easy to find. When the PCs arrive, read or paraphrase the following.

The large paddock of the Wrangling Grounds is currently occupied by a taiga giant woman wrestling with an enormous saber-toothed tiger almost as large as she is. A crowd of spectators has gathered around the paddock fences to watch the scuffle, cheering her on and exchanging bets. Finally, she pins the tiger to the ground and loops a rope around its neck, handing it off to another giant who leads the creature away.

She shakes her reddish braids out of her face, seemingly indifferent to the crowd's cheers, then takes a swig from the waterskin at her waist, stepping to the side of the paddock.

From their information, the PCs recognize this woman as Delka. They can attempt to convince her to change sides using the Influence subsystem (*GM Core* 187). Although impatient with Paskis, Delka is unsure of the PCs' capabilities and isn't about to risk her band on the whims of untested strangers. She gives them 4 social rounds to make their case.

## DELKA THE THORN

LEVEL 11

UNIQUE HUGE GIANT HUMANOID

Accomplished megafauna hunter

**Perception** +25; see the unseen

**Will** +24

**Discovery** DC 23 Hunting Lore, DC 30 Perception, DC 28 Society

**Influence Skills** DC 23 Hunting Lore (to impress her with hunting knowledge); DC 26 Athletics (to demonstrate one's strength); DC 26 Plains Lore, DC 28 Nature, or DC 28 Survival (to show understanding of the terrain); DC 28 Diplomacy; DC 29 Intimidation; DC 30 Deception

**Influence 4** Delka is skeptical about the PCs' chances and refrains from allying with them, but comments, "If you really want to disrupt their warriors, unleash their beasts on them," giving the PCs the lead to **Objective 6** if they haven't already completed it.

**Influence 6** Delka decides her band would be better off leaving Wyvernsting, offering aid to neither Paskis nor Ardax. The PCs earn 1 Sabotage Point.

**Influence 8** The PCs convince Delka to join Ardax's army when the battle begins, earning 2 Sabotage Points instead of 1.

**Resistances** Delka doesn't appreciate being strong-armed, and threatening her increases the Intimidation DC by 2.

**Weaknesses** Delka has a deep respect for animals and the natural world. Appeals to these interests decrease the check's DC by 2.

**Background** Delka first came to Wyvernsting many years ago from the northern Algid Wastes, after a prolonged drought in her homeland. She believed finding allies among the orcs could help her and her small band survive, and until recently, the alliance was relatively fruitful. Though she makes her home in Wyvernsting, Delka's heart lies in the wilderness, and her hunting trips away from the city are her favorite times of the year.

**Appearance** Delka is a fearsome taiga giant with blood-red hair. Her tusks are etched with scrimshaw patterns.

**Personality** brash, straightforward, pragmatic

**Giants' Aid:** If the PCs ally with her, Delka gives them some megafauna wrangling tips, granting them a +1 circumstance bonus on checks to disable the **Objective 6** hazard if they haven't completed it yet.

**Treasure:** To commemorate their alliance, Delka gives the PCs a greater mistform elixir and a carved obsidian figurine of a warcat of Rull worth 200 gp.

**Reward:** For convincing Delka to stay out of the battle or join Ardax's side, award the PCs 60 XP.

## Objective 8: Targeted Assassination Severe 10

Paskis's lieutenant commander, **Verthok the Reaper**, is a figure who strikes fear in the hearts of Unbroken Horn's enemies; without her, Unbroken Horn's forces would lose morale. Verthok is usually highly protected thanks to her living within Fort Paskis; attacking her there would be suicidal. When they find this lead, however, the PCs hear she's heading on a journey the next morning to investigate what happened to the



Wingrippers after they lost contact with the force at Drowned Flotilla. Ambushing Verthok and her retinue on the road is an excellent opportunity to eliminate her and throw the army into disarray.

This encounter takes place the open road, on a 20-foot-wide stretch of trodden pathway in the mountainous wilderness around Wyvernsting. When the PCs approach Verthok's group, read or paraphrase the following.

The canyons surrounding Wyvernsting are as shadowed as the city itself, even in midday. A group of several figures rides further ahead on the pathway winding through the mountains. One is a heavily armored dromaar woman astride a massive bull, its jagged antlers spanning nearly fifteen feet from point to point. Two armed orcs accompany her on foot.

**Creatures:** Verthok rides a specially trained bull of Zagresh and is accompanied by two Fort Hagtooth guards.

## ELITE BULL OF ZAGRESH

### CREATURE 8

Page 86, *Pathfinder Monster Core* 6

**Initiative** Perception +15

**Rider's Bond** The bull of Zagresh acts on Verthok's initiative while she's mounted. Verthok automatically succeeds at attempts to Command it and doesn't need to spend actions to do so, but it only has two actions per turn while Verthok is mounted.

## FORT HAGTOOTH GUARDS (2)

### CREATURE 9

Orc hunters (page 89)

**Initiative** Perception +19

## VERTHOK THE REAPER

### CREATURE 10

UNIQUE MEDIUM DROMAAR HUMANOID ORC UNHOLY

**Perception** +19; low-light vision

**Languages** Chthonian, Common, Orcish

**Skills** Athletics +22, Intimidation +21, Religion +16, Survival +16, Warfare Lore +15

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

**Items** +1 striking orc necksplitter, +1 striking composite longbow (20 arrows), full plate, steel shield, greater demon mask, 100 gp

**AC** 30; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +15, **Will** +20

**HP** 180

**Blade Ally** In her hands, Verthok's orc necksplitter is a fearsome weapon, and she gains the axe critical hit effect.

**Destructive Vengeance** **Trigger** An enemy within 15 feet damages Verthok; **Effect** Verthok increases the amount of damage she takes by 1d6, and she deals 3d6 spirit or void damage to the triggering enemy. An enemy damaged by Destructive Vengeance takes 4 persistent spirit damage. Until the end of Verthok's next turn, her Strikes against the triggering creature deal 2 extra damage of the type she chose.

**Shield Block** **Trigger**

**Speed** 20 feet

**Melee** **◆** *orc necksplitter* +24 (forceful, sweep), **Damage** 2d8+12 slashing

**Ranged** **◆** *composite longbow* +21 (deadly d10, propulsive, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 2d8+9 piercing



Verthok the Reaper



**Champion Devotion Spells** DC 29, 2 Focus Points; **5th** *cry of destruction, touch of corruption*<sup>APG</sup>

**Bloody Assault** ♦ Verthok makes two melee Strikes, each against a different opponent; her multiple attack penalty applies to these Strikes normally. If both Strikes hit and deal damage, each creature struck takes 2d6 persistent bleed damage.

**Greater Cruelty** ♦ (concentrate, spellshape) If Verthok's next action is to cast *touch of corruption* on a living creature, the target is also enfeebled, clumsy, or stupefied 1 for 1 minute if it fails its save (2 on a critical failure).

**Mask's Glare** ♦♦ (manipulate) Once per day, Verthok can use her *demon mask* to cast 3rd-rank *fear* with a DC of 29.

**Intercepted Communications:** On Verthok's body, the PCs find several letters giving Unbroken Horn orders to undermine Ardax's alliances, including discussion of the Wingripper takeover of the Drowning Sand Hold. The letters aren't signed, but are stamped with an image of a gagged skull. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Religion check or DC 22 Orc Pantheon Lore check recognizes this as the symbol of the Whispering Way, Tar-Baphon's cultists.

Even more worryingly, the letters reference the writer's "allies at the Cenotaph," indicating these individuals "and their half-dead god" are aiding the assault against the Empty Hand. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Belkzen Lore, a DC 20 Orc Lore, or a DC 25 Society check identifies this as a reference to the Death Tower Hold, which has long made its home near a strange black tower in the Tusk Mountains known as the Cenotaph.

**Sabotage Points:** It's up to the PCs how they handle Verthok's disappearance. The lieutenant vanishing into thin air creates a stir, earning the PCs 1 Sabotage Point. If they make a show of her death using the Sow Unease activity (page 26), such as by putting her head on a pike somewhere public in Wyvernsting, they earn 2 additional Sabotage Points from this objective (for a total of 3 Sabotage Points). However, they also gain 1 Awareness Point.

## Objective 9: Wings of Thunder

A legendary thunderbird lives atop the mountains surrounding Wyvernsting. In the past, Hundux made offerings to the thunderbird to obtain their aid in defending the city, but Paskis has been preoccupied with her plans and hasn't done this recently. Once the PCs learn of this, they should realize such a creature would make a valuable ally.

Entreating the thunderbird is less an exacting formula and more a collection of best practices

requiring improvisation. Learning the ritual requires 4 hours of studying traditions and devising a plan, followed by a successful DC 29 Nature or Religion check. Alternatively, the PCs can attempt a DC 27 Diplomacy check to Gather Information at the Temple of Tempests, Wyvernsting's temple of Rull; they can attempt the Diplomacy check again if they fail, but a critical failure earns them 1 AP.

## ENTREAT THUNDERBIRD

## RITUAL 5

**RARE**

**Cast** 1 hour; **Cost** rare incense and offerings worth 300 gp  
**Secondary Casters** 3

**Primary Check** DC 29 Nature or Religion; **Secondary Checks** Diplomacy, Mountain Lore, Nature, or Survival  
**Duration** 1 month

You entreat the thunderbird in the Tusk Mountains to come to your aid. While performing this ritual, the secondary casters can appeal to the thunderbird's pride or tempestuous nature to gain a +2 circumstance bonus to their checks.

**Critical Success** The thunderbird is helpful to the casters for the duration.

**Success** The thunderbird is friendly to the casters for the duration.

**Failure** The thunderbird ignores the entreaty and remains indifferent.

**Critical Failure** The thunderbird takes offense and permanently departs the area.

To attempt the ritual, the PCs must go to the top of the cliffs north of Wyvernsting. Read or paraphrase the following.

The clifftop provides a good view of Wyvernsting spread out below, as well as the surrounding peaks. This far up, the clamor of the city is inaudible, and the only sound is the mountain wind whistling through the peaks.

As the ritual incantation begins, a sharp frisson of electricity runs through the air, and a gale swirls around the tops of the surrounding trees. An immense, black-winged bird, lighting crackling along their wings, lands at the edge of the cliff and tilts their head considerably while the ritual continues.

The thunderbird has no name the PCs could pronounce, and if they insist on hearing it, the beast utters a name comprised only of searing lightning and tumultuous thunderclaps, dealing 3d6 sonic damage to the PCs (DC 30 basic Fortitude save). The thunderbird listens to their request during the ritual. If the PCs make the thunderbird friendly, they agree to aid during an upcoming battle; if the thunderbird



is helpful, they also agree to harry Unbroken Horn's forces in the meantime.

**Sabotage Points:** Succeeding at the ritual earns the PCs 1 Sabotage Point (2 Sabotage Points on a critical success). They can try again if they fail (but not critically fail), though this takes additional time and resources.

**Treasure:** If the PCs win the thunderbird's aid, they extract a *greater thunderbird tuft* (*Secrets of Magic* 169) from their breast and bestows it upon a PC who impressed them.

**Reward:** For appeasing the thunderbird, award the PCs 60 XP.

## THE BATTLE OF WYVERNSTING

After the PCs' time elapses, the alliance army arrives outside the palisades of Wyvernsting at dawn the next day. The time for infiltration is over, and the battle of Wyvernsting is about to begin!

The PCs can join up with Ardax's forces by slipping outside the city gates as the armies prepare for the coming battle; the defenders are more concerned about people getting in than stopping the groups of refugees fleeing the city. Nakasha's team joins them, if they survived, and the PCs might spot other familiar faces in the camp. If they allied with the Ice Tooth Hold or the taiga giants, those groups make their way to Ardax's forces as well. Akija and the dissidents, if the PCs allied with them, remain in Wyvernsting to sabotage Paskis's troops and launch surprise attacks from inside the city.

The Battle of Wyvernsting is a large-scale clash of armies, but it occurs primarily in the background of this adventure; there are no checks the PCs need to make to command troops or cleave through large numbers of common soldiers. Instead, the PCs act as specialists at the battle's periphery, striking the most dangerous threats while their allies fight the rank-and-file troops. As the PCs face their foes, consider describing the flow of battle around them, giving them the sense that they're a key part of a larger fight.

Ardax stands before the arrayed troops and tents, silhouetted in the shadow of the mountains. Behind him, the gates of Wyvernsting have shut tight, and warriors are massing upon the watchtowers. Ardax pays them no mind, looking over his own forces.

"They say Wyvernsting is unconquerable," he barks, his voice pitched to carry across the camp. "They say none can besiege it. For generations, the Unbroken Horn Hold has hidden behind its walls. And now they treat with our enemy—with that same undead tyrant who thought he could use us as his pawns as he exploited our ancestors long ago." A chorus of angry hisses and roars echoes

### SABOTAGE THRESHOLDS

The number of Sabotage Points the PCs earned affects upcoming encounters.

**Low Impact** (0–9 SP): Some of Wyvernsting's defenses are weakened, but the city still holds strong.

**Moderate Impact** (10–20 SP): The PCs have weakened crucial defenses and hampered Wyvernsting's response to the attack.

**High Impact** (21–28 SP): Wyvernsting's defenses are in shambles, significantly weakening Unbroken Horn's position.

through the camp in response. He raises his fist to the sky. "I say Unbroken Horn is about to find out our true strength! Wyvernsting will be ours today!"

The alliance army erupts into cheers, and the warriors hurry into position.

The difficulty of the battle's encounters depends on the PCs' Sabotage Threshold (see sidebar), as indicated in the individual encounters.

**Treasure:** Before the battle, Ardax presents the PCs with a *gorget of the primal roar* in appreciation for their work. He encourages them to wear it and strike fear into Wyvernsting's heart.

### Storming the Parapets

At the beginning of the battle, Ardax directs the ancestor storm toward the cliffs. Read or paraphrase the following.

At Ardax's signal, the skies above Wyvernsting darken as a howling horde of ghostly orcs manifests and whirls over the watchtowers. The city's defenders shoot arrows with little effect. The storm ignores them, instead turning toward the nearby hills. The sea of orc spirits crashes into the slopes, at first seeming to disperse harmlessly against the cliffs. However, a low rattle of breaking rock follows seconds later, heralding the cliff's collapse and growing to a deafening crash as enormous boulders cascade onto a section of Wyvernsting's outer palisade and tear open a breach. Cheering, the orc spirits regroup and descend upon the city. Ardax's commanders wave their banners to signal their army's advance.

With the palisade breached, the battle begins!

### SKIRMISH 1: BREAKING THE LINE MODERATE 10

The PCs' first task is breaking the line of defense that's formed around the gap in Wyvernsting's wall so the





main army can get through. Read or paraphrase the following on their approach.

An Unbroken Horn battalion quickly masses around the gap in the palisade, some moving to cast spells while others heft axes high. Each bears a silver armband emblazoned with the symbol of a bloody double axe, and their teeth are filed into points.

"Death to the invaders!" the defenders roar.

This encounter takes place in front of a massive stretch of wall with a 30-foot gap in between, in otherwise open terrain outside Wyvernsting.

**Creatures:** The walls are defended by a rancorous priesthood troop dedicated to Nulgreth; any PC who's trained or better in Religion recognizes the religious symbol on their armbands. The troop is weakened if the PCs achieved a High Impact with their Sabotage Points. If they achieved a Low Impact, the troop uses the elite adjustment, and it has neither adjustment for Moderate Impact.

If the PCs allied with the thunderbird, the immense creature swoops overhead and briefly joins the encounter; its Perception modifier for initiative is +22. On its turn, the creature swoops about 25 feet over the troop and uses its Lightning Blast ability. This is an area effect dealing 6d6 electricity damage and 6d6 sonic damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save). The thunderbird flies away on the following turn, playing no further role in the encounter.

### WEAK RANCOROUS PRIESTHOOD CREATURE 10

*Pathfinder Monster Core 7, Pathfinder Bestiary 3 213*

**Initiative** Intimidation +19

### RANCOROUS PRIESTHOOD CREATURE 11

*Pathfinder Bestiary 3 213*

**Initiative** Intimidation +21

### ELITE RANCOROUS PRIESTHOOD CREATURE 12

*Pathfinder Monster Core 6, Pathfinder Bestiary 3 213*

**Initiative** Intimidation +23

**Treasure:** The priests' silver armbands are worth a total of 300 gp. A PC who succeeds at a DC 27 Perception check after defeating the troop finds a greater antidote in the pocket of one of the priests.

### SKIRMISH 2: WALKING CLIFFS LOW TO SEVERE 10

As the army breaks through into the city, they're faced with some of the cliffs standing up and advancing toward the army! Read or paraphrase the following.

As armies clash in alleyways and public squares, Wyvernsting's streets fill with fighting. Doors to houses and shops are shut tight, as non-combatants fear to venture out; having been sternly warned against looting, the alliance army focuses on defeating Unbroken Horn.

Suddenly, a crack resounds across the street as portions of the cliff face step away from the mountain, forming into roughly humanoid-shaped piles of stone that take up defensive stances. With a single blow, one of them bats one of the alliance formations backward, sending its members flying several feet into the air before they land painfully in a heap.

**Ancestor Storm:** During this encounter, the PCs are especially close to the ancestor storm. The PCs can use the Lure the Storm special action during this encounter to direct the storm against their enemies. The storm has a +25 modifier for initiative, and during the first turn, it attacks the elementals as though the PCs had successfully Lured the Storm the previous round. The storm only attacks once on its turn, even if multiple PCs successfully use this action.

### LURE THE STORM

**SPIRIT VOID**

**Frequency** once per turn

You call out to the ancestor storm's spirits, exhorting them to attack your enemies. Attempt a DC 25 Orc Lore check, a DC 25 Warfare Lore check, a DC 27 Occultism check, or a DC 27 Religion check.



**Critical Success** On its next turn, the ancestor storm strikes each of the elementals, dealing 10d6 void damage to each (DC 27 basic Fortitude save).

**Success** As critical success, but the ancestor storm's damage is reduced to 5d6.

**Failure** The storm attacks creatures near this encounter but ignores the PCs' current foes.

**Critical Failure** The spirits take offense, dealing 5d6 void damage to PCs as if they were elementals on its next turn.

**Creatures:** These are stone maulers, elemental allies bound to defend Wyvernsting, and their approach threatens to devastate Ardax's front lines. There are two stone maulers present if the PCs achieved a High Impact with Sabotage Points, the highest Sabotage Threshold; two elite stone maulers for Moderate Impact; or three elite stone maulers for Low Impact.

## STONE MAULERS (2)

## CREATURE 9

Pathfinder Monster Core 142

**Initiative** Perception +16

## ELITE STONE MAULERS (2 OR 3)

## CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Monster Core 6, 142

**Initiative** Perception +18

**Treasure:** A *mummified bat* was dropped on the street here by a fallen warrior.

## SKIRMISH 3: STORMING THE FORT

After breaking through Wyvernsting's defensive line, PCs and the army reach the palisade around Fort Paskis. Before beginning this encounter, the PCs can rest for 10 minutes. Once they're ready, read or paraphrase the following.

The sturdy stone keep of Fort Paskis stands atop a hill, surrounded by palisade walls still unbroken in spite of the fighting. Arrayed outside the walls are troops of Unbroken Horn warriors, at least a hundred strong. From the tops of the watchtowers on the walls, siege engines stand ready to fling bolts and rocks down at their foes.

There are three phases to this portion of the battle, as the PCs take their place among the alliance army's leadership. Rather than portraying individual combats, this encounter uses the Victory Point system (GM Core 184) to provide a sweeping view of the overall battle. As the PCs handle these challenges, narrate how the battle evolves in response to their actions and their progress toward taking the fortress. The PCs began their adventures as dispensable diplomats; now, they're leading a battle charge!

## DIMINISHED TROOPS

If the PCs failed to influence the war council, resulting in their army taking the riskier route, the DCs of the skill checks in this encounter are increased by 2, as the army's numbers and morale are diminished.

Each challenge presents a goal for the PCs, providing the PCs various approaches they might take to overcome the challenge with different tactics and skill checks. Each PC can attempt one check for each challenge, though a PC can Aid instead if they wish. The challenges detail likely strategies the PCs might use, but alternative skills could also be applicable, at GM discretion. The total Victory Points earned affect their subsequent encounters, detailed in Scoring the Battle (page 44).

## RALLY THE TROOPS

The PCs rally the army as the fight begins, improving their morale.

**Strategies** The PCs might describe how their army's tactics are superior, give a rousing speech, patch up allies' wounds for the fight ahead, or intimidate their forces into fighting.

**Ideal Skills** Diplomacy (DC 29), Intimidation (DC 27), Medicine (DC 27), Performance (DC 25), Warfare Lore (DC 24)

**Special** If PCs allied with the taiga giants, grant each PC a +2 circumstance bonus to checks to overcome this obstacle. The giants' mere presence grants the orc combatants confidence in their army's strength.

## DESTROY SIEGE ENGINES

The PCs destroy Fort Paskis's siege engines, minimizing the army's losses.

**Strategies** The PCs might smash the ballistae, disable them, or wrest control of them from the fort's defenders.

**Ideal Skills** Athletics (DC 29), Crafting (DC 27), Engineering Lore (DC 24), Intimidation (DC 29), Thievery (DC 31)

**Special** The PCs gain a circumstance bonus to their checks to overcome this obstacle equal to the number of Sabotage Points they earned during **Objective 3** (page 32). This represents the gremlins' ongoing sabotage, causing several ballistae to snap spectacularly while being operated, which launches a few siege engineers from the towers.

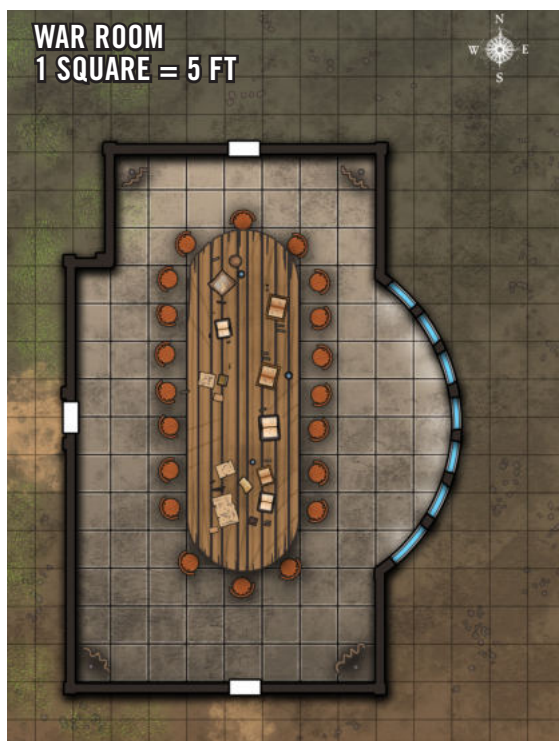
## ROUT DEFENDERS

The PCs lead the army sweeping over Fort Paskis, scattering Unbroken Horn's forces and successfully taking the fort for their own allies.



## WAR ROOM

1 SQUARE = 5 FT



**Strategies** The PCs could come up with a brilliant tactical strategy, terrify the opposing orcs, open doors in their path, or chase down retreating enemies.

**Ideal Skills** Athletics (DC 27), Intimidation (DC 29), Survival (DC 25), Thievery (DC 27), Warfare Lore (DC 22)

**Special** If PCs allied with Akija's dissidents, grant each PC a +2 circumstance bonus to checks to overcome this obstacle. The dissidents launch a flanking attack that helps confuse the defenders.

**Scoring the Battle:** Tally the PCs' Victory Points; their total determines how much support they get when fighting Paskis in **Skirmish 4** (below). If the PCs earned fewer than 8 Victory Points, the alliance forces are stretched thin and can't provide any assistance. If they earned between 9 and 18 Victory Points, warriors from the Empty Hand Hold support the PCs, dealing 3d8 slashing damage to the desert drakes at the start of each round. If they earned 19 or more Victory Points, the army's healers heal the PCs to full HP before they confront Paskis. (These two awards are cumulative.)

**Reward:** For their victory in taking Fort Paskis, award the PCs 80 XP.

### SKIRMISH 4: CONFRONTING PASKIS SEVERE 10

Finally, the PCs reach Paskis's war room on the fort's second floor. As they burst in through the western door, read or paraphrase the following.

A rounded table stands at the center of this room, and a large bay window overlooks the fort's grounds. Four banners with Unbroken Horn's insignia stand on poles in the corners of the room, and more banners and intricate tapestries cover the walls; some appear to be centuries old. Three doors lead into the room, and a murderous-looking axe hangs on a display rack above the door to the south.

An orc woman in red-and-blue leather armor stands in front of the window, surveying the battle below. When the door opens, she turns, a sneer upon her face. Two sand-colored drakes raise their heads and glare hungrily at the new arrivals.

"You upstarts think you can defeat me?" she snarls, drawing knives from her belt. "I'm going to send your flayed skins to White-Hair in a gift box."

**Creatures:** Paskis is accompanied by her two desert drake pets. One rests its head on the table, and the other perches at the northern window to watch the battle, wondering when it will be released to join the fight. Confident in her abilities, Paskis fights the PCs with skirmishing tactics as she dodges around her drakes.

### DESERT DRAKES (2)

### CREATURE 8

*Pathfinder Monster Core* 133

**Initiative** Perception +15

### PASKIS NINE-KNIVES

### CREATURE 11

Page 93

**Initiative** Perception +17

**Treasure:** Ardax grants the PCs the spoils of this room after the battle if they don't claim them here. The axe above the door is a *buzzsaw axe* (*Pathfinder Secrets of Magic* 181) that was once Hundux's; Paskis displays it here as a trophy. A compartment in the table holds a vial of *greater disrupting oil* Paskis obtained as insurance against Tar-Baphon, as well as a pouch of diamonds worth 300 gp.

**Paskis's Escape:** If both drakes are slain or Paskis is reduced below 70 HP, she flees through the nearest door, triggering the next portion of the encounter. She fights here until incapacitated if she's somehow prevented from making her escape.

### A Hasty Retreat

Paskis's flight turns the encounter to a chase (*GM Core* 192) as the PCs pursue her through the battle's chaos toward Ardax's waiting army. To win the chase, the PCs must overcome six obstacles before 8 rounds elapse.



## TRAPPED HALLWAY

## OBSTACLE 10

**Chase Points** 2; **Overcome** DC 25 Acrobatics to evade the traps, DC 27 Perception to spot traps ahead, DC 22 Thievery to disable the traps

Paskis flees down a hallway, activating previously laid traps on her way to discourage pursuit.

## DEFENSIVE LINE

## OBSTACLE 10

**Chase Points** 3; **Overcome** DC 27 Athletics to shove the warriors aside, DC 29 Intimidation to terrify foes, DC 25 Stealth to sneak past

Paskis's remaining warriors cover her retreat.

## COVERING FIRE

## OBSTACLE 10

**Chase Points** 3; **Overcome** DC 27 Acrobatics to dodge attacks, DC 29 Deception to blend in with Unbroken Horn's fleeing forces, DC 25 Arcana or Religion to form a magical barrier

Unbroken Horn archers open fire on the PCs as they pursue Paskis outside.

## WAR-TORN TERRAIN

## OBSTACLE 10

**Chase Points** 2; **Overcome** DC 27 Perception to find a path through, DC 29 Intimidation to clear a path, DC 22 Warfare Lore to analyze the flow of battle

The battle for Wyvernsting rages as Unbroken Horn makes its last stand, making navigation difficult.

## GUIDE ROUTE

## OBSTACLE 10

**Chase Points** 3; **Overcome** DC 29 Deception to feint guidance to a different route, DC 27 Nature to use the terrain against her, DC 25 Survival to anticipate route and cut off avenues of escape

As Paskis flees, the PCs must guide her straight to Ardax.

## CUT OFF ESCAPE

## OBSTACLE 10

**Chase Points** 2; **Overcome** DC 29 Crafting to create barrier, DC 27 Diplomacy or Performance to rally troops, DC 22 Warfare Lore to make a perimeter

Paskis realizes she's been cornered as she nears Ardax and searches for a way out.

**Last Stand:** If the PCs win the chase, they guide Paskis's retreat straight to Ardax. Read or paraphrase the following.

Bloodied and exhausted, Paskis glances around the battlefield, searching for an escape, but her route is cut off by the alliance forces. From behind the front lines, Ardax emerges, seemingly unarmed, and strides toward her. She spits blood to the side and tightens her grasp on her knife. With her last remaining strength, she launches herself at Ardax, aiming her blade for his throat.

## THE FINAL BLOW

The showdown with Paskis is presented in two stages, a combat and a chase, after which Ardax slays her. This is meant to give the PCs time to shine while emphasizing they're part of a larger effort, but if you believe your players would object to an NPC striking Paskis down, feel free to let them reengage in combat after they corner her.

Ardax swiftly dodges, drawing a sword as if from thin air, and slashes her across the chest. Paskis shrieks in fury and pain, wobbling for a moment before falling facedown into the mud. A silence falls over the witnesses as Ardax nudges her body over with his boot, examining her closely.

"Dead," he announces, straightening up, "though I think our friends here did most of the work!"

If the PCs lose the chase, Paskis escapes. Wyvernsting still falls to the alliance, but she might show up seeking revenge later, at the GM's discretion.

**Treasure:** Since the PCs chased Paskis into his blade, Ardax urges them to take her gear for themselves. He also awards them a share of the loot from Unbroken Horn's lieutenants, an assortment of jewelry and battle accoutrements worth a total of 500 gp.

**Reward:** For chasing Paskis down, award the PCs 80 XP.

## Aftermath

In the battle's aftermath, the alliance establishes control of Wyvernsting. If the PCs allied with Akija, she takes over as hold leader, renaming the hold to Phoenix Ash and formally allying with Ardax; otherwise, the survivors scatter to other holds. Regardless, the hold of Unbroken Horn is no more.

As the PCs and Ardax sort through Paskis's documents, these confirm she was working with Tar-Baphon. More troublingly, they name Zagresh—"or what's left of him"—as another ally of the Whispering Tyrant, indicating that he and Death Tower are fueling the undead uprisings across Belkzen. Depending on what hints they uncovered earlier in the adventure, the PCs may have already suspected this, but the confirmation points them toward their next course of action.

For now, however, Ardax recommends they get some rest, as they've had a long day of fighting, and suggests the council discuss a plan of action for Death Tower in the morning.





## Chapter 3: Whispers of Death

The morning after the battle, the alliance awakens to find the ancestor storm has broken loose of Ardax's control and is swirling toward the Tusk Mountains, the Death Tower Hold's territory. Given the PCs' discoveries, Ardax suspects that the ancestor storm is moving toward whatever remains of Zagresh and fears the loss of the ancestor storm's power bodes ill.

The exhausted and battle-worn alliance army is in no position to go into the mountains chasing after ghosts, needing to keep hold of Wyvernsting and stabilize the coalition. Ardax looks to the PCs to follow up on the situation with the ancestor storm, as he needs to remain with the alliance. He asks them to search Death Tower's hold, break whatever control they have over the undead of Belkzen, and ultimately put a stop to the Whispering Tyrant's plans. He

recommends they start at the Cenotaph, near Death Tower's main encampment. While Ardax promises to send reinforcements when he can, he's not certain how long it'll take for the alliance to be stable enough to do so. For now, the PCs are on their own.

### DEATH TOWER'S PLANS

When their slain god returned, the Death Tower Hold relocated from their encampment near the Cenotaph to a stronghold further into the mountains. Frustrated by his setbacks and weakened state, Zagresh is summoning the ancestor storms to consolidate his power, hoping their spiritual energy will fuel his ascension. Complicating matters is the presence of Tar-Baphon's agents, who are ostensibly at the stronghold to help Zagresh regain his divinity. In actuality,



the agents, led by **Jagremaal** (fanatical female wight commander), plan to “harvest” the Carcass Man once he’s gained enough power, directing it to Tar-Baphon instead. To that end, they’ve isolated the Carcass Man from his devoted disciples, indicating it’s necessary for the ritual to regain his godhood, and created several locus points within the stronghold linking the Carcass Man to Tar-Baphon. Once Tar-Baphon is ready or if the Carcass Man is slain, these loci will activate, siphoning Zagresh’s remaining essence to the Whispering Tyrant.

Some of the Death Tower members have grown suspicious, including their high priest and de facto leader Ungukk Fleshdredge. The ritual to bind the remnant of Zagresh to the Carcass Man nearly killed Ungukk; he still hasn’t recovered his full strength but had to take charge of the hold after the disappearance of its former leader, **Bugark Zomash** (brutal male orc antipaladin). Bugark left on a pilgrimage to a remote shrine of Zagresh several weeks ago but hasn’t returned. Jagremaal suggested he was ambushed by Empty Hand forces, but Ungukk—correctly—suspects treachery. Most of the hold’s warriors and necromancers are in the field controlling undead on Tar-Baphon’s behalf, so Ungukk has had few resources to investigate or challenge his supposed allies. He’s concerned about the purpose of the loci but hasn’t risked attracting notice by tampering with them.

## TRAIL THROUGH THE TUSK

The route to the Cenotaph winds into the southern Tusk Mountains, crossing the Flood Road, about 200 miles from Wyvernsting. The PCs’ trip is mostly uneventful, though if they’re behind on XP or you wish to spice up the journey, feel free to include additional encounters with mountain denizens or roaming undead. It takes roughly four days to get to the base of the Tusk Mountains and another four to navigate through the dangerous peaks to the Cenotaph.

### Event 6: Hungry Drakes Low 11

On the PCs’ second day in the mountains as they’re packing up their camp in the morning, they’re accosted by a gang of frost drakes. The increased necromantic activity around the Cenotaph drove the drakes out of their usual territory by. Read or paraphrase the following.

The air is thin and cold this high up in the mountains and several inches of snow cover the ground, glittering in the sunlight. As the last of the camp supplies are packed away to continue the journey, several draconic creatures swoop down from higher in the peaks. Their bodies gleam with a blue inner light and frost puffs off their wings as they leer down hungrily.

“They’re all puny, Dixagor,” one complains, eyeing the campers. “You said they’d be good food.”

“I said they *might* be good food,” the one leading the pack retorts. “Won’t know till we eat ‘em.”

“Hey, you!” another asks. “Are you good food?”

“Anything’s better than no food,” Dixagor grumbles. He bares his fangs but seems skeptical as he considers his potential meal.

**Creatures:** Dixagor and the other drakes are hungry and irritable, but don’t immediately attack the PCs, instead sizing them up to see if they’d make an easy meal. The PCs can attempt a DC 28 Intimidation check to frighten off the drakes, a DC 23 Mountain Lore or DC 26 Survival check to suggest areas where food would be more plentiful, or a DC 30 Diplomacy check to appease them. On a failure, the drakes attack.

If combat breaks out, the encounter takes place on an open mountain plateau, and the snowdrifts create difficult terrain.

### ELITE FROST DRAKES (4)

### CREATURE 8

*Pathfinder Monster Core* 6, 132

**Initiative** Perception +16

**Languages** Common, Draconic

**The Drakes’ Report:** If the PCs talk the drakes down, they mention the only food they’ve come across lately was a frozen orc corpse higher in the mountains but complain he was “barely a morsel” and they didn’t bother to eat him. The drakes also report the wildlife around the “black pillar” has rapidly been falling to undeath, expressing disdain for the taste of such creatures. If the PCs ask about the orc corpse, they describe a male orc in heavy armor but don’t know or care how he died.

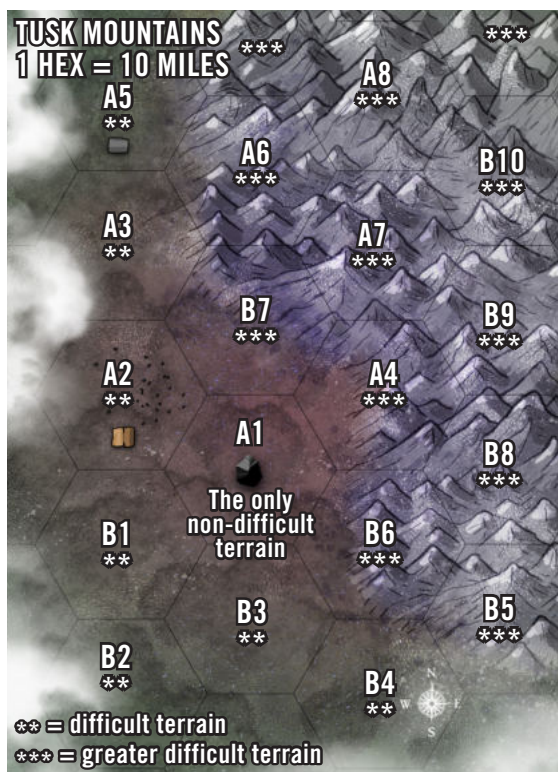
**Reward:** Learning the drakes’ information awards the PCs XP as if they’d defeated them in combat.

### In the Cenotaph’s Shadow

The Cenotaph is an ancient structure of necromantic power and mysterious origin that Tar-Baphon used to raise an undead army when he first plagued Avistan. When the PCs reach the Cenotaph, read or paraphrase the following.

Over a perilous mountain pass, a black stone pillar over a hundred feet high comes into view on the edge of the steep cliffs above. The pillar is smooth and featureless, save for its enormous gates and a strange pair of doors halfway up the tower. A perilous stone bridge leads to the entrance, daring anyone to approach.





At the base of the cliff is a sprawling encampment with enough tents and buildings to house dozens. There's no sign of life or movement; the encampment appears entirely abandoned, though no corpses or indications of violence mar its paths. The lack of birdsong indicates even the wildlife seems to have forsaken this place.

A PC who makes a successful DC 28 Society or relevant Lore check knows that though Tar-Baphon led his armies out of the Cenotaph, the structure is much older than the lich himself.

To find the Death Tower Hold, the PCs must search the terrain around the Cenotaph using the hexploration rules (*GM Core* 206). While exploring, they might come across various encounters; see the Tusk Mountains hexploration map above. The hexes are mountain terrain and most are difficult terrain, requiring 2 Travel or Reconnoiter activities to traverse or survey. Some hexes are greater difficult terrain, as the mountainsides are even steeper in these areas, and require 3 Travel or Reconnoiter activities. Temperatures are chilly in the mountains, ranging from mild cold during the day to severe cold at night, though at this level, the PCs likely have multiple options to survive the harsh environment. If the PCs go into a border hex that has no encounters, redirect them by letting them find traces of an ancestor storm heading towards A8.

## Major Encounters

The following locations contain major encounters (see Exploring the Area on page 49).

### A1. CENOTAPH BASE

Other than the cliffs upon which the Cenotaph looms, this area is a relatively flat plateau in comparison to its surroundings and only requires 1 Travel activity to traverse. The PCs can investigate the encampment with 1 Reconnoiter activity, but there's little of interest. The Death Tower Hold's departure appears to have been orderly and intentional, with no sign of violence and no supplies left behind. A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Survival check to Track spots faded traces of a large group of humanoid tracks moving north, toward A2.

Examination of the buildings confirms the encampment is abandoned. While exploring, a PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Occultism or Religion check detects traces of a massive amount of necromantic energy in the largest building, indicating it was the site of a powerful ritual. If the PCs enter the building, read or paraphrase the following.

Chalk lines cover the floor to form intricate circles and magical script. Parts of the room are charred by traces of magical backlash and old bloodstains trickle towards the doorway.

The PCs can examine the faded spell circles and inscriptions on the floor, requiring a DC 28 Occultism or Religion check to Decipher Writing. On a success, they identify the ritual as intended to seal the spiritual essence of an entity into a pre-existing physical form.

If the PCs investigate the Cenotaph, they find it stubbornly sealed and resistant to both magical and non-magical intrusion. A PC who touches the wall or doors of the Cenotaph witnesses a vision of Tar-Baphon striding inside and later emerging triumphantly with a mass of undead behind him.

**Treasure:** While most of the supply crates around the camp are empty, one contains valuable ores worth 150 gp. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check finds a *needle of undeath* (page 83) hidden between some moldering mundane papers on the floor of the ritual-site building.

### A2. GIANT'S GRAVEYARD

### MODERATE 11

This hex is cold and snowy, and the air is thin. The landscape is rougher than that of the abandoned Cenotaph base, making it difficult terrain. When the PCs Reconnoiter this hex, they find the domain of a tomb giant who's taken up residence in the area. Read or paraphrase the following.



Spread out before an abrupt escarpment is a graveyard containing dozens of headstones. They appear ancient with illegible inscriptions, and some are nearly weathered down to nubs. In spite of the headstones' age, recent furrows in the snow look quite fresh.

A large cottage, its door twice the height of an average human, is tucked under a stony overhang close by. Unlike the headstones, it's in good condition, and a wisp of smoke puffs from its chimney.

**Creatures:** This is the home of **Kastyan** (reclusive female tomb giant hermit), a necromantic scholar studying the nearby Cenotaph. Though grouchy upon receiving visitors, Kastyan begins indifferent to the PCs; they can attempt a DC 23 Deception, Diplomacy, or Religion check to Make an Impression on her. If they improve her attitude to friendly and ask about the Death Tower Hold, she tells them she saw some orcs heading west several months ago accompanied by groups of what appeared to be sentient undead. She overheard them discussing "tending to Zagresh," which intrigued her, as she knew Zagresh had been slain, but she was unable to contact them to ask for more information.

Kastyan isn't involved with the Whispering Tyrant's aims as she has little interest in answering to a more powerful necromancer and has no knowledge of his plans. If the PCs inquire about Death Tower's direction, she tells them the orcs continued directly north toward **A3**. Kastyan knows about the shrine to Zagresh in **A5** and suggests Death Tower may have been headed there.

If Kastyan becomes hostile, she takes offense to the PCs' presence and attacks, calling her undead minions to rise from the graveyard to aid her. This combat takes place on open, snowy terrain near a cliff, outside Kastyan's cottage.

## SKELETAL HULKS (2)

## CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Monster Core 313

**Initiative** Perception +16

## KASTYAN

## CREATURE 12

Female tomb giant (Pathfinder Bestiary 3 110)

**Initiative** Perception +25

**Treasure:** If the PCs make Kastyan helpful, she not only offers them shelter for the night but gifts them a *horn of exorcism* she found on the body of an explorer years ago.

**Reward:** Getting information with Kastyan earns the PCs XP as if they'd defeated her and her skeletons in combat.

## EXPLORING THE AREA

There are different types of encounters the PCs will face as they search for the Death Tower Hold. The following summarizes the encounters and where to find them.

**Major Encounters (page 48):** Encounters marked with A are relevant to the PCs' mission, hold valuable information, or pose a serious threat.

**Minor Encounters (page 52):** Encounters marked with B are inherent to the environment, relate less to the PCs' mission, and are less dangerous.

**The Ancestor Storms (page 53):** As Zagresh gathers ancestor storms to himself, the PCs must deal with its environmental effects starting on their 11th day of travel.

## A3. THE CONTINUED TRAIL

This hex largely consists of unremarkable snowy difficult terrain, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Survival check to Track while Reconnoitering the hex finds faded traces of Death Tower's trail leading toward **A6**.

**Treasure:** If the PCs succeed at a DC 28 Perception check while exploring the hex, they find the remains of a mountaineering party half-encased in ice. The supplies in their backpacks are ruined, but one of them carries an intact *moderate potion of cold resistance* in their pocket.

## A4. TREACHEROUS PEAKS

## SEVERE 11

As the PCs explore, the terrain gets steeper and more mountainous to the east; this hex is greater difficult terrain. The following encounter triggers if the PCs Travel or Reconnoiter here and takes place on an open plateau. Read or paraphrase the following.

The mountain plateau is windswept and barren, the wind having blown any snow further down the peaks. Two mammoths appear to graze at the rocky soil, shambling slowly. As they move closer, it becomes clear that their trunks are rotted, and the white gleam of bone is visible beneath their hides. Dead, milky eyes stare forward unblinkingly as the enormous creatures suddenly charge.

**Creatures:** Two zombie mammoths, animated by recent surges of necromantic energy in the area, roam this plateau. They attack as soon as they notice the PCs and mindlessly fight until destroyed.

## ZOMBIE MAMMOTHS (2)

## CREATURE 11

Book of the Dead 173

**Initiative** Perception +17



**Hazard:** As soon as the PCs defeat the zombie mammoths, they see more shambling toward them from the other side of the plateau. But the zombie horde isn't the main problem: the avalanche behind them is! Read or paraphrase the following.

Another group of zombie mammoths shuffles forward to attack but an ominous rumble comes from above, heralding a sudden cascade of snow and ice from the heights of the peaks. The rush of oncoming snow sweeps away the mammoth horde, knocking the ungainly creatures off their feet and carrying them toward the edge of the drop down the mountainside. Snow continues rushing forward in a mighty blast, sweeping away anything in its path.



## TUSK MOUNTAINS AVALANCHE


## HAZARD 11

### ENVIRONMENTAL

**Stealth** DC 26 (trained)

Snow and ice gathered at the peaks of the mountain come crashing down in an explosive wave.

**Disable** three DC 34 Crafting or Engineering Lore (expert) to create cover for a 10-foot square area and shelter from the avalanche; a flying creature can attempt a DC 29 Acrobatics check to Maneuver in Flight to avoid the avalanche

**Cascade**  **Trigger** The zombie mammoth horde moves beneath the peaks; **Effect** An avalanche of snow and ice cascades down the mountainside at astonishing speed. All creatures on the ground within a 200-foot radius must attempt DC 30 Reflex saves.

**Critical Success** The creature takes no damage.

**Success** The creature takes 4d6 bludgeoning damage and 4d6 cold damage.

**Failure** The creature is swept away, moving 200 feet down the mountainside, and takes 8d6 bludgeoning damage and 8d6 cold damage.

**Critical Failure** As failure, but the creature is also buried, taking an additional 2d6 bludgeoning damage and then 1d6 cold damage per minute of burial. Locating a buried creature requires a DC 28 Perception or Survival check; once located, a buried creature can be extricated with a DC 28 Athletics check in one round or dug out with a DC 23 Athletics check with 4 minutes of work.

## A5. SHRINE TO ZAGRESH

Hidden within the difficult terrain of rocky outcroppings and hills in this hex is a remote shrine to Zagresh. This was Bugark's intended destination, though he never made it. Finding the shrine while

Reconnoitering requires a DC 26 Perception check to find a hidden feature; the DC decreases by 4 if the PCs learned of the shrine from Kastyan. If the PCs find the shrine, read or paraphrase the following.

This rough-hewn wooden building is perched atop a rocky outcropping, flanked by withered pine trees. Inside, a simple firepit sits at the center of the room with a low, comfortable flame heating a small pot. Set up against the back wall is a wide altar being cleaned by an elderly orc woman whose clothing bears careful embroidery of various weapons. She looks up in surprise, her expression quickly warming.

"Come to pay your respects to the Destroyer, have you? Very good of you, faithful children. Lay your offerings on the altar so that our lord may know we remember him."

**Higgra:** Higgra Heartslain is a retired warrior who took to tending the shrine when she was widowed. She knows nothing of Zagresh's current state or plans but excitedly explains that the altar leaks blood at times, perhaps retaining part of Zagresh's power despite his demise. If a PC destroys an object on the altar as an offering, she is friendly to the group and lets them move about freely. If the PCs refuse, they must make a DC 28 Diplomacy check so she will allow them to investigate the altar.

**The Altar:** A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Religion check while examining the altar realizes it's active, confirming Zagresh still exists. They also sense some odd spiritual tethers emanating from the shrine. Though the PCs have no way of knowing yet, these tethers are linked to the essence loci in the stronghold (see Essence Loci on page 57). Higgra can confirm that the altar sometimes gives her a feeling of strength, though this is a recent phenomenon.

After a PC investigates the altar, a sudden roar echoes through the shrine. Read or paraphrase the following.

Higgra falls to her knees in reverence as the walls shake. The flame in the firepit goes bright then retracts into a dim glow. The shadow of the altar warps into the shape of an enormous figure with two heads and three arms, waving its fists in anger. The shadow faces those in the room with four sharp, glowing red eyes and roars once more before fading back into a normal shadow, the flames in the firepit crackling comfortably as if nothing had happened.

A PC who makes a successful DC 28 Perception or Religion check notices another, more skeletal



shadow with large horns was lurking behind the two-headed silhouette.

**Treasure:** Hanging on the shrine's wall is a pair of +2 *greater striking handwraps of mighty blows* for priests to use when smashing items upon the altar. Higgra freely offers them to the PCs, believing the shadowy vision was a sign of Zagresh's blessing.

## A6. ICY HAND OF DEATH LOW 11

This hex is steep and treacherous, with layers of snow and ice sloping up the mountainsides, making it greater difficult terrain. When the PCs Reconnoiter this hex, they find Bugark's body with a successful DC 28 Perception check to find a hidden feature. If they talked to the frost drakes, the DC decreases by 4 as they recognize the terrain the drakes described.

Chipping the body out of the ice to examine it requires 10 minutes of work. The corpse wears custom armor and clutches a bloodstained religious symbol of Zagresh; a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Orc Lore or DC 28 Society check identifies the corpse as Bugark. With a successful DC 26 Medicine check, the PCs can determine that he was slain by thousands of gnawing bites festering with necromantic energy; Bugark was killed by a feral skull swarm now in area C9.

**Creatures:** As the PCs examine the corpse, Bugark suddenly rises to attack, reanimated by rage and necromantic energy as a powerful ice mummy.

A PC can spend an action in combat to attempt a DC 23 Orc or Orc Pantheon Lore, DC 28 Religion, or DC 30 Intimidation check. On a success, Bugark calms and takes no hostile actions on his next turn, instead answering three questions to the best of his fragmented ability.

**Who are you?** "I am Bugark Zomash, leader of the Death Tower."

**How did you die?** "Those damn biting skulls. That damn Jagremaal! I know that witch sent them to kill me, she feared my power and my influence."

**Who is Jagremaal?** "Jagremaal leads the followers of Tar-Baphon. She promised to aid Zagresh but I don't trust her."

**What is Zagresh's current state?** "The Destroyer was placed into a vessel. He is still regaining his power, but soon he will return to his rightful place and crush those who defied him."

**Where is the Death Tower Hold?** "We retreated to a stronghold in the northeast, but two days' journey from here."

**What is Tar-Baphon's plan?** "Damned if I know, but I doubt he truly means to serve the Destroyer. He's using us, but for what, I don't know."

After this round, Bugark resumes hostilities; the PCs can attempt further checks to pacify him, but the DC increases by 2 each time they speak with him. Once he answers three rounds of questions, he loses patience and cannot be calmed again.



Bugark

## BUGARK CREATURE 12

UNIQUE MEDIUM COLD MUMMY UNDEAD

**Perception** +22; darkvision, snow vision

**Languages** Chthonian, Common, Necril, Orcish

**Skills** Deception +22, Intimidation +23, Occultism +21, Religion +23, Stealth +20

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

**Items** +1 *striking maul*, religious symbol of Zagresh worth 100 gp, +1 *resilient splint mail*

**Snow Vision** Bugark ignores the concealed condition from falling snow.

**AC** 32; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +18, **Will** +22

**HP** 211, void healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** fire 10; **Resistances** cold 10

**Reactive Strike** ➤ Bugark can use Reactive Strike when a creature within his reach uses a concentrate action, in addition to its normal trigger. He can disrupt triggering concentrate actions, and it disrupts actions on any hit, not just a critical hit. (*Monster Core* 359)

**Speed** 20 feet

**Melee** ➤ *maul* +27 (magical, shove), **Damage** bludgeoning plus 2d6 cold

**Melee** ➤ *fist* +27 (agile, magical), **Damage** 2d12 bludgeoning plus 2d6 cold

**Frozen Breath** ➤➤ (cold, concentrate, divine) Bugark exhales a 60-foot cone of razor-sharp ice that deals 6d6 cold damage and 5d6 slashing damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save). Bugark can't use Frozen Breath again for 1d4 rounds.

**Intimidating Strike** ➤➤ Bugark makes a melee Strike. If he hits and deals damage, the target is frightened 1, or frightened 2 on a critical hit.

**Smite** ➤ Bugark chooses one enemy he can see. Until the start of his next turn, his Strikes against that foe using his maul deal an extra 6 spirit damage with the unholy trait. If the chosen enemy attacks him before the start of his next turn, the duration extends to the end of that enemy's next turn. If the enemy continues to attack him, the duration continues to extend.



### A7. ABANDONED HERMITAGE

This hex is full of snow and rocky inclines, making it greater difficult terrain. During exploration, the PCs find an abandoned cabin that was once the abode of a mountain hermit. The hermit never returned, but the cabin is still habitable. PCs who investigate the cabin find a map of **A5**, detailing the hermit's survey of the area. If the PCs have this map, they don't need to attempt a Perception check to find the shrine in **A5**.

**Treasure:** A 6th-rank *scroll of field of life* is tucked into the desk's drawer, and several pots of medicinal herbs worth a total of 50 gp sit on the dresser.

### A8. DEATH TOWER STRONGHOLD

After infusing Zagresh's essence into the Carcass Man, Death Tower and Tar-Baphon's agents retreated to this location, viewing it as more defensible due to the greater difficult terrain from the crags and cliffs. This stronghold is built into the side of a mountain and its entrance is difficult to find, requiring a DC 28 Perception check to find a hidden feature. The DC of this check increases by 2 with each subsequent attempt. The exterior door is unlocked, as Death Tower wasn't expecting anyone to find them in such remote environs, leading into **C1** (page 54).

### Minor Encounters

The following locations contain minor encounters (see Exploring the Area on page 49).

#### B1. OLD RUINS

This hex is difficult terrain littered with pieces of ancient ruins. A DC 30 Society check reveals that the ruins appear to be Thassilonian in origin. Upon searching the ruins, the party can find a tiny noqual chunk worth 200 gp.

#### B2. FROST DRAKE AMBUSH

A den of frost drakes lives among the rocky hills and attempts to steal some of the party's rations or fly off with any animal companions that might make a good meal. A successful DC 28 Intimidation check scares them off; on a failure, the drakes get away with 1d4 rations. If a PC willingly gives them a ration, the frost drakes will stand guard for the camp in thanks and point the party north to seek "other two-legs."

#### B3. PERFECTLY PLANNED

Reconnoitering this hex reveals a hidden tunnel to one of the hoards of an omen dragon named Javasthu. There is a prominent note directly addressed to the PCs that says, "For a faster trip!" along with a crude map that indicates **B4** where the aurochs herd resides.

The PCs may each acquire one common item up to level 9 from this hoard, or an uncommon item with the orc trait per the GM's discretion.

### B4. FREEZING GRASSLAND

This hex is occupied by a small herd of wild aurochs that have acclimated to the cold. The party can make a series of three DC 25 Nature or other relevant checks to try to tame the herd. On a success, the herd willingly serves as mounts for the party, doubling their travel speed, but will not stay in dangerous situations without more successful Nature checks.

### B5. STARVING TRAVELER

LOW 11

This hex is barren mountains and sheer cliffs, creating greater difficult terrain. If the party chooses to Reconnoiter, they discover the frozen body of an emaciated orc.

**Hazard:** The ghost of a lost orc who starved to death haunts this hex, inducing ravenous hunger in those who witness its plight. The haunt triggers when someone comes within 10 feet of the corpse.

### DESPERATE HUNGER

HAZARD 12

*Book of the Dead* 67

**Stealth** DC 35 (master) to feel an odd sense of hunger

**Treasure:** Once the haunt has been disabled, the party can check the body to find the orc was wearing *aurochshide armor* (page 82).

### B6. WOODLAND GROVE

This hex is greater difficult terrain, climbing upwards into freezing cold peaks, and the location of a large grove of evergreen trees. The wildlife is plentiful, granting a +1 circumstance bonus to hunt and forage while camping in the area.

### B7. ANCIENT SHRINE

This hex is greater difficult terrain. Reconnoitering uncovers a tiny, worn down shrine with little to indicate whom it was devoted to. A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Religion check can't determine the deity but concludes that the shrine is meant to grant protection to travelers. Leaving an offering at the shrine heals a PC of any conditions they have and magically fills them with warmth and energy, meaning they do not need food or sustenance for 1d6 days.

### B8. ABANDONED GIANT HOUSE

This hex of frigid mountain cliffs is greater difficult terrain. A frost giant's abandoned home hides here, made completely of solid ice. Though the home



doesn't keep out the cold, the party can set up camp inside. If the party is low on treasure, they can find potions and trinkets of the GM's choice stored in a large crate.

## B9. SECRET HOT SPRING

**MODERATE 11**

The overgrown trees, steep inclines, and high piles of snow make this area greater difficult terrain. Amidst the frozen mountains is a small hot spring guarded zealously by a snow oni named Yashiro. Finding the hot spring while Reconnoitering requires a DC 26 Perception check to find a hidden feature.

Yashiro starts off unfriendly and is uninterested in sharing his precious hot spring. If the party camps nearby, he does not attack them unless the party attacks him first or uses the hot spring without permission.

If a PC succeeds at a DC 31 Deception or Diplomacy check to Make an Impression, Yashiro becomes indifferent and reluctantly allows them to dip their feet in the hot spring, which staves off the effects of the cold and removes fatigue. On a critical success, the party is allowed to fully bathe in the hot spring which has the additional effect of granting cold resistance 7 for the rest of the adventure. Bribing Yashiro automatically succeeds at improving his attitude, and multiple bribes count as a critical success.

## YASHIRO

**CREATURE 13**

Male snow oni (*Monster Core* 253)

**Initiative** Perception +26

## B10. MAMMOTH HERD

**LOW 11**

In the massive frozen cliffs and hidden caves of this hex dwells a herd of mammoths unimpeded by the greater difficult terrain of the area. The herd lives in a large cliffside cave that has a heated pool within, which nourishes large patches of edible plants the mammoths thrive on. The creatures are easily spooked but calmed by a DC 28 Nature check; once they've been befriended, they allow the party to shelter with them, and a PC can forage the plants to feed the party or replenish a ration.

Conversely, the party can take advantage of finding a source of protein to have a feast by slaughtering the mammoths. If the PCs kill even one mammoth, the rest of the herd flees in terror and will not return until they leave, though one mammoth is more than plenty to feed the group and have plenty of leftovers. A PC can make a DC 28 Survival check to prepare leftover meat as rations, but the meat cannot be quickly dried in the icy weather conditions except through magical means and must be consumed sooner than later unless the party has a way to properly store it.

## MAMMOTHS (2)

**CREATURE 10**

*Monster Core* 150

**Initiative** Perception +18

## The Ancestor Storms

If the PCs are still exploring the area after 10 days, the roiling ancestor storms begin to overtake the area and infect it with unnatural phenomena. On the 11th day of hexploration, a supernatural blizzard hits the mountains and the PCs must shelter for the day or suffer from necrotic hail, taking 2d6 void damage plus 1d6 cold damage every hour. Each consecutive day of hexploration, a random effect from the ancestor storm occurs. Roll 1d6 on the following table to see what effects the PCs must deal with.

## ANCESTOR STORM EFFECTS

1d6	Description
1	Wailing spirits harangue the party, making it impossible to rest at night. The PCs become fatigued unless the spirits are dealt with (DC 26 Religion or Occultism, DC 28 Diplomacy, or DC 30 Intimidation check).
2	Lightning strikes every three hours, each time forcing a random PC to make a DC 28 Reflex save or take 2d10 electricity damage until the party takes shelter.
3	The party is plagued by nightmares of the deceased, who scream for help as a dark figure tears them apart and feasts on their souls.
4	The sky is black with clouds of ghostly faces, and a strong wind threatens to uproot the scant vegetation. Perception and Survival checks take a -2 circumstance penalty for the day.
5	Enormous hail crashes down from above, causing an initial 4d12 piercing damage plus 3d10 cold damage (basic DC 30 Reflex save). The hail then thins into normal precipitation.
6	A swirling tornado of shrieking souls moves throughout the mountains, dealing 4d12 void damage and 3d10 mental damage (basic DC 30 Will save) to anyone who doesn't take cover. The wind eventually dies down but the screams don't, echoing hauntingly in the cold air.

The storm thins out each day as Zagresh drains its energy, trailing towards A8. A PC can Track the direction of the storm or make a DC 28 Religion check to sense where the spirits of the storm are heading.

## DESTRUCTION'S GRASP

The stronghold consists of four floors carved into the mountain, with the entrance from outside on the

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Doom

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## DEATH TOWER STRONGHOLD

1 SQUARE = 5 FT



lowest floor. Noise doesn't carry well from one floor to another as it's muffled by the solid rock, and the floors are connected with ladders accessed by trapdoors rather than stairways to impede intrusion. Ceilings in the stronghold are 15 feet high. Areas C1 through C8 are dimly lit with torches, and areas C9 through C15 are unlit.

The PCs soon realize, if they haven't already, that the inhabitants of the stronghold aren't entirely united. Tar-Baphon's agents have secluded themselves on the upper floors with the Carcass Man and refuse to explain their plans, leaving the lower floors to Death Tower. Once the PCs learn of this rift, they may be able to exploit it to their advantage.

### C1. Entrance

Low 11

Beyond the door to the outside is an irregularly shaped cavern roughly chipped out of the mountain rock. Veins of minerals run through the cavern walls, glimmering faintly in the torchlight, and a wooden door crammed into a carved archway stands to the north. The air carries a faintly musty scent due to limited ventilation. In the corner, a pile of humanoid skulls is stacked almost to the ceiling.

**Creatures:** The entrance is guarded by two mortic orcs known as lifeleechers who absorbed enough necromantic energy from Ungukk's ritual that they were tainted with undeath themselves, though not fully undead. The skulls in the corner form a clacking skull swarm, meant to defend against intruders as well as raise this floor's alarm. Though mindless, the swarm is under orders not to attack any inhabitants of the stronghold.

### LIFEELEECER BRAWLERS (2)

CREATURE 8

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 176

**Initiative** Perception +15

### CLACKING SKULL SWARM

CREATURE 10

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 244

**Initiative** Perception +18

**Treasure:** In addition to their gear, each brawler carries a *moderate silver crescent* (*Treasure Vault* 50), crafted by Ungukk in case of treachery from Tar-Baphon's agents.

### C2. Warriors' Chambers

Bedrolls line this cramped, narrow room, and several small chests sit within niches cut into the stone walls. Daubed on



the ceiling in weathered paint resembling blood, are intricate inscriptions in a swirling script. Two doors lead to the east.

These are the quarters of Death Tower's warriors at the stronghold. Most are out on missions, and the chambers are currently empty. PCs who can read Necril identify the inscriptions as wards, though they have no magical effect.

**Treasure:** The chests in the wall niches contain the warriors' personal effects. Most hold mundane clothes and knickknacks, but one chest contains a set of gold-inlaid bone dice worth 100 gp. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check spots a secret compartment in the bottom of another chest containing a *vanishing coin* and a *greater skeleton key*.

### C3. Ritual Chamber

Low 11

This roughly crescent-shaped chamber holds several worktables covered in books, jars of viscous black liquid, and rolls of parchment. Bookshelves set into the walls hold leather bound tomes and ancient scrolls. Wooden doors are placed in the walls on all sides of the room, and a trapdoor is visible in the ceiling.

The necromancers of Death Tower do their research in this chamber. The trapdoor in the ceiling opens onto a ladder leading to area C6.

**Creatures:** Occupying this chamber are two Death Tower necromancers. If they hear the clacking skull swarm in area C1 activate, they each ready to cast *summon undead* to raise a poltergeist (*Pathfinder Monster Core* 268) just before the PCs enter.

#### DEATH TOWER NECROMANCERS (2) CREATURE 10

RARE MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

**Perception** +19; darkvision

**Languages** Chthonian, Common, Draconic, Hallit, Jotun, Necril, Orcish

**Skills** Arcana +23, Crafting +19, Necromancy Lore +22, Occultism +22, Religion +19, Society +20, Survival +19

**Str** +1, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +7, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +0

**Items** *charm of cold resistance*, +1 striking mace, spellbook, *wand of teeming ghosts* (2nd-rank *false vitality*, bonded item)

**AC** 28 (29 with *mystic armor*); **Fort** +16, **Ref** +17, **Will** +19

**HP** 135; **Resistances** cold 5

**Ferocity** 2 (Monster Core 359)

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** ♦ *mace* +17 (magical, shove), **Damage** 2d6+10 bludgeoning

**Arcane Prepared Spells** DC 29, attack +21; **5th** *shadow blast*, *invoke spirits*, *summon undead*, *vampiric feast*;

#### THE PROBLEM OF ZAGRESH

While Zagresh's followers have been a sharp thorn in the sides of the PCs throughout the adventure and they need to break Death Tower's power over the undead, their ultimate goals do not explicitly include Zagresh's permanent destruction. Destroying the fallen deity is the safest option as it will stymie Tar-Baphon's plans and prevent Zagresh from causing more trouble in Belkzen or acting against the Empty Hand Hold, but the PCs can opt to spare him.

**4th** *flicker*, *mutilate* (page 82), *vision of death*, *weapon storm*; **3rd** *blindness*, *fear*, *lightning bolt*, *vampiric feast*; **2nd** *blood vendetta*, *darkness*, *see the unseen*, *stupefy*; **1st** *enfeeble*, *force barrage*, *grim tendrils*, *mystic armor*; **Cantrips (5th)** *detect magic*, *ignition*, *shield*, *telekinetic hand*, *void warp*

**Wizard School Spells** DC 29 (2 Focus Points); **4th** *spiral of horrors*, *fortify summoning*

**Arcane Rituals** DC 29; **5th** *create undead*

**Deadhand Spell** Death Tower necromancers have crawling hand familiars. They can cast a spell with a range of touch and command the hands to deliver the spell; the crawling hand uses its 2 actions for the round to move to a target of the necromancer's choice and touch that target.

**Drain Bonded Item** ♦ **Frequency** once per day; **Requirements** The necromancer hasn't acted yet on this turn; **Effect** The necromancer expends the power stored in their bonded staff. During the current turn, they cast one spell they prepared today and already cast, without spending a spell slot. They must still Cast the Spell and meet the spell's other requirements.

**Give a Hand** A Death Tower necromancer's familiar can use its actions to retrieve an item of light or negligible Bulk they're wearing and place it into one of their free hands.

**Quicken Casting** ♦ (concentrate, spellshape) If the necromancer's next action is to cast a spell or cantrip of 3rd rank or lower, they reduce the number of actions to cast it by 1 (minimum 1 action).

**Development:** PCs who spend 10 minutes skimming the books and notes on the tables learn that a fragment of Zagresh's essence fled to Death Tower after his defeat and their high priest bound him into a construct known as the Carcass Man. Most of the projects here focus on regaining Zagresh's divinity and researching how Grask Uldeth might have ascended.

**Treasure:** Reading the collection of books provides a +2 circumstance bonus to Recall Knowledge about subjects involving the undead; the books are worth a

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total of 300 gp. A *greater crafter's eyepiece* is in the desk drawer.

#### C4. Storage

Mundane food supplies and materials for necromantic rituals are stored in the many crates in this room.

**Treasure:** One of the shelves contains a container of rare spices worth 100 gp, a set of *marvelous medicines*, and a rack of vials holding two *moderate healing potions*.

#### C5. Destruction's Altar

Low 11

Across from the door leading into this room stands a black stone altar marred by deep gashes and dents. A glass orb sits upon the altar, glowing with an inner light. Like a macabre crystal ball, the orb's surface displays a multitude of scenes of burning villages, explosions, raging natural disasters, and objects being smashed.



Death Tower Necromancer

The visions in the crystal soon overwhelm the room, the cavern seeming to melt away beneath layer after layer of horrific scenes. Smoldering ruins of countless villages dot the terrain as far as the eye can see, the land charred and barren. Even the gray sky appears to have lost hope, and a tangible sense of desolation permeates the atmosphere. "This is the fate of all," a voice seems to breathe from the crackling flames, unsavory delight apparent in their tone. "All existence one day falls to destruction."

This room holds the first locus connecting Zagresh to Tar-Baphon. A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Occultism or Religion check or a DC 30 Arcana check while examining the orb on the altar realizes it's designed to link one creature's spiritual essence to another; on a critical success, they know that one of the linked creatures is in the stronghold and the other is far away. A small amount of energy is currently being transferred from another creature to the one here, but the link could easily be reversed, draining all the energy out of the creature here and transferring it to the faraway creature.

The PC also discovers that the orb appears to be empowered by the concept of destruction and targeting it with something diametrically opposed would destroy it once its haunt is inactive.

**Hazard:** The locus connected to the domain of destruction attempts to drive anyone in the area to destroy anyone and anything around it, with the exception of the locus itself.

#### LOCUS OF DESTRUCTION

HAZARD 12

UNIQUE COMPLEX HAUNT

**Stealth** +27 (expert)

**Description** A magical orb drives intruders to commit acts of mindless destruction.

**Disable** DC 27 Crafting (master) to reconfigure the locus, DC 30 Occultism or Religion (expert) to counteract the locus's energies, DC 35 Thievery (master) to extricate the orb from the altar

**AC** 30; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +19

**Hardness** 20; **HP** 82 (BT 41); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities (except healing), precision damage

**Destruction's Fury** ⤴ (emotion, mental) **Trigger** A creature touches the orb or attempts to disable the haunt; **Effect** A destructive fury fills the minds of all living creatures in the area, who must succeed at a DC 32 Will save or be stupefied 1 (stupefied 2 on a critical failure) for 1 minute. The haunt then rolls initiative.

**Destruction Manifest** Casting *creation* or a creation domain spell in the orb's presence automatically destroys the locus; other spells or abilities that create things might also do so at GM discretion.



**Unholy Repair** The locus is sustained by the power of Tar-Baphon. The orb regains 10 Hit Points at the beginning of every round and is repaired by void damage.

**Routine** (1 action; mental) The destructive impulses grow stronger. Affected creatures must attempt a DC 32 Will save; creatures who fail or critically fail can't attempt to disable the haunt that turn.

**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected and temporarily immune for 1 minute.

**Success** The creature is unaffected this round.

**Failure** The creature becomes confused for 1 round, targeting both creatures and objects.

**Critical Failure** As failure but the confusion lasts for 1 minute.

**Ranged** destructive lash +26, **Damage** 3d10 force damage; no multiple attack penalty

**Destructive Backlash** ♦ (void) **Trigger** The orb is damaged by an attack; **Effect** The locus makes a destructive lash Strike against the triggering creature.

**Reset** The haunt deactivates 1 minute after all living creatures leave the area. After 1 hour, the haunt reactivates.

**Severing the Locus:** If the locus is not destroyed, the PCs can sever the locus by breaking the orb or with a successful DC 28 Crafting, Religion, or Lore check related to creation (such as Art Lore or Scribing Lore).

**Treasure:** Upon the altar beneath the orb is a ceremonial adamantine hammer worth 100 gp.

## C6. Great Hall

## Moderate 11

A flickering fire in a hearth to the southeast dimly illuminates this cavern, and a long table lined with chairs stands at the room's center. The scent of roasting meat emanates from a perfectly charred haunch rotating on a spit over the fire. Two stone doors are set into the wall to the south, and trapdoors in the floor and ceiling are visible on either side of the room.

This great hall is used for meals and relaxation. The trapdoor in the ceiling leads to area C9, though if it's opened without the password ("free the world of breath" in Necril), it triggers the haunt there (see page 60). Ungukk and the other Death Tower members know there's a password, but not what it is. A PC who succeeds at a DC 33 Religion or Thievery check can open the trapdoor without the password and avoid triggering the haunt.

**Creatures:** Two Death Tower necromancers are stationed here, calling on their greater shadow allies if attacked. If one necromancer is slain, the other attempts to retreat to area C7 to warn Ungukk.

## ESSENCE LOCI

Four loci within the stronghold link Zagresh's essence to Tar-Baphon. Each locus is tied to a domain of Zagresh's, functioning as a spiritual nexus of power, but also secretly enabling Tar-Baphon to absorb Zagresh's energy when he wishes.

The loci are all empowered by unique haunts. If the PCs succeed at their initial check to disable the haunt, they experience the haunt's vision before the haunt ends. Once the haunt is disabled, the PCs can attempt to destroy it and the locus as noted in the loci locations. They can attempt this check more than once, but on a failure the haunt reactivates. If the PCs destroy at least two of the loci, Tar-Baphon's connection with the Carcass Man is broken, preventing him from siphoning Zagresh's energy. Severing the loci also weakens the Carcass Man.

## GREATER SHADOWS (2)

## CREATURE 7

Monster Core 306

**Initiative** Stealth +20

## DEATH TOWER NECROMANCERS (2)

## CREATURE 10

Page 55

**Initiative** Perception +19

## C7. Ungukk's Quarters

## Moderate 11

A stone door leads into this dimly lit cave. It contains three alcoves with a thick fur rug on the floor. The alcove to the east holds a bedroll, while a writing desk sits in the alcove to the west. In the central alcove is a small altar with three skulls piled atop it.

Ungukk spends most of his time here. As the walls of the stronghold and his stone door are thick, he's unlikely to hear sounds of battle from area C6 unless they're particularly loud. If he does hear a disturbance or one of the necromancers flees here, he gathers his allies and approaches the PCs. His distinctive facial tattoo makes him recognizable as the priest from the vision in the ancestor storm from Chapter 1.

**Creatures:** Ungukk is accompanied by two deathless zealots, Death Tower priests turned to undead by Zagresh's rage when the ritual to bind him to the Carcass Man didn't restore him to full strength. They are his most loyal followers after Ungukk, magically bound to see his resurrection through. Additionally, the ritual left Ungukk touched by undeath, and he has void healing despite being a living creature.



Ungukk doesn't jump to attack the PCs if they aren't immediately hostile, knowing they are likely working against Tar-Baphon. He suspects Tar-Baphon's agents don't have Zagresh's best interests in mind and is eager to make a move against them, but knows he's still greatly weakened and that Jagremaal effectively has the Carcass Man as a hostage. The PCs present an opportunity for him to strike with minimal risk.

When the PCs first encounter him, read or paraphrase the following.

A weathered orc in priest robes holds up a hand as he steps forward, leaning heavily upon a twisted bone staff. His face is overlaid with the tattoo of a skull, giving him an awesome and unearthly appearance, but there's a faint

tremble to his hands. At his gesture, the two undead orcs next to him take a defensive position.

"Ardax sent you, I assume," he says hoarsely. "I'd tell you that you don't know what you're meddling with, but I can't say I did either. *We could* try to kill each other, as you came to do, but I believe we share a common enemy. The Tyrant's schemes are vast and far-reaching, and I doubt he has my hold's interests in mind."

Ungukk offers a truce: he'll tell the PCs what he knows about Tar-Baphon's plans and the locus points if they defeat his agents and their commander, Jagremaal. He relays the purpose of the locus points (he suspects, but isn't certain, that there's some sort of trap contained within them) and that destroying the loci will sever the connection between Zagresh and Tar-Baphon. If the PCs inform him of Bugark's fate, this cements his resolve to break his alliance with the Whispering Tyrant.

Of course, Ungukk has no intention of letting them destroy the Carcass Man, though he doesn't mention this. He plans to have the PCs sever the loci and defeat Tar-Baphon's agents for him before he turns on them. To this end, he portrays himself as weaker than he is, hoping they'll underestimate him, though a PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check to Sense Motive recognizes this as a ruse. He and his zealots trail the PCs through the stronghold (offering minor support if their presence is noticed), remaining a room or two behind until the PCs defeat Jagremaal and sever the loci. When they attempt to enter area C15, he attacks, informing them that he cannot allow them to slay the last remnant of Zagresh.

If the PCs refuse Ungukk's offer, he sighs and orders the zealots to attack, using all his remaining power to eliminate the intruders.

### DEATHLESS ZEALOT (2)

CREATURE 9

Page 84

Initiative Perception +21

### UNGUKK FLESHDREDGE

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

Perception +24; darkvision

Languages Chthonian, Common, Necril, Orcish

Skills Crafting +21, Deception +20, Intimidation +20, Medicine +21, Religion +21, Stealth +18

Str +2, Dex +4, Con +0, Int +2, Wis +5, Cha +7

Items amulet of kinship's strength, +1 striking club, staff of the dead, +1 studded leather armor

AC 29; Fort +15, Ref +19, Will +21; +1 vs. fear

HP 146, void healing

Cursebound Using a cursebound ability makes Ungukk enfeebled 1 or increases his enfeebled value

Ungukk Fleshdredge



by 1, to a maximum of 3. If he reaches enfeebled 3, he also becomes drained 1.

**Undying Conviction** (aura) 30 feet. Ungukk's undead allies within his aura gain a +2 status bonus to saving throws to resist vitality damage and to Will saving throws to resist effects that would make them controlled.

### Ferocity

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** **club** +19 (thrown 10 ft.), **Damage** 2d10+12 bludgeoning

**Divine Spontaneous Spells** DC 30, attack +22; **6th** *spirit blast*, *vampiric exsanguination* (2 slots); **5th** *shadow blast*, *spiritual guardian*, *summon undead*; **4th** *divine wrath* (2 slots), *harm*, *talking corpse*; **3rd** *bind undead*, *crisis of faith*, *ghostly weapon*, *strength of mind* (page 82); **2nd** *blood vendetta*, *darkness*, *false vitality*, see the *unseen*; **1st** *bane*, *enfeeble*, *fear*, *grim tendrils*; **Cantrips (6th)** *detect magic*, *divine lance*, *forbidding ward*, *shield*, *void warp*

**Rituals** DC 30; **6th** *call spirit*, *create undead*

**Curse of the Fallen Divine** (cursebound, divine, spellshape) Ungukk increases the damage of a spell he casts by 1 die.

**Roar of Zagresh** (cursebound, divine, void) With a mighty roar, Ungukk unleashes void energy in a 30-foot emanation. Creatures in the area must make a DC 30 Fortitude save or take 6d6 void damage and become doomed 1 (doomed 2 on a critical failure).

**Quickened Casting** (concentrate, spellshape) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** If Ungukk's next action is to cast a cantrip or a spell of 4th rank or lower, reduce the number of actions to cast it by 1 (minimum of 1 action).

**Treasure:** In the desk is a set of *bracers of pain* (page 83), which Ungukk will give the PCs at the end of the adventure if they spare the Carcass Man. Otherwise, they can take it once they've defeated Ungukk.

## C8. Death's Altar

Low 11

Upon a dais in this ovular cavern stands an altar constructed out of hundreds of bleached bones and broken skulls set with an orc skull with rubies for eyes. A glass orb atop the altar emits an eerie red light, washing the room in a bloody glow. Across the orb's surface, scenes depicting assassinations, piles of corpses, and slaughter play out. The room gets colder and colder, as if all life and warmth are being sucked away by the second.

"You," hisses a voice from the shadows. "You may think yourself invulnerable, but I know better. I know your weakness, the same as all mortals." A sharp, guttural laugh echoes mockingly across the cavern, as if death

itself has come to witness. The laughter increases in pitch, higher and higher until it melts into a pained scream.

In this room is the second locus, tied to the death domain. The PCs can attempt the same skill checks as in area C5 (page 56) to obtain the information noted there and learn that something opposed to death would destroy this locus.

**Hazard:** This locus isn't tied just to death but to Zagresh's specific demise and fills creatures with the fear of a similar end.

### LOCUS OF DEATH

HAZARD 12

UNIQUE COMPLEX HAUNT

**Stealth** +27 (expert)

**Description** A magical orb inflicts terrible visions of gruesome ends on anyone who approaches.

**Disable** DC 27 Nature (master) to infuse the locus with life force, DC 30 Occultism or Religion (expert) to counteract the locus's energies, DC 35 Thievery (master) to extricate the orb from the altar

**AC** 30; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +19

**Hardness** 20; **HP** 82 (BT 41); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities (except healing), precision damage

**Death Grip** (emotion, mental) **Trigger** A creature touches the orb or attempts to disable the haunt; **Effect** Necromantic energy lashes out from the orb and the triggering creature must succeed at a DC 32 Will save or be frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure). The haunt then rolls initiative.

**Death Manifest** Casting *breath of life*, *death ward*, or *raise dead* in the orb's presence automatically destroys the locus; other spells or abilities that restore the dead to life might also do so, at GM discretion.

**Unholy Repair** The locus is sustained by the power of Tar-Baphon. The orb regains 10 Hit Points at the beginning of every round and is repaired by void damage.

**Routine** (1 action; death, emotion, fear, mental) One living creature in the haunt's location (determined randomly) is targeted by a 4th-rank *vision of death* (DC 32). A creature that critically fails their save doesn't physically flee but instead can't attempt to disable the hazard until they're no longer frightened. Once all creatures have been affected, the haunt deactivates.

**Reset** The haunt deactivates 1 minute after all living creatures leave the area. After 1 hour, the haunt reactivates.

**Severing the Locus:** If the locus is not destroyed, the PCs can sever the locus by breaking the orb, as in area C5, or with a successful DC 28 Medicine, Nature, or Religion check.

**Treasure:** The rubies in the skull can be pried loose and are each worth 100 gp.



## C9. Skull Guard Post

Moderate 11

This cave is dark and cool, with no torches casting light upon its walls. The natural stone floor is littered with bone fragments and a pile of large animal skulls sits at its center, bleached white from age. One trapdoor is in the floor to the west, another in the ceiling to the southeast, and two doors made of rough planks stand to the east and south.

The third and fourth floor are claimed by Tar-Baphon's agents, and they've "encouraged" Death Tower not to enter to avoid disrupting Zagresh's coalescing spiritual energies. The trapdoor in the ceiling leads to area C12.

**Creatures:** The entry to the agents' domain is guarded by a feral skull swarm. If the PCs found Bugark and identified his cause of death, a PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check upon the beginning of combat notes the teeth on this skull swarm look like they very likely caused the bite marks that killed him. This does not cost them an action on their first turn.

### FERAL SKULL SWARM

CREATURE 12

*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 244

**Initiative** Perception +21

**Hazard:** If the trapdoor from area C6 was opened without the proper password or using a skill check to bypass it, it triggered a spirit cyclone haunt and alerted Jagremaal on the floor above to intruders.

### SPIRIT CYCLONE

HAZARD 9

*Book of the Dead* 68

**Initiative** Stealth +20 (expert)

## C10. Raw Materials

The air is freezing cold in this chamber, every breath visible in pale clouds. Blocks of ice and snow are piled up all around a number of corpses hanging from hooks against the walls, most of them humanoids in various stages of decay. Several shelves hold various cutting implements, and a wooden cabinet stands in the corner.

This room serves as reserve storage for bodies intended for reanimation by Death Tower's necromancers as well as supplies for their rituals. While some of the corpses are of their own members, others are unfortunate travelers who perished in the mountains and were found along the journey to the stronghold. The room is periodically filled with ice to aid in preservation.

**Treasure:** The cabinet contains cloth for corpse wrappings, a vial of *greater oil of unlife*, and pouches of rare herbs and incense worth 150 gp.

## C11. Pain's Altar

Low 11

A grisly altar at the southern side of this room appears to be made of a fleshy substance, continually bleeding where it's pierced by protruding knives and needles. The glassy surface of the orb atop the altar portrays depictions of grievous wounds and injuries, and the faintest echo of pained screams seems to follow every footstep. Blood begins to seep out faster and faster, pooling around the altar and leaking out towards the walls as if to grasp at anyone it can.

The third locus is tied to the pain domain. The PCs can attempt the same skill checks as in area C5 (page 56) to obtain the information noted there and learn that something opposed to pain would destroy this locus.

**Hazard:** Forming this locus is the pain Zagresh endured when he was assassinated by Grask and the agony of undergoing the ritual to bind him to the Carcass Man; the haunt attempts to inflict this same pain on others.

### LOCUS OF PAIN

HAZARD 12

UNIQUE COMPLEX HAUNT

**Stealth** +27 (expert)

**Description** An arcane orb sits upon a sinister altar, filling creatures in the area with unimaginable pain.

**Disable** DC 27 Medicine (master) to soothe the locus's pain, DC 30 Occultism or Religion to counteract the locus's energies, DC 35 Thievery (master) to extricate the orb from the altar

**AC** 30; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +19

**Hardness** 20; **HP** 82 (BT 41); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities (except healing), precision damage

**Agony Lash** ⤵ (emotion, mental) **Trigger** A creature touches the orb or attempts to disable the haunt; **Effect** All living creatures within 60 feet are overwhelmed by pain and must succeed at a DC 32 Fortitude save or be sickened 1 (sickened 2 on a critical failure). The haunt then rolls initiative.

**Pain Manifest** Casting *calm* or *soothe* in the orb's presence automatically destroys the locus; other spells or abilities that ease pain might also do so, at GM discretion.

**Unholy Repair** The locus is sustained by the power of Tar-Baphon. The orb regains 10 Hit Points at the beginning of every round and is repaired by void damage.

**Routine** (1 action; mental, nonlethal) Creatures affected by the haunt's agony lash are wracked with pain, as



4th-rank *phantom pain* (DC 32). If a creature falls unconscious due to the haunt, they don't continue taking damage.

**Reset** The haunt deactivates 1 minute after all living creatures leave the area. After 1 hour, the haunt reactivates.

**Severing the Locus:** If the locus is not destroyed, the PCs can sever the locus by breaking the orb, as in area C5, or with a successful DC 28 Medicine, Religion, or Herbalism Lore check.

**Treasure:** Embedded in the altar are silver torture implements worth 75 gp.

## C12. Zagresh's Hall

## Severe 11

This large chamber has several ancient, unused sconces carved into its walls. Standing around the chamber are three ten-foot tall statues of a massive orc with immense tusks. Each statue holds a greatclub in a different position of battle, ready to strike with a triumphant snarl. One bears a skull-like mask, another has a crushed skeleton in its mighty fist, and the last has a broken sword stabbed into its chest.

The stone floor is etched with jagged inscriptions worn down by age, and a trapdoor is set into the floor to the north, with two other doors along the southern wall.

The stronghold was originally created to house this ancient shrine to Zagresh millennia ago by the progenitors of the Death Tower Hold. Any PC trained or better in Religion identifies the statues as depictions of Zagresh relating to his domains. The statue with a skull represents undeath, the one with the skeleton represents death, and the stabbing sword represents pain. There is no fourth statue because Zagresh is destruction himself. A PC who can read Chthonian knows the inscriptions are prayers to the Zagresh.

**Creatures:** If the PCs activated the spirit cyclone in C9, Jagremaal and her ghostly allies are here; otherwise, they're in area C13. Jagremaal confronts the PCs, warning them not to meddle in Tar-Baphon's plans, while the ghostly wizards conceal themselves, preparing to attack. When Jagremaal falls, she uses final spite to raise wights from corpses hidden in C13. In addition to her gear, she holds the key to the door sealing area C15.

## GHOST MAGES (2)

## CREATURE 10

Monster Core 161

**Initiative** Stealth +21



## JAGREMAAL

## CREATURE 12

Female wight commander (*Book of the Dead* 169)

**Initiative** Perception +26

## C13. Jagremaal's Quarters

This small room displays no personal effects. Among the scant furniture is a dusty bed that appears untouched, a small table, and shelves lining the walls. The bookshelves have clearly seen frequent use, filled with tomes about necromancy and magical rituals. Several books sit open on the table, with a fine quill and ink neatly set aside for later use.

Jagremaal doesn't need to rest as an undead, using this room as a private study as she's brought some of her necromantic research library here. The books on the table are filled with her notes in Necril in a spidery, crabbed hand and describe the creation of the loci and their purpose, including Tar-Baphon's plans to steal Zagresh's divine energy.

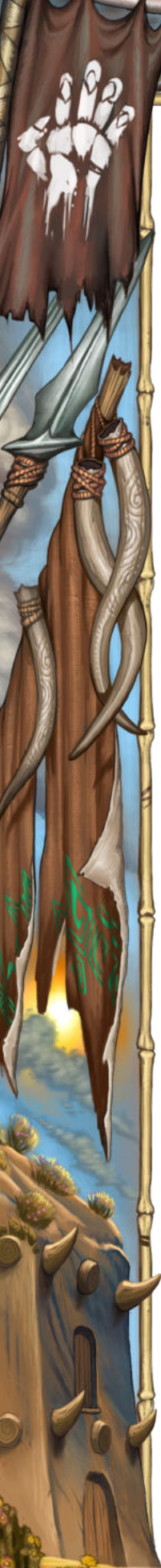
**Treasure:** The ancient tomes here are worth a total of 300 gp and a *potion of truespeech* sits on the table.

## C14. Undeath's Altar

## Low 11

A wooden door leads to the north, and to the south is a circular stone door, barred and sealed with chains. The





altar in this narrow chamber is constructed of interlocking, delicately wrought cages reminiscent of a lich's soul cage. Atop it is a glass orb showing scenes of marching skeletons, zombies, and other undead troops, as well as casters carrying out necromantic rituals. The whispers of restless souls resound throughout the room, louder and louder, hissing unintelligible curses at the living.

This is the final locus. The PCs can attempt the same skill checks as in area C5 (page 56) to obtain the information noted there and learn that something opposed to undeath will destroy this locus. Jagremaal's key unlocks the chains on the stone door to area C15; otherwise, a DC 30 Thievery check is required.

**Hazard:** The undeath locus is the one with the strongest ties to Tar-Baphon, as it was created by Jagremaal sacrificing Death Tower hunters (unknown to Ungukk) to her ghostly allies. This haunt attempts to draw creatures to their doom and push them into undeath.

## WRAITHWELL

## HAZARD 12

COMPLEX HAUNT

**Stealth** +27 (expert)

**Description** An orb of undeath draws creatures closer to a cursed existence.


**Disable** DC 27 Religion to negate the forces of undeath (master), DC 30 Occultism (expert) to channel vital energy, DC 35 Thievery (master) to extricate the orb from the altar

**AC** 30; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +19

**Hardness** 20; **HP** 82 (BT 41); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities (except healing), precision damage

**Undeath Manifest** A creature who dies in the presence of the orb immediately becomes undead. Casting *bind undead* or *peaceful rest* in the presence of the orb automatically destroys the locus; other spells or abilities that combat undead might also do so, at GM discretion.

**Unholy Repair** The locus is sustained by the power of Tar-Baphon. The orb regains 10 Hit Points at the beginning of every round and is repaired by void damage.

**Wraith Storm**  **Trigger** A creature touches the orb or attempts to disable the haunt; **Effect** A cyclone of wraiths spirals from the orb, grasping at all living creatures in the area. Targeted creatures must succeed at a DC 32 Will save or be doomed 1 (doomed 2 on a critical failure).

**Routine** (1 action; void) The wraiths attack all living creatures in the area, dealing 3d10+14 void damage (DC 32 basic Fortitude save). Creatures who fail their saves are drained 1 (drained 2 on a critical failure) or increase their drained value by 1 (2 on a critical failure), up to a maximum of drained 4.

**Reset** The haunt deactivates 1 minute after all living creatures leave the area. After 1 hour, the haunt reactivates.

**Severing the Locus:** If the locus is not destroyed, the PCs can sever the locus by breaking the orb, as in area C5, or with a successful DC 28 Arcana, Occultism, or Religion check.

**Treasure:** A silver emblem of the Whispering Way worth 100 gp sits atop the altar.

**Ungukk's Betrayal:** If the PCs allied with Ungukk, he thanks them for their assistance in destroying the loci and defeating Tar-Baphon's agents before requesting they leave the Carcass Man alone. In the likely event the PCs refuse, he and his zealots attack. If they agree, Ungukk suddenly feels the presence of Tar-Baphon and sends the PCs to see what is threatening his god.

## C15. The Carcass Chamber Severe 11

This cavernous chamber is carved of bare stone. The floor is covered in broken furniture, pottery, and other detritus. A figure shuffles in the dark of the cave.

"What ants have come?" a distorted voice asks. Large, confident footsteps move forward, and a massive two-headed figure swaggers into view. They are an abomination of undeath with mismatched skin meeting beneath stitches and magic, the two heads sneering in judgment as three enormous arms rise to invite a challenge. "Do you come to scavenge on what remains of a god? Tiny, weak fools! You cannot destroy me, I am destruction itself!"

As the twisted form of the fallen deity prepares for battle, the shadows behind him suddenly converge into a large form with glowing red eyes and a horned helm. "Divinity shall be mine," a cruel voice rasps, the shadows of the room shuddering in response. Its yawning mouth stretches horrifically wide, a deep void of blackness within, as it rushes towards the thing that was once a god.

**Hazard:** Knowing that at some point it was likely the Death Tower Hold would realize his true plans and turn against him, Tar-Baphon had a backup plan in case any of his loci were destroyed: a shadow of himself that will directly consume Zagresh's divine essence should his plans be thwarted. This shadow isn't powerful enough to fully transport the fallen deity's energy to Tar-Baphon, hence it was left as a contingency so the lich could obtain at least a small piece of divinity. The haunt's only purpose is to feed on the Carcass Man in an attempt to steal his power and can't harm PCs.

**Creatures:** The Carcass Man is kept here, placated and deceived by Jagremaal. He eagerly leaps into



battle in a fury, determined not to lose what little existence remains to him. The Carcass Man's strength depends on how many loci the PCs severed. With one locus destroyed, he's enfeebled 1. With two destroyed, he's enfeebled 2 and drained 1. With three destroyed, he's enfeebled 2, clumsy 2, and stupefied 1. If all four loci are destroyed, he's enfeebled 2, clumsy 2, and stupefied 2.

**The PCs' Choice:** The PCs now have a choice: destroy the last remnants of Zagresh in the Universe or allow him to fight for his existence. If the PCs wish to destroy the Carcass Man and prevent all risks of Tar-Baphon gaining his divine essence, they must face the Carcass Man in battle and destroy him before Tar-Baphon's shadow can do it first, which would consume his divine essence and send it to the lich himself.

## THE CARCASS MAN

## CREATURE 13

Page 91

**Initiative** Perception +19

If the PCs want to spare the Carcass Man, four graveknights emerge to pin them down as Tar-Baphon's shadow feeds on Zagresh's essence. The Carcass Man spends all three of his actions wrestling the shadow to take back his essence, restoring his Hit Points by 3d12 and reducing the shadow's DCs by 1 until the start of the Carcass Man's next turn. Divine energy lashes out as the two entities collide, striking a random PC each round; this gives that PC a +2 circumstance bonus to their next attack or to disable the hazard.

## GRAVEKNIGHTS

## CREATURE 10

Monster Core 178

**Initiative** Perception +19

## TAR-BAPHON'S SHADOW

## HAZARD 11

UNIQUE COMPLEX HAUNT

**Stealth** +30

**Description** A manifestation of Tar-Baphon drains the essence of its divine target.

**Disable** DC 33 Arcana (expert) to disrupt Tar-Baphon's magic, DC 30 Occultism or Religion (master) to suppress the shadow's energy; three total successes in any combination are required to disable the haunt unless the Carcass Man is destroyed, in which case it's automatically destroyed

**Unholy Leech** ☞ (emotion, mental) **Trigger** A creature enters the cavern; **Effect** The shadow latches onto the Carcass Man, unleashing a 30-foot emanation of necromantic energy. Creatures in the area except the Carcass Man must make a DC 30 Fortitude save or take 2d12 void damage. The haunt then rolls initiative.

**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected.

**Success** The creature takes half damage and is pushed back 5 feet.

**Failure** The creature takes full damage and is pushed back 15 feet.

**Critical Failure** As failure and the creature is stunned 1 and knocked prone.

**Unholy Presence** The shadow is sustained by the power of Tar-Baphon, regaining 10 Hit Points at the beginning of every round, and is repaired by void damage.

**Routine** (1 action; death) The haunt drains Zagresh's divine energies, dealing 5d10 void damage.

**Death of Zagresh:** If the Carcass Man is destroyed, the haunt disperses into the air; if the Carcass Man's demise was due to the hazard, Tar-Baphon succeeds in attaining a fragmented piece of Zagresh's divinity. If the Carcass Man was killed by the PCs, Tar-Baphon is unable to steal the fallen god's power. Either way, the room grows eerily still as, at last, the Destroyer is no more.

**Debts of Zagresh:** Should the PCs choose to defend the Carcass Man from Tar-Baphon's shadow and he survives, he roughly thanks them and promptly ignores them. On a DC 26 Diplomacy check, the Carcass Man grudgingly agrees not to interfere with Ardax's unification efforts "for now."

## CONCLUSION

Having dealt with the threat of Death Tower and Tar-Baphon, the PCs can return to Urgir and report their success. The undead plaguing Belkzen gradually weaken and collapse without the lich's agents to empower them, and the alliance army soon defeats the remainder of the enemy holds' forces. The ancestor storms also calm, drifting back to their origin sites.

Grateful for the PCs' assistance, Ardax offers them positions as his advisors. Whether they accept or move on to other adventures, their efforts have granted Ardax major victories and a successful coalition, and they're hailed as heroes throughout the land. Several rebellious holds are no more, their survivors absorbed into others. Belkzen is closer to unity than it has been since the days of its namesake, making it a force to be reckoned with—especially if the nations of Avistan launch a campaign to destroy the Whispering Tyrant once and for all.

These events have shown Belkzen's neighbors its strength, laying the foundation for future trade and diplomacy even among longtime enemies such as the Shoanti. Belkzen remains a harsh land to survive in where strength is paramount, but the alliance's efforts have proven to the world that it's an ally worth having.







# Continuing the Campaign

The PCs should be level 12 at the end of the Triumph of the Tusk Adventure Path, having overcome the machinations of Tar-Baphon and stopped the undead onslaught plaguing the area. If the players wish to continue adventuring in Belkzen, there are several potential plots to deal with throughout the region.

## CAMPAIGN CONSEQUENCES

Belkzen is on its way to unification, but that doesn't mean things are peaceful. Grask becomes a prominent figure among the orc pantheon, but the followers of other gods resent his rise and are deeply concerned by Ardax's rise in power paving the way for Grask to quickly accumulate worshippers. Meanwhile, said worshippers are busy constructing a temple to Grask, and they proclaim him the patron god of Urgir and Belkzen unity, brokering alliances and peace treaties among the different holds in Grask's name.

Factions such as the Warmongers, Jobbers, and Reverent (appearing on page 6 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #208: Hoof, Cinder, and Storm*) helped Ardax defeat the Unbroken Horn Hold and continue to push their respective agendas. The Warmongers are folded into an official military force of the allied holds, while the Jobbers climb the social ranks as news of a more welcoming Belkzen leads to numerous merchants venturing into the land before the flood months end.

Some resist this formalized structure, fearing it puts too much power into Ardax's hands, and they form smaller militias outside of his influence. While most are grateful to him for dealing with the undead and ending Tar-Baphon's schemes in Belkzen, many wish to retain their individual power and see a united military as a threat to the independence of the various holds.

The influx of outsiders disgruntles traditionalists wary of their culture becoming diluted, as well as local merchants struggling against outside competition. Rising tensions are simultaneously soothed by the formation of new relationships and escalated by petty fighting and spats over territory, forcing the Jobbers to continually petition Ardax for codified rules and protections for traders. Tariffs become the weapon of the locals against new rivals, to the disgruntlement of

customers, and black markets boom as a way to avoid fees and taxes.

The PCs are strongly associated with Ardax, making them heroes for their accomplishments as well as symbols of his strength. The longer the PCs stay in Belkzen, the more likely they'll be asked to handle diplomatic missions, but they could also be targeted by Ardax's rivals as potential threats or assets.

## Divine Winds

If the Carcass Man was destroyed without Tar-Baphon harvesting his divine essence, what remains of Zagresh disperses into the ether and is absorbed throughout Belkzen. This divine energy replicates the Godsrain on a minor scale, infusing people and objects with bits of divine power and the Destroyer's incandescent rage. A seeming plague of uncontrollable anger infects the populace, requiring a divine cure lest the people tear each other apart over even the smallest of disagreements. The Reverent might suggest seeking areas said to be transformed by Godsrain, where plants and herbs might have adapted in a way that can provide solutions to soothe the supernatural rage infesting the land.

**Vissura** (vengeful female lamia matriarch sorcerer) didn't need the plague to rage, as she already hated all the gods. The event of the Godsrain brought her many confused and desperate followers who bought into her tirades against uncaring deities and destructive divinity, allowing her to quickly amass a small but determined cult that conspires to bring down more gods. Zagresh's essence infused her, so she's much stronger than her brethren and now able to infect others with her disdain for the divine, transforming them into pseudo-lamias. Vissura leads her people to hunt warshards as weapons against the gods themselves as well as those who serve them.

Another being empowered by Zagresh's essence is **Myrk Nailsplitter** (contemplative male orc death oracle), a simple nomad now driven to feed on the undead. Myrk's transformation has pulled his body and soul into a state of in-between life, death, and undeath, gaining energy by devouring the power of undead creatures, but as far as anyone can tell, the man is still alive. He wanders Belkzen in search of



undead to feed on, often sheltering in temples to gods of life and vitality.

### Rise of the Carcass Man

If the PCs chose not to destroy the Carcass Man, Zagresh poses a looming threat to peace in Belkzen, for an ex-god of rampant destruction and violence doesn't make a prudent ally. Zagresh's continued existence riles what remains of his worshippers, who destroy villages and attack the temples of rival gods, especially any sites dedicated to Grask Uldeth. The Death Tower Hold implores true followers of Zagresh to gather and directly serve their god, forcing Ardax to ask the PCs to intervene before the Death Tower Hold eventually undoes all the work he's done to bring his people together.

Since the end of the adventure, Zagresh has been scouring the land to absorb the energies of the dead but discovered that without Tar-Baphon's energy riling them up, most haunts have become dormant again, and all ancestor storms have dispersed. The fallen god decides to take things into his own hands by accessing the Void through the Cenotaph itself, working to rip its doors open and harness the power within. These attempts to break down reality's gates send ripples of void energy throughout Belkzen, randomly creating haunts and undead. Reports soon trickle into Urgir with rumors of a two-headed monster tearing at the Cenotaph's gates and the increased strength of the Death Tower Hold.

As the ones who allowed Zagresh to continue existing, the PCs are charged with either getting him to stand down or correcting their mistake. The Death Tower Hold is willing to treat with the PCs, who aided their god against Tar-Baphon's deceit, and the PCs might even be offered great divine boons should Zagresh fully retain his divinity. These benefits would come at the cost of their relationship with Ardax, as Zagresh bears a deep grudge against the Empty Hand Hold due to its association with Grask Uldeth, and he plans to annihilate it once he has the power to do so. If the PCs stay loyal to Ardax and face off with Zagresh, they might get a chance to absorb his divine power and gain Mythic abilities!

### Further Adventures

#### RACKETEERS

As the flood months dwindle, Bravthur approaches the PCs to help him deal with a group that has been harassing traders and demanding protection fees, threatening the reputation of the Jobbers. Their investigation leads to a mysterious group called the Grinners who have ties to the defeated Unbroken Horn Hold. Who's behind these Grinners, and how can the PCs put a stop to their sabotage?

#### SHOANTI VS. KORVOSA

The partnership with the Shoanti during the adventure has begun the process of soothing tensions between the two peoples. With Belkzen attempting to step onto a global platform, the Lyrune-Quah approaches Ardax with a request for support in regaining access to some of their important ancestral sites in Korvosa. Not all the quahs agree with such a demure approach, but the Lyrune-Quah is hopeful that the PCs can make a difference in negotiations.

**Tar-Baphon Consumes Zagresh**



However, a noble named **Cosmin Ilica** (opportunistic male human noble) knows there's a warshard that has fallen near the site of the Grand Mastaba and has witnessed it drawing power from the structure. Ilica desperately desires to drain the pyramid of whatever energy is within and take the warshard for himself, sending agents to stop the Shoanti diplomats and spark a conflict that will distract authorities long enough for him to claim his prize. Can the PCs help the Shoanti people reclaim some of their history, or is the cycle of bloodshed doomed to repeat?

### THE WARSHARD RACE

With the orc pantheon going through rapid changes in a short amount of time, the streets are abuzz with ideas about godhood and the nature of divinity. More than a few ambitious orcs hope to ascend as Grask Uldeth did, obtaining ultimate power and immortality. Some of these individuals have banded together in disparate groups called Ascenders, competing to find warshards in attempts to gain the power to transform into something greater than their mortal shells. Ardax asks the PCs to stop the more violent of these groups and perhaps even find some warshards themselves to defend Urgir and the temple of Grask.

### Signs from the Cenotaph

Both Tar-Baphon and Zagresh manipulated the forces of undeath throughout the adventure, bringing a large amount of void energy near the Cenotaph and the possibility of an unexpected stirring within. The Cenotaph's doors might crack open, leaking void energy and undeath into the environment and cursing the land. In this case, the Reverent tasks the PCs with hunting down warshards that can be forged into a divine seal that will permanently bind the Cenotaph, keeping its doors closed and its threats locked away forever.

### Tar-Baphon's Next Steps

Depending on the PCs' choices, Tar-Baphon has either attained a fragment of divinity or had his chance at divine power thwarted. If Tar-Baphon failed to steal Zagresh's divine essence, the lich is incensed at being thwarted by the orcs who once served him. The idea of a unified Belkzen only fuels his ire, and the Whispering Tyrant likely plants agents amongst the populace to sabotage unification efforts and undermine Ardax's authority before the nation can gain a foothold in international politics.

Tar-Baphon's efforts to raise up a puppet ruler failed with Paskis, but there remain plenty of dissatisfied orcs he can make use of. One such person is **Singrath Tusksnapper** (narcissistic male orc warrior), who likes

the idea of a unified Belkzen with himself at its head. Singrath easily agrees to get rid of Ardax and rule the nation, too self-absorbed to realize Tar-Baphon will be the true head. He first works to raise his social standing by presenting as someone who speaks for the common folk, then makes targeted political attacks against Ardax before attempting a quiet assassination. The PCs are likely targets for Singrath due to their closeness to Ardax, and Singrath might try to turn public opinion against them, recruit them as his own advisors, or even kill them before they become a problem. After all, how can these foreigners be trusted to have the nation's best interests at heart? Has Ardax forgotten the pride of the orcs?

Another possibility is that the Whispering Tyrant decides to fully punish Belkzen for standing against him by opening the doors of the Cenotaph, unleashing an outpouring of his undead legions into the land. The PCs must either join Ardax's forces in fighting off hordes of monstrous zombies to reach the Cenotaph and magically bind it shut with seals devised from vitality energy, or they might quest for warshards to equip themselves magically before delving into the great obelisk to shut it forever!

### A WHISPERING DIVINITY

In the case that Tar-Baphon successfully harvested Zagresh's divine essence, he quickly finds that containing such power is beyond the capabilities of most. For all his strength, the Whispering Tyrant would struggle to retain and control a fallen god's essence. After absorbing part of the energy, he would redirect the rest toward one or more projects beyond the scope of mortal magic.

Tar-Baphon might redirect Zagresh's essence into the lich's headquarters. Infused with a death god's divine essence, the island's very stones begin tearing themselves free, creating titanic colossi eager to do the lich's bidding. When Tar-Baphon inevitably marches against Avistan's nations once more, these constructs could topple castles and fling aside whole battalions!

The animating force would present a weakness, though: Belkzen's mystics can sense their ex-god's essence, both at a distance but also where a colossus's weak points might be. Rather than launch an invasion of the Isle of Dread, Ardax might recruit the PCs and several other elite teams to sneak onto the island and track down these constructs, applying mystical seals penned by Belkzen's own pantheon and priests. If the PCs can approach, climb upon, and affix these seals before Tar-Baphon is any the wiser, they might be able to destroy the colossi and banish Zagresh's essence once and for all.







# Wyvernsting Gazetteer

Located in the northeastern Kodar Mountains near the mouth of Cleftbone Canyon, Wyvernsting is a strategic stronghold second only to Urgir. The nearby forests of the Flood Road and the megafauna in the Algid Wastes provide valuable resources, while its surrounding high cliffs ensure defensibility. Many orc leaders have coveted Wyvernsting, but few have conquered it, and when leadership of the city changes, it's generally from within. For centuries, the Unbroken Horn Hold—a longtime rival of Ardax the White-Hair's Empty Hand Hold—has ruled the city.

Wyvernsting is a cutthroat place, but not an entirely lawless one, and while some visitors (and residents) disappear after venturing down the wrong alley, the guards limit open violence to minor brawls. Its former ruler, Hundux, encouraged as much trade (and safety) as he could to stockpile resources for his eventual bid to conquer Urgir. His successor, Paskis, though she disdained Hundux's measured pace, has done likewise. Wyvernsting's talented blacksmiths make it a popular destination for daring souls seeking weaponry, and its megafauna stables offer truly unusual—and gigantic—mounts, trained by some of the best hostlers in Avistan. Navigating Wyvernsting is a challenge for non-orcs but not impossible, and a strong arm or valuable goods can overcome many of its residents' prejudices.

## WYVERNSTING

## SETTLEMENT 10

### CITY

Mountain fortress of the Unbroken Horn Hold

**Government** Chief (overlord)

**Population** 11,560 (84% orcs, 7% dromaar, 5% humans, 2% giants, 2% other)

**Languages** Common, Jotun, Orcish

**Religions** Dretha, Lamashtu, Nulgreth, Rull, Varg

**Threats** escaped megafauna, petty crime, rival orc holds

**Cutthroat** Brawls in Wyvernsting's streets rarely attract attention unless they spill over to uninvolved people, though openly fatal violence is barred except when meted out by the city's guards.

**Prejudice** Orc NPCs begin with an attitude one step worse than normal toward those with no orc heritage.

**Gindral Lightning-Targe** (wizened male dromaar stormcaller)  
Wyvernsting's high priest of Rull

**Makoa the Gentle** (sadistic female orc ex-cleric) master of the Pit, the city's fighting arena

**Paskis Nine-Knives** (ruthless female orc rogue) ruler of Wyvernsting and chief of the Unbroken Horn

**Verthok the Reaper** (cruel female dromaar lieutenant)  
Paskis's second-in-command, in charge of the Unbroken Horn's army

## HISTORY

Orcs have inhabited Wyvernsting since the warlord Belkzen first united orcs under his banner ages ago. Early tales describe it as a fortress of Guraka, one of Belkzen's subchiefs. After Belkzen's empire fell to infighting after his death, Guraka's forces retreated to their mountain stronghold, gradually expanding it from a single citadel to a burgeoning town.

Over the next few millennia, the city—its original name lost to time—gained a reputation for three things: its defensibility, its proximity to the Algid Wastes and the valuable megafauna roaming there, and its strategic position between the Kodar Mountains and the Flood Road. Much of the original settlement was located within the chambers and tunnels honeycombing the cliff walls nearby, often baffling would-be invaders as Wyvernsting's defenders seemingly appeared and disappeared out of thin air. By the time the Whispering Tyrant united the orc holds under his command in 3203 AR, however, the city had grown past the canyon walls flanking its current site, and a palisade was built to encircle the portion of the city outside the cliffs, protecting it from invaders and wildlife. During this period, the city gained the name of “Wyvern's Sting,” after the wyverns nesting atop its mountain peaks, which was soon shortened to “Wyvernsting.”

In 4064, Kovark Jagged-Tooth, a legendary orc warrior who'd fought under Kavazon, led an army to take Wyvernsting for himself. Orc history states the forces massing outside the palisades were a feint, however; while they kept the defending army's attention, Kovark and a team of assassins rappelled down the surrounding cliffs at night to infiltrate the city, then killed the ruling hold's leadership down to the youngest family members. With their leaders gone, the defenders were in disarray when the attacking army struck.



Wyvernsting prospered under the Unbroken Horn's rule, particularly in recent years. When Hundux took control in 4706, he encouraged trade to supplement their raiding spoils and established an alliance with the nearby Wingripper Hold, ending years of warfare. Hundux remained content to amass wealth and test the Empty Hand Hold in annual clashes, studying their tactics to develop countermeasures. Paskis's coup accelerated this timetable, and now, much of Wyvernsting's trade and industry is dedicated to her promised march on Urgir.

## NEIGHBORHOODS AND GEOGRAPHY

The mountains to the south and east shade the city for most of the day, which many orcs find easier on the eyes. To the west, a precipitous drop leads 500 feet down to Darkwater Lake, and tunnels and caverns riddle the cliffs near the city. Wyvernsting stands atop the relatively flat space in between, encircled by a palisade wall. Within are two smaller hills. Hagtooth Hill to the east is where most of the Unbroken Horn Hold lives and trains. The smaller western hill contains Fort Paskis, recently renamed from Fort Hundux, a stone keep that Paskis uses as a headquarters and living space for herself and her closest allies.

In addition to Fort Paskis and Hagtooth Hill, four other neighborhoods make up Wyvernsting. Downside is home to most orc residents who aren't part of the Unbroken Horn and those non-orcs lucky enough to escape Backhill; its steep-roofed homes are small but comfortable. The Market, located near the center of the city, is its bustling trade district, hosting inns for visitors and numerous shops trading weapons, armor, and Wyvernsting's famed megafauna. The creatures for sale, however, are housed in Stockside, a neighborhood of stables and leather goods manufacturers. Due to the scents of the animals and tanneries, few live in Stockside except for its most dedicated hostlers. Backhill, a sprawling neighborhood to the north where most of Wyvernsting's non-orcs live, is impoverished and run-down, and fires commonly break out among its tightly-packed wooden buildings. Finally, though not a neighborhood proper, the Dumps to the northeast is where Wyvernsting disposes of its refuse. Unfortunate beggars can often be seen there picking through the detritus for scraps of cloth or metal to sell.

## GOVERNMENT

Throughout Wyvernsting's history, it's been ruled by the leader of its controlling hold, currently Paskis Nine-Knives of the Unbroken Horn. In keeping with orc martial traditions, this leader is known as the city's general. The general of Wyvernsting has absolute authority over decisions for all municipal affairs, though most delegate tasks they find uninteresting to a handpicked circle of lieutenants. These lieutenants act as an informal council of advisors, often jockeying for position to win the general's favor over their rivals.

In spite of the recent coup, day-to-day governance in Wyvernsting has largely settled back to normal now that Paskis has completed her purges of Hundux's loyalists.

In Wyvernsting's earlier days, there were few codified laws or regulations save for the mandate to avoid offending the general or their allies. Gradually, however, a loose code accumulated from various restrictions laid down by generals over the centuries, chiefly focused around the prevention of infighting. A city guard, made up of Unbroken Horn warriors, keeps a degree of order in the city. Brawls are an accepted method of settling disputes in Wyvernsting, but the guards expect any potentially fatal violence to be taken outside the city and will break up any melees that appear too threatening. To protect trade, theft from a place of business is also punished severely, with sentences ranging from hard labor to limb removal, or even death, depending on the offense's severity. The same approach isn't taken to theft of individual possessions, and if such matters are brought to the guards, they simply scoff that the aggrieved party should've kept a better hand on their items.

## RESIDENTS

The majority of Wyvernsting's residents are orcs and dromaar. Given Belkzen's continual conflicts with its neighbors, most other ancestries have historically given the region a wide berth. The city does have small populations of non-orcs, however, primarily humans and giants. The bulk of Wyvernsting's human population are descended from prisoners of war from Belkzen's many battles, and most remain in the city simply because they have nowhere else to go. Some, however, are daring merchants or mercenaries willing to risk their lives earning a fortune in a harsh land.



Unbroken Horn Standard



Under Unbroken Horn rule, an unwritten hierarchy defines Wyvernsting's social structures as in traditional orc society. Orcs occupy the top of this hierarchy, with Unbroken Horn members considered of higher status than those of other holds. Besides Unbroken Horn Hold, the Wingripper Hold has a strong presence in Wyvernsting, though they primarily make their homes in the surrounding canyon walls rather than the city proper. Members of other holds residing in Wyvernsting are typically traders acting as a supply line for the city's timber, armaments, and megafauna mounts, though none from holds allied with the Empty Hand are welcome.

Next in the hierarchy are dromaar, though they face an uphill battle to prove themselves due to their "weaker" heritages. Giants are considered valuable allies for their strength but still viewed as outsiders. Humans and other ancestries are at the bottom rung of society, often relegated to servitude and impoverishment unless they've proven their usefulness to the hold.

This divide is apparent in the condition of Wyvernsting's various neighborhoods. Fort Hagtooth, the home of most Unbroken Horn members, is better maintained, with more amenities than anywhere in the city save for Fort Paskis, while Backhill, primarily home to the human underclass, is little better than a slum. Though there's no formal legal distinction between orc and non-orc residents, the city guard pays little attention to any offenses against non-orcs, except for prominent merchants.

## CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Wyvernsting's culture is heavily martial, a tendency encouraged by both Hundux's and Paskis's goal of conquering Urgir. Staunch orc traditionalists occupy most positions of power, valuing strength and physical might above all else. Spellcasting and tactics have their place in battle, of course, but nothing gains respect in Wyvernsting as quickly as martial prowess. Proving one's fighting skill is one of the only ways a non-orc can move up in society, and those few who manage to earn the hold's esteem are often mercenaries willing to fight for the Unbroken Horn Hold's banner.

Even the youngest residents of Wyvernsting learn early on how to hold their own in fistfights or resign themselves to keeping their heads down and trying to avoid trouble. Rugged individualism rules most interactions in Wyvernsting: you have what you can hold onto or claw out for your own, and none will lend you a helping hand if you prove incapable of doing so. Most follow the Unbroken Horn's lead in loathing Ardax the White-Hair and his Empty Hand

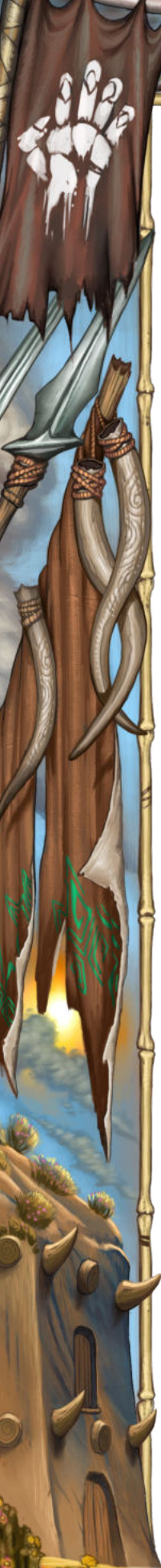
Hold, scorning them as soft fools who have abandoned proud orc traditions; those who don't are wise enough to keep such opinions to themselves.

Popular entertainments include sparring, gladiatorial tournaments, and animal fights. Gambling is also widespread among the city's residents, as are tactical board games that simulate warfare, such as Chiptusk. Festivals held throughout the year commemorate the Unbroken Horn Hold's military victories; the largest and most raucous is Kovark's Day on 21 Rova, celebrating when Kovark Jagged-Tooth is said to have conquered Wyvernsting and established the Unbroken Horn. Kovark's Day festivities include a climbing race down the cliff by which Kovark supposedly entered the



Kovark





city. The race is open to all orcs in Wyvernsting, and the winner each year receives a prize bull of Zagresh as a reward, making it a hotly contested event.

Most Wyvernsting residents have a practical view of religion, viewing deities as akin to hold leaders: powerful entities whom it's best not to offend. Dretha's faith has a strong presence in Wyvernsting, as the war beast breeders view her areas of concern as just as useful in bringing forth animals as orc children. Rull is also often called upon due to the ubiquity of storms in the surrounding mountains. The recent overthrow of several in the orc pantheon shocked Wyvernsting, especially adherents of Verex and Lanishra. The newly risen orc deities are largely scorned or ignored by the Unbroken Horn, especially their old enemy Grask Uldeth, and Wyvernsting has followed suit, leaving no new gods to replace the lost members of the pantheon.

## CONFLICTS

The Unbroken Horn Hold frequently wars with other holds during Proving Time, although such conflicts rarely impact Wyvernsting directly. The most prominent conflict in the city currently is with the Empty Hand and its allied holds, and the majority of the Unbroken Horn's resources are dedicated Paskis's conquest of Urgir. The two holds have been bitter rivals since Paskis's predecessor, Hundux, gained leadership of the Unbroken Horn Hold. Hundux often used Proving Time clashes to evaluate the Empty Hand's strength and tactics in preparation for his eventual invasion of Urgir, and Paskis took care not to discard such information during her coup.

Though external conflicts with other holds are most obvious, internal tensions simmer in Wyvernsting as well. Hundux's most powerful allies were killed in the coup, but there are still those who were loyal to the former leader and secretly disdain Paskis's leadership. Another faction, chiefly comprised of younger warriors, believes that the traditionalist ideas espoused by both Hundux and Paskis only serve to mire the region in pointless infighting and wishes Belzen to take a stronger position among its neighbors. To this end, they support Ardax's strategy, a dangerous position to take in the Unbroken Horn's stronghold. Both groups must tread cautiously to avoid discovery and execution, however, and they've been unable to take much direct action against Paskis or her allies.

Wyvernsting's treatment of its non-orc inhabitants is another point of tension within the city, albeit one the Unbroken Horn leadership rarely considers. Of these residents, the giants are the ones the orcs are most likely to deem a threat due to their size and strength, and Hundux was careful to treat the giant

population with respect. Paskis, however, views the giants as potentially disloyal; this attitude of suspicion has ironically caused the very thing that she feared, as leaders among the giant community consider whether they wish to continue aiding the hold.

## BEASTS OF WAR

Wyvernsting's war beasts have a well-earned reputation as the best in the region. The megafauna stables in Stockside capture, breed, and train a variety of these creatures, some for use as mounts and some to simply let loose against enemies. The most numerous of these are the bulls of Zagresh (page 86), whose aggression grows with each generation. Once trained, the bulls are used as mounts for the Unbroken Horn's elite warriors as well as in a blood sport known as ravine fights, where orcs pit their strength against the animals in blocked-off gorges surrounding the city. Warcats of Rull (page 87), though more common among the neighboring Ice Tooth Hold, are also found in Wyvernsting's stables. Most of the warcats are captured rather than bred, then brought to Wyvernsting to be trained.

Other megafauna trained in Wyvernsting are captured in the Algid Wastes by intrepid hunters. A band of taiga giants led by **Delka the Thorn** (grizzled female taiga giant ranger) is the most prolific of them, capturing creatures such as mammoths and moose to sell to the stables in Stockside. These creatures are usually used as beasts of burden rather than war mounts, though some are sold to foreigners as curiosities.

## POINTS OF INTEREST

**A. Algid Fauna:** This modest stable on the outskirts of Stockside specializes in mammoths from the Algid Wastes. Its owners are a pair of dromaar twins, **Drelkar** and **Mezhra** (shrewd male and female dromaar ranchers 2), who also maintain a shop front in the Market touting their mammoths' reliability and hardiness as draft animals. For more information on Algid Fauna, see **Objective 1: A Stable Sanctuary** on page 29.

**B. Blacktusk Tavern:** A raucous and rowdy establishment, Blacktusk Tavern in Downside is popular among Wyvernsting's younger generation for its strong lagers and convivial atmosphere. Its proprietor, **Victana Blacktusk** (charming female orc bartender), encourages a varied clientele, and Blacktusk is one of the few places in Wyvernsting where orcs and non-orcs drink together as equals. The tavern features a raised stage in one corner where patrons can recount tales of their exploits in verse or in song. Pinned to a corkboard next to the bar is the "community board," which originally was meant for leaflets advertising odd jobs but now mostly contains



postings from lovelorn souls hoping to meet potential partners, as Victana fancies herself a matchmaker. It's rumored that a group of radical dissidents meets under Blacktusk's roof, though Victana quickly deflects any such accusations.

**C. Corpse Row:** Corpse Row holds no mortal graveyard as its name might suggest, but it was once known as Shrine Row, containing small chapels to those in the orc pantheon without larger temples in the city. After the loss of five of the former pantheon, Wyvernsting residents took to calling the street "Corpse Row" in a display of dark humor. The priests at the chapels of Lanishra and Verex, formerly bitter rivals, have retreated into seclusion, though it's whispered that they each toil at a mysterious project. The chapel of Zagresh was smashed to pieces by its own priests as their last act of service. Those at the chapel of Sezelrian cling to their faith, believing if they gather enough flames from the far corners of Golarion, they can resurrect their god; these disciples offer rich rewards to anyone who brings them flint—or better still, a live flame—from a foreign land.

**D. Fort Hagtooth:** A squat, sprawling building atop Hagtooth Hill, Fort Hagtooth holds the barracks and training grounds for the Unbroken Horn Hold's warriors, under the gimlet eye of Verthok the Reaper. Quarters are austere, and training is unforgiving, but the army offers the best path to status and respect in the Unbroken Horn Hold. A small prison attached to the fort holds enemies of the city until they can be executed.

**E. Fort Paskis:** This two-story stone keep overlooks Darkwater Lake. Until recently, it was known as Fort Hundux, but Paskis renamed it when she took over, as the keep is traditionally named after the city's general. Fort Paskis serves as both command center and living quarters for Paskis and her lieutenants, and it contains some of the most luxurious amenities in the city. It's extremely well-defended, so any intrusion past the palisade walls without permission is met with a swift death.

**F. Jorintha's:** This rundown tavern in the heart of Backhill serves as a de facto community center for Wyvernsting's human population. The proprietor, the eponymous **Jorintha** (altruistic genderfluid human tavern keeper), does what she can to aid the impoverished by offering free meals to those in need and distributing donated supplies, but demand often outstrips his resources. She's always on the lookout for those who might be willing to assist, though he can offer little besides a safe haven in exchange.

**G. The Pit:** The Pit isn't exactly in Wyvernsting, but underneath it, accessed by a spiraling stone staircase leading underground. The vertical fighting arena hosts

gladiatorial matches and blood sports at all hours of the day and night, with its audience arrayed in circular tiers ascending from the arena floor. Matches are dangerous, and fatalities are frequent, but many consider the payouts for successful gladiators well worth it. The Pit's manager, Makoa the Gentle, is always on the lookout for more challengers, though any unwise enough to mention the recent loss of her patron deity, Lanishra, earns herself a very slow death.

**H. Riptooth Stables:** As the largest stable in Stockside, Riptooth Stables is responsible for breeding and training most of the bulls of Zagresh that Unbroken Horn warriors use as mounts.

**I. Spark Street:** Weaponsmithing is a vital business in Wyvernsting, and most of the smithies are concentrated on a single street in the Market, where the clang of tools against anvils rings out at all hours. Up-and-coming smithies hawk their wares loudly to passersby, while the elite, established blacksmiths accept jobs by appointment only and often have months-long waiting lists. Each smithy guards their techniques jealously, and rivalries and vendettas are common. Some smiths will even pay outside agents to sabotage a rival smithy or steal their secrets.

**J. Temple of Tempests:** At the center of the Market stands an immense spire of stone and metal, reaching up to the sky. This tower is Wyvernsting's temple to Rull, its metal tip designed to attract lightning from passing storms. High Priest Gindral Lightning-Target is the only one permitted to ascend to the top of the tower, where he conducts rituals to commune with Rull. Rumors abound that an ancient artifact, a staff blessed by Rull himself, was recently stolen from the temple, though Gindral dismisses this as nonsense.

**K. Wrangling Grounds:** Giants use this massive paddock to hone their hunting skills, practicing with captured fauna and against each other. These training sessions often attract spectators, although most take care to stay clear of errant hooves or horns. A lodge near the paddock serves as a dining room and social club, where the giants trade tips and gossip while enjoying robust meals.

**L. Wyvern Canyon:** In the craggy mountains to the south of Wyvernsting is the home of the Wingripper Hold, allies of the Unbroken Horn Hold, who have taken up residence in the tunnels and chambers within the cliff walls. They prize the location for its slight remove from the city and its proximity to the roosts at the mountaintop, where they quarter their wyverns. Visitors are frowned upon by the Wingripper Hold's leader, **Molog** (vicious male orc wyvern rider), but every so often, an enterprising wyvern rustler attempts to make off with some of the mounts.







# Belkzen Faiths

To an outsider, Belkzen's gods reflect age-old orc stereotypes: a band of bloodthirsty warlords and knaves eager to seize and despoil everything that isn't already theirs. There's more than a grain of truth to this characterization—at least historically. Gods such as Lanishra, Verex, and Zagresh championed conquest and war crimes, so by extension, orcs were absolved of doing the same (and even encouraged to do so). Yet Belkzen has never been a monolith of beliefs. Where some embraced these divine mandates, configuring their moral compasses to their pantheon's decrees, many orcs only viewed these gods as role models for dire circumstances; raiding, betrayal, and ferocity were strategies to be employed only when absolutely necessary to survive.

The recent War of Immortals, a clash that killed some gods and raised others, destroyed Gorum and upended the Belkzen orcs' pantheon. Gone are many of their cruelest deities, replaced by gods eager to carve a new path for the nation. These gods are the embodiment of values that were rarely represented by orc deities of the past, yet their beliefs have always been present among Belkzen's people.

The following explores Belkzen's pantheon—past and present. The changing roster of gods reflects the country's evolving role in Avistan, guided by Ardash the White-Hair as he pushes his neighbors to engage and trade with the wider world. It's unclear if the rest of the world is ready to accept this new Belkzen. It's equally uncertain whether orcs will discard the old values and gods that sustained them for millennia.

## ORIGINS

As an institution, the orc pantheon predates the Quest for Sky that drove orcs to the surface. That said, there's no canonical understanding of who the original orc deities were, what role they had in creating orcs, and whether other gods came before the pantheon of today. Each hold or geographic region developed its own myths, creating a mishmash of theology using a shared cast of characters. Each of the following legends likely contains some element of truth.

**Dretha's Spawn:** Dretha was a subterranean goddess awakened by the incessant scratching of serpentfolk and tunneling cave worms. With consciousness came loneliness, so she crafted companions out of blood and dust. They became the Five Brothers: Lanishra,

Nulgreth, Sezelrian, Verex, and Zagresh. They squabbled for Dretha's attention, so she tasked them with creating their own companions. But rather than make five creations, the five worked together on one.

It quickly devolved into infighting as they competed to add features: massive tusks, a heart of fearless fire, blood burning with zeal, and more. When the Five Brothers' fighting grew too loud, Dretha intervened and snatched up their lifeless statue. After making a few adjustments for practicality, she granted it life and created the first orc. Together, the gods seeded the Darklands with countless more orcs.

**The Defiant Heroes:** Before the Quest for Sky—before dwarves invaded orc caverns and slaughtered their people—orcs had no pantheon. Instead, several powerful warriors, mystics, and leaders swore that they would defy the dwarves. They rallied the scattered orcs communities to fight back together. Despite their zeal, these paragons perished one by one to dwarven steel. Yet, the paragons' spirits were stubborn, and orcs' faith in their champions allowed their fallen heroes to apotheosize, becoming demigods who led their people ever upward to safety. On the surface, the young pantheon consolidated its power and attained full godhood.

**Stolen Divinity:** In ancient times, orcs had no gods yet craved some to call their own. The mortals Lanishra and Verex snuck to the surface, intent on abducting a god for their community. They found halflings. The diminutive humanoids prayed to equally tiny gods, and the two orcs scoffed at the notion of worshipping such puny beings. Instead, the two abducted a halfling god, sending the followers screaming in fear and dragging the hapless divinity underground. There, they stole the now-forgotten god's essence and became gods themselves.

Word soon spread, and the two orc gods led more expeditions to raid the halfling pantheon. Again and again, they abducted a deity, sacrificed them, and distributed the spoils. In this way, the orc gods rose to power through their own strength. This is also why halflings have almost no gods left to call their own. However, the orc gods were strangers to divinity; they held it tight, but it wasn't part of them. Thus, each orc god is vulnerable, and through the Deathright, a challenger can steal that divinity for themselves just as their predecessor did ages ago.





## THE PANTHEON

The following summarizes the current pantheon's members. Additional information about each appears in *Pathfinder Lost Omens Divine Mysteries*.

**Grask Uldeth:** Less than a decade has passed since Grask Uldeth ruled Urgir and the Empty Hand Hold. Though ruthless as a warlord, this visionary aimed to transform Belkzen less through raiding and more through trade. Protests faded once the gold started rolling in, yet he knew that mortality limited his ability to change and strengthen Belkzen.

Grask engineered his own death with the help of his protégé, Ardax the White-Hair. Through the Crucible, he killed the death god Zagresh and attained divinity. Grask has already become a leading voice among the orc pantheon, capable of finding common cause with his fellow gods as readily as he united orc holds.

**Jukha:** Young and ambitious, Jukha gathered a small following that might have become her own hold had she not perished during a solo mammoth hunt. However, she had sworn her Deathright, so her spirit embarked on one last hunt—for a god. It's unclear whom she fought and killed, yet she triumphed.

On reflection, Jukha has realized how her self-sufficiency proved her downfall. As a god, she champions hunters of all kinds, favoring group hunts most of all. There, each participant can contribute and cooperate with their peers to achieve something far greater than they could alone. Though Jukha's focus is the hunt, her philosophy also supports the unification of Belkzen. She has also become a de facto patron of the Flood Truce, when orcs hunt the migratory aurochs whose meat feeds the nation.

**Mahja Firehair:** As a mortal, Mahja bristled at the raiding and cruelty that surrounded her in Belkzen. Sarenrae offered Mahja an alternative. The young orc took control of the Burning Sun Hold and remade it from the ground up, instilling more benevolent traditions and aspirations. Even so, her hold stayed combat-ready, repelling any rivals that assumed the Burning Sun was a hold of pacifist weaklings. Through careful ritual, Mahja entered the afterlife to challenge the Fire God, Sezelrian. Ultimately, her flame burned the brightest, and she seized his place in the pantheon.

As a goddess, Mahja treats Sarenrae as a mentor, not as a patron. Mahja favors the same purification-by-fire concept, though she's less forgiving; redemption must be earned. Those who believe themselves righteous are to be tested, and claims are given proper scrutiny before being accepted. As a result, her followers are very proactive as they fan across Belkzen and challenge old traditions. Understandably, this has earned Mahja's faith a mixed reception.

**Nulgreth:** Among the eldest of the orc gods, Nulgreth is a primal divinity of blood and strength. His appearance is practically a caricature of orc violence: red skin, armor caked in others' blood, and sanguine rivulets trickling down his body as he clamors for even more. His priests are encouraged not just to kill others, but also to ritually dissect them to anoint themselves in their victims' blood. Understandably, he appeals to warriors, embodying an instinctive rage an orc can use to overcome any threat.

Recently, philosophers have questioned Nulgreth's motives. He's impatient and violent, certainly, yet his blood fascination goes beyond mere cruelty. This has created small splinters in the faith depending on how they answer the question "Why blood?" For some, it's a demonstration of their strength. To others, Nulgreth needs blood to sustain his own strength because only he can hold back some greater evil (in which case these sacrifices are righteous). Whatever the case, Nulgreth's faithful unsettle nearly everyone they meet—all except blood painters (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 3 33), with whom they have a rapport.

**Rull:** It's thought that Rull was the first god created after orcs reached the surface. There, they cowered at the cacophony of the stormy skies, but the mortal Rull stood unperturbed. He scaled the highest mountain and challenged the storm spirits to battle. A tremendous lightning bolt obliterated his body, yet Rull had sworn his Deathright, and he dragged those same storm spirits into the Crucible. There he bested them, either absorbing their power directly or bending them to his eternal will to become a god of storms.

Thanks to Rull, orcs overcame their fear of the sky. He blessed them with clouds that blocked the sun for generations so orcs could adapt to the light—an allegorical explanation for the Age of Darkness, whose darkened skies coincided with orcs' arrival.

**Uirch:** Like his contemporary Mahja, Uirch worshipped Sarenrae in life. However, he cared less for redemption and more for protecting the weak and innocent. For years, he championed the defenseless by training them to defend themselves. However, he knew his legacy would fade once he died. Following divine recommendation (including from an unlikely ally, Torag), Uirch swore his Deathright, challenged Lanishra, and prevailed.

As a god, Uirch aims to end tyranny before it can take root. Rather than leave a liberated people leaderless, he also encourages followers to establish new systems—laws, guards, and more—to protect others going forward. Understandably, his edicts have an uphill battle in Belkzen, where holds value their autonomy and might-makes-right traditions.



**Varg:** Darklands orcs mastered tunnel warfare, yet on the surface, orcs had to contend with unfamiliar threats like catapults, arrow volleys, troop formations, and walls. Varg was an early warlord, and his keen mind incorporated many tactics used by his surface foes. It wasn't enough, though; he led a short-sighted siege that ultimately destroyed him and his army.

He achieved godhood in death. Varg studies and teaches his followers the virtues of siege engines and techniques for forging the best weapons. Theoretically, he loves technology of all kinds, but in practice, he loses interest in any invention that lacks military applications. His followers are especially numerous in the forge town of Blisterwell and among the Steel Eater Hold, both of which supply Belkzen's armies.

**Wulgren:** As a mortal dromaar, Wulgren traveled widely. Upon reaching Alkenstar, he discovered his true calling: firearms. He learned everything the gunsmiths would teach him, ultimately leading to his invention of the barricade buster, a hand cannon. With a pile of these weapons, he returned to Belkzen and joined in the fight against the Whispering Tyrant. Devastating as his shots were, the undead ultimately overwhelmed him.

However, his barricade buster accompanied him to the Crucible. After shooting the head off another god (whom Wulgren hasn't yet identified), he became a god of invention and crushing the undead. He and his faithful get along well enough with Varg's faith, though a healthy rivalry grows between them. It's still too early to see if one faith subsumes the other.

## OTHER GODS

Countless other faiths have found their way into Belkzen, though few last before being replaced by orc-centric religions.

**Cayden Cailean:** Belkzen's orcs value courage, spontaneity, and carousing—all values that align well with the Accidental God. Cayden's faith spread innocuously, in part because he was presented as a tall tale or mythic hero who posed no threat to Belkzen's existing religions. If these uncanonical tales are to be believed, Cayden led 15 orcs on a pub crawl so epic and delirious that it gave the Mindspin Mountains their name. He even crashed a diplomatic gathering at the Table of Ralock, where he dueled three warlords at once, settled a dispute by winning a tug-of-war contest against an entire hold, and threw up on the Table itself (a just-so story explaining the rock's dubious stain).

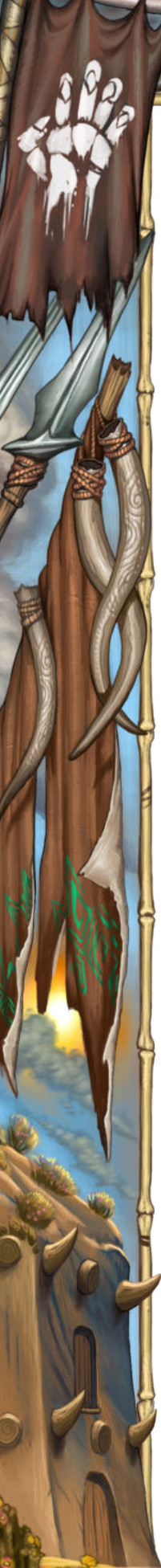
Thanks to his nonthreatening depiction, Cayden's faith found many quiet converts before becoming more overtly religious over the past century. His faithful are still few, yet they find welcome refuge across Belkzen—at least so long as they provide entertainment for their hosts. Cayden's disdain for oppression tends to ruffle more feathers, though. His followers often outwear their welcome when they start preaching liberation or denouncing local power brokers.

The variant of Cayden's faith found in Belkzen can (at the GM's discretion) replace his rapier with the orc knuckle dagger as their favored weapon.

**Lamashtu:** When orcs reached the surface, their bodies were subjected to strange hazards like the scorching sun, choking dust, and unfamiliar beasts.







Orcs nevertheless endured and adapted to their new environment. Orcs often attribute part of their rapid evolution to Lamashtu. Since then, neighboring nations have demonized orcs (sometimes with good cause), earning Lamashtu a steady following; her faith welcomes and empowers outcasts of all types. She has also become an informal patron of tattoos and prostheses, both of which make an orc unique and grant strength in overcoming hardship.

**Rovagug:** For ages, orcs often prayed to Rovagug alongside destructive orc deities like Nulgreth, Verex, and Zagresh. Even the warlord Belkzen famously instituted harsh codes in Rovagug's name to punish infighting. While he still boasts many worshippers in Belkzen, the Rough Beast has gradually evolved from an object of veneration—one whom warriors beseech for strength in shattering their enemies—into a force of nature best appeased to avert his wrath. Rovagug is the embodiment of change, wear, tear, and death. Many orcs revere him as a faceless adversary, defying him just by surviving another day while acknowledging that the Rough Beast will one day grind each one of them to dust. Thus, while many orcs invoke Rovagug in oaths and invectives, few outright disparage him or the important role he plays in the Belkzen narrative.

**Sarenrae:** The Dawnflower's faith gained a foothold through the mortal Mahja Firehair, whose Burning Sun Hold became a holy example among Belkzen's holds. Though small, the hold gradually earned grudging respect from its neighbors—thanks in part to these relentless Sarenites holding their own in skirmishes. Mahja Firehair's recent apotheosis is perhaps the best and worst thing to happen for Sarenrae's following in Belkzen. Nearly all orcs who favored the Dawnflower now worship their homegrown Matron of Rites. In this way, Sarenrae's objectives spread through her deified disciple, even if almost nobody in Belkzen prays to Sarenrae directly.

**Zon-Kuthon:** Orcs famously laugh off pain and celebrate near-death experiences, yet few seek pain for its own sake—at least not to the extent expected of the Midnight Lord's disciples. Whether masochists or cursed by a lifetime of hardship, some few orcs worship Zon-Kuthon. Their faith perturbs onlookers, eliciting the same reaction as one would give a town drunk. Still, these worshippers rarely start trouble, and having a few Kuthites in a hold means there's always at least one volunteer for the most perilous tasks.

## FALLEN FAITHS

Thanks to the Crucible, the pantheon changes over time. The following members of the orc pantheon were destroyed or banished in recent years.

**Dretha:** Deity of birth and community, Dretha served as an informal patron to non-male orcs in a male-dominated pantheon. That said, she held her own among her colleagues, subduing anyone who confused her with some peace-loving fertility goddess. During the War of Immortals, Dretha vanished, her disappearance overshadowed by other orc gods' more prominent and violent deaths. It's unclear whether she's been replaced through the Deathright tradition; if so, her successor hasn't taken credit (and might not have even introduced herself to Belkzen).

Dretha's priests still draw upon a small fraction of their missing patron's magic. This is most notable with protective charms—even newly made ones—commonly worn by expectant parents and newborn children. Dretha has also supported orc holds and ancestral identity, making her a unifying figure. Grask Uldeth's interests overlap heavily, and his faith will likely displace hers in decades to come.

**Gorum:** Gorum wasn't explicitly an orc deity, yet Belkzen depictions of Gorum often portrayed him with orc proportions, weaponry, and even tusks peeking out from his helm. Even the Bloodied Gauntlet Hold honored Gorum as their chief deity.

Thus, the Lord in Iron's recent death hit Belkzen hard. Many of his faithful decided Gorum's death signaled a final, cosmic battle; they sought out any conflict they could, intent on fighting ceaselessly until they fell and could (presumably) join their divine patron in death. Others have dedicated themselves to chasing after the fragments of Gorum that pelted Golarion, believing that anyone who gathers enough might apotheosize and become the god's successor.

A large fraction mourned the Lord in Iron's demise and moved on, often adopting a new divine patron. Often bitter, these followers retain their bellicose instincts and have something to prove in the years to come, making Gorum's ex-priests dangerously ambitious and aggressive.

**Lanishra:** Many of Belkzen's toxic traditions of hierarchy and subjugation trace their origins to Lanishra, remembered as the Slavelord. To him, domination was the only virtue. Others' love was to be earned through terror and force. Even his fellow gods were inferior. Like his sacred animal, the saber-toothed cat, the world was his to pin down, his fangs pressed against reality's neck unless it capitulated.

Uirch overthrew Lanishra during the former's Deathright. In doing so, Uirch shattered any divine command that might have validated orcs subjugating each other. Still, habits die hard. Lanishra's former followers were trained to believe in their own superiority, and many refuse to accept their patron's



demise. This cognitive dissonance has spurred erratic outbursts, with Lanishran raiders roving Belkzen and beyond in search of victims to terrorize as salve for their bruised egos.

**Sezelrian:** In a pantheon dominated by bullies and warmongers, Sezelrian at first seemed to stand out; he championed creativity and intellect, encouraging followers to overcome challenges with their minds and magic. However, the Fire God's innovations were less directed at improving quality of life than at focusing on being a destructive nuisance. His faithful worshipped by building massive bonfires—sometimes from the homes and treasures of their enemies. Likewise, his inventions were often war machine collaborations with Varg.

Mahja Firehair fought fire with fire, defeating Sezelrian through her Deathright. Because Sezelrian's followers tended to focus on their magic and inventions first and their deity second, their patron's destruction had a relatively minor effect on the faith. Sezelrian now serves more as a didactic legend, with his admirers building myths about him that hide alchemical and magical formulas within their verses.

**Verex:** If Lanishra craved his neighbors' obeisance, Verex craved their treasures. The Despoiler was a god of wealth, but especially plunder and theft. Verex also indirectly undermined Belkzen's economic development by inspiring orcs to repeatedly raid each other when they might have developed their own wealth. Still, Verex's low cunning proved instrumental in Belkzen's resistance against foreign tyrants like Tar-Baphon, with orcs learning subtle means of sabotage and survival from the Despoiler.

Godsrain weakened part of Rovagug's prison, and the Rough Beast's power intrigued the Despoiler. For all his greed and confidence, Verex proved no match for the ancient divinity's influence and was corrupted. He transformed in a gruesome, violent metamorphosis, becoming a new Spawn of Rovagug known simply as That-Which-Was-Verex. The monstrosity has departed Belkzen for now, seeking ways to free Rovagug, but it's only a matter of time before That-Which-Was-Verex revisits his homeland. The god's former followers were already stealthy opportunists, so most either quietly changed faiths or washed their hands of religion altogether.

**Zagresh:** If an uninformed outsider created a god of the worst orc stereotypes, they might reinvent Zagresh—a deity of death, destruction, and mindless savagery with immense tusks and a throat more accustomed to animalistic roars than words. Indeed, Zagresh was a violent luddite, though his destructive tendencies were often overshadowed by those of his

equally cruel colleagues. Yet, his dominion over death differentiated Zagresh. In addition to being an informal patron of necromancers, his blessings shielded fallen orcs so that they didn't rise spontaneously as undead.

Upon his death, Grask Uldeth challenged and defeated Zagresh. Here, Zagresh's dominion over death had a strange side effect: he wasn't destroyed outright, as had happened with other deities slain in the Crucible. Instead, a shadow of his former glory fled the battle, seeking refuge among his faithful in the vain hope that he might regain his divinity. Though insignificant compared to gods, Zagresh is still powerful by mortal standards. However, he's driven by instinct and impulse, leaving him outraged by his defeat yet uncertain as to how he might become a god again.



Uirch The Protector

Destroyer's  
Doom

Chapter 1:  
The  
Gathering  
Storm

Chapter 2:  
Under the  
Wyvern's Eye

Chapter 3:  
Whispers of  
Death

Continuing  
the  
Campaign

Wyvernsting  
Gazetteer

Belkzen  
Faiths

Adventu  
Toolb x







# Adventure Toolbox

## NEW RULES

The following character options feature in this adventure or are associated with central Belkzen.

### Wyvern (Creature Companion)

Though most wyverns are too prideful and headstrong to consider debasing themselves as “pets,” the orcs living near Wyvernsting have a reputation for training these drakes to serve as flying mounts. Exactly why wyverns acquiesce is unclear, though common theories include wyverns receiving treasure in exchange, being hatched in captivity so that they’ve never known freedom, or (most likely) that their orc trainers demonstrate such power and confidence that the drakes behave out of admiration. Over time, these wyverns’ most rebellious instincts have been quelled through selective breeding; otherwise the rate at which drakes eat their riders would be much, much higher.

Even with these friendlier characteristics, few riders are tough enough for a wyvern companion. These creatures expect their handlers to be mentally and physically strong, earning a place among the wyvern’s artificial flock. Especially steady wyverns can be trained as mounts, though their innate pride makes this a rather dangerous proposition; if the drake begins to doubt a rider’s commands, they might simply ignore orders or even buck their rider mid-air.

This wyvern is an advanced companion (*Howl of the Wild* 93), available only to characters of 10th level or higher. At the GM’s discretion, a wyvern companion might be accessible at lower levels, but if so, it doesn’t gain the Unsteady Mount ability until 10th level. Before then, it might function as a mount but be unable to fly with a rider, or its ability to fly with a rider might only be usable for 1 round per 10 minutes.

### WYVERN

LEVEL 10

UNCOMMON DRAGON

Size Large

**Melee** ♦ stinger, **Damage** 1d6 piercing plus poison

**Melee** ♦ jaws, **Damage** 1d8 piercing

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

**Hit Points** 8

**Skill** Stealth

**Senses** darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Speed** 20 feet, fly 40 feet

**Special** The wyvern’s stinger attack deals additional poison damage equal to 1 + 1 per weapon damage die.

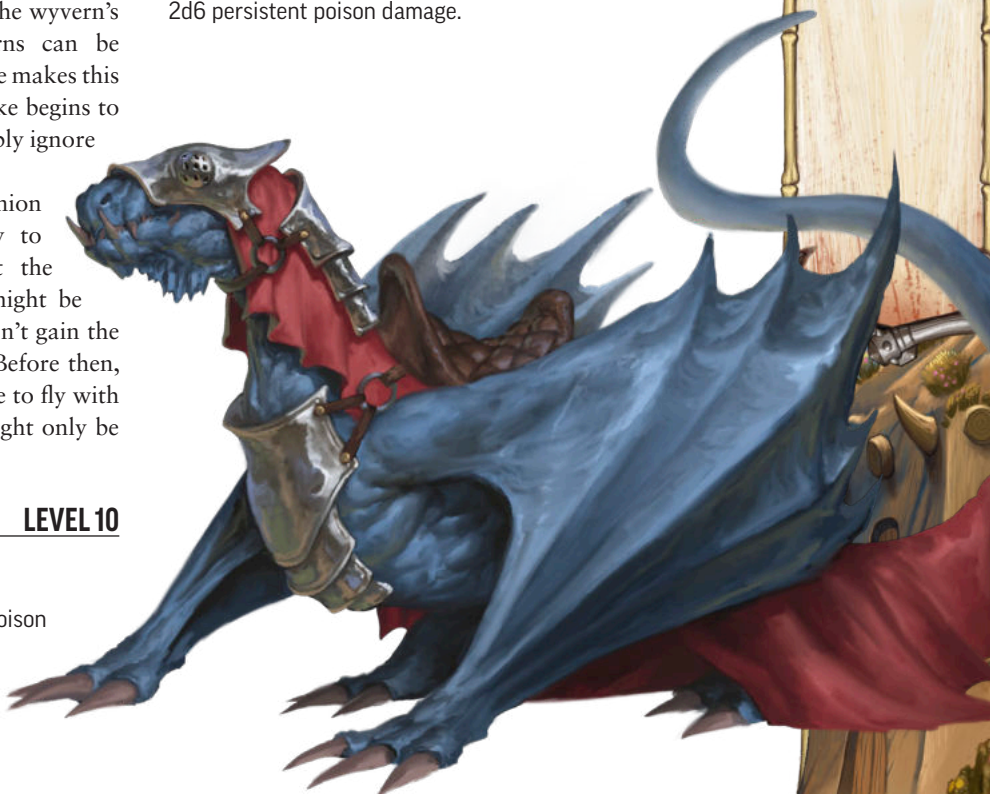
**Unsteady Mount** The wyvern has the mount ability but is only strong enough to fly in short bursts while carrying a rider; if it doesn’t end its turn on solid ground, it descends 30 feet without taking falling damage. At 14th level, a wyvern replaces this with the mount ability, removing this restriction.

**Support Benefit** Your wyvern whips its stinger at your foes. Until the start of your next turn, your Strikes that damage a creature in your wyvern’s reach also deal 1d6 persistent poison damage. If your wyvern is nimble or savage, the persistent damage increases to 2d6.

**Advanced Maneuver** Diving Skewer

### DIVING SKEWER ♦♦

The wyvern Flies up to half its Speed and then makes a stinger Strike. If the Strike hits, the target is also knocked prone. If the Strike critically succeeds, the target also takes 2d6 persistent poison damage.





## Spells

### ANCESTRAL WINDS ◆◆

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE EMOTION FEAR MANIPULATE MENTAL VOID

**Traditions** arcane, divine, occult

**Range** 120 feet; **Area** 20-foot-radius burst

**Defense** Will; **Duration** sustained up to 1 minute

You call on the same energies that manifest ancestor storms, summoning wailing spirits to terrorize your foes. Living creatures in the area take 5d6 void damage and 1d6 mental damage and must attempt a Will save. Nonliving creatures are immune to this spell's effects.

**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected.

**Success** The creature takes half damage and is frightened 1.

**Failure** The creature takes full damage and is frightened 2.

**Critical Failure** As failure, but the creature takes double damage and is stunned 1.

The first time each round you Sustain the spell, you can move the area up to 30 feet within the range of the spell. Living creatures in the new area must attempt saves with the same effects as above.

### SPELL 5



Gorum's Tear

### UTTER DESTRUCTION ◆◆

UNCOMMON DEATH SONIC VOID

**Traditions** arcane, occult, primal

**Range** 120 feet; **Area** 30-foot cone

**Defense** Fortitude

You screech with an unearthly voice made of destructive energy, smashing everything that lies before you. Creatures in the area take 4d8 sonic damage and 4d8 void damage. Each creature must attempt a Fortitude save. Unattended objects of Hardness 5 or less in the area of effect are destroyed.

**Critical Success** The creature takes half damage.

**Success** The creature takes half damage and is deafened for 1 round.

**Failure** The creature takes full damage and is deafened for 1 minute.

**Critical Failure** The creature takes double damage and is permanently deafened.

**Heightened (+1)** The sonic and void damage each increase by 1d8. The Hardness threshold of items destroyed by the spell increases by 1.

### SPELL 6

### MUTILATE ◆◆ OR ◆◆◆

UNCOMMON MANIPULATE

**Traditions** arcane, occult, primal

**Range** 40 feet; **Targets** 1 creature in line of sight

**Defense** basic Fortitude

You cut your own body in a ritualistic manner, causing similar damage to a creature in your line of sight. These cuts are superficial and cause 1d4 slashing damage to you; however, the wounds that open up on our target's body are far deeper. The targeted creature takes 5d8 slashing damage; a creature that critically fails this saving throw also takes 1d8 persistent bleed damage. If you cast this as a three-action spell, the spell instead affects a 5-foot burst.

**Heightened (+1)** Increase the damage dealt to the target by 1d8, and increase the persistent bleed damage by 1.

### SPELL 4

### STRENGTH OF MIND ◆

UNCOMMON CONCENTRATE MENTAL

**Traditions** divine, occult, primal

**Range** touch; **Targets** 1 willing creature

**Duration** 10 minutes

You bolster your ally with reminders of their physical prowess, granting them additional defenses against harmful mental effects. The target gains a +1 status bonus to saving throws against mental effects and against effects that hinder movement (including those that reduce Speed or apply the grabbed, immobilized, or restrained

### SPELL 3

## Items

### AMULET OF KINSHIP'S STRENGTH

### ITEM 12

UNCOMMON INVESTED MAGICAL

**Price** 2,000 gp

**Usage** worn; **Bulk** L

This weighty brass disk is inscribed with the ancestral names of its previous owners and now includes your own. When worn, it rests against your chest with a heavy warmth, a reminder of the strength of those who came before you. While worn and invested, you gain a +2 item bonus to Will saves. This bonus increases to +3 if the effect has the fear trait.

**Activate—Strengthen Resolve** ◆ **Frequency** once per day;

**Effect** You extend your resolve to your allies, casting *strength of mind* on up to three willing targets.

### AUROCHS HIDE ARMOR

### ITEM 10

UNCOMMON INVESTED MAGICAL

**Price** 1,000 gp

**Usage** worn armor; **Bulk** 2

**Base Armor** Hide Armor

Made of the sturdy, thick hide of the aurochs and tempered to be both flexible and durable, this +1 *resilient hide armor* is imbued with the aurochs' natural defenses against venomous predators. You gain resistance 5 to poison damage.



**Activate—Stubborn Skin** ♦ You pull the layers of the armor taut, stiffening your body against incoming forces for 1 minute. While the armor is taut, you have a -1 penalty to Reflex saves and a +2 item bonus to Fortitude saves.

## BRACERS OF PAIN

ITEM 12

UNCOMMON INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 2,200 gp

**Usage** worn bracers; **Bulk** L

These simple bracers look plain on the exterior, but a series of small, sharp studs line the interior like rows of shark teeth. While these bracers are worn and invested, you gain a +2 item bonus to Will saves.

**Activate—Sharp Focus** ♦ (concentrate) **Trigger** You gain an effect that makes you immobilized, slowed, stupefied, or paralyzed; **Effect** Your bracers snap tight onto your wrists, driving the studs into your skin to shock you into focus. You can attempt to counteract the effect causing your condition, with a counteract rank of 6th and a counteract modifier of +22. On a success, you lose the condition. If you have more than one condition from the same source, you only need one counteract check against them.

## GORUM'S TEAR

ITEM 8

UNCOMMON CONSUMABLE MAGICAL TALISMAN

Price 80 gp

**Usage** affixed to a weapon; **Bulk** –

**Activate** ♦ (concentrate, fortune) **Trigger** You make an attack with the affixed weapon.

This teardrop-shaped piece of iron is a naturally occurring mineral, said to be a solidified tear of bellicose joy shed by Gorum during his battles. When you activate the *Gorum's tear*, you roll your next attack roll twice and take the better result, ignoring any circumstance penalties. You then become off-guard to the creature you targeted until the beginning of your next turn.

## DIRT SEA IN A JAR

ITEM 9

UNCOMMON MAGICAL

Price 880 gp

**Usage** held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

This small jar of dark sand swirls intensely as you peer into it, evoking the dangerous beauty of the Dirt Sea.

**Activate** ♦ or ♦♦ (manipulate) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You pour the contents of the jar onto unworked ground. If you activate this item with one action, you pour the sand into one or two 5-foot squares adjacent to you. If you activate this item with two actions, the sand spreads across a 15-foot cone. The affected space turns into quicksand (GM Core 107). Creatures already

in the area can Step out of the area as a reaction. The quicksand doesn't inflict lasting damage to most surfaces or nearby architecture, though a feature surrounded by the quicksand might sink or settle naturally. This terrain lasts for 1 day or until the effect is Dismissed, causing the sand to reappear in the jar.

## MAT OF RESILIENCE

ITEM 7+

UNCOMMON MAGICAL

**Usage** placed on a surface; **Bulk** 1

This light but sturdy woven mat, a miniature version of the floating foundations used in villages of the Dirt Sea, is carried tied in a tight roll. When you use an action to unfurl the mat onto an unoccupied horizontal space, the mat covers the existing terrain to create a smooth surface that can be walked on as if it were solid ground. Difficult or hazardous terrain in that square may be treated as normal while the *mat of resilience* covers it. The mat can be rolled back up or moved to an adjacent square using an Interact action, but it cannot be moved or put away while a creature is atop it.

**Activate—Steady Ground** ♦ (envision) You unfurl the mat and choose which shape it takes, either a 10-foot square or a 20-foot by 5-foot line.

**Activate—Sturdy Foundation** ♦ (manipulate) **Requirements** A creature is atop the mat; **Effect** The creature enters a simple stance that makes the most of the mat's stabilizing magic. While in this stance, if at least half of the creature's space is atop the mat, it cannot gain the off-guard condition.

**Type** *mat of resilience*; **Level** 7; **Price** 330 gp

**Type** *greater mat of resilience*; **Level** 12; **Price** 1,800 gp

The mat's surfaces increase to a 20-foot square and a 40-foot by 5-foot line.

## NEEDLE OF UNDEATH

ITEM 10

RARE MAGICAL

Price 1,150 gp

**Usage** held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

This thin, wand-like implement is carved from bone and scrimshawed with depictions of battle. While holding the *needle of undeath*, mindless undead creatures see you as one of their own and are indifferent to you until you take hostile actions against them, and you have a +2 item bonus to Deception and Diplomacy checks against intelligent undead. This does not affect a summoned undead's attitude.

**Activate—Speak with Undead** ♦ **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** You can use Diplomacy to Make an Impression on mindless undead or make simple requests of them with a +2 item bonus. You cannot make this request of someone else's summoned undead.

Needle of Undeath





## WAR'S TOLL

In the wake of the War of Immortals, deathless acolytes of all types have grown in number, especially deathless zealots, as both deities and their followers fell in battle without completing divine mandates.

Curiously, deathless zealots of slain deities retain their power and continue to roam, still striving to carry out missions granted to them by their lost patrons.

# DEATHLESS ZEALOT

Deathless zealots are powerful variants of deathless acolytes (*Pathfinder Book of the Dead* 88). They're as ambitious as deathless hierophants but more martially oriented, seeking out and slaying alleged heretics and enemies of their faith in pursuit of completing their divine missions. This zealot is dedicated to Zagresh, but any deity of warfare could create a deathless zealot. Due to their focus on battle and conflict, orc deities are especially likely to create deathless zealots in preference to other forms of deathless acolytes.

## DEATHLESS ZEALOT OF ZAGRESH

CREATURE 9

UNCOMMON MEDIUM UNDEAD

**Perception** +21; darkvision

**Languages** Common, Necril, Orcish

**Skills** Athletics +22, Intimidation +17, Occultism +14, Religion +20

**Str** +7, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +2

**Items** +1 *striking greatclub*, religious symbol of Zagresh

**AC** 26; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +16, **Will** +21

**HP** 120 (void healing); **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

**Field of Slaughter** (aura, divine) 40 feet. Allies within the aura treat their weapons and unarmed attacks as *keen* (*GM Core* 238), even if the weapons don't meet the requirements. Critical hits within the aura deal 3d6 persistent bleed damage, in addition to any other critical hit effects. If the critical hit would already deal persistent bleed damage, increase the damage to 3d6+3.

**Ravage Heretic** ⤿ (divine) **Trigger** A creature within 60 feet who the deathless zealot can see and who doesn't worship Zagresh casts a divine spell; **Effect** The deathless zealot attempts to counteract the triggering spell using their spell attack modifier and a counteract rank of 5. If the spell is counteracted, the caster is stunned 3 from the pain of the backlash. If the deathless zealot fails to counteract the spell, the caster is temporarily immune to further uses of this ability for 24 hours.

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** ⬥ *greatclub* +21 (backswing, magical, shove), **Damage** 2d10+11 bludgeoning

**Divine Prepared Spells** DC 28, attack +20; **5th** *chilling darkness*, *divine immolation*, *harm* (×5); **4th** *divine wrath* (×2), *implement of destruction*<sup>DA</sup>; **3rd** *chilling darkness*, *crisis of faith*, *vampiric feast*; **2nd** *blood vendetta* (×2), *spiritual armament*; **1st** *bane*, *fear*, *grim tendrils*; **Cantrips** (5th) *detect magic*, *divine lance*, *void warp*

**Cleric Domain Spells** 2 Focus Points; DC 28; **5th** *cry of destruction*, *destructive aura*

**Spellsmash** ⬥⬥ (divine) The zealot Casts a Spell that requires a spell attack roll or has a range of touch, channeling it into their greatclub, then makes a melee Strike. This attack roll determines the effects of both the Strike and the spell. This counts as two attacks for their multiple attack penalty, but the penalty isn't applied until after the Spellsmash. The zealot can't use Spellsmash again until they recharge it with a single action, which has the concentrate trait.



## PALPARES

Ancient dwarves paid little attention to the Sea of Dirt, seeing little worth harvesting from its muck. Orcs were considerably braver, yet even they're wary of monsters swimming through the silt. To an outsider, palpares might seem like a cautionary tale to keep children from sinking into the quicksand, and the large pits found dotting the Sea of Dirt's shores are just geological phenomena that appear in the wet season. Those who have stumbled across these traps know the dangerous reality.

Few know much about palpares, an enormous insect whose plated, hulking abdomen takes up most of its size. They seem to be solitary ambush hunters that hibernate during the dry season, then awaken during the Flood to create their enormous pit traps. These traps capture prey of all sizes, even the occasional herd of migrating aurochs, as they wait buried in the center. Though usually very patient, when disturbed, a palpares can move through its native sandy soil surprisingly quick, greeting intruders who enter its domain with its shovellike head and vicious pincers.

### PALPARES

### CREATURE 11

UNCOMMON GARGANTUAN ANIMAL


**Perception** +19; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 90 feet

**Skills** Acrobatics +23, Athletics +26, Stealth +22 (+24 in sand), Survival +19

**Str** +8, **Dex** +7, **Con** +5, **Int** -4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

**AC** 31; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +24, **Will** +18


**HP** 195

**Dig In**  **Trigger** The palpares is aboveground and would take damage; **Effect** The palpares Burrows up to its Speed, throwing up a shield of dirt that reduces the damage by 11.

**Speed** 25 feet, burrow 35 feet

**Melee**  pincers +24 (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d8+10 piercing plus Grab and palpares venom

**Melee**  body +24 (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d8+12 bludgeoning


**Breaching Ambush**  **Requirements** The palpares is underground; **Effect** The palpares Burrows up to twice its Speed underneath a creature, then Strikes upward with its pincers, ending aboveground.

**Palpares Venom** (incapacitation, poison) **Saving Throw** DC 30 Fortitude;

**Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 3d6 poison damage and stunned 1 (1 round);

**Stage 2** 3d8 poison damage and stunned 2 (1 round);

**Stage 3** 3d10 poison damage and paralyzed (1 minute)


**Pit Trap**  The palpares Burrows to create a 30-foot radius sloping pit centered on itself that's 10 feet deep at the center. All creatures in the area must attempt a DC 30 Reflex save.

**Critical Success** The creature is moved by tremors to a square outside the edge of the pit.

**Success** As critical success, but the creature is also clumsy 1 for 1 round.

**Failure** The creature falls 10 feet into the pit and is knocked prone.

**Critical Failure** As failure, and the creature is stunned 1.

**Venomous Bite**  **Requirements** The palpares has a creature grabbed; **Effect** The palpares uses its mandibles to inject venom, dealing 3d8 acid damage and exposes the creature to palpares venom.



### LIFE STAGES

Research suggests palpares aren't yet in its final form of life, as large caverns on the shores have been discovered to hold traces of chitin and the rotting remains of palpares partially transformed. Though nobody has encountered an adult and lived to tell the tale, rumors abound that the fully fledged insect form resembles Rovagug. Communities are quick to locate and dispose of any pupae they find in large, sand-encrusted mounds in the dirt. Some towns hold large barbecues to harvest tons of "mud bacon."







### LIVING ALARM

The great ironbill tends to remain eerily still, making it hard to spot when it stands amongst trees or shadows. Combined with their deafeningly loud calls, properly trained ironbills make excellent guards.



### WAR BARDING

A war aurochs is often fitted with pieces of armor to make its attacks deadlier, such as spiked ornaments on their horns or sharp-toed hoof shoes. The symbol of a hold is painted directly onto the beast's hide and left there even if another hold captures it, where it's often treated as a prisoner of war.

## WAR BEASTS

### War Beasts

Belkzen's megafauna husbandry is a source of orc pride, with many species bred for everyday life. In battle, they provide an edge against foes.

### GREAT IRONBILL

The great ironbill, a stork-like creature native to Dirt Sea shores, is known for clapping its fearsome beak to create incredibly loud and unnerving sounds.

### GREAT IRONBILL

### CREATURE 5

**LARGE ANIMAL**

**Perception** +10; low-light vision

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Intimidation +13

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

**AC** 22; **Fort** +9, **Ref** +15, **Will** +10

**HP** 58

**Speed** 20 feet, fly 40 feet

**Melee** ♦ beak +15 (agile), **Damage** 2d6+6 bludgeoning

**Melee** ♦ talon +15 (agile, reach 10), **Damage** 2d6+6 slashing

**Clatter** ♦♦ The ironbill snaps its beak together. Creatures within 30 feet take 2d10 sonic damage (DC 22 basic Will save). On a failure, the creature is also frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure).

**Flyby Attack** ♦♦ The ironbill flies and makes a talon Strike at any point along the way.

**Standstill** ♦ The great ironbill becomes unnervingly still. The next creature the ironbill makes a Strike against is off-guard to the ironbill.

### BULL OF ZAGRESH

The fierce bull of Zagresh is an enormous, easily riled bovine with sharp horns like a stag's. The bulls are bred and raised for sport as well as war.

### BULL OF ZAGRESH

### CREATURE 7

**HUGE ANIMAL**

**Perception** +15; low-light vision

**Skills** Athletics +20, Intimidation +13, Survival +15

**Str** +7, **Dex** +2, **Con** +6, **Int** -5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

**Running of the Bulls** When a bull of Zagresh starts its turn adjacent to another bull of Zagresh, it gains a +10-foot circumstance bonus to its Speed.

**AC** 23; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +12, **Will** +15

**HP** 140

**Berserk** If the bull has 40 or fewer HP at the start of its turn, it must succeed at a DC 5 flat check or go berserk. A berserk bull of Zagresh wildly attacks the nearest living creature, or the nearest object if no creatures are nearby.

**Buck** ⤵ DC 25 (*Monster Core* 358)

**Speed** 30 feet

**Melee** ♦ hoof +18, **Damage** 2d8+8 bludgeoning

**Melee** ♦ horn +18, **Damage** 2d10+9 piercing

**Bull of Zagresh**



**Berserk Stampede** ♦♦♦ **Requirements** The bull of Zagresh is berserk; **Effect** The bull of Zagresh Strides up to double its Speed and makes a horn Strike against up to three creatures with a -1 circumstance penalty. If it hits, it deals 1d6 extra damage and knocks the target prone.

### WAR AUROCHS

War aurochs are especially large versions aurochs bred to pull war machines as their primary duty. Particularly aggressive calves are selected for additional training to fight in battle as support for warriors.

### WAR AUROCHS

### CREATURE 9

HUGE ANIMAL

**Perception** +16; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 10 feet

**Skills** Athletics +20, Intimidation +18, Survival +17

**Str** +7, **Dex** +4, **Con** +6, **Int** -5, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +3

**AC** 27; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +18, **Will** +15

**HP** 195

**Speed** 30 feet

**Melee** ♦ hoof +21, **Damage** 2d8+11 bludgeoning

**Melee** ♦ horn +21, **Damage** 2d8+11 piercing

**Bellow** ♦ (auditory, emotion, mental) The war aurochs bellows aggressively, attempting a single Intimidation check to Demoralize against all enemies within 30 feet.

**Stomp** ♦ The war aurochs strikes the ground with its hooves, causing tremors in a 30-foot emanation.

Creatures in the area must attempt a DC 25

Reflex save or be knocked prone.

**Trample** ♦♦♦ Large or smaller, hoof, DC 25

### WARCAT OF RULL

These fierce hippo-sized cats with scaly, armored skin can only be bred and trained by the most skilled handlers.

### WARCAT OF RULL

### CREATURE 13

HUGE ANIMAL

**Perception** +26; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Skills** Acrobatics +30, Athletics +24, Stealth +28

**Str** +5, **Dex** +9, **Con** +6, **Int** -4, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3

**AC** 34; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +29, **Will** +23

**HP** 233

**Reactive Strike** ↻ (Monster Core 359)

**Speed** 40 feet, climb 20 feet

**Melee** ♦ claw +29 (agile), **Damage** 3d10+16 slashing

**Melee** ♦ jaws +29, **Damage** 3d8+14 plus Grab

**Piercing Fangs** ♦♦♦ **Requirements** The warcat has a creature grabbed; **Effect** The warcat clamps on to the creature's neck. The creature takes 3d12+10 piercing damage plus 1d4 persistent bleed damage (DC 33 basic Fortitude save).

**Pounce** ♦ The warcat of Rull Strides and makes a Strike at the end of that movement. If the warcat began this action hidden, it remains hidden until after the attack.

**Rend** ♦ claw (Monster Core 360)



### APEX PREDATOR

The warcat of Rull is a stealthy predator that roams a large territory, hunting alone or with a mate. Even when nursing cubs, warcats hunt for themselves and teach their cubs to be self-sufficient. Warcats fear no challenge, preying on megafauna, giants, and even young dragons.



Great Ironbill





## ORC DUELS

Dueling is a frequent practice among many cultures of Golarion, and orcs are no exception. The lethality of these duels varies based on the duel's impetus—a friendly bout goes to first blood or until a combatant is knocked out, while a fight in response to a vendetta or insult is more likely to the death. Unlike in many dueling traditions, spectators are encouraged to verbally aid combatants, shouting out encouragement to one's preferred fighter and invectives to their opponent.

## WYVERNSTING ORCS

While some orc warriors specialize in a technique of their hold, others synthesize styles from all over into a unified yet versatile technique.

### Orc Spinecracker

Orc spinecrackers are skilled in the art of hand-to-hand combat, forgoing weapons in favor of gauntlets or bare knuckles.

#### ORC SPINECRACKER

CREATURE 7

MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

**Perception** +12; darkvision

**Languages** Common, Orcish

**Skills** Acrobatics +14, Athletics +20, Deception +14, Intimidation +14

**Str** +7, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +3

**Items** hide armor, shortbow (20 arrows), +1 spiked gauntlet

**AC** 23; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10

**HP** 130

**Ferocity** (Monster Core 359)

**Reactive Strike** (Monster Core 359)

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** spiked gauntlet +20 (agile, free-hand, magical), **Damage** 2d8+8 piercing

**Ranged** shortbow +15 (deadly d10), **Damage** 2d6+6 piercing

**Brawler Critical Specialization** When the orc spinecracker gets a critical hit with a brawling weapon, the target must succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude save or be slowed 1 until the end of the spinecracker's next turn.

**Combat Grab** (press) **Requirements** The spinecracker has one hand free, and their target is within reach of that hand; **Effect** Using their prior attack to shift their opponent's guard, the spinecracker makes a melee Strike with one hand. If it hits, they grab the target using their other hand. The creature remains grabbed until the end of the spinecracker's next turn or until it Escapes, whichever comes first.

**Crushing Pin** (attack) **Requirements** The spinecracker has a creature Grappled; **Effect** The spinecracker crushes the creature in their grip, dealing 2d6+6 bludgeoning damage and giving the target the restrained condition until the end of the spinecracker's next turn.

### Orc Raider

Highly trained and dangerous, orc raiders are masters of channeling their rage in battle. This orc raider draws upon the powers of the elements for their rage, but other raiders could gain strength from different instincts.

#### ORC RAIDER

CREATURE 8

MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

**Perception** +14; darkvision

**Languages** Common, Orcish

**Skills** Athletics +21, Intimidation +13, Stealth +16, Warfare Lore +11

**Str** +7, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** -1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

**Items** bolas (3), +1 striking greatsword, leather armor

**AC** 26; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +15, **Will** +13

**HP** 165


**Deny Advantage** An orc raider isn't off-guard to flanking, hidden, or undetected creatures of 8th level or lower, or creatures of 8th level or lower using surprise attack. However, they can still help their allies flank.




**Elemental Rage** While raging, an orc raider is cloaked in a vortex of fire, granting their weapons the versatile fire trait and granting them concealment from ranged attacks. They can't use this concealment to Hide or Sneak.

**Ferocity**  (Monster Core 359)

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee**  *greatsword* +20 (magical, versatile P), **Damage** 2d10+11 slashing

**Ranged**  *bola* +18 (nonlethal, ranged trip, thrown), **Damage** 2d8+9 bludgeoning

**Destructive Inferno**  While raging, an orc raider can channel their destructive energy into an explosion of flame. Creatures in a 10-foot radius around the raider take 9d6 fire damage (DC 23 basic Reflex save). The raider can't use Destructive Inferno again for 1d4 rounds.

**Rage**  (Pathfinder Player Core 2 72)

## Orc Hunter

The elite hunters of an orc hold often operate alone, venturing into the wilderness of Belkzen for weeks at a time to track and bring down dangerous wildlife. They don't necessarily limit themselves to hunting animals, making them excellent bounty hunters, as their skills are just as useful against humanoids.

### ORC HUNTER

MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

**Perception** +19; darkvision

**Languages** Common, Fey, Orcish

**Skills** Athletics +18, Hunting Lore +17, Medicine +18, Nature +19, Stealth +22, Survival +21

**Str** +4, **Dex** +7, **Con** +4, **Int** +3, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +0

**Items** chain shirt, composite longbow, net, +1 striking shortsword, +1 whip


**Experienced Tracker** An orc hunter can Track while moving at full Speed.


**AC** 29; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +23, **Will** +21


**HP** 155

**Ferocity**  (Monster Core 359)


**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee**  *shortsword* +21 (agile, finesse, magical, versatile S), **Damage** 2d10+13 piercing

**Melee**  *whip* +22 (disarm, finesse, magical, nonlethal, reach, trip), **Damage** 2d6+9 slashing

**Ranged**  *composite longbow* +21 (deadly d10, propulsive, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 2d8+11 piercing

**Ranger Warden Spells** 2 Focus Points, DC 27; **3rd** *ephemeral tracking*, *gravity weapon*

**Hunt Prey**  (concentrate) The orc hunter designates a single creature as their prey. They must be able to see or hear the prey, or must be tracking the prey during exploration. They gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to Seek their prey and a +2 circumstance bonus to Survival checks to Track their prey. They also ignore the penalty for making ranged attacks within their second range increment against the prey. They can only have one creature designated as their prey at a time. If they use Hunt Prey against another creature, the prior creature loses the designation and the new prey gains the designation.

**Hunter's Edge** The orc hunter deals an additional 1d8 precision damage the first time they hit their hunted prey in a round.



## HUNTING TROPHIES

Orc hunters frequently take bone fragments from megafauna or powerful opponents they slay as trophies. To show off their combat skill, they display these bones by inlaying them in armor or weapons, forming intricate patterns that provide an account of that orc's triumphs in battle for those who know how to read them.



Orc Spinecracker





# The Carcass Man

*Within the fleshy prison of a construct created by one of his most devoted priests, a fragment of Zagresh's divine essence seethes, plotting to regain his power.*



Zagresh's worshippers claim he was first among the orc gods, a spark of divinity given form by the primal desire to destroy. His priests teach that Zagresh is present in every violent death, every broken axe haft, and every vanquished hope. He seeks neither glory nor plunder, fighting only to survive so he might continue destroying everything in his wake. Other deities may plot and scheme, but Zagresh cares only for the nihilistic joy gained from tearing things to shreds.

Aside from his dedicated worshippers, most viewed Zagresh as a deity to fear and placate, not actively venerate. His single-minded focus on destruction drove away anyone who wished to accumulate status, power, and material possessions. In addition to death and destruction, Zagresh was the orc patron of undeath. Necromancers were among his most common worshippers, particularly those of the Death Tower Hold.

Whether he was truly the first of the orc pantheon or not, Zagresh is undoubtedly an ancient entity, and his priests are mentioned in the earliest orc tales. His faith has little in the way of written documentation, uninterested in the permanence of legacy, but a series of parables passed down from one priest to the next recount varying origin stories. Some claim that Zagresh arose from the primordial muck of the Outer Rifts long before the first orc was born, while others hint at his existence as a mortal in a previous version of the cosmos. Destruction and death are eternal, and so too, his worshippers thought, was he.

Zagresh's assassination by Grask Uldeth sent a ripple of shock and fear across Belkzen. It's still unclear how Grask was able to revive from his own death, let alone claim Zagresh's godhood. The most common theory is that Grask made a bargain with Zagresh to save his own life and then betrayed him to steal Zagresh's deific power. How Grask was able to accomplish such a thing—if indeed he did—is unknown. Zagresh's remnant hasn't discussed the event, and High Priest Ungukk suspects he may not even remember the details.

When the tattered remains of Zagresh's essence fled to his loyal worshippers in Death Tower, Ungukk acted quickly to bind him to the Carcass Man, a construct

he'd created out of dead flesh years earlier. However, the ritual took a terrible toll. Though Ungukk hoped the binding would bolster Zagresh's strength, it merely gave the remnant a body, and Ungukk sacrificed much of his own power in the process. Enraged at his downfall, Zagresh is set on reclaiming his former divinity but lacks the strategic acumen to make that a reality.

Thus, when the Whispering Tyrant reached out to Zagresh, the fallen god seized on the opportunity, viewing the lich as a natural ally due to their shared interests in undeath. He believes Tar-Baphon is a useful tool and means to maintain their alliance until he achieves his apotheosis, then he will sever the partnership. Little does he know, Tar-Baphon likewise sees Zagresh as a pawn and intends to siphon his essence to fuel the lich's own aspirations to divinity. Still confident in his strength and unwilling to acknowledge the idea that he's being manipulated, Zagresh has responded dismissively to any warnings Ungukk attempted to give him about trusting Tar-Baphon and his agents.

Once he's regained his power, Zagresh intends to slay the usurper Grask Uldeth, reclaim his rightful place within the orc pantheon, and vent his wrath on the Empty Hand, Grask's former hold. The Destroyer doesn't deal in battle tactics or long-term plans, but he's determined to reduce Urgir to ashes and slaughter every orc in the Empty Hand and its allied holds in vengeance for his humiliation.

## Campaign Role

The Carcass Man isn't the mastermind behind the undead uprisings in Belkzen, but he's still a powerful foe. Fortunately for the PCs, the Carcass Man only has a fraction of Zagresh's former divine power, though he remains formidable. If the PCs were able to sever the loci, however, they'll have an easier time facing him if it comes to it.

If the Carcass Man is destroyed at the PCs' hands, the last fragment of Zagresh is finally extinguished, preventing his re-apotheosis. Should Tar-Baphon devour the Carcass Man's essence before they can stop him, the lich gains great power, casting a new shadow over Belkzen...and perhaps all of Golarion!



## THE CARCASS MAN

## CREATURE 13

UNIQUE LARGE CONSTRUCT

**Perception** +19; all-around vision, darkvision

**Languages** Common, Orcish

**Skills** Athletics +30, Intimidation +25, Religion +19, Warfare Lore +22

**Str** +9, **Dex** +4, **Con** +7, **Int** -1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +6

**AC** 34; **Fort** +27, **Ref** +21, **Will** +18; +2 status to all saves vs. fear and magic

**HP** 295; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, electricity, fatigued, healing, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious; **Resistances** physical 10 (except adamantine)

**Annihilation Aura** (aura, emotion, mental) 20 feet. The Carcass Man's form exudes the impulse to destroy. Upon entering the aura, creatures must attempt a DC 31 Will save. Regardless of the results, creatures are temporarily immune for 1 minute.

**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected.

**Success** Urges to attack cloud the creature's mind and if they do not deal damage to another creature on their turn, they become stupefied 1 until the end of their next turn.

**Failure** The creature is confused until the end of their next turn.

**Critical Failure** The creature is confused for 1 minute.

**Reactive Strike** ⤵

**Speed** 25 feet

**Melee** ⬥ fist +28 (agile, finesse),

**Damage** 3d8+14 bludgeoning plus Grab

**Melee** ⬥ tusks +28 (deadly d10, sweep),

**Damage** 3d6+11 piercing plus 1d6 persistent bleed damage

**Divine Innate Spells** DC 31, attack +21; **7th** *divine decree*, *execute*; **6th** *necrotize*<sup>SoM</sup>, *utter destruction* (page 82); **5th** *summon undead*, *divine immolation*, **4th** *bloodspray curse*<sup>SoM</sup>, *divine wrath*; **3rd** *bind undead*, *chilling darkness*

**Neck Snap** ⬥ **Requirements** The Carcass Man has a creature Grabbed; **Effect** The creature takes 6d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 31 basic Fortitude save); a creature that critically fails their save is paralyzed until they heal at least 30 HP. The Carcass Man then releases the creature.

**Revel in Destruction** ⬥ (divine, emotion, fear, mental, visual) **Requirements** The Carcass Man's last action reduced a creature to 0 HP; **Effect** The Carcass Man exults in his victory, painting his face in the creature's blood.

He is quickened until the end of his next turn but can use this extra action only to Strike. Non-worshippers of Zagresh who witness the display must succeed at a DC 31 Will save or be frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure).

**Three-Arm Devastation** ⬥⬥⬥ The Carcass Man attempts a melee Strike against a creature within his reach. If the Strike hits and deals damage, he can attempt two additional melee Strikes with his other arms against two other creatures within his reach; each of the three Strikes must target a different creature. These attacks increase his multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until all three attacks have been made.



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# Paskis Nine-Knives

*Ruthless, ambitious, and haunted by the loss of her deity, Paskis is determined to take Belkzen for herself at any cost.*



Paskis was never supposed to amount to anything. Born the sickly daughter of Unbroken Horn raiders, she was a disappointment to her parents. They assumed the frail girl wouldn't survive long and so dedicated their attention and resources to their other children. Paskis spent her early years ignored by her parents and tormented by her siblings; her elder sister Rulki was especially vicious, taking any toy or food Paskis wanted, even if Rulki had no real desire for it.

Paskis's health improved by her adolescence, yet she couldn't shake the notion that she'd fallen behind. Knowing she'd never catch up to her peers in physical strength, she focused on learning every underhanded tactic she could. She favored knives over larger weapons, honing her skill in agility and precision rather than brute force. Her skullduggery was welcomed and honed in the temples of Verex. There, the vindictive youth adopted the Despoiler's faith, viewing him as a kindred spirit who obtained the prestige and plunder he deserved by any means necessary.

Finally, in her early twenties, she attained a spot in a raiding war band. Though she rejoiced in the chance to prove her strength at last, Paskis's initial experience among the Unbroken Horn warriors was unpleasant. As the newest to the band, she underwent brutal hazing from her fellow warriors. Worse, her band's commander was her sister, Rulki, who made it a point to give her scrawny sister the most odious and thankless missions. Seething at her treatment, Paskis plotted for months before making her move. She challenged Rulki to a duel, poisoning her knives beforehand. When the hard-fought battle was over, Paskis stood over her sister's lifeless body and demanded the band recognize her as its new leader. Never again, she vowed, would she be too weak to defend what was hers. As Verex had shown her, she'd take whatever she wanted and eliminate anyone in her way.


Paskis quickly advanced in the army's esteem as her war band notched victory after victory; others began referring to her by the name "Nine-Knives," acknowledging how often she seemed to produce another blade, no matter how many she'd already thrown or lost. After several years of machinations and murder, she became an advisor to Hundux, then

the hold's leader. And for a while, she reveled in her new influence. It wouldn't last. Hundux had plans to conquer Urgir and Belkzen as a whole, yet year after year they remained just that: plans. Paskis seethed with impatience, wondering if there were truly a reason behind Hundux's seemingly endless plotting? Or was the man who'd led the Unbroken Horn hold since she was a child showing his age—or worse, his cowardice?

Things reached a boiling point upon Grask Uldeth's assassination. Paskis and many like-minded warriors argued that now was the perfect time to strike Urgir, with the Empty Hand in disarray. When Hundux still urged caution, Paskis's patience snapped. If Hundux were too spineless to conquer Urgir and exploit this perfect opportunity, she'd do it herself. Using calculated sabotage and assassinations, she undermined Hundux's reputation, alienated him from his supporters, and then finally overthrew him in a three-day-long coup.

She swiftly executed Hundux and began planning an imminent invasion of Urgir. Gorum's death and the resulting War of Immortals, however, severely damaged her timetable. Not only did this sow confusion among her hold, but it also led to Verex's corruption by Rovagug. Even though she wasn't a priest of Verex, Paskis had earned numerous divine boons from the Despoiler. These lost powers undermined her confidence, yet not nearly as much as her patron's transformation threw her into a spiritual crisis. She stalled for time, hoping Verex might recover. Once it was clear he was beyond saving, she restarted her plans of conquest. After all, Paskis seized power because her predecessor never acted on his plans; she couldn't delay long without being overthrown as a hypocrite.

Thus, when the Whispering Tyrant contacted her seeking an alliance, Paskis realized this shortsighted bargain could provide her with the reinforcements she needed to overwhelm Urgir, Ardax, the Empty Hand Hold, and its allies. She eagerly accepted. She knows the Whispering Tyrant is using her for his own ends and no doubt plans to betray her. It wouldn't be the first time she's had to turn on someone before they turn on her, though, and she'll extract all she can from the alliance in the meantime.





## Campaign Role

As the leader of the Unbroken Horn Hold, Paskis is the final foe the Empty Hand alliance must defeat before conquering Wyvernsting. She's presented as a looming threat throughout Chapters 1 and 2; the PCs shouldn't confront her directly until Ardax's army arrives, though they might see her from a distance. Whether Ardax or the PCs deal the final blow, she's unlikely to survive the battle for Wyvernsting. If she does escape, however, she could reappear in Chapter 3 seeking vengeance for her downfall, either on her own or working with the Death Tower Hold.

## PASKIS NINE-KNIVES

## CREATURE 11

UNIQUE MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

**Perception** +23; darkvision

**Languages** Chthonian, Common, Jotun, Orcish

**Skills** Acrobatics +23, Deception +22, Intimidation +20, Stealth +25, Thievery +23


**Str** +5, **Dex** +8, **Con** +5, **Int** +1, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

**Items** +1 daggers (2), daggers (5), doubling rings, +1 leather armor, +1 striking orc knuckle dagger, orc knuckle dagger, religious symbol of Verex worth 100 gp, spider root (2 doses), wyvern poison (2 doses)

**AC** 31; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +25, **Will** +19


**HP** 195


**Deny Advantage** Paskis isn't off-guard to creatures of 11th level or lower that are hidden, undetected, flanking, or using surprise attack. However, she can help allies flank.


**Dance Between the Blades**  **Trigger** A foe within Paskis's reach critically fails a Strike against her; **Effect** Paskis can Step; she must end her movement within reach of the triggering foe. Paskis then makes a melee Strike against the triggering creature, treating them as off-guard for the attack. This Strike uses the triggering Strike's damage rather than that of Paskis's weapon. If the weapon has the agile or finesse train, Paskis also applies her Sneak Attack to this damage.

**Ferocity** 


**Speed** 30 feet

**Melee**  *orc knuckle dagger* +25 (agile, disarm, magical orc), **Damage** 2d6+11 piercing


**Ranged**  *dagger* +25 (agile, finesse, magical, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 2d4+11 piercing


**Enfeebling Strike**  **Trigger** Paskis's Strike hits an off-guard creature and deals damage; **Effect** The target is enfeebled 1 until the end of Paskis's next turn.

**Knife Training** Paskis treats all weapons in the knife group as finesse weapons.

**Lightning Blades**  (manipulate) **Requirements** Paskis is wielding two knives and targets an off-guard creature;

**Effect** Paskis attempts two knife Strikes against the creature; these attacks increase her multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after both attacks. This counts as a single melee attack for the purposes of Feinting.

**Mark for Death**  **Requirements** Paskis can observe the creature she intends to mark; **Effect** Paskis designates a single creature as her mark. This lasts until the mark dies or she uses Mark for Death again. She gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to Seek the mark and on Deception checks to Feint against the mark. In addition, her sneak attacks against her mark deal an additional 2 precision damage.

**Poison Weapon** (manipulate)  Paskis draws a poison and applies it to a weapon. If her next attack with that weapon before the end of her next turn hits and deals damage, it applies the effects of the poison.

**Sneak Attack** Paskis deals an extra 3d6 precision damage to off-guard creatures.

**Surprise Attack** On the first round of combat, creatures that haven't acted yet are off-guard to Paskis.





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by Jason Bulmahn

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