# Pathfinder® Adventure Path™



## Tyrant's Grasp

# Gardens of Gallowspire

By Crystal Frasier


The Gravelands
GALLOWSPIRE
Virlych
RENCHURCH
CASNORIVA
Ustalav
VAISHAU
GARDEN OF LEAD
VIGIL
HALLEIN TOWN
CALIPHAS
CASTLE FIRRINE
HAMMER ROCK
DORTROT RANCH
CASTLE EVERSTAND
Lastwall
Northern Fangwood
The Isle of Terror
VELLUMIS
THE WIZARD-KING'S PIT
FORT LANDING
SARENITE TEMPLE
ROSLAR'S COFFER
THREE PINES FORD
0
60 MILES

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## ON THE COVER




Artist Igor Grechanyi provides this stunning vision of Arazni, the lich demigoddess who takes a central role in this adventure. In the background, Seelah and Kess fight a nightwing in the pit of Gallowspire.



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## REFERENCE

This book refers to several other Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products using the following abbreviations, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Pathfinder RPG hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at **pfrd.info**.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Advanced Player's Guide* | APG | *Bestiary 6* | B6 |
| *Bestiary 2* | B2 | *Occult Adventures* | OA |
| *Bestiary 3* | B3 | *Ultimate Combat* | UC |
| *Bestiary 4* | B4 | *Ultimate Equipment* | UE |
| *Bestiary 5* | B5 | *Ultimate Magic* | UM |

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# Gardens of Gallowspire


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While the heroes are evacuating refugees from the fallen city of Vigil, their patron reveals herself to be the lich Arazni. Arazni has a plan to confront the newly freed Whispering Tyrant, which requires the heroes to traverse the dangerous lands of Virlych to the ruins of the Whispering Tyrant's prison.

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The heroes navigate the dangerous gardens that have appeared around the ruins of Gallowspire and descend into the dungeons beneath the shattered prison. There, they confront the graveknights seeking Arazni and shut down the magical wards that protect the Whispering Tyrant.

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The heroes have paved the way for Arazni to fight the Whispering Tyrant, but the battle becomes more complicated when the remaining defenders of Lastwall ride to fight the Whispering Tyrant's hordes. The heroes must delay or divert the crusaders to save them from devastation.


### Advancement Track

"Gardens of Gallowspire" is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

11 The PCs begin this adventure at 11th level.

12 The PCs should reach 12th level before entering the Gallowspire dungeons.

13 The PCs should be 13th level before entering the catacombs level.

The PCs should reach 14th level by the adventure's conclusion.

# ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Nine hundred years ago, the Shining Crusade struggled against the unrelenting forces of undead led by Tar-Baphon, the Whispering Tyrant. The pious warriors turned to their deity, Aroden, beseeching the god of humanity to aid them above and beyond the spells he granted their clerics and paladins. It was Aroden, the Last Azlanti, who slew the mortal wizard Tar-Baphon centuries earlier, and the crusaders hoped the Whispering Tyrant's ancient rival would return now that his risen enemy threatened the lands he claimed to protect. The Knights of Ozem begged for Aroden's mercy and his aid.

They were met with silence.

Thus, the Knights turned to a divine force they could control. They summoned Arazni, the legendary warrior and herald of Aroden, to spearhead the Shining Crusade's new push against Tar-Baphon's stronghold of Gallowspire. She was a bold and noble warrior who would happily have taken the fight to the lich king if asked, but the Knights of Ozem thought it wiser—even necessary, in the face of the Whispering Tyrant's threat—to instead bind and order her to meet those goals. This decision planted tiny seeds of doubt and resentment in Arazni's mind. When Arazni confronted Tar-Baphon in 3823 AR, the Whispering Tyrant overpowered and killed her. Whether those hints of resentment played a role in Arazni's defeat, none can say, but they followed her to the grave.

Under the command of the Taldan hero General Arnisant and the then-mortal General Iomedae, the crusaders gradually broke Tar-Baphon's defenses and took the fight to him once again. General Arnisant faced the Whispering Tyrant and won by virtue of wielding an artifact, the *Shield of Aroden*, although the artifact was sundered in combat, becoming thereafter known as the *Shattered Shield of Arnisant*. The Whispering Tyrant fled into the deepest reaches of Gallowspire, the Knights of Ozem erected their seal to bind him away, and what remained of their army established the nation of Lastwall to watch over their unfinished work. In the meantime, the martyr Arazni became a symbol of this new nation and the terrible price paid to halt evil's reign.

But for many knights, their responsibility as guardians was slow and dull, devoid of the passion of the crusade. The horrors and costs of the war seemed less dear when viewed through the lens of decades. After two generations, many among the Knights of Ozem longed for the glorious battle of their grandparents. They had laid low one of the greatest threats to Golarion—by skill and moral certainty, they believed, rather than luck—and turned their gaze outward for new threats. Eyes in search of war will always find an enemy, and the knights set upon the nation of Geb, an isolationist nation of undead ruled by a powerful undead wizard. Lead by the magus Amaretos Barronmor, they made stirring speeches, gathered donations, and ultimately prepared an army to bring war to Geb.

The Second Crusade was over before it began. Amaretos took a few hand-picked crusaders with him as advance scouts to infiltrate Geb and sought to gain information about their enemy and scout out possible allies. But zealous crusaders make poor spies, and Geb had spent lifetimes at war ferreting out enemy operatives. Lastwall's seven agents were captured, corrupted, and raised as undead knights in service to Geb, even while the invading force awaiting their signal was crushed. These evil graveknights returned to Lastwall, but as thieves. They carved a bloody swath through the crusader's capital city of Vigil, stole Arazni's remains, and carried them south to Geb. Their violence was a retribution, and their attack on Arazni—the symbol and heart of Lastwall—a warning of the dire price of continued aggression.

## The Harlot Queen

The wizard Geb was not yet done with Lastwall. He saw Arazni as the ultimate trophy, one that he sought to shape to his desires. For a year and a day, he labored on a potent ritual, dragging what remained of the noble herald back from the Great Beyond and mutilating her soul. Despite Geb's tortures, Arazni's soul remained powerful and defiant. But the seeds of resentment and doubt planted decades earlier by the Knights of Ozem remained, and Geb fixated upon it, nurturing it through honeyed words, abuse, and empty promises until it blossomed into hatred. Through that bounty, his magic corrupted the lingering essence of Arazni into a lich—an abomination like the very one that slew her.

With her soul and body both stolen from her, her life redefined by an enemy she despised, and her phylactery hidden so even the peace of oblivion was forever denied, Arazni's heart slipped, and to survive among monsters, she let herself become a monster. Geb propped her up as his "harlot queen," the ruler of his self-titled nation, and made her responsible for the administrative matters that he considered beneath him. Political power served Arazni as an illusion of autonomy; cruelty replaced her compassion. She felt that her new subjects, the undead residents of Geb, deserved no love or charity, and the mortals of Lastwall—the careless children who had condemned her to this existence—deserved even less.

Though she slowly embraced the hatred Geb so diligently cultivated in her heart, a part of Arazni hoped her old friend Aroden would one day return and save her from her waking nightmare. He never did. When Aroden died, Arazni sank deeper into herself, turning to

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## Cruelty and Kindness

The major theme of this adventure is the consequence of cruelty. Once the PCs enter Virlych, they have few safe places to rest, and many ostensible allies turn out to be evil monsters bent on trickery and murder. It's easy for the PCs to harden themselves, trust no one, and react only with violence. Yet the advantages of kindness in the face of cruelty are many. Mechanically, displays of kindness and generosity help the PCs in the long run, making their final confrontation with the Knights of Ozem in Part 3 easier.

To communicate this to the players, emphasize the human emotions of those the PCs choose to help. A simple commoner left to die owes her life to the PCs. A resolute scout that the PCs help out learns that things were even worse than he realized. Most significantly, this adventure offers the PCs several opportunities to interact with Arazni, an evil undead abomination who nonetheless needs their help and even finds herself growing fond of her peculiar mortal agents. She views any measure of kindness from the PCs with skepticism and pity, but it ultimately endears them to her. Other creatures in Virlych have their own painful backstories and origins, and can no longer see the world as a fundamentally good place. Like Arazni, these individuals may believe kindness or sympathy is misguided, or even worthy of contempt, but they may not be beyond reach.

In this Adventure Path about the human costs of disaster and loss, don't underestimate the all-too-human rewards that come from kindness in adversity.

the hateful whispers that had flowed through the darkest recesses of her soul since she faced Tar-Baphon. Yet these ravings were not her own, she realized—they were echoes of Tar-Baphon's thoughts. Her death at his hands had linked them together in a way she did not understand, but nonetheless carefully attended. Tar-Baphon's fury as he impotently battered the walls of his own prison, so like her own torment, comforted her in these darkest years. Thus when his rage turned to delight only a short time ago, Arazni felt this as well.

Tar-Baphon's mental whispers offered impressions and glimpses, not clear reflections of his thoughts. While Arazni knew that the frontier town of Roslar's Coffer was somehow important to the Whispering Tyrant's impending escape, she could glean nothing more through her vague psychic connection.

For the first time in centuries, Arazni evaded the graveknights that served as her companions and—under the pretense of being her royal guard—her jailers, stealing away to Lastwall. She arrived just in time to catch the full fury of the *Radiant Fire*, which incinerated her body and banished her once again to Geb to re-form near her hidden phylactery.

The process was unusually slow and painful. Arazni realized that whatever Tar-Baphon's weapon was, it had the power to disrupt the ties between her and her phylactery, and for the first time since Aroden's death, she let herself hope. Now, instead of relying upon a distant and arrogant champion, she had a chance at claiming her own freedom. With the Whispering Tyrant's *Radiant Fire*, bolstered by her own rituals, she could perhaps fully sever the shackle to her phylactery. If she happened to be annihilated in the process—as was by far the most likely outcome—at least it would happen on her own terms, and no one could ever control her again. And if she could make the Whispering Tyrant suffer in the process, denying him his undead armies, his magic, or his miserable existence, so much the better.

After re-forming, Arazni returned to Lastwall once again and arrived in Roslar's Coffer in time to witness the PCs' triumph over the Whispering Way. Arazni could see potential in these mortals as spies, with their knowledge, bravery, and strangely warped souls, so she offered her clandestine support and direction. She directed them to Vigil so they might confirm her suspicions and learn more about the Whispering Tyrant's superweapon. But with Tar-Baphon free, subtlety is no longer a luxury she can afford. Arazni has now decided to simply come forward to these valuable new agents. She hopes that honesty will impress them enough to convince them to aid her against the Whispering Tyrant, despite her monstrous nature.

Yet Arazni's second trip to Lastwall did not go unnoticed. While her Gebbite subjects excused her first departure as one of their queen's brooding sequestrations, this second disappearance has proven far longer. Her graveknight captors, led by Amaretos Manslayer, have come to Lastwall to hunt their queen and return her to Geb "for her own safety." But Arazni has concealed herself well. The graveknights cannot find her, though they are following leads that take them to Gallowspire—the site of Tar-Baphon's imprisonment—which puts them into conflict with the PCs, the mortals who have had the closest association with their queen.

Unfortunately for the graveknights—as well as for the good people of Golarion—the Whispering Tyrant is no longer in Gallowspire. Shortly after devastating Vigil, Tar-Baphon obliterated the tower of Gallowspire and the upper dungeon levels beneath it. The Great Seal that had kept the Whispering Tyrant was destroyed, and the lich walked free with his long-imprisoned armies. Now, Tar-Baphon gathers his forces and prepares to make war on the mortal world once more, unaware that the hero he slew centuries earlier yet schemes against him.

# PART 1: AND THE LAND SHALL ROT

The PCs sail west with their refugee flotilla, traveling from the ruins of Vigil to the bastion of Castle Everstand, as yet unaware that their mysterious patron has established a new lair along their path. Queen Arazni is not in Lastwall with the leave of her king and nation. A hostage as much as a sovereign, she is kept under watch at all times by the Council Libertine, the corrupted graveknights who took the Second Crusade to Geb. Her sojourn north is a jailbreak, and her captors—finally realizing the figure left in her place is a slow-witted simulacrum—have come to Lastwall to track down their queen.

To obscure her presence, Arazni selected Naderi's Bastion as her redoubt. Though it is little more than a glorified lighthouse built at the crux of the River Esk and the Kestrel River, the bastion offers an unexpected benefit. Its lower level is lined with lead and mortar to support the bastion's weight and to keep the river water at bay; this, combined with the thick walls, natural stone, and surrounding ring of flowing water serves to obscure the lower level of Naderi's Bastion from all but the most powerful divination spells. Arazni learned of this site decades ago, but has been reluctant to use it until a time of great need—a time she deems is at hand. By supplementing the structure with her own magic, Arazni is hidden from both Geb and Tar-Baphon as long as she remains within Naderi's Bastion.

Arazni is all too aware of Virlych's *witchgates* (see page 74) after her time with the Shining Crusade, and while she does not doubt she could crush any servants guarding those hazards, she does not wish to lose the element of surprise—her one major advantage over the huge numbers Tar-Baphon controls. To that end, she needs proven agents to destroy the *witchgates*' power source concealed deep within Gallowspire, and to scout Tar-Baphon's location so she can launch a precision strike against the lich. Arazni has no better agents for this dangerous mission than the PCs.

## The Messenger

At the end of "Last Watch," the PCs evacuated the survivors of the devastated city of Vigil on a barge called the *Golden Dawnrose*. The refugees are making their way west—up the River Esk and then the Kestrel River—to reach the safety of Castle Everstand. To begin the adventure, read or paraphrase the following:

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Smoke still rises from the horizon like a grave marker over Vigil. The winds carry the *Golden Dawnrose* west on the Esk River. The gathered survivors aboard huddle against the morning chill and eat in reserved silence. Faint hope shines in their eyes.

The lazy lap of water against the hull is drowned out by stunned gasps as an angelic figure descends from overheard. Reaching the deck, it stands as tall as a human, but the creature is clearly artificial—pieced together from lacquered wood and hammered bronze, with a wooden mask hanging



Timberward



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over its chest on a chain. The mask's eyes begin to glow, and a woman's voice issues from the construct's chest. "Well met, Walkers from the Boneyard. I am truly impressed with your tenacity and skill. I would impart more florid greetings, but time is precious—now more than ever. I must speak with you as soon as possible in a private sanctum. Your ship approaches Naderi's Bastion at the crux of the Esk and the Kestrel rivers; you can find me in the lower levels of this... quaint fortification.

"I understand you may feel some responsibility for these lives you have saved, and so as a sign of respect I offer you this golem. It has served as my guardian these past several weeks. It is both powerful and loyal. My mask serves as its focus—entrust it to someone you believe will not abuse such power.

"The wealth I have offered you up to this point has been a pittance compared to what I can present you for the dire tasks ahead, and I can only assure you that these lives you have risked everything to save may be forfeit if we delay."

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The speaker is Arazni; PCs who met Arazni at the end of "Eulogy for Roslar's Coffer" recognize the voice of the woman who met them outside of Roslar's Coffer and directed them to Vigil. As the mask only delivers the message, Arazni cannot hear any response the PCs give. After delivering the message, the mask's eyes fade. A PC who succeeds at a DC 21 Spellcraft check identifies the effect as a powerful variant of *magic mouth*.

The PCs receive this unusual messenger when they are approximately 2 hours from Naderi's Bastion, giving them ample time to prepare to part ways with the refugees of the *Golden Dawnrose*.

**Creature:** The angelic creature is a winged shield guardian wood golem named Timberward. The mask hanging around its neck is the magical amulet used to control it. Timberward remains motionless on the deck and allows any creature on the *Golden Dawnrose* to remove its amulet. A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies the mask as the shield guardian's amulet and further recognizes the craftsmanship of Nex, the nation of legendary golem-builders far to the south. Timberward stores the *lesser globe of invulnerability* spell, which it uses as the bearer of its mask commands.

**TIMBERWARD** **CR 8**

**XP 4,800**

Variant shield guardian wood golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 158, 164)

**hp** 64

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

**Development:** The PCs can gift the golem's amulet to any trusted NPC, such as Aylunna Varvatos or Evni Zongnoss; this choice ensures that the survivors reach

Castle Everstand safely and with no casualties from roving undead or orc invaders.

If the PCs distrust the messenger and want to escort the survivors all the way to Castle Everstand personally, they can do so without difficulty; if the PCs still need additional XP to reach 11th level, then some encounters with roving undead while on this journey should provide what they need. Arazni has no choice but to await the PCs while they do so, although her irritation when she ultimately meets them is obvious. She therefore offers only the *periapt of health* and one other item from the *Panoply of Arazni* (of the PCs' choice) as her reward, rather than the entire set, making clear she values efficiency over human compassion.

Of course, the PCs might choose to keep Timberward for themselves. This choice doesn't particularly surprise Arazni, but it reinforces her suspicion that mortals are greedy and easily corrupted. Further, the decision to keep Timberward for themselves has ramifications for the PCs at the climax of this adventure.

## A. NADERI'S BASTION (CR 11)

This squat, dismal motte-and-bailey fortress looms over the intersection of two wide rivers. A moat connects the waterways to completely encircle the stronghold, while a simple lighthouse rises above the main building's tower.

Naderi's Bastion is an earthworks fortress with a stone tower atop it, built at the fork of the River Esk and the Kestrel River during the Shining Crusade. Far less tactically important than larger complexes like Castle Everstand, it now serves primarily as a lighthouse to prevent ships from running aground on the mudflats where the two rivers join.

The water over the mudflats is 2 feet deep and counts as difficult terrain.

**Creature:** Originally named Kestrel's Bastion and serving as a relay point for messenger birds, the structure was renamed in honor of the goddess of tragic romances after a young husband and new father drowned himself and his infant child in the wake of his wife's death. For decades after, the man—remembered only as the Father in Tears—haunted the riverbanks as a llorona before being laid to rest by the Knights of Ozem. Local priests of Iomedae kept the spirit quiescent by offering yearly prayers on the anniversary of his wife's death. With the surge in necromantic energy caused by Gallowspire's destruction, however, the Father in Tears rose once again to drag other unfortunate souls to a muddy grave.

The Father in Tears won't attack anyone who is aboard a ship, but when someone comes ashore, he rises from the water behind them, crying for his lost wife and child who drowned in the unforgiving river. He uses his wail to compel visitors to enter the river, then he attempts to grapple them and force them down into the mud beneath the water.

**THE FATHER IN TEARS** **CR 11**

**XP 12,800**

Male llorona (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6* 181)

**hp** 138

### Meeting Arazni

The ground level and tower of Naderi's Bastion are all but abandoned. Only an aging keeper, **Malacaih Quentin** (LN old male human expert 4/warrior 3), remains to tend the lighthouse. He greets the PCs with hot cinnamon tea and fresh blackberry scones to help ward them against the river's chill. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Sense Motive check can recognize that Malacaih is laboring under a charm effect. Arazni charmed the old caretaker to keep him calm in her presence. If the PCs suppress or dispel the effect (CL 20th), the caretaker succumbs to his panic at Arazni's presence and flees from the building, screaming about a dead woman.

Once the PCs are properly greeted, Malacaih informs them that his "other guest" is waiting below and would like to speak to them. If asked about this guest, Malacaih says, "She gave me quite a fright when she first arrived in the middle of the night. I don't get many visitors here, you see. But she's been lovely and respectful ever since. Even conjured me a little wind man to help with the chores." Malacaih points to a corner where a nearly imperceptible whirlwind tidies the floor. PCs who succeed at a DC 17 Spellcraft check identify it as an *unseen servant* spell.

Once the PCs venture downstairs, read or paraphrase the following.

A few oily candles shudder against the darkness of this expansive basement. A musty and sickly-sweet odor mingles with the scent of foreign spices. A large circle of salt lines the floor, and in its center—resting upon a cushioned chair—sits a woman in long, formal dress. The pallid, gray skin of her heart-shaped face frames sunken, yellow eyes. A deep surgical wound—fresh but bloodless—runs vertically down from her throat and disappears into the neckline of her dress.

Arazni's lips part into a soft smile. "I suppose we no longer have the luxury of secrets."

Arazni has no interest in harming the PCs—they are, as far as she is concerned, the only people in Lastwall capable of helping her to slay Tar-Baphon and to shatter her bonds. If the PCs attack or attempt to flee, she assures them she only wants to talk, and she disables relentlessly aggressive PCs with non-damaging spells such as *mass charm monster*.

Once the PCs have a moment to react to Arazni's presence, she continues:

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"I will not harm you. I need you, and I remain—even in this malformed state—a practical woman.

"Vigil has fallen, leaving the navel-gazing knights of Lastwall shattered and confused. Mere moments later, Gallowspire itself imploded. The Whispering Tyrant—the entitled fool who ended my life—now walks the world again. And regardless of my feelings on Lastwall, or the world at large, I am the one person on two continents who possesses both the power to destroy Tar-Baphon and a burning desire to do so.

"Tar-Baphon has already moved on from Gallowspire to elsewhere in Ustalav; I know not where. And while I can stand face-to-face against his power, I can't fight both the Whispering Tyrant and his entire army. My only hope—*your* only hope—is a surprise attack. I am, unfortunately, quite easy to locate with magic. This is due not just to my reputation, but also because Tar-Baphon and I have shared a tenuous psychic connection since he murdered me so many years ago. This connection has allowed me to peer into his plans, with a frustrating lack of clarity, but it will also warn him of my approach the moment I leave this refuge. I can't simply teleport to him, as the witchgates he constructed all over his domain of Virlych during the Shining Crusade redirect long-range teleportation.

"I need you to be my hands. Cross Virlych to the ruins of Gallowspire, shut down the witchgates, and find out where Tar-Baphon now prepares his forces. Travel there, and I can use your presence as a focus to teleport. Then, at last, the Whispering Tyrant shall fall.

"I would not send you on such a dangerous quest unprepared, however. I took the liberty of reacquiring some of my old things from Vigil before its destruction. I offer them to you now." With a wave of her hand, five objects float into view: a rapier, a red chain shirt, a cloak, a ring, and an amulet.

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The magic items Arazni offers are detailed in the Treasure section on page 9, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (history) or Knowledge (local) check identifies them as the *Panoply of Arazni*, magic items once carried by Arazni as a mortal. They had been enshrined in Castle Overwatch in Vigil for centuries, but Arazni recently took them back.

Arazni fully expects the PCs to have questions, and does her best to answer as follows.

**Why should we trust you?** "Oh, you shouldn't. Trust is the dagger that will always find your heart. The only thing in this world you should trust is that everyone eventually falls to their worst nature. And my worst nature is petty, selfish vengeance."

**What are witchgates?** "Magical traps that snatch away travelers attempting to teleport, depositing them in the midst of the Whispering Tyrant's most terrible guardians. Any attempt to teleport into or about Virlych will catch a traveler—I was unable to overcome them even as a goddess—and while I have no doubt that any guardian would pale in comparison to my power, it would alert the Whispering Tyrant and his armies to my approach. I can't afford to give him that warning."

**What connection do you have with the Whispering Tyrant?** "Tar-Baphon's presence is a stain on the souls of all he touches. He slew me at the Battle of Three Sorrows, and since my… resuscitation, I have felt his contempt and anger like ghosts in the back of my mind. That is how I learned of his plot to escape, though the feeling was too vague to predict anything beyond his focus on Roslar's Coffer and, later, Vigil."

**Can you track the Whispering Tyrant through your empathic link?** "The cagey sack of bones seems more cautious now that he has escaped, and he takes great effort to shield his mind. I know only that he is free and exultant; his glee runs through my mind like the taste of bitter wine."

**Why are you here? What is special about this place?** "I discovered the unintended protections this sanctum offers several years ago, but I've only recently elected to use it. The lead in the mortar, along with the thick stone walls and the running water around this structure, all contribute to keep this sanctum safe from nearly all scrying. I've protected myself further with wards of my own design. As long as I remain here, neither Geb nor Tar-Baphon can find me. But it's not in my nature to cower and hide for long."

**Why not bring your own army from Geb?** "The word 'queen' is a polite Gebbite euphemism for 'chattel.' I imagine it won't be long before my absence is noticed and raises quite a bit of ire."

**You're a prisoner in Geb? Why not just leave?** "My possessive 'husband' has dispatched his dogs to drag me home more than once, and even without them he keeps my phylactery hidden beyond even my reach. Without it, any escape is little more than a quaint visit; I will always be pulled toward whatever foul vessel he jammed my soul into. Perhaps if you are so concerned with securing my freedom, we can negotiate further once the task before us is done."

**Why not go to the Knights of Ozem with all this?** "Go to the fawning, sanctimonious little children who first conjured me to fight their war for them while Aroden hid like a coward? Go to the knights who let my corpse be stolen and raised as this thing before you, then had the temerity to label me—violated because of their own arrogance and failure—the 'Harlot Queen'? Were this a simple matter affecting just the Knights of Ozem, I would happily let them dash themselves against Tar-Baphon's walls, if I did not kill them myself. To your credit, I find your assistance far less nauseating than theirs."

**Aren't these national relics stolen from Lastwall?** "They are the regalia of a warrior, stolen in death. They were never meant to gather dust resting on pedestals."

**How do you know you won't betray us when you get what you want?** "If all I craved was mindless destruction, I could have easily slain you at any point. No, you are something special, above and beyond the *obols* that pierce your hearts. You are useful, and I am many things, but never wasteful."

**We have your lungs.** If the PCs produce the *bloodstone of Arazni* they recovered beneath Vigil, Arazni looks at it with a wistful longing. After considering for a moment, she says, with some reluctance, "Keep that for now. I can think of no better warrant of my peaceful intentions than to let you keep some of my organs in your care."

**How can we communicate with you?** If the PCs have the bloodstone, she says "You hold one of the few objects whose connection to me is strong enough to reach through my layers of mundane and magical shielding." She adds that any communication spell—such as *scrying*, *sending*, even *whispering wind*—used while carrying her bloodstone will contact her, and she can contact the PCs in the same way. The PCs can also use the bloodstone as a focus for spells like *commune* or *contact other plane* to reach her directly. If the PCs don't have the bloodstone, Arazni explains that the *periapt of health* contains a drop of her blood, freely given as a mortal, which can perform the same function. However, she doesn't tell the PCs this if they already have the bloodstone, as the periapt provides an avenue for surreptitious surveillance and communication if she feels the PCs are betraying her to any of her many enemies.

**What have you done to Malacaih?** "A simple spell to ease his simple mind—liches are not easy for the living to view with impunity. If you prefer, I'll dismiss it. The terror my visage has imparted should fade in a few weeks."

**What happens if we refuse to help?** "Then I suppose you stop being useful to me. Also, I plan to assault Tar-Baphon and, without your aid, what would have been a surgical strike must instead become a mauling. I do not have the patience to separate vile servant from noble soldier; I will tear my way through Virlych and all those who reside within."

Once the PCs are satisfied, Arazni concludes:

"Excellent. I would advise you first journey to Castle Fanum, just over the Ustalav border across the Path River. The Knights of Ozem still operate the castle as a supply depot, so you will find provisions, maps, and scouting reports from across Virlych. From there, your safest approach would be north, through the mountains. I can remain in contact as you wish, as you carry a piece of me with you.

"Do take care. I find you... curiously endearing."

**Creature:** Arazni remains here alone, preparing herself for her eventual assault against the Whispering Tyrant. While she has come to regard the PCs as useful and even interesting, she is tight-lipped about almost anything beyond the answers above. When Arazni first became the PCs' patron at the end of "Eulogy for Roslar's Coffer," she viewed them as little more than interesting pawns. Yet the PCs are also the first living beings Arazni has interacted with on her own terms in centuries. The vibrancy of their lives reminds her of feelings she had long ago wiped from her own memory. Arazni has realized she finds the PCs' independence and passion endearing, especially if they have shown her respect or camaraderie instead of antagonism, fear, or resentment.

She does not share her intention to ultimately risk herself in the battle by drawing Tar-Baphon into unleashing the *Radiant Fire* upon her. She also does not mention that the graveknights of the Council Libertine have likely followed her to Lastwall by now, for fear that these added challenges will dissuade the PCs from helping her.

**ARAZNI** **CR 26/MR 8**

**XP 2,457,600**

**hp** 359 (see page 58)

**Treasure:** Arazni offers the PC the *Panoply of Arazni* to use as they see fit. Arazni wore these five treasures in her mortal life, and while they aren't artifacts, they are unique magic items. They include *Arazni's Sting*, a *+1 holy rapier* that grants its wielder the ability to cast *bear's endurance* on herself once per day; the *Graveward Shirt*, a *+3 undead defiant*[UE] *mithral shirt* that allows its wearer to cast *protection from evil* on herself twice per day; the *Crimson Mantle*, a blood-red *minor cloak of displacement* that provides a continuous *feather fall* effect (as a *ring of feather falling*); *Darting Wings*, a *ring of evasion* shaped like overlapping feathered wings that allows its wearer to cast *find traps* once per day; and *Soul-Minder*, a *periapt of health* with a red spot in its center, which allows its wearer to cast each of *cure moderate wounds*, *lesser restoration*, and *resist energy* on herself once per day. Each item uses its wearer's Hit Dice as its caster level.

Any being of good or lawful neutral alignment wearing at least one piece of the panoply gains a +1 luck bonus on all saving throws. Any creature carrying all five pieces of the panoply increases this luck bonus to +2.

**Development:** Even if the PCs refuse to help Arazni, they can still use her information to try to stop Tar-Baphon themselves. In this case, Arazni casts *scrying* on the PCs during their travels and arrives at their location when they finally confront the lich. If your heroes are especially reluctant to work alongside an evil

queen, then Watcher-Lord Ulthun II (see page 60) may instead offer them a similar quest and resources while Arazni remains watchful. This may require some creative adjustments during the adventure's climax, left to the GM's discretion.

**Story Award:** For meeting with Arazni, award the PCs 12,800 XP.

## Into Virlych

East and north of Lastwall lies the crusaders' eternal charge: Virlych, the birthplace of Tar-Baphon and his first conquest upon his resurrection as a lich. Subject to millennia of undeath, slaughter, and war, the land itself roils with necromantic power. The smattering of plants that grow from its rocky soil are stunted and twisted, and the few animals that dwell within—even normally benign goats and deer—are bloodthirsty and aggressive. More than anything, though, Virlych is a land of the dead. Even before Tar-Baphon's escape, undead wandered Virlych freely, and only the boldest knights of Lastwall ventured into the dread realm on seasonal tours to inspect Gallowspire and clear out whatever necromantic manifestations they could find. It is a dread land of mountains, fog, and storms, where the weather shifts with little reason or warning, and even seasoned travelers become lost as the overcast skies hide sun, moon, and stars alike for days on end.

Due to the hostile weather and tainted landscape, PCs take a –4 circumstance penalty on Survival checks to navigate or find food and water in Virlych. Travel in Virlych is hazardous; you can use the Virlych Random Encounters table on page 81 to determine any wandering monsters the PCs might encounter. Creatures in Virlych watch the skies as well as the land for prey, so double the chance of an encounter if the PCs are flying, and select only flying threats to confront them.

If the PCs follow Arazni's advice, they should first visit the Ozem stronghold called Castle Fanum. From there, the safest route is through the treacherous Hungry Mountains. Though jagged and bearing few marked trails, the Hungry Mountains are hostile to the living and dead in equal measure, so Tar-Baphon's forces largely avoid it as well. If the PCs opt to instead travel the lowlands west of the Hungry Mountains, they should encounter undead flocking to Tar-Baphon's side and learn that this route will place them in the paths of increasingly dangerous and numerous undead patrols.

Use the map provided on page 6 for the PCs' journey through Virlych.




## B. The Border Guard (CR 11)

The lands north of the Path River ostensibly belong to Ustalav, and that nation has officially retained rights to it by making periodic complaints about Lastwall's occupation of their sovereign territory. In reality, however, the nobles of Ustalav are happy to write off this deadly wasteland, and they rattle their sabers only to satisfy petty local politics.

Virlych's formerly aimless undead have wasted little time mobilizing now that they have heard Gallowspire has fallen. Already clamoring to prove themselves useful to the Whispering Tyrant, the most resourceful undead have begun building border defenses along the Path River to stymie any invasion from the south while their forces dig themselves from their graves.

As the PC approach the border, read or paraphrase the following:

---

Along the northern shore of the Path River stands a line of new wooden barricades decorated with freshly impaled human bodies. One of the bodies writhes in agony and moans through sun-cracked lips.

---

The barricades stand 4 feet tall, with fire-hardened wooden spikes facing outward toward the river to repel cavalry disembarking from ships. The barricade provides cover to anyone behind it. There are no greater fortifications beyond this simple barricade, as the forces here have had few days—and even fewer trees—to dedicate to reinforcing their bank.

Most of the bodies come from an ill-fated fishing trawler called the *River Otter*. Warden Ossua, a wight loyal to the Whispering Tyrant, impaled the trawler's crew as a warning, and in the hopes that their suffering would hasten their revival as undead. Only one angler is still alive. **Deadre Cauchen** (N female human commoner 4) is at 0 hit points and affected by exposure and filth fever.

**Creatures:** Warden Ossua was once a scout in the Whispering Tyrant's armies who slumbered, along with several other troops, in a necromantic stronghold hidden in a nearby mountain. After centuries of torpor, most of the troops awoke. Ossua realized that his commanding officers were already gone, so he led the bloody skeletons remaining in the stronghold down to the river to fortify the border until they receive official orders.

By day, Ossua and his skeletons wait just beneath the mud behind the barricades; while not vulnerable to sunlight, they prefer to hide their numbers when the sun is up and they can be seen at a distance. They are active by

night, and they likewise emerge quickly should the PCs try to remove Deadre from her spike.

**OSSUA** **CR 10**

**XP 9,600**

Male cairn wight ranger (skirmisher) 6 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 276, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 128)

LE Medium undead

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +23

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 26, touch 16, flat-footed 20 (+4 armor, +6 Dex, +6 natural)

**hp** 121 (10 HD; 4d8+6d10+66)

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

**Immune** undead traits

**Weaknesses** resurrection vulnerability

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** slam +9 (1d4+2 plus energy drain)

**Ranged** *+1 composite longbow* +17/+12 (1d8+6/×3)

**Special Attacks** combat style (archery), create spawn, energy drain (1 level, DC 18), favored enemies (halflings +2, humans +4), hunter's tricks (7/day; trick shot)

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** Ossua prefers to fight with his bow and leads his troops into taking up positions behind the barricades and firing on enemies. He uses his hunter's bond to share his favored enemy bonuses with his allies.

**Morale** Determined to demonstrate his devotion to the Whispering Tyrant, Ossua fights until destroyed.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 20, **Dex** 22, **Con** —, **Int** 13, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 22

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 30

**Feats** Blind-Fight, Deadly Aim, Endurance, Martial Weapon Proficiency (longbow), Point Blank Master[APG], Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (longbow)

**Skills** Climb +18, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (religion) +8, Perception +23, Profession (soldier) +11, Stealth +27, Survival +17, Swim +12; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

**Languages** Common, Necril

**SQ** favored terrain (plains +2), hunter's bond (companions), track +3, wild empathy +12

**Combat Gear** *potions of inflict moderate wounds* (2); **Other Gear** *+2 leather armor*, *+1 composite longbow* (+5 Str) with 60 arrows and 10 cold iron arrows, *cloak of resistance +1*, porcelain Taldan doll worth 15 gp

**SKELETON GUARD TROOP** **CR 7**

**XP 3,200**

Bloody skeleton troop (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 251, 250; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6* 265)

NE Medium undead (troop)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +2 natural, +1 shield)

**hp** 82 (11d8+33); fast healing 5

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

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, deathless, troop traits; **DR** 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** cold, undead traits

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** troop (3d6+5)

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

**Special Attacks** volley

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** The skeleton guard troop shoots volleys at creatures approaching the barricades. As soon as a creature reaches the barricade, or when otherwise commanded by Warden Ossua, the skeleton guard troop rushes from behind cover to swarm over its foes.

**Morale** The skeleton guard troop fights until it is destroyed.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 20, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 26 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Improved Initiative[B]

**Gear** chain shirts (2d6), short swords (2d6), shortbows (2d6)

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

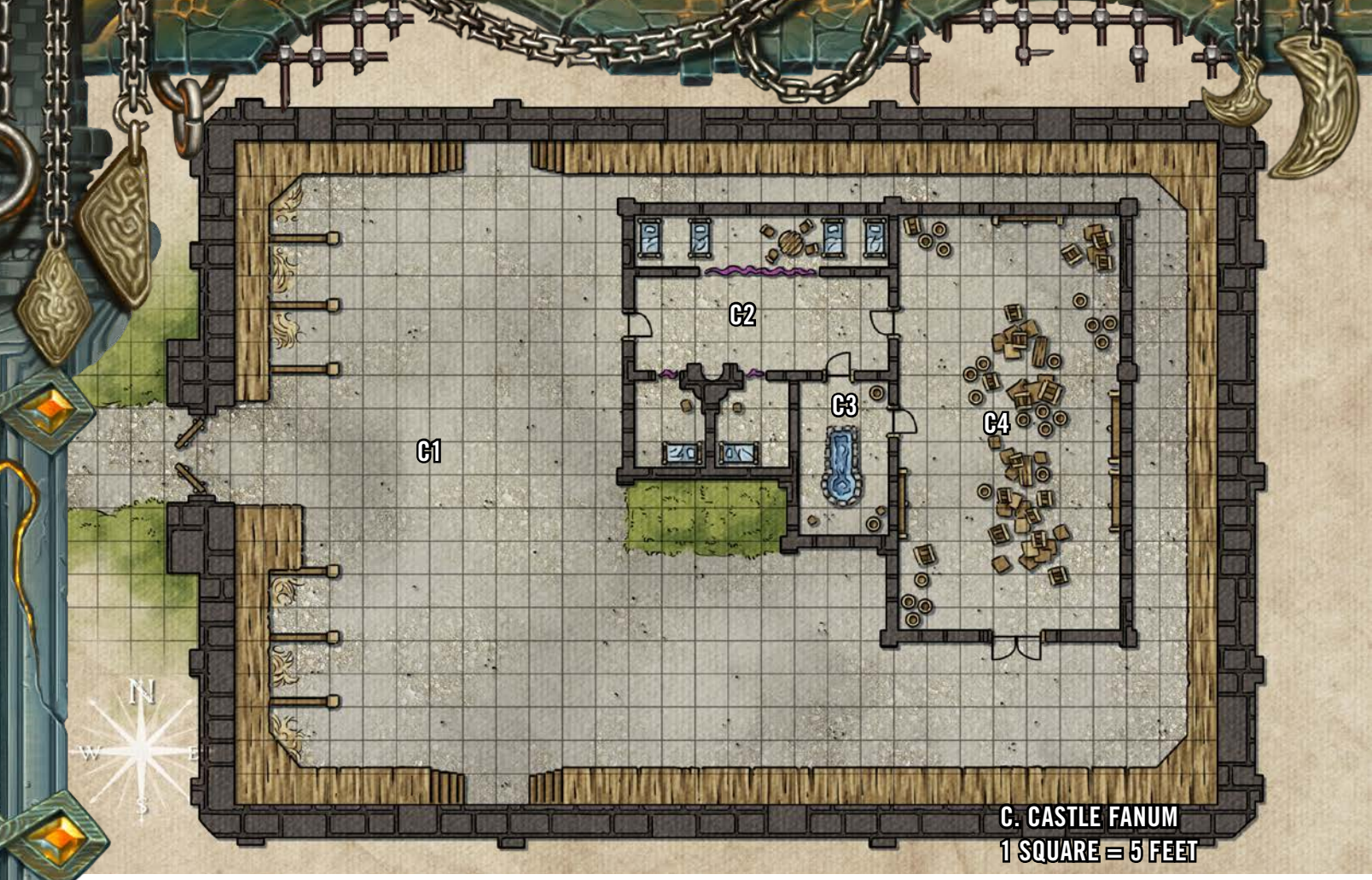
**Volley (Ex)** A skeleton guard troop can fire a volley of arrows as a standard action. This attack takes the form of up to two lines with a range of 100 feet. These lines can start from the corner of any square in the troop's space. Each creature in any of these lines takes 3d6 points of piercing damage (Reflex DC 18 half). The save DC is Dexterity-based.

**Treasure:** The troop's mundane swords, armor, and shields are caked in rust and blood and largely worthless, but Ossua's gear is in good repair. In addition, Deadre has a roll of thin copper plates stashed in her boot. These are a *scroll of banishment* and a *scroll of greater heroism* that she dredged from the river and planned to sell. If the PCs remove Deadre from her spike, she offers the scrolls to them out of gratitude.

**Development:** If the PCs rescue Deadre Cauchen from her stake, they can either offer her some small comfort in her final minutes or work to save her. She's unable to travel on her own until she is stabilized and her disease is cured. If Deadre survives thanks to the PCs, she aids the PCs at the adventure's climax.

## C. CASTLE FANUM

One of the forwardmost supply forts maintained by the Knights of Ozem for their seasonal patrols of Virlych, Castle Fanum is little more than a fortified warehouse squatting atop a low hill. Established as a respite by the church of Erastil, the castle protects one of the




few untainted springs in Virlych, making it a precious resource for the mortal forces pacifying the harsh landscape. The building normally houses three full-time caretakers and a rotating guard staff of a dozen soldiers. Before and after patrols, these forces are supplemented by as many as two dozen knights, but such large groups must pitch tents in the fortress's courtyard.

Unfortunately for the PCs and the caretakers alike, Castle Fanum has already fallen—not to the Whispering Tyrant, but to one of its own scouts. A bold team of gnome scouts called the Bleakfey Irregulars often patrolled near Gallowspire to watch for unusual activity. The Bleakfey Irregulars had all begun the Bleaching process, and they intentionally stared death in the face in these risky raids to hold the Bleaching at bay. The *Radiant Fire* churned rock into dust and rent most mortals into ash, but somehow the infusion of positive and negative energy warped the Bleakfey gnomes into etioling mortics, living creatures sustained by negative energy. Panicked, the Bleakfey Irregulars fled in all directions. Only one, Gibrous Panlatter, returned to Castle Fanum where his expedition originated.

Disoriented and confused, Gibrous accidentally killed two guards. The other guards fought back, and in the ensuing battle, everyone except Gibrous was killed or fled from the castle. Gibrous remains in the main building, still trying to process everything that has happened to him in the last several days.

Gibrous's unexpected carnage attracted two particularly cruel boggles named Flic and Wisq. These wicked prankster fey have spent the last 2 days using their magic to tease and torture Gibrous. They wander the grounds, appearing as geese, and they plan to trick visitors into confronting Gibrous in the hopes that the meeting turns violent.

When the PCs arrive at Castle Fanum, read or paraphrase the following.

---

Castle Fanum's fifteen-foot-high stone outer walls are interrupted by a solitary entrance where a pair of wooden doors hang open, wobbling listlessly in the gritty Virlych wind. Beyond is a squat, ugly edifice that looks more like a warehouse than a castle. This building's walls are stained in several places.

---

The heavy wooden doors are undamaged and simply haven't been latched. The PCs can easily pull them closed behind them. Most of the walls in Castle Fanum are stone with a layer of plaster over them. The doors are sturdy wood and unlocked aside from the large loading doors to the south of the warehouse, which remained locked from the outside with a chain and heavy padlock (see area **C4**). Interior ceilings are 10 feet high except in the warehouse, which has a ceiling 20 feet high.

## C1. The Yard (CR 11)

Castle Fanum's outer walls enclose a massive yard over 100 feet wide and 150 feet long—large enough for visiting troops to bivouac comfortably—with covered areas to shelter mounts on either side of the entrance. The packed earth has been churned and rent into furrows by the area's new resident.

**Creature:** When the etioling mortic Gibrous returned to Castle Fanum, the assembled horses panicked at being trapped in the yard with the unnatural creature. Gibrous's attempts to calm them resulted only in death, frustration, and further panic until the former gnome slaughtered the assembled horses in a nervous fit. His unnatural touch somehow stitched the frenzied animal spirits together into one abomination, and this vile spirit in turn dragged what remained of their bodies together into a writhing serpent of horse bones, flesh, and tack. The heap lies motionless when the PCs first enter the fort, seeming to be a pile of slaughtered animals.

**HORSE THING** **CR 11**

**XP 12,800**

Variant warsworn (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 272)

CE Huge undead

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +23

**Aura** frightful presence (30 ft., DC 22), unnatural aura

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 25, touch 10, flat-footed 23 (+2 Dex, +15 natural, –2 size)

**hp** 152 (16d8+80)

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

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4; **DR** 10/ bludgeoning and magic; **Immune** undead traits

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 4 hooves +19 (1d8+9 plus energy drain)

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

**Special Attacks** absorb dying beast, energy drain (1 level, DC 22), trample (2d6+13, DC 27)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 16th; concentration +20)

3/day—*telekinesis* (violent thrust only, DC 19)

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** The horse thing attempts to trample as many foes as possible as it lurches forward then lashes out with its hooves. It uses *telekinesis* only if it can't reach its opponents in melee.

**Morale** The horse thing fights until destroyed.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 28, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** 2, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 19

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +23 (+25 bull rush, +27 overrun); **CMD** 35 (37 vs. bull rush or overrun, can't be tripped)

**Feats** Awesome Blow, Blind-Fight, Greater Overrun, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness

**Skills** Perception +23

**SQ** profane magic

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Absorb Dying Beast (Su)** The horse thing can consume any dying animal or magical beast by moving into that creature's space. This immediately kills the creature, absorbs it into the horse thing, and restores a number of hit points to the horse thing equal to the absorbed creature's Constitution score. Absorbed corpses can't be resurrected by any effect short of a *miracle* or *wish* spell until the horse thing that consumed them is destroyed.

**Profane Magic (Su)** *Protection from evil* blocks attacks from the horse thing's spell-like abilities.

## C2. Hospice

This large chamber is little more than an oversized great room, with partitioned cells to the south and a semi-enclosed bunk room to the north. Only the front entrance to the west, a sturdy door east, and a door with several splintered boards nailed over it to the south provide a barrier sturdier than heavy wool blankets hung from a curtain rod. Several corpses with faces locked in eerie grins lie among scattered papers on the floor. A large corkboard with a chipped label proclaiming "Updates" hangs from the east wall; tattered bits of paper still hang from tacks embedded in it.

The frontmost room of Castle Fanum is the only dedicated living space, though in severe weather, the warehouse (area **C4**) also serves visiting troops. A large fireplace in the southern wall warms the southern cells, while the bunk room to the north features several sturdy ceramic braziers alongside bins of charcoal and lavender seed to provide heat and mask the smell of a dozen soldiers crammed into a shared living space. Thick wool curtains separate these living spaces.

The furniture is overturned, and a total of five bodies lie of the floor—two caretakers and three soldiers. The soldiers clutch weapons but wear neither armor nor scabbards, suggesting they hadn't expected a fight. A stewpot on one of the braziers in the bunk room has cooked down and burned its contents to a black crust. The corkboard held map sketches and scouting reports, but Gibrous now hoards all this precious knowledge in the warehouse.

The boggles Flic and Wisq have already picked over any valuables and hidden them in the springhouse (area **C3**). A PC who succeeds at a DC 24 Survival check can determine that someone searched the area and nailed the boards to the southern door several hours after the initial violence, which occurred about a day ago.

The west door exits to the courtyard (area **C1**), the door east leads to the warehouse, and the door south leads to

the springhouse where the boggles reside. The boggles tried to make the door look ominous by nailing boards to it and spattering it with a goopy red fluid, but the boards don't prevent the door from being opened, and PCs who succeed at a DC 12 Perception or Knowledge (nature) check—or who simply sniff or taste the goop—identify it as wild strawberry jam.

## C3. Springhouse

This long room is noticeably cooler than the rest of the building. A large well fills most of the room and overflows with clear water, emptying into a gravel trough at its base. Wooden kegs line the east wall, while shelves crowded with jars—half of them empty—line the west.

The springhouse protects one of the few clean water springs in Virlych—a blessing from Erastil, according to that god's priests, who have traditionally maintained the fort. The room's kegs hold clean water for soldiers traveling deeper into Virlych, while the jars hold various preserved foods that the boggles have smashed open and eaten.

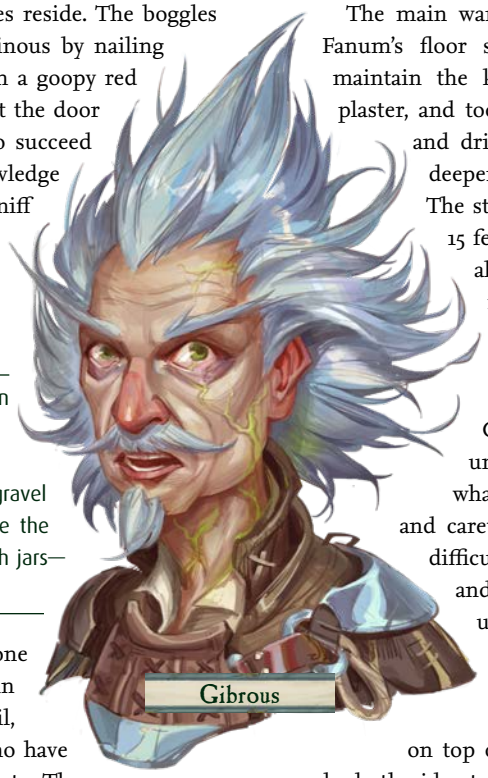
**Treasure:** Flic and Wisq combed the castle for any valuables and threw them into the well here to keep them safe (and also because it's fun to throw things into the water), but they didn't consider how they would recover their treasure later. The well shaft is about 50 feet deep and nearly freezing; a character in the water must succeed at a Fortitude save each minute (DC = 15 plus 1 per previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage from the cold. A character so damaged is fatigued until he recovers from the nonlethal damage taken from immersion.

The treasure in the well is loose and takes 2d4 minutes to gather. It includes 380 pp, 512 gp, 16 cp, a silver holy symbol of Erastil, a length of twine tied to a large uncut emerald worth 800 gp, an *insignia of valor*[UE], and a sturdy pair of *winged boots*.

## C4. Warehouse (CR 12)

The south doors to this warehouse are locked with a chain and padlock from the outside (hardness 5, hp 30, break DC 25, Disable Device DC 30).

Barrels, crates, and heavy sacks fill sturdy shelving in this large storeroom's center, while smaller shelves holding canvas, preserves, tools, and various other supplies line the walls. The ceiling extends nearly twenty feet overhead.




The main warehouse occupies most of Castle Fanum's floor space and contains supplies to maintain the keep itself—lumber, lye, mortar, plaster, and tools—as well as camping supplies and dried food for expeditions heading deeper into Virlych's cursed landscape. The stacks of crates vary between 5 and 15 feet high. Large doors to the south allow supplies to be unloaded here in bulk before being divided into more easily transportable quantities for patrols.

**Creatures:** The former gnome Gibrous languishes here, trying to understand what he's become and what he did to the assembled guards and caretakers—a task made much more difficult thanks to the boggles' spells and mindboggle aura. Gibrous is unfriendly toward visitors—he's more afraid of himself than of them—and he demands they leave. Flic and Wisq creep about on top of the crates overhead and try to provoke both sides to violence, casting *lesser confusion*, *fear*, and *baleful polymorph* to make the PCs think they're under attack, and *ghost sound* to prod Gibrous towards violence. The boggles' influence imposes a –10 circumstance penalty on any attempts to calm or befriend Gibrous. Gibrous isn't an ally of the boggles; in fact, he's so far remained unaware of their presence. Any violence in this room pushes Gibrous to the breaking point and causes him to lash out against any creature he sees. Spells like *calm emotions* and *good hope* can help Gibrous remain calm if the PCs don't wish to fight him, and, if calmed by PCs, he may aid them against the boggles.

In combat, Gibrous casts *confusion* on the largest group of foes, then he uses his corrupting touch against foes that aren't affected by his *confusion*. He passes through walls with his ghostly gasp ability if necessary to get into a good position. Once Gibrous begins a fight, his fractured mind compels him to fight to the death.

The boggles hurl objects and spells from atop the stacks of crates, relying on their physical attacks only if approached in melee. A boggle reduced to fewer than 30 hit points attempts to flee Castle Fanum and doesn't return, having determined that the PCs have ruined their fun in the outpost.

**GIBROUS** **CR 10**

**XP 9,600**

Male etioling (see page 88)

**hp** 112

**FLIC AND WISQ** **CR 8**

**XP 4,800 each**

Boggles (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6* 51)

**hp** 102 each

**Treasure:** The warehouse holds recent maps and scouting reports from across Virlych. As some of the only thorough notes about Virlych in existence, they are worth 200 gp to the Knights of Ozem or other interested groups. The stores here also include various camping and mountaineering supplies worth 180 gp in all, as well as 15 cold weather outfits.

**Development:** If the PCs can keep Gibrous calm and defeat or chase away the boggles, he explains what he knows about the explosion at Gallowspire and his transformation into his half-dead state. He also reports on the massing forces of undead along Virlych's western border and a sudden surge of powerful demons from the ruins of Casnoriva—including a powerful marilith—in the western pass through the Hungry Mountains, leaving only the old Vaishau Pass as a reasonable safe route north to the ruins of Gallowspire. There have been several brave patrols from Lastwall scouting the recent situation in Virlych, but they haven't checked back in and Gibrous expects they've run afoul of the Whispering Tyrant or his armies. Should Gibrous not survive this encounter, a collection of notes and maps he stored in the warehouse's northeast corner provide the same information.

## Overland through Virlych

The PCs can plan their journey from Castle Fanum to Gallowspire using the maps and scouting reports retrieved from the castle. These recent resources report massive troop movements all along the western border of Virlych: armies thousands strong and led by powerful gallowdead, liches, vampires, and wights. The most reliable route through the Hungry Mountains—the Cronefall Pass near Casnoriva—now plays host to a growing army of demons led by the powerful marilith Kaltestrua. Even if these routes didn't present overwhelming opponents, the PCs should be aware that their task is not to fight each of Tar-Baphon's minions individually but to slay the serpent by cutting off its head. The remaining pass through the Hungry Mountains, the Vaishau Pass, is more treacherous in terms of landscape, but the hostile wilderness it runs through means it is largely uninhabited; even Virlych's vile denizens avoid it.

The Vaishau Pass begins at the ruins of Vaishau, where the pass and the Mesmos River that defines it connect with the Cronefall River that carves Cronefall Pass. The Mesmos is almost entirely shallow white water that carves a rocky route north until it reaches the Wailing Cascade, one of the tallest waterfalls in Ustalav. Travelers must scale the slick cliffs here and continue north across the plateau before finally reaching the northern slopes of the Hungry Mountains and Gallowspire beyond. Travelers avoid this route due not only to the harrowing terrain, but also to the umbral dragon Sicnavier, who sometimes hunts along the pass.

The journey from Castle Fanum to the Vaishau ruins is about 12 miles, the path along the Mesmos River from the ruins to the Wailing Cascade is nearly 35 miles, and the journey from the waterfall to Gallowspire beyond is another 50 miles. Altogether, the journey of nearly 100 miles crosses largely trackless, mountainous terrain. The trip takes 7 days on foot and is nearly impassable for horses and carts. Magic may speed the PCs' travels, but keep in mind that flying increases the PCs' chance of random encounters significantly and that long-range teleportation is diverted by the region's *witchgates*.

## D. Ruins of Vaishau (CR 13)

Vaishau was once a nigh-impregnable fortress of the dead. The Knights of Ozem took the castle after years of heavy fighting only to discover that the tainted river water, freezing winters, and toxic natural gases made it almost impossible for living soldiers to hold. Rather than surrender the bastion back to the enemy, they destroyed the structure and salted the earth around it with silver and cold iron to leave the location sanctified against undead. Their efforts prevented the lich-king's forces from ever rebuilding at the site, but in the centuries since Tar-Baphon fell, many necromancers and other living devotees of the Whispering Way have explored the ruins. The Knights of Ozem occasionally make forays to the Vaishau ruins to clear them out, so no permanent structures stand on the site.

Today, the site resembles an archeological dig, with a scattering of tools and wheelbarrows surrounding squares of ground dug down to a depth of 3 feet. This activity is the work of the tomb giant Calloagh and her mindless minions.

**Creatures:** The tomb giant Calloagh has spent her lifetime prowling the Hungry Mountains, scouring old caches of necromantic power and preying on Lastwall patrols. While not a formal member of the Whispering Way, she covets a place at the Whispering Tyrant's side and has decided that reclaiming Vaishau for his glory will please the newly returned lich-king. She has begun by raising an army of zombies to go about the slow process of digging out the tainted earth—and simply dumping the dirt into the river—before creating more advanced minions to build a new fortress.

Calloagh spends part of her time creating new zombies, as the hard work of reclaiming the site wears out her minions' limbs more quickly than she anticipated.

The rest of her time is spent drinking from a captured wagonload of wine in the shelter she has built for herself across the mouth of the Vaishau Pass.

Calloagh keeps four "excavators" to guard her person and to quarry stone for the castle's approaching construction. Each of these stout, three-armed necrocrafts is a horrid amalgamation of stone giant body parts; their hands are wide and shovel-shaped, with long metal claws. The necrocrafts have quarried more stone than she can use for now, so they simply linger atop the pile of rough blocks, keeping watch for intruders or the inevitable messengers Calloagh hopes to receive from Tar-Baphon's army. If attacked, the excavators close to melee while Calloagh hurls stones from the quarry pile. The two dozen zombies are damaged from the relentless digging and pose no threat to the PCs.

**CALLOAGH** **CR 12**

**XP 19,200**

Female tomb giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6* 136)

**hp** 162

**EXCAVATORS (4)** **CR 5**

**XP 1,600 each**

Necrocraft (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 200)

NE Large undead

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +6 natural, –1 size)

**hp** 45 each (7d8+14)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5

**Immune** undead traits

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 3 claws +10 (1d6+6)

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

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** The excavators rush forward into melee and attempt to make full attacks with their claws, concentrating on a single foe at a time.

**Morale** The excavators fight until destroyed.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 23, **Dex** 11, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 22

**Feats** Toughness[B]

**SQ** construction points (extra attack [claw], metal armor)

**Treasure:** In a large wooden chest inside her shelter, Calloagh keeps a collection of treasure she looted from one of Tar-Baphon's concealed sepulcher storehouses several years ago. The chest contains 92 onyx gems worth 50 gp each, a *wand of vampiric touch* (24 charges), and a *bead of force*.

## E. RENDER'S LAKE (CR 11)

More than a dozen miles uphill from Vaishau, the Mesmos widens and slows, gradually becoming one of the area's few small lakes. Render's Lake fills about half of a small valley and irrigates a stand of gnarled pines occupying its banks, providing shelter from the weather. The water is deep, black, and ice-cold, supporting a small population of strange, eyeless fish and toothy eels, all of which inflict red ache if eaten.

Render's Lake earned its name from Maralie Render, a cruel and dark-hearted hag. An atheist who held great malice towards the faithful of any religion, Render attacked worshippers on both sides of the Shining Crusade with abandon. She especially delighted in kidnapping priests, shattering their legs, and dropping them into the deep, icy waters of her lake. Watching worshippers scream for their gods' aid only to be denied filled her bleak heart with joy. She finally fell to an undead assassin dispatched to end her depredations, her corpse joining those of her own victims in the lake.

**Haunt:** Maralie Render is long gone, but her legacy of cruelty remains as a haunt, manifesting to torment anyone who serves a god. The haunt activates each sundown and midnight, targeting creatures bringing a holy symbol within 50 feet of the shores of Lake Render. A victim feels his lungs fill with water and then floats helplessly into the air a few feet above the ground, as if he had just plunged into an icy lake.

**DROWNING FAITHFUL** **CR 11**

**XP 12,800**

CE haunt (50-foot radius around Lake Render)

**Caster Level** 11th

**Notice** Perception DC 23 (water runs from any exposed holy symbols)

**hp** 22; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** special (sundown and midnight each day)

**Effect** The haunt triggers when anyone passes within 50 feet of the lake while wearing or displaying a holy symbol, affecting any such targets with *mass suffocation*[APG] (Fortitude DC 23). Targets begin drowning and floating in the air and cannot leave their space. A *water breathing* spell or the ability to breathe water does not protect a victim, but the haunt does not affect creatures that do not need to breathe. A successful DC 25 Knowledge (history) check recalls the tales of Maralie Render and how she goaded her victims to renounce their faith. A target who removes his own holy symbol is immediately freed from the haunt's effect.

**Destruction** Three clerics of Aroden who renounced their faith nevertheless drowned in the lake. If their remains are recovered from the lake bottom and consecrated, the haunt is destroyed.




## F. THE WAILING CASCADE (CR 14)

A deafening roar fills the pass. An 800-foot-high cliff of glassy black stone stands wrapped in a foaming white column of water that pours down to dissolve into a clinging, icy mist.

The Wailing Cascade is the tallest waterfall in Ustalav. The flow of the Mesmos River loses roughly a third of its volume over the course of the fall, filling the air with icy cold fog that limits visibility, as *fog cloud*, from ground level to 200 feet high. The area within the cloud counts as severe cold (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 442) due to the moisture, which soaks protective clothing and quickly carries body heat away.

The Wailing Cascade tumbles down the side of a rocky cliff that presents the only way to reach the plateau above, where the Vaishau Pass continues. Scaling the cliff requires successful DC 30 Climb checks due to the slick rock and ever-present layers of water and algae, although a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check while examining the cliff notices a few old pitons driven into the cliff face by previous explorers. Using these pitons reduces the DC of the Climb checks to 20. The PCs likely have much more effective ways of ascending the cliff rather than simply climbing, and the real danger of the Wailing Cascade comes from its resident, the umbral dragon Chunvexus. Chunvexus's lair is in a well-concealed cave behind the waterfall, 80 feet above the pool at the waterfall's base and deep in the concealing mist. A PC near the waterfall within the mist can spot the cave entrance with a successful DC 38 Perception check.

**Creature:** Chunvexus is an adult umbral dragon and spawn of the legendary dragon Sicnavier. Chunvexus has haunted the Hungry Mountains from his nearby lair for centuries. Knowing that his father's reputation is built on a succession of umbral dragons who have all held the same name and lair for ages, Chunvexus lurks near his father's lair, waiting for a moment of weakness so he can claim the mantle of Sicnavier for himself. As paranoid as his father, Chunvexus concludes that any visitors to the waterfall are assassins sent to dispose of him. Anyone climbing or flying near the waterfall becomes the target of the dragon's rage as he rants about assassins and cowards.

Chunvexus enjoys maintaining dominance in the air, and he casts *dispel magic* to send flying humanoids plummeting. He uses his breath weapon to catch as many PCs as possible, but once he realizes that the PCs have some resistance to his breath weapon (from the *obols* in their hearts), he switches to melee attacks instead. If reduced to fewer than 75 hit points, he uses *shadow walk* to flee. Chunvexus may return later for revenge and might ambush the PCs within the pit of Gallowspire (area **H6**) as the PCs traverse the pit to go from one of the dungeon levels to the other.

**CHUNVEXUS** **CR 14**

**XP 38,400**

Male adult umbral dragon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 102)

**hp** 195

**Treasure:** Chunvexus's cave extends back 100 feet before dropping suddenly into a 50-foot-deep pit. At the bottom of the pit lie several humanoid bones and the dragon's hoard of 826 pp, 13,503 gp, 26,781 sp, two large rubies worth 2,100 gp each, 94 bloodstones worth 25 gp each, a *greater caster's shield*[UE], and a +2 *called*[UE] *cold iron spear.*

## G. ON EVIL WINGS (CR 10)

The upper reaches of the Vaishau Pass offer a commanding view of the Hungry Mountains as well as a good look at the storm clouds that perpetually roil overhead. As the PCs cross a wide plateau, a herd of majestic white pegasi with peacock wings descends from the clouds.

**Creatures:** The pegasi of the Hungry Mountains have not survived hundreds of generations through charity and kindness. While these equines are not aligned with Tar-Baphon, they are predators and bandits who prey on others' hopes and desperation, offering to carry weary scouts and lost travelers only so they can drop them from incredible heights, eat the broken remains, and claim any valuables that survive the fall. Lead by a pegasus calling itself Dawnwatch, the creatures present themselves as earnest devotees of Iomedae, offering to carry the PCs to any destination they desire.

If the PCs carry or wear heavy equipment that seems valuable, Dawnwatch suggests that one of the pegasi serve as a pack animal, insisting they can travel faster with the load more equally distributed across all the pegasi. Once the pegasi reach a height of 1,000 feet, they attempt to buck the PCs off, which requires them to succeed at a CMB check against the rider's CMD.

**VIRLYCH PEGASI (8)** **CR 4**

**XP 1,200 each**

Variant pegasus champion (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 225, 294)
CE Large magical beast

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect evil*, *detect good*, low-light vision, scent; Perception +14

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 18, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +5 natural, –1 size)
**hp** 42 each (4d10+20)
**Fort** +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4; +4 vs. poison
**Immune** petrification; **Resist** fire 10

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 60 ft., fly 120 ft. (perfect)
**Melee** bite +9 (1d3+6), 2 hooves +4 (1d6+3)
**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 4th)
Constant—*detect evil* (60-ft. radius), *detect good* (60-ft. radius)

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** The pegasi attempt to buck riders or bite at those who hang on.
**Morale** The pegasi flee if it is obvious they are outmatched. Dawnwatch in particular is unwilling to put himself in much danger. Fleeing pegasi take whatever valuables they can easily steal.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 22, **Dex** 19, **Con** 20, **Int** 14, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 17
**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 25 (29 vs. trip)
**Feats** Iron Will, Skill Focus (Bluff)
**Skills** Bluff +14, Fly +17, Perception +14, Sense Motive +7; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Bluff, +4 Perception
**Languages** Common

### The Northern Slopes

The rocky trail drops away ahead, descending several miles down a steep slope that overlooks an alien sight. To the north and east, Virlych continues on—a treacherous landscape choked with miasma and dotted with rotting scraps of greenery. To the west, however, a garden of vibrant greens and reds snakes through the terrain. The winds from this verdant stretch—perhaps twenty miles across—reek of sickly-sweet fruits, acrid rot, and blood.

The landscape to the west is the lush terrain created by the *Radiant Fire* used by Tar-Baphon to destroy the Great Seal at Gallowspire. It surrounds and conceals the crater that was once the Whispering Tyrant's prison, choking the long-dead landscape of Virlych with vibrant, deadly life. Left untended, this spit of corrupted positive energy could easily last a century or longer, even in the wasteland of Virlych.

**Story Award:** For successfully reaching the edge of the Gallowspire Garden, award the PCs 12,800 XP.

# PART 2: LIFE FROM DEATH

The Gallowspire Gardens, or simply the Gallowgarden, was created when the *Radiant Fire's* powerful detonation of positive energy infused the rocks and polluted water of Virlych with the pure essence of life. Warped by the region's corrupt magic and blood-tainted soils, the result is a massive bloom of deadly plants and alien creatures empowered by the region's bloodthirsty nature. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Knowledge (nature) or Survival check determines that none of the plants within the region are natural, and that they are perverse amalgamations of plant, fungal, and animal matter. While lush and idyllic at first glance, the Gallowgarden overflows with unique plants featuring red-spattered patterns, skull-shaped leaves and blossoms, jagged thorns, dripping maws, branches that reflexively cling and crush, and openings that exist solely to emit mournful wails or tortured shrieks.

### Traveling the Gallowgarden

Though a temperate region, the Gallowgarden is effectively a jungle thanks to its rampant growth and dangerous diseases, slowing travel to one-quarter of the PCs' normal overland pace. PCs must hack their own trails

through the strange brush and vines, weaving around trees so massive they blot out what little sun Virlych receives. Both light undergrowth and heavy undergrowth are common in the Gallowgarden. The plants slowly shift the earth and cover trails, increasing the DC of Survival checks to get along in the wild, follow tracks, keep from getting lost, or avoid natural hazards by 10. Class features that rely on respectful interaction with nature, such as woodland stride and trackless step, function only for characters of evil alignment—the corrupted region does not abide the presence of travelers of other alignments, preventing them from using these class features.

Strongly scented flowers and colorful fruit grow in abundance, but almost nothing in the Gallowgarden is safe to eat. Anyone who eats food grown in the Gallowgarden risks contracting ghoul fever (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146).

In addition to the many overt and magical threats, the myriad new plants around Gallowspire pose a more subtle danger: poisonous pollen. The pollen afflicts living creatures with a slow-acting poison that makes it hard for them to breathe deeply.

### GALLOWGARDEN MIASMA

**Type** poison, inhaled; **Save** Fortitude DC 16
**Onset** 24 hours; **Frequency** 1/day for 3 days
**Effect** 1d2 Con damage and 1d2 Wis damage; **Cure** 2 saves

## H. GALLOWGARDEN ENCOUNTERS

The Gallowgarden grows over and around the ruins of Adorak, the Whispering Tyrant's former capital city destroyed at the end of the Shining Crusade. The vibrant plant life conceals and surrounds the burned-out remains of walls and basements, creating twisted, uneven terrain with frequent dead-ends and short cliffs. The thick canopy conceals the precise location of Gallowspire; the PCs must explore the landscape for themselves to find their destination.

Because PCs can approach the thick forest from any direction, these encounters are presented without an associated map; place them where and when you find them most appropriate, and for the most part in whichever order you choose. The last of these encounters should be the pit that yawns where the tower of Gallowspire formerly stood (area **H6**), amid the overgrown ruins of Adorak. You may wish to set aside a few Gallowgarden encounters for when the PCs retreat from the ruins of Gallowspire to rest, to remind them that the Gallowgarden is never truly safe.

### H1. Flytrap Grove (CR 12)

The outer perimeter of Gallowgarden, where life meets death, is a swampy ring half a mile thick. The growth here favors fungi and enormous molds, but stands of greenery dot the gray-blue landscape and stand out from the low fog clinging to the ground. Shallow bogs are common, usually harboring deep bogs in their centers.

**Creatures:** Plants in this region of the Gallowgarden find the sucking soil sparse in nutrition and must supplement their diets by capturing live prey. In the shadow of a large rock outcropping, two giant flytraps hide among the other wetland plants, hungry for flesh. Once they detect a likely meal, the giant flytraps fight until destroyed.

**GIANT FLYTRAPS (2)** **CR 10**

**XP 9,600 each**

**hp** 149 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 134)

### H2. Blood Orchard (CR 11)

The dense undergrowth opens up here into several orderly rows of pear trees. Patterns of red spatters grow on the leaves, while the overlarge fruits bear dark blue veins and occasionally pulse on the branch like beating human hearts. Mounds of moldering vegetation on the ground pulse in response to the beating. A platinum amulet dangles on one tree branch.

The garden here grew from the remains of a team of human scouts surveying this area when the *Radiant Fire* detonated. What survived of the scouts' bodies grew into this grove of eerily ordered pear trees with fruit like beating hearts. The bark of each pear tree bears a face twisted in agony, and any incision in the bark produces thick, red sap.

The platinum amulet is a holy symbol that belonged to a paladin of Iomedae among the scouts. The tree branch has physically grown around the amulet's chain, as though it were clutched in a hand, so the amulet cannot be removed without cutting off the branch.

**Creatures:** The mounds of vegetation are shambling mounds, formed from the assembled spirit energy of the dead scouts. The plant monsters are largely content to wallow in their misery, but they attack in a rage if the grove's pear trees are harmed or threatened.

A more insidious creature has come to investigate this strange orchard. The leukodaemon Adenos was a servant of Tar-Baphon who was locked away in Gallowspire for 8 centuries. When Adenos stumbled free of her prison, she renounced her loyalty to the lich and intended to return to Abaddon. However, Adenos was distracted by the misery and pain of the pear grove and is now taking several days to commune with the agony and suffering infused into the trees in an attempt to see if she can transplant the perverse plants to the shores of the River Styx.

Unlike many daemons, Adenos can assume a humanoid appearance, and she has taken the form of

a sickly female elven archer while investigating the orchard. If she hears anyone approach, she calls out and explains that she is the lone survivor of a legion sent to stop Tar-Baphon's escape. She claims to be unsure how she survived the explosion, but if she is to return to Lastwall she must bring her beloved husband's holy symbol—now wrapped around a tree—back to his family. She asks for the PCs' help in obtaining it. Adenos knows that harming the trees will provoke the shambling mounds to attack, and she hopes to distract and weaken the PCs with these enemies before joining the attack and finishing off the PCs. If reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, Adenos gives up on her plans for the strange orchard and flees.




**ADENOS** **CR 9**

**XP 6,400**

Leukodaemon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 68)

**hp** 115

**SQ** change shape (any humanoid; *alter self*)

**ADVANCED SHAMBLING MOUNDS (2)** **CR 7**

**XP 3,200 each**

**hp** 85 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 246)

**Treasure:** The holy symbol of Iomedae is made from platinum and is worth 500 gp.

## H3. The Orchid Wall (CR 13)

Twisting, vibrant orchid vines—flowering in every color—creep up the remains of an ancient tower, now held together by the greenery threatening to overtake it. A small, warm campfire burns in a remarkably well-preserved room at the tower's base, filling the air with the smell of roasting meats and spices.

Few buildings of Adorak survived the Shining Crusade and 8 centuries of neglect intact, but this 100-foot tower has endured. The lower half of the tower even survived the blast that leveled nearly everything else in the area, making it an unlikely vestige of civilization. The orchids now running rampant across its surface keep the weakened stones together, but they grow 4-inch-long thorns that deal 1d6 points of piercing damage each round to creatures attempting to climb the tower.

The welcoming room at the tower's base is an illusion created by a strange creature called a furcifer; in reality, it is merely a cold, exposed granite slab. The illusion deepens to build itself off whatever the PCs find comforting or safe, so you should add familiar details relevant to the characters (though the monster's illusion magic can't replicate living creatures). The furcifer isn't smart enough to understand the context of comforting elements, so it may create frosted walls of cake or a fragrant stew of butterflies and wildflowers, providing the PCs with clues that something is deeply wrong.

**Creature:** The *Radiant Fire* created—or more likely, called to Golarion—a strange and terrible predator resembling a massive, flower-draped chameleon called a furcifer. The beast creates powerful illusions and releases psychoactive pollen to lull prey into a false sense of safety. It then uses its long, prehensile tongue to snatch away victims one at a time, preferably while they are sleeping within the illusion of safety the furcifer creates. It attacks overtly only if its prey attempts to leave, or if it is discovered.

The furcifer's thick scales protect it from the wall's thorns, and it clings to the tower's inner thorny surface while targeting creatures with its tongue and tail slap attacks. Stranded in the Gallowgarden, the furcifer fights until destroyed.

**FURCIFER** **CR 13**

**XP 25,600**

**hp** 171 (see page 90)

## H4. Mold Garden (CR 10)

A sparkle of gold lines the bottom of this fern-and-cobblestone-lined gully.

Once an open sewer in Adorak, this 10-foot-deep gully still holds some of the scant, precious moisture around Gallowspire, though the trickle of water here is horrendously polluted and fit for only the mutated plants of the Gallowgarden. Spotting the concealed gully before tumbling into it requires a successful DC

15 Perception check. Creatures who fail this check slide down into the gully, taking 1d3 points of damage from the fall.

The glint of gold comes from an old Shining Crusade payroll chest, unearthed and scattered by the *Radiant Fire's* blast. The rusted iron chest is in several large pieces at one end of the gully and plainly marked with the heraldry of Taldor.

**Hazard:** The *Radiant Fire* spawned not only terrible plant monsters, but also toxic mold and fungi, which cling to the dark, damp corners of the Gallowgarden, such as this gully. Yellow mold (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 416) flourishes here among the gold coins.

**Creatures:** A trio of cowardly moldwretches lives in this gully with the yellow mold patch, having already bonded with the deadly mold. The plant creatures ignore any trespassers so long as no one disturbs their patches of filth. If roused, such as by creatures attempting to collect the scattered gold, the moldwretches attack and fight until slain.

**MOLDWRETCHES (3)** **CR 7**

**XP 3,200 each**

**hp** 85 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6* 191)

**Treasure:** A careful search of the gully reveals the scattered contents of the chest: 2,892 gp, a sturdy, wax-sealed jar containing 5,000 gp of diamond dust, six *potions of cure serious wounds*, two *potions of remove curse*, and a single *fire elemental gem*.

## H5. The Rider (CR 14)

Before the PCs reach the ruins of Gallowspire, they should encounter Gebbite scouts patrolling the area to eliminate intruders and search for Arazni. As these foes can fly (or, in Gustari's case, *air walk* while riding her phantom mount), this encounter can occur in any terrain.

**Creatures:** Gustari Fallenstag was a talented scout and hunter who joined the Knights of Lastwall in her youth. Her skills proved particularly useful in the cavalry, and she rose through the ranks quickly. Zealous and proud, Gustari imagined Geb would fall easily to the Second Crusade, and she eagerly agreed to join Amaretos Barronmor to infiltrate the enemy nation. When their mission failed, the wizard Geb forced Gustari to kill her hippogriff mount with her bare hands. Geb resurrected the mount and forced Gustari into the fight again and again; when Gustari finally refused, Geb instead forced the hippogriff to slay the cavalier, then resurrected her to resume the fighting. Soon, Gustari's existence revolved wholly around cycles of killing her once-loyal mount. Once the knight began to look forward to each slaughter, her cruelty blossomed, and Geb knew her will had been broken. On that day, Geb transformed Gustari into a graveknight. When Gustari uses her phantom mount ability, the spectral steed always appears as her former hippogriff mount.

Gustari often ranges at the forefront of Council Libertine expeditions to punish Geb's enemies (for more on the Council Libertine, see the sidebar on page 23). She is insufferably arrogant, relying upon her skills and undead nature to see her through any difficulty. Although her skin is covered with innumerable scars from claw and beak and her cheeks are etched with tear-tracks as though from acid, Gustari always bears a fierce and wild grin.

Gustari was a natural choice to lead the scouting patrol around Gallowspire, and she is accompanied by three daughters of Urgathoa—powerful and pious undead rarely seen outside of Geb. The daughters serve as Gustari's healers, advisors, and comrades-in-arms, but they prefer to aid Gustari from a distance. Gustari charges into combat, at first believing the PCs—thanks to their prolonged contact with Arazni—must be sheltering the disguised queen among them. Once she realizes that isn't the case, Gustari simply resorts to slaughter, as she knows the daughters of Urgathoa accompanying her can question the PCs' corpses later. Gustari screams epithets and threats as she fights, accusing the PCs of collaboration with the "murdered carcass" of Lastwall and being new dalliances of "the Harlot Queen." Despite her evident rage, Gustari remains careful about how much information she reveals, and her ravings divulge little in the way of useful information to the PCs.

**GUSTARI FALLENSTAG** **CR 13**

**XP 25,600**

Female human graveknight cavalier 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 138, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 32)

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +27

**Aura** sacrilegious aura (30 ft., DC 21)

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 29, touch 11, flat-footed 28 (+10 armor, +1 Dex, +4 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 178 (12d10+108)

**Fort** +17, **Ref** +9, **Will** +14

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, rejuvenation; **DR** 10/magic; **Immune** acid, cold, electricity, undead traits; **SR** 24

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

**Melee** *+2 valiant battleaxe* +23/+18/+13 (1d8+10/19–20/×3 plus 3d6 acid) or
heavy shield bash +20/+15/+10 (1d6+8 plus 3d6 acid) or
slam +20 (1d4+8)

**Ranged** mwk composite shortbow +16/+11/+6 (1d6+8/×3 plus 3d6 acid)

**Special Attacks** banner +3, cavalier's charge, challenge 5/day (+14 damage, allies gain +4 bonus on attack rolls), channel destruction (3d6 acid), demanding challenge, devastating blast (8d6 acid, DC 21, 3/day), greater tactician 3/day (swift action, Outflank, Shielded Caster), mighty charge, undead mastery (60 HD, DC 21)

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** Gustari uses her tactician ability to grant the daughters of Urgathoa the Shielded Caster feat before closing to battle. She targets the most obvious melee fighter with her challenge—gaining additional bonuses for her armor and weapon—and attacks that foe single-mindedly, occasionally striking at other nearby enemies with a shield bash or by using Cleave.

**Morale** Gustari's ego will not allow her to retreat from combat; she fights until destroyed.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 22, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 21

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 29

**Feats** Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (battleaxe), Improved Initiative[B], Improved Shield Bash, Iron Will, Mounted Combat[B], Outflank[APG], Power Attack, Ride-By Attack[B], Shield Focus, Shielded Caster[APG], Skill Focus (Survival), Toughness[B], Weapon Focus (battleaxe)

**Skills** Handle Animal +14, Intimidate +28, Perception +27, Ride +18, Sense Motive +13, Survival +25 (+31 to provide food for allies or to protect allies from harsh weather); **Racial Modifiers** +8 Intimidate, +8 Perception, +8 Ride

**Languages** Common

**SQ** aid allies, expert trainer +6, graveknight armor, mount, order of the dragon, phantom mount, ruinous revivification (acid), strategy

**Combat Gear** *vambraces of the tactician*[UE]; **Other Gear** *+1 dastard*[UE] *full plate*, *+1 heavy steel shield* with shield spikes, *+2 valiant*[UE] *battleaxe*, mwk composite shortbow (+6 Str) with 40 arrows, *cloak of resistance +2*, banner with the flag of Geb embroidered in platinum worth 1,100 gp



Gustari Fallenstag

**DAUGHTERS OF URGATHOA (3)** **CR 8**

**XP 4,800 each**

NE Large undead (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* 309)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17

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

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 24, touch 15, flat-footed 21 (+3 deflection, +3 Dex, +9 natural, –1 size)

**hp** 115 each (11d8+66)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +7, **Will** +11

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** fire 10

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** fly 40 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** great claw +16 (2d6+9/×4 plus disease), claw +16 (1d8+9)

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

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 11th; concentration +16)

Constant—*desecrate* (centered on self)

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 6th; concentration +9)

3rd—*contagion* (DC 16), *dispel magic*[D], *inflict serious wounds* (DC 16), *locate object*

2nd—*death knell*[D] (DC 15), *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 15), *resist energy*, *silence* (DC 15), *spiritual weapon*

1st—*cause fear*[D] (DC 14), *command* (DC 14), *divine favor*, *obscuring mist*, *shield of faith*

0—*bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, guidance, resistance

**D** domain spell; **Domains** Death, Magic

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** If she expects combat, a daughter of Urgathoa casts *resist energy* (fire) and *shield of faith*.

**During Combat** A daughter of Urgathoa casts *spiritual weapon* before entering melee, retreating only to cast inflict spells on undead allies who become badly injured.

**Morale** Proud and fearless, the daughters of Urgathoa fight until destroyed.

**Base Statistics** Without her spells, a daughter of Urgathoa's statistics are **AC** 21, touch 12, flat-footed 18.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 27, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 18, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 21

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 30

**Feats** Ability Focus (disease), Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Vital Strike

**Skills** Acrobatics +14, Bluff +16, Fly +23, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (religion) +18, Perception +17, Sense Motive +17, Spellcraft +18, Stealth +0

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Infernal, Necril

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Desecrate (Sp)** The bonuses granted from the daughter of Urgathoa's constant *desecrate* spell-like ability (which is always centered on herself) are already calculated into the stats above.

**Disease (Su)** *Bubonic Plague:* Great claw—injury; *save* Fortitude DC 20; *onset* immediate; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d4 Con damage and target is fatigued; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Great Claw (Ex)** One of the daughter's hands is a tremendous scythe-shaped claw. This attack deals ×4 damage on a critical hit, and is treated as an evil weapon for the purpose of bypassing damage reduction.

**Spells** A daughter of Urgathoa casts spells as a 6th-level cleric. Although she selects two domains to determine bonus spells, she does not gain any domain powers.

## H6. The Pit (CR 14)

The location where the tower of Gallowspire once stood is now a massive pit surrounded by field of rubble overgrown with thorny vines and obscured by a massive tree canopy overhead. Though the Shining Crusade's *Great Seal* was placed in the dungeon's uppermost level and Tar-Baphon's magic mostly directed the force of the *Radiant Fire* upward, the overwhelming power of the explosion still shattered the earth and created a massive blast crater 500 feet across and 200 feet deep.

The sides of the pit—made of the crumbling, ashy soil of Virlych—are slick and steeply angled, requiring a successful DC 20 Climb check to traverse. A climbing rig of ropes, pitons, stakes, and a winch at the edge of the pit leads to openings in the pit's sides and bottom. The Council Libertine installed this equipment to ease its exploration of Gallowspire's ruins. They believe that Arazni is somewhere in Gallowspire, preparing to confront the Whispering Tyrant, and they now search the surviving levels for their wayward queen.

The large crater provides direct access to several of levels of the vast dungeon of Gallowspire that had been

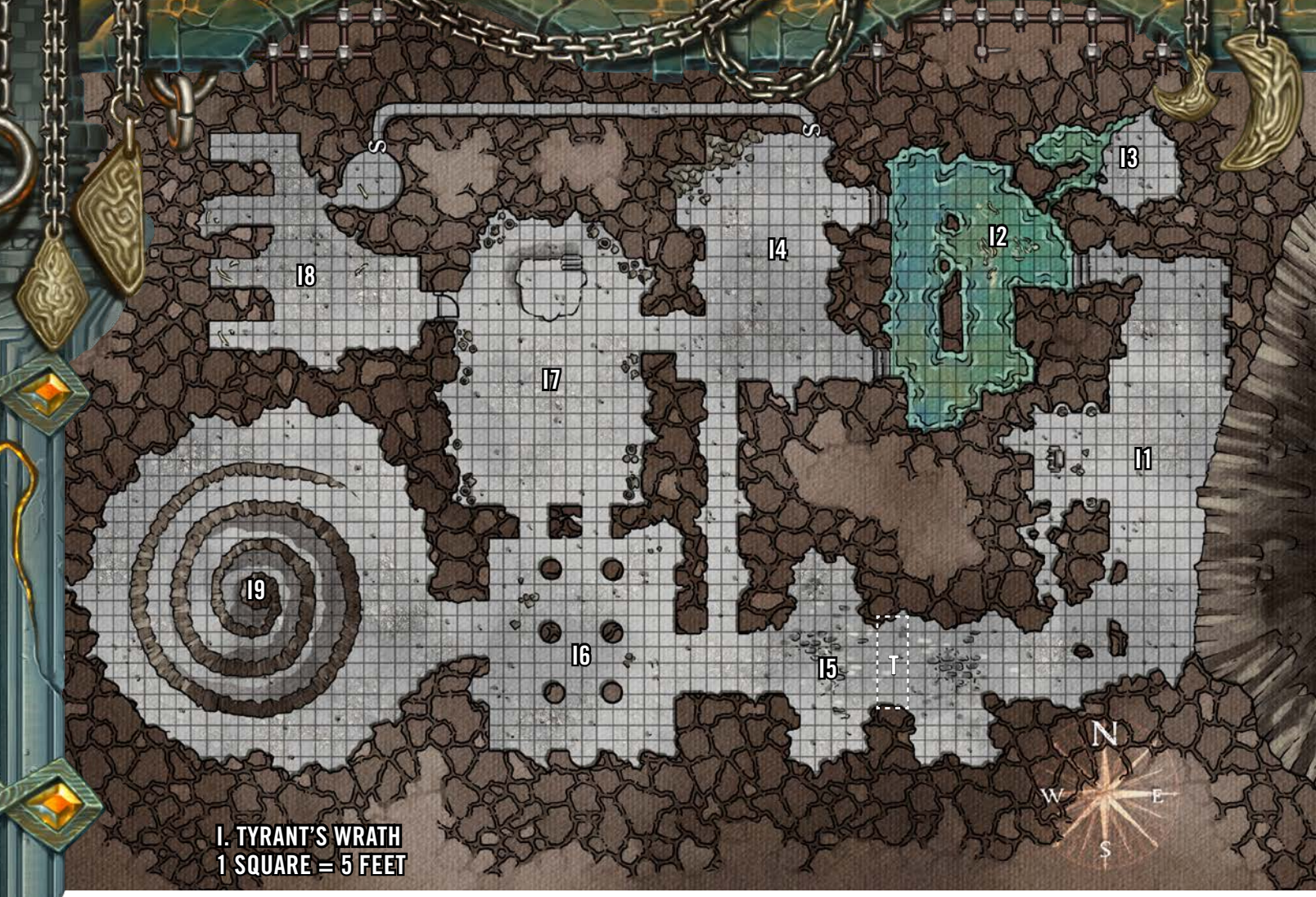
### The Council Libertine

The seven immortal graveknights who were once leaders of the Second Crusade now serve Geb loyally as the Council Libertine. These graveknights were the invaders who attacked Vigil in the wake of the Second Crusade and stole Arazni's body, ultimately damning her to existence as an undead abomination, and they now serve as her bodyguards and jailers. Of the original seven graveknights, only five remain: Amaretos Manslayer, Seldeg Bhedlis, Gustari Fallenstag, Tycha Ghuzmaar, and Yhalas the Serene. The Knights of Ozem permanently destroyed the other two original members in costly and daring attacks, although the Knights of Ozem don't realize that their successes were carefully planned and arranged by Arazni herself to thin the ranks of her minders.

The graveknights of the Council Libertine act with the full authority of the nation of Geb and are popularly believed to be influential attendants of the queen. When the Council Libertine realized that Arazni had left Geb not on an impulsive whim but on a far-ranging plan, they immediately acted to recover her. Nearly the entire Council Libertine has come to Ustalav with several loyal retainers, leaving only Bhedlis behind in Geb. As the most powerful graveknight on the council and Geb's spymaster, Bhedlis needed to remain in Geb to keep the queen's disappearance quiet. Bhedlis's history and statistics aren't necessary for this adventure, but they can be found on pages 52–55 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Undead Unleashed*.

Mental conditioning forced on Arazni gives the Council Libertine a huge advantage in performing its duties. The graveknights, along with Geb himself, are the only creatures Arazni cannot raise a hand against, whether to wield a sword, cast a spell, or even shout a harsh word. Thus, the devastatingly powerful queen is helpless against this handful of weaker entities. Because this compulsion is psychological rather than a curse or magical effect, it is one Arazni could theoretically overcome given sufficient time away from the council.

The graveknights of the Council Libertine are almost impossible to destroy thanks to their powerful, magical armor—the PCs are unlikely to permanently eliminate them, and efforts to do so are beyond the scope of this adventure.




buried for centuries. The uppermost level that remains—called the Great Seal on behalf of the gate that sealed Tar-Baphon below—has been almost entirely collapsed by the blast, leaving only a few isolated rooms looking out over the crater at canted angles.

The pit has openings into the two levels below the Great Seal, Tyrant's Wrath (area **I**) and the Upper Crypts (area **J**), which have both survived with varying levels of damage. The levels below the Upper Crypts, including the Catacombs (area **K**), are not exposed and must be accessed via the dungeon levels above.

**Creature:** While Tar-Baphon took his most powerful minions and treasures with him when he fled Gallowspire, he does not want others to plunder anything that remains. He therefore left several guardians behind, including a nightwing named Vasdrauk. Vasdrauk guards the pit, preventing anyone from accessing the exposed dungeon levels. One of three nightwings sealed away with Tar-Baphon for centuries, Vasdrauk is a sibling to Anabarondye, the nightwing known as the Haunting Dark that the PCs faced in the ruins of Vigil during the previous adventure, "Last Watch."

Vasdrauk originally attacked the graveknights from Geb, but they bent its will with their mastery over undead. Although they compelled the creature to let them construct their climbing rig and enter the ruins, it fundamentally serves the same function as before: keeping anyone else away from the area.

The nightwing attacks all trespassers who approach the pit. It first casts *unholy blight* from a distance, then swoops to attack in close quarters. It pursues any foes that flee (although it doesn't remain out of sight of the pit for long) and fights until destroyed.

**VASDRAUK** **CR 14**

**XP 38,400**

Nightwing (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 203)

**hp** 195

**Development:** Once Vasdrauk is eliminated, the marginally intact remains of the Great Seal level provide a safe refuge from the predators and deadly plants of the Gallowgarden, though anyone camping within these chambers must still contend with Gallowgarden miasma (see page 19). Gallowgarden miasma doesn't affect anyone in Gallowspire's lower levels (areas **I**, **J**, or **K**), as they are too far removed from the plants' deadly pollen, but these levels have their own lurking dangers.





## I. TYRANT'S WRATH

The highest surviving level of Gallowspire—previously its second sub-level—had already endured terrible destruction long before the *Radiant Fire* obliterated everything above it. When first imprisoned, Tar-Baphon raged through this level of libraries, sanctuaries, and storehouses, unleashing hugely destructive spells in a decades-long tantrum. For centuries after, this level served mostly as a refuge for those minions trapped in Gallowspire looking to avoid the displeasure of their petulant master. The blasted hollows and crevices provided ample hiding places, and the general devastation meant few ever came here in the course of their duties.

Tar-Baphon used this level as a staging ground before the blast that freed him, assembling troops and supplies here. Now the graveknight forces from Geb—the Council Libertine—do the same, using this level as their base while they explore the lower levels.

The walls are hewn stonework throughout most of this level, and the only doors that remain are those to the secure vault (area **I8**). The ceilings vary in height between 10 feet in corridors and 50 feet in rooms. The rooms are unlit except as otherwise indicated.

Use the map on page 24 for Tyrant's Wrath encounters.

### I1. Cathedral of the Dead (CR 12)

The rough stone here contains partial carvings of intertwined skeletons and angels, suggesting the room was once a vaulted cathedral before a powerful destructive force pulverized its reliefs. A stack of crates is covered by a tarp near the north wall. One shrine looks far newer and more intact than the rest of the broken mess.

While the Whispering Tyrant had little use for gods, many of his followers worshipped various deities of death, misfortune, and undeath. This cathedral dedicated to Kabriri, Urgathoa, Zyphus, and others provided a place for his religious followers to honor their gods—after honoring him, of course.

The delegation from Geb now uses this chamber as their forward camp while they search the ruins of Gallowspire for Arazni. The daughters of Urgathoa the expedition brought with them have created a new altar to the Pallid Princess while they await new orders from the graveknights or clues about their missing queen.

**Creatures:** Four daughters of Urgathoa maintain this camp, serving the Council Libertine primarily as diviners and healers. Achasanti, Degai, Natinka, and Shara all

## Betraying Arazni

The presence of the Council Libertine gives the PCs a chance to betray Arazni to her pursuers, accidentally or intentionally. The *bloodstone of Arazni* and the *periapt of health* from her panoply both have a sufficiently powerful tie to Arazni that the graveknights could divine her location with them, despite her careful magical protections.

Giving away Arazni's location introduces a complication to the adventure's plot, but not an insurmountable one. The PCs' betraying Arazni to the Council Libertine does not eliminate the graveknights as a threat. Even if the PCs surrender the bloodstone or the *periapt of health* to the graveknights—which they insist upon taking to track their errant queen—the graveknights don't consider themselves bound to honor any deals they strike. These high-ranking undead loathe anyone knowing of the internal strife in Geb's leadership, so the graveknights are still likely to hunt down the PCs as loose ends.

In such a turn of events, the rest of this adventure becomes an attempt to locate and stop the Whispering Tyrant before he can finish assembling his armies; translate the remaining threats from Gallowspire to represent various guardians and agents protecting the lich-king. For the climax, you may elect to pit the PCs against the Whispering Tyrant directly (his statistics can be found in "Midwives to Death") and having some interaction between his magic and the PCs' *obols* catapult them across the sea for the events in the next volume, "Borne by the Sun's Grace."

served Arazni directly as her handmaidens and are the closest things the lich-queen has had to friends for the last 7 centuries. More than anyone other than Arazni herself, these handmaidens understand how much their queen reviles her undead existence.

As mere servants, the handmaidens have no authority and can't directly disobey the graveknights of the Council Libertine, although they dislike Amaretos's intention of returning Arazni to Geb in chains and by any violent means necessary. The handmaidens know they will be punished harshly—and likely destroyed—if they return to their homeland without their queen, but they would like Arazni to willingly return with them and simply choose to stop being miserable—a win-win scenario for everyone involved. They can sense Arazni's magic as soon as the PCs enter the room, and they prefer to get some information from the PCs about the missing queen before killing them.

The handmaidens are not unsympathetic, and they have a dark sense of humor like that of their mistress and are easily cowed. They are initially hostile to the PCs, but the PCs have the opportunity to improve the handmaidens' attitude while interacting with them. If the PCs adjust their attitude to indifferent, the handmaidens accept that the PCs are enacting Arazni's will and don't hinder the party's travels through Gallowspire. If the PCs instead shift their attitude to friendly or helpful, the handmaidens agree to depart Gallowspire entirely.

**DAUGHTERS OF URGATHOA (4)** **CR 8**

**XP 4,800 each**

**hp** 115 each (see page 22)

### Consulting the Handmaidens

So long as the PCs don't attack, the handmaidens parley, hoping to glean useful information about Arazni's current location. They steer the conversation back to the her whenever it drifts away to other topics, but they can answer the following questions.

**Why are you here?** "Why, to seek our wayward queen, obviously. We know you have run across her; her aura clings to you like a perfume. She has wandered far afield and must be returned home. That is why we were dispatched, along with her loyal bodyguards—we shall return her to her throne."

**Why aren't you attacking us?** "Oh, we can, if that's what you like. We live to serve, after all. But your souls reek of our dear queen's touch, and we would so like to hear that she is doing well. Please, tell us where she can be found. We do so worry."

**Do you work for the Whispering Tyrant?** "The child playing at being a man? No, no. We serve a true master. One above petty tantrums and compensatory wars. We serve Geb, the nation and the man."

**Do you work with the graveknight who attacked us?** "Ah, you have run afoul of one of the bodyguards—the Council Libertine. They are born of Lastwall and seemed ideal to bring her home to Geb. They first brought Geb's bride to him, after all.

**We killed one of the graveknights.** "Such a dreadful shame to lose a cruel, abusive, petty bully. The Queen shall mourn the loss between sips of wine, I am sure."

**How many graveknights are here? What other forces has Geb sent?** "Ah, no. That would be telling, and that doesn't help us bring our dear queen home."

**Arazni is unhappy and doesn't want to return.** "Existence isn't about happiness. Existence is having a place. She has one upon the throne of Geb, just as we have our place at her side. If she is not in her place, then we have no place, and Geb has no need for us."

**Arazni is incredibly powerful. Why are you worried about her?** "Here, in this land of traitors and slavers? In the land that drove her to death? Why shouldn't we worry? Only Geb's kind hand spared her from oblivion, but even all these centuries later, her death haunts her. She struggles with the gift of life everlasting. We worry

she may hurt herself if left untended, as she has in the past. She needs us."

**Story Award:** If the PCs deal with the handmaidens nonviolently, award them 19,200 XP as if they defeated them in combat.

## I2. The Sodden Mausoleum (CR 12)

The unsteady ground here gives way to shallow, murky water filling this chamber. Bones and funerary wrappings from hundreds of shattered vaults along the walls are heaped in the dark, still water.

Formerly an enormous crypt to store corpses to later be animated as soldiers, this area's damage comes from one of Tar-Baphon's long-distant rampages rather than from the *Radiant Fire*. Groundwater from an adjoining cavern has flooded the room with knee-deep filth.

With a successful DC 25 Perception check, a PC can find a narrow opening in the rock, just large enough for a grown human to squeeze through. Beyond is a small natural cavern (area **I3**).

**Creature:** The lingering magic of Tar-Baphon's rampage has combined with the corpses and rot to spawn a hungry gravesludge, which now lurks under the water. Once living creatures enter this room, the gravesludge seals the entrance with *wall of ectoplasm* and attacks with *telekinesis* and *phantasmal killer* while remaining concealed beneath the murky water. It casts *harm* on the first creature to approach it in melee. The gravesludge wants one human-sized living creature to devour, and it does not pursue fleeing victims so long as it can retain one for a meal.

**GRAVESLUDGE** **CR 12**

**XP 19,200**

**hp** 161 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6* 145)

**Treasure:** Several of the vaults here belonged to various soldiers and priests of the Shining Crusade, preserving their earthly remains for particularly cruel fates. One such body was interred with her *heretic's bane staff*[UE], which can be found inside the cracked vault with a successful DC 25 Perception check.

## I3. Natural Cavern

This small cavern reeks of sulfur thanks to a mineral-laden spring that empties into the sodden mausoleum (area **I2**). Few beings imprisoned with Tar-Baphon knew of the cave's existence, and his seneschal, Gildais, used to hide out here for decades at a time. Shreds of silk and brocade still litter the corners, remnants of Gildais's Ustalavic finery.

While cold and foul-smelling, the small chamber is one of the few safe places to rest in Gallowspire.

## I4. Fallen Effigies (CR 11)

Enormous rocks here bear the shattered and scorched visage of the Whispering Tyrant, substantially larger than life-sized and repeated over and over with only slight variations.

This large hall once served as Tar-Baphon's counterpoint to the cathedral (area **I1**), where his loyal soldiers could bow and honor him instead of their pathetic gods. In moments of self-flagellation after imprisonment, he lashed out against these monuments to himself, reducing much of his personal shrine to rubble.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check discovers a thinly mortared wall with a narrow passage behind it, eventually leading to area **I8**.

**Creatures:** While the Whispering Tyrant himself has largely abandoned the idea of returning to Gallowspire, many of his minions remain to restore the site for tactical purposes. To that end, the Whispering Tyrant instructed several surveyors to remain behind and begin reconstruction efforts. One of these surveyors is Otto Canrivash, an Ustalavic vampire who spent the past 800 years sealed in one of Tar-Baphon's sepulchers, awaiting his master's return. Now that that glorious day has arrived, the loyal vampire finds himself tasked with civic drudgery, with the assistance of a decrepit clay golem carved in the likeness of a leering skeleton. The golem, Loambones, is strong but clumsy, and Canrivash finds its presence frustrating.

Canrivash attacks any living creatures he spies in the ruins, assuming they are agents of Lastwall working against his master's reborn empire. He orders Loambones to attack while he casts *greater invisibility* and hangs back. Canrivash casts *fireball* and *web* indiscriminately, knowing the construct is largely immune to magic. If Loambones is destroyed, Canrivash attempts to flee.

**OTTO CANRIVASH** **CR 9**

**XP 6,400**

Male human vampire sorcerer 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 270)

**hp** 102

**LOAMBONES** **CR 9**

**XP 6,400**

Degenerate clay golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6* 288, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 159)

**hp** 101

**Treasure:** Canrivash carries a curved crystal in his belt pouch that resembles a crescent moon. This crystal isn't

magical and is worth only 5 gp, but it unlocks a secret compartment in the necromancy lab (area **J4**).

## I5. Cursed Hall (CR 12)

Only a few patches of elaborate tile hint that this blasted cavern may have once been an ornate hall. The southern wall holds two large alcoves; the north wall holds another.



Otto Canrivash and Loambones

The uneven flooring here counts as difficult terrain.

**Trap:** The powerful necromantic energy unleashed by Tar-Baphon has pooled here to create an unplanned magic trap. The trap is invisible, but anyone casting *detect magic* or *detect undead* notices the unstable ball of necromantic magic filling the hall's center. If a living creature enters the squares where this magic lingers (the area is marked on the map), the ball of necromantic magic detonates and targets all creatures in the hall with lashes of dark energy.

**NECROMANTIC PULSE TRAP** **CR 12**

**XP 19,200**

**Type** magical; **Perception** DC 32; **Disable Device** DC 32

**EFFECTS**

**Trigger** proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** automatic after a delay of 1 minute

**Effect** spell effect (maximized *enervation*; Atk +15 ranged touch, 4 temporary negative levels, Fortitude DC 16 negates after 24 hours); multiple targets (all creatures in area **I5**)

**Treasure:** A skeleton, clothing, and backpack are all that remains of a Lastwall scout who hoped to sneak into Gallowspire and learn more of what was transpiring now that Tar-Baphon has escaped. The trap blasted away his soft flesh and even shriveled the rations in his pack. The only equipment to survive the encounter is his *bottle of air*.

## I6. Guard Station (CR 12)

This large, square cavern has wide exits and stout, stone pillars that extend up to the ceiling thirty feet overhead.

**Creatures:** Tar-Baphon honored the most skillful of Adorak's city guard with undeath so they could continue to patrol his city's streets. Dozens of these Tempest Guards assembled to defend the Whispering Tyrant when he retreated into the bowels of Gallowspire, only to be imprisoned with their master behind the crusaders' Great Seal. The Whispering Tyrant destroyed more than half of his Tempest Guard in his subsequent rages, but many survived to accompany him on his recent journey away from Gallowspire.

A small contingent of the most junior members of the Tempest Guard remained behind to protect their master's prison. The Council Libertine co-opted these skeletal soldiers using their ability to command undead, and these undead guards now defend this chamber from anyone who isn't expressly authorized by the graveknights.

**TEMPEST GUARDS (6)** **CR 7**

**XP 3,200 each**

Human skeletal champion fighter (phalanx soldier) 6/rogue 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 252, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 105)

NE Medium undead

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +18

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, +2 natural) **hp** 94 each (12 HD; 6d8+6d10+30)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9; +2 vs. trample

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; **DR** 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** cold, undead traits

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

**Melee** *+1 glaive-guisarme* +17/+12 (1d10+10/×3) or 2 claws +10 (1d4+2)

**Ranged** mwk javelin +14/+9 (1d6+5)

**Special Attacks** phalanx fighting, ready pike +1, sneak attack +2d6 plus 2 bleed

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** Trained to fight as a unit, the Tempest Guards maintain a tight formation and work in pairs against enemies. They prefer to close to melee as soon as possible and use Power Attack, but they use their *javelins of lightning* if they notice two or more opponents in a line.

**Morale** Tempest Guards fight until destroyed.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 28 (30 vs. bull rush, drag, overrun, and trip)

**Feats** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (glaive-guisarme), Weapon Specialization (glaive-guisarme)

**Skills** Acrobatics +12 (+8 when jumping), Climb +10, Intimidate +15, Perception +18, Sense Motive +18, Stealth +12, Swim +10

**Languages** Common

**SQ** rogue talents (bleeding attack +2, slow reactions), stand firm +2, trapfinding +2

**Combat Gear** *javelin of lightning*; **Other Gear** *+1 chainmail*, *+1 glaive-guisarme*[UE], mwk javelins (3), tabard of the Adorak Tempest Guard

## I7. Mustering Grounds

The ground in this cavern has been trampled flat and hard. A makeshift stage—a flattened bit of space atop a severed stone head the size of a boulder—stands at the north, while many open chests and large jars line the periphery of the room. Several wide openings exit this room, and a massive, intact stone door near the makeshift stage is closed.

Undead forces from throughout the ruins of Gallowspire recently assembled here, travelling up from the nearby Trepid Well (area **I9**) to listen to the Whispering Tyrant's grandiose speeches about obtaining freedom and seeking revenge. This is the site where the Whispering Tyrant gained his freedom; he broke the Great Seal and obliterated the tower of Gallowspire with the *Radiant Fire* from the stage here.

The stone doors lead to the secure vault (area **I8**). They are magically reinforced and currently locked from the inside (hardness 12, hp 90, break DC 35, Disable Device DC 35). Knocking on the door attracts the attention of the knights inside, who open the doors hesitantly after a few minutes.

There are obvious signs of a recent, thorough search—overturned chests, disturbed earth, broken jars, and so on—although several valuables remain behind (see Treasure below). Amaretos and his graveknights diligently searched this room and recovered whatever valuable intelligence Tar-Baphon left behind. They haven't yet recovered the treasure or bypassed the locked door, but they intend to do so in the near future.

**Treasure:** The chests and pottery contained many of the untold magical treasures stored within Gallowspire. Most of this treasure was dispersed to the Whispering Tyrant's now-departed armies, but some remains as payment for

### The Territorial Dead

Gallowspire is far from a hollowed-out ruin, and its halls hold plenty of foes beyond those few encounters listed in the adventure. While Tar-Baphon and his greatest allies have departed the site, many undead—especially those bound to a location or devoid of true intellect—remain in the dungeon.

Roll on the following table once for every 4 hours of exploration or 8 hours of rest as the PCs explore beneath Gallowspire. These encounters are especially fitting in those chambers the PCs have already cleared out, as new threats move in to supplant old.

| d% | Encounter | Average CR | Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1–20 | 1d3 skeleton guard troops | 9 | See page 11 |
| 21–36 | 1d6 fallen | 11 | *Bestiary 6* 126 |
| 37–44 | 1 dread wraith | 11 | See page 39 |
| 45–52 | 1 razormouth solifugid | 11 | *Bestiary 6* 256 |
| 53–65 | 1d3 nosferatu rogues | 12 | *Bestiary 4* 268 |
| 66–85 | 2d6 Tempest Guards | 12 | See above |
| 86–91 | 1 bonethorn | 12 | *Bestiary 6* 52 |
| 92–98 | 1d3 devourers | 13 | *Bestiary* 82 |
| 99–100 | 1 gallowdead | 16 | *Bestiary 4* 119 |

various guardians left behind. This treasure includes 5,205 gp, a large diamond worth 5,000 gp, and a *wand of communal protection from energy*[UC] with 50 charges. A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check also spots a *ring of spell knowledge IV*[UE] containing *vermin shape I*[UM] forgotten in a small crevice in the floor.

## I8. Secure Vault (CR 14)

The double door to this room is locked from the inside (hardness 12, hp 90, break DC 35, Disable Device DC 35).

Tar-Baphon stored an assortment of unusual trophies in here—captured banners, knights' helms, slain beasts, pickled remains of rivals, and captured (albeit nonmagical) relics. He destroyed most after his imprisonment, leaving the vault littered with broken garbage and shreds of delicate fabric that crumble to dust when disturbed.



Durgao Heav

**Creatures:** The room is occupied by a small force of Lastwall scouts who were patrolling in Virlych, witnessed the destruction of Gallowspire, and rode to investigate. Lead by the fearless dwarf fighter Durgao Heav, they observed as Tar-Baphon and his armies surged forth from the ruins, taking notes on their activities, direction, and numbers. They eventually investigated the crater to see whether the Whispering Tyrant had left any clues behind, but encounters with powerful undead creatures forced them to fall back to this room. The scouts have been awaiting a good opportunity to escape.

At least, that's the story as Durgao tells it. While most of the story is accurate, the paladin omits the part where an emaciated dybbuk, Trasus the Dancer, overwhelmed the patrol. Trasus was assigned to infiltrate Lastwall's forces and undermine them from within, and she has decided to ride the scouts in the patrol until they take her to increasingly superior officers. The dybbuk knew that a small force of scouts escaping from Gallowspire would raise suspicions, so she engineered the "retreat" to this chamber. Trasus knows that more powerful knights will eventually come to the rescue.

Trasus has possessed the troop's nervous cook, Nermun, knowing a lowly servant won't be subject to the same level of scrutiny as Durgao. The dybbuk has also dominated the five skirmishers under Durgao's command, but hasn't yet gone so far as to dominate Durgao as well.

Durgao is anxious to be free of Gallowspire. Over time, he grows increasingly insistent that the PCs abandon their present mission and escort him back to Lastwall, insisting he has confidential information vital to nation's defense.

Trasus doesn't immediately attack the PCs, preferring instead to first take their measure, and she may even offer the vault as a place for the PCs to camp, by suggesting this to Durgao. She's initially confused as to why the PCs—and not Knights of Ozem—would be the first to arrive here, and she controls Nermun to question the PCs. If the PCs become suspicious of the scouts trapped here—such as by succeeding at the DC 15 Sense Motive checks to realize that the skirmishers are under a domination effect—Trasus directs the skirmishers to attack the PCs while "Nermun" cowers and shrieks about the PCs being "spies for the Tyrant."

Ultimately, Trasus decides she would rather possess a powerful PC and leave the pitiful scout patrol she's become bored with, but she wants to goad the PCs into violence first to determine which one seems to be the most capable, and therefore the best PC to possess.

**TRASUS THE DANCER** **CR 14**

**XP 38,400**

Female degenerate dybbuk (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6* 288, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 108)

**hp** 171

**DURGAO HEAV** **CR 6**

**XP 2,400**

LG male spell hunter (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 83)

**hp** 64

**LASTWALL SKIRMISHERS (5)** **CR 4**

**XP 1,200 each**

LG mounted archers (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 130)

**hp** 42 each

**NERMUN** **CR 3**

**XP 800**

LN male barmaid (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 257)

**hp** 17

**Development:** If the PCs defeat Trasus without harming any of the scouts, Durgao and his troops offer unexpected assistance later in this adventure.

**Story Award:** If the PCs manage to free to scouts from Tarsus's control without killing them, award them XP as though they had defeated the soldiers in combat.

## I9. Upper Trepid Well (CR 14)

The ceiling and floor of the cavern here spiral gently, creating a spindle-shaped room that ends in a large, black pit descending from the middle of the chamber. Strands of luminescent fungus grow in the shape of leering skulls along the walls here, providing dim light.

The Trepid Well is a jagged pit blasted through the stone by powerful magic long ago, and worn smooth by centuries of scurrying denizens traveling up and down to connected levels of Gallowspire's dungeon. It begins here on Tyrant's Wrath (area **I**), descends through the Upper Crypts (area **J**), and finally ends in the Catacombs (area **K**), providing the only access to that lowest level. Each inner loop of the spiraling walkway is 10 feet below the one above it, requiring a short jump or successful DC 18 Climb check to descend directly. Creatures can instead walk the full length of the spiral to read the mouth of the pit; the path has countless handholds worn into the rock.

At the bottom of this spiral, the well opens into a drop 30 feet down into the dry bone-cleaning pool in the Upper Crypts (area **J8**). A large piton driven into the stone at the edge of the drop has a coil of silk rope tied to it. The Geb expedition uses this rope to ascend and descend through this pit to the lower level, but the graveknight here keeps it coiled up when not in use.

**Creature:** One of the graveknights of the Council Libertine, Yhalas the Serene, guards the top of the Trepid Well while her allies explore Gallowspire's lower levels. In life, Yhalas worked hard to contain her furious temper, relying upon peaceful mantras to attain an inner calm; however, she was not always successful, and her brutally effective rages against Lastwall's enemies earned her the ironic title "the Serene." Yhalas is a strong, exceptionally pale woman with short blond hair; Amaretos Barronmor selected Yhalas to join him in the Second Crusade not only for her combat ability, but because he thought her pale appearance would more easily blend with the sallow undead of Geb.

Geb captured Yhalas and wiped away all memory of her peaceful mantras, goading her into a near-constant and increasingly bloodthirsty rage. When Yhalas was finally convinced that her temper was all that defined her, Geb transformed her into a graveknight. Her blackened *rhino hide* armor is badly burned and appears melted into her flesh. Ironically, Yhalas finds the placid calm of undeath easy to reach and is more measured and patient as a graveknight than she ever was as a crusader.

Yhalas doesn't bother to question intruders, but eliminates them as quickly and mercilessly as possible.

**YHALAS THE SERENE** **CR 14**

**XP 38,400**

Female human graveknight barbarian 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 138)

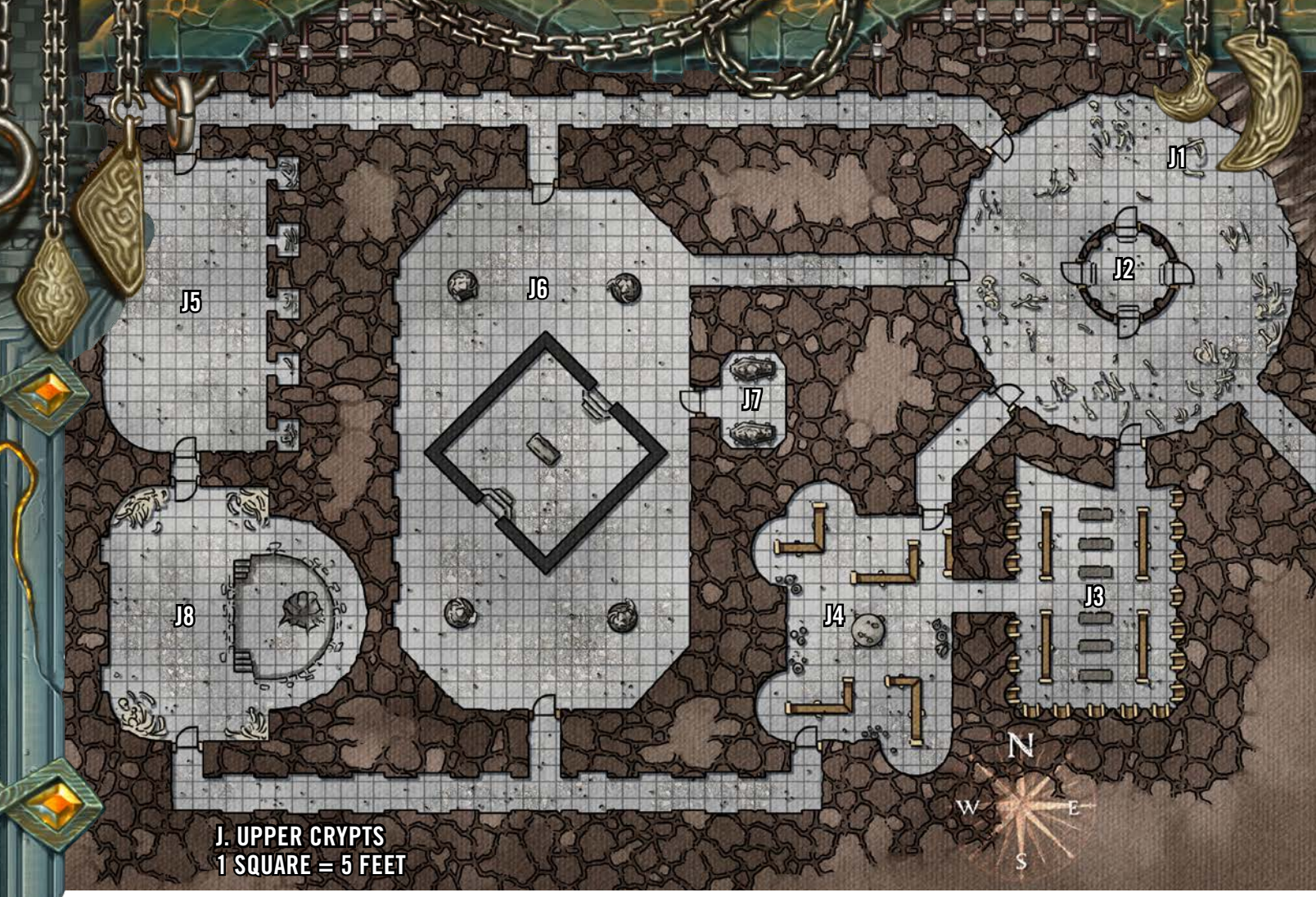
NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +28

**Aura** sacrilegious aura (30 ft., DC 24)



Yhalas the Serene




**DEFENSE**

**AC** 24, touch 12, flat-footed 24 (+6 armor, +2 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural, –2 rage)

**hp** 246 (13d12+156)

**Fort** +14, **Ref** +10, **Will** +17; +5 vs. spells, supernatural abilities, and spell-like abilities

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, improved uncanny dodge, rejuvenation, trap sense +4; **DR** 3/—, 10/magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, fire, undead traits; **SR** 25

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 70 ft. (60 ft. in armor)

**Melee** unarmed strike +25/+25/+20/+15 (1d6+13), unarmed strike +25 (1d6+8), bite +23 (1d4+8) or slam +27 (1d4+13)

**Ranged** mwk javelin +18 (1d6+12)

**Special Attacks** channel destruction (3d6 fire), devastating blast (8d6 fire, DC 24, 3/day), greater rage (33 rounds/day), rage powers (animal fury, brawler[APG], greater brawler[APG], intimidating glare, mighty swing, superstition +5), undead mastery (65 HD, DC 24)

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Yhalas drinks her *potion of barkskin* and *potion of haste* and flies into a rage.

**During Combat** Yhalas enters her Boar Style stance and tears into opponents with her bare hands, charging when possible to take advantage of her *rhino hide*. Yhalas's *boots of striding and springing* allow her to navigate the spiral cavern with relative ease.

**Morale** Yhalas fights until destroyed.

**Base Statistics** When not raging and without her potions, Yhalas's statistics are **AC** 23, touch 13, flat-footed 23; **hp** 207; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +9, **Will** +14; **Speed** 50 ft. (40 ft. in armor); **Melee** unarmed strike +23/+18/+13 (1d6+10) or slam +23 (1d4+10); **Ranged** mwk javelin +17 (1d6+9); **Str** 24, **Cha** 20; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 31; Climb +15, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +25 (+37 to demoralize opponents), Swim +12. In addition, the DCs for her sacrilegious aura, devastating blast, and undead mastery abilities are 21.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 30, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 26

**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 34

**Feats** Boar Ferocity[UC], Boar Shred[UC], Boar Style[UC], Dazzling Display, Improved Initiative[B], Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Mounted Combat[B], Ride-By Attack[B], Skill Focus (Intimidate), Toughness[B], Weapon Focus (bite)

**Skills** Acrobatics +17 (+34 when jumping), Climb +18, Diplomacy +13, Heal +9, Intimidate +38 (+40 to demoralize opponents), Perception +28, Ride +16, Sense Motive +17,

Stealth +6, Swim +15; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Intimidate, +8 Perception, +8 Ride

**Languages** Common, Necril

**SQ** fast movement, graveknight armor, phantom mount, ruinous revivification (fire)

**Combat Gear** *potion of barkskin*, *potion of haste*, *potion of inflict serious wounds*; **Other Gear** *rhino hide*, mwk javelins (6), *amulet of mighty fists +1*, *boots of striding and springing*, *cloak of resistance +2*, *headband of alluring charisma +2*, *ring of protection +2*, signet ring bearing the rune of Geb wreathed in flames

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Undead Barbarian** An undead creature with the ability to enter a rage gains the morale bonuses from rage despite being immune to morale effects. The bonus to Constitution from the rage applies to an undead creature's Charisma instead.

## J. THE UPPER CRYPTS

Below the Tyrant's Wrath lie the Upper Crypts, where the bodies of untold thousands of creatures—especially humanoids—are stored in a grand reserve of undead forces awaiting animation. The Whispering Tyrant animated an army of thousands before departing Gallowspire, but bones still lie thick on the floor and stacked in tight arrays against the walls. The most important feature of the Upper Crypts is the black pyramid that serves as the power source for Virlych's network of *witchgates*.

The reinforced masonry walls of most rooms on this level are covered by a 3-foot layer of tightly interlocked bone arranged in artful patterns, and the hallways are lined with huge, self-indulgent carvings of Tar-Baphon's victories over Aroden, Lastwall, Ustalav, and even death itself. As in the Tyrant's Wrath, the ceilings in the hallways of the Upper Crypts are 10 feet high and its rooms are 50 feet tall unless otherwise noted. All areas of the Upper Crypts here are dark unless specified otherwise.

Use the map on page 32 for Upper Crypts encounters.

### J1. Grand Ossuary (CR 12)

The ceiling of this massive, curving arena stretches some sixty feet overhead, but the floor is completely concealed between a thick, unstable layer of bleached-white bones. A massive hole in the northeast wall looks out over the central crater that was once Gallowspire, while interior doors line both the outer wall and an enormous stone column filling the round room's center.

Undifferentiated bones cover the floor here to a depth of 12 feet—vast heaps too jumbled for the Whispering Tyrant's minions to find useful. The unstable surface of this room counts as difficult terrain and increases the DC of Acrobatics and Stealth checks by 2. The massive hole in the wall leads to the pit (area **H6**) and admits some of Virlych's overcast light, making this room dim during daylight hours and dark at night.

Beneath the bones, long-buried stairs lead up from the stone floor to the room's various exits, which are now level with the floor of bones. Four doors lead into the revered ossuary in the central column (area **J2**), while double doors in the outer wall open onto hallways leading deeper into the Upper Crypts. Two hallways have been blocked by rubble and are impassable as a result of the *Radiant Fire's* force, but these dead ends might be good places for the PCs to rest.

**Creature:** The Shining Crusade attracted several metallic dragons to its grand cause. Some of these noble creatures served in the guise of mortals, while others brought their full strength to bear in their true forms. Valux the Burning Sunrise was a powerful gold dragon who served under General Iomedae but fell against a marilith in the crusade's fierce fighting to claim a beachhead at the site of what is now Hallein Town. The Whispering Tyrant recovered Valux's corpse and flensed away the flesh to create a guardian he christened Pallid Sunrise, a miserable beast still possessed of the gold's dragon's incredible strength and magic, but devoid of its morality and free will.

Bound in enchanted iron shackles, Pallid Sunrise is chained to the Upper Crypts and cannot leave it. Pallid Sunrise has resisted domination by the Council Libertine, but it tolerates their presence as kindred spirits. The skeletal dragon rests beneath the bones in the room and bursts free to surprise trespassers from below. The bones of its past victims are jumbled together with the others in this room.

Pallid Sunrise holds a special hatred for the Shining Crusade and the forces of Lastwall, but it holds a glimmer of mercy for followers of Iomedae. Pallid Sunrise offers obvious worshippers of the Inheritor the option to retreat, but it knows all too well that their dedication likely precludes accepting such a sensible option. In battle, the skeletal dragon rails against devotees of Iomedae, screaming, "The wages of your fanaticism are pain!" and "I shall make you see the true folly of your faith, even if I must tear the eyes from your skull to do it!"

**PALLID SUNRISE** **CR 12**

**XP 19,200**

Variant young adult gold dragon skeletal champion (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 108, 252)

LE Huge undead (fire)

**Init** +5; **Senses** dragon senses, tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +27

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 20, touch 9, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +3 natural, +4 shield, –2 size)

**hp** 185 (18d8+72)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +7, **Will** +17

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4; **DR** 5/bludgeoning or magic; **Immune** fire, undead traits; **SR** 22
**Weaknesses** vulnerability to cold

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 60 ft., burrow 40 ft. (loose bones only), fly 250 ft. (clumsy), swim 60 ft.
**Melee** bite +21 (2d8+15/19–20), 2 claws +21 (1d8+10/19–20), 2 claws +21 (2d6+10/19–20), tail slap +19 (2d6+15), 2 wings +19 (1d8+5)
**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)
**Special Attacks** breath weapon (50-ft. cone, 10d10 fire, Reflex DC 23 half), crush (Small creatures, DC 23, 2d8+15), weakening breath (50-ft. cone, 5 Str damage, DC 23)
**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 16th; concentration +20)
At will—*bless*, *detect evil*
3/day—*locate object* (gemstones only)
**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 5th; concentration +9)
2nd (5/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 16), *silence* (DC 16)
1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *hide from undead* (DC 15), *mage armor*, *shield*
0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *light*, *prestidigitation*

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Pallid Sunrise casts *mage armor* and *shield*.
**During Combat** Pallid Sunrise fights without fear, surprising trespassers by bursting up from beneath the floor's surface and breathing fire before closing to melee. If spellcasters pose it a serious threat, it casts *silence* spells on bones in the floor.
**Morale** Equal parts loyal and miserable, Pallid Sunrise fights until destroyed.
**Base Statistics** Without its *mage armor* and *shield* spells, Pallid Sunrise's statistics are **AC** 12, touch 9, flat-footed 11.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 31, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 18, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 18
**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 36 (40 vs. trip)
**Feats** Alertness, Critical Focus, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Vital Strike
**Skills** Diplomacy +20, Fly +8, Heal +20, Knowledge (nobility) +20, Knowledge (religion) +23, Perception +27, Sense Motive +27, Spellcraft +23, Swim +34
**Languages** Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elven, Halfling
**SQ** bone dweller, change shape (humanoid or animal; *polymorph*), fast flight

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Bone Dweller (Ex)** Pallid Sunrise is well-adapted to dwelling within the bony terrain of the grand ossuary. It has a burrow speed of 40 feet through loose bones and tremorsense with a range of 60 feet.



Pallid Sunrise

**Hazards:** Pallid Sunrise placed two silent *alarm* spells on the hole leading out to the pit (area **H6**).

**Treasure:** Pallid Sunrise considers the bones here to be its hoard, but it also retains a single treasure from its living days: a golden *winged shield* bearing the image of a silver dragon and a gold dragon embracing. The shield is buried in the southeastern corner

of the room under 12 feet of bone, and reaching it requires several hours of digging.

### J2. Revered Ossuary

Unlike the surrounding room, this large crypt houses the bones of significant individuals in distinct, labeled niches in the room's walls. These niches stretch from the floor to the ceiling 70 feet above. The bones housed here are from prominent members of the Shining Crusade or Ustalavic nobility whose bodies were claimed by the Whispering Tyrant's minions and brought here. The Whispering Tyrant keeps them on hand for questioning or for animating them at a later time to send them against their descendants.

**Treasure:** Seven niches hold short wax candles that glow with a cool, blue light from *continual flame* spells. Except for their appearance, these seven candles each function as everburning torches.

Jewelry and ornate holy symbols interred with the bones here are worth 11,600 gp altogether, but require 2 hours of searching and some means of climbing or flying to the room's highest niches. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (history) identifies one niche belonging to Hakuz, a legendary hero of Erastil whose bracers were reportedly gifts from the god of the hunt. Concealed among Hakuz's bones are *greater bracers of archery* inscribed with silver holy symbols of Erastil; due to a permanent *magic aura* spell, the bracers do not radiate any magic auras.

### J3. Anatomy Library

Oversized, leather-bound tomes crowd the shelves covering the walls of this large chamber, interspersed with the preserved bodies of various creatures floating in jars of fluid. Six cold, marble tables fill the room's central area. The reek of astringent chemicals fills the air.

This room contains one of the most comprehensive collections of anatomy texts in Avistan, including unique volumes penned by Tar-Baphon's most accomplished necromancers. The bodies and body parts floating in preservative fluids are dead and completely harmless.

**Hazard:** Though it appears ominous, the anatomy library is one of the more benign rooms in Gallowspire. Yet even here, dangers lurk. One of the books lining the shelves radiates strong transmutation magic and appears to be a *tome of understanding*. In reality, it is a *vacuous grimoire*.

**Treasure:** The books here represent a fortune of scientific knowledge worth 12,000 gp, but they collectively weigh 4,000 pounds. Despite the rare knowledge they contain, their unnerving binding discourages most buyers—the tomes are bound in the flesh of humans, halflings, and various good fey and dragons. A PC must succeed at a DC 25 Diplomacy check to sell the books; on a failure, the buyer is too disturbed to complete the sale and the PC must track down a different buyer instead.

**Development:** One book in the room is a misfiled tome on conjuration, penned by one of Tar-Baphon's minions who assisted in the original creation of the *witchgates*. The book stands out as the only book in the library not bound in leather, instead being pressed between heavy lead covers. The book explains early theories on operating the control network and grants a +5 circumstance bonus on Use Magic Device checks to operate the *witchgates* within the black pyramid (are **J6**).

### J4. Necromancy Lab (CR 15)

Panels of black marble bearing relief carvings of laughing skulls and dancing skeletons line the walls of this large chamber. A large brass table fills the room's center, while shelves filled with long-empty baskets, drawers, and jars occupy much of the rest of the room.

The Whispering Tyrant's minions used this space to experiment with necromancy magic, create new rituals, and animate unique undead. A thick layer of dust covers every surface—save a few obviously disturbed by a recent search—as the room's stores of material components ran out centuries ago.

**Creatures:** Tycha Ghuzmaar, a graveknight of the Council Libertine, is searching this laboratory along with three loyal ghouls. An upright and honest paladin in life, Tycha was the least comfortable with Amaretos's expedition to Geb. Lying and spycraft never suited the blunt man; to his own surprise, he seemed to remain undetected in Geb for longer than the other knights, sending periodic missives both to his fellow knights and back to Lastwall. Tycha later learned that his freedom was a sham; Geb had identified the honorable spy right away. The wizard's agents pretended to shelter and befriend the foreign visitor while they intercepted and twisted his messages and, in turn, manufactured the messages he received back. These agents planted clues that the other knights were secretly enemies of Lastwall and loyal to Geb, instilling a deep paranoia in the once-trusting Tycha. Geb allowed Tycha just enough hope to believe these clues were wrong, and then revealed the fellow knights that had, by that time, been transformed into graveknights. This revelation broke Tycha's faith, and he became an antipaladin. In time, Geb transformed him into a graveknight as well. Tycha now leads Geb's secret police, a network of sly ghouls called the Fleshhunters. The Fleshhunters ferret out dissidents and eliminate potential revolutionaries. Tycha is well versed in techniques to sow misinformation among Geb's enemies, having been mired

in it when he was living, and he has become a cruel and remorseless killer. Tycha still wields the mithral sword, shield, and armor of his days as a glorious paladin, though they are now permanently shackled to his wrists as part of his shame.

Four ghoul Fleshhunters aid Tycha in searching this room. These enemies scatter to hide in the room's shadows when they hear anyone approach. They remain hidden for as long as possible, hoping the PCs might discover clues they've missed; this also allows Tycha to select a target to observe for his death attack. This group doesn't engage in conversation and doesn't intend to let any living creatures leave the room.

**TYCHA GHUZMAAR** **CR 13**

**XP 25,600**

Male human graveknight antipaladin (tyrant) 5/assassin 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 138, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 118, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Intrigue* 64)

LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20

**Aura** cowardice (10 ft.), sacrilegious aura (30 ft., DC 20)

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 32, touch 17, flat-footed 27 (+7 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 insight, +4 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 152 (12 HD; 7d8+5d10+89)

**Fort** +16, **Ref** +15, **Will** +17

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, improved uncanny dodge, rejuvenation; **DR** 10/magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, undead traits; **SR** 24

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** *+1 keen mithral longsword* +18/+13 (1d8+8/17–20 plus 3d6 cold) or slam +17 (1d4+7)

**Ranged** *+1 light crossbow* +17 (1d8+3/19–20 plus 3d6 cold)

**Special Attacks** channel destruction (3d6 cold), channel negative energy 3/day (DC 16, 3d6), death attack (DC 18), devastating blast (8d6 cold, DC 20, 3/day), quiet death, smite good 2/day (+4 attack and AC, +5 damage), sneak attack +4d6, true death (DC 22), undead mastery (60 HD, DC 20)

**Antipaladin Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5th; concentration +9)
At will—*detect good*

**Antipaladin Spells Prepared** (CL 2nd; concentration +6)
1st—*death knell* (DC 15), *protection from chaos*

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Tycha keeps his longsword coated in purple worm poison. He hides and attempts to study the strongest-looking opponent for his death attack.

**During Combat** Tycha prefers to open combat with a death attack, assuming that the poison on his blade will incapacitate his foe even if his death attack isn't successful. He thereafter flanks with his ghouls when possible to deliver sneak attacks.

**Morale** Tycha is the most practical member of the Council Libertine and wants to be sure to return to Geb with information, if not full success. If reduced to fewer than 50 hit points, Tycha retreats and plans to return to Geb right away. If necessary to make this escape, Tycha might pretend to surrender long enough to flee.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 20, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 19

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 32

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative[B], Iron Will, Mobility, Mounted Combat[B], Pack Attack[UC], Ride-By Attack[B], Spring Attack, Toughness[B], Vital Strike

**Skills** Acrobatics +18, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +13, Disable Device +12, Disguise +9, Intimidate +21, Perception +20, Ride +11, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +23; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Intimidate, +8 Perception, +8 Ride

**Languages** Common, Necril

**SQ** cruelty (fatigued), diabolic boon (weapon +1, 1/day), graveknight armor, hidden weapons, phantom mount, poison use, ruinous revivification (cold), touch of corruption 6/day (2d6)

**Combat Gear** deathblade, nightmare vapor, purple worm poison (2); **Other Gear** *+1 mithral breastplate*, *+2 mithral heavy steel shield*, *+1 keen mithral longsword*, *+1 light crossbow* with 20 bolts, *cloak of elvenkind*, *dusty rose prism ioun stone*, *ring of protection +1*, *slippers of spider climbing*, platinum signet ring bearing the holy symbol of Arazni atop the rune of Geb worth 1,100 gp

**GEB FLESHHUNTERS (4)** **CR 7**

**XP 3,200 each**

Ghoul investigator 7 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 30)

LE Medium undead

**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 21, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+5 Dex, +2 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 74 each (9d8+34)

**Fort** +5, **Ref** +10, **Will** +10

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +2, trap sense +2; **Immune** undead traits

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** bite +12 (1d6+4 plus paralysis and disease), 2 claws +12 (1d6+4 plus paralysis)

**Special Attacks** paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, elves are immune, DC 14), studied combat (+3, 2 rounds), studied strike +2d6

**Investigator Extracts Prepared** (CL 7th; concentration +9)
3rd—*displacement*
2nd—*detect thoughts* (DC 14), *eagle's splendor*, *resist energy*, *see invisibility*

1st—*comprehend languages*, *detect undead*, *jump*, *shield*, *true strike*

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** The Fleshhunters cast *shield* and *see invisibility*, then hide to prepare an ambush.

**During Combat** The Fleshhunters work in pairs or with Tycha to flank foes and take advantage of their Pack Attack feat. Before attacking, a Fleshhunter uses its studied combat ability as a swift action; it then makes a studied strike on the first hit. An injured Fleshhunter retreats to cast *displacement* before returning to the fight. Fleshhunters ignore paralyzed enemies to focus on those who still pose a threat.

**Morale** The Fleshhunters fight until destroyed.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 17, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 15, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 24

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Pack Attack[UC], Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Acrobatics +17, Bluff +15, Climb +8, Disable Device +15, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (local) +14, Perception +14, Sleight of Hand +14, Stealth +17, Swim +5

**Languages** Common, Kelish, Necril

**SQ** alchemy (alchemy crafting +7), inspiration (5), investigator talents (perceptive tracking, quick study, sickening offensive), keen recollection, poison lore, swift alchemy, trapfinding +3

**Combat Gear** *potion of inflict moderate wounds*, *potion of invisibility,* alchemist's fire (4); **Other Gear** *amulet of mighty fists +1*, formula book

**Treasure:** A successful DC 25 Perception check reveals a hidden compartment behind a sliding brass panel in the table. It contains an image of a dull orb partially obscured by a crescent-shaped divot. A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check realizes that this image invokes a solar eclipse, but the sun appears extinguished.

The crystal carried by the vampire Canrivash (area **I4**) fits the divot, but does nothing when inserted except obscure part of the orb. If a spell with the light descriptor is cast on the orb, either before or after the crescent-shaped crystal is inserted into the divot, the light spell is automatically dispelled and *darkness* (CL 7th) appears around the table instead. At the same time, a *rod of thunder and lightning* rises from within the table. The last project in development here when Gallowspire fell, it has been forgotten in its secret slot for centuries.

## J5. Crematorium (CR 14)

Long ovens line the walls of this large chamber. One still crackles with flame, though the room is cold.

Gallowspire's crematorium was used to torture and dispose of both allies and enemies, and it was among the first of the titanic dungeon's features to be shut down after the dungeon was sealed. Only one oven still burns—but without heat—thanks to a *continual flame* spell that provides the room simple illumination.

**Creature:** In the wake of Tar-Baphon's defeat and imprisonment in Gallowspire long ago, several



Tycha Ghuzmaar

psychopomps launched their own raid against the lich to reclaim his soul for judgment. The Tyrant and his forces slew the vanth soldiers but preserved their commander, a morrigna named Essarta. Tar-Baphon tortured the outsider for centuries for the insult of suggesting he be subject to the same laws as common mortals. The lich ultimately used his extensive mastery of necromancy to mummify the still-living outsider, transforming her into an undead abomination.

Essarta has no loyalty to Tar-Baphon, but her will is broken by the trauma he inflicted upon her, and she has spent centuries hiding among the cold ovens here. Essarta can sense the influence of the Boneyard on the PCs, which she experiences as a foul stench that drives her into a shame-fueled frenzy. She can't abide the thought of any psychopomp seeing the monster she has become, and in her shattered state she can't tell the difference between psychopomps and other creatures—like the PCs—who have journeyed to the Boneyard and back.

**ESSARTA** **CR 14**

**XP 38,400**

Mummified morrigna (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 196, 219)

NE Medium undead (augmented outsider)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, spiritsense; Perception +28

**Aura** frightful presence (30 ft., DC 22, 1d6 rounds)

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 32, touch 13, flat-footed 29 (+12 armor, +3 Dex, +5 natural, +2 shield)

**hp** 153 (18d8+72); regeneration 5 (acid or fire)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +15, **Will** +16

**DR** 5/—, 10/adamantine; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10; **SR** 24

**Weakness** vulnerability to fire

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor), climb 5 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +26 (3d6+8), 2 wrappings +21 (1d8+4 plus grab)

**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with wrappings)

**Special Attacks** burst of vengeance, dust stroke, wrappings

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +15)

At will—*detect undead*, *stone tell*

5/day—*speak with dead*

3/day—summon (level 7, 1d4 giant tarantulas [*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 256] 75% or 1d4 spider swarms 100%)

**Inquisitor Spells Known** (CL 12th; concentration +15)

4th (3)—*divination*, *freedom of movement*, *inflict critical wounds* (DC 17)

3rd (5)—*dimensional anchor*, *dispel magic*, *invisibility purge*, *searing light*

2nd (6)—*calm emotions* (DC 15), *death knell* (DC 15), *detect thoughts* (DC 15), *hold person* (DC 15), *silence*

1st (6)—*bane* (DC 14), *command* (DC 14), *divine favor*, *expeditious retreat*, *protection from good*, *wrath*[APG]

0—*bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *stabilize*

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** If Essarta expects trouble, she casts *freedom of movement*.

**During Combat** Essarta prefers to attack with her wrappings, but she casts *searing light* against foes that remain at a distance. Eager to recover some of her former stature as a reaper of souls, she casts *death knell* on fallen opponents.

**Morale** Essarta pursues any fleeing foes and fights until destroyed to hide her shame.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 26, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** 11, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +18; **CMB** +26 (+30 grapple); **CMD** 40

**Feats** Alertness, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows[B], Eschew Materials[B], Following Step, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (slam, wrappings)[B], Iron Will, Persuasive, Step Up, Step Up and Strike, Toughness[B]

**Skills** Bluff +15, Climb +13, Diplomacy +25, Disguise +15, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +28, Sense Motive +25, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +26, Survival +15, Swim +8; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth

**Languages** Abyssal, Celestial, Infernal; *speak with animals* (including vermin), *tongues*

**SQ** change shape (any animal or humanoid), spirit touch

**Gear** *+2 glamered breastplate*

## J6. The Black Pyramid (CR 13)

A large pyramid of smooth, black stone stands in the middle of this enormous chamber. Four statues of the Whispering Tyrant stand facing the pyramid, each fifteen feet tall. Passages in the pyramid's side extend into its inky depths.

The black pyramid houses the support network for Virlych's *witchgates*, which redirect teleportation throughout the area. Amaretos Manslayer has already searched this room earlier and took the *witchgate* control crystal with him to prevent any surprises. It can now be found in his possession in area **K10**.

The interior of the pyramid is cloaked in a permanent *darkness* effect. The interior is carved with unusual glyphs and arcane symbols, all leading to a table featuring a hemispherical indentation. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft check surmises that a control device should fit in the now-empty space.

If the PCs damage the black pyramid, such as in an attempt to disrupt the *witchgate* network, the pyramid responds by drawing in reinforcements from across Virlych. These reinforcements appear in this chamber immediately, ready to fight. Select a guardian from among

those presented in the "Witchgates" article beginning on page 74, or use an encounter drawn from the Territorial Dead sidebar on page 29. In any case, a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft understands that significant damage to the pyramid would teleport numerous *witchgate* guardians from across Virlych as a defense mechanism.

**Creatures:** Tar-Baphon did not leave one of his greatest security measures unguarded. Two dread wraiths lurk within the black pyramid, floating about 15 feet apart. The dread wraiths challenge intruders with the following riddle, speaking in unison.

"Halt, outsiders! To trespass is not wise. One of us speaks only truth and the other only lies. And if that identity you can surmise, then from him you must beg passage, and from falsehood avert your eyes."

One of the dread wraiths then says, "The pyramid brings night to day," and the other says, "Travelers in the Tyrant's lands are unwelcome." Despite the enigma presented by the wraiths, the arrangement is simply a ruse to get intruders to turn away from at least one of the wraiths here. As long as the PCs continue to engage the wraiths in conversation, they present increasingly cryptic statements, such as "The Tyrant is gone, yet remains," or "Time and death are synonymous." Both wraiths are actually cunning liars. As soon as a PC turns its back to a wraith, both wraiths attack—gaining a +2 on attack rolls against any PC that's turned her back to it and ignoring that PC's Dexterity bonus to AC.

**DREAD WRAITHS (2)** **CR 11**

**XP 12,800 each**

Advanced wraith (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 281)

LE Large undead (incorporeal)

**Init** +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., lifesense 60 ft.; Perception +22

**Aura** unnatural aura (30 ft.)

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 21, touch 21, flat-footed 14 (+5 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 dodge, –1 size)

**hp** 152 each (16d8+80)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +15

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +2, incorporeal; **Immune** undead traits

**Weaknesses** sunlight powerlessness

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** incorporeal touch +17 (3d6 plus 1d8 Con drain [Fort DC 23])

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

**Special Attacks** create spawn

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** The wraiths initially focus on PCs who have their backs turned, but once their ruse is discovered, they spread out their attacks across multiple PCs to drain as much Constitution as possible.

**Morale** The dread wraiths fight until destroyed.



Essarta


K5a
K6
K5
K3
K2
K1
K4
K7
K9
K8
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K. CATACOMBS
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

**STATISTICS**

**Str** —, **Dex** 23, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 21

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 35

**Feats** Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (incorporeal touch), Iron Will, Mobility, Spring Attack

**Skills** Bluff +21, Fly +8, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (planes) +18, Perception +22, Sense Motive +22, Stealth +21

**Languages** Common, Infernal, Necril

**Hazard:** The door in the eastern wall leading to area **K7** is locked (Disable Device DC 40), with a single handprint-shaped divot set into the door. If a creature places a hand in the indentation, a steel restraint claps shut over it (hardness 10, hp 100, break DC 21, Disable Device DC 40). If the trapped creature presses its hand forward in the restraint, the metal retracts and the door unlocks. If the trapped creature pulls back, fails a Strength check to break free, or twists its hand left or right, an enchanted adamantine blade in the restraint severs the hand at the wrist (Fortitude DC 34 negates) and immediately animates the severed limb as a crawling hand (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 59). The hand does not attack, but simply attempts to scurry into a small hole in the west wall and remain out of sight.

**Development:** If the PCs recover the control crystal from Amaretos in area **K10**, they can insert it into the recess on the table and manipulate Virlych's *witchgates* manually. The PCs can shut the entire network down, or they can attempt a DC 30 Use Magic Device check to permit specific exceptions to the network while keeping it active, such as to allow Arazni and the PCs to teleport but denying this ability to the Whispering Tyrant and his forces. If the PCs fail this check, the entire network is shut down instead. Whether the witchgates are entirely or selectively shut down, the PCs realize they can then use the control crystal here to create a *greater teleport* effect to send any or all creatures in the black pyramid to any location in Virlych.

**Story Award:** When the PCs shut down or co-opt the *witchgate* network, award them 25,600 XP.

### J7. Guardians' Tomb

This small room contains two enormous stone sarcophagi, one to the north and one to the south.

Opening either sarcophagus requires a successful DC 25 Strength check. Each sarcophagus contains the desiccated remains of a cloud giant—the source of the souls used to create the dread wraith guardians for the black pyramid in area **J6**.

**Treasure:** The corpse in the northern sarcophagus still wears a *belt of physical might +4* (Str, Con).

### J8. Bone-Cleaning Pool (CR 12)

A massive, jagged hole opens in the ceiling, and another directly below it in the floor of what once must have been an enormous pool. Heaps of bones fill every corner of the room.

The Trepid Well, which pierces several layers of the Gallowspire dungeons, passes through this large chamber, where attendants cleaned flesh from bone in a massive alkaline pool. An opening in the ceiling leads up to the Upper Trepid Well (area **I9**), but the hole is 30 feet above the floor and difficult to reach without magic or a difficult climb (Climb DC 30 to scramble across the ceiling to the hole).

The dry pool is 10 feet deep. Staircases lead down to the bottom of the pool and the pit in its bottom to the theater below (area **K1**).

**Creatures:** The bone piles in the room's four corners are not simply refuse. They conceal bone golems created to drag remains into and out of the alkaline pool when it was filled, their own structures being invulnerable to the caustic chemicals. Without instructions, the golems have been dormant for centuries, but now they reanimate in response to living flesh. They attempt to incapacitate living intruders, drag them into the dry pool, then slowly peel the skin, muscle, and viscera from their skeletons.

If attacked, the bone golems fight until destroyed.

**BONE GOLEMS (4)** **CR 8**

**XP 4,800 each**

**hp** 90 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 133)

## K. CATACOMBS

The Catacombs of Gallowspire housed vital records and research, as well as the personal chambers of several of Tar-Baphon's more powerful servants. The furnishings are rich despite their age—many of them were maintained magically during the occupants' long centuries of isolation. Bones lie thick on the floors throughout the Catacombs, which this level's former occupants used as both decor and components for necromantic experiments. The large halls here are all lined with softly glowing candles shedding dim light, as most of the Catacombs' residents were avid readers. Unless stated otherwise, hallways in the Catacombs are 12 feet high and ceilings in each room arch up to a 20-foot vault.

Statues of Tar-Baphon stand in most halls and rooms of this level. The Whispering Tyrant frequently used these statues as targets for an *enter image* spell to spy upon minions and visitors, and he could even animate the statues as guardians if necessary for defense. In his absence, however, they are simple stone and bear faint traces of fading transmutation magic.

Use the map on page 40 for Catacombs encounters.

## Wall Wardens of the Catacombs (CR 15)

Specialized spirits defend the Catacombs and lurk within the rock walls. These wall wardens can manifest as either incorporeal spirits or as amorphous globs of dirt and ectoplasm. Equal parts elemental and undead, hundreds of these wardens once scoured Gallowspire for any signs of the living, hungry to rip their souls apart and march their soft flesh into certain destruction. Today, only three wall wardens remain.

The wall wardens can sense the presence of living creatures, but only when such creatures remain in place for more than a few minutes. They slowly travel through the rock walls towards intruders, springing forth to attack and then retreating. The wall wardens aren't confined to a single location, and they serve as a general threat the GM can use whenever the PCs dally or rest in the Catacombs. The wall wardens avoid one another, so the PCs aren't likely to fight more than one of these defenders at a time; in fact, they might think that the three wall wardens are aspects of the same aggressive creature. The wall wardens continue to rejuvenate until the entire catacombs level is sanctified with a *hallow* spell.

**WALL WARDENS (3)** **CR 12**

**XP 19,200 each**

Variant mudlord ghost fighter 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 195, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 144)

NE Medium undead (augmented outsider, earth, elemental, incorporeal, water)

**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft.; Perception +26

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 19, touch 19, flat-footed 13 (+3 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 105 each (13 HD; 9d8+4d10+43)

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +12, **Will** +8

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, incorporeal, rejuvenation; **Immune** elemental traits, undead traits; **SR** 23

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to magic

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** fly 30 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** corrupting touch +18 (12d6, Fortitude DC 19 half)

**Ranged** ectoplasm ball +18 touch (corrupting touch and blindness)

**Special Attacks** malevolence (DC 21), *telekinesis* (stone only, DC 19)

**TACTICS**

**During Combat** A wall warden prefers to take over a host body using its malevolence ability, keeping this puppet as a hostage and using *telekinesis* to hurl rocks at other foes. If unsuccessful at possessing a living enemy, it adopts a hit-and-run approach, using its Spring Attack feat to dive between walls and attack with its ectoplasm ball and corrupting touch.

**Morale** A wall warden reduced to fewer than 25 hit points flees, but it lurks nearby and lunges out again whenever its targets are injured or distracted. A wounded wall warden that attacks in this way fights until destroyed. After it rejuvenates, the wall warden resumes its patrols of the Catacombs once again.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** —, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 32 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Ability Focus (malevolence), Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lunge, Mobility, Skill Focus (Stealth), Spring Attack

**Skills** Acrobatics +17, Escape Artist +17, Fly +13, Perception +26, Sense Motive +14, Stealth +31; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Stealth

**Languages** Necril, Terran

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Ectoplasm Ball (Su)** A wall warden can throw a ball of ectoplasm up to 30 feet at an opponent's face as a ranged touch attack. It if hits, the target takes damage as though from the wall warden's corrupting touch and is blinded. Each round on its turn, the target can attempt a DC 19 Reflex save as a free action; if successful, the target shakes off the ectoplasm and is no longer blinded. The target or an adjacent creature can wipe off the ectoplasm as a standard action. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Vulnerable to Magic (Ex)** Despite a wall warden's incorporeal nature, a *transmute mud to rock* spell deals 1d6 points of damage per caster level to any wall warden in the area and automatically staggers it for 2d6 rounds.

## K1. Theater (CR 16)

The surly muttering of this room's occupant is audible even from within the Trepid Well that pierces the ceiling here. Magical lighting in this room provides normal illumination. A jewel set in the southern wall can be manipulated to raise or lower the light level.

Rows of stone seating surrounding a raised, stone stage in the center of this circular chamber. A jagged hole in the ceiling above the stage drips with putrid water.

The stage here was where Tar-Baphon's highest-ranking servants and acolytes could view private entertainment, lectures, and the public torture of several of Tar-Baphon's high-ranking servants and acolytes. The Trepid Well—the large shaft bored through the rock that connects several levels of Gallowspire's dungeons—leads up to area **J8** and eventually to area **I9** far above.

**Creature:** A powerful gallowdead that formed from the tortured remains of the cleric Amabenty Tho guards the

theater from trespassers. Amaretos Manslayer placed Tho under his mental command, but the surly gallowdead chafes at this control. She constantly mutters dark threats about the "fallen crusader" and his "oppressive mind magic." This allows her aura of whispers to be heard up to 90 feet away, although the magical effects of the whispers extend only to 30 feet, as normal for a gallowdead. Tho lashes out at anyone—including Gebbite explorers other than Amaretos—who enter this room.

Tho is equipped with a *cloak of arachnida*, allowing her to engage foes who remain up in the Trepid Well rather than descending into the room. Her first action in combat is to target flying foes with the cloak's *web* spell to deprive them of their aerial advantage. She then enters melee and fights until destroyed.

**AMABENTY THO** **CR 16**

**XP 76,800**

Female gallowdead (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 119)

**hp** 228

**Gear** *cloak of arachnida*

**Treasure:** The jewel that controls the theater's light level is a *gem of brightness*. Removing it from the wall without damaging it requires a successful DC 30 Disable Device check.

## K2. Guard Post

A raised gallery overlooks this stretch of hallway. Splinters of wood and iron fittings litter the floor above and below.

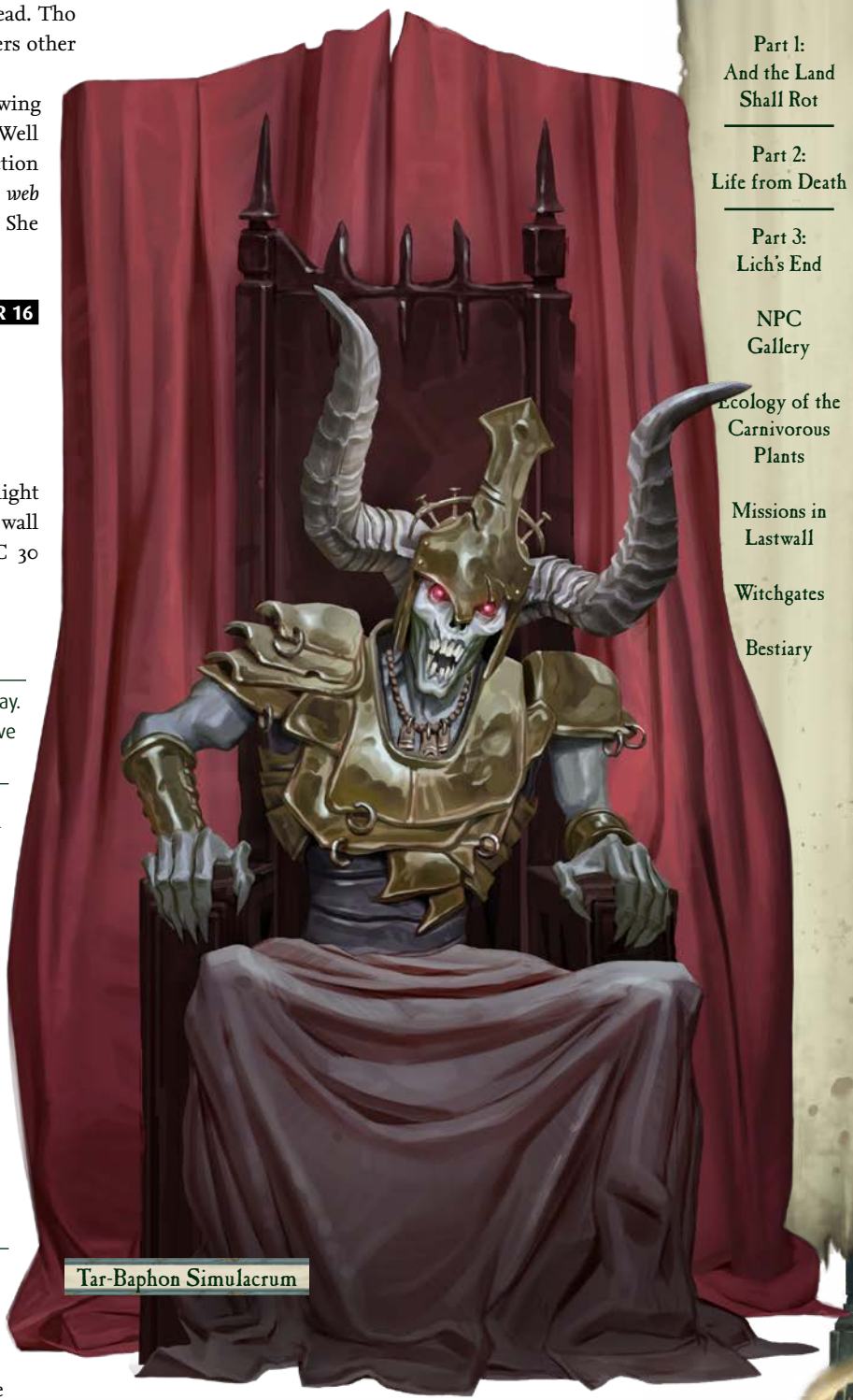
This guard post allowed automated sentries—a set of advanced wood golems—to watch the comings and goings at this crossroads in the hallway. This was the first true pushback Amaretos encountered in his expedition to explore Gallowspire, as he could not easily bring the constructs under his command. He nevertheless overcame the golems and, in his rage, reduced them to mere splinters. A PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Survival check realizes that the destruction here occurred recently—within the last few days.

## K3. Audience Chamber (CR 14)

A tall ebony throne sits alone in the rounded north alcove of this room, backed by ragged red drapes.

This is one of several false audience chambers Tar-Baphon maintained in Gallowspire, where the paranoid lich used illusions and constructs to meet with delegates and servants whose loyalty he doubted or whose reports he didn't have the desire to hear personally.

**Creature:** A withered, skeletal form in bronze armor sits heavily on the throne, which sits on a dais 8 feet above the floor, and stirs once anyone enters. Though it is the



Tar-Baphon Simulacrum

exact likeness of Tar-Baphon himself, this figure is but a simulacrum created from magic to intimidate intruders. The simulacrum bellows threats and condescends with all the theatricality of the original, but it commands only a fraction of the Whispering Tyrant's true power and knows that it is merely a magical duplicate.

The sovereign on the throne cackles at intruders and demands they explain why they have violated his domain, trying to coax any knowledge they may have to feed back to the true Tar-Baphon. He refuses to answer any questions, lashing out with impressive displays of evocation magic at any sign of impudence. The simulacrum directly attacks the PCs if they attack him or if they resist his questioning.

While this foe is powerful, PCs should quickly realize he is a fake—the real Tar-Baphon is unlikely to have remained behind after destroying the gate to his own prison. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception or Sense Motive check realizes the deception. Even if the PCs are fooled, the fact that the simulacrum melts into dirty snow when defeated—and the fact that it can be defeated—should alert them to the ruse.

**TAR-BAPHON SIMULACRUM** **CR 14**

**XP 38,400**

Human lich necromancer 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 188)

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +26

**Aura** fear (60 ft., DC 20)

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 29, touch 13, flat-footed 26 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +8 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 157 (13d6+93)

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +12, **Will** +15

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, rejuvenation; **DR** 15/bludgeoning and magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, undead traits

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.; fly 60 ft.

**Melee** touch +6 (1d8+6 negative energy plus paralysis)

**Special Attacks** paralyzing touch (DC 20)

**Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th; concentration +19)

9/day—grave touch (6 rounds)

**Necromancer Spells Prepared** (CL 13th; concentration +19)

7th—*finger of death* (DC 25), *forcecage* (DC 23)

6th—*acid fog*, *disintegrate* (DC 22), empowered *enervation*, *repulsion* (DC 22)

5th—*cone of cold* (DC 21), *dismissal* (DC 21), quickened *magic missile* (2), *waves of fatigue*

4th—*black tentacles*, *dimension door*, *enervation*, *greater invisibility*, empowered *scorching ray*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 19), *fly*, *haste*, *vampiric touch* (2)

2nd—*detect thoughts* (DC 18), *false life* (2), *resist energy* (2), *scorching ray* (2)

1st—*expeditious retreat*, *grease*, *magic missile* (2), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 19), *shield*, *true strike*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *read magic*

**Opposition Schools** enchantment, illusion

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** The simulacrum casts *shield*, *false life*, and *fly* on himself if he suspects a confrontation.

**During Combat** Like the true Whispering Tyrant, the simulacrum prefers to open up combat with a show of force, rising into the air and unleashing a *finger of death* at whoever seems to be the party's leader and following it with a quickened *magic missile*. He follows with area effects such as *waves of fatigue* and *cone of cold* before focusing on specific opponents with spells like *disintegrate*, empowered *enervation*, and empowered *scorching ray*.

**Morale** Possessed of Tar-Baphon's unparalleled ego, the simulacrum fights until destroyed.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 10, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 23, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19

**Feats** Empower Spell, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Penetration, Toughness, Turn Undead

**Skills** Bluff +17, Escape Artist +16, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (history, planes, religion) +22, Perception +26, Sense Motive +26, Spellcraft +22, Stealth +11; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Infernal, Orc

**SQ** arcane bond (amulet), life sight (20 feet, 13 rounds/day), power over undead (9/day, DC 20)

**Gear** *amulet of natural armor +3*, *belt of incredible dexterity +2*, *bracers of armor +4*, *cloak of resistance +3*, *headband of mental prowess +2* (Int, Cha; Bluff), spellbook with all prepared spells, bronze horned helm worth 150 gp

## K4. Gallery of Plundered Foes (CR 12)

Rows of glass cases display taxidermic humanoid remains, most bearing crude stitching and glassy eyes as they stand in awkward poses. Smaller macabre objects, such as jawbones and stretched skins, rest in other glass cases.

The Whispering-Tyrant assembled this museum of sorts to display the remains of enemies he had no interest in reanimating as his own servants, preferring to gloat over them rather than appropriate their power. The cases are simple glass and easily broken—especially as collateral damage in a fight—although each is protected by an auditory *alarm* spell. The humanoid remains

include several heroes of the Shining Crusade alongside a few nobles from Ustalav and a Varisian fortune-teller—all without any labels to indicate their identity. Most of what remains of each is simply their tanned flesh, with stuffing and metal frameworks within. There isn't enough material present from any of the original bodies for spells like *speak with dead* or *raise dead* to function.

**Creature:** The explosion of positive energy attracted the attention of a powerful outsider called a shining child, who arrived several hours ago to explore the dungeon and find the blast's source. The macabre gallery here has captured its attention, as it puzzles over the stuffed humanoids here, devoid of either life or death energy. The arrival of the PCs—and the *obols* they bear—drives the creature into a frenzy as it attacks, eager to pull these strange shards from the PCs' souls. The shining child fights until destroyed.

**SHINING CHILD** **CR 12**

**XP 19,200**

**hp** 152 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 245)

**Treasure:** While the bodies here are unidentifiable thanks to careless taxidermy, some possessions on display are quite valuable. The assembled treasures include a *dwarfbond hammer*[UE], a set of *ivory goats figurines of wondrous power*, a *robe of arcane heritage*[UE], a *hand of glory*, and a *major crown of blasting*. A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check also uncovers a secret drawer beneath the Varisian fortune-teller's display, revealing a *manual of bodily health* +2 coated in black lotus extract poison.

**Development:** If the PCs trigger the auditory alarm by breaking any of the glass displays, the simulacrum in area **K3** comes to investigate.

## K5. East Acolyte Crypts (CR 14)

Desks, tables, and worn plush chairs fill most of the floor in this large chamber. Doors to the north and south open into numerous smaller chambers.

The small chambers are private crypts that functioned as apartments for the Whispering Tyrant's elite. Minions shared the common rooms for reading, study, debate, and—quite often—frustrated fist-fights after spending centuries trapped in close proximity. As those trapped within were undead, they had no need for bathing or dining facilities. Those undead who relied on blood, life force, or other substances provided by the living were either sealed within their tombs or destroyed outright.

Each of the small crypts here is roughly identical, allowing for personal tastes. Stone furniture has been rendered marginally more comfortable with threadbare pillows and blankets. Only a few have any sort of sleeping accommodations—normally a sarcophagus. Four rooms each have a single hole recently blasted into their walls, as though to access small objects sealed within the walls. These holes were made by liches trapped here; they had sealed their phylacteries into the walls and recovered the phylacteries when they departed. Only the lich Jandaroka has yet to remove her phylactery from the wall of her chamber in area **K5a**. A PC can spot the minute fractures



Jandaroka

that indicate the hidden phylactery's location with a successful DC 40 Perception check.

**Creatures:** Many of Tar-Baphon's apprentices mastered various schools of magic, even as they slowly succumbed to various neuroses and depression from their eons of imprisonment. The years trapped took a considerable toll on those who relied on contact with the wider universe, such as conjurers and summoners. The conjurer Jandaroka—once a proud agent of the Whispering Tyrant—saw many of her arcane skills atrophy over the centuries. Now that the Great Seal is broken and she can reliably contact the Outer Planes once more, she has remained behind to practice her magic and try to regain the expertise she lost. To that end, Jandaroka has been conjuring bone devil servants. She has already bound three of the fiends and is midway through a ritual to summon a fourth.

Jandaroka is more irritated at her ritual being disturbed than at learning there are living intruders in the Gallowspire dungeons. She peevishly orders her bone devils to attack and supports them with her spells.

**JANDAROKA** **CR 12**

**XP 19,200**

Female elf lich conjurer 11 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 188)
LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)
**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +27
**Aura** fear (60 ft., DC 18)

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 27, touch 14, flat-footed 25 (+4 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +5 natural, +4 shield)
**hp** 96 (11d6+55)
**Fort** +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +11
**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, rejuvenation; **DR** 15/bludgeoning and magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, undead traits

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.
**Melee** touch +4 (1d8+5 negative energy plus paralysis)
**Special Attacks** paralyzing touch (DC 18)
**Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 11th; concentration +16)
At will—dimensional steps (330 ft./day)
8/day—acid dart (1d6+5 acid)
**Conjurer Spells Prepared** (CL 11th; concentration +16)
6th—*chain lightning* (DC 21), *summon monster VI*
5th—*acidic spray*[UM] (2, DC 22), *mage's faithful hound*, *summon monster V*
4th—*black tentacles*, *control summoned creature*[UM] (DC 19), *enervation*, *fire shield*, *summon monster IV*
3rd—*dispel magic* (2), *lightning bolt* (2, DC 18), *stinking cloud* (DC 20), *summon monster III*
2nd—*acid arrow*, extended *alarm*, *glitterdust* (2, DC 19), *summon monster II* (2)
1st—*alarm*, *grease*, *mage armor*, *magic missile* (2), *ray of sickening*[UM] (DC 16), *shield*
0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*
**Opposition Schools** divination, illusion

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Justifiably paranoid, Jandaroka places a silent *alarm* spell at the hall intersection south of area **K5** every day, as well as a *mage's faithful hound* at the room's entrance. If she detects intruders, she pauses her summoning ritual and casts *mage armor*, *shield*, and *fire shield*.
**During Combat** Jandaroka orders the bone devils to attack and slows down her foes with *black tentacles* before casting *summon monster VI* to summon 1d3+1 bearded devils. With these reinforcements in place, she casts offensive spells such as *chain lightning* and *acid spray*. She uses her dimensional steps ability to keep her conjured monsters between herself and any attackers.
**Morale** Jandaroka fights until destroyed, confident that no one will disturb her phylactery hidden in area **K5a**.
**Base Statistics** Without her preparations, Jandaroka's statistics are **AC** 19, touch 14, flat-footed 17.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 20, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 16
**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18
**Feats** Augment Summoning, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (conjuration), Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (conjuration), Superior Summoning[UM], Toughness
**Skills** Diplomacy +14, Fly +16, Heal +14, Knowledge (arcana, planes) +19, Perception +27, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +19 (+21 to identify magic item properties), Stealth +10; **Racial Modifiers** +10 Perception, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth, +2 Spellcraft to identify magic item properties
**Languages** Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnome, Infernal, Sylvan
**SQ** arcane bond (*ring of protection +2*), elven magic, summoner's charm (5 rounds)
**Combat Gear** *staff of acid*[UE]; **Other Gear** *bag of tricks* (rust), *cloak of resistance +1*, *ring of protection +2*, spellbook with all prepared spells, silver necklace inscribed with leering devils worth 800 gp, key to secret door in area **K9**.

**BONE DEVILS (3)** **CR 9**

**XP 6,400 each**

**hp** 105 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 74)

**Treasure:** Most valuables here were taken by their owners when they fled Gallowspire, but with a thorough search and a successful DC 20 Perception check, a PC can uncover a diamond earring worth 200 gp, a platinum holy symbol of Urgathoa worth 500 gp, an original book

of poetry by the Ustalavic count Ramiri Dovar worth 1,500 gp, and a set of dice carved from the wrist bones of Tamra Bonnasilla (a revered tutor of General Iomedae), worth 5,000 gp. There are also several boxes of Molthuni cigars, but they're desiccated and worthless due to their advanced age.

## K6. West Acolyte Crypts

This chamber is identical to the east acolyte crypts, save that no defenders remain. Several open wine bottles suggest a large celebration took place here within the past few weeks. The vintages were once exceptional but have long since turned to vinegar; fortunately the undead who partook in this celebration had long lost their ability to taste it.



Ring Puzzle

A ring of green brass, large enough for a human to stick his head through, sits among the wine bottles. This ring radiates faint abjuration magic. Four glyphs are carved into the ring's edge, representing the gods, mankind, Tar-Baphon, and undead. These glyphs use symbols similar to the Necril language, so anyone who speaks Necril understands the meanings of the glyphs automatically; any other character must succeed at a DC 20 Linguistics check to understand them. This ring is part of the door lock in area **K8**.

## K7. Elemental Servants (CR 13)

Enormous alcoves with floors of packed soil line the walls of this large room.

Tar-Baphon enslaved powerful elementals eons ago to help him build not only Gallowspire, but also many of the other great wonders of his empire. His air elementals stacked stones for soaring towers, his water elementals diverted rivers, his fire elementals reshaped cities, and his earth elementals carved vast underground sepulchers.

The Whispering Tyrant kept several elemental servants here for future service, but as the Great Seal prevented any further expansion of Gallowspire's chambers and prevented the elementals from returning to their home planes, most of them languished and, ultimately, expired.

**Creatures:** Only two elementals remain here: an earth elemental and a fire elemental. Infected by the wickedness that pervades Gallowspire, they blame all mortals for their long centuries of isolation and attack until destroyed.

**ELDER EARTH ELEMENTAL** **CR 11**

**XP 12,800**

**hp** 168 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 123)

**ELDER FIRE ELEMENTAL** **CR 11**

**XP 12,800**

**hp** 152 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 125)

## K8. Hall of Mirrors (CR 13)

Mirrors of tarnished silver line the walls here, creating a thousand reflections and the illusion of endless depth in every direction.

The mirrors in this room once held dozens of unique curses and trapped souls. Over time, their magic has waned, and the room's occupants have devoured the trapped souls. The dozens of mirrors here are made from metal and magically reinforced (hardness 15, hp 30, break DC 25).

The door leading south to the receiving room (area **K10**) is magically locked with a ring puzzle; see Development on page 48 for how to open it.

**Hazard:** One of the mirrors on the east wall is actually a secret door to the trophy hall (area **K9**). This "mirror" is a thin layer of mercury held vertical by magic, and anyone can simply walk through. Finding this door requires a successful DC 30 Perception check. The PCs can bypass the mercury sheet with effects such as *disintegrate* or *transmute metal to wood*, or by dispelling the magic holding the mercury in place (CL 13th). Any creature that passes through the mirror is subjected to mercury poisoning.

### MERCURY POISONING

**Type** poison, contact; **Save** Fortitude DC 17
**Onset** 1 minute; **Frequency** 1/hour for 4 hours
**Effect** 1d3 Dex damage and 1d3 Int damage; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

**Creatures:** Three bloody bones occupy the hall of mirrors, using the reflections to move freely and hide in plain sight. They are all that remain of this twisted nation of outsiders that once served the lich. The bloody bones hide within the mirrors to conceal their numbers, leaping free once each round to use their *mass inflict moderate wounds* spell-like ability or attack with bloody claws before diving into another mirror with *dimension door*.

**BLOODY BONES (3)** **CR 10**

**XP 9,600 each**

**hp** 133 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6* 49)

**Development:** Amaretos closed the door to area **K10** behind him to secure his position before studying Tar-Baphon's wards, not realizing that the door bore an enchanted lock. The door is locked with a puzzle requiring four concentric rings, though only two rings are present. One missing ring can be found among the debris in the west acolyte crypts (area **K6**), while the second is held by the phoenix head in the trophy room (area **K9**). Both missing rings must be in place to open the lock.

When the missing rings are in place, the lock consists of four concentric rings, each inscribed with glyphs representing the gods, humanity, Tar-Baphon, and undead. Above the rotating rings is a glyph meaning ascension, while in the center is a glyph that represents servitude. These glyphs use symbols similar to the Necril language, so anyone who speaks Necril understands the meanings of the glyphs automatically; any other character must succeed at a DC 20 Linguistics check to understand their meaning.

The door unlocks when the rings are turned so the symbols line up from top to bottom in the following order: Tar-Baphon, the gods, undead, and humanity. With Tar-Baphon at the top and humanity at the bottom, this order presents the Whispering Tyrant's ideal power dynamic.

If anyone attempts to open the door when any of the rings are absent or when the rings aren't positioned correctly, the door doesn't open. Furthermore, waves of icy energy deal 10d6 points of damage to everyone in the room (Fortitude DC 21 half). Half of this damage is cold damage and half is negative energy damage, so the PCs' *obols* absorb some of the damage they would take.

**Story Award:** If the PC reassemble the rings and solve the door lock, award them 19,200 XP.

## K9. Trophy Hall (CR 15)

The writhing, severed heads of various fantastic creatures line the walls here, framing a display of a cracked mechanical man pieced back together with lead.

Tar-Baphon's trophy room displays the heads of several creatures the lich supposedly slew with his own withered hands rather than his formidable spells. The heads include several dragons, a phoenix, an emerald-skinned angel, a boar-faced demon, and a particularly large wolf. The heads are animated with necromantic magic—just enough to move and gnash their teeth, but not enough to make them dangerous.

A locked secret door (Disable Device DC 40) in the west wall can be discovered with a successful DC 35 Perception check. Jandaroka the Summoner in the east acolyte crypts (area **K5**) carries the only key remaining in Gallowspire. This door leads to the back of the sheet of mercury described in the hall of mirrors (area **K8**).



Krobdak

**Creature:** The mechanical figure at the end of the hall is Krobdak, a proud marut who journeyed to Gallowspire shortly before the Shining Crusade's conclusion to punish Tar-Baphon for ending the life of a demigod. The Whispering Tyrant originally imprisoned the outsider, intending to extract some value from the marut's essence, but after his own imprisonment, thoughts of experimentation turned to blind cruelty. The lich repeatedly shattered the marut, using his necromancy to hold their suffering essence together, while his minions repaired their body with shoddy materials.

Krobdak remembers little of their existence before being trapped. They have been unable to use *plane shift* so long they don't think to do so, even though this effect is no longer prevented by the Great Seal. Krobdak assumes any living creatures they see within Gallowspire are also prisoners, and attacks so the creatures might be "freed from the destiny of pain." If the PCs refuse to fight back, Krobdak realizes their assumption may be erroneous and listens to the PCs, as described in Development on page 49.

**KROBDAK** **CR 15**

**XP 51,200**

Marut inevitable (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 166)

**hp** 214

**Treasure:** Several magical treasures seized from foes line the walls between the animated heads. These include a *quick block buckler*[UE] and a *bouncing metamagic rod*[UE]. Two of the heads on the walls—the planetar angel and the nalfeshnee demon—are illusions; if the PCs interact with them and succeed at a DC 22 Will save, they find more powerful magical treasures concealed within niches behind them: a *scarab of protection* and *+5 bracers of armor with fire resistance*.

**Development:** If the PCs inform Krobdak that Gallowspire has been broken and the inevitable is free to leave, the marut is grateful. They use *plane shift* to depart but return to aid the PCs later in this adventure.

The phoenix head holds a large ring of green bronze in its beak, which can be easily removed. The ring is virtually identical to the one in area **K6**, although it is significantly smaller in diameter. This ring can be used to unlock the door in area **K8**.

**Story Award:** If the PCs deal peacefully with Krobdak, award them 51,200 XP, as though they had defeated the marut in combat.

## K10. Receiving Room (CR 16)

Shredded remains of portraits and cracked relief carvings line the walls of this marble room. A few aged but exquisite tables and chairs stand on the south end of the room, near a hallway leading west. Four statues of the Whispering Tyrant gaze sternly across a bone-filled pit in the center of the room. A wide stone bridge extends over the pit.

The infrequent visitors to these levels usually arrived from the stairwell (area **K11**) and proceeded through this once-opulent receiving room before meeting with Tar-Baphon's agents and apprentices. This room was frequently the site of gruesome entertainments and horrid meals of writhing, begging flesh. The background to it all was the 30-foot-deep pit, into which visitors would be tossed if they behaved rudely or spoke ill of the Whispering Tyrant.

**Hazard:** A heavy, odorless, invisible gas fills the pit, pushing out all the air. Creatures within the pit can't breathe and immediately begin to suffocate. The PCs need magic—such as the *bottle of air* in area **I5**—to explore the remains in the pit.

**Creatures:** Grandson of the revered naval commander Claidius Barronmor, Amaretos Barronmor was a Knight of Ozem who thirsted for the honor and fame of Lastwall's glory days. Amaretos clamored for a new crusade against an undead tyrant, and pressured his grandfather into calling a Second Crusade against the nation of Geb. It was no surprise that Claidius chose Amaretos to lead the Second Crusade, and Amaretos was among seven knights hand-picked by Claidius to infiltrate Mechitar and report back on Geb's defenses. All the knights—but Amaretos most of all—had overinflated senses of their own ability to resist the corruptions Mechitar held for scrupulous and upright crusaders. The knights were discovered and captured, so Claidius unknowingly launched the Second Crusade against a well-prepared and entrenched nation. Those crusaders in Claidius's fleet who made it as far as Geb were slaughtered, and the others were forced to retreat. The Second Crusade was an utter failure. Claidius died in disgrace without ever seeing his grandson again.

In Mechitar, Geb—the man, rather than the nation—showed mercy and compassion to Amaretos while each of the knights who had accompanied him were broken, one by one, and transformed into graveknights. Geb made no effort to imprison or contain Amaretos, instead lavishing him with comforts, luxuries, and wealth. Shame tethered Amaretos to the foreign shore, as he could not return home only to reveal that his glorious purpose had led his fellow knights to ruin and an unknown number of crusaders to their deaths. And so Amaretos drank his host's wine and ate the Gebbite delicacies even as guilt twisted in his gut like a worm. When the miserable state of his existence finally overwhelmed him and the thought of meeting Iomedae upon his death made even suicide an impossible escape, Amaretos begged Geb to rip away his soul and leave him an unfeeling husk, as he had done with the other knights. Geb acquiesced, on the condition that the once-proud warrior first slay a nameless survivor of the Second Crusade held prisoner since the ill-advised invasion: the last witness to Amaretos's failure.

Amaretos Manslayer was born that day, risen from the ashes of failure and shame. Just as he led the knights to Mechitar, Amaretos was appointed the head of the undead knights who came to be known as the Council Libertine. A powerful hatred burned in his hollow chest for Lastwall and the lies of glory his homeland had instilled in him. Since that time, the graveknight has burned with the need to humiliate and shame the Knights of Ozem, just as his own pride had resulted in his humiliation centuries ago. Amaretos now feels more of a kinship with Tar-Baphon than he ever thought possible, as he also craves Lastwall's destruction.

Amaretos Manslayer has opted to use this exquisitely furnished room as an impromptu study while he ponders Tar-Baphon's notes and the unusual wards Tar-Baphon placed over the adjoining stairwell (area **K11**). The powerful magus doesn't immediately attack, as his fellow

graveknights did; he can sense the presence of Arazni on these newcomers, and asks them quite calmly and rationally to divulge all the information they have on his wayward queen. He offers swift and painless death—or even service to the glory of Geb, should they desire—in exchange. In the meantime, he attempts to use his *bracelet of friends* to summon the other members of the Council Libertine to his side (Gustari Fallenstag from area **H5**, Tycha Ghuzmaar from area **J4**, and Yhalas the Serene from area **I9**, in that order). Amaretos does his best to work each graveknight's name into conversation to mask the fact that he must speak their names aloud to call them to him. If the PCs didn't defeat these foes before arriving here, they might quickly find themselves outmatched.

Amaretos is accompanied by four Gebbite necrosages—wight clerics of Urgathoa who help in divining Arazni's location and fight alongside him.

**AMARETOS MANSLAYER** **CR 15**

**XP 51,200**

**hp** 150 (see page 56)

**GEBBITE NECROSAGES (4)** **CR 9**

**XP 6,400 each**

Wight oracle 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 276, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 42)

LE Medium undead

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 25, touch 15, flat-footed 23 (+6 armor, +3 deflection, +2 Dex, +4 natural)

**hp** 135 each (12d8+81)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +15

**Immune** undead traits

**Weaknesses** resurrection vulnerability

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** *+1 light mace* +11/+6 (1d6+2) or slam +10 (1d4+1 plus energy drain)

**Special Attacks** create spawn, energy drain (1 level, DC 17)

**Oracle Spells Known** (CL 8th; concentration +13)

4th (4/day)—*fear* (DC 19), *inflict critical wounds* (DC 19), *unholy blight* (DC 19)

3rd (6/day)—*animate dead*, *inflict serious wounds* (DC 18), *protection from energy*, *wind wall*

2nd (7/day)—*darkness*, *death knell* (DC 17), *false life*, *gentle repose*, *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 17)

1st (8/day)—*bane* (DC 16), *cause fear* (DC 16), *comprehend languages*, *cure light wounds*, *inflict light wounds* (DC 16), *protection from good*, *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*, *resistance*

**Mystery** bones

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** A necrosage uses its armor of bones revelation and casts *false life* and *shield of faith*.

**During Combat** The necrosage casts *unholy blight* on groups of foes, then enters melee to cast inflict spells. When within 30 feet of Amaretos, the necrosage benefits from his armor's sacrilegious aura (a +2 profane bonus on attacks, damage rolls, and saving throws); these benefits are not included in necrosage's statistics.

**Morale** Gebbite necrosages are fanatically loyal and fight to the death.

**Base Statistics** Without its preparations, the Gebbite necrosage has **AC** 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; **hp** 122.

**STATISTICS**

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

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 25

**Feats** Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perception)

**Skills** Heal +13, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana, history, planes, religion) +18, Perception +12, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +22; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth

**Languages** Common, Infernal, Kelish, Necril

**SQ** oracle's curse (lame), revelations (armor of bones, soul siphon, voice of the grave)

**Combat Gear** *potion of levitate*, unholy water (2); **Other Gear** *+1 light mace*, *cloak of resistance +1*, *stalker's mask*[UE], silver unholy symbol

**Treasure:** A thorough search of the bones and tattered clothing at the bottom of the pit takes a total of 2 hours, but uncovers gems and jewelry worth 17,000 gp.

**Development:** Among the treasures and notes sitting on the table are tactical notes left behind by Tar-Baphon explaining that he intends to unite with his forces at Renchurch—a vital piece of intelligence regarding the lich's current location and the information Arazni asked the PCs to find.

Also among Amaretos's possessions is a sphere of black glass similar to the stone making up the black pyramid in the Upper Crypts (area **J6**). This is the control crystal for the *witchgate* network. When slotted into the panel inside the pyramid, it allows the PCs to shut down the powerful magic preventing teleportation across Virlych.

**Story Award:** Once the PCs recover the tactical notes revealing Tar-Baphon's location, award them 25,600 XP.

## K11. Stairwell

Stairs curve both up and down from this ornate landing, though after a few dozen feet, the stairs up are blocked by hundreds of tons of collapsed rock. This rubble was dislodged when the *Radiant Fire* detonated, leaving the Trepid Well as the only way to easily ascend to the upper levels of Gallowspire.

The Whispering Tyrant sealed the stairs down to Gallowspire's deeper levels with powerful magical wards, blocking off whatever treasures and secrets still remain in Gallowspire's deeper levels. Even if the PCs can penetrate these wards, the dangers of these levels are outside the scope of this adventure.

## PART 3: LICH'S END

Once the *witchgates* are deactivated, Arazni feels emboldened about reaching out to contact the PCs. She sends the following missive via *whispering wind:* "I feel the protections around Virlych receding, which means Tar-Baphon can, too. Rest if you must, but approach his location quickly. I'll meet you there." (If the PCs choose to ignore Arazni and not approach Tar-Baphon, you may need to find a more creative means of teleporting the PCs to Arcadia for the events of the next adventure; see page 55 for suggestions.)

Arazni has learned that the Knights of Ozem independently discovered Tar-Baphon's location, and possibly her presence as well, and they now ride en masse to Renchurch to battle him (although she doesn't share this with the PCs, as her words with *whispering wind* are limited). Given the knights' devastated numbers and lack of any time to plan, she fully expects the undead to annihilate the last of the Knights of Ozem—no great loss in her estimation, but she has some appreciation for the pain and difficulty it may cause the PCs, and finds herself surprisingly concerned with their well-being and happiness. The PCs can use the *witchgate* controls in area **J6** to teleport themselves to Renchurch, the fortress-monastery that the Whispering Way has been using as a stronghold for centuries. The PCs arrive in the shadow of a ruined windmill that overlooks the fortress from a tall hill, and they can see massed armies of the dead numbering in the tens of thousands. Arazni arrives shortly after the PCs do, using their presence as a focus to *teleport* to them.

Once Arazni arrives, read or paraphrase the following.

"I'm... I don't hate to see that you have somehow survived. As always, there is a complication. Those fools you risked your lives to save in Vigil? They are so grateful for your gift that they now ride north to throw their lives away. Every soldier and spear-carrier the Knights of Ozem could muster is now on the way here to drown in their own glory. Those shambling hordes down there aren't all the Whispering Tyrant has, but even those forces outnumber the knights twenty or thirty to one. The knights are riding to a massacre.

"While I would find their ends a small comfort, I know you invested considerable time and risk in saving them. I also don't cherish the idea of fighting an entire second army as I confront the Whispering Tyrant. If you want what's left of your nation to survive, then you must stop them. Perhaps you can make them see reason—though I never had so much luck with that—but, failing that, you can rout them by beheading the serpent: kill Watcher-Lord Ulthun and his honor guard. They'll scatter after that, I'm sure."

Arazni is being honest about the danger, as she is in her recommendation that the PCs delay or divert the Knights of Ozem. Arazni addresses any questions or concerns the PCs have, including the following.

**We won't kill Watcher-Lord Ulthun!** "Then you'll damn his entire army to death at Tar-Baphon's hands—and mine—for the sake of your own petty pride. Not that I entirely disapprove; if we don't have our pettiness, then what's left of us, really? Perhaps you don't *need* to kill him to save his people—if you can convince him to turn aside and take a wiser course than senseless martyrdom. But he's blinded with zealotry."

**How are we supposed to convince an army of paladins to turn around?** "I don't know. Be your usual, frustratingly charming selves. If I don't always want to kill you, then I presume they'll only want to kill you a little."

**How did the Knights of Ozem learn Tar-Baphon is here (or that you're here)?** "I suspect my wretched bodyguards leaked this information to sow confusion and leave my attention divided, hoping to make me easier prey. Perhaps they suspected that I have greater loyalty to the people of Lastwall than my dead heart can hold."

### Not the Expected Confrontation

The player characters likely spent this adventure anticipating a fight against the Whispering Tyrant at Arazni's side. The arrival of the Knights of Ozem is a complication that no one other than the PCs can address, which puts them out of the titanic battle between the two lich-wizards. For some players, this may be a disappointment; for others, it may be a relief (particularly if they know their characters aren't yet nearly powerful enough to stand against the Whispering Tyrant). In either case, however, the shift to confront Ulthun, rather than Tar-Baphon, falls right in line with the themes of the Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path: the PCs' objectives are to ease suffering and save lives in the face of overwhelming calamity, and to do practical good rather than merely win fleeting glory.

Much of this adventure's climax is story-driven rather than challenge-driven, so let the players feel invested in the story, especially in ways that lend weight to their own eventual confrontation with the Whispering Tyrant in the final adventure, "Midwives to Death."

### How You Say It

This climax is largely driven by roleplaying rather than combat, and you should be ready to hand out circumstance bonuses and penalties based on how your players describe their interactions with Watcher-Lord Ulthun and his honor guard. Bear in mind that the Knights of Ozem are both a martial order and stalwart champions of morality, prepared to fight to the death for even a small chance at saving the innocent. A Diplomacy check to convince Ulthun that the fight between Tar-Baphon and Arazni as too dangerous or hopeless is likely to fall on deaf ears, while framing the fight as Arazni's chance at redemption or emphasizing the knights' ongoing responsibility to the innocent survivors of Lastwall is more likely to move the paladin's heart.

However, you shouldn't use penalties as a bludgeon to punish players who don't enjoy roleplaying. Instead, consider bonuses for players who took notes or found interesting connections between the NPCs in this adventure. Even players who don't get into character should be able to benefit from such insights.

**Why didn't you warn us that Geb sent graveknights to capture you?** "I expected you could survive, and I didn't want to tell you because I thought you might say no. And I needed you to say yes. I believe I mentioned that I remain a practical woman."

**We had to kill your graveknight bodyguards.** "Delightful. I do hope you were thorough about it. I've only managed to kill two and have it stick."

**How will you defeat a lich?** "When I destroy him here, he'll re-form at his phylactery, wherever it is. It's so well concealed that I haven't been able to find it—nor has anyone else. That's a secret he kept even before getting locked to rot in Gallowspire. When I hurl him back to it, though, he'll be there in person for the first time in centuries. I can follow him to smash his phylactery and finish the job."

## Arazni's Plan

Once the PCs are prepared, Arazni lays out as much of her plan as she is comfortable sharing. She intends to use devastating magic over a wide area to clear out Tar-Baphon's immediate defenders and engage him in close combat, where her melee skills and experience give her an edge. The Whispering Tyrant typically lashes out with powerful blasts of negative energy and necromantic spells—harmless to him and his forces, but devastating to the living foes he normally engages. As Arazni is now confronting him as a lich, Tar-Baphon's greatest strengths are useless against her, although she expects the fallout from their fight to be devastating to any living creatures nearby. Because of this danger, Arazni insists that the PCs keep their distance. If Arazni wins, she plans to locate Tar-Baphon's essence while his phylactery reconstructs it, and to finish him there.

Arazni doesn't reveal that she never intended the PCs to be at her side when she threw herself at the Whispering Tyrant; she had always planned to send them away before the fight, and the need to distract the forces of Lastwall provides her with a far more plausible opportunity than any of the excuses she was contemplating. Arazni has grown fond of the PCs—they are the first living creatures she has spoken to in 700 years with anything other than threats, and a growing part of her does not want to see them harmed without cause.

Arazni admits, if asked, that Tar-Baphon might resort to using the *Radiant Fire* if Arazni manages to gain the upper hand against him. She thinks this is unlikely, as the Whispering Tyrant would eradicate all his forces gathered around Renchurch with the superweapon. Arazni doesn't reveal that Tar-Baphon's use of the *Radiant Fire* is exactly what she hopes to provoke, though she believes that its blast has the power to grant her freedom—albeit, most likely only in the form of oblivion.

To prepare for this final encounter, read or paraphrase the following.

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The heavy cloud cover and roiling smoke from the charnel fires at Renchurch obscure the sky above. A flicker of undefined emotion passes over Arazni's face as she studies the assembled armies of the dead. To the southwest, gold and steel glimmer as the Knights of Ozem crest the last hill before Renchurch.

"There's no more time," the lich comments. She looks around the hill, sets her jaw, and floats into the air. "Thank you."

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## Against the Knights of Ozem

The Knights of Ozem originally followed the then-mortal General Iomedae during the Shining Crusade, and they have defined their existence—above and beyond their loyalty to their goddess—by battling Tar-Baphon and his forces. Arazni's resurrection as an undead queen is perhaps the order's greatest shame, and for generations they have sought to destroy her. Now that both of these powerful liches are in one place, the Knights of Ozem have a singular target for their zeal, no matter how hopeless the situation.

Watcher-Lord Ulthun II leads the charge himself, flanked by his most trusted commanders as his honor guard. Over four thousand knights, squires, and warriors ride with the Watcher-Lord, but most are young and untested recruits pulled from nearby fortresses or from the Belkzen front. Few are veterans and even fewer are paladins. None of these crusaders expect to survive the

coming battle. With Vigil destroyed and Lastwall doomed, they consider this fight against impossible odds their only chance for glory and, perhaps, for an exceptionally unlikely victory. They have faith—perhaps misplaced—in Ulthun and his commanders to win the day.

The PCs' task is to delay the army of Lastwall from reaching Renchurch and, ideally, to cause the army to abandon their crusade. Although they could accomplish this task with open combat—the army routs if Ulthun and the eight members of his honor guard are defeated—they are more likely to attempt diplomacy, as described in the War of Words section below.

Watcher-Lord Ulthun II is far from a fanatic, but he is a man outside his element, retaliating for evil acts occurring on a scale he could never previously imagine. In his mind, he bears the ultimate weight for the deaths of tens of thousands of innocent civilians. He has only just discovered both that the ancient enemy of his order escaped his prison and that Arazni, the shame of the Knights of Ozem, has had some as yet unexplained hand in the disasters that have recently ravaged Lastwall. Ulthun is more than willing to throw away his own life, especially now that life feels so very cheap to him, if it delivers justice to one or both of these abominations.

Ulthun has heard of the PCs' actions in Roslar's Coffer and Vigil, and he had been disposed to consider them heroes of Lastwall. But recent rumors place the PCs as allies of Arazni, which causes him to doubt their motivations. Ever forthright, however, Ulthun greets the PCs openly when he sees them and gives them the opportunity to explain their presence and demonstrate their loyalty to Lastwall.

"Stand aside, stalwart adventurers. The greatest enemies of Lastwall do battle not a stone's throw from here, and the Knights of Ozem march to Renchurch to repay blood with blood for the desolation visited upon Vigil. Your tales may be legends in Lastwall, but rumor reaches us that now you bow to the abomination Arazni. Stand with us against her, and against her bastard sire Tar-Baphon, or at least demonstrate that you remain honorable by stepping aside as we visit Iomedae's justice upon these monsters."

## War of Words

Ulthun II is willing to hear the PCs out before completing the march to Renchurch. He begins this encounter with an indifferent attitude toward the PCs, but he relies heavily on the advice of his honor guard; Diplomacy checks against Ulthun are modified by the attitudes of his honor guard. Each unfriendly or hostile honor guard imposes a –5 circumstance penalty on checks to influence Ulthun, while each indifferent honor guard imposes a –2 circumstance penalty. Friendly or helpful members of his honor guard provide no modifier. These penalties are cumulative. When the PCs first encounter the Knights of Ozem, the honor guard has divided opinions of the PCs based on rumors they've heard: two are friendly to the PCs, four are indifferent, and two are unfriendly. Checks to influence Ulthun immediately therefore have a –18 circumstance penalty.

Convincing Ulthun to delay his attack long enough for Arazni to confront the Whispering Tyrant requires a successful DC 28 Diplomacy check. With a second successful check at the same DC, a PC convinces Ulthun to retreat from Virlych entirely rather than hurl his forces into a fight they cannot win. The PCs might instead attempt to adjust Ulthun's attitude to friendly (requiring a successful DC 18 Diplomacy check) before making their requests, which reduces the DC of the Diplomacy checks to 23.

The PCs can improve their position (and reduce the circumstance penalty on their Diplomacy checks) by making arguments to the assembled honor guard. A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Sense Motive check realizes that Ulthun takes the council of his honor guard seriously, and that adjusting their attitudes is likely to sway him. For every 2 points by which this check result exceeds the DC, the PC learns the current attitude of one of the honor guard (different PCs may learn the attitudes of different honor guard members with their Sense Motive checks; in any case, a result of 26 or higher reveals the attitudes of everyone in the honor guard).

Improving the attitude of a member of the honor guard requires a successful Diplomacy check; the DC is 22 if the individual is unfriendly, or 17 if she is indifferent. Alternatively, a PC can attempt a DC 20 Handle Animal, Knowledge (geography, history, local, nobility, or religion), Perform (oratory), or Profession (soldier) check in place of this Diplomacy check to improve the attitude of an honor guard member by one step. You can instead randomly assign these skills, one to each paladin, creating varied personalities and priorities for each member of the honor guard; if you do so, a PC who succeeded at the Sense Motive result to learn an honor guard's attitude also learns the alternate skill for that honor guard. These checks cannot be retried, although each PC can attempt to influence each honor guard once.

The PCs' interactions during this encounter might also be modified by kindness they displayed earlier in this adventure, as follows. Any bonuses from these interactions are cumulative.

**Giving Up Timberward (Part 1):** The PCs weren't obligated to give up Timberward to protect the refugees, but if they did so, the refugees made it to Castle Everstand safely. One of these refugees was the brother of an honor

guard member, and he knows of the PCs' charitable deed. One of the honor guard members that would start as unfriendly has a starting attitude of friendly instead.

**Saving Deadre Cauchen (area B):** If the PCs saved Deadre's life, her wife—who is among the common soldiers standing near Ulthun—recognizes them and thanks them for their mercy. Ulthun overhears this, granting the PCs a +5 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks to influence him.

**Saving Durgao Heav (area I8):** If Durgao and his scouts survived their encounter with the dybbuk Tarsus, they now ride with Ulthun's army and shout out greetings and thanks to the heroes who freed them. Their praise grants the PCs a +5 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks against Ulthun and his honor guard.

**Freeing Krobdak (area K8):** If the PCs freed the marut Krobdak, it returns with a flash of lightning and a peal of thunder. The mismatched marut cares little for the fact that the PCs are in the middle of a tense negotiation, and solemnly intones, "I return to repay you for your kindness, with thanks from the forces of order." Krobdak touches each willing PC, granting the PC a glowing sigil on the forehead (as *arcane mark*) that lasts for 1 month; during this month, the PC can expend the mark to cast *shield of law* (CL 15th) one time as a spell-like ability. Krobdak then departs as dramatically as they arrived. The forces of Lastwall are impressed by this overt display of trust by an embodiment of law; Ulthun's attitude improves by one step, as does the attitude of each honor guard member.

**Creatures:** Watcher-Lord Ulthun II and the eight members of his honor guard—all stalwart paladins and members of the Knights of Ozem—ride heavy horses. They are ready for battle and watchful for trickery.

**WATCHER-LORD ULTHUN II** **CR 13**

**XP 25,600**

**hp** 179 (see page 60)

**PIOUS GUARDS (8)** **CR 9**

**XP 6,400 each**

**hp** 84 each (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 117)

**Development:** If the PCs are unable to either convince Ulthun to halt or fight him to a standstill, he rides forth into Renchurch with all of Lastwall's defenders, and they are slain in the blast of the *Radiant Fire*. If the PCs can delay Ulthun's advance, the army is further away when Tar-Baphon's and Arazni's battle reaches its climax, and many are saved. If they convince Ulthun to instead retreat from the area, the entire army is spared.

**Story Award:** Award the PCs 6,400 XP for each honor guard whose attitude they successfully improve. If the PCs convince Ulthun to delay his advance, award them 25,600 XP. If they manage to get the Lastwall army to retreat entirely, award them an additional 25,600 XP.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

After a few minutes of fighting Arazni—long enough for the PCs to conclude their negotiations with Watcher-Lord Ulthun and resolve its result—Tar-Baphon finally loses his patience with the even footing Arazni presents. He detonates one of his pieces of the *Shattered Shield of Arnisant* to end the fight, activating a *contingency* to *teleport* away with his key followers in the instant before the blast. Tar-Baphon considers his other undead forces at Renchurch replaceable, and he plans to demand that Geb keep a tighter rein on his bride in the future. Tar-Baphon has no idea that Arazni has ultimately hoped for the sheer power of the *Radiant Fire's* detonation and that she has prepared magic rituals to enhance—rather than minimize—the blast's effect on herself and her connection to her phylactery.

There is an unexpected flaw in Arazni's plan, however, now in its final moment: she finds herself fond of the PCs, who stand near enough to the *Radiant Fire's* blast that they might be killed by it—a fate she finds she cannot abide. Furthermore, Arazni has a shocking realization in the instant Tar-Baphon uses the fragment of the *Shattered Shield of Arnisant* lodged in his hand to detonate the *Radiant Fire*. She realizes not only that the shield fragment and the PCs' *obols* are pieces of the same artifact, but that she knows their source. When Arazni was a mortal in Arcadia, she studied a powerful and unique magical kumaru tree, and the *Radiant Fire* uses its latent energy to power its blast. She knows that the PCs can find more information about the kumaru tree in distant Arcadia—but she lacks the time to tell them how or why. To both save the PCs and set them on a course to learn more, she magically hurls them away just before her annihilation.

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Brilliant flashes of scintillating color originate from two small figures flying above the distant cathedral of Renchurch. Beams of magic, casually turned aside, rip jagged holes into the surrounding earth, and strange thunder follows moments later. All at once, this cascade of light halts. The horned figure of Tar-Baphon pauses and hurls something too small to see clearly from this distance. In a wisp of smoke and wind, the Whispering Tyrant and the core of his army—perhaps a quarter of it—vanish. At that moment, Arazni's head jerks back toward you, an expression of remorse on her ancient features, and she raises a hand in your direction. You hear her voice as clearly as though she were standing next to you, saying, "Seek the kumaru."

The light erupts without sound and rolls outward, consuming



GARDENS OF GALLOWSPIRE

Part 1: And the Land Shall Rot

Part 2: Life from Death

Part 3: Lich's End

NPC Gallery

Ecology of the Carnivorous Plants

Missions in Lastwall

Witchgates

Bestiary

Arazni, the Whispering Tyrant's remaining armies, and the very ground as it approaches. The moment before the devastating blast of the *Radiant Fire* arrives, the damp, cold air of Virlych vanishes, replaced by thick, humid warmth and the singing of birds. Vibrant plants of unfamiliar shapes grow from the wet soil. You have survived, but you are far from Renchurch.

Arazni's magic has teleported the PCs to the shores of the nation in Xopatl in Arcadia, on the other side of the world from Lastwall. This destination is no accident—this land was Arazni's home, and the place where Aroden crafted the shield that became the *Shattered Shield of Arnisant* millennia ago. The PCs don't initially know where they are or why this land is significant, but they will learn all this and more early in the next adventure, "Borne by the Sun's Grace."

If your players took unexpected routes in "Gardens of Gallowspire" (electing not to join Arazni at Renchurch, for example, or even betraying her to the Council Libertine), you may need to figure out another way to deliver them to Arcadia to continue with the next piece of the Adventure Path's plot—Xopatl's secrets are vital to turn the tables on Tar-Baphon and end the threat of the *Radiant Fire*. The psychopomp usher Barzahk the Passage (see the article in "Borne by the Sun's Grace"), curious about the PCs' *obols* since meeting them in *The Dead Roads*, might whisk them away to Arcadia with vague information that they can find further information about the *obols* in their hearts on this foreign shore. As a powerful and enigmatic entity, the usher could deposit the PCs on the shores of Xopatl as readily as Arazni would. The PCs can later learn about Arazni's confrontation with the Whispering Tyrant, and how a blast of the *Radiant Fire* devastated Renchurch and consumed Arazni, Watcher-Lord Ulthun, and the remaining armies of Lastwall.

Arazni's final fate is unclear. Her desperate gamble to claim her own fate may have destroyed her utterly, or it might have failed altogether, leaving her to simply re-form once again in Geb, this time under much tighter scrutiny. Perhaps her plan succeeded beyond her bleak hopes, and her sundered essence—freed from the constraints of lichdom—might one day coalesce into an entirely different being. For now, PCs who worship Arazni and gain divine spellcasting from her continue to do so, but whatever fate you choose for her, Arazni's formal role in the Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path is over, leaving only the player characters to oppose Tar-Baphon as he prepares to conquer the world once more.

# Amaretos Manslayer

**Once a darling of Lastwall blessed with kind eyes, Amaretos is now a scourge of the Knights of Ozem, responsible for their greatest defeat. He is a loyal servant of Geb and leader of the Council Libertine that keeps Arazni in chains.**

**AMARETOS MANSLAYER** **CR 15**

**XP 51,200**

Male human graveknight magus 14 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 138, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 9)

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +18

**Aura** sacrilegious aura (30 ft., DC 19)

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 35, touch 17, flat-footed 30 (+8 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 150 (14d8+84)

**Fort** +15, **Ref** +14, **Will** +16

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, *fire shield* (*chill shield*), rejuvenation; **DR** 10/magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, undead traits; **SR** 26

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** *+2 shocking burst falcata* +20/+15 (1d8+11/17–20/×3 plus 4d6 electricity) or
slam +17 (1d4+7)

**Ranged** mwk javelin +17 (1d6+7 plus 3d6 electricity)

**Special Attacks** arcane pool (10 points, +4), channel destruction (3d6 electricity), devastating blast (8d6 electricity, DC 19, 3/day), greater spell combat, improved spell recall, magus arcana (arcane accuracy, critical strike, hasted assault, maximized magic), spellstrike, undead mastery (70 HD, DC 19)

**Magus Spells Prepared** (CL 14th; concentration +17)

5th—*cloudkill* (DC 18), *interposing hand*

4th—*black tentacles*, *fire shield*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 17), *shout* (DC 17)

3rd—*fly*, *lightning bolt* (DC 16), *ray of exhaustion* (DC 16), *vampiric touch* (2)

2nd—*blur*, *mirror image*, *scorching ray* (2), *web* (2, DC 15)

1st—*feather fall*, *magic missile* (3), *shield*, *shocking grasp*

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Amaretos casts *fire shield* and *shield*.

**During Combat** Amaretos begins by casting *cloudkill*, then uses his hasted assault magus arcana to close to melee with those who obviously honor Iomedae. He casts *black tentacles* and *interposing hand* to keep other foes at bay. Amaretos prefers to channel *vampiric touch* through his blade, and he unleashes a devastating blast or maximized *lightning bolt* if he can catch several opponents.

**Morale** Fanatical by design and miserable by nature, Amaretos fights until destroyed.

**Base Statistics** Without his spells, Amaretos's statistics are **AC** 31, touch 17, flat-footed 26.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 20, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 17, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 32

**Feats** Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (falcata), Improved Critical (falcata), Improved Initiative[B], Lightning Reflexes, Mounted Combat[B], Ride-By Attack[B], Toughness[B], Weapon Focus (falcata), Weapon Specialization (falcata)

**Skills** Climb +13, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (planes) +13, Knowledge (religion) +10, Perception +18, Ride +10, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +20, Swim +13; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Intimidate, +8 Perception, +8 Ride

**Languages** Celestial, Common, Kelish, Necril

**SQ** fighter training, graveknight armor, heavy armor, knowledge pool, phantom mount, ruinous revivification (electricity)

**Combat Gear** *boots of escape*[UE], *scroll of teleport*; **Other Gear** *+2 mithral chainmail*, *+2 shocking burst falcata*[APG], mwk javelins (3), *amulet of natural armor +2*, *bracelet of friends*, *cloak of resistance +2*, *ring of protection +2*, spellbook, sphere of black glass, platinum torc emblazoned with the Barronmor crest worth 450 gp

Named for his great-grandfather, the legendary General Amaretos Barronmor of the Shining Crusade, young Amaretos grew to adulthood on harsh training, strict faith, and stories of long-past glory in battle against unrelenting evil. The wonders of the bygone war—with few of its veterans still alive to narrate its brutal realities—left the young warrior disillusioned with Lastwall's defenders' new role as prison guards waging petty border skirmishes against disorganized orcs. Amaretos dreamed

of reclaiming the purpose and glory his great-grandfather knew by fighting a war with a clear wrong and right in the name of the goddess Iomedae. A man of considerable wealth and charisma, he soon attracted followers with his vision, which only confirmed the young man's suspicions that Lastwall had lost its way and needed a war against a true rival to reignite its idling passions.

Amaretos's words eventually won over his grandfather, Master and Commander Claidius Barronmor. Claidius had earned his position as the most respected officer in Lastwall's small but powerful navy with years of dedicated service. In his twilight years, Claidius saw his grandson as the embodiment of Lastwall's past as well as its future, and he drew up plans to send ships and troops south to instigate a full war with the distant nation of Geb. Though isolationist, Geb was a land ruled by the dead and led by a potent undead wizard-king—a perfect echo of the villainous Tar-Baphon in Lastwall's valorous history. Claidius believed that, despite the unpopularity of a so-called "Second Crusade" among his peers, the endeavor would draw paladins of Iomedae into noble battle once again, with his grandson as their leader and greatest hero.

The Second Crusade was a complete and utter failure. Claidius sent seven hand-picked knights to infiltrate Geb's capital of Mechitar, with Amaretos as their leader. All were captured and transformed into graveknights. Amaretos's transformation was perhaps the most perverse of all, for Geb gave nothing to Amaretos except lavish hospitality until the knight's shame and self-hatred compelled him to beg Geb for undeath. Amaretos has served Geb loyally ever since, with the epithet of Manslayer to mark not only the murders he performs for his new liege, but also the deaths he brought the nation he once loved.

Amaretos remains a tall man with a striking gaze, despite his sallow and sunken flesh. He has blond hair and a short, blond beard with hair falling out in patches. His opulent armor was a gift from Geb while he was a mortal guest of Mechitar, forged of gleaming mithral adorned with polished gold and platinum. Since his transformation into a graveknight, however, Amaretos's armor is constantly spattered with blood to remind him of his role: a killer and a stain upon a once-glorious tradition.

## CAMPAIGN ROLE

Amaretos Manslayer controls the information and resources the PCs need to finally clear a path to Tar-Baphon. Arazni cannot raise a hand against any members of the Council Libertine directly, so the PCs must confront Amaretos Manslayer on her behalf.

Amaretos is unlikely to survive his confrontation with the PCs, but he eventually rejuvenates unless the PCs take the time to utterly obliterate his armor. By the time Amaretos's armor eventually restores him, Arazni is destroyed and the Knights of Ozem are in disarray. Other than to gloat over Lastwall's fall, Amaretos has little reason to remain in Avistan, and he soon returns to Geb.



# Arazni

**Arazni has spent her long existence as a scholar, a legend, an angel, a demigod, and a lich. She is a woman of incredible insight and magical skill, but also a woman tired of the world who yearns for freedom.**

**ARAZNI** **CR 26**

**XP 2,457,600**

Female human lich wizard 20/marshal 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 188, *Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures* 38)

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, human)

**Init** +19; **Senses** *arcane sight*, darkvision 60 ft., *see invisibility*; Perception +40

**Aura** fear (60 ft., DC 30)

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 44, touch 22, flat-footed 38 (+6 armor, +5 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 insight, +10 natural, +6 shield)

**hp** 359 (20d6+287)

**Fort** +22, **Ref** +20, **Will** +24

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, fortification 50%, *freedom of movement*, hard to kill, mythic saving throws, rejuvenation, unstoppable; **DR** 15/bludgeoning and magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, undead traits

**OFFENSE**

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

**Melee** *+5 throwing rapier* +23/+18 (1d6+12/18–20) or touch +18 (1d8+10 negative energy plus paralyzing touch)

**Ranged** *+5 throwing rapier* +22 (1d6+12/18–20)

**Special Attacks** abundant casting, arcane metamastery (2 spell slots), archmage arcana (arcane surge), fight on, force of will, hand of the apprentice (17/day), inspire minions, marshal's order (advance), metamagic mastery (7/day), mythic power (18/day, surge +1d10), paralyzing touch (DC 30), surge of inspiration, words of valor

**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 20th; concentration +34)

9th—*gate* (2), *meteor swarm* (2, DC 33), *time stop*[M], *wish*[M]

8th—quickened *charm monster* (2, DC 32), *horrid wilting* (2, DC 33), *mass charm monster* (DC 36), *mind blank*

7th—quickened *dispel magic* (2), *greater teleport*, *prismatic spray*[M] (DC 31), *spell turning* (2)

6th—*antimagic field*[M], *disintegrate* (DC 30), *greater dispel magic*, *greater heroism*, *leashed shackles*[UM] (DC 30), *mass eagle's splendor*, quickened *scorching ray*

5th—*feeblemind* (DC 33), *overland flight*, *telekinesis* (2, DC 29), quickened *true strike* (3)

4th—*detect scrying*, *dimension door*, *fear* (DC 29), *greater invisibility*, *shout* (2, DC 28), *terrible remorse*[UM] (DC 32)

3rd—*fireball*[M] (3, DC 27), *greater magic weapon*, *halt undead* (DC 28), *haste*[M], *heroism*[M]

2nd—*arcane lock*, *false life*, *mirror image*, *resist energy* (2), *see invisibility*, *spectral hand*, *whispering wind*

1st—*disguise self*, *feather fall*, *mage armor*[M], *magic missile* (2), *protection from good*, *shield*, *true strike*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 24), *mage hand*, *open/close*

**M** mythic spell

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Every day, Arazni casts *detect scrying*, *false life*, *greater magic weapon*, *mythic mage armor*, and *overland flight* on herself, using her arcane metamastery path ability to gain the benefit of Extend Spell with each.

**During Combat** Arazni begins combat by casting *time stop* and then casts *spell turning*, *mind blank*, *greater invisibility*, *haste*, and *resist energy* on herself, in that order. She uses her spells efficiently, such as by casting *meteor swarm* to clear out assembled defenders.

**Morale** Arazni's goal is not to slay Tar-Baphon—as she knows that such a victory would be temporary without access to his phylactery—but instead to provoke the volatile tyrant into unleashing the *Radiant Fire* onto her and his troops. As such, she doesn't back down or retreat from fighting him.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 24, **Dex** 22, **Con** —, **Int** 39, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 31

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 39

**Feats** Arcane Strike[M], Craft Wondrous Item, Dual Path[M], Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Martial Weapon Proficiency (rapier), Mythic Spell Lore[M], Persistent Spell[APG], Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus[M] (enchantment), Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Perfection[APG] (fireball), Toughness

**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Appraise +19, Bluff +12, Climb +8, Craft (alchemy) +19, Diplomacy +31, Disguise +24, Escape Artist +7, Fly +19, Handle Animal +12, Heal +5, Intimidate +34, Knowledge (arcana, dungeoneering, engineering, history, local, nobility, planes, religion) +38, Knowledge (geography, nature) +32, Linguistics +27, Perception +40, Ride +7, Sense Motive +19, Spellcraft +38,

Stealth +35, Survival +5, Swim +8, Use Magic Device +31; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Ancient Osiriani, Aquan, Auran, Azlanti, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Gnoll, Gnome, Goblin, Halfling, Ignan, Infernal, Kelish, Orc, Osiriani, Sylvan, Terran, Undercommon

**SQ** amazing initiative, arcane bond (rapier), divine source (Evil, Nobility [Leadership], Protection [Defense]), exceptional resources, permanent spells, recuperation

**Combat Gear** *lesser maximize metamagic rod*, *pearls of power* (2, 3rd level), *rod of absorption*, *scroll of greater scrying*, *scroll of teleport*, *scroll of tongues*, *wand of inflict light wounds* (48 charges); **Other Gear** *+5 arrow deflection mithral buckler*, *+1 throwing rapier*, *amulet of natural armor +5*, *belt of physical might +6* (Str, Dex), *cloak of resistance +5*, *dusty rose prism ioun stone*, *eyes of the eagle*, *handy haversack*, *headband of mental superiority +6*, *pale green prism ioun stone*, *ring of freedom of movement*, *ring of protection +5*, traveling spellbook with all sorcerer/wizard spells, diamond worth 25,000 gp

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Exceptional Resources (Ex)** Arazni has the wealth of a 20th-level PC rather than an NPC. This increases her CR by 1. She used some of this wealth to acquire the following books to gain inherent bonuses to her ability scores: *manual of gainful exercise +5*, *manual of quickness in action +4*, *tome of clear thought +5*, and *tome of leadership and influence +5*.

**Permanent Spells** Using *permanency*, Arazni gave herself the constant effects of *arcane sight*, *resistance*, and *see invisibility*. A *contingency* effect casts *harm* on her if she's brought below 100 hit points.

Much has been written about the horrors inflicted upon Arazni, with little attention paid to recounting her mighty deeds as a mortal in Arcadia before she became Aroden's herald. She lived and died a hero, and it was her choice to return as Aroden's servant. But all that has transpired since she awoke as an undead abomination wearing a hero's skin has been due to choices others made for her.

Arazni has become a force for evil in Avistan, but her evil is that of casual cruelty, self-interest, and disproportionate vengefulness. Tar-Baphon's *Radiant Fire* presents Arazni with the chance at the freedom she craves, though she will take oblivion in freedom's stead.

Arazni's statistics above are slightly modified from those appearing on page 50 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Mythic Realms*, most notably in the spells she prepared to confront the Whispering Tyrant. In addition, Arazni has abandoned her unique *staff of the magi* and her sword, *Harlot's Kiss*, as both were gifts from her husband and symbols of her imprisonment.

## CAMPAIGN ROLE

Arazni is ultimately fated to be destroyed by the Whispering Tyrant, yet she teleports the PCs away with her mythic magic to save them. After this act, she does not appear again in the Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path, leaving the PCs to stop Tar-Baphon's advance alone.



# Watcher-Lord Ulthun II

**Ulthun is no longer the fresh-faced recruit he was upon his appointment as Lastwall's military commander, but he remains a good-hearted man. He worries that his legacy will be merely as the ruler who watched his nation die.**

**ULTHUN** **CR 13**

**XP 25,600**

Male human paladin of Iomedae 14

LG Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** –1; **Senses** Perception +3

**Aura** courage (10 ft.), faith (10 ft.), justice (10 ft.), resolve (10 ft.)

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 28, touch 11, flat-footed 28 (+11 armor, +2 deflection, –1 Dex, +2 natural, +4 shield)

**hp** 179 (14d10+98)

**Fort** +21, **Ref** +10, **Will** +19

**Immune** charm, disease, fear; **SR** 19

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

**Melee** *holy avenger* +26/+21/+16 (1d8+9/19–20)

**Ranged** *+1 shortbow* +16/+11/+6 (1d6+1/×3)

**Special Attacks** channel positive energy (DC 20, 7d6), smite evil 5/day (+3 attack and AC, +14 damage)

**Paladin Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 14th; concentration +17)

At will—*detect evil*

**Paladin Spells Prepared** (CL 11th; concentration +14)

4th—*break enchantment*

3rd—*daylight*, *fire of judgment*[APG] (DC 16)

2nd—*bull's strength*, *light lance*[APG], *resist energy*

1st—*bless*, *divine favor*, *protection from evil* (2)

**TACTICS**

**Before Combat** Before entering combat, Ulthun casts *bull's strength* on himself and drinks his *potion of heroism*.

**During Combat** Ulthun is a conservative foe in battle, fighting defensively and testing his opponents before targeting them with channeled positive energy (if they are undead) or his *necklace of fireballs*. Once he has taken the measure of his enemy, he fights aggressively with his *holy avenger*.

**Morale** Though cautious in battle, Ulthun is brave and does not flee from evil foes without good reasons.

**Statistics** Without his preparations, Ulthun's statistics are **Fort** +19, **Ref** +8, **Will** +17; **Melee** *holy avenger* +22/+17/+12 (1d8+7/19–20); **Ranged** *+1 shortbow* +14/+9/+4 (1d6+1/×3); **Str** 14; **CMB** +16 (+18 bull rush); **CMD** 27 (29 vs. bull rush); **Skills** Diplomacy +16, Knowledge (nobility) +13, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perception +1, Ride +8, Sense Motive +10.

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 18, **Dex** 8, **Con** 20, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +20 (+22 bull rush); **CMD** 29 (31 vs. bull rush)

**Feats** Extra Mercy, Improved Bull Rush, Iron Will, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Shield Focus, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword)

**Skills** Diplomacy +18, Knowledge (nobility) +15, Knowledge (religion) +9, Ride +10, Sense Motive +12

**Languages** Common

**SQ** divine bond (weapon +4, 3/day), lay on hands 10/day (7d6), mercies (blinded, cursed, fatigued, poisoned, shaken), national treasury

**Combat Gear** *necklace of fireballs* (type VII), *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of fly*, *potion of heroism*; **Other Gear** *+2 bolstering*[UE] *full plate*, *+1 heavy steel shield*, *holy avenger*, *+1 shortbow* with 20 arrows, *amulet of natural armor +2*, *belt of mighty constitution +4*, *boots of speed*, *cloak of resistance +2*, *ring of protection +2*, platinum crown worth 1,100 gp

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**National Treasury (Ex)** Ulthun has access to Lastwall's vaults. He bears a *holy avenger* as a symbol of office and can command other wealth, but this does not change his CR.

Despite his role as Lastwall's ruler and the acknowledged pinnacle of the crusader ideal, Ulthun II is a simple man with simple desires. He wants little beyond continued safety and prosperity for his nation and a quiet life spent revering Iomedae. The idea of standing out in history has always mortified the modest young man and, unlike others in the War College, he doesn't long for the bygone days of war and glory. Ulthun, like his father and grandmother before him, focused on the ultimate goal beyond the pursuit of war: peace, plenty, and a life without hardship for those who never mastered the ways of blade or spell. Lastwall, while imperfect, was something of a paradise for a man who wanted only slow progress and mounting opportunity for his citizens.

In better days, Ulthun was a classic warrior and poet, trained in arms and combat but also an eager student of history, faith, and literature. He loved little more than riding in the country and turning the heads of fair young nobles with lines of Taldan poetry, but he structured his time carefully to tend to the civic and defense needs of his nation first. When anointed as Watcher-Lord in 4709 AR at the age of 19—the youngest Watcher-Lord in Lastwall's history—Ulthun was widely regarded as a pious, valorous exemplar of a crusader and leader. The last decade served to solidify this reputation, as he strengthened relationships with foreign nations, vigilantly defended the Belkzen front, and selflessly dedicated his leadership to the glory of Iomedae and Lastwall. Although a romantic by nature and possessing handsome features that have only improved with age, Ulthun has diplomatically avoided the long line of suitors anxious for his attention.

Now that war has come unbidden and the great evil the Knights of Ozem were created to confront walks the world once more, Ulthun is shaken to the core of his faith. All his life, since a childhood spent helping other children stand up to bullies on the streets of Vigil, he has fixated on the philosophy that the strong have a duty to protect the weak: that he must be a bulwark against the dark things that lurk beyond Lastwall so his people never have to face true evil. But in Roslar's Coffer and again in Vigil, evil struck without warning, obliterating the strong and weak alike. After tours of service in Belkzen, Ulthun is no stranger to sneak attacks and ambushes, but the utterly pointless loss of life that has struck his nation now leaves him doubting not the goodness of people, but the goodness of the gods. If Ulthun can sacrifice his own life for some measure of retribution, he eagerly does so.

## CAMPAIGN ROLE

Watcher-Lord Ulthun II serves as the ultimate adversary in *Gardens of Gallowspire* as he rides to destroy both Tar-Baphon and Arazni, likely dooming the surviving Knights of Ozem by inserting them into this titanic confrontation. The PCs should ultimately be able to reason with Ulthun. If they fail to convince Ulthun to stand down, however, the paladin is incensed to see them working alongside a lich and holds them as responsible for the tragedies in Lastwall as he holds himself.

Should the PCs kill Watcher-Lord Ulthun II, they are branded enemies of Lastwall, though the nation is hardly in a state to prosecute them. Fear of the PCs' incredible prowess keeps authorities from attacking them outright when the PCs return to Lastwall in "Midwives to Death," but their legacies will be stained by rumors of betrayal.





# Ecology of the Carnivorous Plants

"A what!? Young man, I've procured my fair share of 'exotic botanical specimens,' but this is beyond the pale. I respectfully decline your patron's job offer. And yes, of course I'm aware of my reputation! Might I direct your attention to the acid burns on my forearm? Kawa akago. Do anyone else's credentials include scientific renderings of a moonflower's gut? But you tell your patron that if they want an alluring specimen for their estate, they either need to choose something smaller, slower, and less wily, or find a different acquisitions agent altogether.

"Hmph. Tarantula tree, indeed."

—Lucian Paraga, importer of eclectic botanicals

Carnivorous plants occupy a compelling space among fantasy adversaries. More than just an unexpected encounter during a wilderness trek, these creatures command a wide array of abilities and concepts that offer many opportunities for creative use in an adventure. They span a wide range of Challenge Ratings and are found in multiple environments, making them easy inclusions within any region. As plants, they are easily altered through magic or botanical practices to render them appropriate for situations that vary from their defaults.

This article explores the origins, ecologies, and habits of carnivorous plants across Golarion, giving GMs new ideas to run exciting encounters with foliate monsters as well as new templates to modify such creatures.

## GENESIS

Diverse processes give rise to carnivorous plants, with many developing due to environmental factors. Giant flytraps, for instance, grow from the specific combination of poor soil quality and abundant animal life, while corpse lotuses' more supernatural development occurs in battlefields, graveyards, and other carrion-choked areas. Some are even more specific: kawa akagos cannot grow without the spiritual presence of a drowned child, for example.

Other carnivorous plants are intentionally cultivated for a particular purpose. Druids, wizards, and other green-thumbed spellcasters can shape a plant's development through magical means; gluttongrasses likely arose from these methods. Mundane methods such as grafting and selective breeding can refine plants to serve as guards or botanical bloodhounds. Not all such creations are purposeful, however, as poorly controlled gardening can produce unexpectedly ravenous results that spell doom for an aspiring botanist.

Some plant strains arise from even stranger circumstances. Wholly different ecologies exist among the stars, and their unique environments create strange beings like cerebric fungi and moonflowers that then travel to Golarion. Extraplanar influences—particularly from the First World's florid energies—can seep into the Material Plane and turn normally benign plants into flesh-craving monstrosities. Psychic phenomena of sufficient power, such as the trauma left in the wake of a massacre, can infuse and warp local flora. The multiverse is full of potential, and GMs are encouraged to draw on its boundless possibilities should they need to develop a plant's origins.

## ECOLOGY

Carnivorous plants populate a wide range of habitats from deep underground to rugged hills. Fungal creatures tend to dwell in low-light areas like caverns and swamps. Forests and plains are ready sources of food, and several carnivorous plants adapt to mimic harmless trees or other predominant plant life in these regions. The bizarre flying tsaalgrends show that even the sky is within reach.

These strange creatures exhibit a variety of skill sets suited to their preferred environments, though most fall within several common categories.

Ambush is one of the most prevalent hunting tactics among carnivorous plants, necessitated by many plants' lack of mobility. Such plants often blend into surrounding foliage or quickly deploy means of trapping foes, be it through their own appendages, adhesive substances, or manipulation of their environments with spell-like abilities. It is quite common for ambushing plants to swallow surprised creatures; the tendriculos's acidic gut and the moonflower's pod prison are prime examples.

Many carnivorous plants deploy pollens, scents, or spores to beguile their victims, such as a hangman tree's hallucinatory spores or a jinmenju's pleasing odors. Others use nonchemical methods, like the alraune's flower opening to reveal an attractive facsimile of its intelligent prey's species. Rather than lulling creatures into complacency, some deploy outright mental assaults, such as a basidirond's nightmare-inducing spores or the cerebric fungus's terrifyingly alien projections.

A number of these creatures rely upon straightforward attacks, bludgeoning prey into submission, lashing them with vines, or piercing them with thorns. Most such predators are fairly slow and combine their attacks with other abilities. The viper vine, for instance, immobilizes prey long enough to bring its many appendages to bear.

Regardless of their hunting method, most carnivorous plants have a strong effect on the ecosystem in which they dwell. They often linger in certain territories, most due to low mobility and instinct-driven feeding behavior, but some as a result of intelligence and agency. While all fill a predator's ecological niche, several species present a particular risk of widespread environmental disruption. Colonies of gluttongrass, hordes of yellow musk creepers, and alien moonflowers can all become loci of invasive threats to their regions.

Not all carnivorous plants are unthinking forces of nature. Alraunes, cauldron blooms, cerebric fungi, hangman trees, jinmenjus, and tarantula trees all possess intellects approaching or surpassing those of humanoid creatures. Individual members of these groups wield their intellects as befits their needs, and GMs should consider a plant's unique motives, desires, and outlook when determining its behavior. This is particularly important with plants able to articulate their viewpoints to others, either via language or spells such as *speak with plants*.

Deciding how to portray such plants involves considerations similar to those used when portraying

humanoid NPCs, keeping in mind that representations must be tempered by the plant creature's Intelligence score and alien outlook. Simpler intelligent plants likely focus primarily on securing food and safety, but note any specific interests or needs detailed in the plant's ecology; alraunes, for instance, crave memories as much as blood.

## VARIETIES

Golarion hosts a wide range of carnivorous plants. The following strains exemplify these creatures' diversity.



Alraune

**Alraune[B3] (CR 13):** Alraunes are Large intelligent flowers that walk on leg-like tendrils. The plant's petals enclose a unique adaptation: a humanoid figure which the alraune alters to match its target's idea of beauty. It also uses a soothing scent to ensorcell a creature and lure it close, either dispatching it directly or forcing it to dig its own grave. The alraune rests atop the slain creature and feeds on it, with the victim's knowledge and memories sustaining the plant just as much as its blood and flesh.

**Assassin Vine (CR 3):** While these mindless ambush predators don't pursue their prey far, their ability to animate nearby plant life and entangle potential meals means they may not need to. These vicious creatures are also surprisingly resistant to fire.

**Basidirond (CR 5):** Basidironds prefer environs high in nutrient-rich moisture, such as swamps and subterranean jungles. While they can subsist on these natural sources, they can just as easily turn to blood for nourishment. They disable prey by expelling hallucinatory spores to sap their victims' strength while inducing waking nightmares.

**Cauldron Bloom (CR 15, see page 86):** These immense plants dwell in cold regions. They wait beneath snow to consume herd animals whose blood fuels their arcane physiologies and maintains the interior warmth necessary for their survival. Their teleportation abilities are their main means of feeding and locomotion.

**Cerebric Fungus[B3] (CR 3):** Alien beings from other worlds, cerebric fungi are exceedingly curious about Golarion's more mundane denizens. They gather information through inscrutable conversation or by directly scanning other creatures' minds, and can even project a mien assembled from these thoughts. Attempting to directly access a fungus's psyche, however, risks an overwhelming mental assault.

**Corpse Lotus[B5] (CR 13):** Corpse lotuses grow near large amounts of carrion and disguise themselves as local flora. The massive plants force prey down an acidic maw and can quickly reconstruct themselves from extracted nutrients. They exude a curious mist that preserves unconsumed bodies, and their territories are often marked with a macabre garden of flesh.

**Giant Flytrap (CR 10):** These ravenous creatures eke out a life in areas of weak soil by preying on abundant local fauna. Their multiple mouths can trap prey with lightning speed and completely enclose the victim, cutting them off from aid. With their moderate intellects, giant flytraps are even capable of tactical considerations and coordination.

**Giant Sundew[B6] (CR 12):** Lumbering creatures that slowly pull themselves through marshy areas, giant sundews emit a honeyed odor that attracts unwary prey. Lured creatures quickly become

stuck in the giant plant's sticky acidic excretions and are slowly digested. Will-o'-wisps often dwell near giant sundews so that they can feed on the fear of the plants' slowly dying meals.

**Gluttongrass[B6] (CR 1):** Gluttongrasses are slow and weak, but still dangerous—they hide among other vegetation to slash careless passersby, feeding on their blood. Multiple gluttongrasses can form giant fields that do not diminish unless every component plant is eliminated. It is suspected that druids or wizards created the first gluttongrasses, but the motive for their creation remains unclear.

**Hangman Tree[B2] (CR 7):** These patient hunters wait months for prey to approach, after which they release hallucinatory pollen to make their potential meals mistake them for normal trees. Multiple limbs snatch victims up in noose-like vines, and while a hangman tree can consume only one such individual at a time, they will allow other bodies to hang and ripen for later consumption.

**Jinmenju[B4] (CR 11):** Bizarre trees that bear head-shaped fruits, jinmenjus emit a nearly irresistible smell that attracts observers. Nearby victims are enticed to eat one of the tree's ghoulish fruits, a compulsion made harder to shake by the creature's persistent, unnerving hum. The fruit's poison saps the eaters' mental faculties and makes them easier prey for the crafty plant.

**Kawa Akago[B5] (CR 3):** Supernaturally quickened by the spirits of drowned children, kawa akagos lurk near riverbanks and in marshes. The stinging nettles of these giant water lilies produce a burning sensation that drives victims into the water for relief, where they are usually set upon by an entire pack of kawa akagos and their damaging, deafening wails. Kawa akagos that feed predominantly on sentient creatures become swollen with psychic power and turn into blood lilies.

**Mire Nettle[B6] (CR 2):** These small aquatic plants fling sprays of thorns that inject a staggeringly painful toxin. They eat mostly small fish and mammals but have been known to work together to down much larger prey. Some cultures harvest the nettles' toxin for ritual use.

**Moonflower[B2] (CR 8):** Large alien plants whose bulbous flowers resemble gaping maws, moonflowers are surprisingly quick. They blind their prey with bursts of light, swallow the disoriented victim, then eject it in a tight digestive cocoon. These pods hatch hours later as new moonflowers whose trunks display physical similarities to their victims. Though not particularly smart, moonflowers do communicate with each other telepathically, as well as with the occasional bewildered druid.

**Phantom Fungus[B3] (CR 3):** These three-legged fungi flicker in and out of sight to confuse their subterranean prey, and can even turn completely invisible. Particularly noisy creatures attract their predations, though it's uncertain as to why. Phantom fungi possess mouths but no digestive tracts; they crouch atop kills to slowly digest them with descended mycelia.

**Tarantula Tree[B6] (CR 19):** At first appearing to be a copse of towering trees, this massive creature can entrap prey with lightning speed, imprisoning creatures within woven branches and thick vines. Tarantula trees range through their forests with surprising swiftness. Not simply intimidating predators, tarantula trees possess a keen intellect, and while they cannot speak aloud, they nevertheless prove lively conversation partners for those supernatural interlocutors able to hold their attention.

**Tendriculos[B2] (CR 6):** A tendriculos is a corruption of nature typically found where the borders between the Material Plane and the fey realms are thin. These capable hunters employ ambush tactics before they swallow prey whole, and their guts contain a powerful paralytic enzyme that makes escape nearly impossible. A tendriculos is not very intelligent, but can understand simple statements in Sylvan and will occasionally be convinced to work with a druid or another partner able to keep the hungry plant sated.

**Viper Vine[B2] (CR 13):** A giant flower tops this terrifying collection of snakelike vines. Viper vines release a mind-numbing pollen to immobilize their victims while they slowly pull themselves close enough to use their many maws. They are vulnerable to extreme cold, and intelligent enough to avoid those who wield it.

**Xtabay[B2] (CR 1/2):** These exotic, hardy plants spread quickly and can populate almost any environment. Their soporific pollen lulls prey to sleep, after which they crawl atop and slowly digest the slumbering creature. Xtabay petals look unnervingly like faces, but they can hide this trait and disguise themselves as harmless blooms.

**Yellow Musk Creeper (CR 2):** These horrifying creatures disable the living with sprays of noxious pollen, insert tendrils into the helpless victim's brain, and slowly destroy the creature's mind. A creature it kills rises soon after as a yellow musk zombie. These zombies protect their progenitors but decay within several days, usually after wandering off to spread the creeper's seeds in a new location and create a potential infestation.

## CARNIVOROUS PLANTS ON GOLARION

The following areas around the Inner Sea region are home to high concentrations of carnivorous plants.

**Charnel Basin:** In the Darklands beneath northern Avistan is Deep Tolguth, a place of primordial beasts and steaming swamps. Its periphery rises toward rocky slopes where pooling shadows flee the alternating light of artificial sun and glowing crystal stalactites. These foothills host extraterrestrial denizens: a colony of cerebric fungi. The fungi maintain a curious truce with

the area's xulgath rulers (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Occult Bestiary* 61), who occasionally deposit large numbers of their lesser troglodyte brethren on the shadowed slopes. Fungi shuffle these corpses into a vast depression called the Charnel Basin, where they arrange the bodies in miles of inscrutable patterns among the bones of primeval colossi. Numerous corpse lotuses grow in the basin and feed on these graveyard-mandalas, but one arrangement remains strangely untouched: surrounding a cavern mouth glowing with ancient glyphs at the Basin's center are lotus mist-preserved bodies dressed in the decades-old garb of a failed Pathfinder Society expedition.

**Deepweave:** The Arcadian nation of Xopatl is home to the Traveler's River, which once bore floating caravans through the Manzinago Forest toward the southwestern coast and its island settlements. Within the last year, however, the forest's heart has grown dense and forbidding, cutting off river traffic. The newly transformed **Pahiatl** (CN unique rampant [see page 67] viper vine) is at the center of what locals now call the Deepweave. Growth brought on by Pahiatl's transformation chokes out lesser flora and gives rise to increasing numbers of assassin vines and tsaalgrends. The creatures' predations have decimated prey animal populations, driving the ravenous plants toward the hinterlands of the nearby cities of Zipatzi and Ñarula. An armed coalition led by **Elegant Twining Pace** (LN agender vine leshy [*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Wilderness* 20] hunter 4 [*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 95]) patrols the forest's edge and attempts to contain the infestation.

**Fangwood:** This vast forest spans multiple countries. A cabal of alraunes swollen with centuries of absorbed knowledge is rumored to lurk in Lastwall's northern Fangwood. The tainted southern Fangwood blights Nirmathas, where the dryad Arlantia and her twisted minions wield the Darkblight, a supernatural disease powered by the First World and the demon lord Cyth-V'sug. Trees now sag with slick black fungus, and twitching growths foul the air with noxious spores. Copsewights, fuldrexes, heartrot trees, and other twisted creations of the southern Fangwood are detailed in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #119: Prisoners of the Blight*. Beyond the blighted regions, jinmenjus propagate from an individual specimen originally gifted to Arlantia, and corrupted yellow musk creepers bear the seeds of further blight.

**Tanglebriar:** This sprawling swamp in southern Kyonin is a bastion of the nascent demon lord Treerazer. Shifting brambles and poisonous nettles confound exploration and leave interlopers vulnerable to the region's demonic denizens. Mire nettles and stranglereeds stalk choked waterways and compete with ascomoids, basidironds, the odd tendriculos, and other fungal creatures for prey. When these predators come into conflict, their struggles can last for hours, bolstered as they are by the Tanglebriar's magic and Abyssal influences. Greatest of these altered plants is an immense grove of spidery trees whose mangrove-like roots bear the gaunt forms of tormented elves. This collective organism crawls towards Kyonin at a glacial pace, though individual roots are quick enough to snatch victims.

## Carnivorous Plant Variants

Plant creatures' unique nature leaves them open to specific kinds of influence. The following new monster templates may be added to plant creatures.

### Eruphyte Creatures

The Astral Plane, the realm of thought and higher consciousness, hosts two vulnerable sources of information: astral bodies connected to spellcasters' physical forms by invisible silver cords, and souls bound for the Boneyard. When either vessel is disrupted or destroyed, there is a small chance that the victim's fragmented intellect will pass along a fraying silver cord or through a weakened planar barrier. Mixed with the Astral Plane's raw cognitive force, this tumultuous information vents into the Material Plane. For esoteric reasons not fully understood by scholars, sentient plants make ideal vessels for these proto-intellects, where they either instill a rudimentary mind in a formerly thoughtless plant or bolster existing mental capabilities. These eruphyte creatures become conduits for raw thought and vast stores of knowledge.

#### Creating an Eruphyte Creature

"Eruphyte" is an acquired template that can be added to any plant creature, referred to hereafter as the base creature. An eruphyte creature uses the base creature's statistics and abilities except as noted here.

**Challenge Rating:** The base creature's CR + 1.

**Senses:** An eruphyte creature gains the following sense.

*Thoughtsense (Su):* An eruphyte creature notices and locates living, conscious creatures within 60 feet as if it possessed the blindsight ability. Spells such as *nondetection* or *mind blank* make a creature undetectable by this sense.

**Special Attacks**: An eruphyte creature gains the following special attack.

*Thoughtspear (Su):* Once per hour as a standard action, an eruphyte creature can direct a blast of disorienting mental energy at a creature within 120 feet. This attack deals 1d8 damage for every 2 Hit Dice the eruphyte creature has (rounded down, minimum 1d8), and the target cannot attempt Knowledge skill checks for 1 minute afterwards. A target that succeeds at a Will saving throw (DC = 10 + half the eruphyte creature's HD + its Intelligence modifier) reduces the damage by half and negates the skill disruption. This is a mind-affecting effect.

**Languages:** An eruphyte creature gains telepathy (60 ft.).

**Special Qualities:** An eruphyte creature gains the bardic knowledge ability with an effective bard level equal to half its HD, rounded down.

**Abilities:** Int +6. An eruphyte creature gains feats and skill points according to its new Intelligence score. Eruphyte creatures typically receive feats that enhance their preexisting behavior patterns or enable new means of achieving the same goals. Eruphyte creatures with Intelligence scores of 10 or higher may receive feats that enable more advanced behaviors, tactics, or even social patterns, as befits their situation. They typically gain skill ranks in Knowledge or other Intelligence-based skills.

## Rampant Creatures

The Positive Energy Plane is a font of growth, life, and souls, and metaphysical currents bear these resources through the hearts of stars and onto the Material Plane. Especially potent bursts of positive energy or partially developed souls can wind their way through the Material Plane to quicken plant life in particular. Only hardy plant creatures can foster this extraplanar force and be transformed into fonts of unchecked growth. Such rampant creatures rapidly change their local environments, turning mundane plants into tangled masses of competing foliage that slowly develop into new creatures all their own.

### Creating a Rampant Creature

"Rampant" is an acquired template that can be added to any plant creature with at least 8 Hit Dice, referred to hereafter as the base creature. A rampant creature uses the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Challenge Rating:** The base creature's CR + 1.

**Aura:** A rampant creature has the following aura.

*Aura of Growth (Su):* Living plants (but not plant creatures) within 1 mile of a rampant creature grow at triple their normal rate, and plants within 100 feet are affected as by the overgrowth function of *plant growth*. Overgrown plants return to normal after spending 1 hour outside the rampant creature's presence, or immediately if the rampant creature takes negative energy damage.

**Regeneration:** A rampant creature gains regeneration 5 (negative energy).

**Weaknesses:** A rampant creature gains vulnerability to negative energy, and taking any negative energy damage disables the creature's aura of growth for 1 minute.

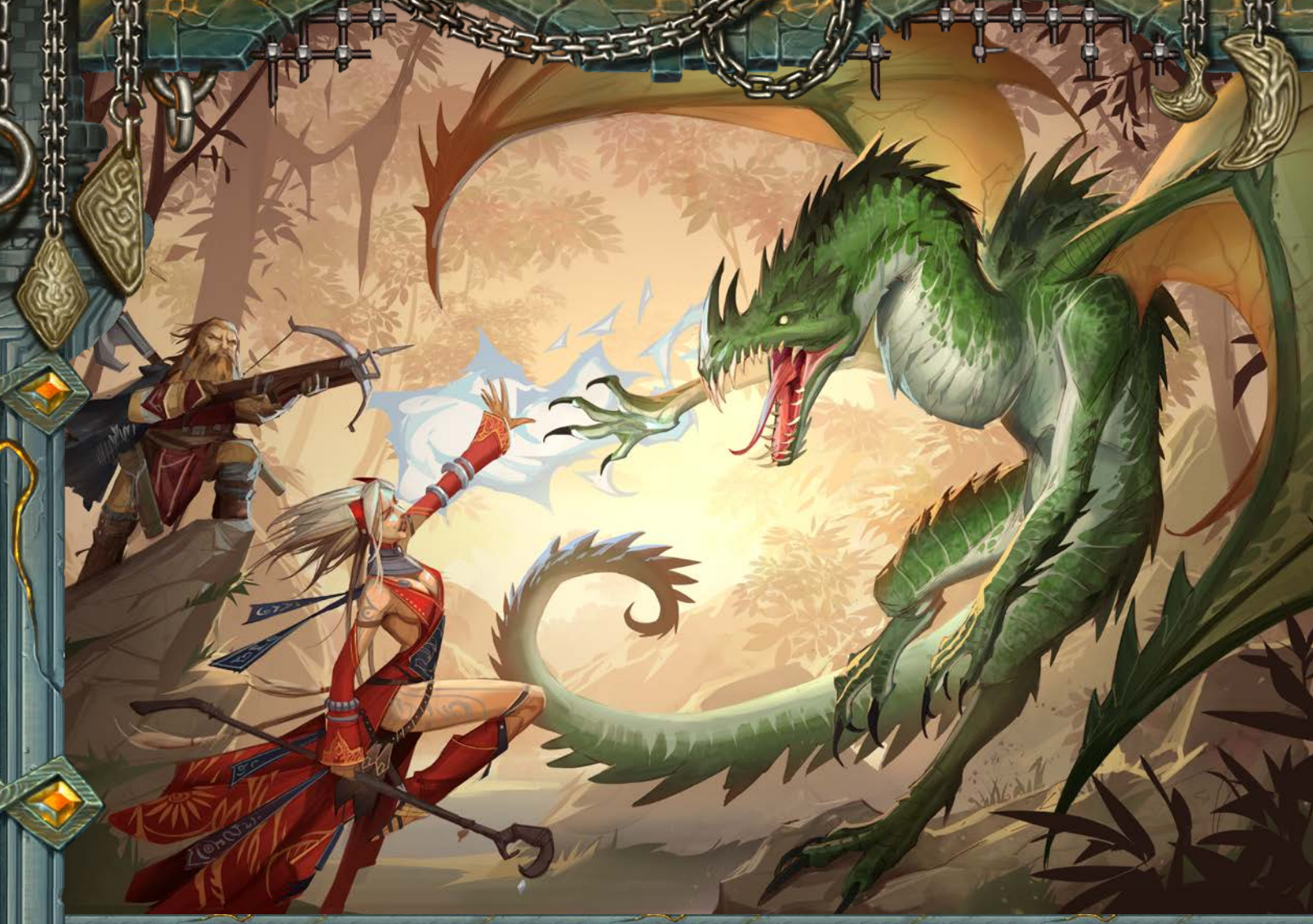
**Abilities:** Con +4.

**Special Quality:** A rampant creatures gain the following special quality.

*Verdant Genesis (Su):* Every week, a group of living plants within 1 mile of the rampant creature grows into new plant creatures with total combined Hit Dice no higher than the rampant creature's total Hit Dice. For instance, a rampant quickwood with 10 HD could create two 4 HD assassin vines and two 1 HD vegepygmies. These new creatures are not under the rampant creature's command. These new creatures each take 1 permanent negative level for each full day they spend more than 1 mile from the rampant creature that spawned them. A rampant creature cannot suppress its verdant genesis ability.



Rampant Tendriculos



# Missions in Lastwall

"How did Lastwall die? Most say the Whispering Way killed it; their magical explosions blew apart its heart as much as its cities. Foreigners might say it was the fires in Vellumis—acts of calculated arson by the cultists and acts of opportunity by fractious dissidents. Barstool sages nod their heads and insist it was an unlucky convergence of these premeditated attacks, administrative neglect from benign leaders, dry seasons and high prices, and vicious orc raids. Me? I think Lastwall has been dead for generations. Noble sentiment can't drive a nation's progress, and stories of long-gone glory can't motivate people who see enemies on all sides. Ranchers have been reducing their herds and dignitaries have been minimizing their presence here for years. This year we simply witnessed the sparks to ignite long-dead kindling."

—Falyin Serret, Master of Stables (retired)

The Whispering Tyrant is powerful and his rage against Lastwall is mighty, but he alone cannot kill an entire nation. Throughout the events of the Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path, the nation of Lastwall faces a very quick decline, but this fall is due to more than Tar-Baphon's *Radiant Fire*. Scheming agents of the Whispering Way, bloodthirsty orc warlords, and opportunistic internal enemies have long watched for the right moment to strike at Lastwall's heartland, and the chaos inflicted by the Whispering Tyrant is exactly the opening they seek.

For many groups of players, the breaking of Lastwall as a nation may occur as simply a backdrop to the Adventure Path. Yet for groups that want a closer look at the tensions and enemies of Lastwall's final days, this article presents three plot hooks and two complete encounters in Lastwall. Each of these showcases the tragedy of Lastwall's decline but provides the PCs opportunities to make small differences—such as rescuing a family or saving a border fort—that keep the spark of hope alive in this difficult time. These aren't tales of nation-altering heroics, but glimpses of bravery and defiance in the face of tragedy.

## PLOT HOOKS

As the PCs travel across Lastwall, use the following plot hooks to enliven the journey, provide some much needed XP or treasure, or show the PCs the desperate situation facing the nation. In addition, you can use these encounters to insert a particular treasure or NPC into the campaign or even introduce a new or replacement PC.

**Bloodseekers (CR 8):** Fort Harusk is a series of towers and thick stone walls covering an acre of land atop a blood-soaked hill in the rolling plains of western Lastwall. Lastwall's soldiers view a Fort Harusk posting as a death sentence, as the fort has been taken by the orcs of Belkzen six times in the last decade, always with no surviving defenders. The Knights of Ozem diligently retake the fort each time, having held it now for nearly a year. While in the area, the PCs intercept an injured messenger bird sent from Fort Harusk asking for aid; they've heard orcish war cries to the north and south and fear they're being surrounded. The messenger bird was injured by an orcish arrowhead, making the plea more urgent. When the PCs arrive, it is a particularly foggy day. The PCs can discover that the orcs have indeed traveled around the fort, but they've given it a wide berth for unknown reasons. The beleaguered soldiers can impart that the orcs have come within bow range of the fort to exchange volleys but have come no closer despite heavy losses among the soldiers. In truth, the last orcish occupiers left behind a *mace of blood* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 347) hidden under a paving stone, and orc priests have insisted that only they can safely reclaim it. Shortly after the PCs arrive, a wrath priest (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 49) and three orc mystics (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 167) descend from the fog via a *scroll of wind walk* and attack the fort from the inside.

**Season of the Landshark (CR 11):** The hardworking hands of Dortrot Ranch in eastern Lastwall have had a few hard years beset by plagues of vermin and vicious fey. Now, the ranch faces the effects of a particularly dry, hot summer. Much of the once-fertile grassland has dried out, and brush fires are becoming distressingly common. The ranch hands whisper about rumblings from three small standing stones near the Path River and worry about further troubles from there. The ranchers are right to be worried but wrong about the "standing stones." These three rocky protrusions are the fins of three bulettes enchanted into an endless sleep generations ago by a clever adventurer. Waves of disruptive magic across Lastwall have recently freed the beasts, and the ranchers don't realize how much more trouble is headed their way. Investigating PCs might initially encounter a lone bulette (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 39), but this is the runt of the trio; the other two are giant bulettes (*Bestiary* 295, 39). The churned earth around the site of the former "standing stones" contains a *handy haversack* holding two *apples of eternal sleep* (*Ultimate Equipment* 281).

**Sign of Dragons (CR 14):** Farmers near the northern Fangwood have always kept a close eye out for orcs raiding from the wood, and they know that large numbers of orcs might herald the devastating return of Zedoran, the immense and ancient green dragon lairing deep in the impenetrable forest. The orcs are in fact raiding in record numbers, but reports haven't reached the Knights of Ozem due to other catastrophes in the nation, and because this time the orcs and their allies have been much more careful to slaughter witnesses. PCs traveling through the region spot burned-down farms and massacred people and livestock. If they remain in the area, one of Zedoran's raiding parties finds them. The PCs first spy a scouting wyvern (*Bestiary* 282) soaring high overhead. If they don't defeat it quickly, it flees to alert a nearby raiding party of the PCs' presence. This party includes seven merciless orc scouts (*Monster Codex* 169) and one of Zedoran's acolytes, a half-orc plaguebrewer (*Pathfinder RPG Villain Codex* 74). Leading the raiding party is an adult green dragon named Hoxinorix (*Bestiary* 96), one of many draconic creatures that have recently flocked to Zedoran's side. If the wyvern scout survived, this group knows the PCs are around; if not, the PCs might be able to ambush the raiders instead.

GARDENS OF GALLOWSPIRE
Part 1: And the Land Shall Rot
Part 2: Life from Death
Part 3: Lich's End
NPC Gallery
Ecology of the Carnivorous Plants
Missions in Lastwall
Witchgates
Bestiary




## A Family Matter (CR 12)

Leana Bartriot, a Knight of Ozem, reaches out to the PCs for aid. A fellow knight named Magdelina Trosk can't be found in her town of Three Pines Ford, and neither can Magdelina's family. Clues indicate that Magdelina has been coerced into murdering several key Nirmathi delegates to save the lives of her kidnapped family. As Magdelina is too careful to be located, Leana wants the PCs to infiltrate the kidnappers' lair and rescue Magdelina's family before the killings start.

### Background

Lastwall maintains fairly good relations with Nirmathas to the south, and the Whispering Way hopes to spoil their alliance. To this end, the cult sent a necromancer named Evriam Kellesten to Three Pines Ford in the guise of a military historian. Evriam became particularly close with Magdelina and learned that she knew several delegates and veterans from Nirmathas. Magdelina came to rely on Evriam's guidance, just as he planned; when Magdelina invited Evriam to dinner to meet her beloved family, Evriam realized the leverage he could apply.

Late that night, Evriam and a few hired thugs kidnapped Magdelina's husband Devard and their four children. Evriam left a message: Magdelina was to murder the Nirmathi delegates in the next two days, or the necromancer would transform her family into undead, starting with her husband and working down to her youngest child. If Magdelina attempted a rescue or alerted the authorities, Evriam would murder and reanimate all of her family at once. Magdelina agonized over this dilemma but decided to put her family first, heading out to the streets of Three Pines Ford in disguise to pursue her assassinations. She wasn't aware that her family servant, a halfling named Hellick, discovered the note and informed Leana Bartriot.

### Introduction

Leana explains that Magdelina can't be found, and that Evriam blackmailed her into planning murder. Evriam lives in a decommissioned logging camp just outside of Three Pines Ford, and Leana worries that her own agents, while well intentioned, might inadvertently alert Evriam. The PCs must infiltrate Evriam's lair, rescue Magdelina's family, and bring the kidnapper to justice. If Leana can publicly announce that Evriam is slain or captured, Magdelina will abandon her task. All this must be done before Evriam kills Magdelina's family or Magdelina murders any influential Nirmathi citizens.

### Description

Although much of the old logging camp has fallen into disrepair, **Evriam Kellesten** (CE undead creator; *NPC*

*Codex* 186) is currently holed up in the sawmill with his two hired thugs (drunken brutes; *Villain Codex* 190) and a loyal shadow mastiff (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 241). Despite his missive to Magdelina, Evriam has already killed her husband, Devard, who now haunts the cutting room as a ghost (*Bestiary* 144) watching over the children held captive in the mill's storeroom.

The sawmill is a sprawling building about 12 feet high, next to a waterfall that formerly powered the mill's waterwheel. The waterfall is 18 feet high, and a platform at its top provides a good view of the surrounding area. However, the waterfall is noisy, providing a –4 penalty to all sound-based Perception checks in the area.

**A1. Yard:** The yard around the sawmill is choked with weeds. Faint paths lead to the front porch and the large doors to the cutting room, but it's clear no one has used the mill for some time. A few other ruined buildings in the lumber camp are off the map to the south and west; they provide good cover for the PCs to approach undetected. During the day, one of Evriam's thugs paces the yard, looking for intruders and wishing he had more rum. He knows that no one should be here without Evriam's approval. If he spots an intruder, he shouts to alert the mill's other inhabitants, flies into a rage, and attacks.

**A2. Watch Post:** This wooden platform has a stout railing and a short bridge to the roof of the sawmill. This post provides a good position to spot anyone approaching the sawmill. Although the roof of the sawmill is pitched, the bridge leads to a set of spiral stairs into the mill's back hall. During the day, one of Evriam's thugs watches for danger and wonders whether getting drunk while in the heartless necromancer's employ is a good idea. At night, a shadow mastiff watches from this platform instead, using its shadow blend ability to keep hidden. Either watcher howls to raise the alarm upon spotting any intruders (the shadow mastiff uses its bay ability, to which the other inhabitants of the mill are immune) and rushes to attack.

**A3. Front Porch:** This sturdy front porch has a solid wooden railing sufficient to provide cover from attackers. The doors to the main room and the cutting room both hang limply on busted hinges and push open easily.

**A4. Main Room:** Once the common room for the sawmill workers, this main room features a table with a few broken chairs and an old desk. Evriam is normally found at the desk looking over several texts he brought with him. Most are grisly anatomical treatises or dry histories, but the one Evriam has been reading most recently is about controlling ghosts. He's been unable to bend the ghost in the cutting room to his will despite repeated attempts; until he finds a solution, he doesn't enter the cutting room.

**A5. Kitchen:** Evriam and his thugs have restored just enough of this dilapidated kitchen to make it useful for their short-term habitation.

**A6. Bunkroom:** Although the mattresses here are infested with parasites and the bed frames sag dangerously, Evriam's two thugs aren't choosy and rest here at night.

**A7. Back Hall:** This short hall connects the bunkroom to the cutting room and the spiral stairs that lead up to the watch post.

**A8. Storeroom:** The door to this room is bolted shut from the outside with a new bolt Evriam installed only a few days ago. Inside, Magdelina's four children (ranging from age 5 to age 10) fear for their lives. They have a few blankets and some food, along with a bucket of water and another bucket for waste. The children know their father is dead, as his ghost appeared to them momentarily to assure them that he would keep them safe no matter what—the only comfort they have recently received.

**A9. Cutting Room:** The largest room in the sawmill, this room contains several old wooden gears that connect to the axle of the waterwheel. These gears formerly powered a long whipsaw that now dangles from its upper mounting, rusted and dull. Evriam killed Devard Throsk here, and his ghost haunts the cutting room. Devard intends to keep anyone from getting at his children in the storeroom, but the confusion and anger that have come with his death cause him to lash out at anyone here who isn't his family. His ghost can be put to rest only by bringing Evriam to justice and returning his children to their mother.

**A10. Waterwheel:** This decaying waterwheel hasn't turned in many years, and its lowest boards are rotten. The PCs can climb this waterwheel to the watch post with a successful DC 20 Climb check; the watcher there doesn't expect anyone to come from this direction.

**A11. Lumber Stacks:** Only a few stacks of rotting lumber remain here. The stacks are sufficient to provide cover for anyone in this area.

**A12. Boathouse:** The dock near the boathouse was once used by river barges to ship lumber. The boathouse itself is just large enough to contain a rowboat that's in surprisingly good condition. The shadow mastiff dozes under the rowboat during the day.

## Encounter

Evriam remains in the sawmill's main room (area **A4**) most of the time. During the day, one of his thugs keeps an eye out for intruders up at the watch post (area **A2**) while the other keeps watch in the yard (area **A1**) and the shadow mastiff dozes in the boathouse (area **A12**). At night, the shadow mastiff lurks in the shadows of the watch post while the two thugs sleep in the bunkroom (area **A6**). All creatures at the site are quick to respond to trouble, but canny PCs might keep these opponents separated to deal with them one at a time.




## Fires of Vellumis (CR 14)

The city of Vellumis is suffering from a series of fires, and the PCs learn that the Whispering Way is behind the most unusual and pervasive blazes. The PCs must infiltrate an abandoned Andoren embassy to put a stop to the cult's incendiary schemes.

### Background

An unusually dry summer, coupled with cooking fires and industry prevalent in any large city, has sparked several fires in Vellumis's dry gardens and wooden rooftops. Although these fires would normally be contained by the city's diligent protectors, the tensions elsewhere in Lastwall have encouraged dissidents or others with grudges against the nation to start fires or use fires as cover for other crimes. This includes the Whispering Way, which has been using a rare form of burning undead to spread more fires and immolate their foes. Several fires now rage out of control throughout Vellumis; entire neighborhoods have burned, prompting mass evacuations. Abandoned buildings provide tempting targets for arsonists to start new fires out of sight.

Most people believe that the Andoren embassy, Freedom's Hall, was evacuated when it sustained substantial smoke damage a week ago. In truth, Chelish spies used the fires as a cover to send a barbed devil into Freedom's Hall and kill all the Andoren diplomats. When cultists of the Whispering Way decided to use the abandoned embassy to stage their own attacks against the city, they found the barbed devil and made a deal for its services. The cultists have been creating undead called combusted and sending them into the city to immolate citizens and start more fires.

### Introduction

The PCs undoubtedly hear about the fires when they are in or near the city of Vellumis, but the most unusual rumors are about burning undead. The fires around these burning corpses never consume them, and in fact they spread easily by touch to other people, who then combust. Groups of undead called combusted have been sighted in places that suggest intentional targeting of fire fighters to perpetuate the citywide blazes. PCs succeeding at a DC 18 Knowledge (religion) check identify these undead as combusted, but also know that combusted aren't intelligent and therefore must be under the command of a malevolent force. The combusted don't return to a lair; once loose in the city, they attack indiscriminately until they are destroyed or trapped within a structure collapsing from the fires they set. However, clever PCs can identify that most appearances originate near the Andoren embassy. If the PCs don't immediately assume that the Whispering Way is behind these undead attacks, they'll learn soon enough.

## Description

Freedom's Hall is a marble building with an ornate dome and several decorative pillars. Anyone in the neighborhood can explain that, due to extensive smoke damage, the embassy was closed about a week ago; everyone assumes the diplomats returned to Andoran. Originally white, the entire building has been stained a dull gray from the smoke of nearby fires. Although Freedom's Hall is three stories tall, the upper two floors are entirely unoccupied. All three of the wooden doors into the building (to areas **B1**, **B6**, and **B7**) are barred (hardness 5, 20 hp, break DC 25), but enterprising PCs might enter one of the upper story windows and descend the stairs to areas **B2** or **B5** without difficulty.

**B1. Reception:** This front area has a wide wooden desk where officials would greet visitors. The east wall bears a large mosaic that resembles the blue-and-gold flag of Andoran. A barbed devil (*Bestiary* 72) named Arkoxi usually sits on the desk, confident it can overpower any intruders. It politely explains to intruders that the embassy is closed until further notice and they should leave; if intruders don't depart right away, Arkoxi attacks.

**B2. Hall:** This long, winding hall contains several portraits of Andoren historical figures and famous Andoren diplomats. Stairs at the east end lead upstairs to the abandoned upper floors of Freedom's Hall.

**B3. Meeting Rooms:** These two rooms are opulently appointed. Each contains a large table, several padded chairs, and Andoren statuary. The southern room contains a few large pools of blood where Arkoxi murdered some Andorens; the Whispering Way cultists turned them into undead, so the bodies are no longer here.

**B4. Offices:** The senior diplomats in the embassy used these three offices. These do not include the ambassador's suite (which was upstairs). The papers and files here are all drenched in blood, as Arkoxi killed the diplomats here. As with the bodies elsewhere in the embassy, they've been removed and reanimated by the Whispering Way cultists. The easternmost office has a paperweight shaped like a soaring eagle made of greenish stone; this is a magic item that functions in all ways as a *serpentine owl figurine of wondrous power* except for its shape.

**B5. Lesser Hall:** This large room was used for speeches and intimate dining functions. Several sturdy wooden chairs are stacked against the south wall. The stairs to the east lead upstairs.

**B6. Servant Access:** This room was used primarily to accept deliveries; a few shelves against the walls are empty. The PCs can discover a secret trap door in the floor with a successful DC 25 Perception check. The trap door opens into a small chamber designed to help smuggle people or goods into or out of Lastwall, but it was rarely used for that purpose; instead, it currently contains a shrine to Urgathoa, decorated liberally with the gagged skull symbol of the Whispering Way. This shrine also includes several communiques from unnamed cult leaders in Ustalav directing them to cause as much mayhem in Vellumis as possible in order to further destabilize the city.

**B7. Grand Hall:** From any adjacent room, the PCs can hear the howling from the eight advanced combusted (*Pathfinder Bestiary 6* 288, 63) standing here. This enormous hall is two stories high and was used for balls, significant speeches, and state dinners. Its walls are decorated with columns of fine white marble, and the room is painted in the blue and gold of Andoran. Its opulence is tarnished somewhat by the soot that permeates Freedom's Hall as well as the smoke issuing from the combusted here, but its elegance is still apparent. If anyone other than Whispering Way cultists enter this room, the combusted all surge forward and attack.

**B8. Storage:** This storage room was used to keep chairs, tables, tablecloths, and other furnishings for the lesser hall and the grand hall out of the way. The Whispering Way cultists currently use this chamber as their quarters, as they know no one can approach them without dealing with the combusted in the adjacent grand hall. The cultists consist of two death priests (*NPC Codex* 50) named Bren and Jellisa Ninriest and a cult librarian (*Villain Codex* 217) named Horbert Calmian. Against the western wall stands an impromptu magical workshop, consisting of a half-finished treatise Horbert is authoring about combusted undead and two completed *robes of burning bones*. These each function as a normal *robe of bones* but contain only four flame-shaped patches; each patch produces a combusted undead.

## Encounter

Arkoxi is usually found in reception (area **B1**), but there is a 20% chance it's out roaming Vellumis, killing paladins and setting fires. The combusted stand in the grand hall (area **B7**), while the cultists remain in the storage room (area **B8**). Horbert works on his book, believing it to be the next magnum opus of undead lore, while Bren and Jellisa craft more *robes of burning bones* to supplement their forces. Both death priests have the Craft Wondrous Item feat rather than Improved Channel, and they prepare *animate dead* instead of *contagion*.

The PCs have several methods of entering Freedom's Hall, but once they encounter any of the new denizens of the embassy, the others arrive quickly. If the PCs encounter Arkoxi first, it fights until reduced to fewer than 50 hit points before teleporting to the storage room to alert the cultists. If the PCs instead encounter the combusted first, the fight gives the cultists enough time to prepare their spells and to allow Horbert to telepathically alert Arkoxi, part of his contract with the devil. All fight to the death to protect their operation in Vellumis.



# Witchgates

"'Why didn't we just teleport in?' If some rookie thought of it a thousand years after the fact, do you really think Tar-Baphon didn't think it up first? The early crusaders tried 'porting in, but they never came back. It wasn't until one lucky cleric got away alive and squeaked out a sending spell that they learned what had happened: some kind of trap, or network of traps rather, that dropped anyone trying to teleport smack into the middle of an ambush. Tar-Baphon had the whole place on lockdown. Not just Gallowspire. All of Virlych. That's why the Shining Crusade marched on foot. We can't even begin to understand how that monster blasted his own lands, but you can bet your last copper those traps are still out there. Nothing the Whispering Tyrant created dies easily."

—Arzil Kobb, Professor of Conjuration at Crusader War College

Accomplished spellcasters find that Golarion becomes noticeably smaller with the use of their power. This age-old power grants accomplished spellcasters the ability to move along the ley lines that stitch together the Material Plane and the various Transitive Planes that overlap it. With the power to easily cross hundreds of miles and bypass countless dangers, such practitioners fundamentally change the normal approach to exploration and adventure.

## COUNTERING TELEPORTATION

Those who study teleportation magic respect that it is not an exact science. Spells sometimes mistakenly deposit subjects miles away from their targets, possibly even harming them with planar feedback or stranding them in remote locations. To further complicate matters, as long as spellcasters have been able to teleport, their peers have developed safeguards against such power. *Dimensional anchor* and *forbiddance* block teleportation outright, while *teleport trap* (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea World Guide* 296) and *treacherous teleport* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Intrigue* 227) subvert it into something unexpected.

## TAR-BAPHON'S WITCHGATES

As he ascended to power, Tar-Baphon recognized that as long as ley lines ran through his territory, enemy spellcasters could use teleportation to outmaneuver his armies and harry his supply lines. As inventive as he was cruel, the Whispering Tyrant used powerful, profane magic to construct anchor points throughout Virlych that tangled the ley lines for miles around, drawing all dimensional traffic toward them like magnets, then mustered forces specially equipped to dispatch the threats that appeared at the anchor sites before they could react to the misdirection.

Despite the years since Tar-Baphon's imprisonment, most of his magical anchors—dubbed *witchgates*—remain standing, corrupting the energy flow between the planes where the ley lines were distorted. This perversion of natural planar balance makes the entire region hostile to those attempting dimensional travel, who pop up at the *witchgates'* locations seemingly at random with little recourse for reaching their desired destination. Furthermore, even though many of Tar-Baphon's original forces no longer guard the *witchgates*, other inhabitants of Virlych have since co-opted them for their own ends, making them far from safe.

*Witchgates* function as permanent variant *teleport traps*, radiating their misdirecting influence throughout an area approximately 20 miles in radius. All teleportation (including *shadow walk*, *transport via plants*, and all variants of the *teleport* spells) into or out of Virlych are redirected toward Virlych's various *witchgates*, regardless of intended destination, though shorter-range teleportation effects such as *dimension door* are unaffected. Once a creature has left or removed a *witchgate*'s area of effect, additional attempts at teleportation shunt the caster and all accompanying creatures to another functioning *witchgate*. A creature cannot attune itself to ley lines (*Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventurer* 233) within a *witchgate*'s area of effect.

A caster attempting to teleport into or out of a *witchgate*'s area of effect can attempt a DC 20 Will save to resist the effect; on a success the creature simply doesn't teleport at all—either to the intended location or to the *witchgate* itself (but the use of the teleport effect is still expended). A caster can identify the presence and effects of a *witchgate* with a successful DC 27 Knowledge (arcana) check. Once aware of a *witchgate*'s properties, with a successful DC 35 Spellcraft check coupled with *detect magic*, a caster can determine the borders of a *witchgate*'s area of effect.

### Destroying A Witchgate

A potent occult ritual can untangle the ley lines bound to a *witchgate*, destroying the trap. Learning the ritual in its entirety may require conversing with a knowledgeable creature or expert, gathering components from the First World, or similar tasks. Rules for performing rituals can be found on page 208 of *Occult Adventures*.

**UNTANGLE LEY LINES**

**School** transmutation; **Level** 9

**Casting Time** 9 hours

**Components** V, S, M (incense ground from First World plants), SC (up to 8)

**Skill Checks** Knowledge (nature) DC 35, 1 success; Knowledge (planes) DC 35, 1 success; Perception DC 35, 3 successes; Spellcraft DC 35, 1 success; Sleight of Hand DC 35, 3 successes

**Range** touch

**Target** one *witchgate*

**Duration** instantaneous

**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

**Backlash** All casters take 1 permanent negative level.

**Failure** All casters suffer a curse or spell effect determined by the specific *witchgate* (if not specified, use *finger of death*, using the ritual's spell DC and caster level). Secondary casters can attempt a saving throw (primary casters automatically fail their saving throws).

**EFFECT**

The primary caster burns the incense in a perimeter around the *witchgate* to soothe the site, then peels back the dimensional fabric, finds the knotted ley lines, delicately unwinds them, steadies their energies, and closes the rift. If the ritual is successful, the ley lines return to normal, forcing the *witchgate* that tangled them to collapse. All casters automatically become attuned to the unraveled ley lines, gaining a +5 bonus on skill checks to cast occult rituals until they leave a 1-mile radius of the destroyed *witchgate*.

## MORE WITCHGATES

A handful of *witchgates* appear in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #64: Shadows of Gallowspire*, but they are not the only *witchgates* in Virlych. Included here are four encounters for GMs who want to include *witchgates* in their campaigns.

### Failfaith Gulch

Failfaith Gulch was one of Tar-Baphon's highest-traffic *witchgates* during the Shining Crusade. The volume of crusaders massacred in this canyon led the Knights of Ozem to give this location its name.



Bolzoran

**Location:** This *witchgate* is in a craterlike canyon in the depths of the Gorcha Pass, littered with debris from numerous massive battles.

**Appearance:** The gate appears as two oversized, rusted swords with Iomedaean iconography crossed at their tips at its highest point.

**Failure:** A failed ritual to destroy it subjects casters to an *insanity* effect, using the ritual's spell DC and caster level.

**Guardians:** Platoons of fallen (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6* 126) roam the canyon, typically attacking in squads of 2d4 undead at a time. If the *witchgate* is destroyed, PCs can halt the fallen's rejuvenation by performing appropriate rites with a successful DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check and casting *consecrate* over the site.

**Encounters:** PCs who arrive at this *witchgate* are immediately beset by fallen, but within 1d4 rounds a large dragon arrives and helps the heroes repel the undead. The dragon introduces himself as **Targariv** (N young crypt dragon; *Bestiary 6* 98), and questions the PCs about their interest in the site while sizing up their capabilities. Targariv eagerly serves Pharasma and came to Golarion to investigate the planar ripples caused by the Whispering Tyrant's struggle against his bindings. Targariv has become fascinated by the *witchgates* and has been looking into how to destroy them so magic-users can more effectively challenge Tar-Baphon's attempted return.

Targariv is devout and academic, viewing atheistic and non-scholarly PCs as a waste of his time and leaning hard on pious PCs to convert to Pharasma's faith. PCs can convince Targariv to share what he's learned with a successful DC 30 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check combined with a successful DC 30 Knowledge (arcana, nature, planes, or religion) check to demonstrate their grasp of complex, relevant topics. Targariv then reveals his suspicions that the *witchgate*'s power is drawn from tangled ley lines, but he believes he knows a ritual that can dismantle it. A handful of things prevent him from performing the ritual, though: he does not have the necessary incense to perform the ritual, and his claws are too large to effectively untangle the ley lines. If the PCs offer, he asks them to help him with his ritual and rid Failfaith Gulch of its *witchgate* and, hopefully, the fallen that plague the area.

If the PCs travel outside of the *witchgate's* area of effect, and from there to the First World via *plane shift* or similar magic, they can collect the necessary herbs for one ritual's worth of incense with a successful DC 30 Knowledge (nature) or Survival check, then create the incense with a successful DC 30 Craft (alchemy) or Knowledge (nature) check. Alternatively, there is a 20% chance that any fey or another creature similarly

connected to the First World of CR 11 or higher has the requisite plants on its person, or a 10% chance it has the incense itself. No one trip to the First World or NPC interaction should yield more incense than what is required for a single ritual.

Upon recovering the material component, Targariv performs the untangle ley lines ritual as the primary caster, inviting the PCs (particularly dexterous ones) to participate as secondary casters. Targariv's understanding of the ritual is incomplete, however, and he fills in the required Knowledge (nature) check with his Knowledge (religion) skill instead, reciting praises to Pharasma in lieu of incantations to steady the ley lines. This results in his automatically failing the check, and if uncorrected, Targariv will suffer the results of a failed ritual even if the rest of the ritual is successful. A PC can catch his mistake with a successful DC 35 Knowledge (arcana, nature, or religion) or Sense Motive check (DC 20 if the PC knows the correct version of the ritual), and they can convince him to let them attempt the correct check with a successful DC 30 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check (assuming the PC knows the required skill).

If the ritual is successful and Targariv retains his senses, he shares the ritual with the PCs, correcting it based on the PCs' discoveries, and encourages them to seek out other *witchgates* to destroy.

## The Starving Mountain

Tar-Baphon placed this pair of *witchgates* deep underground, leaving teleporters to become trapped and eventually starve to death.

**Location:** These witchgates are found roughly 1 mile underground, deep in the central portion of the Hungry Mountains, inside a vast sealed cavern carpeted with bones.

**Appearance:** These two *witchgates* appear as jagged crests of natural obsidian standing opposite each other. Once a teleporter is redirected to one of these gates, any attempts at teleportation originating from within the Starving Mountain redirect to the opposite gate.

**Failure:** A failed ritual to destroy one of the *witchgates* subjects casters to a *mass hunger for flesh* (*Pathfinder RPG Horror Adventures* 121) effect, using the ritual's spell DC and caster level.

**Guardians:** A gashadokuro (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 121) lurks between the *witchgates*, attacking any prey that emerges from them. Even if the gashadokuro is destroyed, the restless energies from the countless starved creatures in the cavern cause it to instantly reform if a creature anywhere in the chamber dies as a result of nonlethal damage from starvation.

**Encounters:** The main challenge of the Starving Mountain is figuring out how to escape the subterranean chamber. The roughly circular chamber is almost 2 miles in diameter. The shallow ceiling stands only 150 feet high, and the walls, floor, and ceiling are all solid stone. The sealed chamber has no food, water, illumination, or valuable resources, and it even stands to run out of breathable oxygen if four or more creatures remain within it for over 10 days, causing slow suffocation rules to set in on day 11.

Resourceful PCs can use divination magic or their own wits to devise creative solutions for escaping the chamber. Repeated castings of *stone shape* could carve a tunnel out of the chamber, as could conjuring or polymorphing into a creature capable of burrowing through solid stone. Casting *gate* or certain occult rituals could also help PCs escape the chamber by rerouting through other planes, although doing so would doubtlessly provoke a CR 12–14 encounter with appropriate denizens of the plane in question. If the PCs destroy one or both *witchgates*, regular teleportation magic also becomes an option for escape.

PCs who can't independently escape the chamber may find some hints among the bones. Searching the area for 1d4 hours and succeeding at a DC 20 Knowledge (dungeoneering) or Survival check uncovers some patches of soft earth in the stone floor that can be navigated with a standard burrow speed. Burrowing 1 mile through this soil deposits the digger into the caverns of Sekamina, specifically into a network of tunnels ruled by a family of driders (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 113). PCs can then fight, negotiate, sneak, or barter their way through the Darklands until they reach a place to safely teleport home.

Alternatively, PCs can scour the Starving Mountain with a successful DC 20 Perception check and find one other living soul trapped inside: a giant named **Bolzoran** (NE male tomb giant; *Bestiary 6* 136). Stranded in the chamber after a misguided teleportation effort by him and his estranged partner, Bolzoran remains here alone after he killed and ate his companion out of desperation. He suffers from exhaustion and has taken 81 points of nonlethal damage due to starvation, and he does not put up a fight if confronted. If fed and healed, Bolzoran offers his necromantic talents to help them all escape. He recommends constructing a necrocraft (*Bestiary 4* 200) using the surrounding bones and rock that can burrow through stone and help them all escape. If created, Bolzoran's necrocraft is Huge and has the additional movement (burrow), blade fists, bone armor, and mostly skeletons construction point abilities, with its burrow speed costing 2 CP in order to burrow through solid stone. Bolzoran remains cooperative until the PCs escape, at which point he no longer sees the PCs as useful and attacks them with the aid of his creation.

## Tolurro Village

Nestled deep in the Ebonwall Forest, the village of Tolurro was once a trap for unwary heroes. Now its purpose has been compromised.

**Location:** This *witchgate* is in a dilapidated hamlet in the central Ebonwall Forest, glamered with *mirage arcana* (DC 20) to appear cozy and intact.

**Appearance:** The gate appears as a floral topiary archway.

**Failure:** A failed ritual to destroy this *witchgate* afflicts casters with the curse of tormenting visions (*Pathfinder RPG Horror Adventures* 140), using the ritual's save DC instead.

**Guardians:** A hag coven and roughly 20 hupias (*Bestiary 6* 168) populate the village, all using their misdirected appearance ability and the hags' *veil* coven spell-like ability (DC 21) to appear as young human women. The hupias typically travel and work together in groups of four to eight when doing chores or fighting.

**Encounters:** Long ago, the village of Tolurro was home to a coven of hags and their family of changeling daughters. The coven's leader, **Marshara** (CE blood hag, *Bestiary 4* 19), reached an accord with Tar-Baphon and agreed to house one of his *witchgates* in her village, eager to ensnare victims for food or to conceive new changeling daughters. For years the coven lured hapless dimensional travelers into their village, lowering their guard with kindness before abducting them for their own fell purposes.

The hags' lives were comfortable, but they eventually ran afoul of a powerful cleric of Mahathalla who emerged through the *witchgate*. The cleric saw through their ruse, and although she was no match for the village's combined strength, she used her magic before being torn to pieces to wipe out all of the hags' daughters, cursing them to forever relive their lie as a waking nightmare. The changelings later rose as undead without fully grasping what had happened to them, and the devastated hags desperately tried to rebuild the shambles of their former lives. They used their coven magic to maintain the charade of their daughters' lives, but the hupias' mutable memories and flashes of reckoning with their undeath have left the village perpetually walking on eggshells and covering for inconsistencies in their shared deception.

Years later, as the *witchgate*'s traffic slowed, the facade has begun to crack. Marshara, a callous creature even in motherhood, has tired of playing along, but her sisters **Hilla** and **Wilsa** (CE advanced green hags; *Bestiary* 167) still mourn for their children and keenly want for them to continue "living" in peace. The friction between the hags threatens their house of cards, to the point where Hilla and Wilsa might entertain the idea of betraying Marshara if they can find a suitable replacement to preserve their coven magic.

PCs who stumble into Tolurro Village likely first encounter some of its hupia residents performing mundane chores. The women eagerly invite the PCs to stay and enjoy the comforts of their home, although they tend to lose focus if pressed for information or asked too many questions, directing the PCs to their "parents and aunts." The hags reflexively begin their routine of lulling the PCs into a false sense of security, but Hilla and Wilsa may try to make private contact with the PCs if they think they can feasibly enlist their aid in replacing Marshara. Encounters may include isolated skirmishes with hupias if their identities become exposed, clandestine meetings with the green hags to negotiate an agreement, and a culminating conflict between the PCs and Marshara or the entire coven alongside any number of their hupia daughters. GMs can balance the CRs of these encounters by having hupias that would make the encounter overwhelmingly difficult become paralyzed by shock and despair over their reality crumbling before them.

Should the PCs decide to cooperate with Hilla and Wilsa, the hags might recommend seeking out a suitable replacement coven member elsewhere in Virlych, or convincing Marshara to cast *reincarnate* on her gentlest and favorite daughter, Enara, who was slain and spared transformation into an undead. Use the statistics for a renewer (*Villain Codex* 144) to represent Enara should the need arise, replacing any one hex with the coven hex. The hags also keep a handful of treasures secreted away, using them as bribes, gifts, or weapons against the PCs as needed: a *+3 mithral shirt, +1 ghost touch quarterstaff, dagger of venom, necklace of fireballs VII, ring of protection +2, wand of quench* (45 charges), and 973 gp.

## Witherwill Copse

The fey of Witherwill Copse have fought for decades to contain the toxic evil emanating from the *witchgate*, but they know they're fighting a losing battle.

**Location:** This *witchgate* is found in a sparse grove of blighted, ashen trees along the eastern border of Witchgate Forest.

**Appearance:** The gate is a circle of standing stones overgrown with black ivy and putrid fungus.

**Failure:** A failed ritual to destroy this *witchgate* subjects casters to a *green caress* (*Horror Adventures* 119) effect heightened to 7th level, using the ritual's spell DC and caster level.

**Guardians:** Two bonethorns (*Bestiary 6* 52) flank the *witchgate*. Several additional bonethorns populate the surrounding area, and they are drawn to the *witchgate*. Every 1d3 days, a new bonethorn replaces a slain one, although no more than two occupy the space within 200 feet of the *witchgate* at the same time.

**Encounters:** This stretch of Witchgate Forest supports a dense fey population, which watched in helpless horror as Tar-Baphon snarled the ley lines to construct

his *witchgates*, poisoning the channels of natural energy that nourished their grove. For generations since the Whispering Tyrant's imprisonment, the fey resolutely pushed back against the *witchgate*'s magic, containing its creeping foulness as best they could. The long years and the relentless spread of corruption have weakened the fey's resolve, however, and as blight claims more and more trees with no observable way to reverse its course, the fey have finally reached a boiling point.

If the PCs travel beyond the borders of the rotting trees to where the forest retains some vibrancy, they stumble upon a large congregation of dryads, pixies, satyrs, and other fey in the midst of a heated argument. The fey stand divided into two factions, each led by one of the twin sisters **Irmryllis** and **Jesaphine** (N female nymph druid 7), on how best to end the *witchgate*'s tenacious destruction of their home. Irmryllis believes that great results require great sacrifice, and their best option is for her to use a powerful ritual to bind herself to the corruption so that she can absorb the evil rather than letting it spread into the forest. With a successful DC 30 Knowledge (nature) check, a PC can recognize Irmryllis's solution as a variation of the *welcome the blighted soul* occult ritual (*Bestiary 6* 250), with her intent being to sacrifice some of her fellow fey and to use the *witchgate* as the focus. Jesaphine, however, wants to implore the First World for a solution, confident that the Green Mother will know how to end the blight. With a successful DC 30 Knowledge (religion) check, a PC can recall that the Green Mother is a knowledgeable but deceitful, self-serving Eldest. The conflict between the factions has simmered for years, and each nymph has dug in her heels, believing her solution to be the right one.

PCs can side with either nymph, remain uninvolved, or try to convince the other fey to ignore both nymphs and follow an idea of their own creation instead. This argument could manifest as a series of three consecutive DC 31 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate checks, or it could use the verbal duel rules (*Ultimate Intrigue* 176), whichever would better engage the players. Siding with Irmryllis and helping her transition into a siabrae (*Bestiary 6* 250) does not cure the corruption but does halt its growth, allowing Irmryllis to command the bonethorns in the area and establishing her as a powerful (albeit profane) ally for the PCs. Siding with Jesaphine allows the PCs to help her contact the Green Mother using a ritual similar to *call beyond the veil* (*Occult Adventures* 210), except it uses Knowledge (nature) instead of Knowledge (religion) and has a backlash effect of calling a giant sundew (*Bestiary 6* 258) with the fey creature template (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 116). During the ritual, the Green Mother provides details for using the untangle ley lines ritual, but she gives a flawed or incomplete version of the ritual similar to Targariv's (see Failfaith Gulch on page 76), which the PCs can identify as such with a successful DC 35 Knowledge (arcana, nature, or religion) or Sense Motive check.

Regardless of the PCs' choice, each nymph ultimately proceeds with her own ritual if left to her own devices. This potentially leaves the PCs with a hostile siabrae, fey plant, or both to contend with in the fallout of the nymphs' magic, unless they preemptively confront a nymph and her most loyal followers. Should combat ensue, eight CR 4 fey aid each nymph in battle, immediately being replaced by nearby reinforcements from her faction when they are slain until the nymphs themselves are dispatched.



Witherwill Copse



# Bestiary

All alone now.

I'm not sure what happened. There were four of us, originally—me, Hanz, Derii, and Sugar—but when we sent Derii to scout ahead of the trail that was the last we saw of her. Then Sugar said he spotted trees, possibly a watering hole, in the hills left of the road and went to check. Same thing—no sign of where he went. Hanz and I stayed close after that, but by this morning all that was left of Hanz was his favorite hat, which must have fallen off when he was nabbed. Didn't even make a peep. Some strange slime led into the brush, but I just hightailed it out of there fast as I could.

I saw a chameleon just before noon. Neat little guy. Maybe it's a sign my bad luck will finally turn around.

—Final entry in the logbook of Gadrienna the Brave, adventurer

The bestiary for this Adventure Path volume includes an array of creature types, including the massive cauldron bloom plant, shifting undead masses known as abandoned armories, the otherworldly anisydaemon, the dazzlingly magical but deadly furcifer, and a new mortic (mortics were first introduced in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #139: The Dead Roads*).

For more random encounters in Virlych, including unique storm conditions for this cursed realm, see *Pathfinder Adventure Path #48: Shadows of Gallowspire*.

## THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

The PCs must face many adversaries on their quest to shut down the *witchgates* in Virlych. The Hungry Mountains are the site of many ancient battles between the forces of Lastwall and the Whispering Tyrant, and as a result the roads that wind through these peaks are plagued by undead soldiers and wretched monsters grown fat on the spoils of war. Now that Vigil has been destroyed, the path is only more dangerous.

The random encounters on this page are most suitable while the PCs are traveling to Gallowspire, but they might take place on the outskirts of the ruins as well. The following unique encounters may be rolled on the Virlych Random Encounters table or selected for use throughout the adventure.

**Carriage of the Damned**: When Tar-Baphon seeks an audience with one of the supplicatory mortals who dwell in his domain, he doesn't send a simple letter; the Whispering Tyrant's favored courier is a powerful dullahan (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 111) who rides in a sentient stagecoach known as a death coach (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 5* 67). The dullahan, Cediri, dutifully pilots her so-called "Carriage of the Damned" at the behest of her master across the length of Ustalav, but when she is not on a mission, Cediri finds her own sport by murdering any travelers unfortunate enough to be in the path of the death coach. The souls of her victims are trapped in individual magical vials organized neatly in a velvet-lined blackwood chest in the back of the stagecoach.

**Commander of Traitors**: Although the leaders of Lastwall prefer to take the party line that their troops are infallible paragons of good, the truth is that bad apples do slip through and sometimes even become leaders within the nation's armies. Hunson Ba-Rakam was one such renegade whose vile interrogation tactics and penchant for extreme discipline made him a feared commander, attracting to him the worst of Lastwall's soldiers and savage mercenaries from around Avistan. When his superiors discovered he was plotting against them, Ba-Rakam was summarily executed, but this was exactly what the traitor had hoped for, as he was destined to rise in undeath as a powerful fext (*Bestiary 5* 115). Now, when he is not disguised as his alternate persona, Sergeant Gil Trumark, and sowing seeds of discord among Lastwall's ranks of paladins, Ba-Rakam leads a cadre of 1d4 mohrgs (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 208) through Ustalavic villages and on country roads, wreaking mayhem to sate his unquenchable blood thirst.

**Unlikely Allies**: When the Whispering Tyrant laid claim to the hallowed halls of Casnoriva in Virlych, he trapped many of the academy's denizens within the crumbling edifice to suffer at the hands of extraplanar horrors and the schoolmasters' own alchemical creations run amuck. But not all of the school's inhabitants were destined to remain within Casnoriva. The sceaduinar (*Bestiary 2* 239) Otnokka is one such escaped creature. Trapped on the mortal plane through the Casnoriva wizards' lingering magic, Otnokka searches the Hungry Mountains for the lich who caused her suffering, seeking an audience with Tar-Baphon in order to be sent home. Traveling alongside the scrappy sceaduinar is a clockwork golem also escaped from Casnoriva whom Otnokka has taken to calling "Winder" due to the incessant whirring noise the construct makes. The pair make for an unlikely duo, and while Otnokka has no interest in making friends with any of the denizens of Virlych, she is open to a temporary alliance with anyone who can get her closer to Tar-Baphon.

### Virlych Random Encounters

| d% | Result | Avg. CR | Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1–3 | 2d6 undigested swarms | 10 | *Bestiary 5* 258 |
| 4–7 | 1d6 deathwebs | 10 | *Bestiary 3* 65 |
| 8–11 | 2d4 ghoul stalkers | 10 | *Monster Codex* 82 |
| 12–15 | 2d4 ghosts | 11 | *Bestiary* 144 |
| 16–19 | 1d6 greater shadows | 11 | *Bestiary* 245 |
| 20–24 | 1d4 geists around 1 haunt | 11 | *Bestiary 4* 124 |
| 25–29 | 1d6 vampire warriors | 11 | *Monster Codex* 240 |
| 30–34 | 1d8 fallen | 12 | *Bestiary 6* 126 |
| 35–39 | Unlikely Allies | 12 | See below |
| 40–47 | 1d6 greater lightning elementals | 12 | *Bestiary 2* 117 |
| 48–55 | Rukh nest | 12 | Bestiary 4 228 |
| 56–63 | Commander of Traitors | 12 | See below |
| 64–71 | 2 razormouth solifugids | 13 | Bestiary 6 256 |
| 72–76 | 1d6 etioling mortics | 13 | See page 90 |
| 77–81 | 2 ash giants | 13 | Bestiary 3 126 |
| 82–86 | 1d6 elder lightning elementals | 13 | Bestiary 2 117 |
| 87–91 | 1 sayona and 2d6 spawn | 13 | Bestiary 4 231 |
| 92–94 | 1 abandoned armory | 13 | See page 82 |
| 95–97 | 1d8 bloody bones | 14 | Bestiary 6 49 |
| 98–100 | Carriage of the Damned | 14 | See below |

# Abandoned Armory

*This aggregation of weapons, armor, and other tools of war looms like a slow avalanche of twisted iron and eldritch sparks.*

**ABANDONED ARMORY CR 13**

**XP 25,600**

NE Huge construct

**Init** +1; **Senses** blindsense 120 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 29, touch 8, flat-footed 28 (+20 armor, +1 Dex, –2 size)

**hp** 139 (18d10+40)

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

**Defensive Abilities** leaden weariness, reflect spell; **DR** 10/—; **Immune** construct traits; **SR** 24

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +28 (2d10+18/19–20)

**Ranged** ballista +17/+12/+7/+2 (3d8/19–20)

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

**Special Attacks** perimeter defense, powerful blows

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 34, **Dex** 13, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +18; **CMB** +32; **CMD** 43

**SQ** tide of metal

**ECOLOGY**

**Environment** any plain or battlefield

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** double

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Leaden Weariness (Su)** Any creature that strikes an abandoned armory with a melee weapon or natural attack must succeed at a DC 19 Will save or be affected by *slow* for 1d4 rounds. Whether or not it succeeds at the saving throw, a creature cannot be affected again by this ability for 1 minute. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Perimeter Defense (Su)** Once per minute as a standard action, an abandoned armory can fire a barrage of energy in a 60-foot cone. The barrage deals 14d6 points of damage, half of which is fire damage and half of which is electricity damage. A successful DC 20 Reflex save halves this damage. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

**Powerful Blows (Ex)** An abandoned armory applies 1–1/2 its Strength modifier and threatens a critical hit on a roll of 19–20 with its slam attacks.

**Reflect Spell (Su)** Once per day as an immediate action, an abandoned armory can turn back a spell targeting it as *spell turning*. An abandoned armory can turn up to seven spell levels with this ability. If an abandoned armory attempts to reflect an ineligible spell, this ability fails and is wasted.

**Tide of Metal (Su)** An abandoned armory can switch between its ebb-tide and rip-tide battle modes as a swift action. An abandoned armory begins combat in ebb-tide mode (reflected in the above statistics). In rip-tide mode, an abandoned armory undergoes several changes, as noted below.

- The abandoned armory's AC decreases from 29 to 24.
- The abandoned armory's speed increases from 20 to 50 feet.
- The abandoned armory applies twice its Strength modifier to its slam attacks and threatens a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.
- The abandoned armory's reach increases from 15 to 25 feet.
- The abandoned armory gains the trip ability with its slam attacks.
- The abandoned armory loses its leaden weariness, perimeter defense, and reflect spells abilities.

An abandoned armory is an animated mass of weapons and armor, both magic and mundane, as well as spell-imbued items of offensive utility. Moving with uncanny locomotion, these constructs scour battlefields seeking objects of war that once held special significance to previous owners who were slain in combat. Due to the faint psychic imprints of the slain combatants from which they collect these artifacts, abandoned armories make it their mission to reunite the items with their past owners or find new owners worthy of wielding their finds. This process proves to be fatal, however, as the constant psychic echoes cause an abandoned armory to believe everyone is unworthy and slay them in hopes of finding a new suitable owner for that individual's equipment. This behavior has led abandoned armories to become something to be feared on the battlefield as they tear through an area, slaying every combatant they encounter.

An abandoned armory is roughly 15 feet wide, cresting up to 20 feet tall, and weighs about 15 tons.

## ECOLOGY

Abandoned armories are rare, as their creation requires an unlikely confluence of environmental conditions and historical circumstances, along with a fair bit of luck. Across Golarion, only a handful of battlefields and other sites of mass death and suffering contain sufficient psychic echoes of terror and pain, as well as buried or hidden implements of war—magic weapons, armor, and other trinkets—to give rise to an abandoned armory. In addition to the psychic imprints that serve as the foundation for the constructs, the genesis of abandoned armories hinges on the application of additional, formidable arcane or divine power, often as an unintended consequence of unrelated events. A leaking seal on a long-forgotten eldritch prison, a thinning of the veil between planes, or a potent ritual to summon a demon may provide the energy needed for an abandoned armory to lurch into animation. When the psychic imprints and magical energy mix at a perfect balance, it can form a small abandoned armory. Once

animated, the abandoned armory is quick to grow into the massive terror that is the bane of all battlefields.

The magic binding that binds armories together does eventually fade away, causing the constructs' various collected items to become open for the taking. These mounds of equipment, typically overgrown with vegetation and hidden by the passage of years, contain treasure troves of items that are prized by fortune hunters. The process for an abandoned armory's collapse usually happens in one of two ways. The more common method is through the destruction of the construct. This usually damages many of the constituent items and makes the process of salvaging this equipment tedious at best. On the other hand, abandoned armories naturally collapse and dissipate when the magic that fuels them is exhausted. This usually happens to "longer-lived" abandoned armories that consume the innate magical energies after countless battles. The energy required to activate an abandoned armory's various abilities slowly saps these magical energies until the abandoned armory lacks enough energy to maintain its form.

## HABITAT AND SOCIETY

The abandoned armory is solitary, lacking the intelligence or empathy required to create bonds with other entities. No one claims to know what would happen if two or more abandoned armories happened to meet on some devastated ancient battlefield. Perhaps the constructs would sense an alignment of purpose, and fuse together to create a larger, even more formidable tide of metal destruction. Alternatively, the abandoned armories might simply clash mindlessly against one another until their constituent metal melted to slag and their magic power was spent.

Certain creatures have taken an interest in abandoned armories, almost to the extent of representing a symbiotic relationship. Scavenging tribes of goblins who forage at the edges of legendary battlefields have developed a near-religious awe of the constructs, and they regard the appearance of an abandoned armory both as a good omen and a prime opportunity to comb the destruction left by its passage for interesting new tools and trinkets. To attract an abandoned armory, the goblins erect crude fetishes at the edges of their territory, making offerings of assorted "magic" items in the hope of drawing the attention of the construct. The rare occasions when an abandoned armory does indeed appear are just as likely to result in the hopeful goblins being destroyed by a tide of unstoppable metal and magic as they are to fulfill the goblins' greed for treasure.



# Anisydaemon

*This fiend has pitch-black, rubbery skin pulled taut over an immense frame. Arms tipped with glistening claws hang past the creature's knees, and two constantly whispering mouths rest on its eyeless face.*

**ANISYDAEMON** **CR 13**

**XP 25,600**

NE Large outsider (daemon, evil, extraplanar)

**Init** +8; **Senses** *arcane sight,* blindsight 60 ft., *detect good*; Perception +21

**Aura** worry (30 ft., DC 22)

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 28, touch 13, flat-footed 24 (+15 natural, +4 Dex, –1 size)

**hp** 172 (15d10+90)

**Fort** +15, **Ref** +11, **Will** +14

**DR** 10/good and silver; **Immune** acid, death effects, disease, poison; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10

**Weaknesses** sunlight weakness

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +23 (1d8+9), 2 bites +23 (2d6+9 plus bleed)

**Special Attacks** bleed (1d4 Wisdom), devour soul, shadow possession

**Psychic Magic** (CL 15th; concentration +20)

10 PE—*babble*[OA] (3 PE, DC 18), *ego whip V*[OA] (7 PE, DC 22), *mental block*[OA] (2 PE, DC 17), *murderous command*[UM] (1 PE, DC 16), *psychic crush III*[OA] (7 PE, DC 22)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 15th; concentration +20)

Constant—*arcane sight*, *detect good*, *tongues*

At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 17), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *invisibility*

3/day—*crushing despair* (DC 19), *deeper darkness*, *nightmare* (DC 20), *suggestion* (DC 18)

1/day—*eyebite* (DC 22), summon (level 4, 2d4 ceustodaemons[B2] 80% or 1 anisydaemon 35%)

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 28, **Dex** 19, **Con** 22, **Int** 17, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 21

**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 39

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Stealthy, Skill Focus (Stealth)

**Skills** Acrobatics +22, Bluff +23, Intimidate +32, Knowledge (planes) +21, Knowledge (religion) +21, Perception +21, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +21, Stealth +32

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

**SQ** compression, hide in plain sight

**ECOLOGY**

**Environment** any (Abaddon)

**Organization** solitary, pair, or lurk (3–7)

**Treasure** standard

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Aura of Worry (Su)** Anisydaemons project a 30-foot aura of anxiety and insecurity. Each creature within 30 feet of the daemon must succeed at a DC 22 Will save or be affected by crushing despair for as long as it remains within the aura. Creatures that fail their save remain affected by the aura for 1d4+1 rounds after leaving the radius. The anisydaemon gains Fast Healing 5 for as long as at least one creature is affected by its aura. Additionally, creatures that fail their save cannot sleep or receive any benefits of rest while under the effects of the aura. An anisydaemon can activate or deactivate this ability as a free action. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Devour Soul (Ex)** Any creature that dies while affected by one of the anisydaemon's mind-affecting abilities—including its aura of worry—has its soul devoured by the fiend's second mouth. That creature cannot be resurrected by any effect short of *miracle*, *wish*, or direct intervention from a deity while the anisydaemon lives. Creatures whose souls have been devoured by an anisydaemon can be resurrected normally if the anisydaemon is slain.

**Hide in Plain Sight (Ex)** An anisydaemon can use the Stealth skill even while being observed. As long as it's standing in an area of at least dim light or shadow, an anisydaemon can hide itself from view without actually hiding behind anything. This ability has no effect if the anisydaemon is not in an area of at least dim light or in an area of shadow of at least Medium size.

**Shadow Possession (Ex)** As a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity if the target is aware of the daemon, an anisydaemon can enter the shadow of any creature to which it is currently adjacent. While within a shadow, the anisydaemon is considered to be sharing its target's space, though while the daemon is within a shadow, neither creature takes any penalties from squeezing. The anisydaemon can still affect creatures within 30 feet of itself with its aura of worry, though the daemon can target only the shadow's owner with its psychic magic or spell-like abilities. While within a shadow, an anisydaemon is considered incorporeal and takes half damage from spells and magic weapons. *Ghost touch* weapons affect it normally. An anisydaemon that dies while possessing a creature's shadow is immediately ejected to a random empty space adjacent to the creature. An anisydaemon can leave a shadow it is possessing as a move action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. If it does so, it is ejected into a free space of its choice adjacent to the creature whose shadow it was possessing. When an anisydaemon is possessing a creature's shadow, that creature cannot benefit from morale bonuses of any kind. An anisydaemon can use its Stealth skill to hide while within a shadow.

**Sunlight Weakness (Ex)** An anisydaemon exposed to

natural sunlight is unable to use any of its psychic magic or spell-like abilities and cannot project its aura of worry. An anisydaemon possessing a creature's shadow does not count as being in direct sunlight, even if the creature whose shadow it's possessing is.

Anisydaemons, or "worry daemons," represent death by stress and anxiety. Their work can be seen in the artisan who drives herself to death because she fears her work will never be good enough, or through the husband making himself sick wondering if his partner secretly has a lover and analyzing every detail of every interaction until his mind can no longer take the strain.

Anisydaemons average around 14 feet tall and weigh about 1 ton. Occasionally, some anisydaemons reach truly monstrous sizes after coaxing countless victims to their deaths. These fiends often grow additional mouths on other parts of their bodies, such as their hands or torsos, which magnify the power of their psychic whispers. Despite their bulk, those attempting to escape an anisydaemon discover the fiends can squeeze into impossibly small spaces in pursuit.

## ECOLOGY

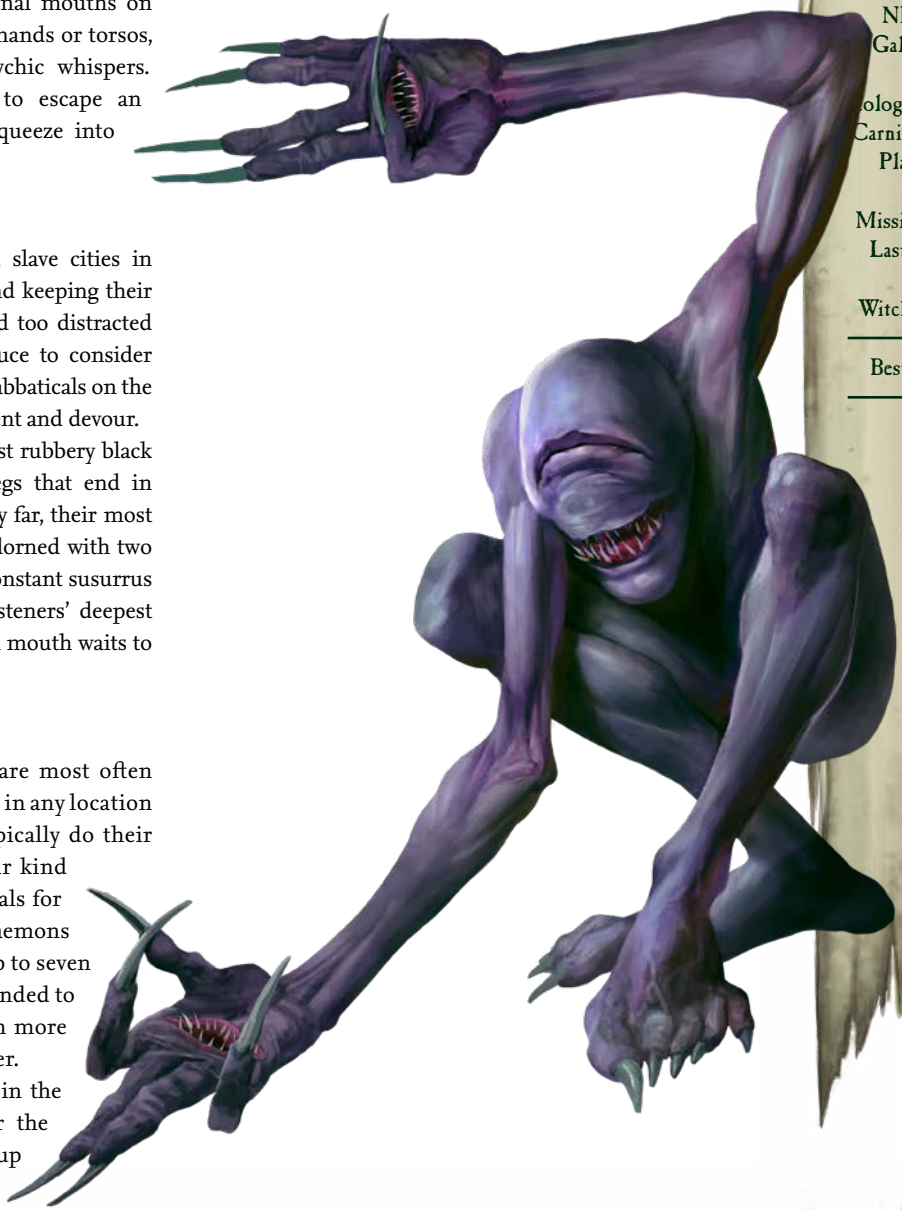
Anisydaemons are most often found in slave cities in Abaddon, stalking the mortal populace and keeping their minds too worn down to foster hope and too distracted by the problems their own minds produce to consider rebellion. However, they sometimes take sabbaticals on the Material Plane to find fresh souls to torment and devour.

The fiends have smooth, hairless, almost rubbery black skin. They're bipedal, with arms and legs that end in claws as sharp as a surgeon's blade. But by far, their most disturbing feature is their eyeless faces adorned with two wide maws. From the top maw comes a constant susurrus of whispers that seems to access any listeners' deepest worries and insecurities, while the bottom mouth waits to snatch the souls of the creature's victims.

## HABITAT AND SOCIETY

While they originate in Abaddon and are most often found there, anisydaemons can be found in any location with large amounts of people. They typically do their work alone, and they see others of their kind or of a comparable strength more as rivals for the same resources than as allies. Anisydaemons have been known to work in groups of up to seven of their own kind, but only when commanded to do so by a summoner or a daemon even more powerful than the group of them together.

Anisydaemons can be found working in the interests of any of the Horsemen. For the Horseman of War, they often help drive up levels of anxiety and paranoia between different groups, eventually culminating in each group believing that their best hope for survival is to eliminate the others. For the Horseman of Famine, anisydaemons often target the wealthy in times of scarcity and press upon their worries of starvation, leading them to hoard what little food is available and allowing countless poor to starve. The Horseman of Pestilence uses these daemons during outbreaks of sickness to convince the healthy their only hope of survival is to eliminate the sick, as such violence often ends up helping sickness spread anyway. Under the Horseman of Death, these fiends whisper of the horrible fates that await mortals after death and watch as the subsequent worry leads mortals to commit heinous acts to lengthen their life spans, ironically leading their souls closer to Abaddon in the process.



GARDENS OF GALLOWSPIRE
Part 1: And the Land Shall Rot
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Part 3: Lich's End
NPC Gallery
ology of the Carnivorous Plants
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Bestiary

# Cauldron Bloom

*Three thick vines sprout from this massive cylindrical plant's base. Ruddy light flickers beneath its sloping armored sides, and it exudes a palpable aura of magic.*

**CAULDRON BLOOM** **CR 15**

**XP 51,200**

N Colossal plant

**Init** +6; **Senses** blindsight 120 ft., low-light vision, tremorsense 1 mi., *true seeing*; Perception +33

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 28, touch 4, flat-footed 26 (+2 Dex, +24 natural, –8 size)

**hp** 231 (22d8+132)

**Fort** +21, **Ref** +11, **Will** +11

**Immune** plant traits; **SR** 26

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 10 ft., burrow 10 ft.

**Melee** 3 slams +24 (2d8+16)

**Space** 30 ft.; **Reach** 30 ft.

**Special Attacks** sanguine centrifuge (2d8+16 plus 3d6 bleed, AC 22, hp 27; DC 23), warping field (DC 23)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 22nd; concentration +24)

1/day—*greater teleport* (self plus stomach contents only; see text)

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 42, **Dex** 15, **Con** 27, **Int** 15, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +16; **CMB** +40 (+44 bull rush); **CMD** 52 (54 vs. bull rush)

**Feats** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Great Cleave, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception)

**Skills** Handle Animal +13, Perception +33, Perform (percussion) +13, Stealth +11 (+31 while underground), Survival +24; **Racial Modifiers** +20 Stealth while underground

**Languages** Sylvan, Terran (can't speak)

**SQ** terraforming teleport

**ECOLOGY**

**Environment** any cold land

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** standard

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Sanguine Centrifuge (Su)** Creatures that enter, or begin their turn within, the cauldron bloom's stomach take 2d8+16 points of bludgeoning damage plus 3d6 bleed as spinning arcane currents force the blood from their bodies. This bleed cannot be stopped while the creature is within the cauldron bloom's stomach. Corpses of creatures slain by this damage are torn apart, as *disintegrate*. Furthermore, creatures within the stomach must succeed at a DC 23 Reflex save to maintain control while caught in the currents or be nauseated for 1 round; creatures with freedom of movement are still affected but gain a +4 bonus on the saving throw. The save DC is Charisma-based. This otherwise functions as the swallow whole ability, with the following changes: a cauldron bloom can simultaneously hold up to one Gargantuan creature, two Huge creatures, four Large creatures, and so forth; swallowed creatures can use any of their available attacks to cut themselves free; and after a swallowed creature has cut itself free, the cauldron bloom can continue to teleport creatures into its stomach with its warping field ability, but it receives a cumulative –2 penalty to its ability DCs for each time a creature has cut its way out.

**Terraforming Teleport (Sp)** A cauldron bloom's *greater teleport* spell-like ability has a range of 1 mile, and the destination must be within enough stone, soil, sand, or similar material to surround the cauldron bloom's body. The material the cauldron bloom will occupy is in turn teleported to backfill the cavity left by the creature's departure. If a cauldron bloom attempts to teleport to an invalid location, the ability fails with no effect.

**Warping Field (Su)** A cauldron bloom draws prey close with invisible arcane strands, which it projects in one of two forms: diffuse or targeted. Projecting diffuse strands is a swift action, and forces each creature within 120 feet of the cauldron bloom to attempt a DC 23 Reflex save. A creature that fails the save is teleported 60 feet toward the cauldron bloom; if this would bring a creature or object within 30 feet of the cauldron bloom, it is instead teleported into the cauldron bloom's stomach. Projecting targeted strands is a standard action and forces one creature within 360 feet to attempt a DC 23 Fortitude save. If the creature fails, it is teleported into the cauldron bloom's stomach. Targets must be at least one size category smaller than the cauldron bloom, and this ability attempts to teleport the closest creature first. A creature cannot be teleported into the cauldron bloom if it would not fit, as noted above. Creatures affected by effects that block extradimensional travel, such as *dimensional lock*, are immune to this ability. Both save DCs are Charisma-based.

Cauldron blooms are immense, slow-moving subterranean plants that maintain their arcane metabolisms by consuming massive quantities of blood. They dwell in cold environs, typically along the migration routes of herd animals, and slowly teleport to new locations in search of food. Feeding cauldron blooms generally erupt from the ground in the midst of such herds. The animals' panicked cries are cut short when the terrified individuals wink out of existence, reappearing a moment later inside the cauldron bloom's otherworldly guts. Arcane winds within the cauldron bloom's stomach rapidly draw the blood from ingested prey, shred their bodies, and leave nothing behind. A particularly hungry cauldron bloom can systematically consume entire herds of animals, or

sequester one individual—such as an unlucky giant or megafauna—inside its stomach. The prey's blood fuels the plant's magical physiology, casting flickering arcane light as it distributes throughout the cauldron bloom's body.

Typically, cauldron blooms live for hundreds of years. Their bodies are around 15 feet in diameter and weigh upward of 80 tons.

## ECOLOGY

Cauldron blooms do not feed in a traditional sense. Instead, they wrap potential prey in invisible threads of magical energy. Snared creatures are teleported directly into the blooms' stomachs, where interior winds swirl in a roaring arcane centrifuge that forcibly extracts prey's blood and quickly renders any mundane organic material to a fine powder. Equipment and magical oddities are left behind, however, meaning clouds of manufactured shrapnel circulate within most older cauldron blooms.

Cauldron blooms most often dwell in cold regions. A consistent diet of blood is necessary for them to maintain a healthy and elevated internal temperature. They use their innate teleportation abilities to jump between subterranean points in pursuit of herding prey. Cauldron blooms give little sign of their presence while beneath the ground, and their senses are highly attuned to surface vibrations.

## HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Curiously, despite their warm-blooded nature and massive size, cauldron blooms don't exude heat. This allows them to go largely undetected between feedings. Their petals are also dexterous and quiet enough that their slow burrowing doesn't alert surface-dwellers. Intelligent, meticulous planners, most of these giant plants use their stealth to actively cultivate herds of prey animals. Cauldron blooms may divert water, manage predator populations, and engage in similar protective activities to ensure a long-term food supply.

The plants' unique method of locomotion means their habitats are pocked with incongruous subsurface materials. A marsh, for instance, may have a stand-alone deposit of dense stone, and a few settlements are even founded on such locations. A dead cauldron bloom, however, may be a hazard to the local environment, as its decay slowly turns the area into a giant sinkhole; a hole above a particularly ancient cauldron bloom eventually reveals a treasure trove of collected objects within the dead creature's gut.

Their heightened intellects mean that cauldron blooms are generally quite knowledgeable about local terrain, fauna, and even historical events, though such information is presented through the unique filter of a subterranean carnivorous plant. One historical record even describes a cauldron bloom with heightened telekinetic abilities working alongside smaller beings to build and protect an entire city; the report's veracity is the subject of ongoing and lively academic debate.



# Mortic, Etioling

*Glowing veins of green creep across the flesh of this pale, spasming gnome. Stifled giggles escape her rictus grin.*

**ETIOLING** **CR 10**

**XP 9,600**

CN Small humanoid (gnome, mortic)

**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +17

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 27, touch 23, flat-footed 22 (+4 armor, +7 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 size)

**hp** 112 (15d8+45)

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +10, **Will** +9

**Defensive Abilities** ectoplasmic shield, negative energy affinity

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** corrupting touch +11 (10d6)

**Special Attacks** corrupting touch

**Bard Spells Known** (CL 10th; concentration +17)

4th (2/day)—*dimension door*, *greater invisibility*

3rd (5/day)—*confusion* (DC 20), *crushing despair* (DC 20), *fear* (DC 20), *see invisibility*

2nd (6/day)—*darkness*, *glitterdust* (DC 19), *hold person* (DC 19), *minor image* (DC 19), *silence* (DC 19)

1st (7/day)—*disguise self*, *feather fall*, *hideous laughter* (DC 18), *silent image* (DC 18), *vanish*[APG] (DC 18)

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 17), *mage hand*, *open/close* (DC 17), *prestidigitation*

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 8, **Dex** 21, **Con** 17, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 24

**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 32

**Feats** Agile Maneuvers, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Ectoplasmic Spell[APG], Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility

**Skills** Bluff +17, Intimidate +17, Perception +17, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +21; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Intimidate, +2 Perception

**Languages** Common, Gnome, Sylvan

**SQ** ghostly gasp, mortic traits, spells

**ECOLOGY**

**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary, pair, or support group (3–5)

**Treasure** standard (mwk chain shirt)

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Corrupting Touch (Su)** An etioling can corrupt living flesh with her touch as a standard action. This attack inflicts a number of d6 equal to its CR in damage (10d6 for most etiolings). This damage is not negative energy—it manifests in the form of physical wounds and aches from supernatural aging. Creatures immune to magical aging are immune to this damage, as are undead and creatures with the mortic subtype; otherwise, the damage bypasses all forms of damage reduction. A successful DC 24 Fortitude save halves the damage dealt. An etioling cannot turn this ability off.

**Ectoplasmic Seep (Su)** An etioling's body constantly weeps ectoplasm—a physical manifestation of the bleachling apathy her body can no longer contain. Any creature touching or being touched by an etioling, or attacking her with a melee weapon, must succeed at a DC 20 Reflex saving throw or be coated in this fluid apathy, taking a –2 penalty on attack rolls, caster level checks, saving throws, skill checks, and weapon damage rolls until the ectoplasm can be scraped off as a standard action. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Ectoplasmic Shield (Su)** An etioling adds her Charisma modifier as a deflection bonus to her Armor Class.

**Ghostly Gasp (Su)** In addition to the normal abilities all mortics gain when using their death gasp, an etioling gains a fly speed of 30 feet (perfect) and can pass through walls and other solid obstructions as if under the effects of *ethereal jaunt*, except that the etioling cannot pass through living creatures or plants. While moving through a wall or other solid object in this way, the etioling treats the structure as difficult terrain and must use additional movement to pass through it.

**Spells (Ex)** An etioling casts spells as a 10th-level bard but cannot cast spells while holding her breath.

Perhaps the most miserable of the mortics—humanoids infused with necrotic energy—etiolings are born from gnomes who have already begun to suffer from the Bleaching. The burst of negative energy into their living flesh twists the process and awakens connections to the First World and long-lost fey magic, leaving the surviving creature ethereal, manic, and overflowing with the vital essence of fey. While they resemble bleachling gnomes, veins of primal, First World energy pump beneath an etioling's pale flesh. Occasional pulses of unchecked energy crackle across their flesh and hair.

Their transformation is hardly one of redemption. An etioling's touch decays living flesh to fuel the supernatural furnace that rages inside them, and their bodies shake uncontrollably as the churn of primordial magic and negative energy causes tremors and muscle spasms. Focusing for more than a few moments becomes impossible, and etiolings become creatures of instinct and impulse, acting on vague memories and emotional connections. Like ghosts, they stick for days or weeks into a routine, reliving some pivotal memory and assigning familiar identities to new people they meet. Etiolings suspend not only their living functions but also their physical connection to the living world, becoming ethereal when they hold their breath.

An etioling stands between 2 and 3 feet tall and weighs about 25 pounds.

## ECOLOGY

Outwardly, etiolings seem carefree and giddy—almost unsettlingly so—as they struggle to focus or hold still. Their existence is a constant battle of wills between the heady, screaming rush of euphoria provided by their rekindled connection to the First World and any semblance of rational thought. The struggle to maintain themselves can be overwhelming, and those who don't succumb to mania are often aggressive and irritable instead. This supernatural wellspring of emotion forces bleachling apathy from their bodies, manifesting it as a physical ectoplasm capable of turning aside attacks and infecting other creatures.

Like most mortics, etiolings spring forth from disaster. Anywhere negative energy intrudes on the living world—especially in powerful surges—gnomes risk this unnatural transformation. The infusion of necrotic power hijacks the Bleaching that most gnomes succumb to, warping their minds and reigniting ancient connections to sylvan magic. Most mortic gnomes develop unsettling or "ghostly" magic focusing on illusions, fear, and confusion, but others develop more primordial and fey magic that hijacks others' emotions and inspires endless revelry.

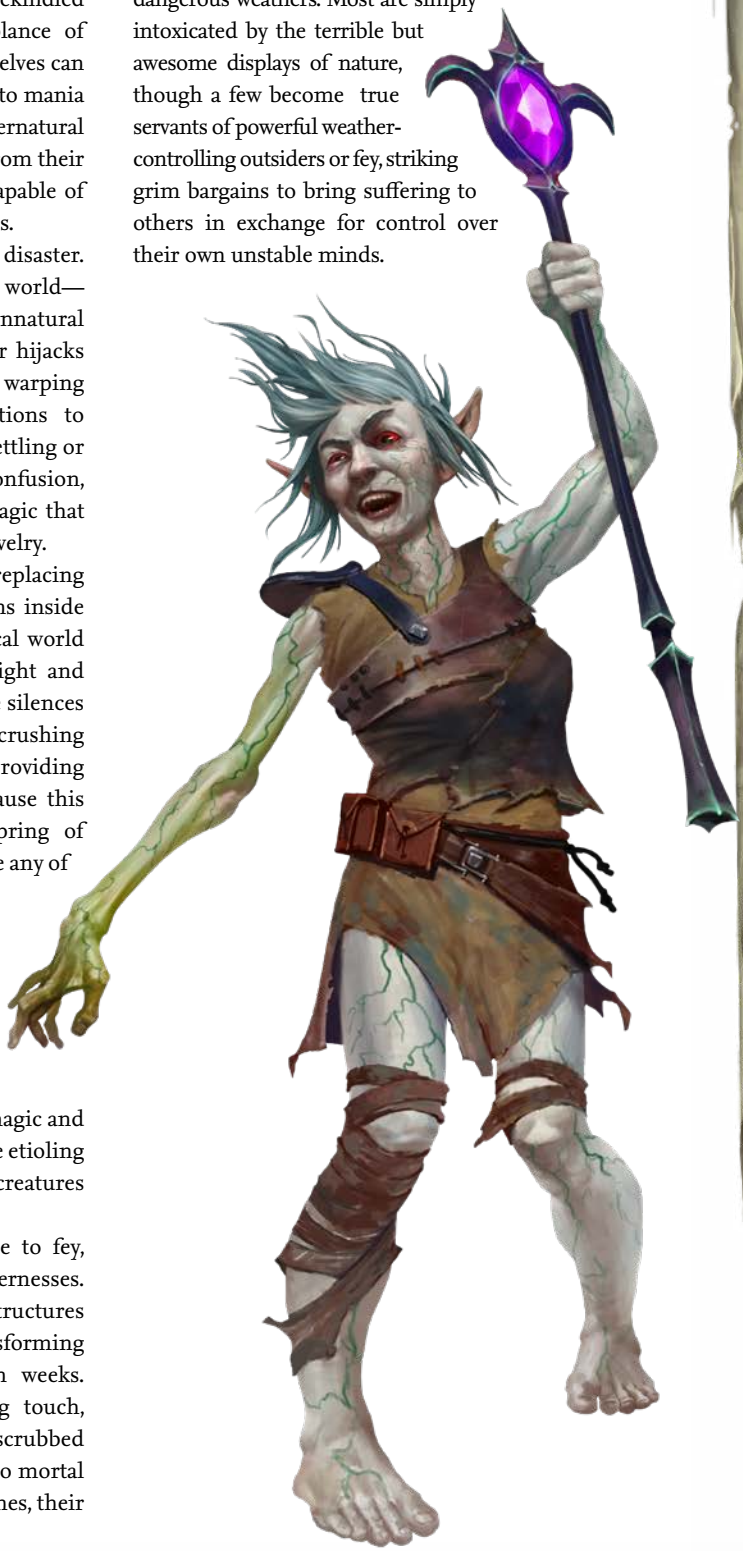
Whether courtesy of the negative energy replacing their souls or the powerful fey magic that burns inside them, etiolings can briefly slip from the physical world and become ghostly apparitions capable of flight and passing through solid matter. This ethereal state silences the mania bubbling from within and allows the crushing bleachling depression to flow over them, providing painful respite from their energetic lives. Because this unearthly state severs them from the wellspring of emotion that powers their magic, they cannot use any of their sylvan magic while incorporeal.

## HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Those etiolings who survive their radical change with their minds largely intact often band together in small communities for support. More often, evil and abusive fey flock to the mortic gnomes—attracted by the sylvan magic and primal emotion like flies to honey—and orbit the etioling to bask in the chaos they create or prey on creatures weakened by the dread gnome's deadly caress.

Thanks to their magic and incidental allure to fey, etiolings usually find homes in primeval wildernesses. Even those who take up residence in permanent structures find their magic and unwanted followers transforming any dwelling into an overgrown ruin within weeks. Because they cannot control their corrupting touch, anything the gnomes interact with regularly is scrubbed clean of life, from insects and moss to gardens to mortal neighbors. While the world around them flourishes, their own circles decay into tumbledown sterility.

Storms bring some measure of calm to the etioling's mind—as if the primordial energy within them were siphoned off by the more powerful forces swirling about—and the mortics can seem truly mad as they rejoice in dangerous weathers. Most are simply intoxicated by the terrible but awesome displays of nature, though a few become true servants of powerful weather-controlling outsiders or fey, striking grim bargains to bring suffering to others in exchange for control over their own unstable minds.



# Furcifer

*Twisting vines and vibrant flowers grow from the back of this titanic, multicolored reptile. A sickly-sweet scent fills the swirling air around it.*

**FURCIFER** **CR 13**

**XP 25,600**

CN Huge magical beast

**Init** +9; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +16

**Aura** deleriant aura (50 ft.)

**DEFENSE**

**AC** 27, touch 13, flat-footed 22 (+5 Dex, +14 natural, –2 size)

**hp** 171 (18d10+72)

**Fort** +15, **Ref** +16, **Will** +12

**Defensive Abilities** all-around vision, displacement, evasion, uncanny dodge; **Immune** illusions

**Weaknesses** vulnerability to cold

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

**Melee** bite +22 (2d6+6), 2 claws +22 (1d8+6), tail slap +17 (2d6+3) or
tongue +22

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (25 ft. with tongue)

**Special Attacks** pull (tongue, 10 ft.), swallow whole (3d6+6, AC 17, hp 17), tongue

**STATISTICS**

**Str** 22, **Dex** 21, **Con** 18, **Int** 5, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +18; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 41 (45 vs. trip)

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Run, Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth), Staggering Critical

**Skills** Climb +23, Perception +16, Stealth +21; **Racial Modifiers** Stealth +12

**Languages** Sylvan (can't speak)

**ECOLOGY**

**Environment** any forest

**Organization** solitary or pair

**Treasure** incidental

**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

**Deleriant Aura (Ex)** A furcifer's pollen induces euphoria and confusion, imposing a –2 penalty on Will saving throws on any creatures within 50 feet of the furcifer. Creatures immune to poison are immune to this effect.

**Displacement (Su)** A furcifer's illusory pollen constantly distorts its presence. It gains a 50% miss chance as if it had total concealment. Unlike actual total concealment, displacement does not prevent enemies from targeting the creature normally. *True seeing* reveals its true location and negates the miss chance, and creatures immune to illusions or poison are immune to this effect.

**Tongue (Ex)** A furcifer can grab a foe with its tongue and draw the victim to its mouth. This tongue attack has a reach of 25 feet. The attack deals no damage but allows the furcifer to grab its target. A furcifer does not gain the grappled condition while using its tongue in this manner.

**Utopia (Sp)** A furcifer is blessed with strange powers of illusion and can warp the world around it at will to seem idyllic and safe. This functions as a *mirage arcana* spell, though the furcifer's simplistic intellect means it may create unusual or surreal illusions based on what its victims find appealing. Creatures in the affected area may recognize the landscape as unnatural with a successful DC 20 Will saving throw; otherwise, the furcifer's powers lull them into accepting the impossible. Affected creatures cannot recognize any natural hazards in the area, and the furcifer itself appears as something harmless within the affected area, such as a flower-covered hill, quaint home, or friendly animal, making it effectively invisible; if the furcifer attacks, it immediately breaks the invisibility effect but does not end the *mirage arcana* effect. Creatures immune to illusions and mind-affecting effects are immune to this effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Standing as tall as a house and draped in intoxicating blossoms, the furcifer is a bizarre synthesis of reptile and plant born from enormous surges of positive energy. Despite their inviting, vibrant hides, furcifers are ravenous predators, capable of warping the world around them into almost any placid scene and concealing themselves from ordinary senses. These abilities make them extraordinary ambush predators, and parties of human-sized travelers are easily picked off one by one from above thanks to the clever reptilian hunters' long, prehensile tongues.

Lazy and patient, these large reptiles sometimes lull whole caravans into complacency, letting them linger in false wonderlands for days or weeks as the furcifer picks off its prey one at a time. Furcifers are cantankerous and stubborn, and dispense with all subtlety to pursue prey relentlessly if it escapes their illusory paradise.

Furcifers on average stand over 15 feet tall and 35 feet long thanks to their long, curled tails. Furcifers weigh up to 6-1/2 tons.

## ECOLOGY

A primordial creature of incredible size and impressive innate magic, the furcifer blends reptile and plant features into the form of a deadly ambush hunter. With the frame of a massive, hunchbacked lizard, opposable claws on each limb, a long prehensile tail, and a bony crest to protect their neck, this vicious beast lacks little in comparison to other predators. Despite all this, furcifers are lazy and capricious, preferring to lie in wait and snatch smaller prey with their long, prehensile tongues. Their

broad-set eyes can rotate independently, allowing them to look in multiple directions at once and constantly watch for other dangerous creatures.

Furcifers command impressive innate magic that allows them to cloak the world around them in a placid disguise. They have rudimentary psychic abilities and can read glimpses of whatever their prey finds inviting and harmless, and then spin those stolen images into a soft landscape. When confronting intelligent creatures, the beasts' limited intellects sometimes result in surreal illusions—such as fruit trees heavy with bunnies, rippling ponds sitting at angles in hillsides, or houses made from candy—but the mind-numbing euphoria of their magic often makes such impossible landscapes feel sensible to their unsuspecting prey.

The orchidlike plants growing from the furcifer's back help further define their abilities. Rather than a symbiotic relationship, the blossoms are as much a part of the predator's anatomy as its eyes or claws, and they secrete a sweetly scented narcotic pollen that lulls most warm-blooded animals into a mild euphoria. The plants provide some sustenance to the furcifer but also produce a bevy of alchemical reagents that help power its magical abilities as well as its consumption. With the aid of these botanical factories, furcifers can digest practically anything they can swallow—from rocks and debris to armor worn by their prey.

## HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Furcifers flourish in warm and temperate forests, as their cold-blooded nature and hothouse flower elements make them vulnerable to the cold. The resilient creatures could survive in desert and mountain environments if transplanted, limited only by available water and prey, but they rarely leave the familiar hunting grounds where they are born.

As asexual creatures, furcifers rely on pollinating insects for reproduction. Once their blossoms are fertilized, they release their spore-like eggs into the wind, and those that settle on trees develop into small, carnivorous flowers that feed on their host trees and passing insects and birds for several years before maturing into miniature furcifers that begin hunting. The youngs' first meals often consist of other larval furcifers that have yet to mature into their ambulatory states. On rare occasion, a single larval bloom will produce twin young, who bond and share their territory for life.

Infused with positive energy and strange alchemical reagents, furcifers are useful components for a variety of projects. Their pollen remains psychoactive for years after death, and the nectar harvested from a single beast can provides weeks' worth of potent hallucinogens. Their bones are coveted for magic items involving acid, and their skin can be readily fashioned into cloaks and robes with illusory properties. The flesh itself is mildly toxic, and dead furcifers may rot slowly for months rather than be scavenged by other animals.



# NEXT MONTH

## Borne by the Sun's Grace

*By Luis Loza*

Hurled across the world to the continent of Arcadia, the heroes enter a land of powerful magic beset by nefarious plots. The heroes' arrival in Arazni's homeland is no accident, but a desperate chance to realign the *obols* in their souls and prepare for their final clash against Tar-Baphon. But the Whispering Tyrant's reach is long; even in distant Arcadia, the heroes must contend with his machinations.

## Xopatl Gazetteer

*By Luis Loza*

From Apertan to Ziplatna, countless cities and ruins dot the exotic region of Xopatl in Arcadia. Explore this ancient realm and uncover a world of legendary treasures, storied hero-gods, and mystical couatls. Whether your players want to take part in a high-stakes game of boundball, explore long-lost cities hidden by powerful primal magic, or simply dine on delicious Arcadian cuisine, this gazetteer gives you all the tools you need to run unforgettable adventures in the Land of Promise.

## Barzahk, the Passage

*By Crystal Frasier*

The inscrutable psychopomps are outsiders that guide mortals from their demise on the Material Plane to their resting place in the afterlife, and the strongest of their kind—known as psychopomp ushers—command even more awesome powers bridging the gap between life and death. Enter Barzahk, the Passage, one of the most powerful psychopomp ushers in existence and guardian of the Dead Roads, the cosmic pathways walked by psychopomps to travel the multiverse and touch the lives of mortals. Lose yourself in the dogma of Barzahk's followers, learn spells known by priests of Barzahk, and more.

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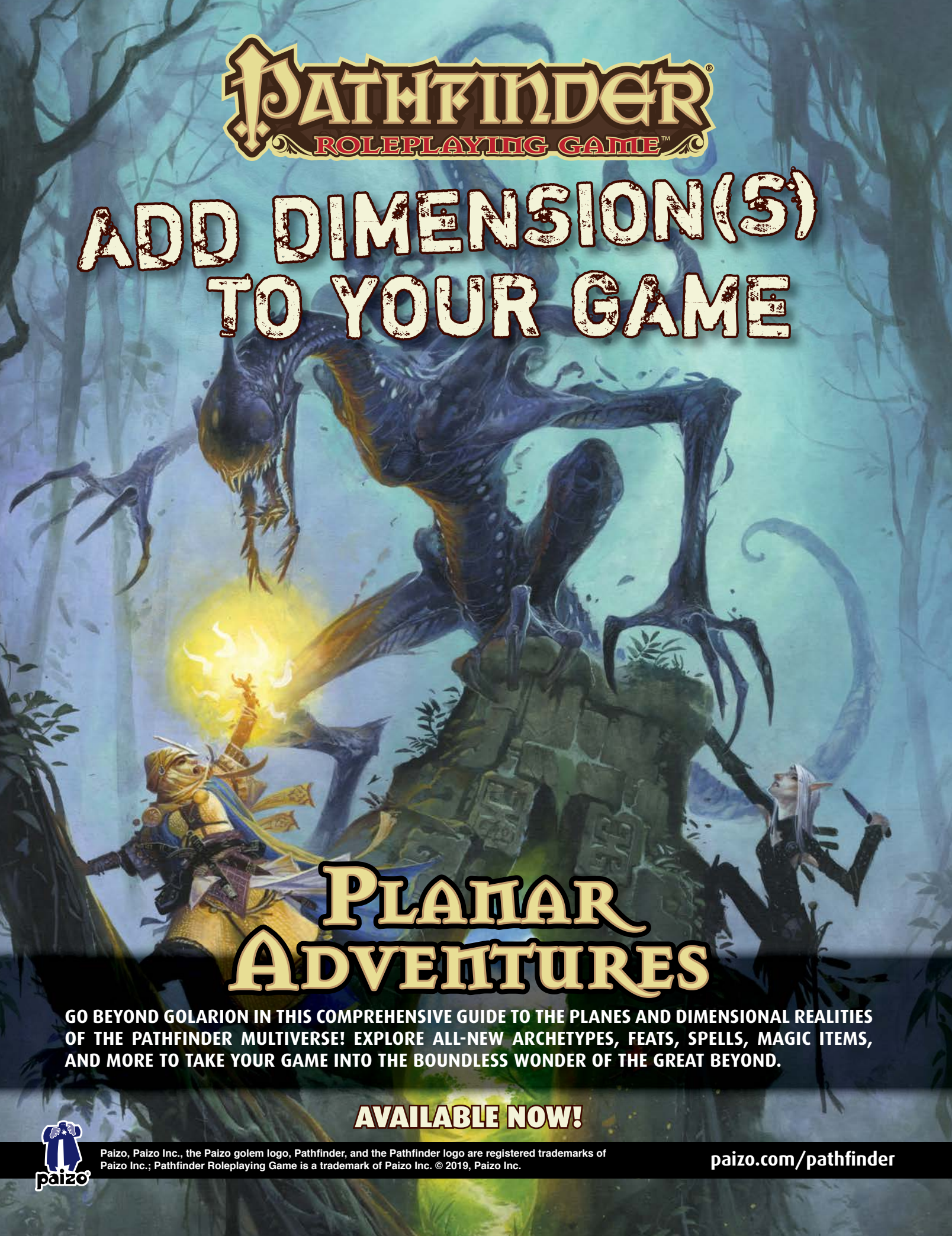
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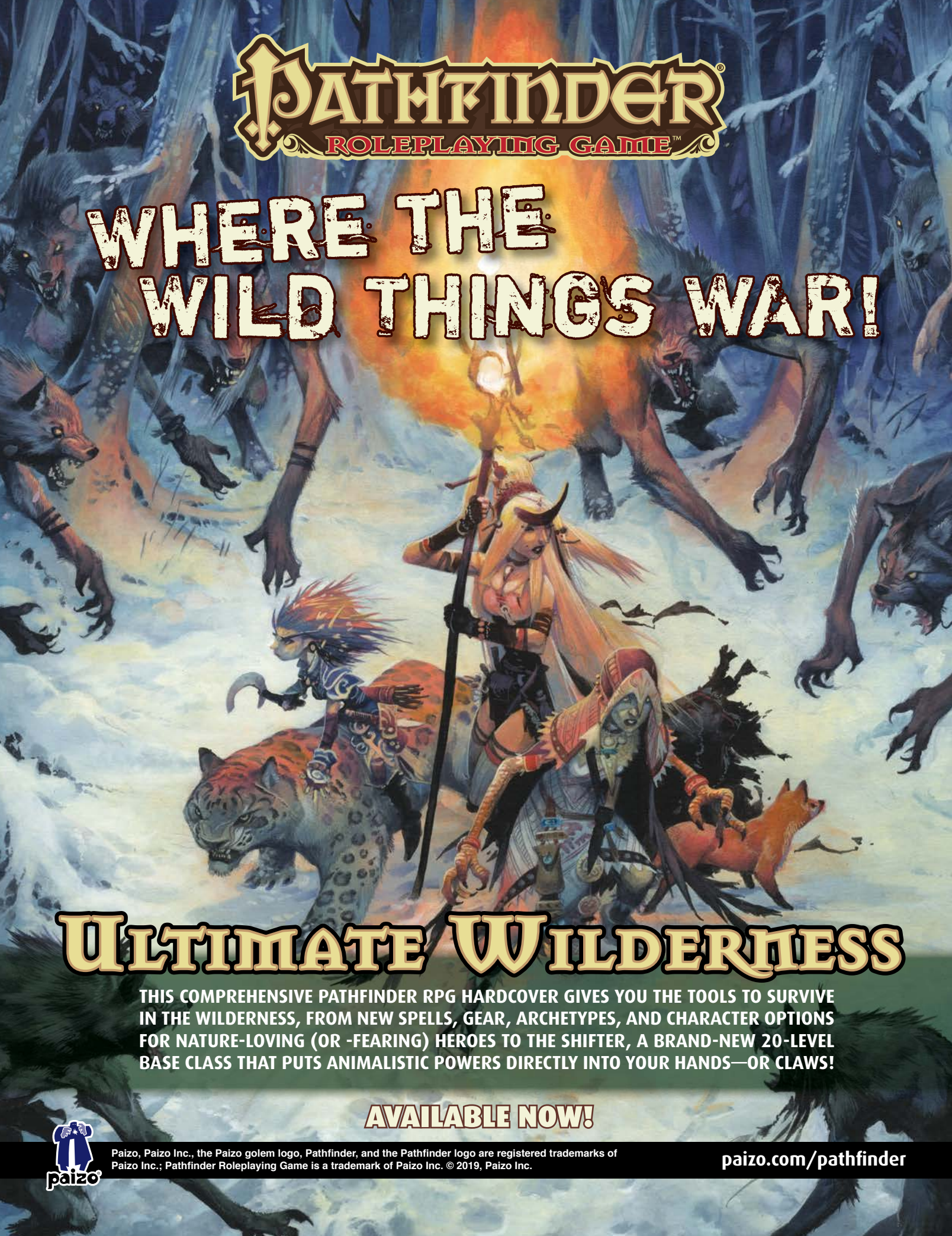
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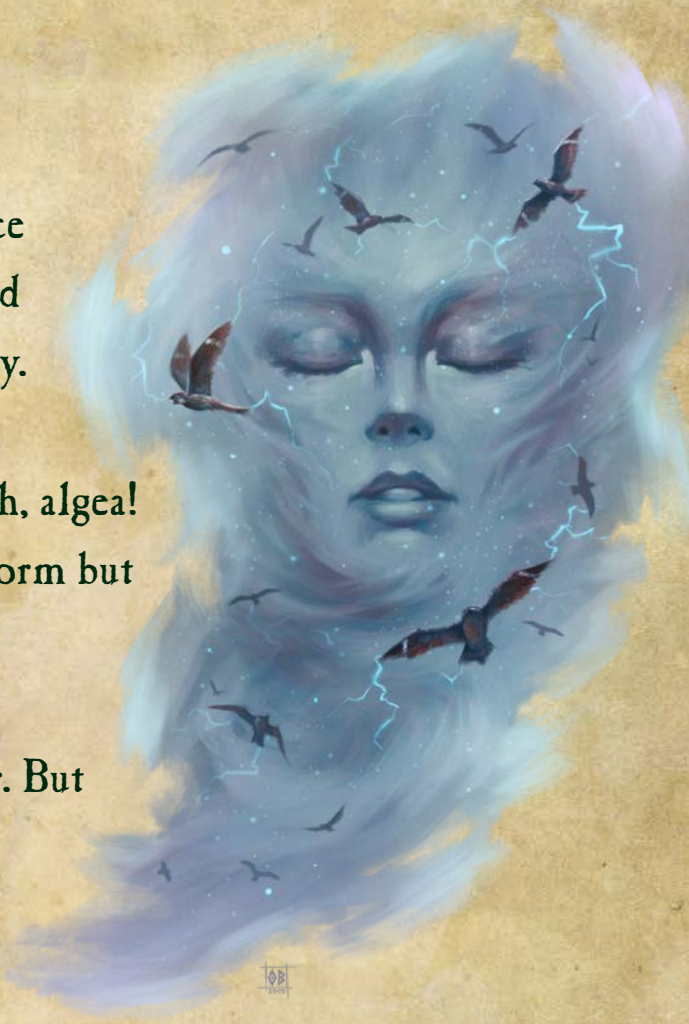

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# Algea

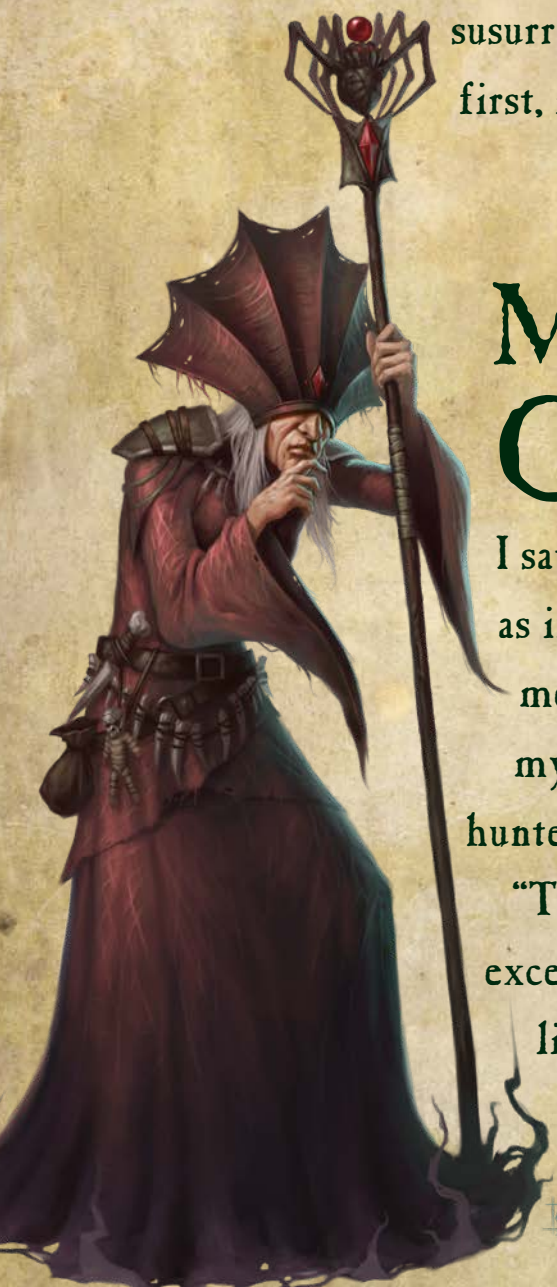


The pain was intense. The clawed essence being pulled from within me raged and thrashed. Screams could not stem the agony.

Then, a fluttering of wings. A flock of whippoorwills enveloped me. I begged, "Oh, algea! Peace-giver and consoler! A multitude in form but one in intent! Grant me solace!"

"Hush, dear one," called a voice amid the susurrus. "It will get better. But first, it must get worse."

# Morrigna



Clad only in spider webs and a wide mask, the morrigna regarded me with eyes I could not see. I sat up from the padded bier and held up my hands, as if to ward her away. "The essence that hid within me while I entered the Land of the Dead is gone, and my recovery continues. What business does a bounty hunter of the Boneyard now have with me?"

"They say your knowledge about us psychopomps exceeds that of nearly any mortal," she began. I blushed like a proud child at the praise. "But do you also know of the evil spirits called sahkils?"



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