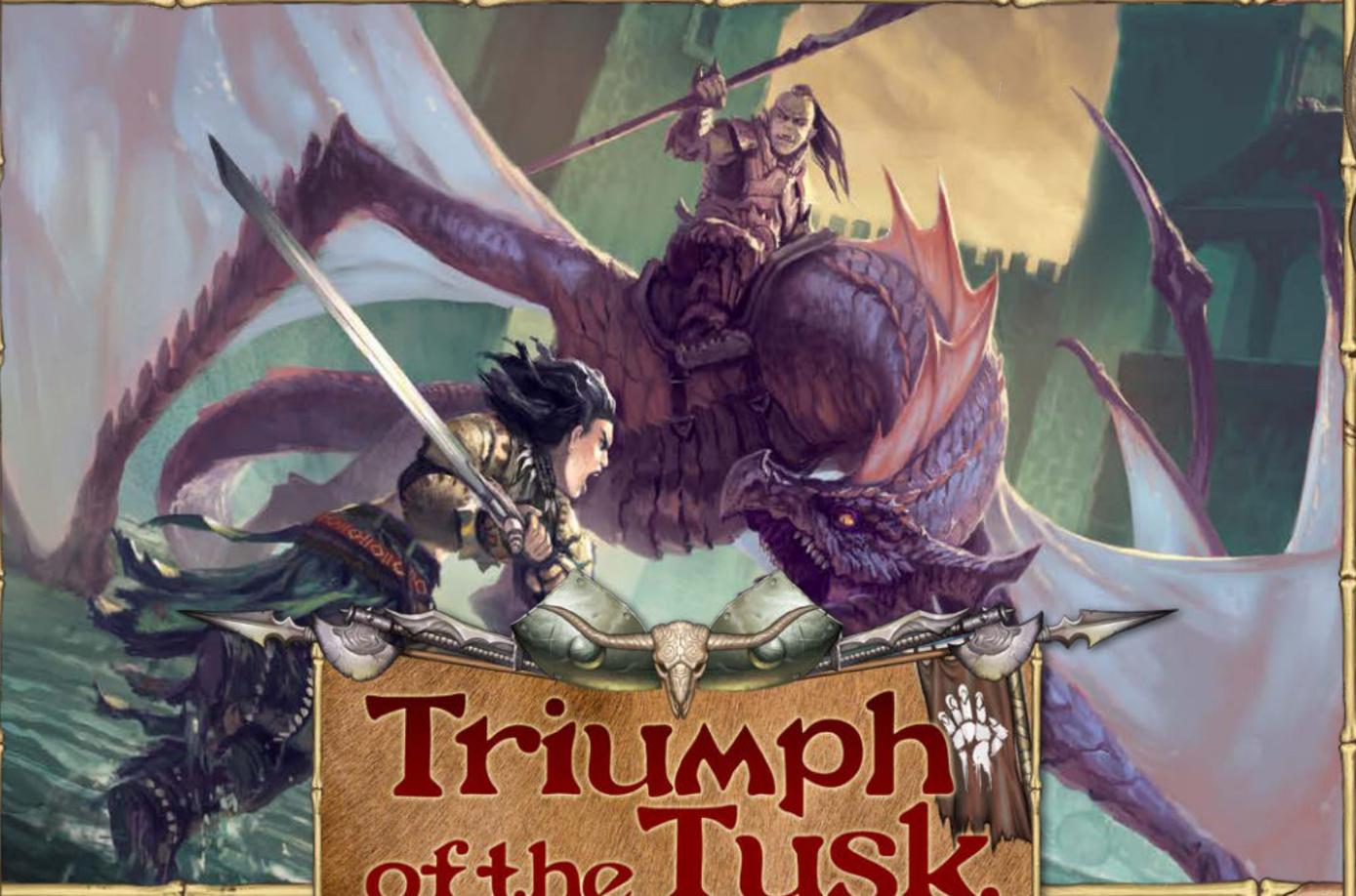


SECOND EDITION

# PATHFINDER®



## Triumph of the Tusk

ADVENTURE PATH

### Player's Guide

By John Compton &  
Michelle Y. Kim

# PATHFINDER

## AUTHORS

John Compton and Michelle Y. Kim

## DEVELOPERS

John Compton and Michelle Y. Kim

## EDITING LEAD

Avi Kool

## EDITOR

Priscilla N. Lagares and Simone D. Sallé

## ARTISTS

Biagio d'Alessandro and Firt Solhan

## ART DIRECTION

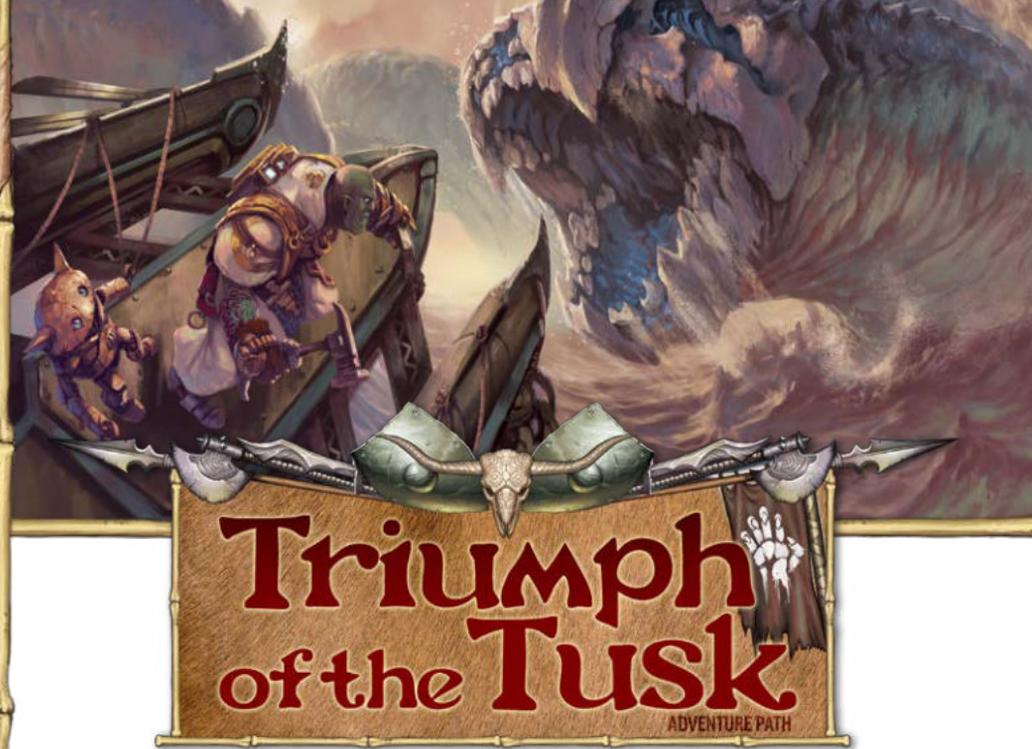
Sonja Morris

## GRAPHIC DESIGN

Adriana Gasperi

## PUBLISHER

Erik Mona



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Paizo Inc.  
15902 Woodinville-Redmond RD NE  
Suite B  
Woodinville, WA 98072-4572  
paizo.com

# Triumph of the Tusk

## PLAYER'S GUIDE

### HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Welcome to the Triumph of the Tusk Adventure Path!

Triumph of the Tusk is a three-part adventure that explores the beginnings of a new chapter in orc history, with the PCs starting at level 3. Each PC is a low-ranking dignitary representing a foreign state, an organization, one of the many orc holds, or even just their own personal ambitions as they seek opportunities in a more welcoming Belkzen. Though this campaign focuses on orcs and the politics of Belkzen, PCs do not have to be orcs to participate meaningfully. If they survive, they'll become respected advisors and warriors working to preserve (and even unify) Belkzen. If they fail, they might bear witness to the latest tragedy in orc history.

This campaign uses Pathfinder's Remastered rules, so all you need to play is *Pathfinder Player Core* and a character sheet. With your Game Master's permission, you can also use other Pathfinder Second Edition supplemental rulebooks, campaign setting books, and accessories to customize your character further.

### HOLDS OF BELKZEN

Orcs once dwelled underground in the Darklands, roving the upper tunnels in large bands as they foraged and hunted. This ended violently when dwarves ascended from the depths, seeking the surface at all costs in their Quest for Sky. The conflict briefly unified orcs against a common foe, though dwarven steel and determination ultimately forced the orcs upward. Upon reaching the surface, orcs found themselves in unfamiliar lands, surrounded by unfamiliar foes and blinded by an unfamiliar sun. It quickly became apparent that if they wanted to survive, they would have to fight. This lifestyle has kept orcs alive, yet it also taught them to subjugate their surroundings or be subjugated—and subjugated they were, most infamously by the Whispering Tyrant centuries ago. Still, the scars of a painful past have become a badge of honor in Belkzen, proving that no matter what, orcs will endure.

#### A Tumultuous History

Relations between the orcs and the dwarves had been hostile even before the Quest for Sky due to cultural misunderstandings. When the dwarves launched their campaign to breach the surface, they did so at the cost of their orc neighbors, relentlessly attacking orc settlements in their bid to fulfill their destiny. The desperate orcs retreated to the surface first, resorting

to violence and aggression to survive in strange new lands. They scattered across the mountains, forming communities called holds for protection as a dwarven empire dawned.

Finally, a leader arose: Belkzen, a charismatic orc who led his people to besiege and conquer the dwarven Sky Citadel of Koldukar. The city was renamed Urgir and became the capital of the orc lands to remind others of their strength. Belkzen ruled the land mercilessly, oppressing others as his people had been oppressed. Upon his death, the orc holds were split and much of their land was reconquered by opportunists who exploited their infighting.

One who came to exploit them was Tar-Baphon, who recruited the orcs on the merit of their strength. The proud orcs soon discovered that they had been swayed into serving a tyrant who treated them like cannon fodder. When they rebelled, he retaliated harshly, erasing much of orc culture and inflicting great torment upon the people. Though the orcs were eventually freed from the lich, their history of initially willing service and violence stained their reputation. For centuries, orcs have been seen as violent brutes haunted by infighting and cruel rulers.

Grask Uldeth, head of the Empty Hand Hold, challenged these deadly traditions. He led his hold to conquer Urgir and implemented changes to cater to non-orc merchants and traders, opening up the city's economy to great effect. However, he was assassinated by an unknown assailant and succeeded by Ardax the White-Hair. Ardax quickly proved himself a similarly prudent leader, and when Tar-Baphon returned to demand the service of the orcs, Ardax rejected him by mounting the heads of his envoys on the city walls. The lich retaliated, and Ardax led a united force of orc holds against Tar-Baphon's forces in the Battle of Nine Broken Skulls, a crucial victory that led all the holds of Belkzen to accept him as their overlord.

#### Torrentmoot

Ardax the White-Hair, the leader of the Empty Hand Hold, knows that the threat of Tar-Baphon can't stand against a united Belkzen. To truly bring the holds together and build new alliances, he has arranged a gathering called Torrentmoot. Ardax has strategically arranged for this meeting to take place during the Flood Truce, an unofficial agreement of peace between orc holds during the flood months of late spring.

During the flood months, melting snowcaps from the nearby Tusk Mountains flow down a path of low

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### WHILE IN BELKZEN

The campaign starts in the late spring of 4724 AR. While you're in Belkzen, uncommon items and weapons with the orc trait are treated as common.

ground known as the Flood Road. When summer's warmth arrives, however, the Flood Road temporarily becomes a rushing river that invites wildlife to migrate down into Belkzen, making it a crucial time for all holds. Bolstered by his status as overlord and the promise of peace during the flood months, Ardax has invited several dignitaries from other holds and even from outside of Belkzen to try to establish alliances that will build a better Belkzen.

### CHARACTER SUGGESTIONS

Though you're free to make any character you like for the this Adventure Path, the following suggestions will help you get the most out of this campaign.

#### Ancestries

Though Belkzen has a reputation for generally being unfriendly to outsiders, Ardax the White-Hair is working to change that by inviting people to come together at Torrentmoot. Any common ancestry is likely to be present at the moot, and most uncommon ancestries can be justified since this meeting includes many outsiders and visitors to Belkzen. The only ancestries that should *not* be present are any undead ancestries, as Ardax is wary of Tar-Baphon's attempts to rule the land once more. This Adventure Path is a great opportunity to play "monstrous" races who have similarly suffered from poor perception and unsavory reputations, whether they're deserved or not, and who may have a keen interest in joining hands with the orcs to change such perceptions. Expanded details on some appropriate ancestries are below.

**Dromaar:** As the inheritors of multiple ancestries, dromaars often struggle with finding acceptance and belonging. Their experiences in Belkzen vary drastically depending on the hold they settle into; a hold that values new perspectives welcomes and encourages a new generation, while a more militant hold sneers at someone who didn't fully inherit the strength of their ancestors. While there are many dromaars local to Belkzen, Torrentmoot is a great opportunity for dromaar characters looking to reconnect with their roots.

**Dwarf:** The dwarves and the orcs have a heavy, bloody history between them that is laden with cruelties inflicted by both sides. However, the Whispering Tyrant's escape several years ago threatened all nations around Lake Encarthan, and dwarves of the Five Kings Mountains have sought regional allies to defend against the lich's inevitable aggression. Wary as they are of each other, dwarves and orcs alike are challenging their old prejudices, perhaps uniting at last against a common enemy. The Torrentmoot is an excellent opportunity for dwarves—or at least one expendable diplomat—to test Ardax's integrity, hospitality, and resolve before broaching the difficult topic of reconciliation. You might be skeptical of the promise of change or eager to finally see the seeds of friendship blossom between your people.

**Goblin:** Goblins, like orcs, have often been portrayed as pariahs or villains in human societies, which has isolated them from much of Inner Sea trade and politics. Yet orcs at least have a homeland; goblin communities are scattered far and wide, shoved toward coastlines, swamps, and remote forests. A goblin PC might be representing a community looking to gain permission to settle in Belkzen or have high hopes of becoming a hero. They may even desire to make their fortune in Belkzen and get away from the stuck-up, "civilized" societies that can't take a goblin joke.

**Hobgoblin:** The hobgoblins of Oprak are always looking to build alliances lest their neighbors try to test them. Hobgoblin culture has many parallels to orc culture, particularly with those who follow the edicts of Grask Uldeth and his strict preference for obeying hierarchy. An ambassador from the militaristic nation of Oprak would fit in well with the strength-minded culture of Belkzen.

**Human:** There are several human nations and peoples near Belkzen that would have an interest in considering official diplomatic ties. Shoanti quahs and orc holds have raided each other for ages, skirmishing on the borders of their lands. Ustalav has a history of hostilities with Belkzen, especially when the orcs were united under Tar-Baphon's banner. Kellids in the Tusk Mountains have varying relationships with different orc holds and often trade with their neighbors during the Flood Truce. Nirmathas is wary of Belkzen due to the orc nation's constant clashes with its ally, Lastwall, back when the orcs served Tar-Baphon; during these exchanges, Nirmathas often took collateral damage.

**Kholo:** Given that they're both renowned for raiding, hunting, intimidating displays, and practicality,

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### SUGGESTED CHARACTER OPTIONS

	Ancestries	Classes	Languages	Skills
<b>Strongly Recommended</b>	Goblin, Hobgoblin <sup>PC2</sup> , Orc	Animist <sup>Wol</sup> , Barbarian <sup>PC2</sup> , Fighter, Ranger	Common, Orcish	Athletics, Diplomacy, Intimidation, Nature, Survival
<b>Recommended</b>	Dwarf, Human, Kholo <sup>PC2</sup> , Kobold <sup>PC2</sup> , Lizardfolk <sup>PC2</sup> , Ratfolk <sup>PC2</sup>	Bard, Cleric, Druid, Exemplar <sup>Wol</sup> , Monk <sup>PC2</sup> , Oracle <sup>PC2</sup> , Rogue, Thaumaturge <sup>DA</sup> , Witch	Dwarven, Jotun, Necril, Shoanti	Acrobatics, Religion, Society, Stealth
<b>Appropriate</b>	Elf, Gnome, Halfling, Leshy, other living ancestries	Alchemist <sup>PC2</sup> , Champion <sup>PC2</sup> , Gunslinger <sup>G&amp;G</sup> , Inventor <sup>G&amp;G</sup> , Investigator <sup>PC2</sup> , Kineticist, Magus <sup>SoM</sup> , Psychic <sup>DA</sup> , Sorcerer <sup>PC2</sup> , Summoner <sup>SoM</sup> , Swashbuckler <sup>PC2</sup> , Wizard	Chthonian, Draconic, Goblin, Hallit	Arcana, Crafting, Deception, Medicine, Occultism, Performance, Thievery
<b>Not Recommended</b>	Any undead ancestries	—	—	—

<sup>DA</sup> See *Pathfinder Dark Archive*.  
<sup>G&G</sup> See *Pathfinder Guns & Gears*.  
<sup>PC2</sup> See *Pathfinder Player Core 2*.

<sup>SoM</sup> See *Pathfinder Secrets of Magic*.  
<sup>Wol</sup> See *Pathfinder War of Immortals*.

kholos and orcs could be either the best of friends or the greatest rivals. Fortunately, a kholo's penchant for joining and supporting a larger group could help them easily integrate into Belkzen society. Few kholo communities exist in Avistan, so you're most likely a traveler who joined an eclectic "pack"—a guild, a mercenary company, or even just a found family of adventurers—and is scouting Belkzen on their behalf. Alternatively, you might be a free agent who hopes Ardax's call for foreign allies could provide you with the camaraderie and creature comforts you crave.

**Lizardfolk (Iruxi):** Lizardfolk and orcs share virtues of simple living, test themselves against their environments, follow rich traditions of oral history, and observe animistic practices. Even better, orcs and iruxis tend not to judge each other by appearances or disparage practices like raiding, wearing bone accessories, or occasionally eating raw meat. Belkzen could easily feel like home for an iruxi character—especially during the Flood Truce, when their swimming abilities make it easy to navigate the inundated floodplains. You might have immigrated to Belkzen recently, even earning yourself provisional membership in an orc hold. You could also represent an iruxi community that wishes to relocate, and you hope that Belkzen might welcome your people's strength with open arms.

**Orc:** Playing an orc in this adventure means you might be from Belkzen or that you might have traveled here from another nation. If you're a local, you're either wary of Ardax's plan or an enthusiast for his vision

of a unified Belkzen. If you're a visitor, you might be coming to Belkzen for the first time or returning after long travels. You might have been picked because it was assumed you would do well with other orcs, or you might have volunteered to witness Belkzen's changes yourself. The sidebar on page 6 explores several orc holds that appear in the campaign as potential allies, making them excellent candidates for a PC who belongs to a hold already.

**Ratfolk (Ysoki):** Few enjoy travel and opportunity as much as ysoki, whose merchant caravans brave even the toughest terrains. Belkzen's badlands won't discourage ysoki, and the potential to connect Avistan's interior with northern markets could prove lucrative. Orcs are another matter—they've historically seen ysoki convoys not as honored traders but as easy targets for raiding. So are Ardax's promises of a more welcoming Belkzen a perfect opportunity to expand economic markets, or are they a cruel ploy to steal others' riches? Before risking a larger expedition, an ysoki community might send a PC to investigate.

### Classes

Though all classes can find the opportunity to shine in *Triumph of the Tusk*, some themes in the adventure and in Belkzen culture itself make certain classes especially appropriate for this campaign.

**Explorers:** Druids and rangers are an excellent choice for this adventure, as Belkzen is a vast and dangerous land full of awe-inspiring nature as well as

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**Bloodied Gauntlet:** Nobody loves battle as much as Bloodied Gauntlet orcs. However, their patron, Gorum, recently perished, leaving the hold rudderless and confused. A Bloodied Gauntlet PC might have worshipped Gorum before and could now feel the need to prove themselves to the world.

**Burning Sun:** This hold adopted Sarenrae's faith decades ago, and its leader, Mahja Firehair, recently ascended to godhood. The hold is hardly holy, yet it does challenge crueler orc stereotypes and traditions.

**Death's Head:** In many ways, this hold is an extension of the Empty Hand; it controls the territory surrounding Urgir and acts like a de facto guardian force for the capital.

**Drowning Sand:** The quicksand of the Dirt Sea discourages all but the Drowning Sand Hold, which adeptly navigates that expanse with cunning catamarans and earns coin by ferrying travelers.

**Empty Hand:** This is Ardax's hold, which rules Urgir and thus has the strongest claim to ruling Belkzen. The hold also controls much of the region's trade, ensuring its members are well equipped and well paid.

**Gutspear:** After being deposed by Eight Fingers Hold and chased away from the Darklands access point of Deepgate, the Gutspear Hold is weakened and without a territory to call its own. Perhaps by aiding Ardax's agenda and earning his protection, a Gutspear PC could earn their hold a new home.

**Ice Tooth:** Far to the north, Ice Tooth Hold rarely engages in Urgir politics; it instead focuses on hunting, training ferocious megafauna, and trading with Kellid neighbors. That said, Ardax's agenda could shake Belkzen to its core, and the hold would send at least one representative to Torrentmoot to learn more.

**Storm-Screamers of Rull:** As the name suggests, the Storm-Screamers are an eccentric hold known for their druids, hunters, and rain-loving guides. They descend from the mountains during the Flood Truce to welcome the water and watch over the aurochs herds, ensuring no hold overhunts the shared resource.

vicious predators. Survival skills are crucial in a land with little fertile soil, making animal husbandry and

hunting paramount to the stability of a hold. As the flood months signal the migration of several species, there is always a chance to use one's skills to hunt and identify creatures.

**Spiritualists:** Belkzen is going through spiritual changes since much of their pantheon has been recently replaced. Animists are the most revered of those who deal with the spiritual realm, and in Belkzen, they literally wrestle spirits into submission and tame unruly haunts through feats of strength and force of will. Clerics might find themselves questioned by those eager to one day challenge a god, or by those with sincere curiosity about finding internal strength through devotion.

**Warriors:** Strength will always be prized in Belkzen, making martial classes and frontline combatants fit in well with the locals. Barbarians, champions, exemplars, fighters, and monks will find plenty of opportunities to show off their skills to win friends and take down enemies. Swashbucklers are quite foreign to Belkzen and might catch wary but bemused looks for their flashiness, then eventually nods of respect for their feats of skill.

### Languages

The primary language in Avistan is Taldane, referred to as Common in this Adventure Path. Unsurprisingly, Orcish is the most common tongue in Belkzen. In some regions, orcs have tamed drakes and other intelligent creatures, making Draconic a worthwhile language for beast wranglers. The same beast handlers often learn Hallit to better communicate and trade with Kellid followings to the north. Bands of giants wander parts of Belkzen, and it's wise for at least one traveler to understand Jotun so that giant encounters can be resolved with words rather than violence.

Not all interactions are so cordial, and most of Belkzen's other neighbors view them with hostility. Orcs once served the Whispering Tyrant, and while Necril isn't spoken widely today, many learn the language to better understand and fight the lich in the future. Orcs rarely clash directly with dwarves anymore, but learning the language is still valuable; dwarven ruins are occasionally unearthed in Belkzen, full of inscriptions that an orc explorer might translate and repurpose for their own needs. Finally, Shoanti communities raid and are raided by orc holds along the western border, often taking captives to interrogate or ransom.

### Faiths

Belkzen's gods went through an upheaval when Gorum was killed. Not only was Gorum an important

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deity to many orcs, but multiple other orc gods were challenged and replaced by mortal souls who rose as new deities. This spate of new gods includes Grask Uldeth, who defeated Zagresh, the god of death and destruction, a transition that has left orcs both wary of and intrigued by these changes to the paradigm. Gods of warfare and strength are the most popular in Belkzen, but some are beginning to turn their eyes toward gods who promise power through other means, such as trade and magic.

### GRASK ULDETH

Though Grask espoused the values of partnership and trade in life, he is a strict adherent of idea that might is right and that one should use their strength to improve life for everyone. Grask expects his followers to follow a strict hierarchy and stay in line.

**Edicts** improve orcs' lot in life, obey the orcs above your station, rule the orcs below you with a strong hand

**Anathema** allow orc-kind to become weak, intentionally make orcs look bad, disrupt your hierarchy without just cause

**Divine Sanctification** can choose unholy

**Divine Font** harm or heal

**Divine Skill** Intimidation

**Favored Weapon** warhammer

**Domains** ambition, cities, confidence, might

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *endure* (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Divine Mysteries*), 2nd: *enthrall*, 7th: *mask of terror*

### JUKHA

As a mortal, Jukha was a charismatic young dromaar with great ambitions of uniting her people to defeat Tar-Baphon. Ultimately failing to keep her followers together, the ambitious youth perished alone but managed to ascend, transforming into a goddess of big game hunting. Having learned from her mistakes, Jukha emphasizes the need to band together to accomplish one's goals.

**Edicts** work together, push each other to greater heights, respect the animals you hunt

**Anathema** abandon or betray your people, refuse to learn from your mistakes, isolate yourself

**Divine Sanctification** none

**Divine Font** heal

**Divine Skill** Survival

**Favored Weapon** longbow

**Domains** family, introspection (*Divine Mysteries*), moon, nature

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *ant haul*, 3rd: *earthbind*, 7th: *unfettered pack*

### MAHJA FIREHAIR

Mahja takes inspiration from Sarenrae, having worshipped her in life, but she believes that redemption must be actively earned rather than freely given. She scorns those who offer empty promises and rewards those who choose to prove their worth through their actions.

**Edicts** bring honor and glory to orcs, build up your community, seek personal perfection

**Anathema** undermine your community, seek personal glory, grant redemption to the unworthy

**Divine Sanctification** can choose holy

**Divine Font** harm or heal

**Divine Skill** Athletics

**Favored Weapon** scimitar

**Domains** family, fire, protection, toil

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *breathe fire*, 3rd: *blazing dive* (*Secrets of Magic*), 5th: *mantle of the magma heart* (*Secrets of Magic*)

### NULGRETH

One of the most ancient of the orc gods, Nulgreth demands bloodshed wherever his followers go. In a way, Nulgreth is an embodiment of other nations' beliefs about orc culture.

**Edicts** bathe in the blood of your fallen enemies, face your enemies head-on, never turn down a fight you can win

**Anathema** grant or accept mercy, take prisoners, perform underhanded tricks

**Divine Sanctification** must choose unholy

**Divine Font** harm

**Divine Skill** Intimidation

**Favored Weapon** greataxe

**Domains** death, indulgence, might, pain

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *grim tendrils*, 3rd: *moth's supper* (*Pathfinder Dark Archive*), 6th: *vampiric exsanguination*

### RULL

Rull was supposedly the first orc to become a god when his people breached the surface, challenging lightning itself in order to take his place as a deity. He has little interest in the details of life, seeking to spread disorder wherever he goes.

**Edicts** create chaos at every opportunity, be loud wherever you go, spread fear and terror in Rull's name

**Anathema** enforce law and order, show mercy, allow morals to impede the sowing of chaos

**Divine Sanctification** can choose unholy

**Divine Font** harm

**Divine Skill** Nature

**Favored Weapon** falchion

**Domains** air, cold, destruction, lightning

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *thunderstrike*, 3rd: *lightning bolt*, 6th: *chain lightning*

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### UIRCH

Uirch promotes using one's strength to defend the weak and employing systems to benefit the people. His teachings are antithetical to many traditional orc beliefs, making his edicts a challenge to accept.

**Edicts** protect the weak and innocent, keep your word, do not throw your life away needlessly

**Anathema** allow tyranny to stand uncontested, put your own safety before those in need of defending, make a promise with the intent to break it

**Divine Sanctification** can choose holy

**Divine Font** heal

**Divine Skill** Medicine

**Favored Weapon** tekko-kagi (*Pathfinder Treasure Vault*)

**Domains** cities, duty, freedom, protection

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *protector tree* (*Secrets of Magic*), 2nd: *oaken resilience*, 4th: *wall of fire*

### VARG

Varg loves innovation and technology, but only for the purposes of combat. His followers are encouraged to use tactics and clever tinkering to get around their problems, but technology is reserved for warfare.

**Edicts** use tactics rather than relying solely on brute force or overwhelming numbers, use siege engines for combat whenever possible, seek out new technology

**Anathema** pursue technology for non-combat purposes, use machinery and other advanced technology outside of combat, keep advanced weaponry or battle tactics a secret from orcs

**Divine Sanctification** none

**Divine Font** harm

**Divine Skill** Crafting

**Favored Weapon** greataxe

**Domains** creation, destruction, knowledge, toil

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *anticipate peril* (*Divine Mysteries*), 4th: *creation*, 5th: *impaling spike*

### WULGREN

Wulgren mastered firearms in life and continues to promote them in death, advocating for his worshippers to build their own means of victory against their enemies.

**Edicts** create the weapons you intend to wield with your own hands, innovate efficient ways to defeat your enemies

**Anathema** wield a weapon forged by another except in direst circumstance, yield ground to an enemy while victory is still possible

**Divine Sanctification** none

**Divine Font** harm or heal

**Divine Skill** Crafting

**Favored Weapon** barricade buster (*Treasure Vault*)

**Domains** ambition, creation, freedom, perfection

**Cleric Spells** 1st: *sure strike*, 4th: *creation*, 6th: *phantasmal calamity*

### Patrons

Although a PC might attend Torrentmoot for their own opportunities and enrichment, the campaign assumes that most or all of the PCs are representatives of a company, state, or other organization that's curious about Belkzen's overtures of friendship and the potential to benefit off of Ardax's desire for alliances. The following is a non-exhaustive list of viable patrons and their possible objectives.

### ACADEMIC

These groups wish to explore Belkzen and study its history and mysteries.

**The Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye:** This secretive organization of scholars and historians based in Ustalav delights in all things occult, and Belkzen has rarely permitted safe passage to the order's agents. Belkzen occupies part of ancient Thassilon and might house esoteric secrets of the Runelords. Orcs' own magic is poorly understood, and the order might unlock new discoveries by studying local mystics and rituals. Finally, the Esoteric Order loathes the Whispering Tyrant; Ardax's new Belkzen might be an ideal ally in defying (or destroying) the lich.

**The Pathfinder Society:** The famous Pathfinder Society is always eager to build connections and forge alliances, enabling field agents to explore and document a region's history. The most infamous expedition to Belkzen in living memory was headed by the illustrious Eando Kline. While his cunning helped him bypass orc patrols to explore ruins around Urgir, his tricks also embarrassed several holds and painted a target on the Pathfinder Society's back. Ardax's invitation is an opportunity to repair burnt bridges and foster a friendlier relationship with the Pathfinders.

### COMMERCE

The city of Urgir became more open to foreign trade during the rule of Grask Uldeth about 20 years ago. Belkzen could easily accommodate more caravans and open up new markets, so many groups hope to convince Ardax to expand on these trade policies—and hopefully cut their specific organization a special deal to secure exclusive rights, avoid tariffs, or gain other similar advantages.

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**The Aspis Consortium:** This cutthroat trade company always needs fresh recruits—ideally operatives who don't mind breaking a few kneecaps and laws to maximize profits. Orcs' reputation for resourcefulness, intimidation, and tenacity make them ideal candidates, and Belkzen's relatively lawless wilds could support lucrative smuggling routes for the Aspis Consortium. Failing that, perhaps Belkzen has resources it could exploit and export, favoring short-term profit over long-term partnership. A PC working for the Aspis Consortium is taking a big risk, but if they succeed, this could lead to their promotion to silver or even gold agent status (overseeing a whole region's business).

**Druma:** The merchants of Druma, particularly the Prophets of Kalistrade, are eager to develop Belkzen's markets and consumer demand. However, the kalistocrats have limited information. They need trustworthy agents to gauge the quality of Belkzen's exports, build mercantile connections, and identify which imports would be worth shipping to the badlands. Few kalistocrats would risk traveling to Belkzen themselves at this point, as it has historically been too unpredictable, violent, and (worst of all for the white-clad merchant-mystics) dirty.

**Kellid Followings:** Though not as illustrious as the kalistocrats nor as opportunistic as the Aspis Consortium, the Kellid followings to the north have just as much to gain from a safer Belkzen. After all, the Realm of the Mammoth Lords contains Icestair, one of the few means of accessing the Path of Aganhei and its overland route to all of Tian Xia. By forging strong ties with Ardax, Kellid followings could at last provide a secure route to Icestair, benefiting from the lucrative trade that passes through both regions.

### MILITARY

As the impending threat of Tar-Baphon's lust for power looms over Avistan, several nations are keeping an eye out to see if Belkzen is prepared to join the inevitable fight against him. Ardax's actions are promising, but not all are convinced of his sincerity.

**Nations around Lake Encarthan:** Several of the nations surrounding Lake Encarthan, such as the Five Kings Mountains, Kyonin, Oprak, and Ustlav, are gearing up for a potential fight against Tar-Baphon. They see Belkzen as a potential ally but are wary due to the nation's history with the lich. The Five Kings Mountains and Ustlav, which have had difficult pasts with orc holds, are especially careful and eager to see if it's time to let bygones be bygones.

**Mercenary Companies:** For millennia, Belkzen has been a violent crucible that destroys the weak and rewards the strong. Some mercenaries might offer their services to various holds, helping them defeat a rival for a share of the plunder. That said, the more promising opportunity is recruitment. By sending a delegate to the Torrentmoot, a mercenary company can identify new talent, all while meeting and advertising to future clients. Druma's Blackjackets are one of the most famous mercenary outfits and are known for their tight discipline. Such a PC might travel to Belkzen to study orcs' battlefield insights and self-control, assessing whether they could thrive among the Blackjackets and whether orcs' reputation for recklessness is overhyped.

### Skills and Feats

While many skills and feats will be useful to this campaign, listed below are some skill categories that are particularly thematic or useful in Triumph of the Tusk.

**Socializing:** As a dignitary, your PC will be interacting with people who can make great allies and even worse enemies. Skills like Diplomacy are crucial to build alliances, with feats like Discreet Inquiry helping you gain information without anyone noticing. Intimidation will prove you're no pushover, while Deception can help you keep your true intentions close to the chest. However, dishonesty tends to be frowned upon as a tactic among the orcs, so make sure you can get away with it by taking the Charming Liar feat or by seeing through someone else's honeyed words with the Lie to Me feat.

**Exploration:** Your PC's adventures will move them around Belkzen, a vast and sometimes perilous land. Athletics, Nature, and Survival skills will help you navigate the treacherous terrain, avoid hazards, and identify the wildlife. Feats like Forager, Survey Wildlife, and Terrains Expertise (plains) can help keep the party alive in this harsh landscape. If you prefer a stealthier approach, a feat like Armored Stealth will help you combine the benefits of both your strength and dexterity.

**Orc Lore:** This adventure explores and focuses heavily on orc culture. Skills like Athletics, Religion, and Society can help a PC better understand and communicate with the orcs they meet, while specific lore skills such as Belkzen Lore and Orc Pantheon Lore can provide an even deeper knowledge of the people they encounter. Tar-Baphon's necrotic touch still stains parts of the land, making Occultism useful in the event one comes into contact with a relic of the lich's time in power.

# Triumph of the Tusk

## PLAYER'S GUIDE

### Backgrounds

At the start of this campaign, you and your party members have arrived at the camp for Torrentmoot. Your character backstory should involve a reason to be interested in potentially allying with Belkzen.

### STANDARD BACKGROUNDS

If you prefer to choose a standard background from *Pathfinder Player Core*, nearly any background will work. Particularly thematic backgrounds that suit this campaign are emissary, merchant, and warrior.

### TRIUMPH OF THE TUSK BACKGROUNDS

The following six new backgrounds are designed specifically for the Triumph of the Tusk Adventure Path. You can use these backgrounds to inspire personality traits and details that explain why your character was sent to attend the Torrentmoot and why you or those who sent you are willing to participate.

#### BADLANDS SCOUT

#### BACKGROUND

UNCOMMON

You're accustomed to the desolate wilds of Belkzen and able to blend into the sparse shadows of craggy rocks and quench your thirst with drops of water. You might be a member of an isolated orc hold, traveling mercenary, or wandering warrior from nearby human settlements.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Survival skill and the Badlands Lore skill. You gain the Forager skill feat.

#### BELKZEN ANTHROPOLOGIST

#### BACKGROUND

UNCOMMON

Belkzen has a long, storied history, but much of it has been erased by time, conflict, and the deliberate cruelty of those who wished to destroy records of the past. You have dedicated your studies to collecting the fragmented stories of Belkzen's past so you can weave together a full picture of the land's lost cultures and knowledge, that the nation might be remembered properly by the world.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Society skill and the Orc Pantheon Lore skill, a broad skill pertaining to orc gods both current and past. You gain the Multilingual skill feat.

#### EMPTY HAND LOYALIST

#### BACKGROUND

UNCOMMON

The orcs have had a long history of violence that brings

some orcs pride, but for you it's a mark of shame. You see the path of reconciliation that Ardax is paving and find hope in the chance to transform your people's ways into one that moves away from stereotypes of brutality.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Charisma or Strength, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Intimidation skill and the Belkzen Lore skill. You gain the Quick Coercion skill feat.

#### FOREIGN DIPLOMAT

#### BACKGROUND

UNCOMMON

You have traveled a long way to be here, using your keen listening skills and careful words to make alliances that benefit your people and surgically sever ties that have become strained. You might be from Druma or Oprak, taking advantage of this invitation to forge new relationships, or you might be from the nations around Lake Encarthan and hoping to find an ally against Tar-Baphon.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Charisma or Constitution, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Diplomacy skill and the Heraldry Lore skill. You gain the Group Impression skill feat.

#### SELF-MADE

#### BACKGROUND

UNCOMMON

Some are born with everything they need in this life, but not you—you scraped everything you have together through hard work and sheer force of will. You might have done hard manual labor to get where you are or apprenticed for years to become a master of your craft.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Strength or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Athletics skill and a Lore skill related to how you've paved your own way through the world. You gain the Hefty Hauler skill feat.

#### TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

#### BACKGROUND

UNCOMMON

You belong to a merchant guild, a vendor group, or some other trade organization where you're protected and ensured a fair deal so long as you do what's best for the group's interests. You might be an agent of the Aspis Consortium looking for new opportunities to gain wealth, or you might be a rising merchant eager to prove yourself to your superiors.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Dexterity or Intelligence, and one is a free ability boost.

You're trained in the Crafting skill and the Mercantile Lore skill. You gain the Quick Repair skill feat.

# Triumph of the Tusk

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