

THUNDERSCAPE™ THE WORLD OF ADEN



The Lost Lexicon

Part II of VI - Radiant Demise

An adventure for 4th to 7th level characters

PATFINDER
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE



THE WORLD OF ADEN ORIGINALLY CREATED BY SHANE LACY HENSLEY

THE LOST LEXICON

Part II of VI: RADIANT DEMISE

An adventure for 4th to 7th level characters

Written by Rich Wulf



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THUNDERSCAPE

THE WORLD OF ADEN

The Lost Lexicon, Part 2 of 6 - Radiant Demise

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TO THE RADIANT NORTH!

Radiant Demise is designed for a party of four characters of about 4th level, though its encounters can easily be adapted for larger parties. The party should gain a level at or near the end of each Act. If using a longer mode of experience progression, sections featuring random encounters are provided in each chapter so that you can modify the adventure's length according to your play style. By the end of the adventure, the party should be approximately 7th level.

Adventure Summary

Like its predecessor, *Heart of the Machine*, this book is divided into two parts. The introduction catches up with events from the last chapter and describes the nation of Arasteen. The second part of this book features an adventure in three acts. An Appendix also included with statistics for new monsters, magic items, important NPCs, and other important information.

Prior to the beginning of this adventure, a group of Radiant knights stumble over an unsettling mystery outside the village of Murdoch's Cove, deep in the Arastinian marshlands. Undead slurgithians have begun to prey upon the local residents. Following a particularly vicious battle, the knights discover that the creatures were after a journal, carefully hidden away in a lost ruin. The journal is written in code, but features the crest of a famous Urbanan scholar - Sir James Dex.

The knights dispatch one of their own to the city of Mekanus in search of answers - and reinforcements. The knight finds that Dex is long dead, but that his former assistant - curator Dennison Waleroix - is willing to decipher the journal. Waleroix turns to his old friends, the player characters, for help.

After an eventful journey to Arasteen, the players learn that the undead slurgithians are controlled by mechemagical parasites. They also discover evidence that the sleepy village was secretly an ancient testing ground for a horrifying combination of necromancy and mechemagic, a secret Sir James Dex took to his grave. This same magic now empowers the undead manikins of Loireag Marsh. The party begins to hunt for the truth, hoping they can find a way to counter the growing plague of undead. This inevitably brings them into conflict with Karloff Radool, the mad alchemist who commands the manikins. He hopes to perfect this new breed of nocturnal nightmares, which leads him to seek more forbidden knowledge buried in the swamp.

The only way to stop him is to beat him to it.

This leads to an ultimate final battle within the village, as the players rally their allies to defend Murdoch's Cove from Radool's undead army.

Radool is no solitary madman; his true allegiance is to Shermazza, the same mysterious entity that menaced Mekanus in *Heart of the Machine*. Though the heroes may save Murdoch's Cove, their continued interference in Shermazza's plans will pit them against a dark power with sinister designs upon all of Aden.

This adventure places a focus on investigation and exploration. The story is flexible and open within each act, allowing players to take things at their own pace and discover the secrets of *Radiant Demise* in any manner that suits them. As previously mentioned, it also includes mechanics for quickly running random encounters so that it can flexibly accommodate games with any rate of experience progression.

The tale that began in the grim urban sprawl of Mekanus now continues into the legendary home of the Radiant Order - Arasteen. In *Heart of the Machine*, our indomitable player characters made their names as agents of the Cogswheel Irregulars. In *Radiant Demise*, they step forth into a much larger world. Traveling north through the desolate wastelands of Urbana, they enter Arasteen. In stark contrast to the industrialized landscape of Mekanus, much of Arasteen remains a lush and vibrant wilderness. This peaceful first impression quickly proves to be deceiving, as our heroes learn that the Radiant North has more than its share of troubles - and their enemies are already here.

If the characters have played *Heart of the Machine*, this adventure picks up a few months after the climactic battle against the Circle of Fire and Steel in the Lost Ghetto. Optimally, things should begin in the spring or summer to facilitate travel to the Radiant North (if traveling in fall or winter, adjust travel times and hazards accordingly). If the party has not played *Heart of the Machine* - not to worry! Though all chapters of *The Lost Lexicon* are designed to work as part of an overarching storyline, they can also be played separately with only minor adjustments. The only necessary preparation is to determine a reason for the characters to be searching for mercenary work in the city of Mekanus. Just keep in mind that some characters, alliances, enemies, and ongoing subplots from the previous adventure continue to play a part in this one, so it is recommended to play each chapter of *The Lost Lexicon* for the full effect.

- RECAP - THE STORY SO FAR

The first part of this Adventure Path allows for a number of different outcomes. This summary is not meant to ignore or overrule any actions that the player characters took. It is only meant to be a summary of the most likely course of events, intended for those who have not played the first chapter or who merely wish to refresh their memory.

The city of Mekanus has a problem. The threat of the Darkfall has driven much of Urbana's populace into its walled cities. Though Urbana boasts the most highly-trained and well-equipped soldiers in Aden, they are far too concerned with their supernatural enemy to deal with mundane matters. It falls to the people to protect themselves from an unprecedented surge in violent crimes.

To this end, a secret organization of nobles, merchants, and retired military have united to restore order. Calling themselves the Elders of



Mekanus, they have created a system by which freelance mercenaries are deputized as agents of Urbanan law. These agents - the Cogswheel Irregulars - deal with the worst of the city's crimes for a fee. The player characters are members of this controversial society of lawmen.

Over the course of several missions, the heroes built a reputation and attracted attention from various powerful individuals in the city, particularly the Eye and the Ghosts of Columbey. As Urbane's secret police, the Eye sought to use the characters to hunt out hidden agents of the Darkfall and threats to Lord Urbane's power. The Ghosts of Columbey attempted to enlist the heroes' aid in their ongoing quest to overthrow the Iron Tyrant and restore the Tarello Dynasty to the throne. Depending on the heroes' actions, they might have allied with one of these powerful factions.

Later, the party's aid was requested by Dennison Walcroix, curator of the Urbanan Museum of History and member of the Elders of Mekanus. Following Lord James Dex's death, Walcroix became executor of Dex's estate. In life, Lord Dex had been a legendary adventurer and scholar, but he had also been an outspoken political opponent of Lord Urbane. As a result, Urbane's soldiers spared only a small detail to protect Dex's hoard of priceless treasures until they could be sold at auction to pay off his debts. Walcroix was unwilling to see his old friend's legacy plundered by thieves - so he turned to the player characters for help with security.

Days after the auction, the party came into conflict with the Circle of Fire and Steel. These Darkfall cultists infiltrated the corrupted Lost Ghetto of Mekanus and sought to plunder the lost treasures of Lord Dex's long-abandoned mansion. Upon reaching the basement, they found they could not breach the massive vault doors. They kidnapped Walcroix, intending to force him to reveal how to open the vault.

Ironically, Dex had only shared this vault's command word with Walcroix himself. Rather than surrender the vault to the cult, Walcroix hatched a desperate gambit. He told the cultists that only the player characters had the information they sought. The cult attacked the party, but only succeeded in drawing their attention. The heroes tracked the Circle of Fire and Steel to their lair, defeated the cultists and their nocturnal ally, Terabit, and rescued Dennison Walcroix. Upon opening the vault of Lord Dex's estate, they discovered that most of the tomes within had been destroyed by the elements. Only a few items of value remained. Among these was a unique and legendary relic - the Heart of Tarello.

PICKING THINGS UP

For the sake of simplicity, the written text of this adventure assumes that Dennison Walcroix survived the first chapter and is on relatively good terms with the party. As *Heart of the Machine* can end in a variety of ways, things may require a bit of adjustment depending on what the player characters did. While you should feel free to create your own story organically as these things develop, the following section is designed to help answer a few of the more common possible results so that you will know what impact they have on the future plotline of *The Lost Lexicon*.

What Happened to Dennison Walcroix?

It is entirely possible that the curator perished in the final conflict. If this is the case, his position (both as curator and as an important supporting character in this adventure path) is filled by Lord Dex's niece, Amara Dex. When Sir Trask Calder arrives searching for Lord Dex, he inevitably seeks out the deceased scholar's only living kin.

Though Amara followed in her uncle's footsteps and studied his work, she was never invited on any of his expeditions due to her rela-

tive youth and inexperience. She still can't shake the feeling that there was something mysterious about Lord Dex, so she leaps at the chance to investigate the goings-on in Murdoch's Cove and perhaps find some answers.

Amara knows the player characters only by reputation, but is aware that they had something to do with the strange events surrounding Dex's estate auction. She turns to them, hoping they are willing to help her find the truth.

Use Dennison Walcroix's statistics from the Appendix to represent Lord Dex's adventurous niece (except for his gender, of course).

Does Walcroix Hate the Party?

Not all player characters are nice people. Maybe your heroes are known to engage in a bit of graft or corruption. Maybe our ostensible heroes got on Walcroix's bad side at some point. Perhaps he caught them stealing some of Dex's treasures. Perhaps their repeated failures to stop the thieves earned his ire. Perhaps they were simply rude. These things happen.

If any of these are the case, it may seem unlikely that Walcroix would turn to the player characters for help, or that Commander Thale would recommend them for such an important mission. In this scenario, Walcroix is out of town on an expedition when Sir Trask Calder arrives. Amara Dex, described above, happens to be visiting Mekanus and crosses paths with the knight. Eager to learn more about her mysterious uncle, Amara lies to Calder, claiming to be the foremost expert on her uncle's work. Calder is too eager to get back to Murdoch's Cove to question her claim.

Eager to leave town quickly, Amara Dex turns to the Cogswheel Irregulars to hire a group of mercenaries for protection. Given that, in this scenario, the characters probably have a reputation for failure and/or rudeness, it is only logical that Commander Thale would choose the player characters, if only to get them out of her hair for a bit.

This scenario's version of Amara is more openly manipulative and deceitful in her pursuit of her uncle's secrets. If she discovers some of the darker things her uncle was up to, she's likely to keep them to herself (leaving the heroes to stumble over the truth at some inopportune moment). This could make for some interesting interactions later in the adventure when and if the players discover that they have been misled.

What Happened to the Cultists?

Unbeknownst to the player characters at this time, the Circle of Fire and Steel was a small sect of the much larger Cult of Shermazza. Even if no members of the Circle survived *Heart of the Machine*, Shermazza has monitored events through the amulets the cult's officers wear, and is well aware that the player characters have interfered with his schemes.

What about surviving cult members? Low-ranking members of the cult (those without the Blessings of Shermazza) aren't a concern. They don't know enough about what's going on to be a threat to the cult or useful to the player characters. Higher ranking cult members are another matter.

If Trina Varlen survived, she abandons her fellow cultists and uses her magic to escape the city. Shermazza will eventually track her down, through her blessing, and return her to the fold.

If Grieve Warnought survived, he will rally any of the other lower-ranking survivors and plan his revenge. This will most likely consist of brazenly attacking the player characters on the road to Murdoch's Cove. Grieve isn't the creative sort. You can easily resolve this with an encounter during the journey, allowing the players a final confrontation with Warnought.

If Magnus Steelfist survived (and Arnagaith Touches-Fire was killed or captured), he goes into hiding in Shadowall in an attempt to escape the cult. Shermazza's assassins will track the jurak through his bless-

A Note on NPCs

You may notice some unusual features on the NPCs in this adventure, such as traits and favored class bonuses. Though these options are usually the domain of player characters, we have chosen to give them to important NPCs as well. We feel this is a good way to offer more variety as well as a greater challenge.

ings. If the players are allied with the Eye or the Grinvoj Syndicate, they may learn that the jurak's mangled body was found in a Shadowwall alley several days later, stripped of its manite implants.

If Arnagaith Touches-Fire survived, he overrules all of the above. Touches-Fire will gather any other survivors not currently in captivity and flee with them back to Le'Ciel.

Captive cultists are another matter. Most cultists don't know much; they can only reveal the information listed on page 41 of *Heart of the Machine*. Steel and Fire know more, but are harder to crack. Under most forms of interrogation, they remain silent. If interrogated by the Eye (who insist on doing so in secret), the cult leaders are more forthcoming. Steel will reveal his debt to Fire. He knows that the rapacious consorts with nocturnals and prays to an entity named Shermazza. Fire viciously curses his interrogators and promises that Shermazza's

vengeance will fall upon them all, and that "Shermazza will defy death itself." He will not, however, reveal who or what Shermazza is and commits suicide in captivity at the first opportunity. The Eye will only share the results of interrogations if the players are allied with them.

If the party looted any *Amulets of Shermazza*, keep note of them. Shermazza can monitor those who carry its symbol. This could potentially make things quite deadly later on, as Karloff Radool and his manikins will be able to track the party more easily.

Where Is the Heart of Tarello?

This mysterious royal artifact can be found in Lord Dex's vault, and once belonged to the Tarello dynasty of Columbey. If the party gave the amulet to Dennison Walcroix, he wears it throughout this adventure. If the party gave the amulet to the Ghosts of Columbey, the Ghosts are grateful for the artifact's recovery. If the party calls on the Ghosts for aid during the Siege of Murdoch's Cove, they will gladly send aid (as described later in this adventure). If the party gave the amulet to the Eye, they take it to their tower in Mekanus for further study. (The Heart of Tarello will play a larger part in later chapters, so keep track of what happens to it.)





ARASTEEN

THE PATH, THE ORDER, AND THE CODE

The ancient nation of Arasteen predates the Peace of the Rose by at least a century. It has ever been a blessed land, rich in fertile soil and mineral resources. It is protected on two sides by the sea and on a third by the North Wall Mountains. Columbey, their sole neighbor to the south, maintained robust trade and good relations with them from the Peace of the Rose until the Darkfall. This combination of circumstances left Arasteen free from strife, barring the occasional pirate attack, bandit uprising, or incursion by Grey Isles necromancers. Much like the Beacon that emblazons their flag, Arasteen stood as a shining example of prosperity for all of Aden.

THE RADIANT ORDER

Though Arasteen is often mistaken for a theocracy, the Radiant Order (which governs Arasteen) and the Radiant Path (its national religion) have been distinct and separate bodies for several centuries. In many ways, the distinction is slim. Most Arastinians are adherents of the Radiant faith, the tenets of which are, in turn, based heavily upon the Order's Radiant Code. The great Twin Virtues of Justice (also called Judgment) and Compassion (also called Love) guide every aspect of Arastinian law and culture. Further, many members of the Radiant Order (including the King) frequently turn to Radiant priests for counsel.

What sets Arasteen apart from a true theocracy (such as Carraway) is that while the leaders of its faith and government influence one another, they are not the same individuals. Overall, Arastinian society is closer to a traditional feudal system. Society is divided into distinct classes and each class is expected to fulfill a unique role for the good of society. Unlike in many feudal systems, Arasteen's classes have greater social mobility.

The peasantry is Arasteen's largest social class. These are common folk - farmers, craftsmen, and soldiers. Peasants receive fair wages

for their labor and are free to relocate to another noble's holdings if they wish to seek better opportunities. Skilled merchants, craftsmen, and artists can accrue considerable wealth and influence in Arasteen, though they are expected to pay a portion of their income as taxes to the nobility.

Those who are born into land-owning families comprise the nobility. Nobles hold titles, collect taxes, and protect their peasants with the knights and soldiers in their employ. Within their territory, nobles are the absolute authority so long as they obey the Radiant Code and the King. An Arastinian's class is determined by birth. However, the King and Templars have the power to grant noble titles for meritorious service or strip them for failure to perform one's duties. A peasant who marries a noble is promoted to noble status.

The Order stands apart from and above Arastinian society as a whole. Those who join the Order give up their former social class, though former nobles are allowed to retain their noble titles, if not always their positions. In return, they dedicate themselves to the Radiant Code as well as a lifetime of service to the Arastinian people.

The King of Arasteen does not hold absolute authority, as in many other nations. He shares his duties with the Templar Council. Most edicts require the Council's approval to pass into law. The King does, however, hold many unique powers. The King can declare war, temporarily overrule existing laws, and grant criminal pardons. Only the King can appoint a new Paladin. The King can bestow or strip noble titles. The King can grant Arastinian citizenship to foreigners. Finally, only the King can propose amendments to the Radiant Code (though these must be approved by three quarters of the Templar Council).

Though the King may choose to call upon the expertise of specific Templars in certain situations, all members of the Council are otherwise considered equal. There is, technically, a complex hierarchy of seniority among them, but this only applies in the unusual event that the King and Paladin perish before a successor can be named. In this case, the senior Templar acts as King until the Council can vote to determine a new King from among their number.

A Word on Character Classes

The Twin Virtues drive the Order toward a heroic code often associated with a lawful good alignment. This might lead one to believe that all of them are paladins, or even that all of them are lawful good. This is untrue. While many Radiant Knights are paladins, most are other character classes. The only virtually nonexistent classes among the Order are fallen and seers. This is not to say a knight who becomes a seer or fallen would not be a permissible - and very interesting - character choice.

To make matters more confusing, the King's successor is referred to as the Paladin (always upper-case) and many knights-errant refer to themselves as "paladins" no matter what their actual class may be. In this case, this is merely an instance where normal language and game mechanics divert from one another, the same way that not everyone who fights is a fighter. Even the Paladin himself is not always a paladin. Priests of the Radiant Path are likewise not always clerics or oracles. Due to the Path's emphasis on learning and their extensive libraries, a priest is as likely to be a wizard, steamwright, or mechatmage.

As for alignment, individual perceptions of morality can lead to skewed or selfish interpretations of the Code. As is described in the *Thunderscape Campaign Setting*, the Twin Virtues are often interpreted to selfish ends. While a somewhat higher than average number of knights are lawful and/or good, plenty of them are neutral and some are downright evil. The Radiant Knights aspire to greatness - but some fall tragically short.



The Radiant Code

At its core, Arastinian philosophy might seem simple, as it can be boiled down to the Twin Virtues - Compassion and Judgment. In practice, things are more complex. The Radiant Code, first drafted by King Tirrian, is a comprehensive analysis of these virtues and their application in all aspects of life. For members of the Radiant Order, adherence to the Code is mandatory and legally binding. Any proven violation will result in commensurate punishment.

Edicts of the Code are divided into Spiritual Edicts and Mortal Edicts. Spiritual Edicts govern thought and behavior, while Mortal Edicts govern action. As Spiritual Edicts are highly subjective, a knight cannot be prosecuted for breaking them unless he faces related charges for a Mortal Edict. Most, but not all, Mortal Edicts are part of Arastinian law and apply to all citizens. These include laws regarding theft, violence, public decency, and other acts normally regarded as crimes in civilized nations.

Only knights (and, by extension, Templars) are legally obligated to obey the entire Code, though hospitalers and devout followers of the Radiant Path often do so voluntarily, even going so far as to seek penance if they violate Spiritual Edicts. For many Arastinians, those who obey the Code are seen as virtuous, moral, and worthy of respect. A true knight should follow the Code not because he must, but because he chooses to. While the Code is extensive and complex, a few of the more important Spiritual Edicts are as follows:

- 1) Be forthright and respectful in your dealings with others.
- 2) Demonstrate wisdom in thought and deed.
- 3) Protect the innocent, the weak, and the helpless.
- 4) Always offer mercy to a defeated foe; always accept an honorable surrender.
- 5) Always deliver justice to the wicked in accordance with the law.
- 6) Never refuse a challenge from a worthy opponent.
- 7) Spread the wisdom of the Radiant Path to those who will hear it.
- 8) Obey those in authority and show respect for one's host.
- 9) Defend the honor of one's comrades and brethren on the Radiant Path.
- 10) Always serve as a beacon of honor, courage, hope, and faith.

RELIGION IN ARASTEEN

Described in detail in Chapter 5 of the *Thunderscape Campaign Setting*, the Radiant Path is by far the dominant religion in Arasteen. The Divine Miasma has begun to develop influence in Redbeach and other settlements on the Urbanan border, and many settlements with large goeaux or dwarven populations acknowledge the Divine Machination, but even these individuals frequently adhere to the Twin Virtues as well as their own belief systems.

Membership in the Radiant clergy is open to all races, genders, and social backgrounds. The only exception is that its members may not also be members of the Radiant Order. Those accepted into the clergy are entitled to education in any of the seven Radiant Cathedrals throughout Arasteen, each of which also serve as the nation's largest libraries and archives of magical lore. The role of educator and priest are one in the same in Arasteen; even humble village priests often serve as the local schoolteacher.

While priests technically retain their prior social standing, they are expected to put aside their previous influence and responsibilities. A large number of priests are second sons or other children unlikely to inherit their parents' holdings and titles, but priests can come from all walks of life. Radiant priests are bound to numerous vows governing their behavior, including honesty, humility, celibacy, and chastity. Those who

break these vows are viewed with scorn, with the exception of those who willingly leave the priesthood to marry. As love is one of the great virtues, leaving the clergy to pursue it incurs no dishonor.

Priests of the Radiant Path are forbidden to join the Radiant Order, but they do not stand completely apart from the government and military. Priests often serve as chaplains and medical officers. Others serve as counselors for influential bureaucrats. The best educated among them find employment as royal ambassadors or advisors to the Templar Council.

The Radiant Path has a controversial reputation in foreign lands due to its practice of vigorous proselytization. While the Path does not require its worshippers to forsake other religions that do not conflict with its edicts, some missionaries can be overzealous in interpreting such conflicts (especially those thousands of miles from the Templar Council's oversight). A number of violent misunderstandings have broken out over the centuries, instigated by arrogant missionaries and intolerant heathens in equal number. As a result, Radiant priests are an unwelcome sight in many nations.

THE RADIANT NORTH



Relations with Other Nations

Arasteen's strongest allies have traditionally been Aramyst and Columbey. Following the Darkfall, Aramyst lies in ruins and Columbey has been replaced by the dystopian technocracy of Urbana, leaving the Radiant North with no strong allies.

In matters of international diplomacy, the Radiant Order, Radiant Path, and Arasteen itself are effectively one and the same. Most foreigners see little distinction between Arasteen and other theocracies. Though Arasteen's missionaries and knights-errant mean well, they sometimes clash with local authorities over differing ethics. Arastinians are notorious for speaking out against corruption, prejudice, and abuse of power no matter where they find it. Of course, the Radiant Order is not always in the right. For example, Arastinian distrust of necromancy and spirit summoning has led to violent conflicts with other nations. Overall, these actions have earned Arasteen a reputation as a nation of self-righteous meddlers.

Vanora remains on particularly icy terms due to an incident known as the Night of Flames. Two hundred years ago, a group of Radiant missionaries led by an arrogant priest named Solthan Nygaard declared the Path of Ten Beasts heretical and obscene. The missionaries burned three villages to the ground before they were crushed by an army of Vanoran samurai. Though the King of Arasteen denounced the missionaries and offered restitution to the Emperor, the incident has never been forgiven. To this day, Arastinians are forbidden to preach the Radiant Path on Vanoran soil on pain of death.

Carraway and Ionara are more passively resentful, viewing any attempt to spread the Path as pure cultural arrogance. Wild lands such as the Rhanate and the High Steppes are openly distrustful, as they resent any foreign attempts to assert order. Other nations, such as Yzeem and Le'Ciel, can sometimes be too welcoming. They eagerly invite Radiant knights to risk their lives fighting the bandits, pirates, and monsters that plague their lands while their own soldiers remain safely uninvolved. For knights in foreign lands, finding the balance between political pawn and political outcast is difficult.

In recent years, the greatest source of political tension has been Arasteen's former friend, Urbana. While Lord Urbane's success in battling the Darkfall cannot be denied, Arasteen cannot ignore the many injustices the Iron Tyrant has inflicted upon his people. That Urbana has made little effort to renew Columbey's friendship (outside of trading with them) only makes the Templar Council nervous. They know that the Urbanan war machine hunger's for natural resources, and it is only a matter of time before that hunger leads Lord Urbane north into the





Cultural Purity

One Arastinian law that foreigners often find peculiar (and that dates back to Oldarus, one of their more peculiar kings) is the Cultural Purity Edict. By this law, artifacts of artistic or historical significance are illegal to sell or move beyond Arasteen's borders without the permission of their creator or the Templar Council.

This includes any artwork, sculpture, or archaeological relics that relate to Arasteen's early history or prehistory, including the various Formori relics that appear in this adventure. Slurgithian cultural artifacts are also protected. The punishment for this crime is typically a fine of 200 to 1000 gold per artifact, depending on the value of the items in question.

Those who discover such items are expected to donate them to the Radiant priesthood (who do not officially pay for them, but commonly reward the finders with healing services or magical items).

Dark Necromancy

Since the days Tirrian first led the Radiant Order to battle against the Grey Masters, Arastinians have seen necromancy as a foul and sinful type of magic. For centuries, necromancy was outlawed in Arasteen, regardless of how it was used. In the year 847, a Templar wizard named Arus Kinley lobbied to amend these laws, creating a distinction between light necromancy, dark necromancy, and shadow necromancy.

In legal terms, light necromancy is defined as the manipulation of necromantic energies for benevolent, defensive, or temporary purpose (such as *gentle repose* or *false life*). Dark necromancy is the use of necromancy to create undead abominations as well as to kill or to inflict permanent afflictions upon others (such as *animate dead*, *finger of death*, or *bestow curse*) and is considered an obscenity according to Arastinian law. Shadow necromancy consists of necromantic spells used to inflict temporary injury or debilitation (such as *vampiric touch* or *fear*). While this sort of magic is frowned upon, it is not illegal in Arasteen when used in self-defense (and an obscenity when used otherwise).

In recent years, mechamages have lobbied to exclude corpse golems from the category of dark necromancy. While such golems are currently legal to possess in Arasteen, it is illegal to construct them within the Radiant North's borders. As it can be difficult to distinguish a corpse golem from a common undead, misunderstandings are common.

lush fields of Arasteen. Rumors of Urbana's secret alliance with Ionara paint a grim picture for Arasteen's future, as they now stand between two of the greatest armies on the face of Aden and have no strong allies.

Climate and Natural Hazards

Arasteen is largely temperate, tending toward colder temperatures along the northern coast. Though the nation is named the Radiant North for its warm summers and brilliant sunshine, it is also a rainy place. Heavy rainfall is common along the western edge of the North Wall Mountains. Fierce storms often roll in from Broken Bay, where the warm ocean currents of the Green Sea meet with the colder Blue Flows. Hurricanes in Arasteen's port cities occur rarely, as well as the occasional tornado in the lowland plains. Mudslides and avalanches are constant dangers for those living beneath the North Wall. The most common hazard is flooding. Spring thaws and the onset of the rainy season often bring severe floods to Arasteen's river communities, a harsh reality that the inhabitants have learned to endure.

Crime and Punishment

Criminal activity is relatively low in Arasteen. Though the Radiant Knights have a well-deserved reputation for swift justice, this is not entirely the reason why. Arasteen is a land that takes care of its own. A large part of Arastinian taxes go toward the welfare of its poor, sick, and elderly. Though the lives of these dependents are not luxurious, they are well cared for. As caring for the poor is a prized Spiritual Edict, many wealthy Arastinian nobles make it a point to donate large portions of their income to the unfortunate.

Another factor in Arasteen's low crime rate is that the Radiant Order focuses on redemption, rather than punishment. Most criminals face only a short prison sentence, during which Radiant priests provide spiritual counseling and attempt to rehabilitate the subject. Most sentences are paired with mandatory education and work-release programs, where criminals can learn a trade as they work earn their freedom.

This does not mean that the Order is soft on crime. Repeat offenders and those guilty of truly heinous crimes face severe sentences, up to and including life imprisonment. A handful of crimes, known as the Obscenities, almost always meet with life imprisonment (and expulsion from the Radiant Order, if one is a member). These crimes include murder, treason, rape, and dark necromancy. A fourth obscenity - consorting with the Darkfall - has been added in recent years. Arasteen has not practiced any form of capital punishment in centuries, even for crimes such as these.

Among nobles and members of the Radiant Order, duels (usually to the first strike or first blood) are a common means of settling disagreements or matters of honor. A duel must be agreed to by both parties and officially witnessed for the results to be legally binding. While duels to the death are technically legal, they are considered barbaric and are exceptionally rare.

If there is a sole - and glaring - exception to the Radiant North's general lack of criminal activity, it is the Underground. This vast organization specializes in contract espionage, smuggling, theft, and assassination. Though its roots are deep in Arasteen, it has extended its influence through every nation in Aden. The Underground is described in greater detail later in this section.

Nocturnals

Compared to other nations, Arasteen escaped the Darkfall relatively unscathed. Though they faced their share of tragedies, such as the fall of Rose and the destruction of Longou, the nocturnal presence was not nearly as great as it was in other nations. Some theorize that the Darkfall wished to avoid the Radiant Order, seeking instead to first gain a foothold in the more poorly defended nations of Columbey and Aramyst. Others posit that to attempt to understand the machinations of the Dark-

fall is madness, and Arasteen's relative good fortune is nothing more than random chance.

Though nocturnals are not as prevalent in Arasteen as they are in Urbana, the Darkfall does maintain a presence. Only the brave and the foolish brave the moors at night, for fear of nocturnal monsters. Especially remote areas seem to be a magnet for corruption - such as the sleepy village of Murdoch's Cove, where our adventure takes place.

Slurghithians

Arasteen is home to the largest population of slurghithians in Aden. Though a few live in secluded river or coastal settlements, most of these creatures dwell deep in the waters of Tirrian's Eye. In the depths of this vast lake they have constructed the great city of Fuathan, as well as many other smaller settlements, such as Loireag (the slurghithian village near Murdoch's Cove).

The slurghithians of Arasteen are a peaceful and reclusive people. They have little interest in the surface world, and prefer to spend their days in quiet contemplation. It was Tirrian's successor, Lugh the Glorious, who first discovered the slurghithians and recognized their gentle nature. Lugh befriended the creatures and brokered the Lake Treaty with their King, Morool. This historic document officially recognized the slurghithians as a free and sovereign people, and began a lasting peace between the lake and surface dwellers.

The Radiant Order takes careful measures to protect slurghithian culture from outside contamination. All areas where slurghithians and surface dwellers live in close proximity are patrolled by Radiant Knights, both to mediate conflict and monitor any intrusion into slurghithian territory. All sale and trade of slurghithians artifacts is tightly regulated, to prevent dishonest merchants from exploiting the reclusive lake dwellers.

By the terms of the Lake Treaty, no Arastinian can take more fish from the lake than he needs to feed himself and his immediate family. In return, the slurghithians are expected to lend their aid to Arasteen in time of war. (To date, the King has never called upon this vow, though the slurghithians have never forgotten it.)

Though commercial fishing on any scale is prohibited on Tirrian's Eye, many settlements have risen around the coast (including Murdoch's Cove). These are not fishing villages in the traditional sense. Instead, they serve as trading posts between the lake and surface dwellers, where slurghithians trade fish and other treasures of the deep for human technology and other resources.

The Grey Masters

Arasteen was founded when King Tirrian united the scattered nomad tribes to repulse an invasion by an army of barbarian raiders led by the necromancer, Zeloch. Though Zeloch was crushed and his armies scattered, the Grey Isles have remained a haven for dark magic throughout Arasteen's history. The reclusive rulers of the islands call themselves the Grey Masters, and are sworn enemies of the Radiant Order.

Arasteen has conducted occasional crusades into the islands, hunting the Grey Masters and their foul servants. These forays invariably result in heavy casualties and little success. It has thus become an unspoken agreement among the Templars that, so long as the Grey Masters remain on their forsaken islands, Arasteen will ignore their presence.

The Grey Masters and their minions occasionally attack the mainland - usually in the form of quick coastal raids followed by a swift retreat. The most noteworthy attacks were in the year 126 and 1113. Both times the Grey Masters stormed Arasteen in force, seeking to ally themselves with the Lord of the Pale. It is not known what, if any, relation the Grey Masters have with this mysterious entity.

Since the Darkfall, small incursions by servants of the Grey Masters have become more common. Some whisper that, through the power of the Darkfall, Lord Zeloch has returned to lead his descendants as a lich.

Giants

Legend holds that many parts of Arasteen were once occupied by cruel yet highly intelligent giant tribes. Shortly after their founding, the Radiant Order led a campaign across Arasteen to cleanse the lands of these foul beasts. Though giant civilization was crushed, a handful of their descendants have survived.

Arasteen's giants are no longer the proud and brilliant creatures they once were. Modern giants are a stupid, pitiful lot, wandering the most desolate regions of the north alone or in small groups. These creatures are often hostile toward smaller races, though most of them have learned to flee at the sight of a knight bearing the Beacon.

(In *Pathfinder RPG* terms, Arastinian giants are represented by ogres, trolls, ettins, cyclopes, and the occasional hill giant.)

Naga

The small mountain range known as the Fangs is also home to many nagas, a reclusive race of serpentine humanoids. The nagas worship ancient snake spirits they call the Serpents, who view other races with seething hatred. According to the Serpentine religion, the mortal world as we know it is a mere "Coil," one of many stages of existence that loop upon one another, leading ultimately to paradise. This temporary life is beset with ordeals meant to test the strength and conviction of nagas, or as their religion refers to them, the True.

According to the naga faith, the naga are the only beings that truly exist. All other races (or the Untrue) cannot be viewed as equals for they are merely obstacles created by the Serpents to test the True. Advanced technology is perceived as another test, a corruption in the natural order intended to bring weakness and corruption to those who use it. For this reason, nagas distrust technology - especially mechamagic. Those few nagas who turn their back on the Serpents are hunted and killed as heretics by their own kind. These naga rarely survive for long in the outside world due to the fear and hatred other races hold for them.

The only small consolation that can be found in naga xenophobia is that most naga fear and distrust the Darkfall, considering it a manifestation of the Untrue. There are unfortunate exceptions, of course, such as the tribe of corrupted naga that destroyed the Arastinian village of Longou. The naga hold a special level of contempt for the slurghithians, who they view as the most pathetic and detestable form of life in Aden.





FACTIONS IN MURDOCH'S COVE

The village of Murdoch's Cove is not the same hotbed of intrigue and political infighting that the characters faced in *Heart of the Machine*. However, this is not to say that there are no powerful factions in play. The Radiant Order and the Underground both hold a measure of influence in Murdoch's Cove, and can serve as powerful allies during this adventure and beyond. As the heroes prove themselves against the enemies of Arasteen, it is likely that these groups will take a vested interest. Either or both might approach the player characters, offering a more permanent alliance.

Like the factions introduced in *Heart of the Machine*, how you choose to present these groups is up to you. Is the Radiant Order a brotherhood of heroic champions or self-righteous crusading meddlers? Is the Underground a thieves' guild with delusions of grandeur or a network of heroic free thinkers unrestricted by antiquated dogma?

Once you have presented an offer of alliance, do not compel the players to pick a side if they don't want to. Perhaps the party fears a conflict of interests with their allies from the previous chapter. Perhaps they're avoiding political entanglements altogether. Perhaps they want to try to play both sides against each other. Once the options are available, feel free to let things develop organically and let the players determine their own course for good or ill. Unlike in *Heart of the Machine*, where the Eye and the Ghosts were liable to treat a neutral party as an enemy, the Radiant Order is likely to remain friendly as long as the party doesn't seem to be a danger to Arasteen and the Underground is content to ignore them.

- OPTION ONE -

THE RADIANT ORDER

History

The history of the Radiant Order is described in detail in the *Thunderscape Campaign Setting*.

Purpose and Methods

The Radiant Order's main purpose is to govern and defend the nation of Arasteen, but they also stand as living examples of the Twin Virtues for the world. How a member of the Order interprets this duty varies by the individual. While most at least aspire to be heroes, a handful are corrupt hypocrites who only seek personal power.

The Darkfall changed the world forever. Arasteen now stands without strong allies. They are besieged from within and without by supernatural creatures. The Templar Council is broken, and torn on how to react. Many believe that Arasteen was fortunate to survive the Darkfall relatively unscathed. Some believe the Order should take this

opportunity to look to their own, secure their borders, and simply try to survive. Others believe that now, more than ever, the world needs the Order. A small, but growing, minority take this philosophy to a radical extreme. These knights counsel that Arasteen's current strength is proof that their faith in the Path protects them from evil. The only way to save the world is to spread Justice and Compassion to the wastelands - whether they want help or not.

Organization

Membership in the Radiant Order is divided into three distinct ranks - hospitaler, knight, and Templar.

Hospitalers, also called squires, are the largest and most diverse rank of the Order. A squire might function as a knight's servant, a game warden overseeing a preserve, or even an official advisor to the King. The only unifying factor among hospitalers is that their positions require no combat training. Some career hospitalers never aspire to knighthood, most of these serving as bureaucrats, barristers, and diplomats.

All hospitalers are entitled to use the formal rank "Esquire" after their name. If a particular hospitaler held a more prestigious rank before joining the Order, he may be referred to by that rank instead. This can create awkward situations for high-ranking former peasants, who, according to the Code, must show polite deference to the former nobles that are legally bound to obey them. To avoid such confusing situations, few former peasants are assigned to positions of command. Many (particularly in the Underground) point to this as an inherent flaw in Arasteen's purported social mobility.

Knights are promoted from among the hospitalers, but are not inherently superior to hospitalers. All knights require martial training, hold a military rank, and are more restricted in their behavior. Only knights

Errantry

Many young knights serve for a time as knights-errant (also called paladins). A knight-errant is expected to travel the world, serving as a living example of the Twin Virtues. At the end of the assigned time, a knight-errant must return to Arasteen and give an honest recounting of his deeds, both good and ill. As humility is seen as a treasured virtue, many knights-errant refuse to record their own exploits. Instead, they bring a squire or bard along to serve as a witness.

In recent years, the Darkfall has made errantry incredibly dangerous. One out of three knights-errant never returns. Rather than shy away from such danger, the Radiant Order sees this as an indication that the world needs paladins more than ever. Almost all newly christened knights are assigned erranhoods. These brave youths are encouraged to travel in groups, or at least find bands of adventurers to travel beside (a great way to explain a Radiant knight's presence in an adventuring party).

may become Templars. As the protectors of Arasteen, most knights are assigned to military or law enforcement positions. All officers in the Arastinian army and navy are knights, as are most city watch commanders. Other knights might serve as bodyguards to important diplomats, missionaries, or nobles. All knights are entitled to use the formal “Sir” or “Lady” title before their name.

Templars are the most esteemed members of the Radiant Order. Whereas any Arastinian can aspire to become a hospitaler or knight, the only way to join the Templar council is to be invited. There are only one hundred members of the Templar Council at any time. A new Templar can only be appointed only if an existing Templar dies or retires, and a prospective candidate can only be chosen by the King. At least two-thirds of the council must approve of the candidate’s promotion.

The Templar Council drafts and approves Arastinian law. They also approve all amendments to the Radiant Code. This is relatively rare, as at least three-fourths of the council must agree to any such amendments. The Council can also vote to remove the King from power, though this requires a unanimous decision by all members of the Council and has only happened twice in Arasteen’s history.

The Templars also serve as official councilors (called rectors) to the king. Dozens of specific offices exist to serve the king, such as Rectory of Finance, Rectory of War, and Rectory of Magic. Each is led by a single Templar and staffed by knights, hospitalers, and civilians. The King can create or dismiss these positions as he needed. A knight or squire who serves a rectory is referred to by that rector’s area of expertise - Knight of War, Squire of Law, Knight of Purification, and so forth.

King Corben has only created one Rectory during his reign - the Rectory of Purification. This office (currently held by Rector Belana Schroder, a rapacious wizard) is charged with advising the king on matters regarding the Darkfall as well as seeking any survivors of the Seer Order.

The King of Arasteen and his Paladin (the King’s chosen successor) are selected from the Templar Council. The Paladin acts as moderator during all Council meetings, a first among equals, and has the power to break ties when the Council is deadlocked. The Paladin also serves as general of the King’s army and the King’s most trusted advisor. Though the King is technically the leader of the Radiant Order, the duties of monarchy often cause many lesser administration duties to fall to the Paladin.

The Radiant Order in Your Game

Any player character who is an Arastinian citizen could already be a member of the Order. An Arastinian knight-errant or a hospitaler are completely appropriate choices for a player character. (Templars are simply too rare and important to run about the world adventuring, at least in campaigns such as this one.)

The only thing to keep in mind with such characters is that all members of the Radiant Order have a purpose. All of them have been given a mission to serve Arasteen in some capacity. So what about campaigns (like this one) that roam beyond the Radiant North? If the character is a hospitaler, perhaps he’s been assigned to study foreign lands and improve the world’s perceptions of his homeland. Perhaps he’s a scholar, sent out into the world to learn about the Darkfall. If the character is a knight, he’s likely a knight-errant seeking fame and adventure.

Wandering knights quickly learn that they are cut off from their homeland with no hope of reinforcements. Though a knight is required to be brave, he is also required to be wise. Knights-errant thus have a well-earned reputation for cleverness and resourcefulness that belies the stereotypical image of the reckless paladin. They are not above recruiting allies, or even working as an adventurer to make ends meet.

Actual membership in the Radiant Order is exclusive to Arastinians who follow the Radiant Path, but the Order is not so closed-minded as to refuse help from allies of other nations. Many rectories, such as the Rectory of Intelligence, Rectory of Purification, and the Rectory of Diplomacy, make frequent use of foreign agents.

The Beacon

The lighthouse in Sea Reach is seen as the universal symbol of King Tirrian, the Radiant Order, and Arasteen itself. It is emblazoned on the Arastinian flag as well as the garb of most Radiant knights and priests. The people of Arasteen colloquially refer to this symbol as “The Beacon” and commonly swear to or by it. (“Beacon’s Light!” or “By the Blazing Blue Beacon” are common Arastinian epithets.)



Foreigners who have proven their friendship can be awarded the title knight-brother (or knight-sister) by the Templar Council. This title recognizes them as honorary citizens of Arasteen and allies to the crown. Knight-brothers are awarded a bronze seal bearing the Arastinian Beacon. They are entitled to claim sanctuary in Arasteen’s foreign embassies and can rely upon wandering knights or missionaries to provide aid. A knight-brother is likewise expected to offer sanctuary, support, and information to other members of the Order when they cross paths.

A knight of Captain rank or higher (such as Dram Hollister in this adventure) can temporarily deputize other individuals as representatives of the Order. As deputies, they are hospitalers in all but name, empowered to enforce the law on the Order’s behalf. Though this is a great boon, the party can expect to face Hollister’s wrath if they abuse it. If the party remains on good terms with the Order and saves Murdoch’s Cove, Hollister will entreat the Council to bestow the title of knight-brother to party members he finds worthy (if they desire it).

The Radiant Order as Allies

The knights of the Radiant Order make powerful allies, especially within the borders of Arasteen. So long as their cause is just, any Radiant knight will eagerly assist a brother in need. Any Diplomacy checks with Radiant knights or priests will receive a +4 bonus if a player can prove he is a deputy or knight-brother (player characters who are actually members of the Radiant Order receive the same bonus).

Exploration missions in the vicinity of Murdoch’s Cove are also somewhat easier with the Order’s help. On any given expedition, the player characters can request assistance from Dram Hollister. He will usually offer a junior knight or two, though in extraordinary circumstances he may allow Trask Calder or Jinny Tonneson to aid them, or even come along himself. Don’t overdo this; you don’t want the party to take the knights for granted and you certainly don’t want the knights to overshadow the player characters.

The Radiant Order as Enemies

If the party openly joins the Underground, endangers the lives of Arastinian citizens, or repeatedly antagonizes Hollister or his troops, they may earn the Order’s ire. Hollister knows he only has a handful of men and expects no reinforcements, so he’ll avoid direct conflict with the party unless innocent lives are in danger (in which case he will deputize any able-bodied citizens he can find and attempt to arrest them).

As enemies, the Order doesn't pose much of a threat to the party as long as they don't go back to Arasteen. They simply have too many other enemies to bother with such vendettas. The only exception is if the party joins the Underground - in which case they will be regarded as a dangerous subversive influence.

Player Contact - Captain Dram Hollister

Captain Hollister is described in detail in the Appendix. If the players become allies of the Order, he remains their official contact. Things grow rather boring in Murdoch's Cove once Radool is defeated, so he's only too happy to maintain correspondence with them. Though contacting Hollister can be difficult in foreign lands, he is a loyal friend and resourceful ally. He can serve as a potential source of information or put the players in contact with wandering knights-errant if they need reinforcements.

Hollister has little use for the Underground, and does not buy into their romantic image as defenders of Arasteen. To him, they are nothing more than a gang of thieves. If Hollister learns that the party has willingly associated with the Underground, he will become more suspicious of them. If he learns that they have actually joined the Underground, he will revoke their deputy status and will not name them as knight-brothers, even if they save the village. (Although given the nature of the Underground, concealing this from him is not impossible.)

Old Allies: The Ghosts of Columbey

If the party previously joined or allied with the Ghosts of Columbey, Vufgar Vanheim is interested to learn of the party's journey into Arasteen. He requests that the players do what they can to get on good terms with the Radiant Order. At one time, Arasteen was Columbey's staunch ally, and he hopes that if the players can gain the Order's trust, the Ghosts might find outside support for Prince Daniel's claim to the throne. This might prove difficult. Dram Hollister and his knights only know of the Ghosts by rumor, and most of that rumor paints them as a rebellious street gang.

While Lord Urbane and King Corben have more than their share of differences, the Order would be reluctant to support a group of rebels dedicated to the Iron Tyrant's overthrow. If the Ghosts could prove the legitimacy of Prince Daniel's claim that would definitely change, but that such grand goals are somewhat beyond the scope of this adventure.

As a small and poorly-equipped organization, the Ghosts need smugglers willing to trade with them directly, beyond Urbane's eye (or, rather, his Eye). A journey to Arasteen presents an opportunity to gather these sorts of contacts, which will inevitably lead to the Underground.

The Grounders would be quite willing to assist the Ghosts. They are always looking to expand into new markets, and view Urbane as a cruel dictator worthy of defiance. Again, the problem is one of perception. The Ghosts view the Underground as a group of smugglers and cutthroats and are hesitant to work with them long-term.

Naturally a third party (such as the player characters) might be able to help iron out these differences and help build trust between the Ghosts of Columbey and one of these groups. While the Ghosts have no real presence in Arasteen, Vanheim will refer the party to Olgen Castbar, a human mercenary who leads a Ghosts cell in the village of Rose (Olgen uses elite soldier stats, see Appendix).

The Ghosts' Objectives in *Radiant Demise*:

Primary Objective: Foster goodwill between the Ghosts and the Radiant Order.

Secondary Objective: Find supplies for the Ghosts of Columbey.

Tertiary Objective: Muster support for the Ghosts of Columbey.

- OPTION TWO - THE UNDERGROUND

History

Though Arasteen has always portrayed itself as a land of Love and Justice, there have been periods in history when they failed to uphold this standard. Beginning at the end of the seventh century, Arasteen's rule passed through the hands of several weak and corrupt kings. These kings filled their respective Templar councils with cronies and abused the prosperity of Arasteen to amass wealth and power.

During this time, Marit Poulson, an influential merchant captain, began to organize Arasteen's criminal underworld into a unified network. She approached Arasteen's assorted thieves' guilds and freelance criminals with an offer of alliance. Those who complied were absorbed into the organization and shared the wealth. Those who refused were forced out of business or eliminated - either by Poulson's enforcers, or by the Radiant Order. As it so happened, Poulson's elder brother Lukas was a member of the Templar Council, and was not above helping his sister eliminate the competition in return for a discreet bribe now and then.

Poulson soon controlled the most powerful network of smugglers and thieves that Arasteen had ever known. This group came to call itself the Underground. Though powerful and well-organized, their aspira-

Old Allies: The Eye

If the party allied with the Eye in *Heart of the Machine*, they may currently be operating as Blinded Eyes. If Beldar Calsheen learns that they intend to visit Arasteen, he encourages them. Though he already has spies in the Radiant North, he's always eager to learn more. If he is informed about their intent to visit Arasteen, he gives the party an *Urbanan pigeon* (see *Heart of the Machine*) so that they can contact him in an emergency.

Calsheen is particularly eager to establish contact with the Underground. He is well aware of their reputation as enemies of the Darkfall, and is keenly interested in any organization that can evade the Radiant Order so long. That they are unbound by the Code's self-righteous morality makes them even more interesting. Calsheen is willing to handsomely reward the party with a bounty of 2,000 gold if they can arrange a meeting between the Eye and the Underground.

He is less enthused about the players joining the Radiant Order. He believes there isn't much to learn about the Order from the inside - most knights are open books. While he respects the Radiant Path as a philosophy, he feels it is far too idealistic and naïve for the modern world. That being said, he doesn't object if the players choose to ally with the Order, especially if it gives them the opportunity to gather information about Arasteen such as troop movements, internal politics, and other items of interest to Urbana.

The Eye is always interested in any new information regarding the Darkfall. A specimen of one of Radool's mechamagical parasites would be very interesting to Calsheen - Radool's unique Darkfall-powered manite implant would be even more interesting.

The Eye's Objectives in *Radiant Demise*:

Primary Objective: Alliance with the Underground.

Secondary Objective: Recover Radool's research/specimens.

Tertiary Objective: Gather information on Arasteen.

tions were the same as any other criminal gang - profit. Under the rule of Oldarus the Blue, things changed dramatically.

King Oldarus of Arasteen, who ruled from 732 until 773, vowed to return to Arasteen's traditions. He was not just King, but also Lord-Bishop, leader of the Radiant Path. He also happened to be insane. Oldarus used his influence as King and Lord-Bishop to pass cruel and draconian laws intended to restore order. Instead, he created an environment of terror. Executions were commonplace, especially among those who opposed him.

Oldarus also abused his authority to intimidate the Templar Council into passing strict and invasive laws. His edicts came to be known as the Scathing Perversions. These were acts which he felt brewed a contagious desire for sin in the souls of the youth. Some of the more outrageous examples included forbiddance of alcohol, theater, public displays of affection, spicy foods, and artwork depicting the female form. He enforced strict taxes upon trade that destroyed Arasteen's economy and brought them to the brink of war with Columbey, their oldest ally. The Templar Council were bound by their oaths to the Church and could do little to oppose him. Eventually only one senior member of Oldarus' Templar still dared to openly lobby for reform. This was Sir Henrik Poulson, cousin to current Underground leader Inge Poulson.

The Underground's smuggling operations prospered during this time but its leaders, still proud citizens of Arasteen, refused to watch madness consume their homeland. Over the course of two weeks, fourteen members of the Templar Council perished in mysterious accidents, culminating in the deaths of Oldarus and his Paladin during a hunting trip. When the dust settled, Henrik Poulson was in direct line to the throne. The new Templar Council later permanently voted him into power as King.

Though several assassins were found and officially brought to justice, no connection between them was ever determined. Privately, the King of Arasteen extended his gratitude to the Underground for delivering its nation through a dark time. Under Henrik's reign the Radiant Path and Radiant Order became two distinct and independent bodies. Capital punishment was abolished. The Scathing Perversions were repealed and Arasteen returned to its former grandeur. King Henrik went on to become one of the most beloved rulers Arasteen has ever known.

Though their part in history is not officially recognized, the Underground's actions have taken root in Arastinian legend. They are heroes unbound by honor, willing to do what is necessary not because the Code demands it, but because it must be done. The Underground feel that they are a necessary balance upon the system. Arasteen's noble class has abused the Radiant Code to oppress and exploit the common folk. While most of the Grounders consider themselves followers of the Radiant Path, they eschew the mindless dogma that they feel constrains many of their kinsmen. They instead follow their own unique interpretation of the Twin Virtues, one in which Justice is embodied by personal freedom and Compassion is embodied by a love of one's common man.

Granted, this image is highly romanticized and often used to rationalize the Underground's activities. They are, first and foremost, a criminal organization and count thieves and assassins among their number. Many of their number eschew highbrow philosophy and nationalism in the name of simple profit. Regardless, some members of the Radiant Order have come to quietly recognize the Underground as an ally and a necessary evil. The Rectory of Intelligence frequently uses Grounders as spies or informants, and more than one knight-errant in danger far from home has received unexpected aid from an Underground smuggler.

In recent years, the Underground has vastly reduced their involvement in assassination and theft and placed a greater focus on smuggling. Their most common adversary is not the law, but the Darkfall. Already practiced at evading detection and eluding pursuit, Grounders continued to maintain a thriving black market despite the nocturnals. The Thunder Scouts, glad to have any ally in the wastelands, frequently worked beside Grounders to maintain some semblance of trade between Aden's besieged nations until the Thunder Trains were fully operational.

In the modern day, the Underground has become the most powerful criminal black market in all of Aden.



Purpose and Methods

Underground agents (also called Grounders) value two principles over all else: profit and freedom.

To the first end, the Underground will provide nearly anything for a price. While their primary sphere of influence is in black market goods, they also engage in contracted services both legal and illegal. Their guilds count thieves, assassins, wizards-for-hire, and professional mercenaries among their number. All of their services are negotiable.

That being said, there are a few caveats - the Underground will not willingly trade in artifacts of the Darkfall, nor will they sell their services to the corrupted or any enemies of Arasteen. While they may be criminals, Grounders have some principles. At the end of the day, the Underground is a business. Dealing with the Darkfall and betraying Arasteen are bad for business. (That being said, they have no morals whatsoever about smuggling Arastinian or slurgithian cultural artifacts to other lands.)

Additionally, the Underground will avoid exploiting the poor. Though some guilds are less bound by such morality than others, the Underground generally focuses its thieving attentions on those who can afford to lose some of their wealth.

The Grounders are staunch believers in personal freedom and can sometimes be quite political in their exploits. While they recognize a general need for order (it keeps people safe and eliminates competition), they believe that they are above such constraints. The most idealistic Grounders claim that they exist as a necessary balance against tyrants everywhere, and that it is their duty to undermine the corrupt and wealthy. Grounders have developed something of a heroic image among Aden's poor and oppressed. This only makes them that much more difficult to catch, as a Grounder on the run can often find sanctuary among the downtrodden.

When profit and freedom intersect, the Grounders choose freedom. They absolutely refuse to indulge in slave trade of any kind, and have been known to unleash brutal street justice upon those who engage in such activity.



Organization

The Underground is a complex affiliation of small, compartmentalized guilds. Each is led by a Guild Master. Though these guilds frequently communicate, direct interaction with one another is kept to a minimum. If one guild is exposed, the others can quickly sever contact and fade into the shadows. Each of these guilds specializes in some aspect of the Underground's smuggled goods or illicit services. If a prospective client requires something that another guild can provide, a message is sent through the Underground network so that a deal can be made.

Unknown to most of Aden, the Underground has appropriated much of the Herald's Guild's lost technology. Prior to the Darkfall, the Heralds used their mechamagic to allow communication over vast distances. Aden's near-apocalypse killed many of the Heralds and left their delicate network destroyed. The Underground has spent several years recruiting former Heralds and adapting their lost mechamagic. Though the Underground communication network is not nearly as advanced as the Herald's, it is impressive. An Underground herald can dispatch a message to nearly any major city in Aden within minutes, whereupon a courier (usually equipped with a thunder cycle or similar vehicle) can then speed the message on to wherever it needs to be.

The Underground is circuitous in its dealings with outsiders. Until they can safely determine that a prospective client is not an agent of the law, they communicate through a complex web of proxies, dead drops, coded messages, and other such enigmatic methods so that they can cut off all communication in the event that the situation grows too hot. In many cases, a customer may never even be aware that they have dealt with the Underground.

The Underground is led by seven talented criminals known as the Chromatic Circle. These individuals each adopt pseudonyms based on a particular color, and each govern a different aspect of the network's operations. If any one of them can be said to lead the network, it is the mysterious woman known only as Violet, guild master of Sea Reach.

It was Violet who first broached an alliance with the Thunder Scouts as they established the future Thunder Trail, despite the fact that the rise of the Thunder Trains would cut deeply into the Underground's smuggling profits. Violet is pragmatic enough to realize she cannot continue to profit without a world to operate in, and having allies entrenched among the Thunder Scouts has proven to be an incredibly valuable asset.

Aden's major law enforcement agencies are well aware of the Underground, though they have had little success in effectively curtailing their operations. Its members have a strict policy of avoiding violent conflict with the authorities, preferring to cut their losses and flee, or use their political connections to arrange the release of their agents, rather than engage law enforcement in direct combat. Due to the guild's loose organization, even those members who are caught by the authorities can do little to harm the Underground as a whole.

In some areas, particularly Balaquim, the authorities make only a token effort to combat the Underground. After all, the Underground presence tends to keep lesser criminals - like the pirates of Rook's Roost - away. At least Grounders have a sense of integrity.

The Underground in Your Game

Grounder guilds can vary dramatically. One might be a band of altruistic rogues who surrender a share of their profits to the poor. Another guild might be a band of cutthroat marauders and bandits. In this manner, the Underground might serve as heroic allies one day and enemies the next. Due to their loose affiliation, even a party member who has joined the Underground may find himself crossing blades with other Grounders from time to time. The organization frowns upon infighting, but sees such conflicts as an inevitable part of their lawless existence. Occasional conflict insures that only the strongest continue to serve. So long as it does not threaten the Chromatic Circle or the network as a whole, a bit of internal warfare is not only tolerated but expected.

The Underground dabbles in countless enterprises throughout Aden, and has constant need of freelancers. If the party befriends Rollimus, it is likely he will take advantage of their potential as freelancers. He is willing to purchase any interesting artifacts the party discovers in their adventures (see below), but, through his own research into the history of Murdoch's Cove, he can provide the occasional lead in their quest. (Naturally he does so with the understanding that they will provide him with access to any items of interest that they discover).

If the party conducts several of Rollimus' missions professionally and discreetly, he may reveal his true affiliations and approach the player characters with an offer of employment with the Underground. Once any prospective members have proven themselves, he will provide them with a silver ring inscribed with his own invisible *arcane mark* - a grinning carp - to be used to identify themselves as allies to other Grounders.

The Underground as Allies

If the party is a bit on the lawless side, the Underground can make for excellent allies. If the party has access to even a small guild headquarters (such as Rollimus' tower in Murdoch's Cove) they can turn to the Underground for assistance.

First and foremost, the Underground can offer employment. While they don't engage in much theft in an area like Murdoch's Cove, the Underground is interested in any mechamagical lore and artifacts that the party can secure from the surrounding ruins. However, Rollimus will not pay for any of Radool's corrupted creations and will strongly recommend that the party destroy all such monstrous mechamagic.

Rollimus will buy and sell items of interest. He can purchase up to 4,000 gold crowns worth of valuable items per week, and generally has 1d4+1 minor magical items as well as an equal number of scrolls and potions to sell or trade to fellow guild members. He can also arrange the delivery of specific items up to 4,000 gold crowns in value, to be delivered in 1-2 weeks, with payment in advance. (Naturally, as GM you may deem that certain items are unavailable).

The Underground as Enemies

While Rollimus does his best to avoid violent conflict with the party, the fact remains that he is a criminal. Depending on the party's ethics, they may refuse to work with him or even seek to bring him to justice if they discover his affiliation and activities. This could prove difficult, as Rollimus is careful to conceal all evidence of his wrongdoings.

If the players make it clear that they are enemies of the Underground, Rollimus will try to lie low and simply avoid them. If they continue to prove themselves a nuisance, he will spread word of the party's unprofessional behavior and alert other Underground guilds to their actions. If they uncover evidence of Rollimus' shady activities and seek to expose him, he will try to flee Murdoch's Cove at the first sign of trouble.

Once word gets out, other Underground guilds will be more cautious about dealing with the party. Some may be openly hostile. That being said, most Grounders are smart enough not to cause trouble if they can avoid it, and most will react to a belligerent thief-hunting party by staying out of their way.

Player Contact - Rollimus Torth

The players may have prior, if indirect, contact with Rollimus Torth. If they played *Heart of the Machine*, Rollimus was the mechamage who sent his apprentice, Kozark, to purchase Samwark Rattlecleave's manite ore. The results of that mission will, in part, determine how Rollimus perceives the player characters.

If the player characters allowed the ore to be stolen, Rollimus will assume they are incompetent. If the party arrested or attacked Kozark, Rollimus will be negatively predisposed toward them and will double the rates for any of his services. If they killed Kozark, he will be outright hostile and refuse to deal with them at all. If the party allowed Kozark to leave peacefully, Rollimus will be positively disposed toward them. If they brought Samwark Rattlecleave to justice for attempting to swindle Kozark, Rollimus will be friendly, gracious, and eager to recruit them as allies.

Rollimus Torth is described in more detail in the Appendix.

- OPTION THREE - GOING IT ALONE

Refusing political entanglements in this chapter of the adventure is not as much of an obstacle as it could be in *Heart of the Machine*. As long as the players are willing to help Murdoch's Cove, the Radiant Order will at least provide passive assistance. If the party doesn't want the Underground's help, the Grounders are content to ignore them.



RADIANT DEMISE

ACT 1 – A LONG ROAD AHEAD

The adventure begins in Mekanus, capital city of Urbana, a few months after the conclusion of *Heart of the Machine*. You may wish to fill in the empty months with a few random Cogwheel Irregular missions, as detailed in *Heart of the Machine*.

The player characters continue to serve under Commander Shara Thale as respected members of the Irregulars. When the party reports to Cogwheel Station, they find Dennison Walcroix's butler, Harmon, waiting for them. Harmon is an elderly human, perhaps in his early sixties, but still quite spry. He has replaced his normal servant's livery with simple and nondescript clothing.

The old man appears nervous and exhausted, but brightens considerably when he recognizes the party approaching. He rises from his seat in the station lobby and hurries toward them. Harmon bows and greets the player characters by name. Once the formalities are out of the way, he gets directly to business.

"My master invites you to attend him at his estate in Honor's Foundry for dinner this evening," he says. "He prepares to undertake a journey within the next few days, and requires protection in this endeavor. Your group has proven your bravery, honor, and strength in the past. He would be honored if you would consider joining him in this endeavor. There will be ample compensation, of course. He has already taken the liberty of clearing the matter with his fellow Elders of Mekanus and Commander Thale, so the choice is yours. Master Walcroix would be pleased to share the specifics over dinner."

Harmon has no ulterior motives and isn't hiding anything. He only appears nervous because he doesn't like leaving the safety of Honor's Foundry. That Walcroix sent his personal butler rather than a courier suggests that this is an important matter and that Walcroix is being very careful who he trusts.

Harmon prefers not to discuss his master's business, but if pressed, he will reveal that his master is currently entertaining a visitor from Arasteen, a ferran who wears the Beacon of the Radiant Order. Harmon is certain that his master's business must be related.

DINNER AT DENNISON'S

The party can report to Walcroix's home in Honor's Foundry at any point during the evening. As usual, the Rusters guards strictly monitor all prospective visitors to the district. Walcroix has sent word ahead, so the Ruster guards are only moderately dismissive as long as the player characters identify themselves. Harmon greets the player characters at the door and invites them inside.

Perceptive party members may notice subtle changes in Walcroix's home. Many historical artifacts that were prominently displayed during the party's last visit are now gone. Some have been replaced with obviously less valuable items. In other cases, shelves or display stands are merely empty.

The party is admitted to the dining room, where Dennison Walcroix waits for them. His guest is a massive wolf ferran dressed in black

leather armor and a white cloak, emblazoned with the Beacon of Arasteen. He currently sits quietly facing the entrance. The curator rises from his seat and warmly greets the party while the ferran remains seated, studying the party without speaking.

"Welcome, my friends," Walcroix says. He shakes their hands if possible. "It is good to see you again. Please, sit, eat, drink, and tell me of your adventures. This is my new friend, Sir Trask Calder, guardian of Murdoch's Cove."

Sir Calder rises from his seat and nods gruffly.

Walcroix invites everyone to be seated. Harmon serves food and drink to the party. The dinner is expertly prepared but relatively modest, another subtle sign that Walcroix's finances are not what they once were. The curator engages everyone in small talk, inquiring about their recent

Off the Beaten Adventure Path

The first act of this adventure assumes that the party has already played *Heart of the Machine*. If this is not the case, then all you need is a reason for the party to be in Mekanus looking for work as adventurers when they cross paths with Trask Calder or Dennison Walcroix. If you prefer, the party need not even begin in Mekanus; they can just as easily begin in Sea Reach or any other large city in or near Arasteen. Just don't have them begin in Murdoch's Cove, as the journey to the village makes up the first part of this adventure.

Befriending Trask

Trask Calder doesn't have anything personal against the party, but he is uncomfortable in large cities and deeply distrustful of Urbanans. (Anyone living in Mekanus may as well be an Urbanan in his book.) Once the party proves themselves to be at least somewhat heroic, he'll quickly cast these prejudices aside and treat the party with respect - but he's still cautious about revealing too much about his village's troubles.

Trask is initially unfriendly toward the party. Shifting him to friendly (and thus willing to volunteer more information about the situation in Murdoch's Cove) requires a Diplomacy check vs. DC 24. This DC is reduced to 19 if a party member identifies himself as a fellow Arastinian or a devotee of the Radiant Path.

If there is another Knight of the Radiant Order in the party, this is unnecessary. Trask is immediately friendly. While he expresses some surprise that his brother would choose to work as an Urbanan mercenary, he acknowledges that each knight follows the Path in his own way and accepts his comrade's choice.

If Trask becomes friendly, he will tell the party all about his squad's battle with the undead (essentially any information Dram Hollister would give them later on), as well as about the growing tensions between the village and the Loireag slurghithians.

exploits. If the party shares tales of their adventures, Walcroix is sure to turn to Trask and make such comments as *"You see? These fellows know what they're doing,"* or *"I shouldn't have expected anything less from this lot. Just as I told you, Sir Calder."*

Trask avoids engaging in small talk with the party, answering most questions with yes or no answers or not at all. He is uncertain, as of yet, whether to trust the party. Until Walcroix explains the job in detail, Trask will confirm only that he is a Knight of Arasteen, and that he is in the city seeking information. If the player characters describe their adventures, he will ask for details on occasion. In particular, he will always inquire further in regard to any sorts of nocturnals the party encountered and how they defeated them. If the party establishes itself as staunch enemies of the Darkfall, he seems to respect them a bit more.

Walcroix will avoid getting to the point as long as possible, as he knows he is about to ask a great deal of the party and fears that they might refuse. If the party demands to know why they have been summoned, he will clear his throat nervously and proceed.

"Perhaps some of you might remember my late friend and teacher, Sir James Dex," Dennison continues. *"It was his estate you so capably protected from thieves on my behalf, and it was his vaults that those wretched Darkfall cultists intended to plunder when they kidnapped me that dark night so long ago."*

"Lord James Dex's research took him throughout the lands of Aden, and he was somewhat notorious for stashing bits of his discoveries and research everywhere he went. Recently, Sir Calder and his fellow knights discovered a trove of encoded documents that bore his seal. Look, here is a sample!"

Walcroix produces a scroll case with shaking hands, unfurling its contents and displaying them to the party. The parchment within is covered with neat, orderly, and utterly unintelligible writing.

"It's code," Dennison explains. *"One of Lord Dex's many personal ciphers, with which I am familiar. Languages were something of his hobby. Learning them, studying them, creating them... This is just an example."*

"There's more where that came from," Trask adds. *"Lots more. Also - we're very interested to know what your old friend's journal was doing in a ruin full of undead monsters."*

"I'm curious to know as well!" Walcroix replies. *"Sir Calder's commander believes that these documents contain information that is of crucial importance for the security of Arasteen, so they dispatched Trask to Mekanus in search of someone who could break this code. With all modesty, I can imagine no one more adequately suited to decipher Dex's writings than myself - and no one more adequately suited to protect me in this endeavor than you, my friends."*

"Murdoch's Cove is a dangerous area," Trask explains. *"We've had a lot of trouble with nocturnals lately, and now the local slurg population has started to get aggressive as well. We've only got a handful of knights to protect the place - two fewer after our battle in the cave. Captain Hollister put in a request for reinforcements, but the cove isn't what you'd call a high priority location. We aren't hopeful that aid will arrive in time. The Order is spread pretty thin these days."* The ferran pauses and fixes the party with a grim stare. *"I'll be frank - I don't think much of Urbanan mercenaries, but Murdoch's Cove needs all the help it can get. If you're as good as the Master Walcroix says you are, Commander Hollister will definitely have more work for you after you help me get the curator to the village safely. Assuming you're willing to fight nocturnals, of course."*

Walcroix offers the player characters 1,500 gold crowns each if they accompany him on the trip to Arasteen. If the players do not agree to this deal, feel free to haggle on the price a bit, so long as the payment is not unreasonable. If they refuse to take the job, Walcroix will plead with them as friends. If left with no other options, Walcroix will remind them that he is a member of the Elders of Mekanus in good standing. If the players refuse to help him, they may find an inordinate number of their future assignments involve the Mekanus sewers. (Leave such threats as a last resort so that the players do not feel railroaded.)

Dennison's Deal

Once the initial business is out of the way, Walcroix has another favor to ask.

"To tell the truth," the curator says, *"I was about to request your aid even before Sir Trask arrived in Mekanus. In the months since our last encounter, I have come to realize that Lord Dex's work holds a greater significance than I ever realized. I suspected as much prior to the auction - those thieves that you faced were far more numerous and well organized than I expected, but when those cultists captured me there could be no further doubt. They were searching for something specific. Unfortunately, Dex's vault was largely ruined by the flood, so we may never know what they sought. But I believe that there must be some clue remaining out there, somewhere. For the past few months I have made it my quest to recover the items we were forced to sell in the estate auction. I have called in every favor I am owed and expended a great deal of my personal fortune to that end."*

"Recently, I received an anonymous message from an individual who claims to have come into possession of several of Dex's historical artifacts. He wishes to meet with me tonight, in Shadowwall, to arrange a deal. Normally, I would find such a claim highly suspicious, but he named several details that only someone intimately familiar with Lord Dex and his work could know. I cannot miss this opportunity, but likewise I do not intend to stumble blindly into a trap. Will you help me, my friends?"

If the players have played *Heart of the Machine* or can succeed at even a cursory Knowledge (local) check vs. DC 10, they know that Shadowwall is one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in Mekanus. It is virtually unpoliced and ruled by the criminal Grinvoj Syndicate. If the player characters refuse to allow Walcroix to attend the meeting, he reluctantly lets the matter go. Trask says that it is unfortunate that he will not have a chance to see the vaunted Irregulars in action, but he agrees that the deal seems too dangerous to be legitimate.

(Note: The Grinvoj don't just give up if the players avoid this initial ambush. Instead, they'll wait until Walcroix leaves the city and ambush him somewhere during the trip to Murdoch's Cove - preferably close enough to the city for safety but far enough away not to draw the Shadow Army's attention. Use the same statistics as the groups described below. The party's caution and foresight will make for a much easier battle, as the Grinvoj won't have the luxury of a complex ambush or call for reinforcements.)

If the party agrees to escort Walcroix to his meeting, Trask offers to accompany the party, both so that he can help protect Walcroix and so that he can observe how the party performs. Walcroix reveals that he has made arrangements to meet with a rapacious scholar named Aklos in an inn called The Shed Scale. He has arranged to trade his rare book of Arastinian poetry for several Carrite runestones that were sold in Lord Dex's estate auction.

The party can make whatever preparations they like in the few hours they have before the scheduled meeting. Shadowwall is a rough neighborhood, rife with poverty and ruled by the Grinvoj. Traveling through the area at night should never be taken lightly, especially when there's a chance the whole thing could be a trap.

Of Course it's a Trap...

The following combat can be difficult; the players are fighting an entrenched enemy in their own territory, one who most likely has the element of surprise. That being said, they *did* have plenty of warning to avoid this fight altogether and should be coming into the encounter fresh and at full strength.

If the party does not supply transportation, Walcroix will drive them to Shadowwall in his steamwagon (a basic vehicle of its type as described in the *Thunderscape Campaign Setting*). Walcroix prefers to drive, but will defer to a pilot-trained player character if they insist. Trask will stop by Walcroix's stable to retrieve his riding horse and his wolf companion before setting off with the party.

Shadowall is unusually still this evening. Only the occasional vagrant crosses their path. The intermittent shriek or moan from the depths of the Lost Ghetto only makes the unnatural silence that much more unnerving. Players familiar with Shadowall (or who make a Knowledge (local) check vs. DC 18) should be on edge. Night time is normally a busy time in this seedy district, with hustlers, ladies of the evening, and shady merchants on every street corner. None of them are out tonight. Someone wanted the streets clear. In Shadowall, only one group has that sort of power - the Grinvoj Syndicate. Unbeknownst to the party, the Grinvoj have been hired by the Cult of Shermazza to kill Dennison Walcroix before his quest for knowledge becomes a threat to them.

The party doesn't even make it to the rendezvous before things get ugly. The Grinvoj have set up an ambush on each of the three major streets leading directly to the inn. A half-dozen rapacian gangsters lie in wait in each of these locations, hiding within homes and businesses. Once Walcroix's vehicle enters the ambush zone, the Grinvoj unleash a wagon full of oil barrels on either end of the street in an attempt to block in Walcroix's steamwagon. Astute player characters actively searching for an ambush can make a Perception check vs. DC 22 to notice this (the Grinvoj have had a while to prepare and have concealed their presence well).

If the players spot the ambush, or were paranoid and approached the inn from an indirect route, the Grinvoj are forced to compensate. They will move to attack the party directly, using magic to disable the party's vehicle as soon as possible. Walcroix is their main goal and the rapacians will do their best to kill him. (Fortunately Walcroix is no hero and will hide in the steamwagon at the first sign of trouble.) If the curator is killed, any remaining rapacians will attempt to flee, fighting only if there is no other option. Grinvoj warriors attack the party directly in melee, while the sorcerer and gunmen attack from nearby rooftops (generally one or two stories above street level).

The Grinvoj gangsters blow shrill signal whistles periodically during the combat, calling for reinforcements from elsewhere in the district. If the party cannot overcome their foes quickly, it may behoove them to clear the oil barrels and try to retreat. Otherwise, a second Grinvoj ambush group arrives in six rounds and a third arrives in ten rounds.

Each of the three ambush groups is functionally identical and uses the following statistics.

Grinvoj Warriors (2)

Rapacian barbarian 2 - CR 1 (each) - XP 400

NE Medium humanoid (reptilian)

Init +4; Senses low-light vision, Perception +4

Defense

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural), (16, touch 10, flat-footed 14)

hp 21 (2d12+8) (25)

Fort +5 (+7), Ref +2, Will +1 (+3)

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee greatsword +5 (2d6+4) (+7 (2d6+7)), bite +0 (1d6+1) (+2 (1d6+2))

Ranged dagger +4 (1d4+3) (+4, 1d4+5))

Special defenses uncanny dodge

Statistics

Str 17 (21), Dex 15, Con 14 (18), Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10

Base Atk +2; CMB +5 (+7); CMD 17 (19)

Feats Power Attack

Traits Ruffian (+2 hp), Reactionary (+2 initiative)

Skills Acrobatics 2 (+3), Perception 3 (+7), Survival 3 (+7)

Languages Rapacian, Western Common

SQ fast movement, rage (8 rounds/day – stats when raging are given above in parentheses), reckless abandon (can take -1 AC for +1 to hit while raging)

Equipment greatsword, 3 daggers, scale mail, 10 gold crests

Grinvoj Gunmen (2)

Rapacian fighter 2 - CR 1 (each) - XP 400

NE Medium humanoid (reptilian)

Init +3; Senses low-light vision, Perception +1

Defense

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 17 (2d10+6)

Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1

Special Defenses bravery +1

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +4 (1d6+2)

Ranged rifle +4 (1d10+2)

Statistics

Str 15, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 16

Feats Point Blank Shot, Rapid Reload (rifle)

Traits Folk Magic (dancing lights, 3/day), Cosmopolitan Education (+1 Stealth and counts as class skill)

Skills Stealth 2 (+9), Survival 2 (+6)

Languages Rapacian, Western Common

Equipment rifle, 10 heavy ammunition, studded leather armor, 10 gold crests



Grinvoj Sorcerer

Rapacian sorcerer (fire elemental) 3 - CR 2 - XP 800

NE Medium humanoid (reptilian)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision, **Perception** +1

Defense

AC 17, **touch** 12, **flat-footed** 15 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 16 (3d6+6)

Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

Special Defenses fire resistance 10

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +1 (1d4)

Special Attacks fire ray +3 ranged touch (1d6+1 fire) 6/day

Sorcerer Spells Known

0-Level - dancing lights, detect magic, message, prestidigitation, read magic

1st Level (6/day) - burning hands (DC 15), grease (DC 14), mage armor*, magic missile, sleep (DC 14),

*This spell has been cast prior to combat, and is calculated into the sorcerer's stats.

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 13, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13

Feats Improved Initiative, Elemental Focus (fire)

Traits Folk Magic (grease added to spells known), Cosmopolitan Education (+1 Diplomacy and counts as class skill)

Skills Diplomacy 3 (+12), Use Magic Device 3 (+9)

Languages Rapacian, Western Common

SQ Feathered (alternate racial trait)

Equipment dagger, potion of cure light wounds, 57 gold crowns

Grinvoj Elite Warrior

Rapacian golemoid 3 - CR 2 - XP 800

NE Medium humanoid (reptilian)

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision, **Perception** +7

Defense

AC 18, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 17 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 30 (3d10+14)

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

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam (1d10), bite +0 (1d6+1)

Ranged scattergun +4 (3d4+1)

Manite Implants (Steam Reserve: 7)

Juggernaut Combat Specialization

Minor Implants chest spikes, internal toolkit (Disable Device), minor resistance generator (Will) momentum manipulator

Basic Implants integrated armor (banded mail), manite injector

Statistics

Str 17, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 17

Feats Extra Steam, Power Attack, Toughness

The Grinvoj Syndicate

The Shadowall District of Mekanus is ruled by the Grinvoj Syndicate, a bloodthirsty rapacian street gang.

If the players killed Malukreebus Grinvoj at Vilshin Grinvoj's request in *Heart of the Machine*, the Syndicate has not forgotten this favor. When combat begins, one of the rapacians delivers a message from Vilshin (or, if you have a flair for the dramatic, have one of the ambushers be Vilshin himself). He tells the party that the Grinvoj have been hired to eliminate the curator, but they have no quarrel with the Irregulars. If the party turns over Walcroix, they are willing to let everyone else leave Shadowall unharmed.

The Grinvoj are as good as their word, but they will definitely kill Walcroix if he is surrendered. Though even an evil party is unlikely to accept such a deal (Walcroix just offered them a lucrative job, after all) a momentary parlay might give a cunning party the opportunity to gain advantage, perhaps by luring the Grinvoj out of cover to collect their bounty or even by using magic to fool the rapacians into believing Walcroix has been killed. Such tricks are unlikely to win the battle outright, but can turn the tide of what would otherwise be a difficult battle.

Traits Ruffian (+2 hp), Implanted (bonus minor implant)

Skills Disable Device 3 (+8), Intimidate 3 (+10), Perception 3 (+7), Survival 3 (+7)

Languages Rapacian, Western Common

SQ steam mastery

Equipment scattergun, 12 standard ammunition, potion of cure moderate wounds (currently loaded in manite injector), 37 gold crowns

If the players stubbornly press on to the Shed Scale, they find it closed and empty. If the party somehow overcomes all three groups of Grinvoj gangsters, the Syndicate will continue to send progressively larger groups. The only wise course of action here is to get out of enemy territory - the Syndicate is not foolish enough to attack a noble and a band of Irregulars outside of Shadowall.

If the players manage to capture a Grinvoj for questioning, there isn't much to learn from those involved in the ambush. All they can say is that someone paid the Syndicate handsomely to end the curator's life. If the player characters report the incident to the authorities, they'll simply caution Lord Walcroix to stay in Honor's Foundry where it's safe and for everyone else to avoid Shadowall.

Following the attack, Walcroix is more eager than ever to leave for Murdoch's Cove. After all, if someone is so afraid of his knowledge that they are willing to hire the Syndicate to kill him, he must be on to something.

If Walcroix dies in this encounter, all is not lost. The player characters will simply need to find another linguist - such as Amara Dex (as described in the Introduction). If you were already using Amara Dex, and she was killed... well do what you have to do, but the players really should take better care of their companions...

Reporting to Cogswheel Station

If the party reports the ambush to Commander Thale, she is incensed. The Grinvoj are too large and well-established for the Irregulars to challenge directly, but she does not intend to let them go unpunished. "We've been willing to look the other way for too long while those monsters dominate Shadowall," she says. "That's over now. I'm not going to stand for attacks on my men. I'm placing a bounty on their entire gang. Any Grinvoj who steps out of Shadowall is going to find a band of Irregulars ready to drag him to Fort Blight on charges of

attempted murder and conspiracy against the welfare of the city. Maybe after a few weeks of being blockaded in that hellhole they call a district, they'll be ready to sue for peace. In the meantime, maybe you'd better take the curator somewhere safe and wait until this blows over. Those rapacians aren't going to be happy that you escaped their meanest thugs. Maybe you should take that trip to Arasteen after all."

As Walcroix said, he already cleared the trip to Arasteen with Thale. She approves of the idea. Relations between Urbana and Arasteen have been strained of late. Though many Urbanans would readily support a war with the Radiant North, she is not among them. She gives the party her blessing.

PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY

Murdoch's Cove is a small village situated along the southwestern coast of Tirrian's Eye, deep in the heart of Arasteen. This is quite a journey from Mekanus and much of the intervening territory is plagued by nocturnals and other dangers. This is why Dennison Walcroix is paying the party so well for their protection. Sir Trask Calder made his original journey to Mekanus on horseback. As a skilled ranger moving quickly by himself, he was able to evade or avoid most of the dangers. Even so, he reports that the trip to Mekanus was harrowing and there were many points where he expected not to survive.

Here are a few options for the upcoming journey. Note that Sir Trask Calder and Dennison Walcroix each cover their own travel expenses. The player characters only need to pay for themselves, when applicable.

● **Land Travel** - Traveling on foot from Mekanus to Murdoch's Cove would entail a journey of roughly 900 miles. The intervening terrain varies between open plains, marshes, and hilly highlands but is relatively flat and even. The first 600 miles venture through the dangerous wastelands of Urbana, while the rest of the journey passes through the somewhat safer plains of Arasteen.

If the party loads into Walcroix's steamwagon (which has a speed of 40) they can travel an average of 32 miles per day, allowing them to reach the village in about 28 days. If the party is using faster vehicles or horses, they would gain 8 miles a day per 10 speed over 40. For instance, a 4th level thunder scout with a 60 speed steamwagon could cover 48 miles a day and reach the village in 19 days. Naturally the party must travel at the speed of the slowest participant. Sir Calder is willing to leave his horse behind, if he must, but not his wolf.

The player characters will also require supplies for their journey, and would have a greater chance of running into trouble on the trip, but this option is otherwise potentially the least expensive.

Pros: Inexpensive, more opportunity for adventure.

Cons: Time consuming (unless the party possesses a quality vehicle), dangerous.

● **Sea Travel** - Mekanus is a bustling harbor; the player characters could book passage on a galley bound for Redbeach, the closest large port to Murdoch's Cove. Locating a ship headed for the appropriate destination is the tricky part. After a few hours of asking around Tarello Landing, the party finds the next ship bound for that destination is leaving in 3d6-2 days.

Party members can attempt to make Diplomacy checks to reduce this number (this represents either convincing a captain to leave earlier or simply canvassing the docks in search of alternate transportation). A result of 10 or more will reduce the departure date by one day, plus an extra day for every 5 by which this check exceeds the DC (minimum 1 day). Only one party member should make this check, though others can use the aid another action to improve the result. Paying double the normal fare reduces the departure time by a week.

Passage from Mekanus to Redbeach costs 30 gold crowns per Medium-sized passenger, animal, or cargo (such as a golem minion). Large mounts or vehicles cost 60 gold crowns each, while huge vehicles cost 100 gold crowns to transport. Any unusual pets (such as Trasks' pet wolf) require cages, muzzles, and sturdy leashes or the sailors will refuse to deal with them. Party members who are skilled sailors or can provide services useful to a sailing vessel can negotiate their passage, reducing the price by half if they are willing to work during the trip. Food and lodging during the journey is included in the price of passage.

If the party is allied with the Ghosts of Columbey and seeks their help arranging passage, the delay is reduced by six days and all travel fees are reduced by 25% due to their influence in Tarello Landing.

The waters between Mekanus to Redbeach are heavily patrolled by Urbana's navy, and as such are relatively safe from pirates, nocturnals, or other dangers. The merchant captains that make this journey have reputations to uphold and are likewise generally trustworthy. The trip to Redbeach by sea takes roughly four days.

Obviously the sea journey will only take the party part of the way. Once they make land, the party will still have 500 miles of land travel from Redbeach to Murdoch's Cove. (See Land Travel option for general land speeds. With Walcroix's steamwagon the remaining distance will require roughly 16 days of land travel.) Fortunately this leg of the land journey is exclusively in Arasteen and is therefore much less dangerous than Urbana.

Pros: Safer and quicker than land travel (especially with help from the Ghosts of Columbey).

Cons: Costly; time advantage depends on if a boat is available.

● **Thunder Train** - The Urbanan capital is also home to Mekanus Central Station, which means the players could book passage on one of the legendary Thunder Trains to shorten their journey. These vehicles leave enter and leave Mekanus with clockwork efficiency. The trains don't visit backwoods villages like Murdoch's Cove, but like sea travel, a ride on the Thunder Trail can cut down on the party's travel time considerably. While most of the Thunder Trains travel slightly faster than a man can run, they do not have to rest.

The closest Thunder Trail runs directly from Mekanus through Smult, where it stops to unload cargo and refresh its crew for twelve hours before continuing north to the village of Rose. In Rose, it stops for only

Using Trask and Dennison

For most of this act, Dennison Walcroix and Sir Trask Calder join the party as allied NPCs. Walcroix knows he is no warrior; he avoids combat and will fight only if necessary. Sir Calder, however, is a brave and competent knight of the Radiant Order and will not hesitate to aid the party.

This could pose some problems - if Walcroix and Calder are too active in encounters, their presence may become disruptive or the players may feel resentful toward them for stealing the spotlight. If these NPCs are too passive, the party might view them as useless baggage.

This can be a delicate balance. As a compromise, you might consider letting the players take control of Walcroix or Calder as secondary characters during combat encounters, or hand them off to a friend or family member who might be present watching the game. In this manner, these NPCs can help the party and keep the players involved and interested at the same time.

an hour so that passengers can board or disembark before continuing west. The line doesn't stop again until Redbeach, so the party will need to disembark at Rose (the Iron Guard does not permit passengers to leap off the moving trains for everyone's safety).

Unfortunately, riding a Thunder Train isn't cheap. A trip to Rose will cost 180 gold crowns per person. Cargo of up to Large size costs 300 gold crowns to transport, with an additional 100 gold crown fee for living cargo. Huge cargo costs 500 gold crowns to transport. Members of the Urbanan military receive a fifty percent discount when traveling on by Thunder Train (this applies only to themselves and their personal cargo). The trip includes food and lodging within the train.

For one third of the normal cost, the player characters can ride in one of the "common cars." These cars pack passengers into unoccupied cargo barges. These rides allow no cargo other than what the passengers can carry on their person - steeds, animals, or other cargo must book passage separately. Common cars are cramped, with no food or other amenities supplied (the characters can try to sleep on a patch of floor if they want). Riding in a common car carries a 25% chance per day that the party will be attacked or robbed by other passengers (treat this as an encounter with 2d4 untrained conscripts, see Appendix for statistics). Discounts are cumulative for Urbanan military - it costs 45 gold, rather than 180, for an Urbanan soldier to ride in a common car.

If the party is allied with the Eye and turn to them for aid, Beldar Calsheen can arrange for discounted passage for the party, their allies, and their cargo as if they were all military. This is with the understanding that he expects the party to repay the favor by finding something useful to the Eye in Murdoch's Cove. Beldar Calsheen will not assist players who want to ride in the common cars - it's unseemly.

The trip to the village of Rose takes about four days (it arrives in Smult after three). After the party is done sightseeing in the ancient village of the Seers, they must cover the final 200 miles to Murdoch's cove on foot. (See Land Travel for general land speeds. Walcroix's steamwagon can cover this distance in a little over six days.)

Pros: Extremely safe and fast, more economical for allies of the Eye.

Cons: Very expensive, especially for parties with lots of cargo.

• **The Thunder Trail** - The routes utilized by the mighty Thunder Trains - known as the Thunder Trails - are well patrolled and protected by Urbana's Shadow Army (in Urbana) and the Radiant Order (in Arasteen). Many caravans, known as remoras, follow these routes, searching for safety in the shadow of the Thunder Trains. While this is much cheaper than riding within the trains, the indirect route means that the trip will be much longer. Following the Thunder Trail to Rose and then making for Murdoch's Cove will be safer, but is 250 miles longer than the route proposed under Land Travel (adding an extra week to travel times if Walcroix's steamwagon is used).

Pros: Relatively safe and inexpensive.

Cons: Extremely time consuming.

POINTS OF INTEREST

Depending on the route the party chooses, they can potentially pass through various major settlements. Though they probably won't spend long in any of them, here is a brief description of the most significant ones.

• **Mekanus** (Major Metropolis, Population 1,000,000) - Described in great detail in *Heart of the Machine*, this city is where the party's journey begins. This bustling metropolis offers a variety of travel options for reaching Murdoch's Cove, as well as numerous markets where the party can acquire whatever supplies they might need on their journey.

• **Smult** (Metropolis, Population 340,000) - Situated near the great volcano, Infernus, Smult is the center of Urbana's mining industry. The people of Smult are a passionate lot, driven by their work by day and prone to raucous celebration in the evenings. Combined with the relatively lax law enforcement in this area, Smult has earned a reputation as a wild and lawless city.

As long as the miners meet their material quotas the Shadow Army is content to tolerate their eccentricities and instead focus on containing the salamanders who occasionally assault the city from the depths of Infernus. While ample supplies, particularly industrial goods, can be acquired here, Smult has little in the way of creature comforts. Most travelers consider this scorched city little more than another stop on the Thunder Trail to Arasteen.

• **Rose** (Small Town, Population 1,500) - Though Rose is only a small settlement that has no particular strategic significance its cultural importance is unparalleled. It was here that the Seers first brought together representatives of Aden's various major nations and drafted the Rose Accords, heralding the end of the Great War and the beginning of Aden's Golden Age. It was also here that the Seers once made their central headquarters.

The Seers made no secret of their belief that Arasteen and Columbey would each play a crucial role in Aden's destiny, so they built their main monastery here to be close to both nations. Though an Arastinian settlement, Columbey and Arasteen both maintained a presence in the city. The Seers remained on close terms with both nations.

The first night of the Darkfall, nocturnal demons slaughtered every seer in Rose Monastery and sacked the village. Rose fell under Darkfall for control for six years, until it was finally reclaimed by the Shadow Army. Urbana has taken great pains to fortify the village against future attack, nocturnal or otherwise. The local architecture is unique, featuring ancient styles from every nation juxtaposed beside cold Urbanan fortifications.

Though Rose is a small settlement, it has become something of a tourist trap due to its cultural significance. Goods and services in the area cost up to 30% more than they would elsewhere, and lodging can sometimes be difficult to find.

• **Redbeach** (Small City, Population 9,000) - This bustling port is a center of trade between Arasteen and Urbana, and sees occasional vessels from Yzeem and the Mislant Republics. Though not as large as Sea Reach, it is much closer to Mekanus and does not require travel through the dangerously haunted Grey Isles, and is thus a preferred port of call for many merchants.

Redbeach is so named for the scarlet tides that wash into the beach periodically, causing the seas to become mildly acidic and poisonous. Legend has it that these are caused by necromantic rituals practiced by the undead inhabitants of the Grey Isles. In fact, they are merely due to a natural anomaly in the local plankton.

Crossing the Border

Urbana and Arasteen are at peace, but only just. King Corben and Lord Urbane are quite outspoken in their disdain for one another's methods. Corben feels Urbane is a cruel, power-mongering dictator. Urbane feels that Corben is a coward bound by antiquated morality, and that his people have done too little to aid Urbana against the Darkfall. For the time, however, they need one another. Arasteen is Urbana's most important trade partner, supplying over three quarters of the food its people need to survive. In return, Urbana supplies Arasteen with raw materials and military support. Those on both sides wonder how long this grudging alliance can continue before Corben has had enough of Urbane's tyrannical posturing or Urbane chooses to seize Arasteen's resources permanently. The village of Rose has become the center of this tension, as since its liberation the Shadow Army has made no effort to return the territory to Arasteen.

Fortunately these are just distant rumblings - for now. Player characters crossing between Urbana and Arasteen can expect to be inspected and briefly questioned by Radiant Order or Shadow Army patrols, but they won't be threatened unless they are obviously carrying contraband or consorting with the Darkfall. Their leaders may be at odds, but the common soldiers have much more pressing problems to worry about than each other.

ENCOUNTERS ON THE ROAD

Most encounters during the journey will be random. Use the Random Encounter Tables in the Appendix of this adventure to determine the nature of these encounters. The following section describes a few more elaborate specific encounters that can also crop up during the party's long journey. Use these as you please, scattering them in among the random encounters for variety.

The Fallen Soldiers

This simple encounter occurs near the border between Arasteen and Urbana. The party comes across the scene of a vicious battle. The corpse of an enormous, horned reptilian creature covered with gaping wounds lies dead in the middle of a clearing. Around it, the corpses of a dozen soldiers wearing Shadow Army and Radiant Order uniforms lay scattered about. Some are burned beyond recognition, while others were clearly clawed apart by the monster. The battle seems to have taken place several days ago, and looters have already stripped the corpses of anything worthwhile.

One Radiant Knight, however, has not been looted. His body leans against a nearby tree, a scroll clutched tightly in his hand, eyes staring into the distance. Before he bled to death, the knight scrawled the Arasteen Beacon and the Urbanan Gauntlet side by side above the following words, in blood:

"IN THE END, WE STOOD TOGETHER."

Knowledge (nobility) vs. DC 15 can identify the dead knight by his sword and uniform. He is Robert Loudain, a captain in the Arastinian military. He wears the gear of an elite soldier (see Appendix). Whether the party dares to loot him, buries him, or leaves him be is up to them.

The Burning Inn

A plume of smoke on the horizon is the first obvious sign that things are awry. If the party chooses to investigate, they find a fortified roadside inn being consumed by flame. Four faerkin civilians (use conscript statistics for all but the leader, who is trained infantry, see Appendix) dash back and forth between the structure and a stream some 300 yards away, desperately tossing buckets onto the conflagration but making little headway.

When the party arrives, Gerber Halcene, the inn's owner, calls out for help. Two hours ago, the building was attacked by a flying black lizard (a corrupted flame drake) that set the building aflame with its breath. The faerkin tried to fight the creature off, but their weapons were unequal to the task. They were forced to take cover until it grew bored and flew away. Now Gerber, his wife, and his sons are struggling to put out the fire. Even worse - Gerber's oldest son, Ryel, is still trapped inside.

Ryel is currently on the third floor, still alive and stable but unconscious. If he is not rescued within minutes, the flames will spread to his bedroom and kill him.

The inn's interior is a horrifying conflagration. Entering flaming areas (such as the stairs) inflicts 4d6 fire damage each round as well as requiring Reflex save vs. DC 15 to avoid catching on fire. Characters within the inn who inhale the smoke must also make a Fortitude save each round (DC 15+1 per previous check) or spend the round choking, unable to act. Two consecutive rounds of choking inflicts 1d6 nonlethal damage.

Rather than rush through the fire, someone could attempt to scale the wall to Ryel's room and rescue him. Scaling the bare wall is a DC 25 Climb check, though appropriate gear or magic can make things easier.

Once inside, the rescuers will still have to deal with smoke, though the fire has not yet entered Ryel's room.

(These are by no means the only possible solutions; if your players come up with something creative, by all means go with it.)

The inn also needs to be saved. Joining the bucket brigade is the most obvious option. To successfully put out the fire, the party must deposit a total of seventy five-gallon buckets of water on the fire within the next half hour (this is in addition to the faerkin family's efforts; keep track of the progress privately with occasional descriptive updates such as "you aren't gaining much ground" or "the fires are beginning to recede").

Running back and forth to the stream is the most obvious way to do it - though each trip there and back will require 15 rounds (or 90 seconds) of running from a character with 30 speed. The faerkin only have three spare buckets, though the party can use their own vessels if they possess them. Astute player characters who are faster than the (20 speed) faerkin can borrow their buckets. A faster character who replaces a faerkin gains an effective +25% to the amount of water he puts on the fire.

(As per the usual movement rules, a character can run for a number of rounds equal to his Constitution, after which he must make a Constitution check vs. DC 10, +1 for each additional round he runs. Failure reduces the character's speed to a move action per round until he rests for one full minute. Keep in mind that a full bucket weighs forty pounds, potentially encumbering some characters.)

Create water or similar effects can be used directly on the fire, making things immensely easier. Again, invite the players to be creative in their solutions. Any effect that could logically help extinguish the fire should count as an appropriate amount of water.

If the fire is not extinguished within thirty minutes, the fire grows out of control and irreparably damages the inn. The quicker the heroes douse the fire, the less damage there is. If they douse it within twenty minutes, the inn is ruined but enough is left standing for the faerkin to retrieve some of their personal possessions. If it is doused within fifteen minutes, it is still stable enough to potentially be repaired with a few months of work. If it is doused within five minutes, Gerber and his family are amazed to find that the overall damage is mostly cosmetic, and the inn can open again once it is thoroughly cleaned. The faerkin are extremely grateful for the party's help, and invite them to stay for free as guests anytime (assuming the inn survives).

If the players try to track down that rampaging drake before it causes trouble again, that may prove difficult but not impossible. Simply patrolling the area long enough grants the possibility of spotting the drake (25% chance per day, with a Perception check vs. DC 18 to spot the hunting drake in the sky) and either attacking it outright or following it to its lair. Alternately, if the party is patient, they can just wait at the faerkin inn for a week and the beast will return to muse upon its handiwork or try to finish the job.

Flame Drake

CR 5 - XP 1,600

hp 57 (See *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*)

If the players can track down the drake's lair, they find a small hoard gathered from the drake's victims: 575 gold crowns, a ruby necklace worth 200 crowns, a masterwork scattergun, and a *wand of obscuring mist* with 32 charges remaining.

Golem in Distress

This encounter is most appropriate if it recently rained in the area.

The party hears the sound of metallic clanking and muddy sloshing from some distance away, punctuated by a hollow voice repeating the same word, over and over: "Return..." If the party seeks out the source of this noise, they find a muscular, pale grey figure sunk hip deep in a patch of muddy quagmire. It is riddled with bullet wounds. The creature



stares directly ahead with hollow black eyes and takes no notice of the party as it struggles to free itself.

A character that makes a Knowledge (arcana) check vs. DC 12 (or any mechamage) can identify this creature as a heavily damaged corpse golem struggling to return to the mechamage who controls it. The golem is currently stuck in a shallow end of the quagmire, so its head and shoulders remain above the surface. If the party ignores the golem, it will gradually stumble deeper into the mud and be trapped forever.

What Happened?

A thorough search of the area (Perception vs. DC 20) shows recent signs of an armed conflict on a nearby ridge. Grass scorched by fire, gunshot impacts to nearby trees and stones, and at least one pool of blood several hours dry serve as evidence. A dead horse lies on the ground, killed by a precise gunshot. The horse's saddle bags have been looted of all valuables. The tracks of a Huge vehicle lead into the area, and then off to the west again, skirting around the quagmire. (These tracks can easily be followed with a Survival check vs. DC 9.) The golem's tracks lead directly from the battle site into the quicksand, following the vehicle's path directly.

The trapped corpse golem belongs to a brave but reckless jurak bounty hunter named Reddek "Red Claw" Karsh. A day before this encounter, Reddek was tracking a bandit named Karghulf Renmeyer. Unfortunately, Karghulf (who turned out not to be alone) noticed Reddek following him and attacked. Reddek was beaten within an inch of his life, his horse was killed, and his golem was nearly destroyed (and would have been destroyed if not for its Steadfast writ). The mechamage was able to surreptitiously cast a *mend construct* spell on his inert golem before the bandits took him prisoner, but they were already in their steamwagon and out of the area before the golem revived. Then it immediately stumbled into the mud.

The bandits haven't decided what to do with Reddek yet. They are considering ransoming him, but aren't sure who would pay for him.

Freeing the Golem

Rescuing the golem is tricky. The pit is forty feet wide and considered quicksand (see Chapter 13, *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*). The golem is stuck in the mud fifteen feet from the eastern end, and is attempting to move directly across the center of the patch toward the western end. While the golem takes no offensive actions against the party (not even to defend itself), it also will not aid them in freeing it. All it wants to do is return to its master, heedless of any obstacles. The DC to swim in quicksand within ten feet of the golem is increased by 5 due to its constant thrashing.

If the party wishes to attempt to free the golem, encourage them to be creative with their solutions. The most obvious solution, dragging the golem free, can be quite difficult. This will require securing a sturdy rope, chain, or similar implement capable of supporting the 300 lb. construct and then dragging it free.

Dragging the golem (once it is secured) requires a DC 20 Strength check to initially dislodge it from the mud and move it five feet. Additional successful checks move the golem five feet per round. This DC begins at 15. If the party drags the golem in any direction but directly east, this DC increases by +2 each round as the golem sinks deeper in the mud. If the party attempts to drag the golem in any other direction but directly west, the golem will immediately take notice of this attempt to interfere with its movement and try to break its bonds. In any case, once the golem is free, it will continue heading west toward its master.

Following the Golem

Once free, the golem strides forward at its normal movement (speed 40), continuing to ignore the player characters. The bandits are in no particular hurry (they don't think anyone is following them) and are only thirty miles ahead of the party and traveling at roughly the same speed. If the party follows the golem's lead, they won't catch up with the bandits until well after they make camp in the evening (they have the same random chance of finding shelter that the party does). If the party is swift and confident in their tracking abilities, they may be able to set off on their own and catch up before the bandits can dig into camp.

Karghulf Renmeyer is accompanied by five other bandits (3 soldiers and 2 archers, see Appendix) and travels in a rusty old steamwagon. Reddek Karsh is currently bound and gagged in the back of the steamwagon. If the party attempts to parlay, Karghulf claims that the jurak is a known bandit and he is bringing him to the nearest settlement for a bounty. (Unfortunately for him, he's a terrible liar, with +0 to Bluff).

If the party engages in combat, Karghulf will immediately deploy his turret, move behind his men, and open fire on any obvious spellcasters. If outclassed, he will command the others to charge while he attempts to hop in his steamwagon and escape. If all else fails, he will drop his weapons and beg for mercy.

Reddek Karsh is severely injured but not helpless. If he catches sight of his golem, he will mentally command it to rescue him, or, if that is impractical, to aid the party in combat.

If the party rescues Reddek, he is effusively grateful (especially if they heal his injuries and give him his equipment back). He reveals that Karghulf is a known bandit with a 1200 gold crown bounty on his head, dead or alive, for the murder of an Urbanan scout. The bounty can be collected in Mekanus or Smult. The party can collect the bounty themselves, or just turn Karghulf over to Reddek to do it. The jurak promises to give the entire bounty to his new friends the next time he sees them. If the party lets the mechamage have Karghulf's steamwagon, he'll set off for Mekanus or Smult (whichever is closer) as soon as he and his golem are back in fighting shape. Otherwise he'll tag along until the party reaches a Shadow Army encampment and arrange his own transport from there.

If the party gives Reddek the steamwagon, heals him, and returns his gear, he swears eternal friendship with them. If they also tell him they are headed to Murdoch's Cove, he'll meet them there to deliver their reward, perhaps showing up just in time to help defend the village against the climactic siege.

Reddek "Redclaw" Karsh

Male jurak mechamage 4 - CR 3 - XP 1,200

CN Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +2; Senses darkvision, low-light vision; Perception -1

Defense

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex)

hp 30 (4d6+12) (has 2 hp remaining when first encountered)

Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +3

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee masterwork greataxe +7 (1d12+4) (currently unarmed +5 (1d3+3))

Ranged pistol +4 (1d8+1) (currently unarmed)

Typical Mechamage Spells Prepared

0-Level - *acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *everheat rune*, *read magic*

1st Level - *burning hands**, *mage armor* X2, *mend construct*

2nd Level - *bull's strength*, *ghoul touch*, *glitterdust*

Mechamage Writs Known - Destructive, Durable, Mighty, Reinforced, Steadfast, Swift, Tactical

*Reddek typically casts *mage armor* on himself and his golem but when he is first encountered, his last *mage armor* has long since expired and he only has the marked spells remaining in memory.

Statistics

Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 8, Cha 10

Base Atk +2; CMB +5; CMD 17

Feats Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Toughness, Weapon Focus (greataxe)

Traits Cosmopolitan Education (+1 Survival and counts as class skill), Natural Pilot

Skills Knowledge (arcana) 4 (+10), Knowledge (engineering) 4 (+10), Linguistics 4 (+10), Survival 4 (+9), Use Magic Device 4 (+7)

Languages Eastern Common, Earthtongue, Fundamental, Giant, Jurak, Lowland, Nocturine, Planar, Western Common

SQ orc blood, golem minion, call minion (distress), throwback (alternate racial trait), tinkering, wastelander, weapon familiarity

Equipment (all of Reddek's equipment except for his clothing is currently in the possession of Karghulf Renmeyer) 10 standard pistol ammunition, masterwork greataxe, pistol, mithral buckler, spell component pouch, spellbook (contains all prepared spells and known writs plus *hydraulic push*, *identify*, *shield*, and *pyrotechnics*), 12 gold crests.

Chunk, Corpse Golem Minion

N Medium construct

Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

Defense

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+1 armor, +1 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 41 (3d10+23) (has 4 hp remaining when encountered)

Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +1

Offense

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 slams +7 (1d6+4, 19-20 crit)

Special defenses construct traits

Current Writs (Loyalty 4)

Mighty, Reinforced, Steadfast, Swift (already added into stats)

Statistics

Str 18, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 1

Base Atk +3; CMB +7; CMD 18

Skills Perception 3 (+6)

SQ link, share spells

Karghulf Renmeyer

Male Half-elf steamwright 4 - CR 3 - XP 1,200

NE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +3; Senses low-light vision; Perception +9

Defense

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 34 (4d8+12)

Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +3

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee spiked gauntlet +1 (1d4-1)

Ranged thundershot pistol +7 (1d8+1)

Special attacks booby trap

Special defenses elven immunities

Steamwright Inventions (2d8 Firepower)

Primary Inventions

Thundershot: Mods - Custom Stock (pistol), Deadly, Efficient, Quick Reload; Uses/day: 10

Turret: AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 20 (+3 armor, +2 deflection, +1 size); Mods: Accurate; hp 17; Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4; Attacks: ranged shot +5 (1d8+2)

Secondary Inventions

Grappleshot: Mods: Swift; Uses/day: 5

Entangler sphere launcher (DC 14); Uses/day: 5

Statistics

Str 8, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 12

Base Atk +3; CMB +2; CMD 15

Feats Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Skill Focus - Knowledge (engineering)

Traits folk magic (*everheat rune* - 3/day), Implanted (internal toolkit - thieves tools)

Skills Craft (alchemy) 0* (+14), Craft (machinery) 4 (+10), Disable Device 4 (+14), Knowledge (engineering) 4 (+14), Knowledge (local) 4 (+9), Perception 4 (+9), Sleight of Hand 4 (+10),

*boosted by handy class ability

Languages Jurak, Lowland, Sylfanic, Western Common

SQ jury-rig, masterworking

Equipment 20 standard pistol ammunition, +1 chain shirt, masterwork crafting tools, pistol, 2 smokesticks, 3 alchemist fires, 35 gold crests



RADIANT DEMISE

ACT 2 – SECRETS OF THE SWAMP

At the end of their long journey, the party finally arrives in Murdoch's Cove. Sir Trask Calder will want to report to Captain Hollister and introduce the party to his fellow knights. However, he invites the party to explore the town, find lodgings (which, he adds, will be paid for by the Order) and get situated. They can meet with the knights when they are ready.

EXPLORING MURDOCH'S COVE

This tiny village is nestled on the southwestern shores of Tirrian's Eye. It stands at the edge of Loireag Marsh, a dense wetland covering nearly 100 square miles directly west of the village. Most residents make their living hunting or collecting peat, which they sell to passing merchants. The village also has a reputation for being the home of Murdoch Swampshine, a potent corn whiskey from which the village takes its name. Murdoch's Cove serves as a trading post with the Loireag slurgithians. A handful of local merchants make a permanent living acting as middle-men between the amphibians and traveling merchant caravans.

The village has a population of about sixty people at any given time. Merchants frequently pass through the area, looking for peat, whiskey, or trade with the slurges. The population booms to perhaps eighty or so in the summer months (when peat harvest is at its peak) as transient workers arrive looking for temporary labor. Like all Arastinian villages in slurgithian territory, this village also houses a small complement of Radiant Order knights. These knights also serve as city watch and train the village militia.

The settlement is protected by the Knights of the Radiant Order under Captain Dram Hollister, as well as a rotating detachment of volunteer city militia. Hollister commands six more novice Radiant Knights (all of these count as trained infantry, see Appendix). The village has eight to ten active militia members at a time (all of these count as untrained conscripts). In an emergency, about twenty more such individuals can be called into action. These are civilians using their own weapons or

equipment from the Radiant Order armory. The rest of the villagers are elderly, children, or unfit for combat.

The village is laid out in a rough circle, centered on the Radiant church. Its buildings are humble but sturdy, mostly constructed of blackstone (see Appendix) scavenged from the local ruins. There is a solid outer wall, twelve feet high, a foot thick, and also constructed of solid blackstone. A second perimeter of spiked palisades encircles this wall, though they are fragile and in constant need of repair. There is a simple dock outside the city walls, where a handful of small lake craft and a battered swampboat are moored.

Stout wooden gates stand at the north and south roads. A twenty-foot high guard tower stands beside each gate. Each tower provides cover to its occupants and is equipped with an alarm bell that can be used to rouse the village. Under normal circumstances, these towers are manned only at night. Since the recent troubles, Dram Hollister has kept two civilian guards in each tower at all times, and placed one of his knights in each tower at night.

Important Locals

Other than those who have volunteered to serve as militia, few of the other villagers possess any sort of combat training so full statistics are not provided for them. Most of those presented without stats are simply 1st level commoners (or, if you are feeling generous, use the soldier or archer statistics provided in the Appendix). Any noteworthy skill bonuses that are likely to arise during interaction with the player characters have been included.

- **Squire Klaus Hansen** (human male): The mayor of Murdoch's cove is a plump, nervous man with thinning brown hair and a perpetually sweaty complexion. Hansen is a minor noble and hospitaler of the Radiant Order. He is embarrassed of his duties here, and openly loathes being surrounded by dirt farmers and swampshiners. Hansen is a fretful man who wants nothing more than to be promoted out of this backwoods village.

Such promotion seems unlikely, as Hansen is an indecisive and incompetent leader. He resents Dram Hollister's constant challenges to his authority and refuses to believe the nocturnals in the swamp are an organized menace unless presented with irrefutable evidence. In the

The Mayor and the Captain

Klaus Hansen and Dram Hollister, the ranking Radiant Order officials in the village, are currently at odds with one another. Though they've never really liked each other, most of the tension is recent. Klaus' son, Vendic, got drunk and led a group of local toughs into the swamp to hunt slurges. Blaming the peaceful amphibians for their undead brethren, they savagely attacked a pair of innocent slurgithians. This resulted in the Loireag Tribe withdrawing from trade with the village.

Hansen, who is technically the village's ranking legal official, refused to press charges against his son. Captain Hollister defied Hansen and arrested Vendic himself, passing him to a group of traveling knights bound for Redbeach and sending one of his junior knights along to act as witness so the boy could stand proper trial for his crimes. Hansen has not forgiven Hollister's insubordination, and does everything he can to make the knight's life difficult.

Murdoch's Cove

TIRRIAN'S EYE



1 - Church of the Radiant Path
2 - Radiant Order Barracks
3 - Smokefall Inn

4 - Murdoch's Distillery
5 - Mayor's Home
6 - Merchant Council

7 - MacCallum's Peat Warehouse
8 - Dinkers Smithy
9 - Old Willem's Shack

event of a crisis, he tends to panic, leaving more competent city residents (like Hollister) in charge. The militia has little respect for Hansen and prefers to follow Hollister's lead. Hansen may attempt to curry the party's favor (offering up to 1,000 gold crowns in bribes) in an attempt to remove Dram Hollister from authority.

Relevant Skills: Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (nobility) +4, Knowledge (local) +4, Sense Motive +3.

• **Dagfinn Murdoch** (rapacian): This elderly rapacian owns the Murdoch distillery. He has lived in the village his entire life (over seventy years), and takes pride in producing the same trademark Murdoch Swampshine that was brewed by his ancestors for generations. Though old even by rapacian standards, the crotchety brewer still rises at dawn to help his children and grandchildren work in the distillery.

Though nearly blind and lame in one leg, Dagfinn's mind is as keen as ever. He remains one of the most well-respected and influential members of the village. He has little love for Mayor Hansen, and takes a great deal of joy in repeatedly reminding the human whose family the village is named for.

Dagfinn was good friends with Brother Arais, the last seer of Murdoch's Cove. (The man had his share of troubles and liked his drink.) The Murdochs made sure Arais was buried with his brethren at the ruins of the old seer monastery. Dagfinn visits his old friend's grave regularly, though he hasn't gone in a few months due to the recent troubles.

Relevant Skills: Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local) +9, Perception +11, Profession (brewer) +15, Sense Motive +11.

• **Eimhir Patton** (female human): For travelers looking for a place to stay, the Smokefall Inn is the only option. The Smokefall is an unusually large inn for such a small settlement, as it has been equipped to house the various transient workers that come to the village for work.

Eimhir Patton owns the place, and she brooks no nonsense from her clientele. Guests that stumble in after ten at night or who wake other guests with excessive noise can expect a sharp lecture from this fearless old widow. Patton is well-known for her foul mouth, her keen ability to sniff out trouble, and her excellent cooking, traits that make her a fine innkeeper (maybe not the first one).

Despite her gruff exterior, she is respected throughout her village. Dram Hollister fought beside her late husband, Donald, at the Battle of Redbeach and is a close friend. His knights frequently visit Eimhir's establishment and are quick to toss out any transients or adventurers who make trouble for her.

Relevant Skills: Appraise +9, Intimidate +11, Perception +7, Sense Motive +7.

• **Fredrik Aiken** (male faerkin): Aiken is tall and thin by faerkin standards. His glossy brown skin has a faint grainy texture, a symbol of his dryad blood. Aiken leads the Murdoch's Cove Merchant Council, a group comprised of four other local merchants and about a half dozen caravan masters who pass through the village regularly. The Council sets local trade policies and mediates disputes between the various merchants.

Though normally charming and friendly, Aiken has been tense of late due to lack of communication from the Loireag slurgithians. If the slurges remain hidden in their swamps much longer, his business is going to suffer. He has several contacts with the Loireag, with whom he normally meets once a week, but they have been disturbingly silent. Anything the players can do to restore relations with the slurges would be greatly appreciated (and may earn them a small discount buying and selling items in the village).

Aiken is good friends with Squire Hansen, though Vendic Hansen's foolishness has strained their relationship. He dislikes Petra MacCallum, whom he considers a boorish and rustic lout who refuses to haggle like a decent person.

Relevant Skills: Appraise +9, Bluff +11, Diplomacy +11, Knowledge (local) +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Linguistics +9, Profession (merchant) +9, Sense Motive +9, Survival +11.

• **Petra MacCallum** (female ferran brute): This imposing bison ferran speaks with a surprisingly soft and musical voice. She is the most experienced peat farmer in the village, and generally speaks for the other farmers in the area. In the summer, she coordinates the village's transient worker population. She helps them to find temporary homes, teaches them to avoid the hazards of the marsh, and buys their harvest for a fair price (which she then sells to traveling merchants throughout the rest of the year at a modest profit).

Petra is frugal, patient, and kind most of the time, though when roused her temper is something to behold. She particularly dislikes Fredrik Aiken, who she considers a worthless swindler. He insists on calling her "Pete of the Peat," a nickname she finds intensely annoying.

Relevant Skills: Appraise +6, Diplomacy +7, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (local) +4, Knowledge (nature) +6, Profession (farmer) +9, Sense Motive +9, Survival +11.

• **Britta Dinkers** (female dwarf): This perky and inquisitive young blacksmith moved to the village a year ago, after the previous smith retired. Though quite talented, Dinkers has had a great deal of difficulty finding customers. After she spurned Fredrik Aiken's unsettling romantic advances, the faerkin turned the merchant council against her and began charging unfair amounts for new supplies. She has been forced to make do with run-down tools and lesser quality materials. She is too proud to ask for help (though if someone did help her, she'd be grateful and offer a permanent discount on her crafting services). Her inability to obtain decent tools has given her a reputation as an incompetent, which irritates her to no end.

Relevant Skills: Appraise +8, Craft (armorer) +8, Craft (blacksmithing) +11, Craft (weaponsmithing) +11, Perception +8.

• **Old Willem** (male dwarf): Willem is a wilderness scout that lives in a ramshackle hovel at the edge of the lake. He spends his days drinking or hiring himself out as a swamp guide for merchants and other travelers. He generally avoids most of the townsfolk. He is described in greater detail in the Appendix.

Relevant Skills: See Appendix for full stats.

Boat Rides

If the party is in need of a vehicle to explore the lake, they're probably going to deal with Old Willem. Old Willem charges 2sp per mile to transport people into the marsh, as well as the price of any damages incurred to his boat. If the party is too large to fit on his boat, he has access to a Huge raft that he can tow behind it, though this reduces the vehicle's speed by 10 and negates its ability to rush.

• **Rollimus Torth** (male goreaux): This relative newcomer lives on the second floor of the Smokefall Inn. He makes his trade as a merchant, surgeon, and collector of rare and esoteric objects. He has shown a particular interest in items from the local ruins. Rollimus is secretly a representative of the Underground, and is described in greater detail in the appendix.

Relevant Skills: See Appendix for full stats.

• **Jinny Tonneson** (female elf): This cheerful young priestess serves as the village pastor, schoolteacher, and assistant to Captain Hollister. She is described in greater detail in the appendix.

Relevant Skills: See Appendix for full stats.

• **Captain Dram Hollister** (male dwarf): Captain Hollister serves as commander for the local Radiant Order garrison, such as it is, and is Trask Calder's commanding officer. He is described in greater detail in the appendix.

Relevant Skills: See Appendix for full stats.

THE SECRET HISTORY OF MURDOCH'S COVE

The troubles brewing in this small village aren't entirely a recent development. While Karloff Radool is a new arrival, he draws upon an ancient power that no one in all of Arasteen (including Radool) truly understands. The full implications of these events will be revealed as the Adventure Path continues, but at GM you should be aware of the following timeline. Many of these revelations are not apparent until later chapters of this Adventure Path and could be major spoilers if revealed to the players too soon.

• **Year 120:** Members of the nascent Radiant Order encounter the city of Formori, a stronghold of aggressive giants, the southwestern shore of Tirrian's Eye. These giants are one of the final holdouts of a once mighty civilization that once ruled the lands that are now Arasteen. The Formori giants wield foul magic that allows them to animate the dead through the use of parasitic constructs. A brutal war begins between the Formori and the Arastinians.

• **Year 135:** After years of bloody conflict, the inhabitants of Formori are wiped out. Believing the city to be permanently cursed by dark magic, Tirrian orders the Formori city to be put to the torch.

• **Year 140:** After investigating reports of supernatural incidents in the area, the Seer Order constructs Loireag Monastery in the heart of the Formori ruins. They begin to excavate the lost city, transferring large amounts of relics and other materials to Rose or other Seer strongholds.

The Seers receive special permission from King Tirrian to perform this project, and discuss their findings with no one outside their order.

• **2nd to 10th centuries:** Throughout this time, the Seers quietly remove all mention of Formori from Arasteen's histories in an attempt to bury any knowledge of what they have discovered. The Seers turn to the Loireag slurgithians for aid in concealing what they cannot hide.

Using their druidic magic, the Loireag transform the area from lush forest into flooded wetlands over the course of many generations. The Loireag establish a village near the edge of the lake.

• **Year 835:** Arastinian settlers construct a small settlement in the shadow of Loireag Monastery. The inhabitants are mostly peat farmers and merchants come to trade with the Loireag slurgithians. Though the Seers are wary of these newcomers at first, they eventually conclude that the secrets of Formori are no longer a threat to the world.

• **Year 860:** Gillek Murdoch, a rapacious entrepreneur, settles in the village and creates a powerful whiskey with a distinctive flavor, drawing curious travelers from throughout Arasteen. The previously unnamed village is named Murdoch's Cove in his honor.

• **Year 970:** Skadra Radool, an Aramystian scholar, is expelled from the Celestial College for his bizarre and unorthodox experiments to combine living flesh with golemoid machinery. After wandering Aden for several months, he finally settles in Murdoch's Cove and sets up shop as a blacksmith under an assumed name. Not long afterward, Radool accidentally uncovers a lost Formori ruin filled with ancient lore. He hides his discovery from the world as he delves into lost magical rituals, using them to empower his forbidden experiments in golemoid technology.

• **Year 977:** Driven mad by his studies, Skadra Radool attacks Loireag Monastery outside Murdoch's Cove with a small army of golemoid undead. The Radiant Order move to stop him, but the monastery burns to the ground. Many seers are killed.

Investigators later discover that Radool had been quietly kidnapping travelers for years, murdering them with foul magic and transforming them into mechanized undead. Radool lives out the rest of his days in the dungeons of Sea Reach and his foul creations are destroyed.

The Seers are reluctant to draw attention to the area by rebuilding their monastery. Instead, they assign one of their own, a young half-elf seer named Arais, to watch the village for any suspicious activity. Arais maintains his solitary vigil for well over a century.

• **Year 1090:** Renowned Columbite scholar James Dex contracts a wasting illness that he knows will one day kill him. In return for dark blessings that will prolong his life, he agrees to aid the mysterious Cult of Shermazza in their search for an artifact known as the Lost Lexicon.

• **Year 1095:** James Dex arrives in Murdoch's Cove, sent by the Cult of Shermazza to investigate the lost Seer monastery. His mission finds unexpected success when he discovers a network of magical obelisks that bestow knowledge of ancient Formori lore. He is horrified by the lost magic's terrible potential. Dex finds that he cannot bring himself to deliver such power to the cult. He is unable to destroy the Formori obelisks, only temporarily nullify them.

He records encoded instructions for how to disable them again in his journal, intending to teach one of his students how to stave off the menace in the future. He hides this journal in one of the Formori ruins so that the cult will not recover it.

Though he reports that the site holds nothing of any interest to the cult, one cult member in particular, a young Karloff Radool, does not believe him. Due to Dex's other successes, Radool's suspicions are overruled.

• **Year 1111:** Brother Arais is attacked by nocturnals as the Darkfall begins. Realizing the monsters have come only for him, he leads them away from the village until the people can muster a defense. The ancient seer is later found dead in the ruins of Loireag Monastery, surrounded by the corpses of several orcs, goblins, and unidentifiable creatures.

• **Year 1119:** Karloff Radool arrives in Loireag Marsh as part of the Cult of Shermazza's worldwide search for the Lexicon. Though James Dex's hoped that the cult would not uncover the lost Formori mechatagic, Radool soon locates one of his ancestor Skadra Radool's undiscovered laboratories. He eagerly begins his own experiments and

continues searching for more *Formori obelisks*, increasing his power and knowledge with each one he discovers.

• **Year 1120 (present day):** Using Formori magic, Radool creates a new breed of mechatagic parasite. He pillages the Loireag burial grounds and uses slurgithian corpses as his first test subjects. He sends these undead deeper into the marshes, seeking more obelisks. Radool reasons that if his minions should be forced to harm any surface dwellers, they'll blame the Loireag.

The Loireag, in turn, blame the surface dwellers for the desecration of their dead. Following Vendic Hansen's attack on their people, they retreat beneath the lake and plan their next move.

MEETING DRAM HOLLISTER

At long last the party has arrived in Murdoch's Cove and is ready to find out what it is, exactly, that they're doing here. When they are ready, Trask Calder will escort them to the grim black slab of a building that serves as a barracks for the Radiant Order. Captain Hollister awaits them inside, along with Sister Jinny and a few of the novice knights. Hollister and Trask will begin to conduct introductions until Curator Walcroix's patience can hold out no longer.

(The dialogue here is, of course a guideline. Please encourage the player characters to participate in the following exchange.)

"So where is it?" Walcroix asks eagerly, his sharp eyes searching the stark headquarters. "Do you have the book here? I'd like to get started right away."

"Of course," Hollister replies with a wary look. He leads the party toward a back room. "You lot showed up just in time. That quack Rollimus found out about the book somehow and has been sniffing around for a chance to see it. Probably got tipped off by one of those farmers that helped us crack open the ruins. If you'd taken a few days longer I might have let him take a look."

If the party inquires about Rollimus, Hollister replies: "He's just a nosy mechatagic from out of town. He won't leave well enough alone. I don't trust him one bit."

The dwarf unlocks a heavy wooden door, revealing the Order's armory. The party's warriors will immediately recognize that the weapons and armor within are nothing extraordinary, but are neatly organized and kept in good condition. A junior knight sits on a bench nearby, sharpening one of the many blades.

In the center of the room an enormous leather-bound book rests on a table. The cover is marked with unique seal - a hart on a field of blue, the personal crest of Sir James Dex. The book is nearly two feet by two feet and half as thick. Dennison Walcroix stares at the book openmouthed for several seconds before carefully opening the cover. The pages are filled with dense, mechanical writing in a language none of you have seen.

"There's so much of it," Walcroix whispers. "All in code. I don't know this particular cipher, but I know Lord Dex and his methods. I can decipher it, but it will take some time. I can't even begin to imagine what he could have been searching for here."

"Was it giant undead fish people?" Hollister asks dryly. "Because that's what we found."

When asked to explain, Hollister elaborates. "One of the Murdoch kids claimed he'd seen some strange creatures in one of the old ruins at the edge of the swamp. When we went to check it out, we found a pack of slurges. They were huge, strong, and undead. They attacked us on sight. Killed Akro and Cecilia, two of our best knights, before Calder brought the last of them down. We thought those things had been hiding in the

ruins, but they weren't - they were trying to break into them. We brought out a crew to crack open a few of the floor tiles..." He gestures at the book. "That's what we found sealed inside, perfectly preserved. I'd love to know what's in that book that's worth the lives of two knights - especially because we've had more sightings of those undead slurges out in the swamp. They're getting closer to the village every day."

Dennison Walcroix becomes quite occupied with studying the book. Deciphering the journal will take quite some time, during which the players are free to do as they wish. Hollister tells them that over the past few nights, the guards on night watch have seen strange lurking about the forest. The Captain admits that, beyond himself and Trask, most of his remaining fighters are too young and inexperienced to risk hunting the marsh for those things, so he's commanded them to hold their positions for now.

If the party can turn up any information about what these creatures are or where they're coming from, he's willing to reward them. At the very least, he can pay them 100 gold for each undead slug they bring down, taking their heads as proof. At this point, the knights don't realize that the undead slurgithians are animated by golemoid parasites. The knights cremated the first ones they fought, their standard practice when disposing of undead creatures. Once the players begin encountering the manikins, it won't be long before they discover their true nature.

MURDOCH'S COVE RUMORS

Whenever the player characters spend any length of time speaking with the locals, they can learn one or more rumors about the area. Though several of the following rumors are false, they can potentially lead to interesting encounters. Distribute these rumors in whatever manner you feel is appropriate, as part of natural conversation with the locals or as the result of downtime in the village.

Perhaps after an evening dining at the Smokefall Inn, you might reveal one of the following rumors as something a party member overheard. If the players wish to actively investigate, you might allow them to conduct Diplomacy checks to periodically canvass the village for more information, rewarding them with one or more rumors depending on the result of their skill check.

- 1) There are ruins in the marsh from a city older than Arasteen. Nobody remembers who lived here, but some of the ruins are far too large to have been used by humans. That's where the blackstone comes from. (True.)
- 2) Word has it the naga up in the Fangs are growing restless again, and readying for a raid on the highlands. (True.)
- 3) Old innkeeper Eimhir is a witch, and hexed her good husband to die when his eye wandered to another woman. (False. Though Eimhir knows a bit of folk magic, she didn't murder her husband.)
- 4) The tower guards have been sneaking swampshine from the inn and drinking it while on watch. (True.)
- 5) Old Willem went crazy during his time on the Thunder Trail. Sometimes the people he takes into the swamp don't come back. (Inaccurate. Willem is eccentric but he doesn't intentionally harm any of his customers. He has, on occasion, dropped off travelers in the marsh only to find nothing but blood and bones on his return - but that's just because the swamp is terribly dangerous.)
- 6) There used to be a seer monastery in the marsh, but it burned down over a century ago. (True.)
- 7) The dead are waking up because the ghosts of dead Seers want revenge on the Radiant Order for failing to protect them. (False.)

8) Rollimus the surgeon will buy artifacts from the old ruins, as long as the knights don't know about it. (True.)

9) Urbana is preparing for war with Arasteen. (Probably true.)

10) Some sort of illness is brewing in the north, and the Order doesn't know how to cure it. (True. See the next chapter in this adventure path, Through Plague and Fire, for details.)

11) Some of the transients aren't what they seem to be; they're shape-shifting nocturnal spies. (False. Though, if you want to complicate matters, a few of the transients may be innocent echoes looking for work.)

12) The slurges haven't traded with the village in almost a year. The Merchant Council is worried they're still mad about Vendic Hansen. (True.)

13) The nocturnals are angry because there's a seer hiding in the village. If we can find it and turn it over to them, the Darkfall will leave us be. (False. Though this rumor could make things interesting for any seers in the party.)

14) Some of the transient peat farmers have gone missing - they never left town, they just disappeared. (True. Radool has begun to capture travelers in the swamp and use them in his experiments.)

15) It's obvious that the slurges are behind all this. They're preparing for war, and the only way to save the village is to attack them first. (False, though a popular opinion in the village, especially among Hansen's supporters.)

16) I heard one of the merchants bragging that Fred Aiken put that snobby young dwarf blacksmith in her place. Serves her right. That dwarf can't even forge a decent sword. (Complicated - see Fred Aiken and Britta Dinkers in the Important Locals section.)

17) Captain Hollister is a damn coward. Word has it he hid in a pile of corpses to escape the nocturnals back in Redbeach. The Templar Council didn't have the heart to kick him out of the Order, so they stuck him out here. (True, except for the first sentence.)

18) The church in Murdoch's Cove is special, ancient, and was once blessed by Tirrian himself. They say that sometimes the spirit of the First King descends from the heavens and suffuses the church with light. (True, though the light, last seen twenty five years ago, was actually the result of Lord James Dex activating the Final Nexus.)

19) Mayor Hansen and Hollister are fighting again. Word has it Hansen is angry at Hollister for sending his son off for trial in Redbeach. (True.)

LOST IN TRANSLATION

Deciphering James Dex's journal will keep Dennison Walcroix occupied for much of this adventure. The book requires a DC 30 Linguistics check per thirty minutes of study (or ten hours if you take 20), and requires twenty successful checks to fully decipher. Though Walcroix's unique knowledge of Sir James Dex's cryptography is necessary for any progress, characters with the Linguistics skill can attempt to aid him. Whoever has the highest Linguistics should make the roll. The others should roll vs. DC 10 to use the aid other action. No more than three characters can aid Walcroix; too many people just get in the way. After a character has helped Walcroix make ten successful checks, they now know enough about Dex's codes to make checks without the curator's assistance.

Deciphering the journal is exhausting as well as time consuming. After ten hours of reading, Walcroix must make a successful Constitution check vs. DC 15+1 per each additional check before each skill check. If this check fails, he is mentally exhausted and must rest for at least eight hours before he can continue reading.

If left to his own devices, Walcroix prefers to analyze the book slowly and meticulously (taking 20 to guarantee one successful check per day, getting plenty of rest). As the curator has +10 to his Linguistics, taking 20 is the most reliable option unless the party has access to large skill buffs or finds themselves caught in a time crunch and are willing to gamble.

Each successful check reveals something of interest - the location of one of the twelve Formori sites of power, part of the history of Loireag Marsh, or a secret regarding the obelisks. Unfortunately, many of the *Formori obelisks* (see Appendix) found in the sites of power have already been discovered by Karloff Radool and used to increase his diabolical knowledge. At first, the only way to tell if a site is still active is to go there and investigate personally. The twelve are each located on lines of magical power that pass through the site where Murdoch's Cove stands now. Though varying distances from the village, they are arranged methodically around it like numbers on a clock and referred to thusly in this section. Site 8, for example, is west-southwest of Murdoch's Cove, in the 8 o'clock position. The thirteenth site is hidden within the village - but more on that later. (Avoid referring to the sites in this manner until the players figure out the pattern on their own.)

The first secret Dennison Walcroix recovers is always "Initial Findings" (see the History of Loireag Marsh section). Whenever Walcroix deciphers another section, roll 1d20 to determine what he has discovered. If you receive a result identical to a previous roll, pick another history result to insure the players get as much of this background information as possible.

Journal Research Results

1d20	Result
1	History of Loireag Marsh, Book One
2	History of Loireag Marsh, Book Two
3	History of Loireag Marsh, Book Three
4	History of Loireag Marsh, Book Four
5	History of Loireag Marsh, Book Five
6	History of Loireag Marsh, Book Six
7	Site 1 (Active) - Isle of Bones
8	Site 2 (Inactive) - Abandoned Laboratory
9	Site 3 (Inactive) - Ruined Farmhouse
10	Site 4 (Active) - Valley of the Dead
11	Site 5 (Inactive) - Standing Stones
12	Site 6 (Inactive) - Hydra's Lair
13	Site 7 (Inactive) - Goblin Camp
14	Site 8 (Active) - Ruins of Loireag Monastery
15	Site 9 (Active) - McGinnis Farm
16	Site 10 (Inactive) - Manticore Hunting Grounds
17	Site 11 (Active) - Attorcroppe's Tomb
18	Site 12 (Active) - Cattail Isle
19	Formori Secret - Manite Grounding
20	Formori Secret - Nexus Tracing Stone

History of Loireag Marsh

While these discoveries do not reveal the locations of any sites of power, they give valuable insight into the history of the Formori and Loireag Marsh. Read the italicized sections whenever Walcroix reports his findings after discovering one of these secrets.

Some of these secrets refer to "the ancient civilization." If the party already knows about Formori, then use that name.)

Initial Findings

This is the first secret that is revealed.

Curator Walcroix greets the party with a tired smile as he prepares his report. *"I've been trying to organize some of Lord Dex's writings. I feel quite certain that he intended for this book to fall into the proper hands - mine or another of his students - so that we would understand what's going on here. I've only begun to scratch the surface of what he was trying to tell us, but I think I've got the basics."*

"Apparently this area is an extremely powerful magical network. There are lines of power everywhere, and where they cross, they create powerful nexuses. It looks like the ancient civilization that once lived here tried to tap these nexuses. The magical machinery they created has seen better days, but it's still very much active. Lord Dex warns that someone who exploits the nexuses can gain extraordinary power and knowledge."

"I suspect that whoever is out there creating these monsters is using these nexuses to do so. If we can find the ones they haven't accessed yet, we may be able to figure out what they're up to - or at least stop them from getting any stronger."

"I'm sure that information is in the book. I'll get back to deciphering more of it right away. In the meantime, it sounds like what we're looking for will be big and obvious - maybe one of those obelisks or standing stones that are all over the marsh? I get the feeling they're hard to miss, and they're likely to be made out of that strange blackstone you see all over the place here. Oh, and their long-term exposure to this level of magic has probably rendered them more or less indestructible."

Book One - The Fallen Temple

Dennison shuffles through his notes on the latest volume and attempts to organize his thoughts. *"Apparently Lord Dex originally came here in search of Loireag Monastery - an ancient seer cloister that was destroyed about one hundred and fifty years ago. The Seers intended to study the magical phenomena in the area. It sounds like they documented thirteen nexuses of magical power in the area."*

"Lord Dex was afraid that if the nexuses fell into the wrong hands, they would be used to create horrible weapons. In the past, apparently they've been used to make undead, golems, all sorts of nastiness. According to his findings, these sites of power could not be permanently destroyed - but their power can be temporarily drained. Each time you drain one of these things, they'll stay inactive for about a decade. All you need is some modicum of spellcasting ability... and to be prepared for the massive magical backlash that follows. Apparently Lord Dex drained them all the last time he was here... and now they're waking up again."

Book Two - Land of the Giants

Curator Walcroix looks very excited as he prepares to share the results of his latest translations.

"I have some extraordinary news," he says. "You know those blackstone ruins that are all over the marsh? No one remembers where they came from. Well Lord Dex's journal has the answer! They were built by giants!"

"According to Lord Dex, this area was once dominated by an advanced race of giants who called this area Formori. The Arastinians have no record of any of that - but apparently the naga do. I'm not sure how Lord Dex talked those maniac snakes into sharing their knowledge, but it adds up, given the proportions of some of the intact artifacts we've discovered. The trolls and ogres that still live in this area must be their descendants."

Book Three - Tirrian's Conquest

The normally upbeat curator looks nervous and somewhat shaken as he prepares his report.

"So you know that ancient civilization that once lived here?" he asks. "Well I found out what happened to them. Apparently they were

exterminated..." he pauses before continuing, "by King Tirrian and the Radiant Order. Apparently they used their magic to create unimaginable horrors and unleashed them against the Arastinians. The Order was forced to destroy their entire civilization."

"I'm sure the Knights didn't do that lightly," he says, though he clearly has his doubts. "I can't imagine how awful that must have been. Some of the tools they used to create their nightmares might still be out there..."

Book Four - Rise of the Marsh

Dennison Walcroix hardly looks up from his notes as he approaches, still poring over them with an intense frown.

"So it seems I've learned why no one remembers the ancient civilization that once dwelled in Loireag Marsh," he says. "Lord Dex theorizes that the seers built Loireag Monastery not just to study this place - they also used their political influence to excise all memory of the ancients. They just... wrote them out of history. I didn't think seers did that sort of thing."

"It gets weirder," he continues. "Lord Dex quotes: 'The power under Murdoch's Cove is no mere magic - it is something greater. It lives. It breathes. It desires to be found. The seers thought they could contain it, but they were wrong. We used our magic as they asked, to transform these fertile lands into a swamp, to help them hide the truth. But it cannot be hidden forever.'"

The curator looks at the party, confused. "He doesn't give any source for that quote," he says, "but it isn't written in Common. It's in the slurgithian language. Could the slurges have created Loireag Marsh just to keep people away?"

Book Five - The Mad Mechamage

Walcroix looks exhausted but full of nervous energy. He has clearly discovered something of interest.

"The latest translations revealed quite a bit," he says. "I learned what happened to the seer monastery that used to be here. Apparently there was an exiled Aramystian mechamage named Skadra Radool who came to the village in the late 10th Century. He was deep into body modification, what we would now call golemization. Keep in mind that this was long before Urbana wiped away the taboos for that sort of thing. This stuff was highly illegal at the time - not to mention dangerous."

"Apparently Radool tapped into the sites of power without the seers realizing it and created a bunch of golemoid monsters. It says that Radool even experimented on himself, making himself virtually immortal. The Radiant Order captured Radool and he eventually died in a Sea Reach prison... so I suppose his immortality was connected to the nexuses somehow. Before they stopped him, his monsters burned Loireag Monastery to the ground."

"The important part is - this has all happened before, in almost exactly the same way," Walcroix continues. "It can't be a coincidence."

Book Six - Dark Premonition

Curator Dennison Walcroix looks morose but determined as he prepares to give his report.

"I'm afraid I don't have good news," he says. "This part was mostly warnings from Lord Dex to use the obelisks responsibly... but he warns about something else. He says that the power under Murdoch's Cove isn't alone - there are others, just like it, all over Aden. Though this one is contained, he says it's only a matter of time before one of the others breaks loose of its confinement and starts turning nightmares into reality." He looks at the party with fear in his eyes. "Those were his exact words. This book was written three years before the Darkfall. Could Lord Dex have predicted it?"

Book Seven - The Final Nexus

This secret does not require a successful translation. Walcroix reveals the following after the player characters drain all but two *Formori* obelisks, even if he has to follow them into the field to warn them. (In this case he will bring Sir Trask along for protection.)

"I have bad news," Walcroix says. "Apparently the thirteenth site of power, or the Final Nexus as Lord Dex calls it, isn't like the others. When the other twelve obelisks are all drained, an intense power surge, much greater than any of the others, will result in the final site. Last time it happened, it lasted for seven days."

"Once the final site activates, anything with any sort of magical awareness within a hundred miles is going to home in on the Final Nexus. The last time Lord Dex did this, it was before the Darkfall. He just waited out the power surge and everyone just thought the display of magic was just some sort of weird miracle. But this time, every nocturnal in the swamp is going to be drawn to it."

"If we don't keep the Final Nexus safe, everything we've done here will have been for nothing."

Sites of Power

Each of the following sites of power houses a *Formori* Nexus. Active sites have not yet been tapped by Karloff Radool. The players have a chance to find these sites and drain them first, preventing the mad alchemist from increasing his power. Even inactive sites, however, sometimes contain interesting encounters and treasure.

All sites of power feature potential bonus treasure - *Formori* relics. These relics are considered Arastinian historic treasures, and are illegal to sell or take from the Radiant North. Of course, the Underground mage, Rollimus, is quite happy to discreetly buy them for their full value. Alternately, the party can donate the artifacts to the Radiant priesthood. Sister Jinny is happy to accept them. She will provide healing services and 1d3 bottles of holy water per week to any party member who donates such artifacts. This gesture will also earn Captain Hollister's respect and admiration if the party wishes to ally itself with the Radiant Order.

Racing Against Radool

Karloff Radool's bond to the evil entity known as Shermazza gives him special insight into the *Formori* obelisks. He can drain them through his undead minions, and the effects are never random. Each obelisk he drains grants him greater insight into *Formori* mechamagic, allowing him to improve his minions. The obelisks he has already discovered have allowed him to create his manikins, parasites, and immortality module. If Karloff activates any of the remaining six obelisks before the players do, all of his manikins gain the following abilities three days later:

- 1 Obelisk - +1 hit point per hit die.
- 2 Obelisks - +1 natural armor bonus to AC
- 3 Obelisks - +1 to attack and damage
- 4 Obelisks - 1 additional mutation
- 5 Obelisks - +1 hit dice
- 6 Obelisks - All manikins gain one ability from the nocturnal template (see the *Thunderscape Campaign Setting*)
- The Final Nexus - See The Final Confrontation

Radool does not have a guide to the obelisks, as the players do, and has been forced to use brute force to slowly scour the area. You can always complicate matters by allowing him to drain some of them if the players are lax about hunting the sites of power.

Karloff Radool has been content to ignore the village because he knows that if he wipes out Murdoch's Cove the Radiant Order will reply with brutal force, complicating his search immeasurably. He would prefer to exhaust all other options before risking a direct assault (though the player characters force him to become desperate later).

Into the Wild

The player characters don't necessarily need to translate Dex's entire journal to find the Formori sites of power. If the party is confident in their exploration skills, they can always take the initiative and venture into the wilderness searching for old ruins.

Long-time residents such as Eimhir Patton, Dagfinn Murdoch, and the slurgithian seer Ceasg (once she is friendly), might even be able to point the players toward some potential sites, should they ask these experienced elders for counsel. Whether these sites are legitimate sites of power or runes with nothing of interest (other than perhaps some relics or a nocturnal making its home) is up to you.

Site 1 (Active) - Isle of Bones

This site is located on an island 36 miles north-northeast of Murdoch's Cove, deep in the marshy regions of Tirrian's Eye. The island is covered with crumbling ruins and mounds of rotting bones, some of which are fresh. It is currently home to a pair of nocturnal ankhegs, who have constructed an elaborate lair of tunnels beneath the island. These Darkfall-empowered insects will attack anyone who invades their territory - including Radool's manikins, if any of them have followed the party here.

Their preferred tactic is to burst out of the earth beneath an unsuspecting foe and drag them into the tunnels so that they can kill their foes one at a time.

Nocturnal Ankhegs (2)

CR 4 each - XP 1,200 each (see ankheg in *Pathfinder Bestiary RPG* and Nocturnal Creature template in the *Thunderscape Campaign Setting*)

CE Large magical beast

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+9 natural, -1 size)

hp 28 (3d10+12)

Defensive Abilities +4 vs. mind-affecting, disease, and poison; **SR 15**; **DR 5/magic**

Once the ankhegs are dealt with, the party will find the Formori obelisk half-buried deep in the ankheg tunnels. They will also find a dozen ankheg eggs (the Eye will pay 50 gold crowns each for these specimens) as well as an impressive treasure hoard buried among the filth and debris: a *potion of expeditious retreat*, several scrolls (*blur*, *golemguard*, and *magic weapon*), an *efficient quiver*, 526 gold crowns, a set of masterwork thieves tools, and a portable chess set carved of obsidian and ivory (missing a few pieces but still worth about 100 gold crowns).

Formori Relics: A sacrificial dagger of Formori make is also among the treasure. This counts as a masterwork dagger crafted for a Large creature, and is worth 500 gold crowns.

Site 2 (Inactive) - Abandoned Laboratory

This site is located on an island 56 miles east-northeast of Murdoch's Cove, at the edge of the marsh but within sight of the shores of Tirrian's Eye. The obelisk is within a crumbling tower of Formori blackstone. As one of the first sites Karloff Radool discovered, this location now serves as storage for one of Radool's backup clones. If the characters explore, they will find a naked corpse that has undergone extensive mechemagical modification to resemble the mad alchemist.

There are also a pair of manikins here, left behind to guard the site.

Tough Slurgithian Manikins (2)

CR 3 each (see Appendix) - **XP 800 each**

hp 28 each

SQ tenacious mutation instead of toughened mutation

Formori Relics: A piece of curved black glass on a four-inch thick handle, worth 120 gold crowns.

Site 3 (Inactive) - Ruined Farmhouse

This site is located twenty miles due east of Murdoch's Cove, in a small farmhouse built upon the foundations of a Formori ruin. Unfortunately, when the players arrive, they find that Radool has long since discovered this obelisk. Though there is a large amount of dried blood in the house, there is no sign of the family that lived here. The floor is torn open, revealing a small cavern underneath where the dormant obelisk stands.

Formori Relics: A half dozen fragments of broken pottery, worth about 15 gold crowns each.

Site 4 (Active) - Valley of the Dead

This site is located roughly 100 miles east-southeast of Murdoch's Cove (the most distant of all the sites of power), well outside the marsh and situated in a low valley in the Arastinian highlands. Several Formori standing stones are scattered about the clearing, most of them sunk almost entirely into the earth. The location might be difficult to pick out among the terrain, if someone else wasn't already there.

A small camp is set up within the valley. A half-dozen masked figures roam the camp, excavating the area with picks and shovels. This is Grey Master Connach, a necromancer from the Grey Isles, and a pack of his undead minions. Connach has used tattered clothing and filthy bandages to disguise his undead slaves as plague victims. Recognizing them for what they are requires a Perception and Knowledge (religion) check vs. DC 10, + 2 for every 10 feet between the undead and their observer.

Connach wears the robes of a Radiant priest over his armor, disguising his true allegiance to Zeloch.

The Grey Master knows nothing about the Formori, but he sensed the obelisk's necromantic aura while traveling through the area and has set his zombies to the task of digging it up. Connach is not here to scrap with a band of adventurers; if he detects the party, or they approach openly, he will call out to them from a distance. The zombies continue to mindlessly dig while Connach's wight stands by its master's side, also disguised, waiting patiently.

"Careful," Connach warns. "Don't get too close to us. They have the plague. I am a priest of the Radiant Path. I'd move on if I were you. These poor souls are just digging graves for some of their brethren." (Four bandaged corpses do lie nearby, but those are just spares Connach usually carries in his palanquin, laid out by the dig site to help cover his lie.)

Connach is a talented deceiver, but far from perfect. Suspicious characters can make Sense Motive or Perception checks to pierce his lies and disguises. If the party approaches too closely, Connach will grow nervous and order his minions to attack.

Grey Master Connach

Male ferran (hyena) predator cleric 6 - CR 5 - XP 1,600

LE Medium humanoid (ferran)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +3

Defense

AC 20, **touch** 10, **flat-footed** 20 (+7 armor, +2 shield, +1 natural)

hp 39 (6d8+6)

Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +8

Special Defenses leathery hide, copycat 6/day

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee masterwork morningstar +8 (1d8+1), bite +2 (1d6+1)

Ranged pistol +4 (1d8+1)

Special Attacks channel negative energy (3d6, DC 18), bleeding touch (1d6 bleed for 3 rounds, 6/day)

Cleric Spells Prepared

0-Level - *detect magic, guidance, light, mending, purify food and drink*

1st Level - *bless, command* (DC 14), *divine favor, sanctuary, cause fear* (domain, DC 14)

2nd Level - *communal protection from good, desecrate, hold person* (DC 15), *sound burst, shatter* (DC 15)

3rd Level - *bestow curse* (DC 16), *dispel magic, summon monster III, animate dead* (domain)

Statistics

Str 16, **Dex** 10, **Con** 12, **Int** 12, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18

Feats Channel Smite, Command Undead, Improved Channel

Traits Reactionary (+2 initiative), sacred conduit (+1 channel DC)

Skills Bluff 3 (+8), Disguise (+8), Knowledge (religion) 6 (+9), Perception 6 (+12), Sense Motive 6 (+12)

Languages Nocturnine, Western Common

SQ predatory mobility (40 base speed), scent, domains (death, trickery), spontaneous casting (inflict)

Equipment pistol, 10 standard pistol ammunition, large steel shield, +1 *breastplate, pearl of power* (1st level), masterwork cold iron morningstar, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, spell component pouch, traveler's journal (including a recent copy of the *Iron Guard Field*

Guide), disguise kit, unholy symbol of Zeloch, Radiant priest robes, 245 gold crowns

Barrowgrinder

Wight (See *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*) - **CR 3 - XP 800**

AC 17, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 16 (+2 armor, +1 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 26

Equipment leather armor, hooded cloak

Zombie Minions (4)

Medium Humanoid Zombies (See *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*) -

CR 1/2 e - XP 200 each

AC 14, **touch** 10, **flat-footed** 14 (+2 armor, +2 natural)

hp 12 each

Equipment tattered leather armor, bandages, shovels

Connach relies heavily on his minions in combat, and is not afraid to use *animate dead* to create reinforcements if his zombies fare poorly. If he is badly injured, he will surrender, even going so far as to directly beg any Radiant Knights for mercy. If questioned, he tells them (truthfully) that he was in the area looking for anything of interest to the Grey Masters for their eventual conquest of Arasteen. "It's coming, you know," he adds, "but if you let me go, I'll put in a good word and see that they spare you when the dead legions arrive." (Again, he is lying - he would never spare his enemies after they humiliated him.)

In addition to the above listed gear and treasure, Connach has a large black palanquin which his minions usually use to carry him and his spare corpses.

The obelisk is still buried under roughly a dozen feet of earth and will take some time to dig up. Fortunately, Connach's zombies left behind plenty of shovels for the party to use. Once the arch is even partially exposed, it can be drained normally.

The players must decide what to do with Connach, if he survived. If they let him go, the necromancer flees (perhaps taking his place among the party's growing rogues' gallery, if they're in the habit of doing this). If they bring him back to Murdoch's Cove, Hollister binds, gags, and imprisons Connach in the barrack's sole jail cell, uncertain what else to do with him.

Connach can be a dangerous person to have around - though he's not foolish enough to start a fight he can't win, he's powerful, resourceful, and certain to attempt an escape if given a chance. Hollister refuses to kill the Grey Master - Radiant Knights do not murder prisoners. Connach knows this, and is willing to bide his time rather than take foolish risks.

Formori Relics: Connach carries a Formori fertility statue worth 165 gold crowns, recovered by his zombies during their digging.

Site 5 (Inactive) - Standing Stones

This site is located 56 miles south-southwest of Murdoch's Cove. The *Formori obelisk* is quite obvious, as it stands in the center of a large clearing surrounded by a circle of black standing stones. Radool has long since drained and forgotten this site, and there is nothing else of interest here.

Site 6 (Inactive) - Hydra's Lair

This site is located in a cave 43 miles due south of Murdoch's Cove. Karloff Radool has already drained the obelisk and moved on, but the latent dark energies of this place have since attracted a nocturnal hydra, which has made its lair here.

Nocturnal Hydra (4 heads)

CR 6 - XP 2,400 each (see hydra in *Pathfinder Bestiary RPG* and Nocturnal Creature template in the *Thunderscape Campaign Setting*)

CE Huge magical beast

AC 17, **touch** 9, **flat-footed** 16 (+1 Dex, +8 natural, -2 size)

hp 47 (5d10+20)

Defensive Abilities +4 vs. mind-affecting, disease, and poison; SR 17; DR 5/magic

Special Abilities dark jaunt (teleport up to 50 feet as move action every 1d4 rounds)

The hydra's treasure (scattered in a heap of filth and remains from past meals) includes a mithral buckler, 223 gold crowns, and a *potion of protection from evil*.

Formori Relics: The hydra's hoard also includes twenty blackstone coins the size of saucers, marked with ancient runes. These are worth about 5 gold crowns each.

Site 7 (Inactive) - Goblin Camp

This site is located 70 miles south-southwest of Murdoch's Cove, in another field surrounded by black standing obelisks. Radool drained this site and left several months ago, but the area has become a camp for a band of Darkfall-worshipping goblins. These creatures are viciously territorial, and will attack the moment they sense the party's presence.

Goblins (10)

CR 1/3 each - XP 135 each (see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

hp 6 each

If defeated, the band's belongings include their weapons and armor as well as 230 gold crowns, 2 alchemist fires, and a *wand of entangle* with 12 charges remaining.

Formori Relics: The goblin leader wears a necklace cobbled together of black Formori stone shards, worth 50 gold crowns.

Site 8 (Active) - Ruins of Loireag Monastery

(Note: if you have a thaumaturge in your party, you may want to consider letting the party find this site early, so that they can get more use out of this adventure's unique legend.)

This site is located roughly 35 miles southwest of Murdoch's Cove, in the remnants of a large stone building. Much of the rubble has been carted away to build homes in Murdoch's Cove over the generations. Only the foundations and a few ruined walls remain. Many of the ruined structures are still badly scorched from some ancient fire.

A small clearing stands in the area before the ruin's entrance. There is a single, well-tended grave site here, with a few withered roses scattered upon it. The tombstone reads "Here lies Brother Arais, Last Seer of Murdoch's Cove, beloved friend. May you find the peace at last."

The obelisk is tucked away in a basement of the ruins, accessible via a well-hidden door (more on that later). Karloff Radool's manikins have already discovered this obelisk, but have not drained it. They've been having trouble getting to the obelisk because the restless spirit of Brother Arais has returned to haunt the ruins. A pair of slurgithian manikins linger in the area, keeping an eye on things until reinforcements can arrive.

When the players approach the area, the manikins attack.

Slurgithian Manikins (3)

CR 3 each (see Appendix) - XP 800 each

hp 22 each

The door leading to the basement is well hidden (Perception vs. DC 20). However, there are also a number of slurgithian tracks in the area that lead directly to the entry and do not emerge (Survival vs. DC 19 to follow). The door is old and heavy, but not locked, and will eventually open to a determined party. As soon as the door opens, a chill wind emerges from below, accompanied by a vague sense of dread. As the party descends, they find several dead slurgithians on the stairs.

The steps lead into a large, half-collapsed chamber where the seers once gathered to meditate upon the mysteries of the nexus. A *Formori obelisk* looms in the center of the chamber. The ghostly figure of Brother Arais paces the room. If he detects the player characters (which is likely, given his ridiculously high Perception), he drifts toward them with a piteous moan.

"Leave this cursed place, or join me in my vigil," the spirit demands. "The power entombed in this place brings only ruin..."

Brother Arais

Male half-elf seer 4 - CR 6 - XP 2,400

CG Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision - 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +30

Defense

AC 15, **touch** 15, **flat-footed** 13 (+3 deflection, +2 Dex)

hp 26 (4d8+8)

Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8

Special Defenses elven immunities, channel resistance +4, undead traits, rejuvenation

Offense

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee incorporeal corrupting touch +5 (4d6, Fort vs. DC 15 for half damage)

Special attacks malevolence (Will vs. DC 15)

Seer Spells Prepared

1st Level - *divine favor*

Statistics

Str -, **Dex** 14, **Con** -, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Finesse

Traits Indomitable Faith (+1 to will saves), Folk Magic (*detect evil* - 1/day)

Skills Fly 0 (+10), Knowledge (history) 4 (+9), Knowledge (religion) 4 (+7), Perception 4 (+30), Sense Motive 4 (+12), Stealth 0 (+10)

Languages Sylfanic, Western Common

SQ second sight (+1, 11/day), fatebender aura, aura of lethargy (DC 15), farsight (recall spell by expending second sight), prophecies (aura of watchfulness*, improved second sight)

*Arais uses this fatebender aura by default, switching to other auras as appropriate.

Equipment Arais carries no equipment, though his spirit seems to be garbed in a seer's ceremonial armor.

Special: Because Arais is bound to protect the ruins from those who would misuse Formori magic, his ghostly abilities function normally against Radool's undead manikins.

Brother Arais is bound to this chamber and will attack if the players do not leave. If defeated, Arais will vanish from the ruins, only to rejuvenate twenty-four hours later (giving the players plenty of time to drain the obelisk and leave). For those who do not wish to attack the seer, there are other options.

- A Diplomacy check is not enough, as Arais is driven by his ghostly nature to protect this place. However, a successful *Speak with Dead* spell will give him pause and compel him to answer the required questions.

- If any player characters are seers, and identify themselves as such, he will recognize them and hear them out.

- If anyone mentions his student, Ceasg, that will also jar him to lucidity.

- If the party presents a bottle of Murdoch Swampshine and claims that Dagfinn Murdoch sent them, memories of his old friend will briefly restore the seer's sanity enough for him to communicate.

(Any of these effects end if anyone attacks Arais or approaches the obelisk.)

Arais will warn the players of the dangers of Formori magic, and implore them to leave. If they tell him of the current situation and their plan, he reluctantly admits that draining the obelisks is probably the only course of action. To aid them, he tells them how to use manite to limit the damage when draining an obelisk, and even offers to possess one of the characters and drain the obelisk for them. In so doing, Arais will absorb the brunt of all effects inflicted by the obelisk and the possessed character will suffer no harm.

If the players drain the obelisk successfully, Arais' ghost becomes dormant. Any thaumaturge in the party will sense that Arais' extraordinary dedication to his vigil now lingers heavily in the vicinity of his grave, and may use the importune class ability to bond with the dead seer's legend (see Appendix).

Further, if the party managed to overcome the seer's madness without violence, he leaves a shimmering blue rose behind. "*Find my disciple, the Vigilant,*" he whispers as he departs. "*She is stronger than she knows, and the people of the Cove need her now more than ever...*"

Formori Relics: Six broken stone plates worth 50 gold crowns each and a large Formori drinking vessel (about the size of a wash basin) worth 75 gold crowns. These are found on a small table in the chamber containing the *Formori Obelisk*.



Site 9 (Active) - McGinnis Farm

This site of power is roughly 25 miles to the west of Murdoch's Cove, beneath a farmhouse built out of blackstone. It is the home of two elfen brothers, Boyd and Barclay McGinnis, who make their living as shepherds.

When they are within five miles of the house, the party encounters Barclay on horseback, galloping toward Murdoch's Cove in a panic. If he spots the party, he rides toward them and cries out for help. Barclay tells the players that his brother never returned from the fields the day before, and that when he went out to look for him this morning, he found their sheep had been slaughtered.

Karloff Radool has surmised that a *Formori obelisk* is somewhere in this area, but does not know where. Radool's manikins kidnapped Boyd McGinnis and are currently interrogating him. Boyd knows nothing about the obelisk, of course, but he has already revealed that his house is built upon old ruins - which is all Radool needs to know. His slugs are now headed toward the farmhouse with the captive shepherd in tow.

Barclay can lead the party to the dead flock, if they wish. The manikins made no effort to hide their tracks, and can be followed with a Survival check vs. DC 10. The trail leads to a nearby cavern. Pools of blood stain the floor and manacles are fastened to one wall. (Boyd was tortured here.) The tracks then lead out once more, toward the McGinnis farm.

The obelisk is buried in a sealed cave beneath the McGinnis home, beneath six inches of solid stone (just thin enough for the artifact's aura to be visible through the floor via *detect magic* and other such effects).

If the player characters came here directly and are faster than the (30 speed) manikins, they get to the house first and have a few minutes before the manikins arrive. If the party stopped to track the manikins, they arrive last. The manikins have already torn the farmhouse apart and are digging at the floor with picks. Otherwise, determine who arrives first randomly.

Three manikins are present - an ogre and two humans. The ogre pounds at the floor of the house while the other two keep watch. Boyd McGinnis is still alive, but barely. He is bound in chains and currently lies on the floor near one of the manikins. When the undead detect the player characters, they cease digging and Radool attempts to parlay through one of the manikins. (If this is the first encounter between Radool and the party, he is proud to introduce himself, though he will give no further details about who he is or what his plans may be.)

"Hold your blades, heroes," Radool demands, his voice echoing mechanically through one of the undead manikins. "Is stopping me from reaching one paltry nexus worth the life of this man? Turn around. Go back to your village. I will spare the shepherd as thanks. Or interfere with me - and watch another innocent perish at the hands of my manikins."

Surprisingly, Radool is as good as his word. If he is allowed to dig up the obelisk and drain it, he will leave Boyd McGinnis alive. If the party attacks, the manikin closest Boyd will coup de grace the helpless farmer as its first action (unless the player characters can stop it).



CR 3 each (see Appendix) - XP 800 each
hp 22 each



CR 6 (see Appendix) - XP 2,400
hp 53

If the party rescues Boyd, the brothers are extremely grateful. They offer to let the players take whatever relics they want out of the nexus cavern. Afterward, they will accompany the party back to the village.

As it turns out, the brothers served in the Arastinian army in their youth, so Hollister is glad to have them. The McGinnis brothers have the statistics of elite soldiers (see Appendix).

Formori Relics: 12 strangely carved stone figurines that depict various creatures - either works of art or the playing pieces in some strange game. They are worth 80 gold crowns each, and are found in the farm's hidden basement near the obelisk.

Site 10 (Active) - Manticore Hunting Grounds

This site is located 80 miles west-northwest of Murdoch's Cove, deep in the marsh but not in an area that requires a boat to reach. The obelisk stands in an open area surrounded by standing stones, and has already been activated by Karloff Radool. The area for at least a mile around is littered with the corpses of animals, some recently killed. Most of these have barely been eaten, victims of a cruel manticore who was attracted to the standing stones and now amuses itself by stalking and killing anything in the area. The longer the party remains in the area, the more likely they are to draw its attention.



CR 5 - XP 1,600 (see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)
hp 57

The manticore's lair is in a secluded cave less than a mile from the nexus. It contains the body of a long-dead Radiant Knight, clothed in a +1 *chain shirt*. There is also a handful of discarded manticore spikes worth a total of 75 gold crowns.

Formori Relics: The manticore's lair also contains a hollow broken stone sphere about the size of a watermelon, worth about 150 gold crowns.

Site 11 (Active) - Attorcrophe's Tomb

This site is located roughly 40 miles to the northwest of Murdoch's Cove, on a small island dominated by an enormous tomb constructed of blackstone. Behind the thick moss that covers the surface, the stone is engraved with an intricate web of serpentine runes. For those who can read the naga tongue, this is a burial site marking an ancient battle between the naga and their sworn enemies, the slurgithians. The tomb warns: "The great Attorcrophe has left this Coil victorious. His Truth is proven. Let the Untrue devour their own hearts in envy."

The entrance is sealed by heavy stone doors (Strength check vs. DC 23 to force open). The chamber within features six naga sarcophagi arranged around a *Formori obelisk*. When the doors open, the sarcophagi burst open and the occupants lurch to unlife. Due to their proximity to the *Formori obelisk* for so long, the ancient naga warrior Attorcrophe's remains have been reanimated as a mummy. His five comrades are now mindless skeletons. They immediately attack.



Mummy (see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*) - CR 5 - XP 1,600 each
hp 60
SQ cannot be tripped



Medium humanoid skeletons (see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*) -
CR 1/3 each - XP 135 each
hp 4 each
Melee shortspear +2 (1d6+3), bite -3 (1d6+1)
SQ cannot be tripped

Attorcrophe's sarcophagus holds the great warrior's treasure - a +1 *greatsword*, masterwork chain shirt, and masterwork crystal bow (+2 Strength rating).

Formori relics: Attorcrophe wears a Formori bracelet as a crown. It is worth 125 gold crowns.

Site 12 (Active) - Cattail Isle

This site is on a small island far out on Tirrian's Eye, roughly ten miles due north of Murdoch's Cove. Though it is not far, the party will need to arrange water transportation (most likely with Old Willem).

Upon arrival, the island is covered with thick reeds and other vegetation and has clearly not been inhabited in some time. As the players begin to explore, they find a great deal of ancient stonework hidden among the plant life - remnants of ancient ruins.

As it happens, the players are not the only ones here. As the players approach the site indicated by Walcroix, they hear the sounds of fierce combat. Two groups of slurgithians are battling - Loireag warriors and Radool's manikins. The Loireag are outnumbered and at the brink of defeat. In the midst of the battle stands the *Formori Obelisk*.

If the players do not interfere, Radool's manikins kill the Loireag within a few rounds and then move to drain the obelisk. If the players enter the fight, the Loireag attempt to withdraw into the lake, while the slurg manikins split their attention between both groups.

Loireag Warriors (2)

CR 2 each (see Appendix) - XP 600 each

hp 17 (on is already injured with 9 hp remaining)

Giant Slurgithian Manikins (3)

CR 3 each (see Appendix) - XP 800 each

CE Large undead (augmented)

Init -1

AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16 (+7 natural -1 size)

hp 22 each

Ref +0

Melee bite +9 (2d6 +10 plus grab)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Str 24, Dex 8,

Base Atk +3, CMB +11, CMD 20

Feats Toughness

SQ hulking mutation instead of toughened mutation

If prevented from leaving, the Loireag cautiously surrender. The slurgithians are wary of the players, especially if the party drains the obelisk, and neither one speaks Common.

If they can communicate, the party can attempt a Diplomacy check to calm the situation (DC 20). Alternately, the party can provide some proof that they are not enemies - the jade serpent carried by the naga killers, or mentioning Lokla or Ceas are sufficient.

If the party gains their trust, the Loireag warn the party that the obelisk is incredibly dangerous and should not be trifled. They then escape into the lake. If the party listens to their advice, Radool will send more manikins later to drain the obelisk for himself. If Diplomacy fails, the slurgs beg for mercy and ask to be released.

Formori Relics: Three of the smaller stone obelisks, while heavy (about 50 lbs. each) can be pried out of the earth and are worth 200 gold crowns each.



Other Secrets

The following discoveries can also be divined from James Dex's journal, which can make dealing with the remaining obelisks much easier.

Manite Grounding

With this discovery, Walcroix reveals that manite can be used to reduce the negative effects of draining a *Formori* obelisk (see the description of these artifacts in the Appendix for details). He feels slightly crestfallen if the party has already figured this out or learned it from Brother Arais.

Nexus Tracing Stone

With this discovery, Walcroix draws up the instructions for creating a *nexus tracing stone*, a magic item that can determine whether or not a *Formori* obelisk is still active. While he cannot create such an item himself, the party can hire Rollimus Torth or Reddek Karsh to do so (or make it themselves, if the party has a skilled magic item crafter). See the Appendix for details regarding this item.

Other Encounters in Loireag Marsh

This stage of the adventure is extremely flexible. The players are free to how and when they plan to approach the troubles in the cove. They can wait for Dennison Walcroix to turn up a clue. They can speak to the villagers to learn more about what's going on. They can go straight out into the marsh and begin hunting for nocturnals. They might attempt to pursue objectives on behalf of the Eye or the Ghosts of Columbey and simply stumble over important clues as they do so.

If you desire more structure, you could open things with a small attack on the village shortly after the players arrive (perhaps an attempt by Radool to recover Dex's journal), to illustrate the stakes involved and the danger these people are in.

The following special encounters can happen at any time, regardless of Dennison Walcroix's progress in decoding the journal.

Encounter: Stakeout

The players may decide to speak with the watchmen on the city guard towers at Captain Hollister's suggestion, or simply investigate the towers on their own. Hollister keeps two civilian guards stationed at these towers at all times, rotating them out every six hours. Lately, the guards have begun sneaking moonshine into the tower and drinking heavily. Hollister is aware of this, but there's only so much he can do to discipline the civilian volunteers. Lately, he has taken to posting one of his novice knights at each tower during the night shift, so at least someone will be sober during the most vulnerable hours.

Using the Manikins

Most of the undead manikins that the players encounter will be slurgithians, and not merely because most of the corpses Karloff Radool has at his disposal are slurgithians. Radool has other humanoid manikins, as well as a handful of ogres and one troll, but he avoids using them at first. He hopes that by using slurgithian undead, he can make the villagers suspicious of the Loireag and make the Loireag suspect that surface dwellers have desecrated their burial grounds. For the first few encounters, at least, all of the manikins encountered by the party will be undead slurges.

If the party makes peace with the Loireag or it becomes clear that the manikins are golemoid creatures, Radool disposes of this facade and will openly stalk the marsh with a variety of manikins (though he reserves his troll for the final encounter).

The guards can confirm that they have sighted hulking figures in the shadows on several evenings over the past month. These beasts have grown bolder, recently, sometimes standing right at the edge of the firelight before retreating into the shadows, daring the guards to attack. Captain Hollister knows that the watchmen are no match for the undead, and has commanded the guards not to attack. Their orders are to stand their ground and ring the alarm if the creatures approach the village.

Radool's manikins are indeed hoping to draw the city guard into a suicidal confrontation. They are also keeping an eye on the village to see if anyone wanders off alone. There is a 40% chance that a group of manikins will stalk the towers on any given night. This increases by 10% for each week that passes.

The manikins, under Radool's control, are intelligent enough to retreat if faced by superior numbers, and will simply return another night. If a single character wanders into the darkness alone, the manikins will stalk them and attack (perhaps allowing the party to use one of their own as bait).

Slurgithian Manikins (2)

CR 3 each (see Appendix) - XP 800 each

hp 22 each

SQ skulking mutation instead of toughened mutation

If the players kill at least one of the monsters, the manikins stop stalking the towers. They might still lurk in the darkness and watch, but they will no longer openly taunt the guards. Even such a small victory improves morale. The guards don't really have much to offer in way of reward beyond the usual bounty, but would gladly share some of their swampshine.

Encounter: Naga Killers

This encounter is most likely to occur while exploring the marsh, perhaps while traveling to or returning from a site of power.

The naga who dwell in the Fangs north of Tirrian's Eye are known for their violent xenophobia - especially toward slurges. A hunting party of murderous naga has descended from the mountains, hoping to prove their superiority against the Untrue.

The party first discovers the site of a bloody battle, where a pair of slurgithian warriors have been killed, stripped clean, and ritually mutilated. The party can track the naga with a Survival check vs. DC 14 (though they make some efforts to hide their trail, the marshy terrain makes things difficult). They soon come upon a small camp where four naga warriors are gathered. They are currently torturing a bound slurgithian prisoner by holding a lit torch near the slug's gills, forcing him to slowly asphyxiate. The naga are uninterested in parley or diplomacy with Untrue races; if they sense the party's presence, they attack.

Naga Killers (4)

Naga Ranger 2 - CR 1 each - XP 400 each

Medium humanoid (reptilian)

Init +3; Senses darkvision - 60 ft.; Perception +8

Defense

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 19 (2d10+8)

Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +1

Offense

Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee greatsword +4 (2d6+3)

Ranged longbow +5 (1d8)

Special Attacks hatred, favored enemy (human, +2)

Statistics

Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6

Base Atk +2; CMB +4; CMD 17 (immune to trip)

Feats Power Attack, Precise Shot

Traits Reactionary (+2 initiative), Ruffian (+2 hp)

Skills Handle Animal 2 (+3), Knowledge (nature) 2 (+5), Perception 2 (+8), Stealth 2 (+7), Survival 2 (+6), Swim 2 (+6)

Languages Naga, Western Common

SQ track, wild empathy

Equipment 20 arrows, longbow, dagger, greatsword, studded leather armor. The naga also have 210 gold crowns in assorted coins, a jade serpent figurine worth 50 gold crowns, and a cloak of resistance +1. A Knowledge (religion) check vs. DC 16 identifies the serpent as a symbol of Vimirra, one of their race's sacred Serpents.

The slurgithian prisoner is currently conscious but disabled at -3 hp. If the party frees and heals him, he is extremely grateful. He cannot speak Common, but he identifies himself as Lokla. (Lokla's stats are those of a typical Loireag warrior, see Appendix.) Lokla will attempt to invite the party to meet with his people (leading to the Finding Ceasg encounter), but if they refuse (or simply do not understand him) he will bid a final good-bye and swim back home.

Encounter: Under Attack!

This encounter involves a much more brazen attack upon the village. This is most likely to occur after the party has already drained several obelisks, or after the party has successfully overcome Radool's manikins on multiple occasions. (It will definitely occur if the party manages to defeat Radool personally.) In a frustrated display of rage, Radool sends some of his most powerful minions to attack an outlying farmhouse. The players might be in the area by sheer chance, or hear a desperate cry from a survivor who has fled to the village for aid. Radool really has no objective here other than to terrify the villagers and gather a few corpses.

If Hollister, Jinny, or Trask are present during this event, they offer to lend their aid for this difficult battle.



Slurgithian Manikins (3)

CR 3 each (see Appendix) - XP 800 each

hp 22 each



Ogre Manikin

CR 6 (see Appendix) - XP 2,400

hp 53

Encounter: The Mourning Troll

This brief encounter serves to warn the party about the existence of Radool's troll manikin, as well as giving the heroes a chance to hear an eyewitness account of their true enemy. Like the previous encounter, this encounter can take place any time the party is exploring the wilderness near Murdoch's Cove.

The party hears a strange, howling cacophony from the depths of a cave. Upon investigation, the cave is lined with animal bones, apparently the lair of a large creature that has dwelled here for a long time. The cavern is humid and reeks with a rotten, musky odor. In the depths of the cavern, the party discovers a monstrous creature - a troll, huddled in the darkness, howling madly. The corpses of several recently killed manikins lie scattered about the cave.

This pathetic beast was one of a mated pair that dwelled in the marsh. While they have no love for the smaller races, they know better than to make enemies of them. The troll and his mate survived for decades

despite their proximity to Murdoch's Cove by avoiding attention and feeding only on animals. When Karloff Radool discovered the troll lair, he attacked in force, hoping to acquire the troll corpses for his experiments. To the alchemist's surprise, one of the trolls held her ground at the mouth of the cavern, sacrificing herself so her mate could escape. The remaining troll returned to the cave later and has since been consumed by grief.

The troll is absorbed in sorrow, but will rise and curse threateningly at the player characters when he notices them. If they speak Giant, they understand: *"Be gone from here and let me waste away, little ones. You have already taken the light."*

If the players do not comply, the troll will attack. They do have a brief period, however, in which to try to reason with the creature. If they can quickly prove that they are enemies of the manikins (by presenting one of their heads or the like), or make an impressive Diplomacy check, the troll will stay his wrath. A Diplomacy result of DC 23 will make the troll unfriendly, giving the party a few more moments to leave before the troll attacks. DC 28 will make the troll indifferent - he will identify himself as D'garr and tolerate their presence if they make no threatening moves. A Diplomacy result of 18 or less immediately sends the troll into a murderous rage.

Assuming D'garr does not become violent, the party has a chance to ask a few questions before he demands they leave him to his grief. If they ask what happened, D'garr tells them the following: *"K'jehr and I lived here for many of your lifetimes. You little ones never knew. We could have devoured you any time - but you never knew. We knew better than to tempt the Beacon's flame,"* he growls. *"We thought we were safe. The Dark came, long ago, and offered us the power to rend the little ones. K'jehr laughed and said we did not need the Dark. We were already safe. She was wise..."*

"Until the fishermen came. They were dead but not dead - and a little one led them. A man. He wielded fire and smoke. The Dark was in his eyes, I saw it. We could not fight him... but K'jehr stood so that I could flee... like the coward that I am. He took her. I can feel that she is dead. He has made her one of his creatures."

"Now I wait here, until he returns for me."

D'garr will angrily demand that the party leaves, and attack if they fail to comply. The troll has nothing to lose, so he will gladly leap into battle even if he has no hope of success.



D'garr

Troll (see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*) - **CR 5** - XP 1,600

hp 63

D'garr has 350 gold crowns in assorted gems stashed away under a stone in his lair, as well as an *everburning torch* and an *elixir of hiding*. He will not allow the party to take his treasures while he lives.

Encounter: Finding Ceasg

This encounter will not happen randomly - it depends entirely on the player characters making an effort to find the Loireag slurgithians and determine why they have cut off trade with Murdoch's Cove. This can happen in a number of ways. Perhaps the party has a random encounter with a group of slurgithian warriors that ends with peaceful negotiation. Perhaps they rescued Lokla the slurgithian from the naga killers. Perhaps they tracked down Rollimus' slurgithian contact and paid him to arrange a meeting with his people.

Any of the above slurg contacts can arrange a meeting between the party and their leader, Ceasg. This meeting will take place on the shores of the lake, at least ten miles away from Murdoch's Cove. The slurg party will consist of Ceasg, one Loireag Warpriest, and four Loireag warriors. Ceasg introduces herself as *"Ceasg the Vigilant, chieftain of the Loireag."*

Into the Depths

If the party attempts to seek out the slurges by exploring the depths of Lake Tirrian (using *water breathing* or similar effects) they will inevitably encounter a slug patrol - 3 Loireag Warriors and 1 Loireag Warpriest. These slurges will demand the player characters respect the Lake Treaty and depart. If the party expresses a desire to meet with the slurges and find out why they have cut off trade, the slurges will arrange a meeting as above, but insist that the party leave their territory.

Ceasg is cold but polite toward the player characters. She tells them the following:

"If you wish to know why the Loireag have been silent, it is because you no longer honor the Lake Treaty," she says. "The surface dwellers have desecrated our sacred burial marsh, stolen our dead, and attacked our people without provocation. We of the Loireag do not desire war, but neither will we turn away from it. My order is bound by sacred oaths to protect these lands, and I will honor them, even unto death."

Any four of the following can help convince her that the Arastinians continue to honor the Lake Treaty.

- If any party members can prove that they are seers and are willing to vouch for the people of Murdoch's Cove (Ceasg will admit to being a fellow seer if a party member does.)
- If the party convinces Ceasg that Vendic Hansen has faced justice for his crimes.
- If the party convinces Ceasg that it was Karloff Radool who stole her dead, and not the people of Murdoch's Cove. (She already has her doubts, so this is not difficult.)
- If the party rescued Lokla.
- If the party healed and aided the Loireag slurgithians at Cattail Isle.
- If the party put the spirit of Brother Arais to present his rose and final words to Ceasg (this counts as two items; Ceasg takes the blue rose and excuses herself for a few moments to contemplate her teacher's final message).
- A Diplomacy check vs. DC 21 (this counts as two items if the result is 26+).

If convinced of the party's sincerity, Ceasg bows in respect.

"I commend you for your bravery, honor, and friendship. That you sought to bring us the truth means much to me. I apologize for misjudging your kind, surface dweller. The Loireag will honor the Lake Treaty - though I warn you people that it would be safer to wait until our mutual enemy has been dealt with before we begin trade again. Until then, take this..."

Loireag offers the party a waterproof satchel containing the following: a healer's kit (10 uses remaining), a masterwork kukri, and four potions of cure moderate wounds. She also offers them a conch shell fashioned into a horn that, when blown, can be heard clearly up to a mile away.

The horn is not magical, but is of a special design unique to the Loireag tribe. If blown three times in succession, any Loireag slurgithians in the area will recognize the call. They will arrive within ten minutes to investigate, and will lend their aid to the party if required.

If the party rescued Lokla earlier, Ceasg is even more generous. She will give the party 2 random 1st level potions and 3 1st level scrolls as a reward for saving her kinsman.

All potions offered by Ceasg are contained in sealed fish bladders, rather than bottles, allowing them to be used underwater.

Encounter: Filthy Parasites

Eventually, Radool will realize that the players know how to find the Formori sites of power. After the party has drained at least two obelisks, Radool begins to send his parasites into the village to act as spies. They

will attempt to hide in any large vehicles that the party is likely to use, particularly Willem's boat or any party thunder scout vehicles, so that Radool can keep an eye on them. (If the party is carrying an *Eye of Shermazza*, this is unnecessary, as Radool can use his own amulet and his connection to Shermazza to snoop upon them.)

The next time the party leaves town, Radool sends a pack of slurges, built for speed and stealth, to pursue the party and attempt to drain any obelisks they find.

If the party enters open water, the undead slurges may attempt to capsize their vessel or grab player characters and drag them overboard.

Stealthy Slurgithian Manikins (3)

CR 3 each (see Appendix) - XP 800 each

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 natural)

hp 22 each

Speed 50 ft., swim 50 ft.

Melee bite +6 (1d8+4 plus grab)

Str 16

SQ skulking and fast mutations instead of standard mutations

Radool's Hideouts

Karloff Radool has roughly a dozen hidden hideouts throughout the marsh, where he stores extra corpses, hides his clones, and conducts his research. It is possible that the party might stumble over one of these during their exploration. These buildings can be simple shacks or Formori blackstone ruins, but they are always guarded by at least two slug or human manikins.

If the party is lucky, they might even catch Radool while he is present. This gives the party the chance to interact with the main villain directly before the final confrontation, and make things personal. Radool will laugh and taunt the players during such an encounter, confident that they cannot permanently kill him.

"The Radiant Order sent all of you heroes to kill one of me?" he laughs. "They should have sent more - for I am Karloff Radool! I am ETERNAL! You cannot understand the legacy of magic, power, and secrets you now face. Your ignorance can only cloud my glorious future. That is why you must burn!"

As Karloff Radool is the ultimate nemesis of the adventure, any encounter where the party faces him should be extremely difficult. Add more manikins if you feel he is too much of a pushover. If Radool is killed, his body immediately disintegrates to be reincarnated elsewhere by his immortality module. Though this means he can repeatedly return to harass the party, take care not to overuse this as a plot device. Radool should be used sparingly, lest constant battles with him begin to grow tiresome or even trivial.

Slurgithian Manikins (3)

CR 3 each (see Appendix) - XP 800 each

hp 22 each

Karloff Radool

CR 6 - XP 2,400

hp 41

Radool's lairs have a 50% chance to contain one or more prisoners (usually transients, farmers, or travelers). He has invariably been torturing these individuals, either to determine if they know anything about the sites of power or merely for his own amusement.



RADIANT DEMISE

ACT 3 - THE SIEGE OF MURDOCH'S COVE

THE FINAL BATTLE

If the player characters have been marking down the locations of each site of power on a map, they may notice how they are arranged. If one draws the lines between the opposing sites, the point directly in the center of the obelisks is Murdoch's Cove - specifically the Murdoch's Cove church. If the players don't catch this on their own, and you're feeling merciful, allow someone with Knowledge (geography) a check vs. DC 20 to notice and anyone with the Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft skill a check vs. DC 15 to realize the implications. Simply knowing that the village will be Radool's final target before Radool does is a huge advantage - the party can begin rallying allies and bolstering defenses in advance.

Searching the church reveals little of interest - except that the door to the church tower is sealed. From the outside, the tower is not a typical bell tower or clock tower - it's merely a sealed tower with no openings of any kind (other than the closed stone door). If asked, Sister Jinny admits that she was asked by her predecessor to keep the tower sealed, and has never been inside. She does not know why, only that the priests have promised to do so since the days when the seers watched over the village.

The tower's only entrance is a stout stone door sealed with an *arcane lock* by some long-forgotten mage. The door can be picked (Disable Device vs. DC 20), forced open (Strength vs. DC 28), or dispelled (the *arcane lock*'s original caster was 6th level). There are no other doors or windows leading into the tower. The final Formori obelisk stands alone in a small (by Formori standards) room at the top of the tower, choked with dust and cobwebs.

If the other Formori obelisks have already been drained, finding the Final Nexus is easy - the church tower will be suffused by a column of blazing violet white that extends straight into the sky, churning the clouds in a furious maelstrom that blots out the sun. This effect persists until the obelisk becomes dormant one week later.

Once it has been activated, the Final Nexus will immediately draw attention. Nocturnals will be instinctively drawn to the light, as will many curious travelers. Most importantly, Karloff Radool will realize

that this is his last chance to claim the power of the Formori and will attack Murdoch's Cove with all of his remaining minions. Not long after the tower lights up, the villagers will cry out at the sight of monstrous creatures surrounding the village. Most of these, of course, will be Radool's manikins.

Battle Rules

As playing out a large scale siege of this magnitude would be time consuming and cumbersome, the following rules will allow you to deal with the final battle in a more abstract manner. For the purposes of this scenario you only need to deal with two things - the advantages the players have gathered for the village and the skirmishes that the party participates in directly (which can be played out as normal encounters). This allows the players to have direct control over the outcome of a large siege without getting bogged down in a lot of new mass combat rules.

Each side of the conflict begins with a pool of Victory Points, which represent the overall strength of that side's forces.

Karloff Radool's army begins with 100 points, representing his vast undead horde and opportunistic nocturnal allies.

Murdoch's Cove begins with 50 points, representing their default troops and defenses.

The party can bolster the village's Victory Points by recruiting allies or seeking other advantages (they've probably done quite a bit of this so far in the adventure without realizing it). They can reduce Radool's Victory Points by participating directly in encounters (see Strategy).

Defending the Village

If there is any advantage to post-Darkfall Aden, it is that its settlements are built to survive. If Murdoch's Cove was unable to repel the occasional nocturnal attack, it wouldn't exist anymore. The walls and palisades offer impressive defenses - at least enough that Radool can't just overwhelm the village and take what he wants. That being said, the odds don't look good. Murdoch's Cove is isolated and has only a handful of defenders; most of them are inexperienced.

Fortunately, the player characters are here.

Making Things Difficult

With the suggested siege rules, the final battle looks tough but is winnable. Even if the party has gathered few allies, they should be able to get by if they are careful (the village has few defenders but sturdy defenses). If you want to be tougher on your players, increase Karloff Radool's Victory Points. Even giving him 10 or 20 more will make things more stressful. If you want to be really cruel (and have a very good chance of wiping out the village) start him with 150 points, or have him gain Victory Points equal to half the points lost by Murdoch's Cove during attrition each day. After all, they're giving him more corpses for his parasites to animate...

Experience

Experience is treated differently during the Murdoch's Cove siege. Rather than reward experience per encounter the entire battle, including the final confrontation with Karloff Radool, is considered to be one enormous special event. If the party survives the siege and defeats Radool, they gain an experience level.

Make sure that the players are aware of this from the start, so that they make choices that will benefit the overall survival of the village rather than taking impractical risks hoping to gain more experience.

Not only are they the village's most powerful defenders, but, depending on their accomplishments during this adventure, they may be able to recruit other allies and advantages. The final siege on Murdoch's Cove depends not only on what the heroes do - but on what they've already done.

The following are a few options the players can take advantage of to protect the village. This should not be considered a comprehensive list. Players are extremely creative, and each game takes a different path. Your players are likely to come up with good ideas that are not described here. If you feel that something your players suggest would benefit the village, award them an appropriate amount of Victory Points. When in doubt as to how many points to award, compare their idea to others on Table: Defenses and pick something similar. Just don't award Victory Points excessively or the battle will be trivial.

Unique Allies

- **Default Allies:** As long as Sir Trask Calder, Captain Dram Hollister, Sister Jinny Tonneson, and Dennison Walcroix are alive and present, they will help defend the village even if they are currently on bad terms with the party. Their presence is accounted for in Murdoch's Cove's starting Victory Points, so if they are not present, reduce the pool accordingly. (Each of these unique allies is worth 2 points. If Dram Hollister is not present, the village loses 2 additional points due to poor morale.)
- **Rollimus Torth:** If Rollimus is aware of the consequences should the village be overcome, he will stay to help defend the village. Otherwise, he will cast *fly* on his golem, command it to pick up his *herald's horn*, and ride it out of town as soon as Radool's army shows up.
- **Old Willem:** This crusty wilderness scout has a nose for trouble, and will flee the village before Radool's army ever arrives unless the party has earned his friendship.
- **Ceasg the Vigilant:** If the party has made peace with the Loireag slugs and uses the conch to summon their aid, Ceasg will arrive in the village the next day.
- **Reddek "Redclaw" Karsh:** If the party saved Redclaw, healed him, returned his gear, and gave him a vehicle or mount, this foolhardy but honorable bounty hunter will make his way to Murdoch's Cove and stand beside them in battle.
- **D'garr:** If the party spared D'garr, the grieving troll will see the Final Nexus and make his way to the village to battle the monsters that killed his mate. He will eventually be overwhelmed and killed unless the party allows him through the gates, in which case he will reluctantly aid the village so that he can see that Radool is killed. D'garr is worth 3 Victory Points, rather than 2.
- **Grey Master Connach:** This Grey Isles necromancer may be evil but he isn't stupid. If he is currently being held in Murdoch's Cove's prison, he will offer to help defend the village in return for his freedom. If the party doesn't keep an eye on him or assign one of their other allies to do so, he'll try to flee or sneak into the Final Nexus and claim its power.
- **The McGinnis Brothers:** Though not quite as powerful as the other potential allies, the shepherd twins are veteran soldiers and work well as a team. If the heroes saved both Boyd and Barclay, they count as a single unique ally.

Troops

These large groups of reinforcements are defined in terms of squads. A small squad consists of 3-5 individuals. A medium squad is 6-8. A large squad is about a dozen. Use the pre-generated Minor NPC statistics in the Appendix for these soldiers, as directed. Veteran squads are more experienced, equipped, and worth more Victory Points. Any member of these squads that is higher than 1st level counts as an officer, and adds additional Victory Points.

- **Default Troops:** Murdoch's Cove has a small veteran squad of Radiant Knights (trained infantry) and three large squads of militia (untrained conscripts). These are accounted for in the village's Victory Points.

- **The Eye:** If the party is allied with the Eye and uses their *Urbanan pigeon* to call for help, Beldar Calsheen will contact his agents in Rose and arrange for reinforcements. A medium veteran squad of Shadow Army soldiers in a steamwagon (trained infantry and a hedge wizard, led by an elite soldier) will arrive in Murdoch's Cove four days later.

- **Ghosts of Columbey:** If the party is allied with the Ghosts of Columbey and send word to Olgen Castbar in the village of Rose, he will muster a medium veteran squad of mercenaries on thunder cycles (trained archers with one gunslinger led by an elite soldier) and ride for Murdoch's Cove to help them, arriving four days after he is notified.

- **Loireag Tribe:** if the party uses Ceasg's conch shell, a small veteran squad of slugs (warriors led by a warpriest) will arrive within one hour. After being informed of the situation, one of the warriors will leave and return a day later with Ceasg and enough reinforcements to turn the original squad into a large veteran squad

- **The Radiant Order:** The nearest Radiant Order watchpost is fifty miles away along to the east. If the party can contact them, they will send a small veteran squad of mounted knights (trained infantry and archers with an elite soldier), with medium veteran squad arriving four days later (trained infantry and archers led by an elite soldier).

- **The Underground:** If Rollimus Torth remains in the village, he will use his *herald's horn* to call a medium veteran squad of mounted Grounder mercenaries (trained archers led by a gunslinger) to help the village. They arrive five days later. If the party is not allied with the Grounders, these individuals will not identify themselves as Grounders, and will claim merely to be helpful passersby. If the party is allied with the Grounders, Rollimus allows the player characters to use his *herald's horn*. The Grounders in Rose will pass their message on to any other allies they wish to contact.

- **Transients:** During the spring and summer months, Murdoch's Cove houses a number of temporary laborers. These count as a medium squad (untrained conscripts). Be warned that these individuals have no particular attachment to Murdoch's Cove beyond their own survival. If they learn of the attack before Radool arrives, they will attempt to desert the village.

Defenses

The following are examples of improvised defenses that can have an effect on the battle.

- **Swampshine:** Murdoch's Cove has a large supply of this potent and highly flammable whiskey. If the players can convince Dagfinn Murdoch to distribute it, it can be used to create improvised incendiary weapons.

- **Smithing Tools:** If the party provided the village smith with replacement tools, she can keep the defenders' weapons and armors in good repair and produce more ammunition.

- **Harsh Weather:** Heavy rain or snow will generally grant the defenders an advantage on that day. (If the party is doing poorly and you are feeling merciful, a chance downpour could buy them time.)

- **Morale:** A particularly stirring speech or display of bravery can improve Victory Points, at your discretion. Likewise, a demoralizing defeat can reduce Victory Points.

- **Using the Final Nexus:** The heroes may be tempted to use the dark power of the Final Nexus against Radool. If they do, any troops exposed to the nexus are worth double Victory Points. Any player character exposed to the nexus is worth 5 Victory Points, as Radool's undead are visibly intimidated by their transmogrified forms. (See Appendix for full details regarding the nexus and its powers.)

Defenses

Benefit	Victory Points
Unique Allies (each)	2
Reinforcements - Small Squad	1
Reinforcements - Medium Squad	2
Reinforcements - Large Squad	3
Veteran Squads	X2 base value
Officers (each)	1
Swampshine	2
Smithing Tools	2
Harsh Weather	4
Morale Event	1-3
Using the Final Nexus	5 or double

Resting

At the end of each day, the party may rest and recover if they wish. They will regain their spells, abilities, and hit points as they normally would for a night's rest plus 3d8 points of additional healing that can be distributed among the party members, representing the attention of village medics and healers.

If the player characters (or at least four of them, if it is a large party) choose not to rest, their constant vigil inspires the defenders and helps keep the manikins at bay. This reduces the enemy's Victory Points by the same amount as a normal encounter. However, any party member that goes without sleep during the tense siege must make a Constitution check vs. DC 12 + 2 per day of sleep deprivation or become fatigued.

Strategy

Each day of the siege, the party can choose the village's battle strategy. The choices are as follows:

- **Cautious:** The defenders hunker down and take few risks. They ignore all but the most serious threats in favor of simply bolstering the village's defenses. During attrition, Victory Point losses are halved. The party must personally address at least 1d3 encounters but no more than 3. They suffer a -10 penalty on all random encounter table rolls as the party avoids dangerous confrontations. This strategy is best if the players are at a disadvantage.
- **Standard:** The villagers will hold their ground but take moderate risks when the opportunity arises. If the party does not choose a strategy, this is the default. This strategy is best if the players wish to maintain the current balance of power. The party must personally address at least 1d3+2 encounters, but no more than 5.

Splitting the Party

Normally, the last thing you want to do is split the party. During the siege, however, some player characters may find it perfectly reasonable. The party cleric might wish to tend to the wounded. The party rogue might want to scout the enemy. The party arbiter might want to stick to Grey Master Connach and make sure he doesn't try anything stupid. The player characters are part of a larger whole in this situation, so such choices are perfectly logical. If certain player characters are not present when a daily encounter occurs, consider offering to allow those players to temporarily take control of friendly NPCs that happen to be in the area. If you do this, make sure to spread the daily encounters around so that everyone gets a chance to play their own character.

• **Aggressive:** The villagers fight recklessly, frequently taking great risks and occasionally conducting daring counterstrikes beyond the walls. The party must personally address at least 1d4+3 encounters, but no more than 7. They gain a +10 bonus on all random encounter table rolls as the party seeks out more dangerous opponents. This strategy is best if players are currently winning and want to press their advantage, but can be risky if the party cannot deal with all the encounters (7 combat encounters in a single day is quite a lot) and begin to lose Victory Points.

• **Retreat:** A last ditch attempt when all is lost. The defenders attempt to fight their way free of the village and flee. The village is lost, but any defenders have a 25% chance of surviving to escape Murdoch's Cove. This does not apply to the player characters. The party must personally address a minimum of 1d6+3 encounters to cover the villagers' escape. If they deal with at least half of these encounters, they can either escape or return to confront Radool as he reaches the church.

Battle Encounters

These random events depict events in the battle where the party participates directly. If the party resolves an encounter successfully, they gain Victory Points depending on the CR of the encounter (see table). If the party fails to overcome an encounter, Murdoch's Cove loses Victory Points equal to double the encounter's CR. (Monsters who flee Murdoch's Cove are considered to be defeated.)

Many of these encounters involve nocturnals that have been drawn to the Final Nexus instinctively. Feel free to replace any of the suggested nocturnals with equivalent CR nocturnals of your choice. (For variety, avoid using undead, as Radool's army already has plenty of those). Though these nocturnals are not under Radool's control, they seem to

Encounter Table

d100 Roll	Encounter	CR	Victory Points
01-20	Minor Manikin (one slurg or human manikin)	3	1
21-30	Minor Nocturnal (accuser devil, nocturnal crocodile, hell hound, ettercap, shanker swarm, medium elemental)	3	1
31-40	Minor Nocturnal Pack (8 orcs or goblins, 3 lemures or krenshars, 2 vargouilles)	4	2
41-50	Medium Nocturnal (gargoyle, barghest, nocturnal dire ape, mimic, sea hag, wasted)	4	2
51-60	Medium Nocturnal Pack (2 minor nocturnals, 4 giant spiders, 3 imps or nocturnal hyenas)	5	3
61-70	Major Nocturnal (flame drake, large elemental, basilisk, nightmare, cloaker)	5	3
71-80	Medium Manikin (2 slurg or human manikins)	5	3
81-90	Large Manikin (ogre manikin, 3 slurg or human manikins)	6	4
91-00	Powerful Nocturnal (flesh golem, nocturnal owlbear, chimera, succubus, aboleth)	7	5

acknowledge him as an ally of convenience, Radool is content to allow these creatures to aid him - if they attempt to bar him from the Final Nexus he can deal with them later.

Each encounter has a 20% chance of coinciding with some dramatic event that the players will need to deal with. Some possibilities include a breach in the wall, a fire in the village, or a group of soldiers losing morale and attempting to flee. The party must deal with this event as well as the enemies or the encounter is considered a failure.

Try to integrate these encounters in a way that increases the drama of the situation. If it's a nocturnal attack, perhaps the creature suddenly rises out of the marsh and leaps over the wall near where the players are stationed. The players should deal with these encounters more or less on their own, but not to the point where it seems that they're fighting this battle alone. You might allow a few NPC allies join the party in their fight and increase the enemy CR appropriately. Alternately, you might simply describe the party's encounter as part of a larger whole, with defenders participating in simultaneous chaotic conflicts all around them.

Attrition

Each day ends with attrition, where overall losses for each side are determined. Compare the amount of Victory Points currently held by each side. Whoever has the higher amount currently is considered to be winning. (In the case of a tie, Radool's army is considered to be winning.) Determine the difference between these numbers and then consult the Attrition table.

Attrition	
Difference	Losing Army
up to 10	-1d10 Victory Points
10 to 20	-2d6 Victory Points
21 to 30	-3d6 Victory Points
31 to 40	-4d6 Victory Points
41 to 50	-6d6 Victory Points
51 to 100	-10d6 Victory Points
101+	-10d12 Victory Points

Casualties

This system is intended to be quick, simple, and abstract. In determining how poorly the village is faring, simply look at how many Victory Points are remaining. If the village is doing badly, report that many soldiers are dead or injured. On a particularly bad day, you may even consider killing one of the Unique Allies. (Try to avoid killing Dennison Walcroix, as he plays a role in future chapters of the adventure.)

Ending the Siege

There are three ways the siege on Murdoch's Cove can end.

Defeat

If Karloff Radool's army reduces Murdoch's Cove's Victory Points to zero, the village's defenses are shattered and the area is overrun with undead. Radool will advance on the church and attempt to take the Final Nexus. The players can either make their escape or make their final stand in the church, where they will face Radool and a large manikin encounter simultaneously. Even if they win this difficult final confrontation, it is a pyrrhic victory, as most of the villagers will die. Any given NPC not with the party when this happens only has a 5% chance to survive. (Using the retreat strategy when defeat seems imminent can save lives.)

Weathering the Storm

If the village survives without losing all of its Victory Points for seven days, Radool desperately breaches the wall and rushes the church near the end of the last day, hoping to take the Final Nexus before it becomes inactive. He is accompanied by a medium manikin encounter.

Total Victory

If Murdoch's Cove reduces Karloff Radool's Victory Points to zero, the undead army takes severe losses. Radool's pride will not allow him to miss his chance to claim his ancestor's legacy, and he intervenes personally. In this case, he attacks the gates with a small manikin encounter.

THE FINAL CONFRONTATION

When Karloff Radool has had enough, he will drink his experimental Formori mutagen before entering the battle. (If you have a sense of drama, you can always have him to drink it in the party's presence before the battle begins so that they can witness his transformation.) This mutagen allows him to physically merge with his most powerful minion - a troll manikin. (This is D'garr the troll's murdered mate.) This mutagen essentially has the same effect as a *magic jar*, except that Radool's body physically merges with the troll while it is possessed. Karloff has the foresight to keep his bombs and extracts separate before he merges - his troll body now carries them in a sling over one shoulder.

Karloff Radool is incredibly strong and is always encountered with a group of manikins proportionate to how his army has fared in the siege (see above). For this reason, you may wish to allow some of the party's valued allies to participate in the battle for this dramatic final showdown.

Radool is not accustomed to melee combat and prefers to use his minions as a distraction while he heads for the Final Nexus. If he is blocked from accessing it, he will use bombs to support his minions at range until they are dead or he is engaged directly.

Lord Dex and the Final Nexus

With everything that is going on, the players may be (rightly) wondering how James Dex managed to trigger the Final Nexus - along with its ominous lightshow - without alerting everyone in the village that something was dreadfully wrong. The last time Dex drained the obelisks, the magical atmosphere in the Cove was quite different. Rather than a churning maelstrom and a column of dark energy, the church tower was simply suffused in radiant light. Most of the residents assumed it was some sort of miracle.

Only one villager - Brother Arais - knew the light for what it was. He guarded the obelisk personally until it became dormant once more. The Seer's presence, fortunately, prevented Dex from succumbing to curiosity and trying to draw upon the Final Nexus' dark powers himself.

This time around, the obelisk's more malevolent manifestations are due in part to the Darkfall. The nightmares that infest Aden have responded to the power sealed beneath Murdoch's Cove.

The Darkfall is welcoming a kindred spirit.

This is a final, desperate attack on Radool's part. His immortality module is inert while he is bonded to the troll manikin, allowing him to be killed permanently. As the module relies upon the ambient power of the Murdoch's Cove obelisks the module is about to become inert anyway, so he sees this as an acceptable risk.

Karloff Radool will not surrender under any circumstances, preferring to die gloriously than be captured like his ancestor.

If everything goes horribly and Radool touches the Final Nexus, he vanishes in an explosion of light and his minions are affected as if he died. An eerie silence fills Murdoch's Cove, echoing with the certainty that you have not seen the last of Karloff Radool. Any surviving defenders will conclude that the alchemist is dead and that the day, somehow, was won. The true implications of Radool's ascension, if it occurs, will be dealt with in later chapters.

Monstrous Karloff Radool

CR 10 - XP 6,400

CE Large undead (augmented)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +8

Defense

AC 20, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 18 (+2 Dex, +9 natural, -1 size)

hp 101 (9d8+27); regeneration (acid or fire)

Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

Special Defenses DR 5/magic

Special Weaknesses mechamagic vulnerability

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +13 (2d6+13 plus grab), 2 claws +13 (1d6+9)

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

Special attacks bomb +10 ranged touch (4d6+5 fire damage plus 9 splash damage, DC 17, 11/day), swift poisoning

Typical Alchemist Extracts Prepared

1st Level (5/day) - cure light wounds X2, expeditious retreat, shield, touch of the sea

2nd level (4/day) - barkskin, blur, invisibility, see invisibility

3rd level (2/day) - cure serious wounds, haste

Statistics

Str 29, **Dex** 14, **Con** -, **Int** 18, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +5, **CMB** +14, **CMD** 26

Feats Toughness, Power Attack, Brew Potion, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Throw Anything, Weapon Finesse

Skills Craft (alchemy) 7 (+14), Craft (machinery) 7 (+14), Heal 7 (+10), Knowledge (arcana) 7 (+14), Knowledge (engineering) 4 (+11), Knowledge (nature) 3 (+10), Perception 7 (+10), Spellcraft 7 (+14), Stealth 7 (+9), Survival 7 (+10), Use Magic Device 7 (+9)

Languages Western Common, Arcadian, Lowland, Nocturnine, Planar SQ mutations (brutish, tenacious)

Treasure See Karloff's entry in the Appendix. His normal gear has no effect while merged with the troll manikin, but he still carries it.

Note: Karloff Radool's normal statistics are described in the Appendix.

RESOLUTION

Once Radool is slain, his body is expelled from the now dead troll's in a gruesome display. All parasites under his control lose their Intelligence score permanently. All manikins within one hundred feet of Radool instantly die, their parasites destroyed from the shock of their master's passing. The remaining survivors are still dangerous, but are no longer intelligent or organized. Most will attempt to wander back into the marsh. At this point, even a small group of defenders should be able to hold Murdoch's Cove until help arrives. The survivors might even attempt to hunt the manikins down and destroy them once and for all.

The most startling revelation upon searching Radool's corpse is likely to be his *amulet of Shermazza*. This is the first real connection between Radool and the Circle of Fire and Steel that the players are likely to find. Dennison Walcroix is particularly disturbed by this revelation, as it reminds him of his past abuse at the cult's hands. Unfortunately, with Radool dead, the full implications of this connection remain unclear.

Captain Dram Hollister makes a special point of addressing the player characters in the presence of any survivors.

"I just want to thank you for everything you've done here," he says. "On behalf of all of us. You didn't just save a village. You showed us how to save ourselves. In this ruined mess of a world, I think that's the greatest gift. I've written a report to the Templar Council telling them what's happened here. I think you should stick around - they're likely to want to reward you for all that you've done. And I think you could use the rest."

If the party failed miserably, he's less optimistic, obviously.

Two weeks after the Final Nexus becomes dormant, a group of sixty Radiant Knights gallop into Murdoch's Cove. The soldiers dismount and spread out across the village, scouting the area's defenses. They are led by Sir Kirkstaan, a tall paladin garbed in shining silver armor that stands in sharp contrast to the hideous scars upon his face. He curtly demands for someone to fetch the player characters as he paces the village.

"Good you're here," he says impatiently, once the party arrives. "You're the mercenaries that sorted out this awful mess, right?"

When they confirm, he nods to a pair of squires who bring an iron-bound chest marked with the Beacon before the party. They open it to reveal a gleaming hoard of treasure: 3,000 gold crowns, 500 crowns' worth of assorted jewelry, a +1 *weapon* appropriate for one of the party's melee characters, a small *bag of holding*, and a *ring of protection* +1. If the party routed Radool's army and saved most of the villagers, there is an additional 1,000 gold and a suit of custom +1 *armor* appropriate for one of the player characters.

"I trust that will be adequate for your fine services?" he says, barely waiting for the players to take in the reward. "If that will be all, then take it, and thank you again for your service. With all due respect, please move somewhere out of traffic."

If the party replies in confusion or anger, as they are likely to do, Kirkstaan just looks annoyed.

"Love and Justice, did no one tell you?" he asks with a sigh. "Of course they didn't. That sort of job would fall on me, wouldn't it? I'm sure you know how that feels. Anyway, my men and I are shoring up defenses here in Murdoch's Cove. A contingent of investigators from the capital is on its way to study this near-catastrophe. King Corben of Sea Reach is among them - and he wants to meet you."

The knight smiles with grim respect. "If I were you, I'd stay in town and see what His Majesty wants. Just, please, stay out of my men's way. Let someone else do the cleaning up, for once."



APPENDICES

- APPENDIX A - WHO'S WHO IN RADIANT DEMISE

The following section presents statistics and character backgrounds for important NPCs in this adventure.

Curator Dennison Walcroix

Dennison Walcroix is a bookish middle-aged Urbanan gentleman. Though friendly and amiable, he often becomes distracted and is obsessed with mysteries of the past. He is a pacifist at heart and despises conflict, but would charge boldly into the most dangerous situations in the name of learning.

Walcroix grew up the pampered youngest son of a minor Columbey noble family. It wasn't until he met his mentor, Sir James Dex, that he found his purpose. At Dex's side, he gained a deep appreciation for Aden's history, and learned that he could be more than just a vapid, idle noble. He went on to become an accomplished scholar as well as the curator of the Urbanan Museum of History (formerly the Columbey Archives).

Dennison reveres Lord Dex and believes, on some level, that he would never have survived the Darkfall without the strength he learned adventuring at the old man's side. Of late, Dennison's recent experiences have begun to disturb him. Though he would not speak his suspicions aloud, he suspects that there was a great deal more to Sir James Dex than anyone knew. He wonders what the old man was really searching for all those years - and if he ever found it.

Curator Dennison Walcroix

Male human bard (archaeologist) 4

LG Male humanoid (human)

Init +2; Perception +13

Defense

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 22 (4d8+4)

Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +6

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee masterwork shortsword +6 (1d6)

Ranged masterwork pistol +6 (1d8+1)

Special defenses uncanny dodge

Bard Spells Known

0-Level - *detect magic, everheat rune, know direction, mending, prestidigitation, read magic*

1st Level (4/day) - *alarm, cure light wounds, disguise self, identify, remove fear*

2nd level (2/day) - *heroism, tongues*

Statistics

Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 14

Base Atk +3; CMB +4; CMD 16

Feats Alertness, Skill Focus - Knowledge (history), Weapon Finesse

Traits Folk Magic (*identify* added to bard spells known), Natural Pilot

Skills Diplomacy 4 (+9), Disable Device 4 (+14), Knowledge (arcana) 4 (+12), Knowledge (history) 4 (+15), Knowledge (local) 4 (+12), Knowledge (nobility and royalty) 4 (+12), Linguistics 4 (+10), Perception 4 (+13, +17 with canny observer), Sense Motive 4 (+11), Spellcraft 4 (+10), Use Magic Device 4 (+9)

Languages Earthtongue, Fundamental, Eastern Common, Kyall, Lowland, Sylfanic, Vanoran, Western Common

SQ archaeologist's luck (+1 luck bonus to attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and weapon damage rolls as swift action, 7 rounds/day), clever explorer (can disable devices in half the normal time), rogue talent - canny observer

Equipment 10 standard ammunition, fine scholar's outfit, masterwork pistol, masterwork shortsword, masterwork thieves' tools, +1 *chain shirt*, 125 gold crests

Sir Trask Calder

This gruff, muscular wolf-ferran comes from a secluded village populated mostly by ferrans and juraks. His home stood undisturbed by outsiders in the forests of Arasteen for generations. For as long as Trask could remember, he wanted to see the world. As soon as he came of age, Trask left his family to join a passing caravan. His family warned him that the "human" world would treat him as a beast, but Trask would not be dissuaded.

Though Trask encountered his share of prejudice, the outside world was not nearly as terrible as his sheltered family believed. With each strange new land he visited, he found he looked forward to returning home with greater anticipation. He wanted to tell his brothers of the wonders he had seen. He wanted to tell them how wrong they had been to stand apart.

When the Darkfall came, Trask was in the Arastinian capital of Sea Reach. Though part of him wanted to remain in the safety of the city, he knew he must return home and protect his family. When the Knights of the Radiant Order stopped him at the gates, he feared they would forbid him from leaving. Trask told them his tale and pleaded for them to show mercy. The Knights did forbid him to leave - without help.

Trask rode back into his village with a squadron of Radiant knights at his side. They smote down the nocturnals who had besieged the small

community and escorted the survivors back to the safety of Sea Reach. Calder's family survived in no small part due to the selfless bravery of the Radiant Order.

Calder became a hospitaler that very day. After years of training, he took his vows as a knight.

Though he may seem cynical and more than a little grouchy, Trask Calder's faith in the Radiant Path is unshakable. He has personally seen generations of hatred and prejudice washed away by the warmth of Compassion. He has seen terrible nocturnals defeated by the power of Justice.

Calder is resourceful and pragmatic. He is not afraid to use unconventional tactics or seek allies outside the Order if he must. On that day in Sea Reach he learned that outsiders can sometimes become great friends. Though he is sometimes slow to trust, he has never forgotten that lesson. By Captain Hollister's standards, Calder can be too idealistic and trusting. Nonetheless, he is the grim dwarf's most trusted friend and comrade.

Calder harbors romantic feelings for Sister Jinny, and suspects that she returns them, but pretends to be unaware. He fears she is too intelligent to have much use for a simple man like himself, and he would never force her to choose between him and her vows to the Path. In the end, they are simply too different.

Trask is almost always accompanied by Justice, his wolf companion.

Sir Trask Calder

Male ferran (wolf) predator ranger 4

CG Medium humanoid (ferran)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +9

Defense

AC 17, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 42 (4d10+14)

Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +6 (1d6+3)

Ranged masterwork composite longbow +8 (1d8+2)

Special attacks favored enemy (undead: +1)

Typical Ranger Spells Prepared

1st Level (1/day) - *longstrider*

Statistics

Str 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19

Feats Endurance, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot

Traits resilient (+1 Fortitude), ruffian (+2 hp)

Skills Handle Animal 4 (+6), Knowledge (geography) 4 (+7), Perception 4 (+9), Stealth 4 (+10), Survival 4 (+9), Swim 4 (+9),

Languages Western Common, Feral Speech (canines)

SQ track, wild empathy, favored terrain (swamp), scent

Equipment masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str modifier), +1 *studded leather armor*, dagger, spell component pouch, assorted survival gear, Radiant Order cloak, Radiant Order amulet

Justice (Calder's wolf companion)

N Medium animal

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +5

Defense

AC 16, **touch** 12, **flat-footed** 14 (+2 armor, +2 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 17 (2d8+7)

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

Offense

Speed 50 ft.

Melee bite +2 (1d6+1 plus trip)



Statistics

Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Base Atk +1; CMB +2; CMD 14 (18 vs. trip)

Feats Toughness

Skills Perception 1 (+5), Survival 1 (+2)

Tricks attack, attack any target, come, guard, heel, stay, track

SQ +4 to Survival when tracking by Scent.

Equipment leather barding

Sister Jinnasai "Jinny" Tonneson

Jinny Tonneson is a soft-spoken, polite, highly intelligent priestess of the Radiant Path. She serves the knights as their healer and moral compass. Though she has little skill in combat, the other knights have come to appreciate her quick mind and keen eye for detail. Jinny provides her healing services to the local community free of charge and serves as the village pastor and schoolteacher. She is generally well-liked and knows everyone in the village.

Tonneson comes from a family of humble social standing, who arranged for her to be educated and inducted into the Radiant Order in hopes that he would use her influence to find a good husband and increase her family's social standing. To their great disappointment, she followed the call of the Radiant Path instead and became a priest. Her family has disowned her, but she takes solace in her faith and in helping others. Unfortunately, her eagerness to please often causes her to appear nervous and insecure, belying her true wisdom.

As the Order's healer, Dram Hollister has personally seen to it that Jinny has a basic level of combat training and has been equipped with adequate weapons. While she has absorbed these lessons dutifully and maintains her gear judiciously, she despises violence and knows she has little talent in the martial arena. She fears the day that she might be required to take a life. If she was forced to do so to defend her people, she would do so without hesitation, but such an act would deeply affect the idealistic young priestess.

Jinny has developed romantic feelings for Sir Trask Calder over the years, but she fears that the dashing ranger would never have time for a simple backwoods elf and the village needs her too much for her to abandon her vows. She keeps these feelings carefully private.

Sister Jinny Tonneson

Female elf cleric 3

LG Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +9

Defense

AC 17, **touch** 12, **flat-footed** 15 (+4 armor, +1 shield, +2 Dex)

hp 18 (3d8)

Fort +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +1 (1d4-1)

Ranged masterwork pistol +5 (1d8+1)

Typical Cleric Spells Prepared

0-Level (any) - *create water, detect magic, guidance, light, mending*

1st Level - *bless, cure light wounds* (domain), *obscuring mist, remove fear*

2nd Level - *communal protection from evil, cure moderate wounds* (domain), *hold person* (DC 15)

Statistics

Str 8, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 12

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13

Feats Cosmopolitan (Perception, Survival), Studied

Traits sacred conduit (+1 DC to channel), surgeon (+4 to extended care)

Skills Heal 3 (+9), Knowledge (arcana) 2 (+8), Knowledge (history) 2 (+8), Knowledge (local) 3 (+9), Knowledge (religion) 3 (+9), Linguistics 2 (+8), Perception 3 (+9), Spellcraft 3 (+9)

Languages Arcadian, Earthtongue, Fundamental, Western Common, Nocturnine, Planar, Slurg, Sylfanic

SQ aura, channel energy (2d6 hp, 4/day, DC 13), domains (glory, healing), touch of glory (+3 bonus to Charisma roll by touch, 6/day), rebuke death (heal dying character 1d4+1, 6/day), spontaneous cures

Equipment dagger, masterwork pistol, 20 standard ammunition, buckler, chain shirt, cleric's robes, healer's kit, *wand of cure light wounds* (17 charges), Radiant Order amulet, Radiant Order cloak

Captain Dram Hollister

Dram Hollister commands the small group of knights currently assigned to Murdoch's Cove. He is curt, short-tempered, and prone to bouts of deep uncertainty. He cannot abide failure in others or in himself. The deaths of his knights, Akro and Cecilia, weigh particularly heavily on him. When he can be encouraged to rise above his doubts, he is a selfless, honorable man and a resourceful leader.

Hollister has mixed feelings regarding the arrival of the player characters. Though he recognizes that the village needs whatever help it can get, he doesn't like relying on mercenaries - especially Urbanan mercenaries. The only exception he will make, at least early on, is for any party members who are members of the Radiant Order.

If the players prove themselves to be honorable allies by helping the villagers or exterminating the nocturnal menace, Dram's gruff demeanor softens. Anyone who would risk their life to defend innocents, he feels, is at least worthy of some respect.

Sir Dram blames himself for the current desperate state of the village. Though he has sent for reinforcements, he fears that none are coming. He knows he has fallen out of favor with the Radiant Order due to his failure during the Battle of Redbeach. The situation has made him even more melancholy and depressed than normal.

Hollister utterly despises the Underground. In his experience, they are nothing but a band of exploitative thieves and criminals. Should he discover that the party has allied with them, he will immediately become standoffish. While he won't deny their help (he's too desperate to turn anyone away) the player characters will no longer have his trust.

The Battle of Redbeach

In the year 1112, Shortly after the Darkfall, Dram Hollister was assigned to command a scouting patrol outside the city of Redbeach. While on a routine scouting mission, his troops blundered into an enormous group of nocturnals. They stood no chance against the vastly larger force. As his soldiers fell, Dram fled from the field and crawled beneath a pile of corpses, praying that the enemy would ignore him.

As luck would have it, Dram survived the night. He knew he would never reach Redbeach in time to warn his comrades, but he tried nonetheless. Fortunately, he stumbled over a burnt-out watchtower with an intact cannon. Hollister loaded the weapon and tore into the nocturnal forces from behind. The cacophony alerted the soldiers in Redbeach to the threat and allowed them to rally a defense. The day was won and Dram Hollister was honored as a hero.

Overcome with guilt, Hollister confessed his earlier cowardice to his superiors. They could not bring themselves to officially punish a hero of his stature. Instead, they reassigned him to the strategically insignificant village of Murdoch's Cove, where he could be quietly forgotten.

Captain Dram Hollister

Male dwarf paladin 6

NG Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

Defense

AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20 (+10 armor)

hp 52 (6d10+12)

Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +8

Special defenses aura of courage

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 *earthbreaker* +11/+5 (2d6+5)

Ranged masterwork scattergun +7 (3d3 armor piercing)

Special attacks smite evil 2/day (+2 hit, +6 dam)

Typical Paladin Spells Prepared

1st Level (2/day) - *bless*, *divine favor*

Statistics

Str 17, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14

Base Atk +6; CMB +9; CMD 19

Feats Power Attack, Furious Focus, Weapon Focus (*earthbreaker*)

Traits indomitable faith (+1 Will saves), cosmopolitan education (+1 Perception and counts as class skill)

Skills Knowledge (religion) 6 (+9); Perception 6 (+10); Sense Motive 6 (+9)

Languages Earthtongue, Western Common

SQ detect evil, divine bond (weapon), divine health, lay on hands (2d6 hp, 5/day, DC 15), mercy (fatigued, staggered)

Equipment +1 *earthbreaker*, +1 *full plate*, spiked gauntlets, dagger, Radiant Order cloak, Radiant Order amulet, masterwork scattergun, 10 armor-piercing scattergun ammunition

Old Willem

Old Willem is a crusty, surly, frequently drunk Thunder Scout who has taken up residence in Murdoch's Cove. He spent eight years charting the Thunder Trails for the Shadow Army following the Darkfall, and during that time saw no end of horrors. Given the chance to retire, he immediately settled down in Murdoch's Cove for no other reason than that Arasteen is prettier than Urbana and the Murdochs make his favorite whiskey.

Willem lives off of a modest pension from the Shadow Army, delivered twice a year by courier. He supplements his income by working as a wilderness guide, ferrying merchants and travelers into the marsh in his customized swampboat.

Though Willem has more experience fighting the Darkfall than anyone else in town, he prefers to keep to himself. He has seen too many friends die and prefers not to get close to anyone. If the Darkfall comes to Murdoch's Cove, he plans to hop on his boat and move on. Of course, the players may be able to change his mind. Anyone who takes the time to treat him as anything more than an old drunk will gain his trust - anyone respects him for his knowledge and experience will gain his friendship.

Old Willem

Male dwarf thunder scout (iron scout) 4

CG Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +5; Senses darkvision - 60 ft.; Perception +8

Defense

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 29 (4d8+8)

Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2

Special Defenses defensive training

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee masterwork rifle +7 (1d8+1)

Ranged battle axe +4 melee (1d8+1)

Special Attacks hatred, hardy, scout's mobility

Manite Implants (Steam Reserve: 4)

Igniter implant power mechatmagical vehicle at will

Minor Implants grapnel launcher, skill booster (+2 Survival)

Statistics

Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 9

Base Atk +3; CMB +4; CMD 17 (21 vs. bull rush/trip)

Feats Expert Gunner, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Reload - Rifle

Traits reactionary (+2 initiative), implanted

Skills Craft (machinery) 4 (+11), Disable Device 4 (+10), Knowledge (dungeoneering) 2 (+7), Knowledge (engineering) 4 (+9), Knowledge (nature) 2 (+7), Perception 4 (+8), Stealth 4 (+9), Survival 4 (+10), Swim 4 (+7)

Languages Earthtongue, Nocturne, Slurg, Western Common

SQ stonecunning, pilot training, scout techniques (favored terrain - swamp, steady hand), golemoid pilot

Equipment masterwork rifle, 20 standard rifle ammunition, battle axe, dagger, studded leather armor, masterwork repair tools, masterwork thieves tools, driving goggles, jug of swampshine, 37 gold crowns

Willem's Signature Vehicle - Swampboat

Huge Manite-Powered Vehicle

Caster Level 5th

AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 14 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, -2 size)

Hit Points: 35 (3d10+23)

Speed 60 ft. (water movement only); Speeding 10 ft.

Bonus Features High Speed, Superior Materials

Rollimus Torth

Rollimus Torth was born to a poor family in the city of Sea Reach. At an early age, he showed talent in the magical arts and joined the clergy in hopes of studying in their libraries. Instead, Torth was assigned to a remote fishing village where his talents languished. To this day, he believes it was his family's status that led to his talents being wasted.

Bitter and resentful, Torth abused his position. He accepted bribes from smugglers in return for using his position as a priest to circulate their goods without drawing suspicion. After a time, his profit from these endeavors allowed him to cultivate a small library of magical tomes and hired tutors. He became a self-made mechatmage.

Torth's resourcefulness (and generally questionable morals) eventually drew the Underground's attention. He was officially inducted into the organization, left the priesthood (on claims that he had found love) and moved to Redbeach. From there, he began directing smuggling operations into Urbana, Le'Ciel, and the Rhanate. He deals mostly in mechatmagic and minor magical items. He also has a number of apprentices (such as Kozark Vull, introduced in *Heart of the Machine*) that attend to his business throughout Aden in return for instruction. All of these students come from poor Arastinian families, men and women whose potential he believes would otherwise be ignored.

After acquiring a rare tome of arcane history from the Grey Isles, he discovered references to ancient magical power in the village of Murdoch's Cove. Almost one year ago, Torth journeyed there to inves-

tigate the matter personally. He now lives in a large room in the Smokefall in, undercover as a traveling surgeon and merchant. He conducts a modest trade in illegal slurgithian artifacts, which he purchases once a month from a slurg thief named Boac.

Rollimus will discreetly purchase any Formori artifacts discovered in the local ruins, though he is cautious not to mention this around any Radiant Knights. He stores all such contraband in his golem's extradimensional storage space until he can send it back to Sea Reach via one of his apprentices.

Though an unrepentant smuggler, Torth is not without honor. He will not buy or sell items of a cursed or corrupted nature. If given a Formori parasite sample, he can study it and comment on its capabilities, but will destroy the remains as soon as he is done. He abhors violence and will not condone any theft from the local villagers - except for Fred Aiken and Squire Hansen. Both men are fools who abuse a corrupt system, in his opinion. He has a grudging respect for Captain Hollister, without whom the village would have no protection from the terrors of the swamp.

Rollimus has access to a *herald's horn*, which he uses to keep in contact with the Underground. He keeps this item hidden in the closet of his inn room.

Rollimus is never seen in public without his golem minion, a gleaming marble giant named Precipice.

Rollimus Torth

Male goreaux mechamagic 6

CG Small humanoid (goblin)

Init +8; Senses darkvision - 60 ft.; Perception +10

Defense

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 shield, +2 Dex, +1 size) (+2 cover if mounted on golem)

hp 32 (6d6+6) plus 1d10+6 temp hp

Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +7

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee dagger +2 (1d3-1)

Ranged masterwork pistol +6 (1d8+1)

Special defenses +4 ac vs. constructs, mechamagic resistance (+2)

Typical Mechamagic Spells Prepared

0-Level - *detect magic*, *detect mechamagic*, *everheat rune*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*

1st Level - *enlarge person*, *grease* (DC 15), *mage armor* X2*

2nd Level - *construct servant*, *false life**, *levitate*, *web* (DC 16)

3rd Level - *construct servant II*, *haste*, *repair construct*

Mechamagic Writs Known Capacious, Durable, Elemental, Enchanted, Mighty, Reinforced, Steadfast, Steed, Swift, and Talented writs

*Rollimus typically casts these spells on himself, as well as *mage armor* on his golem, before attending to important business. This is accounted for in his stats and those of his golem minion.

Statistics

Str 9, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 12

Base Atk +3; CMB +2; CMD 14

Feats Cosmopolitan (Perception, Sense Motive), Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Items, Improved Initiative, Inspiring Mechamagic

Traits Implanted (Skill Booster - Sense Motive), Surgeon

Skills Appraise 3 (+10), Bluff 6 (+10), Disable Device 6 (+15), Heal 6 (+12), Knowledge (arcana) 3 (+10), Knowledge (local) 3 (+10), Perception 6 (+10), Sense Motive 6 (+12), Spellcraft 3 (+10)

Languages Arcadian, Eastern Common, Fundamental, Jurakti, Lowland, Planar, Sylfanic, Western Common

SQ golem minion, call minion (distress), mechamagic mastery,

Equipment 10 standard pistol ammunition, cold iron dagger, masterwork pistol, *wand of mend construct* (27 charges remaining), *cloak of resistance* +1, masterwork thieves tools, mithral buckler, *ring of manite analysis* (see *Heart of the Machine* for details), healer's kit, spell component pouch, spellbook (contains all prepared spells and writs plus *alarm*, *burning hands*, *crafter's fortune*, *identify*, *mend construct*, *protection from evil*, *arcane lock*, *fox's cunning*, *summon monster II*, *dispel magic*, *fly* and *shrink item*), 75 gold crests. Torth also usually carries the following items, affected by previously cast *shrink item* spells: burning campfire, a barrel full of gravel, a 6 X 6 foot steel cage with good lock, a wheelbarrow, and a rowboat.

Precipice (Rollimus' Rock Golem)

Rollimus' Rock Golem Minion

N Medium construct

Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

Defense

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 47 (5d10+25)

Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +1

Special defenses construct traits, evasion

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +10 (1d6+3 plus 1d6 acid damage)

Current Writs (Loyalty 7)

Capacious, Elemental, Enchanted, Mighty, Steed, Swift, Talented (already added into stats)

Statistics

Str 16, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 1

Base Atk +5; CMB +8; CMD 19

Feats Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Perception 5 (+8)

SQ link, share spells

Ceasg the Vigilant

During Brother Arais' long vigil over the lonely marshes it was part of his duties to maintain the Seer Order's ancient alliance with the Loireag Slurgithians. It came as some surprise to him when a young slurgithian named Ceasg began to demonstrate the gift of prophecy. Though he sent word of this development to his brethren in Rose, no one ever came to collect her for training. So he trained her himself. Under the patient old elf's guidance, Ceasg became a brilliant and insightful young seer. In time, she was chosen to lead the Loireag tribe.

When the Darkfall came, the nocturnals did not hunt Ceasg as they did most other seers. She still does not know why. In her heart she fears perhaps she was too weak, and they did not find her a threat. She blames herself for not being there to protect Arais when the nocturnals murdered him. Over the years, her guilt, doubt, and regret have slowly festered into a deep distrust for all surface dwellers.

In her eyes, the surface folk are the ones who failed to protect Arais. This distrust has made her quick to judge all for the actions of a few. Now she prepares her tribe for war against the people of Murdoch's Cove.

It is not too late for Ceasg. In her heart, she is a good person and not beyond reason. If the party can prove to her distrust is misguided, she can turn the Loireag back from their current course and join the people of Murdoch's Cove in their fight against the Darkfall.

Ceasg

Female slurgithian seer 6

NG Medium humanoid (aquatic)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision - 60 ft.; **Perception** +16

Defense

AC 18, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 17 (+5 armor, +2 shield, +1 Dex)

hp (6d8+12)

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +9

Special Defenses uncanny dodge

Offense

Speed 30 ft., **swim** 30 ft.

Melee +1 *trident* +8 (1d8+3), bite +2 (1d6+1) or bite +7 (1d6+3) and 2 claws +2 (1d4+1)

Ranged javelin +5 (1d6+3)

Seer Spells Prepared

1st Level - *timely maneuver*

Statistics

Str 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 11, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Toughness

Traits Indomitable Faith (+1 to will saves), Folk Magic (*shield* - 1/day)

Skills Knowledge (nature) 6 (+11), Perception 6 (+16), Sense Motive 6 (+16), Knowledge (history) 6 (+9), Swim 6 (+16)

Languages Slurgithian, Western Common

SQ amphibious, second sight (+1 to roll, 15/day), fatebender aura, aura of alacrity*, farsight (recall spell by expending second sight), prophecies (rejuvenating strike, moment of truth)

*Ceasg uses this fatebender aura by default. If combat begins, she switches to aura of weakness (DC 16)

Equipment +1 *hide armor*, masterwork buckler, +1 *trident*, holy symbol, 4 javelins

Karloff Radool

Karloff Radool is the great-great-grandson of Skadra Radool, the insane mechamage who destroyed the Loireag Monastery. The Radools never forgave the Celestial College for rejecting Skadra's genius or the Radiant Order for imprisoning him.

This resentment has festered for generations. Viewing the Celestial College and their ilk as pawns of the Seers, the Radools turned their back on the academic community. They turned instead to those who walked in the shadows, those who embraced secrets the world refused to acknowledge. They became founders of a bizarre sect of the Divine Machination, religious extremists who believe that no form of knowledge is taboo and that men of learning cannot be bound by the morality of the ignorant. Karloff Radool's beliefs - and intellect - eventually made him allies with the Cult of Shermazza.

When the cult began its search for ancient sites of power, it was Radool who first suggested Murdoch's Cove. He suspected that his ancestor had discovered some powerful magic there. Unfortunately, the cult chose not to send him to investigate, relying instead on the services of Sir James Dex. Radool never forgave the slight. He never believed that Dex found nothing of interest in the swamp.

It has taken him years, but Radool has finally gathered enough influence for the cult to permit him to operate alone and unrestricted. He immediately returned to Murdoch's Cove and began following in the footsteps of Skadra Radool. He was not surprised to discover that he was right, that Dex was a traitor all along, and that there truly is unimaginable power in the swamp. He keeps this knowledge to himself, for now, until he can return to the cult in triumph. It's only a matter of time

before he perfects his creations - and shows the world the true genius of the Radool bloodline.

Radool is a nervous, fidgety man who speaks with a pronounced stutter. Though normally calm and methodical, he tends to lose his temper and act irrationally when his intellect or the dignity of his ancestors are called into question.

In combat, Radool prefers to stay at range and use his bombs tactically. As his undead manikins are immune to the poison effect of his stink bombs, he will frequently target the clouds where opponents will be forced to enter them to deal with his minions. As long as his immortality module remains functional, Radool is not afraid to fight to the death, confident he will return to fight again.

Karloff Radool

Male human alchemist (scientist) 7 - CR 6 - XP 2,400

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +8; **Perception** +10

Defense

AC 20, **touch** 15; **flat-footed** 15 (+4 armor, +1 shield, +4 Dexterity, +1 deflection)

hp 41 (7d8+7)

Fort +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee masterwork cold iron dagger +10 (1d6 plus poison)

Ranged masterwork pistol +10 (1d8+1)

Special attacks bomb +10 ranged touch (4d6+5 fire damage plus 9 splash damage, DC 17, 11/day), swift poisoning

Special defenses poison resistance +4



Typical Alchemist Extracts Prepared

1st Level (5/day) - cure light wounds, expeditious retreat, reduce person, shield, touch of the sea

2nd level (4/day) - barkskin, blur, levitate, invisibility

3rd level (2/day) - cure serious wounds, haste

Manite Implants (Steam Reserve: 8)

Minor Implants adrenalin booster (spend steam point to reroll initiative)

Basic Implants Immortality Module (special, see sidebar)

Statistics

Str 10, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 10, Cha 10

Base Atk +5; CMB +5; CMD 19

Feats Brew Potion, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Throw Anything, Weapon Finesse

Traits folk magic (*detect magic* - 3/day), surgeon (+4 to extended care)

Skills Craft (alchemy) 7 (+14), Craft (machinery) 7 (+14), Heal 7 (+10), Knowledge (arcana) 7 (+14), Knowledge (engineering) 4 (+11), Knowledge (nature) 3 (+10), Perception 7 (+10), Spellcraft 7 (+14), Stealth 7 (+13), Survival 7 (+10), Use Magic Device 7 (+9)

Languages Western Common, Arcadian, Lowland, Nocturine, Planar

SQ alchemy, mutagen, poison use, swift alchemy, discoveries (self-modification, smoke bombs, stink bombs)

Equipment 2 potions of cure moderate wounds, alchemist's kit, belt of dexterity +2, healer's kit, improved amulet of Shermazza, masterwork buckler, masterwork chain shirt, masterwork cold iron dagger, masterwork pistol and 6 standard ammunition, 3 alchemist fires, medium spider venom (3 doses - injury; Save: Fortitude DC 14; Frequency: 1/round for 4 rounds; Effect: 1d2 Strength damage; Cure: 1 save), ring of protection +1, wand of obscuring mist (10 charges), Karloff's formulae book (contains *ant haul*, *crafter's fortune*, *cure light wounds*, *expeditious retreat*, *identify*, *reduce person*, *shield*, *touch of the sea*, *barkskin*, *blur*, *false life*, *invisibility*, *levitate*, *see invisibility*, *cure serious wounds*, and *haste*), and 237 gold crowns.

Karloff Radool's Immortality Module

Karloff Radool created this implant in a fit of inspiration after exposing himself to several Formori obelisks. It draws directly upon the dark energies of the swamp, filtered through Radool's blessing of Shermazza, to allow Radool to resurrect himself upon death. If killed, Radool's body and all of its equipment melt into nothing. His spirit journeys to a specially prepared corpse and transforms it into the visage of his original body. This functions as if the new body was the result of a *clone* spell, except that Radool gains no negative levels and retains his old equipment. Radool has at least a dozen such corpses hidden throughout the swamp at any time.

The immortality module allows Radool to telepathically monitor, control, and speak through any manikins or Formori parasites within fifty miles, as well as absorb the power of any Formori obelisks they drain.

The implant draws upon the ambient power of Formori obelisks, and functions only as long as at least one of the obelisks in Murdoch's Cove is not currently dormant. Radool believes that once he has drained the power of the Final Nexus, he will gain the knowledge to modify his immortality module to function anywhere in Aden.

Like many followers of Shermazza, Radool possesses a blessing of Shermazza - however his blessing has been completely suppressed, as he uses its power to fuel his Immortality Module.

- APPENDIX B - NEW MONSTERS

This section describes the new monsters introduced in this adventure - Radool's undead manikins and the golemoid parasites that control them.



Radool Parasite

Just as the creature seems to be dead, a sickly tearing sound erupts from its back. A twisted coil of leathery flesh and rusted metal cable tears itself from the corpse's spine. It rears back like a serpent and turns toward you, its face split by a wide, circular mouth lined with hundreds of jagged metal teeth. It releases an unearthly metallic squeal before slithering into the shadows.



Radool Parasite

CR 1/2 - XP 200

CE Tiny Construct

Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +5

Defense

AC 16, **touch** 14, **flat-footed** 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural, +2 size)

hp 11 (2d10)

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

Immune construct traits

Offense

Speed 10 ft., **swim** 40 ft.

Melee bite +4 (1d3-5)

Space 2 1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks manikin conversion

Statistics

Str 1, Dex 14, Con -, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 1

Base Atk +2, **CMB** +0, **CMD** 12 (can't be tripped)

Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +10 (+14 in marshy terrain)

Languages Western Common, Nocturine (cannot speak)

SQ hive mind, symbiosis

Special Abilities

● **Manikin Conversion (Ex)** A Radool parasite can merge with the spine of a dead or helpless humanoid as a full round action. This process immediately kills the target (if it was alive) and applies the manikin template to it. The newborn manikin is completely under the parasite's control as long as they remain bound to one another. If the parasite is removed from the manikin, the manikin immediately dies. A Radool manikin that is killed or abandoned can no longer be animated by a parasite.

● **Hive Mind (Su)** A Radool parasite shares a telepathic bond with all other Radool parasites within 100 yards, allowing them to silently communicate with one another at all times.

● **Symbiosis (Ex)** While bound to a manikin, a parasite can take no action other than to leave the host (which kills it immediately). A parasite is immune to all damage while bound to its host. If a parasite's manikin perishes, there is a 75% chance that the parasite dies as well. If it survives, the parasite will flee or find a new host as quickly as possible.



Ecology

Environment temperate lakes and marshes

Organization solitary or pack (2-5), with manikins

Treasure none

Manikin

A foul-smelling creature lurches forward out of the muck. Its limbs bulge with grotesque, misshapen muscles. Its eyes are dead, black, and lifeless. Its jaw hangs open in an expression of rage and horror. It rushes forward at a speed that belies its lumbering appearance.

Creating a Manikin

“Manikin” is an acquired template that can be applied to any Large or smaller corporeal humanoid that undergoes manikin conversion by a Radool parasite, referred to hereafter as the base creature. A manikin retains its base statistics except as noted here.

- **Challenge Rating:** Same as the base creature +3
- **Alignment:** Always chaotic evil.
- **Type:** The creature’s type changes to undead (augmented).
- **Armor Class:** The creature gains a +4 bonus to natural armor. This stacks with any natural armor possessed by the base creature.
- **Hit Dice:** Drop HD gained from class levels and change racial HD to d8s. Increase the base hit dice by 3d8. Manikins use their Charisma modifiers to determine bonus hit points instead of Constitution.
- **Saves:** Base save bonuses are Fort +1/3 HD, Ref +1/3 HD, and Will +1/2 HD +2.
- **Defensive Abilities:** Manikins retain their natural defensive abilities and gain all the qualities and immunities granted by the undead type. Manikins gain DR 5/magic.
- **Weaknesses:** Manikins gain mechemagic vulnerability.
- **Mechemagic Vulnerability:** A manikin is vulnerable to spells and effects that specifically affect constructs, as well as those that affect undead.
- **Attacks:** Manikins retain all of the natural weapons of the base creature. It also gains a bite attack that deals damage as a creature one size category larger (if the creature already had a bite attack, only the one that does more damage remains).
- **Special Attacks:** A manikin retains none of the base creature’s special attacks, but gains a grab special attack associated with its bite.
- **Abilities:** +4 Str. A manikin has no Con or Int score. Its Wis and Cha become 10.
- **BAB:** A manikin’s base attack is equal to 3/4 its Hit Dice.

• **Skills:** A manikin has no skill ranks.

• **Feats:** A manikin loses all feats, but gains Toughness as a bonus feat.

• **Special Qualities:** A manikin loses most special qualities of the base creature. It retains any extraordinary special qualities that improve its melee or ranged attacks. A manikin gains the symbiosis special quality.

• **Symbiosis (Ex):** Each manikin is controlled by a Radool parasite. If this connection is severed, the manikin immediately dies.

• **Mutations (Ex):** Additionally, a manikin gains two Manikin Mutations, plus one additional mutation per 3 HD (not counting the hit dice added by this template). See the “Manikin Mutations” sidebar for details.

Typical Slurghthian Manikin

CR 3 - XP 800

CE Medium undead (augmented)

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

Defense

AC 18, **touch** 10, **flat-footed** 18 (+8 natural)

hp 22 (4d8+4)

Fort +1, **Ref** +1, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities undead traits

Weaknesses mechemagic vulnerability

DR 5/slashing

Offense

Speed 30 ft., **swim** 30 ft.

Melee bite +8 (1d8 +7 plus grab)

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

Statistics

Str 20, **Dex** 10, **Con** -, **Int** -, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3, **CMB** +8, **CMD** 18

Feats Power Attack, Toughness

SQ symbiosis, mutations (brutish, toughened)

Ecology

Environment temperate lakes and marshes

Organization solitary or pack (2-5)

Treasure none

Manikin Mutations

Bloated (Ex): Upon its death, the manikin releases a cloud of noxious vapor in a 10’ radius. Living creatures in the cloud must make a Fortitude save (DC 14) or be nauseated for 1d4+1 rounds. This is a poison effect. The vapor cloud lingers for one minute, or until scattered by strong winds.

Brutish (Ex): The manikin gains an additional +4 Strength and the Power Attack feat.

Carrier (Ex): The manikin can carry up to three additional parasites safely in its body. These parasites are immune to all damage while carried by the manikin, but can emerge at will. If the manikin is killed, these additional parasites immediately emerge from its corpse.

Fast (Ex): The manikin’s speed is increased by 20 feet.

Hulking (Ex): The manikin’s size category is increased by 1. Due to its size increase, the manikin gains +3 natural armor, +4 Str, -2 Dex, and its damage dice increase by one step.

Skulking (Ex): The manikin gains a +8 racial bonus to Stealth checks.

Swift (Ex): The manikin gains an additional +4 Dexterity and the Weapon Finesse feat.

Tenacious (Ex): The manikin gains an additional +2 hp per hit die.

Toughened (Ex): The manikin gains an additional +4 natural armor bonus.

Venomous (Ex): The manikin’s bite carries powerful venom. Manikin venom - injury; save Fort DC 14; Frequency 1/round for 3 rounds; effect 1d4 Str damage; cure 1 save.

Typical Human Manikin

CR3 - XP 800

CE Medium undead (augmented)

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

Defense

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+4 natural)

hp 22 (4d8+4)

Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4

Defensive Abilities undead traits

Weaknesses mechamagic vulnerability

DR 5/slashing

Offense

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee bite +6 (1d8 +4 plus grab and poison)

Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Statistics

Str 16, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 10

Base Atk +3, CMB +6, CMD 16

Feats Toughness

SQ symbiosis, mutations (venomous, bloated)

Ecology

Environment temperate lakes and marshes

Organization solitary or pack (2-5)

Treasure none

Typical Ogre Manikin

CR6 - XP 2,400

CE Large undead (augmented)

Init -1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

Defense

AC 17, touch 8, flat-footed 17 (+9 natural, -1 Dex, -1 size)

hp 53 (7d8+21)

Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +5

Defensive Abilities undead traits

Weaknesses mechamagic vulnerability

DR 5/slashing

Offense

Speed 60 ft.

Melee bite +13 (2d6+13 plus grab)

Space 10 ft., reach 10 ft.

Statistics

Str 29, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 10

Base Atk +5, CMB +13, CMD 22

Feats Toughness

SQ symbiosis, mutations (brutish, fast, tenacious)

Ecology

Environment temperate lakes and marshes

Organization solitary or pack (2-5)

Treasure none

- APPENDIX C - PRE-GENERATED MINOR NPCs

Many encounters in this adventure, particularly random encounters and the siege in Murdoch's Cove, involve the participation of numerous unnamed civilians, bandits, knights, and military personnel. The following stat blocks can be used to quickly generate these individuals. The statistics presented are, by default, human. For greater variety please use the Cosmopolitan Aden tables at the end of this section to better represent Thunderscape's diverse racial makeup. Alignments are not listed in these statistics, as they should vary depending on the particular NPC.

Untrained Conscript

These statistics represent untrained soldiers. They can be used for Mekanus city guard, wasteland frontiersmen, desperate bandits, or the militia in Murdoch's Cove.

Untrained Conscript

Human Warrior 1 - CR 1/3

Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; Perception +4

Defense

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +1 shield)

hp 7 (1d10+2)

Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee shortsword +4 (1d8+2)

Ranged light crossbow +1 (1d8)

Statistics

Str 14, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8

Base Atk +1; CMB +2; CMD 12

Feats Endurance, Weapon Focus (swordsword)

Traits Folk Magic (*light* 3/day), Cosmopolitan Education (+1 Perception and counts as class skill)

Skills Perception 1 (+5), Profession (guard) 1 (+4)

Languages Western Common

SQ none

Equipment dagger, light wooden shield, studded leather, shortsword, light crossbow, 10 bolts

Trained Infantry

These statistics represent soldiers who have received a greater degree of training and higher quality equipment. They can represent exceptional militia members and frontier civilians, bandit ruffians, Shadow Army grunts, Arastinian military, Grounder thugs, or Dram Hollister's junior knights.

Trained Infantry

Human Fighter 2 - CR 1

Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Perception** +0

Defense

AC 17, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 16 (+5 armor, +1 shield, +1 Dex)

hp 22 (2d10+11)

Fort +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2

Special defenses bravery

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee shortsword +3 (1d8+1)

Ranged pistol +1 (1d8+1)

Statistics

Str 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16

Feats Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Traits Reactionary (+2 initiative), Ruffian (+2 hp)

Skills Climb 2 (+4), Profession (soldier) 2 (+5), Survival 2 (+5)

Languages Western Common

SQ none

Equipment 10 standard pistol ammunition, dagger, light wooden shield, shortsword, pistol, scale mail

Trained Archer

These statistics represent soldiers who place greater focus on stealth and ranged combat. They can represent militia sharpshooters, wasteland hunters, bandit snipers, Shadow Army and Radiant Order archers, or Grounder thieves.

Trained Archer

Human Rogue 2 - CR 1

Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; **Perception** +0

Defense

AC 16, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 13 (+3 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 17 (2d8+8)

Fort +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +0

Special defenses evasion

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee shortsword +2 (1d6+1)

Ranged shortbow +6 (1d6)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

Statistics

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15

Feats Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Traits Reactionary (+2 initiative), Ruffian (+2 hp)

Skills Acrobatics 2 (+7), Appraise 2 (+5), Bluff (+4), Climb 2 (+5), Disable Device 2 (+6), Knowledge (local) 2 (+5), Perception 2 (+5), Stealth 2 (+7), Use Magic Device 2 (+4)

Languages Western Common

SQ fast stealth, trapfinding

Equipment 20 arrows, shortbow, dagger, shortsword, studded leather armor, thieves tools

Hedge Wizard

Magic is common in Aden. These statistics represent minor spellcasters and can be used for wandering adventurers, bandit wizards, Shadow Army mages, or Radiant Path scholars. Though the following statistics represent a conjurer, but these are by no means the only mages who wander Aden. Feel free to vary a hedge wizard's spell selection and specialization as needed.

Hedge Wizard

Human Wizard (conjurer) 3 - CR 2

Medium humanoid (human)

Init +8; **Perception** +7

Defense

AC 16, **touch** 12, **flat-footed** 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 22 (3d6+12)

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

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +0 (1d4-1)

Ranged masterwork pistol +4 (1d8+1)

Typical Wizard Spells Prepared

0-Level - *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

1st Level - *grease* (DC 15), *mage armor*, *summon monster I*, *vanish*

2nd Level - *glitterdust* (DC 16), *summon monster II* (X2)

*hedge wizards typically cast *mage armor* prior to an encounter. This is accounted for in their stats.

Statistics

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 12

Feats Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (conjuration), Toughness

Traits Cosmopolitan Education (+1 Perception and counts as class skill), Reactionary (+2 initiative)

Skills Craft (alchemy) 3 (+9), Knowledge (arcana) 3 (+9), Knowledge (nature) 3 (+9), Linguistics 3 (+9), Perception 3 (+7), Spellcraft 3 (+9)

Languages Arcadian, Fundamental, Jurakti, Lowand, Planar, Sylfanic, Western Common

SQ arcane bond, barred schools (necromancy, enchantment)

Equipment arcane bond ring, dagger, 20 standard pistol ammunition, masterwork pistol, scrolls (*shield*, *vanish*, *mage armor*), spellbook (contains all prepared spells plus *feather fall*, *identify*, *mount*, and *shield*)

Wandering Gunslinger

These statistics represent experienced individuals with an emphasis on firearms and skill use and can represent military scouts, expert adventurers, frontier lawmen, or Grounder assassins.

Wandering Gunslinger

Human Rogue 4 - CR 3

Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Perception** +7

Defense

AC 18, **touch** 14, **flat-footed** 14 (+3 armor, +1 shield, +4 Dex)

hp 26 (4d8+8)

Fort +2, **Ref** +8, **Will** +1

Special Defenses evasion

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee shortsword +7 (1d6+2)

Ranged masterwork pistol +8 (1d8+1)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

Statistics

Str 14, **Dex** 18, **Con** 13, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 19

Feats Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload (pistol), Weapon Finesse

Traits Folk Magic (*dancing lights*, 3/day), Reactionary (+2 initiative)

Skills Acrobatics 4 (+11), Appraise 4 (+7), Bluff 4 (+7), Disable

Device 4 (+8), Escape Artist 4 (+11), Perception 4 (+7), Sense

Motive 4 (+7), Stealth 4 (+11), Use Magic Device 4 (+7)

Languages Western Common

SQ fast stealth, trapfinding, trap sense +1

Equipment 20 standard pistol ammunition, shortsword, masterwork pistol, masterwork buckler, masterwork studded leather armor, thieves tools



Elite Soldier

These statistics represent highly trained and well equipped foot soldiers and can represent low-ranking military commanders, Ruster guards, experienced Knights of the Radiant Order, or Grounder specialist mercenaries.

Elite Soldier

Human Fighter 5 - CR 4

Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; **Perception** +10

Defense

AC 20, **touch** 10, **flat-footed** 20 (+9 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 52 (5d10+25)

Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4

Special Defenses bravery

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee masterwork greatsword +12 (2d6+9, +15 with Power Attack)

Ranged masterwork pistol +7 (1d8+1)

Statistics

Str 18, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 20

Feats Furious Focus, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword),

Traits Folk Magic (*detect magic* 3/day), Cosmopolitan Education (+1 Perception and counts as class skill)

Skills Climb +4, Perception +10, Profession (soldier) +5, Ride +2, Survival +9

Languages Western Common

SQ armor training, weapon training (blades)

Equipment 20 standard pistol ammunition, masterwork greatsword, masterwork pistol, masterwork full plate

Loireag Slurgithians

Any Loireag slurgithians encountered in the wilderness during this adventure are likely to be highly trained warriors. Until the party can broker a peace with the Loireag, these individuals will blame any surface dwellers they see for their tribe's recent troubles and either demand surrender or attack on sight. Though most slurgithians speak only their native tongue, most large groups will include at least one member fluent in Western Common.

Groups of four or more slurgithians warriors are always led by a Loireag warpriest (with animal companion).

Loireag Warrior

Slurgithian Ranger 3 - CR 2

N Medium humanoid (aquatic)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +8

Defense

AC 15, **touch** 12, **flat-footed** 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 17 (3d8+8)

Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3

Offense

Speed 30 ft., **swim** 30 ft.

Melee masterwork spear +7 (1d8+3), bite +0 (1d6+1), or bite +5 (1d6+2), 2 claws +0 (1d4+1)

Ranged masterwork spear +7 (1d8+2) or javelin +5 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks favored enemy (undead)

Statistics

Str 14, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 9, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Endurance, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (spear)

Traits Folk Magic (*create water*, 3/day), Ruffian (+2 hp)

Skills Climb 3 (+7), Handle Animal 3 (+7), Knowledge (nature) 3 (+7), Perception 3 (+8), Stealth 3 (+7), Survival 3 (+8), Swim 3 (+15)

Languages Slurgithian

SQ amphibious, favored terrain (swamp), combat style (thrown), track (+1), wild empathy

Equipment masterwork spear, 4 javelins, dagger, studded leather armor

Loireag Warpriest

Slurgithian Druid 5 - CR 4

N Medium humanoid (aquatic)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +11

Defense

AC 16, **touch** 12, **flat-footed** 14 (+3 armor, +1 shield, +2 Dex)

hp 26 (4d8+8)

Fort +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +8

Offense

Speed 30 ft., **swim** 30 ft.

Melee masterwork shortspear +6 (1d6+2)

Ranged masterwork shortspear +6 (1d6+2)

Typical Druid Spells Prepared

0-Level - *create water*, *detect magic*, *know direction*, *light*, *mending*

1st Level - *cure light wounds*, *entangle*, *faerie fire*, *obscuring mist*

2nd Level - *barkskin*, *bull's strength*, *heat metal*

3rd Level - *call lightning*, *sleet storm*



Statistics

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

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Improved Initiative, Natural Spell, Toughness

Traits Indomitable Faith (+1 Will), Cosmopolitan Education (+1 Stealth and counts as class skill)

Skills Handle Animal 2 (+7), Knowledge (nature) 5 (+10), Perception 5 (+11), Stealth 5 (+8), Survival 5 (+11), Swim 3 (+14)

Languages Slurgithian, Western Common

SQ amphibious, nature bond (animal companion), wild empathy, woodland stride, trackless step, resist nature's lure, spontaneous casting (*summon nature's ally*), wild shape (small or medium animal, 1/day)

Equipment masterwork shortspear, light wooden shield, studded leather, *cure light wounds* potion

Giant Crab

(Loireag Warpriest's Animal Companion)

N Medium vermin (aquatic)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +4

Defense

AC 19, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 18 (+1 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 37 (5d8+15)

Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities evasion

Weakness water dependency

Offense

Speed 30 ft., **swim** 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +7 (1d4+3 plus grab)

Special Attacks constrict (1d4+3)

Statistics

Str 16, **Dex** 13, **Con** 15, **Int** 1, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 4

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6 (+10 grapple); **CMD** 17 (29 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Natural Armor, Toughness, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Perception 4 (+4), Swim 1 (+15)

Tricks attack, attack any target, heel

Cosmopolitan Aden

Humans are far from the dominant race in Aden. Please use the following tables to create more believable randomly generated NPCs. Remember to replace human racial bonuses (a bonus feat, a bonus skill, and +2 to the highest ability score) with appropriate racial abilities.

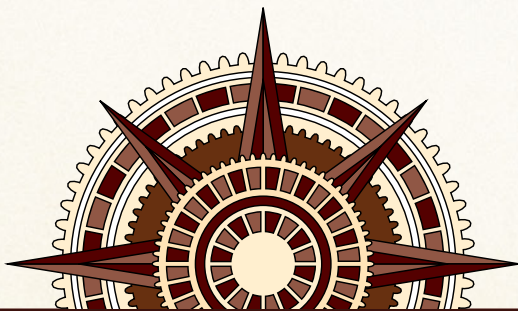
Racial demographics vary by nation, and certain races gravitate toward military professions so we have provided both military and civilian tables for Urbana and Arasteen. (Though certain races excel as soldiers, randomly generated adventurers are more diverse and should use the civilian table.)

d100	Urbana (civilian)
01-20	Human
21-40	Goreaux
41-50	Dwarf
51-60	Elf
61-70	Ferran (sneak)
71-75	Ferran (brute)
76-80	Ferran (predator)
81-85	Jurak
86-90	Rapacian
91-95	Faerkin
96-00	Half-elf

d100	Arasteen (civilian)
01-20	Human
21-35	Dwarf
36-50	Elf
51-60	Half-elf
61-70	Jurak
71-75	Ferran (sneak)
76-80	Ferran (brute)
81-85	Ferran (predator)
86-90	Goreaux
91-95	Faerkin
96-00	Rapacian

d100	Urbana (military)
01-10	Dwarf
11-20	Elf
21-25	Faerkin
26-30	Ferran (sneak)
31-40	Ferran (predator)
41-45	Ferran (brute)
46-50	Goreaux
51-55	Half-Elf
56-75	Human
76-85	Jurak
86-00	Rapacian

d100	Arasteen (military)
01-15	Human
16-30	Dwarf
31-45	Elf
46-55	Half-elf
56-65	Jurak
66-75	Rapacian
76-80	Ferran (predator)
81-85	Ferran (brute)
86-90	Ferran (sneak)
91-95	Faerkin
96-00	Goreaux



Iron Guard Field Guide

Introduced in our class book of the same name, the *Iron Guard Field Guide* is a series of almanacs written by thunder scouts, mercenaries, and soldiers who brave the dangerous wastelands of Urbana. A recent copy of the Guide (which can generally be bought in Urbana for 1 gold crown) could prove to be of great use for those planning a journey deep into Urbana. Any thunder scout or character skilled in Knowledge (cartography) can easily distinguish a recent copy of the Guide from older, less useful editions.

A copy of the Guide includes maps to Urbanan settlements, military way stations, and other pockets of civilization as well as warnings regarding known nocturnals and environmental dangers. With a copy of the Guide in hand, the party can plan its travels accordingly and increase the chance of finding a place to rest for the night by 20%. (This doesn't mean these locations are guaranteed to be safe - the wastelands are a dangerous and ever-changing place.)

To represent the Guide's monster and nocturnal lore, you may wish to roll up a few nocturnal encounters in advance. The guide could feature information about these creatures and their last known locations in case the party wishes to avoid (or seek out) a fight. Again, this information is not always reliable. The party may arrive only to find their quarry has already been killed by other adventurers.

- APPENDIX D - RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLES

Encounters While Traveling

The world outside Aden's walled cities is incredibly dangerous since the Darkfall. Nocturnal monsters are an obvious danger, but so are opportunistic bandits and other desperate survivors. The following tables should be used for determining random encounters in the wilderness.

For each day of travel, roll 1d10. A result of 0 indicates a random encounter that day. Proceed to roll on the table appropriate to the party's current location. If a "nocturnals" result occurs, reroll on the nocturnals column. Nocturnal encounters indicate the presence of creatures empowered or created by the Darkfall. These entities are always aggressive and evil in alignment, even if creatures of their type normally are not.

Keep in mind that not all encounters need to be combat-related. Even in the case of nocturnal encounters, the party might simply come across an unsettling set of tracks or the grisly remains of some abomination's recent feeding. While the players could turn such encounters into combat (by tracking down the beast, for example), this is not mandatory. Likewise, encounters that seem peaceful could become hostile, at your option. Perhaps those civilians mistake the party for a known criminal, or are merely so distrustful of strangers that they attack on sight.

The "Travel Encounters" table is intended for use on the road between Mekanus and Murdoch's Cove, where much of Act 1 takes place. Urbanan and Arastinian encounters are separated by table to better indicate the general populace, tone, and level of safety of those respective nations, but all nocturnal results use the same table. The "Murdoch's Cove" table is intended for use in the marshlands surrounding Murdoch's Cove, where later acts of the adventure occur, and has its own nocturnals table to better indicate the specific sorts of creatures that dwell in that area (like Karloff Radool's manikins).

These encounter tables are meant purely as a GM tool, so feel free to reroll if you receive repetitive or undesirable results. Likewise, feel free to skip directly to the nocturnals column if you just want a challenging monster combat.

Encounters on these tables range from CR 2 (an easy encounter for a 4th level party) up to CR 9 (a challenging encounter for a 7th level party, the maximum level intended for this adventure). Aden can be a dangerous place, and the party should be prepared to retreat from fights they are not prepared to handle.

Travel Encounters

d100 Roll	Urbanan Wastelands	Highlands of Arasteen	Nocturnals
01-05	Civilians, 1d6	Civilians, 1d6	Zombie pack (1d4+2)
06-10	Militia, 1d4+1 (conscripts)	Wild Dogs, 1d4+1	Goblin bandits (1d4+4)
11-15	Stirges (3)	Radiant priest (hedge wizard)	Hell hound
16-20	Traveling merchant (noncombatant) and 2 bodyguards (soldiers)	Small air elementals (pair)	Vargouille (1d3)
21-25	Shadow Army scout (gunslinger)	Giant Wasp	Wasted golemoid
26-30	Lion (mountain lion)	Traveling merchant noncombatant and 2 bodyguards (soldiers)	Giant crawling hand
31-35	Shadow Army Patrol (3 soldiers)	Arastinian scouts (3 archers)	Barghest
36-40	Giant Spiders (3)	Hippogriffs (pair)	Green hag
41-45	Boars (pair)	Dire boar	Wraith
46-50	Bounty Hunter (elite soldier)	Brown bear	Will o' Wisp
51-55	Owlbear	Radiant knight (elite soldier)	Otyughs (pair)
56-60	Giant Scorpions (pair)	Ankheg (Pair)	Nightmare
61-65	Wolves (pack of four)	Military patrol (4 soldiers/archers)	Mephit swarm (4-6, any type)
66-70	Bandits (4 soldiers/archers)	Bandits (4 soldiers/archers)	Darkfall cultists (6 soldiers or archers)
71-75	Manticore	Ogres (pair)	Ettin
76-80	Giant Stag Beetles (pair)	Griffons (paired)	Ettercaps (3-4)
81-85	Nocturnals	Ursax (electric)	Ghost
86-90	Nocturnals	Bulette	Dire lion (nocturnal template)
91-95	Nocturnals	Nocturnals	Cackler pack (1d4+4)
96-00	Nocturnals	Nocturnals	Erinyes

Encounters around Murdoch's Cove

d100 Roll	Murdoch's Cove and Loireag Marsh	Nocturnals
01-05	Crocodiles (2)	Hobgoblins (4-5)
06-10	Giant flies (3)	Ghouls (2-3)
11-15	Medium water elementals (pair)	Imps (pair)
16-20	Basilisk	Barghest
21-25	Naga hunting party (1d4+4 rangers)	Wasted golemoid
26-30	Dire wolves (Pair)	Cockatrice (nocturnal template)
31-35	Bat swarms (3)	Phase spider
36-40	Slurghithian patrol (4 warriors)	Slurghithian manikins (pair)
41-45	Shambling mound	Gargoyles (1d3)
46-50	Arastinian scouts (3 gunslingers)	Will o' Wisp
51-55	Bandit gang (1 hedge wizard, 4 archers/soldiers)	Demon, babau
56-60	Giant wasps (1d3+1)	Allips (3)
61-65	Dire lion (pair)	Werebear
66-70	Bulette	Gibbering mouthers (1d3)
71-75	Adventurers (3 elite soldiers/gunslingers)	Slurghithian manikins (4-6)
76-80	Nymph	Ogre manikin
81-85	Slurghithian war party (battle priest and 4 warriors)	Mohrg
86-90	Treant	Zombie swarm (1d12+20 medium zombies)
91-95	Nocturnals	Manikin swarm (6-8 manikins, possibly Karloff Radool himself)
96-00	Nocturnals	Bone devil

Camping in the Wilderness

Given the dangers of traveling Aden at night, finding a safe place to rest can be critical. It can also be difficult.

In Urbana, there is only a 20% chance each night that the party finds some manner of shelter. This chance increases to 40% in Arasteen. Without shelter, the party must make camp as best they can in the wilderness. This chance decreases to 10% in the desolate marsh within approximately seventy-five miles of Murdoch's Cove. Given that the party is likely to be exploring the Murdoch's Cove area for some time, keep track of any safe locations, their direction, and distance from the village in case the party wishes to reuse one of them. Murdoch's Cove locations will not be found in an *Iron Guard Field Guide* (though enterprising players may want to record the ones they find for submission to a future edition).

Roll a 1d10 to determine whether the party's camp draws attention during the night - a result of 1 or 0 indicates a random encounter. Roll on the appropriate encounter table; if the first result is not a nocturnal encounter, roll a second time and use that result. Treat this encounter logically - if the party has taken measures to hide or defend their camp, take that into account. Intelligent foes will not sacrifice themselves pointlessly against an entrenched enemy, and may move on to seek easier prey. For a party camped in a large military settlement, a potentially hostile encounter may result in a beast howling angrily at the walls before retreating into the night. A party camped in a remote ruin might find itself under siege by a pack of hungry undead and be grateful for the defenses they constructed.

A character with the Survival skill can spend two hours of searching and make a skill check to find natural shelter. The DC of this check is DC 14 + 2 per each additional Small or Medium sized creature requiring shelter. A result of 14 or more is always successful, but will only accommodate the indicated number of people at one time. This natural shelter has a 50% chance of being inhabited.

Finding Shelter in the Wilderness

d100	Result
01-20	Natural shelter
21-35	Natural shelter (inhabited)
36-50	Ruin
51-60	Ruin (inhabited)
61-75	Small Settlement (civilian)
76-85	Small Settlement (military)
86-95	Large Settlement (civilian)
96-00	Large Settlement (military)

• **Natural Shelter:** This can be anything from a cave to a narrow canyon to a large, hollow tree as long as it is capable of housing the party. This shelter offers protection on at least two sides and some protection from the elements.

• **Ruins:** This result indicates some sort of abandoned structure. This might be an ancient temple, a burnt-out way station, an abandoned inn, or any other partially destroyed structure. Ruins are generally sturdy and easily defensible shelter.

• **Inhabited Natural Shelter/Ruin:** If these results are inhabited, roll on the appropriate random encounter table to determine what is already present. Bestial or monstrous occupants are most likely using the location as a permanent lair. Intelligent occupants are probably just taking shelter for the evening. The current occupants may or may not be willing to share the space.

• **Small Settlement:** This is generally a small fort, roadside inn, farmhouse, or watchtower with up to a dozen occupants. These buildings are well-fortified and in good condition.

How's the Weather?

The weather in much of Arasteen is bright, sunny, and temperate with a moderate chance of rain or snow. Closer to Murdoch's Cove, the climate is a bit damper. On any given day, there is a 15% chance of some sort of precipitation in the marsh, usually light rain.

• **Large Settlement:** This settlement consists of several small buildings, usually with a protective outer wall. This might be a small village, a ranch, or a military encampment. These settlements have anywhere from thirty to one hundred occupants and are extremely well-fortified. Reroll any large settlement results in the vicinity of Murdoch's Cove.

• **Civilian Settlements:** The occupants are not skilled warriors, but at least half of those present are armed and able to defend themselves (conscripts, soldiers, or archers). Peaceful civilian settlements will feed and shelter the party for the same rates as a common inn.

• **Military Settlements:** The occupants are members of either the Shadow Army (in Urbana) or the Radiant Order (in Arasteen). These individuals are well-organized, trained warriors that will actively pursue threats when reasonable to do so. As long as the player characters are not aggressive and don't cause any trouble, most military settlements will allow the party to camp near (or even within) their walls and may be willing to trade supplies or information. Occupants are mostly soldiers and archers, perhaps a hedge wizard or two, with an elite soldier in command. Reroll any military results in the vicinity of Murdoch's Cove.

- APPENDIX E - NEW MECHANICS

Swampboat (Basic Vehicle)

The swampboat is part cargo ferry, part high-speed wilderness transport. Its design is simple, consisting of a large open deck, a shielded passenger's seat, and a large, manite-powered paddle in the rear, designed to propel the vehicle across water. The boat rests upon two large metal pontoons to provide floatation and balance. Sturdy metal bits are mounted around the deck, intended for the securing of cargo and/or passengers.

Swampboats are capable of incredible speed and maneuverability within their environment, but also leave their crew relatively exposed. These vehicles are typically unarmed save for a token gunner tripod on the helm, preferring to outrun their enemies than fight them head-on.

Huge Manite-Powered Vehicle

Caster Level 5th

AC 13 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, -2 size)

Hit Points 32 (3d10+20)

Speed 40 ft. (water mov. only) **Speeding** 10 ft.

Space 15 ft. X 20 ft.

Strength 16

Dexterity 12

CMB +5

CMD 16

Crew Stations pilot

Maximum Weapons 4

Cover partial (pilot only)

Engine Type basic

Creation: Craft DC 15; Time required 1 month; Craft interval 1 week

Cost: 1,500 gold crowns

Standard Features

Armor (light): The vehicle gains a +4 armor bonus to AC.

Increased Hauling: This vehicle is designed to be a cargo vehicle, and can carry twice the normal weight for a vehicle of its size and strength before becoming encumbered.

Secured Harness: This vehicle features secured harnesses that protect its crew from impact and prevent them from falling out of the vehicle. Removing or securing the harness requires a full round action (though the harness can be cut with a slashing weapon as a move action).

Standard Weapons: gunner tripod (pilot's seat)

Special

Advanced All-Terrain: As with the normal all-terrain features, swampboats can ignore 2 squares of difficult terrain per turn. Swampboats ignore up to 10 squares of difficult terrain per turn in a swamp or jungle environment (so if a swampboat travels slowly enough it can ignore such terrain altogether). They can also use these difficult terrain squares to move over solid land, but must move in a straight line and end their turn in water or the vehicle suffers collision damage as if it struck a solid object.

New Wondrous Items

Herald's Horn

Aura strong transmutation; **CL** 12th

Slot none; **Price** 10,000 gold crowns; **Weight** 75 lbs.

Description: This item resembles an enormous, curved ivory horn encircling a manite plate, mounted on a heavy steel pedestal. These items were once the signature creation of the now defunct Herald's Guild, who guarded the secrets of their creation jealously. Since the Darkfall many *herald's horns* have been recovered and put to use by members of the Underground.

The function of this item is simple. Once per day, it allows the user to cast *sending*, targeting any other *herald's horn* in existence. If no one is present at the other horn when the message is received the message is inscribed upon the plate, where it remains until read.

Construction Requirements: Craft wondrous item, *sending*; Cost 5,000 gold crowns

Nexus Tracing Stone

Aura moderate divination; **CL** 6th

Slot none; **Price** 1,000 gold crowns; **Weight** 1 lb.

Description: This item is a simple sphere crafted of blackstone. When the user holds it in one hand and concentrates as a standard action, the stone glows warmly if there is an active *Formori obelisk* in the direction the user is facing. It has a range of 100 miles. The stone does not reveal the distance or exact location of the obelisk. This item may be useful for detecting other places of magical power as well.

Construction Requirements: Craft wondrous item, *detect magic*; Cost 500 gold crowns (the secret of this item's construction must be learned from Sir James Dex's journal)

Note: If Formori relics are used in the creation of this item, their effective value is doubled.

New Special Material

Blackstone

This strange shadowy stone does not appear to be of natural origin, but rather was created via techniques long lost when the Formori civilization was destroyed. Blackstone is 20% lighter but slightly harder than an equivalent amount of granite (hardness 10 and 20 hp/in. of thickness). Blackstone retains heat better than most stone, making it an excellent housing material in cold or wet areas (such as Murdoch's Cove).

Blackstone holds an edge better than stone, allowing it to be fashioned into blades as well as blunt weapons. Weapons crafted of Formori stone ignore the damage reduction of good-aligned outsiders.

Weapons made of blackstone cost twice as much as their normal counterparts (not counting masterwork costs). Adding any magical enhancements to a blackstone weapon increases its cost by 2,000 gold crowns the first time it is enchanted.

Formori Obelisk * Major Artifact

Aura strong transmutation and necromancy; **CL** 20th

Slot none; **Weight** 20,000 lbs.

Description

These fifteen-foot blackstone obelisks are the only remaining mortal connection to the dark power that once guided the Formori civilization. There are thirteen of these obelisks distributed throughout Loireag Marsh in central Arasteen, all located on sites of powerful magical nexuses. Though their power is greatly reduced in the modern age, they are still quite dangerous.

The original means of using an obelisk has been long forgotten. However, an obelisk can easily be drained by touch, causing it to release a massive burst of magical energy. To drain an obelisk, one must have at least a rudimentary understanding of magic (any spellcasting ability, even folk magic, will do) or make a successful Use Magic Device check vs. DC 20.

When activated, roll on the Obelisk Drain Table to determine which random effects will occur.

A user that touches an obelisk with manite (or who is composed of large amounts of manite, such as any true golemoid) can attempt to channel the results of the drain. If the user succeeds on a Fortitude save vs. DC 15, he may roll twice and select the preferred result or simply take 5d10 negative energy damage and suffer no other effects (he must decide which of these he desires before he rolls). If the user is a golemoid, the drain always refills his steam reserve and has no other effect.

Fallen characters cannot drain a Formori obelisk, and can touch one (including the Final Nexus) without effect. The power within the obelisks simply has no interest in them.

Once an obelisk has been drained, it becomes dormant for 5 + 2d10 years.

The Final Nexus

The thirteenth Formori obelisk, also called the Final Nexus (located in Murdoch's Cove's church) remains dormant as long as any other obelisks are active. Long ago, the Seers ensorcelled the chamber containing the obelisk with a permanent *nondetection* spell to prevent

Special Effects

Draining a Formori obelisk is an extremely dynamic event. At the very least, the obelisk will release a burst of magic and electricity into the sky - at most, it might cause thunderstorms and unnatural darkness for hours. Draining an obelisk has a 20% chance of causing a random encounter within one hour, as some entity in the area arrives to investigate.

Obelisk Drain Table

d100 Roll	Random Effect
01-10	One item carried by the user is randomly and permanently enchanted (roll as a minor magic item, rerolling inappropriate results). This item is physically altered, gaining a twisted and sinister appearance similar to blackstone. It is otherwise a normal item of its type.
11-20	The user takes 3d10 negative energy damage and is stricken blind and deaf.
21-30	The user is charged with magical energies. He gains 2d12 Formori Power Charges. These charges may be used as an immediate action at any time to gain a +4 profane bonus to a single die roll. Once used, they are gone. As long as the user has any charges remaining, he radiates an aura of powerful necromancy and his eyes glow an eerie shade of violet.
31-40	Up to 2d4 random spells known by the user are immediately cast with the user as the target. The user cannot cast these spells for one week.
41-50	The user is charged with magical energies. He gains 2d4 Formori Warp Charges. These charges may be used to cast <i>dimension door</i> as a swift action, at a caster level equal to the user's hit dice. Each time this ability is used, the user must make a Will save vs. DC 16 or be shaken for one hour. Whether or not this save is successful, the user will have terrifying nightmares for the next 1d6 days, of which he has no memory upon awakening.
51-60	A shadowy version of the user materializes and attacks. This duplicate is identical to the original in all ways, except for a chaotic evil alignment and a manic desire to kill the original. The duplicate wears shadowy copies of all of the user's equipment, but any magic items function only for the duplicate. If the duplicate is killed, it ceases to exist, along with everything it carried.
61-70	The user's consciousness is scattered to an alternate plane. He is knocked unconscious for three days, during which time he cannot be roused. Upon awakening, the user remembers nothing but bears some permanent mark of his terrifying experience, such as white hair, a hoarse voice, or inexplicable scars. The user permanently gains the ability to speak Giant and Nocturne.
71-80	The user becomes immune to poison and no longer needs to eat or drink, but must feed on the blood of an intelligent being no more than an hour dead at least once a week or suffer the effects of starvation. This effect can be removed as if it were a curse cast by the obelisk.
81-90	The user is inspired by dark intelligence. For the next week, he gains a +10 bonus to all craft checks to create magic items. The time and cost required to create constructs, golemoid implants, and undead created by the character during this time is reduced by 50%. All resulting items permanently radiate a strong aura of necromancy.
91-00	The user is teleported 1d100 miles in a random direction, arriving at its destination safely. (Roll for a random encounter upon arrival.)

(GMs feel free to invent your own drain effects; while the above table avoids effects that unavoidably kill or irrevocably damage a character, whether or not you wish to add such effects is your own business.)

the artifact's detection. However, once all twelve obelisks have been drained, the Final Nexus becomes suffused in an aura of incredible power for one week, after which it becomes dormant again. Once active, the *non-detection* spell is no longer adequate to mask its power (and the effects are quite obvious even if that were not the case).

All creatures that touch the obelisk during this time suffer a random drain effect (limit one per day) and permanently gain the half-fiend template (see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*). This template can be removed as if it were a curse cast by the nexus. Each day the template is not removed, a character must make a Will save vs. DC 12 + 1 per day or permanently shift to a chaotic evil alignment and become an NPC as dark forces assume control of his mind.

Destruction

There is currently no known way to permanently destroy a Formori Nexus.

Dark Blessings

If a player character attempts to use the Final Nexus' power to protect Murdoch's Cove, consider this option. Instead of the usual effects, the character can instead receive the experience level he would normally receive for completing the adventure in advance - as long as he takes a level of the fallen character class. (You may even allow the player to replace prior levels, permanently transforming into a fallen.)

New Unique Thaumaturge Legend

The Vigilant Seer

Once the party has drained the obelisk at Loireag Monastery, Brother Arais' grave begins to resonate with the dead seer's legend. A thaumaturge can importune a reflection of this brave seer to aid him in the quest to stop Karloff Radool. The Vigilant Seer will permanently abandon a thaumaturge if he purposefully aids the Darkfall, whether or not the legend is active at the time.

Base Attack: Medium

Good Saves: Fortitude, Reflex, Will

Weapon Proficiencies: One martial or exotic weapon of choice.

Armor Proficiency: Light armor, medium armor, and shields (except tower shields)

Feats: Alertness

Spirit Points: 2 + 1 per level after 1st.

Special: You gain the seer's fatebender aura ability. You may only choose between *aura of alacrity*, *aura of swiftness*, and *aura of weakness*. You gain a +4 enhancement bonus to Wisdom while this legend is active.

Legendary Ability: Once per week, you suffer no effects (good or ill) when draining a *Formori obelisk*. After using this ability, the legend withdraws for the day. You must declare the use of this ability before draining the obelisk.

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The Lost Lexicon

Part II of VI - Radiant Demise

The sleepy little village of Murdoch's Cove has a secret. Foul monsters stalk the swamp, haunting ancient ruins and preying upon the villagers. The Knights of the Radiant Order are sworn to protect the cove, but they can barely protect themselves from this mysterious new threat. A strange journal holds the key to the truth, but its contents are cloaked in impenetrable code. The player characters - along with an old friend - are soon dragged into the center of this mystery. Can they find the truth and save the village from a mad scientist's vengeance before it's too late?

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