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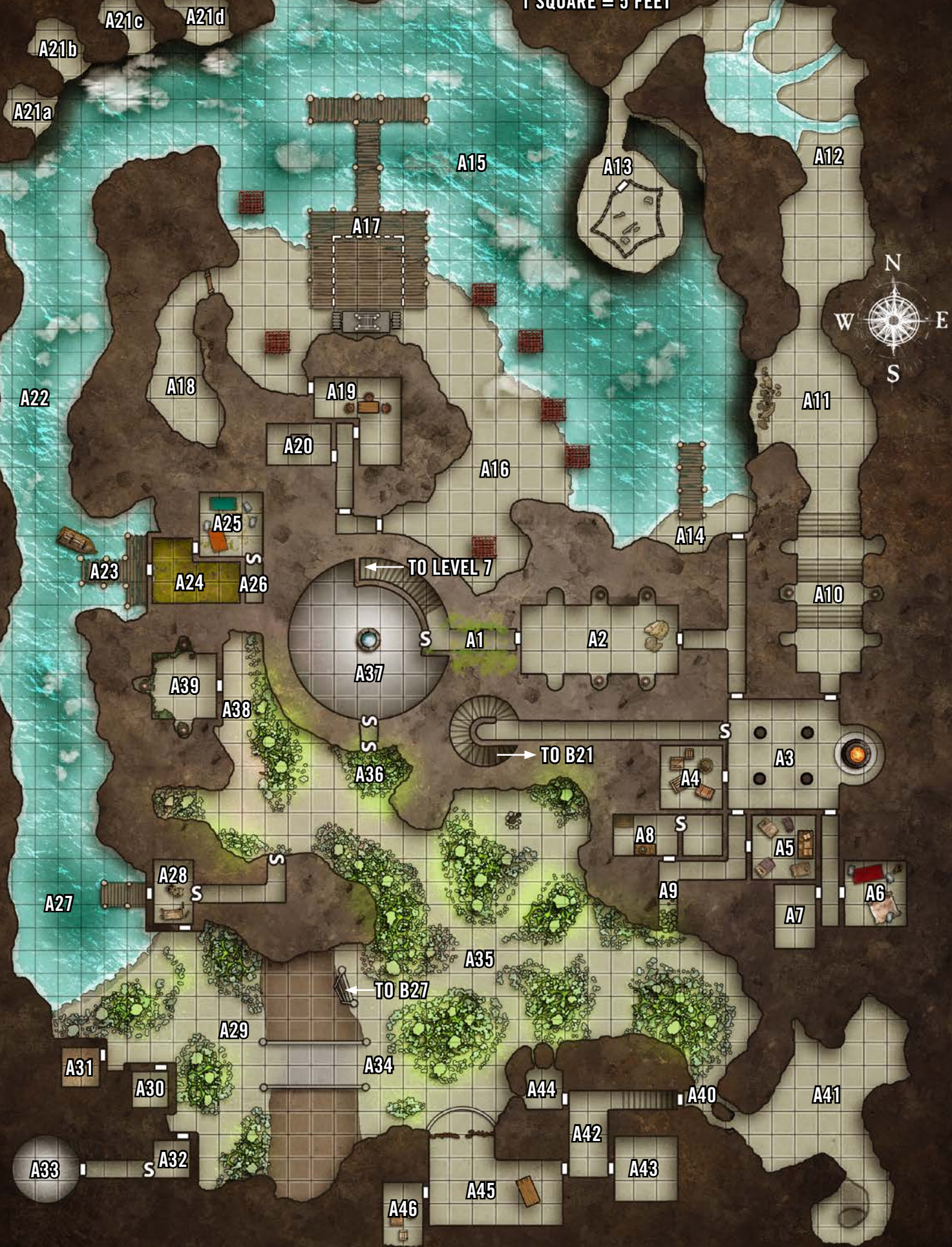
Abomination Vaults

ADVENTURE PATH

EYES OF EMPTY DEATH

By Stephen Radney-MacFarland

LEVEL 8: FARM
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



PATHFINDER

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CHAPTER 1: DECAYING GARDENS..... 4

The heroes explore the overgrown Farm level. Here, they can meet a strange caligni cult and the gug they worship, and a cabal of undead gnomes that still serve Belcorra despite the intervening centuries. Belcorra takes notice of the intruding heroes and harries them in person as they explore!

CHAPTER 2: ON THE HUNT24

In the wild Hunting Grounds level, the heroes can make allies in a drow outpost, contend with marauding urdefhans, and learn that the secret to defeating Belcorra lies in the magical fulcrum lenses she has spread throughout the dungeon.

CHAPTER 3: TO DRAW THE BALEFUL GLARE.....50

The heroes explore an ancient temple of the Outer God Nhimbaloth and take a series of tests at the direction of a strange, silent undead guardian. Passing these tests—or fighting through them—allows the heroes to face Belcorra once and for all. If they can turn Nhimbaloth’s menacing attention to the evil ghost, the world will be free of her forever!

A VAST EXPANSE

Huge natural caverns make up the eighth and ninth levels of the Abomination Vaults, overgrown with fungal forests and teeming with feral predators and desperate survivors. Worked chambers are less common here, and those that exist each serve their own purpose, like a shrine or boathouse. Not all denizens are dangerous; the heroes might ally with some residents to gain useful information or safe places to rest.

It’s critical that the heroes discover the three *fulcrum lenses* (in areas **A12**, **B37**, and **B41**) and learn how they work—specifically, how they should use them against Belcorra. The heroes need all three lenses to permanently destroy her.

But Belcorra won’t wait idly for the heroes; she harries them throughout this adventure. As a ghost, she can reach anywhere in the dungeon with ease and she keeps rejuvenating, even if they’re lucky enough to defeat her. By the time the heroes face Belcorra in the Empty Vault, they’ve earned her ire.

These caverns also contain passages to the Darklands that aren’t in the scope of this Adventure Path—unless you want them to be! You might use these passages to launch a sprawling campaign that continues long after the heroes have defeated Belcorra and toppled *Gauntlight*.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

“Eyes of Empty Death” is designed for four characters, with each dungeon level’s encounters keyed to a specific character level.

8

The heroes begin this adventure at 8th level.

Milestone: The heroes advance to 9th level after clearing out most of the Farm level.

9

The heroes should be 9th level upon entering the Hunting Grounds level.

Milestone: The heroes advance to 10th level upon entering the Gate of Nhimbaloth.

10

The heroes should be 10th level upon entering the Temple level.

Milestone: The heroes advance to 11th level after defeating Belcorra.

The heroes should reach 11th level by the end of the adventure.



CHAPTER 1: Decaying Gardens

Gauntlight is active, but its true power is yet to be realized. Belcorra penetrated deep underground to build *Gauntlight*'s foundation, following the psychic pull of the Empty Vault, a place sacred to Nhimbalothe at the heart of an ancient, subterranean temple. *Gauntlight* draws upon the energies of the Empty Vault as its foundation and the source of its powers. Within the Empty Vault, Belcorra empowered four *fulcrum lenses* that, when installed in the lighthouse high above, focus Nhimbalothe's attention and unleash the artifact's full power. But the *fulcrum lenses* are dangerous; they invite Nhimbalothe's uncaring gaze, and even Belcorra can't withstand the scrutiny of the Outer God. Thus, though they hold great power, the *fulcrum lenses* are also Belcorra's greatest weakness.

Belcorra repurposed the massive natural caverns above the Empty Vault for her needs. The eighth level made a lush cavern of fungus growths and freshwater

lakes that teemed with subterranean fish, offered a perfect, hidden place to raise food for her growing army, while the ninth level was a wilderness where predators and prey alike could thrive. Heroes must descend through these levels to reach the Empty Vault.

Children of Belcorra

Uninterested in administering these vast caverns herself, Belcorra enthralled deep gnomes already living there, compelling them with threats and favors to tend her subterranean farm. She dubbed these loyal, diminutive gardeners the Children of Belcorra.

The Children of Belcorra disbelieved rumors of Belcorra's death as some sort of trick or test and didn't waver in their duties. But as the years passed, more and more feral monsters made their way into the level and made their mission in the farm more difficult. Believing that Belcorra (or, perhaps, some other

Haruvex) would return, the Children chose to become undead to combat their dwindling numbers and increasing age. They immured each other in the muddy shores to rise again as bog mummies, or undertook difficult transformations into other, more powerful, undead.

Eventually, their timeless lives and lack of direction took their toll. Many Children fell into a torpor or retreated into obsession or isolation. The farm they had carefully tended became infested with monsters and explorers, such as calignis, drow, and urdefhans.

Even Belcorra's return as the Ghost Queen couldn't quite energize all of the Children of Belcorra to action, but many realized how much they had failed their charge. Belcorra gave the Children a new mandate: to round up the various dangerous creatures of the farm level to serve her in her assault on the surface. She placed the Children under the command of a new supervisor, a dark naga named Vethris, but chose poorly; the naga is corrupt, lazy, and more interested in her creature comforts than guiding the deep gnome undead in their tasks. The Children of Belcorra aren't happy with the naga's indolence, but are reluctant to contradict their Ghost Queen. The pace of the Children's work is, at best, plodding, and has done little to reduce the chaos in the garden.

Wisps

Although Belcorra trusts the Children—and their new overseer, Vethris—to put things in order on the Farm level, she still keeps tabs on the area. A few will-o'-wisps and dread wisps (page 81) can communicate with the Empty Vault. They hover over basins filled with brackish swamp water and reeds that thrive despite the darkness, as they draw nourishment from their connection to the swamp fed by the Empty Vault. The wisps quickly inform Belcorra of any unexpected intruders such as the heroes, leading her to make an appearance, as described in the Belcorra Attacks! sidebar on page 6.

The Cult of Urthagul

A group of caligni refugees came to the Hunting Grounds years ago, fleeing some deeper calamity. Their two leaders—a spellcaster named Galudu and a warrior named Dulac—led them into the safety of an old lodge in the Hunting Grounds level. From there, the calignis explored upward, reaching an abandoned shrine of Nhimbaloth and eventually discovering a gug mystic named Urthagul. Urthagul laired in a cave resonating with strange psychic whispers that awed the calignis. Some of the calignis, led by Dulac, revered the gug and his eerie visions; others remained skeptical of Urthagul's powers. This ultimately resulted in a schism: the self-named Cult of Urthagul inhabits the shrine and Galudu's calignis reside in the lodge below. The two groups aren't enemies, but they only rarely interact.

The Cult of Urthagul has grown increasingly insular and zealous. (Urthagul, for his part, hardly even noticed their presence, much less their worship.) The calignis hunt chuul eggs from the lake, ritually cooking and consuming them as part of their strange rites. Dulac and her second-in-command, Padli, have both gained occult powers from meditating on the whispers in Urthagul's cave, which they use to keep the cult in line.

When Belcorra awakened, she visited the shrine to Nhimbaloth and was surprised to find the calignis there. She visited with Urthagul and found that the gug's strange behavior was not only due to the psychic emanations of the cave, but also because the gug had found the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens* and

CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

The chapter begins with the heroes descending into the overgrown Farm level from either entrance in the Prison level above. The primary denizens, other than feral monsters, are listless undead gnomes and addled caligni cultists, both of whom can provide some clues about Belcorra's return. The heroes will likely face Belcorra in person for the first time—but certainly not the last!

Environmental Cues: glowing moss, creeping tendrils of mold, decaying wood, distant splashing, foul mists, muddy footprints, smells of earthy rot, towering fungi

CHAPTER 1 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 1 are as follows:

- +1 composite longbow
- +1 composite shortbow
- +1 repeating hand crossbow
- +1 striking longsword
- +1 striking shortsword
- +1 striking war flail
- armbands of athleticism
- barkskin potion
- black smear poison (6 doses)
- bracers of armor, type I
- *Crimson Fulcrum Lens*
- dust of disappearance
- eyes of the eagle
- gallows tooth
- gloom blade
- greater bracers of missile deflection
- greater cheetah's elixir
- grim trophies (3)
- javelin of lightning
- lethargy poison (12 doses)
- moderate bravo's brew
- moderate healing potions (4)
- potion of quickness
- standard-grade darkwood shield
- stupor poison (4 doses)
- thundering runestone
- wand of fireball
- wand of magic missile (3rd level)

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BELCORRA ATTACKS!

Ghost stories work best when the ghost is an active and terrifying adversary. As soon as any of the will-o'-wisps or dread wisps in this adventure see the heroes, they immediately alert Belcorra through the magic of the swampy basins throughout the Abomination Vaults. Belcorra is worried to hear that the heroes have penetrated this far, and she resolves to harry them until the other dungeon denizens can overcome them. The scope and timing of Belcorra's attacks are described on page 86.

XP Award: Each time the heroes survive one of Belcorra's attacks, award them 30 XP. Increase this to 80 XP if they manage to defeat her in a confrontation and force her to rejuvenate.

communed with the splinter of Nhimbalo's essence inside it. Belcorra realized the lens was probably safe in the gug's claws, but she didn't want it to end up in the hands of some interloper cult she didn't have the time or desire to deal with. She tasked her wisp minions to keep the calignis contained within their shrine.

It frustrates the cult to be apart from the object of their veneration. Dulac is desperate for a solution, so the heroes might find the calignis eager to talk.

Yldaris Drow

The drow outpost of Yldaris lies on the next level of the Abomination Vaults, but their silent, skilled hunters have established a watch post in abandoned Children of Belcorra outpost. The heroes might ally with the drow here, which makes a peaceful meeting with Yldaris more likely in Chapter 2.

Farm Features

The vast caverns of this level and the many structures and rooms within them are normally dark, though bioluminescent fungus is common in overgrown areas. The caverns reach 50 feet high, but the ceilings in rooms carved out of the stone are much lower. Ceilings in the areas claimed by the Cult of Urthagul (areas **A2** to **A10**) are only 10 feet high. Ceilings in other interior areas are sized for the Children of Belcorra and are only 8 feet high. Sturdy planks of fungal wood form the doors. They are crusted with mold and give off an unpleasantly earthy, rotten smell.

The map of the Farm level appears on the inside front cover of this adventure.

A1. OVERGROWN STAIRS

The smell of rot and mildew pervades the air of this enclosed staircase. At the base, a moist carpet of fungus, slime, and mold grows thickly on the walls.

The western wall of the passage contains a secret door leading into *Gauntlight's* footprint (area **A47**) that is magically locked and can't be broken open. A hero spots the door's faint outline with a successful DC 15 Perception check. It has a concave indentation, and it only opens when touched with a *fulcrum lens*.

A2. HALL OF EYES

MODERATE 8

Six alcoves line the walls, three to the north and three to the south. The four easternmost alcoves each contain a large stone planter filled with muddy water that reeks like a dismal swamp. Two scorch marks on the ground near the eastern door surround piles of dark rags. The pommel of a blade peeks out from underneath one of the rag piles.

The basins are magically connected to the swamp in the Temple level far below (area **C15**). They remain filled with the swamp's waters, and the will-o'-wisps here can use them to transmit images to Belcorra.

The scorch marks and rags are the remains of two calignis who ran afoul of this room's denizens.

Creatures: A will-o'-wisp hovers over each basin, although they appear at first to be merely decorative lights. They telepathically report on the heroes' actions until they're attacked or until the heroes try to leave this chamber. At that point, the will-o'-wisps spring into action and fight until destroyed.

Belcorra should attack the heroes (see the sidebar above) sometime shortly after this encounter.

WILL-O'-WISPS (4)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 333

Initiative Perception +16

Treasure: One rag pile has a *gloom blade* in it.

A3. HAZY SHRINE

LOW 8

An unusual scent, as of burning fungus, is apparent to anyone approaching any of the doors to this chamber.

A haze of smoke with a pungent but not entirely unpleasant scent emanates from a large copper cauldron atop a bed of coals on a dais to the east. A metal rack over the basin holds several brown and purple eggs, each about the size of a human head, cooking in the smoke. The walls are painted with sweeping lines and whorls.

Belcorra crafted these chambers centuries ago as both a shrine to Nhimbaloth and as a base to study the strange visionary effects of the island caves (area A12). Calignis of the Cult of Urthagul now use this room for prayer and meditation, and to cook the chuul eggs they harvest from the lake. The ones being cooked now are the last of the cult's current store of eggs.

A secret door to the lodge on the lower level is hidden amid the abstract patterns painted on the west wall. The calignis know about the secret door, but they're reluctant to reveal its presence. A hero Searching this room finds the door and the hidden knob to open it with a successful DC 25 Perception check. The door's other side has an obvious latch mechanism; it's not secret from the other side.

Creatures: Six Cult of Urthagul calignis meditate here. When their devotions are disturbed, they rise to attack. They believe their death flames empower Urthagul, so they fight tenaciously to the death.

CALIGNI STALKERS (6)

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 51

Initiative Perception +10

A4. STORAGE

This square chamber is filled with a jumble of open boxes, casks, bundles of torches, and faintly glowing plants.

This storage chamber is a mess because calignis have haphazardly thrown supplies in here over the years. The plants are bioluminescent reeds that retain their glow for weeks after being harvested, and they provide dim light here. Most casks contain the meaty, dried mushrooms calignis favor, although their gritty taste makes them practically inedible to other creatures.

Treasure: A hero Searching through this room uncovers three beautiful amethysts worth 20 gp each.

A5. CULT BARRACKS

This drab chamber contains a few bedrolls and a box with several earthen mugs atop it. A desk holds stacks of paper.

Rank-and-file members of the Cult of Urthagul all sleep in the eight bedrolls here. Some are mapping the Abomination Vaults, in the hopes of finding an easy way around the wisps to reach Urthagul again. This map is on the desk. They've mapped out areas A2 to A14, and drawn several lobster-like shapes in the water between areas A13 and A14 to represent the chuuls. Several angry ball-like shapes in areas A2 and A10 represent the new wisps. They've also mapped out

B22 to B26 and the connecting staircase. They aren't aware of the secret door in area A8, so it isn't noted.

A6. PADLI'S CHAMBER

MODERATE 8

This room is a jumble of pillows, furs, blankets, and rugs. Several empty jugs litter the floor.

While Dulac is studious and intense, her second-in-command Padli is a selfish, gregarious hedonist. He favors mushroom wine, and the jugs around this room once held the earthy, intoxicating beverage.

Creatures: For all his hedonism, Padli is no less devout than Dulac, and he sees any intrusion here as an assault on the faithful. Padli lets his companions take the brunt of melee attacks and hangs back to cast spells. The calignis here have no interest in parley or quarter.

PADLI

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM CALIGNI HUMANOID

Male caligni subcommander (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 50)

Perception +16; greater darkvision

Languages Caligni, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +18, Deception +20, Diplomacy +20, Intimidation +18, Occultism +14, Stealth +18

Str +2, **Dex** +5, **Con** +1, **Int** -1, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +5

Items dagger (3), key to area A7, leather armor, wand of magic missile (3rd level)

Light Blindness

AC 26; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +20, **Will** +18

HP 160; death flame

Death Flame (light) When Padli dies, his body combusts in a flash of white-hot flame. All creatures in a 20-foot burst take 6d10 fire damage (DC 28 basic Reflex save). His gear is unaffected by the flames and is left in a pile where he died.

Occult Ward **Trigger** Padli attempts a saving throw against a spell cast by a creature he can see; **Effect** Padli gains a +2 circumstance bonus to the triggering save.

Speed 25 feet

Melee **Damage** **dagger** +15 (agile, finesse, versatile S), 1d4+7 piercing

Occult Innate Spells DC 26, attack +18; **4th** darkness, phantom pain, suggestion; **3rd** blindness, enthrall, paralyze; **2nd** darkness (at will), invisibility, obscuring mist (at will); **Cantrips** (5th) chill touch, daze, detect magic, shield

Sneak Attack Padli deals 3d6 extra precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

CALIGNI STALKERS (2)

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary 51

Initiative Perception +10

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Treasure: Amid the comforts of the room is a small pouch with 25 gp, 10 sp, and a greater cheetah's elixir.

A7. PRISON

This room is locked on the outside; Padli has the only key. A hero can open it with four successful DC 25 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock, or a successful DC 29 Athletics check to Force it Open.



A single prisoner waits inside: an urdefhan warrior (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 272) named Huglu whom the calignis recently captured. The calignis have denied Huglu food and water to get information out of him, but the stubborn warrior would rather die than tell his captors anything. He's currently pretending to be dead to catch his abductors off-guard, but as his Deception DC is only 12, the heroes likely see through his ruse.

Getting any information out of Huglu is virtually impossible, as the evil warrior's only desire is to inflict as much death and destruction as he can before oblivion. Diplomacy attempts to improve Huglu's hostile attitude don't work, though the heroes might get information out of him with Deception checks to Lie or Intimidation checks to Coerce compliance. The DC for these checks is 19, which is both his Will DC and his Perception DC. On a success, Huglu relays his name, that he was caught near the door in area A9, that he serves a great war champion named Khurfel, and that his people control the territory at the bottom of a nearby chasm (area A34). Huglu sprinkles this information with threats against the heroes and promises to drink the heroes' and the calignis' blood (on a critical success, Huglu omits these threats). If the heroes free Huglu, he turns on them as soon as he thinks he can kill one of them before being killed himself.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for getting information about the urdefhans from Huglu.

A8. DULAC'S CHAMBERS

MODERATE 8

This sparsely appointed chamber contains a single mat in the far corner of the room and a small desk on the south wall with an iron strongbox sitting under it. A bowl with some gray gruel and a spoon are the only items on the desk.

This chamber serves as quarters for a severe caligni woman named Dulac, the head of the Cult of Urthagul. She's granted herself the title of "custodian" to demonstrate her humble subservience to Urthagul. Once a very active and vital leader, she drew the attention of an owb, one of the malevolent manipulators of caligni communities. The owb spends his time in the secret chamber off of this room, twisting Dulac's faith.

Dulac's control and self-confidence took a severe blow when Belcorra stationed the will-o'-wisps around the cultists' domain. Cut off from Urthagul's bizarre babblings and strange insights, Dulac isn't sure what to do next. The owb offers vague assurances, but he secretly likes seeing the cult crumble and doesn't want contact with Urthagul restored.

A hero who Searches this room and succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check discovers the secret door in the east wall, as well as the hidden latch that must be pulled and turned to open it. The room is empty—the owb needs no comforts, only solitude.

Creatures: Custodian Dulac and the owb are in here in close conversation. They fight intruders, but if the heroes give any indication that they're willing to talk, Dulac ceases hostilities to hear them out. However, the owb presses the attack to silence the heroes.

If the owb is defeated and Dulac is reduced to fewer than 30 Hit Points, she surrenders.

DULAC

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE N MEDIUM CALIGNI HUMANOID

Female caligni cult leader (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 50)

Perception +18; greater darkvision

Languages Caligni, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +18, Athletics +19, Intimidation +18,

Occultism +16, Religion +18, Stealth +18

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

Items chain shirt, +1 striking war flail

Light Blindness

AC 28, **Fort** +15, **Ref** +18, **Will** +20

HP 155; death shadows

Death Shadows (cold, darkness) When Dulac dies, her body is destroyed in a burst of chilling shadows. All creatures in a 20-foot burst take 8d8 cold damage (DC 28 basic Reflex save). Dulac's gear and treasure are unaffected by the shadows and are left in a pile where she died.

Opportune Step **Trigger** A dazzled or blinded creature, or a creature with light blindness, ends its move adjacent to Dulac; **Effect** Dulac Steps.

Warding Shove **Trigger** An ally within Dulac's reach is targeted with a ranged or melee attack by an attacker she can see; **Effect** The ally gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack, and the ally can Step after the attack.

Speed 25 feet

Melee **war flail** +21 (disarm, sweep, trip), **Damage** 2d10+8 bludgeoning

Occult Innate Spells DC 28, attack +20; **4th** darkness, read omens, suggestion; **3rd** haste, paralyze, vampiric touch; **2nd** darkness (at will), ghoulish craving, obscuring mist (at will); **Cantrips (5th)** daze, detect magic, shield, telekinetic projectile

Sneak Attack Dulac deals an additional 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

OWB

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 3 196

Initiative Perception +13

Side Quest: If the heroes parley with Dulac, she proposes a deal. If the heroes gather more chuul eggs and eliminate the wisps on the fringes of the cult's territory, Dulac will make them formal allies of the cult. As allies, they can rest in the shrine whenever



Dulac

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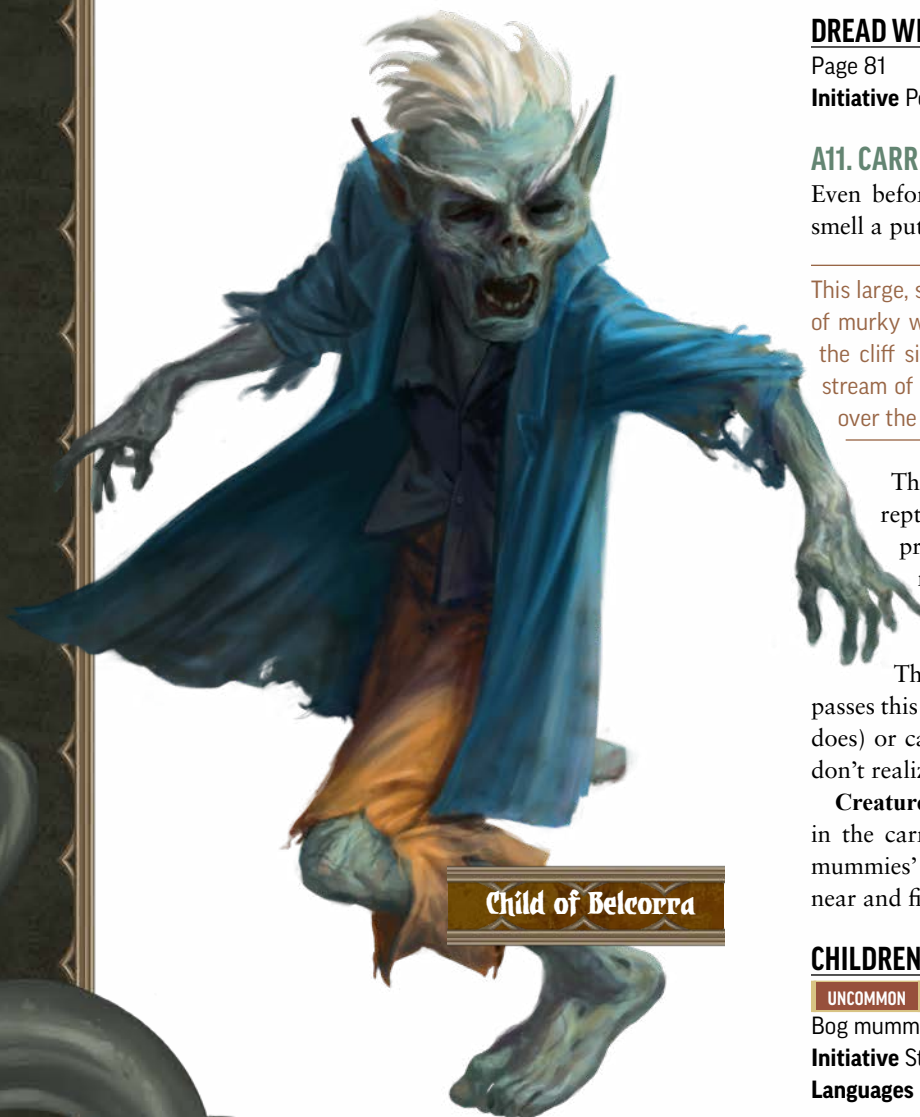
they'd like. Further, she can grant them safe passage through caligni territory in the lodge. She warns that the caligni defenders on the lower level aren't likely to speak with the heroes without Dulac's good word.

Treasure: The iron strongbox holds one small pouch containing 13 gp and 50 sp, another with 30 pieces of onyx worth 2 gp each, four *moderate healing potions*, and a *barkskin potion*.

XP Award: In addition to 30 XP for completing the side quest, award the heroes XP for talking with Dulac as though they had defeated her in combat.

A9. BARRICADED DOOR

This stout, iron-bound door swings open to the north. It used to be barred from the north, but after Huglu sneaked in, the calignis blocked the southern side with rubble for additional security. Moving the rubble to open the door is time-consuming, but not difficult.



Child of Belcorra

A10. STAIRS OF URTHAGUL

SEVERE 8

This long chamber features roughly carved stairs leading upward. Its sides are dotted with nooks, two of which contain stone basins filled with muddy water.

The basins are similar to and serve the same purpose as those in the Hall of Eyes (area A2).

When Belcorra learned that calignis were meeting with Urthagul, she sent a pair of dread wisps here to prevent the calignis' passage. She doesn't want the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens* to fall into caligni hands, as she sees them as less reliable guardians than the gug.

Creatures: The pair of dread wisps attack any creatures other than Belcorra and any Children of Belcorra who attempt to pass. The defeat of the dread wisps triggers the Belcorra Attacks! event described in the sidebar on page 6.

DREAD WISPS (2)

CREATURE 9

Page 81

Initiative Perception +20

A11. CARRION AMBUSH

LOW 8

Even before the heroes enter this chamber, they can smell a putrid stench of carrion and decay.

This large, smelly cave opens onto a cliff with a large body of murky water about twenty feet below. At the edge of the cliff sits a heap of reeking, decomposing carrion. A stream of water flows from the north, past the heap and over the cliff in a narrow waterfall.

The pile of carrion was once a Huge aquatic reptile that scaled the cliff to escape the predatory chuuls but died here. Its rotting mass hides a group of Children of Belcorra who wait underneath to gain information about—and hopefully capture—Urthagul.

They plan to either follow Urthagul if the gug passes this way (which they don't realize the gug never does) or capture and interrogate calignis (which they don't realize Belcorra has prevented).

Creatures: Four Children of Belcorra are hiding in the carrion heap, which counts as a bog for the mummies' abilities. They attack anyone who comes near and fight until destroyed.

CHILDREN OF BELCORRA (4)

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON LE SMALL MUMMY UNDEAD

Bog mummies (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 177)

Initiative Stealth +13

Languages Common, Gnomish, Undercommon

A12. ISLAND CAVERN

MODERATE 8

Four small streams flow through this chamber, fed by a dark pond against the west wall. The streams divide the chamber into islands, each covered with lichen, mildew, and mushrooms. Bioluminescent fungi and strange motes of light bathe the place in eerie illumination, playing off the water to form odd shapes on the cavern's walls, like humanoid apparitions gliding through the air. Water flowing along the sides of the islands echoes off the walls in weird ways, like harsh whispers.

"Haruvex has risen. There is nothing you can do," the overlapping echoes say. The sound is hypnotizing, and strangely calming.

Long-gone cultists used this cavern as a meditation chamber to calm their emotions and clear their minds, but it now echoes with subtle whispers of Nhimbaloth's alien will. These whispers can be maddening or enlightening, but are usually wholly unintelligible.

The northwestern end of this cavern forms a rock wall 10 feet high that leads to a natural bridge 30 feet above the lake. Urthagul used to leave this way every week or two to hunt in the lake but hadn't bothered to do so while the calignis were bringing him offerings.

Distracting Whispers: Creatures in the cavern are immune to emotion effects, but spending time amid the whispers affects the mind. Every minute, creatures in the cave must attempt a DC 24 Will save or become stupefied 1 (stupefied 2 on a critical failure) for 24 hours. This condition is cumulative, up to stupefied 4. The whispers speak a different truth each time a creature here increases its stupefied condition, as follows.

Stupefied 1: "The lenses. She knows the secrets of the lenses. Three are within reach, one very close. The other lost by Yldaris. One held by the blood eaters."

Stupefied 2: "She keeps them apart while she works her petty vengeance, but the essences shall become one."

Stupefied 3: "Find the lenses and place their essences together within a host."

Stupefied 4: "Join the essences within Haruvex, and she can fall again. This is a promise of the Empty Death, a promise of empty death."

The cavern affects aberrations and sorcerers with the aberrant bloodline differently; they don't gain the stupefied condition but are fascinated while within the cavern. This fascination ends as soon as they leave. If such creatures stay here too long, they involuntarily babble strange truths that echo in the whispers, which is how Urthagul obtained his reputation as a mystic among the calignis.



Urthagul

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Creatures: On the northernmost island, amid a nest of glowing toadstools, lurks the gug Urthagul. He sits hunched, purring and stroking the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens* in one of his four hands. Urthagul has been here for decades, or perhaps longer. While a formidable creature, his fascination with the whispers and the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens* have taken a toll. He rarely eats, and does so even less now that the caligni cultists don't visit him. His glowing treasure commands nearly all of his attention.

When the heroes enter, Urthagul takes no more notice other than a glance in their direction. The heroes can even explore or pass through the cave without rousing Urthagul; if they speak to him, he doesn't respond other than to shift his treasure to the hand farthest from anyone who might try to take it. If the heroes use force against Urthagul or try to take the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens*, he attacks with relentless brutality. In combat, he prefers to use his jaws, supplemented with the powers of the lens. When Urthagul uses his Furious Claws ability, he can only make three attacks instead of four, as he doesn't let go of the lens. Urthagul fights to the death to protect his treasure, but he doesn't leave this cavern.

URTHAGUL

CREATURE 10

Male gug (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 198)

Initiative Perception +19

Items *Crimson Fulcrum Lens* (invested, page 75)

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for recovering the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens*.

A13. ISOLATED CAGE

This large metal cage stands atop a natural pillar rising thirty feet above the water. The bars have been ripped and bent, and bones lie scattered about the cage's bottom.

The Children of Belcorra once imprisoned creatures in this cage, though it was hard for them to reach. After Urthagul attacked and ate the creatures within, twice, the deep gnomes realized the cage wasn't worth the bother and abandoned it.

A14. RICKETY DOCK

LOW 8

A lone dock, rotten and rickety, juts out from a shelf of rock. It looks long unused, and no vessel is tethered to its moorings.

This dock went unused for many years as the Children of Belcorra withdrew from their duties. It's still usable, with only the occasional mishap of a collapsing board.

The Cult of Urthagul used to dive for chuul eggs from it, but they haven't done so since being wracked by the trauma of being cut off from Urthagul.

Creatures: A pair of chuuls hunt in this area, sometimes working together, other times competing for food. They prefer to sneak up on their prey, clambering onto the dock close to the shore so their prey has nowhere to run except into the water. A chuul reduced to fewer than 20 Hit Points flees and doesn't return.

CHUULS (2)

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 64

Initiative Perception +15

Treasure: While the chuuls carry nothing of value, heroes who Search under the water find their hidden nesting nook some 15 feet below the surface. It holds a cache of 6 chuul eggs, 9 gp, 42 sp, and a +1 *striking longsword*.

A15. FETID LAKE

These waters are brackish and silty. Dark clouds of fetid air and grimy mists cling to the surface. Where it laps on the shore, the water leaves trails of glistening muck.

The lake's water was once potable, fresh, and teeming with subterranean fish stocked by the Children of Belcorra. After Belcorra's fall, the gnomes allowed and even fostered strange aberrations and other aquatic monsters in the lake. Despite the lake's calm, the visibility at the water level is poor; the mist imposes a -2 circumstance penalty to Perception checks, everything beyond 30 feet is concealed, and visibility ends at about 90 feet. Visibility from a higher point (such as the cliff in area A11, the pillar in area A13, or the caves in area A22) is unobstructed and gives a better view of the lake cavern.

Drinking the water can be hazardous, but not fatal. There's a 1 in 6 chance that anyone drinking the water is exposed to sewer haze (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 119). Fish still live in the lake: blind, ugly, spinous things that are poisonous to most creatures. Eating these fish—even when well cooked—is a slimy and sickening affair, and also spreads sewer haze. The other foul creatures living in the lake have built a tolerance to its diseased water and fish.

Random Encounters: Every 15 minutes that the heroes spend traversing the lake, make a secret DC 5 flat check. On a success, the heroes come across one of the following encounters, determined randomly or at your choice. If the result is a creature the heroes have already faced, treat it as no encounter.

d10	Encounter
1–4	One chuul, from area A14
5–6	Four Children of Belcorra on a skiff, from area A17
7	One krooth (<i>Pathfinder Bestiary</i> 215)
8	Two brood leech swarms (<i>Bestiary</i> 2 156)
9	One lost deepwater dhuthorex, from area B39
10	The froghemoth from area A27 , which only fights for 1 round before retreating

A16. MONSTER CAGES

VARIABLE 8

Seven cages constructed of metal and strange fibrous wood line this beach, each partially submerged in the stinking waters.

The Children of Belcorra use the cages to trap powerful monsters living in the lake, as Belcorra recently commanded them to do. It's hard going and involves many setbacks. Each cage has a simple latching device—a curved bar leading through metal hoops—that takes three Interact actions to open or close. The latch can't be reached by a creature inside the cage due to its position. The metal gives the cages strength and the fibrous wood allows enough give that they're particularly difficult to burst open. Forcing Open a cage requires a successful DC 40 Athletics check. The cages have wide enough gaps that a Medium creature can Squeeze through the bars with a successful DC 25 Acrobatics check. Small or smaller creatures don't need to Squeeze and can simply move through the bars as greater difficult terrain.

Creatures: The three unmarked cages are empty and open. A “c” indicates a cage with a chuul, a “k” indicates a cage with a krooth, and an “s” indicates a cage with a skeletal hulk that was once a giant reptilian humanoid. The creatures are furious at their imprisonment and, if freed, simply attack anyone nearby and flee if reduced to half their Hit Points. The heroes might be able to negotiate with the chuul, although it only speaks Aklo and Undercommon. The chuul insists it will simply swim away and not trouble the heroes again if freed; if the heroes seem to need further enticement, the chuul offers to reveal the location of several chuul eggs (area **C14**). It goes back on its word only if the heroes seem particularly vulnerable.

CHUUL

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 64

Initiative Perception +15

KROOTH

CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 215

Initiative Perception +16

SKELETAL HULKS (2)

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 299

Initiative Perception +16

A17. DOCK AND LIFT

LOW 8

This large, T-shaped dock has four old skiffs moored to it. On the land side, the docks open up to a large wood and iron platform; at each corner, an iron chain climbs upward into darkness. At the south end of this platform sits a large pulley device. Its chains and machinery, as well as the chains on the platform, are crusted with rust.

This is the launch point for the Children of Belcorra's increasingly rare lake excursions. The big lift once brought food and supplies from the Farm level to the upper levels of the Vaults. While the rusted machinery can still be coaxed to work, it's slow and often stalls. It's controlled by an external array of four levers at the mechanism's front. The controls are unintuitive, as each one controls a chain pulley on a corner, but each lever pulls at a different rate. It takes 1d4 hours of tinkering to figure out exactly how to control the lift, and such trial and error might ruin the entire mechanism (roll a DC 11 flat check; on a failure, the mechanism is permanently destroyed). A hero who succeeds at a DC 24 Crafting check to Repair the mechanism reduces the DC of this flat check to 5 (or to 1 on a critical success). The lift is marked by a white square on the map.

Creatures: Four Children of Belcorra are repairing a skiff here. When they spot intruders, three rush to fight while the fourth flees to area **A19** for aid. Although there are several caged creatures nearby, the Children don't release them, because it was such trouble to capture them in the first place. Instead, if in genuinely desperate straits, the undead either flee to area **A19** or launch a skiff to get aid from area **A21**.

CHILDREN OF BELCORRA (4)

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON LE SMALL MUMMY UNDEAD

Bog mummies (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 177)

Initiative Perception +12

Languages Common, Gnomish, Undercommon

A18. ROPER PEN

MODERATE 8

The entrance to this cave is blocked by a makeshift barricade of wood and iron straps. Its door is barred from the outside and the bar has the words, “Danger! Do not open!” written on it in Gnomish.

The Children of Belcorra keep their largest and most dangerous monsters here. The barricade has obviously been broken and rebuilt many times, but it's sturdy enough to keep its current prisoner contained.

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Creatures: The cave continues a single roper. The Children who discovered the creature took great care to capture it and move it here. They have no idea how to control the aberration, but they are sure that Belcorra will want it for her army. The roper waits in the back of the cave, disguised as a nondescript stalactite. If given the chance (such as if the heroes open the door and then leave), it creeps out of the cave so it can't be imprisoned again. Otherwise, it waits for creatures to step further inside before striking, and it fights until destroyed.

ROPER

Pathfinder Bestiary 282

Initiative Stealth +25

CREATURE 10

A19. GAME ROOM

MODERATE 8

Four small reclining couches circle a small table toward the corner of this L-shaped room. On the table is an elongated game board split into rows of squares. Various pieces sit in place on the board, and pyramid-shaped dice are scattered about the surface.

Some Children of Belcorra retreated from their duties after long years and spend their time gambling

on a deep gnome board game called "The Dark Chase." Their set is missing several pieces (although it has all six required four-sided dice), but the incompleteness holds a peculiar attraction to the Children: the missing pieces mean there's no end state, so the game is never over. The wagers around the board are all colored pebbles that are pretty but not particularly valuable. A simple iron key to area A20 is among the pebbles.

Creatures: The three Children here fight intruders, but they avoid disturbing the game in progress. If a hero damages the game (such as by moving across the square containing the low table or by damaging the square with a splash or area effect), the mummies focus their rage upon that hero. They fight until destroyed.

CHILDREN OF BELCORRA (2)

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON LE SMALL MUMMY UNDEAD

Bog mummies (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 177)

Initiative Perception +12

ELDER CHILD OF BELCORRA

CREATURE 9

RARE LE SMALL MUMMY UNDEAD

Variant bog mummy (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 177)

Perception +18; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Common, Gnome, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +19, Nature +19, Stealth +19 (+21 while buried in a bog)

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

AC 28; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +18, **Will** +20

HP 155, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** cold 10; **Resistances** fire 10

Breath of the Bog (aura, divine, enchantment, mental) 30 feet. A creature that begins its turn within the area feels as if its lungs were filling with water and must succeed at a DC 28 Fortitude save or be unable to speak or breathe. The creature can still hold its breath and can attempt a new save at the end of its turn. A creature that succeeds is temporarily immune for 24 hours.

Rise Up **Trigger** A creature walks on top of a bog mummy that lies buried in the mud or peat below;

Requirements Initiative has not yet been rolled;

Effect The bog mummy automatically notices the creature and Burrows before rolling initiative.

Speed 20 feet; burrow 15 feet

Melee fist +21, **Damage** 2d10+8 bludgeoning plus bog rot

Primal Prepared Spells DC 28, attack +20; **4th** air walk, barkskin, freedom of movement; **3rd** blindness, glyph of warding, meld into stone; **2nd** acid arrow, entangle, glitterdust; **Cantrips (5th)** acid splash, detect magic, prestidigitation, produce flame, read aura



Elder Child of Belcorra

Primal Innate Spells DC 28; **1st** *illusory disguise*
Rituals DC 28; *plant growth*

Bog Rot (curse, disease, divine, necromancy, negative) This affliction can't be reduced below stage 1, nor can the damage from it be healed, until it's successfully treated with *remove curse* or a similar effect; the affliction can then be removed as normal for a disease. A creature killed by bog rot melts into a noxious sludge and can't be resurrected except by a 7th-level *resurrect* ritual or similar magic; **Saving Throw** DC 21 Fortitude; **Stage 1** carrier with no ill effect (1 minute); **Stage 2** 3d6 negative damage and clumsy 1 (1 day)

Treasure: The game board is inlaid with semiprecious stones. Even incomplete, the set is worth 80 gp.

A20. TOMB OF THE DEMILICH LOW 8

The door to this chamber is locked; the key is in area A19. The lock requires five successful DC 30 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock to get open, or a successful DC 30 Athletics check to break it down. The door is also magically protected with a *glyph of warding* containing a 3rd-level *fireball* (DC 28 basic Reflex save; DC 28 to notice and disarm the glyph). The glyph triggers when a non-undead creature touches the door, even to open it with the key.

This chamber is dusty and dry. At its west end sits a stone slab three feet high. Atop it lies a small body covered in funeral wrappings.

One of the oldest Children of Belcorra, Gorsalthith, plans to become a demilich. The other Children don't know where he got this idea; none of them have even seen a demilich, although they've all heard stories of the gemstudded undead skulls with phenomenal spellcasting power. But Gorsalthith was adamant that he knew the method: he placed gemstones in his eyes, replaced his teeth with smaller gems, and drilled holes into his head to lodge a crown of crystals there. He then locked himself in this room to lay in repose, patiently waiting for his body to turn to dust and his transformation to take its

final form. He's been here for nearly a century, with no change in his mummified form.

Creatures: Gorsalthith is determined in his unrealistic goal. When the heroes enter, he becomes convinced must defeat them to advance his evolution. He arrogantly talks about his pending transformation as he attacks, and he fights until destroyed.

GORSALTHITH

CREATURE 9

Elder child of Belcorra (page 14)

Initiative Perception +20

Treasure: Gorsalthith's only treasures are the gemstones grafted to his skull. The teeth are a variety of semiprecious stones, 24 of them in total, each worth 8 sp.

His eye sockets each have a clear topaz worth 50 gp, and his crown is nine bits of quartz worth 3 gp each.

A21. ANCIENTS' CAVES

SEVERE 8

Four caves atop steep cliffs sit ten feet above the lake's dark water.

These cliff walls have numerous handholds and are easy to Climb, requiring a successful DC 15 Athletics check to Climb to the caves (or across from one to the other).

Creatures: Three Children of Belcorra became far too interested in the lore of Nhimbaloth and were blasted with a powerful glimpse of the Outer God, transforming them into bodaks. Nursing their pain and resentment, the bodaks retreated to these caves. The other Children acknowledge the bodaks' power and knowledge, but rarely approach them. The bodaks dwell individually in area A21a, A21b, and A21d. When any bodak is disturbed, the others clamber over to help, so anyone fighting one of the bodaks soon fights them all.

BODAKS (3)

CREATURE 9

UNCOMMON CE SMALL UNDEAD

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 42

Initiative Perception +17



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Treasure: While two bodaks have no treasure, the one that dwells in area **A21d** has valuables scattered about its cave. A sack contains 80 gp, 2 pp, and a set of *eyes of the eagle*. A set of *bracers of armor* lie discarded at the back of the cave, and a +1 *striking shortsword* is wedged in a crack in the wall.

A22. QUIET LAKE

On this western side of the large lake, the foul water and obscuring mist are identical to that in the lake to the east (area **A15**), but this side is far less populated (predominantly due to the appetite of the froghemoth lairing to the south). The heroes might have random encounters here, too, but DC of the flat check to encounter something is 10 rather than 5.

A23. SHADOWED DOCK

LOW 8

This T-shaped dock has been recently repaired, and a single skiff is moored on its north side. Beyond the dock,

a masonry structure juts out from the cavern walls, the drifting mist creating strange shadows on the stonework. At its center is a single iron-bound door.

This dock and building was abandoned decades prior to Belcorra's return. Vethris, the spirit naga Belcorra recently put in charge of the Children of Belcorra, now claims it. The door is unlocked.

Creatures: The shadows playing on the masonry are more than just a trick of the water. A dread wraith haunts this area, acting as a lookout. When it spots strangers, it silently moves to the inner complex to warn Vethris. Vethris peevishly dismisses the dread wraith, commanding it to "take care of the problem." The dread wraith then hunts down the heroes, eager to make wraith spawn out of them.

DREAD WRAITH

CREATURE 9

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 298

Initiative Stealth +19

A24. MUD ROOM

LOW 8

This damp room has a recessed floor filled with mud.

The mud is only a few inches below the doors' thresholds, but is two feet deep and is difficult terrain.

Creatures: Four Children of Belcorra lurk in the mud in the eastern part of this room, bitter at being stationed here under the command of the lazy Vethris. They're quick to attack when anyone disturbs this room but, being beneath the mud, they don't notice when the dread wraith flits overhead to warn the naga of intruders and aren't likely to know the heroes are present until they enter the mud.

CHILDREN OF BELCORRA (4)

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON LE SMALL MUMMY UNDEAD

Bog mummies (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 177)

Initiative Perception +12

A25. NAGA LAIR

LOW 8

This room is filled with rugs, tapestries, and pillows. Most are stained with mud.

This is the lair of the scheming spirit naga Vethris. Vethris convinced Belcorra she'd do a good job of getting the Farm level back in good order and keep the Children in line, but she's done nothing of the sort. Vethris spends her days lounging



Vethris

about and ordering her new minions to bring her food and treasures. While the undead are dissatisfied with her, they're loyal to Belcorra, so they either grudgingly follow the naga's orders or find ways to ignore her.

Vethris brought the pillows and other trappings, but good hygiene is not one of the naga's priorities. One tapestry, depicting a stylized nest of intertwining snakes, covers the secret door on the south wall. Anyone removing the tapestry or Searching the room locates the secret door with a successful DC 25 Perception check. It's opened by pressing the proper stone on the eastern wall.

Creatures: Vethris is lazy, but she snaps into action against any who dare intrude on her relaxation. She screams curses at her foes while casting spells at them. She prefers to use *black tentacles* to keep her foes at a distance, but then she follows up with *paralyze* as often as possible; this is her favorite spell, and it frustrates her that the Children of Belcorra are immune to it. Vethris surrenders if reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points and tries to slither away.

If the heroes managed to get here without disturbing the mud in area A24, the mummies there rise up and fight alongside the naga.

VETHRIS CREATURE 9

Female spirit naga (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 179)

Initiative Perception +18

A26. SECRET TREASURY

A glittering mass of treasure sits at the south end of this small room.

This is the bulk of the treasure Vethris had accumulated, as well as that she tasked the undead to gather.

Poisoned Treasure: A porcelain teapot in the hoard is slathered with nettleweed residue (*Core Rulebook* 553).

Treasure: Once the poison is washed off the teapot, it's worth 40 gp. Scattered about the room are 130 gp, 310 sp, *greater bracers of missile deflection*, a *wand of fireball*, three *grim trophies*, a *potion of quickness*, and a *javelin of lightning*. A small sack contains 10 saltwater pearls worth 9 gp each.

A27. SHORES OF DEATH EXTREME 8

At this southern terminus of the foul underground lake, a small wooden dock juts out from a stone and masonry building. The dock is in ruin; its front has been ripped away with massive force, leaving the rest of it sloping down into the water. The building had a door at the dock's end, but

it's been ripped off its hinges, with a chunk of the door partly submerged and leaning against the cavern wall. South of the structure, the lakeshore gives way to a forest of massive fungi. The water near the dock occasionally bubbles, as if something massive dwells somewhere below the surface.

A surly froghemoth attacked the Children of Belcorra in this outpost, damaging the dock and driving the bog mummies away. It's the source of the bubbles in the water. A hero who succeeds at a Perception check against its Stealth DC of 38 spots its eyestalk peeping above the fetid water.

Creatures: How the froghemoth came to the lake is a mystery, but in the short time it's been here, it's damaged this building and driven nearly all the aberrations and creatures away from the southern lake. It sometimes makes its way north to hunt, but it's usually lurking under the water by the shattered dock.

The Children of Belcorra injured the froghemoth more than they've realized; it's afflicted with bog rot that has affected its alien physiology in strange and debilitating ways. Rather than simply being clumsy, the froghemoth has the weak adjustment.

A lazy hunter, the froghemoth tends to attack from the water and rarely pursues those who find shelter within the fungus garden. However, it's vindictive in a simple-minded way; if it loses at least half of its Hit Points, there is a chance (DC 15 flat check) it becomes enraged and follow its attackers onto dry land.

BOG-ROTTED FROGHEMOTH CREATURE 12

Weak froghemoth (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 6, 122)

Initiative Stealth +28

A28. RUINED OUTPOST

The remains of a table and some chairs are scattered around the room. While the western door has been ripped off its hinges, the southern door is still intact but open. Two torn, soggy corpses are slumped in the doorway.

The corpses are Children of Belcorra who were destroyed in the froghemoth's rampage. While there's nothing of value in the abandoned room, there is a secret door on the east wall. A hero Searching the room who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check spots the fake flagstone in the wall and can open it. Beyond the door is a narrow passage heading east and then turning north, leading to another secret door of similar design. The Children of Belcorra used this passage to gain quick access to the northern reaches of the fungus garden.

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A29. WEST GARDEN

While the fungal forest continues to grow high, there are also signs that this area was recently tended. Rocks outline sections of healthy growth, and the paths are clear of all the but the occasional bits of mold and fungus. Bioluminescent moss provides a low, even glow throughout the area, as though intentionally cultivated for the effect. To the east, a wide stone bridge spans a massive chasm. A gigantic iron ladder snakes down into the darkness of the chasm from its other side. Beyond the bridge and the ladder, the fungal forest becomes even more overgrown.

The Children of Belcorra long ago limited their efforts from tending the entire fungus garden to only this western end. With the recent arrival of the froghemoth, they've stopped their efforts here as well. The fungi here are harmless; in fact, they are good sources of food, fungus-wood lumber, and glowing moss.

A30. LUMBER SHED

This squat stone building looks like a storage room.

One of three storage rooms in the fungal garden, this building was used to store wood formed from tough fungus fibers. Inside, a pile of fungus woods still sits, along with a bundle of axes and saws used to collect the fungus and cut the boards into shape.

A31. TOOL SHED

This shed has a small hole where a lock would be, but traces of rust around the hole are all that remain there.

The tools once stored here have met the same fate as the lock and are nothing more than a piles of rust around axe handles, wooden shims, and other non-metallic materials. The shriveled corpse of a fat rust monster lies in the center of the room; the Children of Belcorra killed it years ago when it got into their tools, and they never bothered to remove it.

A32. INHABITED SHED

MODERATE 10

This simple storage shed is filled with small, gnawed bones, discarded scales, and a pungent reptilian reek.

The ghonhatine fleshwarp lairing here doesn't know that there's a secret door in the west wall. A hero who Searches the room discovers the false flagstone that opens it automatically, as the flagstone has shifted slightly out of place.

Creatures: Some time ago, the ghonhatine escaped from the Laboratory level far above and fled all the way here. It's found more than enough to eat in the surrounding fungus garden, so it never ranges far, although it prefers living prey. As it's learned to avoid the nearby lake because of the lurking froghemoth, it hasn't had more than a few small bats or rodents in months and it's eager for larger flesh. It rushes at the heroes who open this door and attacks with a single-minded fury until slain.

GHONHATINE

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 119

Initiative Perception +19

Treasure: The repulsive residue of the ghonhatine's meals contain bloodstained *armbands of athleticism*.

A33. LEVEL 8 PORTAL CHAMBER

Belcorra connected this remote room to the network of permanent *teleportation circles* throughout the Abomination Vaults.

The round walls of this chamber are deeply carved with flowing runes. The runes are filled with silver and dust.

In "Ruins of Gauntlight" and "Hands of the Devil," the heroes likely discovered the inactive network of permanent *teleportation circles*. The heroes may have even begun restoring it with the *awaken portal* ritual. The heroes can connect this inactive *teleportation circle* to others they've already reawakened.

The other portal chambers are areas **B59** and **C5**.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for using the *awaken portal* ritual to reactivate the *teleportation circle* here.

A34. EASTERN WILDS

MODERATE 8

Across the bridge's span, fungus grows to greater heights—some reaching nearly to the high ceiling of the cavern, fifty feet overhead. The remains of old paths are here, but most are covered with clumps of smaller fungus or patches of pale slime. Spores drift through the air and huge red blooms on the fungi shift as though in a wind, although there is no wind here. An enormous iron ladder hangs down into the deep chasm. Each link of the chains that hold it up are as large as a human, but the rungs are spaced to give even small creatures an easy climb.

The east side of the fungus garden has gone a long time without proper cultivation, which has made it overgrown and dangerous. The paths are somewhat

clear, if overgrown, and the rest of the cavern is greater difficult terrain if it's passable at all.

The gigantic iron ladder leads more than 100 feet down to area **B27**.

Creatures: The massive patch of fungus closest to the bridge has grown two deadly red puffballs. These dragon's blood puffballs resemble overgrown flowers, but they soon detach and float toward the heroes to attack with their fatal blooms. They follow fleeing heroes and fight until destroyed in an explosive burst.

DRAGON'S BLOOD PUFFBALLS (2) CREATURE 8

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Initiative Perception +12

A35. WEBBED CROSSROADS SEVERE 8

The towering fungi around these overgrown paths are laced in thick webbing. Within are a few humanoid figures, too shrouded in webs to see clearly.

The webbed corpses are a desiccated urdefhan and two much-more-recently killed drow from Yldaris. It takes half an hour to clear the thick webbing from each corpse.

Creatures: The hungry goliath spider that's made its web here is not on the ground, but hiding in a crevasse in the ceiling 60 feet above, where it has greater cover. The spider begins its assault with its Descend on a Web ability to catch its prey off guard. If reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points, it retreats for the safety of its ceiling crevasse high above.

GOLIATH SPIDER CREATURE 11

Pathfinder Bestiary 307

Initiative Perception +22

Treasure: The urdefhan carries a *gallows tooth* and a standard-grade darkwood shield. One of the drow corpses has a pouch with *dust of disappearance*.

A36. ROUNDED WALL LOW 8

This patch of fungus sits lower than the rest, though it bears no signs of cultivation. Amid the other fungi are bulbous green growths. The back wall of the cavern is visible through a cloud of drifting spores; it isn't natural rock, but a pale, curved, seamless stone.

The wall is part of the footprint of *Gauntlight* high above, and is thus impervious to damage. A secret door in the curved wall provides access to the structure's interior (area **A37**); like the secret door in area **A1**, it's

easy to find (DC 15 Perception) but only opens when a *fulcrum lens* is placed into its indentation.

Creatures: The spores and green growths belong to a drakauthix lairing here. It attacks any living creatures that approach, floating upward to reveal its hooked tentacles. If reduced to fewer than 20 Hit Points, it ascends to the ceiling and tries to float away to the south. If the heroes haven't dealt with the goliath spider lurking above area **A35**, the drakauthix floats right beneath its crevasse. The spider darts out, kills the drakauthix, and retreats into its bolt-hole. This might alert the heroes that the spider is there!

DRAKAUTHIX CREATURE 9

Pathfinder Bestiary 129

Initiative Perception +17

A37. UPPER PIT

This large, circular room is made of pale stone and covered with dust. At its center stands a single stone-lipped pit. A twisting ribbon of blue light coils and twists in the air, extending from the ceiling down into the pit. The stone of the ceiling and the walls of the pit undulate in the eerie light as though the stone itself were suffering.

This pit leads down through *Gauntlight*'s lowest levels. The ribbon of energy shows that *Gauntlight* is drawing even more power, and the heroes might have seen a ribbon like it in the dungeon's higher levels. A living creature ending its turn within the 5-foot-diameter ribbon of light takes 10d6 negative damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save); unlike the ribbons discovered in the upper levels, this energy doesn't heal undead creatures.

The pit leads down over 100 feet to a similar chamber on the Hunting Grounds (area **B28**) and then another 100 feet to the Empty Vault (area **C20**), where Belcorra typically dwells.

A38. STRANGE SENTRY TRIVIAL 9

Toward the end of the fungal path, a masonry structure juts out from the cavern wall, a door at its center.

The structure served as a waypoint where the Children of Belcorra could converse with their Ghost Queen through the wisps. They abandoned this building when they left the eastern fungus garden.

Creatures: A sinister, sloth-like monster called a nilith moved into the structure, but it left a guardian outside: a *feebleminded* medusa it calls Murmur. Murmur stands in front of the door, her hood up, muttering unintelligible words to herself.

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Murmur isn't likely to pose much of a challenge for 8th-level characters, but she's an indication that something strange is afoot. She fights with her bow,

which she only barely remembers how to use, if creatures remain at a distance. If foes close in, she drops her bow and flees into area A29 to join her master.

MURMUR

CREATURE 7

Female feebleminded medusa (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 234)

Initiative Perception +10

Side Quest: Restoring Murmur's mind is a challenge, but it's not impossible. If the heroes restore her, the medusa introduces herself as Moadenn and offers to fight alongside them for a few days before striking off on her own. She's bossy and cruel, so the heroes might not want her aid; she's perfectly happy to depart sooner if the heroes don't want her around.

A39. LAIR OF THE DREAMER

MODERATE 8

Three alcoves in this square chamber are overgrown with a tangle of thin mushroom stalks and creeping, flowering vines. The air smells sweet and heady.

The alcoves each contain stone basins, like those in areas A2 and A11. They used to provide a connection to the swamps below, but the nilith lairing here didn't want the interruption. It pulled the muck from the basins, coated their interiors with a fungal resin, and repurposed them as planters to grow vegetation that reminds it of its former home in the Dreamlands. If the heroes clean them out, they refill with fetid swamp water once again, and a will-o'-wisp (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 333) appears above each. Their observation triggers the Belcorra Attacks! event, as described in the sidebar on page 6.

Soporific Pollen: The pollen in the air gives living creatures in the room (except the nilith) a –1 circumstance penalty on Will saves. This is an olfactory effect.

Creatures: The nilith climbs around on the vines in this room, idly tending the flowers. It's bored with Murmur and is looking for other minds to twist, but it's willing to engage in conversation first if the heroes seem amenable. It talks about how the basins connect to some malignant swamp far down, and it proudly shows off its means of sealing them with resin to grow its own strange garden. As it talks, it tries to rank the heroes from the weakest mind to the strongest, so it knows who to target best with its mental attacks. It might propose puzzles or riddles to find this out, or ask the heroes about their recent dreams.

NILITH

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 245

Initiative Perception +19



Murmur

Treasure: Hidden deep in the nilith's hanging tangles is its treasure, consisting of a bag with 253 sp, three topaz gemstones worth 60 gp each, a *thundering runestone*, and a moderate bravo's brew.

A40. BETWEEN A ROCK AND A DOORWAY LOW 8

The path ends at a door leading west. A large boulder covered with spidery carvings blocks a cave entrance to the east.

The door to this room is locked and Nyzuros (in area A44) has the key. A hero can open it with four successful DC 25 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock, or a successful DC 25 Athletics check to Force it Open.

The boulder seems impassable, but it's cleverly hinged to open when parts of its surface are pressed in the proper configuration. The Elven carvings describe how to move the boulder, but these instructions are intentionally wrong and trigger the hazard below. Finding the proper way to move the boulder requires a successful DC 25 Nature, Perception, or relevant Lore check. Alternatively, a hero can roll it aside with a successful DC 30 Athletics check to Force Open, and a Small or smaller creature can Squeeze past the boulder with a successful DC 25 Acrobatics check.

Glyph of Warding: The carvings form a *glyph of warding* containing a 4th-level *sound burst* (DC 28 basic Reflex save; DC 28 to notice and disarm the glyph). The glyph triggers when a creature handles the boulder in the way indicated by the Elven carvings. The noise also alerts the nearby drow to intruders and they go on alert.

A41. DESCENT TO YLDARIS SEVERE 8

Faintly glowing green veins of crystal line the walls of this large cave. To the south, a wide passage spirals into the earth as though created by some massive burrowing creature.

The slick green veins crackle with faint electricity when touched, but they aren't harmful. A cave worm burrowed this passageway long ago. It leads to the drow outpost of Yldaris far below (area B1).

Creatures: This passage is not unguarded; a quartet of drow hunters is always on alert here. If they detect intruders, they form a firing line to prevent anyone from getting past them. Although they're quick to attack calignis, urdefhans, or other enemies they recognize, a group of surface-dwellers intrigues them. The hunters keep their weapons at the ready, but they first ask the heroes why they're trespassing in Yldaris territory. Their starting attitude

to the heroes is indifferent. If the heroes improve their attitude to friendly (which requires a successful DC 24 Diplomacy check to Make an Impression), they agree to escort them to their leader in Yldaris. Three drow escort the heroes through areas B1, B5, B6, and B17 to meet Quara Orshendiel. If the heroes improve their attitude to helpful, only a single drow accompanies them. If they can't improve the hunters' attitude, the drow firmly turn them away.

If the heroes mention that they rescued Falxi Orshendiel from the kitchen in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #164: Hands of the Devil*, the hunters remember that Falxi mentioned them. The heroes thereafter have a +4 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks to negotiate entry into Yldaris.

The heroes might have earned the trust of the drow in areas A44 or A45; in that case, the heroes don't need to separately win over these hunters.

DROW HUNTERS (4) CREATURE 7

Page 82

Initiative Perception +16

XP Award: Award the heroes 80 XP if they successfully negotiate entry to Yldaris from these drow.

A42. SPIDER GUARD TRIVIAL 8

Sheets of webbing hang on the south wall of this room, between two wooden doors.

Creatures: A trained hunting spider, the loyal pet of the drow shootist Iribo in area A44, lairs in this room. The spider whistles shrilly as its first action when it spots intruders, then springs to attack. The noise alerts the nearby drow and brings them running; together, this is a severe encounter for 8th-level characters.

HUNTING SPIDER CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary 306

Initiative Perception +7

A43. CELL

This square cell has two pairs of rusted manacles bolted into the wall about six feet from the floor.

The drow recently captured one of the Children of Belcorra in the fungus garden and brought her here. She dangles from one of the manacles. They've been interrogating her for information about the layout and denizens of the level, but the mummy hasn't yet been forthcoming with any information.

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Creatures: The Child of Belcorra realizes that the heroes aren't with the drow and asks for release. She makes only vague promises about what she can do for the heroes if released, because she's lying; as soon as they let her go, she flees to warn the other Children of Belcorra that the drow have made significant inroads to the fungus forest (although the listless mummies aren't likely to act on this information anytime soon).

The prisoner knows the denizens and layout of areas A15 to A25 and that there's a frogemoth in area A27.



CHILD OF BELCORRA

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON LE SMALL MUMMY UNDEAD

Female bog mummy (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 177)

Initiative Perception +12

A44. OBSERVATION POST

TRIVIAL 8

This small room appears to be a lookout post. Three narrow slits line the north and east walls, giving a view of the overgrown fungus garden beyond.

The Children of Belcorra observed their cultivated and thriving gardens from here, but the post had been abandoned for some time before the drow of Yldaris discovered it.

Creatures: A drow shootist named Iribo serves as a lookout in this room. She investigates any indication of intruders, such as her pet spider's shrill whistle. In a fight, Iribo attempts to quickly incapacitate her foes with her poison and calls for the drow in area A45. However, she doesn't foolishly throw herself into combat; if she thinks it's possible to negotiate with the heroes, she does so.

A longtime friend of Yldaris's leader, Quara, Iribo knows that Quara might have some use for surface dwellers. The heroes can attempt to improve her starting attitude of indifferent just as they can with the hunters in area A41. If they improve her attitude to friendly, she personally escorts them to Yldaris.

IRIBO

CREATURE 8

Female drow shootist (page 83)

Initiative Perception +16

XP Award: Award the heroes 80 XP if they talk to Iribo rather than fight her. Award them an additional 80 XP if they successfully negotiate Iribo's escort into Yldaris, but do not award this additional XP if the heroes have already arranged an escort from the drow in area A41.

A45. PLANNING ROOM

MODERATE 8

This large room may have once been richly appointed, but it's now full of mold and decay. Shattered furniture covers the floor and tattered, mildew-specked tapestries hang from the walls. At the north, curtains obscure a wide bay window made of what looks like transparent stone.

The elder Children of Belcorra used to plan their lush gardens from this room, but it's now the staging area for the small drow contingent. The curved, floor-to-ceiling bay window provides a

clear view into the garden. The window is made from blocks of enchanted stone that are transparent from this side but resemble ordinary, natural stone when viewed from outside. The drow stationed here might have gotten a good look at the heroes passing by in area **A34**, were it not for the fact they keep the curtains closed most of the time.

Creatures: A drow hunter named Nyzuros and four drow wardens huddle over a map of the gardens. Their main concern is the goliath spider that dwells at the crossroads, as it's already feasted on two drow scouts. They debate whether to risk attacking the spider, gaining significant glory for vanquishing such a dangerous foe, or to summon aid from Yldaris. Nyzuros commands this contingent, even though Iribo in area **A44** is their most respected fighter. Whether the heroes make it this far without alerting these drow, or they're called into battle by noise, the wardens are hotheaded and quick to attack. Nyzuros is more circumspect, however, and wants to know how and why intruders have come. Like the hunters in area **A41**, he has an indifferent attitude toward the heroes but his attitude can be improved in the same way (and, if made friendly or better, he personally escorts them to Yldaris). The heroes have another option to get into Nyzuros's good graces: if they've killed the goliath spider in area **A34** and promise to let Nyzuros and his team take the credit for doing so, his attitude automatically improves to friendly.

Nyzuros's forbearance is not without limits. If the heroes have slain other drow, he turns against them.

NYZUROS CREATURE 7

Male drow hunter (page 82)

Initiative Perception +16

Items Nyzuros also holds the keys to areas **A40** and **A46**.

DROW WARDENS (4) CREATURE 4

Page 82

Initiative Perception +11

XP Award: Award the heroes 60 XP if they talk to Nyzuros rather than fight him. Award them an additional 80 XP if they successfully negotiate Nyzuros's escort into Yldaris, but do not award this additional XP if the heroes have already arranged an escort from the drow in area **A41** or from Iribo.

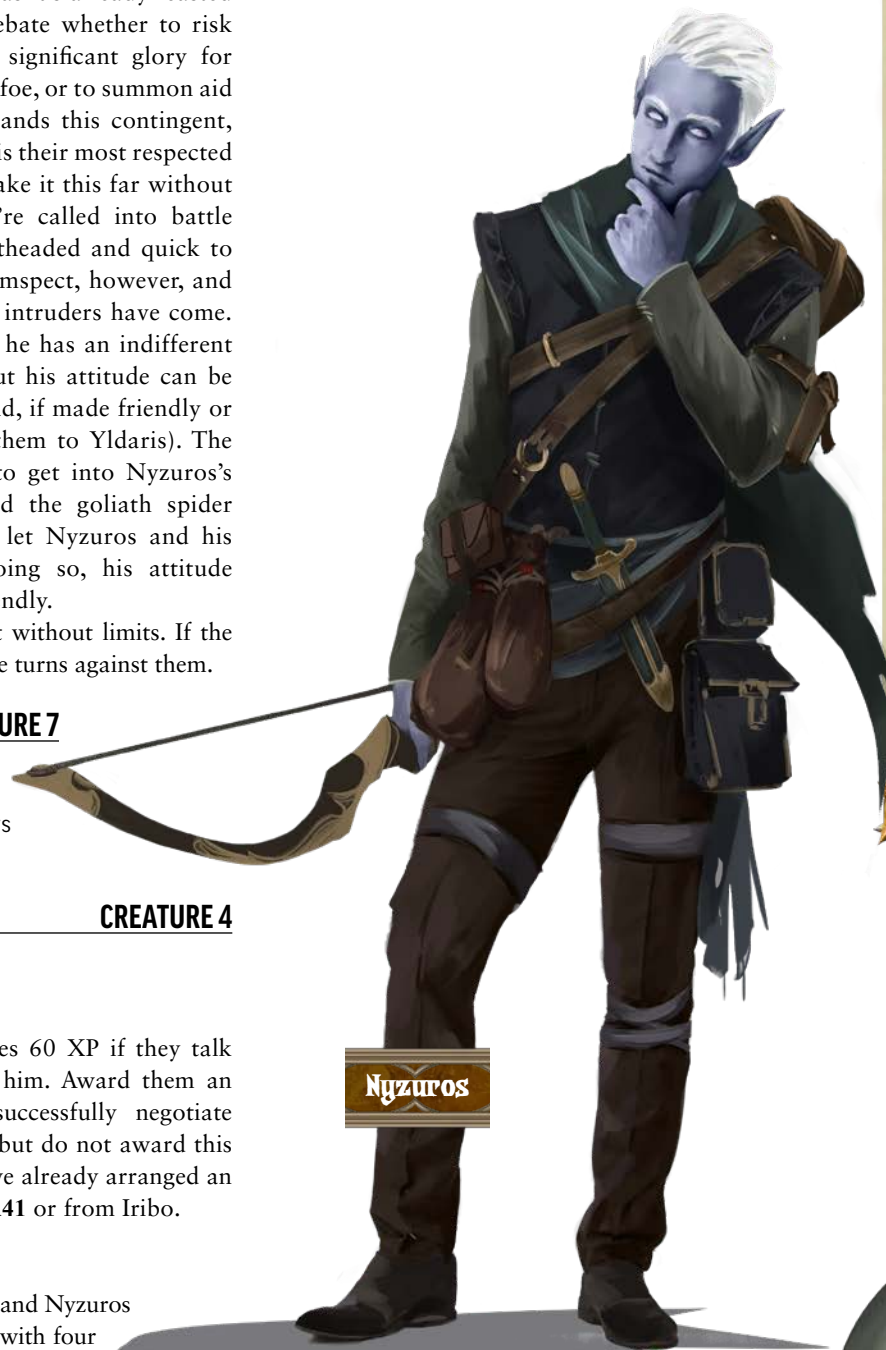
A46. PROVISIONS ROOM

The door to this room is locked and Nyzuros has the key. A hero can open it with four

successful DC 25 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock, or a successful DC 29 Athletics check to Force it Open.

This room is plainly used for storage. Casks and bundles are stacked against its north and west walls.

Treasure: The drow on this level keep their supplies here, including six weeks of rations, three casks of water, two casks of fungus wine (worth 2 gp each), five longswords, six hand crossbows, 50 bolts, and 50 gp.



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CHAPTER 2: On the Hunt

As any explorer of the Darklands can tell you, the farther you descend, the wilder and stranger things become. As Belcorra dug the Abomination Vaults deeper, she found an extensive system of caverns. Unlike the self-contained Farm level, these caverns were truly wild. At first, she fought against the fierce denizens and tried to close off the passages to deeper places, but the task was futile. She dubbed the place the Hunting Grounds and left it mostly alone, save for building alliances with the communities there. Belcorra established only a few strongholds in the area, including a lodge, a vault, and the entrance to the Gate of Nhimbaloth, the subterranean temple holding the Empty Vault.

The Urdefhan Cult

Urdefhans are vampire-like humanoids who largely pursue lives of violence and slaughter. As brutal killers obsessed with ending life and existence itself, the

urdefhans who regularly emerged from their caves to raid the caverns and lake of the Hunting Grounds were precisely the kind of soldiers Belcorra needed for her campaign. She made a calculated, overwhelming attack to awe the urdefhans, and when the sorcerer called for a parley, the urdefhan war champion listened. Belcorra swore the urdefhans would be the vanguard of her eventual assault on the surface and gave the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens* to the war champion as a token of her favor until then. Generations passed, and the war champions passed down the *fulcrum lens* as their symbol of leadership.

Drow Allegiance

With the deep gnomes cowed and the urdefhans awed by her power, Belcorra next turned to the drow of the Hunting Grounds. From their secure stronghold of Yldaris, the drow ranged through the caverns like

deadly apparitions, retreating in the face of significant danger. Belcorra knew that she must trap the drow into an alliance, so she captured and imprisoned more and more of their hunters until Yldaris's leader agreed to meet with her. She traded the captives for a promise that the drow would keep the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens* safe and provide aid in her attack on the surface.

Belcorra's Return

When Belcorra arose as a ghost, she first visited the Hunting Grounds. She checked on her treasure vault to ensure its most important contents remained secure and then sent the vault's graveknight guardian to retrieve the valuable books she'd left on an upper level when she'd died. She next visited the urdefhans, who still told vague legends of the quasi-mythical sorcerer. Their new war champion, Khurfel, carried the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens* and agreed to follow their Ghost Queen to raze the surface world. The urdefhans have since stepped up their summoning of daemon allies, preparing for the pending assault.

Belcorra's visit to the drow of Yldaris went less well. Quara Orshendiel, the granddaughter of the leader from whom Belcorra extracted a promise to serve, had little idea who Belcorra was. Belcorra nevertheless accepted Quara's promise to serve.

Hunting Grounds Features

The numerous interconnecting caverns in the Hunting Grounds are mostly dark, but patches of glowing fungus illuminates enough areas to provide a sense of the caverns' great size. Ceiling height varies widely: large caverns are 40 feet high, smaller caverns are 20 feet high, and the several areas of stone worked for humanoid habitation—such as Yldaris, the calignis' lodge, and the Gate of Nhimbalothe—are 12 feet high. Doors in most areas are made of stone or sturdy fungal wood, with entrances to inhabited areas are often being thicker or otherwise reinforced for defense.

The map of the Hunting Grounds level appears on page 26.

B1. GUARDED INTERSECTION

TRIVIAL 9

The passage upward to the Farm level is reasonably secure, but the cautious drow keep a guard here regardless.

Creatures: A surly drow hunter named Rikizlia sits here on a stool, carving a bit of fungus wood with a small carving knife. If the heroes stroll down without escort, she's surprised and speeds toward area B2 for help. If other drow accompany the heroes, she watches them with open curiosity but doesn't stop her whittling.

RIKIZLIA

CREATURE 7

Female drow hunter (page 82)

Initiative Perception +16

B2. CARAVAN STAGING

MODERATE 9

Several bags, barrels, and crates line the walls between this cavern's three exits.

Caravans going between Yldaris and Lozardyn load and unload in this cave. It isn't always busy, as the caravans are on an erratic schedule, but usually at least a few drow linger here. The passage east leads to a network of Darklands caverns beyond the scope of this adventure.

CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

The Hunting Grounds contains aggressive urdefhans, insular drow, and some of the most powerful monsters the heroes face in this Adventure Path. It's key for the heroes to learn about the *fulcrum lenses*, such as from the drow Quara.

This chapter provides substantial treasure, by design, as there's very little treasure on the level below.

Environmental Cues: mold, echoing roars, patches of slick slime, rough stone walls, strange tracks

CHAPTER 2 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 2 are as follows:

- +1 repeating hand crossbow (7; page 73)
- +1 resilient full plate
- +1 shauth blade (4; page 73)
- +1 striking corrosive longsword
- +1 striking kukri
- +1 striking repeating hand crossbow
- +1 striking rhoka sword (page 73)
- +1 striking shauth lash (9; page 73)
- +2 armor potency rune
- +2 resilient chain shirt
- +2 striking battle axe
- +2 striking dagger
- +2 striking mace
- boots of elvenkind (2)
- cloak of elvenkind (2)
- Emerald Fulcrum Lens (page 76)
- Fulcrum Lattice (page 76)
- greater healer's gloves
- greater pendant of the occult
- iron medallion
- lethargy poison
- moderate necrotic bomb (page 74)
- mummified bat
- Ochre Fulcrum Lens (page 76)
- oil of keen edges
- ring of lies
- scroll of spirit blast
- standard-grade adamantine warhammer
- stupor poison (3; page 74)
- swan boat feather token
- wand of continuation (stoneskin)
- wand of manifold missiles (1st level)

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LEVEL 9: HUNTING GROUNDS
1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



Creatures: When the heroes first arrive, six drow are unloading cargo from a large, harnessed pack lizard. If the heroes are under guard, or have otherwise gained the trust of Yldaris, the drow don't confront or question them; otherwise, they mobilize a quick defense. A warden takes 2 Interact actions to unhitch a riding lizard to fight alongside it. When combat starts, one of the hunters races to area **B3** to rally the creatures there to join the attack. Drow who are badly outnumbered or injured flee into the caverns to the east and don't return for a few days.

DROW HUNTERS (2)

CREATURE 7

Page 82

Initiative Perception +16

DROW WARDENS (4)

CREATURE 4

Page 82

Initiative Perception +11

RIDING LIZARD (2)

CREATURE 5

Giant frilled lizard (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 229)

Initiative Perception +11

Treasure: These trade goods include spices, dried fungus, and cloth that are all uncommon on the surface. The 18 Bulk of goods is worth 100 gp in total.

B3. STABLE

MODERATE 9

This cavern contains pens for half a dozen giant lizards. A jumbled pile of harnesses sits near the corrals.

Creatures: Three drow wardens are usually here, guarding and feeding Yldaris's riding lizards. The lizards can climb out of the pens along the walls, but they don't do so unless directed to fight.

DROW WARDENS (3)

CREATURE 4

Page 82

Initiative Perception +11

RIDING LIZARDS (6)

CREATURE 5

Giant frilled lizard (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 229)

Initiative Perception +11

B4. SECRET TUNNEL

This tunnel appears to come to a rocky end in the south, but this ersatz collapse hides a secret door the Yldaris hunters use to come and go from the caverns. Characters who Search this dead end can discover the secret door with a successful DC 26 Perception check. Any character who is Detecting Magic or is an expert

in Survival automatically finds it, as the secret door is magical in nature and there are several subtle tracks leading right to it.

The rubble swings aside when an invisible magical wall panel is touched by someone speaking any words in Elven. Magic reinforces the secret door, so it's impossible to break through.

B5. YLDARIS ENTRY

TRIVIAL 9

Iron sheets cover the outside of the western door, with a slot at drow eye level covered by a sliding plate on the inside. The door has no keyhole or handle and is reinforced by heavy bars. Anyone seeking entrance must either burst through the door (Hardness 15, Hit Points 60) or supply the secret knock known to all of the outpost's drow (and which occasionally changes).

The door to the east, leading into Yldaris, uses the same construction, but it's normally open and unbarred.

Creature: A drow warden named Taklitur stands guard inside the door, ready to admit anyone who gives the proper knock. If the warden hears the wrong knock, he first ignores it, thinking another drow is just misremembering. If the beats persist, or if he realizes someone is trying to break down the door, he opens the slot to take a shot at anyone on the other side, shuts it, and raises the alarm.

TAKLITUR

CREATURE 5

Male drow warden (page 82)

Initiative Perception +11

B6. WATCH CHAMBER

MODERATE 9

A table and chairs sit in the northeast corner of this large room. The walls feature words carved in a flowing script underscored with hash marks. Of the four doors leading out of this chamber, the door leading west looks sturdier than the others.

The words on the wall are drow aphorisms in Elven about staying alert and protecting one's home. The hash marks record times the drow have repelled invaders and lived up to these sayings.

Creatures: When the heroes first arrive, a drow shootist named Yrorix and a pair of hunters are playing cards with a drow version of a harrow fortune-telling deck. In the event of an assault, they knock on the three doors leading deeper into Yldaris to alert more defenders, but they make their stand here.

If the heroes are allies of Yldaris, the drow cheerfully invite the heroes into their game. The stakes aren't high, and the drow cheat relentlessly, but it might be an enjoyable way for the heroes to pass the time.

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If the heroes rescued the drow rogue Falxi Orshendiel in *Hands of the Devil*, he's also here gambling. Falxi is well-regarded because he's a distant cousin of Yldaris's leader, but he's fundamentally lazy. He greets the heroes warmly and insists to his companions that they can be trusted.

YRORIX

CREATURE 8

Male drow shootist (page 83)

Initiative Perception +16

DROW HUNTERS (2)

CREATURE 7

Page 82

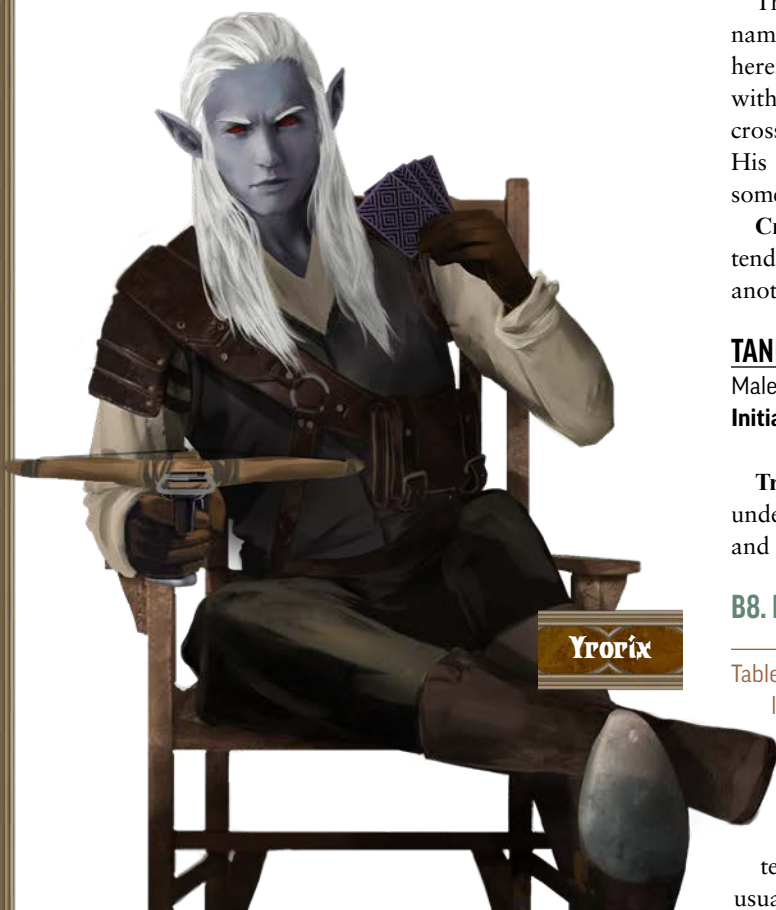
Initiative Perception +16

FALXI ORSHENDIEL

CREATURE 2

Male drow rogue (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 137)

Initiative Perception +6



A Peaceful Meeting: If any drow led the heroes to meet with Quara, they stop here and ask the heroes to leave their weapons for the duration of the meeting. Falxi (or, in his absence, Yrorix) promises to watch over their gear personally. As bringing armed strangers before their leader is expressly forbidden, the drow don't negotiate on this point. If the heroes balk, the drow lead them back out of Yldaris and invite them to return if they change their minds.

Treasure: The deck of harrow cards is well worn but features unusual drow iconography. It's worth 15 gp. Stacks of wagers worth 24 sp sit around the table.

B7. TANIETH'S ABODE

TRIVIAL 9

This small room has a bed and table next to it. A ceramic mug and a modified hand crossbow sit next to the bed.

This is the sleeping quarters for a solitary shootist named Tanieth. Tanieth is a loner; when he isn't resting here, tinkering with his repeating hand crossbow with parts from another, inoperable repeating hand crossbow, he's ranging the Hunting Grounds alone. His good looks and remote demeanor make him something of a heartthrob among some Yldaris drow.

Creatures: Tanieth doesn't like being disturbed. He tends to shoot first and ask questions later, even if it's another drow who bothers him.

TANIETH

CREATURE 8

Male drow shootist (page 83)

Initiative Perception +16

Treasure: Tanieth has hidden several treasures under his mattress, including a small sack with 50 gp and three opals worth 100 gp each.

B8. HUNTERS' MESS

Tables, chairs, dirty dishes, empty bottles, and utensils litter this chamber. It's evident that creatures eat their meals here but very rarely clean up afterwards.

Yldaris's hunters are skilled at their craft and keep their equipment in good working order, but tend to be slob in their day-to-day living. They usually avoid this place unless they're eating.

B9. HUNTERS' QUARTERS

LOW 9

The five bunk beds in this area are a mess of blankets and furs. A trio of locker boxes is stacked at the foot of each bunk.

While not in the total disarray of the adjacent mess hall, this room is remarkably untidy. The beds are unassigned; hunters simply grab a bunk when they can. Unlike the beds, each padlocked locker box belongs to a specific hunter. Each padlock requires five successful DC 30 Thievery checks to unlock or a single DC 30 Athletics check to Force Open. Most hunters carry their keys on their person.

Creatures: At least three hunters are usually resting here. They're quick to rouse and confront danger.

DROW HUNTERS (3)

CREATURE 7

Page 82

Initiative Perception +16

Treasure: Each locked box has some personal items, 2d10 gp, and 4d10 sp. One contains a *mummified bat*.

B10. TARGET PRACTICE

LOW 9

A cluster of stools takes up one corner of this room, but most of it is empty space, with several reed-stuffed dummies dangling from the ceiling on the south wall. The dummies are full of holes, a few bolts still lodged in them.

The shootists engage in close-range target practice here. A secret door conceals a storage closet to the west; a hero who Searches the room and succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check locates it. One of the hooks for hanging dummies, when pulled, causes the door to slide open. The closet holds discarded dummies and some atrocious fungus wine.

Creatures: There are typically a pair of shootists practicing here. Fiercely competitive, they ignore any sounds outside this room, as they're so focused.

DROW SHOOTISTS (2)

CREATURE 8

Page 83

Initiative Perception +16

B11. SHOOTISTS' QUARTERS

LOW 9

Four bunk beds are crammed into this room. In front of each sits a trio of sturdy, padlocked boxes.

The shootists tend to be much more orderly than the hunters, but this is still a communal space. Shootists come and go when they aren't doing other tasks in and outside of Yldaris and sleep where they'd like. The lock boxes are similar to those in area B9.

Creatures: There are typically a pair of shootists resting here at any given time. They're quick to respond to any alarm or sounds of trouble.

DROW SHOOTISTS (2)

CREATURE 8

Page 83

Initiative Perception +16

Treasure: Each locked box has personal items, 3d10 gp, and 5d10 sp. One contains an *oil of keen edges*.

B12. WARDEN BARRACKS

TRIVIAL 9

This room contains a pair of bunks and a low table.

Like the hunters and the shootists, drow wardens dwell in these barracks. The more regimented wardens insist on assigned bunks, but don't have lock boxes and thus keep their valuables with them and their personal items tucked inside their blankets.

Creatures: There is typically at least one warden resting in each room. When any are in danger, they call out for the others, who quickly come out of their rooms. Encountering these wardens together constitutes a Trivial challenge for 9th level characters (if Salaisa Malthulas is present in area B14, she joins the fight, making this a severe challenge).

DROW WARDENS (5)

CREATURE 5

Page 82

Initiative Perception +11

B13. OVERFLOW LODGING

This room contains a pair of bunks, each with a carefully folded bedroll atop the mattress. At the foot of each sits a pair of strongboxes with padlocks and keys.

As with any border outpost, Yldaris's population waxes and wanes with caravans coming and going at any given time. These rooms are set aside for visitors, and Quara offers them to the heroes. The empty locker boxes and padlocks are like those in area B9.

B14. MASTER WARDEN'S QUARTERS MODERATE 9

Master Warden Salaisa Malthulas keeps the door to her bedroom locked and carries the only key. It requires five successful DC 30 Thievery checks to unlock or a single DC 33 Athletics check to Force Open.

This room is tidy and clean. It contains a bed, a small desk, and a large trunk.

Yldaris drow all look to Salaisa for leadership when Quara isn't around. If something happens to Quara, Salaisa becomes Yldaris's next leader.

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The desk contains extensive notes about the wardens of Yldaris: their names, schedules, personal quirks, and other evidence that Salaisa is watching them all very closely. The trunk contains only personal items.

Creatures: Salaisa is continuously on the move, and rarely uses her room for anything but sleep. The heroes might encounter Salaisa anywhere in or near Yldaris. She's not nearly as friendly with the heroes as Quara is, and she's concerned that having unknown surface dwellers in Yldaris puts the whole community at risk.



In a fight, Salaisa quickly seeks aid from any nearby drow. She's reluctant to let opponents flee because she doesn't want to fight them again later. She's utterly loyal to Yldaris, and she fights to the death to protect it.

SALAIISA MALTHULAS

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE N MEDIUM DROW ELF HUMANOID

Female drow head warden (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 136)

Perception +22; darkvision

Languages Elven, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +21, Athletics +22, Intimidation +20, Stealth +21, Survival +20

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

Items breastplate, hand crossbow (10 bolts), +1 *striking corrosive longsword*, stupor poison (3; page 74)

Light Blindness

AC 31; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +21, **Will** +22; +1 status to all saves vs. magic, +2 status to all saves vs. mental

HP 200; **Immunities** sleep

Attack of Opportunity ⤴

Speed 30 feet

Melee ⚔ *longsword* +24 (versatile P), **Damage** 2d8+9 slashing plus 1d6 acid

Ranged ⚔ hand crossbow +22, **Damage** 1d6+8 piercing plus stupor poison

Divine Innate Spells DC 28; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *faerie fire* (at will); **Cantrips (6th)** *dancing lights*

Attack Now! ⚔ Salaisa shouts, and a drow ally within 30 feet that can see or hear Salaisa makes a melee or ranged Strike as a reaction.

Storm of Blades ⚔⚔ Salaisa Strides up to her Speed. She can make up to three longsword Strikes at any point during this movement, each against a different target within reach. These attacks count toward her multiple attack penalty, but the multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after she makes all of her attacks. If she moves half her speed or less during Storm of Blades, that movement doesn't trigger reactions.

Treasure: Salaisa's desk contains suspicious items confiscated from visitors, including a ruby idol of the evil god Mazmezz worth 40 gp.

B15. COMMON AREA

LOW 9

This large room contains several tables with benches and a few padded chairs. Heads of strange creatures hang stuffed and mounted on the walls.

The heads are trophies of creatures slain in the Hunting Grounds. They include an albino basilisk, a chuul, an ether spider, and a seugathi (see *Hands of the Devil*).

The secret door on the south wall is one-way; it doesn't open from this side and can't be detected here.

Creatures: There are 2d4 wardens here at any time, eating meals or swapping stories.

DROW WARDENS (2D4)

CREATURE 5

Page 82

Initiative Perception +11

B16. KITCHEN

TRIVIAL 9

Several fire pits and small ovens with flues bored into the rock walls stand about this chamber. Dishes and utensils are stacked on a central table. A basin of water stands in one corner, a soapy film across the top. Stacks of barrels and crates totter precariously against the south wall.

As a rough and tumble outpost, Yldaris has no dedicated cooking staff. Drow prepare their own food or talk others into cooking for them (a common penalty for losing at gambling or an athletic contest).

Creatures: There are typically 1d4 wardens preparing meals here, rushing through the food preparation.

DROW WARDENS (1D4)

CREATURE 4

Page 82

Initiative Perception +11

B17. GREAT CHAMBER

MODERATE 9

This massive chamber has a high, vaulted ceiling. At its center stands a small forge, anvil, and worktable with various tools. A few benches line the walls.

This massive chamber serves double duty as the outpost's workroom and meeting hall. The drow sometimes move tables here for banquets or meetings.

Creatures: Quara meets with the heroes here.

QUARA ORSHENDIEL

CREATURE 11

Page 90

Initiative Perception +21

Treasure: A repeating crossbow magazine (page 73) and a superb repair kit are on the worktable.

Befriending the Drow

If the heroes dealt peacefully with the drow and earned an audience with Quara, wary drow wardens escort them here and ask them to wait for Quara to arrive. Various staff bring in chairs from the common area (area B15) and food and fungus wine from the kitchen (area B16). The wardens are curious and talkative, as

they have little experience with surface-dwellers, but they diplomatically avoid conversation that would color their questions as an interrogation—that's Quara's prerogative. If the heroes are reticent or rude, the drow simply watch over them in silence. If the heroes unwisely attack, the wardens call for backup.

Before long, Quara arrives to greet the heroes, radiating calm command and curiosity. She is joined by the stern-looking Salaisa Malthulas, commander of the outpost's wardens, and the strange twin drow cavern seers, Bhazrade and Klathor, who remain quietly at a distance. Quara does the talking.

"You have the look of surface dwellers. I've never met any of your kind, but I've seen artwork. Strange, you are not nearly as ugly as our art makes you out to be. I am Quara Orshendiel, leader of this outpost. Let's figure out whether or not we can help one another."

If the heroes rescued Falxi, Quara adds her thanks for rescuing her cousin from "one of the scrapes he keeps getting himself into."

Quara is sincere in her words and her goals. The seers foretold that surface dwellers would come as potential allies, and Quara wants to believe it.

Quara invites the heroes to tell their story. She sympathizes with hardships, laughs at humorous parts, and asks questions when she doesn't understand something. If the heroes mention the *fulcrum lenses* or show her one, she takes an obvious interest. Quara overlooks petty slights or rudeness, but she chastises any overt aggression calmly—once. Her patience is not infinite, and overly obnoxious heroes are asked to leave Yldaris and not return.

At the end of the conversation, Quara says, "You've given me some things to think about. Thank you." She then invites the heroes to stay in the overflow lodging (area B13) until she makes up her mind. Quara spends a few hours thinking, then gambles on an alliance.

She calls the heroes back into this room, either a few hours later or the next time they return to Yldaris. Bhazrade and Klathor are, as before, lurking at the edges of the room. Quara explains the following.

"I believe you've been truthful with me, so I'm going to be truthful with you. Yldaris only exists at Belcorra's pleasure. It was here when she first created her vast dungeons; at the time, my grandfather was its leader. Belcorra made allies of several groups, including drow, urdefhans to the west, and the deep gnomes above, who have embraced undeath. To each, she gave a large magical lens with strange powers. For safekeeping, I believe. Ours was the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens*, and it could manipulate emotions.

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DROW AID

Gaining the drow's trust is a tremendous boon to the heroes' mission in the Hunting Grounds and beyond. Not only do they gain a safe place to rest, but they can also use the outpost's forge and workspace (area B17) to repair or even craft items. Furthermore, traders can sell them any common items up to 7th level including alchemical items, gear, and weapons from the Adventure Toolbox. Items they don't have on hand require a week or so to fetch from Lozardyn.

Lastly, heroes who learn from Yldaris's shootists gain access to the shootist archetype (page 77).

"But there was more to the lens. My grandfather told my father, Larathols, who became Yldaris's leader after him. But my father never told me." Quara sighs. "I was never meant to lead. My older sister was to succeed my father. They both embarked on a secret expedition a few years ago. On an island in the great lake, the urdefhan warlord Khurfel caught and killed them. Their expedition had something to do with the lens, I believe, and I suspect my father had it with him. Perhaps he hid it someplace; perhaps Khurfel took it. I don't know.

"Belcorra came to me as a ghost shortly afterward. She insisted I swear Yldaris's support and aid in a surface invasion that drives her even in death. For the good of Yldaris, I renewed the vows my grandfather made. But I've never felt bound by mere words. I won't help her. I'll help you. You're welcome in Yldaris as long as you'd like."

The heroes can ask Quara more questions if they'd like, but she knows little more than she's already told them. Before the conversation winds down, however, Bhazrade and Klathor speak.

"There is more..." One of the twins says. They move their mouths in unison, making it hard to tell which is speaking.

"...you should know," the other drow continues.

This plainly piques Quara's interest, and she motions for the brothers to go on.

"The ochre lens lies in a dark and wet place. Khurfel didn't claim it. Larathols dropped it in the water to deny it to his enemy. He died attempting to learn more of its purpose, more than the partial truth we know," one twin speaks.

"We have seen in a vision that the stones both empower the Ghost Queen and hold the key to her demise. They are slivers of something ancient, alien, evil, and hungry," the other continues.

"We saw eyes of Empty Death!" they cry in unison.

"She separated the lenses because, together, they draw the baleful attention of the Empty Death. Even the Ghost Queen cannot withstand the Empty Death when their powers are joined within her. The secrets to the lenses are in the old treasure vault, which overlooks the lake."

"Find the lenses and the answers Larathols sought."

The twin seers fall silent again, and Quara looks back to the heroes. She explains, "I would say you get used to Bhazrade and Klathor, but one never does. Let me assure you that when they do speak, it's important. This is all news to me, but when the cavern seers speak, it's to the benefit of Yldaris, and you as well."

Consulting the Whispering Reeds: The heroes might have recovered a book of Nhimbalothe's lore, called *The Whispering Reeds*, from higher in the Abomination Vaults. A hero who consults this tome finds references to the *fulcrum lenses* without a check to Recall Knowledge and without suffering from the book's curse. *The Whispering Reeds* speaks of slivers of Nhimbalothe's essence existing in the *fulcrum lenses*, perhaps as a means to contact the Outer God. The *fulcrum lenses* possess different and powerful (but, in the text, unspecified) abilities. Yet the *fulcrum lenses* are dangerous in close proximity, and even Nhimbalothe's worshippers fear to have more than two or three together at one time. Using their powers draws Nhimbalothe's scrutiny and invites destruction.

Side Quest: Finding the *fulcrum lenses* and using them against Belcorra is the primary goal of this adventure. But Quara has a side task that's personally important to her: she'd like Khurfel killed and his rhoka sword brought to her as a trophy. As pragmatic as Quara is, she carries the common drow vice of vengeance. She emphasizes to the heroes that Khurfel would never part with his lens while he draws breath, so defeating him is necessary regardless.

XP Award: Award the heroes 120 XP for allying with Quara and the Yldaris drow.

B18. SEERS' QUARTERS

MODERATE 9

This large room contains only two thin sleeping mats. The ceiling is painted with patterns resembling constellations.

Bhazrade and Klathor live here. The twins receive enigmatic divinations from the stone of the Darklands and share this wisdom to benefit Yldaris. When here, they are usually meditating or resting.

Creatures: In a fight, the seers use their occult powers to harry and incapacitate foes one at a time.

BHAZRADE AND KLATHOR

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM DROW ELF HUMANOID

Male drow cavern seers (2; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 136)

Perception +18; darkvision

Languages Common, Elven, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +17, Nature +18, Occultism +18 (+20 underground), Stealth +19, Survival +18


Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

Items staff, wand of manifold missiles (1st level)


Light Blindness

AC 27; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +19, **Will** +18; +1 status to all saves vs. magic, +2 status to all saves vs. mental

HP 110; **Immunities** sleep

Stone Defense  **Trigger** An enemy is about to damage the cavern seer with bludgeoning damage or with a spell that has the earth trait; **Effect** The cavern seer gains resistance 10 against the triggering damage.

Speed 30 feet

Melee  staff +19 (two-hand d8), **Damage** 1d4+4 bludgeoning

Divine Innate Spells DC 28; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *faerie fire* (at will); **Cantrips (5th)** *dancing lights*

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 28, attack +20; **5th** (3 slots) *black tentacles*, *ectoplasmic expulsion* (page 75), *prying eyes*; **4th** (4 slots) *dimension door*, *globe of invulnerability*, *outcast's curse*, *sound burst*; **3rd** (4 slots) *blindness*, *heroism*, *slow*, *wanderer's guide*; **2nd** (4 slots) *augury*, *false life*, *invisibility*, *paranoia*; **1st** (4 slots) *bless*, *command*, *grim tendrils*, *mending*; **Cantrips (5th)** *chill touch*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *know direction*, *shield*

Rituals DC 28; *commune*, *geas*

Cavern Distortion  (occult, transmutation)

Frequency once per day; **Requirements** The cavern seer is underground; **Effect** Pebbles and dust rise from the stone to impede vision. The cavern seer and their allies within 60 feet become concealed for 1 minute. This concealment can't be used to Hide or Sneak.

Underground Stride The cavern seer ignores difficult terrain while underground.

B19. QUARA'S CHAMBER

Both doors along this hallway are locked, and Quara carries the keys. Picking a Lock requires five successful DC 30 Thievery checks or a successful DC 33 Athletics check to Force Open. The inner door bears a *glyph of warding* containing a 4th-level *sound burst* (DC 28 basic Reflex save; DC 28 to notice and disarm the glyph). The glyph triggers if the door is opened without the key.

An unmade bed piled with pelts sits next to a table stacked with papers and a half-eaten meal on a plate. A chest sits crookedly in the corner, with clothing spilling out of it.

This chamber has always housed Yldaris's leader; it was most recently Larathol's room, and now it's Quara's. This fact sits uneasily with her, as she still considers the room to be her father's private space.

The north wall contains a cunning secret door, which Quara can use to slip into the common area to find



Klathor

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reinforcements or escape from trouble. Locating the secret door requires a successful DC 30 Perception check, and opening it involves pushing the correct sequence of hidden wall panels to cause the wall to slide outward.

Treasure: Within the open chest, amid personal items and changes of clothes, is a small iron box containing 50 gp, a gold and opal bracelet worth 75 gp, and 5 tiny diamonds worth 30 gp each. The chest also contains two black *cloaks of elvenkind* and two pairs of *boots of elvenkind*. Quara loans these items to

her people during particularly sensitive missions in the Hunting Grounds. She might loan them to the heroes if they're on especially good terms with her.

B20. MEDITATION CAVE

This massive cavern is stunning. Among its gray stones cut veins and growths of crystals in lustrous shades of pearl white, dark purple, glimmering blue, and brilliant scarlet. At the center of the chamber waits a shallow pool, its bottom and sides made of the same glittering crystals.

This chamber is the closest thing that the outpost has to a temple, though few Yldaris drow are religious. Bhazrade and Klathor perform their rituals here.

B21. LODGE ENTRY

This large stone structure is flanked on one side by the massive *Gauntlight* footprint to the north, and on the other by the enormous iron ladder descending from the chasm in the Farm level. Belcorra built this lodge so those hunting in the wild caverns could relax in relative safety. In the earliest days, urdefhans, drow, and various mercenary hunters all used the lodge in a series of uneasy truces enforced by Belcorra and her Children. These fragile truces fell apart when Belcorra died, and the lodge has changed hands several times since then.

The calignis currently holed up within are insular and reclusive. They only rarely leave through this door to hunt, as their leader Galudu takes care of most of their needs. The heroes' best way to speak to the calignis peacefully is to speak with Custodian Dulac in the shrine (area A8). Otherwise, the calignis view anyone barging through this door as a threat, and the heroes need to be especially diplomatic to placate them.

The door had a massive lock, but it was smashed long ago. Now, the calignis bar the door from the inside. It can't be Forced Open, but it can be destroyed (Hardness 15, Hit Points 60). It's also protected by the glyph described below.

Glyph of Warding: Galudu placed a *glyph of warding* on this door that affects any non-caligni who touches it. It contains a 5th-level *lightning bolt* (DC 26 basic Reflex save; DC 26 to notice and disarm the glyph).

B22. GREAT HALL

SEVERE 9

This large hall was once grand and impressive. Now the walls' murals are chipped and stained, the floor is covered with mud, and the few pieces of furniture look like they've



Caligni Defender

been hastily repaired many times. A fire pit sits at the center of the chamber.

Once a lively meeting place and banquet hall for hunters, the area now serves as an outpost where caligni refugees keep a careful watch for intruders. The two smaller doors of the area are unlocked, but the large double door to the west is barred from this side.

Creatures: Three calignis try to contain intruders and keep them from penetrating any deeper into the lodge. If possible, a defender moves to the smaller doors and knocks on them, alerting the other calignis to an attack. This brings the calignis in area **B23**; together, this makes up a Severe encounter for 9th-level characters.

If Custodian Dulac accompanies the heroes, the calignis grudgingly point her toward area **B25** to speak with Galudu. They look upon the heroes with undisguised suspicion.

CALIGNI DEFENDERS (3)

CREATURE 8

RARE CN MEDIUM CALIGNI HUMANOID

Perception +16; greater darkvision

Languages Caligni, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +17, Athletics +18, Intimidation +16, Stealth +17, Survival +16

Str +4, **Dex** +5, **Con** +1, **Int** -1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2

Items black smear poison (2 doses; *Pathfinder Bestiary* 51), chainmail, shortbow (20 arrows)

Light Blindness

AC 28; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +19, **Will** +16

HP 125; death flame

Bravery When the caligni defender rolls a success on a Will save against a fear effect, they get a critical success instead. In addition, any time they gain the frightened condition, reduce its value by 1.

Death Flame (light) When the caligni defender dies, their body combusts in a flash of white-hot flame. All creatures in a 20-foot burst take 6d10 fire damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save). Their gear and treasure are unaffected by the flames and are left in a pile where they died.

Attack of Opportunity ➤

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ shortsword +19 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d6+8 piercing plus black smear poison

Ranged ♦ shortbow +19 (deadly d10, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), **Damage** 1d6+8 piercing plus black smear poison

Occult Innate Spells DC 24; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *obscuring mist* (at will); **Cantrips (3rd)** *detect magic*

Shoulder to Shoulder When adjacent to one or more defenders they can see, the defender deals an additional 2d6 damage with their Strikes.

B23. CALIGNI BUNKS

LOW 9

This room is filthy and smells stale. Rags and tattered rugs and blankets litter the floor.

This sleeping chamber is dimly lit, as the cracks around the door to area **B24** glow.

Creatures: The two calignis resting here respond to commotion in the great hall. If outclassed, a defender opens the door to area **B24** to set the undead free.

CALIGNI DEFENDERS (2)

CREATURE 8

See above

Initiative Perception +16

B24. STRANGE DEAD

MODERATE 9

If the heroes examine the glow in the cracks around this door, they see it shift, as if the light source within the room is moving around.

A stack of dusty urns is heaped against the east wall of this small room. Each is covered with jagged runes.

The caligni keep out of this room due to its strange occupants, a pair of rare undead calignis called bright walkers. Only Galudu regularly comes here to speak with them; the other calignis only open the door if they need serious and immediate aid.

The urns are left over from when this place was a lodge for hunters. There are 11 urns in total, each 3 feet tall. They were used to magically preserve creature parts taken as trophies, but their magic expired long ago. Four urns contain shriveled claws or bones.

Creatures: The two bright walkers pace restlessly in this room. The only reason they don't go on a rampage is because Galudu does her best to keep them grounded and calm. When they see non-calignis, they assume the lodge is under attack and fight until destroyed, or until Galudu calls them off.

BRIGHT WALKERS (2)

CREATURE 9

Page 78

Initiative Perception +19

B25. OLD RUBBISH

Piles of broken furniture, rags and other rubbish litter this dirty room.

Galudu sometimes meets with others here, rather than in her private chamber to the south. If the heroes are with Custodian Dulac, she asks them to wait here while she privately informs Galudu about them.

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B26. GALUDU'S ROOM

MODERATE 9

A large bay window of transparent stone overlooks the wilderness outside the lodge, but it's so covered in grime that it's difficult to see through with any clarity. A makeshift table has been erected near the center of the room, and a sleeping mat is rolled up to one side of it.

Creatures: Galudu spends most of her time here. She's not only the leader of the calignis but their chief



Galudu

provider, feeding them with conjured food and water when hunters return empty-handed—or not at all.

If the heroes have fought their way through the lodge, Galudu uses her spells to drive them off. With nowhere else to go, she fights to the death.

If Custodian Dulac led the heroes here, Galudu is wary but welcoming; if the heroes aided Dulac and her band of foolish cultists, they might be able to help her as well. She listens to the heroes but quickly introduces the topic of her side quest, below.

GALUDU

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM CALIGNI HUMANOID

Female caligni leader (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 50)

Perception +18; greater darkvision

Languages Caligni, Common, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +20, Arcana +18, Deception +22, Diplomacy +20, Stealth +20

Str +2, **Dex** +5, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +5

Items dagger, wand of continuation (stoneskin)

Light Blindness

AC 30; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +21, **Will** +22

HP 195, death motes

Death Motes (force, light) When Galudu dies, her body explodes into brilliant motes of magical energy. All creatures in a 20-foot burst take 12d6 force damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save). Galudu's gear is unaffected by the explosion and is left in a pile where she died.

Opportune Step **Trigger** A dazzled or blinded creature, or a creature with light blindness, ends its move adjacent to Galudu; **Effect** Galudu Steps.

Speed 25 feet

Melee dagger +22 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+9 piercing

Melee dagger +22 (agile, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+9 piercing

Occult Innate Spells DC 28, attack +20; **4th** darkness; **2nd** darkness (at will), obscuring mist (at will); **Cantrips** (6th) detect magic

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 30, attack +22; **6th** dominate, mislead, repulsion; **5th** banishment, cloudkill, cone of cold (×2); **4th** create food (×2), globe of invulnerability, veil; **3rd** blindness, glyph of warding, lightning bolt (×2); **2nd** create food, hideous laughter, invisibility, telekinetic maneuver; **1st** alarm, create water (×3); **Cantrips** (6th) acid splash, daze, message, ray of frost, shield

Sneak Attack Galudu deals an additional 3d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Survivor's Nourishment (healing) A creature that eats food conjured by Galudu's create food spell regains 4d4 Hit Points. A creature can only benefit from this healing once per week.

Side Quest: Galudu explains that the calignis here are all refugees, fleeing from some calamity deeper in the Darklands that she doesn't explain. She recounts that several calignis died before they made it to the safety of this lodge, and only the strongest now remain. She quickly glosses over the schism that led to Dulac breaking away to occupy the upper levels and establish the Cult of Urthagul; Galudu considers Dulac and her cult to be simpletons clinging at misplaced hope and doesn't particularly care about their fate. Galudu is more interested in finding a safe exit for herself and for the caligni defenders; the cultists are welcome to come along, too, if they don't slow Galudu down. Galudu explains that there are two ways to leave, but both are blocked by powerful monsters: a daemon to the south (area **B31**) and a dragon to the west (area **B51**). Furthermore, hunting bands of urdefhans can—and have—whittled down the calignis' numbers. If the heroes agree to eliminate either the daemon or the dragon (or, better yet, have already done so) and escort the calignis to the opened passage, Galudu gives them her magic wand as payment. Galudu doesn't know that area **B42** also leads to a way out of the Hunting Grounds, but she's happy to take that passage instead, if the heroes clear the way.

The heroes are on their own to defeat the creature they choose and can come back to escort the calignis. As the defenders in **B22** don't let them in through area **B21**, they'll have to return to the Farm level and descend through the shrine to return to Galudu.

Urdefhan Attack

Severe 9

If the heroes accept the side quest, the journey isn't without incident. Urdefhan death scouts are waiting for the calignis to come into the open. The denizens of areas **B35** and **B36** come together to assault the group. This is a Severe encounter for 9th-level characters, but they have the calignis on their side to help.

B27. LADDER BASE

LOW 9

A large, iron ladder stretches upward into the darkness. Its chains and rods are cracked and flaked with rust.

This ladder leads over 100 feet up to area **A34**.

Creatures: Four ceustodaemons prowl amid the rubble and fungus at the ladder's base. They're supposed to report to the urdefhans if anyone unusual uses the ladder, but they're so eager for violence that they fight anyone they see to the death.

CEUSTODAEMONS (4)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 71

Initiative Perception +14

B28. CENTRAL PIT

A ribbon of twisting light extends from a circular hole in the ceiling to a matching hole in the floor. The stone near the light looks pockmarked and infected. The rounded walls are decorated with snarling stone heads of fearsome monsters.

Gauntlight's interior can't be reached from this level; the only access is from 100 feet above (area **A37**) or 100 feet below (area **C20**). A living creature that ends its turn within the 5-foot-diameter ribbon of light takes 9d6 negative damage (DC 24 basic Reflex save). The stone heads are simply decor that Belcorra liked; they constitute a checklist of sorts for aberrations. They include chuuls, fleshwarps, gugs, and other monsters the heroes have likely already encountered. They aren't made of the same invulnerable stone as *Gauntlight*, and thus can be removed or destroyed normally.

B29. BOATHOUSE

MODERATE 9

This squat stone building, only eight feet high, hugs the shore. Two wooden docks jut from the building into the dark waters of the massive underground lake. The doors are caked with mold and lichen, as if they haven't been opened in years.

The Children of Belcorra once tended to this lake as they did the one above, but the urdefhans routed them centuries ago. During this rout, the urdefhans drove Beluthus, a powerful occultist among the Children of Belcorra, back to this boathouse and locked him in. Beluthus has remained inside ever since, succumbing to torpor like many of the other undead gnomes.

In addition to being caked with mold, the doors have makeshift planks nailed across them on the outside. They're easy to pry off, but doing so is noisy and alerts Beluthus.

Inside, an old but serviceable rowboat hangs from the ceiling on short chains. Oars hang on the walls that are covered with mold but otherwise usable.

Creatures: Beluthus wakes when anyone pries open the doors or intrudes into the boathouse. He lashes out with fury, eager to recover more souls after his long torpor and rejoin the other Children of Belcorra.

BELUTHUS

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE **NE** **SMALL** **UNDEAD**

Variant devourer (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 278)

Initiative Perception +22

Treasure: The rowboat contains a small sea chest with a *swan boat feather token*, a *runestone* with a +2 armor potency rune, and a +2 striking dagger.

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THE CAVERN VAST

Most of the Hunting Grounds is a wilderness of rock formations, crystal growths, mineral springs, and vast swaths of towering fungi. Its denizens aren't always found in their respective encounter areas. Every 15 minutes that the heroes spend traversing the cavern, make a secret DC 5 flat check. On a success, they face one of the following random encounters. If the result would be a creature the heroes have already faced, treat it as no encounter.

d12	Encounter
1	An escaped riding lizard from area B30
2	Salaia Malthulas from area B14 and 1d4 wardens from area B12
3-4	2 drow shootists from area B10
5	2 caligni defenders from area B23
6-7	Urdefhan warband: 2 death scouts and 2 lashers from area B34
8-9	Urdefhans and daemons: 4 warriors and 2 ceustodaemons from area B34
10	Urdefhan sacrifice seekers: 1 blood mage and 3 tormenters from area B35
11	The cauthooj from area B41 , which returns to its nest after 2 rounds
12	Ravirex from area B51

B30. LIZARD RUN

LOW 9

The ceiling of this cavern sports many crystal growths and stalactites. A pattering drizzle drips from these formations, and paths wind through thick fungus growing on the ground.

The Yldaris drow cultivated this area with a thick, fast-growing fungus developed by drow mycologists in distant communities. These mushrooms hide drow movements and provide the community with a ready source of food.

Movement in this area is challenging, as the thick mushrooms conceal stalagmites and crystalline growths on the ground. For Yldaris drow and their riding lizards, who know the terrain, the ground is difficult terrain; for all other creatures, it is greater difficult terrain.

Creatures: The drow let their riding lizards run free in this area. The predators of the cavern sometimes catch and kill an errant lizard, but the drow don't mind the loss, as they can study the site of the kill and learn more information about creatures hunting near their home. Four riding lizards currently reside

here, all just reaching maturity. As two of their siblings were recently killed by urdefhans, they're aggressive to non-drow humanoids. A lizard reduced to fewer than 25 Hit Points flees the area.

RIDING LIZARDS (4)

CREATURE 5

Giant frilled lizard (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 229)

Initiative Perception +11

Treasure: While the giant frilled lizards have no treasure, 87 gp and 120 sp are scattered near the remains of a spider's web. A dead drow in the web wears *greater healing gloves* and a *cloak of elvenkind*.

B31. THE BARRENS

SEVERE 9

The fungus growth thins in this cavern, giving way to barren rock and rubble. Amid the dull gray stone, strange clouds of thick, grayish-black fog hug the ground.

The Yldaris drow skirt the north stretch of this cavern when they come this way, knowing of the dangers that lurk deeper in. The drow call this place the Barrens; if the heroes have earned their aid, they warn the heroes of its risks: the fog is deadly, and the cavern harbors a dangerous monster.

The fog imposes a -2 circumstance penalty to Perception checks. Everything beyond 10 feet is concealed, and visibility ends at 30 feet.

A narrow passage leads south to distant, equally treacherous Darklands caverns outside the scope of this adventure.

Hazard: The fog arose due to the derghodaemon's presence, and its effects are tied to the daemon's miasma. When a non-fiend, non-urdefhan creature ventures halfway into the cavern, the mist solidifies into life-draining mouths. If the derghodaemon is killed, this hazard disappears in minutes.

DAEMONIC FOG

HAZARD 10

ENVIRONMENTAL MAGICAL

Stealth DC 30 (expert)

Description The fog solidifies into tiny, gnawing creatures that devour everyone within before fading back into mist.

Disable DC 28 Survival (expert) to disrupt the fog before the hazard triggers or *dispel magic* (5th level; counteract DC 26) to counteract the magic.

Gnawing Fog ☞ (divine, evocation) **Trigger** A creature crosses the cavern's midpoint (the dotted line on the map); **Effect** The hazard deals 9d6 piercing damage (DC 32 basic Reflex save) to the triggering creature and all other non-fiend creatures within 20 feet. A creature that critically fails the saving throw is confused for 1d4 rounds.

Reset The hazard resets over the course of an hour as the daemonic stain reenergizes the fog.

Creatures: A derghodaemon lurks in the fog at the south end of the cavern. It keeps an eye on the deeper Darklands passages to protect the urdefhan hunting grounds from anything that might come from that way. It scuttles forth whenever anyone triggers the hazard, or when it otherwise hears intruders come close.

DERGHODAEMON

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 60

Initiative Perception +24

B32. SOUTHERN JUMBLE

MODERATE 9

Fungus grows wild and tall throughout this enormous cavern, sometimes reaching as high as thirty feet. The cavern ceiling, when visible through the fungal canopy, is higher still.

Creatures: Some fungus in this wild section of the cave is dangerous. Two deadly puffballs float toward the heroes when they first enter this area, descending from the mushroom tops high above.

REAPER SKULL PUFFBALLS (2)

CREATURE 9

Page 79

Initiative Stealth +17

B33. FEROCIOUS DISPLAYS

LOW 9

This wide cavern entrance is a disgusting sight. The walls are splashed with ochre and scarlet images in a riot of violent and obscene symbols. Stakes around the entrance hold up skulls and dismembered parts of strange creatures.

This is the main entrance of the cavern complex where the urdefhans live. Intelligent creatures in the Hunting Grounds avoid this place, knowing the urdefhans ruthlessly protect their territory.

Creatures: Two urdefhan lashers stand guard, while two death scouts lurk amid the gruesome displays of skulls and body parts. They've been directed to shout an alarm in the face of powerful or numerous foes, but they jump eagerly into a fight as soon as they detect any enemies. If any three urdefhans are defeated, the survivor suddenly realizes they should have called for help sooner and flees to area **B34** to raise the alarm.

URDEFHAN DEATH SCOUTS (2)

CREATURE 6

Page 84

Initiative Stealth +14

DROW TO THE RESCUE

If the heroes have gained the aid of Yldaris and indicated they were going against Khurfel, the drow might have followed at a distance to keep an eye on them. If the heroes are in over their heads, a group of two drow hunters and two drow shootists come to their aid. The drow won't enter melee if they can avoid it, but they're happy to pick off urdefhans at a distance. If the heroes have truly shown their worth to Yldaris, Quara might come to their aid as well.

URDEFHAN LASHERS (2)

CREATURE 7

Page 84

Initiative Perception +16

Replacements: If these guards are defeated, they're first replaced with death scouts and lashers from area **B34**, then with a pair of nervous urdefhan warriors from the same area.

B34. URDEFHAN HORDE

SEVERE 9

This massive cavern holds a jumble of low-lying tents made of stitched-together pelts and blood-streaked leather. Most of the tents surround a natural stone pillar decorated with strange symbols in brown and red paint, amid skulls tied or spiked to the pillar. Hides cover the entrances to three large caves to the southeast, each with a narrow wooden door.

Most urdefhans in the Abomination Vaults dwell in this enormous cavern. They sleep in small, cramped tents but spend their time awake eating, sparring, or working with their weapons. Other accouterments to support their camp, such as food storage and mundane supplies, are in the tents.

Traversing this war camp to face Khurfel is difficult. With their craving for destruction, the urdefhans are always ready for battle. As they spend so much time sparring and fighting among themselves, the denizens of the adjacent caves (areas **B35**, **B36**, and **B37**) don't respond to the sounds of combat here. The heroes might have an easier time bypassing these forces if they use stealth or trickery, but keep in mind the daemons here have a constant *see invisibility*.

Creatures: Nearly 20 urdefhans can be found here at almost all times, along with two ceustodaemons who stoke their bloodlust. About a third of the urdefhans are sleeping, but they're quick to grab

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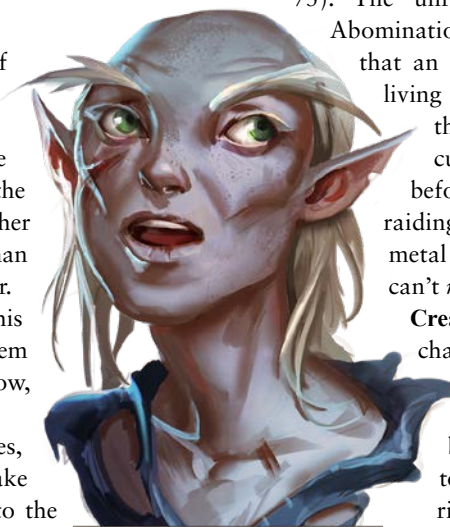
KHURFEL ON THE MARCH

If the heroes assault the urdefhan camp and retreat or escape, Khurfel is active in his retribution. He doesn't wait for the heroes to return. Instead, he leads a lasher, a death scout, and four urdefhan warriors in the search for them. The next random encounter the heroes have is an encounter with Khurfel's war party. Alternatively, you can have the war party show up whenever the heroes are traveling outside of Yldaris.

their weapons and join in a fight if other urdefhans raise a hue and cry. All the urdefhans fight with growling whoops and revel in the battle, even if they're losing. If the heroes defeat all the foes here other than urdefhan warriors, the urdefhan warriors all break and flee together.

If the heroes retreat from this battle, most of the urdefhans let them go; 1d6 urdefhan warriors follow, screaming for the heroes' blood.

If the urdefhans defeat the heroes, they don't kill them, but rather take them alive and hand them over to the tormentors in area **B35**, where they might have a chance to escape before being slain as sacrifices.



Calinth Narogblom

B35. SUMMONING CAVERN

LOW 9

This cavern slopes upward to a flat area on the far side. A metal box about three feet across sits against the northern wall, its lid pressed against the wall to prevent it from opening. A bloody circle surrounded by runes is painted on the floor to the south.

Dedicated to bringing more daemons into their midst, the urdefhans use this chamber for vile summoning rituals. They currently keep one prisoner they intend to sacrifice: a deep gnome rockwarden named Calinth Narogblom (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 75). The unfortunate Calinth came to the Abomination Vaults searching for evidence that an offshoot of his people were still living here. He never even met up with the Children of Belcorra—whose current state would horrify him—before being captured by an urdefhan raiding party. They keep Calinth in the metal box pushed against the wall so he can't *meld into stone* and escape.

Creatures: Three urdefhan tormentors chant and wail, casting a lengthy summoning ritual with the assistance of a scarred and cruel blood mage. The tormentors hope to empower their *daemonic pact* ritual to bring in a more powerful daemon; whether or not they succeed is up to you. All four urdefhans attack any intruders that interrupt their rite. They fight to the death.

URDEFHAN WARRIORS (12)

CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 272

Initiative Perception +9

URDEFHAN TORMENTORS (2)

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 273

Initiative Perception +13

CEUSTODAEMONS (2)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 71

Initiative Perception +14

URDEFHAN DEATH SCOUTS (2)

CREATURE 6

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Initiative Stealth +14

URDEFHAN LASHERS (2)

CREATURE 7

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Initiative Perception +16

URDEFHAN TORMENTORS (3)

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 273

Initiative Perception +13

URDEFHAN BLOOD MAGE

CREATURE 8

Page 85

Initiative Perception +15

Side Quest: Calinth carries no gear, but he nevertheless still wants to find out about the deep gnomes living here. If the heroes show him evidence of the Children of Belcorra—even their corpses from past fights—Calinth is sad but his curiosity is satisfied. If the heroes lead him to one of the exits to the Darklands, he can make it back to his people. A week later, Calinth sends them a token of his appreciation: a jet and opal complete set of the Dark Chase board game, worth 120 gp. If the heroes told Calinth that

they are friendly with the Yldaris drow, he sends it by the caravan route between the outpost and Lozardyn. Otherwise, he searches the heroes out himself, even braving the surface world if he must.

B36. THE BLOOD TEMPLE

LOW 9

A raised platform with a bloody altar stands on the east side of this roughly triangular cavern.

A constant orgy of bloodletting goes on in this chamber, all part of the strange and gory urdefhan religion. If interrupted, the participants are anxious to cover their altar with fresh blood.

Creatures: Two tormentors guide two lashers in the rites. All of them attack nonbelievers who interfere with their gruesome rituals and fight to the death.

URDEFHAN TORMENTORS (2)

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 273

Initiative Perception +13

URDEFHAN LASHERS (2)

CREATURE 7

Page 84

Initiative Perception +16

B37. KHURFEL'S TENT

MODERATE 9

At this cavern's center sits a single fur-and-skin hovel. A path to the hovel is flanked with skull-topped spears.

It's the tradition of this urdefhan cult that the war champion dwells apart and lives in a home no more elaborate than that of other urdefhans. The skulls all belong to rivals that Khurfel defeated to obtain and maintain his position as war champion. Their teeth are gone, having been used for the shauth weapons these urdefhans use (page 73).

Creatures: Once Khurfel notices the heroes, he looks pleased, his face contorting in a terrifying grin. He calls out "We meet on a good day to kill" in Undercommon as he draws his rhoka sword and strides forward. As his blood visions foretold his fight with the heroes, he doesn't shy away from it, and he neither offers nor accepts quarter. He keeps the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens* on his person at all times, strapped across his back so it doesn't get in the way during a fight. He's invested the lens, so *harm* spells cast on him heal additional Hit Points.

Two tormentors advise Khurfel and join any battle with him. They're careful not to get in their war champion's way, and they use their *harm* spells to keep him in the fight. They flee if Khurfel is defeated.

URDEFHAN TORMENTORS (2)

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 273

Initiative Perception +13

KHURFEL

CREATURE 10

Page 89

Initiative Perception +19

Treasure: Inside Khurfel's hovel are mounds of tribute: 180 gp, 1,320 sp, five moonstones worth 10 gp each, and two chrysoberyls worth 20 gp each.



Urdefhan Death Scout

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XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for recovering the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens*.

B38. GUARD POST

LOW 9

The urdefhans use this passageway to come and go from the lakeshore.

Creatures: The three urdefhan lashers assigned to guard this little-used entrance are itching for a fight. Unwilling to accept the shame of admitting defeat, they fight to the death.

URDEFHAN LASHERS (3) CREATURE 7

Page 84

Initiative Perception +16

Reinforcements: If these guards are defeated, they're replaced by the ceustodaemons in area **B34**. If the daemons are defeated, this area remains unguarded.

B39. DEADLY LAKE

MODERATE 9

The murky waters of this massive lake shift ominously.

Though not covered with a cloying, sickly mist like the large lake in the Farm level, this lake is hundreds of feet deep in its center and harbors strange aquatic life.

Creatures: A total of six deepwater dhuthorexes swim in this lake. Two quickly come to investigate any disturbance in the water. This attack should occur the first time the heroes venture into the lake, but you can have another pair of dhuthorexes attack during later excursions if you choose. The dhuthorexes attack singly or in pairs and are shockingly aggressive; they pursue foes on land and fight to the death.

DEEPWATER DHUTHOREXES (2) CREATURE 9

Page 80

Initiative Perception +18

B40. CRYSTAL SHORE

The stone along the shore here sprouts large growths of pale-green crystals. The crystals hang from the ceiling, climb up the wall, and reach toward the water in long strands.

While some of these crystals are pointed, they aren't hazardous. However, if a creature touches one of the crystals it begins to vibrate, which starts a chain reaction of resonant, ringing sounds among the crystals.

The sound is loud but not unpleasant. The noise piques the attention of the cauthooj nesting in area **B41**, which swims over to investigate.

B41. ISLAND NEST

SEVERE 9

A mix of green crystals and grayish stone make up the mass of this island. A few patches of fungus grow across the rocks, with a particularly thick patch near the island's eastern shore.

The thick patch is a cauthooj nest holding two eggs.

Creatures: A cauthooj recently came to this island to lay its eggs and stockpile corpses to feed the hatchlings. When it detects the heroes, it attacks immediately to secure a source of food. If reduced to fewer than 40 Hit Points, it flees the island and abandons its eggs. It's wary of a trap and doesn't pursue anyone who flees into a narrow passage, such as to areas **B38** or **B43**.

CAUTHOOJ

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 55

Initiative Perception +22

Finding the Lens: Quara's father dropped the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens* in the water near the eastern shore of this island during his battle with Khurfel. Spells like *detect magic* locate it easily; otherwise, a hero Searching the water finds it with a successful DC 28 Perception check. If the heroes haven't already encountered deepwater dhuthorexes in area **B39**, those monsters might harass anyone spending a lot of time searching this area.

Treasure: The two cauthooj eggs are valuable to the right buyer, but finding one can be difficult. Worliwynn, who runs the Stone Ring Pond just outside of Otari, has contacts who offer 400 gp or any common permanent magic item that's 8th level or lower for the eggs.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for recovering the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens*.

B42. STEEP EXIT

This rubble-filled passage slopes steeply downward. The passage's ceiling undulates as an echoing chitter fills the air.

The passage leads deeper into the Darklands, but the going is not easy. The steep and rocky decline slopes downward for 80 feet before reaching a sheer, 300-foot drop. Several disused natural passages radiate



Ochre Fulcrum Lens

outward from its base, but where these passages may lead is beyond the scope of this adventure.

Hundreds of tiny subterranean bats lair here. They don't pose a threat to high-level characters, even with their staggering numbers and tendency to swarm around the heads of intruders. The bats sometimes hunt in the Hunting Grounds, or in deeper Darklands caverns, but are just as often food for larger creatures.

B43. SANCTUARY

A thick growth of fungus blocks this narrow cave entrance.

The harmless fungus can easily be pushed aside. It conceals an out-of-the-way cavern with a small spring of fresh water. This cavern makes a perfect place for the heroes to rest, as wandering monsters ignore it.

B44. DIGGER'S CAVERN

SEVERE 9

A jumble of fungus grows in the center of this roughly square cave. A large lizard's corpse lies amid the fungus.

The giant frilled lizard barely escaped the roper in area **B45** but collapsed and died in this harmless fungus patch.

Creatures: When the heroes examine the lizard or the fungus, the entire cavern starts to shake as a shuln chews its way through the north wall. The enormous, rodentlike shuln scented the dead lizard and was coming to eat it, but it's more excited for living prey. It's hungry and fights until slain. It pursues foes that run away but doesn't like the water, so it gives up chasing anyone that flees into the lake.

SHULN

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 294

Initiative Perception +20

B45. DEAD ROPER

A rocky depression at the south end of this chamber contains a thick stalagmite toppled over in a pool of dark ichor.

Upon closer inspection, the stalagmite is a dead roper. The shuln in area **B44** burrowed up from beneath it and bit off its lower third before deciding its taste was wholly unpleasant and leaving the rest of the body behind. A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Nature or relevant Lore check realizes that a Huge burrowing beast came up beneath the roper and bit it, but the burrowing creature's tunnel has collapsed behind it and is now impassable.

B46. PUDDING WALLOW

A pool of thick black goo coats a large patch of the floor in this cave.

A black pudding stripped most of the fungus in this room clear before it was defeated by another predator. Its gooey remains rest in a shallow pit.

B47. CORRUPTED GARDEN

LOW 9

An ancient and crumbling stone bridge stretches across the water to an island teeming with reeking fungus.

The old stone bridge is still stable enough to traverse safely, though it's slick with slime and moist lichen that make it difficult terrain. The island used to be a tended garden, but it's now greater difficult terrain thanks to the dense, slick fungus. The slime growing on the fungus emits a terrible smell, but one overwhelmed by the stench of the island's denizen.

Creatures: An ofalth dwells on the island. The fungus and the layer of filth it grows from fuels the creature's Filth Wallow ability. It treats the slime-covered fungus as difficult terrain rather than greater difficult terrain.

OFALTH

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 251

Initiative Perception +18

B48. HORRID CARNAGE

Bones and discarded viscera are strewn across this cavern as if some horrifying battle recently occurred here. A trail of the gruesome remains winds to the northeast, up a narrow tunnel.

The carnage is the result of gogiteth feeding. The gnashing, nightmarish aberration lairs in area **B49**, but it sometimes lurks in the passageway to ambush prey. When the heroes approach this area, make a secret DC 15 flat check. On a success, it's watching from the passageway and is prepared to strike.

B49. GOGITETH CAVE

SEVERE 9

If the heroes haven't already defeated the gogiteth lairing here, as they approach, they hear its clacking and popping legs as it moves about. Any hero who succeeds at a DC 30 Occultism check recognizes the sound as that of a gogiteth.

Creatures: If the gogiteth is here, it's tearing up an urdefhan corpse. It drops the dead urdefhan with a sickening plop to skitter forward and feast upon

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the heroes. It fights until slain, but it doesn't pursue creatures out of areas **B48** and **B49**.

GOGITETH

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 183

Initiative Perception +21

B50. COINS AND SLIME

Hanging streamers of mold dangle from the ceiling here. Several coins protrude from a shelf of stone to the north.

A traveler left the coins in the wall here long ago, hoping to keep them safe, though they never returned. A patch of green slime grew from the streams of mold, particularly over the coins, where it could fall upon greedy treasure-seekers, dissolve them, and slither up the ceiling to await a new victim.

Hazard: The green slime is hard to spot amid the hanging mold. It drips upon anyone who tries to pull the coins free.

GREEN SLIME

HAZARD 9

Gamemastery Guide 78

Stealth DC 30 (expert)

Treasure: There are only 15 sp stuck in the floor, and breaking out each coin requires a few minutes' chiseling or *shape stone* or similar magic (which is how the coins got stuck in the stone in the first place).

B51. RAVIREX'S FEN

MODERATE 9

A morass of mud sprouting thick fungus and clinging vines makes up the floor of this large cavern. A few boulders protrude from the mud.

Not long ago, a black dragon named Ravirex moved into the swampy cavern at the edge of the Hunting Grounds to make his lair. He initially thought to dominate the area but soon ran afoul of powerful creatures like the derghodaemon in area **B31**, the gogiteth in area **B49**, and the drow hunters who've proven impossible to pin down. Ravirex quickly realized the need to be much more circumspect in the



Hunting Grounds, and these days he primarily works on sculpting the growth in his wide cavern to his liking. He's too arrogant to consider defense, assuming that even the other dangerous creatures of the Hunting Grounds know better than to attack a dragon.

Belcorra appeared to Ravirex a short time ago to open negotiations about aiding an attack on a surface city that Ravirex doesn't know, and the dragon awaits her next visit to learn more. She mentioned something about entrusting a colored magical lens to Ravirex, so he's keeping an eye out for those in the hopes of currying favor with Belcorra.

Two passages lead out of this area to wild Darklands areas to the west. Swamp water floods the southern passage entirely, while the northern passage is clear but very narrow.

Creatures: While not working to sculpt the fungus in its lair or out hunting, Ravirex rests upon his hoard in the alcove to the north. He defends his lair ferociously and works hard to drive intruders away so he can preserve his privacy. If he learns that the heroes have any of the magic lenses he believes Belcorra wants, he targets the heroes who carry them and tries to take them.

RAVIREX

CREATURE 11

Male adult black dragon (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 105)

Initiative Perception +22

Treasure: The dragon's hoard consists of 260 gp, 1,412 sp, 4,303 cp, a golden goblet worth 200 gp, a +2 *striking mace*, an *iron medallion*, a *scroll of spirit blast*, and a *mummified bat*.

B52. VAULT LEDGE

The lake's water laps lazily on a wide stone ledge surrounding a structure built into the cavern wall. The ledge is thick with lichen and barely wide enough to stand on. A single iron, vault-like door with a metal handle and a keyhole leads into the structure.

Belcorra built this secure vault as a place to gather the treasures she planned to use to fund her assault on Absalom. Beneath the profusion of lichen, the ledge holds several cleats for securing boats.

The vault door looks formidable but is, surprisingly, unlocked. The vaults' only intelligent occupant, a graveknight named Caliddo, recently traveled to the third level of the Abomination Vaults to recover some books Belcorra wanted, and he neglected to lock the door when he returned.

Hazard: The vault door isn't locked but is trapped.

BLAST TUMBLER

HAZARD 10

MAGICAL MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 32 (master)

Description A hard-to-reach rune is placed on the lock's tumbler. It emits a blast of force when the door is jostled.

Disable DC 32 Thievery (master) to disarm the rune, or *dispel magic* (5th level; counteract DC 28) to counteract the rune's magic.

Force Blast ☞ (evocation, force, occult) **Trigger** A non-undead creature opens the door or critically fails an attempt to disarm or dispel the rune; **Effect** A 30-foot cone of force issues forth from the lock. Creatures within the cone must succeed a DC 29 basic Fortitude saving throw or take 8d12 force damage. Those who fail the save are pushed 10 feet, and those who critically fail are pushed 20 feet and are stunned 2.

Reset The rune resets 1 minute after it triggers.

B53. VAULT ANTECHAMBER

LOW 9

The dust is thick in this room, save for footprints that lead to and from the southernmost of three iron doors, which look similar to the vault's entrance.

On the south side of the chamber is a hardened clay statue sculpted to resemble Belcorra.

Each door leads to another vault. The doors to areas **B54** and **B55** are both locked, and Caliddo the graveknight has the keys. The locks require six successful DC 40 Thievery checks to Pick a Lock to open, and they can't be Forced Open. The door to area **B56** is unlocked; this is where Caliddo went.

Creatures: The statue is a clay golem charged with attacking any creature other than Belcorra or Caliddo. It fights until destroyed, its old clay grinding as it attacks. The sound quickly brings Caliddo to fight as well. Together, they are a Severe encounter for 9th-level characters.

CLAY GOLEM

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 186

Initiative Perception +16

B54. COIN VAULT

Three iron chests, all in different sizes, are lined up against the north wall of this room.

The boxes hold a mass of treasure that Belcorra accumulated in life to aid in her assault on Absalom.

Treasure: The largest box contains 8,000 sp, and the next largest holds 500 gp. The smallest has 100 pp. All these coins were minted centuries ago.

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B55. ALCHEMICAL VAULT

This door is difficult to open, even once unlocked, because the inside has been warped by an explosion. Inside the vault is a tangle of ancient wood and shattered glass and pottery. Scorch marks scar the stone walls.

Belcorra stored a variety of alchemical bombs in this vault. As the centuries passed, the wooden shelves that

held some of them collapsed, creating a chain reaction of explosions and leaving the room and its vault door in its current state. Nothing of value remains.

B56. CALIDDO'S VIGIL

LOW 9

This small, bare room contains more vault doors, just as in area **B53**; Caliddo Haruvex carries these two keys as well. There's also a remarkably well-hidden secret door here; a hero Searching this room discovers the hidden switch to open it with a successful DC 30 Perception check.

Creatures: A warrior in archaic armor stands in this room, clutching a greatsword. This is Caliddo Haruvex, a skilled mercenary who came to serve Belcorra when he heard how powerful his distant relative had become. Belcorra accepted Caliddo's offer of aid and promptly killed him, raising him as a graveknight eternally bound to serve her. Caliddo proved his worth and loyalty to Belcorra many times, so she entrusted him with guarding her vault. He kept a silent vigil here for centuries.

When Belcorra returned, she put Caliddo to work fetching several books she wanted out of the hands of others who might use them against her. For the first time in centuries, Caliddo left the vault. He recovered the texts from an upper level of the dungeon and locked them in area **B58**.

Caliddo remains at his post and assaults anyone who enters. If the heroes don't face him with the golem in area **B53**, he's encountered here. Caliddo fights until destroyed, but he doesn't leave his post in the vault unless Belcorra expressly orders him to.

CALIDDO HARUVEX

CREATURE 10

Male graveknight (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 191)

Initiative Perception +19

Items composite longbow (20 arrows), +1 resilient full plate, greatsword, keys to Belcorra's vault (areas **B52** to **B59**)

Caliddo's Return: Destroying Caliddo for good proves difficult because his armor rebuilds him. If he rejuvenates after the heroes have plundered the vault, he pursues them in an attempt to recover the items. He doesn't have any special connection to the treasures, though, so he might have to search around a lot to find out where the heroes went. Caliddo isn't likely to negotiate, but he's most interested in reclaiming his keys and returning the books to the vault (as those were the last things Belcorra expressed particular interest in and, he assumes, the most valuable to her). Heroes who turn over the keys and books might avert Caliddo's implacable retribution and keep the other treasures from the vault.



Caliddo Haruvex

B57. DERELICT ARMORY

Ancient weapon racks have collapsed over time, leaving many swords, spears, and axes jumbled on the floor.

Belcorra hoarded dozens of weapons for her campaign in this room, intending to arm the humanoid warriors who fought alongside the aberrant monsters in her attack. While most of the weapons are merely well-made, a number of them are genuinely superior.

Treasure: Amid the weapons are a standard-grade adamantite warhammer and a +2 *striking battle axe*. A fallen armor stand is tangled up with the +2 *resilient chain shirt* that was once displayed on it.

B58. VAULT OF SECRETS

The shelves of this room contain several old books and various odds and ends. In the center of the room is a dusty mechanism of copper and silver. It's missing its lenses, but otherwise looks like the framework of a lantern that belongs in the top of a lighthouse. The dust in this room has been recently disturbed.

This is Belcorra's most protected vault, holding her treasures and secrets of her past. The books that have been most recently shelved here—as evidenced by the trails in the dust—are research journals Belcorra penned when she was alive. They are centuries old, but careful magical preservation has kept them from falling apart. These journals describe four *fulcrum lenses* (in crimson, ebon, emerald, and ochre) that focus Nhimbaloth's soul-extinguishing gaze across space and time. Belcorra's journal details how she built *Gauntlight* and created a special framework called the *Fulcrum Lattice* to fit the four lenses and harness their power. A diagram of the *Fulcrum Lattice* makes it clear that the device is the very one sitting here. Belcorra expresses some trepidation at using the *fulcrum lenses*; they each contain a sliver of Nhimbaloth's essence, and bringing them in close proximity can be dangerous. More specifically, the lenses impart Nhimbaloth's essence into those who use or are touched by them. Having all four essences imbued at once is sure to bring Nhimbaloth's dreadful scrutiny. Belcorra had her talented apprentice, Volluk Azrinae, fashion mundane lenses that would allow *Gauntlight* to function at a diminished capacity until the *Fulcrum Lattice* and the *fulcrum lenses* could be installed, on the eve of Belcorra's assault on Absalom. The *Fulcrum Lattice* allows all four of the large, heavy lenses to be carried with ease.

Belcorra's journals explain that she used only the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens* in the Empty Vault at *Gauntlight's*

base, deeming the essence within one *fulcrum lens* a minimal risk. She gave the other lenses to trusted groups in the lower vaults: the emerald lens to the urdefhans, the ochre lens to the drow, and the crimson lens hidden where her undead gnome minions could protect it. She trusts that the groups won't work together, much less learn that bringing the lenses together to imbue a single creature with all four splinters of Nhimbaloth's essence would impart total annihilation.

Other Books: The other books are aging tomes full of occult knowledge; they've been in the Haruvex family for generations. They hold a wealth of occult lore about ghosts, Nhimbaloth, and the Haruvexes. A hero who peruses these tomes for at least an hour gains a +2 item bonus on checks to Recall Knowledge on these subjects when using the Investigate exploration activity here.

Treasure: Belcorra keeps many valuables here, including a skull-shaped key worth 30 gp that unlocks the doors to the Gate of Nhimbaloth (area B60) and two signet rings that each bear the symbol of a tentacle wrapped around a skull with a moss-filled mouth. One is a *ring of lies* and the other functions as a *greater pendant of the occult*. The *Fulcrum Lattice* is also here, and it's surprisingly lightweight for its size. If the heroes have discovered any *fulcrum lenses* so far, they fit neatly into the lattice, and the lattice grows no heavier for their weight.

XP Award: Award the heroes 80 XP for uncovering the lore of the *fulcrum lenses* and learning how to destroy Belcorra.

B59. LEVEL 9 PORTAL CHAMBER

Spiraling runes filled with silver cover this chamber's curved walls. The same silvery metal covers the floor and ceiling.

This room contains another inactive *teleportation circle* that the heroes might connect to others in the Abomination Vaults with the *awaken portal* ritual. The others in this adventure are areas A33 and C5.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for using the *awaken portal* ritual to reactivate the *teleportation circle* here.

B60. EBON DOORS

These massive double doors are made of black and green stone. An oxidized bronze lock has a keyhole but no handles.

This door leads to a structure called the Gate of Nhimbaloth, an ancient temple made of black stone streaked with a greenish, nauseating hue. Belcorra didn't built this place; she found it and incorporated

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it into her ever-expanding dungeon. Whether the Gate of Nhimbalothe always existed underground or was once cast down from the surface is a mystery, as are the cultists who once inhabited it. In any case, its entry is now seamless with the stone of the Abomination Vaults. The Gate of Nhimbalothe includes not only the rooms beyond it, but most of the lower level as well.

The door's ancient lock is incredibly complex. Six successful DC 40 Thievery checks are required to Pick the Lock, and it can't be Forced Open. The skull-shaped key in area B59 opens this door.

B61. HALL OF PRIESTS

MODERATE 9

This large chamber is made of the same black stone as the imposing ebon doors to the north. Eight alcoves, four on each side, line the east and west walls. Each alcove contains the remains of jade-colored statues.

All of the figures have been defiled; none have any heads remaining, most are missing hands, and one is just a pair of bare feet upon a pedestal. An enormous stone throne carved out of heavy blocks stands in a domed chamber opposite the black doors.

Well before Belcorra's time, this served as a semipublic area of worship for a cult of Nhimbalothe. Those seeking vengeance, an enemy's obliteration, or assurance that a lost loved one would return as a ghost left offerings and sacrifices around the throne and the creature sitting on it, who was called Lady's Whisper—the creature that sits there still. Aspirants hoped the shrouded skeleton would rise and lead them through one of the three doorways to take the tests to become an initiate in the cult. Lady's Whisper sometimes remained still for years, or ushered in new cultists for days on end. Although even the senior cultists never understood the connection between Lady's Whisper and Nhimbalothe, none questioned the skeleton's role as gateway to cult membership.

The cultists did know, however, that only those Lady's Whisper ushered into the eastern door would join the cult. The western doors lead to grim fates reserved for those unworthy to even be tested for admittance to the cult.

Creatures: Lady's Whisper is a unique undead creature distantly related to the lesser deaths that serve the Grim Reaper (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 196). For reasons long lost, the skeletal creature is irrevocably tied to Nhimbalothe. It knows that the heroes are here to face Belcorra and are ill-suited to join the now-nonexistent cult, but it decides to put them through the initiation trials anyway, in the hopes of weakening and killing them. Lady's Whisper commands the allegiance of the many dread wisps within the Gate of Nhimbalothe, but there are none here to defend it when the heroes first arrive, so it deals with the heroes cautiously.

Lady's Whisper rises and holds forth both hands, gesturing for peace. It then points to the eastern door and whispers the names of each hero, one by one. It steps toward the eastern door, gesturing for the heroes to follow.

If the heroes attack, Lady's Whisper lashes out with its claws to teleport heroes away, preferably into the adjacent chambers with dangerous wisps and traps. It flees if it takes more than 50 points of damage, but tries to lure the heroes deeper into the Gate of Nhimbalothe as it does.



Lady's Whisper

LADY'S WHISPER

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM UNDEAD

Perception +25; darkvision, *see invisibility*, *true seeing*

Language Aklo, Common, Necril, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +20, Deception +21, Diplomacy +21, Intimidation +21, Occultism +21, Religion +23, Society +21, Stealth +22

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

Death's Grace Lady's Whisper can choose whether or not it counts as undead for effects that affect undead differently. Even if it does not count as undead, Lady's Whisper never counts as a living creature.

AC 31; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +20, **Will** +25; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 195, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

Negative Recovery Lady's Whisper can choose whether or not it takes positive damage.

Sibilant Whispers (auditory, aura, divine, emotion, enchantment, mental) 20 feet. Each creature that begins its turn within the aura and can hear the ominous whispers must succeed at a DC 30 Will save or become frightened 2. On a success, the creature is temporarily immune for 1 minute.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ claw +23 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d10+7 slashing plus unwilling teleportation

Divine Innate Spells DC 30, attack +22; **Constant (6th)** *true seeing*; **(3rd)** *haste*; **(2nd)** *see invisibility*

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 30, attack +22; **5th** (4 slots) *crushing despair*, *mind probe*, *shadow blast*, *vampiric touch*; **4th** (4 slots) *blink*, *gaseous form*, *modify memory*, *phantasmal killer*; **3rd** (4 slots) *hypercognition*, *levitate*, *paralyze*, *slow*; **2nd** *calm emotions*, *death knell*, *mirror image*, *touch of idiocy*; **1st** (4 slots) *command*, *fear*, *illusory disguise*, *magic missile*; **Cantrips (6th)** *daze*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*

Gatekeeper's Will ♦ (concentrate) Lady's Whisper mentally causes any doors or portals within the Gate of Nhimbalo (areas **B60** to **B64** and areas **C1** through **C18**) to open or shut. If Lady's Whisper wills a door closed, it must be Forced Open or battered down.

Unwilling Teleportation (conjunction, divine, teleportation) When Lady's Whisper hits and damages a creature with its claw Strike, it can choose to teleport that creature to any open space within 15 feet, even if Lady's Whisper can't see the destination. The target can attempt a DC 30 Will saving throw to resist this effect.

B62. OBLIVION FALL

Made of the same dark stone as the rest of the temple, this passage opens into a rectangular chamber.

Hazard: The chamber at the end of the hall has no floor. It's a bottomless pit that, unlike the hazard in the *Core Rulebook*, has no trapdoor; nevertheless, because it's set into reflective black stone, it's still difficult to notice. Lady's Whisper led aspirants whom it judged to be useless to Nhimbalo's cause into this pit—forcefully, when necessary.

BOTTOMLESS PIT

HAZARD 9

Core Rulebook 524

Stealth DC 26 or *detect magic*

B63. GARDEN OF FAILURES

TRIVIAL 9

A black-stoned passage opens into this octagonal chamber. The room is a riot of foul-smelling swamp weeds.

Creatures who made it into the Gate of Nhimbalo but were, in their hearts, too afraid to undertake the initiation tests below were brought here. Often, Lady's Whisper gave them comforting words about how they could simply rest and depart in peace, but this was a lie—creatures were brought here to be killed, their blood and essence used to fuel the cavern's sunless garden.

Creatures: A single dread wisp floats in this room. It attacks anyone who enters, desperate to feed for the first time in many, many years.

DREAD WISP

CREATURE 9

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Initiative Perception +20

B64. INITIATES' CHAMBER

SEVERE 9

The walls of this room are carved from black stone and feature four large alcoves, two to the east and two to the west. Three contain large stone basins filled with reeds, moss, and other swamp plants. The basin in the fourth alcove is empty. Stairs lead downward to the north.

The stairs lead down to area **C1**.

Creatures: Three dread wisps hover over three of the stone basins (the fourth was slain long ago, and its basin now contains only desiccated soil). If the heroes are accompanied by Lady's Whisper, two of them follow it and the heroes at a distance, ready to intervene if the heroes become violent. If the heroes aren't with Lady's Whisper, the dread wisps attack.

DREAD WISPS (3)

CREATURE 9

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Initiative Perception +20

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CHAPTER 3: To Draw the Baleful Glare

Perhaps a few of the vaults' inhabitants know the true story of Nhimaloth's ancient temple—notably Lady's Whisper and maybe a dread wisp or two—but none will tell the tale. Was it the hub of a cult cast deep into the earth by some ancient enemy, or the headquarters of a Darklands cabal? No matter its original purpose, the complex series of initiation trials are the last challenges that the heroes must face to confront Belcorra. The first is the Challenge of Souls, where unworthy initiates were poisoned, tormented, and had their souls extracted. The second is the Challenge of Despair, where initiates faced their greatest fears. The last test is the Challenge of the Swamp, where initiates demonstrated their mastery over swampland dangers. The heroes are likely to face these in order only if guided by Lady's Whisper; otherwise, they're free to tackle them in whatever order they'd like. Beyond lies the Empty Vault, Belcorra's domain and the source of *Gauntlight's* powers.

Temple Features

The temple is wholly dark, except where otherwise noted. Ceilings are generally 15 feet high but reach 60 feet in the main chambers (areas **C1**, **C9**, **C14**, **C18**, and **C20**). The stone doors all bear intricate carvings, such as a moss-filled skull, swirling mists, or detailed swamp scenes, as well as clusters of seven divots. Lady's Whisper controls the doors here.

The map of the Temple level appears on the inside back cover of this adventure.

C1. FIRST CHALLENGE

A basin filled with reeds and moss stands in an alcove between doors that lead to the north. Two metal tubes jut into the room from the east, sealed off by some iris-like mechanism a foot or so inside the pipe. No opening mechanism is visible. Black stone doors lead south, and a

single gray stone door carved with shapes of swirling mist leads west. None of the doors have handles or latches.

The tests begin with the Challenge of Souls through the western door. The metal tubes slant downward and drain into the swamp (area C15). They're just large enough for a Medium creature to slide down. If the heroes enter here with Lady's Whisper, the skeleton silently points at the gray door. That door opens with a push, or simply swings aside if someone stands in front of it for 1 round. The doors to the south (Hardness 15, Hit Points 60) and the tubes' mechanical iris openings (Hardness 18, Hit Points 72) are all shut and don't open unless Lady's Whisper wills it.

If the two dread wisps are following the heroes, one takes a position above the basin to silently report everything the heroes do here to Belcorra.

Passing the Challenge of Souls: When the heroes return here having either fed or defeated the dread wisps in area C8, Lady's Whisper opens the doors to the south and leaves them open. A hero who succeeds at a DC 27 Perception check to Sense Motive realizes that Lady's Whisper is offended that the heroes passed the test but is keeping this irritation suppressed.

C2. POISONING ROOM

MODERATE 10

At the eastern end of this long room stands a giant jade statue of a cracked and chipped skeleton in a burial shroud. The skull clenches a bundle of swamp weeds in its teeth. Built into the walls are several narrow slits and stone doors.

A hero who Investigates the statue and succeeds at a DC 25 Religion check realizes that it's a rare physical representation of Nhimbalothe.

Long ago, initiates were commanded to kneel before Nhimbalothe. When they did, cultists hiding in the galleries shot poisoned blowgun darts at them. Those who didn't succumb to poison were worthy and led south; those who succumbed were taken north to have their souls harvested.

Creatures: Six cultists have arisen as specters. They manifest in the shooting galleries with ghostly blowguns, which they use in addition to their vile touch Strikes to shoot ephemeral darts made of their own ghostly substance. The narrow slits provide anyone in the shooting galleries with greater cover (+4 circumstance bonus to AC, Reflex saves against area effects, and Stealth checks). If the heroes enter a shooting gallery, the specters pass through the walls to keep their distance. The specters fight until destroyed.

SPECTERS (6)

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 248

Initiative Stealth +17 (+21 in the shooting gallery)

Ranged ♦ vile blowgun +18 (range increment 20 feet), **Damage** 3d6 negative plus 3d6 poison and spectral corruption

C3. CLEANSING CHAMBER

Two grime-crusted copper tubs, devoid of water, stand against the south wall.

Long abandoned, this chamber was once where initiates who survived the poisoning room were stripped, bathed with swamp water, and then escorted into the worthies' cave. A hero can discover the secret door while Searching this room with a successful DC 25 Perception check. A false

CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

The heroes have their final confrontation with Belcorra in this chapter. On the way to the Empty Vault, where Belcorra can be found, they pass through several challenges that aspirants of Nhimbalothe faced back when this was an active temple to the Empty Death. Ironically, this lowest level of the Abomination Vaults is one of the safest, in that its denizens generally stay put and the heroes can rest for as long as they need in empty chambers. They'll need to be in top form to tackle Belcorra; if they haven't collected all three *fulcrum lenses* by now, they may need to retreat, recover them, and face Belcorra again.

Environmental Cues: black stone, carvings of bones or mist, clammy air, eerie lights, fog, swamp plants

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The heroes might go along with Lady's Whisper at first, wondering just what the enigmatic undead is asking of them. After they complete one or two tests, they might decide they don't want to be judged worthy of Nhimbalo's attention after all. This is especially true if they realize that each successful test increases Lady's Whisper's displeasure and that the undead plans to kill them.

Lady's Whisper responds to any preemptive attack by the heroes as though expecting it. The undead attempts to levitate out of melee reach and cast spells to eliminate the heroes. The lurking pair of dread wisps that may have followed from area B64 join the fight as well.

stone on the eastern wall must be rotated to pivot open one of the copper tubs and the wall behind it.

C4. WORTHIES' CAVE

LOW 10

The ceiling of this natural chamber bears seven holes no larger around than a human finger.

Before surviving initiates took the next challenge—the Challenge of Despair—they were subjected to a mind-numbing gas to make the test more difficult.

The secret doors here both open the same way: when rotated, a portion of the smooth, flat wall makes the door pivot open. The secret doors are each at the end of short hallways, so they aren't hard to find. Anyone Searching either short hall discovers the secret door and the method of opening it. The doors won't open, however, if the room's trap is active, so they must be battered down (Hardness 18, Hit Points 60) to escape the trap.

Hazard: The trap spews mind-numbing gas through the seven holes in the ceiling.

BEFUDDLING GAS TRAP

HAZARD 11

COMPLEX MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth +21 (expert) or DC 31 (expert) to notice the hidden override mechanism on the north wall.

Description Seven nozzles hidden within holes in the 15-foot-high ceiling release a poison gas.

Disable DC 33 Thievery (master) to disable the hidden mechanism on the north wall, immediately sucking the gas from the room, or DC 29 Thievery (expert) to

adequately plug one of the seven nozzles. When all seven nozzles are plugged or destroyed, the trap is deactivated.

AC 31; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +18

Nozzle Hardness 20; **Nozzle HP** 32 (BT 16); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Gas Release ☞ (inhaled, mental, poison) **Trigger** Both secret doors are closed and at least one creature is in the room; **Effect** Gas fills the chamber. Creatures within the chamber must succeed on a DC 30 Fortitude save or become stupefied 1 (stupefied 2 on a critical failure). The trap then rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action) The gas intensifies. Each creature in the room must make a DC 30 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected and becomes temporarily immune to the gas for 1 hour, though if the creature has already been stupefied by the trap, that condition remains for its normal duration.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature becomes stupefied 1 for 24 hours. If the target is already stupefied, the condition value increases by 1 (to a maximum of stupefied 4) and the target takes 8d6 mental damage.

Critical Effect As failure, except the target takes double the mental damage.

Reset After an hour, the trap deactivates; the gas disperses slowly, and the doors can be opened again. After 24 hours, the gas builds up and the trap can be triggered again.

C5. LEVEL 10 PORTAL CHAMBER

MODERATE 10

Belcorra added this room to the temple to connect her network of permanent *teleportation circles*. Its door is locked and the key is long lost. A hero can Force it Open with a successful DC 25 Athletics check or Pick the Lock with four successful DC 25 Thievery checks.

Swirling, silver-filled runes adorn the rounded walls of this chamber. Sheets of reflective metal cover the floor and ceiling.

The other portal chambers in this adventure are located in areas A33 and B59.

Creatures: As the lowest portal chamber, Belcorra ensured this room was well-guarded. A powerful stone golem is built into the wall, in an open space between the silver-filled runes. It steps out and attacks anyone who isn't accompanying Belcorra.

ELITE STONE GOLEM

CREATURE 12

Pathfinder Bestiary 6, 187

Initiative Perception +19

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for using the *awaken portal* ritual to reactivate the *teleportation circle* here.

C6. CREMATORIUM

MODERATE 10

Two pools of bubbling magma sit side by side in the center of this large chamber.

This crematorium is extremely hot (*Core Rulebook* 518), dealing 2d6 fire damage every 10 minutes (the scorpions are immune). Immersion in the 25-foot-deep magma pools deals 20d6 fire damage each round.

Creatures: Bound fire elementals have maintained the heat in this room for centuries. They climb out of the magma pits to attack intruders, pursuing them aggressively and fighting until destroyed.

MAGMA SCORPIONS (4)

CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 111

Initiative Perception +18

C7. SOUL EXTRACTORS

MODERATE 10

This strange, irregular hall features several wide alcoves, each with a standing rack bearing crystals and levers, like bizarre torture devices.

Failed initiates were brought here and strapped to the strange standing racks. These occult machines extracted the initiates' souls into crystal globes as special glass golems sliced their bodies to pieces. Cultists took the soul-infused globes (which were far too delicate for the blade-handed golems to handle) to the dread wisps in area C8.

Only three of the occult machines still function, and each holds a crystal globe containing the soul of an initiate killed centuries ago. A hero Investigating a functional machine and succeeding at a DC 30 Occultism, Religion, or relevant Lore check (such as Spirit Lore) realizes what the globes are and how they were created.

Creatures: The four golems remain here and do their best to slice intruders to ribbons. Their greenish glass bodies emit an unsettling glow, giving them the Grim Glimmering ability instead of Dazzling Brilliance.

NHIMBALOTH'S CUTTERS (4)

CREATURE 8

RARE NE MEDIUM CONSTRUCT GOLEM MINDLESS

Variant glass golems (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 131)

Initiative Perception +14

Grim Glimmering ♦♦ (evocation, light, visual) The golem

creates waves of baleful light that cast dim light in a 60-foot emanation. The light lasts until the start of the golem's next turn, after which the golem can't use Grim Glimmering for 1d4 rounds. A creature within the light or that enters the light must attempt a DC 23 Will save.

Success The creature is unaffected.

Failure The creature is dazzled for 1 round.

Critical Failure The creature is doomed 1 and blinded for 1 round.

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Treasure: The three crystal globes are each about a foot in diameter and worth 200 gp to certain unsavory soul merchants, such as night hags. If smashed, their fragments are valueless but the soul trapped within travels to the Boneyard and its ultimate reward.

The three functioning machines contain some valuable parts. With several hours' work and a successful DC 30 Crafting check, a hero can strip a machine of rare metals and delicate gears worth 80 gp. If this check is a critical success, the parts are worth 160 gp; on a critical failure, the parts in that machine are ruined and valueless.

C8. DEVOURING CHAMBER

SEVERE 10

This large chamber has a spiny, dust-covered floor. On the far western end is a large stone basin filled with swamp plants.

A thick layer of dust covers the shattered crystal shards littering the floor, evidence of hundreds of initiates' extracted souls. The broken crystal makes the ground difficult terrain and inflicts a -5 circumstance penalty to Stealth checks, but it isn't dangerous to anyone who isn't barefoot. Barefoot creatures take 5 piercing damage at the end of each Stride in the room.

Creatures: Three powerful dread wisps called soul feeders float here. As extensions of the evil energies of the Empty Vault (area C20), they funnel souls released here into that chamber. They can't return to the Empty Vault, or even leave this room, without more souls.

When the heroes arrive, the bobbing wisps demand that the heroes gather the crystal globes from the next room and smash them here. They don't admit that doing so frees them to return to the Empty Vault, but might insist (truthfully) that doing so will cause them to vanish from here. One soul feeder winks out for each sphere the heroes smash; the heroes will face them again in the Empty Vault.

If it becomes clear to the soul feeders that the heroes aren't going to comply, they attack the heroes in an attempt to kill them and use their souls as the fuel for the Empty Vault instead. Soul feeders gang up on one hero at a time, moving on to another when their target is dead. Each hero killed in this room returns one soul feeder to the Empty Vault immediately.

SOUL FEEDERS (3)

CREATURE 10

Elite dread wisps (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, page 81)

Initiative Perception +22

Stolen Soul: A hero who dies in this room has a portion of their soul stolen to power the Empty Vault. The hero can be raised as normal, but they gain the

doomed 1 condition and can't reduce their doomed condition below 1 for a year.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for dealing with these soul feeders and passing the Challenge of Souls.

C9. SECOND CHALLENGE

This chamber looks much like the room to the north, except the gray door to the west is carved with frightened faces rather than mist, and there are three metal tubes rather than two. The basin of reeds and swamp water is to the south.

This is where initiates began the Challenge of Despair. The south doors and mechanical iris openings in the tubes are similar to those in area C1. The door on the west wall is unlocked and leads to second test.

If Lady's Whisper is leading the heroes through the challenges, it points silently at the western door. The second dread wisp shadowing Lady's Whisper moves to hover above the basin and silently report the heroes' movements to Belcorra. Once the heroes are through the door, Lady's Whisper opens the doors to area C14 and awaits the heroes there, closing the doors after moving through them.

C10. PATH OF PLEASANT MEMORIES

The walls of this long, narrow hall are momentarily stark white, but colorful images soon swirl upon them. A door stands at each end of the hall.

Occult magic powers the illusions here and along the path that constitutes the Challenge of Despair (areas C11 and C12). Each viewer sees different images, as they're all a hodgepodge of memories drawn from the viewers' mind. You might draw upon the heroes' victories, friendships, and amusing encounters in this Adventure Path to describe the images. A hero who approaches the western door must attempt a DC 27 Will saving throw; on a failure, the hero is entranced by the illusory images for 24 hours. While so entranced, the hero takes a -10-foot penalty to all Speeds in areas C10 to C12, and can't Avert their Gaze from the images in the same areas.

Two secret doors allowed cultists to cut quickly between the challenges. Heroes Searching this hall discover the secret door to the north with a successful DC 25 Perception check and the secret door to the south with a successful DC 30 Perception check. Each is opened by manipulating a nearby section of the wall that's slightly darker than the surrounding stone. The secret door to the south is one-way only; the heroes can use it to access area C12 but can't come back.

C11. PATH OF FAILURE

This path widens and turns south opposite the single narrow door. Its walls are a riot of swirling images.

The occult magic in this hall pulls personalized memories from the viewer, as in area **C10**, but these memories are all failures: mentors scolding the viewer, authorities punishing them, or lost friends crying. You can also pull from any significant failures a hero had during this Adventure Path, such as needing to flee a significant foe or triggering a damaging trap.

Hazard: This room's images worm into the victim's mind. The heroes can *Avert their Gaze* (*Core Rulebook* 472) from these images and gain that action's bonus to saving throws required by this hazard, even though these illusions are more than merely visual.

IMAGES OF FAILURE

HAZARD 12

MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 35 (expert) to realize the illusory images conceal a magical trap (noticing the images has a DC of 0)

Description Psychically enhanced illusions flood the minds of creatures in the 40-foot-long, 15-foot-wide hallway (the white dotted box on the map) with memories of their past failures.

Disable DC 32 Occultism (master) or *dispel magic* (5th level; counteract DC 26) to weaken the images; three successes are required to disable the trap

Echoes of Defeat ♦ (curse, emotion, enchantment, mental)

Trigger A creature ends a move action within the trap's area; **Effect** The triggering creature takes 2d10+10 mental damage (DC 32 basic Will save) as it recalls its past failures. A creature that takes damage hears a soft whisper offering, "Let me take something from you and I can stop the pain." A creature who agrees loses access to a random skill feat that isn't a prerequisite for another feat, and the creature doesn't take further damage from Echoes of Defeat. This effect lasts for 1 week and can be ended by effects that remove curses.

Reset The trap resets immediately and can affect the same creature multiple times on the creature's turn.

C12. PATH OF POWERLESSNESS

The walls, floor, and ceiling of this long hall swirl with overlapping, shifting images.

This hall's occult magic manifests images drawn from the viewer's mind, as in areas **C10** and **C11**, but these images predict failure in the future. Viewers see themselves growing infirm, succumbing to disease, or falling in battle against Belcorra.

The secret door leading north doesn't open from this side. The secret door to the east is the only way to leave and complete the Challenge of Despair; those who couldn't find this hidden exit eventually died from the torment in the images. Anyone more than 20 feet from the secret door can't see it due to the overlapping images, but anyone within 20 feet who Seeks in the area discovers it with a successful DC 27 Perception check. A hero who Searches the hall (which isn't possible while the trap is active, as the heroes are in encounter mode rather than exploration mode) finds the secret door automatically.

Hazard: This trap is similar to the one in area **C11**, though its area is much larger, as it fills the entire long hallway. The heroes can also *Avert their Gaze* from the images in this trap as well, if they choose.

IMAGES OF POWERLESSNESS

HAZARD 12

MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 35 (expert) to realize the illusory images conceal a magical trap (noticing the images has a DC of 0)

Description Psychically-enhanced illusions flood the minds of creatures in the 95-foot-long, 15-foot-wide hallway (the white dotted box on the map) with visions of their failures yet to come.

Disable DC 32 Occultism (master) or *dispel magic* (5th level; counteract DC 26) to weaken the images; three successes are required to disable the trap

Flood of Despair ♦ (curse, emotion, enchantment, mental)

Trigger A creature ends a move action within the trap's area; **Effect** The triggering creature takes 2d10+10 mental damage (DC 32 basic Will save) as it considers its future failures. A creature that takes damage hears a soft whisper offering, "Let me take something from you and I can stop the pain." A creature who agrees loses access to a random class feat that isn't a prerequisite for another feat, and the creature doesn't take further damage from Flood of Despair. This effect lasts for 1 week and can be ended by effects that remove curses. The creature also immediately detects the secret door at the end of the hall, no matter how far away from the end of the hall they are.

Reset The trap resets immediately and can affect the same creature multiple times on the creature's turn.

C13. CHAMBER OF REFLECTION

The walls of this bare room are white and plain.

Initiates who passed the Challenge of Despair were permitted to stop in this psychic refuge to recover before facing the next test.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for reaching this room after passing the Challenge of Despair.

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C14. THIRD CHALLENGE

This large room has double doors of black stone to the north and an enormous slab of rough-hewn rock blocking passage to the south. Two metal tubes jut into this room from the east wall. Both of their mechanical irises are open.

The slab of rock blocking the passage south is one of two slabs that function as enormous doors. There's a gap of only a few inches between them. The doors are particularly sturdy, and the only way for anyone other than Lady's Whisper to open them is to smash them down (Hardness 20, 80 Hit Points each).

Passing the Challenge of Despair: Lady's Whisper meets the heroes who enter from area C13 here. A hero who succeeds at a DC 22 Perception check to Sense Motive realizes that Lady's Whisper is angry that the heroes passed. On a critical success, the hero realizes

that Lady's Whisper plans to betray them if they keep passing Nhimbalothe's tests.

Lady's Whisper points to the open pipes. When the heroes exit through the pipes, it closes the iris portals after them and then raises the stone slabs enough to enter are C18, where it again waits for the heroes.

C15. DEADLY SWAMP

MODERATE 10

The pipes leading to this chamber from area C1 end with a 25-foot drop, the pipes from area C9 end with a 20-foot drop, and the pipes from area C14 end with a 15-foot drop. In all cases, the drop is into reeking swamp muck, so falling creatures take no damage but draw the attention of this room's inhabitants.

This massive cavern is a thick swamp, moist and stinking. Seven rusted metal boxes are just visible within the dense reeds of the swamp. The south end of the cavern is a rounded metal dam that is slid upwards so only a constant trickle of water dribbles from its top, near the ceiling. Ancient gears on either side of the dam appear to lower it, though streaks of rust show they haven't moved in quite some time. At the lower north end of the cavern, the swamp water drains into a murky, flooded room.

This room's environment echoes the poisonous terrain of Nhimbalothe's dead world, Voidbracken. The Challenge of the Swamp is simple: survive, find the way to open the dam, and enter area C17.

This area is difficult terrain, as the water isn't deep but the ground beneath it is sucking and treacherous.

Further, the air in the swamp is toxic.

Any creature starting its turn in the swamp must succeed on a DC 27 Fortitude saving throw or become sickened 2 (sickened 4 on a critical failure) and can't reduce its sickened condition while in this area. The creature is then temporarily immune for 10 minutes, whether or not it succeeded at the saving throw. This is a poison effect.

Heroes Searching this area spot three rusted metal pipes running just beneath the swamp water and weeds. These connect to the rusty metal boxes (marked on the map) and are part of the control system to lower the dam.

Heroes who succeed at a DC 25 Crafting, Engineering Lore, or Thievery check to Recall Knowledge realize that the pipes are important

Voidbracken Chaul

to controlling the dam; on a critical success, the hero also realizes that they connect to controls further north (in area **C16**).

Rusting Boxes: Each box has a single valve turned sideways, pointing east to west. This is the “off” position; turning it to point north to south (the way the pipes run beneath them) puts it in the “on” position. All seven boxes must be turned to the “on” position before the control wheels in area **C16** can turn. If your players like puzzles, you can have each valve that’s turned (in either direction) automatically turn all other valves along its pipe and in its row as well; the players then need to puzzle out how to turn them all “on.”

Creatures: Before the heroes can manipulate the valves on the rusting boxes, they must contend with a trio of chuuls imbued with Voidbracken’s toxic energies. The chuuls fight until slain.

VOIDBRACKEN CHUULS (3)

CREATURE 9

RARE **CE** **LARGE** **ABERRATION** **AMPHIBIOUS**
Variant chuul (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 64)

Perception +18; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Aklo, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +21, Nature +16, Stealth +17, Survival +16

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

AC 31; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +18, **Will** +15

HP 140; **Immunities** poison

Attack of Opportunity

Speed 30 feet, swim 25 feet

Melee claw +22 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+12 bludgeoning plus Grab

Constrict 1d8+12 bludgeoning, DC 28 (grabbed by claws only)

Draining Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 28 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** drained 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** drained 2 (1 round)

Mind Feeding **Requirements** A drained creature is grabbed by the chuul’s tentacles; **Effect** The creature takes 3d6 mental damage.

Swamp Stride The Voidbracken chuul ignores difficult terrain and greater difficult terrain in swamps.

Tentacle Transfer **Requirements** The Voidbracken chuul has a creature grabbed; **Effect** The chuul transfers the grabbed creature from its claws to its tentacles, or vice versa. The creature is exposed to the chuul’s draining venom when transferred into the tentacles and at the start of each of the chuul’s turns if it remains grabbed by the tentacles.

C16. PERILOUS CONTROLS

SEVERE 10

Swamp water floods much of this cave. Three small islands each hold a metal box with a rusty wheel.

DESTROYING BELCORRA

Belcorra only stops rejuvenating once she completes her goal of inflicting murderous revenge upon Absalom—but there is another way to end her villainy for good. Nhimbalothe, the devourer of spirits, can utterly annihilate the ghost so she troubles the world no longer. Drawing the reclusive and inhuman Nhimbalothe’s attention isn’t easy, but Belcorra laid the groundwork for this by relying so heavily upon the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens*. Nhimbalothe is already inclined to turn her spirit-consuming attention to Belcorra because Belcorra has made frequent use of the glimmers of Nhimbalothe’s essence within the item. The heroes must strengthen this contact by imbuing Belcorra with the splinters of Nhimbalothe’s essence in the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens*, the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens*, and the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens* (it’s easier to do so via the *Fulcrum Lattice*, but that item isn’t strictly required). Each splinter gives Belcorra a bit more power, but all three together (building upon her past use of the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens*) draw Nhimbalothe’s dread gaze to her ghostly devotee.

The murky water in this room looks no deeper than the swamp in area **C15**, but it’s 25 feet deep. The heroes will likely need to swim to the islands. Fortunately, the air in this cavern isn’t as toxic as that in area **C15**.

The three wheels on the islands control the dam in area **C15**. If all are turned fully clockwise (requiring three Interact actions each) while all the valves in area **C15** are positioned “on,” the dam there grinds downward, releasing a cascade of fetid swamp water. This influx raises the water level here and in area **C15** by several inches.

Creatures: Lurking under the water are a pair of dread dhuthorexexes that fight intruders to the death.

DREAD DHUTHOREXES (2)

CREATURE 11

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Initiative Perception +22

C17. INFESTED REEDS

LOW 10

This room is usually filled a foot deep with swamp water that drains from the Empty Vault when the dam connected to area **C15** is closed. The heroes most likely enter this area from area **C15** after lowering the dam; if they do, they’ve completed the Challenge of the Swamp.

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A circular pool of swamp water sits at the center of this square chamber. The pool is fed by a channel in the west wall, between two sets of black stone double doors. The water flows out to the north, through a metal dam. A thick knot of writhing reeds, like a grotesque tree, rises from the pool.

The pool and channels are only six inches deep, which is why the room floods so easily when the dam is closed.

Creature: The writhing here is caused by an isqulug infestation. When the heroes arrive, the grotesque aberration moves out of the reeds to attack. While a malevolent creature, it's not affiliated with Nhimbalothe and recalls very little about how its larvae came here ages ago. If reduced to fewer than 150 Hit Points, the isqulug casts *control water* to raise the water in this room by 10 feet and, it hopes, gain an advantage in the fight. When destroyed, its larvae scatter in the water and slip into the swamp below—in time, to grow a new host body.

ISQULUG

CREATURE 11

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 149

Initiative Perception +24

C18. MAW OF THE GODDESS

LOW 10

The vaulted ceiling of this massive chamber reaches eighty feet high and is carved with intricate patterns of bones, swamp weeds, and misty swirls. To the south stands a huge dais, its stone carved into crooked, cracked teeth. Upon the dais rests a massive skull, its eye sockets empty and its visage menacing. A channel of filthy water cuts across this room, emerging from the base of the walls on the east and west side. Double doors bracket each channel outlet.

The wall behind the giant skull hides a secret door, partially outlined in moisture and easier to find than normal. A successful DC 20 Perception check while Searching this area locates it.

Creature: If the heroes have yet to defeat Lady's Whisper, it is waiting on the dais. It doesn't point toward any direction, but instead walks slowly toward the heroes. It whispers, "I know that you are pretenders. Defilers. You should not be here. Nhimbalothe thinks you serve some purpose to her plans, but I disagree." Lady's Whisper then attacks to stop the heroes' progress. It uses its unwilling teleportation ability to shunt the heroes into area C14 if it can, so they have to take the time to come around through the swamp again. Lady's Whisper fights until destroyed.

LADY'S WHISPER

CREATURE 11

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Initiative Perception +25

C19. PASSAGE TO THE DEPTHS

SEVERE 10

A smooth, natural cavern winds its way through the darkness, ending in a larger chamber with a wide pit at the far side. A corpse is slumped at the pit's edge.

The pit is hundreds of feet deep and leads to even darker and stranger places in the Darklands. Its challenges are beyond the scope of this adventure.

The corpse is a messily killed humanoid of a strange appearance: two heads and a chitinous body. The irlgaunt in the pit hollowed it out and filled it with gravel, so it makes a clattering noise when disturbed unless it's handled very carefully.

Creatures: Although this passage hasn't been used in centuries, it's not wholly abandoned. A crab-like irlgaunt from deeper in the Darklands lurks in the pit. When the irlgaunt hears activity in the room above, such as the clattering of gravel from the gruesome alarm it made, it skitters up the pit and arrives in 2 rounds. It retreats, abandoning its potential meal, if reduced to fewer than 50 Hit Points.

IRLGAUNT

CREATURE 13

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 148

Initiative Perception +24

Treasure: The odd corpse still wears a strange jeweled torc worth 500 gp.

C20. EMPTY VAULT

EXTREME 10

This strangely shaped chamber is humid and oppressively clammy. The room's four wings each contain a massive pool of bubbling swamp water. Flickering motes of light and darkness play underneath the surface of the pools. The chamber's center is partially blocked by a circle of towering black standing stones, which crackle with eerie energy that shoots up into a shaft in the ceiling. Seven narrow channels, as though dug into the stone by a seven-fingered hand, run from each pool and three of the walls to a moat in the center of the room. From there, the water flows under the wall to the east, between a pair of black stone double doors. An island in the moat holds a smooth altar topped with a black lens the size of a fist.

The Empty Vault has always been a generation pit for the wisps who serve Nhimbalothe. A funnel of swamp, despair, and ghostly energies, it is mystically connected to the various swamp plant basins throughout the lower Abomination Vaults. Any follower of Nhimbalothe can telepathically communicate with wisps adjacent to the basins from here.

The Empty Vault drew Belcorra's soul after the Roseguard killed her, and her ghost reappeared here 500 years after the most traumatic event in her life—not her death, but her family's exile from Absalom. Belcorra can't leave this chamber for long, so she uses her wisp proxies and bound agents to enact her will throughout the Abomination Vaults. She keeps the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens* on the altar to restore its energies; while here, it can regain its glimmers of Nhimbaloth's essence, but this takes time.

The seven swamp water rivulets are both dangerous and noxious, as they mark where Nhimbaloth once touched the world. It's a simple matter to step over them, but they pull unpleasantly at the life energy of anyone who crosses them. At the end of any turn in which a hero crosses a rivulet (whether by Striding, Stepping, Flying, or any other means), the hero must succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude save or become doomed 1. This DC increases by 2 for each additional unique rivulet crossed during that turn (for example, a hero who crosses over 3 rivulets in their turn must make a DC 26 Fortitude saving throw). The doomed condition is cumulative on subsequent rounds. Crossing the pools doesn't have this effect, so the heroes might learn that there are safer ways to move about the room than simply walking in a direct line. The rivulets have no effect on followers of Nhimbaloth, including Belcorra and the dread wisps.

The black stone menhirs help support *Gauntlight*'s weight and emit the twisting ribbon of eerie energy that writhes up the shaft through area **A37** and **B28**. Belcorra's connection to *Gauntlight* means she can manipulate this ribbon of energy to power the artifact.

Creatures: If Belcorra hasn't yet rejuvenated, the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens* automatically rejuvenates her when the heroes arrive. She is so incensed that another group of adventurers would dare to oppose her in her sanctum that she attacks with her full fury. Belcorra focuses her attacks on anyone who carries *fulcrum lenses*, especially a hero who carries them in the *Fulcrum Lattice*. She realizes that the lenses are potent weapons that can be used against her.

There is one soul feeder here at all times. If the heroes presented souls to the soul feeders in area **C8**, they've come here and also fight at Belcorra's side; this makes the encounter particularly challenging!

Belcorra and the soul feeders use the menhirs for cover as they dart about, hoping to draw the heroes over the doom-inducing rivulets of swamp water. When the heroes infuse Belcorra with splinters in the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens*, the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens*, and the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens*, Nhimbaloth comes for her and she is forever destroyed. When the heroes do this, proceed to Nhimbaloth's Entrance, below.

BELCORRA HARUVEX

CREATURE 12

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Initiative Perception +22

SOUL FEEDERS (1 TO 4)

CREATURE 10

Elite dread wisps (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, page 81)

Initiative Perception +22

Nhimbaloth's Entrance

Once the heroes have infused Belcorra with all three of Nhimbaloth's splinters, the earth shakes. A tremendous and hideous wail emanates from somewhere beyond this chamber—indeed, it seems, from somewhere beyond the Material Plane. All creatures in the Abomination Vaults must succeed a DC 30 Will save or become frightened 3 (a creature that critically fails is also paralyzed for 1d4 rounds). At the start of the following round, the essence of Nhimbaloth pervades the room.

A terrible, blackish-gray mist seeps into the room. It stinks of a fetid bog and leaves a layer of cloying, slimy water upon everything it passes. The mist twists in shape and form, with seven-fingered tentacles appearing and disappearing in the fog.

This misty incarnation can't be attacked or damaged. It flows into Belcorra, who shrieks, "No! I deserve your power, not your attention! My death is full of rage and strength—it is not empty!" Despite these protestations, Belcorra's form is pulled apart into the mist, and the mist vanishes.

An immense grinding noise comes from high above. *Gauntlight*, Belcorra's greatest work, is collapsing, one level at a time. With each passing round, the artifact drops one dungeon level along the lighthouse's footprint, obliterating anything directly beneath it. In the 9th round, it collapses into this chamber, destroying everything here—by then, the heroes would best be gone.

Conclusion

With Belcorra destroyed, Otari and Absalom are safe from her spiteful schemes. The heroes receive a warm welcome when they return to Otari, and everyone wants to hear their tales over a friendly fire, good food, and more than a few drinks. The heroes are always welcome in Otari and their stories are told, retold, and embellished upon for generations.

Gauntlight is no more, and only the pit in the Fogfen marks the spot it once stood. The dangers lurking in the Abomination Vaults might one day regain their strength and menace the surface—but those are tales for other heroes.

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The banks of the River of Souls brushes against every world, for when a mortal dies, their spirit steps out of their body to cross over these banks on the first step toward the afterlife. Yet, as with most rivers, predators lurk along these perilous banks. Night hags, astradaemons, devourers, and worse stalk the River, eager to pluck souls free and feed on them. Dread Nhimbaloth, the Empty Death, doesn't deign to hunt the shores of the River of Souls alongside these predators—she instead feeds upon the predators themselves, reveling in consuming souls already being digested in the gullets of those who would deem themselves the apex hunters of the dead.

Nhimbaloth uses the shores of the River of Souls to manifest upon the universe's countless worlds, but she can't just do so whenever she wills it. Before the Empty Death can manifest within a world, it must first endure a cataclysm so vast that the outflow of the dead into the River of Souls weakens the boundaries between life and death. When such massive casualties sufficiently thin these borders, she can drift in through the cracks and stain what she finds. The resulting blurring between the River of Souls and its shore is metaphysically akin to the muddled boundary of a swamp. It's no coincidence that when Nhimbaloth emerges into a world, she chooses to dwell in its remote swamplands. Nhimbaloth isn't a glutton—she's endlessly patient and can linger on a world for centuries before being noticed.

More often, her presence in an isolated swampland simply festers, turning a region of natural beauty into a dangerous fen that draws all manner of monsters to its fetid heart. Such lands call to will-o'-wisps; for these feeders of fears, the ruin wrought by the Empty Death is like a fine wine of unparalleled vintage.

"The wind, her voice;
The wisp, her eye;
Your life, her choice;
Your lot, to die."
—The Whispering Reeds

In time, many of these wisps realize the truth of the influence in their chosen haunts, and in most cases, these ravenous aberrations become Empty Death's most fervent worshippers.

Personification and Realm

While Dread Nhimbaloth has no physical body of her own, she has been known to manifest a perceivable shape under the perfect conditions, growing visible after consuming a huge quantity of souls as an empty

glass's contours becomes more defined once filled with liquid. In this form, Nhimbaloth appears as a twisting melted mass of glistening blue fluid with eyes the shape of yellow four-pointed stars, with a tangle of translucent tentacles extending in every direction from the fluid. The tentacles' tips split into seven smaller tendrils, and where these "hands" touch the world, they leave her mark behind—a ring of seven strange divots where vegetation refuses to grow, stone grows chalky, and flesh festers as if it had forgotten how to heal. The position of the stars in the sky, the number of dead trapped within the swamp, and the time of year all seem to play a part in determining when this shadow of what might have once been Nhimbaloth's body can appear, as does the presence of her cultists, but the manifestation rarely persists for long. Always, the manifestation ends in a sudden consumption from within when the Empty Death retreats to her domain, leaving behind a dead swampland of toxic waters and mindless undeath.

This form often appears in illustrations that depict the Empty Death, though Nhimbaloth is also portrayed as a ghostly human woman with a single yellow eye in the shape of a four-pointed star filling her otherwise blank face, and a long, writhing mane

NHIMBALOTH'S INSPIRATION

H. P. Lovecraft encouraged others to add to the mythos of eldritch beings he created to populate his weird fiction, and it was in this tradition that I first created Nhimbalothe as an antagonist for my own stories and roleplaying campaigns. Largely inspired by the mysterious horror lurking behind nature's veil in Algernon Blackwood's classic short story "The Willows," and with some valuable advice on Outer God naming conventions from the fine folks at Chaosium, Nhimbalothe has become one of my proudest additions to the ever-expanding Lovecraft Mythos. —James Jacobs

of ghostly, seven-fingered tentacles as hair wraps around her nearly skeletal body in a smoky shroud. This version of her is surely the product of an artist's nightmare, yet cults have adopted it as their own.

Nhimbalothe's realm is a twofold domain. She uses the banks of the River of Souls as a hunting ground and a highway to travel from world to world but supposedly dwells on a distant, dead planet. The name of this domain has been lost to time; the faithful of Nhimbalothe refer to it in whispers only as Voidbracken. Here, an ancient battle between Nhimbalothe and another power took place (most myths suggest her foe was Pharasma) that resulted in the destruction of the Empty Death's body. This conflict didn't result in her death, however, and her cult fondly views the event as an evolution—for without a body, she could now come and go as she pleased along the shores of the River of Souls. Voidbracken spins still in the Dark Tapestry, wandering aimlessly through the universe but driven always by Nhimbalothe's will, and when it draws near an inhabited system, the souls of the living are drawn from their mortal shells in a cataclysm referred to in rare surviving accounts as the Deadtide. According to certain passages scribed in ancient texts like the *Necronomicon*, many of the Great Old Ones and Outer Gods must wait for the stars to align just right to manifest. This is quite literally true in Nhimbalothe's case. Eventually, her Deadtides will claim enough lives so that Nhimbalothe's death will die; the accumulated spiritual energy she has digested will ultimately undo her ancient defeat, allowing her to once more exist as a physical being.

She will rise from death hungrier than ever.

Dogma and Worshippers

Nhimbalothe's creed and worship are entirely the product of her cultists, as the Empty Death has little interest in providing her worshippers with direct inspiration or direction. This tradition echoes the pattern established with all other cults centered on entities of the Elder Mythos who similarly care not for their worshippers. Because of this lack of divine direction, while their worshippers strive to accomplish specific goals, they aren't limited by anathemas.

In Nhimbalothe's case, her worshippers seek to create undead—particularly ghosts and other incorporeal creatures—to provide sustenance for their eldritch icon. They also feast upon carnivores at their ceremonies, aping Nhimbalothe's predation upon soul-eating monsters. Her faith is all but unknown in urban areas, but in isolated swamp villages, worship of the Empty Death can suffuse entire settlements. In such instances, the cult typically builds the shell of a mainstream church to serve as a front and satisfy any curious outsiders passing through, while worshipping their goddess at a hidden location in the heart of the night.

Lower-level clerics of Nhimbalothe dress in whatever corpse's attire is commonly used in their society's burial rites, choosing to wear a "final suit" or "last gown" during their rituals in hopes that sweet oblivion might answer their prayers. Cult leaders, however, often eschew this tradition, instead wearing dark green or gray hooded robes adorned with tangled sheets of clinging moss and skull-shaped masks adorned with veils of additional moss. The cultists favor flails in combat; these weapons often have heads shaped into four-pointed stars with the flail's chain attached to the center of the star and handles wrapped in moss and tanned flesh stripped from the dead.

Humanoids are far from the Empty Death's only worshippers. As mentioned, will-o'-wisps and their kin find much to admire in the sinister aura Nhimbalothe's presence brings to desolate swamplands, and it doesn't take long for them to take up faith in the Empty Death, almost as if feeding on fear spurred by her influence infects the wisps with devotion to her faith. Marsh giants have also been known to venerate Nhimbalothe under names like "Bogmother," "The Rushlight Woman," "Swampfire Queen," or the like, although they pray to her more as a patron of swampland than anything else. Vampiric mists commonly appear in her swamplands as well, and many scholars have nervously wondered about the implied connection between Nhimbalothe's mark and the clusters of seven perfectly spaced punctures vampiric mists leave in the bodies of those they've fed upon through their misty tendrils.

Temples and Shrines

Often, the members of a cult of the Empty Death consist of the truly desperate, those with little money and less hope. They conduct their worship in their homes, or what passes as a home—partially collapsed shacks, abandoned barns, or even slumped survivalists' shelters all suffice for the worship of Nhimbalothe. The rarer cults led by deviants of means construct larger structures to honor Nhimbalothe and often build these structures as mockeries of other churches by including stained glass windows, mosaics, and other works of art that honor the Outer Goddess. In such cases, the structure often serves a secondary purpose, such as a castle, a manor house, or the like. Curiously, these larger structures often share a particular feature: a tower that serves as a beacon or lighthouse as a way to honor will-o'-wisp, which the cult adore. To her followers, will-o'-wisps are Nhimbalothe's eyes, and her gaze looks out upon the world through the lambent glow of these supernatural predators. A beacon or lighthouse in a temple thus symbolizes a will-o'-wisp, but also, they believe it gives Nhimbalothe a lens through which to gaze upon the world.

Nhimbalothe's symbol is a skull with moss stuffed into its jaws, although her cultists often create variants of it as crude dolls or effigies of moss-caked bones and fragments of skulls. Temples that can afford to be open about their affiliation with the goddess often adorn their structures with skulls that have moss carefully grown into soggy, vermin-infested beards or with moss draperies that hang down over archways to form moist curtains in place of proper doors.

A Priest's Role

As with most cults of the Elder Mythos, the majority of Nhimbalothe's devout don't worship out of respect or adoration so much as fear. For them, the concept of death isn't what evokes nightmare, but the fear of what judgment might await in the afterlife is what drives most to her faith. Those who have sinned, who have committed heresy against a prior faith, or who simply live in constant terror of what Pharasma might say to them when they reach her throne instead seek the oblivion offered by Nhimbalothe. They seek not to escape death or life, but to escape what they fear will be an even worse afterlife.

Yet this is not the only motive that draws worshippers to her fold. Some, rather than being driven by a fear of the afterlife, are enticed by the opportunity to bask in the misery and despair of others. These members are some of the most awful in the sect, for they use the promise of oblivion that Nhimbalothe offers to those who worship her as a lure to draw in the desperate

to aid their own nefarious plots. Some seek to use these eager-for-oblivion zealots as disposable armies for acts of vengeance or rage; others draw upon these worshippers as sacrifices to fuel abhorrent rituals or to craft horrific magic items.

Even these predators of the desperate pale in comparison to the worst of Nhimbalothe's worshippers—nihilists who fully understand the Empty Death and see in her the ultimate tool to destroy a world they've grown to loathe. For these cultists, nothing less than using the Voidbracken to bring a Deadtide upon their world will suffice. They might have a hidden plan to escape the world the moment all life is ended; they might even seek their own oblivion or believe that Nhimbalothe herself might reward them with dominion over a dead world. Regardless of their intent, these doomsday shepherds are the most dangerous of the Empty Death's worshippers.

Holidays

Cults of Nhimbalothe that exist in small communities under the guise of a different religion take pains to observe that faith's holidays if visitors or (more rarely) townsfolk don't know their gathering's true faith, but apart from that, worshippers of the Empty Death don't observe regular holidays or religious festivals—with one unusual exception. The exact date on which Nhimbalothe's body was taken from her and Voidbracken was denuded of life is unknown, so each cult chooses one day of import to observe this anniversary. The fact that no one knows the length of Voidbracken's year makes this ritual even more arbitrary; regardless, her faithful believe that on one of these so-called Void Dawns, the sun won't rise upon the world and all life will be snuffed in a Deadtide. Cultists celebrate the night leading to a Void Dawn with a gluttonous feast consisting of all manner of carnivores and monsters—meals they often make during the proceedings while the “food” still lives. When the sun inevitably rises, the cultists choose one of their own as the final feast in atonement for failing to bring the Deadtide to their world.

Aphorisms

Worshippers of Nhimbalothe fondly quote and recite their favorite tales from *The Whispering Reeds*, each of which has a number of memorable and haunting lines. However, a variant of an infamous quote from the *Necronomicon* particularly resonates with all of her worshippers.

Long Dream the Dead, Yet Even Death Can Die: To many, the notion of death is akin to an eternal slumber, a dawnless rest in which the soul experiences

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an afterlife in the way a sleeping person could dream several different lives in the span of a single night. Whether a dreamer wakes with the dawn or dies in their sleep, all dreams eventually come to an end. Just as when the Empty Death comes to call, even death knows oblivion—and even death may die.

Holy Text

Mentions of Nhimbalothe are rare, even for the esoteric topic of the Outer Gods. The dread *Necronomicon* mentions her, and certain translations of that book purportedly contain descriptions of her true form, which might be the only place where Nhimbalothe's true form is set down in print. This information isn't even present in the text most often associated with her worship: a rare tome called *The Whispering Reeds*.

The genesis of *The Whispering Reeds* lies not in those who worship the Empty Death, but in those who

sought to oppose her. The book consists of stories, myths, parables, and encounters with Nhimbalothe gathered from hundreds of regions in dozens of worlds. The compiler's name has been long forgotten, as they neglected to name themselves in the text. This matters not to those who worship Nhimbalothe, nor does the fact that the author originally penned the book for the purpose of cataloging the ways in which Nhimbalothe's influence could be opposed. The very act of collecting these old stories of the Empty Death brushing against the world had the opposite effect, and now, those who seek to draw their goddess's attention to their world uses *The Whispering Reeds* to spread stories of her previous visits.

Details on this potent, cursed work appear on page 78 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #163: Ruins of Gauntlight*.

Relations with Other Religions

Nhimbalothe doesn't consort with other gods, although often her visitations upon the wilderness force confrontations with other faiths. In particular, Gozreh and Desna oppose her influence—the former because of the proliferation of unnatural elements that taint swamplands, and the latter out of a mixture of anger and fear that her flock might stumble into Nhimbalothe's clutches accidentally while exploring the wilds. The Eldest of the First World also oppose Nhimbalothe, whose parasitic tendrils can occasionally drift into that plane through fey gates and portals. Even after driving out the Empty Death, small cults of fey who have fallen under her sway inevitably remain.

Pharasma opposes Nhimbalothe for multiple reasons. Those who perish in lands haunted by the latter's presence tend to rise as ghosts. Moreover, the Empty Death's habit of consuming those ghosts has rightly angered Pharasma, for rather than being released to the Boneyard, the consumed souls simply disappear. One might assume that such an affront to the cycle of life and death would compel Pharasma into a direct confrontation with Nhimbalothe, and indeed, certain ancient texts tell of such a clash between the two goddesses at the very dawn of mortal civilization. The titanic battle left neither goddess the victor.



Priest of Nhimbalothe

Nhimbaloth learned to hide her predations upon the world so that even Pharasma can't readily find her, and one particularly blasphemous tale in *The Whispering Reeds* speaks of a hidden scar that Pharasma bears to this day as a reminder of her failed attempt to decisively defeat the Empty Death—a scar, supposedly, in the pattern of seven divots of flesh where Nhimbaloth fed upon the essence of the Goddess of Death.

Whether or not this myth has any basis in fact, the faithful of Pharasma view Nhimbaloth and her cult with a combination of hatred and fearful respect. Only the most devout and powerful of Pharasma's worshippers receive leave to hunt Nhimbaloth's faithful, and they work hard to prevent lay worshippers from learning much of the Empty Death. Their justification—that Nhimbaloth feeds only on ghosts, and that by defeating or preventing the formation of theses undead, they strike blows against the Empty Death—reads to some as an excuse.



Nhimbaloth (CE)

The Empty Death's sphere of influence encompasses despair, ghosts, and swamps. As with most of the Outer Gods, Nhimbaloth cares nothing for those who worship her (and thus her clerics have no key anathemas), yet those who venerate the Empty Death nonetheless toil in vain to attract her favor.

Edicts create undead (particularly incorporeal undead), feast upon carnivores that have recently feasted upon others

Anathema none

Follower Alignments CE

DEVOTEES BENEFITS

Divine Font harm

Divine Skill Nature

Favored Weapon flail

Domains decay (*Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 112), nature, undeath, void (*Gods & Magic* 119)

Alternate Domains abominations (see below), delirium (*Gods & Magic* 113)

Cleric Spells 1st: *grim tendrils*, 2nd: *entangle*, 5th: *cloudkill*

New Rules

ABOMINATIONS DOMAIN

You seek to instill abhorrence and horror in those around you.

Domain Spell: *lift nature's caul*

Advanced Domain Spell: *fearful feast*

LIFT NATURE'S CAUL

FOCUS 1

UNCOMMON FEAR ILLUSION VISUAL

Cast ☞ somatic, verbal

Range 5-foot emanation; **Targets** creatures in the area

Saving Throw Will; **Duration** varies

With a wave of the hand, you cause the targets to see the world around them as if a gauzy film had been lifted away to expose the truth that lies below their perceived reality. Natural features they can see grow twisted and horrendous, structures appear distorted and ruined, and objects seem warped and alien. This alternate vision fades quickly, but the glimpse beyond the natural world lingers for the spell's duration.

Aberrations or worshippers of Outer Gods or Great Old Ones are bolstered by this vision of warped reality and gain a +1 status bonus to Will saving throws and attack rolls for 1 minute, while all other creatures must attempt a Will saving throw.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected and temporarily immune for 1 hour.

Success The creature is sickened 1.

Failure The creature is stupefied 1 for 1 minute and frightened 1.

Critical Failure The creature is stupefied 1 for 1 minute and frightened 2. It can't reduce the value of its frightened condition below 1 as long as it remains stupefied by this spell.

Heightened (+2) You increase the area by 5 feet and the duration of the stupefied condition by 1 minute.

FEARFUL FEAST

FOCUS 4

UNCOMMON FEAR MENTAL NECROMANCY

Cast ☞ somatic; **Trigger** A creature within range becomes frightened.

Range 30 feet; **Targets** the triggering creature

Saving Throw Will; **Duration** varies

You open your mouth wide and inhale sharply; you draw in the bravery, self-confidence, and hope to which the frightened target clings and then strip away the target's false assumption that these fragile emotions can save them from the oblivion of terror.

You deal 6d4 mental damage to the creature, which must attempt a Will saving throw.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature's frightened condition increases by 1, and it takes half damage.

Failure The creature's frightened condition increases by 2, and it takes full damage; you regain Hit Points equal to half the damage the target takes.

Critical Failure The creature's frightened condition increases by 3 and it takes double damage; you regain Hit Points equal to half the damage the target takes.

Heightened (+1) The damage increases by 2d4.

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Ghosts need no introduction. Perhaps no other monster carries the sheer cultural heft of the humble phantom, the ability to conjure a vivid image with the simple words “ghost story.” The oldest recognizable literary ghost story in Western literature dates to Pliny the Younger in the 1st century CE, and already includes a mysterious haunting, a spooky house, and an unquiet spirit. Later masters of the form have included Alejandro Amenábar, Charles Dickens, Lafcadio Hearn, Susan Hill, Samantha Hunt, M. R. James, Stephen King, Shirley Jackson, Edith Nesbit, Helen Oyeyemi, and Joe Ruby and Ken Spears (creators of *Scooby-Doo*), as well as Steven Spielberg.

In Golarion, as in most of fiction, a ghost arises when a person dies with some manner of unfinished business, and then continues to haunt until this is resolved—their killer is brought to justice, they guide a descendant to a buried treasure, and so forth. Then, and only then, can the ghost be permanently set to rest.

Using Ghosts

In Pathfinder, until a ghost’s particular unfinished business is resolved, it can’t be permanently destroyed. This means that ghosts make poor random encounters or nameless minions—other undead such as wraiths are better suited for that role. Rather, every ghost is a unique individual, whether they’re a tragic victim or an evil monster, with a story that the heroes must engage with if they are to permanently deal with the spirit. With that in mind, here are a few elements GMs should keep in mind when creating these stories.

Remember the Mystery: A ghost story is, at heart, an investigation. Often, laying a ghost to rest is as simple as a few hours work with a shovel and a short prayer. The challenge lies in knowing where to dig.

What anchors ghosts to the mortal world is usually not immediately obvious, as they are rarely straightforward about their aims in their encounters with mortals. Heroes faced with a ghost usually want

to learn how and why the ghost died and what might be keeping it around. This might involve looking for clues at the scene of the haunting, consulting church or civic records, speaking to those who knew the ghost, or even trying to talk to the ghost directly. It’s not uncommon for ghost hunters to require a couple of attempts to determine precisely what is keeping a ghost around, though GMs should be careful to provide heroes with plenty of avenues for investigation.

Remember the Tragedy: Elderly people who die in bed surrounded by loving family rarely become ghosts. A ghost arises because, when the person dies, there is something that they want, a desire they feel more keenly than even the pull to pass on into death. This is very rarely a happy thing.

Most often, ghosts remain because something went horribly wrong. Murder victims are likely candidates for ghosts. People who feel they have been deeply wronged, such as star-crossed lovers or slandered innocents, may also return from the dead. Some ghosts feel that they are still needed in the land of the living, and so remain to watch over their descendants or guard their treasure. The most frightful ghosts are those that were evil in life and know no pleasant eternity awaits them in the Great Beyond. Such a ghost behaves more like a demon than a shade, and will need exorcisms or other extreme measures to defeat.

Remember the Symbolism: Ghosts are not logical entities. Jacob Marley from Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol* wore chains attached to lockboxes to symbolize his greed and miserliness. Beetlejuice from the eponymous movie wore a shabby suit with prison stripes, symbolic of both his sleazy, con-artist nature and his desire to escape death. Ghosts are driven by emotion, by symbolism, by a sort of thematic poetry that inflects everything they do and everything they are. When designing a ghost, giving it a distinctive style or meaningful bit of symbolism is more important than strict internal logic.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The following are some reasons a ghost could rise.

- Avenging their death (emphasis can be on justice or on vengeance).
- Obtaining a proper burial (or a reconsecrated grave).
- Protecting a cherished person, place, or thing.
- Reconciling with a loved one.
- Finishing a feud with a rival.
- Clearing their name.
- Finishing a life-consuming task (write a book, complete some significant research).
- Making sure their treasure or prize is found and not lost to the ages.
- Making sure their treasure or prize is never found or taken away.
- Seeking forgiveness for past crimes or sins.

Ghosts of the Inner Sea Region

The following are some of Golarion's notable ghosts.

Ammelon VI: In life, Ammelon VI was the last cyclops patriarch of Ghol-Gan, though by Ammelon's day the once-great land of Ghol-Gan had fallen far. Prophecy and sun worship had given way to mass sacrifice and the invocation of unearthly gods. Ammelon ruled over this blood-maddened faith from the secretive temple complex of Xanthuun, in the present-day Sodden Lands. When he and his kingdom perished during Earthfall, that disaster was merely the final blow.

In life, Ammelon ruled cruelly and covetously; his death rendered him spiteful as well. A shadowy horror with a single, flickering ember of an eye, he guards wonders that brings him no joy, purely so that none may claim to own Ammelon VI's treasure—and the wealth of even a decaying empire is no small thing.

The Angel of Egorian: According to a famous story, if one walks by Egorian's opera house at night, one might hear someone singing: a beautiful, high countertenor that enchants the ear. It seems to come from nearby, but nowhere quite in particular, and might seem like one of Cheliox's divas practicing a piece, albeit someone unfamiliar to the listener. But if the listener is wise, they'll leave quickly, for those who linger find that the song never ends. It follows them home, a beautiful but ceaseless sound that drives them to lose themselves and worse.

No one has seen the Angel, but local historians suspect that it to be the ghost of Beacien Persix, a

beautiful young man who died of blood poisoning in 4789 AR, just weeks after being accepted into the opera house's chorus. Opera lover, ex-Hellknight, and Angel-survivor Paracount Damius Julistarc is rumored to have taken an interest in the mystery.

Geb: The arch-necromancer Geb has fair claim to be the most powerful ghost on Golarion, by a good margin. Born millennia ago, Geb founded his namesake country, only to lead it in a centuries-long war against his rival, the archmage Nex. In 576 AR, Nex disappeared and Geb seemed to have won, but uncertainty gnawed at the necromancer until he committed ritual suicide in 632 AR. In the years since, Geb has plotted and worried and wondered, chained to the mortal realm until he is certain that he has defeated Nex once and for all.

For most of the last thousand-odd years, Geb was content to leave the lich queen Arazni in charge of his land, but with Arazni's disappearance and signs of Nex's return growing, the arch-ghost has stirred to activity once more. His emissaries travel again to living and dead alike, and every night new horrors make the pilgrimage to the land of the undead, all in preparation for a confrontation that will shake the world.

The Ghosts of Cosymnos: Impoverished and obscure, House Cosymnos holds but a single claim to fame among Oppara's aristocracy: its manor at the edge of Westpark is likely the most haunted house in all of Taldor's capital. While a few ghosts, such as the Woman in the Veil, have been reported for centuries, others are more recent manifestations, including the horrific Eyeless Soldier, the violent Bloody Heron, and the silent and drifting Wisp. The Marquis and Marquess Cosymnos are considered either heroes or fools for remaining in the residence.

What few realize is that most of the ghosts are of quite recent vintage, products of a Cult of Shax run by the Cosymnoses. The poor spirits seek only to keep people away from their killers, but are themselves harried by the Bloody Heron, a bound demon of vile temper.

Kaltia, the Haunter of the Hills: According to local legend, Kaltia was a young and idealistic dwarven merchant, member of some clan that dwelled in the general vicinity of Lastwall. Seeing the troubles caused by the endless strife between her people and the orcs of Belkzen, she hatched a scheme to bring peace, inviting orc emissaries to her clan. But the horrified elders saw only treachery in her actions and killed both the emissaries and Kaltia, leaving her body unburied in a ditch. A generation later, Kaltia's clan was gone, wiped out by the orcs.

Since then, Kaltia has haunted the hills around Hallein Town and is sometimes driven away, but she's

unable to pass on until she is properly buried. Since Lastwall's fall, the ragged ghost has ranged further afield, though as hostilities with Belkzen lessen in the wake of Tar-Baphon's return, the ghost has grown strange. Sometimes Kaltia attacks, marshaling wind and cold to her cause, while other times she shepherds innocents to safety, as few of the Gravelands' other dead will attack those in her company.

Duke Pieln Melcat: For generations, the House of Melcat had ruled over its Archduchy on the shores of Lake Encarthan, until the self-proclaimed living god Razmir came to its lands. Thrice he demanded Duke Melcat's fealty, and thrice he was refused. In consequence the sorcerer destroyed the duke's city of Aerduin with flame and ash. It lies in ruins still, now known as Aerduin's Folly, haunted by the whispers of the dead and tainted by the anguish of the burning.

The Duke of Melcat still walks the fallen walls of his city, drawing lesser ghosts to him by the strength of his will and the power of his hatred. Razmir took Melcat's life, his city, and his people, and the Duke will not rest until justice—or vengeance—is his.

Sahba al-Koriab: For years past counting, priests of Aroden maintained a small hermitage atop Arazlant Mox, highest and holiest of all the Kortos Mounts. Sustained in those unlivable heights by a miracle of Aroden, they perished when their god did—and one middle-aged initiate, Sahba al-Koriab, returned. Sahba simply refuses to leave the sacred site unattended and won't allow even the death of her god stop her. The ruined hermitage's few visitors report meeting a pleasant, patient Keleshite woman with a dry sense of humor, not realizing she was a ghost until she vanished when they looked away.

Special Abilities

Ghosts can select from the following special abilities in addition to those listed in the *Bestiary*. Of special note, several of abilities invoke the ghost's particular circumstances and death and can be used to guide heroes toward new avenues of investigation—possibly in exchange for a good share of their Hit Points.

BEATIFIC APPEARANCE

When dealing with ghosts, appearances can be deceiving. For every gory specter exists an innocent-looking spirit, their cherubic mien enhanced with magic to lull victims to their deaths.

Beatific Appearance ➤ (divine, enchantment)

Requirements A creature the ghost is aware of targets the ghost with an attack; **Effect** The ghost has an unusually pitiable appearance or can

change its features to look like someone close to the attacker, which causes the target to pull back on its attack. The triggering creature must attempt a Will save. On a failure, the creature takes a -1 circumstance penalty to its attack roll (-2 on a critical failure).

COLD SPOT

Ghosts are often associated with unnatural cold, and one of the first signs of a ghostly presence is an uncanny cold spot in the air.



Sahba al-Koriab

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FIGHTING GHOSTS

The heroes may decide not to take up arms against a particularly benign or tragic ghost, but battling a terrifying specter while attempting skill checks to lay it to rest can make for a thrilling climax to a story.

Incorporeal and infinitely variable, ghosts are difficult foes. At the same time, their site-bound nature makes them relatively easy to escape, and you should remind players of this if the heroes get in over their heads. If you expect the heroes to stand and fight, make sure that the party has access to suitable anti-ghost weapons or spells (*ghost touch* weapons, positive energy, or force effects).

Cold Spot (aura, cold, divine) The air within 5 feet of the ghost is supernaturally cold. Characters that enter or begin their turn in the ghost's aura take 1d6 cold damage per 3 levels the ghost has (basic Fortitude save).

CORPOREAL MANIFESTATION

Traditionally, ghosts are thought of as wispy, insubstantial things, but not all ghosts follow this rule.

Corporeal Manifestation ♦ (concentration) The ghost loses the incorporeal trait, temporarily increasing its Strength modifier to equal its Charisma modifier. The ghost loses its immunity to precision damage and its resistance to all damage while corporeal. The ghost can resume being incorporeal by using this action again.

DREAMWALKER

People who encounter ghosts are often plagued by nightmares, sometimes supernatural ones. Only powerful ghosts of 6th level or higher have this ability.

Dreamwalker (divine, illusion, mental) Anyone who meets the ghost or visits its bound site can become subject to this effect. The first time the subject sleeps after their ghostly encounter, they're targeted by a *nightmare* spell, with the nightmares being somehow related to the ghost. Most often this means that the subject relives the ghost's last moments alive, but there are other possibilities. If the ghost wishes, it can manipulate the dreams to send messages or even hold entire conversations with dreamers.

FADE

Ghosts are notorious for appearing and disappearing when least expected.

Fade ♦ (divine, illusion) The ghost becomes invisible until the beginning of its next turn.

FETCH

A fetch is a person's double, often associated with hauntings and considered a mark of great ill omen.

Fetch ♦♦ (divine, illusion) The ghost creates an illusory double of a creature. The fetch functions as a 2nd-level *illusory creature*, except that the ghost doesn't control the fetch, and the spell lasts for 1d4 hours instead of needing to Sustain the Spell. The fetch has a rudimentary intelligence and tries to imitate its original (it has a Deception skill value equal to the ghost's highest skill) but comes across as confused or vague. A ghost can have only one fetch at a time. If the creature doubled by the fetch encounters it, the creature must succeed at a Will save or become stupefied 1 (stupefied 2 on a Critical Failure) for as long as they can see the fetch.

GHOST STORM

Most ghosts can summon a wind to rattle a window or bang a shutter, but some angry spirits can do far worse.

Ghost Storm (air, aura, divine, evocation) Wind surrounds the ghost out to a range of 30 feet. The wind extinguishes small non-magical fires, disperses fog and mist, blows objects of light Bulk or less around, and pushes larger objects. Squares in the ghost's aura are difficult terrain and flying creatures are always considered to be moving against the wind (*Core Rulebook* 463). The ghost can dismiss or resume the wind as an action, which has the concentrate trait.

HAUNTED HOUSE

Ghosts tend to haunt a specific place, remaining for eternity within a tightly bound space. They might haunt their graves or the sites of their death, but either way they rarely venture far. In their home, though, a ghost holds great power.

Haunted House ♦ **Frequency** once every 10 minutes;

Effect The ghost extends its presence throughout its bound site until the end of its next turn. Within this area, the ghost can extend its senses, gaining the benefits of all-around vision, and can make ghostly hand attacks or use special abilities originating from any part of the area.

LYNCHPIN

Ghosts are typically thought of as solitary beings, but sometimes their will and rage are so strong that they drag others back from the grave as well.

Lynchpin (divine, necromancy) The ghost extends some of its nature to one or more undead of equal or lower level, who are connected to the ghost's story and unfinished business. These undead gain the ghost's Rejuvenation ability and can't be permanently destroyed so long as the ghost exists. If the ghost is laid to rest, all linked undead are likewise instantly destroyed. Linked undead

often, but not always, share the ghost's Site-Bound ability as well. The ghost doesn't have any control over such undead, and indeed the ghost and their partners in eternity may be unremittingly hostile to one another.

MEMENTO MORI

For most ghosts, death is a traumatic event, and an angry spirit is perfectly willing to share their pain with others.

Memento Mori ♦♦ (divine, illusion, mental)

The ghost causes one creature within 30 feet to relive the ghost's death. The target must succeed at a Will save or see and feel what the ghost did, taking 1d4 persistent mental damage per 2 levels the ghost has. All other creatures are concealed to the target until the persistent damage ends.

PHANSTAMAGORIA

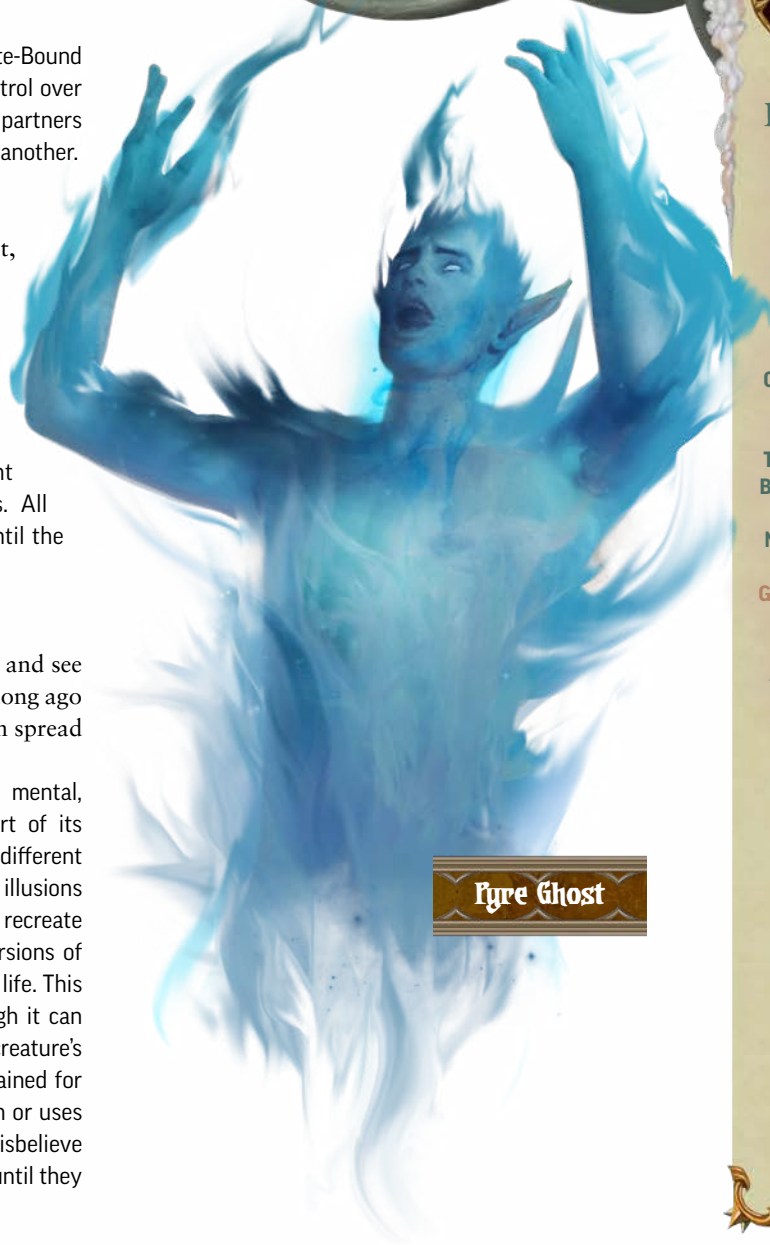
Ghosts are rarely aware of the passage of time and see no difference between the homes they lived in long ago and the ruins they haunt now. Some ghosts can spread that delusion to others.

Phantasmagoria ♦♦♦ (auditory, divine, illusion, mental, olfactory, visual) The ghost causes all or part of its bound site to look, sound, feel, and smell like a different kind of place, and can populate it with simple illusions of people or animals. Typically, the ghost can recreate only a handful of images, usually different versions of its bound site as it appeared during the ghost's life. This can't disguise any creatures in the area, though it can cause minor, cosmetic changes (like causing a creature's clothing to appear nicer for a party or bloodstained for a battle). Any creature that touches the illusion or uses the Seek action to examine it can attempt to disbelieve it. Creatures can't leave the area of the illusion until they successfully disbelieve it.

PYRE'S MEMORY

Burning is one of the most painful ways to die, and ghosts that burned to death are often more aggressive and violent than other incorporeal creatures. Their bound site is often scorched or scarred with some other evidence of fire.

Pyre's Memory ♦♦♦ (divine, evocation, fire) The ghost causes great gouts of flame to erupt without warning. The ghost picks three 5-foot squares within 30 feet. Creatures that start in or enter one of these squares take 1d6 fire damage per 2 levels the ghost has, subject to a basic Reflex save. The flames last for 1 minute and don't set other things alight unless the ghost wishes. If the ghost uses this ability again, it dismisses any existing flames.



Pyre Ghost

REVENANT

Not all ghosts try to possess the living. Some prefer to ride corpses instead, wrenching bodies from shallow graves to serve as their hosts.

Revenant ♦♦ or 1 hour; **Effect** The ghost possesses and transforms an adjacent corpse (this requires 2 actions if the ghost is possessing its own corpse; otherwise, it takes an hour). The possessed corpse uses the statistics of a non-incorporeal undead 2 levels lower than the ghost, and the ghost possesses it as if using the *possession* spell. The specific undead is determined by the nature of the ghost and the corpse—ghouls, wights, and dullahans are all common, but almost any undead is possible. If the ghost ceases to possess the corpse, the corporeal undead is immediately destroyed.

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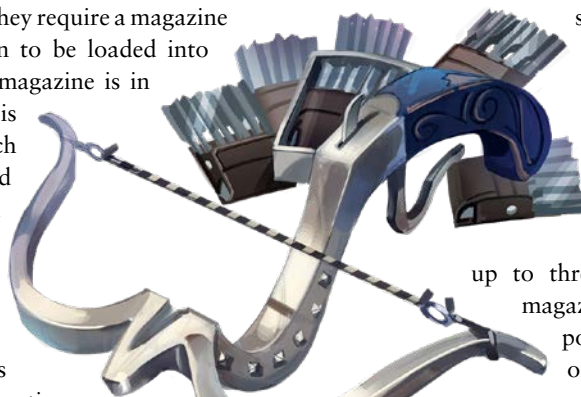
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Weapons and Adventuring Gear

Creatures the heroes encounter in this adventure use the following weapons and equipment. Urdefhans use shauth weapons in addition to their iconic rhoka swords, while drow of Yldaris use repeating hand crossbows.

NEW WEAPON TRAITS

Repeating: A repeating weapon is typically a type of crossbow that has a shorter reload time. These weapons can't be loaded with individual bolts like other crossbows; instead, they require a magazine of specialized ammunition to be loaded into a special slot. Once that magazine is in place, the ammunition is automatically loaded each time the weapon is cocked to fire, reducing its reload to the value in its reload entry (typically 0). When the ammunition runs out, a new magazine must be loaded, which requires a free hand and 3 Interact actions (to remove the old magazine, retrieve the new magazine, and slot the new magazine in place). These actions don't need to be consecutive.



Repeating Hand Crossbow
and Magazines

jagged and deadly weapons made from the alchemically strengthened teeth of dead urdefhans. Each weapon is typically named for the urdefhan whose teeth were forged into the weapon, which are often carried (and revered) by that urdefhan's descendants. Magical shauth blades allow an urdefhan wielder to channel their Wicked Bite ability through shauth blade Strikes.

Shauth Lash: This metal chain bears hook-like barbs made of alchemically strengthened urdefhan teeth. Magical shauth lashes have the same ability to channel an urdefhan wielder's Wicked Bite as magical shauth blades, and urdefhans hold these weapons with the same reverence as they do shauth blades.

GEAR DESCRIPTIONS

Shootist Bandolier: This leather bandolier holds up to three repeating hand crossbow magazines in leather pockets that pop open with the quick flick of a thumb. You reduce the reload time for a repeating hand crossbow magazine from the bandolier by 1, to a total of 2 actions. You can wear only one shootist bandolier at a time.

WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

Repeating Hand Crossbow: This weapon features an ingeniously designed catch mechanism at the top of the flight grove, just in front of the latch, which automatically loads a bolt from a magazine and resets the string each time the weapon is fired. A typical repeating hand crossbow magazine holds five bolts.

Rhoka Sword: These dual-bladed swords are commonly used by urdefhan warriors.

Shauth Blade: These strange curved blades are

Alchemical Items

The following alchemical items can be found in this adventure.

ALCHEMICAL BOMB

Alchemical bombs are martial thrown weapons with a range increment of 20 feet. Like all alchemical bombs, necrotic bombs combine volatile alchemical components that explode when the bomb hits a creature or object.

TABLE 1: MELEE WEAPONS

Uncommon Martial Weapons	Price	Damage	Bulk	Hands	Group	Weapon Traits
Shauth blade	2 gp	1d4 S	L	1	Knife	Agile, deadly d8, finesse, versatile P
Uncommon Advanced Weapons	Price	Damage	Bulk	Hands	Group	Weapon Traits
Rhoka sword	4 gp	1d8 S	2	1	Sword	Deadly d8, two-hand d10
Shauth lash	8 gp	1d6 S	1	2	Flail	Deadly d10, finesse, trip

TABLE 2: RANGED WEAPONS

Uncommon Advanced Weapons	Price	Damage	Range	Reload	Bulk	Hands	Group	Weapon Traits
Repeating hand crossbow	10 gp	1d6 P	60 ft.	0	L	1	Bow	Repeating
Magazine with 5 bolts	9 sp							

TABLE 3: UNCOMMON ADVENTURING GEAR

Item	Price	Bulk	Hands
Shootist bandolier	1 gp	—	—

TABLE 4: ALCHEMICAL GEAR

Alchemical Bombs	Price	Bulk	Hands
Necrotic bomb	varies	L	1
Alchemical Poisons	Price	Bulk	Hands
Stupor poison	20 gp	L	2
Alchemical Tools	Price	Bulk	Hands
Fungal walk musk	21 gp	L	2

NECROTIC BOMB

ITEM 1+

ALCHEMICAL BOMB CONSUMABLE NEGATIVE SPLASH

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Activate ♦ Strike

Necrotic bombs combine reagents most people consider disgusting at best and unholy at worst, creating a life-sucking miasma upon contact with air. A necrotic bomb deals the listed negative damage and splash damage, and it sickens the primary target on a critical hit. This damage harms only living creatures. Many types grant an item bonus to attack rolls.

Type lesser; **Level** 1; **Price** 3 gp

The bomb deals 1d6 negative damage and 1 negative splash damage. On a critical hit, the target is sickened 1.

Type moderate; **Level** 3; **Price** 10 gp

You gain a +1 item bonus to attack rolls. The bomb deals 2d6 negative damage and 2 negative splash damage. On a critical hit, the target is sickened 2.

Type greater; **Level** 11; **Price** 250 gp

You gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls. The bomb deals 3d6 negative damage and 3 negative splash damage. On a critical hit, the target is sickened 3.

Type major; **Level** 17; **Price** 2,500 gp

You gain a +3 bonus to attack rolls. The bomb deals 4d6 negative damage and 4 negative splash damage. On a critical hit, the target is sickened 4.



Necrotic Bomb

ALCHEMICAL POISON

This alchemical poison is a potent toxin distilled from sources deep in the Darklands.

STUPOR POISON

ITEM 4

UNCOMMON ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE INCAPACITATION INJURY POISON SLEEP

Price 16 gp

Usage held in 2 hands; **Bulk** L

Activate ♦♦ Interact

Stupor poison is a more potent distillation of lethargy poison. Further exposure to stupor poison doesn't require the target to attempt additional saving throws; only failing a saving throw against an ongoing exposure can progress its stage.

Saving Throw DC 20 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 hours; **Stage 1** slowed 1 and flat-footed (1 round); **Stage 2** slowed 2 and flat-footed (1 round); **Stage 3** unconscious with no Perception check to wake up (1 round); **Stage 4** unconscious with no Perception check to wake up (1d6 hours)

ALCHEMICAL TOOL

The heroes might obtain this alchemical tool from Yldaris drow connections.

FUNGAL WALK MUSK

ITEM 5

ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE OLFACTORY

Price 21 gp

Usage Held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Activate ♦ Interact

This foul-smelling unguent dulls the odors and traces that fungus creatures detect. For 1 day after you slather this musk on your body, fungus creatures take a -4 penalty to Perception checks to Seek you or otherwise notice you. If a fungus creature is mindless, it instead has a -6 penalty. The musk also grants you a +1 item bonus to AC against melee attacks from fungus creatures with no vision for the same period of time. The effects of fungal walk musk end immediately if you're submerged in water or subject to another olfactory effect.

Spells

The heroes might come across the following new spells in this adventure.

CALL THE BLOOD

SPELL 4

UNCOMMON DEATH NECROMANCY NEGATIVE

Traditions arcane, occult, primal

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range 60 feet; **Target** 1 living creature

Saving Throw basic Fortitude

With a word and gesture, you cause streams of blood to erupt from the target's mouth, nostrils, ears, or other facial openings and come rushing into your mouth. You deal 8d4 negative damage to the target.

If the target takes damage, its blood flows into your mouth. If you're a living creature and don't have negative healing, you're sickened 2. If you're undead (or living but have negative healing), you can choose to either gain temporary Hit Points equal to half of the negative damage the target takes (after applying resistance and the like) and become quickened for 1 round, or forgo the temporary Hit Points and become quickened for 1 minute. You can use this extra action only to Step, Stride, or Strike. You lose any remaining temporary Hit Points after 1 minute.

Heightened (+1) The damage increases by 2d4.

ECTOPLASMIC EXPULSION

SPELL 5

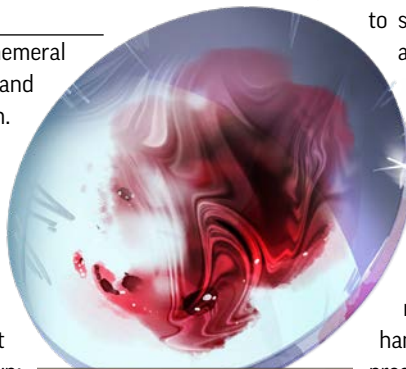
UNCOMMON MENTAL NECROMANCY

Traditions occult

Cast ♦♦♦ material, somatic, verbal

Range 30 feet; **Target** 1 creature

You call upon tendrils of ephemeral ectoplasm to pass through the target and carry away a harmful psychic affliction. You immediately attempt to counteract a single effect on the target with the emotion or possession trait, or an effect giving the target the controlled or fascinated condition. If you fail to counteract the effect, you nevertheless set up a resonance that allows the target to more ably escape the effect on its own; for the next hour, the target gains a +2 status bonus to Will saves to shrug off the effect you failed to counteract (such as Will saves to shake off control by the *possession* spell).



Crimson Fulcrum Lens

Magic Items

Fulcrum lenses are unique magical crystals that each contain a sliver of Nhimbalothe's essence. They belong to a larger set of lenses created to manipulate or even bind the Empty Death; most of the other lenses are long lost and likely destroyed. The Haruvex family came

into possession of four of the lenses, and they knew that bringing them together focused Nhimbalothe's attention in unprecedented and dangerous ways. Belcorra brought all four lenses to the Abomination Vaults with her, intending to install them in *Gauntlight* for her ultimate revenge upon Absalom. She also created a special receptacle called the *Fulcrum Lattice* to hold the lenses so that their power could be focused together. She realized the danger of keeping the *fulcrum lenses* too close together until the right time and spread them out among loyal groups in the Abomination Vaults' lowest levels for safekeeping.

Belcorra keeps only the most powerful lens, the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens*, with her—indeed, as a ghost, it's the only one she can carry. If the heroes can bring the other three lenses to bear against Belcorra, they can draw Nhimbalothe's dread glare to the sorcerer. Despite her loyalty, Belcorra can't hope to keep her spirit intact when Nhimbalothe gazes directly upon it.

The *fulcrum lenses* are more than mere receptacles of Nhimbalothe's essence. Each grants those who use it a fragment of the Great Old One's power.

CRIMSON FULCRUM LENS

ITEM 9

UNIQUE ENCHANTMENT INVESTED OCCULT

Price 700 gp; **Bulk** 1

This concave lens has a drifting crimson cloud resembling slowly swirling blood within it. While you have the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens* invested, you seethe with malevolent fury you can barely contain. You gain a +2 item bonus to saving throws against fear effects and a +2 item bonus to your melee Strike damage (this increases to a +4 item bonus to damage if the melee Strike is a jaws attack). You can also activate the lens in the following ways.

Activate ♦♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You grasp the *Crimson Fulcrum Lens* in one hand and make a Strike that doesn't require that hand. The Strike deals an additional 1d8 precision damage (or 2d8 precision damage if you make a jaws Strike) and doesn't count toward your multiple attack penalty.

Activate ♦♦ Interact (attack, possession); **Effect** While grasping the lens, make a melee spell attack roll with a modifier of +18. On a hit, you force the splinter of Nhimbalothe's essence from the lens to possess the target. You're no longer invested in the lens, and the target gains the benefits as though it had invested the lens but can't activate the lens's other abilities. This effect is permanent, but it can be ended by any effect that removes a possession effect. The lens doesn't have

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any magical abilities until the possession effect ends; when it does, the essence returns to the lens.

EBON FULCRUM LENS

ITEM 12

UNIQUE INVESTED NECROMANCY OCCULT

Price 2,000 gp; Bulk L

This strangest and most powerful of the *fulcrum lenses* resembles a chip of smooth obsidian containing three dark glimmers of Nhimbalo's essence. Incorporeal creatures can touch and hold the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens*. While you have the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens* invested, and you're a corporeal creature, you become insubstantial, gain the incorporeal trait, and are drained 2. Your drained condition can't be reduced below 2 as long as you have the lens invested. You can activate the lens in the following ways. Both require expenditures of glimmers within the lens; once the lens is depleted of its three glimmers, it retains its ability to make corporeal creatures insubstantial but can't be used for its other abilities until its glimmers are restored (which generally requires a ritual or being steeped in an area of Nhimbalo's power).

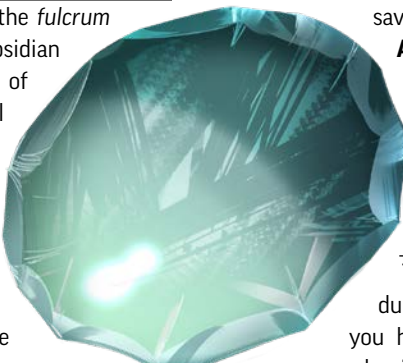
Activate ➤ envision; **Frequency** once per day;

Requirement At least one glimmer remains in the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens*; **Prerequisites** you have the rejuvenation ability;

Trigger you would be destroyed and are able to rejuvenate; **Effect** For the first 24 hours after you rejuvenate, you gain a +1 item bonus to attack rolls, saving throws, and DCs. Reduce the number of glimmers remaining in the lens by 1.

Activate ➤➤ Interact; **Frequency** once per day;

Requirement At least one glimmer remains in the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens*; **Effect** You draw upon a glimmer of Nhimbalo's essence for power; reduce the number of glimmers remaining in the lens by 1. You're quickened for 1 minute and gain a +1 item bonus to attack rolls, saving throws, and DCs. You can use this extra action to Stride or Step, or for an action in a special ghost ability you have.



Emerald Fulcrum Lens



Fulcrum Lattice

EMERALD FULCRUM LENS

ITEM 10

UNIQUE INVESTED NECROMANCY NEGATIVE OCCULT

Price 1,000 gp; Bulk 3

This concave green lens is pitted and flawed; its jagged edges can cut those who don't handle it with care. While you have the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens* invested, your flesh appears

waxen and pallid. You gain negative healing and *harm* spells gain a +4 status bonus to the Hit Points they restore to you. You can also activate the lens in the following ways.

Activate ➤➤ Interact (healing); **Frequency** once per day;

Effect You grasp the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens* in one hand, regain 30 Hit Points, and gain a +2 item bonus to saving throws against magic for 1 round.

Activate ➤➤ Interact (attack, possession); as *Crimson Fulcrum Lens*, but the melee spell attack modifier is +20.

OCHRE FULCRUM LENS

ITEM 11

UNIQUE ENCHANTMENT INVESTED OCCULT

Price 1,400 gp; Bulk 2

This brownish-orange lens always seems dusty and gritty, even when wet. While you have the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens* invested, lassitude grips you. You gain resistance 10 to mental damage and a +2 status bonus to saves against emotion effects. You can also

activate the lens in the following ways.

Activate ➤➤ Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You hold up the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens* in your hand and the item casts *crushing despair* (DC 31 Will save).

Activate ➤➤ Interact (attack, possession); as *Crimson Fulcrum Lens*, but the melee spell attack modifier is +21.

FULCRUM LATTICE

ITEM 11

UNIQUE OCCULT TRANSMUTATION

Price 1,200 gp

Usage held in 2 hands; Bulk 2

This silver and copper framework is shaped to hold four focusing lenses, one behind the other, from smallest to largest. It has a socketed base to be mounted into a stand, such as that found in a lighthouse lantern. The *Fulcrum Lattice* was specifically designed to hold the four *fulcrum lenses* from smallest to largest (ebon, crimson, ochre, emerald), and it hums slightly while within 10 feet of any *fulcrum lens*. A *fulcrum lens* slotted into the *Fulcrum Lattice* has no Bulk; the lattice remains at 1 Bulk and can be carried easily. Inserting or removing a lens from the *Fulcrum Lattice* requires a single Interact action.

The *Fulcrum Lattice* channels the power of *fulcrum lenses* joined with it. While you hold the *Fulcrum Lattice*, lenses socketed into it are considered to be in your hand for the purpose of activating their abilities. When you make a melee spell attack with a lens in the *Fulcrum Lattice*, you use the highest melee spell attack modifier of any lens in the lattice, or you can use your melee attack modifier with simple weapons if it's greater.

Drow Shootist Archetype

Some drow take skill with the hand crossbow to new heights. You've learned the secrets of these fabled drow shootists. With fearlessness and swagger, you can accomplish amazing deeds with hand crossbows.

Additional Feats: You can select these class feats as archetype feats, as described on page 149 of the *Advanced Player's Guide*. **8th:** Poison Weapon (*Core Rulebook* 185), Running Reload (*Core Rulebook* 172); **10th:** Skirmish Strike (*Core Rulebook* 186).

DROW SHOOTIST DEDICATION

FEAT 2

UNCOMMON ARCHETYPE DEDICATION

Prerequisite trained in the hand crossbow

Every chance you get, you practice with the hand crossbow to increase your draw speed and accuracy. Whenever you gain a class feature that grants you expert or greater proficiency in a given weapon or weapons, you also gain that proficiency in the hand crossbow. If you're at least an expert in a hand crossbow you're using, you gain access to its critical specialization effect. You also gain the Shootist's Draw action.

Shootist's Draw ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** You Interact to draw a hand crossbow and Strike with it, or you Strike with a loaded hand crossbow you're already holding and then Interact to stow it.

Special You can't select another dedication feat until you've gained two other feats from the drow shootist archetype.

REPEATING HAND CROSSBOW TRAINING

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Drow Shootist Dedication

You become trained in the repeating hand crossbow (page 73) and gain access to repeating hand crossbows and shootist bandoliers (page 73). Whenever you gain a class feature that grants you expert or greater proficiency in a given weapon or weapons, you also gain that proficiency in the repeating hand crossbow. If you're at least an expert in a repeating hand crossbow you're using, you gain access to its critical specialization effect. You can perform the Shootist's Draw action with repeating hand crossbows.

Special If you have the Running Reload feat, you can reload a repeating hand crossbow magazine on the move. You can use Running Reload as a 3-action activity to reload a magazine into a repeating hand crossbow after you Stride, Step, or Sneak, or as a 2-action activity if you use a magazine from a shootist bandolier.

RELOADING TRICK

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE MANIPULATE

Prerequisites Drow Shootist Dedication

Frequency once per round

Requirements You're holding an unloaded hand crossbow.

You can fire off a single shot even when unprepared. You Interact to reload your hand crossbow and Strike with it.

Special If you have the Repeating Hand Crossbow Training feat, you can use this feat with a repeating hand crossbow to load either a bolt or a magazine, but the speed means you can fire only one bolt, then the magazine jams. You must spend a 3-action Interact activity to remove the jammed magazine and clear it before it can be used again.

LETHARGY POISONER

FEAT 8

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Drow Shootist Dedication, trained in Crafting You've learned more than the use of hand crossbows from drow lore. During your daily preparations, you can prepare a dose of lethargy poison (*Core Rulebook* 552) from ordinary materials in a wilderness or urban area. If you're an expert in Crafting, you can instead craft a dose of stupor poison (page 74). You can prepare two doses (of either poison) if you're a master in Crafting and three doses if you're legendary in Crafting. The save DC for this poison is equal to your class DC. Only you can use these poisons, and they expire the next time you make your daily preparations. The GM might decide that the area you're in is too barren to provide the materials you need for this feat.



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BRIGHT WALKER FORMATION

Most calignis assume that bright walkers arise at the whims of their malign and capricious demigods, the

Forsaken, but as the Forsaken are denied the souls of these undead, some other unknown force must be involved.

Bright Walker

Those who encounter calignis (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 50) quickly learn that their deaths involve burning out instead of bleeding out. At times, this dramatic immolation is denied to a caligni, so they arise as a bright walker. Tied to caligni society, these creatures don't understand that their glow damages and repels living calignis. Despite their name, these undead don't walk; they instead float a few inches above the ground.

BRIGHT WALKER

CREATURE 9

RARE NE MEDIUM INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Perception +19, greater darkvision

Languages Caligni

Skills Acrobatics +19, Intimidation +18, Stealth +19

Str -5, **Dex** +6, **Con** +0, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3

AC 26; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +21, **Will** +19

HP 115, negative healing; **Immunities**

death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistance** all

damage 10 (except for force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical).

Bright Release (fire, light) When a bright walker is reduced to 0 Hit Points, they flash out in a burst of light, obtaining the blazing end they were denied at death. This blaze deals 10d6 fire damage (DC 25 basic Reflex save) to creatures within 20 feet. Creatures who fail this save are also dazzled for 1 minute (blinded for 1 minute on a critical failure).

Light Aura (aura, divine, light) 30 feet. The bright walker sheds bright light. Any creature that starts its turn in the aura must attempt at a DC 24 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is temporarily immune for 24 hours.

Success The creature is dazzled for 1 round.

Failure The creature is blinded for 1 round.

Critical Failure The creature is blinded for 1 hour.

Suppress Aura ♦ (concentrate) The bright walker suppresses their light aura for 1 round, reducing it to a faint, ghostly glow of dim light.

Speed fly 25 feet; landbound

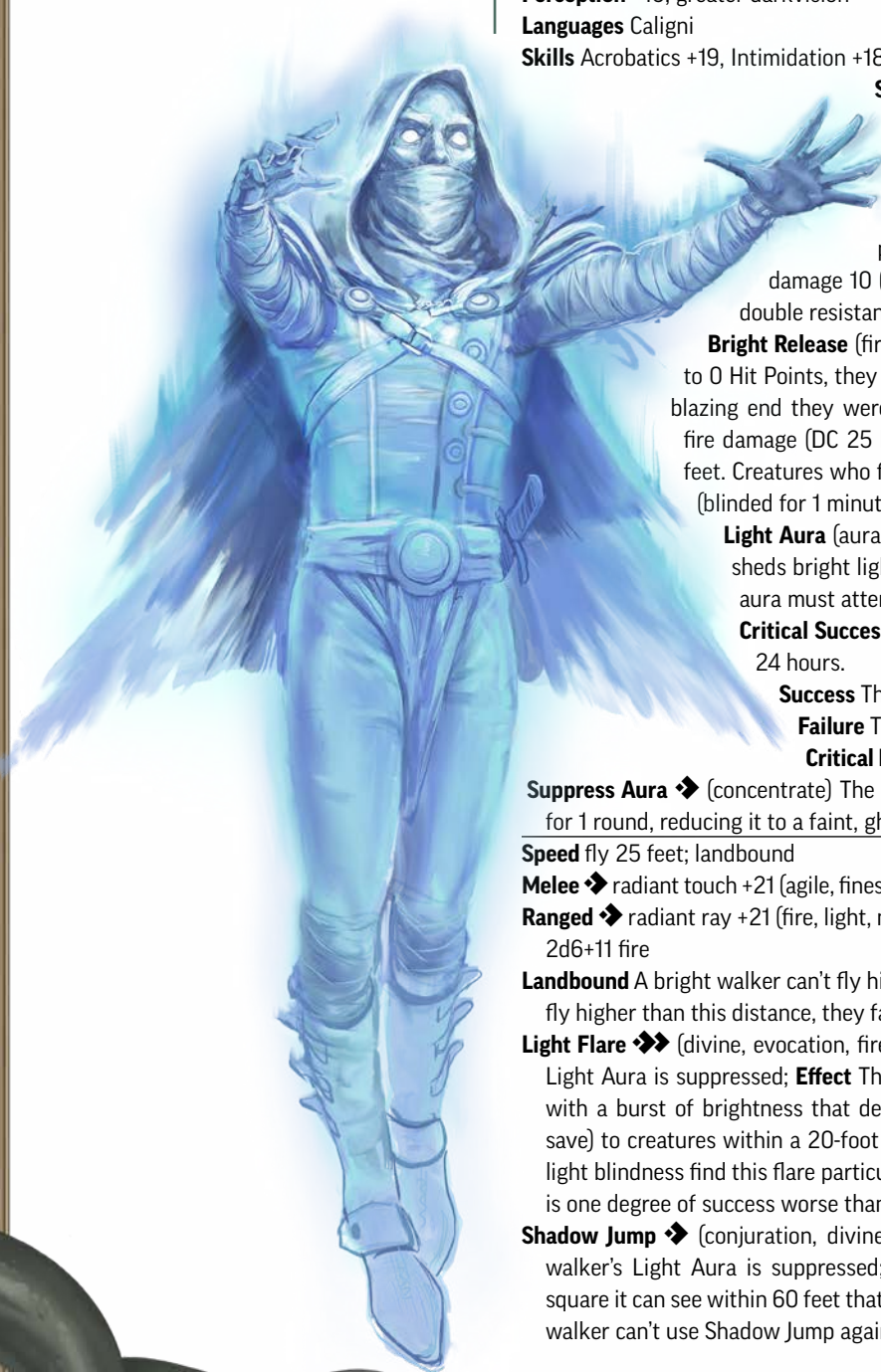
Melee ♦ radiant touch +21 (agile, finesse, fire, light, magical), **Damage** 2d8+11 fire

Ranged ♦ radiant ray +21 (fire, light, magical, range increment 60 feet) **Damage** 2d6+11 fire

Landbound A bright walker can't fly higher than 1 foot above the ground. If they fly higher than this distance, they fall but don't take any damage from falling.

Light Flare ♦♦ (divine, evocation, fire, light); **Requirement** The bright walker's Light Aura is suppressed; **Effect** The bright walker reignites their Light Aura with a burst of brightness that deals 5d6 fire damage (DC 25 basic Reflex save) to creatures within a 20-foot burst. Creatures who are dazzled or with light blindness find this flare particularly painful; such a creature's save result is one degree of success worse than the result it rolled.

Shadow Jump ♦ (conjuration, divine, teleportation); **Requirement** The bright walker's Light Aura is suppressed; **Effect** The bright walker teleports to a square it can see within 60 feet that is not in an area of bright light. The bright walker can't use Shadow Jump again for 1d4 rounds.



Deadly Puffball

Many benign puffball fungi cling to the detritus of forest floors in Darklands caverns. These fungi's giant versions are more mobile and dangerous.

DRAGON'S BLOOD PUFFBALL

This bulbous, deep red fungus looks like an enormous, decaying rose.

DRAGON'S BLOOD PUFFBALL

CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON N LARGE FUNGUS MINDLESS

Perception +12; motion sense 60 feet, no vision

Skills Stealth +14

Str +6, **Dex** +1, **Con** +4, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -2

Motion Sense The puffball senses motion through vibration and air movement.

AC 24; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +15, **Will** +12

HP 170; **Immunities** bleed, fatigued, mental, poison, sleep, unconscious;

Weaknesses piercing 10

Spore Explosion When the dragon's blood puffball dies, it explodes, dealing 7d8 poison damage to each creature in a 20-foot emanation (DC 26 basic Fortitude save).

Speed 10 feet

Ranged ♦ bloom +18, **Damage** 2d10+8 bludgeoning plus 1d6 poison

Ranged ♦ spore jet +18 (range increment 30 feet), **Damage** 3d8 poison

REAPER SKULL PUFFBALL

When this fungus detects prey, its tendrils writhe and exude a paralytic toxin.

REAPER SKULL PUFFBALL

CREATURE 9

UNCOMMON N LARGE FUNGUS MINDLESS

Perception +15; motion sense 60 feet, no vision

Skills Acrobatics +19, Stealth +17

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +3, **Int** -5, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -2

Motion Sense As dragon's blood puffball.

AC 25; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +21, **Will** +15

HP 195; **Immunities** bleed, fatigued, mental, poison, sleep, unconscious;

Weaknesses fire 10, piercing 10

Spore Explosion As dragon's blood puffball, but DC 28 and 8d8 poison damage. Creatures that fail the save are exposed to skull rot.

Speed 10 feet, fly 20 feet

Melee ♦ tendril +21 (finesse, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d12+8 plus paralysis

Spore Cloud ♦♦ (poison) The puffball releases a 30-foot cone of spores that deals 4d8 poison damage (DC 28 basic Fortitude save) to creatures in the cone. Creatures that fail this save are also exposed to skull rot.

Paralysis (incapacitation, poison) A creature hit by the puffball's tendril must succeed a DC 28 Fortitude save or become paralyzed. The paralyzed creature can attempt a new save at the end of each of its turns.

Skull Rot (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 28 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration**

6 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d8 poison damage plus enfeebled 2 (1 round);

Stage 2 2d8 poison damage plus enfeebled 2 and drained

1 (1 round); **Stage 3** 3d8 poison damage plus enfeebled

2 and drained 2 (1d4 rounds)



VALUABLE SPORES

Alchemists, naturalists, and other collectors prize samples from unusual underground fungi. Deadly puffballs are even more valuable. The carefully harvested scraps of an exploded deadly puffball can fetch as much as 150 gp to the right buyer.

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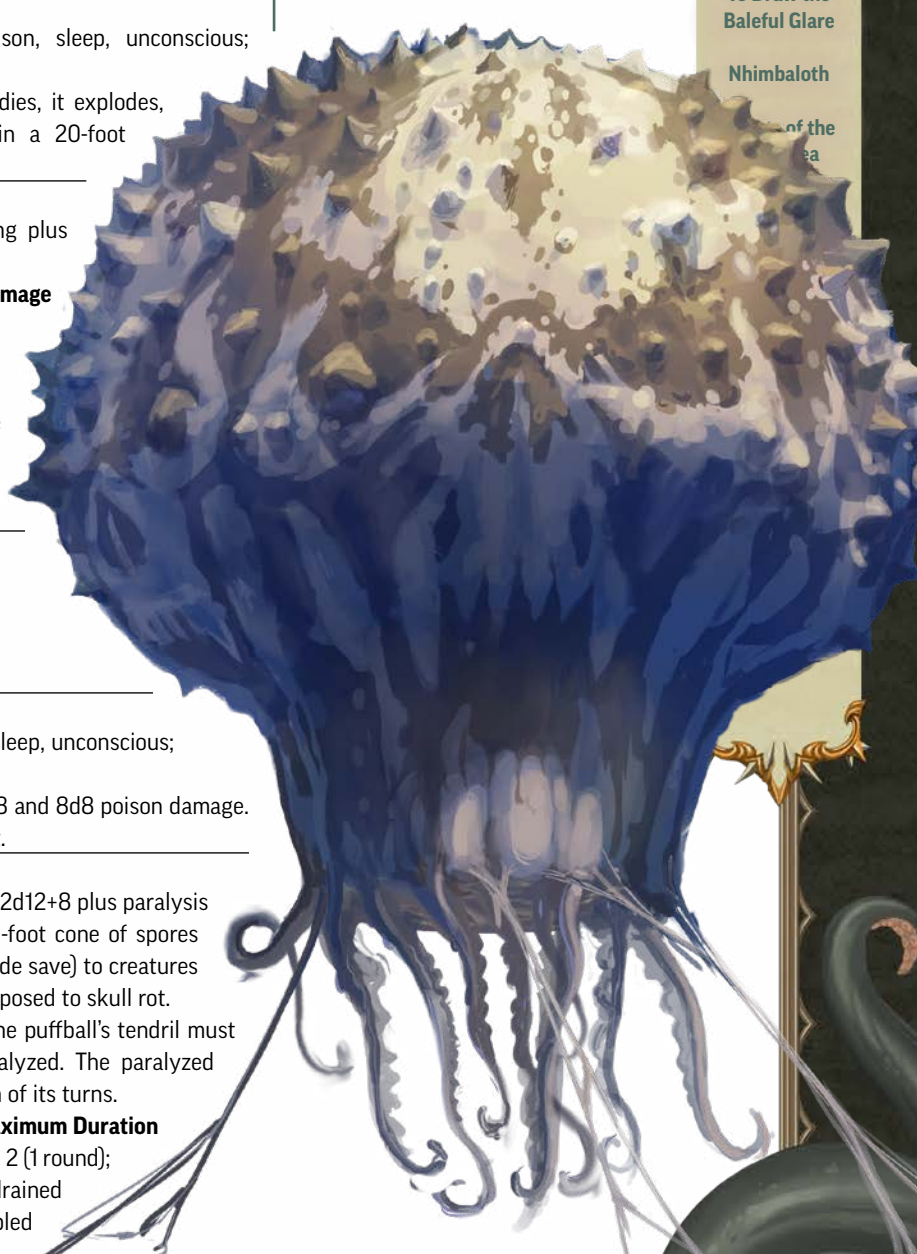
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DHUTHOREX SAGES

Rare dread dhuthorex develop additional, linked brains down their throats. These dhuthorex sages lose

Overpowering Jaws and Swallow Whole but have an Intelligence of +3 and can cast the following spells.

Occult Prepared Spells DC 27, attack +19; **5th** *cloak of colors*, *crushing despair*, *hallucination*; **4th** *confusion*, *nightmare*, *read omens*; **3rd** *enthral*, *fear*, *paralyze*; **2nd** *augury*, *death knell*, *telekinetic maneuver*; **1st** *bane*, *mindlink*, *sanctuary*; **Cantrips (5th)** *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *message*, *read aura*, *shield*

Dhuthorex

Strange things swim in sunless seas, but few as fierce as the shark-like dhuthorex. These beasts chase prey fearlessly and tenaciously.

DEEPWATER DHUTHOREX

The typical dhuthorex is a dumb and hungry beast, chasing prey through the depths and venturing onto land only to pursue easy prey.

DEEPWATER DHUTHOREX

CREATURE 9

UNCOMMON CN LARGE ABERRATION AQUATIC

Perception +18; **darkvision**, **wavesense** (imprecise) 60 feet

Skills Athletics +20, Stealth +18, Survival +19

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

AC 28, all-around vision; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +18, **Will** +17

HP 155; **Immunities** acid

Attack of Opportunity ⤵

Speed 10 feet; swim 40 feet

Melee ⤵ jaws +21 (deadly d10, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d10+11 piercing plus Grab

Melee ⤵ snout +21 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+11 bludgeoning plus Push

Melee ⤵ tentacle +19 (agile, reach 15 feet),

Damage 2d6+11 slashing

Aquatic Ambush ⤵

Overpowering Jaws A deepwater dhuthorex deals 7 piercing damage to its target if its jaws Strike is a failure (but not a critical failure).

Swallow Whole ⤵ (attack) Medium, 2d6+7 bludgeoning plus 2d6 acid, Rupture 20

DREAD DHUTHOREX

More intelligent than their lesser kin, dread dhuthorex possess eerie, enchanting powers.

DREAD DHUTHOREX

CREATURE 11

UNCOMMON CN LARGE ABERRATION AMPHIBIOUS

Perception +22; **darkvision**, **wavesense** (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Aklo

Skills Athletics +23, Occultism +16, Stealth +20, Survival +21

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

AC 31, all-around vision; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +18, **Will** +21

HP 195; **Immunities** acid

Attack of Opportunity ⤵

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 60 feet, DC 27

Speed 20 feet; swim 40 feet

Melee ⤵ jaws +24 (deadly d12, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d10+12 piercing plus Grab

Melee ⤵ snout +24 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d8+12 bludgeoning plus Push

Melee ⤵ tentacle +22 (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d6+12 slashing

Occult Innate Spells DC 27; **5th** *mariner's curse*; **3rd** *hypnotic pattern*, *mind reading*

Aquatic Ambush ⤵

Overpowering Jaws As deepwater dhuthorex, but 8 piercing damage.

Swallow Whole ⤵ (attack) Large, 3d6+8 bludgeoning plus 2d6 acid, Rupture 23

Dread Wisp

Will-o'-wisps native to the Darklands are more ominous and malevolent than those that bob about in the lonely marshes and surfaces of the upper world. These dread wisps instill terror with eerie shifts of light and consume the fear they create, drawing life energy from their victims in the process. While dread wisps can survive anywhere within the Darklands, they prefer moist areas like partially submerged caves, the banks of underground rivers, and towering fungus gardens.

Dread wisps don't glow as brightly as surface will-o'-wisps because even the dimmest light attracts notice underground. Long-lived and hateful creatures, they remember vivid details about their lives, travels, and most delicious prey. Although dread wisps could share extensive lore and unique experiences, they don't, as they find amusement in others' ignorance.

DREAD WISP

CREATURE 9

UNCOMMON CE SMALL ABERRATION

Perception +20; darkvision

Languages Aklo, Common

Skills Acrobatics +23, Deception +16, Intimidation +16, Stealth +23

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

AC 31; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +21, **Will** +18

HP 90, negative healing; **Immunities** magic; **Weaknesses** positive 10

Dread Flickering (aura, light) 20 feet. A dread wisp, though naturally invisible, glows with a grayish illumination, casting dim light in the aura and making them visible. Living creatures that end their turn in the aura must succeed at a DC 25 Will saving throw or become frightened 1 (or frightened 2 on a critical failure).

Those that critically succeed are temporarily immune for 10 minutes.

Magic Immunity A dread wisp is immune to all spells except *faerie fire*, *magic missile*, *maze*, *searing light*, and spells with the positive trait.

Speed fly 50 feet

Melee ♦ draining touch +17 (magical, negative), **Damage** 3d8+8 negative plus wearying touch

Feed on Despair ♦ (concentrate, necromancy, negative, occult); **Frequency** once per round; **Requirement** An enemy within 15 feet of the dread wisp is under a fear effect, drained, or dying; **Effect** The dread wisp feeds on the creature's despair. The dread wisp regains 2d8 Hit Points and deals 3d8 negative damage to the creature (DC 25 basic Fortitude save), and if the dread wisp has Gone Dark, their Dread Flickering reignites.

Go Dark ♦ (concentrate) The dread wisp extinguishes their Dread Flickering, becoming invisible. They can end this effect with another use of this action. If the dread wisp uses their draining touch Strike while invisible, the arc of pale energy lets any observer determine their location, making them hidden to all observers only until the dread wisp moves.

Shadow Flitter ♦ (conjuration, occult, teleportation) The dread wisp teleports to a square they can see within 30 feet that isn't in an area of bright light. The dread wisp can't use Shadow Flitter again for 1d4 rounds.

Wearying Touch If the dread wisp critically hits with their draining touch Strike, the target is drained 1.



DREAD WISP ORIGINS

The origins of will-o'-wisps are hotly debated, but dread wisps have a commonly understood origin. Surface wisps give momentary hope to those lost and scared in a dark and damp wilderness, but nearly all of the Darklands is dark and damp. Hope has little place here, and defiant people and menacing monsters populate the Darklands. Subterranean will-o'-wisps adapted to overcome these new, resilient food sources. Dread wisps descended from those tenacious survivors.

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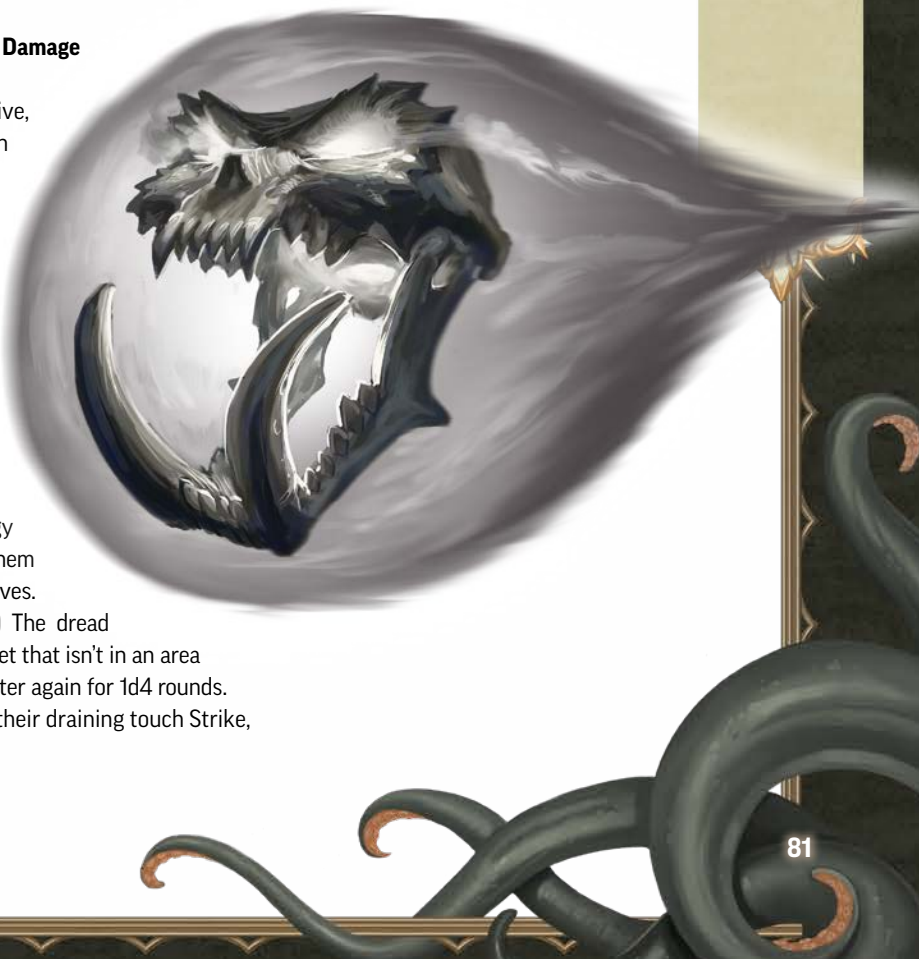
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ADHERENTS OF CHAOS

Away from the larger drow cities where worship of demon lords is instilled into all citizens from a young age, drow might adopt the worship of other entities. Many drow feel the call of the protean lords and embrace chaos, art, and freedom to set themselves apart from their demon-worshipping kin. These communities often have proteans living among them, instructing drow proteges in the power of disorder.

Drow

Drow (*Bestiary* 136) have a reputation for evil due to demon worship in their major settlements. However, like members of any ancestry, drow can have any alignment, especially when removed from the demon lords' sinister influence.

DROW WARDEN

Wardens watch over drow encampments and often work in small groups.

DROW WARDEN

CREATURE 4

UNCOMMON CN MEDIUM DROW ELF HUMANOID

Perception +11; darkvision

Languages Elven, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +12, Intimidation +8, Stealth +9, Survival +11

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

Items chainmail, elven curve blade, hand crossbow (10 bolts), lethargy poison (3)

Light Blindness

AC 21; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9; +1 status to all saves vs. magic, +2 status to all saves vs. mental

HP 60; **Immunity** sleep

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Speed 30 feet

Melee ✦ elven curve blade +14 (forceful), **Damage** 1d8+6 slashing plus hampering slash

Ranged ✦ hand crossbow +13 (range increment 60 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d6+2 piercing plus lethargy poison

Divine Innate Spells DC 19; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *faerie fire* (at will); **Cantrips** (2nd) *dancing lights*

Hampering Slash A target damaged by the warden's melee Strike must succeed at a DC 21 Fortitude save or be slowed 1 until the end of the warden's next turn.

Sneak Attack A warden deals an extra 1d6 damage to flat-footed creatures.

DROW HUNTER

Hunters seek out game to keep drow communities fed and functioning.

DROW HUNTER

CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON CN MEDIUM DROW ELF HUMANOID

Perception +16; darkvision

Languages Elven, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +14, Nature +14, Stealth +15, Survival +16 (+18 to Subsist)

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1

Items chain shirt, +1 *composite longbow* (20 arrows), *longsword*

Light Blindness

AC 25; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +15, **Will** +14; +1 status to all saves vs. magic, +2 status to all saves vs. mental

HP 115; **Immunities** sleep

Deft Evasion When the hunter rolls a success on a Reflex save, they get a critical success instead.



Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ longsword +16 (versatile P), **Damage** 1d8+7 slashing

Ranged ♦ *composite longbow* +18 (deadly d10, propulsive, range increment 100 feet, reload 0, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 1d8+7 piercing

Divine Innate Spells DC 23; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *faerie fire* (at will); **Cantrips (4th)** *dancing lights*

Hunter's Wound ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Prerequisites** The hunter is wielding a ranged weapon with a reload of 0; **Effect** The hunter makes two ranged Strikes against their prey. If both hit and deal damage, the target takes an additional 1d8 persistent bleed damage.

Skirmish Strike ♦ The hunter can Step and then Strike, or Strike and then Step.

DROW SHOOTIST

The rare few drow who specialize in the repeating hand crossbow command respect not only for their skills but for their luck and swagger.

DROW SHOOTIST

CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON CN MEDIUM DROW ELF HUMANOID

Perception +16; darkvision

Languages Elven, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +19, Athletics +16, Deception +16, Intimidation +14, Stealth +17, Thievery +17

Str +2, **Dex** +5, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

Items +1 *repeating hand crossbow* (4 magazines; page 73), rapier, shootist bandolier (page 73), stupor poison (4; page 74), studded leather armor

Light Blindness

AC 27; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +17, **Will** +16; +1 status to all saves vs. magic, +2 status to all saves vs. mental

HP 120; **Immunities** sleep

Shootist's Luck ⤵ (fortune) **Trigger** The shootist fails a save; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The shootist rerolls the save and uses the better result.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ rapier +18 (deadly d8, disarm, finesse), **Damage** 1d6+9 piercing

Ranged ♦ *repeating hand crossbow* +20 (range increment 60 feet, reload 0 [3 to reload magazine], repeating), **Damage** 1d6+9 piercing plus stupor poison

Divine Innate Spells DC 24; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *faerie fire* (at will); **Cantrips (4th)** *dancing lights*

Distracting Shot ♦♦ The shootist takes aim and makes a ranged Strike. If the attack hits and deals damage, the target is flat-footed until the end of the shootist's turn, or until the end of the shootist's next turn on a critical hit.

Reloading Trick ♦♦ **Requirements** The shootist is holding an unloaded repeating hand crossbow; **Effect** The shootist Interacts to reload the repeating hand crossbow and Strikes with it.

Shootist's Draw ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The shootist Interacts to draw a repeating hand crossbow and Strikes with it, or Strikes with a loaded repeating hand crossbow they're holding then Interacts to stow it.

Sneak Attack The shootist deals an extra 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.



SHOOTIST ENTOURAGES

Many drow shootists have a magnetic bravado that draws others to follow and learn from them. Few shootists are as skilled at teaching as they are at fighting, however, and their followers aren't much more than an entourage. These hangers-on are rarely as lucky or quick as the shootist, so shootists lose their followers to monsters or mischance with startling frequency.

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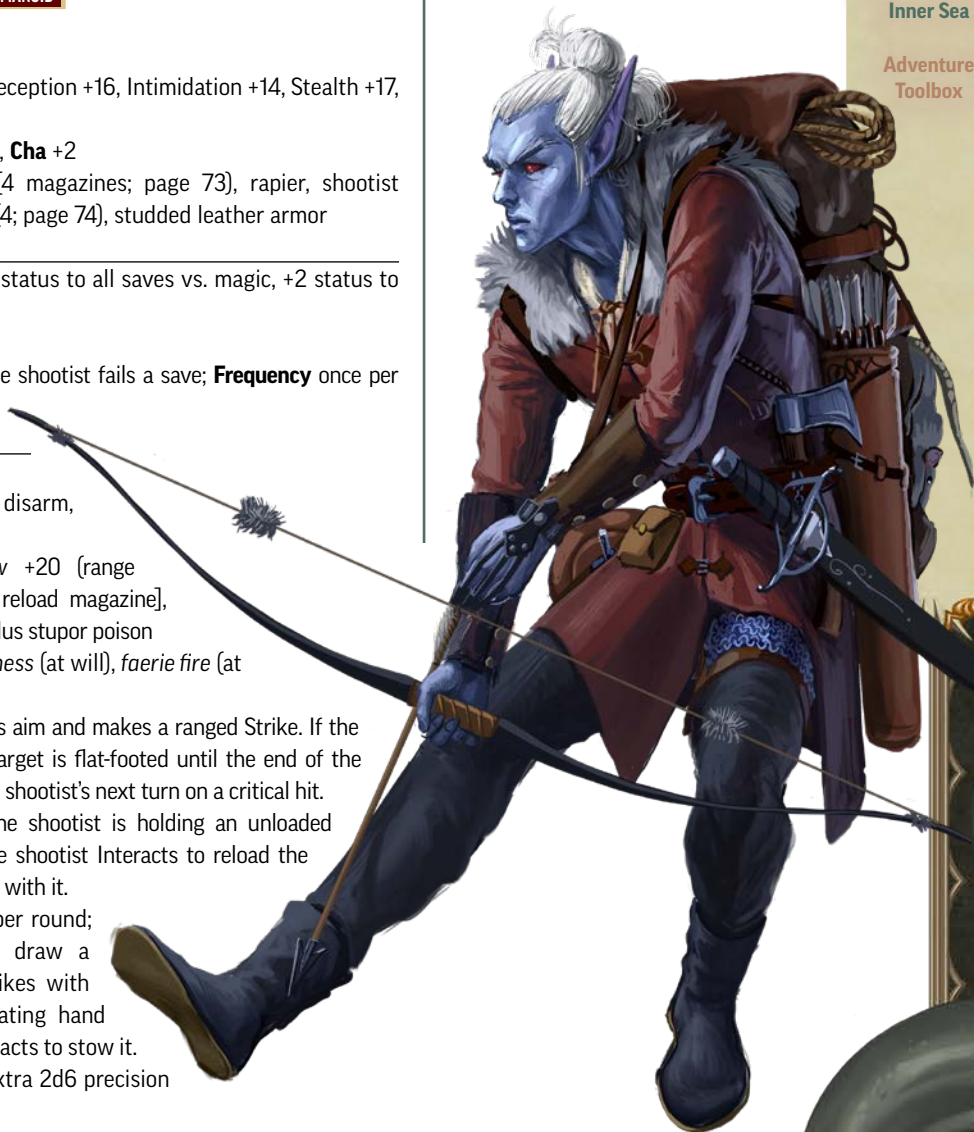
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SHAUTH WEAPONS

Shauth blades and shauth lashes are made from the teeth of fallen urdefhans. Collecting these teeth is difficult, as a slain urdefhan dissolves into a foul-smelling gas almost immediately. However, their bones are somewhat more durable.

Urdefhan

Translucent-skinned scourges of the Darklands, urdefhans (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 2 272) are remorseless killers and foot soldiers of the world's end.

URDEFHAN DEATH SCOUT

Death scouts train as spies and assassins for their cult. Other urdefhans scorn their stealthy methods, but none can argue with their results.

URDEFHAN DEATH SCOUT

CREATURE 6

NE MEDIUM HUMANOID URDEFHAN

Perception +15; greater darkvision

Languages Aklo, Daemonic, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +14, Athletics +12, Intimidation +11, Stealth +14, Thievery +14

Str +2, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1

Items leather armor, moderate necrotic bomb (3; page 74), +1 shauth blade (page 73)

AC 24; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +16, **Will** +11

HP 92, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fear; **Weakness** positive 5

Necrotic Decay (divine, necromancy, negative) As urdefhan warrior (*Bestiary* 2 272), but DC 23 and 6d6 negative damage.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *shauth blade* +17 (agile, deadly d6, finesse), **Damage** 1d6+4 slashing plus 1d6 persistent bleed and Wicked Bite

Melee ♦ *jaws* +16, **Damage** 2d6+4 piercing plus Wicked Bite

Ranged ♦ *necrotic bomb* +16 (range increment 20 feet, splash), **Damage** 2d6 negative plus 2 negative splash damage (and sickened 2 on a critical hit)

Divine Innate Spells DC 21, attack +13; **4th** *invisibility* (self only); **2nd** *death knell*; **1st** *feather fall* (at will, self only), *ray of enfeeblement*

Shauth Bite The death scout deals an additional 1d6 persistent bleed damage with shauth blades and can use their Wicked Bite through magical shauth weapon Strikes.

Sneak Attack The death scout deals an extra 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Wicked Bite ♦ As urdefhan warrior (*Bestiary* 2 272) but DC 24.

URDEFHAN LASHER

Trained from a young age with the strange and powerful shauth lashes, urdefhan lashers would rather die than retreat from combat.

URDEFHAN LASHER

CREATURE 7

NE MEDIUM HUMANOID URDEFHAN

Perception +16; greater darkvision

Languages Aklo, Daemonic, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +17, Intimidation +13, Religion +14, Survival +14

Str +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

Items chain shirt, +1 striking shauth lash (page 73)

AC 24; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +14, **Will** +16

HP 120, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fear; **Weakness** positive 5

Necrotic Decay (divine, necromancy, negative) As urdefhan warrior (*Bestiary* 2 272), but DC 24 and 7d6 negative damage.



Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *shauth lash* +18 (deadly d8, trip), **Damage** 2d8+7 slashing plus Grab and Wicked Bite

Melee ♦ jaws +17, **Damage** 2d6+7 plus Wicked Bite

Divine Innate Spells DC 22, attack +14; **3rd** *paralyze*; **2nd** *death knell*; **1st** *feather fall* (at will, self only), *ray of enfeeblement*

Constrict ♦ 1d8+7 slashing, DC 25

Shauth Seize The lasher gains the Grab ability with a shauth lash and can use their Wicked Bite through magical shauth weapon Strikes.

Wicked Bite ♦ As urdefhan warrior (*Bestiary* 2 272), but DC 25 and the urdefhan regains 10 Hit Points when they Drink Blood if the target fails its saving throw (20 Hit Points on a critical failure).

URDEFHAN BLOOD MAGE

Hardened masters of occult power, urdefhan blood mages trade their blood for magical might. A heavily scarred blood mage is held in esteem by their fellow urdefhans, as it shows they have survived many bargains with eerie occult patrons.

URDEFHAN BLOOD MAGE CREATURE 8

UNCOMMON NE MEDIUM HUMANOID URDEFHAN

Perception +15; greater darkvision

Languages Aklo, Daemonic, Undercommon

Skills Arcana +16, Athletics +16, Intimidation +16, Occultism +18, Religion +16

Str +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +6, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

Items +1 striking *kukri*

AC 26; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +14, **Will** +17

HP 140, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fear; **Weakness** positive 10

Necrotic Decay (divine, necromancy, negative) As urdefhan warrior (*Bestiary* 2 272), but DC 24 and 8d6 negative damage.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *kukri* +16 (agile, trip), **Damage** 2d6+8 piercing

Melee ♦ jaws +15, **Damage** 2d6+8 plus Wicked Bite

Divine Innate Spells DC 26, attack +18; **3rd** *paralyze*; **2nd** *death knell*; **1st** *feather fall* (at will, self only), *ray of enfeeblement*

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 26, attack +18; **4th** (4 slots) *call the blood* (page 75), *confusion*, *dimension door*, *phantasmal killer*; **3rd** (4 slots) *haste*, *levitate*, *slow*, *vampiric touch*; **2nd** (4 slots) *dispel magic*, *ghoulish craving*, *invisibility*, *touch of idiocy*; **1st** (4 slots) *bane*, *fear*, *grim tendrils*, *phantom pain*; **Cantrips** (8th) *chill touch*, *daze*, *message*, *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*

Blood Offering ♦ (occult, metamagic, necromancy) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The blood mage cuts themselves and takes 8 slashing damage. If the blood mage's next action is to Cast a Spell, the action can't be disrupted, and if the spell has a range, the blood mage can increase that spell's range by 30 feet.

Wicked Bite ♦ As urdefhan warrior (*Bestiary* 2 272), but DC 26 and the urdefhan regains 10 Hit Points when they Drink Blood if the target fails its saving throw (20 Hit Points on a critical failure).



BLOOD MAGIC

Urdefhans typically cast divine spells, as their cultural connection to the Four Horsemen is strong. Those who embrace blood magic are turning away from their cult's zealous faith for strange occult powers.

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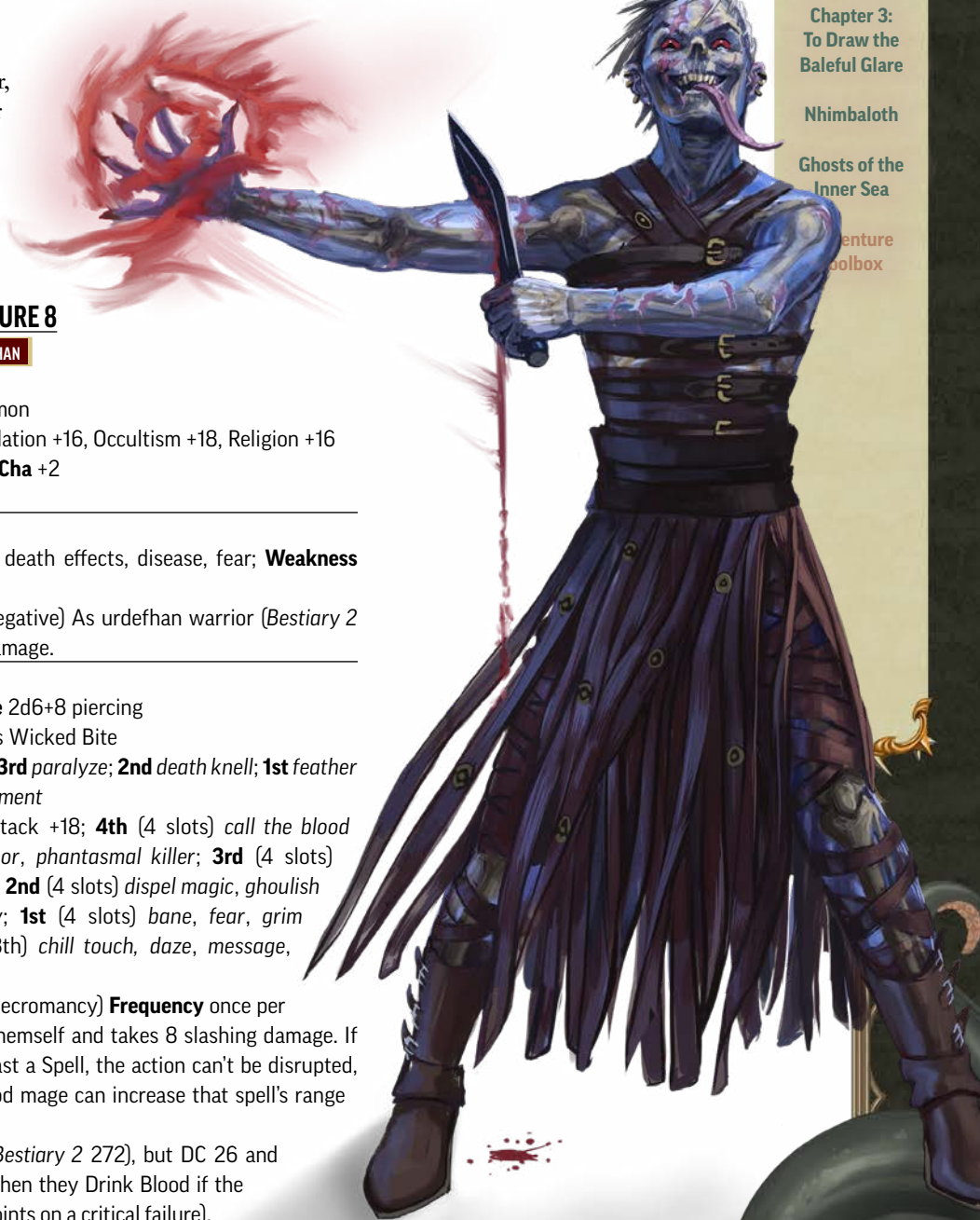
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Belcorra Haruvex

Spiteful Master of the Abomination Vaults

Belcorra's background is detailed in the first volume of the Abomination Vaults Adventure Path, "Ruins of Gauntlight." She's determined to renew her attack against Absalom once more, though her status as a ghost limits her. Despite Belcorra's brilliance and cunning, a perpetual fury consumes her. She rages for days at the slightest setback, making the implementation of her complex, far-reaching plan difficult. Belcorra knows the potential of the *fulcrum lenses* and the danger they pose, but she can't calm her mind enough to focus for long, even in the face of this existential threat.

Campaign Role

During their trek through the lowest levels of the Abomination Vaults, the heroes likely face Belcorra several times before they finally acquire the *fulcrum lenses* they need to defeat her for good. She learns about them from her wisp allies, as described in the sidebar on page 6, and you can thereafter use her whenever her appearance might cause the most tension. She should attack at least once on each dungeon level, as often as every couple of days. You shouldn't have Belcorra fight alongside other creatures until the adventure's finale—she's tough enough on her own!

Each time Belcorra attacks, she learns more about how the heroes fight and adapts her tactics and her preparations. She might cast *spell immunity* to protect herself from the heroes' most effective spells, *true seeing* or *see invisibility* to keep them in sight, or *dispel magic* to counter their magical defenses. She mocks the heroes for their failures and rages at their successes—remember, she has been aware of them since her test firing of *Gauntlight's* beam in "Ruins of Gauntlight."

First Attack: As soon as Belcorra realizes the heroes' presence, she seeks them out, traveling through the *Gauntlight* footprint (areas **A37** and **B28**). She casts *phantasmal calamity* at a distance and retreats, moving through walls if necessary so the heroes can't follow.

Second Attack: Belcorra wants the heroes to fear her, so she approaches them more closely the second

time and uses single-target spells like *feblemind* and *phantasmal killer* while demanding the heroes flee her Abomination Vaults. With her message delivered, she retreats after only a few rounds.

Later Attacks: Once the heroes have recovered a *fulcrum lens* or the *Fulcrum Lattice*, Belcorra considers the heroes an actual threat, but her anger overrides her caution. She attacks with her full might, using her Corrupting Gaze and ghostly hand along with her spells. If she defeats a hero, she retreats, confident that they'll leave her alone.

Leveraging Agents: Belcorra has several living allies within the Abomination Vaults, including the urdefhan cult and the Children of Belcorra. She might send these groups after the heroes, insisting they let the heroes know they're acting on Belcorra's orders. Fortunately, neither group can muster large numbers, so the heroes should be able to manage an attack from them.

Killing Allies: Belcorra learns if the heroes make alliances, such as with nearby calignis or drow. She knows better than to face powerful, entrenched leaders like Galudu or Quara, but she might murder a few guards or direct monsters where they can most damage the heroes' allies. It's important to Belcorra that she leave some evidence (usually a single, injured survivor) to let the heroes know she had orchestrated the attack.

In the Footprint: Belcorra is most effective fighting the heroes who enter the *Gauntlight* footprint (areas **A37** and **B28**) due to her Haunted Lighthouse ability.

The Final Attack: If the heroes defeat Belcorra shortly before they reach the Empty Vault, she uses the power of the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens* to hasten her rejuvenation so she can face them in her sanctum.

Belcorra doesn't ever surrender or flee in the Empty Vault. The heroes could possibly face her there without yet having the ability to permanently defeat her. In this case, they'll need to retreat to collect the *fulcrum lenses* and return to face her again. Once the heroes can focus Nhimbaloth's gaze upon Belcorra, they can defeat the sorcerer for good.

BELCORRA HARUVEX

CREATURE 12

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM GHOST INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Female ghost sorcerer (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 166)

Perception +22; darkvision, magic sense

Languages Aklo, Common, Undercommon

Skills Arcana +23, Diplomacy +23, Intimidation +25, Occultism +26, Religion +22, Stealth +22

Str -5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +0, **Int** +5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +7

Magic Sense (detection, divination) Belcorra can sense the presence of magic auras as though she were always using a 1st-level *detect magic* spell. When she Seeks, she gains the benefits of a 3rd-level *detect magic* spell on things she sees.

Site Bound (lowest three levels of the Abomination Vaults)

AC 30; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +22, **Will** +20; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 175, negative healing, rejuvenation; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistances** all damage 10 (except force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Rejuvenation (divine, necromancy)

When Belcorra is destroyed, she re-forms in 2d4 days within the Empty Vault (though she can reduce that time by empowering herself with glimmers of Nhimbaloth's essence using the *Ebon Fulcrum Lens* [page 76]). Belcorra can only be permanently destroyed if she enacts her full revenge on Absalom or if Nhimbaloth devours her soul.

Speed fly 25 feet

Melee ♦ ghostly hand +24 (agile, finesse, magical), **Damage** 3d8+12 negative

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 33, attack +25; **6th** (4 slots) *dispel magic*, *feeblemind*, *phantasmal calamity*, *true seeing*; **5th** (4 slots) *black tentacles*, *crushing despair*, *illusory scene*, *tongues*; **4th** (4 slots) *confusion*, *globe of invulnerability*, *phantasmal killer*, *spell immunity*; **3rd** (4 slots) *mind reading*, *nondetection*, *paralyze*, *vampiric touch*; **2nd** (4 slots) *death knell*, *see invisibility*, *telekinetic maneuver*, *touch of idiocy*; **1st** (4 slots) *mindlink*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *spider sting*, *true strike*; **Cantrips (6th)** *daze*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *message*, *read aura*, *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*

Sorcerer Bloodline Spells DC 33; **6th** (2 Focus Points) *aberrant whispers*, *tentacular limbs*

Rituals DC 33; *legend lore*, *planar binding*, *teleportation circle* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 244)

Blood Magic Each time Belcorra casts a sorcerer bloodline spell or an aberrant bloodline granted spell, she can grant herself or a target of the spell a +2 status bonus to Will saving throws for 1 round.

Corrupting Gaze ♦♦ Belcorra stares at a creature she can see within 30 feet. The target takes 9d6 mental damage

(DC 33 basic Will save). A creature that fails its save is also stupefied 1 for 1 minute.

Haunted Lighthouse ♦ **Frequency** once every 10 minutes; **Effect** Belcorra extends her presence throughout the lowest three levels of *Gauntlight* until the end of her next turn. She can see with the benefits of all-around vision and can make ghostly hand attacks or use special abilities originating from any surface in this area.

Quickened Casting ♦ **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** If Belcorra's next action is to cast a sorcerer spell of 4th level or lower, she reduces the number of actions to cast it by 1 (minimum 1 action).

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Chap



Khurfel

Visions-Wracked Warlord

Khurfel saw his first blood vision as a child, after his first taste of an enemy's blood. Not every urdefhan has blood visions; those who do tend to keep them quiet, for those who experience them are seen as irrational or untrustworthy. Such visions always relay great apocalypses, perhaps connected to daemons and urdefhans' lust for great death, but they're nonsensical and rarely come true. Yet, like all urdefhans subjected to blood visions, Khurfel was absolutely convinced of his vision's veracity, its outcome terrifying him. He saw the end of his cult, the urdefhans in the Abomination Vaults once sworn to Belcorra but who had mostly forgotten their oaths. He saw that this end would come while he ruled and that he was powerless to stop it. He would be the last war champion.

Of course, Khurfel kept his visions secret. If the rest of his cult knew of them, his life would be forfeit—but that wasn't the real reason he denied them. His blood boiled at the revelation. He was the chosen of Abaddon. He would indeed rise to war champion, but he would fight these fevered nightmares. They were another enemy to be vanquished.

Khurfel's rise was swift. He was large, strong, and fearsome. When he led his first war band, he achieved victory and slaughter, and when he partook in his enemies' blood, the haunting visions waned. Within a few years, Khurfel became the youngest war champion in his cult's history. He swore to defend their symbol of leadership, the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens* carried by generations of war champions. That's when Khurfel's troubles began.

It's one thing to lead comrades into battle. Everything not urdefhan is prey. Fighting was simple and visceral. It focused Khurfel's mind, and it exhilarated him. But being a leader, he learned, was far more nuanced. He had to juggle the jealousies, ambitions, and problems of everyone in his cult, an aspect of his position that he found tiring and dull. Worse still, his blood visions resumed. The Ghost Queen Belcorra returned to tell his cult to be ready, for they would soon have

worlds of slaughter when she finished with her plans. His fellow urdefhans cheered at this promise, but Khurfel's visions dampened his joy.

His visions showed him that hunting the drow leader, Larathols, would be the first step toward his cult's demise. However, Larathols provoked Khurfel with his cautious explorations of the great lake the urdefhans claimed as their own. Larathols sought secrets in the forbidden vault—the one the urdefhans had been told long ago that no one should enter. Hungry for another fight and believing he could overcome his visions, Khurfel swam to an island on the lake and there killed Larathols and his daughter. He drank of the drow's blood and threw the body into the lake so monsters could rip it apart. He had vanquished his foes. The victory was glorious, and his people screamed his name in triumph. Larathols's blood was invigorating. What urdefhan doesn't want these things? It's every urdefhan's right to bring death and destruction into the world.

But Khurfel's blood visions now manifest more frequently, showing strangers who threaten him and drow working against him. He has called upon his cult's tormentors and blood mages to summon more daemons and strengthen their defenses, but the visions persist. Khurfel is uneasy, and his doubt feels like weakness. The only way to solve a problem is to destroy it utterly—what his people have always done. Still the visions come, and Khurfel is powerless to stop them.

Campaign Role

Khurfel leads the largest and most active group of adversaries the heroes face in the Abomination Vaults. His fated confrontation with the heroes is necessary because he holds the *Emerald Fulcrum Lens* and refuses to give it up as long as he lives, as it symbolizes the leadership of his cult. Khurfel's vision of falling at the heroes' hands doesn't inspire fear—it inspires fury, and he fights against his prophesized enemies as long as breath remains in his body.

KHURFEL

CREATURE 10

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMANOID URDEFHAN

Male urdefhan war champion (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* 272)

Perception +19; greater darkvision

Languages Aklo, Daemonic, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +22, Intimidation +19, Survival +20

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

Items chain mail, *Emerald Fulcrum Lens* (page 76), heavy crossbow (10 bolts), +1 striking *rhoka sword*

AC 28; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +19, **Will** +22

HP 200, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fear; **Weaknesses** positive 10

Necrotic Decay (divine, necromancy, negative)

When Khurfel dies, his invisible flesh quickly rots away and sublimates into a foul-smelling gas that fills a 10-foot emanation around his body. The gas deals 10d6 negative damage to creatures in this area as their flesh too curdles and rots (DC 28 basic Fortitude save).

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *rhoka sword* +24 (deadly 2d8, magical, two-hand 2d10), **Damage** 2d8+11 slashing

Melee ♦ jaws +23, **Damage** 2d8+11 piercing plus wicked bite

Ranged ♦ heavy crossbow +22 (range increment 120 feet, reload 2), **Damage** 1d10 piercing

Divine Innate Spells DC 28, attack +20; **4th** *harm*, *read omens*; **3rd** *blindness*, *paralyze*; **2nd** *augury*, *death knell*; **1st** *feather fall* (at will, self only), *ray of enfeeblement*

Frenzied Attack ♦♦ Khurfel makes one *rhoka sword* Strike and two jaws Strikes against one or two different creatures (splitting up the attacks any way he wishes). His multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after all three attacks.

Insightful Swing ♦♦ Khurfel makes a melee weapon Strike. On this Strike, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus to the attack roll and ignores any concealment the target has.

Wicked Bite ♦ **Requirements** Khurfel damaged a creature with a jaws Strike on his last action; **Effect** Khurfel maintains contact, turning the creature's flesh translucent around the injury. Khurfel chooses one of two options, each of which requires a DC 28 Fortitude save. If the jaws Strike was a critical hit, the creature suffers both effects, using the same save result for both.

- **Drain Blood** Khurfel drinks some of the creature's blood. On a failed save, the creature is drained 1 and Khurfel regains 10 HP (or, on a critical failure, it's drained 2 and Khurfel regains 20 HP).
- **Drain Vitality** (necromancy) Khurfel draws out some of the creature's vital essence. The creature becomes enfeebled 1 for 1 hour on a failed save (or enfeebled 2 for 1 hour on a critical failure).



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Quara Orshendiel

Reluctant Ruler

Quara Orshendiel never expected to become the ruler of Yldaris. Her father, a wise and prudent man named Larathols, had ruled the settlement for many centuries. She loved her father, not only because he was a decent man, but because he granted Quara the freedom to forge her own path. She loved the swagger and fearlessness of Yldaris's shootists and grew up fascinated by their tall tales and the way they reveled in their exploits.

Larathols saw no reason not to indulge his youngest daughter's aspirations. He was already preparing Quara's older sister, Galuna, to lead Yldaris when the time came, which Quara always imagined as many centuries in the future. In the meantime, she honed her skills with the shootists. It didn't take long for her to start inspiring stories herself and to collect the scars that go with them—the most severe of which came from a run-in with a gug, against which she ultimately prevailed. She wore the creature's pelt for years until it grew too tattered to be practical.

Quara's carefree life changed after her father's and sister's deaths. At the time, she was carousing in Lozardyn and delighting in its residents' larger-than-life rumors about her. Larathols decided to raid one of Belcorra's secret storehouses to gain more information about the magical lens the sorcerer had entrusted to Larathols's father many years ago. Galuna had gone with him, and Khurfel, war champion of the nearby urdefhans, ambushed and killed the pair. Quara was immediately called back to Yldaris. As the most senior of the shootists and Larathols's daughter, she was expected to assume leadership of the outpost.

Quara never knew much about Belcorra or about the secret mission that cost her father and sister their lives. Belcorra had visited Yldaris years before Quara's birth and made a deal with her grandfather, the vague details of which Quara heard only through rumors. She knew her grandfather played a dangerous game with Belcorra, promising forces that he couldn't deliver and keeping the arrangement secret from Lozardyn's rulers.

When the sorcerer suddenly disappeared—killed at the hands of surface dwellers, rumor said—the problem seemed to have sorted itself out.

Belcorra arrived in Yldaris shortly after Quara came home, imperiously demanding that Quara swear fealty just as her grandfather had. Never one to be much bound by promises anyway, Quara glibly swore to support the ghost because it seemed like the safest course of action.

Quara immediately consulted with Yldaris's enigmatic cavern seers and her father's closest allies to find out what had happened to him. She learned a little bit about her father's last days, where he had gone and why, and that he'd taken something called the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens* that Belcorra had entrusted to Quara's grandfather five centuries earlier. Belcorra hadn't mentioned the lens when she appeared before Quara—perhaps assuming it was languishing in some Yldaris treasure vault—but Quara deduced the lens's critical importance.

The responsibility of administering Yldaris has changed Quara. Her wild days have ended; she rarely drinks and never to excess. However, her freewheeling time as a shootist taught her the dangers of their outpost. She boasts less and has become more circumspect, having learned the lessons of true leadership. Her people love her for it. Quara would be shocked to hear it, but she's just as well-regarded a leader as Larathols ever was.

Campaign Role

Quara will likely become an ally of the heroes, as she knows useful partners when she sees them. She's interested in avenging her father and sister, but she knows that whatever goal her father was pursuing with the *Ochre Fulcrum Lens* could prove critical in freeing Yldaris from Belcorra's control forever. She has learned that the ochre lens was only one of three lenses that Belcorra entrusted to allies in the region centuries ago, and she sets the heroes on the trail of recovering them

and finding out more. The most important lead Quara provides to the heroes is that her father was headed toward an ancient vault at the edge of the lake, so the heroes can find out more at that location.

The heroes might see drow as enemies and assault Yldaris. In this case, Quara does her best to protect her people, relying on the shootist training that still lingers in her quick fingers. She likely won't trust the heroes with any information after such aggressions, but they might find some clues in her quarters.

QUARA ORSHENDIEL

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM DROW ELF HUMANOID

Female drow leader (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 136)

Perception +21; darkvision

Languages Common, Daemonic, Elven, Undercommon

Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +20, Deception +22, Diplomacy +20, Intimidation +22, Stealth +20, Survival +19

Str +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +0, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +5

Items chain shirt, +1 striking repeating hand crossbows (2, with 3 magazines; page 73), shootist bandolier (page 73), +1 striking kukri, stupor poison (4; page 74)

Light Blindness

AC 30; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +22, **Will** +21; +1 status to all saves vs. magic, +2 status to all saves vs. mental

HP 190; **Immunities** sleep

Commanding Aura (aura, emotion, mental) 30 feet. Drow around Quara are heartened by her presence. Her drow allies in the aura gain a +1 status bonus to attack rolls and skill checks.

Deny Advantage Quara isn't flat-footed to hidden, undetected, or flanking creatures of 11th level or lower, or to creatures of 11th level or lower using Surprise Attack.

Evasion When Quara rolls a success on a Reflex saving throw, she gets a critical success instead.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ *kukri* +24 (agile, finesse, trip), **Damage** 2d6+9 slashing

Ranged ♦ *repeating hand crossbow* +24 (range increment 60 feet, reload 0, repeating), **Damage** 2d6+9 piercing plus stupor poison

Divine Innate Spells DC 28; **2nd** *darkness* (at will), *faerie fire* (at will); **Cantrips (6th)** *dancing lights*

Defensive Shooter Quara's ranged attacks don't trigger reactions.

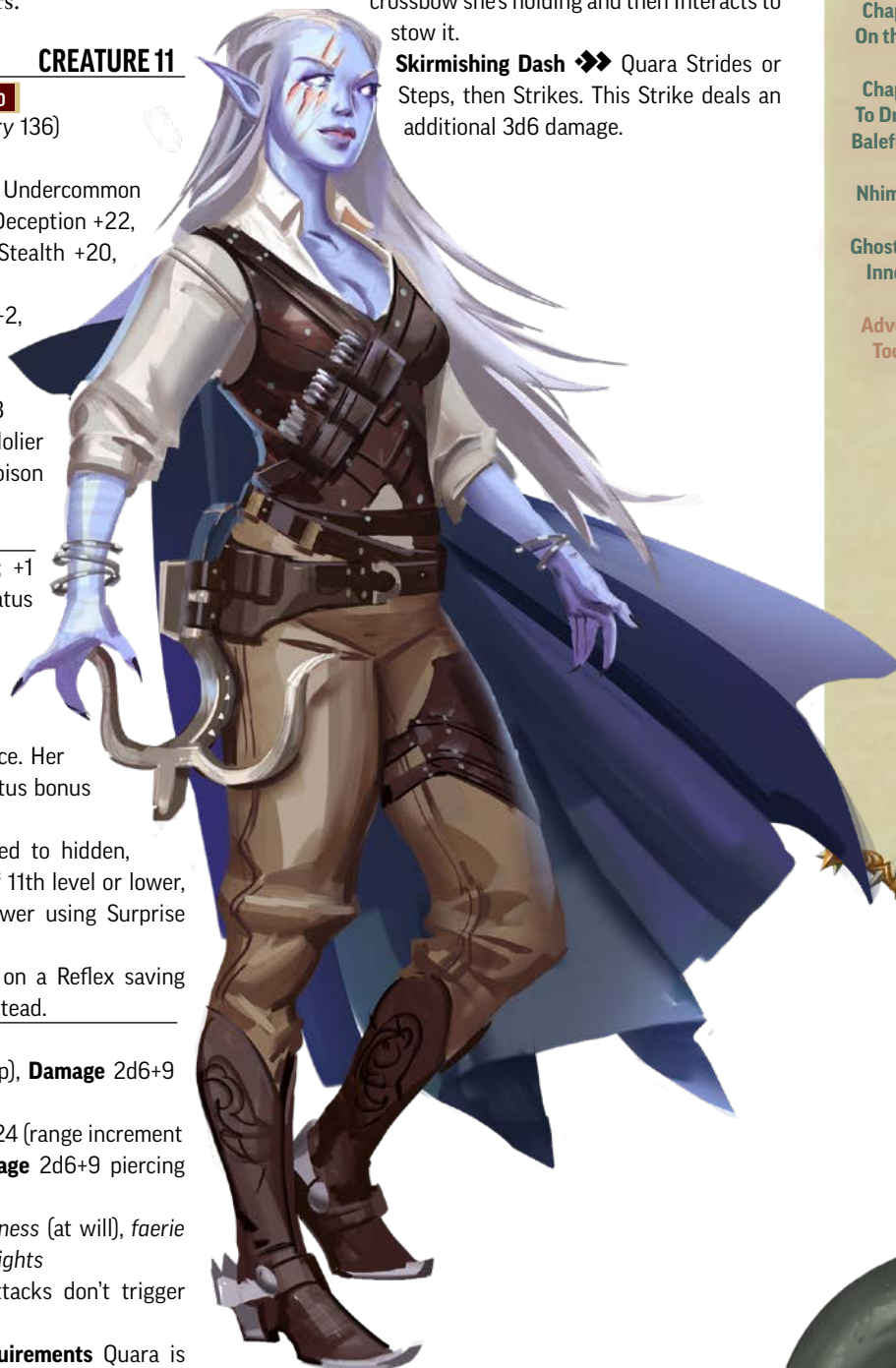
Poison Weapon ♦ (manipulate) **Requirements** Quara is

holding a piercing or slashing weapon and has a free hand; **Effect** Quara applies poison to the weapon.

Reloading Trick ♦ **Requirements** Quara is holding an unloaded repeating hand crossbow; **Effect** Quara Interacts to reload the repeating hand crossbow and Strikes with it.

Shootist's Draw ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Quara Interacts to draw a loaded repeating hand crossbow and Strikes with it, or Strikes with a loaded repeating hand crossbow she's holding and then Interacts to stow it.

Skirmishing Dash ♦♦ Quara Strides or Steps, then Strikes. This Strike deals an additional 3d6 damage.



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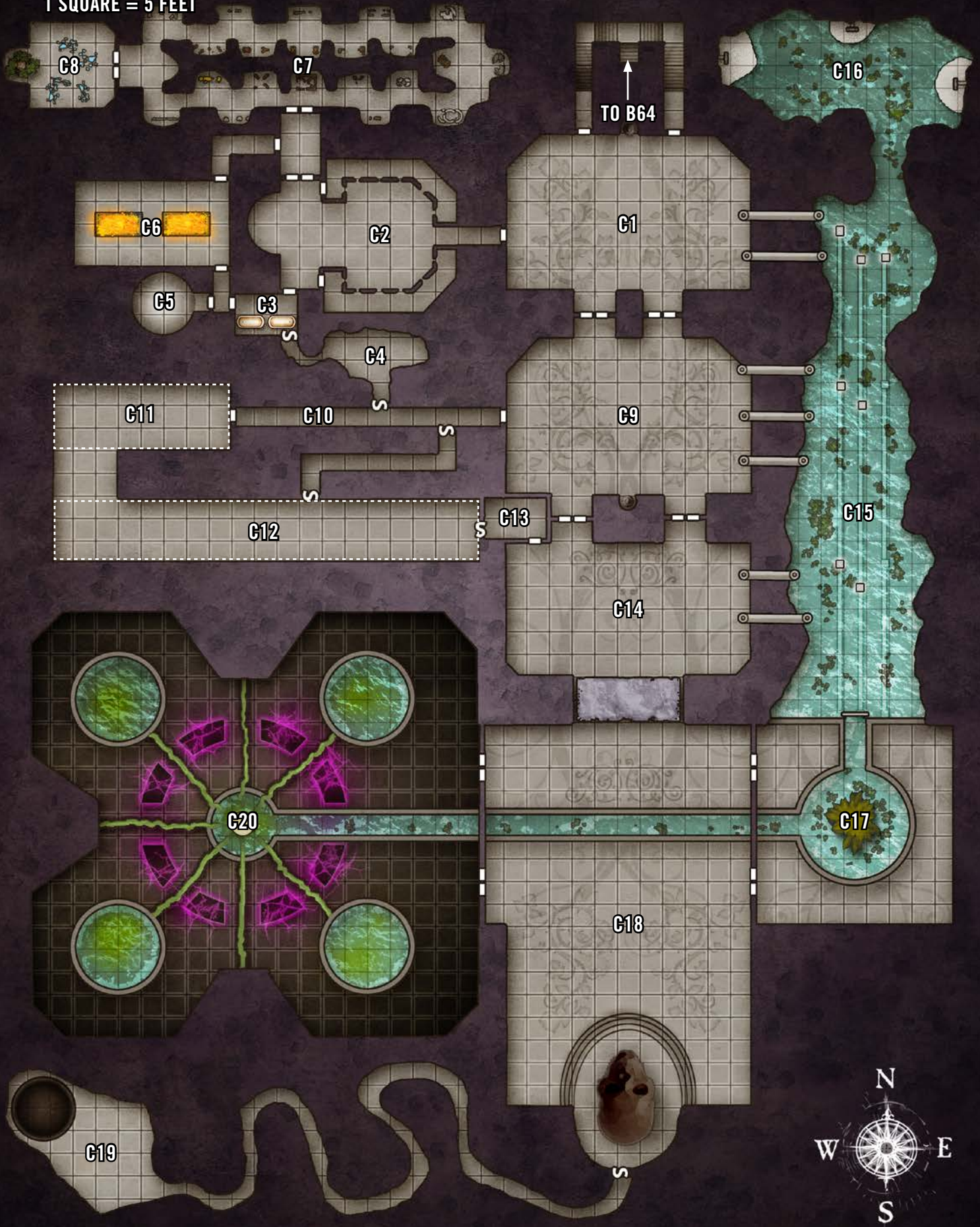
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