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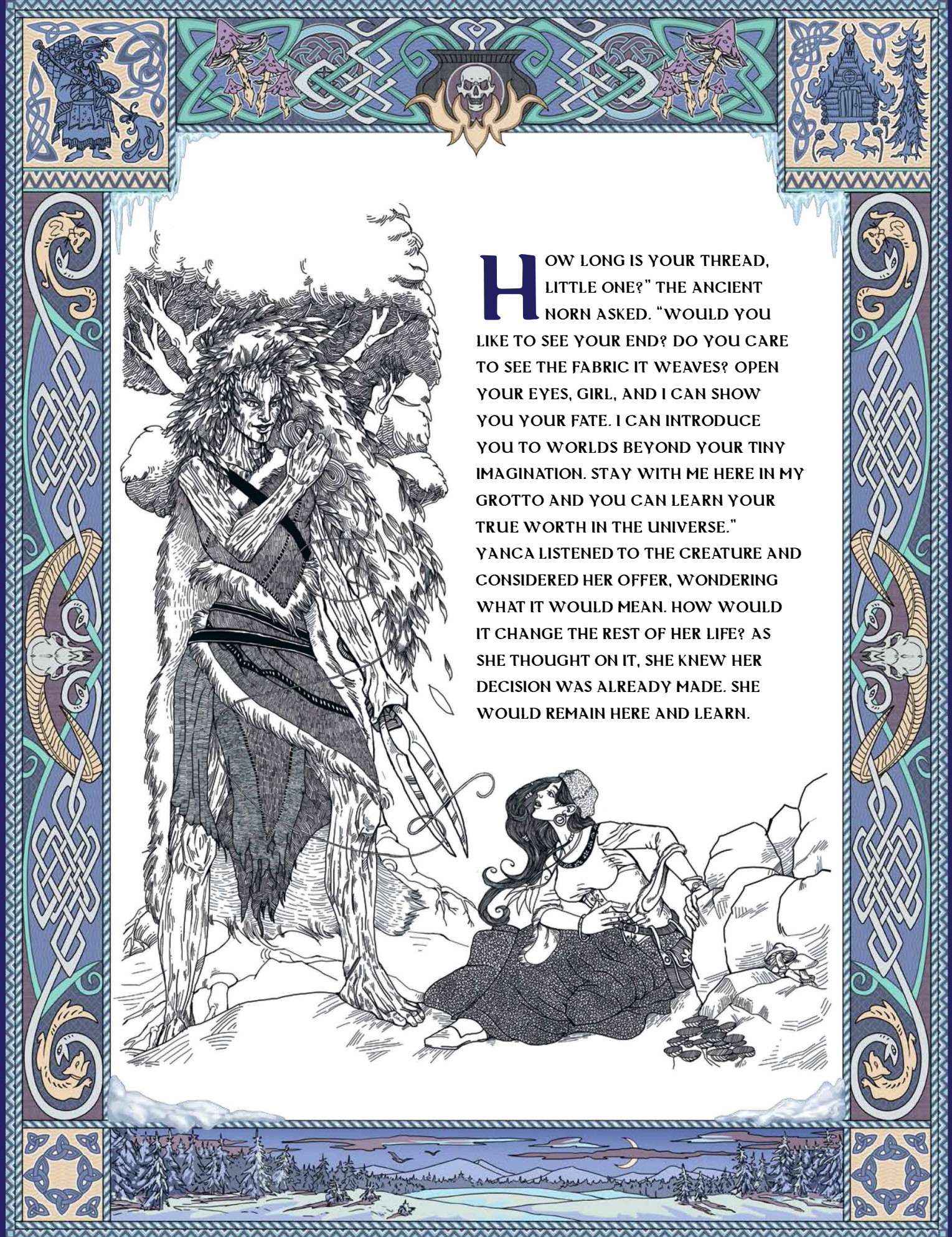
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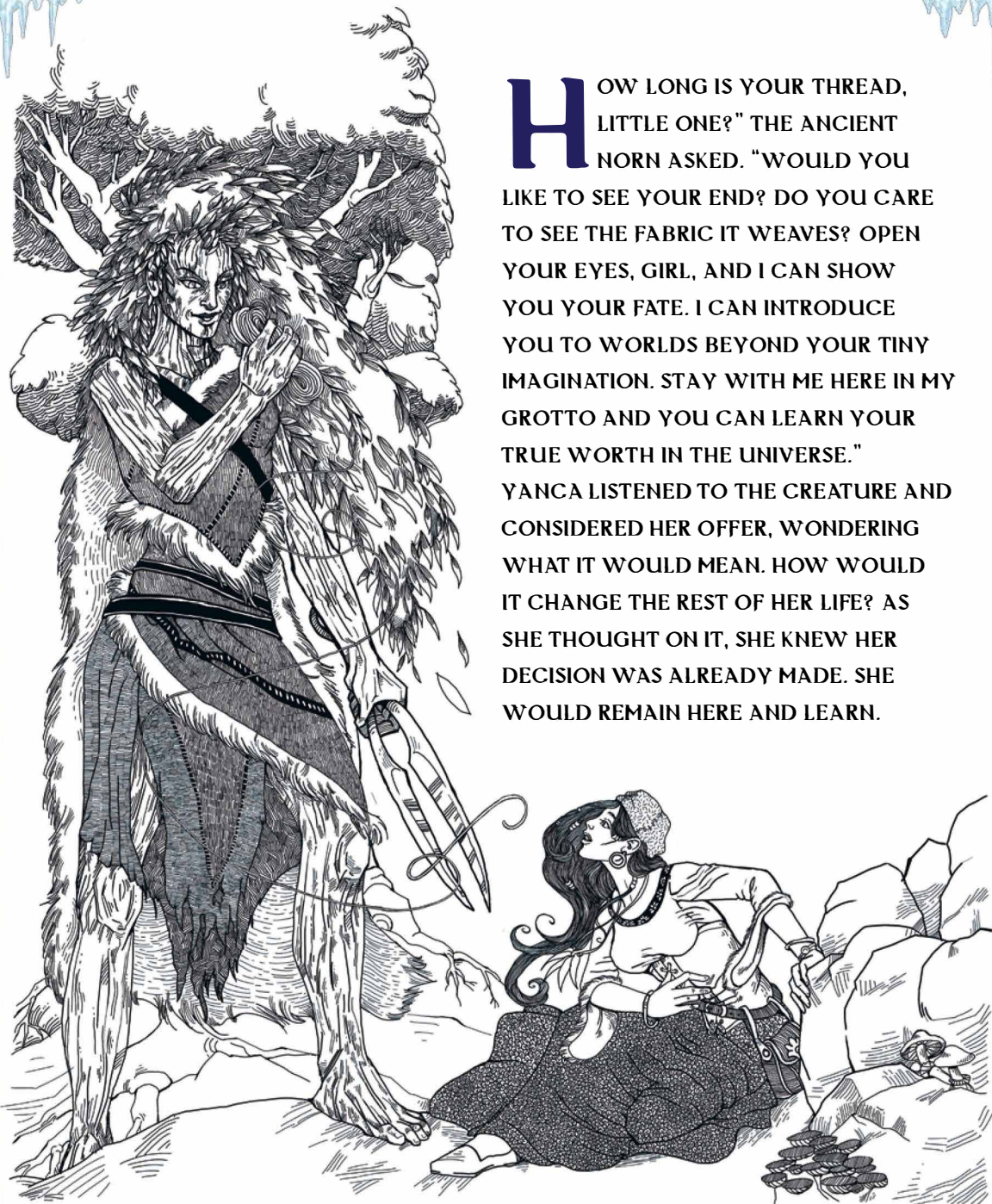
REIGN OF WINTER

THE WITCH QUEEN'S REVENGE

by Greg A. Vaughan



HOW LONG IS YOUR THREAD, LITTLE ONE?" THE ANCIENT NORN ASKED. "WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE YOUR END? DO YOU CARE TO SEE THE FABRIC IT WEAVES? OPEN YOUR EYES, GIRL, AND I CAN SHOW YOU YOUR FATE. I CAN INTRODUCE YOU TO WORLDS BEYOND YOUR TINY IMAGINATION. STAY WITH ME HERE IN MY GROTTO AND YOU CAN LEARN YOUR TRUE WORTH IN THE UNIVERSE." YANCA LISTENED TO THE CREATURE AND CONSIDERED HER OFFER, WONDERING WHAT IT WOULD MEAN. HOW WOULD IT CHANGE THE REST OF HER LIFE? AS SHE THOUGHT ON IT, SHE KNEW HER DECISION WAS ALREADY MADE. SHE WOULD REMAIN HERE AND LEARN.





PATHFINDER[®]

ADVENTURE PATH[™]

REIGN OF WINTER

ADVENTURE PATH  PART 6 OF 6

THE WITCH QUEEN'S REVENGE



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ADVENTURE PATH™

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<i>Bestiary</i>	B1	<i>Paths of Prestige</i>	POP
<i>Bestiary 2</i>	B2	<i>Ultimate Combat</i>	UC
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Printed in China. O Wind, if Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?



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ROOTS FROM OUR WORLD

Here we are at the end of this wild ride. By now the PCs have jumped around Golarion, visited other worlds, and are about to explore the inner depths of Baba Yaga's Hut and face the climax of the Adventure Path.

Although this Adventure Path tells a sword-and-sorcery fantasy story filled with witches, magic, and supernatural creatures, it is deeply rooted in our own world's stories. This was important to me, and I pressed to get as much of it in as I could. Russian and Slavic folklore have some robust tales, legends that have persevered through the ages and woven themselves into other cultures' stories. Many of these tales filtered down and appeared in *Grimm's Fairy Tales* and the like. Hansel and Gretel, considered a German tale recorded by the Brothers Grimm, borrows greatly from stories of a tricky cannibalistic hag not unlike Baba Yaga. Some say it is actually just a retelling of one of the many stories of

Baba Yaga, complete with a mean stepmother, threats of being cooked alive in an oven, and the children ending up victorious after outwitting the old hag. These variants in tales are more common than not in oral tradition. The particular details of a tale may change depending on the region or era, but the basic story remains the same.

The various authors in this Adventure Path did a great job seeding fairy tales and folklore throughout their adventures and articles. There are talking animals and trolls under a bridge. Mirrors hold real magic, witches lick their lips in anticipation of devouring children, and gingerbread houses lure the unsuspecting children to their demise. In these adventures, the PCs get to talk with Vasilissa's doll, encounter Little Otik, and have a chance to befriend a domovoi or kikimora. Of all our Adventure Paths, this one is the most steeped in stories from our world.

When it comes to Baba Yaga, I've always had a soft spot in my heart for dear Grandmother. Sure, most of the stories paint her as an evil witch and a cruel old crone, but to me it looked like she was testing those who came to her. When people intruded and asked things of her, she never made it easy. She always gave them a chance to seal their own fates—be it good or bad. It's not her fault if her visitors happened to be greedy or lack willpower. The stories of Baba Yaga were lessons that helped prepare readers, cautioning them against being hoodwinked or cursed in some way. They served as a reminder to always be careful with your words and deeds—and certainly to respect your elders.

NEW GUNS ON GOLARION

It's entirely possible that the PCs acquired some advanced firearms on twentieth-century Earth in "Rasputin Must Die!" and at the conclusion of "The Witch Queen's Revenge," bring those guns back to Golarion. So what does this mean for a world where "emerging guns" are the norm? The answer is twofold: very little, and whatever you want it to mean. Just because the PCs now possess advanced firearms doesn't mean that Golarion is suddenly overrun with revolvers, rifles, and machine guns. The gunsmiths of Alkenstar still produce the early firearms they are known for, and gunslingers and other firearm users are just as rare as they have always been. The only difference is that the PCs now have better guns—but at this point, they're likely 17th level, and far more powerful than most of Golarion's inhabitants anyway.

That said, if you wish advanced firearms to have a greater effect on the world in your campaign, then they can. Just remember that these advanced firearms are in the hands of a very select few (the PCs), and any changes resulting from their presence on Golarion are likely to be incremental. The PCs, or other gunsmiths, must first reverse engineer these guns, then try to replicate them. Mass production will likely take some time to get going, and even more time will be necessary for commonplace use of advanced firearms to spread across the world.

Advanced firearms have the potential to change the world in significant ways, so be aware of the possible repercussions of making them commonplace and widely available. Remember also that the existence of magic already makes Golarion a very different place from our own historical world, and how guns and magic interact could well lead to a completely different type of world. Be prepared to address these changes, and don't be afraid to limit the ambitions of the PCs if you think their goals might be detrimental to your campaign.

BUT BABA YAGA'S EVIL!

This month's adventure, "The Witch Queen's Revenge," hinges on one endeavor—freeing Baba Yaga from her matryoshka doll prison. But Baba Yaga is an evil witch,

ON THE COVER

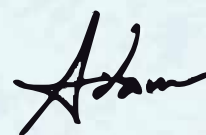
The Reign of Winter Adventure Path finally comes to a close, and this month's cover gives us Queen Elvanna of Irrisen. As this adventure begins, Elvanna is working furiously to finish a ritual that will extend Irrisen's endless winter over all Golarion, and the PCs must finally confront her to free Baba Yaga and save their world from a new ice age.

and good PCs might question the wisdom of releasing her, particularly if they believe they can defeat Queen Elvanna themselves. The important thing to keep in mind here is that while Baba Yaga is evil, she is not really interested in committing evil acts against Golarion or the PCs at this point—that ambition lies with Queen Elvanna, who really is trying to destroy the world. As a result, Baba Yaga is quite literally the lesser of two evils—Elvanna is a much greater threat to Golarion. At the same time, only Baba Yaga has the power to end Elvanna's ritual. Even killing Elvanna will not end the ritual, and Irrisen's winter can only be prevented from spreading over all Golarion with Baba Yaga's help.

Hopefully, this realization will be enough to convince the PCs to free Baba Yaga. Make it clear to the PCs that without Baba Yaga's aid, they will be unable to stop Queen Elvanna's ritual, and remind them that this is why they have been searching for Baba Yaga for the whole campaign. If necessary, the *geas* from the mantle of the Black Rider can further prompt the PCs, and Baba Yaga will revoke the boons that she has granted them throughout the adventure if they refuse to release her.

Lastly, freeing Baba Yaga from her prison does not have to be the campaign's final act. If the PCs feel strongly enough about it, the campaign can continue with the PCs' attempts to recapture or slay Baba Yaga after they were forced to free her by necessity. See "Continuing the Campaign" on page 64 for possible directions this quest might take.

If your PCs felt forced to side with obvious evil, just wait until next month! Polish your armor, grab your holy avenger, summon your mount and ride forth to the Worldwound! Next month's volume launches the Wrath of the Righteous Adventure Path, and if you've been looking forward to shutting down evil and being the capital "G" good guys, pick up the first installment of this mythic Adventure Path.



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THE WITCH QUEEN'S REVENGE

PART ONE: GRANDMOTHER'S CAULDRON

PAGE 8

Deep inside Baba Yaga's *Dancing Hut*, the PCs meet the holder of Baba Yaga's fate, who gives them the first key to unlock Baba Yaga's prison and instructs them on how to find more.

PART TWO: THE RUINS OF VASHLIQ

PAGE 16

The PCs venture into the ruins of an ancient empire, contained on a demiplane in the *Dancing Hut*, to find a remnant of Baba Yaga's power.

PART THREE: THE ISLAND OF BUYAN

PAGE 25

On another demiplane inside the *Dancing Hut*, the PCs travel to the mythical island of Buyan in search of Baba Yaga's death.

PART FOUR: THE COTTAGE IN THE DARK FOREST

PAGE 38

Beneath a cottage in a dark forest on yet another demiplane inside the *Dancing Hut*, the PCs face the past queens of Irrisen to recover Baba Yaga's life.

PART FIVE: THE WITCH QUEEN'S KURGAN

PAGE 49

In Baba Yaga's inner sanctum, the PCs must defeat Queen Elvanna to free Baba Yaga and save their world.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"The Witch Queen's Revenge" is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

15

The PCs begin this adventure at 15th level.

16

The PCs should reach 16th level while they are on the Island of Buyan, and before they face the khala in the Guardian's Cave.

17

The PCs should be 17th level before entering the Witch Queen's Kurgan and confronting Queen Elvanna in the inner sanctum.

The PCs should be 17th level by the end of the adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

When Baba Yaga first created her *Dancing Hut*, she created five demiplanes within it to serve as her private sanctum. The first of these demiplanes, Grandmother's Cauldron—where Baba Yaga met her mentor, the primordial norn Vigliv, and took her first steps on the road to power—served as the foundation upon which the *Dancing Hut* itself was constructed, and linked these core demiplanes together. While the hut's various configurations change depending on the hut's physical location, these five demiplanes remain linked, accessible by Baba Yaga—and only Baba Yaga—from anywhere in the hut.

To create these unique demiplanes, Baba Yaga infused parts of her own essence into them, representing her birth, her fate, her power, and her death. Not only did this infusion of power strengthen these demiplanes, but it also had the secondary effect of safeguarding Baba Yaga's essence, for only by recovering these elements from the demiplanes could one truly overcome the Queen of Witches. Even when Baba Yaga fell victim to the trap laid by Queen Elvanna and Rasputin, her treacherous children could only imprison her inside a magical matryoshka doll—without the elements of Baba Yaga's power, which were safely ensconced inside the *Dancing Hut*, they could not kill her.

Although Queen Elvanna was aware of this fact, she had other, more pressing matters to attend to—namely, her plan to envelop all of Golarion in a new ice age. Still, she took precautions to prevent Baba Yaga's minions from freeing her. Elvanna left Baba Yaga on Earth in the possession of her half-brother Rasputin, and took the *Dancing Hut* back to Golarion with her, disabling its keys so no one could use it to mount a rescue. Elvanna then ordered the capture and execution of Baba Yaga's Three Riders, those agents most likely to attempt to free the Queen of Witches, and disbanded Irrisen's own Iron Guard, whose loyalty was to Baba Yaga over Elvanna. With the exception of the Black Rider's escape, Elvanna's precautions seemed to work perfectly, and she was confident that no one would come to rescue Baba Yaga anytime soon.

With these safeguards in place, Elvanna finally turned her attention to the ritual that would expand Irrisen's eternal winter over all Golarion, giving her the power to conquer the whole planet and to supplant her mother as Queen of Witches. There was only one place that such a ritual could be performed, however—Baba Yaga's own inner sanctum inside the *Dancing Hut*. Elvanna created a *mirror gate*, a “back door” that connected the inner sanctum with the Royal Palace in Whitethrone, and sequestered herself in the hut to enact the ritual.

Even after the Black Rider passed on his mantle to a group of heroes, who then stole the *Dancing Hut* from the Market Square in Whitethrone, Elvanna remained focused on her ritual. Using her *mirror gate*, she was able to regularly access the inner sanctum, even as the hut

traveled to Iobaria, then Triaxus, and finally, to Earth. At first, Elvanna was unconcerned; even with the *Dancing Hut* in their possession, these heroes would be unable to track Baba Yaga to Earth, and the hut's own guardians would hinder them at every step.

It wasn't until the *Dancing Hut* arrived on Earth and Rasputin was defeated that Elvanna began to worry. Her ritual was already in progress, however, and Elvanna believed she could still complete the ritual before Baba Yaga could be freed. But deep inside the *Dancing Hut*, in Grandmother's Cauldron, the primordial norn Vigliv holds the threads of both Baba Yaga's fate, and the fates of those who would rescue her. With her guidance, these heroes could recover the portions of Baba Yaga's essence from the hut, free the Queen of Witches, and defeat Queen Elvanna before she can ascend to a new level of power.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure begins with the PCs in possession of the matryoshka doll in which Baba Yaga has been trapped. Following the doll's empathic guidance, they pass through a trap door in the *Dancing Hut* that leads to a previously hidden demiplane known as Grandmother's Cauldron. There, the PCs encounter the primordial norn Vigliv and learn something of Baba Yaga's past as well as the necessary steps to open the nested layers of the matryoshka doll and free Baba Yaga for a final confrontation with Queen Elvanna. To do this, however, the PCs must recover components of Baba Yaga's very essence: her fate, her power, her death, her life, and her blood, scattered throughout the *Dancing Hut* for safekeeping.

After defeating a guardian in Grandmother's Cauldron and receiving Baba Yaga's fate from Vigliv, the PCs enter the demiplane containing the ruined fortress of Vashliq, where Baba Yaga's power lies with the remains of the powerful queen Bremagyrt, whom Baba Yaga raised up and then destroyed for refusing to pay her obeisance. Only after defeating both the undead horror that the queen has become and a disingenuous div out to recover the power for himself can the PCs claim Baba Yaga's power and open another layer of the doll.

Vigliv then sends the PCs to retrieve Baba Yaga's death, hidden upon the mythical island of Buyan on another demiplane within the hut. After assisting the island's native maftets against an invasion of horrific nuckelavees, the PCs find Baba Yaga's death inside a coffer, in a corpse, buried in a grave under an oak tree, and use it to open the next layer of the matryoshka doll.

The norn then sends the PCs to recover Baba Yaga's life, hidden in a cottage deep in the center of a dark forest. There they find a cavern holding the enthroned remains of Irrisen's former queens, and make the discovery that Baba Yaga has been using their life essences to power her

BABA YAGA'S COMMUNICATIONS

In addition to her empathic communications, Baba Yaga is faintly aware of the doll's surroundings. She has a Perception modifier +11 while in the doll, so any time Perception checks are required, attempt a check for the doll as well. If Baba Yaga's check is successful, she can provide her bearer with a hint of what she noticed through her empathic communication—a sense of danger if an ambush is about to be sprung, a sense of accomplishment if a secret door is detected, and so forth. Baba Yaga cannot explicitly describe what she has perceived, but careful PCs would do well to pay attention to the signals coming from the doll if they value their skins. If the doll is covered or inside a container of some sort, however, Baba Yaga cannot attempt these Perception checks.

After the PCs have begun to open the layers of the matryoshka doll, Baba Yaga's ability to communicate with them increases. As it does, she provides the information she gleans from her Perception checks as new means for doing so open up to her. However, if she feels like the PCs are progressing too slowly or are being thickheaded, she doesn't hesitate to introduce them to the sharp side of her tongue to spur them on. She nags them incessantly (though she also praises them, when deserved) as they proceed through the adventure, likely making her presence a mixed blessing of constant complaints balanced by the benefits she provides.

In addition, Baba Yaga can provide the PCs with hints or motivational comments if they become stumped. Communication is very taxing for her while she is trapped within the doll, however, so she reserves this for only the most important occasions, as she would rather use her opportunities to communicate with them to nag and harangue them for their perceived incompetence.

own immortality. By defeating these undead monstrosities, the PCs can recover the Old Crone's life essence and open the next matryoshka doll.

Finally, the PCs enter an ancient burial mound in search of the blood that will free Baba Yaga from the final doll. There, in Baba Yaga's inner sanctum, the PCs find Queen Elvanna readying the final stages of her ritual to plunge Golarion into eternal winter. With the help of boons provided by Baba Yaga and their own threads of fate, harvested by Vigliv, the PCs confront the Queen of Irrisen and her allies. Only when Elvanna is slain can Baba Yaga finally be freed from the imprisoning matryoshka doll and Golarion saved from its impending ice age.

PART ONE: GRANDMOTHER'S CAULDRON

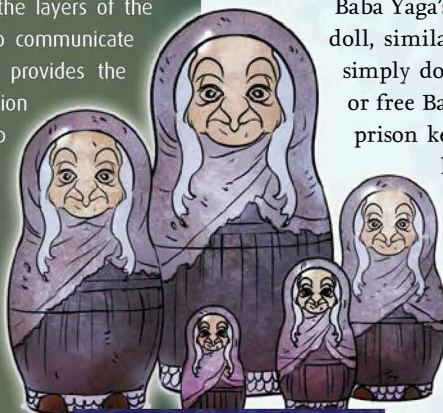
The adventure begins with the PCs returning to the *Dancing Hut* with Baba Yaga's matryoshka doll prison, recovered from the Siberian sanctuary of her estranged son, the mad monk Rasputin. The doll appears to be a typical matryoshka doll—a set of wooden dolls of decreasing size nested within one another—about a foot tall with a wide, bowling pin shape. The doll is exquisitely painted to resemble a gray-haired old crone with a stern, disapproving face wearing traditional peasant garb. It rattles when shaken, revealing it to be hollow with other dolls likely nested inside, but has no seam where it can be opened. The doll has an overwhelming aura of abjuration and necromancy and is impervious to all means of physical and magical harm.

Baba Yaga's body and soul are trapped inside the doll, similar to a *trap the soul* effect, but the PCs simply do not have the means to open the doll or free Baba Yaga at this time. The magic of her prison keeps Baba Yaga from speaking or using her powers, but her will is strong, and she is able to communicate urges and emotions to the PCs with empathic impulses. These impulses are enough to send the message that she is trapped within the doll and that the PCs must take her to her "sanctuary" inside the *Dancing Hut* to free her. Anyone who physically carries the matryoshka doll on her person or touches it receives these empathic signals

very strongly, and it is clear that these signals originate from the doll itself. Anyone standing within 3 feet of the character bearing the doll can also receive these signals, though they are much weaker and require a successful DC 20 Perception check to pick up on them. Storing the doll in an extradimensional space such as a *bag of holding* blocks the empathic signals completely.

Shortly after the PCs bring the matryoshka doll into the *Dancing Hut*, the doll urges the bearer toward the trap door in the ceiling of the domovoi gulag in the hut's Siberian configuration (area A1 in "Rasputin in Must Die!"). Although this trap door normally leads to a loft above that room, Baba Yaga's presence causes the trap door to open into a different space entirely—a demiplane known as Grandmother's Cauldron (area A below).

Once the PCs enter Grandmother's Cauldron, they again find themselves in a new configuration of the *Dancing Hut*. However, the hut has not gone anywhere; it still stands outside the Akuvskaya Monastery in Siberia, on Earth, and remains there for the duration of this adventure. Unlike the hut's other layouts, this configuration is not tied to the hut's physical location—the demiplanes forming the



MATRYOSHKA DOLLS

“rooms” of Baba Yaga’s sanctuary exist independently of the hut’s normal location-based layouts, and Baba Yaga (or those in possession of her matryoshka doll prison) can access Grandmother’s Cauldron from any of the hut’s different configurations.

A. GRANDMOTHER’S CAULDRON

Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs pass through the trap door in the *Dancing Hut*.

The trap door opens out of a large, flat-topped gneiss boulder at the bottom of a grotto surrounded by sheer rock cliffs broken by myriad ledges and fissures. The sound of falling water echoes through the grotto and a fine, chill mist fills the air with sparkling droplets. Most of the grotto’s walls are in shade, though bright sunlight shines down from somewhere above, refracting through the mist to create rainbows and glowing jewels of radiance. The shadow of a huge, gnarled tree is just visible through the fog toward the sound of the waterfall.

Grandmother’s Cauldron is a canyon-like grotto filled with light from above made diffuse by the constant mist rising from the waterfall. This light is the equivalent of sunlight, but the source of the light cannot be discerned through the mist. Unless otherwise noted, the mist provides concealment for creatures 5 feet away, and total concealment for creatures 30 feet away or more. This mist can be temporarily cleared by *gust of wind* or similar effects, but it immediately reforms once the spell expires.

The grotto is essentially of infinite height. Whether climbing or flying, it’s impossible to reach the top of the cliffs, though no matter how long or far one has ascended, the floor of the grotto is never more than 100 feet below. The walls of the grotto are of the same ancient gneiss as the boulder at area **A1**, formed from geologic processes billions of years ago. While it is normal rock in all respects, attempts to pass through it or otherwise burrow in order to escape the grotto always fail after only a few feet. The floor of the grotto is covered with a layer of soil, ranging from inches to dozens of feet deep depending on where one digs, atop the same impenetrable gneiss.

It is perpetually winter in the grotto, but the chill mist from the frigid waterfall combines with the steam rising from hot springs to create an overall comfortable temperature within the grotto. Despite that, a light dusting of snow covers the ground, with small drifts on ledges and in corners, but not enough to hinder movement. Vegetation fills the grotto, primarily lichens on the rocks and ferns growing in crevices and ledges, but also scores, if not hundreds, of small rowan trees (identifiable with a successful DC 10 Knowledge [nature] check), all seeded from the ancient, giant rowan standing at area **A2**. These trees grow on the floor of the grotto and in the thin soil of the cliff ledges, ranging

from young saplings to mature trees with trunks over 2 feet in diameter and crowns over 30 feet high.

Throughout the grotto can be found various petroglyphs and crude pictographs depicting sticklike humanoid figures and stylistically drawn animals. A giant tree by a pool, sometimes depicted with a woman’s face, appears prominently among them. These are signs of the Stone Age peoples who once frequented the grotto and worshiped an ancient fertility and earth goddess here.

Grandmother’s Cauldron is actually a demiplane created by Baba Yaga “inside” her *Dancing Hut*, but the grotto originally existed as an actual locale in the Scythian steppes of southern Russia. The grotto and its spring were originally sacred to the early inhabitants of the steppe thousands of years ago, and as a result, the grotto bears the marks of usage by Stone Age humans of ancient Earth as a ceremonial and sacrificial site. It was largely forgotten until a young Baba Yaga fell into it almost 2,000 years ago and met her primordial mentor. The nascent Witch Queen ended up claiming the grotto as her own demesne, and when she constructed her *Dancing Hut*, Baba Yaga chose Grandmother’s Cauldron to serve as its core and built the rest of the hut around it. As a result, Grandmother’s Cauldron is the center of Baba Yaga’s power and provides the means for the PCs to free her from her current imprisonment.

Several side canyons exit off the main “room” of the grotto, creating a twisting maze of ravines and gorges, and the high cliff walls of the grotto contain numerous ledges and platforms. Some of these side canyons and ledges exit into other areas within the hut, though it almost impossible to find these exits without guidance (such as from the doll entrapping Baba Yaga). In addition, a *dimensional lock* effect (CL 20th) blocks all extradimensional travel within Grandmother’s Cauldron itself.

The only exits from Grandmother’s Cauldron are the trap door at area **A1** and those portals to other demiplanes described in the following locations. Unless otherwise detailed, these portals are the only way to access these other demiplanes forming Baba Yaga’s sanctuary—even magic such as *plane shift* cannot cross these planar boundaries.

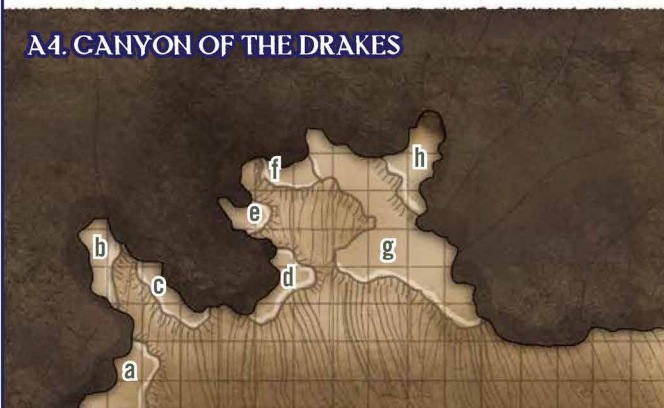
A1. Entrance

A wooden trap door opens in the surface of a large, flat boulder here. Beneath the door, a wooden ladder leads down into the domovoi gulag in the *Dancing Hut*’s Siberian configuration. This connection only exists when Baba Yaga wills it, so when the PCs carried the matryoshka doll through the trap door, they entered Grandmother’s Cauldron. Baba Yaga can use this trap door to access any of the hut’s myriad other configurations, regardless of its physical location, but since Baba Yaga is present within the Cauldron and has no reason change it at this time, the trap door leads back to the hut in Siberia for the duration of this adventure.

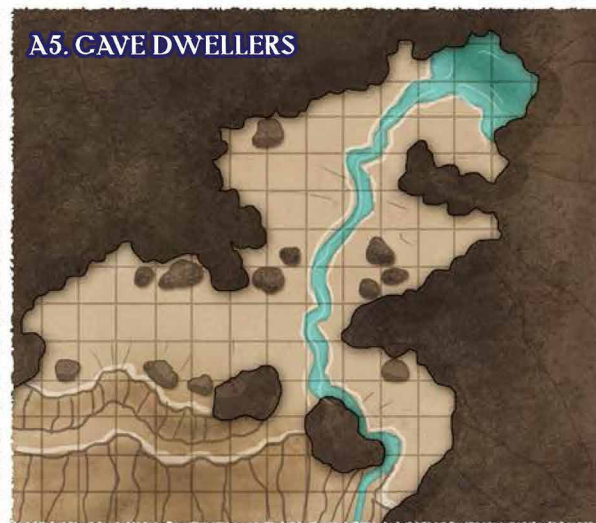
A. GRANDMOTHER'S CAULDRON



A4. CANYON OF THE DRAKES



A5. CAVE DWELLERS



A6. GUARDED LEDGE



A9. ANCIENT STAIRS



A2. The Mother Tree (CR 19)

A picturesque waterfall tumbles from the cliff above into a roiling pool that bubbles like a giant witch's cauldron. The waterfall gives off a frigid mist, but hot steam rises from the bubbling waters of the pool, combining with the mist to make a comfortable, if somewhat damp, locale. Colorful lichens grow on the rocks around the pool, and lush ferns grow from every fissure and seam in the rock. Numerous trees, ranging from shrublike saplings to fully grown specimens crowd the soil around the pool's edge. Just visible through the mist, a magnificent rowan tree with an immense trunk stands on a low ledge overlooking the pool. The lowest of its thin branches hang all the way down to dip into the surface of the pool, and its leaves constantly drip with condensation from the ever-present mist. Massive knots that almost resemble contorted faces look out from the tree's gnarled surface, and its fissured bark bears the scars of ancient lines carved into the tree that lost whatever symbolic meaning they may have had ages ago.

This rowan tree, called the Mother Tree, is 80 feet tall and over 30,000 years old, though it largely stopped growing thousands of years ago. Its extreme longevity is the result of its link to the primordial norn Vigliv, who was granted immortality by an ancient goddess as long as she remains in the grotto. The massive tree sits upon a ledge that stands 4 feet above the level of the roiling waters below.

Creature: A primordial norn named Vigliv inhabits the Mother Tree. Although bound to the mighty rowan, Vigliv is not actually a part of the tree. She is free to travel about Grandmother's Cauldron as she pleases, though she usually spends most of her time inside the tree's trunk using *tree stride* or jumping to one of the saplings that live throughout the grotto. Vigliv is fully detailed in the NPC Gallery on page 60.

When the PCs first arrive at the pool, Vigliv watches them from within her tree with some curiosity. When she sees the matryoshka doll in their possession, she immediately realizes that Baba Yaga is imprisoned inside and reveals herself, her head, arms, and upper torso suddenly emerging from the trunk of the tree, as if she has suddenly grown from the tree like a new limb. Vigliv initially addresses the PCs in Russian, since she knows that the *Dancing Hut* currently rests in Russia. However, she quickly uses her *tongues* ability if she realizes that the PCs don't speak that language. Once she has established communications with the PCs, Vigliv relates the following.

"You have come far, wanderers, but the threads of fate have finally led you here to Grandmother's Cauldron, the root of Baba Yaga's *Dancing Hut*. Here was Baba Yaga's past made, and here will her future be decided. Know then that I am Vigliv, ally and mentor to Baba Yaga, for I am norn, and hold the golden thread of her fate in my hands.

"Baba Yaga has been trapped within the doll you hold by one of her own blood, her own power turned against her to do so. But to free Baba Yaga from her prison and gain mastery over her betrayer, you must pay heed to the wisdom of the universe and homage to its fate. Here, in Baba Yaga's *Dancing Hut*, lie the very fundamental essences of Baba Yaga's being. Should her treacherous daughter recover these, she would gain great power over her mother, possibly enough to destroy Baba Yaga once and for all.

"Therefore, you must seek out these elements of Baba Yaga's nature first. You must first take the fate of Baba Yaga into your hands, then find her power, her death, and her life. Lastly, you will need the blood of Baba Yaga to finally free the Old Crone. Only in this way can you defeat the daughter who betrayed her, and in so doing, save your own world. I can guide your steps in their quest. Your search begins now."

As Vigliv finishes her speech, the water beyond the ledge suddenly explodes in fury as the catoblepas in area A3 emerges to attack, causing Vigliv to retreat back into her tree.

VIGLIV

CR 19

XP 204,800

hp 270 (see page 60)

Development: Vigliv reemerges once the catoblepas is defeated (see area A3), and reappears several times throughout the adventure to guide the PCs in their efforts to free Baba Yaga. Each time the PCs open one of the matryoshka dolls, Vigliv emerges from her tree to speak with the PCs. These appearances are described at the beginning of each part of the adventure. Although the adventure presents a set order of locations to visit and tasks the PCs must complete to open the matryoshka dolls, there is no reason these cannot be modified to create a more free-form adventure based on the PCs' choices. If you decide to modify the adventure in this way, however, be aware that you may need to adjust the CR of certain encounters, as the PCs might venture into areas designed for higher-level PCs. In addition, you should endeavor to keep Part Five as the last mission, so the climactic battle with Queen Elvanna takes place at the end of the adventure.

A3. Sacred Pool (CR 13)

Natural hot springs feed the grotto's pool, but the icy waters of the waterfall help create a comfortable 90-degree temperature in the water. The pool's bottom is smooth rock and ranges from 3 feet deep near the shore to over 50 feet deep at the center of the pool. The water becomes dangerously hot below 40 feet (1d6 points of fire damage per round), and it is frigid directly beneath the waterfall (no cold damage but 1d6 points of nonlethal bludgeoning damage per round from the force of the water). The water has a bit of a mineral taste but is otherwise fresh and pure,

draining through several small streams that flow down the canyon floor or disappear into subterranean drains. This circulation keeps the occupant of the pool from tainting the waters with its foul effluvia.

Creature: Baba Yaga introduced a catoblepas to the pool many years ago to serve as a guardian for the norn Vigliv and her tree. As a result, the catoblepas does not disturb the norn or attempt to damage any of the trees. It subsists on the prolific growths of ferns and lichens that surround the pool. The catoblepas has the hold breath special quality (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 298) and dwells on a ledge concealed behind the waterfall, spending most of its time basking in the sauna-like depths of the pool. When the PCs first enter Grandmother's Cauldron, the catoblepas is napping below the surface and does not attack until the PCs have met Vigliv as described in area A2 above. Once the catoblepas appears, it unleashes its breath weapon upon the PCs before trundling forth from the water to attack.

ADVANCED CATOBLEPAS

CR 13

XP 25,600

hp 189 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 52, 292)

Development: When the catoblepas is defeated, Vigliv again emerges from the bole of the Mother Tree with a long, lustrous, golden thread in her hands. She states, "This

thread represents Baba Yaga's fate; the first part of your quest is done. Twine the thread around the doll and soak them both in the poison blood of the beast. Then bathe the doll in the pool and the bars of her prison will weaken."

Vigliv's golden thread is impervious to harm; it cannot be cut or broken. If the PCs attempt to keep the thread instead of using it on the doll, it disappears from their hands back into Vigliv's keeping. In this case, convincing Vigliv to part with the thread again requires a successful DC 32 Diplomacy check, though the PCs may make multiple attempts.

If the PCs follow Vigliv's instructions, the PC soaking the doll in the catoblepas's tainted blood must succeed at a DC 25 Fortitude save or suffer the effects of the catoblepas's poison as if affected by the creature's breath weapon. Once the matryoshka doll is dipped in the pool, the blood washes away and the golden thread of Baba Yaga's fate is absorbed into the doll. A sudden crack appears in the wood where the cord was absorbed, and the doll splits open to reveal a second, slightly smaller doll within, this one painted as a stout Russian matron holding a pullet under one arm.

The new doll is just as impervious as the previous one, but Baba Yaga's prison has been weakened. She is still not capable of verbal communication, but she can now communicate with the bearer of the doll and anyone within 30 feet with full empathy, conveying complex feelings. In addition, she grants a boon to the PCs. Each PC gains a permanent +1 bonus to his or her natural armor that stacks with any existing natural armor bonus.

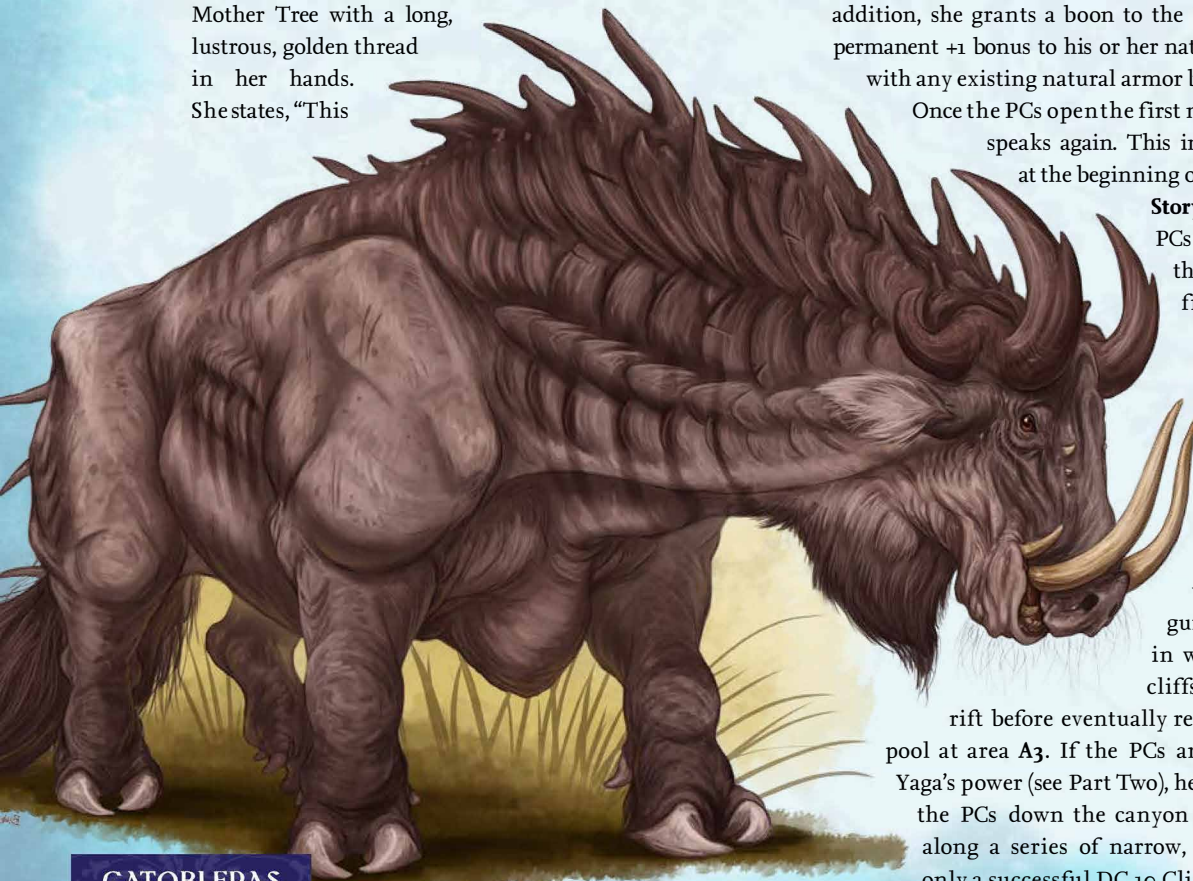
Once the PCs open the first matryoshka doll, Vigliv speaks again. This interaction is described at the beginning of Part Two.

Story Award: Award the PCs 51,200 XP for opening the matryoshka doll's first layer.

A4. Canyon of the Drakes (CR 14)

A side canyon exits the grotto to the northwest, but attempting to explore this area without Baba Yaga's guidance merely results in wandering among the cliffs and chasms of the

rift before eventually returning to the sacred pool at area A3. If the PCs are searching for Baba Yaga's power (see Part Two), her empathic urges lead the PCs down the canyon and up the cliff face along a series of narrow, icy ledges, requiring only a successful DC 10 Climb check to scale, but



CATOBLEPAS

successful DC 15 Acrobatics checks are needed to balance on the ledges and avoid a fall of 40 feet that deals 4d6 points of damage. Once the PCs have reached the ledge marked **A4a**, read or paraphrase the following.

The cliff face rises in a series of natural ledges rimed with ice and dusted with small drifts of snow. The mouth of a low cave is just visible atop the highest ledge.

These ledges follow the cliff face until reaching the cave mouth 70 feet above the floor of the canyon. Ledge **A4a** is 40 feet above the ground, ledge **A4b** is 50 feet high, ledge **A4c** is 40 feet, ledge **A4d** is 45 feet, ledge **A4e** is 50 feet, ledge **A4f** is 55 feet, ledge **A4g** is 60 feet, and ledge **A4h** is 70 feet. The cave mouth is on ledge **A4h**. These ledges are wide enough that they do not require Acrobatics checks to balance upon, but unless the PCs are flying, they will have to climb along the icy rock faces from ledge to ledge (Climb DC 28) or attempt Acrobatics checks to jump between them.

Creatures: A rampage of six rift drakes inhabits these ledges, three on ledge **A4d** and three on ledge **A4g**. They are not immediately visible to PCs climbing along the ledges, though flying PCs can attempt Perception checks (opposed by the drakes' Stealth checks) to notice the drakes. Otherwise, the drakes attack as soon as anyone comes into view, launching balls of clinging corrosion, then using their speed surge ability to make pouncing dive attacks against the PCs. It has been some time since the drakes have felt the thrill of battle, and they fight to the death.

RIFT DRAKES (6)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 126 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 106)

Treasure: Ledge **A4f** holds the remains of a meal taken by the drakes some time in the past. Only the rib cage and left arm of an elf skeleton remain, but a +2 *arrow catching light steel shield* is still strapped to the skeleton's arm.

Development: The cave on ledge **A4h** leads to the demiplane of Vashliq. See Part Two for details of this location.

A5. Cave Dwellers (CR 15)

If the PCs venture into this side canyon to the northeast without following Baba Yaga's telepathic guidance, then they wander aimlessly among the twisting canyons before arriving back at area **A3**. After the PCs have recovered Baba Yaga's power and opened the second layer of the matryoshka doll (see Part Three), however, Baba Yaga's fragmented telepathic messages lead them here. Following her telepathic directions takes the PCs to the base of a broken cliff, where a successful DC 5 Climb check is sufficient to climb the broken and gradual slope. After ascending 50 feet, the PCs reach a crude path carved into

the face of the cliff. To the left, the path winds endlessly without ever quite reaching the lip of the grotto; to the right, it follows several twists in the canyon wall, ascending another 50 feet. Baba Yaga's guidance points the PCs to the right. If the PCs follow her directions, read or paraphrase the following.

The canyon widens ahead, and the cliffside path climbs to pass between two spurs of rock above, opening onto a wide ledge with a high-ceilinged cave extending back into the cliff face. A large bonfire burns upon the ledge. The ribs and skulls of gigantic animals litter the ledge around it and are perched like totems in crevices and upon crags.

The path leading to the ledge is 100 feet above the canyon floor and rises an additional 20 feet to meet the ledge itself, 120 feet above the floor. The two rock pinnacles that flank the path stand an additional 35 feet high with flat tops that allow them to be used as lookout posts. Detritus and filth clutter the ledge and cave floor, and those areas are considered difficult terrain for any creature smaller than Large. Due to their steepness and the slickness of the filth coating them, the cliff faces here require successful DC 25 Climb checks to ascend. The rock pinnacles are not smeared with discarded garbage and require only successful DC 15 Climb checks to scale.

A deep pool of crystalline water sits at the back of the cave, formed from rivulets seeping through the rock of the cave's rear wall. A narrow trickle exits the pool and travels across the cave floor before emptying over the cliff's edge in a small waterfall to the canyon floor below. The pool is only 2 feet deep at the edge but slopes steeply to 12 feet deep in the center, its rocky floor mostly bare. Unlike everything else within the cave that has been soiled by the gugs, the water of the pool remains clear and pure. The water is also breathtakingly cold, but there is no danger of hypothermia unless a creature remains in the water for more than 10 minutes.

Creatures: The ledge and cave are home to a camp of four gugs led by a gug savant. One of the gugs is perched atop the eastern rock pinnacle as a lookout. If caught unawares, the rest are dancing a barbaric circuit around their bonfire, flailing bloody haunches of meat from recently slaughtered mountain goats, while the gug savant looks on from the cave entrance. If the lookout spots the PCs' approach, however, the gugs hide behind the pinnacles or crouch behind boulders at the cliff's edge, gaining cover and total concealment, and the gug savant casts *spike stones* on the path leading up to the ledge. When the PCs reach the pinnacles at the top of the path, two gugs attempt to knock the foremost PCs off the ledge with *Awesome Blow* while the other two gugs scramble down the cliffs to the path behind the PCs in order to attack them from the rear. The gug savant remains on the ledge to

cast *unholy blight* on PCs caught in the *spike stones*. If the PCs reach the ledge, the gug savant casts *invisibility* and waits for them to enter the cave, at which point it casts *transmute rock to mud* to collapse the cavern's ceiling on the PCs. If the gug savant is slain, the other gugs attempt to flee if reduced to fewer than 60 hit points. Otherwise, or if cornered, the gugs fight to the death.

GUGS (4) CR 10

XP 9,600 each

hp 127 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 151)

GUG SAVANT CR 11

XP 12,800

hp 127 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 151)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th, concentration +14)

1/day—*invisibility*, *spike stones* (DC 18), *transmute rock to mud* (DC 19), *unholy blight* (DC 18)

Treasure: Piled about the cave among the gugs' filth are rough gold nuggets worth a total of 1,300 gp. Behind a hide screen separating the gug savant's quarters in an alcove to the east from the rest of the cave is a badly flawed diamond the size of a human fist (worth 15,000 gp) and a large white bear pelt (though dirty, the pelt is in good shape and is worth 1,500 gp if cleaned). Finally, a large mortar and pestle, covered in dust, sit in an alcove just south of the pool in the rear of the cave. These are *Baba Yaga's mortar and pestle* (see page 62). If she is with the PCs, Baba Yaga sends the PCs a brief telepathic message to take these items and gives rudimentary instructions as to their use, including their command words.

Development: The entrance to the island of Buyan is through the pool at the back of the cave; Baba Yaga telepathically instructs the PCs to bathe themselves in the pool when they discover it. A creature who completely submerges itself in the water is instantly transported to the demiplane containing the island of Buyan. See Part Three for details on this area.

A6. Guarded Ledge (CR 16)

Once again, without Baba Yaga's guidance, PCs venturing into this area end up back at area A3 after fruitless wandering. However, once the PCs have recovered Baba Yaga's death and opened the third matryoshka doll (see Part Four), her limited ability to speak guides the PCs through this canyon, primarily through trial and error by saying "warmer" or "colder" as they make their way through the canyon. Along the way, Baba Yaga relays the following information: "She's going to have it guarded. No one's supposed to get to the source of my life. She wants it all for herself. But it's mine! She can't have it!" Following the old witch's hints, the PCs eventually find a path that

makes its way up the north face of one of the grotto's side canyons in a series of switchbacks before reaching a ledge 500 feet above the canyon floor.

At the base of the cliff, Queen Elvanna has left a *stone of alarm* on the path. Unless the PCs somehow detect the stone or avoid it (such as by flying up the cliff face), they suddenly hear a piercing screech that echoes all through the canyon as soon as they set foot on the path. "Now you've done it," Baba Yaga warns. "They know you're coming now." If the PCs follow the switchback trail up the cliff, it eventually reaches a ledge 500 feet above the canyon floor. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs reach the ledge.

The trail ends at a wide section of ledge. Sparse scrub trees and bracken grow among the snow and ice that has gathered in natural fissures and crevices.

Creatures: Queen Elvanna is aware that Baba Yaga has recruited help and is attempting to free herself by recovering the various components that make up her essence. As a result, she has left two advanced ice devils on this ledge to prevent anyone from reaching Baba Yaga's life. If they were warned by the *stone of alarm* on the path leading to the ledge, the devils have prepared for the PCs' arrival by each attempting to summon two bone devils. If successful, the bone devils wait, invisible, on the path leading up to the ledge. The ice devils create a *wall of ice* to block access to the ledge itself, and conceal both themselves and the cave entrance (area A7) behind a *persistent image* of the bare ledge. The ice devils let the bone devils engage the PCs first, watching the battle to take note of the PCs' tactics. Once two or more of the bone devils are slain, or if the PCs breach the *wall of ice* or disbelieve or dispel the illusion, the ice devils join the fray. If the devils were not warned, then they are simply standing guard on the ledge and attack any trespassers. Either way, the ice devils fight to the death.

ADVANCED ICE DEVILS (2) CR 14

XP 38,400 each

hp 189 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 77*)

A7. Worm's Gullet

Nearly hidden among the bracken at the back of the ledge is a small cave opening, no larger than a human can crawl through. A rime of frost covers the rock around it and the surrounding ground. Periodically, a cold gust of wind issues forth from the cave as if the cliff face were breathing, leaving a cloud of frost in the air that quickly dissipates.

Magically contained within the cave is a frost worm whose gullet forms a portal to a demiplane within the hut called the Dark Forest. As the PCs approach the cave, Baba

Yaga tells them, "You have to go into the cave. The secret is the worm's mouth, so you can't kill it. You have to walk down its gullet to get to my life, but watch out, it bites!" After revealing this clue, she giggles and goes quiet.

Anyone crawling into the cave mouth finds that the frost worm's mouth sits directly against it, and is automatically subjected to the worm's bite (automatic hit dealing 4d10+15 points of damage plus 4d6 points of cold damage), then swallowed. Anyone willingly swallowed by the worm is immediately transported to the demiplane containing the Dark Forest and Baba Yaga's cottage (she, of course, has other ways to enter, but this entrance keeps all but the most obstinate intruders out). See Part Four for details on this area.

If the worm is attacked, it immediately breathes its breath weapon out onto the ledge, then begins to trill (see page 126 of *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* for details on these attacks). If this happens, Baba Yaga immediately berates the PCs, cautioning them that killing the worm will destroy their only means of reaching her life. If the PCs willingly subject themselves to the frost worm's bite attack without resistance, it swallows them as described above but does not attack further. Due to the nature of its magical containment, the frost worm cannot actually be killed, though it keeps attacking any creatures that attack it unless they willingly allow themselves to be swallowed.

A8. The Infinite Spiral

Beyond the waterfall, small streams of water flow from the pool and drain into crevices at the base of the cliff face. To the left, the canyon walls move closer together, bending along a curved path that narrows as it extends deeper into the canyon.

If the PCs visit this area without Baba Yaga's guidance, the canyon walls curve together in an ever-narrowing spiral that eventually becomes so confining that it's not passable. Incorporeal creatures could conceivably follow the spiral path forever as it continues to infinitely narrow without ever quite closing off entirely. This is a magical effect inherent to Grandmother's Cauldron and cannot be dispelled or otherwise bypassed.

Once the PCs have claimed Baba Yaga's life and opened the fourth matryoshka doll (see Part Five), Baba Yaga guides them into the spiraling canyon with a combination of acerbic sniping and fretful urging. However, if the PCs have the samovar from area **L11** in their possession, the spiral path leads to an otherwise inaccessible box canyon (area **A9**).

A9. Ancient Stairs (CR 17)

The canyon walls continue to narrow as they curve ahead, but just as it seems they must close together and come to an end,

the path suddenly opens up into a box canyon on a warm spring night beneath unfamiliar stars glinting down from a cloudless and moonless sky. A wide pool glistens at the far end of the box canyon, its waters dark and still. The cliff wall beyond the pool has been crudely carved into a narrow stair that climbs out of the water straight up the bluff in a series of uneven steps. At the top of the stair, a dark opening with a great stone lintel leads into the cliff face.

As soon as the PCs enter the box canyon, the spiraling path disappears, leaving a blank rock wall behind them. This box canyon resides on its own demiplane, and regardless of how much time passes, it remains a warm spring night. The canyon's cliffs tower high overhead, but regardless of how high one climbs or flies, the floor of the canyon is always 300 feet below. The pool plunges precipitously to a depth of almost 60 feet at the rear wall of the canyon and its waters, fed by a hot spring, are comfortably warm. The carved stone stair begins just below the surface of the water and climbs 200 feet to the opening in the cliff. No skill checks are required to ascend the stair. The stars overhead provide dim light on the canyon floor.

Creature: A unique being known as the Infernal Crocodile lurks beneath the dark waters of the pool. The Infernal Crocodile is an ancient foe of Baba Yaga that once guarded a gateway to Hell. In an epic battle, Baba Yaga defeated the creature and imprisoned it here to defend the entrance to her inner sanctum. The Infernal Crocodile is an immense sarcopterygian over 40 feet long, with red batlike wings, black scales, glowing red eyes, and a crest of red fur around its head and running down the center of its back. The Infernal Crocodile is no ally of Baba Yaga; for centuries, it has been trapped here, an unwilling guardian unable to escape, and it takes out its frustrations on any intruders who make it this far. It hides beneath the waters of the pool until intruders approach within 15 feet of the water's edge or attempt to reach the stairs, at which point it bursts from the water to attack.

THE INFERNAL CROCODILE

CR 17

XP 102,400

Advanced awakened half-fiend dire crocodile (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 51*, 171)

NE Gargantuan outsider (augmented animal, native)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +35

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 8, flat-footed 30 (+2 **Dex**, +24 natural, -4 size)

hp 275 (22d8+176)

Fort +21, **Ref** +15, **Will** +13

DR 10/magic; **Immune** poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 28

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good), swim 30 ft.; sprint

Melee bite +27 (3d6+14/19–20 plus grab), 2 claws +27 (2d6+14), tail slap +21 (4d8+7)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks death roll (3d6+14 plus trip), smite good 1/day (+6 attack and AC, +22 damage), swallow whole (3d6+14 damage, AC 22, 27 hp)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 22th; concentration +28)
3/day—*darkness*, quickened *poison* (DC 20), *unholy aura*
1/day—*blasphemy* (DC 23), *contagion* (DC 20), *deseccate*,
destruction (DC 23), *horrid wilting* (DC 24), *summon*
monster IX (fiends only), *unhallow*, *unholy blight* (DC 20)

TACTICS

During Combat The Infernal Crocodile casts *unholy aura* on itself on the first round of combat, then lunges from the pool to attack the closest opponent. It seeks the most dangerous-looking good foe, particularly one wearing a holy symbol of a good deity, and makes a full attack with its smite good ability. It continues making full attacks if possible, combined with quickened *poison* spells. If surrounded, the Infernal Crocodile takes flight and casts *blasphemy* or *horrid wilting* on its foes before returning to melee combat. It saves its *destruction* spell-like ability for use against a single particularly dangerous opponent.

Morale When reduced to 125 hit points or fewer, the Infernal Crocodile casts *summon monster IX* to summon 1d3 barbed devils to aid it in battle. Thereafter, the Infernal Crocodile fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 39, **Dex** 14, **Con** 27, **Int** 13, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 23

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +34 (+38 grapple); **CMD** 46 (50 vs. trip)

Feats Critical Focus, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*poison*), Run, Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth), Staggering Critical, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Acrobatics +27 (+23 when jumping), Climb +39, Fly +25, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +35, Stealth +21 (+29 in water), Survival +15, Swim +22; **Racial**

Modifiers +8 Stealth in water

Languages Infernal, Russian

SQ hold breath

Development: Once the Infernal Crocodile has been defeated, the PCs may climb or fly up to the opening in the cliffface. Anyone who steps through the cave entrance is immediately transported to the demiplane containing the Witch Queen's Kurgan, which holds Baba Yaga's inner sanctum. See Part Five for details of this area.

PART TWO: THE RUINS OF VASHLIQ

Once the PCs have used the golden thread of Baba Yaga's fate to open the first matryoshka doll, Vigliv once more addresses the PCs.

"You have taken Baba Yaga's fate into your hands. The first test is past, but many remain. You must now reclaim a symbol of her power. Know that the demon lord Kostchtchie and the witch queens of Irrisen were not Baba Yaga's first attempts to elevate some mortal to supreme power to rule in her name over lesser peoples. There was another before, a great warrior called Bremagyr, whom Baba Yaga made a queen over a vast empire on her own world. Yet when the Queen of Witches sought the obeisance due her from this petty empress, Bremagyr forgot from whence her power came and refused to do honor unto Baba Yaga. Where Baba Yaga had raised her from warrior to queen in a year, she laid Bremagyr and all her empire low in a night. Never again has the sun risen or set over the crumbled empire of Bremagyr, as a lesson to all who would come after and seek Baba Yaga's power but refuse her obedience.

INFERNAL CROCODILE

KOP

"Bremagyr is now a shadow of the queen she once was, cursed to forever haunt her iron fortress of Vashliq, which was cast down by Baba Yaga and brought inside her *Dancing Hut*. Yet some vestige of Baba Yaga's power still lies within Bremagyr, and only with the destruction of the dead queen will you be able to obtain that power and continue on your quest. Now go. Follow Baba Yaga's guidance. Find the Canyon of the Drakes and enter the lost fortress of Vashliq. When you have reclaimed Baba Yaga's power, bring it back to this sacred pool to unlock the next secret of the doll that imprisons her."

With these words, Vigliv disappears back into her tree. With her empathic urges, Baba Yaga can guide the PCs to the Canyon of the Drakes (area A4).

THE BROKEN PLAIN AND THE RUINED FORTRESS

The cave mouth in area A4 leads to the remains of Bremagyr's empire: a broken plain slowly crumbling into the void, and her ruined fortress of Vashliq, now a separate demiplane inside Baba Yaga's hut. PCs entering the cave emerge in the tent of the sepid div Mametqul (area B).

B. MAMETQUL'S TENT (CR 16)

Stepping into the darkened cave deposits the PCs inside the dim interior of a large tent. There is no sign of the cold, frost-shrouded canyon or the cave entrance they just came through, just the blank silk wall of the tent behind them.

This large, opulent tent is made of heavy silk, its walls and roof supported by a dozen sturdy teak poles. Despite two silver braziers giving off warmth and smoke from a pungent incense, the tent's interior is still uncomfortably cold, and its walls whip and snap against gusts of icy wind. The tent is luxuriously outfitted with cushioned beds, camp chairs and tables, and amenities such as fine cabinetwork around the walls, rich wall hangings, and a large silver hookah.

Creatures: This richly adorned tent is the abode of a sepid div named Mametqul, who is decked out in the rich finery and jeweled rings of genie nobility. He is attended by six surly human women dressed in coarse robes and veils who speak little and scowl suspiciously at the PCs. These women are actually two shira divs and four pairaka divs who have changed shape. In the demiplane of Vashliq, Baba Yaga's magic allows all of the divs to change their shape into Small or Medium animals or humanoids (as the pairakas can do normally). In their human guises, the female divs do not interact with the PCs other than to provide refreshment as ordered by Mametqul, allowing the sepid to do all the talking.

Mametqul greets the PCs personally when they arrive and welcomes them to his humble camp. He makes no attempt to hide his true nature as a div, matter-of-factly

stating that Baba Yaga has servants from all across the Great Beyond, and introduces the disguised divs as simply "my servants." None of these statements are lies, should the PCs make any attempts to detect falsehoods. Mametqul offers the PCs cups of extremely strong coffee and bids them take seats as he takes a few puffs of strongly spiced tobacco from his hookah. If the PCs accept the div's hospitality, or at least refrain from attacking outright, Mametqul walks over to the tent entrance where he pushes the flap aside, revealing that the tent sits on the edge of a cliff. Beyond the cliff edge lies nothing but a vast, dark expanse of roiling chaos. Far out in the void, a shadowy vortex slowly swirls, intermittently illuminated from within by sudden flashes and streaks of color. Bits of the rocky cliff edge crumble in the howling winds and are dragged out into the vortex where they disappear, as if the maelstrom were slowly eating the land bit by bit. In the distance to the west, the ruins of a large fortress cling to the edge of the cliff, as if it were also slowly being consumed by the vortex.

Looking out upon this vista, Mametqul relates the following to the PCs.

"Queen Bremagyr established her empire with Baba Yaga's help over a thousand years ago. We stand now in what is left of her capital of Vashliq. The final battle of her conquest was fought on this very cliff above a vast fertile plain of fields and sprawling towns below. This was the breadbasket of her empire, and the fortress of iron and stone that she built was its crown jewel.

"Baba Yaga gave Bremagyr her empire and demanded only her fealty in return, but Bremagyr became drunk on the power of her newly won realm and believed it was by her might that it had been established. Bremagyr spurned Baba Yaga and threatened to turn the might of her empire against her if she ever returned. Instead, Baba Yaga called upon the might of the cosmos, struck Queen Bremagyr down, and wrested her capital from its very foundations to be placed here in this void within her hut. Baba Yaga captured Bremagyr's soul and imprisoned her here in her fortress, to watch as her empire slowly decays into nothing, just as her power has.

"My role here is simple. I watch Vashliq's destruction and observe Queen Bremagyr as she howls her rage at the void. When the time comes, my retinue and I shall depart and report on the soul-rending anguish that has occurred here—a fitting punishment that brought the queen to this end. Now, however, it seems that Baba Yaga needs to reclaim the power that she invested here to imprison Bremagyr's soul and realm. For you to recover it, you must venture into the fortress of Vashliq, where Bremagyr still waits in her throne room. Bremagyr's crown holds the power of Baba Yaga that you seek. Destroy Bremagyr, recover her crown, and bring it back here, and I will show you the way back to Grandmother's Cauldron."

Much of the information that Mametqul relates is true. Baba Yaga did, in fact, summon the div here to serve as an observer of Bremagyr's suffering. With Baba Yaga's recent disappearance and her vulnerability exposed, however, Mametqul has decided to strike out on his own. He wants to recover the power of Baba Yaga for himself—whether to sell to Elvanna or to another buyer—but he does not wish to face Bremagyr himself. He has no problem letting the PCs take the risks in recovering the crown, however, and intends to ambush them when they return with the crown. Mametqul responds to any further questions with an enigmatic shrug of his shoulders.

If the PCs attack Mametqul or any of the disguised div women, the divs assume their true forms and attack, fighting to the death. See page 25 for the divs' tactics.

MAMETQUL CR 14

XP 38,400

Sepid div (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 89)

hp 202

PAIRAKA DIVS (4) CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 76 each (*Pathfinder RPG*

Bestiary 3 88)

SHIRA DIVS (2) CR 12

XP 19,200 each

hp 150 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 90)

Treasure: Mametqul's attire and accoutrements are worth a total of 7,000 gp. The pairakas and shiras wear jewelry worth an additional 1,000 gp each. The silk pavilion is an ordinary field tent, though of extremely high quality. The tent and its furnishings are worth a total of 8,000 gp, though when packed up they weigh 2,200 pounds and fill two large wagons.

Development: Mametqul and his div servants wait here for the PCs to return with Bremagyr's crown, at which point he ambushes them to claim the crown for himself. See Return to Mametqul's Tent on page 25 for what transpires when the PCs return.

C. THE BROKEN PLAIN (CR 15)

The desolate cliff edge is devoid of all save the crumbling foundations of buildings that once stood here but have now fallen into fissures or succumbed to the howling winds that scream across the plain. To the north is the great void with its slowly swirling vortex of annihilation, and to the south and west stands a range of jagged volcanic peaks. A broken fortress

stands at the base of the mountains where they reach the edge of the cliff.

Although the cliff appears to be outside, the entire place is actually a finite demiplane within Baba Yaga's hut. Anyone walking or flying along the cliff edge to the east or toward the mountains to the south finds that they never reach them (not even by teleportation magic). Nor can one cross the mountains to the west. Likewise, attempts to fly over the edge of the cliff or into the void can go no farther than the vortex a mile away. Anyone foolish enough to enter the vortex itself is utterly destroyed, as if touching a *sphere of annihilation*. The vortex has no effect on the matryoshka doll containing Baba Yaga, however, which simply reappears in the possession of another PC or bearer of the mantle of the Black Rider.

The temperature in the demiplane of Vashliq is consistent at 20° F, requiring a Fortitude check each hour to avoid nonlethal cold damage, and the wind is strong (–2 penalty on ranged attack rolls, –2 penalty on Fly checks) with severe gusts every 1d6+2 rounds (–4 on penalty ranged attack rolls, –4 penalty on Fly checks, Small creatures are checked, Tiny creatures are blown away). The fortress of Vashliq stands 1,800 feet from Mametqul's tent along the edge of the cliff, and the entire distance is covered with dense rubble (requiring 2 squares of movement to enter a square, Acrobatics DCs increase by 5, and Stealth DCs increase by 2). The light on the plain is perpetually dim.

Creatures: The plain between Mametqul's tent and the fortress is haunted by devourers riding nightwings on the frigid winds in the darkness. PCs traveling overland encounter one devourer riding a nightwing during their trip unless the pair uses stealth and remain concealed from them. Flying PCs attract the attention of three of these patrols, though these should be divided into three separate encounters of one devourer and one nightwing each. PCs using magic to (such as *teleport*) to travel instantly to the fortress avoid these patrols entirely. The patrols attack as soon as they spot the PCs, and fight until destroyed.

DEVOURER CR 11

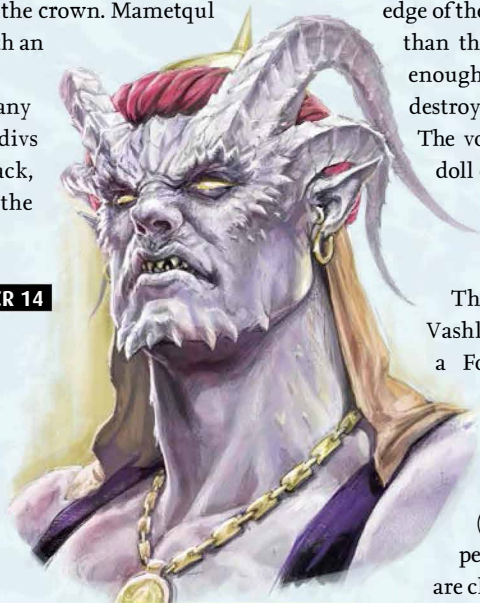
XP 12,800

hp 133 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 82)

NIGHTWING CR 14

XP 38,400

hp 195 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 203)



MAMETQUL

Story Award: If the PCs avoid all of the devourer and nightwing patrols by teleporting to the fortress, award them 51,200 XP, as if they had defeated one pair.

D. FORTRESS OF IRON AND STONE (CR 13)

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs reach the fortress of Vashliq.

A great fortress with walls of rusting, pitted iron and massive stone blocks, stained and scarred by time and the perpetual winds, clings to the edge of the ever-eroding cliff as if awaiting only the right moment to collapse and crumble away into the distant vortex. An ancient lava flow has descended from the volcanic peaks behind the fortress to consume much of the rear portion of the citadel, leaving only its imposing gatehouse, its curtain wall, and a portion of its central keep unburied by the volcanic rock. Although half-buried by the ancient eruption and battered by the erosion of this dark place, the fortress still seems strong and grim.

The iron and stone walls of the fortress of Vashliq are 60 feet tall and still strong. They require a successful DC 30 Climb check to scale in the high winds. Unless otherwise noted, all interior areas within the fortress are dark.

Creatures: Attempts to climb or fly over the walls attract a patrol of four baykoks that hover over the citadel and swoop in to attack. They attempt to capture at least one prisoner for questioning, carrying any captives back to a holding cell within the fortress (area D10).

BAYKOKS (4) **CR 9**
XP 6,400 each
hp 97 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 35*)

D1. Gatehouse

A massive, 10-foot-thick riveted iron plate (hardness 10, hp 3,600) closes off the fortress's main gate, put in place by Baba Yaga to seal the gate shut and trap the fortress's occupants inside. With a successful DC 20 Perception check, however, a PC can notice that the murder holes in the ceiling 60 feet above are open and large enough for a Medium creature to fit through. The rivets on the iron plate can serve as handholds, requiring only successful DC 15 Climb checks to reach the murder holes. These murder holes lead to the upper gatehouse (area D2). This area is sheltered from both the wind and baykok patrols.

D2. Upper Gatehouse (CR 11)

Murder holes in this guard chamber look down into the fortress's gateway, now blocked by a massive iron plate. Arrow slits provide a view of the plain outside and the fortress's inner bailey. Two spiral staircases descend to the northwest,

and iron doors open out onto the parapets on either side of the gatehouse.

The upper gatehouse is 60 feet above the ground, level with the top of Vashliq's walls. The spiral stairs lead down to the inner bailey (area D3) behind the iron plate sealing the gate.

Creature: A retriever currently makes its lair in this chamber, placed here by Baba Yaga to prevent Vashliq's inhabitants from leaving the fortress. It is able to squeeze through the doors out onto the parapets, where it occasionally hunts baykoks. The retriever attacks any creature entering this chamber, whether through a door or murder hole, and pursues intruders out onto the parapets or into the inner bailey. It does not leave the bounds of the fortress, however.

RETRIEVER **CR 11**
XP 12,800
hp 137 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 234*)

Treasure: Slumped near one of the southeastern arrow slits is an ancient skeleton wearing tattered and rusted chainmail armor. Its bony fingers still clutch a +2 *flaming heavy crossbow*.

Development: Exiting the gatehouse onto the surrounding parapets attracts the attention of the baykok patrol over the fortress, if it has not yet been encountered (see area D). The baykoks never enter the upper gatehouse, and once the retriever has been defeated, this room makes a good area to rest and recover as long as the PCs do not draw attention to themselves

D3. Inner Bailey (CR 16+)

The inner bailey of the fortress has flooded completely between the curtain wall and the keep, forming an internal moat. A single causeway, broken in several places, crosses this murky expanse from the gatehouse to the keep's gate, which stands slightly ajar. Piled in the center of the causeway is a mound of corpses, their death wounds still visible upon their shattered and broken forms. Bodies continually drift away from this mound in the moat's waters, floating away to the north and east, but more corpses float in from the west to join the conglomeration so that the pile never seems to grow or shrink.

The water in the bailey is ice cold and 10 feet deep with a slight current pulling to the north and east (DC 12 Swim check required) but is otherwise unoccupied. The loose corpses are the fortress's defenders, felled by Baba Yaga when they attempted to battle the Witch Queen. Now their cursed corpses never decay, but continually float through the flooded bailey.

Creatures: The corpse pile in the center of the causeway is actually a massive undead amalgam of corpses called a warsworn. The warsworn waits until someone attempts to cross over it to reach the far side of the causeway (this can be easily accomplished with a full-round action, but attempting to do so as a move action requires a successful DC 20 Acrobatics check to avoid slipping and falling into the moat). As soon as someone moves past the corpse pile, the warsworn rises up like a living siege tower of undead flesh to isolate that character and attack anyone on the causeway. Once the warsworn reveals itself, it no longer bridges the 20-foot-wide gap in the causeway, necessitating other means to cross the gap.

In addition, any PCs attempting to fly within the bailey attract the attention of a second patrol of baykoks that immediately swoops in to attack. The baykoks do not assist the warsworn, focusing their attacks instead on flying PCs or those that attack them. Like the patrol at area **D**, these baykoks attempt to take at least one prisoner back to area **D10** for questioning.

WARSWORN CR 16

XP 76,800

Pathfinder Adventure Path #35 88

NE Gargantuan undead

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +27

Aura frightful presence (60 ft., DC 26)

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 9, flat-footed 26 (+3 Dex, +20 natural, -4 size)

hp 243 (18d8+162)

Fort +15, **Ref** +11, **Will** +17

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4

DR 10/bludgeoning and magic; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 4 slams +21 (2d6+12 plus energy drain)

Ranged 1 scrap ball +12 (2d6+12/19-20)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks energy drain (1 level, DC 26), haunt armor, haunt weapons, trample (2d6+18; DC 31)

STATISTICS

Str 34, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 9, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +29; **CMD** 42 (can't be tripped)

SQ absorb

Feats Awesome Blow, Blind-Fight, Greater Overrun, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Step Up, Strike Back

Skills Climb +33, Fly +0, Perception +27, Stealth +0, Swim +30

Languages Common (cannot speak)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Absorb (Su) A warsworn can consume any creature with -1 or fewer hit points that is dying by moving into the same space. Doing so immediately kills the creature and heals the warsworn

by an amount equal to the creature's Constitution score. This ability cannot heal a warsworn beyond its maximum number of hit points. Nonliving creatures or completely dead corpses cannot be absorbed. Absorbed corpses cannot be resurrected by any effect short of a *miracle* or *wish* spell until the warsworn that consumed them is destroyed.

Haunt Armor (Sp) Three times per day, a warsworn can violently take control of a suit of heavy armor or its wearer. This limited form of possession manifests much like the violent thrust effect of the spell *telekinesis*. A warsworn can only target a suit of heavy armor with this effect or a creature wearing a suit of heavy armor. Creatures affected by *protection from evil* are immune to this effect. The effect is CL 18th.

Haunt Weapons (Sp) Three times per day, a warsworn can animate a number of unattended weapons as per the spell *animate objects*. A warsworn can animate a number of Medium or smaller weapons equal to its Charisma bonus (typically 7) for up to 10 minutes. (Most weapons sized for Medium creatures are considered Tiny or Small animated objects.) These weapons must be within 50 feet of the warsworn and are all animated at once. This effect only affects weapons and no other type of object. Each weapon animated by this effect appears to be wielded by ghostly hands. Aside from being able to be individually destroyed or dispelled as per normal animated objects, any object animated by this effect can also be damaged by channel energy as if it were an undead creature. Creatures affected by *protection from evil* are immune to this effect. The effect is CL 18th.

BAYKOKS (4) CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 97 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 35*)

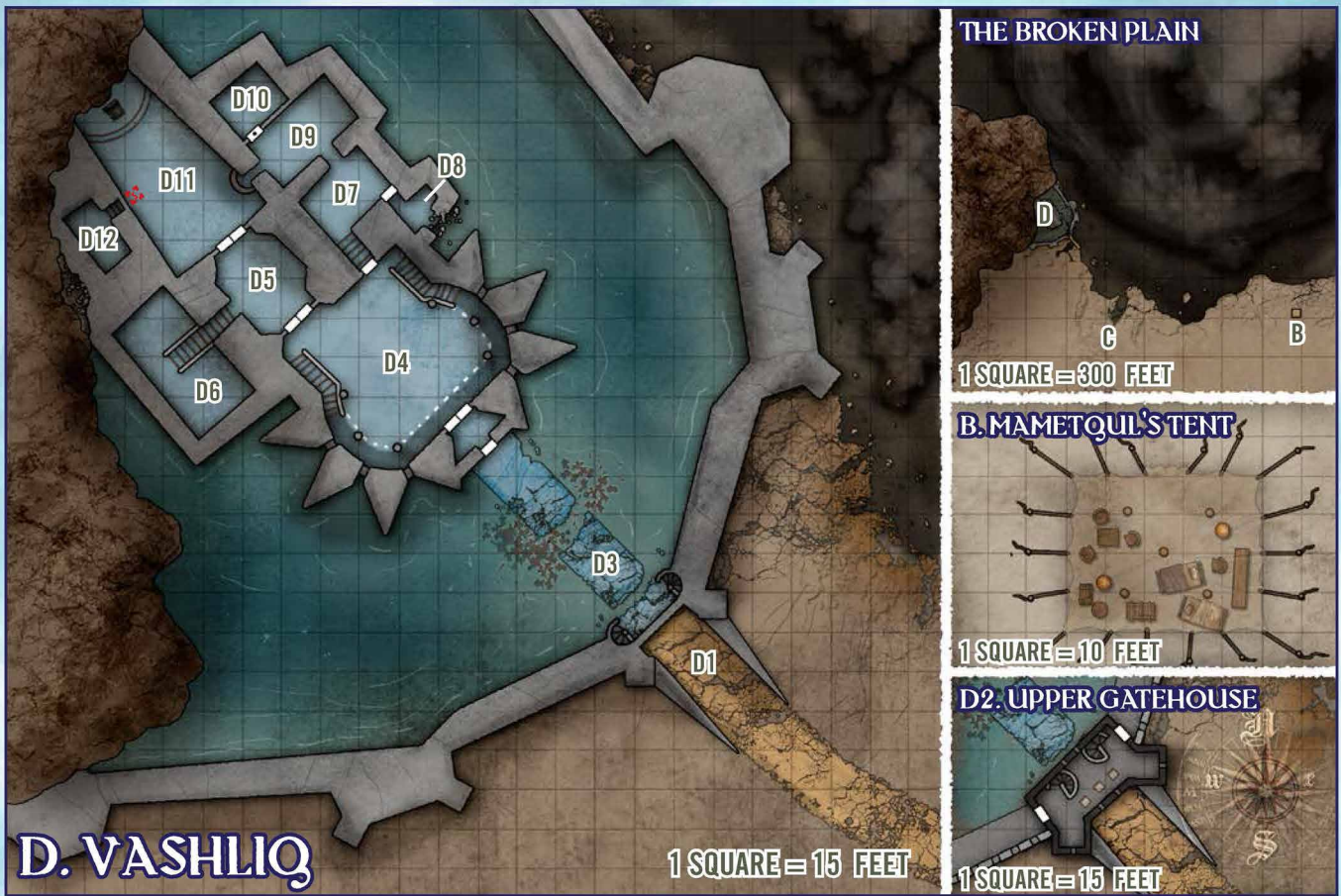
Treasure: The vast majority of the equipment on the corpses that make up the warsworn is no longer usable, but an *absorbing shield* can be recovered from the remains.

Development: Any creature investigating the moat to the north likely draws the attention of the omox demons in area **D8**.

D4. Entry Hall (CR 15)

The main doors of the keep open into a grand entry hall. Pillars follow the lines of the curving walls, supporting a gallery lined with arrow slits looking outward. A massive rosette window once formed the hall's ceiling, but it has long since shattered, leaving nothing more than its iron framework and jagged shards of glass upon the floor. At the far end of the hall, two doors exit the chamber.

The ceiling is 60 feet high in this chamber. The gallery stands 30 feet above the hall's floor, accessible by two



D. VASHLIQ

1 SQUARE = 15 FEET

THE BROKEN PLAIN

1 SQUARE = 300 FEET

B. MAMETQUL'S TENT

1 SQUARE = 10 FEET

D2. UPPER GATEHOUSE

1 SQUARE = 15 FEET

staircases. The floor is considered difficult terrain due to the glass fragments everywhere. Anyone knocked prone in this room takes 1d6 points of slashing damage from the jagged shards each round she remains prone.

Creatures: A troop of 10 baykoks, part of the cursed remnants of Queen Bremagyr's personal guard, inhabits this chamber. They perch on the gallery above the entrance, unseen by those below. As soon as the PCs come into view, the baykoks launch themselves into the air in a swarming mass to rain arrows down upon the interlopers. The baykoks fight until destroyed.

BAYKOKS (10) **CR 9**

XP 6,400 each

hp 97 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 35*)

D5. Vestibule (CR 14)

Coffer arches support the high ceiling of this chamber. Small iron mesh cages, alive with flitting black shapes and glowing red eyes, hang suspended by hooks from the arches' stone groins. Empty alcoves on either side of the room apparently once displayed painted iconographic figures, but the plaster has been chipped away until only distorted figures that seem to have

sprung from the depths of Hell remain. Double doors exit the room to the northwest and southeast, and a steep flight of stairs descends to the southwest. The smell of sulfur and refuse are strong in this chamber.

The ceiling is 20 feet high in this chamber.

Creatures: This chamber has been taken over by a pit hag named Nuragla. A horned, haglike figure whose crimson skin is little more than blistered flesh pulled taut over the bones beneath, Nuragla has come to Vashliq in search of the lost souls of Queen Bremagyr's subjects who were slain in the catastrophe brought about by Baba Yaga. Nuragla has managed to locate a few hellwasp swarms in the fortress, which she believes formed from the consciousness of some of Bremagyr's more malevolent followers. Unfortunately, the pit hag has also discovered many lemures oozing among the crevices of the lava flow that engulfed the fortress. These loathsome devils have a tendency to accidentally release her hellwasp swarms, so Nuragla is currently in the process of shoveling them down the side stairs with her pitchfork. There are a total of three cages (hardness 4, hp 20, break DC 16) hanging from the ceiling, each of which contains a hellwasp swarm condensed into the space. In addition, 12 lemures crawl across the floor of the chamber.

When the PCs enter the room, Nuragla immediately casts *fog cloud* to conceal herself as the lumbering lemures instinctively move to attack the intruders. Nuragla then casts *waves of fatigue* to weaken the PCs and quickened *open/close* to open the cages containing the hellwasp swarms. The freed hellwasp swarms go mad, attacking anything in the room (though they avoid the hag's *fog cloud*). Nuragla continues casting quickened *open/close* along with her other attacks until all the hellwasp swarms are released. The hellwasps and lemures fight to the death.

HELLWASP SWARMS (3) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 90 each (*Pathfinder RPG*

Bestiary 3 146)

LEMURES (12) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 13 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 79)

NURAGLA CR 13

XP 25,600

Pit hag (*Tome of Horrors*

Complete 477)

LE Medium

outsider (evil,
extraplanar,
lawful)

Init +9; **Senses**

darkvision 60 ft.;
Perception +29

Aura aura of affliction (30 ft., DC 23,
18 rounds)

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 16, flat-footed 22
(+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +12 natural)

hp 171 (18d10+72)

Fort +12, **Ref** +16, **Will** +17

DR 10/cold iron and magic;

Immune fire, poison; **SR** 24

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +2 *unholy trident* +25/+20/+15/+10 (2d6+7), claw +18
(1d8+2) or

2 claws +23 (1d8+5)

Special Attacks rend (2 claws or trident and claw, 1d8+7),
skewer

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 11th; concentration +15)

5th (4/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 20), *waves of fatigue*

4th (7/day)—*crushing despair* (DC 18),
enervation, *wall of fire*

3rd (7/day)—*fireball* (DC 18), *lightning bolt* (DC 18), *ray of
exhaustion* (DC 18), *vampiric touch*

2nd (7/day)—*blur*, *fog cloud*, *glitterdust* (DC 16), *scorching
ray*, *web* (DC 16)

1st (7/day)—*burning hands* (DC 16), *grease*, *magic missile*,
ray of enfeeblement (DC 16), *true strike*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *bleed* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *flare*
(DC 15), *ghost sound* (DC 14), *open/close*, *ray of frost*,
read magic, *touch of fatigue* (DC 15)

TACTICS

During Combat When all of the hellwasps have been unleashed, Nuragla tries to further weaken the PCs with spells such as *crushing despair*, *fireball*, *lightning bolt*, and *wall of fire* before attacking with her *unholy trident*. If possible, she tries to throw weakened opponents down the stairs and into area **D6** (see that area for details).

Morale Nuragla tries to flee if reduced to fewer than 80 hit points (see Development, below).

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 20, **Con** 19, **Int** 17, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 39

Feats Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge,
Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will,
Quicken Spell, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell
Focus (necromancy)

Skills Bluff +25, Diplomacy +25, Intimidate
+25, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge
(planes) +24, Perception +29, Sense
Motive +29, Spellcraft +24, Stealth +26

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common,
Infernal

Gear +2 *unholy trident*, gold bracelets
and anklets worth 500 gp total

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aura of Affliction (Su) Three
times per day for up to 18 rounds,
a pit hag can emit an aura in a
30-foot radius as a free action.
Creatures within or coming within
the area must succeed at a DC 23
Fortitude save or contract devil chills.

Devil Chills: Aura—affliction; save Fort DC 23;
onset immediate; *frequency* 1 day; *effect* 1d4 Str
damage; *cure* 3 consecutive saves.

Skewer (Ex) Pit hags are masters at combat using
the trident. In the hands of a pit hag, a trident deals
damage as if it was one size category larger (usually
2d6). In addition, if the pit hag hits with a trident
and a claw attack in 1 round,
she can rend as if she had hit
with two claw attacks.

Spells A pit hag casts spells
as an 11th-level sorcerer.



NURAGLA

Development: If Nuragla escapes, she has no way to leave Vashliq. In this case, she might lurk near Mаметqul's tent (area **B**) to wait for the PCs' return, perhaps ambushing them after they're weakened from battling the divs.

D6. Ooze Cellar (CR 14)

The floor of this cellar is 30 feet below the level of the adjoining vestibule (area **D5**). The stairway into the cellar is extremely steep and worn smooth from many centuries of use. Without using a rope or other stabilizing aid, walking the stairs requires a successful DC 15 Acrobatics check to avoid falling. Anyone pushed down the stairs (such as by the pit hag in area **D5**) takes 3d6 point of damage. A successful DC 25 Acrobatics check allows a character to stop herself before reaching the bottom of the stairs.

Creature: A dangerous creature called a dark matter entropic ooze lurks at the bottom of the stairs. Pitch black in color, the ooze resembles a black pudding, but it is imbued with negative energy. The ooze has been contentedly feeding on the lemures that the pit hag has been shoveling down to it, but as soon as it detects any living creatures with its soulsight ability, it hungrily attacks, seeking to devour their souls. The entropic ooze pursues living creatures anywhere in Vashliq.

DARK MATTER ENTROPIC OOZE	CR 14
XP 38,400	
<i>Tome of Horrors Complete</i> 457	
N Huge ooze	
Init -3; Senses blindsight 60 ft., soulsight 120 ft.; Perception -5	
DEFENSE	
AC 13, touch 5, flat-footed 13 (-3 Dex, +8 natural, -2 size)	
hp 290 (20d8+200)	
Fort +16, Ref +3, Will +1	
Defensive Abilities negative energy affinity; Immune ooze traits; Resist positive energy 20	
OFFENSE	
Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.	
Melee slam +23 (2d8+15 plus energy drain)	
Space 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.	
Special Attacks devour soul, energy drain (3 levels, DC 22)	
STATISTICS	
Str 31, Dex 4, Con 30, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 10	
Base Atk +15; CMB +27; CMD 34 (can't be tripped)	
Feats Ability Focus (energy drain) ⁸	
Skills Climb +18	
SPECIAL ABILITIES	
Devour Soul (Su) A living creature slain by an entropic ooze has its soul devoured by the ooze. Such a creature cannot be returned to life until the entropic ooze that contains its soul is slain.	
Soulsight (Su) An entropic ooze can automatically detect the location of any living creature with a soul within 120 feet. It also senses the strength of the creature's life force automatically, as if it had cast <i>deathwatch</i> .	

D7. Guardroom

This featureless room houses the eight baykoks that fly patrols above the fortress (see areas **D** and **D3**). If only one of these patrols was encountered, then there are four baykoks here. If both patrols were encountered and destroyed, the room is empty.

Treasure: A PC who succeeds at a DC 23 Perception check notices a loose flagstone in the floor that conceals a hidden stash. Within, wrapped in rotted burlap, are seven gold ingots stamped with the symbol of Vashliq, a sword and crown (worth 200 gp each), and a single large amethyst worth 500 gp.

D8. Garderobe (CR 15)

A wide window looks out from this chamber over the fortress's flooded moat ten feet below. The air is heavy with the pungent smell of filth.

Creatures: Three omox demons make their home in this smelly garderobe, occasionally feeding upon the corpses as they float by in the moat. The demons attack any who enter, as well as any creatures they detect in the moat outside (area **D3**).

OMOX DEMONS (3)	CR 12
XP 19,200 each	
hp 162 each (<i>Pathfinder RPG Bestiary</i> 2 79)	
TACTICS	
During Combat The omoxes throw slime at intruders, then cast <i>acid fog</i> or <i>stinking cloud</i> over their opponents before attempting to grapple and smother them.	
Morale If reduced to 80 hit points or fewer, an omox flees into the moat outside, though it returns later to attack wounded foes as they cross the causeway in area D3 to leave the fortress.	
Treasure: Buried in the filth in the demons' lair is a <i>staff of heaven and earth</i> (<i>Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment</i> 197) with 6 charges, which can be found with a successful DC 17 Perception check.	
D9. Guard Barracks (CR 14)	
Rows of bunks line the walls of this chamber, and the splinters of a large table and benches occupy the center of the room. An iron door stands in the rusty iron wall to the northwest, next to a symbol of a crown and sword engraved into the wall. To the southwest, an archway leads to a small balcony overlooking a large chamber beyond.	
This chamber served as the barracks for Queen Bremagy's personal guard. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check locates a key hidden in the broken	

remains of one of the bunks; the key opens the locked iron door to area **D10**. The balcony overlooks Queen Bremagyr's throne room (area **D11**) 10 feet below.

Creatures: Six baykoks, the last of Bremagyr's personal guard, still occupy this room. They do not leave this room unless summoned by Bremagyr in area **D11**. During battle, the baykoks attempt to take prisoners if possible and lock them in area **D10**. The baykoks fight until destroyed.

BAYKOKS (6)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 97 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 35)

D10. Holding Cell

A locked iron door (hardness 10, hp 90, break DC 28, Disable Device DC 30) blocks entry to this bare, windowless room; the key is hidden in area **D9**.

Development: Any PCs captured by the baykoks are stripped of their equipment (which is stored in area **D12**) and locked in here to await questioning by Bremagyr. The queen, accompanied by three baykoks, arrives in 1d4 hours to do so. Unless a captured PC wishes to fight Bremagyr and her guards alone, that character takes 8d6 points of damage from the tortures inflicted by Bremagyr during the questioning. Obsessed with the long-ago fall of her empire, the queen's questions all concern the far outdated subjects of Baba Yaga's maneuvers and troop dispositions. Bremagyr is unable to grasp that Baba Yaga has been laid low and is trapped within a doll, assuming such tales are merely false information meant to mislead her. The queen continues this questioning each day until the PC is freed, escapes, or dies under questioning.

D11. Fallen Throne Room (CR 17)

This long hall extends deep into the fortress, ending in a mass of long-cooled lava that overwhelmed the rear of the chamber. Partially buried in the volcanic rock is a large iron throne atop a dais of polished, red-veined marble, both covered in a thick rime of ice. A small balcony high on the northeast wall overlooks the length of the hall.

This chamber was the throne room of Queen Bremagyr, whose remains still sit on her iron throne (see Creature below). The balcony to the northeast is 10 feet above the floor of the chamber and has a low balustrade that does not provide cover. On the southwest side of the chamber, a secret door beneath a flagstone can be detected with a Successful DC 28 Perception check. The flagstone weighs 400 pounds, but if lifted, reveals a stone stairway underneath that leads to Bremagyr's secret treasury (area **D12**).

Creature: Queen Bremagyr, now a skeletal figure, wearing an elaborate crown of gold, her hollow eyes surveying what is left of her domain, is seated on the throne, frozen to the cold iron beneath a thick layer of ice. Even as her kingdom fell around her due to Baba Yaga's retribution, Bremagyr never left her iron throne. The Witch Queen's magic struck her where she sat and froze her to her throne, even as the volcanic eruption began to bury her fortress. The powerful magic of the Old Crone stopped the lava flow in its tracks and caused the slain queen to rise as an undead winterwight bent on vengeance and obsessed with fighting off what she believes are Baba Yaga's continued assaults upon her empire.

Although Bremagyr is buried under a layer of ice, this doesn't inhibit her from rising—the ice simply breaks

QUEEN BREMAGYR

apart as she stands—but it always refreezes once she is seated again. As soon as the PCs enter the chamber, Bremagyr rises in a shower of cracking ice and calls for her personal guards (the baykoks in area D9) with an eerie howl. If they haven't already been destroyed, the baykoks join their undead queen in 1 round. Whether or not her guards respond, Bremagyr immediately charges into battle, slashing with her claws to inflict her blightfire on as many opponents as possible. Consumed by the need to defend her already-lost kingdom, Bremagyr fights until destroyed.

QUEEN BREMAGYR**CR 17****XP 102,400**Female winterwight (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 283)**hp** 270

Treasure: Queen Bremagyr wears a string of rare blue pearls (worth 2,000 gp) around her neck. Her golden crown is frozen to her head and cannot be removed until she is destroyed. However, close examination reveals that it is not the true crown of Queen Bremagyr, only a replica made of gold-plated copper worth only 150 gp.

D12. Secret Treasury

This hidden cellar vault is the secret treasury of Vashliq, and though much of the wealth it once held was depleted as the kingdom prepared to fend off the expected invasion of Baba Yaga, it does still contain some riches. Eight wooden crates lined around the walls hold a total of 80 gold ingots stamped with the sword and crown of Vashliq (worth 200 gp each). A mahogany coffer lined with velvet (worth 70 gp) contains a *potion of displacement*, a *potion of fly*, a *potion of good hope*, a *potion of haste*, a *potion of heroism*, and a *potion of nondetection* (though all are currently frozen and must be thawed before they can be used). A platinum casket (worth 2,000 gp) contains a *ring of mind shielding*, a *tome of leadership and influence* (+3) wrapped in silk (50 gp), an emerald and topaz necklace (worth 5,200 gp), and an engraved red gem on a gold chain that appears to be a *periapt of wound closure* but is actually a *periapt of foul rotting*. In addition, a suit of +1 *spell resistance half-plate* (SR 19) hangs on an armor stand in one corner. Finally, seemingly carelessly tossed in one corner is a burlap sack containing a gold crown that is a masterpiece of craftsmanship and set with the finest gemstones. The crown has an overwhelming aura of evocation and is worth 15,000 gp. This is the true crown of Bremagyr, which holds a remnant of Baba Yaga's power that can be used to help free her from her prison.

Development: The first PC to touch Bremagyr's true crown receives a sudden empathic jolt from the matryoshka doll containing Baba Yaga and sees a vision of the severed head of the sepid div, Mametqul, wearing

Bremagyr's crown and set within an ornate wooden wall cabinet. Baba Yaga sends this vision to the PCs both to warn them of Mametqul's treachery and to show them the means of returning to Grandmother's Cauldron.

RETURN TO MAMETQUL'S TENT

Once they have recovered Bremagyr's crown, the PCs can return to Mametqul's tent (area B). The sepid div greets them warmly at the entrance to the tent, but he has no intention of allowing them to leave alive with the crown and matryoshka doll. As soon as the PCs enter the tent, the two shira divs immediately assume their true forms and attack the first PC to enter the tent, attempting to consume his essence. Mametqul rains debris on the rest of the party by moving into their midst, and the pairakas gang up on any spellcasters while Mametqul tackles those not already engaged by the shiras. The divs fight to the death to keep the PCs from returning to Grandmother's Cauldron.

Development: When the battle is over, the PCs can find the ornate wall cabinet seen in the vision within the tent. By setting the crown atop Mametqul's severed head and placing the head in the cabinet, the back of the cabinet opens as a portal back to Grandmother's Cauldron next to the sacred pool (area A3). The PCs can pack the tent to take with them before stepping through the portal, along with Mametqul's head and Bremagyr's crown though the cabinet must be left behind. Once the PCs emerge on the other side, the portal closes.

Once beside the sacred pool, Baba Yaga empathically urges the PCs to submerge the head, the crown, and the matryoshka doll in the bubbling waters of the pool. If the PCs follow Baba Yaga's urgings, the doll splits open once again with a crack, revealing another smaller doll within. As before, this new doll remains impervious, but Baba Yaga can now communicate with the PCs through limited telepathy, though the communication is fragmented, as her mental voice cuts in and out almost like a weak radio transmission. In addition, Baba Yaga grants a second boon to the PCs. Each PC can choose to gain either DR 5/— or spell resistance equal to 12 + his character level.

When the PCs open the second layer of the doll, Vigliv appears once again from the bole of the tree at area A2. This appearance is described at the beginning of Part Three.

Story Award: Award the PCs 51,200 XP for opening the matryoshka doll's second layer.

PART THREE: THE ISLAND OF BUYAN

After the PCs use the crown of Bremagyr to remove the second layer of Baba Yaga's prison, Vigliv emerges once again from the bole of the Mother Tree and speaks.

"Your bravery has won through, even against the treachery of those who would steal your prize. But your quest is not yet done.

You have recovered Baba Yaga's fate and her power, but now you must seek out her death. As she rose in power from a mere mortal, Baba Yaga used great magic to ensure that death would not be able to swiftly find her through misfortune or betrayal.

"Baba Yaga placed her death in an athame, a witch's knife, which she then hid in a chest within a corpse, which she buried under an oak tree on the mystical island of Buyan. Even if Baba Yaga was slain, her death would still need to be recovered and released back into her body in order for her to truly die. And so Baba Yaga plucked the island from the ocean and stored it in one of the many hidden realms of her hut so that none could stumble across it, and her death, without first facing her power.

"Now, to free Baba Yaga from her prison, you must go to Buyan, find her death, and bring it back here to her cauldron. She is gaining greater awareness as you free her and will be able to guide you to some extent; heed her counsel. Now go; the death of Baba Yaga awaits you."

After completing this explanation, Vigliv once again withdraws into her tree. Baba Yaga is able to make limited telepathic contact, however, and gives the bearer of her matryoshka doll this message: "North and east across the stream... climb the cliff to find the path..." Following these instructions leads the PCs to area A5.

ISLAND IN AN ENDLESS SEA

The pool in area A5 leads to another demiplane inside Baba Yaga's *Dancing Hut* that houses the island of Buyan. Anyone who completely immerses herself in the icy cold water of the pool surfaces in a warm, salty tidal pool on a sunny stretch of beach.

A brilliant sun shines down from a cloudless azure sky, as flawless as a painting from a storybook. Ahead, the waves of a cerulean blue sea break against a sandy shore that stretches into the distance in either direction. The cry of gulls and the roll of the surf is all that breaks the silence of this empty seascape.

If they explore their new surroundings, the PCs soon discover that they are on a small, sandy islet no more than a quarter mile in diameter. All around them stretches an apparently endless blue sea. Like the demiplane of Vashliq, this one appears infinite, but aimless travel across the ocean only results in ending back at this islet after 1d6 hours. Likewise, regardless of how high one attempts to fly, the surface of the sea is always 100 feet below. In addition, this entire demiplane is warded with a *dimensional lock* effect (CL 20th) that blocks all extradimensional travel within the demiplane. Attempting to submerge in the tidal pool to travel back to Grandmother's Cauldron fails to work—it is a one-way portal. The islet is otherwise completely safe; the PCs may camp here with no danger of hostile encounters.

JOURNEY TO THE ISLAND OF BUYAN (CR 12)

Once on the nameless islet, Baba Yaga telepathically urges the PCs to head west toward the island of Buyan. How they travel is up to them—they can make use of *Baba Yaga's mortar and pestle*, found in area A5, to travel over the waves, or use some other means of their own devising. Regardless of their means of travel, it takes 1d8 hours to reach the island of Buyan.

Creature: If the PCs fly or travel in *Baba Yaga's mortar and pestle*, there are no encounters on the trip. If they choose to swim, use *water walk*, or travel by ship or some other water conveyance, they are attacked by a sea serpent a couple of hours after setting out. The sea serpent attempts to capsize their vessel and swallow any creatures falling into the water, but it retreats once it reaches 90 hit points or fewer.

SEA SERPENT

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 187 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 244)

THE ISLAND OF BUYAN

Although time otherwise passes normally on the demiplane, regardless of how the PCs travel to the island of Buyan or what time they start their journey, they always arrive at the island at sunset. When the party first comes in sight of the island of Buyan, read or paraphrase the following.

The sun sets ahead in the distance, outlining the dark mass of an island rising from the gently rolling sea. Surrounded by sheer cliffs hundreds of feet high, the island is thickly forested. To the south, the rise slopes down to a wide, flat beach, but the island ends at a precipitous cliff to the north. Atop this cliff sits a golden city, overlooking the sea from the precipice. The light of the dying day reflects off its walls and turrets with a gleam that extends out over the waves like a beacon. A stretch of smooth beach lies at the base of this cliff, interspersed with great rocks that emerge from the sea.

The island of Buyan is 2 miles long and just over a mile wide. The climate is temperate with warm, windy days and calm, cooler nights. The forest that grows upon the island is a combination of old-growth oaks as well as younger pines and beeches. Rocky, broken cliffs ranging in height from 10 feet to 400 feet surround two-thirds of the island, with the highest cliffs at its northernmost extremity (Climb DC 25). Other than the inhabitants of the keyed areas, the island has no occupants other than small animals such as foxes, badgers, tortoises, assorted rodents, and a plethora of sea birds. The demiplane's magic keeps the island self-sustaining, providing sufficient food and water for the island's inhabitants.

The island of Buyan incorporates both event-based encounters and keyed encounter locations. The events



begin when the PCs arrive on the island and occur at prescribed times while the PCs are on the island. The encounter locations can be explored at the PCs' convenience, but you should familiarize yourself with them beforehand, as many of the event encounters occur at these locations.

EVENT 1: ARRIVAL ON BUYAN (CR 15)

This event occurs when the PCs first reach the island, regardless of where they make landfall.

Creatures: The maftet inhabitants of Buyan's Golden City (area E) fly regular patrols over the island, and their lookouts have spotted the PCs' approach. A reinforced patrol of six maftets is sent to deter the intruders. The maftets swoop by the PCs to land 20 yards in front of them, but they do not attack unless attacked first. The leader of the patrol hails the PCs (first in Sphinx, then in Aklo; the maftets don't speak Common), asking their business on the island. The maftets are threatening, having orders to defend their island from outsiders, but they make no overtly hostile moves at this point, at least until they

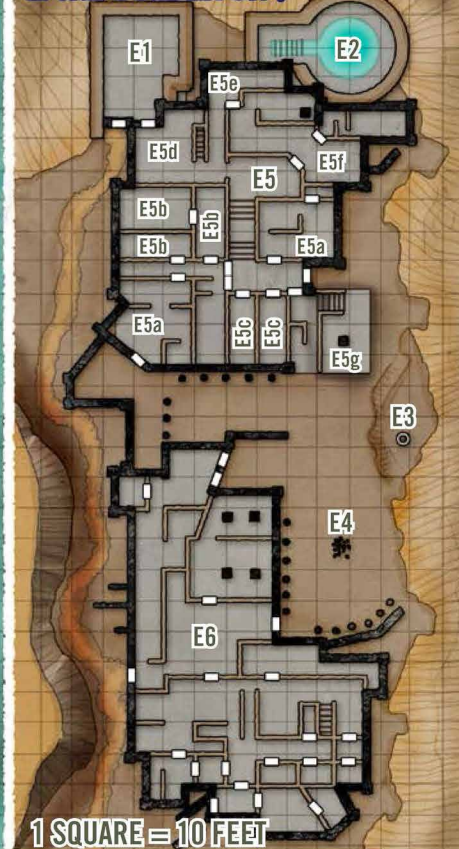
have discovered the nature of these outsiders. Assuming the PCs can communicate with the maftets, the leonine creatures can confirm that this is the island of Buyan, but they know nothing of its existence on a demiplane inside Baba Yaga's *Dancing Hut*. Likewise, they have no knowledge of Baba Yaga or her death. The maftets have little else to say, and while they are willing to converse with the PCs for a short time, the message should be clear—outsiders are not welcome, and it would be best for the PCs to leave the island immediately or face the wrath of the maftet clan.

Although the situation is likely tense, before it can descend into violence, another intruder appears. Allow the PCs and the maftets to attempt DC 37 Perception checks to spot a lone popobala sweeping in low over the dark ocean waves from behind the PCs. A success means the creature is spotted before it attacks; otherwise, it stays hidden until it is 30 feet away, when it activates its frightful presence ability as part of a Flyby Attack against one of the PCs. The popobala attempts to dominate the most formidable-looking PC to fight the other PCs while it focuses its attacks on the maftets. The maftets fight defensively against the

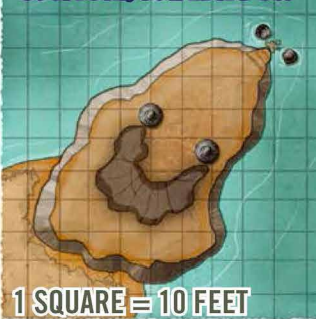
THE ISLAND OF BUYAN



E. THE GOLDEN CITY



G. SACRIFICIAL ROCK



J. HIDDEN CAVE



popobala and do not assist the PCs, being more concerned for their own survival. If the PCs attack the popobala, it turns back to attack them instead. If reduced to 30 hit points or fewer, the popobala flees back over the sea. The maftets fight to the death against the popobala, but if more than half of them are slain, at least one tries to retreat back to the Golden City (area E) to warn its people.

MAFTETS (6) **CR 6**

XP 2,400 each

hp 68 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 188*)

POPOBALA **CR 15**

XP 51,200

hp 225 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 221*)

Development: After the battle is over, any surviving maftets grudgingly thank the PCs for any assistance they gave against the popobala. If all of the maftets were slain, a second maftet patrol arrives soon after. If asked, the maftet leader simply states that the popobala was an agent of their enemies. If the PCs wish to find out more information about these enemies, or about the island or their own quest, the leader offers to escort them to the

maftets' city (area E). There the PCs can speak with the maftets' queen, who can surely answer the PCs' questions (see Event 2).

EVENT 2: MEETING THE QUEEN

If the PCs agree to travel to the Golden City (area E) to meet the maftet queen, the maftets escort them to the village's central plaza (area E4), where the entire clan gathers round while the PCs await the appearance of the queen. Rajet, the captain of the guard, demands that the PCs lay down their weapons before they are allowed into the queen's presence. If the PCs do so, an honor guard of 12 maftet warriors escorts them into the northeast wing of the royal palace (area E5f) to meet the queen.

If the PCs refuse to lay down their arms, tensions once again rise as dozens of armed maftets surround them, preparing for a fight, until a woman's voice from the palace calls out to stop them. The black-furred, purple-skinned Queen Esmyra stands on the palace veranda (area E5g) wearing a circlet and the heavy gold necklace of her office. She says in Sphinx to her captain, "Rajet, would you have us go to war yet again even in this, our time of desperation?" She then turns to the PCs and says, "Be welcome here. You may keep your weapons if you will agree to hear me out."

The queen turns and reenters the palace, leaving her guards to escort the PCs to her chambers.

Once the PCs reach Queen Esmyra's chambers, the maftet queen offers them comfortable seating, and maftet servants bring them cups of honeyed nectar. When the PCs are comfortable, Queen Esmyra addresses them.

"We have lived in our beautiful Golden City on this island since before the time of our grandsires' grandsires. Always we have been masters of our realm, living in peace, hunting, and gliding upon the thermals—until two days ago. Then strange creatures from the depths of the sea emerged upon our island's shores. They demanded that we swear loyalty to their rule. We fought them, but individually they are more powerful than my people, and several of my warriors were killed. These enemies have demanded that I be chained to the old sacrificial rock below the city tomorrow at dawn or they will invade our island and kill all of my people. The creature you fought earlier is merely one of the horrors that our enemies can command. We cannot stand against them, so tomorrow I go to my fate to save my people. But with your arrival, perhaps the tide can be turned, and the fate of myself and my people can be rewritten."

Queen Esmyra would like the PCs' aid in fighting the sea creatures. The queen does not know what they are, but she can describe the maftets' enemies as "skinless monstrosities with the torso of a man or woman atop the body of a horse, who bring sickness with them." A successful DC 19 Knowledge (nature) check can identify the creatures as nuckelavees, though Esmyra does not know them by that name.

Esmyra is willing to offer the PCs much of her clan's wealth—10,000 gp in gems, jewelry, and assorted art objects—in exchange for their help. If the PCs mention their quest to find Baba Yaga's death, Esmyra states that her clan has legends of a tree on the island that hides the death of a powerful witch. If the PCs help defeat the sea invaders, she will lead the PCs to the tree. Queen Esmyra knows nothing more of Baba Yaga, however—the island of Buyan is the only home she knows, and she is unaware that the island exists on a demiplane inside the *Dancing Hut*.

QUEEN ESMYRA

CR 10

XP 9,600

Female advanced maftet aristocrat 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 188, 290)

NG Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +5 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 141 (14 HD; 8d10+6d8+70)

Fort +9, **Ref** +13, **Will** +15

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor)

Melee +1 *scimitar* +17/+12/+7 (1d6+6/15-20), +1 *scimitar* +17/+12/+7 (1d6+6/15-20)

Special Attacks paired weapons, raptor dive

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +11)

Constant—*mage armor*



QUEEN ESMYRA

3/day—*magic weapon*

1/day—*cat's grace, protection from evil*

TACTICS

Before Combat Queen Esmyra casts *magic weapon* on both of her scimitars before battle.

During Combat Queen Esmyra prefers to let her warriors fight for her, but she is more than capable of defending herself, particularly if her people are threatened. She focuses her attacks on a single opponent, hoping to bring that foe down as quickly as possible before facing another enemy.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 70 hit points, Queen Esmyra offers to surrender. If any of her people are in danger, however, she fights to the death to protect them.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 21, **Con** 20, **Int** 14, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 32

Feats Combat Reflexes^b, Double Slice, Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Critical (scimitar), Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Persuasive, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Skills Bluff +16, Diplomacy +24, Fly +12, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (history) +13, Knowledge (local) +13, Knowledge (nobility) +13, Perception +15, Sense Motive +15, Stealth +20

Languages Aklo, Sphinx, Sylvan

SQ runic tattoos

Gear mwk scimitars (2), two gold bracelets (worth 50 gp each), gold circlet (worth 100 gp), gold necklace of office (worth 1,000 gp)

Development: If the PCs agree to help the maftets, Queen Esmyra tells them that she will go down to the sacrificial rock the next morning as planned—a perfect time for the PCs to ambush the attackers. In the meantime, the PCs can camp in the Golden City's plaza (area E4) to rest and prepare. Regardless of whether the PCs help the maftets, Event 3 occurs the following morning.

EVENT 3: ROYAL SACRIFICE (CR 14)

This event occurs in the early morning of the day after the PCs arrive on the island. In the predawn darkness, Queen Esmyra and an honor guard of 12 maftet warriors descend to the sacrificial rock below the Golden City (area G). The warriors chain the unarmed queen to the rock and fly 100 yards away to await her fate. The PCs can set up as they see fit if they wish to interrupt the sacrifice and help the maftets fight their enemies.

Creatures: As the first light of dawn falls upon the sacrificial rock where the queen stands defiantly, four advanced nuckelavees emerge from the surf and climb the stairs to the top of the rock. Unless stopped, the nuckelavees hack off the queen's arms and drag her bleeding body to drown and devour beneath the waves, leaving her dismembered arms still chained to the rock.

If the PCs intervene, the nuckelavees attack, using their breath weapons as often as possible, combined with Spring Attacks. The nuckelavees retreat if half of their number are killed, promising swift vengeance upon all inhabitants of the island.

ADVANCED NUCKELAVEES (4)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

hp 126 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 203, 290)

Treasure: Each nuckelavee wears gold and coral ornaments worth 400 gp in total.

Development: If the PCs defeat the nuckelavees and prevent Queen Esmyra's sacrifice, the maftets hail them as heroes. The queen gives the PCs rooms in the palace barracks (area E5b) and invites them to her war councils to prepare for the impending invasion. Regardless of whether the nuckelavees are successful in claiming Queen Esmyra as a sacrifice, they begin their invasion of the island the following night (see Event 4).

Story Award: If the PCs save Queen Esmyra, award them 38,400 XP.

EVENT 4: FIRST FORAY (CR 15)

This event occurs the day after the attempted sacrifice of Queen Esmyra. There is no sign of the nuckelavees for the entire day. If the PCs are allied with the maftets, they sit in on the queen's war council and can make whatever plans they wish for the defense of the Golden City and the maftet clan.

Creatures: The nuckelavees wait until nightfall to begin their invasion. A large force of nuckelavees invades the island from the southeast beach (area H) under the cover of the nuckelavees' *obscuring mist* spells. The nuckelavees emerge from the mist and seek cover in the island's central forest. Once in the trees, the nuckelavees make their way toward the Golden City, using the darkness and tree cover to ward off attacks by flying maftets.

The maftets follow the PCs' lead in the defense of the island, but they do not fight with the PCs. While the maftets deal with the majority of the rank-and-file attackers, the PCs must face the nuckelavees' most elite warriors. These nuckelavees are unique to the demiplane of Buyan; instead of a flayed human torso growing out of a horse's back, a Buyan nuckelavee has the upper body of a skinless rusalka with long, seaweed-like tresses, and possesses additional abilities, including the capability to summon water elementals.

Where the PCs encounter the nuckelavees—whether on the beach when the nuckelavees first emerge from the sea, in the depths of the forest, or in the Golden City itself among the screaming noncombatant maftets sheltering in the buildings there—depends on the plans the PCs made for

the defense. Regardless of where the encounter takes place, the PCs face a squad of four Buyan nuckelavees. If, in your judgment, the PCs made adequate defensive preparations, this is the only squad they must defeat. Alternatively, if the PCs did not sufficiently prepare, they could encounter two or even three of these squads in succession.

BUYAN NUCKELAVEES (4)

CR 11

XP 12,800 each

Variant nuckelavee (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 203)

NE Large fey (aquatic)

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +22

Aura frightful presence (30 ft., DC 21)

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 17, flat-footed 17 (+7 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 152 each (16d6+96)

Fort +11, **Ref** +17, **Will** +13

DR 10/cold iron; **Immune** disease, fire, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., swim 50 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +14/+9 (1d8+9/19-20), bite +11 (1d8+3), 2 hooves +11 (1d6+3 plus disease), tresses +11 (2d6+3 plus staggering touch)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (15 ft. with tresses)

Special Attacks breath weapon (30-ft. cone, 10d6 damage plus disease, Reflex DC 24 half, usable every 1d4 rounds), trample (1d6+9, DC 24)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +12)

3/day—*control water*, *diminish plants*, *obscuring mist*

1/day—*summon nature's ally VI* (water elementals only)

TACTICS

During Combat The nuckelavees use their breath weapons, then use Spring Attack and Vital Strike to attack with their tresses, keeping mobile and away from counterattacks until their breath weapons recharge.

Morale The nuckelavees fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 24, **Con** 22, **Int** 13, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 33 (37 vs. trip)

Feats Acrobatic Steps, Dodge, Mobility, Multiattack, Nimble Moves, Spring Attack, Vital Strike, Wind Stance

Skills Acrobatics +26 (+34 when jumping), Escape Artist +26, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (nature) +20, Perception +22, Stealth +22, Swim +33

Languages Aklo, Sylvan

SQ amphibious, undersized weapons

Gear mwk longsword

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Su) *Mortasheen*: Contact or injury—bite; *save* Fort DC 24; *onset* immediate; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d4 Con damage and fatigue; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. Animals take a -2 penalty on their saves.

Staggering Touch (Su) A creature that takes damage from a Buyan nuckelavee's tresses must succeed at a DC 21 Fortitude save or be staggered for 1 round by overwhelming feelings of desire and shame. This is a mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Tresses (Su) A Buyan nuckelavee's long, seaweed-like hair is strong and capable of making powerful primary natural attacks.

Treasure: Each Buyan nuckelavee wears gold and coral ornaments worth 1,000 gp in total.

Development: The outcome of the maftets' battle with the nuckelavee invasion force matches the outcome of the PCs' fights. If the PCs are victorious, the maftets are assumed to have defeated the others and sent any survivors fleeing back to the sea. Maftet casualties are anywhere from 10% to 30%, depending on how well the PCs prepared and how successful they were in fighting off the invasion. The actual number of maftets killed has no bearing on the outcome of the invasion, but it should serve to drive home the desperation of the situation to the PCs. Regardless of how successful the nuckelavees' first foray was, Queen Esmyra is convinced that they have not been defeated, only temporarily repulsed, and cautions her people and the PCs to be ready for more attacks.

EVENT 5: NIGHT LANDING (CR 15)

Creatures: The second wave of the invasion occurs the same night as the first attack at around 3:00 A.M. Under the cover of darkness and an *obscuring mist* that the nuckelavees have conjured over the still sea, four hezrous approach the north beach (area F) in *gaseous form*. Baba Yaga brought these hezrous to the demiplane long ago, and they have since allied with the nuckelavees. With the magic of the demiplane preventing them from using their *greater teleport* ability, the hezrous begin flying up the 380-foot-high cliff to the overlook (area E3), gaining a +10 bonus on their Stealth checks from the *obscuring mist*. When they reach the top, the hezrous return to their normal forms and set about destroying the Golden City. The maftets are largely unable to harm the demons and leave the battle primarily up to the PCs. The hezrous fight to the death.

HEZROUS (4)

CR 11

XP 12,800 each

hp 145 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 62)

EVENT 6: DAWN CHARGE (CR 17)

Creatures: The nuckelavees begin their final attack at dawn the following day. The main body of the nuckelavee army emerges from the sea on the southern beach (area H) and charge up the slope toward the Golden City (area E). The nuckelavees are spread out, and each one tries to reach

the city individually. The maftets launch themselves from the city to once again repel the invaders.

Meanwhile, nuckelavees on the sea floor enact ancient, powerful rituals to raise a 40-foot-wide, 400-foot-high column of water from the surface of the sea just off the coast from the Golden City, forming a bridge of water to the city's cistern (area E2). Nuckelavee raiders are then able to swim up the column and ride across the bridge to attack the palace (area E5), which is defended only by Queen Esmyra and three of her warriors. Six Buyan nuckelavees, accompanied by two elder water elementals, lead the attack on the palace. Fortunately, lookouts spy the water spout rising and summon the PCs back to the city, so that they

are present when the attack begins on the palace.

The nuckelavees and elementals fight to the death.



BUYAN NUCKELAVEE

BUYAN NUCKELAVEES (6)

CR 11

XP 12,800 each

hp 152 each (see page 31)

ELDER WATER ELEMENTALS (2)

CR 11

XP 12,800 each

hp 152 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 127)

Treasure: Each Buyan nuckelavee wears gold and coral ornaments worth 1,000 gp in total.

Development: If the PCs defeat the nuckelavees attacking the palace, the rest of the invasion force on the island retreat back to the sea and end their attacks upon Buyan. If Queen Esmyra survives, the PCs are heralded as saviors of the Golden City and the maftets begin crafting statues of the PCs to place among the heroes depicted in the city's plaza (area E4). In addition, Esmyra offers to personally lead them to the tree marking the "witch's grave" (area I), where they can look for Baba Yaga's death.

If Queen Esmyra is killed, the maftets thank the PCs for their help, but the loss of their queen overshadows their joy at victory. As the maftets begin the painful process of electing another queen to rule their shattered clan, one of Esmyra's warriors agrees to show them to the hidden grave.

Either way, if the PCs are victorious, the maftets honor their agreement with them and give them clan treasures worth a total of 10,000 gp as a reward.

If the PCs are unable to defeat the nuckelavees, the horrendous fey creatures overrun the island and enthrone their own queen in the Golden City. Buyan is the only home the maftets have; they have no other place to go, and the few surviving maftets are enslaved by their conquerors. In this case, a wounded maftet warrior who escaped the city might be able to guide the PCs to the witch's grave, but they must contend with patrols of the conquering nuckelavees roaming the island.

Story Award: If the PCs defeat the nuckelavees and Queen Esmyra survives, award them 76,800 XP. If the PCs defeat the nuckelavees but the queen dies, award them only 19,200 XP.

ISLAND OF BUYAN LOCATIONS

The island of Buyan contains the following locations, which the PCs can explore in their own time, though keep in mind that the events detailed above occur whether or not the PCs are present at a given location.

E. THE GOLDEN CITY

A small settlement sits atop the island's northernmost precipice. Little more than two sprawling stone structures connected by a retaining wall, the town's buildings stand upon the very verge of the cliff. The walls have been plastered with lime mixed with mica so that they sparkle like gold in the sunlight and glint like silver under the moon. Although somewhat crudely constructed, the buildings have an air of great age, displaying skilled artistry and style. All around are statues and painted frescoes showing noble winged beings in war and in peace.

This settlement has no other name than Buyan, like the island, but it is more commonly called the Golden City—even though it is no larger than a village. An extended clan of maftets, composed of a dozen prides, inhabits the “city.” Ruled by a queen, the maftets have lived on the island for as long as their racial memory recalls (even before Baba Yaga took Buyan and sequestered it in her hut). The current settlement was built upon the foundations of one much older, but the maftets know nothing of the original builders, and almost all vestiges of the Golden City's previous inhabitants have been erased.

BUYAN, THE GOLDEN CITY

N village

Corruption -1; **Crime** -6; **Economy** -1; **Law** +2; **Lore** +1; **Society** +1

Qualities insular, superstitious

Danger +0

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government autocracy

Population 197 (197 maftets)

Notable NPCs

Queen Esmyra (NG female advanced maftet aristocrat 6)

Captain of the Guard Rajet (LN male maftet fighter 3)

Clan Shaman Jafira (N female maftet adept 2)

MARKETPLACE

Base Value 500 gp; **Purchase Limit** 2,500 gp; **Spellcasting** 1st

Minor Items +1 scimitar, *potion of protection from chaos*, *ring of swarming stabs*^{UE}, *scroll of remove sickness*^{UM}; **Medium**

Items *duelist's vambraces*^{UE}; **Major Items** —

E1. Terrace (CR 10)

This wide platform, constructed of great stone blocks, provides a view of the seas north of the island. A gilded door opens into a large building to the south, next to a gate leading to a gravel path that winds around the structure to the south.

This elevated platform catches the sea breezes and thermals rising up the cliff, making takeoffs and landings particularly easy (+10 circumstance bonus on Fly checks made in this area). The maftets teach their young to fly

from this platform. The terrace stands 8 feet above the surrounding ground, its northern edge looking directly over the 400-foot-high cliff.

Creatures: Four maftets always stand watch here, keeping a lookout for dangers from the northern horizon. Twice per day, a patrol of four more maftets leaves from here to fly around the island, returning 3 hours later. Any maftets here challenge the PCs and sound the alarm unless the PCs have been welcomed into the settlement.

MAFTETS (4)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 68 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 188)

E2. Cistern

This cistern stands at the very edge of the cliff. Open topped to collect rainwater, the cistern is level with the roof of the palace (area E5), where it is accessible by a stairwell. The cistern extends 30 feet down into the cliff. From the west, a narrow, stepped channel descends into the cistern, so that as the water level drops, the stairs provide access down into the cistern. Currently, the cistern is nearly full from recent rains and the steps remain submerged.

E3. Overlook (CR 10)

Steps descend to a small shelf overlooking the rocky beach below. A squat stone well sits on the ledge, filled to the top with large, jagged rocks.

This ledge is 20 feet below the level of the city, 380 feet above the beach. The well is only 5 feet deep but is filled with rocks that can be rained down on anyone attempting to climb the cliffs.

Creatures: Four maftets always maintain a watch here to keep an eye on the beach below. They drop rocks on anyone attempting to climb the cliffs. The rocks have a range increment of 20 feet and deal 2d6 points of damage with a successful ranged touch attack. If a rock falls more than 150 feet, it deals double damage; if less than 30 feet, it deals half damage.

MAFTETS (4)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 68 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 188)

Ranged dropped rock +11 ranged touch (2d6)

E4. Plaza

This open expanse is floored with smooth, flat stones harvested from the shale of the cliffs and lies between the buildings of the settlement and the sheer drop to the beach below. The remains

of past bonfires mark one end of the plaza, and many small, squat statues line its perimeter.

This courtyard serves as a gathering place for the maftet clan, a market square, and a training ground for its warriors. The statues depict the torsos and heads of heroes and leaders of the maftet clan stretching back many generations. During the day, 2d6+2 maftets can usually be found here drilling and training at arms, while three other maftets watch over a group of 23 cubs—those old enough to leave the nursery but not to take part in the work of the clan. The cubs are noncombatants. At night, the plaza is usually empty.

E5. Royal Palace (CR varies)

This large building is opulently decorated with geometric lines and angles painted in vibrant reds and brilliant greens on the plastered walls. Poles set into the roof support colorful awnings that allow the inhabitants to lounge in the shade and catch the ocean breezes.

This large structure is the palace of the maftet queen, Esmyra, and also houses her servants and the clan's warriors. While all of the adult maftets are trained to fight, only the warriors reside in the palace. They are exempted from the normal duties of the clan, spending their time instead patrolling and drilling in the plaza (area E4). The palace contains guard chambers near the southern and eastern entrances (area E5a), barracks for the warriors (area E5b), servants' quarters (area E5c), a dining area (area E5d), and a kitchen (area E5e). Queen Esmyra's private chambers (area E5f) occupy the entire northeast wing of the palace. To the southeast, an open-air veranda (area E5g) overlooks the plaza, with a throne for the queen where she can receive audiences.

Creatures: A pair of maftet warriors stands outside each of the palace's outer doors, and 12 more are always on guard duty inside the palace, six in each guardroom (area E5a). At any given time, 2d6+6 warriors are either asleep in their barracks (area E5b) or attending to personal matters elsewhere in the palace.

MAFTETS (18+)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 68 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 188)

Treasure: The maftets don't keep much in the way of coinage, but they do craft jewelry from gold and copper, and several examples of fine textiles, statuary, and pottery are on display within the palace, including a copper and gold mask (worth 900 gp) and a jeweled golden statue of an obscure maftet deity (worth 1,200 gp). The rest of

the palace's furnishings and decorations are worth an additional 7,500 gp in total if the entire palace is looted, though the maftets would obviously view such activities with great hostility.

Queen Esmyra's personal wealth, kept in her private chambers, consists of 300 pp, 300 gp, two black pearls worth 250 gp each, three sapphires worth 500 gp each, and a fine painting of Esmyra's mother, Queen Bassaba, worth 750 gp. In addition, the queen keeps 12 *potions of cure moderate wounds* and four *potions of lesser restoration* that she gladly shares with the PCs if they agree to help defend the island and the city (see Event 2).

E6. Common Quarters

The remainder of the maftet clan resides in this sprawling set of chambers. Though not as splendid as the palace to the north, this large structure is nevertheless well constructed, with glittering walls and a terraced roof shaded by sturdy awnings. Personal property only extends to the maftets' personal clothing and equipment, so living, sleeping, eating, and common areas are spread throughout the building and shared in kind, usually along pride lines, though the clan's youngest cubs are raised communally in a nursery to the southwest. Although the maftets share decidedly close quarters, they are very social creatures, and much prefer the company of their kin's warm bodies to solitude. At any given time, 1d20+20 adult maftets are present in the building, with the rest out attending to the needs of the tribe. At night, this number rises to close to 100, most of whom are sleeping.

Treasure: While less fine than the trappings of the palace, the contents of these chambers would yield 3,500 gp worth of valuables to looters, though such actions would be met with just as much hostility.

F. NORTH BEACH

This beach lies directly below the Golden City at the base of the 400-foot-high cliff. Other than piles of broken rubble that have fallen from the cliff over the centuries and large rocks and sea stacks rising from the surf, this beach is largely deserted save for the crabs that swarm upon it for food early in the morning. The maftets hunt these in the predawn darkness as a supplement to their diet. The seaweed and driftwood that washes up each day is likewise harvested for use by the maftets.

G. SACRIFICIAL ROCK (CR 12)

Among the black rocks that protrude from the surf along the beach, an especially large one rises as a great stone shelf, relentlessly pounded by the waves. In the middle of the platform stands a rock pillar with a hollow at its base forming a sheltered spot amid the foam and spray. Rusted manacles

with thick chains, fashioned for something much larger than a human, hang from the back wall of this hollow. Two pillar-like statues of gray limestone flank this hollow, depicting four vaguely humanoid faces under a single stone cap or hat, their sides covered with weathered engravings. To the northeast, crudely formed, wave-worn stairs descend into the sea. Another pair of statues brackets either side of this stair, though ages of erosion have left them almost formless pillars.

This ancient sacrificial rock predates the maftets' habitation of the island, and is one of the few traces left behind by the same unknown mysterious race that built the Golden City on the cliff above. The maftets largely avoid the rock out of superstitious dread. The rock shelf rises 10 feet above the surf. The platform can be reached with flight, by wading or swimming out to the sea stairs with a successful DC 15 Swim check, or by scaling the shelf's landward side with a successful DC 30 Climb check.

Creature: A sea serpent still habitually patrols this area looking for the sacrifices that ended long ago. It attacks anyone who sets foot the rock shelf. If the PCs defeated the sea serpent on their way to the island, it is not encountered a second time.

SEA SERPENT

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 187 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 244)

Development: Queen Esmyra is scheduled to sacrifice herself to the nuckelavees at this spot on the morning following the PCs' arrival. See Event 3 for details of this encounter. In this case, the sea serpent does not appear.

H. SOUTH BEACH

This wide beach wraps around the southern tip of the island where the waves and currents are much gentler. The island gradually slopes upward from the beach to the north. In more peaceful times, the maftets frequently visit the picturesque strand for recreation and relaxation.

I. WITCH'S GRAVE (CR 16 AND 16)

A gnarled old oak stands in the middle of the forest, slumped over a small depression in the earth, that upon closer inspection, seems to form the sunken outline of an old grave.

This tree stands near the center of the island and marks the location of the grave containing Baba Yaga's death. From a distance, the tree is indistinguishable from the rest of the trees in the forest, and is virtually impossible to find without guidance, such as from the maftets of the Golden City. If the PCs did not ally themselves with the maftets, Baba Yaga can guide them to the tree, though it has been many years since

she has been to the place, and her memory is not perfect. In this case, you might want to add some additional random encounters in the forest before Baba Yaga finally guides the PCs to the right location.

Creature: The tree is in fact a venerable quickwood left here by Baba Yaga to watch over the grave containing her death. Its unnatural appearance is not noticeable until the PCs approach within 30 feet of the tree, well within reach of the quickwood's roots. As soon as interlopers recognize it for what it is, the quickwood lashes out with its roots to try to pull unsuspecting creatures closer to bite. Bound here by Baba Yaga, the quickwood does not leave its position next to the grave, and fights to the death.

Once the PCs defeat the quickwood, they can dig up the old grave, revealing a large figure buried in the earth 8 feet down. The figure is almost 10 feet tall, wrapped in a burial cloth, and appears to be made of stuffed human skin stitched together with cloth, rags, leather, and human hair, its body pierced with large pins and needles. This is Baba Yaga's witch-doll, a golem that is the final guardian of her hidden death. Once unearthed, the witch-doll lunges out of the grave and attempts to establish its witch-doll link with the closest PC. The witch-doll fights until it is destroyed.

VENERABLE QUICKWOOD

CR 16

XP 76,800

Advanced quickwood (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 228)

N Gargantuan plant

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, oaksight; Perception +29

Aura fear aura (variable distance, DC 27, 1 round)

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 6, flat-footed 28 (+22 natural, -4 size)

hp 252 (24d8+144)

Fort +20, **Ref** +8, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities spell absorption; **Immune** electricity, fire, plant traits; **SR** 27

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft.

Melee bite +26 (2d8+12/19-20), 3 roots +24 (2d6+6 plus pull)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft. (60 ft. with root)

Special Attacks pull (root, 10 ft.)

STATISTICS

Str 35, **Dex** 10, **Con** 23, **Int** 12, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +34; **CMD** 44 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (root), Iron Will, Lunge, Multiattack, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth), Stand Still

Skills Knowledge (local) +17, Knowledge (nature) +17, Perception +29, Stealth +21 (+25 in forests)

Languages Sylvan

BABA YAGA'S WITCH-DOLL

CR 16

XP 76,800

Variant advanced witch-doll golem (*Tome of Horrors Complete* 343)

N Large construct

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 9, flat-footed 29 (+20 natural, -1 size)

hp 145 (21d10+30)

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

Defensive Abilities target magic defense; **DR** 10/adamantine;

Immune construct traits, magic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee needle +28/+23/+18/+13 (2d6+12/19-20) or 2 slams +28 (2d10+8)

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

Special Attacks find target, linked attack, target focus, witch-doll link

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 10, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +21; **CMB** +30; **CMD** 40

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Find Target (Sp) A witch-doll golem can unerringly find its linked target, as though guided by *discern location* (CL 15th).

Immunity to Magic (Ex) A witch-doll golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells function differently against the creature, as noted below.

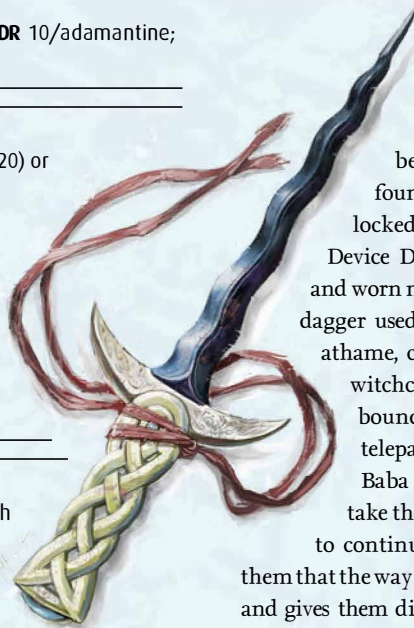
- A *confusion* spell slows it (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw.
- A *mending* spell heals 2d6 hit points."

Linked Attack (Su) When a witch-doll golem successfully establishes a witch-doll link, any damage taken by the witch-doll golem from any source other than the linked target deals half its damage to the golem and half its damage to the linked target as long as the golem and the linked target are within 60 feet of each other. Only the linked target can successfully attack a witch-doll golem and not take "linked damage." Attacks that don't damage a witch-doll golem (because of its immunities or its damage reduction) likewise deal no damage to the linked target. Attacks that damage the linked target do not damage the witch-doll golem (the link it establishes is one way). Healing (or repair in the case of the witch-doll golem) is not passed through the link. A witch-doll golem cannot attack itself in order to damage its linked target.

Target Focus (Su) A witch-doll golem deals an extra 2d10 points of damage with its slam attacks against its linked target.

Target Magic Defense (Ex) A witch-doll golem gains a +8 bonus on all saving throws against any spell or spell-like ability or effect cast by its linked target (provided the effect gets past the golem's immunity to magic).

Witch-Doll Link (Su) With a successful melee attack, a witch-doll golem can establish an invisible link between itself and a chosen target. The target must succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude save to resist the link. A witch-doll link is broken if the witch-doll golem is destroyed or the linked target dies. A witch-doll golem can only have one witch-doll link at any given time. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.



BABA YAGA'S ATHAME

Development: After the witch-doll has been defeated, a small iron coffer can be found within the golem's chest. The coffer is locked (hardness 10, hp 30, break DC 28, Disable Device DC 30). Secured within the coffer is an old and worn masterwork cold iron athame, a ceremonial dagger used by witches. This is Baba Yaga's personal athame, crafted when she first began to delve into witchcraft, and it holds her death magically bound within it, as the matryoshka doll telepathically informs the PCs once it is found. Baba Yaga further tells the PCs that they must take the athame back to Grandmother's Cauldron to continue to release her from the doll. She tells them that the way to leave the island is through a hidden cave and gives them directions to a cave on the island's southern beach (area J), though she does warn them that she left a guardian in place, if she remembers correctly, and that they may need to gather their strength before they face it. Baba Yaga has no further information for the PCs and she doesn't respond to further queries, the effort to speak to the PCs this much having exhausted her.

J. HIDDEN CAVE

The PCs can only locate this small cave by if Baba Yaga guides them to it (see Development, above).

A cliff of broken slate slabs rises from the sands of the southern beach, crawling with many varieties of ivy and numerous ferns. Hidden at the base of the cliff, barely visible in the shadows, is a narrow cave opening leading into the cliff itself.

The tunnels beneath the cliff are a part of a natural fissure in the rock that ranges in height from 7 to 15 feet. Medium creatures must squeeze to navigate these narrow passages, and larger creatures must succeed at DC 30 Escape Artist checks or use some form of magic to fit inside. A constant dripping of water seeping from the cliff above slicks the walls and floors of the tunnels.

J1. Dead End (CR 14)

The tunnel dead-ends here in a large formation of beautiful, faceted crystals.

Creatures: An advanced carnivorous crystal lurks among the crystalline formations at the end of the passage, and it attacks as soon as a living creature comes within reach. In addition, a second carnivorous crystal clings to the ceiling 15 feet above. It quickly crawls along the ceiling to drop down behind the PCs, trapping them between the two oozes.

ADVANCED CARNIVOROUS CRYSTALS (2) **CR 12**
XP 19,200 each
hp 168 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 45, 290)

Treasure: The crystals growing at the end of the tunnel are valuable; if carefully removed, they are worth a total of 5,000 gp.

J2. Witch's Mask

A wooden mask carved from tree bark hangs suspended from a rocky outcrop where the tunnel makes a sharp turn. Dry and cracked from age, with dried strands of moss dangling from the top like stringy hair, the mask displays a crude and somehow sinister woman's visage.

With a successful DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check, a PC can recognize the mask as a type used in some witchcraft rituals. Baba Yaga left the mask here long ago to mark this cave as her own and deter intruders. She does not respond to queries about it, preferring to let her secrets remain her own. The mask appears to be completely mundane and nonmagical, but if anyone dons the mask, for a fleeting moment she feels as if the mask is her true face and her real face just a mask, but this unexplainable feeling passes after a moment and leaves no ill effects. The mask has no other effects or value.

J3. Guardian's Cave (CR 17)

A large cavern suddenly opens beneath the cliff. The ceiling is lost in darkness, though the tips of stalactites can be seen descending from the gloom, several of them ending in jagged stumps and displaying large gouges from great teeth or claws. Stalagmites once lined the floor, but most have likewise been sheared off and reduced to little more than rubble. A dark pool lies at the rear of the cavern, and a small stream runs across the floor from the pool to empty into a deep sinkhole near the south wall. White shards of broken bones litter the cave floor among the rubble and debris.

The ceiling of this cavern is more than 50 feet above. The stream is only a few inches deep but is considered difficult terrain. The sinkhole is 120 feet deep and drains away into an underground river at the bottom, which is littered with broken bones. See Development below for a description of the pool.

Creature: Long ago, Baba Yaga left a guardian in this cave to prevent anyone from using the pool to reach Grandmother's Cauldron. This guardian is a khala, a serpentine dragon with three heads and a whiplike tail. Over the years, the creature has grown too large to leave the cave and has remained here ever since, a true terror to anyone who dares enter Baba Yaga's cave. Despite the *ring of sustenance* that it wears to keep from starving, the three-headed monstrosity is still desperate for the taste of fresh blood and warm flesh between its teeth and immediately attacks with its breath weapons followed by its bites. The khala fights until killed.

KHALA **CR 17**
XP 102,400

Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Irrisen, Land of Eternal Winter 59
 CE Large dragon (cold)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +30

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 15, flat-footed 25 (+6 Dex, +16 natural, -1 size)

hp 261 (18d12+144)

Fort +19, **Ref** +17, **Will** +16

Immune cold, disease, magic paralysis and sleep; **Resist** acid 10, electricity 10

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)

Melee 3 bites +26 (2d10+9/19-20 plus disease), tail +26 (2d8+9 plus grab)

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

Special Attacks breath weapon (60-ft. line, 16d6 cold damage plus encased in ice, Reflex DC 27 half, usable every 1d4 rounds), constrict (2d6+8), rend (2 bites, 2d10+13)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +23)

3/day—empowered *ice storm*, *fire shield* (chill shield only), *incendiary cloud* (DC 25, deals cold damage), *suggestion* (DC 19)

1/day—*control weather*, *polar ray*

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 22, **Con** 27, **Int** 22, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +28 (+32 grapple); **CMD** 38 (can't be tripped)

Feats Alertness, Critical Focus, Empower Spell-Like Ability (*ice storm*), Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Staggering Critical, Stunning Critical

Skills Appraise +27, Bluff +28, Diplomacy +28, Fly +29, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (geography) +27, Knowledge (local) +27, Knowledge (nature) +27, Perception +30, Sense Motive +30, Stealth +23, Survival +26

Languages Abyssal, Draconic, Giant, Hallit, Russian, Skald

SQ tenacious grapple

Gear ring of sustenance

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) Every 1d4 rounds, the khala can fire a jet of frigid liquid up to 60 feet in a straight line from one of its three mouths, dealing 16d6 points of cold damage to the target (Reflex DC 27 for half). Even if this save is successful, the target must succeed at a DC 27 Fortitude save or be encased in ice. A trapped creature must succeed at a DC 25 Strength check or a DC 26 Escape Artist check to break free. Attempting to break free of the ice is a full-round action.

Disease (Su) *Chillbane Fever*: bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 27; *onset* 1 day; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d4 Con damage and target is sickened and fatigued; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

Tenacious Grapple (Ex) A khala does not gain the grappled condition if it grapples a foe with its tail.

Development: Once the PCs have slain the khala, Baba Yaga telepathically contacts them again, instructing them to stab the athame containing her death (see area I) into the body of the guardian beast, which causes the athame's cold iron blade to turn to solid gold.

The way back to Grandmother's Cauldron is through the pool in the rear of the cavern, as Baba Yaga now advises the PCs. Although the water in the pool is dark, cold, and filthy with the detritus of the khala that has lived here for many centuries, it functions identically to the pool in area A5. A creature who completely submerges itself in the water is instantly transported back to Grandmother's Cauldron, emerging from the pool in area A5. From there, the PCs can return to the sacred pool in the grotto (area A3) with the gold athame containing Baba Yaga's death.

BACK TO GRANDMOTHER'S CAULDRON

When the PCs have recovered the athame containing Baba Yaga's death and turned it to gold by stabbing the khala, they can return to Grandmother's Cauldron via the pool in area J3. Upon returning to area A3, Baba Yaga telepathically instructs the PCs to embed the golden athame in the matryoshka doll and soak it in the pool. The athame sinks easily into the doll, though it cannot be used to cut open the doll. If the PCs follow Baba Yaga's instructions, the doll splits open once again (this time along the crack made by the athame), revealing yet another smaller doll inside, just as impervious as the previous ones. Baba Yaga can now speak with the PCs through the doll, though her voice comes through only in a halting, childlike manner. In addition, Baba Yaga grants a third boon to the PCs. Each PC receives the benefit of a *breath of life* spell (CL 20th) the next time he takes enough hit point damage to otherwise kill him. This benefit only works once per PC.

When the PCs open the third layer of the doll, Vigliv appears once again from the bole of the tree at area A2. This appearance is described at the beginning of Part Four.

Treasure: Once the third layer of the matryoshka doll is removed, the athame's gold blade becomes cold iron, but the athame is now a +3 *cold iron heartseeker dagger* (*Ultimate Equipment* 143). With Baba Yaga's death returned to her, she has no more use for the athame, so the PCs can keep the dagger for themselves.

Story Award: Award the PCs 76,800 XP for opening the matryoshka doll's third layer.

PART FOUR: THE COTTAGE IN THE DARK FOREST

Once the PCs have used the gold athame to open the third layer of Baba Yaga's matryoshka doll prison, Vigliv reappears to address the PCs again.

"The death of Baba Yaga is no small thing, and you have succeeded in finding it where none have before. Now that you have secured her death, however, you must also locate and obtain her life. Although Baba Yaga hid her mortality away so death could not find her, to be more than a walking corpse, she must still have life. To this end, she ensured that a wellspring of life would flow in an ever-renewing fountain for her purposes. Guarding and protecting this source of life she tasked to her daughters, the Queens of Irrisen. After one hundred years of rule, these queens rejoin Baba Yaga and take up the responsibility of ensuring that her wellspring of life never runs dry. Now you must face the queens of old to reclaim Baba Yaga's life and escape with your own as well."

Vigliv again retreats back into her tree, but Baba Yaga speaks to the PCs for the first time. Due to the strain of verbal communication from within her prison, she is able to convey only simple ideas and emotions, sounding much like a petulant child. "It's mine and I want it! Get it back from them—they can't have it! I'll tell you if you're getting close. Go now!" Baba Yaga then begins giving simple directions to the PCs to guide them to area A6.

THE COTTAGE IN THE DARK FOREST

The gullet of the frost worm in area A7 transports anyone swallowed by the worm to another demiplane inside the *Dancing Hut*, this time a dark forest containing a quaint wooden cottage. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs arrive.

The virgin trees of an old growth forest tower high into the air, their dense canopy almost completely blocking the sunlight from reaching the forest floor. Very little undergrowth grows in the gloom of the forest floor, just a carpet of old leaves, black with mold, and pine needles dried to a white brittleness. The tree



trunks are a dozen feet in diameter or more but have plenty of room between them, making the forest a spacious, if dimly lit, place. A soft, crisp breeze blows through the air.

A faint trail, just visible through the carpet of leaves, wends between the trees until it reaches a quaint cottage set back between the trees. The cottage is neatly built of timber with a thatched roof that is in good repair. No light shines from the cottage's windows, but a small plume of smoke rises from the hut's stout stone chimney, giving off the scent of wood smoke and the pleasant aroma of baking.

As with the other demiplanes inside the *Dancing Hut*, the forest is not infinite but wandering in any direction eventually leads the PCs back to the doorstep of the cottage. Regardless of how high one climbs or flies, however, the treetops cannot be reached, and the forest floor remains 100 feet below. The forest is always lit by the waning golden rays of evening filtering down through the canopy, regardless of how much time actually passes. Although the occasional cries of birds and the sounds of small, scurrying animals can be heard in the forest, none are ever actually visible.

Baba Yaga's *Dancing Hut* is nearly limitless in scope and size, but sometimes the Old Crone craves a place that is

a bit more quaint and comfortable in which to relax and bide her time. To this end, she constructed this forest demiplane to house a replica of a cottage she once occupied in the forests of Russia centuries ago, and from which countless tales of her were inspired. Beneath the hut, in secret frozen caverns, Baba Yaga hid the source of her long life—the undead remains of her most powerful daughters, the past queens of Irrisen.

Creature: The cottage is haunted by a dybbuk, the undead spirit of a woman named Yarova lost in Baba Yaga's woods long ago who ultimately took her own life in despair. Although Yarova frequently inhabits one of the caverns beneath the cottage (area L5), the dybbuk occasionally possesses various objects in the cottage to toy with visitors, including the PCs. See the individual encounter locations for details of Yarova's activities.

K1. FRONT PORCH

A short stair next to a woodpile climbs up to a veranda surrounding the front and one side of the cottage, its railing and roof decorated with intricate gingerbread woodwork, as are the shutters on either side of the cottage's windows. The windows themselves are composed of rows of triangular panes

of thick, opaque glass set into lead frames. Two comfortable-looking wooden rocking chairs sit on either side of the cottage's front door, which is itself a triumph of woodwork, complete with scrollwork along its arched top and carved images of birds and small animals happily playing.

The porch is as mundane and charming as it seems. The PCs cannot see the interior of the cottage through the windows, but the glass is easily broken. If the PCs break the windows or otherwise damage the house, however, Baba Yaga shrilly screeches at them to "stop breaking my things!" She then pouts and refuses to speak to the PCs anymore except in regard to the broom (see Treasure, below) and the entrance to her caverns in area **K5**.

Anyone who succeeds at a DC 17 Perception check notices the remnants of a line of old breadcrumbs that trails up the steps and around the porch up to the front door. Many of the crumbs have been picked at and removed by birds and other animals, but enough remain for an observant PC to take notice.

Treasure: An old straw broom called a besom leans against the railing in the corner of the porch to the left of the front door. Topped with a small skull with long white hair, the old broom is actually *Baba Yaga's Besom* (see page 62). Baba Yaga's voice identifies it as such, and instructs the PCs to take it, telling them, "It's important, very important."

K2. FRONT ROOM (CR 14)

This room is a child's wonderland. A skilled woodcarver has been hard at work carving and painting all manner of wooden toys, ranging from small animal figurines to life-sized mannequins with articulated limbs painted to resemble beautiful princesses, armored soldiers, and regal kings wearing crowns of gilded foil. The smaller pieces clutter tables, shelves, and even the floor. A small fireplace, its ashes cold, occupies one corner, while next to it stands a comfortably padded chair. A small table holds an assortment of small carving knives and a half-finished wooden figurine. Wood shavings cover the floor in drifts and piles.

Baba Yaga is an accomplished woodcarver and has put the skill to good use over her lifetime to lure hapless individuals into her clutches.

Creatures: When the PCs first enter this room, the dybbuk Yarova who inhabits the cottage (see area **L5**) passes unseen through the floor to possess some of the carvings and figures, causing them to surreptitiously move when the PCs are not looking. The PCs might hear a click of wood, only to turn to find one of the figures facing a different direction, or catch one of the mannequins seemingly winking at them. Allow the PCs to attempt

Perception checks opposed by Yarova's Stealth check to notice the dybbuk moving from figure to figure, but Yarova does not confront the PCs here.

Six of the mannequins in this room are actually advanced wood golems. These living mannequins remain inert unless disturbed or activated by fighting in area **K3** (see Development, below).

LIVING MANNEQUINS (6)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Advanced wood golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 164)

N Medium construct

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +3

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (+4 Dex, +9 natural)

hp 113 each (17d10+20)

Fort +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +8

DR 5/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, magic

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +23 (2d8+6)

Special Attacks splintering (DC 18)

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +17; **CMB** +23 (+25 grapple); **CMD** 37 (39 vs. grapple)

Feats Improved Grapple^B

Treasure: The carved figures are quite skillfully rendered, and anyone willing to pack and haul approximately 500 pounds of the carvings could sell them for a total of 1,500 gp. In addition, the carving knives constitute a set of masterwork artisan's tools for woodcarving.

Development: When the dybbuk possesses the furnace golem in area **K3**, the living mannequins here likewise activate and join the battle in that room.

K3. KITCHEN (CR 14 OR 16)

A great cast-iron stove in one corner keeps this room is pleasantly warm, its stove pipe extending upward through the ceiling. A plate of cookies sits atop the stove's cooling shelf, filling the room with a delicious aroma. A small paper placard stands next to the plate. A table with two tall stools stands next to a door to the south, and another door exits to the east. In the far corner of the room, a child-sized wooden cage hangs by a hook from the rafters. The cage is empty, its door hanging open.

The small placard next to the plate of cookies is scribed in Common and reads, "Welcome to Granny's kitchen. Thank you for coming for dinner. Please come in, have a cookie, and make yourselves at home." Each of the cookies

on the stove has a bite taken out of it. The cookies are made from molasses and raisins and are fairly fresh, are nothing more than tasty treats. If the doll is consulted, Baba Yaga says nothing. The cage in the corner is stout and can hold a Small creature. In the bottom of it is a single child-sized boot, a wax candle with a bite mark in it, and a small, thick stick of wood—the only remains of the last of Baba Yaga's victims brought here.

Creature: As soon as the placard has been read, the dybbuk Yarova (see area L5) passes up through the floor and possesses the cast-iron stove. Baba Yaga created the stove specifically for the dybbuk to possess and control as a furnace golem. When Yarova possesses the stove, it unfolds itself into a vaguely humanoid shape whose stovepipe head brushes the 15-foot-high ceiling, the banked fire in its belly immediately roaring to life.

When the furnace golem activates, any living mannequins remaining in area K2 likewise activate and enter the room to attack, attempting to overpower intruders and toss them into the golem's furnace. The living mannequins do so recklessly, even exposing themselves to additional damage. Both the furnace golem and the living mannequins fight until destroyed.

interior requires a successful DC 30 Strength check to bend the bars. Alternatively, a trapped creature can escape by dealing at least 25 points of damage to the bars (AC 22; the golem's damage reduction applies to attacks against the bars as well). A Huge furnace golem's interior can hold two Medium, eight Small, or 16 Tiny or smaller creatures.

Immunity to Magic (Ex) A furnace golem is immune to spells or spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance. Certain spells and effects function differently against it, as noted below.

- A magical attack that bypasses a furnace golem's cold resistance slows it (as the *slow* spell) for 3 rounds, with no saving throw.

FURNACE GOLEM

CR 14

XP 38,400

Tome of Horrors Complete 333

N Huge construct

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 7, flat-footed 29 (-1 Dex, +22 natural, -2 size)

hp 144 (19d10+40)

Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6

DR 15/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, fire, magic;

Resist cold 20

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee 2 slams +28 (4d6+11 plus 2d6 fire and grab)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon (50-ft. line, 10d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 19 half, usable every 1d4 rounds), furnace interior, grab (Medium or smaller), heat (2d6 fire)

STATISTICS

Str 32, **Dex** 9, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +19; **CMB** +32 (+36 grapple); **CMD** 41 (43 vs. trip)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Furnace Interior (Ex) A furnace golem can try to shove a grabbed opponent up to two sizes smaller than itself into its interior by making a successful grapple check. An opponent thrown into the furnace golem's interior is trapped as a metal grating closes over the opening in the same round. A trapped creature automatically takes 2d6 points of fire damage each round. Escaping the creature's



FURNACE GOLEM

- A magical attack that deals fire damage breaks any *slow* effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for each 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points.

Treasure: The interior of the oven contains the charred remnants of a few child-sized bones as well as a singed but still intact sapphire ring worth 2,000 gp. An *apple of eternal sleep* (*Ultimate Equipment* 281) sits in a nearby cupboard.

Development: When the furnace golem is destroyed, the PCs can catch a brief glimpse of Yarova as the dybbuk leaps laughing from the broken stove to disappear through the eastern wall.

K4. BEDROOM (CR 15)

Gauzy lace curtains hang over the window in this quaint, cozy bedroom. A thick pile of rustic quilts lies folded at the foot of a four-poster bed, atop which sits a tin foot warmer. A wooden rocking chair sits between the windows beside a small table holding a porcelain bowl and pitcher.

This comfortable chamber is just as it appears, a cozy bedroom. The items inside are of sturdy craftsmanship but are not particularly valuable.

Creature: A jotund troll named Gaj, the “Gentleman Jotund,” currently inhabits this room, hunched over beneath the room’s 15-foot-high ceiling. He wears a matching vest and ushanka of wolf fur, concealing eight of his nine heads beneath his vest. Gaj is an ally of Baba Yaga, but the dybbuk Yarova (see area L5) has used her malevolence ability to possess the troll. Yarova cannot use Gaj’s extraordinary or supernatural abilities, but she retains her own mental abilities, spell resistance, spell-like abilities, skills, and feats. She uses Gaj’s body to attack the PCs, attempting to swallow one of them whole while focusing the rest of her attacks on other opponents, one PC at a time.

If the PCs have already defeated Yarova, Gaj greets them here and politely asks them to leave “Grandmother’s cottage.” If the PCs show him the matryoshka doll containing Baba Yaga, or otherwise convince him they are here on Baba Yaga’s business, the giant troll doffs his hat and steps aside, allowing them access to the bedroom’s closet (area K5).

GAJ, THE GENTLEMAN JOTUND CR 15 XP 51,200

Male dybbuk-possessed jotund troll (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 272)

NE Huge humanoid (giant)

Init +3; **Senses** all-around vision, low-light vision, scent; Perception +29

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 7, flat-footed 30 (–1 Dex, +23 natural, –2 size)

hp 216 (16d8+144); regeneration 10 (acid or fire)

Fort +15, **Ref** +5, **Will** +17

SR 26

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee club +21/+16/+11 (2d6+10), bite +16 (2d6+5 plus grab), claw +16 (1d8+5 plus grab)

Ranged rock +11 (2d8+15)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks fast swallow, malevolence (DC 26), possess object, rock throwing (120 ft.), swallow whole (4d6+15 bludgeoning damage, AC 21, 21 hp)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +25)

At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 19), *telekinesis* (DC 22)

3/day—*dominate monster* (DC 26), *feeblemind* (DC 22), *inflict serious wounds* (DC 20)

1/day—*greater heroism*, *modify memory* (DC 21), *tongues*

STATISTICS

Str 31, **Dex** 8, **Con** 29, **Int** 15, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +25 (+29 grapple); **CMD** 34

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lunge, Step Up, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +25, Diplomacy +25, Intimidate +28, Perception +29, Sense Motive +29, Stealth +12

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Russian

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Malevolence (Su) The dybbuk retains its malevolence and possess object abilities while possessing Gaj (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 108).

Development: If the possessed troll is slain, Yarova leaps from the body and disappears through the door to area K5, avoiding combat if possible, and retreats to her lair (area L5). If the PCs drive Yarova from Gaj’s body, she flees the room as described above. Gaj is momentarily disoriented, but unless the PCs dissuade him otherwise, he assumes the PCs attacked him, and renews his attacks. Use the standard jotund troll stat block on page 272 of *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 for Gaj when he is not possessed.

Story Award: If the PCs manage to get past Gaj without fighting him, award them 51,200 XP, as if they had defeated him in combat.

K5. CLOSET

This nondescript closet is lined with cedar panels, and various cloaks, dresses, and robes hang from hooks along the walls.

The floor of the closet is a magical portal that only opens with *Baba Yaga’s besom* (see page 62). When the

PCs first enter this area, the matryoshka doll giggles and says, "Hidey, hidey hole. Can't get in unless you knock, knock, knock with the witch's stick." If the PCs have not yet recovered *Baba Yaga's besom* from area **K1**, Baba Yaga tells them, "You have to find it! I left it in the hut somewhere!"

If *Baba Yaga's besom* is knocked against the back wall of the closet three times, the floor disappears, dumping everyone inside the closet down a 300-foot-deep shaft. However, anyone in the shaft is affected by *feather fall* and drifts safely down to area **L1** in the caverns below the cottage. The floor reappears 1 minute after the shaft opens. Breaking through the floor itself (hardness 5, hp 60, break DC 20) also reveals the shaft beneath the floor.

Treasure: A *shawl of the crone* (*Ultimate Equipment* 268) hangs from a hook on the wall among the other mundane pieces of clothing.

L1. CAVERN ENTRY

A thin rime of ice coats the walls of this cold natural cavern. A heavy woolen curtain hangs over an opening to the north.

The shaft in the closet in the cottage above (area **K5**) deposits creatures in this chamber. One minute after the shaft opens, it disappears, leaving only a solid ceiling of stone 20 feet above. The cavern ceilings maintain this height throughout the rest of the complex unless otherwise noted. If questioned, Baba Yaga states, "Watch out. The cold queens live ahead. Though maybe 'live' isn't the best word for it. But they're very, very angry." After a few moments, the matryoshka doll makes a sniffing noise and she adds, "You're not the first. I smell the blood of my grandchildren ahead."

L2. ICE CAVERN (CR 16)

A thick layer of smooth ice coats the walls, floor, and ceiling of this cavern, creating a translucent shell that looks like a scene out of a fantasyland. Icicles dangle from the ceiling, creating a maze of hanging natural sculptures high above. Some appear to have fallen as clumps of broken ice blocks scattered across the floor.

The floor of this chamber is slippery ice and requires a successful DC 10 Acrobatics check to walk across at half speed. Fighting or trying to move faster requires a successful DC 20 Acrobatics check to avoid slipping and falling prone. A character who makes a double move on the ice and succeeds at his Acrobatics check gains 10 feet of movement per round in a straight line due to sliding, but slides an additional 20 feet after attempting to stop unless able to brake herself.

The broken ice blocks are actually the shattered remnants of ice elementals, which can be identified with a successful DC 21 Knowledge (planes) check. If the remnants are examined, it is apparent that the elementals were destroyed in combat. In fact, they were killed by Winter Guards sent here by Queen Elvanna (see area **L3**) as they passed through this chamber, though left no other traces behind.

Creatures: Six elder ice elementals remain in this cavern. These creatures encountered the Irriseni party earlier and took a beating for not coordinating their attacks. Now the survivors wait beneath the icy floor until all of the PCs are within the cavern before using their ice glide ability to burrow up and surround the PCs, attacking them from all sides. The elementals pursue PCs any fleeing combatants and attempt to force them off the ledge into area **L4**.

ELDER ICE ELEMENTALS (6)

CR 11

XP 12,800 each

hp 152 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 115)

L3. STAGING AREA

When Queen Elvanna seized the *Dancing Hut* following Baba Yaga's capture, she learned of the existence of these caverns and their function as the secret repository of Baba Yaga's life force. In addition to posting the ice devil guards in area **A6**, Elvanna also sent a group of her Winter Guard into the caverns to find Baba Yaga's life and claim it for Elvanna. Using her secret "back door" to the inner sanctum (see area **M7**), Elvanna brought the group from Whitethrone and transported them directly to this chamber. The group arrived only a few hours before the PCs, but its members have already fallen afoul of the denizens of the caves and are all now dead.

The Winter Guard used this chamber as a staging area for their exploration of the caverns. Various items of equipment and supplies are stacked neatly on the floor as if someone expected to be returning here soon. Searching the gear reveals the group apparently consists of five individuals, at least one of whom is likely Large. The equipment is mundane adventuring gear consisting of ropes, packs, food and water, and other assorted items that could come in handy but were left behind until they were needed. A successful DC 20 Knowledge (local) check is enough to recognize some of the equipment is Irriseni in origin.

Treasure: Among the items left behind are an ale jack carved from ivory (worth 125 gp) and a saltcellar composed entirely of magical ice (worth 500 gp). The saltcellar has a faint conjuration aura, and is identifiable as likely having come from the Royal Palace of Whitethrone with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (nobility) check. A character who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check can

surmise that the saltcellar was probably used as a sort of magical key to bring its bearer to this dungeon without traveling through other areas of the *Dancing Hut*, though it no longer possesses the ability to do so.

L4. SMOKY CAVERN (CR 16)

An icy ledge overlooks a rocky cavern filled with foul-smelling smoke. Barely visible through the haze, a jumble of broken stone and debris covers the floor.

This chamber is huge, with a 100-foot high ceiling. The ledge from area L3 lies 60 feet above the floor, which is considered difficult terrain due the treacherous rubble underfoot. The smoke obscures all sight beyond 5 feet and provides concealment to all creatures in the room. In addition, creatures who breathe the smoke must attempt a Fortitude save each round (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or spend that round coughing and choking (this does not affect any other actions). A character who chokes for 2 consecutive rounds takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. The smoke is the result of an *eversmoking bottle* (see Treasure below); although the smoke can be dispersed with wind, it does not dissipate unless the bottle is commanded to reseal.

To the southeast, two ledges 70 feet above the floor lead to area L5. In the southwest corner is a large sinkhole. A piton has been driven into the stone at the edge of the sinkhole, supporting a series ropes knotted together that descend 150 feet down the sinkhole to the floor of area L6. The rough walls of the chamber require successful DC 15 Climb checks to scale, but using the ropes to climb down the sinkhole requires only successful DC 5 Climb checks.

Creatures: A bizarre extraterrestrial plasma ooze, long ago captured by Baba Yaga, lurks beneath the smoke in this chamber, slowly digesting the remains of one of the Winter Guard warriors, Farlof, sent here by Elvanna. As soon as the ooze detects more intruders with its blindsight ability, it activates its magnetic pulse ability and fires plasma rays at opponents. With its blindsight and no breath ability, the plasma ooze is completely unaffected by the smoke. The plasma ooze pursues intruders throughout the cavern, but electromagnetic fields put in place by Baba Yaga keep it from leaving the chamber, either via the ledges or the sinkhole.

PLASMA OOZE CR 16
XP 76,800
hp 241 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 220)

Treasure: Farlof's metal gear lies on the floor of the cavern, where it was attracted by the plasma ooze's magnetic pulse. It consists of a suit of +1 *dwarven plate*, a

+1 *light steel shield*, a +2 *greatsword*, and a *ring of counterspells* (*baleful polymorph*). Farlof's companions used the smoke produced by an *eversmoking bottle* to cover their retreat from the plasma ooze. The bottle lies near the eastern wall, directly across from the ledge to area L2, and can be found with a successful DC 25 Perception check. In addition, one of the ropes leading down into the sinkhole is a *rope of climbing*.

Development: Although the corpse of the Winter Guardsman Farlof can be found in the cavern, what little remains undigested is not enough to be subject to *speak with dead* spells and the like.

L5. USED PUPPETS (CR 15)

Dried and desiccated corpses are stacked against the walls of this chamber like so much cordwood. Seated cross-legged in the center of the chamber is an armored warrior wearing a felt-lined helmet. An axe lies on the floor at his feet, and his hand clutches a bloody dagger as he stares sightlessly straight ahead. The front of his armor is covered in blood, which has pooled in his lap into a tacky, partially coagulated puddle.

The dead warrior was another member of Elvanna's Winter Guard expedition. After the majority of his party fell victim to the linnorms in area L6, this warrior, named Angwalf, fled back up the sinkhole and took refuge here from the plasma ooze in area L4, only to run afoul of the dybbuk Yarova. The dybbuk took possession of Angwalf's body and forced him to cut his own throat, after which he sat here and bled to death. The other bodies in the cabin are all victims of the dybbuk over the long years.

Creature: The dybbuk Yarova makes her lair in this chamber. She is currently hiding among the corpses stacked against the wall. If the PCs examine Angwalf's corpse, Yarova leaps forth, a mad-eyed spectre with blood-red hands, and attempts to possess a likely warrior with her malevolence ability, using the stolen body to battle the other PCs.

YAROVA CR 15
XP 51,200

Female dybbuk (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 108)

hp 207

TACTICS

During Combat Yarova uses her possessed foe's body to fight her other opponents, combined with her own spell-like abilities, dominating others to become her allies and targeting spellcasters with *feeblemind*. If the plasma ooze in area L4 is still alive, she uses *telekinesis* to push enemies off the ledges into that room if given the opportunity.

Morale Here in her lair, Yarova fights until destroyed, even if expelled from her chosen victim.

Treasure: Angwalf's corpse still wears his bloodstained *+1 cold resistance banded mail* and carries a pouch holding a *potion of bear's endurance*, a *potion of remove blindness/deafness*, a ruby worth 500 gp, and 35 gp. His *+2 greataxe* lies on the ground before him.

Development: If the PCs use *speak with dead* to communicate the corpse of the warrior, he is surly and uncooperative (his Will save to resist the spell is +6). If he fails his save, he reveals that his name was Angwalf, and that he and his companions, the warriors Farlof and Lutra, the winter witch Vjerica, and the ice troll Thjalfarr were members of Queen Elvanna's Winter Guard, sent here by Elvanna to recover the life of Baba Yaga. None of the Winter Guards knew exactly what they were looking for, but they were told it could be found in these caverns and they had orders to secure it against any other intruders. Angwalf can relate that Farlof was killed by the plasma ooze in area L4. Angwalf fled when he saw Lutra and Thjalfarr slain by the linnorms in area L6. He does not know what happened to Vjerica.

L6. SANDY CRAGS (CR 16)

Small burning gas vents provide dim light in this vast chamber, and the air is noticeably warmer. The walls are broken and crumbling, rising in a series of crags around the edges of the chamber, some nearly climbing to the ceiling. The floor is covered in fine black sand interspersed with chunks of brittle stone. Near the bottom of the rope lies the charred and still smoldering carcass of some large humanoid-shaped creature. Another corpse, this one less badly burned, lies wedged among the rocks at the base of a nearby crag. Far to the north is a pair of tall bronze doors. One of them stands ajar.

The sinkhole in area L4 descends 70 feet before opening up into the 80-foot-high ceiling of this chamber. The rope in the sinkhole descends the full 150 feet to the floor. Each contour line depicted on the map on page 39 indicates an additional 20 feet of height above the chamber floor (these are cumulative). A successful DC 15 Climb check is required to move among the crags. The bodies are more members of Elvanna's Winter Guard who were slain by the inhabitants of this cavern. The large burned corpse is the ice troll Thjalfarr; the smaller corpse is the human warrior Lutra.

Creatures: Two crag linnorms inhabit this chamber. They nest upon high crags and keep watch over the sinkhole entrance. The fire giants at area L8 bring the linnorms food once a month, but otherwise the dragons sleep here and keep their vigil. Both linnorms are currently awake due to the battle that occurred a few hours ago, and they know one intruder escaped back up the sinkhole, so they keep a close watch on the dangling rope. The linnorms fight to the death but do not leave this chamber.

CRAG LINNORMS (2)

CR 14

XP 38,400 each

hp 202 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 190)

Treasure: The ice troll Thjalfarr's possessions were all immolated with him. Lutra, however, was dropped from a great height and her possessions, a *+2 mithral shirt* and a *rod of thunder and lightning*, were spared. The rest of the linnorms' hoard lies atop the highest crag in the southwest corner of the room. This pile consists of *druid's vestments*, *gloves of arcane striking* (*Ultimate Equipment* 236), a *horn of antagonism* (*Ultimate Equipment* 302), a *potion of protection from cold*, a *potion of slipstream* (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced*



YAROVA

Player's Guide), a golden brooch engraved with the coat-of-arms of Irrisen (worth 80 gp), an amethyst necklace (worth 1,100 gp), three large topazes (worth 200 gp each), 120 pp, 3,800 gp, 5,250 sp, and 10,040 cp.

Development: Although badly crushed and mangled, Lutra's corpse is in good enough shape that *speak with dead* can be used to communicate with her. The ice troll's body is too badly burned. If questioned, Lutra can provide much the same the same information as Angwalf in area L5. She did not see Angwalf flee, but she did notice the winter witch Vjerica slipping through the bronze doors to the north before her life left her.

L7. HELL HOUND KENNELS (CR 15)

The fire giants in area L8 use this cavern as a kennel for their Nessian warhound pets.

Creatures: Six advanced Nessian warhounds inhabit this cavern. They spend most of their time sleeping or roughly "playing" with each other or the fire giants in area L8, and eagerly attack anyone entering their cavern who is not a fire giant.

ADVANCED NESSIAN WARHOUNDS (6) CR 10

XP 9,600 each

hp 150 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 173, 294)

Development: The warhounds begin baying if they spot intruders, alerting the giants in area L8, who prepare for the intruders' arrival.

L8. MAGMA RIFT (CR 17)

The corridor widens into a large cavern before ending precipitously at the edge of a chasm filled with slow-moving magma. Across the rift, the passage continues beyond a landing where two columns of stout, black rock buttress a low wall between them.

This cavern is uncomfortably hot, though not dangerously so. The chasm is 50 feet deep and just over 30 feet wide. A fall into the magma below deals 5d6 points of falling damage plus 20d6 points of fire damage for each round a creature remains immersed in the magma. A creature falling into the magma continues to take 10d6 points of fire damage each round for 1d3 rounds after exposure ceases.

Creatures: A platoon of eight fiendish fire giants is stationed on the landing on the western side of the rift to guard the approach to the hall of thrones. They superstitiously avoid the devils in the next room, and they have no knowledge of what lies behind the doors there. Usually, half of the giants are sleeping at any one time, unless awakened by the baying hell hounds in area

L7, in which case all of them are awake and active. The giants hurl boulders at intruders across the chasm. All receive the benefit of cover from the 10-foot-high stone wall that extends between the pillars. If the PCs manage to make it across the rift, the giants move to engage them in melee, attempting to pin opponents back against the cliff edge. The giants fight to the death.

FIENDISH FIRE GIANTS (8) CR 11

XP 12,800 each

hp 142 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 148, 294)

Treasure: The giants' camp sits on the landing behind the wall, and holds their mundane equipment, including

a Gargantuan assault bridge (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat* 165) that they use to cross the magma chasm to visit the hell hound kennels (area L7) and the sandy crags (area L6) to feed the linnorms there. The camp also holds the giants' accumulated treasures, consisting of a *shatterspike*, *figurines of wondrous power* (golden lions), a *wand of inflict serious wounds* (17 charges), a platinum-and-emerald necklace (worth 3,500 gp), a small diamond (worth 500 gp), two opals (worth 350 gp each), 360 pp, 5,300 gp, and 12,200 cp.

In addition, large metal locker stands against the southwestern wall. Every week it magically fills with charred foodstuffs and barrels of bitter spirits suitable for fire giant palates. The locker itself is not magical, but Baba Yaga's servitors elsewhere in the *Dancing Hut* use their own magic to keep these guards (and the linnorms in area L6) well fed and well provisioned.

L9. HALL OF DEVILS (CR 16)

Gas jets erupt from the rock walls of this long hall to provide it with red-tinted illumination. Animated carvings of devils torturing the souls of the damned decorate the walls, and the floor is lined with a carpet of charred bones and cracked skulls. Screams of pain and terror echo through the room, and the air



FIENDISH FIRE GIANT

is heavy with the stench of brimstone. Two rows of dark stone columns extend down the hall toward double doors of black iron at the far end.

The animated wall carvings and the bones covering the floor, as well as the sounds and smells, are *persistent images* created by this chamber's inhabitant to decorate her abode. In this chamber, these *persistent images* are permanent, powered by Baba Yaga's magic, unless changed or dispelled. The ceiling arches overhead, reaching a height of 60 feet in the center of the chamber. The doors at the end of the hall are cold to the touch and beaded with moisture.

Creatures: This hall is the territory of a handmaiden devil named Olcazra and her retinue of six advanced erinyes. Baba Yaga long ago charged Olcazra with guarding this room, though few realize that her real purpose here is to ensure that Baba Yaga's daughters do not escape their imprisonment in the chamber on the other side of the doors. Nevertheless, Olcazra and her handmaidens are just as capable of defending this area against anyone who would disturb the undead queens beyond.

Currently, Olcazra and her handmaidens are torturing the last survivor of Queen Elvanna's Winter Guard expedition, the winter witch Vjerica. Vjerica escaped the destruction of her party by the linnorms in area L6, and used *invisibility* and flight to bypass the hell hounds and fire giants in areas L7 and L8. Unfortunately for her, these precautions were useless against the devils here, who toyed with the winter witch for some time until Olcazra entrapped her in her tentacle cage.

When the PCs enter the room, the devils finally finish off poor Vjerica. Her lifeless body drops from Olcazra's tentacle cage as the handmaiden devil and the erinyes all take to the air. Olcazra casts *black tentacles* around the PCs, while three of the erinyes teleport into the corridor behind the PCs to cut off their retreat. The remaining erinyes then attempt to entangle anyone not caught in the black tentacles. The erinyes prefer to stay at range to fire flaming arrows at foes, but Olcazra relishes melee combat, attempting to entrap at least one opponent in her tentacle cage while she lashes out at her foes with her claws. The devils fight to the death.

OLCAZRA **CR 14**
XP 38,400
 Handmaiden devil (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 86)
 hp 187

OLCAZRA'S HANDMAIDENS (6) **CR 9**
XP 6,400 each
 Advanced erinyes (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 75*, 294)
 hp 112 each

Treasure: In addition to the erinyes having longswords and composite longbows, Olcazra wears a necklace of gold-plated human vertebrae interspersed with carnelians (worth 1,500 gp). Vjerica's corpse still wears her equipment as well, consisting of *bracers of armor +4*, two *potions of protection from arrows*, a *scroll of fear*, a *scroll of greater teleport*, a *wand of invisibility* (38 charges), and *wings of flying*.

L10. COLD CORRIDOR (CR 15)

The iron doors leading into this corridor from area L9 are locked (hardness 10, hp 120, break DC 28, Disable Device DC 30) and trapped (see Trap below). Once beyond the doors, read or paraphrase the following.

This corridor has walls of smoothed slate coated in a thick rime of frost. A pair of iron doors at the far end likewise bears this coating of frost. Inscribed upon them is an image of a hut atop long, birdlike legs, beneath a stylized crown of icicles.

The temperature is perpetually below -20° F in this corridor, though the PCs are in no danger unless they linger here. The doors to the west are not locked, but they are frozen shut (hardness 10, hp 120, break DC 33). As the PCs approach the doors, the matryoshka doll says, "Watch out. My daughters sit inside. No doubt they're very angry."

Trap: Opening the doors from area L9 causes a blast of frigid air to burst from the doors, forming a cloud of icy mist that quickly evaporates.

FRIGID BLAST TRAP **CR 15**
XP 51,200
Type magic; **Perception** DC 31; **Disable Device** DC 31
EFFECTS
Trigger touch; **Reset** automatic (1d4 rounds)
Effect spell effect (intensified^{APG} *cone of cold*, 20d6 cold damage, DC 19 Reflex save half); multiple targets (all targets in a 60-ft. cone)

L11. HALL OF THRONES (CR 19)

A wide cavern opens away from the door, lit by a diffuse glowing cloud that continually hovers near the ceiling. Arranged in a semicircle around the entrance are fourteen identical stone thrones, their high backs each bearing the same dancing hut sigil and a small plaque beneath. Seated upon twelve of the thrones are corpses dressed in royal regalia in various stages of decomposition. Like the corridor outside, a thin layer of frost covers everything in this room, including the thrones and their occupants.

The air in this room remains at a constant 0° F, so characters lingering here run the risk of hypothermia or frostbite from exposure to the cold (*Core Rulebook* 442).

A *dimensional lock* effect (CL 20th) blocks extradimensional travel into or out of this chamber.

This chamber holds the source of Baba Yaga's unnaturally long life, in the form of the life energy of her daughters who have served as queens of Irrisen. After a daughter has reigned for 100 years as Irrisen's queen, Baba Yaga replaces her with another daughter and takes the dethroned queen and the first generation of her offspring into the *Dancing Hut*. But Baba Yaga's promises of untold power and indescribable experiences as a reward for her daughter's term of service are empty, as she requires her daughter's power and vitality for herself. But if Baba Yaga were simply to slay her daughter outright, all of the former queen's power, aged and matured over 100 years as Irrisen's queen, would pass on and be divided among her children, so Baba Yaga first kills her grandchildren, then brings her daughter to this cavern and magically links her to one of the thrones in this chamber, where she drains her daughter's life force to replenish her own.

But even drained of their vitality, Baba Yaga's daughters do not truly die. With the transfer of power, they become one with her—in a sense gaining the promised power and experiences, though hardly in the spirit of the unspoken agreement. Their bodies remain imprisoned here, next to their enthroned sisters, withered undead husks of the powerful witches they once were, dreaming of half-remembered past glories and thirsting for vengeance against the mother who stole their power. While Elvanna did not know the precise details of her sisters' fate, she came to suspect something of the truth, which formed the primary impetus for her attempted coup.

There are 14 thrones in this chamber, one for each queen in Irrisen's 1,400-year history. Each throne bears the sigil of Baba Yaga and Irrisen and a plaque naming the queen who sits upon it (recognizable with a successful DC 15 Knowledge [local] check). In order from earliest to most recent, left to right, they are Jadwiga, Morgannan, Urvalane, Pjallarane, Aelena, Harcatha, Sascha, Karina, Tashanna, Velikas, Kseniya, Betyrina, Yelizaveta, and Elvanna. Twelve of the thrones hold what's left of Baba Yaga's daughters. Those daughters to the extreme left are little more than brittle bones with leathery skin stretched over them, while those on the right are in much better condition, their pale corpses yet unblemished by the passage of time. The ninth throne (Tashanna's) and the fourteenth (Elvanna's) are empty. Elvanna has yet to be enthroned here, and Tashanna, who led her own revolt against Baba Yaga 500 years ago, impressed her mother enough that she was spared this fate.

When the PCs first enter the chamber, Baba Yaga giggles, and her voice issues from the matryoshka doll: "There they are; twelve queens all in a row. Such beautiful,

loyal daughters... they each ruled a hundred years and then gave me their lives so I could live on. The life of Baba Yaga sits before you; all you need to do is take each of their hearts and steep them to make a fine witch's brew." She giggles again and goes silent.

Creatures: Baba Yaga's daughters are now undead creatures called crone queens, their youth and vitality drained to sustain Baba Yaga, but the Witch Queen's magic and the lingering remnants of their own power keep them in a state somewhere between life and death. All 12 of the enthroned queens writhe and twitch with foul necrotic animation, but the first eight crone queens are fused to their thrones, the long centuries having taken their toll, leaving them little more than barely sentient shells, slumbering in deathlike torpor. These eight ignore the PCs, but the last four crone queens—Velikas, Kseniya, Betyrina, and Yelizaveta—still retain much of their memories and seethe with hatred of Baba Yaga. They can sense the presence of their mother in the matryoshka doll carried by the PCs and leap from their thrones to attack the PCs as soon as they enter. The four crone queens fight until destroyed.

BETYRINA, KSENIYA, VELIKAS, AND YELIZAVETA (4) CR 15 XP 51,200 each

Crone queens (see page 84)

hp 209 each

Treasure: Each of the enthroned crone queens wears the garb of an Irriseni queen, a royal outfit worth 200 gp each, as well as an assortment of jewelry worth 3,000 gp each. In the southern corner of the room is a small table and two chairs. A brass samovar—a traditional Russian tea urn—sits upon the table, beside a silver platter containing a complete silver tea service for eight, worth a total of 900 gp.

Development: Once the four active crone queens have been defeated, Baba Yaga instructs the PCs to remove the heart of each of the queens present. The eight remaining crone queens are unable to stop the PCs from doing so, at most weakly raising their arms or moving their heads to glare at the PCs with icy hatred as their frozen hearts (or what remains of them) are cut out of their chests. Placing the 12 hearts of the crone queens in the teapot atop the samovar immediately transports the PCs back to the sacred pool in Grandmother's Cauldron (area A3).

LEAVING THE HALL OF THRONES

Upon returning to Grandmother's Cauldron with the samovar containing the frozen hearts of the 12 crone queens, Baba Yaga instructs the PCs to fill the samovar with water from the sacred pool, heat it to boiling and steep the hearts in the water, then pour the brew over the

matryoshka doll. Doing so causes the doll to crack open once again, revealing the last doll inside. Baba Yaga can now speak freely with the PCs through the final doll, and she immediately begins to chastise them for their slowness and any perceived mistakes they've made to this point. She is rude and acerbic but does not push the PCs too far. Though they still need her to save their world, she still needs them to free her. In addition, Baba Yaga grants the PCs a fourth boon. Each PC gains a permanent +2 inherent bonus to one ability score of the PC's choice.

With the final doll revealed, Vigliv appears from her tree to give the PCs one last bit of guidance. This is described at the beginning of Part Five.

Story Award: Award the PCs 76,800 XP for opening the matryoshka doll's fourth layer.

PART FIVE: THE WITCH QUEEN'S KURGAN

With the final layer of the matryoshka doll removed, Vigliv appears one final time from the trunk of her tree.

"The fate, the power, the death, and the life of Baba Yaga, all have you claimed. Only one thing remains for you to break her free from her prison and save your world: her blood, which flows through the veins of the ruling queen of Irrisen, her daughter Elvanna. Elvanna's blood is her birthright, handed down from her mother, and represents both Baba Yaga's and Elvanna's burning desire to rule their fates and those of others. It is only with Elvanna's blood, returned to her mother, that you can save your world from the eternal winter that threatens it.

"Even now, Elvanna has sequestered herself in Baba Yaga's inner sanctum, here in the *Dancing Hut*, where Baba Yaga formulated her most potent spells and executed her most glorious triumphs, and where Elvanna now works her greatest ritual to cement her power, conquer your world, and supplant her own mother as Queen of Witches.

"Now you must go to this sanctum and face Queen Elvanna before she can finish her ritual. But beware, for time is running short, and Elvanna is truly her mother's daughter. Her will to power is as strong as the blood in her veins, and she will not give up her desires easily. Heed the guidance of Baba Yaga, however, and you may yet win the day, freeing her and saving your world."

Unless the PCs intend to attack Vigliv or her tree, this is the last time they encounter the primordial norn. If their dealings with Vigliv so far have been respectful and considerate of one of her power and age, Vigliv grants them a final boon before leaving, giving each of the PCs a golden thread. Vigliv explains that she has harvested these excess threads from the PCs' own threads of fate, which have grown long and densely plied as they have pursued their quest to free Baba Yaga and save their

THE THREADS OF FATE

Each PC may cut his (and only his) harvested thread once as an immediate action to change his fate as desired from the possibilities below. This is a supernatural ability and does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Anyone else cutting the thread has no effect. Once a thread has been cut, it loses its golden luster and becomes nonmagical. Cutting these excess threads does not harm the PCs in any way.

CUTTING THE THREADS OF FATE

When a PC cuts his thread of fate, he can choose one of the following benefits, which takes place immediately.

- The PC can reroll one saving throw, attack roll, skill check, or ability check and take the higher of the two rolls.
- The PC gains an extra standard action on his turn for 1 round, even to cast a second spell if so chosen.
- The PC can change his place in the initiative order one time to the position of his choice.
- The PC gains a +10 luck bonus on one roll of his choice or to his AC for 1 round.
- All of the PCs' current wounds are completely healed.
- All conditions currently affecting the PC are removed.
- The PC can recall up to 12 levels of spells that have already been cast or spell slots that have been used, restoring them to the character's mind, just as if they had not been cast. For example, a character could recall one 9th-level spell and one 3rd-level spell, or three 4th-level spells, or any combination of spells, provided the total number of spell levels does not exceed 12.

world. See the sidebar on this page for the powers of these threads of fate. After granting of this boon, Vigliv disappears back into her tree.

When Vigliv departs, Baba Yaga speaks again, taking a more conciliatory tone with the PCs to make peace with them after the tongue lashing she gave them (though she can't resist making occasional cutting remarks). She tells them that Elvanna is indeed already in her inner sanctum working on her ritual, but is still a couple of days away from completing it. If the PCs wish to prepare for this final showdown, they may rest before entering the inner sanctum. If the PCs want to reequip themselves or sell off their treasure to buy new equipment, this would be a good time to call on the mercane Zilvazaraat (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #70 13). The PCs would do well to remember that the *Dancing Hut* still stands on Earth, where there are no "magic shops" to buy or sell magical gear, likely making the mercane their only option to equip themselves for the upcoming battle. There should be just enough time to send Zilvazaraat an order and receive its delivery before Elvanna completes her ritual.

M. THE WITCH QUEEN'S KURGAN



Once the PCs are ready to face Queen Elvanna, Baba Yaga instructs them to take the samovar from the hall of thrones with them and leads them to the curved, narrowing cliff path at area A8.

THE ENDLESS STEPPE

Anyone stepping into the cave at area A9 immediately finds herself standing in the midst of a lonely, frigid steppe with a bitter wind howling out of the north. The sky is an endless leaden, overcast dome above a brown plain of frozen mud and dry grass. The Endless Steppe is another demiplane within the *Dancing Hut*. A *dimensional lock* effect (CL 20th) blocks all extradimensional travel within the demiplane. There is no sign of the cave entrance that brought the PCs here; the PCs will need to free Baba Yaga if they want to escape the Endless Steppe.

Baba Yaga explains that this demiplane mimics her homeland in southern Russia, where she found an ancient burial mound called a kurgan and took it as her abode in the time before she constructed her *Dancing Hut*. Later, she transported that kurgan inside her hut to serve as her inner sanctum. Baba Yaga advises the PCs that whichever direction they travel, and by whatever means, the Witch Queen's Kurgan (area M) lies 1 day

away. She warns that Queen Elvanna has undoubtedly already been here and has likely turned Baba Yaga's guardians against her. In addition, Baba Yaga knows that at least one native creature of the frigid steppes inhabits the demiplane. It never previously inconvenienced her, so she never bothered to hunt it down, but she cautions the PCs to be wary.

HOWL OF THE WINDWALKER (CR 17)

Regardless of what method of travel the PCs use, night falls before they reach the Witch Queen's Kurgan.

Creature: As the sun sinks to the horizon, the PCs catch their first hint of the predator that Baba Yaga warned them of—a wendigo that haunts the Endless Steppe. The wendigo begins stalking the PCs as they make their way toward the Witch Queen's Kurgan, using its howl when night has fallen or when the PCs first make camp, if they choose not to push on through the darkness. If the PCs do camp on the steppe, the wendigo howls again in the dead of the night before making use of its dream haunting ability to try to infect a sleeping PC with wendigo psychosis. Just before dawn, whether the PCs camp or not, the wendigo howls again as a precursor to an attack, using *wind walk* to try to snatch a single PC—particularly one who is sleeping.

If successful, the wendigo deposits the captive PC atop the kurgan at area **M**, where that character might have to face the guardians there without the aid of his companions. The wendigo otherwise tries to avoid combat, preferring to retreat and await the PCs in its lair (area **M5**).

WENDIGO**CR 17****XP 102,400****hp** 279 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 281)**M. THE WITCH QUEEN'S KURGAN (CR 17)**

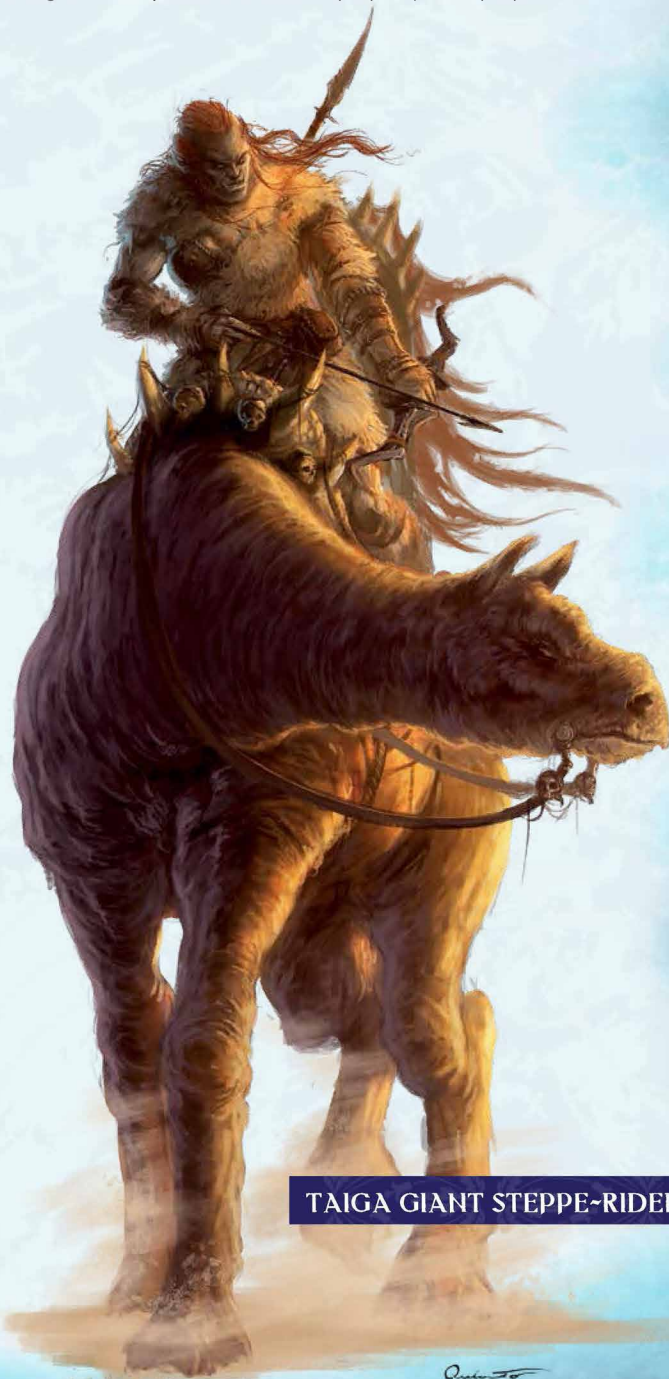
When the PCs arrive at the Witch Queen's Kurgan, read or paraphrase the following.

Rising from the bleak plain like a beacon stands a huge earthen mound. It is clearly artificial, protruding prominently from the otherwise flat steppe, but it is just as obviously thousands of years old, as its contours are the natural result of long years of wind and rains, and the brown grasses of the steppe grow in an unbroken blanket over its sides. A low, dark entrance, little more than a cave opening, leads into the mound near the bottom on the south face, framed by two mammoth tusks. Two squat, lichen-covered female statues flank this opening, but the details of whatever they once depicted have long since been erased by the years.

Baba Yaga originally found this 60-foot-high burial mound on the steppe in southern Russia that her own people once traversed in their nomadic wandering. This mound, or kurgan, belonged to a far older culture that had long since departed, so Baba Yaga took the kurgan as her first lair as she began her rise to power among mortals. She neither knows nor cares about the people that once used this place, only that their reverence of an ancient goddess mirrored her own vanity early on, and she chose to adopt it for her own secret ends.

Creatures: Baba Yaga is not aware of every creature that lives within this demiplane, which is but one of many contained within the *Dancing Hut*. Many years ago, a matriarchal tribe of taiga giants was pulled into this demiplane as part of another experiment and forgotten. They have made a home here and flourished, and have come to regard the kurgan as sacred ground. Baba Yaga rarely left the confines of her mound when present, and so she has never encountered the taiga giants, but a scouting party sent out by Queen Elvanna managed to stir the giants up (and were subsequently slain by them). As a result, four taiga giants riding Gargantuan baluchitheriums are now patrolling the perimeter of the mound. These giantesses use bows instead of throwing boulders, have skill ranks in Ride rather than in Climb, and have replaced their Alertness, Cleave, Power Attack, and Self-Sufficient feats with Deadly Aim, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat,

and Weapon Focus. The giants performed their spirit-summoning rituals before riding out, and attack anyone approaching the kurgan. They fight to the death and hunt anyone who flees, but they do not enter the kurgan since their tribe considers the mound taboo.

TAIGA GIANT STEPPE-RIDERS (4)**CR 12****XP 19,200 each****hp** 157 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 131)**Ranged** +2 composite shortbow +14/+9/+4 (2d6+12/x3)**TAIGA GIANT STEPPE-RIDER**

Feats Deadly Aim, Endurance, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Shot on the Run[®], Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (composite shortbow)

Skills Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +11, Ride +7, Stealth +6 (+12 in undergrowth), Survival +16

Gear hide armor, +2 *composite shortbow* (+10 Str) with 30 arrows, spear

GIANT BALUCHITHERIUMS (4) CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 138 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 192, 291)

Treasure: Besides their bows, each giantess carries an ivory figurine of their ancient goddess, resembling a crudely stylized female figure, carved from a mastodon tusk (worth 600 gp each) and has assorted bangles of copper and semiprecious stones hanging from their saddles (worth 300 gp each). In addition, one carries a bag containing the treasures looted from Elvanna's patrol: a +2 *returning spear*, two masterwork longswords, a horned *helm of brilliance*, three pearls (worth 100 gp each), and 385 gp in Irriseni currency. Lastly, the two mammoth tusk doorposts framing the kurgan's entrance are worth 1,200 gp each, though each weighs upward of 150 pounds.

M1. Ancient Shrine (CR 16)

A vast chamber has been dug out of the mound, the ceiling overhead supported by stout wooden posts and shored up with rough timbers to prevent the packed dirt from collapsing. A large alcove in the north side of the chamber holds a strange statue depicting a humanoid with the head of a hippopotamus, sitting cross-legged and clutching a double-bladed greataxe in its massive hands. Although dark stains smear the statue's features, it has been beautifully preserved from the passing ages by its sheltered position inside the mound.

The interior walls and floors in the mound are composed of hard-packed earth and stone. The ceiling in this chamber is 30 feet high. Elsewhere in the mound, all ceilings are 15 feet high and are clad in the same rough timbers as described in this chamber, unless otherwise noted. The mound has settled enough that even removing the wooden beams from the ceiling does not cause an immediate collapse. The chambers inside the mound are dark unless otherwise noted.

Creatures: The ancients who originally built this kurgan traveled from more southern lands and carried with them the belief in a god of the underworld who took the form of a hippopotamus-headed humanoid whose name is long lost to history. They built this idol and made countless blood sacrifices to it over the centuries before

they finally moved on. As it received its blood sacrifices over the years, the idol somehow developed a sentience and became an animated construct. Now it attacks any who enter this chamber other than the wendigo (area M5) or Baba Yaga. The idol has never attacked Baba Yaga, and she is unaware that it is sentient. The idol attempts to charm anyone examining it and then stands up and spits an ooze to block intruders from retreating. The idol then activates its fear aura and charges into melee combat with its axe. The idol pursues intruders anywhere within the kurgan, and fights until destroyed. If brought to area M7, the idol can even be used against Queen Elvanna, as it attacks all intruders indiscriminately.

IDOL OF THE FORGOTTEN GOD CR 16

XP 76,800

Advanced bipedal stone idol behemoth hippopotamus

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 157, *Advanced Bestiary 27*, 230)

N Huge construct (augmented animal)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +21

Aura fear (60 ft., DC 21, 1 hour)

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 8, flat-footed 27 (+19 natural, -2 size)

hp 155 (21d10+40)

Fort +14, **Ref** +14, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities hardness 8, half damage from energy attacks and ranged attacks; **Immune** construct traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee *labrys of the stone idol* +27/+22/+17 (6d6+19/x3), bite +19 (4d8+5/19-20 plus grab) or

bite +24 (4d8+11/19-20 plus grab), 2 slams +24 (1d8+11)

Ranged spit ooze +13 touch (3d6 plus ooze effects)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks capsize, charming gaze (10 ft., DC 23), spit ooze, trample (2d6+16, DC 31)

STATISTICS

Str 33, **Dex** 10, **Con** —, **Int** 6, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +28 (+30 bull rush, +32 grapple); **CMD** 38 (40 vs. bull rush)

Feats Ability Focus (charming gaze), Awesome Blow, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Martial Weapon Proficiency (greataxe), Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Perception +21, Stealth +3, Swim +15

Languages Proto-Indo-European

SQ power from worship

Gear *labrys of the stone idol* (+3 *stone impact greataxe*; see page 63)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Charming Gaze (Su) Any creature within 10 feet of the idol of the forgotten god that meets its gaze must succeed at a DC 23

Will save or be affected as though by a *charm monster* spell (caster level 7th). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Fear Aura (Su) As a free action, the idol of the forgotten god can project a continuous aura of fear. Every creature within 60 feet must succeed at a DC 21 Will save or be shaken for 1 hour. Creatures charmed by the idol are immune to this effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Power from Worship (Su) For every 10 creatures with Intelligence scores of 6 or higher that are currently charmed by the idol of the forgotten god's charming gaze, the idol gains 2 temporary hit points and a +1 bonus on Perception checks.

Spit Ooze (Su) As a standard action once every 1d4 rounds, the idol of the forgotten god can spit an advanced glacial ooze (see below) from its mouth at a single target within 60 feet. This is a ranged touch attack that deals 3d6 points of bludgeoning damage plus the ooze's slam attack damage to the target. On a successful hit, the ooze also automatically engulfs the target. An ooze takes no damage from being spit, and does not provoke attacks of opportunity as it travels to its target.

Entrap (Ex) A creature encased in ice from a glacial ooze's entrap ability takes 2d4 points of cold damage each round until freed.

Transparent (Ex) A glacial ooze is hard to identify, even under ideal conditions, and a successful DC 20 Perception check is required to notice one. Creatures who fail to notice a glacial ooze and walk into it are automatically engulfed.

Treasure: Over the years, a number of items have been left as offerings to the idol, which lie collected at its feet, including a *dark blue rhomboid ioun stone*, a *scroll of insect plague* scribed on a piece of uncured hide, a pile of uncut gems (worth 2,800 gp total), seven bits of mammoth ivory with rough scrimshaw carvings of elk and plains bison (worth 50 gp each), and a section of petrified tree trunk 3 feet high, 1 foot thick, and weighing 225 pounds that has been carved to resemble some crude prehistoric deity or nature spirit (worth 3,500 gp).

ADVANCED GLACIAL OOZE

CR —

Tome of Horrors Complete 458

N Large ooze (cold)

Init -3; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; Perception -5

DEFENSE

AC 10, touch 6, flat-footed 10 (-3 Dex, +4 natural, -1 size)

hp 135 (10d8+90)

Fort +12, **Ref** +0, **Will** -2

DR 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** cold, ooze traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee slam +12 (2d6+9 plus 1d6 cold)

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

Special Attacks cold, engulf (DC 21, 1d6 cold and entrap), entrap (DC 24, 1d6 rounds, hardness 0, hp 10)

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 5, **Con** 28, **Int** —, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

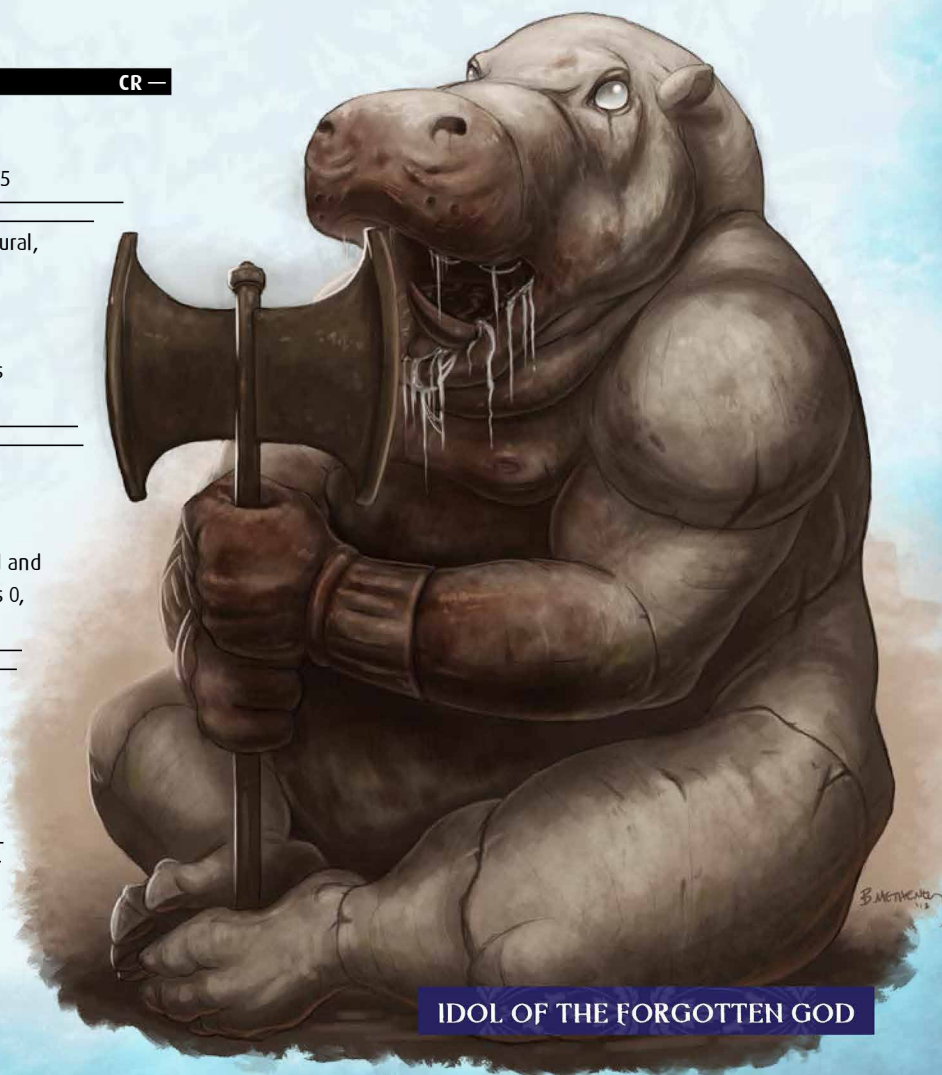
Base Atk +7; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 21 (can't be tripped)

Skills Swim +14

SQ transparent

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cold (Ex) A glacial ooze's form is extremely cold, dealing 1d6 points of cold damage with its slam attack. Creatures attacking a glacial ooze unarmed or with natural weapons take this cold damage each time one of their attacks hits.



IDOL OF THE FORGOTTEN GOD

M2. Chamber of Hides (CR 16)

This chamber is musty and smells faintly of decay. Stacked against the walls are hundreds of bundles of hides and pelts, votive offerings left by whatever people built this place long ago.

Creature: Included among the many hides, stiff with dry rot, are rolls of scaled skin—identifiable as the shed skins of giant snakes with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (nature) check. If anything in the room is disturbed or the intruders linger here longer than 2 rounds, these dried snakeskins animate as a hollow serpent and attack. The creature fights until destroyed but does not leave this room.

HOLLOW SERPENT CR 16

XP 76,800

hp 230 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 149)

Treasure: The vast majority of the pelts and hides here have succumbed to age and are worthless, but secreted among the piles of stiff and rotten furs is one black bear pelt that remains as supple as the day it was cured. Enchanted long ago by primitive shamans, this pelt functions as a *cloak of resistance +5*, and can be found with a successful DC 32 Perception check.

M3. Guarded Passage

The corridor widens here to create two alcoves containing stylized stone statues of saber-toothed tigers engraved by the ancients with crude glyphs and sigils.

Although they appear similar to the taotiehs in area M4, the saber-toothed tigers here are just inanimate statues.

M4. Hall of Guardians (CR 15)

Six pillars support the wooden ceiling of this chamber. Four stone statues of saber-toothed cats stand between the pillars.

Creatures: Unlike the statues in area M3, the four statues here are guardian constructs called taotiehs. They attack anyone other than Baba Yaga who passes through this room and stalk intruders throughout the kurgan and even onto the steppe outside. Once they have sighted prey, they do not relent until their quarry is dead or they are destroyed.

TAOTIEHS (4) CR 11

XP 12,800 each

hp 107 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 260)

Treasure: One of the taotiehs swallowed a valuable treasure long ago and still retains it in its extradimensional

core. If the taotieh is destroyed, an *instant fortress* can be found among the rubble with a successful DC 30 Perception check.

M5. Lair of the Windwalker (CR 17)

Two earthen tunnels converge here, and the floor of the intersection is clogged with broken bones and bits of dried flesh from creatures that obviously met violent deaths. The cobwebs and advanced state of decay of some of the remains show that these remains have been collected here for many, many years.

Unless the PCs specifically state they are examining the ceiling here, only those characters succeeding at a DC 20 Perception check notice that the wooden ceiling of the corridor ends 20 feet before this intersection. Above the intersection itself, the ceiling rises 50 feet.

Creature: In the south wall of the intersection, 40 feet up, a ledge has been cut away to form a lair for the wendigo that stalks the steppes around the kurgan. If the wendigo was not already slain as the PCs approached the kurgan (see page 50), it waits here for its prey. The wendigo takes its meals on the ledge and then casually knocks the remains over to accumulate in the corridor below. The wendigo uses its howl before attacking, and attempts to snatch a victim to take up to its ledge and consume at its leisure. It fights to the death against intruders that have penetrated this far into its abode. If the wendigo was already killed, this area is empty.

WENDIGO CR 17

XP 102,400

hp 279 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 281)

Treasure: Among the bits of bone and half-eaten flesh that remain on the ledge, a skeletal hand still wearing a *ring of shooting stars* can be found with a successful DC 24 Perception check.

M6. Doors to the Inner Sanctum (CR 10)

Trap: The stone double doors leading into the inner sanctum are not locked, but Queen Elvanna has placed a *symbol of vulnerability* (CL 20th, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 243) on them. The symbol activates when anyone approaches close enough to read it.

SYMBOL OF VULNERABILITY CR 10

XP 9,600

Type magic; **Perception** DC 34; **Disable Device** DC 34

EFFECTS

Trigger spell; **Duration** 200 minutes; **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*symbol of vulnerability*^{UM}, 60-ft. radius)

M7. Inner Sanctum (CR 21)

This chamber has been cut from the heart of the kurgan in the shape of a crescent moon. A pale glow from the center of the room illuminates two tall stone statues. The one on the left is a crude female figure with exaggerated feminine features, an ancient fertility idol representing the nameless goddess revered by the original builders of this mound. The one on the right is much more skillfully carved with more modern techniques, depicting a beautiful woman standing tall and proud, robed in witch's garb, her left hand extended outward to receive a supplicant and her right holding up a crescent moon above her head. Between the two statues, an ancient, pitted iron cauldron bubbles over a fire pit, steam rising from its contents, and giving forth the pale, white radiance that provides the room's dim light. A tall mirror with a frame of glittering ice stands behind the cauldron.

This chamber is Baba Yaga's inner sanctum, where she has conducted her most powerful magic for centuries. The entire chamber is blanketed by a permanent *mage's private sanctum* effect (CL 20th) put in place by Baba Yaga years ago.

The wooden ceiling 40 feet above is skillfully joisted, and no columns interrupt the floor space. The statue on the left was crafted by the original builders of the kurgan to propitiate their goddess of the moon. A young Baba Yaga carved the second statue herself to mark her own rise in power and to presage her ambition to supplant the goddess who once held sway over the steppes she walked. Despite its decrepit appearance, the cauldron between the two statues is impervious to all physical and magical damage, and has an overwhelming aura of transmutation—it has been the wellspring for many of Baba Yaga's most potent magics, and now serves the same function for Elvanna's ritual. The cauldron is actually a part of the *Dancing Hut*, and cannot be removed from the hut. The mirror behind the cauldron is Elvanna's "back door" into the inner sanctum. This *mirror gate* has a strong aura of conjuration, and serves as a permanent *gate* between the inner sanctum and the Royal Palace in Whitethrone. The *mirror gate* functions only for Elvanna herself, and like the portal in the cave in area A9 that brought the PCs to the Endless Steppe, it is unaffected by the demiplane's *dimensional lock* effect.

Creatures: Queen Elvanna, the fourteenth daughter of Baba Yaga, is here working her ritual to expand Irrisen's

eternal winter over all of Golarion. In fact, Elvanna has been freely moving between the Royal Palace and the inner sanctum the entire time the *Dancing Hut* has been in the PCs' possession. With her ritual nearing its conclusion, however, Elvanna has sequestered herself here in the inner sanctum, accompanied by two slimy demodands who act as bodyguards and protectors. Elvanna still requires another 2 days to complete the ritual, however, and she is not about to let the PCs stop her now.

The two statues are actually shield guardian stone golems, created by Baba Yaga to protect the sacred confines of her inner sanctum. As Elvanna's blood is the blood of Baba Yaga, the shield guardians have not automatically attacked her, but neither can she control them.

At this point, Baba Yaga remains trapped inside the matryoshka doll. As the PCs battle Elvanna, she can at last vent her rage upon her rebellious daughter. Baba Yaga's actions are limited, but she telepathically informs the PCs that they can give up the boon of damage resistance or spell resistance that she previously granted them (see Return to Mаметqul's Tent on page 25) to gain control of one of the shield guardians.

If a PC chooses to do so, he must spend a move action to permanently lose the damage resistance or spell resistance granted by Baba Yaga and choose one of the shield guardians to control. Thereafter, that PC is considered the chosen shield guardian's master, as if he possessed the golem's keyed amulet, and can issue orders to the shield guardian. If two PCs are willing to sacrifice their boons in this way, then both shield guardians can be turned against Elvanna.



BABA YAGA

QUEEN ELVANNA CR 20

XP 307,200

hp 232 (see page 58)

SLIMY DEMODANDS (2) CR 16

XP 76,800 each

hp 241 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 70)

TACTICS

During Combat The demodands move to intercept anyone attempting to engage Elvanna in melee combat. They cast *acid fog* to control the battlefield and attempt to summon tarry demodand allies if they seem outnumbered or outmatched.

Morale The demodands fight to the death, faithfully defending Queen Elvanna.

GUARDIANS OF THE INNER SANCTUM (2)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

Shield guardian stone golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 158, 163)

N Large construct

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 8, flat-footed 26 (-1 Dex, +18 natural, -1 size)

hp 107 each (14d10+30); fast healing 5

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

DR 10/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, magic

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee 2 slams +22 (2d10+9)

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

Special Attacks slow (DC 17)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; concentration +8)

1/day—shield other, spell storing (fertility idol contains *bestow curse* [DC 32], witch contains *debilitating portent*^{UC}; both CL 20th)

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 9, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +24; **CMD** 33

SQ find master, guard

Development: If the PCs defeat Elvanna, Baba Yaga demands that they soak the final matryoshka doll in Elvanna's blood to finally free her. If the PCs balk at doing this, Baba Yaga informs them that only she can reverse the ritual that Elvanna started—without her, Irrisen's winter will spread to encompass all of Golarion. A successful DC 25 Spellcraft check confirms this fact—the means to end the ritual is beyond the power of the PCs. Assuming the PCs agree to free Baba Yaga, soaking the matryoshka doll in Elvanna's blood causes the doll to crack open. Thick white smoke pours from the broken doll, and 1 round later, Baba Yaga appears in person. The Queen of Witches is free once more!

Story Award: Releasing Baba Yaga from the final matryoshka doll earns the PCs an award of 100,000 XP.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With Queen Elvanna defeated and Baba Yaga freed, the PCs' quest is nearly at an end. As promised, Baba Yaga chants a short incantation, causing the bubbling cauldron to go dark and still. All across Golarion, Elvanna's winter portals close, sparing Golarion its frigid fate. With another incantation, Baba Yaga shatters Elvanna's *mirror gate*, permanently shutting the "back door" to her inner sanctum. If Elvanna somehow survived the final battle, Baba Yaga demands that the PCs turn her over so she can properly punish her wayward daughter. Whether they agree or not, Baba Yaga takes control of the helpless witch, refusing to allow the

PCs to do her further harm and magically whisking Elvanna away—presumably to an icy throne deep within the *Dancing Hut* to join her sisters.

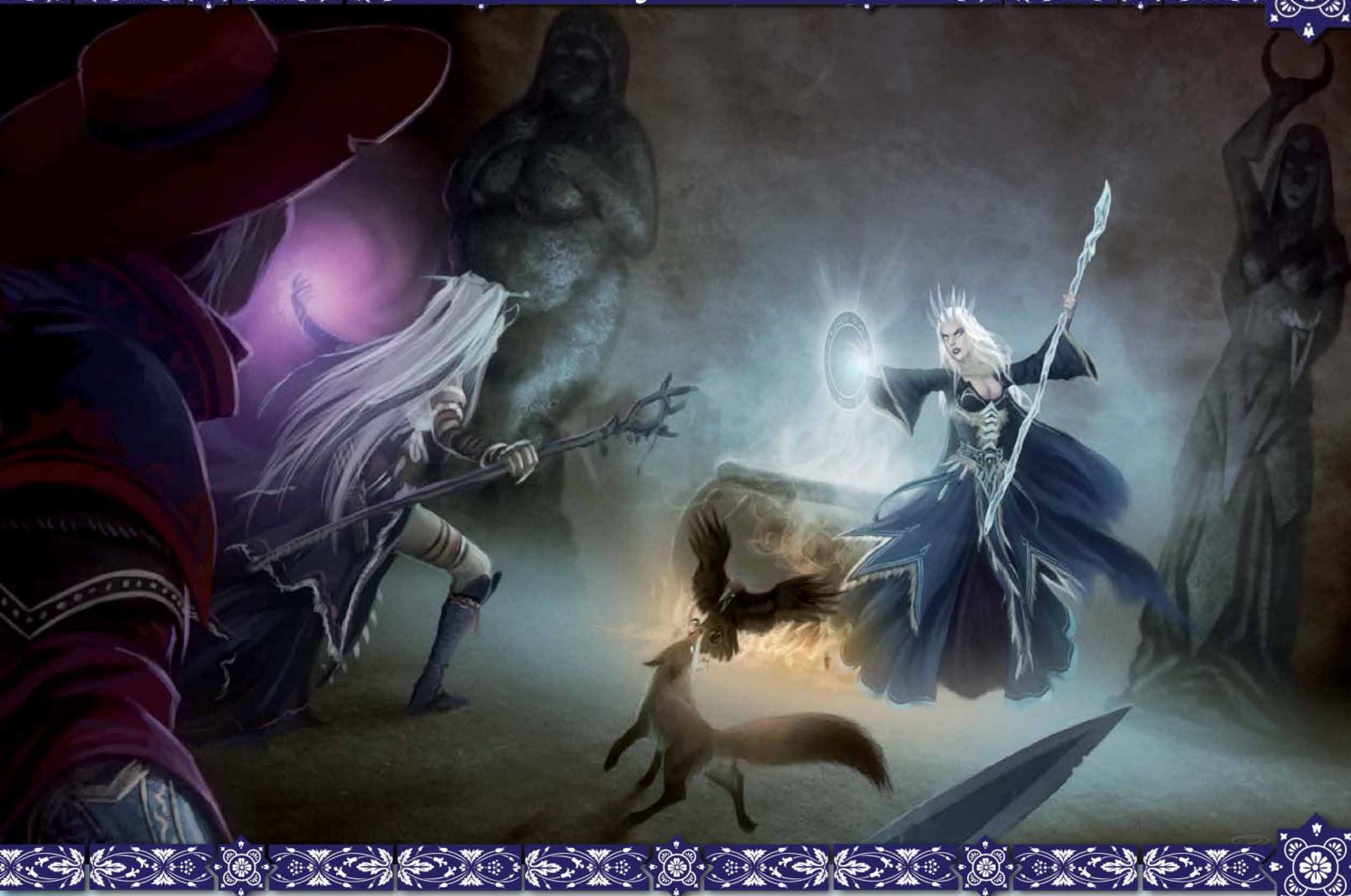
Although Baba Yaga is evil, the PCs have done her a great service, and the Queen of Witches is not without a sense of gratitude. She allows the PCs to keep the boons she granted them during this adventure, as well all of the treasures they have recovered from within her *Dancing Hut* (Baba Yaga can always craft more) and from Elvanna, with the exception of the *Icecrown of Irrisen*, which will go to the next queen of Irrisen. Now that Baba Yaga is free, the PCs have no more need of the mantle of the Black Rider; Baba Yaga revokes the mantle, removing the *geas*, but the PCs retain the ability score increases they gained from the mantle. In addition, Baba Yaga offers the PCs a final boon—any one thing that is within her power (within reason) to grant. See *Continuing the Campaign* on page 64 for examples of the rewards Baba Yaga is willing to grant. As the *Dancing Hut* remains on Earth, Baba Yaga is also willing to return the PCs to Golarion—though they would be wise to word their request politely and carefully, or this could count as their boon. Regardless, unless the PCs attempt some double cross, Baba Yaga is true to her word and grants the PCs the boons they request in good faith and in perpetuity.

WHAT DOES BABA YAGA DO?

After she is released from her prison, Baba Yaga is once more free to go about her mysterious business. Although two of her greatest enemies—her children Elvanna and Rasputin—have most likely already been defeated by the PCs, the consequences of their failed rebellion remain, and Baba Yaga's first priority is to set her house in order. How exactly she goes about this depends upon the PCs' actions and the boons they requested.

After granting the PCs their boon (and hopefully returning them to Golarion), Baba Yaga turns her attention to the now-vacant throne of Irrisen. Her first step to create three new Riders to herald her delayed return—perhaps drawn from the PCs' own allies who accompanied them on their quest to free Baba Yaga. This done, Baba Yaga returns to Irrisen and immediately removes Elvanna's children from power—just as she had planned to do upon Elvanna's abdication. As the remaining Jadwiga scramble to fill the power vacuum left behind by the Jadwiga Elvanna, Baba Yaga crowns a new queen of Irrisen—either a heretofore unknown daughter brought from some other world, or perhaps her granddaughter Anastasia, if the girl was rescued from Rasputin's monastery on Earth.

With Irrisen's throne secure, Baba Yaga leaves Golarion for other worlds and other concerns—but it's only a matter of time before she returns once more.



If the PCs choose to betray or attack Baba Yaga, their attempts are likely doomed to failure. Baba Yaga is a mythic creature, far beyond the ability of the PCs to defeat at this point, particularly following their battle with Elvanna. If the PCs are interested in confronting Baba Yaga at a later date, however, the Continuing the Campaign article on page 64 provides details on how this might be accomplished. Baba Yaga's mythic stat block appears on page 74.

WHAT IF THE PCs LOSE?

If the PCs are unable to defeat Queen Elvanna and Baba Yaga remains trapped in her matryoshka doll prison, Elvanna's ritual continues unabated. Two days later, she finishes the ritual, and winter portals appear all over Golarion, spreading Irrisen's eternal winter far beyond its borders. How fast and how far this new ice age spreads is left for you to determine, but without Baba Yaga or the PCs to stop her, Elvanna is not content to just sit in her palace in Whitethrone. As the cold snows of the north descend onto the lands of the south, so too do armies of cold fey,

frost giants, ice trolls, winter wolves, and Elvanna's own Winter Guard, led by Elvanna herself in her *Dancing Hut*.

As Irrisen's armies sweep through the Lands of the Linnorm Kings and the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, viking warriors, Kellid barbarians, and mighty mammoths join Elvanna's forces, soon adding orcs from Belkzen as well. Elvanna leaves the Worldwound alone for now, but Varisia and Ustalav soon fall, followed by Lastwall and Nirmathas. Eventually, even Andoran, Cheliax, and Taldor are threatened, as the endless winter expands beyond the lands of the Inner Sea.

Thousands die of famine as crops and livestock succumb to the unseasonable cold, and trade comes to a standstill as rivers freeze and roads become choked with snow. Civil unrest topples governments even before Irrisen's armies reach them, and summer becomes just a distant memory. The armies of the south band together to halt the onslaught, but mere soldiers are powerless against the encroaching, endless winter. If new heroes do not come forth to stem the tide, Elvanna will claim all of Golarion as her icy throne world, proclaiming herself the new Queen of Witches.

QUEEN ELVANNA

The fourteenth daughter of Baba Yaga and queen of the nation of Irrisen, Elvanna knows that her time upon the throne grows short. She fears the future that Baba Yaga has in store for her and will stop at nothing to retain her crown.

QUEEN ELVANNA

CR 20

XP 307,200

Female venerable human (Jadwiga) witch^{APG} (winter witchSM) 10/
winter witch^{POP} 10

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +9; **Senses** blizzard sight^{POP}, *true seeing*; Perception +28

DEFENSE

AC 36, touch 23, flat-footed 30 (+8 armor, +5 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 insight, +5 natural)

hp 232 (20 HD; 20d6+160)

Fort +16, **Ref** +18, **Will** +23

Defensive Abilities *death ward*, *freedom of movement*, *ice body*^{UM}; **DR** 10/adamantine (130 points); **Immune** cold; **Resist** fire 20; **SR** 32

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee *Winter's Reach* +12/+7 (1d6+2 plus 1d6 cold)

Ranged touch +15 (by spell)

Special Attacks hexes (agony [20 rounds], blight [200 feet], cackle, death curse, evil eye [-4, 13 rounds], frostfootSM, frozen caressSM, hoarfrost^{UM}, ice tomb^{UM}, natural disaster, numbing chill^{POP}), ice magicSM, inexorable cold^{POP}, unearthly cold^{POP}, unnatural cold^{POP}, winter hex^{POP}

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +25)
10/day—sculpt ice and snow^{POP}

Witch Spells Prepared (CL 20th; concentration +30)

9th—*foresight*, *mass suffocation*^{APG} (DC 29), *polar midnight*^{UM} (CL 21st, DC 32), *wail of the banshee* (DC 29)

8th—*destruction* (DC 28), *moment of prescience*, *polar ray* (CL 21st), *stormbolts*^{APG} (DC 28)

7th—*chain lightning* (DC 27), *harm* (DC 27), *heal*, *mass hold person* (DC 27), *waves of ecstasy*^{UM} (DC 27)

6th—*greater dispel magic*, *flesh to stone* (DC 26), *freezing sphere* (CL 21st, DC 29), *mass suggestion* (DC 26), *true seeing*, *unwilling shield*^{APG}

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 25), *cone of cold* (CL 21st, DC 28), *dominate person* (DC 25), *feeblemind* (DC 25), *major curse* (DC 25), *mind fog* (DC 25)

4th—*charm monster* (DC 24), *crushing despair* (DC 24), *death ward*, *greater false life*^{UM}, *phantasmal killer* (2, DC 24)

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 23), *dispel magic*, *howling agony*^{UM} (DC 23), *ice spears* (CL 21st, DC 26)*, *lightning bolt* (DC 23), *vampiric touch*

2nd—*death knell* (DC 22), *detect thoughts* (DC 22), *disfiguring touch*^{UM} (DC 23), *feast of ashes*^{APG} (DC 22), *flurry of snowballs*SM (CL 21st, DC 25), *frost fall* (CL 21st, DC 25)^{UC}, *spectral hand*

1st—*charm person* (DC 21), *chill touch* (DC 21), *ill omen*^{APG}, *lock gaze*^{UC} (DC 21), *obscuring mist*, *snowball** (CL 21st, DC 24), *unshakable chill*^{UM} (CL 21st, DC 24)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *message*, *ray of frost* (CL 21st)

Patron winter^{UM}

* See *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #67 72–73.

TACTICS

Before Combat Elvanna casts *greater false life* and *moment of prescience* every day. She uses her *cauldron of seeing* to scry the entrance to the Witch Queen's Kurgan, and so has warning when anyone enters the kurgan. When invaders reach area **M5**, Elvanna uses the *Icecrown of Irrisen* to summon three elder ice elementals to defend her and uses *Winter's Reach* to cast *ice body*. She then casts *death ward*, *foresight*, and *true seeing*, and applies her *flying ointment* and *stone salve*.

During Combat When opponents first enter the inner sanctum, Elvanna activates her *boots of speed* and uses the *Icecrown* to cast *overwhelming presence* while her allies engage foes. She casts *unwilling shield* on a fighter or rogue, and uses *polar midnight*, *mass hold person*, and *waves of ecstasy* to control the battlefield. Thereafter, Elvanna casts offensive spells to harm her opponents as much as possible, making use of the *Icecrown*, *Winter's Reach*, and her own prepared spells as necessary.

Morale Elvanna is aware that her survival depends upon her success in this battle. She knows her fate if Baba Yaga is freed, and as a result fights to the death to defeat the PCs and complete her ritual.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 20, **Con** 21, **Int** 30, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 32

Feats Accursed Hex^{UM}, Alertness^B, Combat Casting, Craft Staff, Dodge, Elemental Focus^{APG} (cold), Greater Elemental Focus^{APG} (cold), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Split Hex^{UM}, Split Major Hex^{UM}, Toughness

Skills Appraise +13, Bluff +28, Craft (alchemy) +23, Fly +26, Intimidate +30, Knowledge (arcana) +33, Knowledge (history) +33, Knowledge (local) +33, Knowledge (nature) +33,

Knowledge (nobility) +33, Knowledge (planes) +33, Perception +28, Sense Motive +31, Spellcraft +33, Swim +3, Use Magic Device +28

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Aquan, Draconic, Giant, Hallit, Infernal, Russian, Skald, Sylvan; *tongues*

SQ cold fleshSM, exceptional resources, freeze and thaw^{POP} (10/day), hyperboreal patronage^{POP}, iceglide^{POP}, inherent bonuses, winter witchcraft^{POP}, witch's familiar (raven named Svoboda)

Combat Gear *flying ointment*^{UE} (2 uses), *potion of good hope*, *potions of protection from energy* (electricity, CL 10th, 2), *stone salve* (3 ounces), *wand of cure serious wounds* (39 charges);

Other Gear *amulet of natural armor* +5, *belt of mighty constitution* +4, *boots of speed*, *bracers of armor* +8, *clackling hag's blouse*^{UE}, *cauldron of seeing*^{UE} with telepathy, *cloak of resistance* +5, *headband of inspired wisdom* +4, *Icecrown of Irrisen* (see page 62), *deep red sphere ioun stone*, *orange prism ioun stone*, *greater rime metamagic rod*^{UE}, *ring of freedom of movement*, *ring of protection* +5, *robe of components*^{UE}, *Winter's Reach* (+3 icy burst quarterstaff, see page 63), royal outfit (worth 500 gp), spell component pouch, Tashanna's journal (see page 63), two platinum and sapphire rings (worth 5,000 gp each), belt pouch holding 37 pp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Exceptional Resources (Ex) As a daughter of Baba Yaga, Elvanna holds mythic potential in her veins. As a result, her ability scores were generated using a 20-point build. In addition, as queen of Irrisen, Elvanna has access to all of that realm's resources, and she has the wealth of a PC rather than an NPC. These advantages increase her CR by +1.

Inherent Bonuses (Ex) Through the study of magical tomes such as a *manual of gainful exercise* and a *manual of quickness of action*, Elvanna has a +5 inherent bonus to her Dexterity and Constitution scores.

Like all of the daughters of Baba Yaga groomed to rule Irrisen, Elvanna took her throne upon the abdication of the former queen—in Elvanna's case, her sister Yelizaveta. Also like her sisters before her, Elvanna never knew what fate befell her predecessor. For most of Irrisen's queens, the vague rumors and traditions that Baba Yaga's daughters went on to experience greater things with their mother were sufficient, and they went about ruling their realm as efficiently and brutally as they chose during their 100-year tenures. However, Elvanna—perhaps more far-sighted than most of her sister-queens—had some misgivings about this nebulous future and decided to investigate the fate of those who had gone before.

Disturbingly, while Elvanna found ample evidence of Baba Yaga's pursuits on myriad planes and distant worlds,

she never discovered any trace of Yelizaveta's activities or that of any of the other prior queens. Trusting even less the uncertain future promised by her mother, Elvanna redoubled her efforts to find some way to retain her throne or at least prepare her own future—one not at the mercy of Baba Yaga's whims.

And so Elvanna began studying the reign of Tashanna, Irrisen's ninth queen, who had raised her own failed rebellion against the Old Crone in an attempt to retain her throne—an event in Irrisen's history known as the Witchwar. Elvanna discovered Tashanna's journal, which outlined Tashanna's own suspicions of Baba Yaga's plans for her daughters. Reading Tashanna's journal galvanized Elvanna into action, and she concocted a plan to both plunge all of Golarion into eternal winter and to finally throw off the shackles of her mother forever. If successful, she would not only keep her crown, but she would also supplant Baba Yaga as the true Queen of Witches.



VIGLIV

An ancient keeper of fate from the dawn of mankind, long ago imprisoned by Baba Yaga, Vigliv now watches as the centuries-long rise of her former pupil is on the verge of coming to a sudden end through the betrayal of Baba Yaga's own protegee, Elvanna.

VIGLIV

CR 19

XP 204,800

Divine guardian norn (*Advanced Bestiary* 60, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 202)

CN Large fey (chaotic)

Init +22; **Senses** all-around vision, blindsight 120 ft., darkvision 60 ft., *greater arcane sight*, low-light vision, *true seeing*; Perception +37

DEFENSE

AC 35, touch 23, flat-footed 33 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, +12 insight, +5 natural, -1 size)

hp 270 (20d6+200); fast healing 5, regeneration 10 (cold iron)

Fort +18, **Ref** +16, **Will** +23

Defensive Abilities ability healing, *death ward*, fated, *foresight*, *mind blank*, never surprised or flat-footed;

DR 15/cold iron; **Immune** cold, disease, mind-affecting effects, poison; **Resist** acid 30, electricity 30, fire 30; **SR** 29

OFFENSE

Speed 55 ft.

Melee shears +21/+21/+16 (1d8+12/15-20 plus energy drain) or touch +16 (energy drain)

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

Special Attacks energy drain (2 levels, DC 32), shift fate, snip thread (DC 32)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +30)

Constant—*death ward*, *foresight*, *greater arcane sight*, *mind blank*, *tongues*, *true seeing*

At will—*bestow curse* (DC 26), *dimension door* (within Grandmother's Cauldron only), *divination*, *greater dispel magic*, *geas/quest*, *tree stride*, *vision*, *wind walk* (self only) 3/day—*alarm*, *knock*

1/day—*arcane lock*, *augury*, *banishment* (DC 28), *clairaudience/dairvoyance*, *commune*, *dismissal* (DC 26), *forbiddance* (DC 28), *guards and wards* (DC 28), *hold portal*, *maze*, *moment of prescience*, quickened *phantasmal killer* (DC 26), *power word kill*, *repulsion* (DC 29), *screen* (DC 30), *time stop*, *weird* (DC 31)

TACTICS

Before Combat Before revealing herself to visitors to the grotto, Vigliv casts *moment of prescience*.

During Combat Vigliv attempts to avoid combat, but if forced into it, she tries to incapacitate and overcome her foes with spells such as *bestow curse*, *maze*, *repulsion*, and *time stop*.

Only if she takes more than 100 points of damage does she revert to quickened *phantasmal killer*, *power word kill*, *weird*, and her snip thread ability.

Morale Vigliv always tries to avoid combat by using *dimension door* or *tree stride* to jump to one of her rowan's many saplings, using the time she gains to plot her retaliation and prepare with spells such as *forbiddance* and *guards and wards*. Destroying the rowan tree does not harm Vigliv, but she is likely to exact retribution on those responsible. If forced into combat and unable to escape, Vigliv fights to the bitter end, trying to snip the threads of as many of her opponents as possible.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 14, **Con** 30, **Int** 21, **Wis** 28, **Cha** 35

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 42

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Diehard[®], Great Fortitude, Improved Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*phantasmal killer*)
Skills Bluff +25, Craft (cloth) +18, Heal +14, Intimidate +32, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (geography) +28, Knowledge (history) +25, Knowledge (nature) +28, Knowledge (planes) +25, Knowledge (religion) +25, Perception +37, Perform (oratory) +20, Sense Motive +37, Use Magic Device +25

Languages Cimmerian, Proto-Indo-European, Russian, Sarmatian, Scythian, Sylvan; *tongues*

SQ aura, blessed life, change shape (humanoid; *alter self* or *giant form II*), divine swiftness, sacred site

Gear +3 *hide armor*, shears, golden thread (worth 10,000 gp)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ability Healing (Ex) Vigliv heals 1 point of ability damage per round in each damaged ability score.

Aura (Ex) Vigliv has an aura as if she were a 20-HD aligned outsider for the purpose of *detect chaos* effects.

Blessed Life (Ex) Vigliv does not age or breathe, and she does not require food, drink, or sleep.

Divine Swiftness (Ex) Vigliv gains a +4 bonus on initiative rolls and her base speed is 80 feet (55 feet in her hide armor).

Sacred Site (Ex) Vigliv is bound to Grandmother's Cauldron (area A) and was charged by the ancient goddess who invested her with power with protecting the grotto from harm and preventing intrusion. Should Vigliv ever leave the

grotto, she loses the divine guardian template unless she atones and reenters the site within 1 week. Otherwise, she loses the template permanently and takes 6d6 points of Constitution drain as the years catch up to her.

When humanity took its first tentative steps upon the world known as Earth, the fates of mortal lives began to form as golden strings to be cut or spared by the keepers of fate, the norns. These prehistoric norns were not the statuesque women of the realms of gods and fey common to later epochs; they were more primal and savage, much like the world where they were spawned. Though most of these early primordial norns were destroyed, died, or evolved into those that would follow, at least one has survived, safely ensconced deep inside Baba Yaga's *Dancing Hut*—the primordial norn Vigliv.

Vigliv's form is similar to that of a normal norn in that she appears as a towering humanoid woman, but the resemblance ends there. Like her primordial kin, Vigliv reflects that part of the natural world to which she was originally tied—a mighty rowan tree that grew beside a secret hot spring upon the Pontic-Caspian steppe. Vigliv stands nearly 16 feet tall, her skin the rough brown bark of a rowan tree and her hair the leafy lengths of small branches. Her eyes are like chips of hard amber with a speck of ebony trapped within them.

Unlike her other primordial kin, who died or returned to the First World when the natural features that gave them their forms were destroyed by time, natural disasters, or the work of humanity, Vigliv remained behind—the grotto surrounding her tree was both isolated and sheltered, and sacred to an ancient goddess of fertility and the earth, who chose Vigliv to guard and protect the site for eternity, granting her immortality. The nomadic steppe tribes who worshiped the forgotten goddess held the grotto in reverent awe, and few dared to descend into the steamy fissure except for ritual sacrifices of the young, the sick, and the elderly, who were drowned in the hot springs as tribute.

As the centuries ground on, the forgotten goddess who granted Vigliv her powers died, and the visitations of worshippers ceased, but Vigliv

remained, still charged with protecting the site. She noticed little change, content to continue to monitor the fates of the new groups that traversed the barren plains above. When a young Sarmatian girl named Yanca found her way into the rift one harsh winter, Vigliv assumed she was merely one of the sacrifices that she distantly recalled from an earlier time and was prepared to drown the child in the spring. She hesitated, however, when she noticed something unusual—the golden thread of the child's fate was of such length and luster that she knew the child was destined for some greatness. Taking an interest in the young girl, Vigliv began to teach her the mysteries of the world and the secrets of the magical arts.

Yanca—who would eventually become Baba Yaga—soon outstripped her former mentor in power, and became a plane-traveling legend in her own right. But Baba Yaga knew that Vigliv still held the golden thread of her fate, and dared not let the norn out of her power. Using her magical might, Baba Yaga tore Vigliv's entire abode from the fabric of the Earth and used it as the foundation for her greatest creation, her fabled *Dancing Hut*. Still ensconced in her sacred grotto, now known as Grandmother's Cauldron, Vigliv is a prisoner of the Witch Queen, always at the beck and call of Baba Yaga, who carries the norn's grotto and tree with her wherever her hut travels. Vigliv both loves and fears Baba Yaga, and serves her because her own thread of fate is inextricably entwined with that of Baba Yaga. She is infused with a combination of pride and frustration at being made a prisoner in her own domain. Through it all, however, whatever anger or joy she feels is tempered by the glowing golden thread—the fate of Baba Yaga—she still holds, and the knowledge that the time of its unraveling has not yet come.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

As the holder of Baba Yaga's fate, Vigliv is the primary source of knowledge for how to free the Queen of Witches from her matryoshka doll prison. Although she is unable to leave Grandmother's Cauldron, her guidance is essential, both in leading the PCs to recover the pieces of Baba Yaga's essence, and in preparing them for their final confrontation with Queen Elvanna.



REIGN OF WINTER TREASURES

The following unique treasures can be found in “The Witch Queen’s Revenge.” Player-appropriate handouts appear in the *Pathfinder Cards: Reign of Winter Item Cards*.

BABA YAGA’S BESOM (MINOR ARTIFACT)

SLOT none	CL 20th	WEIGHT 3 lbs.
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AURA strong transmutation



The handle of this simple straw broom, or besom, is capped with a small skull with long white hair. On command, the broom sweeps away any tracks or traces of passage, as *pass without trace*, and wards its user with *nondetection*. The broom can be used in this capacity for a total of 8 hours each day. By sweeping

the broom in a circular motion, the user can also learn the location of both secret doors and simple natural traps at will, as *detect secret doors* and *detect snares and pits*.

Baba Yaga’s besom can also be used up to three times per day to open locks, doors, lids, shackles, chains, and the like by knocking it against the item to be opened. The wielder must succeed at a caster level check using the broom’s caster level of 20th, with a DC equal to the Disable Device DC of the lock or binding. Each knock opens only one form of locking, so if a chest is chained, locked, and under an *arcane lock*, it takes all three uses of the broom to open it. The broom automatically dispels a *hold portal* spell or *arcane lock* with a caster level lower than 20th.

Lastly, *Baba Yaga’s besom* can be used as a weapon, functioning as a +4 *dancing club*. On a successful attack, a creature struck by the broom is blinded for 1 round.

The broom may have other powers known only to Baba Yaga.

DESTRUCTION

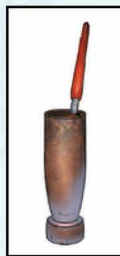
Baba Yaga’s besom falls into pieces and is destroyed if it is used to sweep all of the rooms in all configurations of *Baba Yaga’s Dancing Hut* within a 24-hour period.

BABA YAGA’S MORTAR AND PESTLE (MINOR ARTIFACT)

SLOT none	CL 20th	WEIGHT 50 lbs.
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AURA strong transmutation

This wooden mortar for grinding is 4 feet tall and 14 inches in diameter, and can hold up to 4 cubic feet of dry goods. Its pestle is about 8 feet long and carved of the same dense wood. It can be used as a weapon, functioning as a +1 *quarterstaff*. On command,



the mortar and pestle shrink down small enough to fit in a belt pouch and weigh only 3 pounds. The mortar must be empty to shrink.

The mortar and pestle can be commanded to grind any object placed inside; each round, the object takes 3d6 points of damage that bypasses hardness. Any object reduced to 0 hit points in this manner is ground into powder. Magic items

can attempt a DC 19 Fortitude save each round to avoid taking damage. Artifacts can’t be destroyed in the mortar and pestle.

The mortar is large enough to hold a single Medium creature, but it can enlarge to hold up to four Medium creatures or one Large creature. The mortar can be commanded to fly at a speed of 30 feet as *overland flight*, for up to 8 hours per day. Using the pestle to steer the mortar grants a +10 bonus on Fly checks. Twice per day, the mortar can create a single-use *phase door* that closes behind the mortar. *Baba Yaga* can summon her mortar and pestle to fly to her from anywhere on the same planet, regardless of the commands of any creatures inside it.

With the exception of using the pestle as a weapon, the mortar and pestle must be together to use their abilities.

DESTRUCTION

Baba Yaga’s mortar and pestle are destroyed if they are used under the light of a moon that shines on three worlds to grind to powder the hipbone of a maiden, the ribcage of a mother, and the spine of a crone—all taken from the same person.

ICECROWN OF IRRISEN (MAJOR ARTIFACT)

SLOT head	CL 20th	WEIGHT 3 lbs.
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AURA strong transmutation



This jagged crown is composed of ice that never melts regardless of the ambient temperature. The *Icecrown of Irrisen* is the royal regalia of the queen

of *Irrisen*, was crafted by *Baba Yaga* specifically for that role, and has been worn by all of *Baba Yaga’s* daughters who have served as monarchs of that realm. When placed on the head, the *Icecrown* merges with the wearer so that icicles seem to grow directly from her head. Once in place, the crown can be removed only by *Baba Yaga* or upon the death of the wearer or the destruction of the crown. The *Icecrown of Irrisen* deals

3d6 points of cold damage per round to any creature touching or wearing it as it absorbs body heat (or 6d6 points of cold damage per round to a creature with the fire subtype).

The *Icecrown of Irrisen* grants its wearer the following abilities: fire resistance 20, spell resistance 32, and a +4 enhancement bonus to Intelligence and Charisma (with ranks in Knowledge [local] and Sense Motive, as a *headband of vast intelligence*). The wearer doesn't take penalties to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution from being of middle age or older (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 169), and retains a youthful appearance, always appearing to be the same age as when she first put on the crown. Once per day, the wearer can summon three elder ice elementals that remain for 1 hour and follow her commands. In addition, the *Icecrown* gives its wearer the following abilities:

Constant—*tongues*

At will—*frigid touch*^{UM}, *ice crystal teleport*^{UM}, *Irriseni mirror sight*^{*}, *unseen servant*

3/day—*control weather*, *dominate monster* (creatures with the cold subtype only), *ice spears*^{*}

1/day—*overwhelming presence*^{UM}, *polar midnight*^{UM}

Finally, the *Icecrown of Irrisen* gives its wearer the ability to shape the ice that forms the Royal Palace in Whitethrone, allowing her to create or destroy walls, doors, windows, and even furnishings and decorations at will.

^{*} See *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #67 72–73.

DESTRUCTION

The *Icecrown of Irrisen* can be destroyed only if the perpetual winter that shrouds the land of Irrisen ends and the normal course of the seasons returns. In this case, the *Icecrown* melts away on the first day of Irrisen's new spring.

LABRYS OF THE STONE IDOL		PRICE 98,320 GP
SLOT none	CL 15th	WEIGHT 36 lbs.
AURA strong evocation		



This Huge, double-bitted stone axe, or labrys, is carved entirely of hematite, with a wooden shaft covered in fur. It functions as a +3 *stone impact*^{UE} *greataxe* that automatically resizes to match the size of its wielder, from Small to Huge size. The hematite that composes the axe is as strong as iron, and doesn't have

the fragile quality. Once per day, the *labrys of the stone idol* can be struck against the ground to create a powerful tremor, as the *earthquake* spell. When used in this way, the labrys creates a shield around its wielder, protecting him from the immediate effects of the earthquake, including fissures, falling rubble, and landslides. This shield disappears after 1 round, when the earthquake's effects end.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 49,320 GP
Craft Magic Arms and Armor, <i>bull's strength</i> , <i>earthquake</i> , <i>giant form I</i> , <i>lead blades</i> ^{APG} , <i>shrink item</i>	

TASHANNA'S JOURNAL

PRICE 5,150 GP
WEIGHT 4 lbs.

This tome is bound in the hide of a winter wolf with pages of pure white vellum, though the pages' edges and the book's tarnished silver fittings show its age. The book is a journal kept by Tashanna, the ninth queen of Irrisen, daughter of Baba Yaga and sister of Queen Elvanna. It contains a personal history of Tashanna's 100-year rule, as well as her theories about Baba Yaga's true purpose in installing her daughters as successive monarchs of Irrisen—speculations that led to Tashanna's rebellion against her mother, known as the Witchwar. The journal also contains knowledge Tashanna accumulated and compiled in regard to the Great Beyond and the nature of magic in general. Tashanna's journal grants a +2 circumstance bonus on Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), and Knowledge (planes) checks.

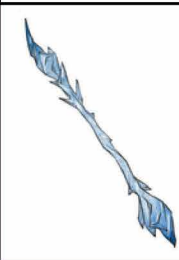
Elvanna added her own notes to the journal, and anyone reading the journal can learn much of the background behind the Reign of Winter Adventure Path, including Elvanna's scheme to use her half-brother Rasputin as the bait to trap their mother, and her plan to spread Irrisen's winter over all of Golarion.

At the GM's option, Tashanna's journal might also contain a few spells—either existing spells or completely new ones—that can be taught to a witch's familiar or copied into a wizard's spellbook.

WINTER'S REACH

PRICE 228,000 GP

SLOT none	CL 19th	WEIGHT 5 lbs.
AURA strong evocation and transmutation		



This staff is made of a single icicle that tapers to a sharpened point at each end. It can be used as a +3 *icy burst quarterstaff* (only one end of the staff bears this magical enhancement), even if all of its charges are drained. It allows the use of the following spells and abilities:

- *Frostbite*^{UM} (1 charge)

- *Ice storm* (1 charge)
- *Freezing sphere* (2 charges)
- *Icy prison*^{UM} (2 charges)
- *Wall of ice* (2 charges)
- *Cone of cold* (3 charges)
- *Ice body*^{UM} (3 charges)

Like a *frost brand*, *Winter's Reach* extinguishes all nonmagical fires in a 20-foot radius. As a standard action, it can also dispel lasting fire spells, but not instantaneous effects. The bearer must succeed at a dispel check (1d20+19) against each spell to dispel it. The DC to dispel such spells is 11 + the caster level of the fire spell. The staff can also be used to counterspell any spell with the fire descriptor as if with *dispel magic*. Dispel or counterspelling a fire spell in this way uses 1 charge.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 114,000 GP
Craft Staff, <i>cone of cold</i> , <i>dispel magic</i> , <i>freezing sphere</i> , <i>frostbite</i> ^{UM} , <i>ice body</i> ^{UM} , <i>ice storm</i> , <i>icy prison</i> ^{UM} , <i>wall of ice</i>	



CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

THEY WERE A MYSTERY AT THE TIME, THESE THREE RIDERS OUR SCOUTS SPOTTED IN RAEMERRUND. THEY GREW MORE BOLD AS THE WEEKS WENT ON. EACH ASTRIDE A FANCIFUL HORSE, THE RIDERS KEPT THEIR DISTANCE AS IF THEY WERE SCOUTING TOO. THEY RODE CLOSE ENOUGH TO OUR TOWNS AND VILLAGES TO COUNT HEADS, BUT THEY DIDN'T DRAW NEARER. IT WASN'T UNTIL OUR LANDS WERE TAKEN BY THE WITCH'S ARMY OF GIANTS AND FEY THAT WE KNEW THEY WERE SCOUTS FOR HER INVASION. NOW THE RIDERS HERALD THE QUEEN OF WITCHES' RETURN TO OUR LOST LANDS—THE ICEBOUND REALM OF IRRISEN.

—FROM *THE CONQUERING COLD: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WINTER WAR*

The Reign of Winter Adventure Path concludes with this volume, but there are more adventures to be had following “The Witch Queen’s Revenge.” Although this adventure assumes the events in *Pathfinder Module: The Witchwar Legacy* have already occurred, they could just as easily transpire after the events of this Adventure Path. If the PCs now have possession of Tashanna’s journal, clues within the journal can lead them to the far north of Irrisen to discover Tashanna’s fate, or perhaps Baba Yaga herself sends them on a mission to recover the *Torc of Koschtchie*. In addition, this article presents other possible scenarios to expand the campaign, and *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Irrisen, Land of Eternal Winter* contains numerous adventure hooks and ideas. First, though, the PCs may claim one boon from Baba Yaga for freeing her; several possibilities for this reward are detailed below.

BABA YAGA’S BOONS

In exchange for freeing Baba Yaga, the PCs may request one boon from the Queen of Witches, so long as it is within her power to grant. The following are just a few possibilities; if your PCs come up with their own ideas for a reward, use these examples as a guide. Note that Baba Yaga will not grant some boons—the Queen of Witches is simply unwilling to part with some of her treasures and abandon some of her plans.

The Dancing Hut: Baba Yaga will not give the PCs her own *Dancing Hut*, but she is willing to give them a lesser version, which takes the form of a permanent version of the witch’s hut grand hex (*Ultimate Magic* 83). Expanding the hut or giving it additional abilities is up to the PCs. *Create demiplane* spells (*Ultimate Magic* 213–214) can be used to permanently expand or personalize their new hut.

End Irrisen’s Winter: “Sorry, dearie, I can’t do that.” The magic behind Irrisen’s supernatural winter is already in place, and Baba Yaga does not budge on this point. Ending Irrisen’s winter is a major quest in its own right, and successfully completing the task will likely gain the PCs mythic tiers. See *Finishing the Job* on page 66 for details on how this might be accomplished. If asked politely, Baba Yaga should be willing to grant another boon to the PCs instead.

Leave Golarion Forever: If the PCs ask Baba Yaga to leave Golarion and never return, she begrudgingly agrees to do so. She has a lot invested in Golarion, but it is far from the only world where she has influence, and with her latest daughter deposed from the throne of Irrisen, she has less tying her to Golarion than before. What this means for Golarion is up to you, but Baba Yaga’s absence will certainly have an effect on places like Irrisen and Artrosa. See *Vengeance of the Linnorm Kings* on page 68 for one possible version of events if Baba Yaga abandons Irrisen.

Magic: The PCs might simply want nothing more than a monetary reward from Baba Yaga. If so, Baba Yaga is willing

to give each PC a single magic item of his choice—either from one of her many treasuries or created specifically for him. She will not give a PC an artifact, but otherwise, this boon is limited only by the GM’s discretion. Alternatively, a spellcaster can ask Baba Yaga to teach him new spells instead. Again, it is up to the GM to decide exactly what magical knowledge the Old Crone is willing to part with, but it should certainly be equal to the great favor they have done Baba Yaga.

A New Dynasty: With Elvanna’s death, the throne of Irrisen sits empty. Bold PCs might ask Baba Yaga to crown one of their number as Irrisen’s new queen. Surprisingly, Baba Yaga agrees, and enthrones one of the PCs in the Royal Palace in Whitethrone, placing the *Icecrown of Irrisen* upon her head. The other PCs will likely replace Elvanna’s children as dukes and duchesses of Irrisen, but the rest of the country’s Jadwiga aristocracy is another matter—there is no guarantee of a peaceful reign. Likewise, what will happen in 100 years is a mystery—will Baba Yaga return to claim the new queen’s life force, or will she allow the new dynasty to rule Irrisen uncontested? See *The Fate of Irrisen* on page 66 for possible challenges Irrisen’s new queen might have to overcome.

Queen Anastasia: Another possible replacement for Elvanna is Anastasia Romanov, provided the PCs rescued her from Rasputin’s monastery in “*Rasputin Must Die!*” Anastasia is Baba Yaga’s granddaughter, and Baba Yaga agrees to crown her queen of Irrisen if the PCs ask. In this case, the PCs can likely set themselves up the young queen’s advisors, and with their guidance, Queen Anastasia could well become the most popular and well-loved queen of Irrisen. On the other hand, the blood of Baba Yaga flows in Anastasia’s veins, and she could just as easily follow in the footsteps of her predecessors if she succumbs to the corruptive influence of power. *The Fate of Irrisen* on page 66 deals with some of the repercussions of a new queen on the throne.

The Three Riders: With the deaths of Baba Yaga’s Three Riders at the hands of Queen Elvanna’s Winter Guard, Baba Yaga is willing to choose the PCs as her new heralds. The PCs must agree to faithfully serve her for 100 years, but they will become powerful, unique fey creatures with potent abilities. At the end of their term of service, Baba Yaga will offer them an additional boon as a reward. See pages 52–55 of *Irrisen, Land of Eternal Winter* for details on Baba Yaga’s Riders; the GM should use the Riders presented there as an example when creating powers and abilities for PC Riders.

Travel to New Worlds: Baba Yaga is willing to take the PCs anywhere the *Dancing Hut* can go—which is effectively anywhere on the Material Plane or in the Great Beyond. If the PCs want to visit the fabled City of Brass on the Plane of Fire, or explore the jungles of Castrovel, for example, Baba Yaga can take them there, though it is a one-way trip.

THE FATE OF IRRISEN

Stopping Queen Elvanna from plunging the entire planet into permanent winter is just the beginning. The PCs' actions at the end of the campaign have the chance not only to save Golarion, but also to have a direct effect over the future of Irrisen. Here are a few considerations for PCs who want to take a more personal role in the future development of Irrisen.

A New Queen: If one of the PCs, or perhaps Anastasia, becomes the new queen of Irrisen, the PCs will need to help the new monarch consolidate her power at the beginning. The current aristocracy won't bow down to a foreigner easily, unless Baba Yaga commands it or the PCs show great authority during this transition of power. Elvanna's eldest daughter, Princess Cassisoche, has been seeing to the day-to-day operation of Irrisen for years now. If her mother were eliminated, she would fight hard to claim the throne, but before leaving Golarion, Baba Yaga still takes Elvanna's children with her so as to siphon a small fraction of power as a consolation for missing out on Elvanna's matured essence.

What remains of the Jadwiga Elvanna are split between their support of Baba Yaga and their dedication to their own immediate family ties. Some of these aristocrats could lead a revolt against the new monarch or they could engage in more secretive ploys. One example of this subterfuge could be an assassination attempt carried out by a group of powerful Cold Sisters (see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Irrisen, Land of Eternal Winter* for more information on the Cold Sisters).

Maintain the Status Quo: It might be that the PCs are unconcerned with what transpires in Irrisen, choosing boons for their own benefit and leaving the situation in Irrisen unchanged. In this case, while Baba Yaga misses out on getting Elvanna in her clutches, she still places a new daughter on the throne and invites the PCs to the coronation. In thanks for her rescue (and in addition to the boon already granted), Baba Yaga gives the PCs a special place in Irriseni life if they desire. For the entire rule of the new queen, the PCs and their families are considered favored allies of the nation of Irrisen, able to come and go as they please. If they ingratiate themselves to Baba Yaga or the new queen they might even be given titles and rule over a portion of the country.

Clean Up Irrisen: Assuming the PCs take a benevolent tack when it comes to ruling Irrisen, the nation is still filled with cruel baronesses, vicious monsters, and brutal winter conditions. Whitethrone itself contains numerous monstrous residents, and the PCs will need to work to eliminate the bestial threats in the city, particularly in the Howlings, the Troll Quarter, and the goblin-infested Ratnest. If any of the PCs made a connection with the winter wolf Greta in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #68, she might be willing to help them, or even offer to assume the

role of leader of the Howlings to keep her fellow winter wolves in order. Greta pleads with the PCs that it would be a shame to waste the great gift that Baba Yaga gave to the winter wolves to allow them to take human form, and she and her kin are willing to fight to keep this gift. If the PCs don't have a relationship with Greta, she forms the winter wolves of Whitethrone into a resistance group fighting to keep the Howlings the way it is forever.

The best aid to making Irrisen a better place would be to help out the resistance that has been slowly picking away at the icebound nation's evil foundation. In earlier adventures, the PCs met members of the Heralds of Summer's Return and worshipers of Milani working a subtle revolution within the borders of the country. If the PCs can recruit these groups to their side, they can help put down any initial rebellions and can even place some of the Heralds' leadership into positions of power in the six provinces of Irrisen.

The PCs could also invite help from good-leaning neighbors. The Lands of the Linnorm Kings once held much of the area that is now within Irrisen's borders, and they have been eager to get rid of the White Witches and reclaim their ancestral land. The PCs could work with the Ulfen, but if they plan to keep Irrisen's current borders, conflict could arise. Another potential ally is the southern nation of Andoran. After hearing the news that the political leadership of Irrisen has been shaken up, Andoran offers their aid in establishing a democratic government in the new Irrisen. Andoran is willing to send advisors for the PCs and their chaotic nation, who recommend that the PCs allow the Linnorm Kingdoms to reclaim their ancestral lands (see *Vengeance of the Linnorm Kings* on page 68). This would greatly reduce the size of Irrisen, but would likely lead to more stability in the long run.

An important thing to keep in mind is that if the PCs don't use their boon from Baba Yaga to convince her to leave Irrisen or Golarion altogether, the Old Crone would still have a strong presence in Irrisen. Any invasion or dramatic change of power would likely draw her interest and retribution. Even with an army of Ulfen soldiers and sympathetic groups within the country, the PCs are no match for the Queen of Witches—unless they possess mythic tiers themselves. See *Finishing the Job* below for how the PCs can attain such power and defeat Baba Yaga.

FINISHING THE JOB

The PCs may have stopped Elvanna and saved Golarion from a new ice age, but they might be less than thrilled to have worked so hard to free an evil old witch. Likewise, Baba Yaga is unwilling to end the supernatural winter cloaking Irrisen that she herself created. Unfortunately for the PCs, Baba Yaga is a mythic creature, far beyond their ability to defeat at this point. However, if the PCs were to end Irrisen's eternal winter, ushering in the first spring

that land has seen in over 1,400 years, they could gain their own mythic tiers—an important accomplishment if they want to confront Baba Yaga with even a chance of success. If you choose to continue the campaign in this way, defeating Queen Elvanna at the end of “The Witch Queen’s Revenge” should be the PCs’ moment of ascension, and they gain their first mythic tier at the end of the campaign. As they work to shut down Baba Yaga’s winter portals and bring summer back to Irrisen, the PCs should gain more mythic tiers until they’re ready to face Baba Yaga herself. This option draws heavily on the rules presented in *Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures*.

THE WINTER COLLECTORS

Irrisen’s endless winter is powered through a system of weather collectors that gather winter energies from dozens of locations and feed them into a receiver located inside the Royal Palace in Whitethrone. Baba Yaga scattered these *winter collectors* across many worlds to make it more difficult for her enemies to disrupt her winter magic, but to fully bring Irrisen out from under the spell of Baba Yaga, the PCs must destroy the *winter collectors* that are fueling the lasting supernatural winter.

WHERE ARE THE COLLECTORS?

Baba Yaga scattered her *winter collectors* in cold locales across the worlds and planes, adding new ones as she discovered new realms of ice and snow. Each of the *winter collectors* is guarded by powerful creatures, devious traps, hazardous conditions, or all three. Examples of *winter collector* locations are presented below, though dozens more may exist.

Antarctica: Baba Yaga placed one of her *winter collectors* on her home world of Earth. She traveled to the coldest place on the planet, a great landmass at the South Pole, and erected an obsidian spike jutting up from the polar ice, its smooth surface covered with an iridescent sheen. Any creatures approaching the spike trigger a powerful magic trap that gates in daemons to fight anyone disturbing the *winter collector*.

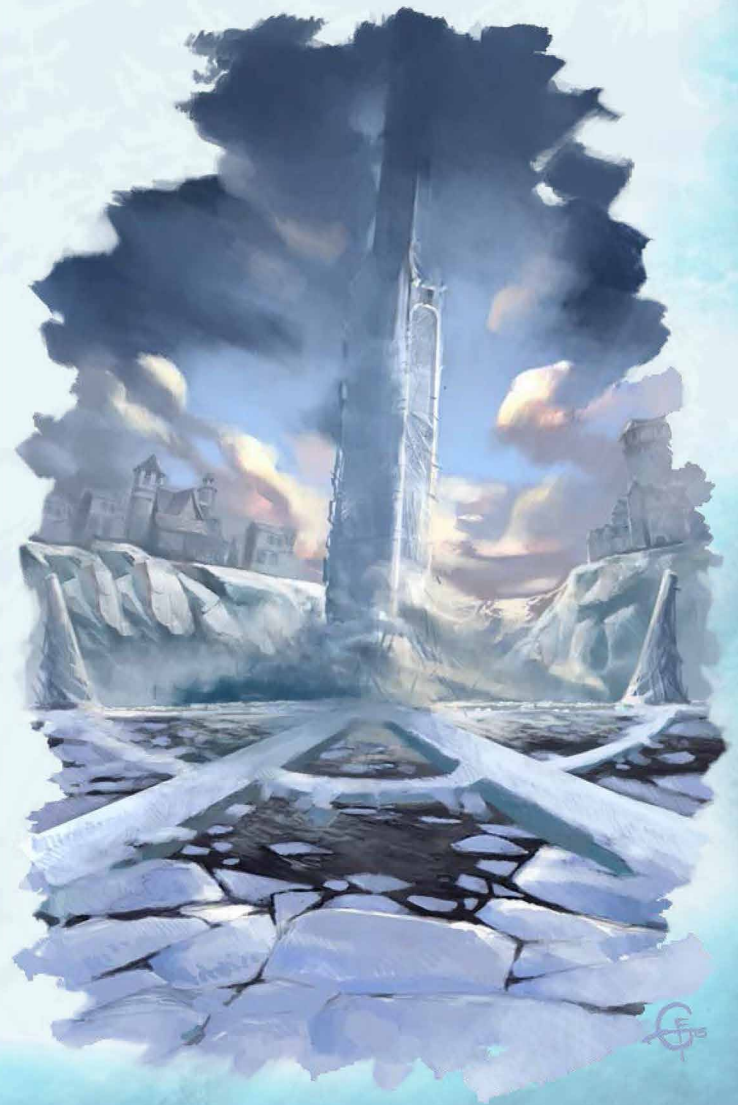
Beurdreda: This frozen moon in a far distant solar system revolves around a vibrant, warm planet constantly washed over with colorful auroras. Beurdreda has little atmosphere and is composed completely of an ice colder than any material previously discovered. The strange, three-armed humanoids that live on this moon shape the ice into vast cities and tunnels that stretch between them. Baba Yaga placed her *winter collector* deep underground near the moon’s core, in a vast domed chamber.

Ketkalkitrex, the City of Ice: Located on the Plane of Water near its border with the Plane of Air, this massive city stretches for miles, both horizontally and vertically. Carved from an immense iceberg, Ketkalkitrex

supports millions of the plane’s inhabitants, including ice elementals and ice mephits. Baba Yaga built a *winter collector* inside a massive spire that houses a cabal of cruel and stoic marids.

The Thrice-Tenth Kingdom: Baba Yaga’s activities are not limited to the Material Plane. Upon discovering that she could manipulate the physics of the First World and twist the land to her own whims, Baba Yaga staked a claim on a remote region and warped the countryside to suit her vision. Baba Yaga’s Thrice-Tenth Kingdom resembles a vast boreal forest at the foot of a looming mountain threaded through with glaciers. At the mountain’s summit, Baba Yaga built a *winter collector* guarded by a host of icy fey.

Triaxus: The *winter collector* on Triaxus stands in the far northern reaches of the Drakelands near the planet’s north pole, where it can draw on the severe polar cold even when the planet is in the midst of its long summers. Baba Yaga made a deal with a great wyrm white dragon



THE WINTER COLLECTORS

Far more powerful than the winter portals established by Elvanna to spread Irrisen's winter over the rest of Golarion, the *winter collectors* are major artifacts created by Baba Yaga. Each *winter collector* varies in appearance, design, and construction, but they function exactly the same.

WINTER COLLECTOR (MAJOR ARTIFACT)

SLOT none	CL 20th	WEIGHT varies
AURA strong conjuration and evocation		

Winter collectors are always located in areas of severe cold, and are typically surrounded by thick snow or ice. A *winter collector* siphons a portion of the ambient cold weather and condenses it into concentrated cold energy, which the collector then beams like a signal across worlds to the *winter receiver* in the Royal Palace in Whitethrone. This energy then radiates out to the borders of Irrisen, keeping the weather in a perpetual wintry state. In addition, a *winter collector* functions as a permanent *gate*, allowing instant travel from the collector's location to the Royal Palace (but not in the other direction), even if the collector is located on the Material Plane.

A *winter collector* radiates an aura of cold out to 50 feet. This aura deals 6d6 points of cold damage each round to creatures in this area. Creatures within 10 feet of the *winter collector* take 12d6 points of cold damage each round. Half of this cold damage is not subject to being reduced by resistance or immunity to cold-based effects.

DESTRUCTION

Each *winter collector* has a unique means of destruction, which is left for the GM to develop, though successfully destroying a *winter collector* should be a trial worthy of gaining a mythic tier.

that lives in a series of caves carved into a great glacial cliff, paying the beast to watch over the *winter collector*. The dragon has generations upon generations of its brood acting as additional guardians during the winters, and the cave complex serves as a home for other white dragons during the summer years.

DESTROYING THE COLLECTORS

The PCs can finally end Irrisen's long winter only by destroying Baba Yaga's *winter collectors*. Each collector has its own unique requirements for its destruction, but the adventure to destroy a given *winter collector* should include one or more trials that allow the PCs to attain more mythic tiers upon the successful destruction of the *winter collector*. The order in which the collectors are shut down doesn't matter, but at least six *winter collectors* must

be destroyed to weaken the *winter receiver* in Whitethrone's Royal Palace, which is otherwise impervious to all damage beyond that of the highest mythic tiers. Once the PCs finally destroy the *winter receiver*, they can end winter's supernatural hold on Irrisen. Accomplishing such a legendary task should automatically grant the PCs at least one additional mythic tier beyond those gained by destroying the *winter collectors*.

FIGHTING BABA YAGA

Once the PC have destroyed the *winter receiver* in Whitethrone, ending Irrisen's enduring winter once and for all, they might finally be ready stand toe to toe with Baba Yaga herself. The PCs should likely have attained 10 mythic tiers by the time they go after Baba Yaga, though perhaps—if they've enlisted the aid of deities or other powerful entities—they might be able to face her sooner. In any case, they'll need to find Baba Yaga first, as her *Dancing Hut* can take her virtually anywhere in the Great Beyond. This final confrontation will not be easy, as Baba Yaga is a CR 30 foe with 10 mythic tiers of her own, but if successful the PCs can rid the universe of the Queen of Witches forever. See the Baba Yaga article beginning on page 70 for Baba Yaga's statistics and ideas for further fleshing out an encounter with the Old Crone.

VENGEANCE OF THE LINNORM KINGS

Regardless of whether the PCs want to rule Irrisen or help usher in better times, they are certain to come into contact with Sveinn Blood-Eagle. Ruler of the largest Linnorm Kingdom, the Thanelands, King Sveinn has grown old, and the rumors throughout the Lands of the Linnorm Kings claim that he plans to abdicate any day now—except that Sveinn has yet to choose an heir. Upon hearing of the change in politics in Irrisen, Sveinn hatches a plan for one final raid against the White Witches—or their successors—intent on reclaiming the lands taken from his people so long ago.

If one of the PCs, or one of their allies, such as Anastasia, now rules Irrisen, the PCs have a decision to make—whether to return the Ulfen's ancestral lands to the Linnorm Kings or keep Irrisen's borders where they stand. Sveinn knows this is his last chance to do something grand before he departs for Valenhall and he hopes to bring the stories of this glorious achievement to his ancestors. He is also very aware that this could be his last battle. Sveinn respects the strength of anyone who could take down Queen Elvanna and is wary of the PCs, so he sends out scouts to make their way to Whitethrone and find out as much information about them as possible.

When ready to make his move on reclaiming his nation's old borders, Sveinn sends a messenger to request a meeting with the PCs. If they accept, the Linnorm King

arrives with a small band of soldiers and makes a case to the PCs to manage his people's former lands. Sveinn is proud and boastful, claiming the PCs are so new to governing people that perhaps he should take charge of the western half of Irrisen. If the PCs refuse this offer, he makes it clear that he intends on taking it regardless. He and his guard return to Kalsgard and prepare for war.

Sveinn gathers an army of his best Ulfen barbarians and warriors, and easily gains the support of the Blackravens from Hagraech. An event of this magnitude might even be enough to get the kingdoms of Broken Bay, the Ironbound Islands, and Southmoor to align with the Thanelands. The Linnorm Kingdoms' armies invade the Verge first, focusing their strength on the Irriseni military strongholds in that province, followed by Bleakmarch and Wintercrux. Sveinn also sends word to the tribal leaders of the Realm of the Mammoth Lords about his plans to strike, hoping to gain allies and put pressure on Irrisen from two fronts. With an Ulfen army amassing along the western border, and Mammoth Lords to the east, the PCs must raise their own loyal forces to defend Irrisen. Unless they want to enter into a long war with enemies at both sides, the PCs would do well to side with Sveinn and let him reclaim his people's ancient lands.

SVEINN BLOOD-EAGLE CR 17
XP 102,400

Male old human (Ulfen) barbarian 18
CN Medium humanoid (human)
Init +4; Senses Perception +22

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 14, flat-footed 28 (+9 armor, +3 deflection, +3 Dex, +2 natural, -2 rage, +6 shield)

hp 248 (18d12+126)

Fort +21, Ref +14 (+6 vs. traps), Will +14 (+4 vs. enchantments); +6 vs. magic

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, indomitable will, trap sense +6; DR 4/—

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +4 furious^{UE} *thawing^{UE} battleaxe* 28/+23/+18/+13 (1d8+13/19-20/x3), +3 *heavy steel shield* +30 (1d4+7 plus bull rush) or *flame tongue* +28/+23/+18/+13 (1d8+10/19-20) or

guarding blade^{UE} +28/+23/+18/+13 (1d6+14/19-20)

Ranged +2 *seeking composite longbow* +26/+21/+16/+11 (1d8+9/x3)

Special Attacks greater rage (41 rounds/day), rage powers (clear mind, knockback, powerful blow +5, roused anger, scent, spell sunder, superstition +6, unexpected strike, witch hunter +6)

TACTICS

Base Statistics When not raging, Sveinn's statistics are AC 33, touch 16, flat-footed 30; hp 194; Fort +18, Will +11; +4 furious^{UE} *thawing^{UE} battleaxe* +25/+20/+15/+10 (1d8+10/19-20/x3), +3 *heavy steel shield* +27 (1d4+6 plus bull rush) or *flame tongue* +25/+20/+15/+10 (1d8+7/19-20) or *guarding blade^{UE}* +25/+20/+15/+10 (1d6+10/19-20); Str 22, Con 17; CMB +24, CMD 43; Skills Climb +6, Swim +9.

STATISTICS

Str 28, Dex 19, Con 23, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 14

Base Atk +18; CMB +27 (+29 sunder); CMD 44 (46 vs. sunder)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (battleaxe), Improved Shield Bash, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Shield Focus, Shield Master, Shield Slam, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (battleaxe)

Skills Acrobatics +11, Climb +9, Diplomacy +14, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (history, local, nature) +13, Perception +22, Survival +15, Swim +12

Languages Common, Hallit, Skald SQ fast movement, king's wealth, tireless rage

Combat Gear *potions of cure serious wounds* (3); **Other Gear** +3 *greater cold resistance steel lamellar^{UE}*, +3 *heavy steel shield*, +4 *furious^{UE} thawing^{UE} battleaxe*, +2 *seeking composite longbow* (+6 Str) with 20 arrows, *flame tongue*, *guarding blade^{UE}*, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *belt of physical might* +4, *boots of speed*, *cloak of resistance* +4, *efficient quiver*, *glove of storing*, *greater bracers of archery*, *handy haversack*, *horn of Vahalla*, *mantle of immortality^{UE}*, *ring of evasion*, *ring of protection* +3, *werewhistle^{UE}*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

King's Wealth (Ex) Sveinn Blood-Eagle is a Linnorm King and as such has the wealth of a PC rather than an NPC.



SVEINN BLOOD-EAGLE



BABA YAGA

IF YOU WANT MY SECRETS, MY MAGIC, YOU MUST DO SOMETHING FOR ME. I HAVE MUCH WORK TO DO, AND YOU WILL DO IT FOR ME," SAID BABA YAGA. "YOU MUST SWEEP MY FLOORS AND COOK MY SUPPER, BUT FIRST YOU MUST GO TO THE HEARTH. THE CAT KNOCKED OVER MY FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER AND IT SCATTERED AMONG THE ASHES. YOU MUST PICK THE GRAINS FROM THE ASH IN THE HEARTH. ONCE THAT IS DONE AND MY SUPPER IS PREPARED, DRAW ME A BATH, AND I'LL THINK ON YOUR WANTS. IF YOU DO WELL, I WILL GIVE YOU WHAT YOU ASK. IF YOU ARE LAZY AND CLUMSY—LIKE THAT PATHETIC DOG IN THE CORNER—I WILL COOK YOU AND EAT YOU."

—FROM AN IRRISENI BEDTIME STORY

Around campfires and in front of hearths on cold winter nights, wise grandmothers and favored uncles recite countless tales of a stern and powerful woman. Some know her as the Old Crone, others as Old Knobby Legs. She's often called the Queen of the Witches, but those who are wise call her Dear Grandmother. She is Baba Yaga, and on Golarion, she has an oppressive and violent legacy. But, on other worlds, the foolhardy and the brave seek her for wisdom and magic.

BEGINNINGS

The blizzards across the Pontic-Caspian steppe in what would become southern Russia and Ukraine were particularly harsh in the winter of 65 BCE, though the Sarmatian tribes that wandered across the land did not know the year by that name. To them it was the Winter of Cruel Loss, as over a third of their number perished from the cold or deprivation. It was in that winter that a 10-year-old girl named Yanca disappeared. Her family's band had camped in a hollow between ancient steppe mounds to escape the worst of the weather on the wind-scoured plain, and Yanca and the other children had gone forth to fetch water for the day. This day a new wind had arisen from the north and blanketed the snowy plain in a fog of icy clouds. Yanca and the other children soon became disoriented in the unexpected whiteout, and many panicked and ran back toward the encampment. But young Yanca was confident that she could find her way back after fetching the water and forged on through the haze.

When an unexpected gust of warmer air washed over her, Yanca was both surprised and pleased. Following the warm gusts led her to the edge of a partially snow-filled fissure from which arose billowing steam, and Yanca knew that she had not only found a watering hole but also a comfortable place to wait out the windstorm. As Yanca began the descent into the fissure with her leather bucket, she discovered that the cavern was much larger than she first thought, with most of the fissure covered with a thin crust of icy snow, broken only where the warm drafts from below had melted through. Reaching the bottom, Yanca found a deep grotto surrounding a hot spring. Plant life filled the grotto, flourishing in the steamy moisture rising from the hot spring and sheltered from the harsh winter winds of the steppe above.

As she continued her descent, Yanca noticed crude carvings on the rock walls of the grotto, signs that wanderers from the ancient past had likewise visited this isolated place and considered it sacred. Finally she reached the hot spring at the bottom of the grotto and found a venerable rowan tree, grown giant in its immense lifespan, growing at the edge of the nutrient-rich spring. Young Yanca had just decided to take a quick bath in the luxuriously warm water of the pool—a treat never before

experienced in her short life—when the tree suddenly spoke to her.

Yanca sat with rapt attention as a face formed on the tree and began to relate to her the secrets of the ages of the Earth and its peoples. She listened and lost herself in the wonders that were revealed to her until she suddenly remembered the water she was supposed to fetch. She filled her bucket and climbed out of the grotto, only to discover the formerly snow-swept steppe now covered in the tiny purple and yellow flowers of spring. As a warm southern breeze blew across the plain, Yanca discovered that her family's camp between the ancient mounds was long abandoned. Only then did Yanca notice that her clothing was threadbare to the point of tatters and her hair was long and unruly, as more than 2 years had passed since she had descended into the grotto and listened to the voice of the tree. Her family had moved on long ago and given her up as lost in the storm on that fateful day, merely one more life claimed by the Winter of Cruel Loss.

Lost in the middle of the steppe with her family long gone and nowhere to turn, Yanca chose the only option that remained to her. She returned to the grotto to sit once more before the rowan tree beside the hot spring. And the "spirit" of the tree—the primordial norn Vigliv—spoke to her once again and began to teach her the greater secrets of the Earth and the universe.

Yanca excelled at the training and after mastering all of the magical knowledge Vigliv could impart, she turned her attention to the ways of ancient witchcraft. When Yanca emerged again from the grotto years later, she was alive with power unknown to most mortals of her world, power that far outstripped even that of her mentor and teacher.

GROWTH

As a mature woman, Yanca set forth from the secret grotto intent to see the world and the wonders it held. For a time, Yanca wandered. She took up with different peoples that would have her in their tribes and communities, and while she lived with them she learned. Yanca also shared things she had learned with the women of the communities, and in turn taught their children. As she traveled for these years, she learned other people's ways and customs, their deities and magic. Most of all she was interested in how different people harnessed magic and shaped the power they held. After leaving the grotto and spending time among the rest of humanity, she came to understand the distinction between divine magic and arcane magic—or rather, how slim that line actually is.

Yanca pondered what it was that made someone great. Was it conquering lands and having people grovel at your boots like the warlords? Was greatness found in solemn study of the world's secrets? Or does the true secret to life lie in the ways of the ascetics and those faithful to their gods? Was the

real path a simple pursuit of one's goals—and damned be those who got in the way? The norn had taught young Yanca the secrets of magic, but she didn't teach morality.

Having learned to question reality itself, Yanca was a skeptical woman who didn't take anything at face value. She questioned everything and scorned anyone who tried to corner her into what was considered accepted behavior. As her reputation as a witch spread, people sought her out to ask for favors and to share her power. Some chiefs and warlords tried to force her to use her magic through ultimatums or violence, but she always refused. Yanca would not be tamed by those who couldn't find power for themselves. Yanca would do as she pleased.

It was a tumultuous time for Yanca. Though she was brimming with power and confident of her own abilities, she was growing bitter and tired of having the weak endlessly entreating her to solve their petty problems. They were all leeches to her—simple things only there to take. In exchange for her gifts, she demanded more and more to test those who came to her with their desperation and wishes. She asked for land she would never visit. She demanded coffers of gold only to pitch them into rivers. She called for a man to cut off his own thumbs in exchange for healing his lame leg. She asked farmers to slaughter all their goats in return for protection from a wheat blight. She demanded firstborns so that she could eat their tender flesh, and parents gave their children away for fleeting glory and temporary riches. Some say that during this time Yanca gained a wrinkle for every question asked of her and a wart for every favor she deigned to grant. Out of respect and in light of her withering body, the simple folk began calling her Grandmother—or Baba—and among the Rus tribes, Yanca became Yaga. Eventually, Baba Yaga, the mother of witches, disgusted with the way humanity scraped at the feet of the powerful, departed her home world to pursue greater deeds.

WISDOM

Even though Baba Yaga had learned the secrets of immortality as a young woman, she wanted to naturally reach a ripe old age before making that leap. She knew that with age came great wisdom, and she wanted to live out most of her life as a mortal before attaining immortality. She saw it as a challenge, a milestone, and a goal to be reached. Only foolish people grab at things without considering all possibilities—and Baba Yaga was no fool. At the age of 102, Baba Yaga felt her body failing. She had contracted some ailment she couldn't quite heal; she

could feel it growing within her, some malignant part of her own body fighting against her vitality. Realizing she was nearing her end, she finally embraced immortality. Upon gaining eternal life, Baba Yaga's lingering concerns of morality completely slipped away. Now she could do whatever she truly wished.

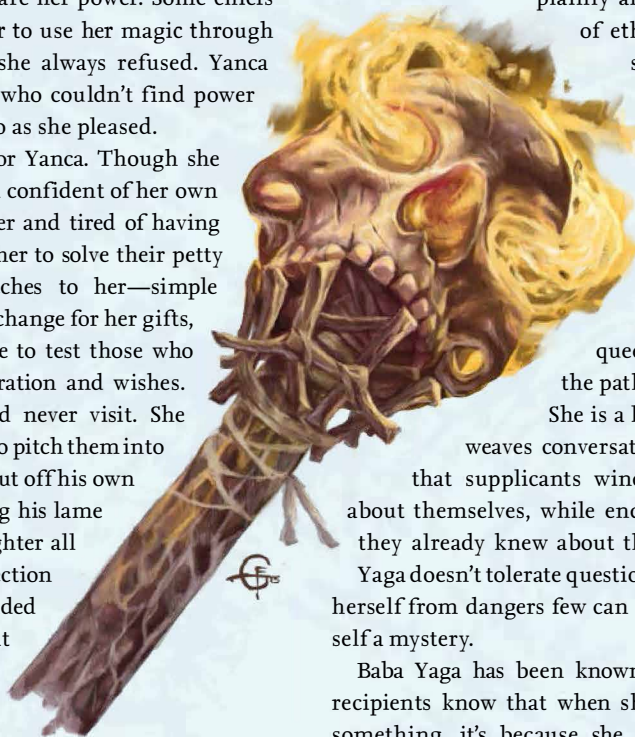
Throughout her years, Baba Yaga has become a bitter and foul crone, but as far as she cares she sees things plainly and clearly without concern of ethics. Nothing is up to her standards. Nothing anyone can do is good enough. The strongest heroes and the darkest evil are all somehow flawed under her crooked gaze. She treats demigods the same as shepherds, and spews curses at milkmaids and queens alike. None dare step in the path of Baba Yaga.

She is a liar and a yarn spinner. She weaves conversations around themselves so that supplicants wind up revealing everything about themselves, while ending up knowing less than they already knew about their original queries. Baba Yaga doesn't tolerate questions about herself, insulating herself from dangers few can fathom by keeping her own self a mystery.

Baba Yaga has been known to grant boons, but wise recipients know that when she allows someone to have something, it's because she desires it to be so. Greed almost always compels her gifts, not kindness or love. She knows that power corrupts and always tests those who seek it, delighting in watching how it debases those who grab at the power she grants without thinking first. Baba Yaga herself does not lust after power, nor does she lord it over others. Though she enjoys her own personal realms of influence, she mostly prefers to be left alone, and is always annoyed when strangers still come to her with requests.

Although Baba Yaga has long held the potential to grant spells to followers and perhaps even ascend to divinity, she never even considers such things. The last thing Baba Yaga wants is a multitude of voices whining prayers to her every minute of the day. That's just more people asking her for things. Being on the threshold of divinity keeps her on fair footing with a number of archdevils, demon lords, and other influential denizens of the Great Beyond. Most see no threat from her and are constantly delighted in the stories she brings from the various worlds she visits on the Material Plane.

Baba Yaga dislikes the politics and predictability of the Great Beyond, however. Though she has long since become



more than just a simple human, she is still primarily interested in mortal worlds, and prefers to travel the nearly limitless lands of the Material Plane. As with her legacy on Golarion and her home world of Earth, knowledge of Baba Yaga lingers where most sentient humanoids dwell.

THE THRICE-TENTH KINGDOM

After Baba Yaga created her *Dancing Hut* and began exploring other worlds and the Great Beyond, she decided she wanted a world of her own that she could sculpt as she wished. She knew that the First World was a primer to the rest of mortal creation and that it had a place in her people's lore as a world between worlds. She also knew that the First World was mutable to those with sufficient power, and it was there that she decided to build her kingdom. Baba Yaga was well beyond her five hundredth year when she traveled to the First World in her hut and staked her claim at a distant edge of a roiling landscape. With arcane might and her indomitable will, she stabilized the realm, calling it to order in an idyllic image of the Russian steppes in simpler times.

The Thrice-Tenth Kingdom is a wide plain dotted with thick forests at the foot of a spine of majestic mountains. Uncanny fey dart through the gloomy woods and strange ogres wage war among the mountain peaks. Even stranger creatures come out when the sun sets and the ever-changing moon races across the night sky. Inky black beasts that shred flesh from bone hunt unfortunate pixies too distracted to find shelter for the night. Philosophical herds of elk and deer roam the steppes on quests for enlightenment. Talking birds bicker with each other in aerial matches of wits and wing, and even the wriggling worms in the rich soil have their say, for the seemingly idyllic surface conceals sinister truths. Below the earth here, vast caverns stretch forever, echoing with screams and pleas for help. In some, a low moan goes on forever, only altered in pitch by sorrowful pauses.

In the center of the deepest forest is a fanciful castle wrought of silver and glass called the Witchspire, where an empty throne sits in the grand central chamber. Baba Yaga never asked for the Witchspire. Her minions, brought here from a thousand worlds, built it in honor of the Queen of Witches, but as Baba Yaga has never cared for opulence or overt political power, she eschews the seat set for her. In fact, when Baba Yaga visits the Thrice-Tenth Kingdom, she more often than not still stays within her sanctum in the *Dancing Hut*.

BABA YAGA ON GOLARION

As the people of Earth lost interest in arcane magic and turned toward their various bickering gods, Baba Yaga looked to some of the other worlds she had visited for a better place to practice her magic and perhaps instruct

others in the same way. On Golarion Baba Yaga found a good fit for her needs. Upon first arriving on the planet, she kept her *Dancing Hut* secreted away in the forests of Iobaria and spoke to no one other than the fey of the world and the occasional visiting centaur. Before long, however, her reputation for potent magic spread. It was then that the Iobarian warlord Kostchtchie visited Baba Yaga and demanded she make him immortal. As a twist to his rude ultimatum, Baba Yaga transformed Kostchtchie into a deformed giant and plucked out a portion of his soul, which she hid in an artifact called the *Torc of Kostchtchie*. The defeated warlord fled to the Abyss to lick his wounds, eventually becoming a demon lord. To this day, Kostchtchie still hates Baba Yaga and vows revenge—something he has yet been able to achieve.

Once rid of Kostchtchie, Baba Yaga began the construction of Artrosa in the nearby Deeprun Crevasse. This massive monument depicts the triple goddess aspect and gives insight into Baba Yaga's influence and background. Soon after shaping Artrosa with her powerful magic, Baba Yaga left Golarion for several hundred years, only stopping in from time to time to check on her legacies and to make sure her servants were doing as they should.

When Baba Yaga returned in 3313 AR, she came with a plan. She gathered an army of giants and fey and descended from the Winterwall Glacier with conquest in mind. She chose a land not unlike the northlands of her home world, and in less than a month she subjugated its people and carved out the nation of Irrisen. Crowning her daughter Jadwiga queen of the newly built realm, Baba Yaga set about completing a series of portals to plunge the nation into an eternal winter. When this task was complete, she left Golarion again, but she has returned once every 100 years to remove each royal daughter from the throne and replace her with another, a cycle that has remained unbroken for 1,400 years.

Baba Yaga considers Irrisen an experiment in power, one that at first held her interest greatly. However, as time wore on and the subjugated Ulfen were unable to muster the power to overthrow her daughters' rule, Baba Yaga grew bored. She was baffled why so few—neither her daughters, nor the oppressed citizens—rose up to break this chain of tyranny. After the reign of her first few daughters, Baba Yaga only returned to Golarion when it was time to crown a new daughter queen. It was this boredom with Irrisen, and her lack of attention on her experiment there, that led to Baba Yaga's entrapment at the hands of Queen Elvanna and Rasputin. Nevertheless, Baba Yaga is somewhat proud of Elvanna for her attempted coup, considering it by far the most ambitious rebellion since her ninth daughter Tashanna's uprising—not that Baba Yaga believes that it ever had a chance of succeeding.

THE QUEEN OF WITCHES

Baba Yaga's stat block is presented below, and makes use of rules from *Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures*. More information about the *Dancing Hut of Baba Yaga* can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Artifacts & Legends*.

BABA YAGA **CR 30**

XP 9,830,400

Female venerable advanced human witch 20/archmage 10
(*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 65, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, *Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures* 14)
NE Medium humanoid (human, mythic)

Init +19; **Senses** *arcane sight*, *darkvision* 60 ft., *see invisibility*; **Perception** +27

DEFENSE

AC 51, **touch** 31, **flat-footed** 46 (+13 armor, +5 deflection, +5 Dex, +11 insight, +7 natural)



hp 782 (20d6+710); **regeneration** 20

Fort +30, **Ref** +27, **Will** +35

Defensive Abilities hard to kill, mythic saving throws, unstoppable; **DR** 10/epic and good; **Immune** ability damage and drain, charm and compulsion effects, death effects, disease, energy drain, petrification, poison, and all forms of madness; **SR** 35 (arcane only)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *Baba Yaga's besom* +17/+12 (1d6+7)

Special Attacks archmage arcana (wild arcana), channel power, coupled arcana, energy conversion, forceful will, hexes (agony [20 rounds], cackle [swift action 2/day], cauldron, child scent^{UM}, cook people^{UM}, death curse, evil eye [-4, 21 rounds], scar^{UM}, life giver, slumber [20 rounds], witch's hut^{UM}, vision), mythic hexes, mythic power (23/day, surge +1d12), mythic presence (DC 28), reverse scrying, sanctum, throw spell

Witch Spells Prepared (CL 20th; concentration +38)

9th—*dominate monster* (DC 37), *foresight*, *gate*, *time stop*^{MA}, *wail of the banshee* (DC 37), *weird* (DC 37), *wish*^{MA}

8th—*binding* (DC 36), quickened *dimension door*, *maze*, quickened *phantasmal killer* (DC 36), *polymorph any object* (DC 36), *stormbolts*^{APG} (DC 36), *symbol of death* (DC 36)

7th—*control weather*, *finger of death*^{MA} (DC 35), *greater teleport*, *heal*^{MA}, *jolting portent*^{UC} (DC 35), *terraform*^{MA, MA}, *temporary resurrection*^{UM}

6th—quickened *blindness/deafness* (DC 34), *chain lightning*^{MA} (DC 34), *disintegrate*^{MA} (DC 34), *eyebite* (DC 34), *greater dispel magic*, *slay living* (DC 34), *true seeing*

5th—*baleful polymorph*^{MA} (DC 33), *break enchantment*^{MA}, *dominate person*^{MA} (DC 33), *feeblemind* (DC 33), *greater forbid action*^{UM} (DC 33), *major curse*^{UM} (DC 33), *smug narcissism*^{UM}, *steal power*^{MA, MA} (DC 33)

4th—*bestow curse* (DC 32), *charm monster* (DC 32), *confusion* (DC 32), *dimensional anchor*, *ice storm*^{MA}, *greater invisibility*, *stoneskin*^{MA}, *terrible remorse*^{UM} (DC 32)

3rd—*cockling skull*^{UM} (DC 31), *dispel magic*^{MA}, *fireball*^{MA} (DC 31), *fly*, *haste*^{MA}, *lightning bolt* (DC 31), *protection from energy*, *suggestion*^{MA} (DC 31)

2nd—*anticipate peril*^{UM} (DC 30), *glitterdust* (DC 30), *mad hallucination*^{UM} (DC 30), *mirror image*^{MA}, *miserable pity*^{UM} (DC 30), *pox pustules*^{MA, APG} (DC 30), *touch of idiocy*, *web* (DC 30)

1st—*beguiling gift*^{APG} (DC 30), *bungle*^{UM} (DC 30), *charm person* (DC 29), *disguise self* (DC 29), *feather fall*, *fumbletongue*^{UM} (DC 30), *magic missile*^{MA} (2)

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 28), *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

Patron fate (see page 75)

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 20, **Con** 26, **Int** 46, **Wis** 24, **Cha** 32

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 36

Feats Accursed Critical^{UM}, Accursed Hex^{MA, UM}, Brew Potion^B, Extra Hex^{APG}, Extra Path Ability^{MA, MA}, Greater Spell Penetration,

Improved Familiar, Improved Initiative, Mythic Paragon^{M, MA}, Mythic Spell Lore^{M, MA}, Quicken Spell, Spell Penetration^M, Split Hex^{UM}, Split Major Hex^{UM}, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +15, Appraise +23, Bluff +26, Craft (alchemy) +22, Craft (woodworking) +22, Diplomacy +21, Escape Artist +25, Fly +23, Heal +25, Intimidate +36, Knowledge (arcana) +41, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +38, Knowledge (engineering) +38, Knowledge (geography) +38, Knowledge (history) +41, Knowledge (local) +38, Knowledge (nature) +41, Knowledge (nobility) +38, Knowledge (planes) +41, Knowledge (religion) +38, Perception +27, Ride +13, Sense Motive +27, Spellcraft +41, Stealth +25, Survival +11, Use Magic Device +34

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Aquan, Auran, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Giant, Ignan, Infernal, Iobarian, Polish, Russian, Sarmatian, Sylvan, Terran, Triaxian; *tongues*

SQ amazing initiative (+10), component freedom, contingency, crafting mastery, enduring armor, exceptional stats, forceful presence, hut familiar, immortal, legendary hero, long-lived, mythic spell power, permanent spells, Queen of Witches, recuperation, true archmage

Gear *amulet of natural armor* +5, *apple of eternal sleep*^{UE}, *Baba Yaga's besom* (see page 62), *belt of mighty constitution* +6, *bracelet of second chances*^{UE}, *clackling hag's blouse*^{UE}, *corset of dire witchcraft*^{UE}, *ebony fly figurine of wondrous power*, *gem of seeing*, *Grandmother's basket* (as a *portable hole*), *Grandmother's shawl* (as a *cloak of resistance* +5), *grim lantern*^{UE}, *hat of disguise*, *haunted shoes*^{UE}, *headband of alluring charisma* +6, *hexing doll*, *orb of foul Abaddon*^{UE}, *pearl of power* (5th level), *ring of elemental command (fire)*, *ring of freedom of movement* (slotless), *ring of protection* +5; in addition to the gear listed here, Baba Yaga has access to a wide variety of other magic items that she can use at the GM's discretion.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Contingency Whenever Baba Yaga is attacked, she is affected by *mislead*.

Exceptional Stats (Ex) Baba Yaga was born a perfect specimen of humanity. As a result, her ability scores were generated using 25 points, rather than using the standard 15 point buy used to create most NPCs. Additionally, Baba Yaga has much more gear than an NPC of her level would normally have. These modifications increase her total CR by 2.

Forceful Presence (Ex) Baba Yaga adds her Charisma modifier as an insight bonus to her Armor Class and on all of her saving throws. In addition, Baba Yaga uses her Charisma score as well as her Constitution score when calculating hit points. This ability increases her total CR by 1.

Hut Familiar (Ex) Baba Yaga built her *Dancing Hut* using a combination of the witch's hut hex and the sanctum mythic path ability, and over time expanded the artifact's powers to its present state. The *Dancing Hut of Baba Yaga* serves as Baba Yaga's familiar, and replaces the normal witch's familiar ability. Baba Yaga's life is forever intertwined with her

NEW PATRON

The norn Vigliv sparked Baba Yaga's pursuit of magic and ever since fate has been her patron. Witches hoping to follow in Baba Yaga's footsteps often select this patron.

Fate: 2nd—*doom*, 4th—*anticipate peril*^{UM}, 6th—*helping hand*, 8th—*blessing of fervor*^{APG}, 10th—*greater forbid action*^{UM}, 12th—*contingency*, 14th—*jolting portent*^{UC}, 16th—*maze*, 18th—*wish*.

Dancing Hut and parts of her essence reside within it. As long as the hut exists, this special connection grants her 300 bonus hit points, DR 10/epic and good, and regeneration 20. This ability increases her total CR by 1.

Immortal (Su) Baba Yaga has hidden her death to make herself even more difficult to kill. This functions as the base mythic ability (*Mythic Adventures* 13), but Baba Yaga always returns to life 24 hours later, regardless of how she is killed. In order to permanently kill Baba Yaga, her death must be found and released back into her body, at which point she can be killed with a coup de grace or critical hit made with an artifact.

Long-Lived (Ex) Mystical arcane powers, mythic abilities, and complex arcane rituals have extended Baba Yaga's life. She gains the +3 bonus to Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores for having lived beyond venerable age, but she doesn't gain the penalties to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution resulting from this advanced age. Baba Yaga's supernaturally empowered life grants her complete immunity to ability damage and drain, charm and compulsion effects, death effects, disease, energy drain, petrification, poison, and all forms of madness (including confusion effects and *feblemind*). This ability increases her total CR by 1.

Permanent Spells Through the use of *permanency*, Baba Yaga is constantly under the effect of the following spells: *arcane sight*, *darkvision*, *read magic*, *see invisibility*, and *tongues*. Baba Yaga has also devised a way to inscribe symbol spells upon her person. Baba Yaga has permanent *symbols of death* (DC 36) magically inscribed on the center of her chest, between her shoulder blades, upon the crown of her head, and on the soles of her feet. Only a few great beings have knowledge of the symbols' passwords (each symbol has its own unique phrase), and even fewer significant personalities have been attuned to the symbols.

Queen of Witches (Ex) As Queen of Witches, Baba Yaga knows all witch spells, as well as all sorcerer/wizard spells. Baba Yaga also has knowledge of many other spells that she has researched. Many of these are arcane versions of divine spells. In addition, Baba Yaga can create artifacts, and has done so to great extent, the greatest of which is the *Dancing Hut of Baba Yaga*.



THE IVORY TOWER

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Two chipmunks dwelled in a cage on the mantel. One stuffed its cheeks with pine nuts. The other hid in a nest of storybook pages.

The fact that both recently had been monstrous spiders was less disconcerting than the revelation that one of my forebears may have been a unicorn.

Before, the only peculiarity I had entertained was some elven heritage, Dabril being across the river from Kyonin. I earned a couple black eyes before I learned that “whoreson” and “half-elf” were not synonymous.

The only other complication I had contemplated was a drop of noble blood. The Unicorn’s Carbuncle, ancestral jewel of House Devore, supposedly only shone on the hand of a true heir.

The telltale ruby glowed indiscreetly as I scraped the unicorn’s beard of shaving cream from my chin, rinsing my razor occasionally.

I examined myself in the mirror. Was my face a bit more equine? Did I stand a fraction taller? My beard had certainly grown heavier. But that happened with many young men, even ones who did not swill mutagenic tonics.

This was the trouble. Before I had discovered the Devores’ treasures, I had been a crippled wreck. The duke’s formulary had helped me heal my body. The duchess’s stone? My heart. So I could empathize with Arjan Devore, slowly losing his faculties.

Having witches put some of him in a gemstone seemed almost common sense.

“You are very handsome, Papa,” said Emilie. “Even more than your portrait.”

I turned, wiping my face with a towel. “Which portrait?”

Emilie, garbed in ivory samite three centuries out of fashion, perched on the dresser, playing with a scrap of iridescent silk. “The one you and mama left.” She put on

her hennin, the conical cap once popular among Galt's gentlewomen, and tossed her head, the silk now forming the cointoise, the pennant veil. "I memorized all of it, along with the other gifts you left me."

"Remind me," I said, "what were they?"

"Silly Papa," she laughed, "don't you remember?"

"I want to hear you say it."

She recited like a schoolgirl, "You gave me your joy of discovery. Mama left me her love of learning. Together they made me." She looked sad. "Will we never see her again?"

"I have not seen her since the Revolution," I lied truthfully. "It was a tumultuous time." I put on a cheerful face and changed the subject. "When we're in Galt, you must be careful to not let others know you're alive."

"Oh, yes!" Emilie nodded, fluttering her cointoise. "That was the first lesson Baba Alechka taught in Department: When a person enters, unless he is our master, a Jadwiga, or one who knows the secret of the dolls, we must hold perfectly still. Like this." Lightning fast, Emilie snatched a pair of tiny spectacles out of her pocket and jammed them on, simultaneously taking out a miniature book thumbed open to a familiar page. Her mouth froze open in a round O of wonderment while her eyes went wide with delighted surprise. Her face was the visage of a wizard discovering a spell or an alchemist cracking a formula.

I had an epiphany as well: This was how Emilie looked before she was brought to life.

She smiled then, putting away her book and glasses. "The only times we are allowed to move are when we need to protect ourselves or someone we've been ordered to guard. Or..." She trailed off and a pink blush of glaze rose in her porcelain cheeks.

"You're not supposed to say because it's another secret."

"Yes," she admitted, "and Lady Morgannan hasn't performed the Rite of Adoption yet, so you are not properly my papa yet. Even though you are!"

"If I guess, are you allowed to say?"

"Well... we are allowed to use our judgment."

I mulled it over for a moment. "You're ordered to kill someone."

"Only the bad dolls do that!" Emilie exclaimed, then clapped her hands over her mouth.

"I'm guessing the bad dolls are another secret."

Emilie nodded. "They're horrid. They've been torturing the spiders." She glanced about the guest room, then confided, "The wicked and unruly dolls take separate classes from the sweet and mindful ones. Lady Morgannan doesn't want us getting into fights."

She did not say any more, but I could read her expression. "And you spied on the bad dolls' classes."

"How did you know?"

I grinned. "Because it's precisely what I would do."

"It's been fifty years, papa!" Emilie exclaimed. "Mama sent letters for the first ten. She said you were unwell, but as soon as you were better, she would send for me. But then that horrid Revolution came and the letters stopped! I had to do something! There's nothing worse than being an unwanted doll!"

She began to cry then, real tears down porcelain cheeks.

"There, there." I picked her up, putting her head against my shoulder and patting her on the back. "Let it all come out."

Fifty years of bottled tears poured down my shoulder. While I wondered where the water came from, I also wondered where the food the dolls ate went. It was like wondering where the snow went and why Irrisen was not buried under a glacier after a thousand years of snowpack. Witchcraft. No further explanation was needed.

A more troubling question was what had transpired with Duke Devore. So far as I had heard, he died of old age shortly after his marriage, a decade before the Revolution. That death was not one from which anyone ever "got better"—unless, of course, you considered undeath a preferable state.

Then again, I had resurrected the dead with alicorn shavings and the duchess's philosopher's stone. If the equally fabled sun orchid elixir were added to the solution?

But there were more pressing questions. "So, what did you learn from the bad dolls' classes?"

That got her to stop crying. "Oh, tricks too wicked to tell," Emilie demurred, then confided with an embarrassed grin. "My favorite is the one where you pretend to be a mundane doll but move a person's possessions around when they're not looking to make them think they're going mad!"

I was curious what other tricks they'd taught, but was interrupted by a knock at the door. "Are you ready?" It was Valya.

"Just a moment!" I called. Some of Duke Devore's clothes from his last visit had been located. A richly embroidered kaftan and silver fox fur coat aired on a clotheshorse before the fire. They smelled of cedar chips, but the fit was good. I unlocked the door.

Valya now wore an ivory sarafan, trimmed in pale rose, and a kokoshnik, Koliadki perched on the crown. Madenya wore the same ensemble. After a moment, the doll declared, "You look wonderful!"

"Terribly old-fashioned," Valya added, dimpling. "But wonderful."

I didn't know enough of Irrisen to know what part of my ensemble was out of date. "I suppose I'm that kind of man."

I fetched my alchemist's pack, now transferred to a handsome white boarskin bag, and let Emilie clamber astride, riding my shoulder.

When we reached the round gallery, I heard the laughing screech of Lychee and the monkeyish snickering of Poskarl Elvanna. He wore a kaftan as well, but with a

radically different collar and hemline. I also realized he was wearing his coat with the fur turned in and the brocade turned out.

Byanka Morgannan, her apparent age again grandmotherly, hid her mouth with her peacock feather fan, then lowered it, saying, "I'm afraid I did you a discourtesy, Duke Devore, when I allowed you to forego a valet. I thought you might recall the manner in which the clothing of Irrisen is worn." She glanced to Valya and Madenya. "Why didn't you inform him that he's wearing it inside-out?"

Madenya said politely, "He's a spellcaster of great power. I thought he had turned his coat to repel gremlins, or something similar."

Byanka merely gestured for the tall footman. "Please assist the duke."

I set down my pack with Emilie atop it. My coat was taken off, turned, and redonned. I modeled it. "Well?"

More snickers issued from Poskarl and Lychee. Parrot laughter came from Olya and Irynya. Kyevgeny let out a bearlike guffaw while Valya and Koliadki whistled and the gallery was filled with the tittering of dolls like porcelain bells.

"Oh dear," Byanka's fan dropped to swing from her wrist, "I had completely forgotten you had procured *that* shuba."

I looked over my shoulder and examined the brocade. Beautifully woven, it showed a landscape of snow-covered pines. Pulled threads created the silhouette of a fox below a branch with a crow holding a piece of holed cheese.

"Children, I would remind you that the Fox and Crow was once the height of fashion!"

"Duly chastened, Lady Byanka," Irynya noted.

"My abject apologies to House Elvanna." Byanka appeared mortified. "I was speaking to my grandchildren, my dolls, and my apprentice."

"I didn't laugh," said Orlin. Tinka hid behind him, looking fearfully at Byanka's hard-edged fan.

Byanka looked at him, then Tinka, then me. "This is a joyous occasion. I suggest that, within these walls, we act as if nothing were untoward." She glanced to Irynya. "Lady, are you prepared

to stand as godmother to this child?" She gestured to Emilie.

Irynya looked amused, but answered, "Yes, Lady Byanka."

"I suppose I can be godfather," deigned Poskarl, "unless you would prefer Lychee?"

Byanka appeared to be considering it, at last saying, "We Morgannans are a very traditional house, Lord Poskarl. I am afraid I would find that improper."

"I could be godfather," offered a muffled voice.

Byanka looked about the room. "Who said that?"

"I did!" The muffled voice appeared to issue from between Orlin, wearing the snowy white robes of a witch's apprentice, and Tinka, standing closely behind him.

A doll stepped out from between the two. He stood just above knee-high with a mop of fine blonde hair and the pearl-buttoned livery of House Morgannan. His blue-gray eyes were the color of shadows on a frozen lake.

A punch cup shattered on the floor. "Holgrim!" Irynya gasped.

"What did you call me?" asked the doll.

"His name is 'Hotisnarr,'" Byanka corrected. "And he is supposed—"

"You bound Holgrim's soul into a doll?" Poskarl inquired gleefully.

"I'm not a doll!" The Holgrim doll stamped his foot indignantly. "You're all cloud giants!"

"Cloud giants?" echoed Poskarl.

"White skin, white hair, three times the height of a man, surrounded by luxury?"

"He's got us there." Poskarl grinned like his monkey, then pointed to Kyevgeny's blond mane. "So what's he?"

Holgrim thrust out his lower jaw. "Either a very large frost giant or a very pale storm giant." He paused. "I had a friend who looked like him in the world below."

Kyevgeny stared at the tiny model of his friend, then softly began to weep. Irynya reached out a hand and placed it on his enormous shoulder. "Oh Kyevgeny... it could be worse..."

"Kyevgeny, yes!" cried Holgrim. "That was my friend's name!"

Byanka looked like she could use a stiffer drink than punch. I took out my flask and topped her off.

"Thank you, Duke Arjan," she said softly. "You are a gentleman and a scholar." She downed it in one shot, then held it for a refill. I obliged.



"Holgrim may be a doll, but he's still a man."

"I'm sorry, Holgrim," Kyevgeny whispered, tears in his eyes. "I'm so sorry."

"As am I," breathed Valya.

"His name is 'Hotisnarr,'" Byanka corrected.

"That's a stupid name," said Holgrim.

"And he will be silent, for I command it, as his maker."

Holgrim opened his mouth, but no sound came out. He tried to speak again, but was still mute. Then he ran up and kicked Byanka in the shins.

There were gasps of a hundred dolls and the clattering of silver on porcelain.

Byanka raised her ivory cane. "What I make I can unmake!"

"No!" cried Kyevgeny and Valya.

Byanka brought the knob down swiftly, only at the last moment changing its trajectory. "Sit there or be smashed!" She pointed to an empty doll chair.

Holgrim leapt to the chair and sat as if glued to it. He struggled to free himself, then proceeded to gesture. It was not sign language, but rather the rude gestures every boy learns.

Orlin moved to block Byanka's view, but she had already looked away.

"Please..." Irynya asked.

Byanka paused. "Of course, Lady." She swigged the liquor, then appropriated my bottle and refilled her cup herself. She took another sip and coughed. "Night's black balls, what's in this stuff!?"

Poskarl snickered.

"I was meaning to perform an elegant ceremony in honor of our friend, the duke," she said, "but given the events of the past week—"

"What events?" asked Poskarl.

"Morgannan family business, Lord Poskarl." She fixed him with an icy stare. "We had an infestation of spiders. They were dealt with, yet not before poor Holgrim perished."

"What sort of spiders?"

"It hardly matters. They're dead."

Poskarl turned slightly green at this. "All of them?"

"All," Byanka lied brazenly, not mentioning the cages in the boiler room or the two chipmunks in my bedchamber. "We burned the egg sacks as well. Evidently the jorogumos misunderstood my letter. Rather than sweet little scarlet spiders Kyevgeny might have used as a familiar, their eggs hatched some horrid monstrosities from Shenmen. Is that not right, dear?" she inquired of her grandson.

Kyevgeny nodded, not telling how the dolls wove dream spider webs into silk the past week, nor of me showing his grandmother how to brew shiver in case he was addicted and needed a safer source than Silvertooth and his ilk.

"It's been a very tiring week," Byanka concluded. "As such, I am hoping Duke Devore will pardon the breach of protocol and allow the bare bones rite."

"By all means," I said.

Byanka turned. "Emilie, I am not your creator but I inherited autocracy over your soul from my mother when I became head of House Morgannan. I hereby transfer it to House Devore—"

"Gantier," I corrected.

"Or House Gantier, as it's now known after Galt's unpleasantness." She waved curtly. "This man, whatever he calls himself, will be your new master."

"Papa?" said Emilie. "My papa is truly mine?"

"Yes," said Byanka, "and you also have godparents in case House Gantier perishes." She glanced to the Elvannas. "Lord Poskarl, Lady Irynya, I had so looked forward to being your hostess at the Frosthall this evening. Yet I am afraid that troubles in my own household mean that I must beg your indulgence and postpone the honor." She glared at Kyevgeny and Orlin, then reached into her sealskin muff and withdrew a pair of gilt-edged scraps of ivory pasteboard. "Yet as I know you have honored others with your own passes to the royal box for the opening night, I am hoping you will accept these if you still wish to see 'Kostchtchie the Deathless.'"

"Thank you, Lady Morgannan." Irynya took them with a pained glance at Holgrim. "If you would just have a servant crack a window, I will have Olya fetch a sleigh."

Byanka nodded, gesturing to the tall footman who took a long pole and opened the vent window atop the western oriel. Olya flew out.

I paused. My plan was for Orlin and myself to attend, then slip away with Dr. Orontius on the steps afterward, taking Emilie and Tinka with us.

Byanka laid a gentle hand on my arm. "I must apologize to you, Duke Devore. I know how you looked forward to tonight's performance, but I cannot in good conscience allow a guest of House Morgannan to be seen in a 'Fox and Crow' shuba!"

"Surely we could find another coat," I protested.

"Possibly, but there's a fine line between 'eccentric' and 'scandalous' and you shan't be invited to any reputable Jadwiga houses dressed like that. Besides which, there is a matter of discipline for my grandson and your brother. A willful apprentice does not last in Irrisen. Missing a social outing is the very least punishment my ancestress might respect." Byanka looked to Orlin. "I should probably turn his whipping child into a chipmunk as well..."

"Please don't," I said. "This is supposed to be a joyous occasion, after all."

Byanka nodded. "A fair point." She then turned to Valya. "What about you? Do you wish to go to the theater with your friends?"

Valya looked torn, but at last nodded.

Byanka produced one more pass. "Go to the Bone Bridge with the Elvannas and have Yelchev lower it so you may await their sleigh."

They left, and an exceedingly awkward celebration began—the culmination of Duke and Duchess Devore's extravagant purchase a half-century earlier. There were cakes and frozen confections, little turnovers and tiny crepes topped with sturgeon roe which was the one bit of seafood Byanka considered fit to eat. I passed out small tabletop fireworks from my sample case, which the dolls were allowed to light on silver tea trays or set off in one of the fireplaces. A few rockets were shot out the windows.

Finally, Orlin used Kyeveny's shadow theater to put on a Galtan play, "The Imp and the Match Safe", one of Darl Jubannich's farces. Though the characterization of the wicked nobles was broad and the plight of the enslaved peasants was clear, the dolls watched impassively—excepting Holgrim, still bewitched to silence by Byanka's command.

Byanka looked unamused, but still spiked her punch until Orlin returned and refreshed her cup. "There," she commended, "that is a proper apprentice—though that was a most improper play." Byanka downed half the punch and reached for the flask. "You are fortunate Queen Elvanna—" She slumped forward on the table.

The room was dim, candles snuffed for the shadow theater, but I noted Kyeveny sprawled in his chair, Klaufi trying to wake him. Then I saw Byanka shiver, a most uncharacteristic activity for a winter witch—but a classic indicator of a certain drug.

"The goats," Orlin whispered. "She keeps them in her muff."

I blinked, then reached out hesitantly and took hold of the sealskin. Her cat familiar looked up at me and hissed, but clearly wasn't about to challenge me on his own.

Orlin took the fur roll from me, whispering, "Get Emilie, but give me that potion you got from the fireworks dealer."

He was speaking of the Tian Wash, the elixir for the banishment of evil. I handed it to him and watched him dump the contents over Holgrim who immediately stood up, the air filling with the scent of lemongrass.

I should have explained I had formulated a concentrate, but it was too late. The perfume spread out, the aroma designed to dispel all manner of evils, including charms and bewitchments. As we disappeared downstairs, I heard a childlike voice say, "Look! They left the bottlerockets!"

The sound of childlike laughter had become thunderous by the time we made it out the front door.

Orlin turned to me, holding an ivory goat in his hand. "Did you grab her fan?"

"No."

"Bother. We'll squeeze." He tossed the toy to the ground, calling out, "Trip-trap-trip! It's time to dance and skip!"

The toy skipped. It danced. It grew in size—then continued growing, bigger than a bull. The goat reared up, dancing on its hind legs, rampant, its hooves burning the

blue of alcohol flames. Its eyes glowed and it breathed fire the same color.

"That's not the same goat," I observed.

Orlin reached into the muff and pulled out another caprine figurine. He recited the charm again. This goat grew bigger than a warhorse, but was not breathing fire or rolling wicked glowing eyes like some shiver-addled herald's nightmare.

I put Orlin, Tinka, and Holgrim atop it, climbing astride the hellish goat with Emilie myself. "To the Bone Bridge!" Orlin commanded and the goats took off.

I pulled the bee-eater charm out of my pocket, whispering frantically, "Dr. Orontius. Meet us outside the Frosthall now. We are on our way. Norret."

I tossed the trinket in the air and it came to life, winging its way across the fjord.

The bridge was down, its bony planks spanning the gap, the way clear to the other—except for Yelchev the Troll. He stood in the middle, huge in his ivory armor.

"Who seeks passage—" he began.

That was as far as he got. My brother's bull-sized goat charged across the bridge, one of its horns having come free and transformed into a glowing lance. My brother held the oversized weapon awkwardly, yet it slammed into the astonished creature's chest at the same time as the goat's head met its midsection. The troll was thrown backward, past the rail-less edge of the bridge, and into empty space. Then he was gone.

"Orlin Gantier!" my brother cried. "That's who!"

I didn't know if the troll could survive the fall. Trolls were generally unkillable except by fire. That said, the indignity of being defeated by a human child—magical assistance or not—would likely make any troll consider self-immolation.

"To the Frosthall!" Orlin cried, reholstering his lance, which shrank to become his goat's left golden horn.

My own goat's horns were exceptionally large and razor-sharp, and I had no interest in touching them. Nevertheless, a blur of color shot out of the sky and alit on one of them.

"Help!" shrieked Olya, Irynya's parrot familiar. "Lies! Treason!"

It was only to be expected that someone would notice our escape. I made to backhand the offending bird—but was stopped short as it turned imploringly to me.

"Duke Devore, my mistress has been ambushed! You must save her!"

"What?" I gasped. "Who? Where?"

"The wolf!" cried Olya. "Silvertooth! Follow me!" It burst into flight again.

"Follow the parrot!" I called to Orlin, who relayed the command to the goats.

We dashed down the nighttime streets of Whitethrone, down a bright boulevard illuminated by lampposts topped

with skulls with flaming eyes, then careened into a dark alleyway lit only by the hellish eyes of my goat, the lanterns of a sleigh, and the blue glowing eyes of a pack of wolves.

Orlin charged. As he did, his goat didn't so much bleat as roar, a horrifying sound. Half the wolves turned tail and fled, tripping over snowbanks and pissing themselves in terror as the goat passed between them. Mine disemboweled a troll, breathing fire into its empty guts and setting the remains alight. This made it easy to toss in a fire grenade, which blew off the upper half.

The troll's lower torso stumbled about blindly, terrifying the other trolls, who ran after the craven wolves. There remained only the braver wolves and Silvertooth, who held Poskarl Elvanna up by the front of his kaftan. The boy was still alive, but bleeding onto the snow and missing several teeth. Irynya and Valya, unharmed, huddled in the sleigh with the Varki driver. The reindeer had all been torn apart, except for one that stood rimed with hoarfrost, frozen as a block of ice.

Seated on the front end of the sleigh was the old woman who'd tried to capture Orlin upon our first arrival, Poskarl's monkey familiar dangling lifeless from one hand. She grinned. "So the boy is back! But your Jadwiga owe Silvertooth a great deal of money, child. Perhaps they'll sell you to pay their debt?"

Tinka had the answer to that: "The wasp stings until she is satisfied!" the child cried, breaking the string on her wrist. She tossed a sparkling trinket toward the hag.

The Merrymeade charm grew and grew, becoming a great golden whip. It stung like a wasp, striking the woman's hand, causing her to snatch it back and drop the monkey. Then it struck again, lashing about the crone, coiling about her like the string of a child's top. I half expected it to whip away and send her spinning, but apparently the Savored Sting was satisfied.

Holgrim was not. He leapt to the larger goat's head, pulling off its right horn. This became a golden greatsword, sized for a doll, but still long enough and sharp enough to do the job.

The old woman's head fell to the snow.

Silvertooth howled, taking wolf-shape, but his howl was answered by a new howling from the far end of the alleyway. Above it, the voice of Valya's thrush familiar trilled, "Guards! Here they are! Here!"

Silvertooth glowered at Poskarl. "This isn't over, boy." Then he turned tail and fled, his fellow wolves running after him.

Poskarl cradled his monkey, moaning, "Lychee! My little Lychee! Oh Valya, heal him!" He then looked up at me. "Don't let that villain get away!"

I nodded, and we charged on in the direction the wolves had gone. Solving Poskarl's drug-dealing debts was the least of my concerns, however. As soon as we were out of

sight, I turned us away from the canine tracks. A minute later, we thundered into the plaza where Dr. Orontius waited at the foot of the ice sculpture of Kostchtchie.

We dismounted, Orlin pronouncing the charm to reduce the goats to chryselephantine curios.

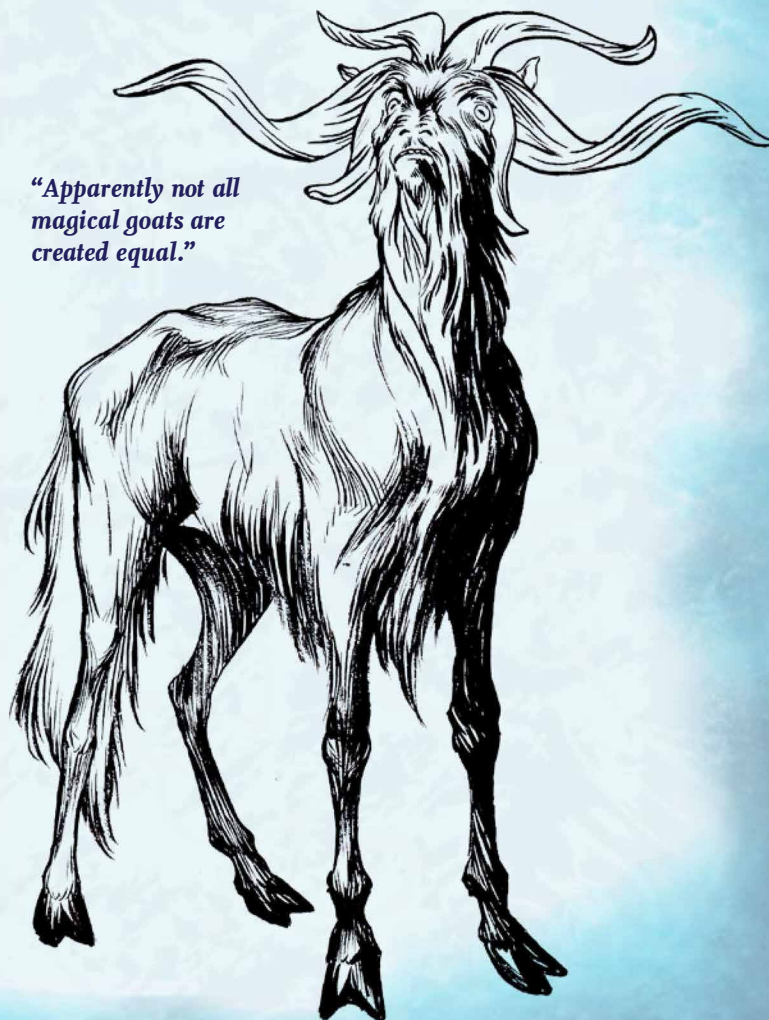
"Desna's wings!" Dr. Orontius exclaimed. "Is this all of you? Very well then. No time for frills. To Absalom!" he cried.

And then we were somewhere else entirely.

That, members of the Decemvirate, is my report. While my notes on the dancing huts are lacking, I hope I have explicated the mystery of the bonedust dolls to your satisfaction. Emilie will be returning with me to Galt, but Holgrim—while uninterested in being a historic relic in your vaults—is interested in applying for apprenticeship.

I would recommend him. He is very brave.

Sincerely,
Norret Gantier



"Apparently not all magical goats are created equal."



BESTIARY

THE WIND WHIPPED UP ALL OF A SUDDEN AND FRIGHTENED A FLOCK OF GRACKLES OUT OF A NEARBY OAK. THE SKY WAS GROWING DARKER BY THE SECOND, AS IF NIGHT WERE VISITING EARLY. A CRACK OF THUNDER FOLLOWED A BLINDING FLASH, AND WHEN IT SETTLED I SAW AN OLD WOMAN STANDING THERE. SHE HAD A BITTER TWIST TO HER FACE, AND SPARKS CHASED EACH OTHER UP HER VOLUMINOUS PUFF OF HAIR. SHE DIDN'T SPEAK. SHE JUST STOOD THERE STARING AT ME AND WAGGING HER FINGER AS IF I WERE A DOG THAT HAD SOILED THE RUG. THERE WAS ANOTHER FLASH OF LIGHTNING... AND THEN I WOKE UP HERE."

—AKI, COURT POET OF KALSGARD
RECOUNTING HIS TROUBLES ON THE ROAD

This month's Pathfinder Bestiary brings you undead queens drained of their vitality, cruel hags controlling the power of a tempest, strange oozes born from covens, and radiant fey creatures pouring out the heat of the sun to wear down their enemies.

OTHER HUT DENIZENS

The *Dancing Hut of Baba Yaga* is a curious device, and it contains even stranger inhabitants. Over the years, Baba Yaga has pressed numerous beings into her service. Most of these have been ordered to watch over various places in the hut, and the remainder of them populate her First World domain, the Thrice-Tenth Kingdom. In addition to the creatures encountered throughout this Adventure Path and the unique beings mentioned in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Artifacts & Legends*, the *Dancing Hut of Baba Yaga* hut holds an uncounted number of other denizens and guardians. Some benign, some malevolent, the creatures inhabiting the hut come from thousands of different places and all have their own motivations and individual desires. What follow are just a few examples of the personalities and threats that can be found in the chicken-legged hut.

Amitrie Leth (N female aranea^{B2} cleric 3/sorcerer 2/mystic theurge 3): In the thick branches of an ancient oak tree, Amitrie and her cabal of spellcasting shapechangers constantly research new spells, create magic items, and sift through the magical secrets of a thousand worlds. Baba Yaga gave the araneas a safe lair (and a magical extension of their natural lifespans) in hopes they might unlock some grand mystery of the universe she has yet to discover. Amitrie and seven other araneas, all of whom are spellcasters of some discipline, have woven spider silk chambers in the upper reaches of the tree where they work. The araneas are able to scribe scrolls of almost any known spell, and for the right price they might consider allowing someone to copy spells into a spellbook or scribe new formulae into a formula book, or having one of their familiars teach a new spell to a visiting witch's familiar. Encountered alone, Amitrie is a CR 12 threat.

Blea Trodukis (NE female human variant worm that walks^{B2} illusionist 15): In a dark corner of the hut resides Blea Trodukis and her brood of millions of cockroaches, though at times it's unclear where her form stops and the swarming cockroaches begin. The cramped warrens where they live are kept dark, and holes in the ceiling periodically open to deposit refuse into the chambers for Blea and her brood to feed upon. Blea met Baba Yaga when she was a living wizard, and through a poorly worded wish for immortality she ended up in her current form after her death. Upon learning of Blea's passing and subsequent transformation, Baba Yaga visited her

distant world and brought the verminous wizard and her crawling swarms of cockroaches to their current home. Blea has no true responsibilities in the *Dancing Hut*, and after such long isolation, any semblance of sanity has long drained from her. Never one to let someone off the hook, Baba Yaga keeps Blea in the hut as part of a long punishment for asking too much. Blea is a CR 16 threat.

Corina (NE female alraune^{B3}): Nestled in a lush garden, this alraune spends her time refining what she hopes will be the perfect perfume. Her most recent concoction is mildly hallucinogenic to those who take even a brief whiff, and the aroma wafts on the gentle breeze in her domain within the hut. Unimpressed with perfumes, Baba Yaga captured the alraune and set her up in the hut so the strange plant woman could craft her a poison that could affect undead creatures. Though Corina never progressed much at her primary task, Baba Yaga is still pleased with the other extracts and psychotropic substances the alraune has distilled, so the Old Crone keeps her around and provides her with materials and ingredients from thousands of worlds. Corina's garden is perpetually lit as bright as a sunny day, but she can dim or even extinguish the artificial sun on command. Corina is a CR 13 threat.

Srathal (NE male invisible stalker rogue 11/assassin 5): Originally summoned by Baba Yaga to quietly eliminate a tricky rival, Srathal agreed to remain in the hut as a guardian if Baba Yaga helped him destroy his home city on the Plane of Air. Together they hatched a plan to open a rift and send the city—a mile-wide sprawl of delicate towers built on a chunk of floating ice—into the heart of the Plane of Fire. After holding up her end of the bargain, Baba Yaga brought Srathal to the hut and allowed the invisible stalker to choose his personal chamber. His hidden lair is a perfectly spherical room that he keeps shrouded in supernatural darkness. Baba Yaga calls upon Srathal when she needs to get rid of someone, needs it to go unnoticed, and isn't invested enough to do it herself. Srathal is a CR 15 threat.

Viliar Savos (CN male vodyanoi^{B3} druid 10): In one section of the hut, a wide sunny meadow spreads out to the horizon, bisected by a narrow river. Standing at the edge of the river is a squat mill with its wheel steadily revolving in the flow. The mill is home to a vodyanoi druid known as Viliar Savos. Baba Yaga met Viliar years ago on her home world and brought him into the hut as a favor because his river was being dammed and his mill would fall into ruin. During the day Viliar rests on the riverbed, but at night he climbs up onto the bank to drink mead and play cards with anyone that might happen by. At dawn he tends to the hives of bees he keeps before returning to the river to rest for the day. Viliar is a CR 10 threat.

CRONE QUEEN

A cold, hateful light burns in the eye sockets of this corpselike creature, whose withered skin is stretched over its icy bones. It wears the tattered raiments of ancient royalty, and a crown of jagged icicles juts from its head.

CRONE QUEEN

CR 15



XP 51,200

NE Medium undead (cold)

Init +9; **Senses** blizzard sight, darkvision 60 ft., lifesense; Perception +32

Aura fear aura (30 ft., DC 25)

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 16, flat-footed 24 (+4 armor, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural)

hp 209 (22d8+110); fast healing 10

Fort +13, **Ref** +14, **Will** +18

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **DR** 10/cold iron and slashing; **Immune** cold, undead traits; **SR** 26

Weaknesses frozen heart, vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee ice staff +24/+19/+14/+9 (1d6+10 plus 1d6 cold and energy drain) or

2 claws +21 (1d6+5 plus 1d6 cold and energy drain)

Special Attacks cold, energy drain (2 levels, DC 25), hexes^{APG} (blight, frostfootSM, hoarfrost^{UM}, ice tomb^{UM}, misfortune), ice staff, unearthly cold

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 19th; concentration +23)

Constant—*mage armor*

At will—*frost fall*^{JUC} (DC 16), *ice missile* (as *magic missile*, but deals cold damage), *obscuring mist*, *screech*^{APG} (DC 17)

3/day—*bestow curse* (DC 17), *crushing despair* (DC 18), *ice storm*, *unshakable chill*^{UM} (DC 16), *wall of ice* (DC 18)

1/day—*cone of cold* (DC 19), *freezing sphere* (DC 20), *polar ray*

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 19, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 37

Feats Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Lunge, Mobility, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Intimidate +29, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Knowledge (history) +26, Knowledge (nobility) +26, Perception +32, Sense Motive +32, Spellcraft +29, Stealth +30

Languages Common, Draconic, Russian, Skald, Sylvan

ECOLOGY

Environment cold ruins

Organization solitary, coven (3–6), or court (12–14)

Treasure double

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blizzard Sight (Su) A crone queen can see normally in natural or magical rain, sleet, hail, fog, snowstorms, blizzards, and similar weather conditions.

Cold (Ex) A crone queen's body generates intense cold, dealing 1d6 points of cold damage with its touch. Creatures attacking a crone queen with unarmed strikes or natural weapons take this same cold damage each time one of their attacks hits.

Frozen Heart (Su) A crone queen's frozen heart contains a tiny portion of Baba Yaga's life, and binds the crone queen to Baba Yaga's will. As a free action, Baba Yaga can command a crone queen as *dominate monster* (CL 20th). If a crone queen's frozen heart is somehow removed before the creature is destroyed, the crone queen loses its fast healing, spell resistance, and unearthly cold ability.

Hexes (Su) A crone queen can use the following hexes as a 20th-level witch: blight, frostfootSM, hoarfrost^{UM}, ice tomb^{UM}, and misfortune. The save DC is 24 to negate or resist and is Intelligence-based.

Ice Staff (Su) As a free action, a crone queen can create a magic staff out of supernaturally hard ice that functions as a +3 *frost quarterstaff* and allows the crone queen to use her energy drain attack with the staff. The ice staff melts away instantly if it leaves the crone queen's hands.

Unearthly Cold (Su) A crone queen's spell-like abilities and supernatural abilities that deal cold damage are horrendously cold. Half the cold damage caused by these effects comes from an otherworldly power and is not subject to being reduced by resistance or immunity to cold-based attacks.

When one of Baba Yaga's chosen daughters has served her 100-year tenure as queen of Irrisen, the Queen of Witches comes to replace her with another daughter. Ostensibly, the deposed daughter joins her mother in the *Dancing Hut* and goes on to bigger and better things far beyond the bounds of Irrisen and Golarion, but the true fate of the queens of Irrisen remains a mystery to most. In fact, these former queens never leave the confines of the *Dancing Hut*—drained of their vitality and power by Baba Yaga and imprisoned deep inside the hut's innermost chambers, these daughters become crone queens, undead mockeries of the powerful witches they once were.

The crone queens are unique creatures, each one a former queen of Irrisen. They are bound to the Hall of Thrones inside the *Dancing Hut*, where Baba Yaga has erected a throne for each deposed queen. Currently there are only 12 crone queens, though the Hall of Thrones holds 14 royal seats. One throne sits ready for the current queen, Elvanna, when her reign is over, and the other is left empty—the throne of Tashanna, Baba Yaga's ninth daughter and the only queen to escape the fate shared by her sisters.

As a crone queen ages, the long years take their toll on the necromantic energies animating the unliving husk of her body, and movement and activity become more difficult. Although their powers have not diminished with age, the oldest crone queens rarely leave their frozen thrones; less interested in vengeance, they instead spend

the long centuries reliving the memories of their former lives. It takes a significant effort to rouse them from their dreamlike reveries, but once awakened, the eldest crone queens are dangerous foes indeed.

THE DEPOSED QUEENS

Twelve of Baba Yaga's daughters sit enthroned inside the *Dancing Hut*, fueling their mother's extended lifespan. Besides the abilities presented in the stat block above, each crone queen possesses additional unique abilities. Over the centuries, the first eight queens of Irrisen—Jadwiga, Morgannan, Urvalane, Pjallarane, Aelena, Harchatha, Sascha, and Karina—have gradually withdrawn into themselves, and now rarely move or interact with the world at all, but in general, the older the crone queen, the more powerful her unique abilities are. If any of these crone queens are awoken from their torpor, they should receive additional abilities in line with their age.

The four most recent queens remain active, full of hatred and a thirst for vengeance. Their unique abilities are detailed below.

Betyrina: The twelfth queen of Irrisen, Betyrina, was known for her vanity and conceit. It is said that, during her reign, no room in Whitethrone's Royal Palace was without a mirror, so the queen could enjoy a constant view of her own reflection. Next to Yelizaveta, Betyrina is perhaps the best-preserved crone queen, and though she is still clearly an undead creature, she takes great pains to keep her hair carefully coiffed and her 200-year-old gown as clean and tidy as possible. Betyrina can cast *strangling hair* (*Ultimate Magic* 240) as a spell-like ability three times per day, and *smug narcissism* (*Ultimate Magic* 238) as a spell-like ability once per day.

Kseniya: A skilled conjurer herself, Irrisen's eleventh queen, Kseniya, founded an academy for conjurers and summoners known as the Bloodstone Conservatory. Kseniya was also famous for trying to take her own life when Baba Yaga came for her at the end of her reign. She was unsuccessful, and the scars of her attempted suicide are still visible on her shrunken wrists. Kseniya can cast *control summoned creature* (*Ultimate Magic* 212) and *terrible remorse* (*Ultimate Magic* 243) as spell-like abilities three times per day.

Velikas: The reign of Velikas, tenth queen of Irrisen, was marked by a lethal epidemic of chillbane fever that swept across the land and devastated the population of the city of Algidheart.

Velikas is still a carrier of this original potent strain of chillbane fever and can cast *epidemic* (*Ultimate Magic* 218) as a spell-like ability once per day, infecting the target with virulent chillbane fever.




Virulent chillbane fever—inhaled or injury; *save* Fortitude DC 23; *onset* 1 day; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d6 Con damage and target is shaken and fatigued, target must make a second Fortitude *save* or 1 point of the damage is drain instead and target is exhausted instead of fatigued; *cure* 2 consecutive *saves*.

Yelizaveta: Irrisen's thirteenth queen, Yelizaveta is the most recently deposed and best preserved of the crone queens, having died only 100 years ago, and her hatred and spite toward her mother is still fresh. Yelizaveta can cast *vengeful outrage* (*Ultimate Magic* 246) as a spell-like ability once per day.



HAG EYE OOZE

A single eye stares unblinking from an amorphous blob. A transparent pseudopod extends from the mass, ready to strike.

HAG OOZE	CR 3	  
XP 800		
N Small ooze		
Init -5; Senses blindsight 60 ft.; Perception -5		
DEFENSE		
AC 6, touch 6, flat-footed 6 (-5 Dex, +1 size)		
hp 34 (4d8+16)		
Fort +5, Ref -4, Will -4		
Immune acid, cold, ooze traits; Resist fire 5		
OFFENSE		
Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.		
Melee slam +6 (1d4+3 plus paralysis)		
Special Attacks paralysis (1d4 rounds, DC 16), spell channel		
STATISTICS		
Str 12, Dex 1, Con 18, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1		
Base Atk +3; CMB +4; CMD 9 (can't be tripped)		
Skills Climb +10		
SQ suction, transparent		
ECOLOGY		
Environment temperate marshes or underground		
Organization solitary		
Treasure none		
SPECIAL ABILITIES		

Spell Channel (Su) A hag creator of a hag eye ooze can see through the embedded *hag eye* as if she were looking from the ooze directly. This ability requires that the hag creator and the hag eye ooze be on the same plane in order to function. If the hag that created the hag eye ooze is part of a coven, the following spells have a 5% chance per caster level of operating through a hag eye ooze: *detect chaos*, *detect evil*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *detect magic*, *message*, *read magic*, and *tongues*. A non-hag that controls a hag eye ooze can't cast spells through the ooze, nor can it see through the creature, but it can target the hag eye ooze with a *clairaudience/clairvoyance* spell and view through it in that manner.

Suction (Ex) A hag eye ooze can create a powerful suction against any surface it climbs, allowing it to cling to inverted surfaces with ease. It can establish or release suction as a swift action, and as long as it is using suction, it moves at half speed. Because of the suction, a hag eye ooze gains a +10 bonus to its CMD to resist bull rush attacks, awesome blow attacks, and other attacks and effects that attempt to physically move it from its location.

Transparent (Ex) A hag eye ooze is difficult to discern from its surroundings in most environments. A successful DC 15 Perception check is required to notice a hag eye ooze. Any creature that fails to notice it and walks into it automatically suffers damage as if struck by the hag eye ooze's slam attack.

Some hags create hag eye oozes to serve as scouts and spies, favoring them over humanoid servants due to the ease of control. With their ability to blend in with their surroundings and climb nearly any surface, these creatures patrol the hag's lair and surrounding territory. Hag eye oozes seem to be imbued with a sliver of the cautious side of their creator's personality, watching intruders from a distance and avoiding combat unless directed to attack. Once given a command, these creatures pursue their goal mindlessly until a countermand is given.

Hag eye oozes have gelatinous, transparent bodies that can sometimes grow larger than 5 cubic feet, though most are smaller, taking up roughly half that space. To date, no specimens have been found weighing more than 500 pounds.




CREATING A HAG EYE OOZE

The process of creating a hag eye ooze is a strange blend of cooking in a cauldron and the magic rituals involved in sparking simulated life into a construct. For more information on *hag eyes* see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Classic Horrors Revisited*.

Creating a hag eye ooze requires 2 weeks. This time is reduced if the brewer is working cooperatively. For each additional member of a coven involved in the process, the creation time is lessened by 2 days, to a minimum creation period of 3 days. During this period, various nutrients and ingredients must be added to the cauldron in which the ooze is brewed. As the ingredients are added the hag must consult strange texts and foul recipes to assure proper creation. If she misses a step or poorly measures a reagent, the necessary arcane energies to create the hag eye ooze do not properly bind to the creature's nascent form. If successful, she then begins a 24-hour ritual, during which the cauldron holding the brewing ooze is bombarded with spells. This ritual and spellcasting culminates in the addition of a *hag eye*—preferably from the hag creator. If the ritual is successful, the hag eye ooze animates fully formed and able to serve as a minion. The hag eye ooze is under the control of the creator, but in cases where a coven takes part in creating the ooze, control goes to the hag that supplied the *hag eye*.

COVEN OOZE

This eerily disturbing gelatinous blob lumbers forward. Three disembodied eyes float within its mass, seemingly scanning back and forth with each surge of movement.

COVEN OOZE	CR 9	  
XP 6,400		
N Large ooze		
Init -5; Senses blindsight 60 ft.; Perception +7		
DEFENSE		
AC 4, touch 4, flat-footed 4 (-5 Dex, -1 size)		
hp 115 (11d8+66)		

Fort +9, Ref -2, Will -1

Defensive Abilities split; **Immune** acid, cold, ooze traits;
Resist fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee slam +11 (1d8+4/19-20)

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

Special Attacks absorb flesh, engulf (DC 18, 1d4 Con drain),
hag eye ray

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 1, **Con** 22, **Int** 2, **Wis** 3, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 17 (can't be tripped)

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (slam), Power
Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Climb +12, Perception +7, Swim +5

SQ suction

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate marshes or underground

Organization solitary

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Absorb Flesh (Ex) A coven ooze doesn't eat plants or inorganic matter, but devours living flesh with voracious speed, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain to creatures it engulfs. Whenever the ooze deals Constitution drain in this manner, it heals 10 hit points for each point of Constitution drained. Excess hit points above its normal maximum are gained as temporary hit points. A coven ooze can gain no more than 30 temporary hit points in this manner. If a coven ooze has temporary hit points when it splits, those temporary hit points are divided into its copies.

Hag Eye Ray (Sp) Every 1d4 rounds, each of the *hag eyes* within a coven ooze can fire a magic ray at a target within 60 feet. Each *hag eye* emits a different spell effect: *bestow curse* (DC 17, -6 to Dexterity), *confusion* (DC 17, 9 rounds), *hold person* (DC 16, 9 rounds). All of these spell-like abilities function at CL 9th. The save DCs are Charisma-based, and include a +8 racial bonus.

Split (Ex) Slashing and piercing weapons deal no damage to a coven ooze. Instead, the creature splits into three identical oozes, each with one third of the original ooze's current hit points (round down). Upon splitting, each copy retains a single *hag eye* within its mass and can continue to use its hag eye ray ability, albeit with only one spell effect. A coven ooze with 10 hit points or fewer, or that doesn't have enough hag eyes to result in each new ooze getting its own eye, cannot be split and instead takes damage normally.

Coven oozes result from a hag eye ooze's conglomeration of multiple *hag eyes*, often caused by the destruction of a hag coven with a hag eye ooze nearby. With its controller gone, and no one to provide food, the ooze feeds upon its mistress and her coven sisters. Through this consumption, the creation gains some semblance of its creators' cunning, independent thought, and malignancy. If the coven sisters had *hag eyes* of their own, the ooze absorbs them into its form. Otherwise, consumption of the coven, with the residual magic of the original *hag eye*, transforms one eye from each of the hags in the coven into a functional *hag eye*.

A coven ooze wanders its creator's territory, devouring any living organism it comes upon. With their animal intelligence, they use the terrain to their best advantage, often lying in waterways near frequented river crossings.

Coven oozes are generally 10 feet to a side and weigh roughly 1,500 pounds, although larger specimens have been encountered. When a coven ooze comes across another creature with the ooze subtype, it attempts to engulf and consume it. For every 10 HD of ooze creatures that a coven ooze consumes, its size increases by one step, to a maximum size of Gargantuan. If a coven ooze ever consumes a hag eye ooze, the creator of the hag eye ooze—if a hag—must succeed at a DC 25 Will save or have her connection to the hag eye ooze severed.



POLUDNICA

A haze of heat shimmers around this beautiful woman. The glare of the sun gleams from her radiant skin.

POLUDNICA

CR 10



XP 9,600

CN Medium fey

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +19

Aura sunstroke haze (10 ft., DC 21)

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 20, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +4 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 119 (14d6+70)

Fort +11, **Ref** +14, **Will** +11

DR 10/cold iron; **Immune** blindness, exhaustion, fatigue, fire; **SR** 21

Weaknesses darkness powerlessness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *scythe* +15/+10 (2d4+10 plus 1d6 fire and 1d2 Con damage/×4)

Special Attacks searing weapons

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +14)

Constant—*pass without trace*

At will—*daylight*, *plant growth* (enrichment only), *touch of fatigue* (DC 14)

3/day—*blur*, *dimension door*, *rainbow pattern* (DC 18), *searing light*

1/day—*sunbeam* (DC 21), *waves of fatigue*

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 20, **Con** 21, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 33

Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Stand Still, Weapon Focus (*scythe*)

Skills Bluff +12, Diplomacy +13, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (local) +17, Perception +19, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +20, Survival +10

Languages Common, Sylvan

SQ grace, tied to day

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate plains

Organization solitary

Treasure standard (+1 *scythe*, mithral chain shirt, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Darkness Powerlessness (Su) As long as a poludnica is within an area of magical darkness, her sunstroke haze aura does not function. She also becomes staggered and cannot use any of her spell-like abilities.

Grace (Su) A poludnica adds her Charisma modifier as a deflection bonus to her Armor Class.

Searing Weapons (Su) Any weapon a poludnica wields becomes incredibly hot and conducts and amplifies her ability to cause fatigue by reducing the target's ability to resist the effects.

In melee combat, such a weapon deals an additional 1d6 points of fire damage plus 1d2 points of Constitution damage. The Constitution damage is negated with a successful DC 21 Fortitude save. The weapon cools rapidly if it leaves her grasp, losing these additional abilities immediately.

Sunstroke Haze (Su) A poludnica radiates oppressive heat in a 10-foot radius. Any creature that starts its turn within this area must succeed at a DC 21 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and become fatigued. A fatigued creature that fails a second saving throw becomes exhausted. The fatigued or exhausted condition lasts for as long as the nonlethal damage goes unhealed. A poludnica can activate or suppress this ability as a free action and the save DC is Charisma-based.

Tied to Day (Su) A poludnica's connection to the sun tethers her to the Material Plane. During daylight hours (from dawn to sunset), her abilities are as shown above whether she can actually see the sun or not. During the nighttime hours (from sunset to dawn), a poludnica shifts to the Ethereal Plane (as *ethereal jaunt*). This is automatic, involuntary, and causes a poludnica great distress. While on the Ethereal Plane, a poludnica is affected by her darkness powerlessness and is nearly helpless. This curse cannot be dispelled or removed by anything short of divine interaction.

Driven by an obsession that few can fully comprehend, poludnicas are bitter creatures of light, heat, and envy. Although they are surprisingly strong and deadly combatants, these scythe-wielding women resort to violence only when guile and trickery have failed. They are lonely creatures that seek the company of mortals by luring farm workers and children away from their families so that they can briefly enjoy a feeble simulation of family life. In the rural farming communities where her kind is most commonly found, a poludnica might also be known as Cornwife, Lady Middy, or Mother Noon. She might even be mistaken for a vengeful or beneficent ghost depending on how she presents herself.

Averaging 6 feet tall and weighing approximately 170 pounds, poludnicas could easily be mistaken for strapping farm girls if it were not for their radiance. Their maximum life expectancy has not been documented and it is commonly believed that poludnicas are effectively immortal unless they suffer some deadly mishap. It has been theorized that permanently keeping a poludnica in magically darkened conditions would eventually lead to her death, but no scholars have so far attempted to prove this hypothesis.

ECOLOGY

Poludnicas draw their physical sustenance from sunlight, but they often eat and drink to emulate the simple folk who are the subjects of their obsession. However, emotional nourishment is more difficult for them to obtain and their

need for companionship and the simulation of a normal family life leads them to commit questionable acts of kidnapping or even murder.

Like bees who pollinate nearby flowers—which then go to seed and produce more flowers the next season—a poludnica’s ability to enrich local plant life leads farming communities to thrive around their lairs. These plentiful fields bring more farmhands and more families, all potential companions for the poludnica.

Though the magic that pulls poludnicas into the Ethereal Plane at nightfall is viewed as a curse, it is also one of their most useful abilities. Though distressed and weakened on the Ethereal Plane, poludnicas can nonetheless perceive events upon the Material Plane. They often spend their nights spying on mortal families. Each night they move ethereally through mortals’ homes, watching them eat, sleep, and enjoy the company and intimacy of others. Though this fills all poludnicas with sorrow, many are also driven to impotent, jealous rage as they watch children sleeping peacefully and wives embracing their husbands.

The origin of their cursed existence is a mystery—whether poludnicas were created by some powerful creature that did not anticipate the maddening effects of their abilities or whether they were once different creatures cursed for some failure or insult is not known. Either way, the curse has driven these lonely fey slightly mad.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Poludnicas usually claim a few hundred acres of fertile land as their territory, most often centered on a lair that is hidden in plain sight, inaccessible, or avoided by the community, such as a hollow beneath the tangled roots of a tree, the tumbledown barn of a former companion who no longer lives, or an abandoned and supposedly haunted farmhouse.

By day, a poludnica prowls crop fields seeking to lure, coerce, or physically abduct an overworked farmhand back to her home where she has built a mockery of a human farmhouse kitchen or bedroom, expecting her abductee to indulge her whims in a pantomime of normalcy, companionship, or intimacy. Sometimes one of these companions might choose to play along with his captor or try to escape during daylight hours, but those that bide their time until nightfall when the poludnica disappears at least have a chance of escape.

If a companion survives until nightfall, the poludnica fades away, leaving the suitor or child to fend for himself while she watches impotently from the Ethereal Plane. This may not prove to be a problem, but since many poludnicas make their daytime lairs in inaccessible places, if the captive cannot free himself before dawn, the poludnica often simply returns—likely unhappy with the “inconsiderate” companion’s lack of loyalty to his new “family.”

Some poludnicas who are kinder than most choose to hide their presence altogether. They avoid coming into contact with the peasants working the land, except at night where they can invisibly and sorrowfully observe mortals enjoying the companionship that is denied to the poludnicas themselves. More commonly, poludnicas are driven to lure away farmhands and kidnap children who they believe will come to love them and consider them their new family.

For all the suffering poludnicas cause, dwelling in a poludnica’s territory is not without its benefits. Their crop-enriching powers provide abundant food, and many farming communities have come to see them as a kind of guardian spirit. Children often weave cornhusk dolls to placate a local poludnica, ask for her protection, or thank her for sparing their fathers or brothers. Some poludnicas are touched by these displays and stop, or at least reduce, their predations on those in the community.



STORM HAG

Clad in hides and furs, this creature appears to be a small, ugly woman whose hair, claws, and teeth crackle with sparks of electricity. Her windswept hair billows up from her brow like an enormous thunderhead.

STORM HAG

CR 7



XP 3,200

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** child-scent, darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural)

hp 85 (10d10+30)

Fort +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +8

Immune electricity; **SR** 18

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee bite +13 (1d6+3 plus 1d6 electricity), 2 claws +13 (1d4+3 plus 1d6 electricity)

Special Attacks storm strike, whipping winds

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +13)

At will—*bleed*, *gust of wind* (DC 15), *whispering wind*
3/day—*invisibility*, *lightning bolt* (DC 16), *river of wind*^{APG}
(DC 17), *sleet storm*
1/day—*control winds* (DC 18)

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 13, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 26

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Hover, Vital Strike

Skills Bluff +10, Fly +17, Intimidate +15, Perception +14,
Spellcraft +7, Stealth +15

Languages Common, Giant

SQ storm rider

ECOLOGY

Environment any temperate

Organization solitary or coven (3 hags of any kind)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Child-Scent (Ex) A storm hag has the scent ability, but only with respect to humanoid children and immature animals.

Thus, she could sniff out a child's hiding place or a den of wolf pups, but not the child's parents or the den mother.

Storm Rider (Su) A storm hag is considered two size categories larger than she actually is in regard to wind effects.

Storm Strike (Su) Each time a storm hag makes a successful attack with her bite, claws, or when she uses a weapon that is predominantly made of metal the attack deals an additional 1d6 points of electricity damage.

Whipping Winds (Su) As a standard action, a storm hag can use her *gust of wind* spell-like ability to trip her foes. This ability can only affect one target within 30 feet, and the storm hag uses her combat maneuver bonus as if tripping a creature normally. The *gust of wind* spell doesn't possess

its normal effects, but instead sweeps a creature off its feet. Attempting to trip a creature with this ability does not provoke an attack of opportunity, but casting the spell-like ability provokes attacks of opportunity as normal.

When the clouds turn gray and the winds pick up into a howl, wise travelers pray that the cause is only a natural tempest and the foul weather is not connected with a storm hag. Storm hags are hateful creatures, and strangely, their hate is one of the few things that brings them pleasure.

A storm hag resembles a shrunken old woman with a thundercloud of hair stacked atop her wrinkled head. Her mouth hangs open, revealing thin pointed teeth; small arcs of electricity can be seen jumping across her teeth and spittle. Black talons sprout from her fingertips, likewise crackling with electricity. A storm hag's wrinkled face contains a look of gleeful distaste, and her eyes are thick with cataracts, rendering her gaze pupil-less. A storm hag's hair is wild and unruly with static electricity popping and crackling throughout the mass. Seemingly animated, a storm hag's hair can easily stand as tall as she is. Wiry and stooped, a storm hag weighs about 70 pounds and stands a little over 4 feet tall, though if she stood up straight she could easily reach 5 feet or more. A storm hag usually wears rough furs and coarse woolen clothing that is rarely cleaned, giving her a distinctly unpleasant odor.

ECOLOGY

Like most other living things, a storm hag needs to eat, and her favorite meal is the tender flesh of young children. Storm hags use their ability to smell children and young animals to track down their meals no matter where the child has hidden himself. On Golarion, storm hags have developed a special fondness for Kellid and Ulfen children.

Storm hags find the childlike gnomes and halflings infuriating. It is unknown why this is so—perhaps storm hags cannot distinguish between children and members of these small races on sight and are angered that their prey is not actually their favorite food. They may very well just have some other unknown pet peeve about the smaller folk, but either way, the presence of gnomes or halflings drives storm hags into a rage. When given the choice, storm hags always target members of these races above all others.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Storm hags are most numerous in the northern lands of the Inner Sea region, but with their ability to fly, their insatiable hunger, and the desire to share their hate with others, storm hags can likely appear anywhere. They prefer areas that are prone to inclement weather,

and enjoy flying through the air during thunderstorms, feeling the static discharge dancing across their warty skin. Storm hags most frequently claim territory in the wild spaces between settlements where they keep their distance from civilization unless hunting. Like a predator, a storm hag constantly surveys her territory and takes great pains in keeping a secret den she considers always hers. For the most part, a storm hag is content to remain in one place if the food is plentiful and her shelter is safe and obscured. A storm hag's den is a simple, yet grotesque affair, often located in deep, dark forests or atop craggy mountains, and is always hidden from sight. Cluttered with bones and skins from previous meals, a den's most dominant feature is the storm hag's cauldron.

Storm hags roam their territory hunting, preferring to prey on children if possible, but they do consider adult humanoids suitable substitutes when children are unavailable. A storm hag only stoops to eating animals when her hunger grows too strong, however.

When a storm hag encounters travelers in her territory, she torments the unwitting visitors, calling down the winds and whipping up a storm of howling gales and crashing lightning to break her enemies' ranks and to send them running for shelter. Once her prey has been cornered into a cave or thicket where they sought shelter from the weather, the storm hag sows discontent by using her *whispering wind* spell-like ability to harass and frighten the sheltered travelers with a hate-filled, disembodied voice. Like a cat toying with a crippled field mouse, the storm hag pushes her prey to their breaking point—letting them steep in shivering fright—before confronting them face to face with tooth, claw, and lightning before finally killing and consuming them.

STORM HAG COVENS

Like other hags, storm hags form covens. They prefer to form these covens with other storm hags, but storm hags have been known to team up with green hags or other hags on occasion. Storm hags inhabiting stormy coasts or soggy salt marshes sometimes ally with sea hags and form covens with them. Though they respect the strength of annis hags, few storm hags enter into a coven with those brutish and simple creatures. When they do, the storm hags rely on the annis hags' intimidating physical might to help in their hunts.

A storm hag is an attractive prospect for any burgeoning coven-to-be, but these hags aren't easily wooed into joining with others. A storm hag is haughty and views her way of doing something as the best, if only because she is the one doing it. Any hag thinking of forming a coven with a storm hag would do well to

ride a fine line between flattery and outright dominance by performing simultaneous acts of humble depravity and honorific evil. The other two hags in a coven with a storm hag gain her child-scent ability as long as they are within 100 feet of the storm hag. In addition, a coven with a storm hag as a member has access to the following spell-like abilities beyond what a normal coven provides: *call lightning storm* (DC 18), *plague storm*^{UM} (DC 19), *quench* (DC 16), *whirlwind* (DC 21), *wind wall*. Like other covens, all three hags must be within 10 feet of one another and must work together and take a full-round action take part in this cooperative magic. For more information about hag covens, see page 167 in the *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*.



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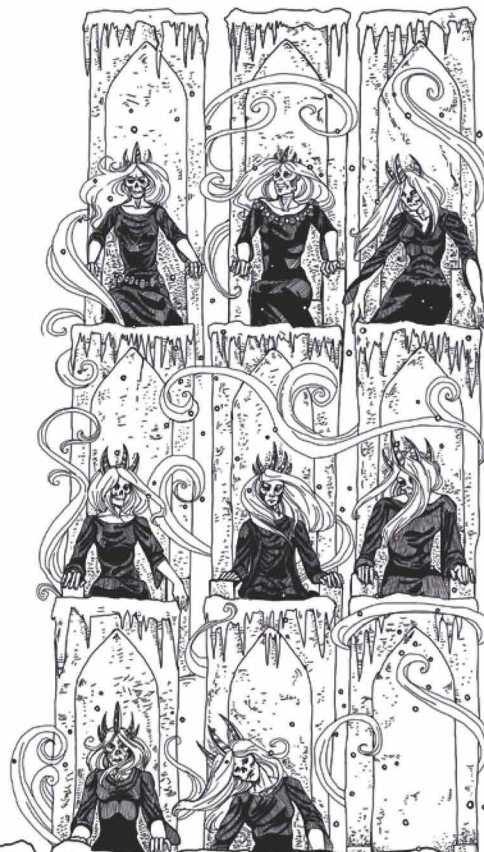
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FOURTEEN THRONES FOR FOURTEEN QUEENS TAKEN FROM THEIR PALACE AFTER A CENTURY OF RIPENING. NO BLANKET OF BLACK EARTH AWAITS THESE QUEENS, FOR BABA YAGA HAS CALLED THEM HOME. THERE IS OLD JADWIGA, FURIOUS MORGANNAN, CRUEL URVALANE, DEFIANT PJALLARANE, AMENABLE AELENA, THE ONCE-KIND HARCATHA, STERN SASCHA, HARSH KARINA, ABSENT TASHANNA, DESPERATE VELIKAS, DESPONDENT KSENIYA, VAIN BETYRINA, AND SPITEFUL YELIZAVETA. ELVANNA'S SEAT IS READY FOR HER ARRIVAL, BUT THE CURRENT WITCH QUEEN OF IRRISEN HAS NO INTENTION OF TAKING IT. WHAT WILL BABA YAGA DO WITH ANOTHER EMPTY THRONE?



PAYBACK'S A WITCH!

Baba Yaga has been rescued from the clutches of her son Rasputin, but the Queen of Witches remains trapped inside a magical matryoshka doll. Delving into hidden chambers deep within the *Dancing Hut*, the heroes must open the nesting dolls imprisoning Baba Yaga, but they must also contend with the hut's most dedicated guardians, including the former queens of Irrisen. When the time comes to finally face Queen Elvanna inside the *Dancing Hut*'s innermost sanctum, will the heroes defeat her and free Baba Yaga, or plunge Golarion into a new ice age?

This volume of Pathfinder Adventure Path concludes the Reign of Winter Adventure Path and includes:

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