



# Year of the Open Road



**PATHFINDER SOCIETY**

**IOLITE SQUAD ALPHA**

By Mike Kimmel



# PATHFINDER SOCIETY

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## How to Play

*Pathfinder Society Scenario #1-19: Iolite Squad Alpha* is a Pathfinder Society Scenario designed for 3rd- through 6th-level characters (Tier 3–6; Subtiers 3–4 and 5–6). As a scenario, this adventure is designed to take about 4 hours to play. It is designed for play in the Pathfinder Society Organized Play campaign, but can easily be adapted for use with any world. For more information on the Pathfinder Society campaign, how to read the attached Chronicle sheets, and how to find games in your area, check out the campaign's home page at [PathfinderSociety.club](http://PathfinderSociety.club).

## GM Resources

*Iolite Squad Alpha* makes use of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* and *Pathfinder Bestiary*, as well as *Pathfinder Flip Mat: Cavernous Lair*. All rules referenced in this adventure are available in the free online Pathfinder Reference Document at [paizo.com/prd](http://paizo.com/prd), and creature stat blocks from the *Bestiary* are reprinted at the back of the adventure for the GM's convenience.

## Scenario Tags

Scenario tags provide additional information about an adventure's contents. For more information on scenario tags, see the *Pathfinder Society Guide to Play* at <http://www.organizedplayfoundation.org/paizo/guides/>. This scenario has no scenario tags.



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# Iolite Squad Alpha

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## GM SYNOPSIS

In this scenario, the PCs escort a group of hobgoblin recruits from Kaer Maga to Korvosa as part of a diplomatic mission to train new Pathfinders. The adventure features social interactions, skill-based challenges, and combat in roughly equal measure.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In 4717 AR, the hobgoblin warlord General Azaersi and her Ironfang Legion invaded the nations of Nirmathas and Molthune, leading vast armies with the help of a powerful artifact that created dimensional pathways through the Plane of Earth and moved troops and supplies with ease. Though her armies were powerful, a group of heroes confronted and eventually convinced a war-weary Azaersi that her continued military conquests were only hindering her ultimate goal: the establishment of a stable hobgoblin homeland. In the aftermath of the Ironfang Invasion, Azaersi has focused on building this new homeland nation of Oprak through diplomacy and treaty. The general is well aware that Oprak's imposing barrier mountains, highly trained army, and access to tremendous resources via secret portals to the elemental Plane of Earth make it one of the Inner Sea region's best defenses against the threat posed by the newly released Whispering Tyrant.

To help establish connections with the rest of the region, Oprak reached out to the Pathfinder Society, a globally established agency and natural candidate for diplomatic relations. While still suspicious of Azaersi and her motives, the Society has decided to allow a newly formed trial squad of hobgoblin recruits, dubbed the Iolite Squad, to travel to Absalom and train as Pathfinders. The Society hopes to learn more about the hobgoblin nation and its goals, as well as share the Society's values with the recruits—and, by extension, with the people of Oprak. Due to the urgent diplomatic situation and the hobgoblins' military training and experience, the Society has further opted to administer an accelerated crash course in Pathfinder techniques and then evaluate the squad at specially selected training grounds before reporting to Absalom.

The Pathfinders assigned to the squad must escort the hobgoblins from Kaer Maga to the training grounds and on to Korvosa, where they will board a ship to Absalom. They will pass through lands that are hostile to hobgoblins in the wake of the Ironfang Invasion while also evaluating the hobgoblins' skills as prospective Pathfinders in a series of challenges both planned and spontaneous.

## WHERE ON GOLARION?

*Iolite Squad Alpha* takes place in the nation of Varisia and follows the PCs as they escort a group of hobgoblin recruits from Kaer Maga to Korvosa. More information on Varisia can be found on pages 116-117 of the *Pathfinder Lost Omens World Guide*, available in hobby and game stores, and online at [paizo.com](http://paizo.com).



## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure begins with the PCs nearing the end of their journey from Heidmarch Manor in Magnimar to Kaer Maga, with the details of their assignment in a letter from Venture-Captain Sheila Heidmarch. The letter outlines where the PCs are to meet the Iolite Squad, the parameters of their mission, and what little is known about the ruins that are to serve as the hobgoblins' training grounds.

The PCs meet up with the Iolite Squad and begin their journey. During their time in transit, the Pathfinders can converse with and observe the hobgoblins. Their first opportunity to assess the hobgoblins' fighting ability and coordination comes when they encounter a merchant family that has been run off the road by a band of wargs. After slaying or chasing off the wargs, the PCs and hobgoblins can offer assistance to the merchant family, while navigating the family's suspicion of hobgoblins.

Once they reach the training site, the two groups conduct joint training exercises that give the Pathfinders a chance to exchange interesting tactics and techniques with the Iolite Squad prior to their expedition into the ruins.

In the ruins, the hobgoblins take the lead and the Pathfinders back them up—but when unexpected predators show up, both teams must test their mettle!



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## GETTING STARTED

The PCs begin the adventure late in the morning after several days of travel from Heidmarch Manor in Magnimar to Kaer Maga, on orders from Venture-Captain Sheila Heidmarch. The City of Strangers and its 80-foot-high walls loom far above them from atop the Storval Rise. Give the PCs **Handout #1: Heidmarch's Mission Briefing**.

Allow the PCs to purchase supplies before their arranged meeting at the Sorry Excuse inn, but if necessary remind them that the well-disciplined Iolite Squad will likely resent tardiness. This is also a good time for the PCs to roll checks to see if they know or can learn more about hobgoblins and the area's recent history.

## RECALL KNOWLEDGE (SOCIETY OR LORE)

A PC who succeeds at a DC 19 Society check (DC 22 for Subtier 5–6) or related Lore check to Recall Knowledge knows more about the local opinion of hobgoblins.

**Critical Failure** Since the armistice between Oprak and the surrounding nations following the Ironfang Invasion, relations have steadily improved to the point that hobgoblins have assimilated into the surrounding area.

**Success** Hobgoblins from Oprak are making headway in improving the reputation of goblinoids throughout the region, but they still face a great deal of prejudice stemming from the bloody Ironfang Invasion and their reputation as monsters and murderers. There are many hobgoblins who still cling to these old ways, but General Azaersi continues her efforts to bring hobgoblins and other so-called “monsters” under her banner of diplomacy.

**Critical Success** The Iolite Squad is the first of its kind, a test squadron put together with an emphasis on qualities the nation of Oprak believes will mesh with the Pathfinder Society's values. Its leader, Sergeant Drussem, is renowned not only for her successes in battle during the Ironfang Invasion, but also for avoiding unnecessary combat and helping to negotiate several key treaties.

## MEETING THE IOLITE SQUAD

Read or paraphrase the following once the PCs have reviewed **Handout #1**, attempted their skill checks, purchased supplies, and are ready to enter the rowdy, ale-soaked Sorry Excuse to begin their work.

Laughter and shouts rise from the boisterous crowd that occupies the cheaply furnished tavern room at the Sorry Excuse inn. The staff move from table to table with practiced efficiency to take orders and deliver pints of frothing ale. Four hobgoblins seated near the entrance size up everyone who enters and ignore the mugs on their table.

The four hobgoblins are the members of the Iolite Squad. Though they are not unwelcome at the tavern, they are out of their element and visibly uncomfortable. The PCs can introduce themselves and ask questions to learn more about the company.

**Sergeant Drussem** (LN female hobgoblin officer), the group's leader, approaches the PCs when they enter the tavern. If the Pathfinders spent more than one hour purchasing supplies in Kaer Maga before arriving at the Sorry Excuse, she informs them of their tardiness. However, if the PCs can explain a useful reason for the perceived delay—such as the purchase of necessary equipment or services—Drussem nods with satisfaction. Drussem is slightly taller than the rest of the hobgoblins, her armor is well made, and her equipment—from her cloak to her sword and shield—is utterly unadorned save for the flag of Oprak at her shoulder.

Drussem calls her soldiers to attention before introducing each of them by name. **Akrag** (LN male hobgoblin soldier) grins broadly and extends his lanky arm to shake hands with each of the Pathfinders, his belt bristling with small bladed weapons. **Gintka** (LN female hobgoblin engineer), their sapper, gives a quick nod as Drussem introduces her before she returns to fidgeting with the metal buckles and sealed vials adorning her gear. Finally, the Sergeant introduces **Ozaril** (LN male hobgoblin commando), their veteran scout, who gives a perfect salute, his fingers coming close to the many scars that cross his head.

Shortly after the PCs introduce themselves, the GM should express the squad's readiness to be on their way—they glance toward the exit, begin gathering their equipment, settle their tab, and so on. The bartender is visibly relieved when the group departs.

The hobgoblins are eager to begin their journey, and if the PCs push for extended conversation beyond these initial introductions, they ask to continue their discussion on the road for the sake of efficiency.

**GM Instructions:** Give the PCs an opportunity to slot their boons for the adventure if they have not already done so, and remind them that they each have 1 Hero Point available. If the PCs have final purchases to make, the hobgoblins begrudgingly wait for them to finish shopping before beginning their journey south.

Once the PCs are ready to embark with the Iolite Squad, proceed to area **A**, where the PCs and their hobgoblin companions happen upon a pack of wargs ambushing a traveling merchant. The **Traveling with the Iolite Squad** section on page 4 contains information about roleplaying the PCs' interactions with the hobgoblins throughout the scenario, and the journey to area A is an ideal time to introduce these interactions.



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**SERGEANT DRUSSEM**

## TRAVELING WITH THE IOLITE SQUAD

The journey from Kaer Maga to the training grounds, then the ruins, and finally Korvosa stretches over 100 miles of varied terrain and should take multiple days. The PCs can get to know the Iolite Squad during this time, particularly after leaving Kaer Maga but before area **A**; after the encounter with the merchant family (**The Wary Merchant**); and after the **Joint Training Exercises** but before reaching the ruins. Some conversation topics and hobgoblin behaviors will likely come up over the course of the journey, described as follows.

**General Azaersi:** The Iolite Squad's members each recently earned special recognition from General Azaersi for their impressive service record in securing allies in the fight against the Whispering Tyrant. The Squad members have always had great respect for their general, and after meeting her in person and being in the presence of her charisma and passion, they understood why so many rallied behind her during the Ironfang Invasion—and why so many have stayed by her side following the armistice.

**Oprak:** The Iolite Squad is proud to serve Oprak and view the new nation as a symbol of hobgoblin strength and endurance in the face of adversity.

**The Pathfinder Society:** Though becoming Pathfinder agents was not their first preference for an assignment, the Iolite Squad's members recognize that they are among the best hobgoblin candidates for such a mission. They believe that the Pathfinder Society has much to offer in terms of knowledge, resources, and practical experience, and they hope that their presence can help to ingratiate hobgoblins with others throughout the Inner Sea.

**The Squad's Reactions to other Goblinoid Pathfinders:** If any of the PCs are goblinoids, such as goblins or hobgoblins, the Iolite Squad members take particular interest in them. Early in the journey, one or more of the hobgoblins ask the goblinoid PCs how they ended up joining the Pathfinder Society. If the PCs' responses are at least somewhat in line with the Iolite Squad's mission objectives—such as creating better relationships between goblinoids and other humanoids, especially where Oprak is concerned—then the Squad reacts favorably. If the PCs have more individualistic reasons or seem at odds with the Squad, the hobgoblins resist voicing open disdain but are clearly displeased. Toward the end of the scenario, if the mission was successful, one or more members of the Iolite Squad might approach such PCs to offer thanks and express regret at judging them so harshly.

**Attitudes Toward Magic:** The Iolite Squad does not contain any spellcasters, but the group respects



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## ROLEPLAYING THE IOLITE SQUAD

Rather than condense all of the role-playing with the hobgoblins into a single scene, GMs should intersperse interactions with the Iolite Squad throughout the adventure. The simplest way to roleplay the Iolite Squad is to have the hobgoblins defer to Sergeant Drussem. As ranking officer, Drussem speaks for her team and feels responsible for representing them. It can be cumbersome for players and GMs alike to have too many NPCs participating in role-playing scenes, especially with a larger table of players or a louder event site, so having a single representative can simplify the scenario and prevent player confusion. Some groups instead thrive on deep role-playing with a variety of NPCs. If that's the case—and you as the GM are comfortable with playing four NPCs at once—you can use the descriptions below to flesh out the squad.

**Sergeant Drussem** is stern and commanding, though quite cordial when at ease. She invites others' opinions on strategic decisions but expects her squad to fall in line when she makes a decision and likewise takes full responsibility for her squad's successes and failures. She singles out the PC who seems most authoritative (or one with the most senior military background) and treats them as the PCs' "ranking officer," assuming the PCs are also a strictly hierarchical unit.

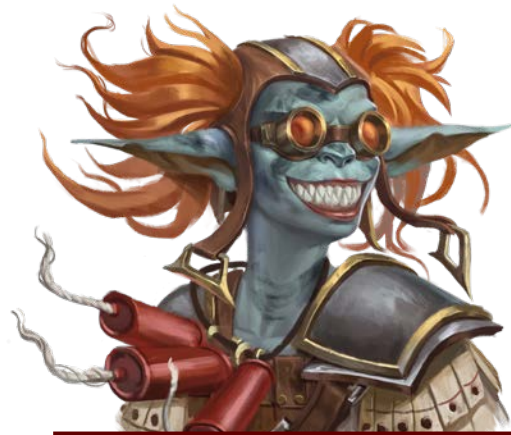
**Akrag** is a perfectionist. He follows a strict exercise routine and conducts regular combat drills. He reads to keep his mind sharp and learn about the world and has always wanted to get his hands on a volume of the *Pathfinder Chronicles*. He's eager to share his knowledge but grows impatient with those who don't meet his standards.

**Gintka** is the group's smokeworker. She constantly fidgets and mutters to herself, has difficulty paying attention for extended periods, and collects odd objects that she wears in open defiance of Ironfang Legion regulations; she's especially attached to a recently acquired combination hat/wig. She's drawn to alchemy, woodworking, and other activities involving careful measurement and effortlessly tracks her tasks and mission objectives with thorough mental checklists. Martial displays and long tales bore her.

**Ozaril**, the Iolite Squad's scout, is comfortable in both remote areas and bustling settlements. He displays earnest curiosity for other humanoid's customs and languages and is usually the Squad's most good-natured member, but he also experiences periods of deep melancholy. The oldest hobgoblin and a veteran of multiple wars—some with fellow hobgoblins, some with other humanoids—he has great respect for warriors and soldiers but recognizes the value of avoiding conflict when possible.



**AKRAG**



**GINTKA**



**OZARIL**



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practitioners of magic and other mystical arts—even arcane and occult magic, which many from Oprak view with suspicion. In their many missions, the Squad members have witnessed powerful acts of creation, destruction, and restoration at the hands of magic-users. They ask questions of spellcasting PCs—what is the source of your magic? When did you first learn how to cast spells? What is the most powerful magic you can do?—but they balk at the suggestion that they themselves could study it. Gintka's bombs and smokeworks are as close to magic as any of them do, and they claim that this advanced science suits the Squad well enough.

If the PCs or players are hesitant to initiate conversation with the squad, consider having one of the hobgoblins approach the PCs to ask a question or seek advice.

## A. ROADSIDE AMBUSH MODERATE

The roads surrounding Kaer Maga are generally well traveled, and the Pathfinders and Iolite Squad cross paths with many people as they make their way south. The hobgoblins do their best to appear friendly, but most travelers give the group a wide berth, some even moving to the side of the road to allow the armed hobgoblins to march by.

The PCs and their Iolite Squad companions make their way along the road several hours south of Kaer Maga before looking for a spot to rest for the night, but their search is interrupted when they encounter a pack of wargs attacking some traveling merchants who were setting up their own camp near an abandoned homestead.

This encounter assumes the PCs are searching for a place to camp or otherwise traveling through this area around dusk. The setting sun provides dim light; the hobgoblins have no trouble seeing in such conditions thanks to their darkvision. Read or paraphrase the following to begin the encounter.

The path winds through the rugged, wooded foothills for several miles before opening onto a small ravine. A dilapidated homestead lies in ruin to the south, and a nearby campfire sheds flickering illumination on the surrounding outcroppings.

This abandoned homestead is unremarkable, except that a merchant and his family have sheltered their wagons under its mostly intact roof and are setting up camp nearby. The merchant is **Caradrian Subold** (LN male human merchant), a devout young man from Magnimar on his way to sell all manner of holy texts in Kaer Maga. Caradrian and his family are understandably unable to engage in conversation until the imminent threat of being devoured by wargs has been resolved.

The paths in this area are well trodden and smooth, but debris and dense grass cover the ground off the paths and constitute difficult terrain. The rocky outcroppings in the area are natural stone ranging from 5 to 20 feet tall.

**Creatures:** A pack of hungry wargs tracked the merchant family for hours and waited until their prey was distracted by the task of preparing camp before ambushing them. Caradrian was savvy enough to hire two caravan guards, but they were the first to fall in the ambush and lie bleeding on the path just west of the campfire. The wargs are initially relieved at the approach of hobgoblins—assuming that the goblinoids will fight alongside them and split the spoils after the slaughter—but quickly notice that the hobgoblins are not alone and do not mean to help them. When they recognize this threat, the wargs ignore the family to



**ELITE WARG**

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turn their attention to the far more dangerous Pathfinders and hobgoblins. See the scenario's appendixes for more details on the wargs and their tactics.

The merchant and his family cower behind the logs near their campfire.

**The Iolite Squad in Combat:** The Iolite Squad does not roll initiative or take individual turns in this encounter—indeed, this scenario does not present traditional combat statistics for the hobgoblins at all. Instead, the Iolite Squad acts together by performing a single action on initiative count 10. See the Encounter Appendixes for information about the hobgoblins' available actions.

You don't need to represent the hobgoblins with figures on the battle map, though you might choose to do so. Be sure to narrate the Iolite Squad's actions and emphasize their combat prowess and coordination—after all, they're a military group, and they should give the impression of being about on par with the PCs in terms of their combat training and experience.

## SUBTIER 3–4

### ELITE WARGS (2)

### CREATURE 3

Page 18; art on page 23

## SUBTIER 5–6

### WINTER WOLF

### CREATURE 5

Page 20

### ELITE WARGS (2)

### CREATURE 3

Page 20; art on page 23

**Rewards:** One of the wargs wears a war harness studded with onyx gems and reinforced with mithral links, a device crudely fashioned from a noble warrior's cast-off armor that nonetheless has great value. The harness is worth 40 gp and represents 1 Treasure Bundle.

**Grateful Merchants:** With the wargs defeated or driven off, Caradrian and his family come out from hiding to thank the PCs. Their reaction to the hobgoblins is more mixed. Proceed to The Wary Merchant, a social encounter in which the Iolite Squad enlists the PCs in helping them make a good impression and change the merchants' attitudes toward their kind.

## THE WARY MERCHANT

Following the skirmish with the wargs, Caradrian stumbles out from his hiding place near the campfire to ascertain whether his caravan guards are still alive. He is a man from Magnimar with simple, conservative traveling clothes that suggest an austere lifestyle. His

partner, a Garundi man named Jharless, huddles with two youths near the fire to console them and shield their gaze from the carnage. When the Iolite Squad approaches, Caradrian retreats in fear, shouting that he doesn't want any more trouble.

Sergeant Drussem, having been tasked with representing the better aspects of Oprak and hobgoblin cooperation and recognizing the potential benefit of helping distressed travelers, orders Gintka and Akrag to help the injured guards while she and Ozaril address Caradrian. If the PCs do not immediately move to help, she gestures for them to join; each PC can either speak with the merchant or treat the injured guards. Their success (or lack of it) affects the Iolite Squad's morale, which adjusts the DCs of the Joint Training Exercises on page 10. Each adjustment must be applied to a different exercise.

## Speaking with Caradrian

Addressing the merchant involves multiple steps. First, a PC must calm Caradrian with a successful DC 18 Diplomacy check (DC 21 for Subtier 5–6); if the PC fails this check, the PCs take a –1 circumstance penalty to the subsequent Society or Religion check due to a poor first impression.

A PC must then attempt to convince the merchant that the hobgoblins are trustworthy with a successful DC 19 Society check (DC 22 for Subtier 5–6) to explain the error of prejudice against hobgoblins given their evolving role in the region, or a successful DC 18 Religion check (DC 21 for Subtier 5–6) to persuade the devout merchant with religious doctrines of tolerance, second chances, or similar arguments. Either check has one of the following results and alters the Iolite Squad's morale after the encounter.

**Critical Success** Caradrian not only expresses sincere thanks to the PCs and the Iolite Squad, but also offers to share any text of the hobgoblins' choice. Drussem selects a book of prayers and songs from a variety of good-aligned faiths called *Common Prayers and Hymns of the Inner Sea*. Decrease the DCs of two of the Joint Training Exercises by 1.

**Success** Caradrian expresses sincere thanks for the PCs' intervention and takes a long moment to ponder their argument. He then thanks Drussem and the Iolite Squad, acknowledges that he has much to learn about hobgoblins and will endeavor to have more faith in them. Decrease the DC of one of the Joint Training Exercises by 1.

**Failure** Caradrian is grateful for the PCs' intervention, but his gratitude extends to only the Pathfinders. He expresses that the hobgoblins' one small act of mercy can't undo a long history of violence resulting from the greed and hatred of goblin-kind in the area. Do not adjust the DCs of the Joint Training Exercises.



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**Critical Failure** Caradrian is grateful but wants nothing further to do with the PCs. He feels that their presence only puts his family in greater danger. Increase the DC of one of the Joint Training Exercises by 1.

## Helping the Injured

Helping the injured guards involves multiple steps. First, a PC must stabilize the guards and assess their condition with a successful DC 20 Medicine check (DC 22 for Subtier 5–6) to Administer First Aid. The check applies to both guards at once. If the PC fails this check, the PCs take a –1 circumstance penalty to the subsequent Crafting or Medicine check due to the guards' more severe condition. As the PCs approach to help the guards, Akrag pulls out a set of healer's tools while Gintka begins to mix salves, and Akrag insists on using their expertise in field medicine rather than magic to prove the hobgoblins' desire to help to the merchant. He grants the PC who attempts the check a +1 circumstance bonus on their roll.

A PC must then aid Akrag and Gintka in treating the guards more comprehensively with a successful DC 19 Crafting or Nature check (DC 22 for Subtier 5–6) to help Gintka prepare antiseptics and wound sealants, or a successful DC 18 Medicine check (DC 21 for Subtier 5–6) to Treat Wounds and help Akrag apply bandages. Either check will have one of the following results and alters the Iolite Squad's morale after the encounter.

**Critical Success** Both guards recover swiftly and are amazed at the efficacy of the hobgoblins' medical practice. Decrease the DCs of two of the Joint Training Exercises by 1.

**Success** Both guards are stable and happy to be alive, though it will take them a bit longer to be recovered enough to resume their guard duties. Decrease the DC of one of the Joint Training Exercises by 1.

**Failure** The guards are stable but remain unconscious for at least a day as their bodies recover from blood loss and fight off infection. Caradrian takes this as a sign of the hobgoblins' inability to do anything other than bring harm. Do not adjust the DCs of the Joint Training Exercises.

**Critical Failure** While one of the guards stabilizes and remains unconscious, the other is lost during treatment. Caradrian believes that this was intentional sabotage to make the wagons easier prey later, and he chases the PCs and squad off. Increase the DC of one of the Joint Training Exercises by 1.

If the PCs go against Akrag's wishes and use magic to treat the guards, the guards automatically recover with no check, but the Iolite Squad feels undermined in their genuine attempt to remedy the situation; in this case, increase the DC of two of the Joint Training Exercises by 1.

**Rewards:** As long as one of the guards doesn't die during treatment, Caradrian expresses gratitude to

the PCs and the squad and offers a few small items as thanks. In Subtier 3–4, he gives the PCs an *oil of mending* and a lesser mistform elixir. In Subtier 5–6, he instead rewards the PCs with two moderate acid flasks and a moderate mistform elixir. These items are worth 2 Treasure Bundles.

## JOINT TRAINING EXERCISES MODERATE

After the PCs rest for the night, the Pathfinders' journey continues to the southeast on less-traveled paths for nearly two days. During this time, the stoic Iolite Squad members remain vigilant, knowing that danger could come from hungry monsters and distrusting humanoids alike.

The group's next destination is a small valley containing a training ground that the Society has prepared for the Pathfinders in advance—their mission briefing includes directions on which paths to travel to find the site. The training ground is about four miles from the abandoned dig site that the Iolite Squad is tasked with exploring.

This brief stretch of travel is uneventful, so it's a good time for GMs to add a brief role-playing scene or two between the Iolite Squad and the PCs. See **Traveling with the Iolite Squad** on page 5 for suggestions.

Read or paraphrase the following when you have completed any role-playing and are ready to continue.

The road from Kaer Maga continues south and east through the foothills. The Iolite Squad seems comfortable in the rocky terrain, and they grow more relaxed as the path takes the group farther away from the more crowded main roads. After a few miles, the winding path descends into a shallow, shrub-strewn valley. Soon, the path becomes obscured with foliage, but a small stream leads the way to a large cleared area. Small tables and a few crates of supplies stand neatly at the center of the area, and four nearby patches of flattened earth ring a sizable bonfire pit. To the south, a ramp leads into a labyrinth of trenches that stretches across the valley floor. About six feet deep, the trenches are blocked with a sign that reads "DANGER: for Pathfinder Society training purposes only. Keep Out!"

The Iolite Squad sets up camp in a matter of minutes. They move with efficiency and obvious eagerness to begin their joint training. Sergeant Drussem barks a few orders in guidance, and a minute later the four hobgoblins stand at the ready near the bonfire pit.

Drussem addresses the squad in Common. "Here begins your real training! We have fought together many times. This is something new. These Pathfinders have seen things that would surprise us. We know how to fight, how to scout, how to use every tactic to gain the slightest advantage. We are the Iolite Squad! But soon, we will be more. To



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become Pathfinders, we must learn from Pathfinders. But we are not lazy students who wish to sit and read books in a dusty building. We will learn through experience. These Pathfinders are part of our team now, but there is much we can teach them as well. Let us show them what the Iolite Squad can do!"

The PCs have a total of 6 hours to train with the hobgoblins, and each activity takes about 2 hours to complete. This time represents multiple attempts, feedback sessions, discussion, and short rests between attempts. Each PC can attempt up to three of the activities. For a group of 6 PCs, each activity takes about 3 hours to complete, so each PC can attempt up to 2 of the activities. Before rolling any checks for an activity, each PC must commit to whether they are engaging in that activity. If more than one PC joins a given activity, each PC decides whether to roll independently or help another PC with their roll. If multiple PCs roll independently, use the best roll to determine the result of the activity. Any PC who chooses to help instead rolls against the same DC to Aid their chosen PC.

In Subtier 5–6, the hobgoblins are more capable, but they also insist on more rigorous training and have higher expectations of their Pathfinder guides. Each activity notes the increased DCs resulting from this more intensive training.

**GM Reminder:** Keep careful track of the highest degree of success that the PCs achieve with each activity. Each activity describes how the results of the PCs' checks affect the Pathfinders and the Iolite Squad while they are facing future areas and encounters. Furthermore, take note of any activities that the PCs did not attempt at all, whether due to focusing their time on the other activities or for some other reason. The PCs automatically receive the "Failure" result for any activities that they did not attempt, so be sure to communicate to the PCs the consequences of not practicing a given exercise.

## Essentials of Infiltration and Obstacle Avoidance

Hobgoblins enjoy bloodshed, but they also seek out practical solutions whenever possible. This is especially true when exploring dangerous areas such as ruins, where blood can be spilled due to traps and hazards as well as foes. The Iolite Squad recognizes that the Pathfinders are the experts in exploring ruins and getting out alive—their own past experience generally covers traps and snares used in war and hunting, not the myriad traps left by civilizations long gone. The course leads through a series of simple traps and obstacles laid out in the trenches and designed to demand a variety of strategies for avoiding such dangers. Attempt a DC 19

Acrobatics or Thievery check (DC 22 for Subtier 5–6) with the following results.

**Critical Success** You complete the obstacle course and teach the Iolite Squad a few new things about the sort of traps that are likely to appear in ancient ruins. Additionally, your explanations and feedback are swift, accurate, and clear. As a result, the Iolite Squad has plenty of time to practice the techniques you demonstrate. The DC of checks for the associated task in area **B** decreases by 2.

**Success** You complete the obstacle course and teach the Iolite Squad a few new things about traps that often appear in ancient ruins. The DC of checks for the associated task in area **B** decreases by 1.

**Failure** You complete the obstacle course, but you fail to demonstrate any useful new skills for the hobgoblins. The DC of checks for the associated task in area **B** increases by 1.

**Critical Failure** You complete the obstacle course, but only by teaching the Iolite Squad a few dangerous shortcuts for bypassing traps and obstacles. They come away from this session with misconceptions about how to safely avoid danger when searching for and disarming traps. The DC of checks for the associated task in area **B** increases by 2.

## Exchange of Hand-to-Hand Tactics

A hobgoblin army's traditional "exchange of hand-to-hand tactics" exercise (also known as a "fight") typically results in serious injury or death for one or more parties. More modern and practically minded hobgoblins have reduced the lethality of these duels by allowing a participant to surrender; they still recognize that the loser might be weaker, but they can also learn something from their loss and grow stronger for it. That doesn't mean the hobgoblins go easy on you when you engage in this brutal wrestling exercise, however. Attempt a Strike against AC 18 (AC 20 for Subtier 5–6) using your highest proficiency with a weapon or magical tradition, with the following results.

**Critical Success** After a few bouts, you and the hobgoblins size each other up and determine exactly how best to complement one another's fighting abilities. With a few more rounds, you each learn something new and the Iolite Squad gains a newfound respect for how you handle yourself in a fight. The DC of checks for the associated task in area **B** decreases by 2.

**Success** You match the hobgoblins blow-for-blow and move-for-move. The Iolite Squad is impressed with your fighting abilities, and you learn a few tips from Sergeant Drussem about reading your opponent and keeping a clear head in a fight. The DC of checks for the associated task in area **B** decreases by 1.

**Failure** The Iolite Squad starts off too aggressively and handily wins the first few matches. They take it a little



# Iolite Squad Alpha

bit too easy on you for the rest of the training session. Your bout results in a few bruises and scrapes, but you do not learn any new fighting techniques. The DC of checks for the associated task in area **B** increases by 1.

**Critical Failure** The hobgoblins are demoralized by your apparent lack of skill in close combat and worry that you might not be able to help them in a truly dangerous fight. The DC of checks for the associated task in area **B** increases by 2.

## Understanding Artifacts and Lore

Many hobgoblins fail to see the value in crumbling artifacts and forgotten lore—if it has no immediate practical use, why take the time to study it? The Iolite Squad, however, recognizes that they must understand such things if they are to become Pathfinders and help to elevate Oprak and hobgoblin-kind in the eyes of the Society. Lacking experience in such matters, they are eager for any advice that you have to offer in an impromptu field lecture. Attempt a DC 19 Arcana, Occultism, or Religion check (DC 22 for Subtier 5–6) or a DC 18 Lore check with an especially relevant Lore skill (DC 21 for Subtier 5–6) with the following results.

**Critical Success** You explain the practical use of ancient artifacts and lore in such a way that the hobgoblins begin connecting this knowledge to their own experiences and recognizing situations in which thorough documentation and extensive research might have helped them. The DC of checks for the associated task in area **B** decreases by 2.

**Success** You demonstrate the usefulness of ancient artifacts and lore with examples from your own knowledge and experience. The Iolite Squad sees the value of this new knowledge and demonstrates a fair understanding of how to recognize and document such findings. The DC of checks for the associated task in area **B** decreases by 1.

**Failure** The Iolite Squad becomes confused by the expectations for handling and documenting ancient artifacts and lore—they try their best, but they do not engage enough to have learned anything useful. The DC of checks for the associated task in area **B** increases by 1.

**Critical Failure** Your explanation bores the hobgoblins. They put up with your attempts to train them, but they do not yet see the immediate usefulness of this skill. The DC of checks for the associated task in area **B** increases by 2.

## The Art and Science of Smokeworking

You learn the essentials of hobgoblin smokeworking, which combines alchemy and engineering to bring fire and smoke to the battlefield. This hands-on training is quite dangerous! Attempt a DC 19 Crafting or Medicine check (DC 22 for Subtier 5–6) with the following results.

**Critical Success** It takes only a few attempts to duplicate the hobgoblins' techniques. The Iolite Squad's alchemist, Gintka, teaches you a few advanced tips and methods in the remaining time. The DC of checks for the associated task in area **B** decreases by 2.

**Success** You get hurt a few times while attempting to duplicate the techniques and processes that the Iolite Squad demonstrates, but after several attempts you succeed. The DC of checks for the associated task in area **B** decreases by 1.

**Failure** You receive a few minor burns, and your eyes won't stop watering for a few hours. The DC of checks for the associated task in area **B** increases by 1.

**Critical Failure** You think you understand the smokeworking technique that you've been taught, but in truth you've mixed up the steps. The DC of checks for the associated task in area **B** increases by 2.

**Hero Point:** Upon completing all four exercises, you should be approaching or have already passed the end of your second hour of gameplay. Award a Hero Point to one of the PCs if you have not already done so since completing **The Wary Merchant**. This could be a PC who critically succeeds during the joint training exercises or is most engaged in role-playing with the hobgoblins. If none of the PCs match these requirements, give a Hero Point to a random PC of your choice; this should be a different PC than the one to whom you previously awarded a Hero Point.

## B. THE ABANDONED DIG SITE

For thousands of years the dwarves of the Mindspin Mountains, a range not far to the northeast, have explored and mined the foothills surrounding their mountain halls. The region is pocketed with caves and mines both great and small, but most were stripped long ago of anything valuable and are abandoned or collapsed. Few people still bother to explore the area, and most long-lost dwarven settlements which might have existed have either been re-discovered and looted, or now house monsters and bandits.

Venture-Captain Sheila Heidmarch is familiar with the area's history and has used the old settlements in the foothills as training sites for years. They offer an ideal mix of interesting (but not too interesting) discoveries and dangerous (but not too dangerous) threats. When she heard word that the Pathfinder Society would be training hobgoblins, she quickly ordered that this specific dig site be reserved for their use. The negotiations dragged on, and in the intervening weeks a group of dangerous monstrous spiders took up residence in the ruins. Once the arrangements



# Iolite Squad Alpha

were finally and suddenly made, the Iolite Squad was sent on its way there with no time to double-check the site, and the Society is unaware of the new danger lurking within.

Before the PCs venture into the dig site with the Iolite Squad, GMs have another opportunity to add brief role-playing encounters between the PCs and the Squad. See **Traveling with the Iolite Squad** on page 8 for suggestions.

Read or paraphrase the following when you have completed any role-playing scenes and are ready to continue.

A few miles from the training grounds, a stone edifice rises against the northern slope of the valley. Thick vines drape over a fifty-foot-wide archway that leads into the structure and cover most of the rough-hewn stone around it. A cool wind carries the faint stench of dust and decay from the ruins.

The interior of the abandoned dig site is dark, though the room at the entrance is dimly lit by sunlight if the PCs explore this location during the day. The ceilings are about 10 feet high in most places, though they arch to 15 or 20 feet high in the larger chambers. The floor and walls are roughly hewn stone.

**Special:** The Iolite Squad's level of success in exploring the ruins contributes to their overall sense of accomplishment and preparedness as Pathfinder trainees. This determines whether the PCs fulfill their secondary objective of truly preparing the hobgoblins, rather than rushing them through their training for the sake of a quick and convenient allegiance with Oprak. For each of the four tasks in this area, keep track of the best degree of success attained by the PCs. At the end of the scenario, refer to the **Secondary Objectives** section (page 17).

## B1. Disarm the Traps

The dwarves who last explored these ruins used simple trip-wire traps and a few magic runes to hinder those who might interfere with their excavation.

Akrag takes a few moments to explore the entrance to the ruin. Rough stairs descend to the left and right and lead to multiple hallways. He holds up a hand to warn the others to halt. "Possible traps—all routes compromised. Status unclear. Request assistance locating, will attempt disposal."

To proceed through this area, the Iolite Squad must disarm the traps or suffer their consequences. Akrag takes the lead. The PCs can help to find traps with a

## EXPLORING THE RUINS

This delve does not follow the traditional formula of other scenarios in that the PCs don't take the lead—the Iolite Squad directs the expedition, with the Pathfinders providing support and guidance while evaluating the Squad's actions. To represent this, the PCs progress through a series of activities as they accompany the squad through the ruins. Each location in this area presents a brief description of what the group finds, what the hobgoblins decide to do, how the PCs can participate, and what happens as a result. Proceed through these events in the order presented.

The group's success and failures in the **Joint Training Exercises** directly affect their degree of success in this area's activities. Each activity indicates which training exercise it is associated with. The PCs' degree of success from each associated training exercise adjusts their DC in this area's exploration tasks.

**Critical Success** Decrease the DC of checks for this task by 2.

**Success** Decrease the DC of checks for this task by 1.

**Failure** Increase the DC of checks for this task by 1.

**Critical Failure** Increase the DC of checks for this task by 2.

successful DC 20 Perception check (DC 23 for Subtier 5–6), with the following results.

**Associated Training Exercise:** Essentials of Infiltration and Obstacle Avoidance (see the "Exploring the Ruins" sidebar)

**Critical Success** Not only does Akrag spot and disarm all the traps, he also finds a stash of ancient coins concealed behind a trapped slab of stone.

**Success** You help spot traps and point out how Akrag can identify them on his own, and he successfully disarms every trap without setting any of them off.

**Failure** Akrag disarms most of the traps, but one rune blows up in his face, which deals 2d6 fire damage to each PC (DC 20 basic Reflex save). In Subtier 5–6, the damage increases to 4d6, and the DC increases to 23.

**Critical Failure** Akrag makes a serious error and sets off several magic traps at once, dealing 2d6 fire damage to each PC (DC 23 basic Reflex save). In Subtier 5–6, the damage increases to 4d6, and the DC increases to 26.

**Rewards:** The ancient coins have a 50 gp value and are worth 1 Treasure Bundle. If the PCs succeed at their check but did not critically succeed, they can attempt a second Perception check to Seek to find the treasure (DC 20, or DC 23 in Subtier 5–6).



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## B2. Vanquish the Skeletons

Six dwarf explorers, betrayed by a greedy companion, never made it out of this dig site alive, and their remains now prowls the caverns.

Rounding a corner, the Iolite Squad discovers a half-dozen skeletal dwarves. They shed centuries of dust and cobwebs as they rise to attack the intruders with ancient picks and shovels.

To proceed through this area, the Iolite Squad must defeat the undead. These foes pose little threat if the hobgoblins use good sense. The PCs can help with tips about battling undead foes or general battle tactics by succeeding at a DC 19 Religion or related Lore check (DC 22 for Subtier 5–6), with the following results.

**Associated Training Exercise:** Exchange of Hand-to-Hand Tactics (see the “Exploring the Ruins” sidebar)

**Critical Success** You advise the Iolite Squad that the skeletons will attack without thought of tactics. The hobgoblins funnel their enemies into a narrow corridor and quickly destroy them. The quick combat is a great warmup that grants the PCs a +1 status bonus to initiative in area **B5**.

**Success** Knowing the skeletons will do little to prevent themselves from being surrounded, you suggest a quick flanking strategy. Sergeant Drussem and Ozaril leap into the fray, while Akrag and Gintka outflank the skeletons. After a brief skirmish, the enemies are defeated.

**Failure** You mistake the skeletons for a more powerful foe and hesitate briefly—the Iolite Squad holds off the enemies, but they are unable to gain a quick advantage. They eventually wear down the skeletons with brute force while sustaining minor injuries.

**Critical Failure** You suggest a flawed defensive strategy that the skeletons exploit to attack from multiple directions. Several skeletons break through the Iolite Squad's defenses and attack you. You defeat them handily, but the din alerts the enemies in area **B5**, granting them a +1 bonus to their initiative checks.

**Rewards:** In Subtier 3–4, one of the skeletons wore a *lifting belt*, which the hobgoblins give to the PCs. They know that its good condition likely means it is magical, but without a way of knowing what it does, they have little use for it. In Subtier 5–6, the group instead finds a *ring of the ram*, which they similarly turn over to the PCs out of distrust in magic over their training. In both Subtiers, the item is worth 2 Treasure Bundles.

## B3. Record Ancient Findings

The dwarven expedition set up camp here long ago. What remains of their equipment is ruined, but a few interesting pieces remain of the stash of ancient relics they recovered.

A ruined, rotting campsite occupies the east wall of this large chamber. The hobgoblins spend a few minutes picking through the wreckage. Sergeant Drussem says, “This must be where those dwarves made camp. A long time ago, it seems.” After a few minutes, Ozaril exclaims, “I found something!” He lifts a small wood chest still largely preserved, and the hobgoblins open it to find ancient scrolls, a dusty tome, and a few miniature stone statuettes.

Upon reaching this area, the Iolite Squad sets out to record their findings for submission to the Pathfinder archives. The PCs can help the Iolite Squad with their reports by serving as scribes, which requires a successful DC 20 Society check (DC 23 for Subtier 5–6), with the following results.

**Associated Training Exercise:** Understanding Artifacts and Lore (see the “Exploring the Ruins” sidebar)

**Critical Success** The hobgoblins are able to fashion accurate copies of the texts they found, as well as detailed sketches of the objects. From one of the texts, they discover that the one of the stone statuettes is missing from the set and locate it within a few minutes of searching.

**Success** Following your advice, the hobgoblins carefully translate the ancient dwarven texts and discover clues about when the site might have been constructed.

**Failure** The hobgoblins listen carefully, but Akrag and Gintka can't agree on whether the statuettes are magical. When Drussem steps in to tell them to do their best and move on, the two are embarrassed by their lack of knowledge. The confusing back and forth causes all PCs to take a –1 status penalty to Recall Knowledge attempts for the rest of the day.

**Critical Failure** Your meandering explanation causes the squad to nitpick the details of the report. They finish the task, but it embarrasses and frustrates them, and the confusion causes all PCs to take a –2 status penalty to Recall Knowledge attempts for the rest of the day.

**Rewards:** The stone statuettes in the chest have a 25 gp value and are worth 1 Treasure Bundle. If the group finds the complete set with a critical success, the statuettes have far greater value and are instead worth 2 Treasure Bundles.

## B4. Smoke out the Spiders

Swarms of mundane spiders followed the far more monstrous web lurkers into the deeper areas of the ruins.

Thick cobwebs and hundreds of spiders choke this passage. “Our weapons will be no use here,” says the sergeant. Gintka steps forward, already mixing a few vials of smoking liquid eagerly. “This should clear them out.”



# Iolite Squad Alpha

To proceed through this area, the Iolite Squad decides to smoke out the spiders with alchemy. Gintka passes a pair of fuming vials to each of her companions. The PCs can give Gintka advice on what reagents are most likely to repel the spiders with a successful DC 19 Nature or Survival check (DC 22 for Subtier 5–6), with the following results.

**Associated Training Exercise:** The Art and Science of Smokeworking (see the “Exploring the Ruins” sidebar)  
**Critical Success** With your help, Gintka creates a smoke that billows along the floor and creeps up the walls. She includes aromatic herbs that are harmless to humanoids but noxious to arthropods, which swiftly disperses the spiders. The lingering fumes stick to the PCs’ clothing, granting them a +1 status bonus to their saves against the abilities of the enemies in area **B5**.

**Success** With your help, Gintka smokes out most of the spiders, though a few remain to harass the group as they move through the passage.

**Failure** Gintka’s alchemy smokes out the spiders, but the cloud does not stay contained as intended, and the hobgoblins are all exposed to the roiling, choking cloud. They must delay for several minutes as they recover from their self-inflicted condition.

**Critical Failure** The reagents you suggest to Gintka actually attract the spiders rather than repel them, and the group spends nearly an hour fighting off swarm after swarm. The fumes stick to the PCs’ clothing, imposing a –1 status penalty to their saves against the abilities of the enemies in area **B5**.

**A Brief Respite:** With these four tasks complete, Sergeant Drussem orders her squad to regroup and rest for a moment. She thanks the Pathfinders for their guidance so far and suggests that they take a moment to rest as well. If they insist on pressing on, she orders the Squad to proceed through the previously spider-choked passage.

**Hero Points:** Upon completing this encounter, you should be approaching or have already passed the end of your third hour of gameplay. Award a Hero Point to one of the PCs if you have not already done so since completing the joint training exercises. This could be a PC who had just the right skill to succeed in an activity, achieved a critical success in an activity, or was able to succeed at multiple checks throughout the exercises and exploration. If none of the PCs match

these requirements, give a Hero Point to a random PC of your choice; this should be a different PC than the ones to whom you awarded a Hero Point after the previous encounters.

## B5. Deadfall Ambush

## Severe

A group of web lurkers and their pet giant spiders occupy the deeper areas of the ruins and occasionally wander at night out into the foothills to hunt for prey. Venture-Captain Sheila Heidmarch was unaware that such dangerous foes had moved into the ruins, and their cunning plan to separate the intrusive humanoids poses the greatest threat that the Pathfinders and their trainees have yet to face.

Rough stairs rise to the west, and a wide passage leads east. Thick webs cling to the walls and ceiling. A loud scrape and thud alerts the Squad to the presence of something beyond the east passage. “Wait here,” says the Sergeant, who signals her squad to stay on their guard as they press forward. One of them shouts a curse as a sharp twang echoes through the ruins—part of the ceiling above, concealed by webbing, suddenly collapses. The hobgoblins rush forward, dodging the cascade of boulders that fall and block the passage.

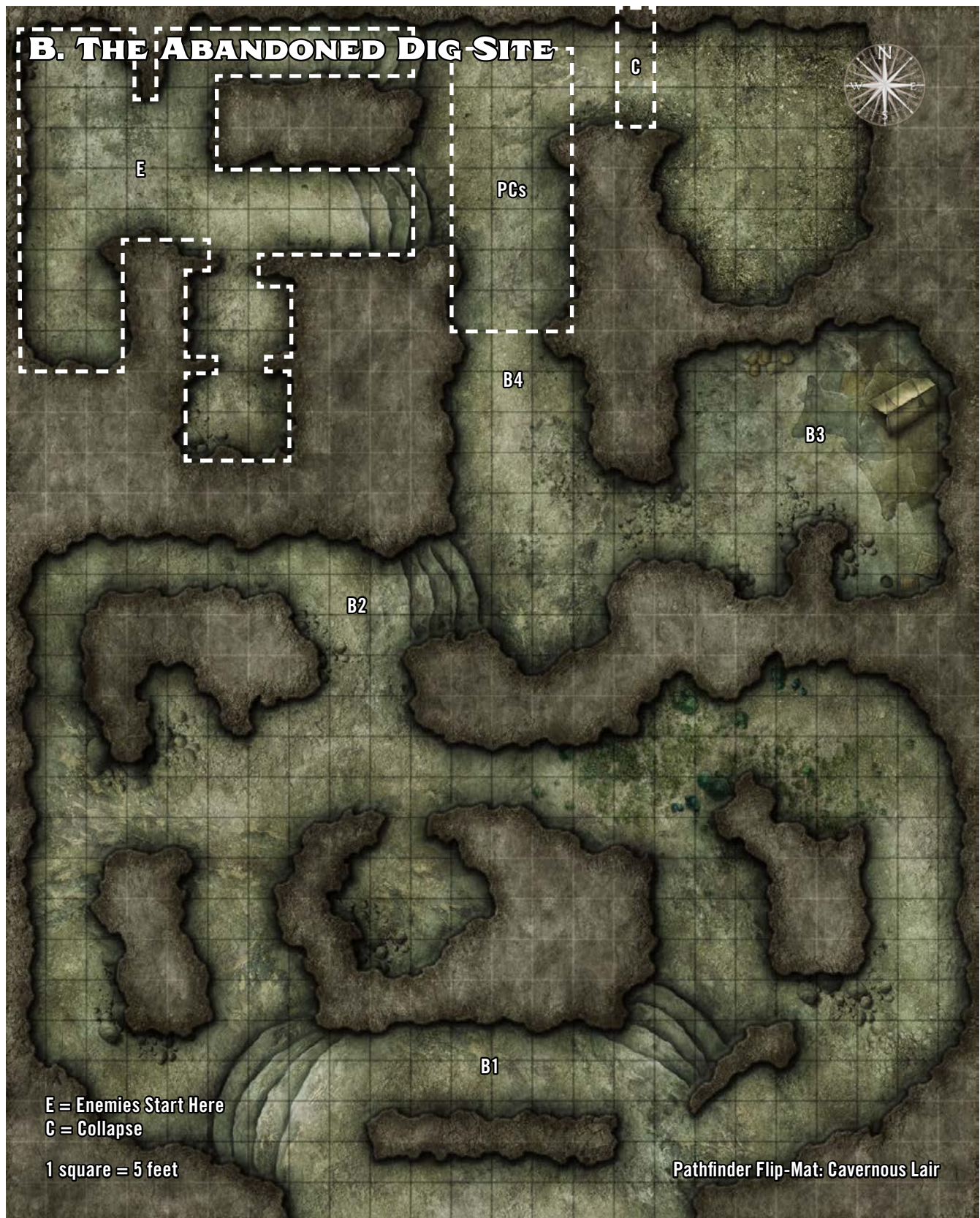
As the dust settles, the hobgoblins’ faint battle cries mix with a hideous chattering noise—some of the web lurkers are attacking the squad beyond the collapsed passage. Before the PCs have time to start digging out the tunnel to help the trainees, they are ambushed as well.



GIANT TARANTULA



# Iolite Squad Alpha





# Iolite Squad Alpha

**Creatures:** A group of web lurkers recently discovered this lair after being driven out of their previous home. They have no desire to negotiate and view the Pathfinders and hobgoblins as food for themselves and their giant spider pets—including tarantulas of enormous size. The area **B** map (see page 16) indicates the starting areas for the PCs and enemies when the encounter in area **B5** begins.

## SUBTIER 3–4

### ELDERLY GIANT TARANTULA

### CREATURE 3

Page 19; art on page 24

### WEB LURKERS (2)

### CREATURE 3

Page 19; art on page 25

## SUBTIER 5–6

### GIANT TARANTULA

### CREATURE 6

Page 21; art on page 24

### WEB LURKER

### CREATURE 3

Page 21; art on page 25

**Reuniting with the Squad:** Shortly after the battle, the PCs hear the Iolite Squad’s victorious shouts. It takes about an hour for the two groups working together to dig out the deadfall debris and free the hobgoblins. The Squad vanquished a giant tarantula; Ozaril has a vicious bite wound, but they otherwise fared well in the battle.

**Rewards:** With a thorough search of the rest of the ruined dig site, the Iolite Squad discovers several objects in surprisingly good condition, from religious symbols and prayer beads to precious gems. They find a low-grade cold iron breastplate in Subtier 3–4; in Subtier 5–6 they instead find a standard-grade cold iron shield. These items are worth 2 Treasure Bundles.

## CONCLUSION

With the abandoned dig site cleared of danger, the Iolite Squad can fully explore the site. They discover signs that this location was once a way station of sorts for dwarven travelers, but they also find the remains of ancient writings that suggest this was a hideout of some kind for an exiled religious sect. They lack the knowledge to piece together exactly when these dwarves used the site, or when it was built, but they are eager to continue their research once they reach Absalom. There is pride in Sergeant Drussem’s eyes as she sees her squad poring over their findings.

Over the next few days, the PCs escort the Iolite Squad to Korvosa, where they board a ship to Absalom. There, they report their findings and the results of their joint training at the Grand Lodge. Sergeant Drussem thanks the PCs for completing their field training and expresses hope that the two teams can work together in the future. Later, the PCs receive a letter from Venture-Captain Sheila Heidmarch commending them for their successful diplomatic mission. She expresses uncertainty at what the future holds for the Society and the nation of Oprak, but is also confident that it is brighter thanks to the PCs’ successful mission.

## PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

The PCs fulfill their primary objective if they guide the Iolite Squad through the ruins and defeat the unexpected spiders, thereby clearing the site of danger. Doing so earns each PC 2 Fame and 2 Reputation for any faction associated with their currently slotted faction boon. PCs who complete this mission also gain the Iolite Trainee Hobgoblin boon on their Chronicle sheet.

## SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

The PCs fulfill their secondary objective if the Iolite Squad demonstrated strong Pathfinder skills in their exploration of the ruins (areas **B1**, **B2**, **B3**, and **B4**). For each area, consider the highest degree of success by any PC who attempted the check. If the PCs attained at least four “successes,” they fulfill their secondary objective. For these purposes, a critical success counts as two successes, and a critical failure subtracts one success. Fulfilling their secondary objective earns each PC 2 Fame and 2 Reputation for any faction associated with their currently slotted faction boon.



# Iolite Squad Alpha

## APPENDIX 1: SUBTIER 3-4 ENCOUNTERS

The statistics presented in this appendix include full stat blocks for creatures and hazards appearing in this scenario. These encounters are written for four 3rd-level PCs. If your group has a different composition or size, refer to the Challenge Points section of **GM References** (page 27) for instructions on how to use the scaling sidebars to adjust the encounters for your group.

If a creature is marked “(0)”, don’t include it in the encounter unless otherwise specified (likely from the scaling sidebars).

### Encounter A: Roadside Ambush (Subtier 3-4)

While the PCs are traveling through this area, they encounter a pack of wargs that has ambushed a merchant family.

**Iolite Squad Actions:** Each round, on initiative count 10, the hobgoblins perform one of the following actions. The GM should choose the option that seems most efficient, such as attacking a foe that is near death.

**Melee or Ranged Strike:** The hobgoblins Strike with a weapon attack. Their attack roll has a +12 modifier and deals 1d6+4 slashing or piercing damage on a successful hit.

**Alchemical Support:** The hobgoblins attempt to blind a warg with smoke. The warg must succeed at a DC 19 Fortitude save or be blinded for 1d4 rounds.

**Draw Attention:** The hobgoblins attempt to draw a warg’s attacks. The warg must succeed at a DC 17 Will save or spend its next turn chasing the hobgoblins rather than attacking the PCs.

**Creatures:** The wargs begin the fight spread throughout the area—place them as evenly as possible among the possible starting areas indicated on the map. They use their speed to attack their enemies’ back rank, flanking and surrounding whichever foe seems weakest. Whenever possible they try to coordinate their attacks and positions to take advantage of Pack Attack and Avenging Bite. When only one warg remains, it flees into the wilderness.

### ELITE WARGS (2)

### CREATURE 3



**Perception** +10; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Languages** Common, Goblin, Orcish

**Skills** Acrobatics +9, Athletics +10, Deception +8, Intimidation +8, Stealth +9, Survival +10

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

**AC** 19, **Fort** +13, **Ref** +11, **Will** +8

**HP** 51

**Avenging Bite** **Trigger** A creature within reach of the warg’s jaws attacks one of the warg’s allies. **Effect** The warg makes a jaws Strike against the triggering creature.

## SCALING ENCOUNTER A

To adjust for the PCs’ overall strength, use the following Challenge Point adjustments. These adjustments are not cumulative.

**10-11 Challenge Points:** Add one warg to the encounter.

**12-13 Challenge Points:** Add one elite warg to the encounter.

**14-15 Challenge Points:** Add one warg and one elite warg to the encounter.

**16-18 Challenge Points (5+ players):** Add two elite wargs to the encounter.

**Speed** 40 feet

**Melee** jaws +13, **Damage** 1d8+6 piercing plus Grab

**Pack Attack** The warg’s Strikes deal 1d4 extra damage to creatures within the reach of at least two of the warg’s allies.

**Swallow Whole** (attack) Small, 1d6+4 bludgeoning, Rupture 9

### WARGS (0)

### CREATURE 2



**Perception** +8; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Languages** Common, Goblin, Orcish

**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Athletics +8, Deception +6, Intimidation +6, Stealth +7, Survival +8

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

**AC** 17, **Fort** +11, **Ref** +9, **Will** +6

**HP** 36

**Avenging Bite** **Trigger** A creature within reach of the warg’s jaws attacks one of the warg’s allies. **Effect** The warg makes a jaws Strike against the triggering creature.

**Speed** 40 feet

**Melee** jaws +11, **Damage** 1d8+4 piercing plus Grab

**Pack Attack** The warg’s Strikes deal 1d4 extra damage to creatures within the reach of at least two of the warg’s allies.

**Swallow Whole** (attack) Small, 1d6+2 bludgeoning, Rupture 9



# Iolite Squad Alpha

## Encounter B5: Deadfall Ambush (Subtier 3–4)

While the PCs are guiding the Iolite Squad through the ruins, the two groups become separated by falling rocks as indicated by the impassable area marked C on the map. Monstrous spiders ambush the PCs and attempt to slaughter them for their next meal.

**Creatures:** The giant spider attacks once from range before closing into melee. Any web lurkers in the fight use their webs to hold enemies in place, and engage in melee combat only once their pet spiders have fallen or their victims are helplessly trapped.

### ELDERLY GIANT TARANTULA

### CREATURE 3

**N** **LARGE** **ANIMAL**

**Perception** +9; darkvision

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Athletics +10, Stealth +7

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

**AC** 16, **Fort** +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +6

**HP** 65

**Speed** 30 feet, climb 30 feet

**Melee** ♦ fangs +12, **Damage** 2d6+5 piercing plus giant tarantula venom

**Melee** ♦ leg +12 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d10+5 bludgeoning plus Knockdown

**Giant Tarantula Venom** (poison) **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 25; **Maximum Duration** 8 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d4 poison (1 round); **Stage 2** 1d4 poison, flat-footed, and clumsy 1 (1 round); **Stage 3** 1d4 poison, flat-footed, and clumsy 2; **Stage 4** 1d4 poison and paralyzed (1 round).

**Hair Barrage** ♦♦ The tarantula flicks its legs, flinging spiky hairs in a 15-foot cone. This deals 3d8 piercing damage with a DC 19 basic Reflex save.

## SCALING ENCOUNTER B5

To adjust for the PCs' overall strength, use the following Challenge Point adjustment.

**12+ Challenge Points:** For every 2 Challenge Points beyond 10, add one elderly giant tarantula or web lurker, keeping the numbers roughly equal.

### WEB LURKERS (2)

### CREATURE 3

**N** **MEDIUM** **ABERRATION**

**Perception** +10; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet (creatures touching its web)

**Languages** Aklo; spider speak

**Skills** Acrobatics +9, Athletics +9, Crafting +8 (+12 to craft traps and snares), Stealth +11

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

**Spider Speak** The web lurker can speak with spiders, with the same effects and limitations as *speak with animals*.

**AC** 19, **Fort** +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +8

**HP** 45

**Spring upon Prey** ⤵ **Trigger** A creature touches the web lurker's web while the web lurker is on it. **Requirement** Initiative has not yet been rolled. **Effect** The web lurker automatically notices the creature and Strides or Climbs before rolling initiative.

**Speed** 25 feet, climb 25 feet

**Melee** ♦ fangs +11 (poison), **Damage** 1d8+6 piercing plus web lurker venom

**Melee** ♦ claw +11 (agile), **Damage** 1d8+6 slashing

**Melee** ♦ web +11

**Web Lurker Venom** (poison) **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 19; **Maximum Duration** 10 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d6 poison and flat-footed (1 round); **Stage 2** 1d6 poison, flat-footed, and slowed 1 (1 round)

**Web Trap** A creature hit by the web lurker's web attack is immobilized and stuck to the nearest surface until it succeeds at DC 20 Acrobatics check to Escape.



# Iolite Squad Alpha

## APPENDIX 2: SUBTIER 5-6 ENCOUNTERS

The statistics presented in this appendix include full stat blocks for creatures and hazards appearing in this scenario. These encounters are written for four 5th-level PCs. If your group has a different composition or size, refer to the Challenge Points section of **GM References** (page 27) for instructions on how to use the scaling sidebars to adjust the encounters for your group.

If a creature is marked “(0)”, don’t include it in the encounter unless otherwise specified (likely from the scaling sidebars).

### Encounter A: Roadside Ambush (Subtier 5-6)

While the PCs are traveling through this area, they encounter a pack of wargs that has ambushed a merchant family.

**Iolite Squad Actions:** Each round, on initiative count 10, the hobgoblins perform one of the following actions. The GM should choose the option that seems most efficient, such as attacking a foe that is near death.

**Melee or Ranged Strike:** The hobgoblins Strike with a weapon attack. Their attack roll has a +15 modifier and deals 1d8+6 slashing or piercing damage on a successful hit.

**Alchemical Support:** The hobgoblins attempt to blind a warg with smoke. The warg must succeed at a DC 21 Fortitude save or be blinded for 1d4 rounds.

**Draw Attention:** The hobgoblins attempt to draw a warg’s attacks. The warg must succeed at a DC 19 Will save or spend its next turn chasing the hobgoblins rather than attacking the PCs.

**Creatures:** The wargs begin the fight spread throughout the area—place them as evenly as possible among the possible starting areas indicated on the map. They use their speed to attack their enemies’ back rank, flanking and surrounding whichever foe seems weakest. Whenever possible they try to coordinate their attacks and positions to take advantage of Pack Attack and Avenging Bite. When only two wargs remain, they flee into the wilderness.

### WINTER WOLF

### CREATURE 5



**Perception** +14; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Languages** Common, Jotun

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Athletics +13, Deception +11, Intimidation +11, Stealth +13 (+16 in snow), Survival +12

**Str** +6, **Dex** +4, **Con** +4, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

**AC** 23; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +15, **Will** +10

**HP** 70; **Immunities** cold; **Weaknesses** fire 5

**Buck** ⤵ DC 21

### SCALING ENCOUNTER A

To adjust for the PCs’ overall strength, use the following Challenge Point adjustments. These adjustments are not cumulative.

**19–22 Challenge Points:** Add one elite warg to the encounter.

**23–27 Challenge Points:** Add one winter wolf to the encounter.

**28–32 Challenge Points:** Add one winter wolf and one elite warg to the encounter.

**33+ Challenge Points:** Add two winter wolves to the encounter.

**Avenging Bite** ⤵ As warg.

**Speed** 40 feet

**Melee** ⬥ jaws +15 (cold), **Damage** 1d10+6 piercing plus 1d6 cold and Knockdown

**Breath Weapon** ⬥⬥ (cold, evocation, primal); The winter wolf breathes a cloud of frost in a 15-foot cone that deals 5d8 cold damage (DC 23 basic Reflex save). The winter wolf can’t use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

**Pack Attack** The winter wolf’s Strikes deal 1d6 extra damage to creatures within the reach of at least two of the winter wolf’s allies.

### ELITE WARGS (2)

### CREATURE 3



**Perception** +10; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

**Languages** Common, Goblin, Orcish

**Skills** Acrobatics +9, Athletics +10, Deception +8, Intimidation +8, Stealth +9, Survival +10

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

**AC** 19, **Fort** +13, **Ref** +11, **Will** +8

**HP** 51

**Avenging Bite** ⤵ **Trigger** A creature within reach of the warg’s jaws attacks one of the warg’s allies. **Effect** The warg makes a jaws Strike against the triggering creature.

**Speed** 40 feet

**Melee** ⬥ jaws +13, **Damage** 1d8+6 piercing plus Grab

**Pack Attack** The warg’s Strikes deal 1d4 extra damage to creatures within the reach of at least two of the warg’s allies.

**Swallow Whole** ⬥ (attack) Small, 1d6+4 bludgeoning, Rupture 9



# Iolite Squad Alpha

## Encounter B5: Deadfall Ambush (Subtier 5–6)

While the PCs are guiding the Iolite Squad through the ruins, the two groups become separated by falling rocks, as indicated by the impassable area marked C on the map. Monstrous spiders ambush the PCs and attempt to slaughter them for their next meal.

**Creatures:** The giant spider attacks once from range before closing into melee. Any web lurkers in the fight use their webs to hold enemies in place, fighting in melee only once their pet spiders have fallen or their victims are helplessly trapped.

### GIANT TARANTULA

### CREATURE 6

**N** **LARGE** **ANIMAL**

**Perception** +14; darkvision

**Skills** Acrobatics +9, Athletics +16, Stealth +11

**Str** +6, **Dex** +1, **Con** +5, **Int** -5, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -4

**AC** 21, **Fort** +15, **Ref** +13, **Will** +10

**HP** 135

**Speed** 30 feet, climb 30 feet

**Melee** ♦ fangs +17, **Damage** 2d8+8 piercing plus giant tarantula venom

**Melee** ♦ leg +17 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d12+8 bludgeoning plus Knockdown

**Giant Tarantula Venom** (poison) **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 23; **Maximum Duration** 8 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d6 poison (1 round); **Stage 2** 1d6 poison, flat-footed, and clumsy 1 (1 round); **Stage 3** 1d6 poison, flat-footed, and clumsy 2; **Stage 4** 1d6 poison and paralyzed (1 round).

**Hair Barrage** ♦♦ The tarantula flicks its legs, flinging spiky hairs in a 15-foot cone. This deals 4d6 piercing damage with a DC 25 basic Reflex save.

## SCALING ENCOUNTER B5

To adjust for the PCs' overall strength, use the following Challenge Point adjustments. These adjustments are not cumulative.

**19–22 Challenge Points:** Add one web lurker to the encounter.

**23–27 Challenge Points:** Add one giant tarantula to the encounter.

**28–32 Challenge Points:** Add one giant tarantula and one web lurker to the encounter.

**33+ Challenge Points:** Add two giant tarantulas to the encounter.

### WEB LURKERS (3)

### CREATURE 3

**N** **MEDIUM** **ABERRATION**

**Perception** +10; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet (creatures touching its web)

**Languages** Aklo; spider speak

**Skills** Acrobatics +9, Athletics +9, Crafting +8 (+12 to craft traps and snares), Stealth +11

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

**Spider Speak** The web lurker can speak with spiders, with the same effects and limitations as speak with animals.

**AC** 19, **Fort** +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +8

**HP** 45

**Spring upon Prey** ⤵ **Trigger** A creature touches the web lurker's web while the web lurker is on it. **Requirement** Initiative has not yet been rolled. **Effect** The web lurker automatically notices the creature and Strides or Climbs before rolling initiative.

**Speed** 25 feet, climb 25 feet

**Melee** ♦ fangs +11 (poison), **Damage** 1d8+6 piercing plus web lurker venom

**Melee** ♦ claw +11 (agile), **Damage** 1d8+6 slashing

**Melee** ♦ web +11

**Web Lurker Venom** (poison) **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 19; **Maximum Duration** 10 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d6 poison and flat-footed (1 round); **Stage 2** 1d6 poison, flat-footed, and slowed 1 (1 round)

**Web Trap** A creature hit by the web lurker's web attack is immobilized and stuck to the nearest surface until it succeeds at DC 20 Acrobatics check to Escape.



# Iolite Squad Alpha

## APPENDIX 3: ART & HANDOUT



**SERGEANT DRUSSEM**

**IOLITE SQUAD**



**AKRAG**



**GINTKA**



**OZARIL**



# Iolite Squad Alpha



**ELITE WARG**



# Iolite Squad Alpha



**GIANT TARANTULA**



# Iolite Squad Alpha



**WEB LURKER**



# Iolite Squad Alpha

## Handout #1: Heidmarch's Mission Briefing

Greetings, Pathfinders,

We have an urgent diplomatic mission for you, but not of the traditional sort. The Pathfinder Society has been negotiating for weeks with General Azaersi, leader of the hobgoblin nation of Oprak. Now that she has secured Oprak's borders, the General has cast far and wide in search of useful allies: including the Society. Despite the General's central role in the recent bloody conflict known as the Ironfang Invasion and the resulting instability in the region, she is potentially a powerful ally. The resurgent threat of the Whispering Tyrant must not be taken lightly, and an allegiance with Oprak could prove invaluable.

However, General Azaersi's full intentions are unknown. To further ascertain her motives, the Society has agreed to accept a small squad of hobgoblins into its ranks. You are to meet this group, the Iolite Squad, in Kaer Maga, then escort them to a nearby training ground to conduct a series of joint training exercises. The training ground is near an ancient dwarven dig site that we have identified as an ideal location for these recruits to practice being Pathfinder agents; it is not a place of global significance, but it likely contains some interesting pieces of history.

After your joint exercises, guide the recruits in exploring the site. The hobgoblins are competent soldiers and we do not expect great danger, but you must ensure that they all make it out alive. This is a diplomatic mission, after all. Defer to the hobgoblins when exploring—they must prove themselves capable Pathfinders—but give aid if they request it. With this task complete, escort the Iolite Squad to Korvosa, where all of you are to book passage to Absalom and report to the Grand Lodge.

We have arranged for you to meet the Iolite Squad at the Sorry Excuse, an establishment in the Hospice District. Do not keep the hobgoblins waiting long upon your arrival to Kaer Maga. Most citizens of the City of Strangers will not blink twice at a band of hobgoblins, but the Ironfang Invasion has soured public opinion toward them. Be wary of those who may resent their presence.

From Kaer Maga, follow the river south to Sirathu, then take the southeast road for 30 miles. The training grounds and dig site are in a rock-strewn valley to the northeast of a small wood.

Go with care,

Venture-Captain Sheila Heidmarch



# Iolite Squad Alpha

## GM REFERENCES

### TREASURE TABLE

Level	Treasure Bundle
3	3.8 gp
4	6.4 gp
5	10 gp
6	15 gp

### Chronicle Sheet

PCs who successfully run the Iolite Squad through the training grounds gain the Iolite Trainee Hobgoblin boon on their Chronicle Sheets.

### TREASURE BUNDLES:

- ☐ Area A, page 8: 1 Treasure Bundle
- ☐ The Wary Merchant, page 10: 2 Treasure Bundles
- ☐ Area B1, page 13: 1 Treasure Bundle
- ☐ Area B2, page 14: 2 Treasure Bundles
- ☐ Area B3, page 14: 2 Treasure Bundles
- ☐ Area B5, page 17: 2 Treasure Bundles

### CHALLENGE POINTS PER PC

Level	Challenge Points
3	2
4	3
5	4
6	5

### CHALLENGE POINTS AND SUBTIER

CP Total	Subtier
8-14	3-4
16-18 (5+ players)	3-4
16-18 (4 players)	5-6
19+	5-6

### Challenge Points

Challenge Points are a system for scaling the difficulty of encounters appropriately for groups of mixed size and level. Total up the number of Challenge Points your group has.

- 3rd-level PCs = 2 points each
- 4th-level PCs = 3 points each
- 5th-level PCs = 4 points each
- 6th-level PCs = 6 points each

Now use the table above to determine which Subtier is appropriate for your PCs. Subtier 3-4 encounters appear in Appendix 1, and Subtier 5-6 encounters appear in Appendix 2.



# Iolite Squad Alpha



## Event Reporting Form

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Event Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

GM Org Play #:	-2	GM Name:	GM Faction:
Adventure #:		Adventure Name:	
Reporting Codes: (check when instructed, line through all if no conditions to report)			<input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D
Bonus Faction Goal Achieved:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	Scenario-based Infamy earned?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Character Name:		Faction:	
Org Play #:	-2	Level	<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Archive
			<input type="checkbox"/> Radiant Oath
			<input type="checkbox"/> Vigilant Seal
			<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Envoy's Alliance	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow Track
		<input type="checkbox"/> Horizon Hunters	<input type="checkbox"/> Dead
		<input type="checkbox"/> Verdant Wheel	<input type="checkbox"/> Infamy

Character Name:		Faction:	
Org Play #:	-2	Level	<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Archive
			<input type="checkbox"/> Radiant Oath
			<input type="checkbox"/> Vigilant Seal
			<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Envoy's Alliance	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow Track
		<input type="checkbox"/> Horizon Hunters	<input type="checkbox"/> Dead
		<input type="checkbox"/> Verdant Wheel	<input type="checkbox"/> Infamy

Character Name:		Faction:	
Org Play #:	-2	Level	<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Archive
			<input type="checkbox"/> Radiant Oath
			<input type="checkbox"/> Vigilant Seal
			<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Envoy's Alliance	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow Track
		<input type="checkbox"/> Horizon Hunters	<input type="checkbox"/> Dead
		<input type="checkbox"/> Verdant Wheel	<input type="checkbox"/> Infamy

Character Name:		Faction:	
Org Play #:	-2	Level	<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Archive
			<input type="checkbox"/> Radiant Oath
			<input type="checkbox"/> Vigilant Seal
			<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Envoy's Alliance	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow Track
		<input type="checkbox"/> Horizon Hunters	<input type="checkbox"/> Dead
		<input type="checkbox"/> Verdant Wheel	<input type="checkbox"/> Infamy

Character Name:		Faction:	
Org Play #:	-2	Level	<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Archive
			<input type="checkbox"/> Radiant Oath
			<input type="checkbox"/> Vigilant Seal
			<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Envoy's Alliance	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow Track
		<input type="checkbox"/> Horizon Hunters	<input type="checkbox"/> Dead
		<input type="checkbox"/> Verdant Wheel	<input type="checkbox"/> Infamy

Character Name:		Faction:	
Org Play #:	-2	Level	<input type="checkbox"/> Grand Archive
			<input type="checkbox"/> Radiant Oath
			<input type="checkbox"/> Vigilant Seal
			<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/> Envoy's Alliance	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow Track
		<input type="checkbox"/> Horizon Hunters	<input type="checkbox"/> Dead
		<input type="checkbox"/> Verdant Wheel	<input type="checkbox"/> Infamy



# Iolite Squad Alpha

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# Pathfinder Society Scenario #1-19: Iolite Squad Alpha

Character Chronicle #

Herolab Code

J4Q3

A.K.A.		Faction _____		Reputation _____
Player Name	Character Name	Organized Play #	Character #	
Faction _____		Faction _____		Reputation _____
Faction _____		Faction _____		Reputation _____

## Adventure Summary

You successfully escorted a squad of hobgoblin Pathfinder candidates to Absalom, sharing techniques and skills along the way.

## Boons

**Iolite Trainee Hobgoblin:** The Iolite Squad's reports on valuable Pathfinder skills have made it back to Oprak to be incorporated into their training regimens. You have gained access to the following background for all of your characters (include a copy of this Chronicle Sheet with any character who selects this background).

### IOLITE TRAINEE HOBGOBLIN

### BACKGROUND

**Prerequisites** Hobgoblin ancestry

The Iolite Squad was Oprak's first foray into training hobgoblins for Pathfinder membership. You've added the archival and archaeological skills they sent back to Oprak into your military training.

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

You're trained in the Society skill and the Warfare Lore skill. You gain the Sign Language skill feat.

## Items

## Purchases

lifting belt (level 4; 80 gp)

### Items Sold / Conditions Gained

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**TOTAL VALUE OF ITEMS SOLD**

Add 1/2 this value to the "Items Sold" Box

ring of the ram (level 6; 220 gp)

### Items Bought / Conditions Cleared

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**TOTAL COST OF ITEMS BOUGHT**

## Notes

## Downtime

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## REWARDS

Starting XP

XP Gained

Final XP

Starting GP

GP Gained

Earn Income

Items Sold

GP Spent

Total GP

Starting Fame

Fame Earned

Total Fame

## FOR GM ONLY

EVENT

EVENT CODE

DATE

Game Master's Signature

GM Organized Play #