

Demon Cults & SECRET SOCIETIES

BY JEFF LEE

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DEMON CULTS & SECRET SOCIETIES

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INTRODUCTION

Do you ever find yourself confined, even slightly, by a lengthy prewritten campaign? Adventure paths are wonderful tools for busy GMs, but they are by their very nature, fairly scripted. The opposite extreme, the home campaign that is entirely handcrafted, can be both daunting to envision and time-consuming to prepare. There is a middle ground. What if you had a robust outline for a campaign, chock full of imaginative ideas and fully realized villainous NPCs to expand upon and customize to create your own unique campaign experience?

Demon Cults & Secret Societies draws GMs and campaign setting fans into the world of ten nefarious organizations. Each cult has its own ambitious and chilling agenda for the regions or worlds that you choose for them to inhabit. Their plots range from the conquest of nations to the daring heists of the greatest of treasures, from the redefinition of the nature of truth to extinguishing the sun itself! You will discover of each of these groups are easily fleshed out to create your own campaign or enliven and enrich another. Author Jeff Lee created these cults with inspiration from the *Midgard Campaign Setting* with special consideration of its companion volume, *Southlands*.

Each cult is suitable for any campaign setting, and is presented with information on how it specifically relates to Midgard. Jeff provides a complete toolkit to introduce these cults to your players with minimal effort while leaving you the flexibility to design your own encounters.

Each chapter describes the group's beliefs and agenda, alongside complete statistics for their top leaders, usually in a diverse range of levels to reflect masterminds and lieutenants. Three tiers of acolytes, soldiers, and minions fill out their ranks and represent adversaries for PCs of every level. A series of adventure seeds describes plots and schemes the cult perpetrates from CR 1 to epic career-ending challenges as high as CR 17. Finally, each chapter provides a generous sampling of new associated material, such as related artifacts, spells, magic items, feats, monsters, vehicles, and more! Great villains are integral to every great campaign, and I invite you to keep reading to discover conspiracies, plots, and mayhem to thrill and entertain your players for hours to come!

—Jim Groves

- **REQUIRED MATERIALS:** This volume requires *Deep Magic* by Kobold Press to utilize many new and thematic spells, and some select mechanics (specifically rune magic). All other game mechanics are either included or, if part of the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* core rules, are available for reference on free online rule sites.
- **NEW MATERIAL:** When listed in a stat block, all new rules elements from this book are marked with an asterisk (*).
- **NOTATIONS:** The notations in this text refer to the following products:
 - AB = *Advanced Bestiary* by Green Ronin Publishing
 - ACG = *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Class Guide*
 - APG = *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*

- ARC = *Advanced Races Compendium* by Kobold Press
- DM = *Deep Magic* by Kobold Press
- MB = *Midgard Bestiary for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* by Kobold Press
- MC = *Midgard Campaign Setting* by Kobold Press
- MS = *Collected Monsters of Sin* by Kobold Press
- N = *Northlands* by Kobold Press
- OA = *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Occult Adventures*
- SO = *Southlands Campaign Setting*
- UC = *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat*
- UE = *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Equipment*
- UM = *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic*
- Unchained = *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Pathfinder Unchained*

CONTENTS

Black Goat's Flock	4
Leaders, Organization, and Goals.....	4
Cult Members and Minions.....	10
Cult Activities and Adventure Hooks.....	13
The Burning Rune	21
Leaders, Organization, and Goals.....	22
Cult Activities and Adventure Hooks.....	26
Cultists of the Burning Rune	29
Chosen of the Demon Bat	35
Leaders, Organization, and Goals.....	35
Verperito, the Demon Bat.....	40
The Mi-Go.....	41
Cult Activities and Adventure Hooks.....	42
Creed of All Flesh	51
Leaders, Organization, and Goals.....	52
Cult Activities and Adventure Hooks.....	59
Cultists of the Creed of All Flesh	64
Doomspeakers	70
Leaders, Organization, and Goals.....	70
Cult Activities and Adventure Hooks.....	76
Cultists of the Doomspeakers.....	79
The Emerald Order.....	83
Leaders, Organization, and Goals	83
Cult Activities and Adventure Hooks	86
Cultists of the Emerald Order	88
Hand of Nakresh.....	97
Leaders, Organization, and Goals.....	97
Cult Activities and Adventure Hooks	105
Cultists of the Hand of Nakresh	107
Night Cauldron of Chernobog.....	113
Leaders, Organization, and Goals.....	113
Cult Activities and Adventure Hooks.....	118
Sample Night Cauldron Members	120
Red Sisters	128
Leaders, Organization, and Goals.....	128
Cult Members and Minions.....	134
Cult Activities and Adventure Hooks.....	136

The Sanguine Path.....	144
Leaders, Organizations, and Goals	144
Three Leaders of the Sanguine Path.....	146
Cult Activities and Adventure Hooks.....	151
Cultists of the Sanguine Path	153
Selket's Sting	159
Leaders, Organization, and Goals.....	159
Cult Activities and Adventure Hooks.....	165
Playing for the Other Team	167
Cultists of Selket	167
Servants of the White Ape.....	173
Leaders, Organization, and Goals.....	173
Cult Activities and Adventure Hooks.....	176
Cultists of the White Ape	179
Weavers of Truth	186
Leaders, Organization, and Goals.....	187
Cult Activities and Adventure Hooks.....	191
Cultists of the Weavers of Truth	195
Appendix: Antipaladins and Doomspeakers..	201
Examining and Expanding	
the Antipaladin	201
Falling and Rising: Making the Switch.....	201
Antipaladin Archetypes.....	203
Sample Antipaladins	211

HALF-ELVES AND THE MIDGARD CAMPAIGN SETTING

Demon Cults & Secret Societies is intended for use in most fantasy settings, with particular consideration for the *Midgard Campaign Setting*. Midgard is unique with respect to half-elves, in that they aren't considered as their own race. The term elfmarked refers to individuals with some varying degree of elven heritage, usually much less than half. GMs who wish to reconcile the half-elf stat blocks in this book in Midgard should consider those NPCs as having Elfmarked (from the *Midgard Campaign Setting*) as a bonus feat. It conveys all standard half-elf racial abilities.



BLACK GOAT'S FLOCK

"Ever their praises and abundance to the Black Goat of the Woods. Iä! Shub-Niggurath! Iä! Shub-Niggurath! The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young!"

– "The Whisperer in the Darkness", H.P. Lovecraft

Indulgence without restraint. Greed without guilt. Debauchery without limit. Chaos beyond the restraint of order. Knowledge without fear of the embrace of madness. The Black Goat's Flock pursues all these in the name of their goddess, the Goat of the Woods.

LEADERS, ORGANIZATION, AND GOALS

Organization is a misnomer where the Black Goat's Flock is concerned. The worship of the Goat of the Woods is chaos itself. Individual members of the cult worship her out of ambition, desperation,

or madness—or often all three. Some worship alone, others in small groups, and occasionally a charismatic leader draws a mob of cultists together for some great purpose.

The cult is most common in the wilderness and in rural villages, though adherants can be found within the brightest cities. Ambitious or debauched wizards are the most common cult leaders. Bent on personal power, they latch onto tales of the past glories of the magocracies of old and the forbidden rites and magic through which they rose to power. Anton Valcris is one such wizard, and among the most fervent and scholarly. He works to rebuild the Viridian Codex, the old unholy writ of the Black Goat. He finds and translates the lost fragments, compiling them into one complete work. With such knowledge at his command, Anton hopes to establish himself as the founder of a terrible new dynasty, with himself ensconced as a new wizard-king. His fawning adherents hope to rise along with him.

To challenge the law and bring forth new visions, that is what the Black Goat's voice demands. Challenge everything; change everything; embrace fluidity and flux. The most vocal advocate of this portion of the Black Goat's Flock is the selang witch Xiax Galleborne, a self-proclaimed ambassador from the Court of a Million Stars, a far-flung fey court of the outer dark. Xiax is a wild, fervent, and androgyne being whose motives and actions are near impossible to guess at or predict. With a strong influence over the other dark fey, especially other selang, Xiax is a powerful arm of the cult.

In the wilderness and wastes, the humanoid tribes that eke out a living in desperate conditions often join the Black Goat's Flock. They search for respite, for the strength to take all they can from those who have something worth stealing. They perform rites cobbled together from drug-induced dreams and visions, capering madly in the burned and withered glades where once others followed the same path.

These rural bands are led by the Speakers, the clergy that the Black Goat calls to hear Her and spread Her words. Tivishta Trikinda, a goblin cleric of the Goat of the Woods, is the greatest of these. She wanders the wastes and the border settlements, spreading the words of her goddess to all who will hear. Like the ocean waves, her preaching erodes the

edges of civilization, freeing more to run wild at the behest of her goddess.

ANTON VALCRIST

CR 10

XP 9,600

Male human transmuter 11

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; Senses Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)

hp 85 (11d6+44)

Fort +8; Ref +6; Will +9

DR 10/adamantine (110 points)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 dagger +5 (1d4/19-20)

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th; concentration +15)

At will—*change shape* (beast shape II/elemental body I, 11 rounds/day)

7/day—*telekinetic fist* (1d4+5 bludgeoning)

Transmuter Spells Known (CL 11th; conc. +15)

6th—*curse of formlessness** (DC 22), *disintegrate* (DC 22)

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 21), *monstrous physique III*^{UM}, *quickened shield*

4th—*black tentacles*, *calcific touch*^{APG} (DC 20), *dimension door*, *reach excruciating deformation*^{UM} (Range close, ranged touch; DC 19), *stoneskin*

3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *countless eyes*^{UM}, *dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 17), *hostile levitation* (DC 19), *slow* (DC 19)

2nd—*cat's grace*, *extreme flexibility*^{ACG}, *resist energy*, *see invisibility*, *twisted space*^{UC}, *web* (DC 18)

1st—*animate rope* (DC 17), *enlarge person*, *expeditious retreat*, *grease* (DC 15), *mage armor*, *touch of gracelessness*^{APG} (DC 17)

Divine Favor: The Cleric, from Kobold Press is not necessary to use this product. However, the faith of Black Goat does have access to two domains (Apocalypse and Prophecy) from that volume. No character described below uses those domains, but GMs who wish to stat up their own worshippers of the Black Goat may find *Divine Favor: The Cleric* useful.

0—*detect magic, mage hand, message, read magic*
Opposition Schools enchantment, necromancy

TACTICS

Before Combat Anton casts *cat's grace*, *extreme flexibility*, *mage armor*, and *stoneskin*.

During Combat Anton casts *black tentacles* to catch as many opponents as possible and create an obstacle for others moving into melee. He attempts to *disintegrate* an enemy spellcaster, or anyone providing the enemy group with magical advantages, such as a bard. He repeats this tactic with his reach version of *excruciating deformation*. If an opponent is clearly benefiting from a powerful magical effect, Anton attempts to *dispel magic* augmented by his Destructive Dispel^{UC} feat.

Base Statistics Without his preparatory spells cast, Anton's statistics are **Init** +5, **AC** 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12; **DR** none; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 19, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +4 (+8 to break grapple); **CMD** 19 (23 vs. grapple)

Feats Combat Casting, Destructive Dispel^{UC}, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (transmutation), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Quicken Spell, Reach Spell^{APG}, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (transmutation)

Skills Appraise +18, Craft (bookbinding) +18, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (history) +18, Knowledge (religion) +18, Linguistics +12, Perception +9, Spellcraft +18

BLACK GOAT OF THE WOODS

Use the following information for creating clerics and other divine casting members of the Black Goat's Flock.

Domains: Animal, Chaos, Destruction, Madness, Magic, Plant (if using the *Midgard Campaign Setting*, substitute Apocalypse and Prophecy for Animal and Plant, respectively)

Subdomains: Arcane, Catastrophe, Dark Tapestry, Divine, Insanity, Nightmare

Favored Weapon: Starknife (if using the *Midgard Campaign Setting*, add garrote.)

Languages Aklo, Ankeshelian*, Common, Draconic (Mharoti), Dwarven, Elven, Goblin, Infernal (demonic), Umbral*, Vos'ghaen*

SQ arcane bond (ring of protection +1), physical enhancement (+2 Con)

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, *scroll of fly*, *scroll of dispel magic*, *wand of scorching ray* (50 charges); **Other Gear** +1 *dagger*, *ring of protection* +1, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *pearl of power* (2nd), masterwork artisan's tools, spell component pouch, the Valcrist Folio**, diamond dust (worth 500 gp), platinum signet ring (100 gp), 17 gp.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Scaly Diplomacy (Ex) Those who speak Mharoti (draconic) gain a +2 to Diplomacy with scaly creatures (Midgard Campaign Setting only).

Stealthy Language (Ex) Those who speak Umbral gain +1 to a Stealth check 1/day (*Midgard Campaign Setting* only)

*If the campaign is not set in Midgard, replace these with languages of your choice, especially dead or forgotten languages.

**See page 19

Anton Valcrist is known publicly as a wizard of moderate power and means, a researcher into arcane history, and a collector of antiques and ancient tomes. He moves in aristocratic circles and is a well-regarded member of his city's elite. While he is short and slightly built, Anton carries himself with confidence and maintains styled, curly black hair. He is always impeccably dressed, often to the point of flamboyance or foppishness, and never fails to powder and make up his face before leaving his house. Soft-spoken and eloquent, Valcrist is a welcome addition to any social event.

What the public at large do not know is that Valcrist leads a sect of the Black Goat's Flock. They use tunnels beneath the streets and secret entrances to meet in the basement of his townhouse. His collection of antiquities serves the ultimate goal of his sect: to find and restore the *Viridian Codex*, the lost litany of the Goat of the Woods. With it, he hopes to restore worship of the Black Goat to prominence, and style himself a mage-king in the new order.

XIAX GALLEBORNE

CR 13

XP 25,600

Androgyne selang witch 8

CE Medium outsider (extraplanar)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 15, flat-footed 22 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural)

hp 176 (16 HD; 8d10+8d6+104)

Fort +13; **Ref** +12; **Will** +18

DR 5/cold iron or magic; **Immune** acid, electricity, fire (96 points)

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 *spear* +16/+11/+6 (1d8+5/x3)

Ranged +1 *composite longbow* +16/+11/+6 (1d8+4/x3)

Special Attacks alien piping, hexes (DC 20: cackle, charm [2 steps, 6 rounds], evil eye [-4, 9 rounds], flight [*feather fall* at will, *levitate* 1/day, fly 8 minutes/day], slumber [8 rounds])

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

At will—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 14)

3/day—*beast shape II*, *fear* (DC 18), *sleep* (DC 15), *suggestion* (DC 17)

Witch Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +14)

4th—*black tentacles*, *charm monster* (DC 22), *triggered suggestion* (DC 22)

3rd—*barrow haze*^{ACG}, *lightning bolt* (DC 19), *polymorph familiar*^{ACG}, *twilight knife*^{APG}

2nd—*alter self*, *command undead* (DC 18), *enthrall* (DC 20), *stricken heart*^{ACG}, *touch of idiocy*

1st—*beguiling gift*^{APG} (DC 19), *charm person* (DC 19), *command* (DC 19), *detect undead*, *ill omen*^{APG}, *mage armor*

0—*arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *message*

Patron Occult

TACTICS

Before Combat Xiax reads its *scroll of protection from elements* (choosing fire) and *mage armor*.

During Combat Xiax plays its alien pipes to induce confusion, then attempts to disable multiple opponents with *black tentacles*. It uses Spring Attack to deliver a *touch of idiocy* to the

most powerful looking melee combatant, followed by *charm monster* or *charm person*, then pleads with that person to defend it against the other attackers. Alternatively, it casts *barrow haze* to reduce the saving throws of its opponents and employs its witch hexes.

Base Statistics Without reading the *scroll of protection from elements* or casting *mage armor*, Xiax's statistics are AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 18 (+1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural), **Immune** acid, electricity.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 17, **Con** 22, **Int** 22, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 30

Feats Dodge, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Initiative, Iron Will,



MYSTERIOUS FEY

The selang originally appeared in *Dark Fey*, from Kobold Press, and are sometimes referred to as dark satyrs. There is some confusion whether these creatures are truly fey or not. They are outsiders from some outré plane from whence the Great Old Ones hail. That said, the selang and the Court of a Million Stars look fey, claim to be fey, and thus far have been accorded that status by Midgard's other fey courts. The truth has yet to be determined and you are free to determine it for yourself in the interim.

The extraplanar subtype does interact with certain game mechanics like the *protection from evil* and *dismissal* spells. Since a relatively larger number of selang dwell in the Midgard's Wasted West, it is entirely appropriate to apply the native subtype (in place of extraplanar) if it suits your story better.

Mobility, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spring Attack

Skills Acrobatics +15 (+19 when jumping), Bluff +15, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +12, Escape Artist +14, Fly +15, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (nature) +17, Knowledge (planes) +17, Knowledge (religion) +17, Perception +18, Perform (wind) +16, Ride +14, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +17, Stealth +14, Survival +14, Swim +7, Use Magic Device +15; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Acrobatics when jumping, +4 Perception, +4 Perform (wind)

Languages Aklo, Common, Sylvan

SQ witch's familiar (goat named Xerxes; knows all listed prepared spells plus the following: 4th—*moonstruck*^{APG}; 3rd—*hex glyph*^{ACG}, 2nd—*glitterdust*, *summon swarm*; 1st—*command*, *ray of enfeeblement*; 0—all)

Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), *scroll of protection from energy*, *wand of adjustable disguise* (10 charges); **Other Gear** +1 *composite longbow* [+3 Str], +1 *spear*, with 20 arrows, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, *dust of tracelessness*, alien pipes, sleep poison (3 doses), spell component pouch, assorted gold jewelry (worth 300 gp).

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Alien Piping (Su) Xiax can confuse and injure its enemies by playing weird, ear-bending harmonies

on its alien pipes, made from the beaks, cartilage, and throat sacs of a dorreq. When Xiax plays a tune on the pipes, all creatures within a 60 ft. radius must succeed at a DC 18 Will save or be affected by *contagion*, *confusion*, *hideous laughter*, *irresistible dance*, or *mass charm monster*, depending on what alien and otherworldly music Xiax chooses to play. Xiax can use each of these effects once per day. A creature that successfully saves against the alien piping cannot be affected by Xiax's piping for 24 hours, but it can still be affected by the alien piping of another selang. This is a sonic, mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Sleep Poison (Ex) Dark satyrs coat their weapons with a sleep poison made from the brain fluids of dorrequi (another creature from the Realms Beyond), and any creature not immune to poison injured by a dark satyr blade or arrow must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save or fall asleep for 2d6 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

A dark fey hailing from the Court of a Million Stars, Xiax Galleborne's delicate facial features are framed with long auburn hair and partially masked by a thick, curling beard of the same color. A sleeveless shift of raw silk provides a plunging décolletage and slits from hemline to the hips that leave Xiax's insectoid legs disturbingly visible. Xiax has the obsidian skin, glowing red eyes, and antennae typical of its kind. The writhing mass of its alien pipes hang from a shoulder strap when not in use.

Xiax revels in unabashed anarchy, urging followers to undermine authority and tradition wherever they are. To Xiax, the Black Goat's Flock should be a pulse of manic life to shock the world from its torpid complacency and patterns. That its followers might be imprisoned or cut down is simply part of the price for achieving great wakefulness and joy in nihilism and raw chaos. As others see the Flock's actions, they too will be stirred to action, and these newcomers will fill any holes in the ranks. It is all part of the wondrous, inscrutable dance that moves to the voice of the Dark Mother and her music.

TIVISHTA TRIKINTA

CR 15

XP 51,200

Female goblin cleric of the Black Goat of the Woods 16

CN Small humanoid (goblinoid)

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

Perception +15

Aura madness (30 ft., DC 24, 16 rounds/day)

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 13, flat-footed 23 (+6 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size, +5 shield)

hp 139 (16d8+64)

Fort +12; **Ref** +6; **Will** +16

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 *returning starknife* +21/+16/+11 (1d3+2/x3)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 7/day (DC 22, 8d6), hand of the acolyte (9/day)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; conc. +22)

9/day—*vision of madness* (+/- 8)

3/day—*dispelling touch*

Spells Known (CL 16th; concentration +22)

8th—*earthquake*, *protection from spells*^D, *stormbolts*^{APG} (DC 26)

7th—*destruction* (DC 23), *insanity*^D (DC 24), *summon monster VII*, *word of chaos* (DC 25)

6th—*blade barrier* (DC 24), *dust form*^{UC}, *harm* (DC 22), *heal*, *phantasmal killer*^D (DC 22)

5th—*cleanse*^{APG}, *major curse*^{UM} (DC 21), *flame strike* (DC 23), *insect plague*, *spell resistance*^D, *true seeing*

4th—*chaos hammer* (DC 22), *confusion*^D (DC 21), *cure critical wounds*, *dismissal* (DC 20), *divine power*, *spell immunity*

3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *deeper darkness*, *dispel magic*^D, *glyph of warding* (DC 19), *magic vestment*, *prayer*

2nd—*bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *darkness*, *delay poison*, *resist energy*, *spiritual weapon*, *touch of idiocy*^D

1st—*bane* (DC 18), *bless*, *command* (DC 18), *deathwatch*, *divine favor*, *lesser confusion*^D (DC 18), *obscuring mist*

0—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *read magic*, *spark*^{APG}

D Domain Spell; **Domains** Madness, Magic



TACTICS

Before Combat Tivishta casts *bear's endurance*, and *bull's strength*. She casts *magic vestment* on her buckler at the beginning of each day.

During Combat Tivishta uses spells and channeling to destroy her foes. If forced into melee, she uses *harm* on the most dangerous opponent, then spontaneously casts inflict spells on remaining opponents if she cannot put any distance between herself and them.

Base Statistics Without her preparatory spells cast, Tivishta's stats are **AC** 21, touch 13, flat-footed 20; **hp** 107; **Fort** +11; **Str** 8, **Con** 12; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 12, **Con** 16, **Int** 13, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 24

Feats Channel Smite, Extra Channel, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Guided Hand^{UC}, Improved Channel, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (enchantment, evocation)

Skills Diplomacy +13, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Perception +15, Ride +5, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +20; **Racial Bonuses** +4 Ride, +4 Stealth

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ aura

Combat Gear *potion of haste, potion of protection from cold, scroll of invisibility purge*; **Other Gear** +2 mithral chain shirt, buckler, +2 returning starknife, amulet of natural armor +1, dowsing syrup^{UE}, headband of inspired wisdom +6, ring of protection +1, gold unholy symbol (worth 100 gp), spell component pouch, 20 gp.

Tivishta Trikintha is an unassuming looking figure. Her thin frame is topped with a head that looks overlarge for her body. Her dirty, weathered skin makes her appear older than she actually is, and her gait seems frail, with the cautious, deliberate movement of the elderly.

However, this is largely an act, and the wasteland wanderer is the First Speaker of the Goat of the Woods and the most powerful figure in the Black Goat's Flock. She travels the badlands—sometimes alone, other times with a band of fanatical adherents to attend her—preaching the mad litany of her goddess, which she hears sung upon the winds.

Many goblin tribes have turned to worship of the Black Goat due to Tivishta's proselytizing, and her words have planted the seed of cults in dozens of border settlements, and even a major city or two. She is typically forced out of civilized areas. She goes willingly, knowing how to pick her battles, and knowing that playing the victim of harsh law will win her more sympathy from the populace than confrontation. Those swayed by her words will seek her out, and then she can teach them to hear the Dark Mother's words for themselves, and spread the faith.

CULT MEMBERS AND MINIONS

The following NPCs can be used by the GM as cult members, functionaries, and minor leaders in the Black Goat's Flock.

GOBLIN ZEALOT

CR 1/2

XP 200

Goblin barbarian (unchained) 1 (*Pathfinder Unchained*)

CE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, -2 rage, +1 shield, +1 size)

hp 17 (1d12+3+2 temp)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft. (30 ft. in armor)

Melee battleaxe +5 (1d6+3/×3)

Ranged javelin +5 (1d4+3)

Special Attacks rage (6 rounds/day)

TACTICS

During Combat The goblin zealot hurls a tanglefoot bag at a foe before closing into melee with its battle axe.

Base Statistics When not raging, the goblin zealot's statistics are **AC** 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16; **hp** 15; **Will** +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 14; **Melee** battleaxe +3 (1d6+1/×3); **Ranged** javelin +5 (1d4+1).

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 12

Feats Power Attack

Skills Intimidate +3, Perception +5, Ride +3, Stealth +7, Survival +5; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Ride, +4 Stealth

Languages Common, Goblin

SQ fast movement

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear** hide armor, light steel shield, battleaxe, javelins (5), 7 gp

These fierce warriors do the bidding of the Speakers and other cult leaders. Their fanatical loyalty drives them into fits of profane rage against the enemies of their faith.



BLACK GOAT CABALIST

CR 5

XP 1,600

Human arcanist 6 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Class Guide*)

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex)

hp 41 (6d6+18)

Fort +4; **Ref** +5; **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk light mace +3 (1d6-1)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +5 (1d8/19-20)

Special Attacks acid jet (30 ft., +4 ranged touch, 3d6+1 acid damage plus sickened 1d4 rounds, Fort DC 14)

Spells Known (CL 6th; concentration +9)

3rd (3/day)—*fireball* (DC 16)

2nd (5/day)—*glitterdust* (DC 15), *sonic scream*^{ACG} (DC 15)

1st (5/day)—*burning hands*, *color spray* (DC 14), *mage armor*, *vanish*^{APG}

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *daze* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat The cabalist casts *mage armor*.

During Combat The Black Goat cabalist uses spells and acid jets to disable and kill opponents. The cabalist will also use the potent magic function of their arcane reservoir to boost the CL or DC of *fireball*. Finally, the cabalist may use Empower Spell with any spell which is cast spontaneously with an increase of casting time.

Morale If overmatched, the cabalist casts *vanish* and attempts to flee.

Base Statistics Without *mage armor*, the Black Goat cabalist's statistics are **AC** 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14

Feats Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Appraise +11, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +7, Spellcraft +11, Use Magic Device +9

Languages Aklo, Common, Goblin, Mharoti (draconic)

SQ arcanist exploits (energy shield [resist 15, 6 min.], potent magic [+2 CL or +2 DC], arcanist reservoir (9 points), consume spell (1/day)

BLACK GOAT'S FLOCK IN MIDGARD

The Black Goat's Flock is very active among those who live in the Wasted West and around its borders, even in the Ironcrag Cantons and some southern reaches of the Grand Duchy. The Goblin Wastes in particular are home to dozens of tribes where the cult thrives.

Goblin cultists listed in this book should be considered dust goblins (see the *Midgard Bestiary*). To do so, make the following changes to the listed stat blocks: **Weakness** light sensitivity; **Racial Bonuses** +4 Survival, +4 Use Magic Device. Also note that due to their variable size, dust goblins can also be Medium-sized. If you wish dust goblin NPCs of that size category, remove the size bonus to attack rolls and AC, as well as the size penalties to CMB and CMD. Approximately one in three dust goblins are Medium-sized.

Among the shining cities of the Grand Magocracy of Allain, the Black Goat's Flock is a slowly growing cancer. With Allain's use of mighty magics to run its everyday affairs, there remains pride of power. That inevitably leads to temptation, and the Black Goat's Flock preys on that to lure new members in with hints of forbidden knowledge and the power that can come from it.

Recently a tribe of taiga giants has converted to the cult, hopeful that the Black Goat will lead them to unlocking ancient magics. They believe the cult's power will help giants overcome the Great Restlessness that curses their ancestral lands, and allow them to raise their people's civilization back to the great heights from which it fell.

Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), alchemist's fire (3); **Other Gear** mwk light crossbow, with 10 bolts, mwk light mace, *ring of protection* +1, spellbook (contains all prepared spells, plus the following: 3rd—*mad monkeys*^{UM}2nd—*mirror image*, *web*; 1st—*blurred movement*^{ACG}, *charm person*, *expeditious retreat*, *grease*, *magic missile*, *shield*; all 0 level spells), everburning torch, spell component pouch, wooden unholy symbol, gold signet ring (worth 50 gp), 4 gp.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Scaly Diplomacy (Ex) Those who speak Mharoti (draconic) gain a +2 to Diplomacy with scaly creatures (*Midgard Campaign Setting* only).

Black Goat cabalists are members of the cult interested in magic, typically to increase their own personal power and social influence. They often reside in large cities, and meet secretly to worship and plot. Sometimes a cabalist will lead a small sect, with a lieutenant and a small group of fanatical followers (use the cultist and 4-8 farmers from the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Gamemastery Guide*).

SPEAKER FOR THE BLACK GOAT CR 8

XP 4,800

Human oracle 9

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 20 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 shield)

hp 80 (9d8+36)

Fort +6; **Ref** +6; **Will** +10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee +1 **heavy mace** +8/+3 (1d8+1/x3)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +9 (1d8/19-20)

Special Attacks brain drain 2/day (9d4 damage, 6 rounds, DC 20)

Oracle Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; conc. +15)
1/day—*automatic writing*

Oracle Spells Known (CL 9th; concentration +15)
4th (5/day)—*blessing of fervor*^{APG}, *cure critical wounds*, *legend lore*

3rd (7/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 19), *cure serious wounds*, *inflict serious wounds* (DC 19), *locate object*, *summon monster III*
 2nd (7/day)—*bull's strength*, *eagle's splendor*, *oracle's burden* (DC 18), *resist energy*, *tongues*
 1st (7/day)—*cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *doom* (DC 17), *identify*, *murderous command* (DC 17), *obscuring mist*
 0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 16), *create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *light*, *resistance*, *spark*^{APG}

Mystery Lore

TACTICS

Before Combat The Speaker casts *eagle's splendor*.

During Combat The Speaker casts *summon monster III* to bring forth a dretch to attack foes. *Blessing of fervor* is cast on any allies.

Base Statistics Without *eagle's splendor*, the Speakers statistics are **Cha** 18; all spell and special attack DCs are 2 lower; concentration checks are +13; Diplomacy +14.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (heavy mace)

Skills Diplomacy +16, Knowledge (planes) +16, Knowledge (religion) +16, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +8

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common

SQ oracle's curse (tongues), revelation (automatic writing, brain drain, lorekeeper)

Combat Gear *hand of the mage*, *potion of aid*, *potion of fly*, *robe of bones*, *scroll of dispel magic*, *scroll of shield of faith*, antitoxin; **Other Gear** +1 *breastplate*, +1 *heavy steel shield*, +1 *heavy mace*, masterwork crossbow and 20 bolts, *cloak of resistance* +1, silver unholy symbol, spell component pouch

Speakers can hear the words of the Dark Mother upon the winds. They gather her knowledge and use it to lead the Black Goat's Flock as She demands. They use their knowledge and personal magnetism to coax others into doing the will of the Black Goat, aiding and abetting the cult, or luring them into the flock with dark promises of pleasure and power.

CULT ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURE HOOKS

Choose your favorite option below to introduce the Black Goat's Flock as adversaries for the PCs in your campaign. They can be foes for a single adventure or used as a continuing threat in an extended campaign.

APL 1-3

- **The city is uneasy, even violent during a contested political succession.** The city guard is working hard to control protests and ensure they don't break out into riots and violence. Black Goat cultists take advantage of the chaos to attack established shrines and temples of other deities. Unable to gain a proper response from the law due to the unrest, an acolyte from a small temple to a deity favored by the patron deity of the party's cleric requests their aid to guard the temple. During the PCs watch, the Black Goat's minions break into the temple to desecrate it and steal away its finest sacred items, books of scripture, and holy relics.
- **During the harvest festival in a small town, mayhem breaks out as people begin hallucinating.** Hysterical townsfolk fight one another, flee from terrors only they can see, and destroy property. If the PCs are in town, they too may succumb to whatever mind-altering agent has gripped the populace.

Investigation reveals a wagon loaded with (mostly empty) ale barrels is the source of the chaos. The ale is tainted with Earth Mother's Milk, a psychoactive drug that warps perception and induces vivid hallucinations. The only clue to its origin is a stamp on the barrels—a star made of five stalks of wheat, with a crescent moon in the center—and a tavern owner's vague recollection that a black horse pulled the wagon into town. A cloaked figure was the driver, but the tavern owner remembers very little of that meeting. If pressed she remembers it as odd because the wagon arrived by way of the long-disused western road. Black Goat cultists reside in a ruined monastery in the hills that way, and their resident alchemist is working on a more potent batch to ship to a larger city.

- **A wizard hires the PCs to engage in a crime for the right reasons.** The wizard claims property of his was stolen by lord of thieves. Due to the criminal's connections, he can gain no assistance from local law enforcers, who are firmly in the pockets of the thieves' guild. He wishes the PCs to break into the thief-lord's home and repossess his stolen goods, and he provides a list of strange and arcane items to be recovered.

The PCs must find a way into the manor house, deal with or avoid the guards and defenses, and get all the items. The wizard will then meet them in a neighboring town, well away from the thief guild and various cronies, to reclaim his possessions and reward them. One of the items on the list is a ragged piece of blue-green metal foil, acid-etched with words in a dead language. This is a fragment of the Veridian Codex, once the unholy text of the Goat of the Woods.

Once the PCs have the fragment, strange things happen on their journey to deliver the goods. Their sleep is haunted by lurid and disturbing dreams. Strange creatures linger and move in the shadows of trees in the night. On the road outside the town, a paladin confronts the party and claims they harbor great evil. She demands they surrender it to her so she can see it safely destroyed. Complying will mean they earn the ire of Anton Valcrist, the wizard. Refusal means the paladin will attack them as agents of evil; defending themselves against her may have serious repercussions, including being declared outlaws and agents of the cult.

APL 4-6

- **Two shapechanging Black Goat agents infiltrate the local power structure.** The PCs must uncover the agents before they can spread their corruption too far. The first signs of strange behavior are not indicators of the culprit(s), as the agent can enchant others to act against their better judgment. A clerk accused of graft, for example, committed the crime due to the agent's influence. The agents could include a dark fey, a spellcaster, or even a doppelganger. Alternately, if the PCs are already enemies of the Black Goat's Flock, an agent

may be placed nearby to watch the PCs and report their movements to the cult. Perhaps the PCs attack a cultist hideout, only to be attacked with magic items they recognize as being items they themselves brought back to town and sold. This clues them in that one or more of the merchants they deal with may be spies of the Flock.

- **The PCs are retained to track down a brutal murderer, and bring him back dead or alive.** This brash villain has been killing commoners, artisans, and nobles alike, with no signs of stopping. A local lord suspects that a local merchant will be targeted, and arranges an ambush. However, the murderer is working to destroy the Black Goat's Flock, and her victims have all been secret members of the cult, as is the very lord who has hired the PCs to stop her.

If the PCs succeed at their task, they have eliminated a major obstacle of the cult, and furthered its ends. The lord who hired them is rewarded for his efforts and granted access to the local monarch's inner circle, where he can corrupt others and influence politics. If the murderer convinces the PCs of her righteous intentions, they may join forces with her, becoming fugitives themselves and resisting the machinations of the Flock, and avoiding the law themselves.

- **The PCs find the aftermath of a ritual performed by a group of Black Goat cultists.** The cultists have been defeated, killed or driven off, but the result of their magic—a portal to a strange, far realm—remains. The portal cannot be closed from this side. There were a pair of anchors keeping it open, but those who dealt with the cultists destroyed the one on this side. Until the one on the other side of the portal is destroyed, it remains open. The forces that defeated the cultists remain on guard here to defend against the horrors coming through, while the PCs enter, locate the anchor, destroy it, and then retreat through the portal before it closes again.

The strange dimension is home to aberrations, dark fey, and other terrors at the GM's discretion. Once the anchor is destroyed, the portal begins to collapse and the PCs must quickly return through it, or risk being stranded in this mysterious realm.

APL 7-9

- **An enemy of the PCs—a recurring NPC the PCs dislike, a recent villain returned, or someone else—pays a surprise visit.** Assuming the PCs do not attack and kill or drive away the enemy, that person proposes an alliance to defeat a common threat. The enemy has recently lost something or someone of great value to the cult, and asks the PCs to assist in the recovery. The enemy presents evidence that the PCs too will be targeted, and will also experience loss unless they join forces.

If the PCs decline, their enemy is proven correct, and members of the Black Goat's Flock steal an important magic item or kidnap someone close to the PCs. Their enemy will gloat quietly if they come to renegotiate the alliance, but they will accept a partnership against the cult. The enemy has knowledge of the cult's location, but lacks enough power to mount an offense, where the PCs have the power but no knowledge of where the cult is or how to find them.

- **The son or daughter of an important ruler, general, or noble hires the PCs to escort their child out of the city to a remote country estate.** Recent signs indicate that the Black Goat's Flock has an interest in the young person, and the parent wishes to move them to safety. Unfortunately for the PCs, the young person has no interest in leaving, and they are likewise fascinated by the Black Goat's Flock. Not only do the PCs have to contend with attempts by the Flock to make away with the young person, but that person (who is of an equivalent level to the PCs) attempts to escape custody and join the cultists.
- **A burgeoning town on the edge of civilization is suffering from a virulent plague.** What was once a prosperous new settlement is collapsing as the local government shuts the gates and quarantines the town until the disease is brought under control, lest merchants and other visitors spread it further. With stockpiles of food and supplies running low, a new problem arises. A group of the Black Goat's Flock has arrived, chasing away those bringing relief to the town, claiming the relief supplies before they can be brought into town, and camping outside the gates. Day and night,

they proselytize to the people inside, promising freedom and relief for those who break the yoke of their rulers, defy the quarantine, and come forth. Desperation is rising, and riots are imminent. The situation is beyond the weakened town militia's ability to control. The PCs must help maintain order, then lead a charge to kill or drive away the cultists, bring essential supplies into town, and maintain the quarantine. For an extra twist, the disease itself may have been conjured by the cult, and it fades when the cultists are driven away.

APL 10-12

- **The Black Goat's Flock sends a charismatic and persuasive NPC into the party's midst as a cohort, confidant, henchman, or even mentor.** This figure becomes intimately familiar with the PCs—the better to sow dissent and chaos. The PCs are gently nudged onto self-indulgent paths, encouraged to flaunt their personal power and trust in their own judgment rather than that of local law. If the NPC gains influence in their circle, the most responsive and chaotic characters are pushed even further, and may be granted access to cult materials and powers if and when their corruption has carried far enough. This hook works best if started when the party is low level, especially with the NPC as a mentor, or simply with a fanatic cult loyalist as a companion or friend who grows in power as the PCs do. Worse, the NPC can genuinely admire the PCs and feel friendship for them, only wishing them to throw off the yoke of conformity and stifling law, letting themselves grow under their confidant's guidance. Corrupt at the core, they wish their friend well, meaning they hope they eventually embrace the joyous worship of the Black Goat.
- **Strange things are afoot at the castle.** The local lord has cast out his normal courtiers, filling the courtyard, stables, and even the throne room with goats. Strange folk come and go from the castle daily, and bonfires glow behind the walls at night, as strange chants and eerie flute music rise into the starlit skies. Whispers of madness grow among the local populace, as do rumblings of dissent when new taxes are levied by the lord for a great project

he says will ensure greater prosperity and peace. Can the PCs gain access to the lord and heal him of his madness? Or does this go deeper than simply insanity? Do the Black Goat's Flock now control the country? What is the "great project" which the new funds support?

Whether the PCs seek to heal the lord's mind and restore his reputation, or defeat him and his cultist supporters and install a new ruler, they need to do it soon. If left to spread, the widespread unrest turns into open revolt and the castle is burned by a peasant army led by virtuous followers of a faith familiar with the Black Goat's corruption.

- **The PCs are asked to investigate the scene of a battle.** Evidence points to one side being the Black Goat's Flock. The other is another group inimical to the PCs (the forces of an old enemy, a group opposed to a PC's militant order or druid circle, or even another cult from this book). As they investigate, the PCs are find a survivor of the conflict alive and hidden in the carnage—but he is a member of the hostile group. This representative tells the PCs that the Black Goat's Flock were victorious, and made away with a prize that will make them even more dangerous: a magical tome, weapon, or sacred goblet. This antagonist offers to join forces with the PCs to stop the Black Goat's Flock before they achieve whatever nefarious goal they seek to attain with their newfound prize. Their enemy appears sincere, but can the PCs trust them not to turn on the party once their mutual goal is achieved?

APL 13-15

- **The PCs are visiting a town that borders a wasteland.** While they are preparing for their next adventure, the town is attacked by goblins. The PCs defeat the goblin attackers easily. However, soon after the attack a severe dust storm arises, keeping people shut in their homes, and the PCs cannot start their journey until the storm passes. Once the storm has died, another wave of goblinoids, this one even larger, assaults the town. If this one is also defeated, another storm rolls in, even stronger than the first. Massive drifts of dust build up on the town walls, and rooftops

are scoured and damaged. The pattern continues. Each wave of enemies is stronger, and the storm which inevitably follows is worse.

The Speakers of the Black Goat's Flock have granted a *selfish wish* to a goblin chieftain which uses the souls of those lost in the attacks to fuel the great dust storms. With this proof of his power, other tribes have joined under his banner, and they provide fodder for greater magical storms, which will eventually bury this town (and any others the goblin horde attacks). The only way to break this cycle is with two deaths: that of the chieftain that made the wish, and that of Tivishta Trikintha, the Speaker that granted it.

- **An old friend of the PCs is in trouble, and she manages to get a magical message to them, calling for immediate aid (using *sending* or similar magic).** If the PCs respond to the message, there is no further response from their friend. Assuming the PCs use magical travel to reach her, they can save her before she is sacrificed by members of the Black Goat's Flock. Any significant delay instead makes it a mission of vengeance.

However, instead of just defeating the cultists, the PCs must also face the flame-scoured scion awoken by the cultists' ritual. In either event, the PCs find their foes in the burned out remnants of an ancient grove in the badlands. The PCs learn from their friend (or her spirit via speak with dead, or a recovered journal, if she is deceased) that other groups of cultists are conducting similar rituals at other dead groves throughout the wastes, reawakening their old guardians to bolster the cult's strength, calling up flame-scoured scions (see page 20) to fight for them.

The swiftest way to stop the Black Goat's Flock is to locate and kill Xiax Galleborne, whose wind-whispered dark inspirations started this. Unfortunately, Xiax lives in a grove where the ritual has already been performed, and is guarded by anywhere between two and six flame-scoured scions, depending on how difficult the GM chooses to make this battle.

- **The leaders of competing groups of the Black Goat's Flock have found inspiration to join forces, with the hope of summoning an avatar of the Goat of the Woods into the world.** Anton Valcrist has recently found a partial copy of the Viridian Codex which hints that this can be done. His own research has been for naught, so he seeks out Xiax and Tivishta to assist him. After much experimentation at a corrupted grove deep in the wastes, they achieve a degree of success. A great portal opens in the sky, a gaping black space at the eye of a growing storm.

The ritual generates side effects appreciated by the cultists. Insanity is on the rise. Magic begins working strangely, from unintended but benign side effects to harmful and deadly backlash. Weird mutations of both normal animals and monsters are reported. Word comes of the great storm from those civilized areas closest to it; missives sent in response go unanswered, and there is ominous silence from those wasteland border town. Can the heroes find out what is happening and close the portal before the worst happens?

SPELLS

The Goat of the Woods was once a wellspring of fearsome magic, now mostly lost from memory. Those in the Black Goat's favor are sometimes granted the dark knowledge of her ancient lore, garnered from a reclaimed scrap of the Veridian Codex, or heard whispered on the wind through the dead trees in the charred remnants of Her sacred groves.

CURSE OF FORMLESSNESS

School transmutation (polymorph) [curse];

Level druid 6, shaman 6, sorcerer/wizard 6, unchained summoner 6, witch 6

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a drop of quicksilver)

Range touch

Target creature touched

Duration permanent

Saving Throw Fortitude negates, see text;

Spell Resistance yes

A creature you touch is cursed with a shifting, amorphous form. Spells that change the target

creature's shape (such as *beast shape*, *form of the dragon*, and *polymorph*) do not end the curse, but they do hold the creature in a stable form, temporarily mitigating it until the end of that particular spell's duration; *shapechange* and *stoneskin* have similar effects.

While under the effects of the *curse of formlessness*, the target creature is immune to precision damage and critical hits, but it can neither hold nor use any item, nor can it cast spells or activate magic items. Movement rates are reduced to half normal, and winged flight becomes impossible. Any armor, clothing, helmets, or rings become useless. Large items that are carried or worn, such as armor, backpacks, or clothing, become constant hindrances, and the target takes a –4 penalty to Dexterity while such items are in place.

A creature under the effects of a *curse of formlessness* can attempt to hold itself together through sheer force of will. As a standard action, the afflicted creature can attempt a subsequent Will save at the same DC as the initial save. If successful, the afflicted creature avoids all the penalties of the spell for that round.

MORPHIC FLUX

School transmutation (polymorph);

Level alchemist 7, sorcerer/wizard 7, witch 7

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a piece of clay and a drop of quicksilver)

Range personal

Target you

Duration 1 round/level

When you cast this spell, your body becomes highly mutable, your flesh constantly shifting and quivering, occasionally growing extra parts—limbs and eyes—only to absorb them back in soon afterward.

While under the effects of this spell, you gain immunity to critical hits and precision damage. You gain the all-around vision ability and immunity to flanking. You can squeeze through spaces up to two size categories smaller than yourself without penalty.

In addition, once per round, you can make a natural attack with a newly grown limb. This is considered a primary slam attack (or a secondary attack if used in conjunction with other melee

attacks) and deals damage appropriate for a creature of your size (1d4 Medium, 1d6 Large). This attack inflicts bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage as you choose and may be changed once per round as a free action.

SELFISH WISH

School universal [evil]; **Level** cleric 8, sorcerer/wizard 8

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, M (a pint of blood and a black sapphire worth at least 2,500 gp)

Range see text

Effect see text

Duration see text

Saving Throw none, see text; **Spell Resistance** yes

The *selfish wish* grants the desires of a supplicant in exchange for power. Like a *wish*, it alters reality, but in doing so it grants the caster power, while the end results of the *selfish wish* are often twisted or misinterpreted versions of the actual desire.

The wish-maker must provide a sacrifice of their own blood and state their desires. The caster then completes the spell and provides whatever effect is asked for. However, unlike *wish*, the GM should pervert any casting of this spell. If the *selfish wish* is very well-worded, the negative effects may not be as hideous, but they should still be present.

All fulfillment of a *selfish wish* should come with some drawback. A *selfish wish* can produce any of the effects that a *wish* can. If greater effects than those are wished for, the drawbacks of the wish become even more dangerous (e.g., a wish for a great increase in Strength may come with an equal reduction in Intelligence).

In exchange for casting the *selfish wish*, the caster receives an influx of power. This has the effects of *blessing of fervor*, though it affects only the caster. This effect lasts for one round per level of the caster, but it does not have to be used on consecutive rounds if used within 24 hours. After that time, any unused rounds are wasted.

MAGIC ITEMS

MANTLE OF THE MOTHER

Aura strong conjuration; **CL** 11th

Slot shoulders; **Price** 36,000 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

Made of strips of black leather, this cloak always shines as if freshly oiled. When worn, it provides a +2 bonus to natural armor. When the wearer grapples an opponent, the strips writhe and grasp at the foe, providing a +4 bonus on any combat maneuver checks made to grapple or maintain a grapple. The wearer can forgo the bonus to allow the cloak to grapple for her, using her combat maneuver bonus. This allows the wearer to grapple without gaining the grappled condition, and it leaves her hands free to attack with weapons or cast spells.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *black tentacles*; **Cost** 18,000 gp

MAYHEM MASK

Aura moderate enchantment; **CL** 7th

Slot head; **Price** 36,450 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This goat mask with great, curving horns is carved of darkwood and framed in goat's hair. When donned, the wearer gains a gore attack, dealing 1d6 points of piercing damage (for a Medium creature) plus the wearer's Strength modifier. The base damage is adjusted to the wearer's size (e.g. 1d4 if the wearer is Small). This gore attack inflicts double damage as part of a charge and counts as a magical attack for the purpose of overcoming DR. Once per day and upon command, the wearer may use *confusion* (one target per round) merely by meeting the gaze of a target within 30 feet. Those targets that fail a DC 16 Will save become confused for 1d4 rounds.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *beast shape I*, *confusion*, creator must worship the Black Goat; **Cost** 18,225 gp

SPELLBOOK

THE VALCRIST FOLIO

The ongoing attempt by Anton Valcris to collect the remnants of the *Veridian Codex* has resulted in a spellbook that the wizard carries with him at all times. Much of this book is Valcris's chronicle of his search for the lost Codex, as well as his research based on rumors, secondhand information, and research. The few scraps of the original book and partial copies that the wizard has been able to recover are kept in the Folio, as well as the few spells that Valcris has been able to translate from those relics. The remainder of the book contains spells Valcris has gathered during his continuing search.

Note that the Valcris Folio is considerably thicker than a normal spell book with 140 pages, all but one of which is filled. It contains all standard cantrips except those which belong to Anton's opposition schools (and they are factored in the book's page count). Despite the book's unusual thickness, it is sturdy, thanks to the bookbinding talents of its creator. The Folio is also heavier than most spellbooks, weighing 4.2 lbs.

THE VALCRIST FOLIO (LEVEL 11 TRANSMUTER)

This book is bound in dark green leather, with bronze fittings gone green with verdigris. Tooled into the cover are designs of twisted, thorny vines, all wrapped around a fist-sized goat's eye crafted of red and black glass. The cover shows signs of wear, but the strap and lock that hold the book closed are well kept.

Protection good lock with *arcane lock* (DC 40)

Opposition Schools enchantment, necromancy

Value 4,545 gp (6,655 gp with preparation ritual)

SPELLS

6th—*curse of formlessness**, *disintegrate*, *flesh to stone*

5th—*baleful polymorph*, *monstrous physique III*^{UM}, *transmute mud to rock*, *transmute rock to mud*

4th—*black tentacles*, *calcific touch*^{APG}, *dimension door*, *scrying*, *stone shape*, *stoneskin*

3rd—*beast shape I*, *blood biography*^{APG}, *clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, *countless eyes*^{UM}, *dispel magic*, *excruciating deformation*^{UM}, *fireball*, *hostile levitation*, *slow*

2nd—*arcane lock*, *cat's grace*, *continual flame*, *darkness*, *extreme flexibility*^{ACG}, *resist energy*, *scorching ray*, *see invisibility*, *twisted space*^{UC}, *web*

1st—*animate rope*, *enlarge person*, *expeditious retreat*, *feather fall*, *floating disk*, *grease*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *polypurpose panacea*^{UM}, *touch of gracelessness*^{APG}

PREPARATION RITUAL

Key of Making and Unmaking (Su) The copious notes within the Valcris Folio expand your understanding of arcane transformative principles. Spend this boon's effect as a free action when you cast a spell from the transmutation school. If the spell has a save DC, it is increased by 1. If the spell does not have a DC, but has a duration, that duration increases by a number of units equal to half your caster level. (For example, if you are a 10th level caster and cast a spell with a duration measured in rounds/level, then the spell's duration increases by 5 rounds.)



NEW MONSTERS

FLAME-SCOURGED SCION

This tree-like creature's hide is charred, cracked, and oozing. A crown of long, branching tentacles set with goat-like eyes encircles a central fanged maw at the top of its bulk. Root-like appendages end in blackened, sooty hooves.

FLAME-SCOURGED SCION

CR 12

XP 19,200

CE Huge aberration

Init +7; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., firesight; Perception +21

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 11, flat-footed 24 (+3 Dex, +16 natural, -2 size)

hp 161 (14d8+98)

Fort +11, **Ref** +9, **Will** +13

Defensive Abilities all-around vision; **DR** 15/slashing; **Resistance** 15 fire; **Immune** dazzled

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 4 tentacles +19 (1d8+10/19-20 plus grab), bite +18 (2d6+10 plus grab)

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

Special Attacks burning rage, swallow whole (2d6 bludgeoning and 2d6 acid, **AC** 18, **hp** 16)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th; concentration +19)

Constant—*freedom of movement*

At will—*air walk*, *tree shape*

3/day—*cup of dust*^{APG} (DC 18), *obsidian flow*^{UC} (DC 19), *pyrotechnics* (DC 17)

1/day—*insanity* (DC 22), *sirocco*^{APG} (DC 21)

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 17, **Con** 24, **Int** 16, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +22 (+26 grapple); **CMD** 35 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (tentacles), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (tentacles)

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (nature) +17, Knowledge (religion) +17, Perception +21, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +20, Stealth +12 (+20 in dim light or darkness); **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth in dim light or darkness

Languages Aklo, Common, Sylvan

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate or warm deserts and mountains

Organization solitary, pair, or grove (3-6)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Burning Rage (Su) When a flame-scourged scion takes fire damage, it gains bonuses as if it were under the effects of rage. These bonuses last 1 round for every die of damage inflicted by the fire attack, whether or not it bypasses the flame-scourged scion's fire resistance.

Firesight (Ex) A flame-scourged scion can see through fire and smoke without penalty, ignoring any cover or concealment bonuses from fire and smoke. The creature is also immune to the dazzled condition.

Tentacles (Ex) Flame-scourged scions treat their tentacles as primary attacks.

During the great scourge that broke the power of the Black Goat's followers and the power of the magocracies that worshiped Her, crusaders destroyed the unholy groves. Her loyal followers and guardians were slain, and the groves were razed with holy fire, in keeping with the faith of the Sun God Khors. All the unholy trees of those vile groves burned, as did the profane offspring of the Goat of the Woods. However, not all that were burned died. The strongest of Her children lived, and they remain as guardians of those lost places of power. Their might has warped and changed, but it is hardly diminished.

Flame-scourged scions often lurk in their unholy mother's groves in tree form. Where once they would take the shape of living trees, now they appear as leafless, charred husks, to blend in with the hardscrabble nature of these desolate areas.



THE BURNING RUNE

Usi-Ziyad, a fervent but low-ranking cultist of a god of dragons and fire (Baal-Hotep in Midgard), backed the wrong side of a political power struggle and was forced to surrender in the face of a lost cause. His life was spared, but he was cast into exile, unable to return to his homeland upon penalty of death. Despondent, he wandered aimlessly, sure that his god had abandoned him and eventually found himself in the cold, bleak Northlands. Usi-Ziyad fell upon a lonely road, bitter and exhausted, a broken man on the edge of sanity.

Usi-Ziyad would have died there had not a hermit stumbled upon him while gathering firewood. The hermit loaded the fallen traveler onto his sled and took him to the small cabin in the woods. Fevered and delirious, Usi-Ziyad watched as the hermit laid a log on the banked coals in the fireplace and traced a gnarled finger over a rune carved into the wood. The log burst into flames and the glowing, glorious fire was the last vision Usi-Ziyad had before slipping into unconsciousness and blazing dreams.

When he awoke, Usi-Ziyad was filled with questions and new purpose. As he recovered, he asked the hermit about the symbol. Where did it come from? How was it used? The hermit explained some of the most basic principles of rune magic to the stranger, but little more. The more strength Usi-Ziyad recovered however, the more he became determined to possess this new, strange power and add it to his own. And as his faith rekindled, so did his divine power. When sweet and honeyed words failed him, Usi-Ziyad turned to force. He ambushed and subdued the hermit and eventually resorted to torture. He eventually broke the old hermit who had shown him hospitality.

Unsatisfied with only the fire rune, he wrenched more and more from the hermit—the second and third runes—before the old man expired. Yet Usi-Ziyad's frustration grew. It wasn't enough. The cultist set on a mad binge and carved the runes on every surface throughout the cabin: furnishings, walls, floor, even the poor hermit's corpse. When the cabin was filled, he scratched over the existing ones. In his frenzied and disassociated state, he activated a combination of all three runes together, turning the cabin into a blazing inferno. He fled the conflagration laughing. He had found the Burning Rune, a rune of fire and need. Burning need. This was the sign.

Usi-Ziyad attempted to gain a foothold in the North, but his fire cult was soon roused. This too, he took as a sign. Let the northerners keep their cold land and their accursed gods. His god was a god of the South. Usi-Ziyad returned there, took up leadership of the faith, and raised it up with the power his god had revealed to him.

LEADERS, ORGANIZATION, AND GOALS

Usi-Ziyad is the undisputed leader of the Burning Rune, having driven out or subjugated all other followers of the dragon god. It is his wish to see worship of his god become preminent in the river kingdom of Nuria Natal. This proves more difficult than he would like however, for his vision is filled only with flames. He is blind to the other aspects of the dragon god—as a god of fertility and rain—so

even the secret worshipers of the god in the region fear the Burning Rune.

Belina, the phlogistian faerie, is his second-in-command. Her powerful and enchanting presence has been a major factor in the Burning Rune's influence over the region since Usi-Ziyad's return from the North. The cult leader's powers are impressive and he has a formidable presence, but many of the cult followers cleave to Belina's beauty, vitality, and force of personality. They see her as an embodiment of the rune and of the flame. Where Usi-Ziyad is feared, Belina is loved.

Underlings and minor leaders of the Burning Rune vary. Some of the clerics who accepted Usi-Ziyad's authority now serve him as leaders of sects or cells of the cult. Sorcerers with the draconic and elemental (fire) bloodlines are likewise attracted to the cult. The Burning Rune actively recruits alchemists, hoping to enhance their strength with the cult's knowledge of incendiaries.

The majority of the Burning Rune's members are human, drawn from the locals in the area. The group includes dwarves and kobolds of the region in smaller numbers. Though rare, the occasional elf, gnome, and even minotaur are counted among the cult's following. Many dragonkin have joined the Burning Rune as followers, only to quickly rise to positions of influence and power. It is said that Usi-Ziyad has a quartet of dragonkin fighters as his personal bodyguard. Finally, one or more tribes of gnolls have fallen under the sway of the Burning Rune; the symbol is now seen among their banners. At Usi-Ziyad's request, they wreak havoc among the smaller settlements on the outskirts of civilization.

Arson is the obvious choice of offense for the Burning Rune. Those who oppose them find their temples, businesses, and homes ablaze in the night. Smaller settlements, villages, and farms are sometimes caught in the path of wildfires that seem to plague the enemies of the cult with a singular purpose. Those that have embraced the cult's ways are spared. Cult members use the symbol of the Burning Rune to identify one another, idly scratched into the dirt or scribbled upon paper to see the reaction of those that view it.

USI-ZIYAD

CR 13

XP 25,600

Male human oracle 13 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +3**Aura** heat (10 ft., DC 18, 6d4 fire, 20% concealment, 3/day)

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 21 (+8 armor, +1 Dex, +1 deflection, +2 natural)**hp** 101 (13d8+39)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +13; +1 vs. illusions, +2 vs. mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft. (30 ft. in armor)**Melee** +1 spear +9/+4 (1d8/×3)**Ranged** +2 light crossbow +12 (1d8+2/19–20)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th; concentration +18)
1/day—*stabilize***Oracle Spells Known** (CL 13th; concentration +18)
6th (4/day)—*fire seeds*, *harm* (DC 21), *heal*, *mass cure moderate wounds*5th (7/day)—*blazing chariot*^{DM}, *cleanse*^{APG},
flame strike (DC 22), *mass cure light wounds*,
*summon monster V*4th (7/day)—*blessing of fervor*^{APG} (DC 19), *charm monster* (DC 19), *communal protection from energy*^{UC}, *debilitating portent*^{UC}, *freedom of movement*, *wall of fire*3rd (7/day)—*borrow fortune*^{APG}, *cup of dust*^{APG} (DC 18), *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 20), *wrathful mantle*^{APG} (DC 20)2nd (7/day)—*boiling blood*^{UM} (DC 17), *bull's strength*, *cure moderate wounds*, *dread bolt*^{UM} (DC 19), *instrument of agony*^{UC}, *intoxicating scent*^{DM} (DC 17), *resist energy*1st (8/day)—*burning hands* (DC 18), *charm person* (DC 16), *cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *murderous command*^{UM} (DC 16), *shield of faith*, *sun metal*^{UC} (DC 16)0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *kobold's fury*^{DM}, *light*, *mending*, *quicken*^{DM}, *read magic*, *spark*^{APG} (DC 17)**Mystery** flame

TACTICS

Before Combat Given forewarning, Usi-Ziyad casts *intoxicating scent*^{DM} and attempts to follow it up with his 1st-level runic power (with the –3 penalty) to make the maximum use of his associated runic spells.**During Combat** Usi-Ziyad prefers to remain out of hand-to-hand combat and encourages his minions to engage enemies while he supports them with spells to bolster their offense and defense or to wear down the enemy. His wings of flame revelation grants him the ability to fly. If directly engaged, he will cast *harm* to quickly take out a threatening opponent or *instrument of agony* to eliminate their offensive capability while he disengages.**Morale** Usi-Ziyad is proud and mad but not suicidal. If things go against him and his followers, he commands them to hold off the enemy while he makes his escape.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 12, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20

Feats Acrobatic Steps, Craft Wondrous Item, Deeper Rune Lore^{DM} (*brenna-purfa*), Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Lightning Reflexes, Nimble Moves, Rune Mastery^{DM} (2; *brenna-purfa*, *kaunen*, *naudiz*, *perpo*), Runic Spellcasting^{DM} (*brenna-purfa*), Spell Focus (evocation)

Skills Craft (carpentry) +8, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (planes) +12, Knowledge (religion) +16, Perform (oratory) +15, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +16

Languages Common, Ignan; tongues (understand all languages)

SQ oracle's curse (tongues), revelations (cinder dance, gaze of flames, heat aura, wings of fire)

Combat Gear *potion of eagle's splendor*, *potion of protection from cold* (2), *antitoxin* (2), *unholy water* (4); **Other Gear** +2 *breastplate*, +1 *spear*, +2 *light crossbow* with 20 crossbow bolts, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2, *deathwatch eyes*^{UE}, *headband of mental prowess* +2 (Wis, Cha), *ring of protection* +1, golden unholy symbol of Baal-Hotep with the rune of *brenna-purfa* engraved.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

CR Adjustment (Ex) Usi-Ziyad's CR is adjusted by +1 due to superior equipment.

Deeper Rune Lore (Sp) Once per day as a spell-like ability, Usi-Ziyad can use one special power of the *brenna-purfa* rune. Some powers increase in potency when the rune master reaches a certain level.

Rune Mastery (Su) Usi-Ziyad receives the mastery bonus for his four runes. These bonuses and special abilities are included in his stat block. The bonuses against illusions and mind-affecting effects are both insight bonuses. Additionally he receives a +2 insight bonus when carving or scribing any of his runes onto an item with the Craft skill.

Runic Spellcasting (Sp) Usi-Ziyad adds the spells associated with the *brenna-purfa* rune to his spell list. He casts these spells as a caster of 1 level higher than normal. If he is targeted by such a spell, the DC of any saving throw is lowered by 1.

BELINA

CR 8

XP 4,800

Female phlogistian faerie

CN Medium fey (fire)

Init +10; **Senses** low-light vision, smokesight; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 22, flat-footed 15 (+5 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 97 (13d6+52); fast healing 5 (must be in contact with fire)

Fort +8, **Ref** +14, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities radiant aegis, **DR** 10/cold iron; **Immune** fire; **SR** 19

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee +1 *rapier* +13/+8 (1d6+1/18–20) or touch +12 (revoke the gift or touch of phlogiston)

Special Attacks revoke the gift, touch of phlogiston

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +21)

At will—*burning gaze*^{APG} (DC 17), *produce flame* (DC 16), *pyrotechnics* (DC 17), *spark*^{APG} (DC 15) 3/day—*blistering invective*^{UC} (DC 17), *flame blade*, *heat metal* (DC 17)

1/day—*ash storm*^{UM} (DC 18), *contagious flame*^{APG} (DC 21), *fire shield* (warm)

TACTICS

During Combat Belina employs her spell-like abilities so that she may fight among open flames, and only reluctantly leaves such an area. She uses touch of phlogiston if she is pursued into fiery areas or if forced to the ground.

Morale Belina uses revoke the gift against opponents who prove immune to fire and such a foe is likely to cause her to flee.

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 22, **Con** 18, **Int** 13, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 28

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +20, Bluff +19, Escape Artist +14, Fly +28, Knowledge (nature) +17, Perception +15, Perform (dance) +18, Sense Motive +15, Stealth +13; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Fly

Languages Ignan, Sylvan

Other Gear +1 rapier, gold and ruby belly chain (380 gp), 12 gold bangles (25 gp ea.), red brass and fire opal diadem (1,000 gp)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Flamedancer (Su) When in areas of flames, a phlogistian faerie's land movement is unhindered by difficult terrain. When flying in or above flames (within 5 feet), a phlogistian faerie's movement rates are doubled, and her normally invisible wings blaze with fire. Additionally, when in or near fire, her maneuverability class increases to perfect and she gains a +4 bonus to her existing Fly skill. The *fire shield* spell-like ability satisfies this requirement.

Radiant Aegis (Su) A phlogistian faerie adds her Charisma modifier as a deflection bonus. She also gains fast healing 5 whenever she is in a fiery area or surrounded by a fire effect. The *fire shield* spell-like ability satisfies this requirement.

Revoke the Gift (Su) With a successful touch attack, a phlogistian faerie can remove the spark of fire from a living creature. The targeted creature must attempt a DC 21 Will save. Failure means the creature gains immunity to fire, but cannot get warm. The creature must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) every 10 minutes or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage as if suffering from exposure to severe cold (below 0° F). Cold weather gear and Survival checks do not provide bonuses to these saves. Once the creature has taken nonlethal damage, it becomes fatigued as hypothermia sets in. If rendered unconscious by damage, the creature takes 1d6 points of cold damage each minute until dead. This is a curse effect. A successful *break enchantment*, *remove curse*, or a touch of phlogiston removes the effects as will slaying the phlogistian faerie that invoked the curse. The DC of the curse effect is Charisma-based.

Smokesight (Su) A phlogistian faerie can see through fire, fog, and smoke without penalty.

Touch of Phlogiston (Su) A phlogistian faerie's touch attack infuses its target with fuel, making a creature or object more susceptible to fire attacks. A creature or object under the effects of the touch of phlogiston takes +1 damage per die from the next fire attack it suffers and must succeed at a Reflex



save with a DC equal to the original effect or catch fire (objects only do so if normally flammable). If the effect already requires

the target to save against catching fire, the target automatically fails that saving throw. If a touched creature is already burning, then the damage it takes per round is doubled and the DC of the Reflex save to extinguish the flames is increased by 2. If the target has fire resistance, it does not suffer the normal effects of this ability, but its resistance is reduced by 5 for 1 minute. The effects stacks of this ability stack to a maximum three times. Creatures immune to fire are immune to the effects of this power. If a phlogistian faerie maintains contact with an object (not a creature) for a full minute, then the damage from the next fire attack upon it bypasses its hardness and the object catches fire, even if it is not normally flammable, such as objects made of stone or metal.

Belina's stat block is standard for all phlogistian faeries, save for her items of personal wealth. The phlogistian faerie is a new monster.

CULT ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURE HOOKS

There are several methods of introducing the Burning Rune as adversaries for the PCs in your campaign. They can be the enemies in a single adventure or returning enemies in an extended campaign, pitting the PCs against the growing threat of the cult as it attempts to dominate the land while reducing those who stand against them to ashes.

APL 1–3

- ***A local village seeks adventurers to aid them against a particularly hostile band of gnolls that seems intent on razing the settlement to the ground.*** These gnolls are unusual as they brandish torches during their raids and their banner bears a strange sigil unrecognized by the locals. Their leader is a sorcerer with an affinity for fire. The village is grateful to anyone willing to stop the gnolls and return the prisoners that have been taken during prior raids.

- ***The agent of a city official was found dead upon a rooftop, burned to a crisp.*** He was a spy that rooted out troublemakers and disloyal elements and who operated undercover for long periods of time. His untimely death occurred before he could make his next scheduled report. The only clue is a brass medallion bearing an unusual rune still clutched in one fist.

The PCs are asked to trace the agent's movements and discover his murderers. Recently established in this town, a small sect of the Burning Rune plots an attack upon the temple of a popular deity. The agent was discovered before he could expose the cult and killed for meddling in their affairs.

- ***The son of a local merchant has been kidnapped.*** She is greatly worried because no ransom demand has been made. If PCs take an interest, they find the merchant has no enemies but she can relate a noteworthy incident from a month past. A group of religious folk visited her, asking to buy large quantities of lamp oil. They could not afford the price she quoted however, and tried to persuade her to join their religion. The merchant

declined and they left disgruntled. She remembers odd markings on their clothing, specifically an unknown symbol. If the PCs gather information, they discover there is a building in the city slums with similar markings defacing it.

APL 4–6

- ***A spree of arson in the local area has caused much panic and paranoia among the citizenry.*** The fires burn with preternatural ferocity, and thus far, none of the efforts to extinguish any blaze has succeeded. Every affected building has burned to its foundations. The arsonist's methods are a mystery. Nearly all the fires have occurred in places of import—guildhalls, large inns and taverns, and two temples. The one exception is a tenement. If the PCs investigate the fires, they find that the tenement fire started on an upper floor, allowing residents on lower floors to escape before the building was consumed, which is unlike the other incidents. Witnesses also saw a burning woman jump from an upstairs window to escape the fire.

The dead woman's body holds a clue: a gold coin with a mark carved into one face (the *kaunen* rune). Investigation reveals that some folk who worked at the targeted buildings recall similar coins being passed around shortly before the fires. Should the PCs stake out potential targets, they can spot a strange woman who strolls past the building and traces a hand along the wall as she goes. This occurs a mere hour before another fire starts. The Burning Rune is using Belina to infuse the buildings with phlogiston to ensure their destruction and setting the fires with scorch bombs (see page 33) disguised as coins.

- ***A slew of recent edicts by the lord mayor have aroused the ire of local temples, merchant's guilds, and much of the populace.*** Tension is high in the city. Increases in taxes and tariffs, as well as draconian new laws restricting the freedoms of citizens, are announced with alarming frequency. Now the lord mayor is demanding that the local temples open their coffers and pay taxes like the rest of the city. The city council is worried. One of the few still loyal to the mayor, a long-time friend,

is deeply concerned. She wishes to determine if the mayor is ill or otherwise compromised, but he refuses to see a healer and has banned any of the local clergy from the city hall or his residence. In a desperate gambit, she encourages him to take on the PCs as guards—a wise precaution given the current sentiments of the populace—and charges them with finding out what is causing the mayor's bizarre change in behavior and policy.

The Burning Rune has infiltrated the mayor's household staff. They keep the mayor compliant to their wishes through a combination of drugs in his food to weaken his will and covertly cast enchantments. When the PCs discover the plot, they have the difficult task of defeating the cultists while keeping the mayor from harm. A difficult prospect as the mayor now considers the cultists close friends and confidants.

- ***A drought has gripped the countryside for months.*** The Burning Rune takes advantage of the natural disaster to expand their influence. Rampant wildfires sweep the land and destroy all in their path, except those who choose the Burning Rune's protection. The blazes miraculously avoid those holdings whose owners cleave to the cult, despite geography and prevailing winds. Should the PCs choose to help those that refuse to bow to the cult's extortion, they see the wild form of Belina whirling amidst the flames and driving them toward their targets when the cult's inevitable retribution comes. The heroes may defeat her, which prompts the cultists to strike openly. Perhaps the faerie flees and inadvertently leads the heroes back to the cultist's lair. They might be able to convince Belina to turn against the Burning Rune; she then spares the farms and leads the PCs back to the cult's headquarters.

APL 7–9

- ***A lone, gold-capped pyramid at the edge of the desert sands has long been a holy site of the sun god and a place of pilgrimage for his faithful, but now all communication with the priests at the pyramid has stopped.*** Pilgrims report being driven off by gnolls. The priests of the sun god accuse the followers of the cat goddess of being

behind the gnoll raids. They in turn claim to be the scapegoats for internal strife between sects of the sun god. The reality of the situation is that the Burning Rune have claimed the pyramid for their own after their spies discovered a portal to the Elemental Plane of Fire hidden within. Now, the Burning Rune employs its loyal gnolls to keep the site isolated while they locate and activate the portal. The cult plans to bolster its strength with new fiery allies from beyond. Adventurers who seek to reclaim the temple on behalf of the sun god's followers must get through the gnoll blockade, fight their way into the pyramid, and find the secret chamber where a cult leader awaits, possibly with some new friends—an elemental or two, or perhaps a pair of salamanders.

- ***The PCs are hired to guard a museum in a large city when rumors reach city officials of a possible robbery attempt.*** During the night, fires erupt throughout the building as cultists use them as a distraction to obtain their goal. The heroes must not only stop the robbery but keep entire galleries of precious art objects and artifacts from burning to ash at the same time.
- ***The recently discovered murder of a mine supervisor provides evidence of an even greater crime about to be committed.*** Evidence found at the scene indicates that the Burning Rune has targeted the mine in retaliation against the owner, a pious man that not only rebuffed advances by the cult to recruit him but reported the cultists to local authorities. Now, the supervisor of his coal mine is discovered dead, yet witnesses report seeing her alive and well after the time of her death. PCs have to race against time to find the impostor and her cultist allies—now disguised as newly hired miners—before they set fire to the coal vein in the mine and cause a horrendous catastrophe for the entire region.

APL 10–12

- ***A local supplier of magical and alchemical reagents and supplies reports suspicious purchases of certain rare powders and powdered gemstones by clientele unfamiliar to him.*** Tracking down the purchasers leads to a recently

reopened warehouse occupied by cultists of the Burning Rune. A secret trap door leads to a sub-level that contains their hidden shrine, the local leader, and the recently constructed altar flame golem (see page 33).

- ***The PCs are hired by the local high priest to replace guards lost to repeated attempts on her life.*** The Burning Rune has vowed that she will burn before the week is out. The adventurers must fend off a raid by a crack team of zealous kobold commandos, a surprise attack through the sewers by a force of elite dragonkin, and finally an aerial assault by the head cleric of the local Burning Rune sect... and his red dragon ally and mount!
- ***Active efforts by concerted forces have uprooted and destroyed most of the Burning Rune over the course of the year, but its highest tier of leadership has eluded capture.*** Due to their reputations, the PCs have been hired to put an end to this

dangerous cult. Their mission is to track, locate, and either kill or capture Usi-Ziyad, Belina, and the group's entourage of elite guards and followers. Eventually, they trace the cult leader's movements over the grasslands to an abandoned border fortress. When crossing the veldt, the first line of resistance is Belina, who holds off the pursuers with a massive wildfire. The faerie attempts to herd the PCs into a canyon to be ambushed by dragonkin fighters, a draconic bloodline sorcerer, and several summoned fire elementals, supported by Belina's own powers and hit-and-run tactics. If they overcome the ambush, Belina flees back to the fortress. The PCs must penetrate the old but still formidable defenses of the stronghold and fight their way past the last of Usi-Ziyad's fanatical minions, including a dwarf alchemist. Finally, the PCs face the leader, Belina, their elite dragonkin bodyguards, and a hastily summoned glabrezu demon.

THE BURNING RUNE IN MIDGARD

The Burning Rune has sects hidden in all the major cities of Nuria Natal, and seek to subvert and sabotage the worship of other gods, with the ultimate goal of making Baal-Hotep the supreme deity in the region. Meanwhile, on the fringes of the kingdom, two gnoll tribes have been recruited by the Burning Rune and are being used to terrorize border settlements. Prisoners captured in raids are secretly carried to the cult, where they are either brainwashed to join the ranks or serve as offerings to sacrificial fires.

Belina enjoys the veneration she receives from the local cultists, as well as the ability to act as she pleases without answering to the Seelie (and Unseelie) Court as she must back in the northern lands. Placated with gifts of jewelry from the cult's followers and plentiful opportunities to cleanse the land with fire, she is content for now. As a fey however, she is closely connected to the cycle of life and not merely concerned with annihilation as is her partner and paramour. It is possible that a sound and convincing argument could separate her from the cult, depriving Usi-Ziyad of his most powerful ally and dealing the Burning Rune a grievous blow.

Usi-Ziyad's new rune has recently caught the attention of the priests of Thoth-Hermes. The followers of the god

of knowledge do not often find themselves lacking information, and it leaves them uncomfortable. Ignorant of the origins of the Burning Rune and where its leader obtained his knowledge of runes, they seek to infiltrate the cult and gain the answers. There is a disquieting possibility—in their minds—that the knowledge was stolen from their own temple, or worse, one of their own betrayed the temple and secretly gave or sold the rune knowledge to Usi-Ziyad. They will not be satisfied until they have answers to their questions.

It is possible that a splinter group of the cult survives in the North, allowing for adventures in that region. Perhaps Usi-Ziyad taught a follower the rune magic he stole, and now that pupil prepares to bring his own version of the Burning Rune to power. Alternatively, the Northerners might find their own heroes to wipe out the remnants of Usi-Ziyad's followers in the North but still demand blood for the crime of the hermit's murder. Thus, a group of northern adventurers might trek the long journey south after Usi-Ziyad, making their way through the strange land in search of long-delayed justice.

CULTISTS OF THE BURNING RUNE

Members of the Burning Rune are untamed and dangerous, like a wildfire. They overwhelm opponents and act with swift and terrible force. The following NPCs can be used as cultist minions, intermediaries, and lower-level leaders to provide suitable enemies for the PCs as they strive against the Burning Rune.

BURNING RUNE CULTIST

CR 3

XP 800

Human barbarian (elemental kin) 4 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +2 shield, -2 rage)

hp 43 (4d12+12)

Fort +8; **Ref** +3; **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities uncanny dodge; **Resist** fire 2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk morningstar +10 (1d8+5)

Ranged mwk throwing axe +7 (1d6+5)

Special Attacks rage (14 rounds/day), rage powers (energy resistance [fire], lesser elemental rage)

TACTICS

Before Combat The burning rune cultist rages and charges into combat.

During Combat The burning rune cultist uses Power Attack and lesser elemental rage to slash and burn all foes within reach until none are left to stand against her, using her throwing axes against opponents that avoid melee.

Base Statistics When not raging, the burning rune cultist's statistics are **AC** 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; **Fort** +6, **Will** +3; **hp** 37; **Resist** none; **Str** 17, **Con** 14; **Skills** Intimidate +11

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21

Feats Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Power Attack

Skills Acrobatics +9, Intimidate +13, Perception +7, Survival +7

Languages Common

SQ elemental fury, fast movement

Combat Gear potion of cure moderate wounds;

Other Gear masterwork morningstar, masterwork throwing axes (3), masterwork red dragonhide breastplate, masterwork red dragonhide heavy shield, oil flasks (3), torches (3), 47 gp

These fierce warriors have undergone rituals that imbue them with the power of the Burning Rune. Their allegiance is hard to mistake, as the cult's rune is branded into each cultist's forehead.

DRAGONKIN BODYGUARD

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

Dragonkin fighter (unbreakable) 5 (*Advanced Races Compendium, Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat*)

LE Medium humanoid (reptilian)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19 (+8 armor, +1 natural) **hp** 52 (5d10+20)

Fort +6, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2; +1 vs. mind-affecting effects

Defensive Abilities unflinching +1; **Resist** fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk falchion +10 (2d4+6/18-20) or mwk dagger +10 (1d4+6/19-20)

Ranged mwk composite shortbow +6 (1d6+4/×3) or mwk dagger +6 (1d4+4/19-20)

TACTICS

During Combat Usi-Ziyad's dragonkin bodyguards fight cooperatively, forming a defensive line around their leader and using Stand Still to ensure enemies cannot pass. If the enemy can only come from one direction, then two will fight with melee weapons to hold off enemies while the other two use their bows to pick off any spellcasters or ranged attackers.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 19

Feats Bodyguard^{APG}, Combat Reflexes, Diehard, Draconic Aspect^{ARC, B}, Endurance^B, Heroic Recovery^{APG, B}, In Harm's Way^{APG}, Stand Still, Toughness

Skills Climb +4, Diplomacy +3, Intimidate +7, Swim +4; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Diplomacy, +2 Intimidate

Languages Common, Draconic

SQ slow and steady

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of shield of faith*; **Other Gear** +1 banded mail, mwk falchion, mwk composite shortbow with 20 arrows, mwk dagger, antitoxin (2)

Members of Usi-Ziyad's personal bodyguard, these fearsome dragonkin fighters are loyal to their leader and are sworn to die before allowing him to come to harm.

Usi-Ziyad rarely goes anywhere without four such guards around him at all times.

RUNE CASTER

CR 6

XP 2,400

Dwarf wizard 7

NE Medium humanoid (dwarf)

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

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex, +4 shield)

hp 55 (7d6+28)

Fort +6; **Ref** +4; **Will** +6; +2 vs. mind-affecting effects, poison, spells, and spell-like abilities

Defensive Abilities defensive training, stability

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 heavy pick +5 (1d6+2/x4)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +6 (1d8/19-20)

Special Attacks hatred

Kaunan Runic Spell-like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +10; any single power once/day)
1st—*magical campfire* (8 hours, 2d6 fire if touched, Reflex DC 14 for half), *sense of need* (70 ft., DC 14, -4 penalty vs. compulsions, +4 on skill checks to influence)

3rd—*flaming quality* on weapon (7 hours or 7 successful hits)

5th—*reckless infatuation* (DC 14, 7 points fire damage on successful save)

7th—*remove disease*

Mastered Runes brenna-þurfa (see above), kaunan^{DM}

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +10)

4th—*glyph of vengeance*^{DM}

3rd—*fireball* (DC 17), *fly*, *suggestion* (DC 16)

2nd—*bear's endurance*, *burning gaze*^{APG} (DC 16),
resist energy, *scorching ray*

1st—*burning hands* (DC 15), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *sleep* (DC 14)

0—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *read magic*, *spark*^{APG}

TACTICS

Before Combat The rune caster casts *bear's endurance*, *mage armor*, *shield*, and *glyph of vengeance*, in that order.

During Combat The rune caster casts *fly*, moving out of range of melee opponents, then casts *fireball* to catch as many foes as possible. If forced into melee, he invokes the rune on his weapon to give it the *flaming* special ability, lasting for 7 hours or 7 successful hits, whichever comes first.

Base Statistics Without spells cast, the rune caster's statistics are **AC** 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11; **hp** 41; **Fort** +4; **Con** 14.



STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6
Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16 (20 vs. bull rush or trip)
Feats Deeper Rune Lore^{DM}, Rune Mastery^{DM}, Spell Focus (evocation)
Skills Appraise +13, Craft (weapons) +13, Fly +12, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Spellcraft +13
Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Goblin, Terran
SQ greed, slow and steady, stonecunning
Combat Gear alchemist's fire (2), arrow magnet^{UE}, potion of cure moderate wounds, scroll of flaming sphere; **Other Gear** +1 heavy pick (inscribed with the kaunan rune), masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, ring of protection +1, spell component pouch, spellbook, 230 gp

Rune casters are members of the cult with the ability and power necessary to learn the secrets of runes. They often act in the cult's interests to recruit followers or acquire goods and resources, such as large quantities of alchemist's fire. A rune caster may have two to four Burning Rune cultists assisting him. The rune caster's bonus against mind-affecting effects is an insight bonus, which stacks with the dwarven racial bonus against spells and spell-like abilities.

BURNING ORACLE

CR 8

XP 4,800

Human oracle 9 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** gaze of flames (9 rounds); Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (+5 armor, +3 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 71 (9d8+27)

Fort +5; **Ref** +5; **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities; **Resist** fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 spear +10 (1d8+5/x3)

Ranged sling +8 (1d4+3)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +15) 1/day—*stabilize*

Oracle Spells Known (CL 9th; concentration +15)
 4th (5/day)—*blessing of fervor*^{APG}, *inflict critical wounds* (DC 20), *wall of fire* (DC 22)
 3rd (7/day)—*cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 21), *summon monster III*
 2nd (7/day)—*align weapon*, *bull's strength*, *eagle's splendor*, *oracle's burden*^{APG} (DC 18), *resist energy*
 1st (7/day)—*bane* (DC 17), *burning hands* (DC 19), *cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *entropic shield*, *shield of faith*
 0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *spark*^{APG}

Mystery flame

TACTICS

Before Combat The burning oracle casts *eagle's splendor*, *shield of faith*, and *bull's strength*, in that order, on herself. If she has allies, she also casts *blessing of fervor*.

During Combat The burning oracle uses her spells to overwhelm opponents.

Base Statistics Without spells cast, the burning oracle's statistics are **AC** 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16; **Melee** +1 spear +8 (1d8+2/x3); **Ranged** sling +8 (1d4+1); **Oracle Spells Known** (concentration +13) lower all spell DCs by 2; **Skills** Diplomacy +16.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21

Feats Combat Casting, Elemental Focus (fire), Extra Revelation (2), Greater Elemental Focus (fire), Iron Will, Nimble Moves

Skills Acrobatics +14, Diplomacy +18, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +11

Languages Abyssal, Common, Ignan

SQ oracle's curse (tongues; Abyssal and Ignan), revelations (burning magic, cinder dance, form of flame, gaze of flames, molten skin)

Combat Gear *scroll of spiritual weapon*, *scroll of weapon of awe*^{APG}, *wand of cure light wounds* (50 charges); **Other Gear** +1 spear, sling and 10 bullets, +1 chain shirt, amulet of natural armor +1, buffering cap^{UE}, silver holy symbol, spell component pouch, 425 gp

A charismatic and powerful zealot of the Burning Rune, the oracle uses her powerful force of personality to sway the masses, gathering new recruits for the cult.

She also promises swift and fiery death to those that openly oppose the cult's goals. Burning oracles are often leaders of local branches of the Burning Rune, often with a rune caster as their second-in-command, and several Burning Rune cultists in attendance.

NEW MAGIC ITEM

Whether to light a campfire or to kill a troll, easy access to fire is always handy.

SCORCH BOMB

Aura faint evocation; **CL** 5th

Slot none; **Price** 500 gp; **Weight** (varies, see below)

This item is usually a flat disc of metal, stone, or wood with the kaunen rune inscribed upon it, and can be disguised as some commonplace item—a plate, tool, or even a coin—when created. When a scorch bomb is activated, the user chooses a time up to 6 hours in the future. At the appointed time, the item erupts in a burst of flame, doing 3d6 fire damage in a 10-foot radius and lighting any combustibles on fire. This action consumes all magic in the scorch bomb, rendering it a mundane item once more.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, Runesmith^{DM}, creator must have mastered the kaunen rune; **Cost** 250 gp



NEW MONSTER

The Cultists of the Burning Rune protect their sanctums in a surprising way.

ALTAR FLAME GOLEM

The large creature's rough, humanoid form is made of some kind of durable brick or stone, and its demonic face is shaped from flame.

ALTAR FLAME GOLEM

CR 12

XP 19,200

N Large construct

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

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 8, flat-footed 28 (–1 Dex, +20 natural, –1 size)

hp 118 (16d10+30)

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

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

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee 2 slams +25 (2d10+10 plus 1d6 fire)

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

Special Attacks burn (1d6 fire, DC 18), flame strike breath (30-ft. cone, 8d6 fire/divine damage, Reflex DC 21 for half, usable every 1d4 rounds)

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 9, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +27; **CMD** 36

SQ altar, fiery destruction

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or gang (3–4)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Altar (Ex) An altar flame golem can sit perfectly still, emulating an altar bearing an eternal or sacrificial flame. An observer must succeed at a DC 30 Perception check to notice the altar flame golem is alive. As a free action, an altar flame golem can rise swiftly to its feet and initiate combat from this pose. When it does so, it gains a +6 bonus on its initiative check.



Fiery Destruction (Ex) When reduced to 0 hit points, an altar flame golem shatters in an explosion of jagged shards of hot stone and fire. All creatures within a 15-foot burst take 8d6 points of slashing damage and 4d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 21 half). The altar flame golem receives a +3 racial bonus on the saving throw DC for this effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Flame Strike Breath (Su) As a free action once every 1d4 rounds, an altar flame golem can unleash a 30-foot cone of divine fire that deals 8d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 21 half). Half the damage is fire damage, but the other half results directly from divine power and is therefore not subject to being reduced by resistance to fire-based attacks. The altar flame golem receives a +3 racial bonus on the saving throw DC for this ability. The save DC is Constitution-based.

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

- A magical attack that inflicts cold damage or has the water descriptor slows an altar flame golem (as the *slow* spell) for 3 rounds with no saving throw.
- A magical attack that inflicts fire damage breaks any slow effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for every 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. An altar flame golem gets no saving throw against fire effects.

Those who seek to defile the holy altar of the Burning Rune find that it is capable of defending itself. The altar quickly takes a humanoid shape and destroys or drives out all who fail to show proper obeisance to the sacred flame, searing them with a holy inferno or crushing them with scorching fists of brick. These golems are often found in the larger and more important fire temples.

CONSTRUCTION

An altar golem's body is constructed from at least 2,500 pounds of baked bricks, fashioned of clay suffused with rare powders and crushed gemstones worth a total of 5,000 gp.

ALTAR FLAME GOLEM

CL 15th; **Price** 85,000 gp

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Construct, *animate objects*, *commune*, *flame strike*, *geas/quest*, creator must be caster level 15th; Skill Craft (pottery) or Craft (stonemasonry) DC 20; **Cost** 45,000 gp

NEW RUNE

Borne in flames. Tempered by heat. Even magic can be forged.

BRENNA-PURFA

Meaning: Burning

Need/Desire

Mastery bonus: +2 insight bonus on saving throws against mind-affecting effects

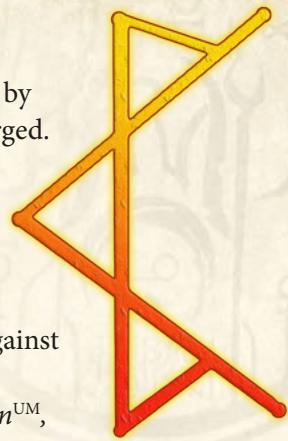
Associated spells: *adoration*^{UM}, *beguiling gift*^{APG}, *charm monster*, *charm person*, *cup of dust*^{APG}, *feast of ashes*^{APG}, *intoxicating scent*^{DM}, *reckless infatuation*^{UM}, *unnatural lust*^{UM}

Powers: Mastery of brenna-purfa grants the following powers as you increase in level.

1st Level: Invoked in an area, brenna-purfa fills nearby creatures with a sense of desire or need. You gain a +4 bonus on Diplomacy checks to change an affected creature's starting attitudes toward you. Additionally, the affected creatures take a –1 penalty on all saving throws to resist enchantments. The duration of this effect is 1 minute per level. The effect centers on the rune master and spreads in a radius of 10 feet per the rune master's character level. Targets can attempt a Will save to resist (DC = 10 + 1/2 the rune master's HD + her Wisdom bonus). A successful save renders the target immune to the same effect for 24 hours.

5th Level: Invoked within sight of a creature, the rune affects a single target as if *reckless infatuation* were cast upon it (Will save DC = 10 + 1/2 the rune master's HD + her Wisdom bonus to negate). If the target succeeds on its save, it takes 1 point of fire damage per level of the rune master in response to its resistance. Additionally, the penalty a creature takes on saving throws against enchantments from the 1st-level power increases to –2.

10th Level: As the 5th level power, but it affects up to 1 creature per level of the rune master. Additionally, the penalty a creature takes on saving throws against enchantments from the 1st-level power increases to –3.





CHOSEN OF THE DEMON BAT

The Chosen of the Demon Bat are followers of the demon lord Camazotz. A coterie of the insane, this cult is most popular among derros, who ultimately strive to bring about the demon lord's rule in the world, destroy the hated sun, and plunge the world into eternal darkness. The cult also has a following among the darakhul, vampires, and other dwellers of the underground that both hate and fear the daylight.

LEADERS, ORGANIZATION, AND GOALS

Given that the worshipers of the Demon Bat are primarily derros, it is understood that the organization and structure of the cult is loose at best and nearly nonexistent at worst. The most powerful, or at least the most powerful of personality, form the leadership. The main body of the cult lairs

in the depths beneath a major surface city, while smaller, splinter bands of cultists are found scattered throughout the subterranean world. The derro devotees are joined by thralls driven mad by their masters' experiments. These creatures constitute thralls too valuable to destroy, or those to whom the derros have formed peculiar attachments. There are also undead adherents, including a vampiric leader, whom the derros tolerate by order of the Demon Bat. The religious rituals and beliefs of the cult focus on loyalty to the Demon Bat (and through it, Camazotz), hatred of daylight, devotion to the teachings inscribed upon the Ebon Shards, and bloody, orgiastic, ritual sacrifice.

Darkness is the pervasive theme among the Chosen. They adhere to the belief that all darkness is connected. Therefore, one could conceivably reach the outer darkness of the skies above by plumbing the depths of a Stygian ravine below ground. Hence, the belief that the Demon Bat lives both below ground as well as in the outer darkness isn't contradictory, at least according to the crazed metaphysics described in the Ebon Shards. The ultimate goal of the Chosen is to extinguish the sun, as doing so will plunge the world into eternal darkness, granting Camazotz and his faithful bloody dominion over the surface world. The cultists alternate between violent, gory sacrifices and rituals at a great volcanic ravine near their lair and demented experimentation of kidnapped victims within the tunnels and caves of their home.

The Demon Bat is an exiled vassal of Camazotz. Through the combined power of several of its enemies, the Demon Bat's name has been expunged from memory, even its own. This serves to hobble its power and sever it from those that could aid its return to the Abyss without permission of the demon lord. While the Demon Bat is the primary figure mentioned in the inscriptions of the Ebon Shards (or so it claims to be, as the figure mentioned in the writings is actually called "Death on White Wings"), its role in the grand scheme of the cult is secondary to its own desires. Its true goal is to gain the ability to return to the Abyss, either through the favor of Camazotz or by finding the means on its own. To this end, it long ago formed a pact with the mi-go and through them, the Great Old Ones

whom they serve. The Demon Bat now acts as the figurehead of the cult and intermediary between the derros and the mi-go. In the meantime, it is content to assist the cult with its ultimate goal: plunging the world into eternal darkness.

The face of the cult is the Speaker to the Darkness. This derro is one whose mind howls louder with the voices of the outer dark more loudly than the others. He has had many predecessors, as leadership of a derro cult connected to demon lords, mi-go, and the great terrors of the Dark Tapestry leads to a short lifespan. The current Speaker to the Darkness is an oracle. He gave up his former name to assume his title, and he is zealous in his attempts to bring on the Night Eternal and to keep the Demon Bat fat with sacrifices. In the interim, he follows the call of the voices and brings victims from the surface down for experimentation and interrogation while poring over the writings of the Ebon Shards. Speaker to the Darkness is rarely seen without Lanose, his fungal minion cave giant bodyguard.

Arikiine, a vampire derro, keeps the cult from devolving into pure chaos. Her undead nature has cured her of her madness to an extent, and she would be in real trouble if the other derros realize this. Her clarity of thought however, allows her to better organize and lead the cult's activities. The Demon Bat realizes her usefulness and Camazotz favors vampires, so she retains a modest measure of security. Arikiine is in charge of the derro laboratory and oversees the various mad experiments performed on captured surface dwellers, as well as magical research. Arikiine focuses on the main goal of extinguishing the sun and obsesses on this task to the point of working on little else. Given her slightly improved mental state, the chance the cult may actually succeed at such a mad scheme is increased.

The mi-go exist on the periphery of the cult. They are not typically active in rituals or plans, but offer assistance and advice where needed. Their main contribution thus far is to give the derros' mad experiments enough direction to be not only dangerous but occasionally successful. The greatest success thus far is the development of a hybrid fungal spore that infects living creatures, subsuming the form and replacing flesh with fungus, turning them into loyal servitors of the cult. Fungal minions

use the fungal creature template from *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 4*, but replace the Sylvan language with Aklo. Fungal minions also respond to commands from any derro.

ARIKIINE**CR 15****XP 51,200**

Female derro vampire alchemist 10 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

NE Small undead (augmented humanoid)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 16, flat-footed 23 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +8 natural, +1 size)

hp 140 (13d8+78); fast healing 5

Fort +14; **Ref** +13; **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10; **SR** 26

Weaknesses vampire weaknesses

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk aklys +12/+7 (1d6+4) or slam +12 (1d3+5 plus energy drain)

Ranged bomb +13/+8 (5d6+2 fire) or +1 repeating light crossbow +12/+7 (1d6+1/19-20)

Special Attacks blood drain, bomb (14/day, 5d6 fire), children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 20), energy drain (2 levels, DC 20)

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 10th)

4th—*fire shield*

3rd—*countless eyes*^{UC}, *haste*, *protection from energy*

2nd—*alter self*, *bull's strength*, *fire breath*^{APG}, *kinetic reverberation*^{UC}, *see invisibility*

1st—*altered consciousness*^{DM}, *expeditious retreat*, *long arm*^{ACG}, *shield*, *vocal alteration*^{UM}

TACTICS

Before Combat Arikiine drinks her *fire shield* and *protection from energy* extracts to boost her defense and gain immunity to fire before entering combat.

During Combat Arikiine uses her bombs to deal with most opponents and keeps her distance. If enemies close, she drinks her extracts of *bull's strength* and *long arm* to strike opponents using slam attacks and reach. She will attempt to dominate a heavily armed opponent to turn against her foes.

**STATISTICS**

Str 17, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 7, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 23

Feats Alertness^B, Brew Potion^B, Combat Reflexes^B, Dodge^B, Extra Bombs, Extra Discovery, Improved Initiative^B, Lightning Reflexes^B, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Step Up, Throw Anything^B, Toughness^B, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (bomb)

Skills Appraise +15, Bluff +13, Craft (alchemy) +15, Fly +17, Heal +11, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Perception +17, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +15, Stealth +18; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Bluff, +8 Perception, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth

Languages Aklo, Common, Undercommon

SQ alchemy +5, change shape (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*), discoveries (acid bomb, cognatogen,

confusion bomb, explosive bomb, fast bombs, precise bomb), gaseous form, madness, mutagen, poison use, shadowless, spider climb, swift alchemy, swift poisoning

Combat Gear acid (4), alchemist's fire (3), blue whinnis (5 doses), cognatogen (+4 Intelligence), *potion of false life*, tanglefoot bags (3); **Other Gear** +1 studded leather armor, +1 repeating light crossbow and 20 bolts, masterwork aklys, *bodywrap of mighty strikes* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, alchemist's kit, formula book, copper jewelry worth 200 gp, 60 gp

Arikiine wears her hair short save for a single braid in the back that falls nearly to her ankles. She prefers loose-fitting clothes, always black, and has a fondness for copper jewelry. Given her already pale skin and derro aversion to sunlight, there is little to suggest that Arikiine is a vampire unless she exposes her fangs. One might expect the powers of vampirism to make leadership easy, but the increased clarity of her undead existence gives Arikiine momentary episodes of lucidity, which she tries to keep secret, as the derro are quick to distrust the sane. While the vampire is far from stable, these bouts of temporary sanity actually make her a great asset to the cult, as she can identify flaws in the plans and schemes and attempt to rectify them, or at least attempt to persuade the Speaker to the Darkness to accept her suggestions.

SPEAKER TO THE DARKNESS CR 15

XP 51,200

Male derro oracle 12 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

CE Small humanoid (derro)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 17, flat-footed 24 (+8 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 luck, +3 natural, +1 size)

hp 131 (15d8+60)

Fort +9; **Ref** +10; **Will** +15

SR 26

Weaknesses oracle's curse (tongues), vulnerability to sunlight

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +2 aklys +16/+11 (1d6+2)

Ranged +2 aklys +16 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks brain drain 3/day (100 ft., DC 20, 12d4 damage), sneak attack +1d6, touch of the void 7/day (1d6+6 cold; **Fort** DC 20 or fatigued 6 rounds)

Oracle Spells Known (CL 12th; concentration +16) 6th (4/day)—*harm* (DC 20), *planar binding* 5th (6/day)—*feeblemind* (DC 19), *major curse* (DC 19), *summon monster V*

4th (7/day)—*black tentacles* (DC 18), *chaos hammer* (DC 18), *fleshworm infestation*^{UM} (DC 18), *winged spies**

3rd (7/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *cure serious wounds*, *glyph of warding* (DC 17), *prayer*, *tongues*

2nd (7/day)—*darkness*, *death knell* (DC 16), *dread bolt*^{UM} (DC 16), *dust of twilight*, *eagle's splendor*, *hold person* (DC 16)

1st (7/day)—*command* (DC 15), *deathwatch*, *divine favor*, *doom* (DC 17), *entropic shield*, *ray of sickening*^{UM} (DC 17)



0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *mending*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *spark*, *stabilize*

Mystery Dark Tapestry

TACTICS

Before Combat The Speaker to the Darkness activates his cloak of darkness revelation at the start of each day.

During Combat The Speaker to the Darkness relies on Lanose and creatures he summons with his staff to protect him from opponents as he uses spells to destroy those foes. If forced into melee, he uses his touch of the void ability on enemies before using his weapons.

Base Statistics Without his cloak of darkness revelation active, the Speaker's statistics are AC 21, touch 17, flat-footed 17; Stealth +17

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 16, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 5, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 23

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Extra Revelation^{APG}, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Initiative, Paincaster*, Spell Focus (necromancy), Weapon Finesse

Skills Diplomacy +17, Knowledge (planes) +13, Knowledge (religion) +13, Perception +8, Spellcraft +13, Stealth +23

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Undercommon

SQ madness, poison use, revelation (brain drain, cloak of darkness, many forms [12 minutes/day], read the tapestry, touch of the void)

Combat Gear alchemist's fire (3), *potions of cure serious wounds* (2), *staff of Camazotz** (10 charges);

Other Gear +2 *aklys*, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *bracers of armor* +1, *jingasa of the fortunate soldier*^{UE}, *ring of protection* +1, the Ebon Shards*, gold holy symbol, 135 gp

The Speaker to the Darkness is a strange sight, even for a derro. He wears a masked cowl and cloak stitched of the flayed skins of the cult's most worthy sacrifices over a robe of bat fur. His bare feet are caked with dried guano, while his clothing is spattered with fresher samples. Beneath the cowl and mask, his mustache is braided with beads of carved bone, and the long, straw yellow hair on his balding head is pulled back into a trio of ponytails.

The Speaker to the Darkness oversees the religious aspects of the cult, leading rituals and sacrifices, consulting with the Demon Bat, and organizing expeditions to the surface for prisoners. He often squabbles with Arikiine over how to divide such prisoners between them. He demands sacrifices, while she wishes more subjects for her laboratories. He worries with how much the Demon Bat seems to favor the vampire, but the howling winds of the outer dark soothe his troubled mind and remind him of the great destiny before him and his ultimate gift to his lord Camazotz: eternal darkness.

LANOSE

CR 9

XP 6,400

Advanced fungal cave giant (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 4, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 3)

CE Huge plant (augmented humanoid)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 8, flat-footed 26 (+5 armor, +0 Dex, +13 natural, -2 size)

hp 103 (9d8+63)

Fort +13; **Ref** +3; **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities ferocity, poisonous blood (DC 19), rock catching; **Immune** disease, plant traits

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee mwk greataxe +16/+11 (4d6+15/x3) or 2 slams +14 (2d6+10)

Ranged rock +4 (2d6+15)

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

Special Attacks create spawn, poison spore cloud (DC 19), rock throwing (100 ft.)

TACTICS

Before Combat Lanose sounds his signal horn to alert other cultists before entering combat.

During Combat Lanose attacks all opponents that threaten the Speaker to the Darkness until all are dead or flee.

STATISTICS

Str 31, **Dex** 10, **Con** 25, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 28

Feats Cleave, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (greataxe)
Skills Climb +10, Intimidate +7, Perception +5
Languages Aklo, Common, Giant
SQ fungal metabolism, rejuvenation
Combat Gear fungal blood poison (DC 21, 2 doses);
Other Gear Huge masterwork greataxe, Huge bone and hide armor (treat as Huge-sized horn lamellar), signal horn

Lanose appears to be an exceptionally large and pale cave giant with a prodigious amount of wooly, white body hair, which are actually rough threads of fungus. He wears armor made of the tanned hides of derro victims, reinforced with their charred and lacquered bones. He serves as the bodyguard to the Speaker in the Darkness, looming by his side at all times. Unlike other fungal minions, Lanose only obeys the commands of the Speaker to the Darkness.

VERPERTILO, THE DEMON BAT

This great bat-like fiend is festooned with fungal growths over its white fur and skin. Its eyes blaze like twin fires in the darkness.

VERPERTILO	CR 18
XP 153,600	
CE unique huge outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, native)	
Init +4; Senses see in darkness, true seeing; Perception +6	
DEFENSE	
AC 37, touch 16, flat-footed 33 (+4 deflection, +4 Dex, +21 natural, -2 size)	
hp 300 (24d10+168)	
Fort +21; Ref +24; Will +25	
Defensive Abilities unholy aura; DR 15/cold iron and good; Immune electricity, fire poison; Resist acid 10, cold 10; SR 29	
OFFENSE	
Speed 30 ft., fly 120 ft. (good)	
Melee bite +33 (2d6+13/19-20 plus disease and grab), 2 wings +31 (1d8+6)	
Space 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.	
Special Attacks disease (demon fever, DC 25), rake (2 claws +25 1d8+13)	

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +23)
 Constant—*true seeing*
 At will—*deeper darkness*, *detect magic*, *fungal infestation*^{UM} (DC 18), *pernicious poison*^{UM}
 3/day—*fire shield*, *unholy blight* (DC 19), *quickened wall of fire* (DC 19)
 1/day—*crawling corruption*^{DM}, *unholy aura* (DC 23), *visage of madness*^{DM} (DC 20)

TACTICS

Before Combat Verpertilo uses its *fire shield* and *unholy aura* spell-like abilities. The benefits of *unholy aura* are included in its stat block, though its **SR** is naturally higher than what the spell grants.

During Combat Verpertilo enjoys grabbing up opponents in its jaws, then flying up in the air or over chasms and releasing its foe. It uses quickened *walls of fire* to divide opponents and separate spellcasters from their allies so it can attack them alone.

Base Statistics Without its spell-like abilities in effect, Verpertilo's statistics are **AC** 33, touch 12, flat-footed 29; **Fort** +17; **Ref** +20; **Will** +21;

Defensive Abilities no *unholy aura*

STATISTICS

Str 36, **Dex** 18, **Con** 24, **Int** 17, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 21
Base Atk +20; **CMB** +35 (+39 grapple); **CMD** 49
Feats Cleave, Critical Focus, Great Fortitude, Hover, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*wall of fire*), Vital Strike
Skills Bluff +33, Craft (alchemy) +31, Fly +32, Intimidate +33, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +31, Knowledge (planes) +31, Perception +34, Sense Motive +34, Stealth +24
Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Ignan, Infernal, telepathy 150 ft.

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization unique

Treasure double

Once a high-ranking servant of Camazotz, the creature known as Verpertilo, the Demon Bat attempted a coup against the demon lord and failed. Rather than destroy it, Camazotz banished the creature to the material plane, stripping it of its true name so that none could tap into its powers or help it return to the Abyss. The demon lord



commanded it to serve as his figurehead, leading his derro worshipers until it had proven itself worthy again to return to the service of Camazotz in the demonic realms. Verperitlo does as ordered, though it seeks ways to increase its power and gain entry to the Abyss on its own terms. Thus, it has brokered the alliance between the cult and the mi-go and the dark horrors they serve. The mi-go seem content with the arrangement, providing access of their strange technologies to the derros, and altering the Demon Bat's physical form with their strange fungal infusions, increasing its power. The Demon Bat cares not whether it regains its place in the Abyss through the will of Camazotz or its own schemes. It abides for now, feasting on the cult's sacrifices and funneling a steady supply of souls to its master while aiding the mi-go and the cult in their concerted effort to extinguish the sun.

THE MI-GO

The mi-go aren't worshipers of Camazotz. They have no vested interest in the success of the cult's machinations, although they support them through their efforts, mainly out of a sense of curiosity. They find the derros' experiments fascinating and provide aid where they can to see if any brilliant inspiration arises from the derros' madness. They do not attend any of the religious rituals, but occasionally visit Arikiine's labs to observe the procedures of the vampire and her assistants. They offer helpful advice or occasionally provide some minor assistance. Given the strange properties of mi-go technology, the derros' fungal minions, the derros themselves, or experimental subjects from the surface can be outfitted with mi-go technology. This usually takes the form of some type of fungal graft, which act as magic items and take up an item slot as normal, but are physically attached to the body. Examples include a band of symbiotic fungus that provides enhanced strength while it feeds on its host and strange stalks

that grow from a subject's head and enhance the senses. If you don't wish PCs to utilize such items, simply have them shrivel and become useless when their host creature dies. The mi-go themselves will typically not aid the cultists in combat, but defend themselves should PCs attack them.

CULT ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURE HOOKS

Here are several methods of introducing the Chosen of the Demon Bat as adversaries for the PCs in your campaign. They can be enemies for single adventures or a continuing threat in an extended campaign in which the PCs work to foil the rising threat of the cult and their attempts to bring eternal night to the world.

APL 1–3

- ***The PCs seek information from a low-level figure of the local underworld whom they have been told can help for a price.*** Unfortunately for them, this person recently committed suicide. Those who are willing to speak to the PCs cannot tell them much, except that the criminal had vanished for a time after failing to meet an smuggler in the tunnels below the city. When he turned up again, he wasn't quite right in the head. He was prone to terrible nightmares, heavy drinking, and rambling about captors with "terrible white eyes." A friend of the deceased agrees to provide the information the PCs seek if they investigate the cause of the criminal's distress. Delving into the smugglers' tunnels below the city, they find a passage leading even deeper below the earth, and a derro cultist preparing to descend with her latest batch of captives.
- ***Two members of a construction crew sent to demolish a local abandoned house vanish.*** They were tasked with tearing out the inside of the house to be remodeled when they disappeared and now work has ground to a halt. Long-standing rumors of the house being haunted recirculate and the rest of the crew refuses to reenter the building.

The PCs are hired to do a sweep of the house and eliminate any threats, or at least identify them and report back so an appropriate response can be devised. The house has long been used by

the Chosen of the Demon Bat to sneak up to the surface to thief and kidnap. The PCs find their light sources extinguished and strange noises plaguing them as they explore. Eventually, they discover a group of fungal minions in the house, along with one of the missing workers. A secret tunnel in the basement leads deeper into the earth, where the worker says his partner was taken.

- ***A warehouse in the mercantile district of town has been closed by authorities due to a pest infestation and strange fungal growths of unknown origin.*** While traveling through the district at night, the PCs hear cries for help coming from within the building. A group of homeless folk, seeking shelter, have broken into the building only to fall prey to the dangers within. PCs that go to the rescue find a man being attacked by a fungal crawler. If they defeat the creature and explore the rest of the warehouse, they find that several species of dangerous fungal growth and a colony of bats inside. A concealed tunnel in a separate storeroom leads underground. Near this entrance is a fungal pod (see page 46), which triggers if the PCs disturb it.

APL 4–6

- ***The city is under attack! A sudden infestation of strange batlike creatures has descended like a plague.*** These flame eater swarms (see page 46) are attracted to smoke and flame, and devour fire of any sort. This extinguishes torches, hearths, forges, and more. Once they have feasted, the flame eater swarms become doubly dangerous as they can regurgitate the fire at their foes. The creatures must be stopped before the city is engulfed in darkness and littered with the scorched bodies of the dead.
- ***The intrepid but somewhat foolhardy son of a local notable personage has disappeared.*** The young man, who styles himself an adventurer, was last seen with his "company," a group of other young well-to-do folk that includes their sycophants and hangers-on, headed to an abandoned foundry on the outskirts of town. The boy's parents are offering a sizeable reward for his return. Questioning his friends reveals that only a few of them actually entered the place and one of them has not been seen since. The other friend is found hiding at

home, terrified. Should the PCs get her talking, she babbles about “white fiends” that came out of the basement and chased them. She escaped but the missing young man was captured. If the PCs hurry, they may find the derro cultists and their fungal minion servants still in the foundry, securing the last of a batch of kidnap victims aboard their skittering skiff (see page 50) before heading back down to their cavern home.

- ***The PCs are captured by the Chosen and subjected to the initial stages of a new experimental procedure.*** They awaken in cells afterward. With their senses playing tricks on them and their minds in a tenuous state, they must escape their cells, gather weapons and equipment, and find a way out of the cult’s lair and back to the surface. The cultists eventually notice them missing and mount a pursuit to reclaim their test subjects, likely to sacrifice them to the Demon Bat. This scenario can involve a lot of stealth, ingenuity, and perhaps a climactic final chase scene. This style of adventure provides a lot of in-game tension and reliance on the innate abilities of the characters. Some players may feel deprived of their agency. Be sure to discuss it with your players before springing it on them to be sure everyone is on-board.

APL 7–9

- ***A friend or associate of the PCs recently took her own life, but the PCs discover clues to suggest there may be extenuating circumstances.*** The NPC was a collector of artifacts and disappeared shortly after returning from the jungles outside the city with several ancient relics from a ruined temple. The NPC reappeared as suddenly as she vanished, about 10 days later, with no memory of what happened or where she had been. Her journal speaks of bizarre nightmares and visions of an idol she brought back from the jungle, as well as “dark tunnels with foul-smelling water” and “great white eyes in the dark.” The idol in question was turned over to a local museum. Should the PCs go to see the idol, they are told it was stolen—the very day of the NPC’s suicide. The idol is a representation of the demon lord Camazotz. Questioning the staff reveals that no doors or windows on the exterior of the building were broken or unlocked after the robbery.

A search of the building reveals a disturbance in a basement storeroom, and a broken wall leading into the city sewers. Using clues from the deceased NPC’s journal, the PCs eventually track down a group of derro cultists. The derro prepare to take the stolen idol and some kidnapped citizens back down to their lair. A map held by the derro leader could lead PCs to further pursue this hidden threat below the city.

- ***The PCs are approached by a cleric of the sun deity to investigate disappearances at an orphanage.*** A half dozen children have simply disappeared from the Children of the Sun orphanage in the last three days. The remaining orphans are frightened and tell tales of “the small pale men” who come in the night and carry off their friends. None of them can provide any solid details and all their tales sound entirely too alike. If pressed, the children eventually relent and say that they did not see who took their fellow orphans. They are only retelling the tales of one particular girl who claims to have seen it. If questioned, the girl, Aurora, says that a strange mist fills the bedchambers on the nights the children are taken. Aurora is a strange child, mature for her age, with golden eyes. She describes short, pale men, all broad except for one who is skinny and tells the others what to do, enter and take two children each time. No one else wakes up, even the children who are being abducted.

In actuality, a derro from the Chosen and his dwarf fungal minions sneak into the building through the basement, where a secret door and tunnel remain from when the building belonged to smugglers. The derro releases into the building a gas that causes unconsciousness. The fungal minions and derro are immune, as are aasimars, of which Aurora is one. The derro chooses a pair of children to take. The lunatic derro target this building in particular because he takes the name literally, believing that these children are the spawn of the sun deity and thus will make worthy sacrifices. He takes only a few at a time, fearing retribution. Since his earlier raids have gone unpunished however, he is emboldened and may seek to gather up the lot on his next visit. Should the PCs resist or overcome the sleeping

gas, they must face the derro and a veritable army of fungal warriors. If victorious, they find the remaining children alive in the secret tunnels off the basement, where they wait bound and ready to be hauled off for sacrifice.

- *In late hours of the evening, a strange, dark fog rises from sewer grates and holes in the streets, out of basements and cellars, throughout the city.*

A decidedly unnatural phenomenon, it has no apparent affect on the citizens, but the city goes dark as flames dim to mere flickers and magical lights are suppressed. The city guard mobilizes to secure order, wielding sunrods that illuminate with no more intensity than candles. Many folk huddle in their homes or in taverns to wait out the strange phenomenon. Others take advantage of the darkness and move about with ill intent, too many for the guard to police. The authorities are grateful for any helpful PCs that help keep order or try to find a cause for this unnatural mist. Over the course of the night, the PCs could deal with looters, criminals, and monsters attracted by the unnatural gloom. Meanwhile, derros are on the move, testing their new experiment and grabbing sacrifices and test subjects. The mist persists even after the sun rises. The pall makes the daylight weak and the derro find they can tolerate the light in these conditions. If the PCs encounter the derros and find some way to connect the mist with them, the next step is to venture below the city to find and destroy whatever the derros used to create it.

APL 10–12

- *A blasphemous crime spree has the city in an uproar.* Holy symbols and relics of deities of sun and sky are being reported stolen. Tempers flare and suspicions are quickly cast upon rival religions. Something must be done to stop these thefts before the tensions turn into open war between sects. Careful observation of the crimes notes that only items made of metal have been stolen. Other non-metallic relics that the thieves had ample opportunity to take were left behind. Should PCs come up with a successful plan to track the thieves or lure them into a trap, they find the Chosen of the Demon Bat are responsible.

A battle with the derro and their minions halts the attacks and finds a pile of the stolen items, though many have been melted down and turned into parts for what seems to be a giant clockwork structure. Should the PCs fail to make progress in their investigation, they still witness the final result of this plot: a great clockwork effigy of the Demon Bat, interwoven with parts made from the reformed stolen holy items, appears to wreak havoc upon the city. Treat this as a clockwork leviathan (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 3) but with a Fly skill in place of a Swim skill and SR 23 against divine spells.

- *The Chosen of the Demon Bat capture the tallest building or tower in the city.* The cult's fanatical followers and fungal minions resist efforts to retake the building. The sounds of drums and shrill chants

CHOSEN OF THE DEMON BAT IN MIDGARD

The main sanctum of the Chosen lies in the lightless caverns and tunnels under Majid Zinj on the Spice Coast. The derros venture above into the city at night and commit all manner of trespasses. They steal rare spices and plants from vendors and warehouses, as well as other goods for use in their rituals and experiments, and abduct people. The victims are typically drunks wandering the street, beggars, sailors from the docks, or others who are easy prey and will probably not be missed. During the times of the Chosen's rituals and sacrifices, the city is plagued by bats from the jungle.

City officials offer bounties on the creatures to keep their numbers down. Occasionally, fires break out that witnesses say blaze into existence on their own; these incidents also occur on nights when the derros show their zealous devotion to Camazotz. PCs visiting or residing in the city could be caught up in these mysterious affairs, with the cult becoming a recurring foe (possibly before the PCs even realize there is a cult) as the heroes fend off these strange attacks and investigate the sinister goings-on.

can be heard, and a bonfire blazes on the rooftop. Occasionally victims are tossed from the rooftop to their deaths. If the PCs assist in the recapture of the building, they find a ritual in progress. In attendance are a quartet of mi-go with a strange device that resembles both a cannon and a bizarre flower. The derro fight to hold off the interlopers while the mi-go finish their preparations. A ray of dark energy erupts from the device and soars into the sky, causing the moon to eclipse! Destroying the device returns the moon to its normal state. Should the PCs prevail, the cult and the mi-go mark them as enemies and may work to destroy them before continuing with their experiments.

- ***On the night of the new moon, alarmed citizens report a great, winged shape soaring above the city in the night sky.*** Where the creature passes, the stars are extinguished, leaving nothing but darkness in the fiend's wake. Panic and alarm increase with reports of attacks by strange, pale figures boiling up from the sewers. Should the PCs confront the winged creature in the sky (the Demon Bat), it avoids them and continues to fly its circular paths across the sky. If they go after the derro and their fungal minions, who are rounding up another batch of sacrificial victims for the final portion of their ritual, the cultists fend them off as best they can. They flee with their existing prisoners if they cannot defeat the heroes.

As the hours roll on to morning, the dawn never comes. Investigation and news from outside the city show that there is a great field of darkness over the city and its environs that blocks the sunlight and leaves it shrouded in shadow. Brave PCs must track the cultists back to their lair and find a way to reverse this terrible catastrophe. Divination spells may help narrow down the proper course to take, and notable NPCs in town may offer aid. The heroes soon learn that the Speaker to the Darkness bears the *staff of Camazotz*, which has been used to draw the deep darkness from the void to block the light of the sun. The derro are elated with their success and are in an orgy of sacrifice and celebration. If the PCs can seize the staff and return it to the temple of the sun deity on the surface, the high priest can break the magic,

disperse the darkness, and return the light to the city. Yet, this act signifies the cult has finally made a significant step towards their final objective.

APL 13–15

- ***The Chosen of the Demon Bat are tracking and assaulting surface dwellers with celestial blood.***

They abduct some while others are hung up like slaughtered animals and exsanguinated. The cultists have found a way to use the victims' blood and life essence to further their plot to extinguish the sun. The PCs can discover the derros' plans, either through magic or the interrogation of captured cultists, and learn that the vampire Arikaime is behind the attacks. She is based in a cavern beneath the city known as the Stygian Geode, a massive natural amphitheater with its interior lined with dark crystals, ranging from smoky gray to black, some taller and more massive than a human.

The chamber is a focal point for necromantic energies that enhance the rites performed here and channel power to the Demon Bat in preparation for the final stage of the ritual. If successful, it will cast a permanent shadow over the sun. If the final combat against Arikaime needs to be more challenging, consider having her charged with negative energy from the chamber and boosted from gorging on the aasimar blood during the ritual, effectively adding the advanced template to her stat block.

- ***The abductions of the celestial-blooded have been stopped, but the Chosen continue with their machinations.*** The sacrifices made were enough to power the next step in their ritual. The Speaker to the Darkness uses the power offered up to Camazotz to fuel a massive device crafted by his derro followers under the guidance of the mi-go. This monstrosity of living technology, a great engine of flesh and fungus, harnesses the blood and souls to gather shadowstuff and darkness from the deeps and the outer dark, and casts it into the sky to eclipse the sun. A great stream of darkness erupts out of the ground and into the sky. It collects and thickens, like a pall of smoke in the air. As it slowly gains mass and begins to block the light, it coalesces into a black moon.

The PCs can seek out the Speaker to the Darkness in a great vaulted chamber below ground, surrounded by his cultists and his fungal cave giant bodyguard. Several mi-go also stand by to observe the process. The destruction of the cult and the alien device stop the black moon from growing any further in size, but it does not disperse. To restore the sun, the Demon Bat itself must be destroyed.

- **The black spot over the sun has not faded.** With the cult's leaders slain, their members scattered, and their infernal machine demolished, all that remains is to sever the last link. The black moon that blots out the sun, is tied to the life of the Demon Bat. While it lives, the sun will not shine. The PCs must descend to the great volcanic chasm where the creature lairs and slay it. Only then will the darkness disperse and sunlight once again grace the world. The task is far from easy, as the Demon Bat knows its enemies come for it, and it will use the inimical terrain to its best advantage, subjecting opponents to great falls, poisonous fumes, and burning magma. Those who manage to defeat the fiend and restore the world truly deserve to be called heroes. This constitutes an epic challenge for APL 15 heroes. For a more moderate challenge, ensure the PCs are at least 16th level.

NEW FEAT

The Chosen of the Demon Bat don't allow pain to stop them from showing their devotion to Camazotz.

PAINCASTER

You are conditioned to focus through the pain while casting.

Prerequisite: Combat Casting.

Benefit: You gain a bonus on concentration checks equal to +1 for every 4 caster levels you have to cast a spell or use a spell-like ability when you are injured while casting or taking continuous damage while casting. This benefit stacks with the benefits of Combat Casting.

Special: The GM may optionally assign other special prerequisites, such as membership in an organization or cult that practices asceticism, or possession of a lore object like the Ebon Shards.

NEW HAZARD

Derros cultivate these dangerous fungal pods in order to create more minions.

FUNGAL POD (CR 3)

These fungal growths look like translucent, membranous, egg-like sacs, with some dark form incubating within. The fungal pod is a hybrid of derros' ubiquitous fungus and a strain provided to them by the mi-go. Fungal pods are triggered by movement and body heat. Should a living creature come within 10 feet of a fungal pod, it splits at the top, peeling back like some gruesome flower, and blue-black tendrils unfold from inside and release spores in a 10-foot radius, infecting creatures with a fungal growth that eventually consumes them, turning them into fungal minions (creatures with the acquired fungal creature template). *Remove disease* kills the spores and stops any further fungal infection. A successful DC 25 Heal check also stops the infection, but the victim becomes fatigued until all ability damage from the infection is healed. Three points of fire damage or exposure to sunlight destroys a fungal pod.

Infestations are afflictions similar to diseases. They require a specific method to cure them once the initial saving throw is failed, no matter how many subsequent successful saving throws are made. Immunity to disease offers no protection, as the infestation is caused by parasites. Undead are unaffected by infestations.

FUNGAL POD

Type infestation; **Save** Fortitude DC 16

Onset immediate; **Frequency** 1/hour

Effect 1d2 Dex and 1d2 Con; a creature whose Constitution damage equals its Constitution score acquires the fungal creature template (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 4*).

NEW ITEM

The following item is an unusual form of spellbook.

THE EBON SHARDS

Price 765 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

Held in a bag of tanned human skin, these shards of obsidian appear to be pieces of a larger tablet or set of tablets. The fragments are engraved with words in Aklo, as well as various runes and arcane symbols and their presence often causes a feeling of anxiousness in intelligent creatures. Rusty lines and patches of dried blood cover the shards and anyone who handles them without wearing gloves receives shallow cuts on the hands and fingers. This does not result in any hit point damage, and the handler somehow feels more comfortable reading the shards after having bled. The shards were gifted to the Chosen of the Demon Bat by their mi-go allies.

The content of the shards is obscure, highly esoteric, and possibly incomplete. They explore the metaphysical concept of darkness as a complete and uninterrupted medium, free from the physical barriers and natural laws of the universe. With the proper orientation, will, and training, one can travel from darkness to darkness as easily as one would walk down a road. Recurring in the writings is a being, sometimes a guardian, sometimes a guide, known as Death on White Wings. This being is said to lead the worthy through the darkness to rewards beyond mortal conception, while devouring the unworthy, body and soul. Other portions of the writings speak of using pain as a focal point to gather will and power, converting agony into strength.

In terms of *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* mechanics, the Ebon Shards are an unusual form of spellbook. A spellcaster must first anoint them in blood. Then, to fully determine the nature of the shards requires the ability to read Aklo or a spell such as *comprehend languages*. Once the reader concludes that the shards constitute a source of magical knowledge, she must succeed at a Spellcraft check (DC = 15 + the level of the spell) or cast read magic to decipher any spell written within. A deciphered spell may be copied into a more traditional medium with the normal spellbook rules found in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*

Core Rulebook. A spellcaster can gain access to the following spells, provided she is of the appropriate class and level, and has available spells known (if she is a spontaneous caster): *blood tide*^{DM}, *devouring shadow*^{DM}, *greater blood tide*^{DM}, *light blindness*^{DM}, *shadow jump*^{DM}, and *star fall*^{DM}. Additionally, once any of the shard's spells have been deciphered, the reader must succeed at a DC 14 Will save or develop a mania concerning pain, whether suffering or inflicting it. Rules for manias may be found in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide*. Additionally, reading the shards provide ample justification for the reader to acquire the Paincaster feat (see above) provided she meets the prerequisites and the GM has placed special restrictions on it.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

These powerful magic items are considered precious commodities by the Chosen of the Demon Bat.

EYES OF THE OUTER DARK

Aura strong divination and transmutation; **CL** 17th

Slot eyes; **Price** 43,700 gp; **Weight** —

These lenses are crafted of polished, opaque black stone. However, when placed over the eyes, they allow the wearer not only improved vision of her current surroundings, but glimpses into the vast emptiness between the stars. When worn, the *eyes of the outer dark* provide darkvision to a range of 60 feet. If the wearer already has darkvision, then she gains the see in darkness ability instead. Once per day as a swift action, the wearer can use the lenses to pierce the veils of time and space and see into the outer darkness. This gives the wearer the benefits of *foresight* and *true seeing* for 17 minutes. If the latter abilities are used and the wearer of the *eyes of the outer dark* does not have the Madness domain, suffer from some type of insanity, or is not a creature that meets the GM's criteria as alien, insane, or otherworldly, then she automatically takes 3d8 points of Wisdom damage when the power is activated.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *darkvision*, *foresight*, *true seeing*; **Cost** 21,850 gp



STAFF OF CAMAZOTZ

Aura strong varied; **CL** 15th

Slot none; **Price** 22,400 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.

This staff of petrified wood is topped with a stylized carving of a bat, its wings spread, its mouth bearing great fangs, and a pair of rubies inset as its eyes. As long as the staff holds at least 1 charge, the bearer can *speak with animals* at will (bats only). Living bats of any size (including fiendish versions, flame eaters, and mobats) do not willingly attack the bearer of the *staff of Camazotz* (though summoned or magically controlled bats obey their summoner). Batlike creatures with Intelligence 3 or greater have an indifferent starting attitude towards the wielder with respect to Diplomacy checks. The staff allows use of the following spells:

- *charm monster* (bats and bat-like creatures only, 1 charge)
- *deeper darkness* (1 charge)
- *flame strike* (2 charges)
- *summon monster V* (dire bats or dretches only, 2 charges)

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Staff, *deeper darkness*, *flame strike*, *summon monster V*; **Cost** 11,200 gp

NEW MONSTER

These swarms of mutant bats can prove deadly to unprepared adventurers.

FLAME EATER SWARM

The air is filled with a swirling cloud of white bats with bloated bodies, strangely distended jaws, and glowing red eyes.

FLAME EATER SWARM

CR 3

XP 800

N Diminutive magical beast (swarm)

Init +2; **Senses** blindsense 20 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +12

DEFENSE

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

hp 26 (4d10+4)

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities swarm traits; **Immune** fire, weapon damage

Weaknesses vulnerability to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee swarm (1d6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks distraction (DC 13), fire eating

STATISTICS

Str 3, **Dex** 15, **Con** 13, **Int** 2, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 4

Base Atk +4; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Feats Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Fly +15, Perception +12 (+16 when using blindsense), Stealth +18; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception when using blindsense

SQ swarm traits

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary, pair, infestation (3–6 swarms), or plague (7–12 swarms)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fire Eating (Su) A flame eater swarm is drawn to fire, which it compulsively devours. Any nonmagical fires up to four squares in size that are in the area of the swarm on its initiative are immediately extinguished. After devouring flames in this manner, the swarm's damage also does 1d6 points of fire damage in addition to its regular damage for the next 1d4+1 rounds.

Should a flame eater swarm attempt to devour a magical fire (such as the flames on a flaming weapon or a wall of fire) it attempts a caster level check using the swarm's Hit Dice as its caster level, as if casting dispel magic. Multiple swarms eating the same magical fire add their total Hit Dice for

the purpose of this check. If successful, then the effect is dispelled. If the magical fire is permanent (such as on a flaming weapon), then the effect is suppressed for 1d4+1 rounds.

These creatures have been bred as part of the schemes of the Chosen of the Demon Bat, with the hopes of creating a massive swarm of beasts fly to the sun and consume it. Whether this scheme would have ever worked is unlikely, but flame eaters are still dangerous creatures. They consume any fire they encounter, as well as attack nearby creatures. They regurgitate the fires they eat, burning the creatures they attack and setting fire to anything flammable nearby, causing more fires, which the flame eaters devour only to belch up elsewhere. These creatures are universally hated by most living things, aside from derros and their fellow insane cultists, and are eradicated whenever possible.

NEW POISON

Dark dream is a gas created by distilling the ubiquitous derro fungus with certain necromantic energies, as well as components provided by the mi-go. The resulting mixture causes unconsciousness in those that breathe it. Derros and creatures of celestial blood (including half-celestials and aasimars) are immune to the effects of the poison. The gas is typically kept in glass bottles capped in wax, unsealed or smashed when the derros wish to release the poison.

DARK DREAM

Type poison, inhaled; **Save** Fortitude DC 16

Onset —; **Frequency** 1/round for 6 rounds

Effect unconscious 1 minute/2d4 hours; **Cure** 1 save

Cost 500 gp

NEW SPELL

The Chosen of the Demon Bat use the following spell to spy on aboveground settlements.

WINGED SPIES

School divination (scrying); **Level** cleric 4, sorcerer/wizard 4, witch 4

Casting Time 1 round

Components V, S

Range 1 mile/level

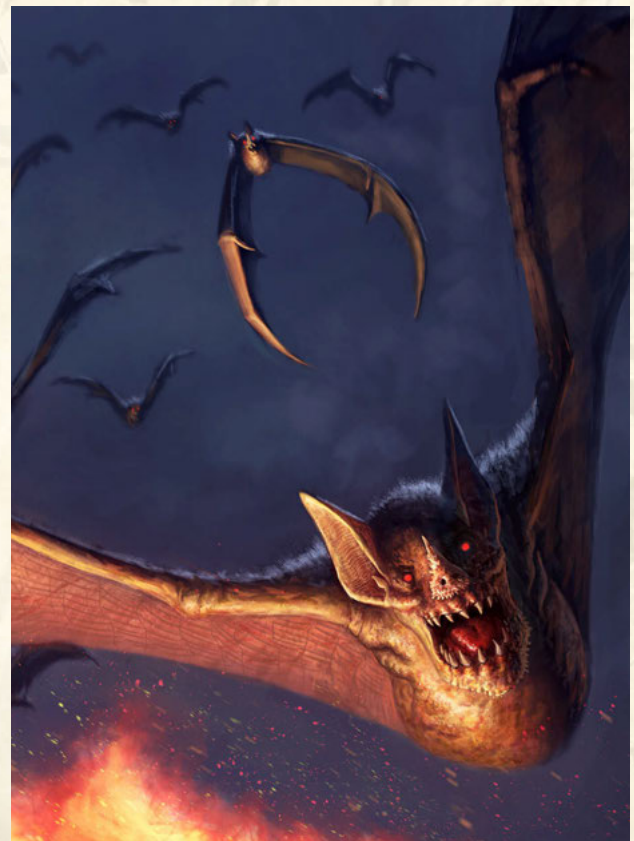
Effect a flock of birds or bats that follows commands

Duration 1 hour/level (D)

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

This spell summons a flock of birds, or bats if used at night or underground, to serve as spies for you during the duration of the spell. The swarm moves out as you direct, up to the maximum range of the spell. Commands must be relatively simple, such as “Fly in a spiral pattern out as far as you go for as long as you can,” or “Fly to the canyon to the north, sweep through it, then return.” You can recall the flock at any time, and the spell ends once it returns to you and delivers any information it has gathered. If you fail to recall the flock before the duration ends, you do not receive any information.

The flock you summon has the same statistics as a bat swarm, no matter the type of animals that comprise it. They cannot make any offensive actions and only take the actions you direct, although they will avoid danger if attacked. If the flock is destroyed, you become aware of it and the spell ends.



While the flock is in flight, you can take a standard action to link your mind with those of the animals, allowing you to see and hear through their eyes and ears. You use your total Perception skill modifier or that of the flock, whichever is higher, but you must use whatever senses your spies have (for example, you can see with low-light vision through the eyes of the flock, cannot use your own darkvision if you have that ability). You can maintain this vision as a free action, but are blind and deaf to everything around your body until you break the connection. Breaking the connection is a free action. Should the flock be attacked and destroyed while you are mentally linked, you are stunned for 1 round when the spell ends.

When the flock returns to you, you can experience everything it has seen or heard by touching it. It takes 1 round to absorb every hour of observation. The flock then disperses.

NEW VEHICLES

Insane derro engineers designed these strange vehicles by infesting living creatures with terrible strains of fungus.

FUNGAL FLYER

Large air vehicle

Squares 4 (10 ft. by 10 ft.; 5 feet high); **Cost** 5,000 gp

DEFENSE

AC 9; **Hardness** 0

hp 40 (19)

Base Save +4

OFFENSE

Maximum Speed 40 ft.; **Acceleration** 20 ft.

CMB +1; **CMD** 11

Ramming Damage 1d8

DESCRIPTION

This living vehicle was once a dire bat, but now it as much fungus as flesh, with saddle-like formations growing from the back to accommodate a Small-sized pilot and a single passenger. The fungal flyer is alive, controlled by a goad fixed into its brain and a set of reins. Despite being a living thing, the fungal flyer is treated as an object for the purposes of spells and other effects.

Propulsion muscle (fungal flyer's wings)

Driving Check Handle Animal or Profession (driver)

Forward Facing Towards the fungal flyer's head

Driving Device Driving goad and reins

Driving Space The two forward-most squares

Decks 1

SKITTERING SKIFF

Gargantuan land and water vehicle

Squares 15 (15 ft. by 25 ft.; 15 feet high);

Cost 7,500 gp

DEFENSE

AC 6; **Hardness** 0

hp 150 (74)

Base Save +3

OFFENSE

Maximum Speed 60 ft.; **Acceleration** 30 ft.

CMB +4; **CMD** 14

Ramming Damage 4d8

DESCRIPTION

This strange vehicle resembles nothing so much as an enormous fungal crawler, its back hollowed out like the hull of a ship, a helm installed on its head, and its body festooned with writhing tendrils. The skittering skiff moves equally well in water as on land, using its legs to propel itself. The tendrils allow it to reach across chasms and gaps and pull itself across. A skittering skiff can cross expanses of open air up to 75 feet across in this manner, though each square crossed counts as double. A skittering skiff is alive, but has no real consciousness to speak of, will not move without a driver at the helm, and is considered an object for the purposes of all spells and effects. Some skiffs are designed as raiding vehicles and armed with harpoon ballistas (treat as a ballista, but with the grappling property), used to haul grappled creatures on board; these vehicles require a crew of 3 derros per ballista.

Propulsion muscle (skiff's legs and tendrils)

Driving Check Handle Animal or Profession (driver)

Forward Facing Toward the skittering skiff's head

Driving Device Driving goads

Driving Space The forward-most squares in the skiff's upper deck

Crew 0 (6 for an assault skiff)

Decks 2

Weapons none (2 harpoon ballista for an assault skiff)



CREED OF ALL FLESH

The ingestion of the flesh of other intelligent creatures, especially one's own people, is a nearly universal taboo among civilized races. There are those however, who secretly crave such sustenance and the vile powers they can gain from eating such forbidden fare. Such individuals band together under the sign of Vardesain (known as

Mordiggian to the living) to revel in this evil. The temptation of the power afforded by the cult's occult knowledge and rituals draws the desperate, the power-hungry, and the depraved to swell their ranks, more with every passing week. The Creed of All Flesh will not have its hunger denied.

LEADERS, ORGANIZATION, AND GOALS

Followers of the Creed of All Flesh are mainly darakhul, though other types of undead that feast upon the flesh of the living are welcome. Ghouls and ghosts form the bulk of the undead ranks, though the cult utilizes festrogs as guards and occasionally to hunt for meals. Sometimes the cult works with or admits totenmaskes into their ranks, though this is rare. Vampires aren't often seen in the cult, as their appetites extend only to the blood rather than the meat of their prey, but they are represented. Many members of the humanoid races also adhere to the cult. Most of these are already cannibals and most aspire to becoming darakhul after death. Some are successful, while others only become mere ghouls and ghosts at the beck and call of their darakhul masters. Others never cross over into undeath at all and their bodies end up feeding the more fortunate. Some among the cult venerate oozes, seeing these creatures as the ultimate expression of hunger. Feeding sacrifices to a pit full of oozes is popular among certain sects of the Creed.

The Creed of All Flesh is a tripartite organization. In theory, all three branches of the cult worship Vardesain, although followers of the Creed are considered a splinter group of the main religion. The aspect of Vardesain they venerate is euphemistically named the Father of the High Feast. They promote him as a benevolent god who favors his chosen with great bounty and blessings, invariably through sacred feasting. The official church of Vardesain cares little of these variant beliefs as heresy is not a crime in the empire of the darakhul. They do keep careful watch over the Creed however, wary of any shifts in political power that might give the cult more sway. This is wise, as the leaders of the cult would not be averse to taking the reins of power in the capital. The three branches of the Creed cooperate well with each other, though each has its own unique goals and leaders.

First, there are the Ravening Adherents. This group is organized much like the standard religion of Vardesain, except that the living are actively encouraged to join. These cannibalistic worshipers hope to one day achieve undeath, becoming

darakhul themselves. In the meantime, they partake in the gluttonous, orgiastic rites of the cult alongside ghouls, ghosts, and darakhul. The faction's leaders see this as a means of allowing the faithful to come closer to their god. The truly devout are raised up in the eyes of Vardesain and allowed to become his true people. Those that are lacking may still serve as lesser undead or as flesh at the cult's holy feasts. The Ravening Adherents are led by Jasna Veldrik. She believes that followers of the Creed serve Vardesain more truly than adherents of the primary faith. Her wish is to convert all of the darakhul empire to the cult. She abhors the idea of internal conflict among her kind, however, and uses persuasion and political pull to slowly shift others to her point of view.

Next are the necrophagi, a cabal known as the Virtutim Carnis. These death eaters pursue the knowledge and power that comes from eating the flesh of both enemy and ally. Though nominally worshipers of Vardesain, the Virtutim Carnis have many dealings with nabasu demons, to whom they trade the souls of their victims and welcome into their rituals as fellow feasters. Many have pacts with demons and other fiends, which expand their abilities. Still, they are loyal to the cult and use their knowledge and powers to bolster the organization both financially and defensively. The Virtutim Carnis are led by Kazimir Ernis. He is perhaps the most power-hungry among the Creed's leadership. Kazimir sees the Virtutim Carnis gaining eventual control over the darakhul empire. He envisions a magocracy where darakhul who recognize that their very essence is power itself ascend to positions of power.

Finally, there is the Guild of Performance Eaters. These entertainers are a macabre mix of chefs, gourmands, and torturers. They prepare and devour live meals before rapt audiences of hungry cannibals, darakhul, and other intelligent flesh-eaters who appreciate the artistic qualities of the performances. They transform worship into entertainment and so whet the appetites of the crowds. Zadina Valgyt is chief among the Guild. She is the only mortal among the leaders of the Creed and seems in no hurry to make the transition to undeath. The perfection of the guild's performances is most important to Zadina. The path to the Father of the High Feast lies through enlightenment found in experiencing the true

beauty of consumption. This is something only her people can accomplish by turning mere eating into a spiritual experience. Those who do not share Zadina's proclivity for cannibalism simply call her insane.

JASNA VELDRIK

CR 14

XP 38,400

Female elf darakhul cleric of Mordiggian (Varadesain) 13 (*Midgard Bestiary for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*)

NE Medium undead (humanoid, elf)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +10

Aura destructive aura (30 ft., +6, 13 rounds/day)

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 16, flat-footed 23 (+6 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 140 (13d8+78)

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

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **DR** 5/daylight or magic; **Immune** undead traits

Weaknesses daylight weakness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 15 ft.

Melee *consuming rod* +15/+10 (1d6+6/×2) or +1 *punching dagger* +15/+10 (1d4+6/×3) or 2 claws +14 (1d6+5 plus paralysis), bite +14 (1d8+5 plus disease and paralysis)

Ranged +1 *light crossbow* +14 (1d8+1/19–20)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 8/day (DC 23, 7d6), curse of hunger^{DM}, disease, ferocious feast^{DM} (bite 2d6+5, 8/day), paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, elves are immune, DC 15), smite (+6, 8/day)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; conc. +18) 8/day—*feast of ashes*^{APG} (DC 17)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 13th; concentration +18) 7th—*destruction* (DC 24), *disintegrate*^D (DC 22) 6th—*antilife shell*, *greater dispel magic*, *harm*^D (DC 23) 5th—*boneshatter*^{DM} (DC 22), *flame strike* (DC 20), *shout*^D, *slay living* (DC 22), *unhallow* 4th—*control summoned creature*^{UM} (DC 19), *fleshworm infestation*^{UM} (DC 19), *freedom of movement*, *poison* (DC 21), *strong jaw*^{APG, D} (DC 19), *unholy blight* (DC 19)

3rd—*animate dead*, *dispel magic*, *magic vestment*, *protection from energy*, *rage*^D, *ravenous hunger*^{MCS}, *speak with dead* (DC 20)

2nd—*death knell* (DC 19), *gentle repose* (DC 19), *instrument of agony*^{UC}, *ravenous hunger*^{DMCS}, *spiritual weapon*, *unliving rage*^{ACG}

1st—*bane* (DC 16), *command* (DC 16), *deathwatch*^D, *divine favor*, *murderous command*^{UM} (DC 16), *obscuring mist*, *restore corpse*^{UM}

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 17), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *read magic*

D domain spell; Domains Destruction, Hunger^{DM}

TACTICS

Before Combat Jasna casts *freedom of movement*.

During Combat Jasna uses her spells to destroy opponents quickly. If melee is necessary, she casts *strong jaw* and attacks with bite and claws, using her +1 *punching dagger* if her natural attacks seem ineffective.

STATISTICS

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

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

Feats Combat Casting, Command Undead, Extra Channel, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Channel, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack, Spell Focus (necromancy)

Skills Appraise +19, Climb +12, Diplomacy +13, Heal +10, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (history) +19, Knowledge (religion) +19, Perception +10, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +19 (+21 to identify

DARAKHUL AND DAMAGE REDUCTION

A darakhul's damage reduction is listed as DR 5/daylight or magic. A darakhul's damage reduction can be overcome by magic weapons. Alternately, if the creature is exposed to sunlight or a *daylight* spell (or a spell or effect that gives off light equivalent to sunlight or a daylight spell), it loses its damage reduction until it is no longer in direct sunlight or within range of the illumination produced by a magical effect.

Also, darakhul have appeared in multiple editions and a PC-friendly playable version exists in the *Advanced Races Compendium* by Kobold Press. For clarity, the following NPCs use the darakhul monster template which appeared in the *Midgard Bestiary for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*.

magic item properties); **Racial Modifiers** +8 Climb, +8 Intimidate, +2 Perception, +2 Spellcraft to identify magic item properties

Languages Abyssal, Common, Elven, Undercommon

SQ elven magic, undead diplomacy^{MCS}

Combat Gear *arrow magnet*^{UE}, *dust of darkness*^{UE}, *potion of fly*, *potion of invisibility*, *ring of counterspells (daylight)*, *silversheen*, *wand of inflict moderate wounds* (44 charges), unholy water (2); **Other Gear** +2 *chain shirt*, +1 *light crossbow* with 10 crossbow bolts, +1 *punching dagger*, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *ring of protection* +2, golden unholy symbol of Vardesain, spell component pouch

SPECIAL ABILITIES

CR Adjustment (Ex) Jasna's CR is 1 higher due to superior equipment.

Curse of Hunger (Sp) Jasna can cast *feast of ashes* as a spell-like ability 8 times per day (CL equal to her cleric level). She can affect the same target with this ability multiple times. Each time a target successfully saves against this ability, the ability's DC increases by 2 for that target; these increases are cumulative.

Daylight Weakness (Ex) A darakhul takes a -4 penalty to attack and saving throws when in full daylight. A *daylight* spell instead inflicts a -2 penalty to a darakhul.

Disease (Su) *Darakhul fever*: Bite—injury; *save* Fortitude DC 15; *onset* 1 day; *effect* 1d6 Con and 1d3 Dex damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

A creature that dies while infected with darakhul fever must attempt a Fortitude save (see Darakhul Fever sidebar). If the result is high enough, it rises as a darakhul rather than as a standard ghoul within an hour. A darakhul is a free-willed undead. A creature that rises as a standard ghoul or ghost is controlled by the darakhul whose fever infected it.

Ferocious Feast (Ex) For 13 rounds per day, Jasna can increase her bite attack damage die by one step. These rounds need not be consecutive. If she threatens a critical with her bite while grappling she can add her Wisdom modifier as a bonus to confirm the critical hit.



Undead Diplomacy (Ex) Once per day, Jasna can gain a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks against undead creatures. In a non-Migard setting, this ability can be ignored.

Jasna is high priestess of the Ravening Adherents and the spiritual leader and political face of the Creed of All Flesh. She spends much of her time coordinating the cult's activities within the capital city of the darakhul (Darakhan the White City, for those using the Midgard Campaign Setting). She maintains a civil working relationship with Kazimr Ernis, but feels that he and his necrophagi do not show proper devotion to Vardesain. Nevertheless, she values their contributions to the Creed and the strength they provide her sect. Zadina Valgyt is a valued treasure in Jasna's eyes, and her inspired performances are just what the cult needs to draw new members. Jasna's interest in Zadina strays into the romantic, but until the performance eater makes

the transition to darakhul, the cleric is content to admire her from afar. Jasna still resembles the tall and pale elf she once was, but her features have a much more feral cast to them. She wears the red-and-white robes of a cleric of Vardesain over her armor, and an elaborate headdress of bone sits atop her waist-length, glossy black hair.

Jasna has a greater than normal wealth in respect to gear. In a Midgard Campaign, Jasna has the following languages: Darakhul, Darakhul (deep), Elvish, Infernal (demonic), and Trade Tongue.

KAZIMIR ERNIS

CR 15

XP 51,200

Male gnome darakhul necrophagus 14 (*Midgard Bestiary for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game, Deep Magic*)

NE Small undead (humanoid, gnome)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +19

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 15, flat-footed 24 (+2 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +6 natural, +4 shield, +1 size)
hp 178 (14d8+112)

Fort +11, **Ref** +10, **Will** +15; +2 vs. illusions

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, defensive training; **DR** 5/daylight or magic; **Immune** undead traits

Weaknesses daylight weakness

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., burrow 10 ft.

Melee bite +10 (2d6+2 plus 2 bleed, disease and paralysis), 2 claws +10 (1d4+2 plus paralysis)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 8/day (command undead only; DC 23; 13 HD [or 17 HD of ghouls and ghosts), disease, hatred, paralysis (1d4+1 rounds, elves are immune, DC 16)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th; concentration +20)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 17), *prestidigitation*, *speak with animals*

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 14th; concentration +20)

7th—*cannibal compulsion*^{DM} (DC 25), *finger of death* (DC 25), *waves of exhaustion*

6th—*circle of death* (DC 24), *greater contagion*^{UM} (DC 24), *greater dispel magic*, *repulsion* (DC 22), *shroud of death*^{DM}

5th—*call of the grave*^{DM}, *dominate person* (DC 23), *mass repair undead*^{ACG} (DC 21), *vampiric shadow shield*^{ACG}

4th—*bestow curse* (DC 22), *crushing despair* (DC 22), *fear* (DC 22), *lesser globe of invulnerability*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 21), *strength of the underworld*^{DM}

3rd—*animate ghoul*^{DM}, *blood biography*^{APG} (DC 19), *dispel magic*, *ray of exhaustion* (DC 21), *unliving rage*^{ACG}, *vampiric touch*

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 20), *greater blood tide*^{DM} (DC 20), *cannibalize*^{DM}, *dust of twilight*^{APG} (DC 18), *see invisibility*, *spectral hand*, *unshakable chill*^{UM} (DC 20)

1st—*disguise self*, *mage armor*, *razor maw*^{DM}, *repair undead*^{ACG}, *shield*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 18), *bleed* (DC 18), *maggots*^{DM}, *read magic*

Opposition Schools evocation, transmutation

TACTICS

Before Combat Kazimir casts *razor maw* and *shield*. This abilities are included in his stat block.

During Combat Kazimir will use *waves of exhaustion* to debilitate living foes, then his *wand of confusion* to throw them into disarray. He relies on his spells to disable and destroy opponents, resorting to hand-to-hand as a last resort. If Kazimir has any undead minions or allies in the fight, he uses *mass repair undead* to heal them if necessary.

Base Statistics Without his spells cast, Kazimir's statistics are **AC** 23, touch 15, flat-footed 18; **Melee** bite +10 (1d6+2 plus disease and paralysis)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 22, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 22

Feats Combat Casting, Command Undead, Empower Spell, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Focus (necromancy), Toughness

Skills Appraise +23, Climb +10, Fly +22, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +31, Knowledge (local) +23, Knowledge (religion) +23, Perception +19, Spellcraft +23; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Climb, +8 Intimidate, +8 Knowledge (dungeoneering), +2 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Gnome, Infernal, Sylvan

SQ arcane bond (zombie weasel), fruit of the mind^{DM}, gnome magic, memory of flesh^{DM}, power over undead, scaly diplomacy^{MCS}, undead diplomacy^{MCS}

Combat Gear *elixir of fire breath, potion of gaseous form, potion of nondetection, wand of confusion* (23 charges); **Other Gear** *amulet of natural armor +2, bracers of armor +2, cloak of resistance +1, ring of protection +1, spell component pouch*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Daylight Weakness (Ex) A darakhul takes a –4 penalty to attack and saving throws when in full daylight. A *daylight* spell instead inflicts a –2 penalty to a darakhul.

Disease (Su) Darakhul fever: Bite—injury; *save* Fortitude DC 16; *onset* 1 day; *effect* 1d6 Con and 1d3 Dex damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

A creature that dies while infected with darakhul fever must attempt a Fortitude save (see Darakhul Fever sidebar). If the result is high enough, it rises as a darakhul rather than as a standard ghoul within an hour. A darakhul is a free-willed undead. A creature that rises as a standard ghoul or ghost is controlled by the darakhul whose fever infected it.

Fruit of the Mind (Su) Three times per day, Kazimir can consume the flesh of a living or recently slain creature and gain the effects of a *speak with dead* spell (CL equal to his wizard level), even if the creature is still alive or is undead. The targeted creature attempts a DC 23 Will save against this effect with a –3 penalty. If the save is successful, the creature can't be affected by this power again for 24 hours. This ability can only affect a single living creature once per day unless a *restoration* spell is cast on it (this allows the creature to be affected one additional time per day). Eating the flesh of a living creature requires a successful bite attack or the target must be helpless. This ability can never affect a dead creature more than once per day.

Memory of Flesh (Su) As a standard action, Kazimir can consume the flesh of a living or recently slain creature. He gains a +2 profane bonus on all Knowledge checks, as well as 1 temporary hit point per Hit Die of the target and a +2 bonus

to his channel resistance. These bonuses last for 7 rounds. The bonuses and temporary hit points are immediately dispelled if Kazimir enters the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell. He can use this ability 9/day, but Kazimir can only consume the flesh of a particular creature once. Eating the flesh of a living creature requires a successful bite attack or the target must be helpless.

Scaly Diplomacy (Ex) Once per day, Kazimir gains a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks against scaly creatures. This ability can be ignored in a non-Midgard campaign

Undead Diplomacy (Ex) Once per day, Kazimir gains a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks against undead creatures. This ability can be ignored in a non-Midgard campaign.



Kazimir leads the Virtutum Carnis, a cabal of necrophagi that serves the Creed of All Flesh as the financial arm of the cult. The necrophagi offer their spellcasting services and crafted items for coin. Their studies into the arcane power unlocked by devouring humanoid flesh are of interest to many necromancers and wizard guilds throughout the world, and the Virtutum Carnis offer some nominal amounts of information and research in exchange for hefty fees. Kazimir himself is quiet and reserved, content to stay silent and observe during cult proceedings unless directly asked for his input. He does not flaunt his wealth, accessorizing with only a simple skullcap and his chain of office. His black robes are well tailored, but simple and unassuming. The bald, clean-shaven darakhul gnome has a calm demeanor, but if he is provoked he is masterful at subtle threats and not above a gory, violent act to provide an example to others of what happens if he is crossed.

In a Midgard campaign, Kazimir has the following languages: Undercommon Darakhul, Darakhul (deep), Dwarvish, Elvish (sylvan), Gnomish, Infernal (demonic), Infernal (diabolic), Mharoti (draconic), and Trade Tongue.

ZADINA VALGYT

CR 13

XP 25,600

Female ravenous human bard 12 (*Advanced Bestiary*)
CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;
Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +2 dodge, +1 natural)

hp 105 (12d8+48)

Fort +7; **Ref** +12; **Will** +7; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

Defensive Abilities cannibalistic healing; **DR** 5/—;

Immune undead traits

Weaknesses ravenous body

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft.

Melee +1 human-bane rapier +13/+13/+8
(1d6+4/15-20) or dagger +12/+7 (1d4+3/19-20)

Ranged light crossbow +12 (1d8/19-20) or
dagger +12/+7 (1d4+3/19-20)

DARAKHUL FEVER

When consulting this table, the infected creature must attempt a Fortitude saving throw to determine how accustomed the creature becomes to its new incarnation.

Creatures that do not make at least a DC 10 do not become ghouls. The disease kills them instead. This provides the ultimate penalty for trying and failing to enter the ghoul's kingdom as one of them, and it makes it possible for evil creatures to deliberately infect themselves, and optimize their chances with *bear's endurance*, a *belt of mighty constitution*, and the like.

Fortitude Save Result	New Incarnation
10–16	Ghoul
17–20	Ghast
21–26	Dread Ghoul
27–30	Dread Ghast
31+	Darakhul

Special Attacks bardic performance 33 rounds/day (move action; countersong, dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +4, inspire courage +3, inspire greatness, soothing performance, suggestion), favored prey (+2 vs. humanoids; +4 vs. half-elves, half-orcs, and humans), hungry frenzy, hungry special attacks

Bard Spells Known (CL 12th; concentration +16 [+20 defensive casting])

4th (4/day)—*adjustable polymorph*^{ACG}, *dance of a hundred cuts*^{UM}, *dominate person* (DC 19), *greater invisibility*

3rd (5/day)—*adjustable disguise*^{ACG}, *haste*, *phantom steed*, *slow* (DC 18)

2nd (6/day)—*alter self*, *create treasure map*^{APG}, *cure moderate wounds*, *enthrall* (DC 17), *ravenous urge*^{DM} (DC 17)

1st (6/day)—*animate rope*, *beguiling gift*^{APG} (DC 16), *charm person* (DC 16), *hideous laughter* (DC 16), *undetectable alignment*, *unnatural lust*^{UM} (DC 16)

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 15), *ghost sound* (DC 15), *haunted fey aspect*^{UC}, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat Zadina drinks her *potion of haste*.

During Combat Zadina casts *dance of a hundred cuts* and *greater invisibility*, then moves through her enemies laughing madly as she capers through the battlefield, slashing whoever gets too close.

Base Statistics Without using her potion, Zadina's statistics are AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 16; **Ref** +11; **Speed** 30 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 17, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +12 (+16 to grapple); **CMD** 25 (29 vs. grapple)

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Dodge, Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Mobility, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Wind Stance

Skills Acrobatics +22, Bluff +18, Climb +15, Escape Artist +15, Heal +11, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (local) +21, Perception +11, Perform (dance) +20, Perform (oratory) +20, Profession (butcher) +12, Stealth +15, Survival +15

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Undercommon

SQ ageless, bardic knowledge +6, jack-of-all-trades (use any skill), loremaster 2/day, versatile performance (dance, oratory, sing), sprint, undead diplomacy^{MCS}

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of haste*; **Other Gear** +1 human-bane rapier, light crossbow with 20 bolts, daggers (3), +1 studded leather armor, amulet of natural armor +1, ring of protection +1, acrobat slippers^{UE}, deathwatch eyes^{UE}, entertainer's outfit, healer's kit, spell component pouch, surgeon's tools^{UE}, silver unholy symbol, gold-inlaid ivory half-mask (50 gp), jewelry worth 1,000 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ageless (Ex) Zadina does not age as long as she is not starving.

Cannibalistic Healing (Ex) As long as Zadina has fed upon the flesh of her own kind (a creature with the same racial subtype) within the last 24 hours, she has fast healing 10. Feeding on a creature of her own kind that was killed within the last hour heals all ability damage and ability drain Zadina has taken.



Favored Prey (Ex) Zadina gains a +2 bonus on damage rolls against creatures and on Bluff, Perception, Sense Motive, and Survival checks against creatures of the same type (humanoids). Against a creature of her own kind (humans), each of the bonuses increases to +4.

Hungry Frenzy (Ex) Five rounds per day, Zadina can enter a rage identical to a barbarian's rage ability. However, the rage only applies towards humans. If Zadina is currently suffering the effects of starvation, the bonuses and penalties for the rage

double, but she can no longer end the rage at will unless she eats enough to remove the nonlethal damage she has suffered from starvation.

Hungry Special Attacks (Ex) Any creature of the same type and subtype as Zadina takes a –2 penalty on saving throws against her spells and special attacks.

Ravenous Body (Ex) Zadina can eat other food, but only the flesh of her own kind satiates her hunger. She must feed upon the flesh of a creature of her own kind at least once every 3 days or she suffers the effects of starvation. When Zadina's nonlethal damage due to starvation equals her Constitution score, she dies.

Sprint (Ex) Once per hour, Zadina can move ten times her normal speed when she makes a charge.

Zadina Valgyt is head of the Guild of Performance Eaters. A relatively recent diversion in the capital city of the ghoulish kingdom (Darakhan the White City), this particularly gruesome form of entertainment is rapidly gaining popularity among the darakhul and spreading among the jaded and corrupt in the lands of the living as well. A performance eating involves one or more living captives that are slowly and artistically devoured alive while an audience looks on. The trick is to keep these unfortunate victims alive as long as possible while maintaining the performance. Zadina is the prima donna of this dark entertainment. Her exhibitions are highly attended and the darakhul nobility often call upon her for private performances. Zadina's favorite performances are not for the undead, however, but the living. Many attendants are apathetic souls looking for elusive thrills, but she knows that some have a similar hunger to her own kindling inside them, and she believes that her shows are the perfect catalyst to awaken such forbidden desires and draw new adherents to the Creed of All Flesh. Zadina is most often seen in her performance gear: an alluring outfit of bleached white leather and red silks, a belt adorned with instruments to both harm and heal, and an ivory half-mask that hides her features.

In a Midgard setting, Zadina has the following languages: Darakhul, Dwarvish, Elvish (sylvan), Trade Tongue, and Undercommon.

CULT ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURE HOOKS

Here are several methods of introducing the Creed of All Flesh as adversaries for the PCs in your campaign. They can be the enemies in a single adventure or returning enemies in an extended campaign, pitting the PCs against the rising threat of the ghoulish cultists and their unsated desire for their forbidden food.

APL 1–3

- *A local cleric who operates a local charity for the destitute contacts the PCs.* She is concerned that several of her regulars have stopped coming around in recent weeks. Queries to local law enforcement have been met with platitudes, but no official investigation is underway. She appeals to the PCs, in hope they are compassionate enough to assist her. If not, she attempts to sway them by offering discounted services from her temple. However, the PCs can find no signs of foul play. One homeless man swears he saw one of the missing while begging in the Merchants' Quarter. The missing woman was dressed in finery and accompanied by servants in red and white livery.

Following up this lead reveals that the missing persons are indeed alive and well. Very well, in fact, as they are living in a townhouse in that quarter, guests of a group known as the Procurers. No one knows much about the Procurers except some obscure religious ties. The Procurers do not talk about themselves, but artful diplomacy, violent interrogation, or magical means compels one to admit they serve a god known as the Father of the High Feast. Approaching the missing persons shows they are perfectly happy with their current situation and unwilling to leave. They were told they are chosen of this new god, destined to enjoy a pampered lifestyle. Only investigation of the townhouse will reveal the Procurers darker motives—they are grooming these people as the fatted calves for a cannibalistic feast. Should the PCs not pursue the matter, a frightened “guest” finds them after escaping, revealing the horrible fate of another of the “chosen,” perhaps with the Procurers right on his heels.

- ***A local disappears from a local eating establishment.*** The PCs have become regular patrons of a roadhouse or inn either by preference or convenience. The proprietor is known for his excellent stews and smoked sausages. Then, an incident throws suspicion upon the establishment. The PCs might even be indirectly involved. For example, they make enemies of a person of some influence in the area, who makes trouble for them. The innkeeper, who has taken a liking to the PCs, assures them he can take care of the problem, after which their enemy simply disappears without a trace. The innkeeper simply tells them not to worry; they won't be seeing their antagonist again. The innkeeper is associated with the Ravening Adherents, and specializes in procuring meat for their rituals. He has also taken to keeping select pieces for himself not wishing to waste such delicacies on his customers—unless the GM feels particularly cruel. Alternatively, the horror can be mitigated if the PCs discover the innkeeper uses his pigs to dispose of bones and bodies.
- ***The Creed of All Flesh targets the PCs from the outset.*** This works especially well for groups that contain one or more characters who are of exotic races, as the performance eaters seek a unique specimen for one of their pieces of culinary performance art. They send Procurers—minions trained to capture those whose flesh the Creed desires—to capture the PC alive to transport to the site of the next performance. Alternatively, the Virtutum Carnis may desire a person of a particular race or sorcerous bloodline to extract power from its blood and flesh. Again, this could result in an abduction, or perhaps a performance eater is sent to deal with the group and extract whatever parts the necrophagi require. The Ravening Adherents might have a holy feast planned and want a particular PC (or PCs) as the main course. This changes the dynamic and puts the adventurers on the defensive against an unknown enemy. This could be a one-time encounter, ending with the defeat of their pursuers, or be the opening act for a recurring villain over the course of the campaign.

APL 4–6

- ***The PCs stumble upon madness and horror while traveling.*** Lost and seeking shelter during a terrible storm, the PCs come across an old, decrepit inn along a mountain road. Lights indicate that the place is still in business and the only apparent shelter. The current residents of the inn are not expecting company apart from the band of Creed adherents there to present a performance eating to them. The family that runs the inn resorted to cannibalism to survive during an excruciatingly bad winter and the temptation to taste such flesh again has the Creed courting them with a tantalizing display. If the intended victims are lucky, the PCs discover the situation and put a stop to it before anyone dies—or perhaps the cannibals decide that the PCs should be added to the menu.
- ***The PCs are lured into an ambush under the guise of a mission of mercy.*** The heroes are wintering in an outpost on the frontier either as visitors or mercenary troops. The gates are opened to admit a haggard woman who claims to be the only survivor of a group of settlers attacked by raiders. She asks for help in returning to her homestead to gather her family's bodies and any remaining items of value. Those that go with her find a grisly scene upon arrival: the remnants of slaughtered and apparently devoured people. The woman, a secret member of the Creed of All Flesh, signals an attack and attempts to kill the rescue party. Meanwhile, other members of the cult slip into the now undermanned fort in an attempt to take it for their own and stock up its larder with fresh meat to last the winter. The PCs may be part of the rescue party or defending the fort, but either way must fight to completely rout the cultists.
- ***The crypt of a local family of wealthy merchants was recently robbed.*** Strangely, the body interred there is missing along with the grave goods. The merchant offers a princely sum to anyone who finds and returns his late wife's remains. Investigation eventually leads to the grave robbers, who swear that the sarcophagus was empty when they opened it. If the PCs think to question the priest in charge of the cemetery, or check other recent interments, they soon discover that none

of the bodies of the wealthy buried in the last year ever made it to their coffins. The cleric flees into the catacombs beneath the city, where a group of cultists of the Creed of All Flesh reside. They pay the cleric well for choice meat to place upon their unholy feasting tables. He eased his conscience by turning over the bodies of those nobility he considered impious or unworthy of his deity's attentions. The grave goods that accompanied the bodies are packed carefully into chests for later shipment to the cult's treasury.

APL 7–9

- **Hunters become the hunted.** Traveling through foreign lands, the PCs hear horns in the distance, but closing fast, as if a hunting party were approaching. Strangely absent, however, is the baying of hounds that normally accompany such a hunt. When the hunters' quarry stumbles from the trees, the PCs find that the prey is humanoid. The person is too panicked and exhausted to provide explanation, and desires only to flee. The pursuing "hounds" eventually arrive and anyone in the area, whether the original quarry or the PCs, are set upon by a pack of hungry festrogs. Soon after, the hunt masters arrive on the scene: a pair of darakhul nobles riding skeletal horses, followed by their ghoulish servants. Should the undead be defeated and the original quarry survives, he tells the PCs he was captured and held for this hunt in a nearby manor house, where a group of strange cultists await to prepare a magnificent feast for the darakhul nobles in gratitude for their monetary and moral support.
- **Caravan raiders seek something other than trade goods.** The PCs are guarding, or perhaps simply traveling with, a caravan. While the caravan is moving through a high mountain pass, it is attacked by a group of fierce dwarven barbarians, mounted on great boars with tusks stained in old blood. The attackers do not attempt to take anything from the wagons or pack animals. Instead, they gather up any fallen defenders—dead or otherwise—and flee with them back into the mountains. If the PCs choose not to pursue, then the caravan is attacked again, and again, with the raiders making off with bodies and the wounded. Should they track the

pursuers back to their home, they find evidence of (or depending upon their timing, a witness to) a horrific feast made of the bodies of the missing, as well as a temple to Vardesain, where choice captives are being held for ritual sacrifice.

- **The PCs find themselves lost in the mountains.** Signs of large numbers of hostile humanoids are everywhere and there is evidence of a scouting party trailing them. Seeking solace or a narrow pass where they can face their myriad enemies but a few at a time, the PCs press up a trail and find themselves at the entrance to a small valley. Symbols of a dwarven clan mark the pass. Surprisingly, their pursuers fall back, despite the dwarven settlement being small and surely outnumbered by the troops the local humanoid tribes could bring to bear. Still, the walled village is secure and warm, and the dwarves are welcoming if a bit stoic. They insist on offering the PCs all the hospitality due guests of their clan, and the PCs are treated to a rich feast and as much drink as they can handle. However, this particular dwarven clan is a group of practicing cannibals and adherents to the Creed of All Flesh. According to their traditions, acceptance of their hospitality means the PCs are marked as their next meal and the dwarves wait for the opportune time to take axe and knife to the PCs, likely when the heroes at their most relaxed and vulnerable.

APL 10–12

- **A city that thrives on trade and commerce has announced a "day of amnesty."** Assorted criminals, ranging from pickpockets and muggers to burglars and embezzlers are released from prison, but they are not free. Their sentences have been commuted to indentured servitude to a religious group, which has provided the city with a generous donation to their coffers in exchange for the cheap labor. The payment is sizeable and saves the city the considerably larger cost of their incarceration. The council of guildmasters who run the city was unanimous in this decision, save one naysayer. That particular person is suspicious of the circumstances and would like the PCs to shadow these religious pilgrims and find out what they intend to do with

the prisoners. The religious group in question is the Creed of All Flesh, who tell their new charges that their sins will be expunged upon completion of the great banquet in honor of the Father of the High Feast. They fail to mention the prisoners will provide the meat. If the PCs find this out, they have a choice. Unless they truly believe that death is a deserving sentence for such crimes, they must devise a rescue. The lingering question remains of whether anyone on the council knew about it and was in collusion with the cult.

- ***The PCs are alerted to the presence of a “flesh farm.”*** Humans, elves, and other humanoids are kept in a large compound and raised as food for the undead. Perhaps an escapee tells the tale of her former gilded cage. They might receive word from a merchant who provides supplies to the place; he became suspicious and hired spies to determine what the place is and why the undead needed so many supplies they themselves would not use. Whatever the case, someone wants the compound shut down for good and those held within freed from captivity and their cruel fate at the hands of the Creed of All Flesh. This will be a difficult task. The darakhul prize their flesh farm, which is guarded with competent warriors and festrog “hounds.” Convincing some of the prisoners to leave may also prove difficult. Some are captured and brought to the flesh farm to be held until bought. Others are raised from childhood or even infancy, taught that they have a great destiny ahead of them if they obey and will be denied nothing until that time. These “destined” aren’t likely to want to be rescued and may even assist the darakhul by warning them of intruders.

- ***The powers that be within the city wish to be rid of a particularly obnoxious and abhorrent nobleman.*** His estates are within the city limits and he is wealthy and well connected with various merchants in town. His excesses and debaucheries are local legend and his public presence at various state affairs have been cause for great embarrassment on behalf of the city. Many local leaders, both secular and religious, would like him gone, but while the noble is a blot of shame on the city, he has done nothing illegal, at least not publicly. They would like

someone to dig into the noble’s personal affairs and find proof of activities that could see him jailed or, better yet, sent into exile.

The PCs are hired to ingratiate themselves to the nobleman and worm their way into his inner circle. This takes time and exposes the PCs to all manner of unseemly activities the jaded noble partakes in. Eventually, they are invited to an exclusive performance by a mysterious artist who the noble is particularly excited to host. The guest list is selective and security is heightened for the event. The nobleman shows more enthusiasm than the PCs have ever seen, as usually even the most debauched activity barely stirs any passion within the man. When the night of the performance arrives, the assembled guests are treated to a night of performance eating, perhaps even a show from the infamous Zadina Valgyt. How the night goes depends on the actions of the PCs. Perhaps they can discover the secret before the performance, free the intended victims and escape with evidence. Or they may be moved to intervene during the performance, causing the outraged nobleman to have his guards attack them, with Zadina and her entourage surely joining the fight.

APL 13–15

- ***As either part of a personal vendetta or as agents of forces for good, the PCs are sent to cut the head off the snake and end the depredations of the Creed of All Flesh.*** They have been tasked with destroying the cult’s leaders in the hopes that the Creed will fall apart without them in command. The first task is to remove their primary means of recruitment, Zadina Valgyt and her performance eaters. They are encouraged to find her when she is plying her trade in lands outside the darakhul empire. Perhaps they can infiltrate an exclusive performance (such as the one described in the APL 10-12 adventure hooks above). In addition to the head of the Performance Eaters Guild, the PCs will have to contend with other performance eaters providing supporting cast for the show, the bodyguards of Zadina’s troupe, and non-cult allies that lend a hand (such as the nobleman’s guards mentioned above). Zadina is outraged at such an

interruption, even as she anticipates the thrill of fresh meat to butcher. Should the battle go wrong, she attempts to flee and make her way back to the other leaders of the Creed to inform them of their enemies' attentions and possible intentions.

- **The next step is to remove Kazimir Ernis from his leadership of the Virtutum Carnis.** While he remains in charge, Virtutum Carnis continues to lend support to the Creed of All Flesh. Not all the necrophagi are content with their ties to the cult however, as some favor a secular approach to leadership or at least adherence to the main church of Vardesain. Through various means of espionage (which optionally may be performed by the PCs), it is discovered that Kazimir and a coterie of loyal necrophagi are traveling to meet with the wizard's guild of a distant city, stopping along the way to visit other associates and allies. The PCs can search for an ideal spot somewhere on the route from which to stage an ambush. If they kill Kazimir and as many of his cohorts as possible,

the Virtutum Carnis withdraws its support of the Creed of All Flesh. Kazimir travels with a number of lesser necrophagi and a contingent of darakhul guards, who ride greater festrogs as mounts. He also has the services of a nabasu demon, thanks to a *planar binding* spell. If he can, Kazimir escapes and make his way back to the Creed's main temple, warning Jasna that foes are rallying against them.

- **The final task ahead of the PCs is to cut out the heart of the Creed of All Flesh: its high priest, Jasna Veldrik.** This takes the adventurers to the center of the darakhul empire. While daunting, the darakhul in power, which includes the orthodox church of Vardesain, are inclined to allow this, as they feel the Creed is gaining too much political power to be trusted. The PCs are given implicit permission to conduct their mission, as long as it is done with precision and discretion. Should they make a mess of things or bring embarrassment upon the darakhul leadership, they will likely never leave the empire alive.

THE CREED OF ALL FLESH IN MIDGARD

The power center of the Creed of All Flesh resides in Darakhan, the capitol of the Ghoulish Imperium. The cult is a recognized but unofficial sect of Vardesain. As such, it operates with relative freedom within the White City, although the official church of Vardesain keeps a close watch on them. Small branches of the cult have a presence in most other major settlements in the Imperium. Then there are the missionaries who go abroad in the world seeking those whose secret hungers draw them to the Creed. Most missionary groups operate in the Cloudwall Mountains, Morgau, and Duresh. Others are rumored to seek converts in the Seven Cities, and even the far-flung Dragon Empire. It is said that they have made significant headway with certain clans of Northland dwarves, where cruel, unspeakable things are done to survive incredibly harsh winters. Reports of roaming bands of cannibal dwarven berserkers mounted on flesh-eating boars only serve to confirm these rumors.

The Creed focuses much of its time and attention on large urban centers, where they can find the powerful who are jaded yet desperate, yearning for something new and exciting in life while they dread its inevitable

end. The performance eaters make their strongest appeal to such world-weary folk—those who look for satiation and power to rise beyond their circumstances, can also be found within large cities. The Ravening Adherents offer surcease from hunger and poverty with the promise of power everlasting and food to gratify an ever-growing hunger.

While the Creed of All Flesh is firmly rooted in the Northlands, it is easily adapted or exported to the Southlands. In this instance, the Creed recognizes that the demon lord Mechuiti is a mask of Vardesain and would work to help free the demon lord from his island prison. Performance eating could be a specialized ritual intended to siphon the energy of both the performance and the crowd's emotional response to weaken the bonds of Mechuiti's prison. The ranks of the Creed of All Flesh could include the Bhetu, as well as ghouls or darakhul converted from the Bhetu's ranks. The cult could even be based on the island itself, or in a coastal city within several days sailing distance, perhaps with a secret lair under the docks guarded by ghastr dire apes.

The Creed's temple is well guarded, but they are about to conduct a high ritual on the night of the new moon and the temple is very active with servants. Distractions abound as visitors attend the ceremony, bringing shipments of goods, which include humanoids slated for sacrifice and as food for the feast following the ritual. The PCs can slip in disguised as guests. Alternatively, they can arrange for their gear to be delivered as part of a shipment while they infiltrate the temple openly as potential sacrifices, should they wish to trust the darakhul government to assist them. Whichever method they exploit, Jasna has her two co-leaders with her (if they survived previous attacks) during the ritual as well as the feast afterward. Even without her allies, Jasna is ready for trouble. The ritual demands a massive amount of flesh and blood sacrifice. Should it succeed, a carnivorous blob (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 2) is called into existence and Jasna has enough control over it to send it after her enemies. She may even have loyal cult agents hidden among the worshipers as a contingency against troublemakers.

CULTISTS OF THE CREED OF ALL FLESH

The followers of the Creed of All Flesh draw their power from the consumption of other intelligent beings. They tear down their foes to build themselves up. Members of the cult are a terrible, feral force that both intimidates and overwhelms foes. The following NPCs can be used as cultist minions, intermediaries, and lower-level leaders to provide suitable enemies for the PCs as they strive against the Creed of All Flesh.

PROCURER

CR 1

XP 400

Ravenous human expert 1 (*Advanced Bestiary*)

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +2 deflection, +1 Dex)

hp 7 (1d8+3)

Fort +2; **Ref** +1; **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities cannibalistic healing; **DR** 5/—

Weaknesses ravenous body

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee sickle +3 (1d6+3) or unarmed strike +3 (1d3+3)

Ranged light crossbow +1 (1d8/19-20) or dagger +1 (1d4+3/19-20)

Special Attacks favored prey (+2 vs. humanoids, +4 vs. half-elves, half-orcs, and humans), hungry frenzy

TACTICS

Before Combat The procurer drinks his *potion of shield of faith*.

During Combat The procurer shoots his crossbow at any obvious casters before closing into melee.

Base Statistics Without the potion in effect, the procurer's stats are **AC** 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +3 (+5 grapple); **CMD** 14 (16 vs. grapple)

Feats Blind-Fight, Deceitful, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +5, Bluff +5, Climb +11, Disguise +5, Intimidate +9, Perception +13, Profession (butcher) +5, Profession (cook) +5, Stealth +9, Survival +5; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Acrobatics, +8 Climb, +4 Escape Artist, +4 Intimidate, +8 Perception, +4 Stealth, +8 Survival

Languages Common

SQ ageless, sprint

Combat Gear *potion of shield of faith*; **Other Gear** daggers (3), light crossbow and 20 bolts, sickle, chain shirt, disguise kit, 11 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ageless (Ex) The procurer does not age as long as it is not starving.

Cannibalistic Healing (Ex) So long as the procurer has fed upon the flesh of his own kind within the last 24 hours, he has fast healing 10. Feeding on a creature of his own kind that was killed within the last hour heals all ability damage and ability drain the procurer has taken.

Favored Prey (Ex) The procurer gains a +2 bonus on damage rolls and on Bluff, Perception, Sense Motive, and Survival checks against creatures of the same type. Against a creature of his own subtype, each of the bonuses increases to +4.

Hungry Frenzy (Ex) A number of rounds equal to its Charisma modifier (minimum 1 round), the procurer can enter a rage identical to a barbarian's rage ability. However, the rage only applies against creatures of his own type and subtype. If the procurer is currently suffering the effects of starvation, the bonuses and penalties of the rage double, but the procurer can no longer end the rage at will unless he eats enough to remove the nonlethal damage he has suffered from starvation.

Ravenous Body (Ex) The procurer can eat other food, but only the flesh of his own kind satiates his hunger. He must feed upon the flesh of a creature of his own kind at least once every three days or the procurer suffers the effects of starvation (see the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*). When the procurer's nonlethal damage due to starvation equals his Constitution score, he dies.

Sprint (Ex) Once per hour, the procurer can move at ten times his normal speed when he makes a charge.

Procurers are cultists tasked with gathering suitable victims for the cult's rituals, magical research, and performance feasts. They are infused with power from the cannibalistic rituals of which they partake, but also possess a dire hunger that must be satiated, else they succumb to death. Procurers can be found operating alone or in pairs, or in groups of up to eight or more for particularly large operations.

PERFORMANCE EATER

CR 5

XP 1,200

Human darakhul bard 2/expert 3 (*Midgard Bestiary for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*)

CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 58 (5d8+32)

Fort +1; **Ref** +4; **Will** +6; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4;

DR 5/daylight or magic; **Immune** undead traits

Weaknesses daylight weakness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 15 ft.

Melee 2 claws +7 (1d6+3 plus paralysis) and bite +7 (1d8+3 plus disease and paralysis) or mwk whip +8 (1d3+3 nonlethal) and bite +5 (1d8+3 plus disease and paralysis)

Ranged mwk composite shortbow +8 (1d6+2/x3)

Special Attacks bardic performance 12 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire courage +1), disease (darakhul fever, DC 19), paralysis (DC 19, 1d4+1 rounds)

Bard Spells Known (CL 2nd; concentration +8)

1st (4/day)—*charm person* (DC 19), *disguise self*, *grease* (DC 18)

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 18), *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 17), *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

TACTICS

Before Combat The performance eater inspires courage for the benefit of her allies.

During Combat The performance eater attacks opponents with spells and arrows, resorting to melee with natural weapons if pressed.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 18, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 19

Feats Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Spell Focus (enchantment)

Skills Bluff +15, Climb +10, Diplomacy +15, Disguise +15, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +21, Perception +11, Perform (dance) +15, Perform (oratory) +15, Sense Motive +12, Stealth +10; Racial Bonuses +8 Climb, +8 Intimidate, +8 Knowledge (dungeoneering)

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Elven, Undercommon

SQ bardic knowledge +1, versatile performance (dance)

Combat Gear *potions of inflict light wounds* (2);

Other Gear masterwork composite shortbow (+2 Str), mwk whip, daggers (3), mwk chain shirt, disguise kit, mwk manacles, traveler's any-tool^{UE}, 218 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Daylight Weakness (Ex) The performance eater takes a –4 penalty on attacks and saving throws when in full daylight. The *daylight* spell instead inflicts a –2 penalty to the performance eater. Likewise, the performance eater has DR 5/magic except in sunlight or when exposed to *daylight* or an equivalent level of illumination.

Disease (Su) *Darakhul fever*: Bite—injury; *save* Fortitude DC 17; *onset* 1 day; *effect* 1d6 Con and 1d3 Dex damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

A creature that dies while infected with darakhul fever must attempt a Fortitude save (see Darakhul Fever sidebar). If the result is high enough, it rises as a darakhul rather than as a standard ghoul within an hour. A darakhul is a free-willed undead. A creature that rises as a standard ghoul or ghost is controlled by the darakhul whose fever infected it.

This darakhul is an entertainer, one who devours living humanoids in front of audiences as performance art. These gruesome shows provide intellectual stimulation among other darakhul, but for audiences comprised of the living, the reactions range from outrage and disgust to morbid fascination and an arousal of certain forbidden hungers, the very type the Creed of All Flesh seeks to bolster their ranks. A performance eater can be encountered alone, with a troupe of two to four other performance eaters, or as a band of performers consisting of one to four performance eaters and another two to six procurers.

CREED NECROPHAGUS

CR 8**XP 4,800**

Gluttonous human necrophagus 9 (*Monsters of Sin, Deep Magic*)

NE Large humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +4 shield)

hp 65 (9d6+32)

Fort +5; **Ref** +5; **Will** +7

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +5 (2d6+3) or

mwk dagger +5 (1d4+2/19-20) or

mwk dagger +5 (1d4+2/19-20), bite –1 (2d6+1)

Ranged mwk dagger +5 (1d4+2/19-20)

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

Special Attacks channel negative energy 7/day (command undead only; DC 13; 9 HD)

Necrophagus Spells Known (CL 9th; conc. +13)

5th—*beast shape III*, *corpsewall*^{DM}

4th—*animate dead*, *boneshatter*^{DM}, *enervation*, *lesser globe of invulnerability*

3rd—*animate ghoul*^{DM}, *dispel magic*, *displacement*, *fly*, *vampiric touch*

2nd—*alter self*, *caustic blood*^{DM}, *false life*, *ghoul touch* (DC 18), *greater blood tide*^{DM} (DC 18), *see invisibility*

1st—*charm person*, *chill touch* (DC 17), *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 17), *razor maw*^{DM}, *shield*

0—*blood tide*^{DM} (DC 16), *detect magic*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue*

Opposition Schools conjuration, illusion

TACTICS

Before Combat The creed necrophagus casts *false life* at the beginning of each day. Before combat, he casts *mage armor*, *razor maw*^{DM}, and *shield*.

During Combat The creed necrophagus uses his spells to defeat his enemies, taking advantage of his natural reach when using touch attacks. To slow and divide foes, he casts *corpsewall*^{DM} and then animates it with *animate dead* to form a barrier. If forced into melee, he casts *beast shape III* and becomes a dire tiger.

Base Statistics Without his spells cast, the creed necrophagus' stats are **AC** 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12; **hp** 51; **Melee** bite +5 (1d6+3)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 12, **Con** 12, **Int** 18, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

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

Feats Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Command

Undead, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy),

Greater Spell Penetration, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Penetration

Skills Fly +13, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (religion) +16, Profession (butcher) +9, Profession (cook) +9, Spellcraft +16

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Undercommon

SQ arcane bond (zombie bat), fruit of the mind, memory of the flesh 7/day

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*,

scroll of fireball, scroll of protection from energy, wand of scorching ray (30 charges); **Other Gear** mwk daggers (2), *cloak of resistance +1, deathwatch eyes*^{UE}, *ring of protection +1*, spell component pouch, spellbook, 3 pieces of onyx (100 gp each)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fruit of the Mind (Su) Three times per day, the creed necrophagus can consume the flesh of a living or recently slain creature and gain the effects of a *speak with dead* spell (CL 9th), even if the creature is still alive or is undead. The targeted creature makes a DC 17 Will save against this effect with a –3 penalty. If successful, the creature can't be affected by this power again for 24 hours. This ability can only affect a single living creature once per day unless a *restoration* spell is cast on it (this allows the creature to be affected one additional time per day). Eating the flesh of a living creature requires a successful bite attack or the target must be helpless. This ability can never affect a dead creature more than once per day.

Memory of Flesh (Su) As a standard action, the creed necrophagus can consume the flesh of a living or recently slain creature. He gains a +1 profane bonus on all Knowledge checks, as well as 1 temporary hit point per Hit Die of the target and a +2 bonus to his channel resistance. These bonuses last for 4 rounds. The bonuses and temporary hit points are immediately dispelled if the creed necrophage enters the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell. He can use this ability seven times per day, but the creed necrophage can only consume the flesh of a particular creature once. Eating the flesh of a living creature requires a successful bite attack or the target must be helpless.

This initiate of the Virtutim Carnis harnesses power by cannibalizing the flesh of others. Vast physical changes have occurred from his rapacious appetite, warping the necrophagus into an obese giant. Hoping to one day undergo the transformation into a darakhul, the necrophagus serves the cult's interests in order to advance his own power. A necrophagus can be encountered alone, or traveling with up to a dozen procurers as attendants and underlings. If the necrophagus intends harm and isn't picky about the company, he can instead command a number of ghouls and ghaunts, up to 9 total in any combination.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Many of the magic items crafted by members of the Creed of All Flesh are foul consumables that offer vile power to those that ingest them.

BROTH OF NEEDFUL FORTITUDE

Aura moderate conjuration; **CL** 11th

Slot none; **Price** 1,650 gp; **Weight** 1/2 lb.

This rich stock brewed from the flesh and bones of humanoids is kept sealed in an earthenware jar. When drunk, it removes fatigue and exhaustion and provides a +4 profane bonus to saving throws against disease, poison, and environmental effects. If drunk by an undead creature, it provides a +1 bonus to channel resistance and a +2 profane bonus on all saving throws. Bonuses granted by drinking the broth last for 8 hours.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *heroes' feast*; **Cost** 825 gp

CONSUMING ROD

Aura strong conjuration; **CL** 15th

Slot none; **Price** 50,000 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

This bone rod is crafted from a humanoid femur. One end is carved to resemble a ghoulish face, mouth open wide and full of sharp fangs. The rod functions as a +1 *light mace*. Alternatively, the wielder can use the rod to make a melee touch attack against any living creature. If successful, the rod's face stretches gruesomely wide to bite the target for 1d6 points of damage. If the attack is a confirmed critical hit, the target takes 1d4 points of bleed damage (in addition to double the bite damage).

After the rod performs a successful bite attack and until the end of the wielder's next turn, the wielder can cause the rod to swallow the target's bloody goblet of flesh as a move action. This fills the wielder with rejuvenating energy, granting her 4 temporary hit points. These



temporary hit points last up to 1 hour or until used. The wielder can have no more than 8 temporary hit points granted in this fashion at one time.

Finally, once per day, the rod can attempt to swallow a creature of Medium size or smaller as a full-round action. The wielder must first succeed at a melee attack and if successful, the mouth of the rod stretches impossibly wide and attempts to swallow the target whole. Treat this as a grapple combat maneuver check, using the wielder's total Hit Dice as the base attack bonus, and acting as a Huge creature with a strength of 18 (giving the check an additional +6 bonus. If the grapple check fails, the rod does normal bite damage instead. If successful, the creature disappears down the mouth of the rod, ending up in an extra-dimensional space where it remains in stasis for 24 hours (as per *temporal stasis*), or until the wielder commands the rod to regurgitate the swallowed creature. Releasing a creature takes a full-round action. After 24 hours, or if the rod acquires the broken condition while it carries a swallowed creature (hardness 5, hp 10), the creature immediately reappears in a square adjacent to the rod's wielder.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Arms and Armor, Craft Rod, *razor maw*^{DM}, *trap the soul*; **Cost** 25,000 gp

JERKY OF DESPERATE STRENGTH

Aura faint conjuration and transmutation; **CL** 5th
Slot none; **Price** 500 gp; **Weight** 1/2 lb.

This long, thin strip of cured, dried meat was taken from the thigh of a humanoid creature. If eaten by a creature suffering the effects of starvation, that creature is considered fed and the *jerky of desperate strength* removes fatigue and heals the creature 2d8+5 points of nonlethal damage. If the consumer of the jerky is not starving, then the meat provides a boost of vigor, granting a +4 profane bonus on all Strength- and Dexterity-based skill checks, as well as a +2 profane bonus on damage rolls for the next hour. Consuming multiple pieces of jerky does not increase the granted bonuses, but does increase the duration by an additional hour. If eaten by an undead creature, the jerky grants a +2 morale bonus to Strength and a +4 morale bonus on grapple combat maneuver checks against living opponents for 1 minute.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *bull's strength*, *lesser restoration*; **Cost** 250 gp

TOME OF BOUND FLESH

Aura moderate necromancy; **CL** 9th

Slot none; **Price** 8,550 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

This book is painstakingly crafted from humanoid flesh. Its ragged-edged pages are fine vellum, made from skin, inked in blood, and stitched with sinew. The leather cover displays a humanoid face on its front, or is decorated with brands or ritual scars.

A *tome of bound flesh* contains a wealth of information about humanoid anatomy. Consulting the tome provides a +2 competence bonus on any Heal, Knowledge (local), or Profession (torturer) skill checks against creatures of the humanoid type. There are 500 blank pages in the back portion of the book, and a necromancer or necrophagus^{DM} can fill these pages with spells without paying the material cost. Any necrophagi spells prepared from a *tome of bound flesh* are cast as if the caster were 1 level higher.

When in the possession of a necromancer or necrophagus, it allows the owner to be considered 4 levels higher for the purpose of controlling undead, provided the extra HD added to the limit are used to control ghouls or ghasts.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, Heighten Spell, *command undead*, *gentle repose*; **Cost** 4,275 gp

NEW MONSTER

These horrible new undead are massive versions of the disgusting festrogs.

GREATER FESTROG

This disfigured humanoid corpse is hairless, covered in inflamed boils, and the is size of a warhorse.

GREATER FESTROG

CR 3

XP 800

NE Large undead

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+1 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)

hp 30 (4d8+12)
Fort +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5
Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.
Melee bite +6 (1d8+4 plus greater feed), 2 claws +7 (1d6+4)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Special Attacks charging trample (1d6+6, DC 16), disease, diseased pustules, greater feed

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 16
Base Atk +3; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 19 (23 vs. trip)
Feats Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Focus (claws)
Skills Climb +9, Perception +8, Stealth +7, Survival +3
Languages Common
SQ four-footed run

ECOLOGY

Environment any land
Organization solitary, pair, gang (3–5) or pack (6–11)
Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Charging Trample (Ex) A greater festrog that hits with its bite after making a charge attack may immediately overrun the opponent as if it had the trample special ability. The greater festrog must have some portion of their movement remaining after the attack. The target takes damage equal to the greater festrog's claw damage plus 1-1/2 times its Strength modifier.

Diseased Pustules (Ex) When a greater festrog takes damage from a piercing or slashing weapon, some of its boils rupture, squirting the attacker with pus-like fluids. The noxious secretions carry a potent disease that causes those infected to break out in necrotic boils.

Necrotic Boils: Disease—contact; *save* Fort DC 15; *onset* 1 day; *frequency* 1 day; *effect* 1d4 Con damage; *cure* 1 save.

Four-Footed Run (Ex) A greater festrog can run on all fours if it doesn't hold or carry anything in its hands. When running on all fours, it is treated as if it had the Run feat.

Greater Feed (Su) Every time a greater festrog makes a successful bite attack, it feeds on its opponent's

flesh and gains 5 temporary hit points. The greater festrog cannot have more than 10 temporary hit points gained by this ability at one time.

Like their smaller brethren, greater festrogs are created when a creature is killed by massive amounts of negative energy. In the case of greater festrogs, those killed are typically giants. Where common festrogs are known as dog-ghouls, greater festrogs are horse-ghouls, as they are often used as mounts by the darakhul.

Left to their own devices, greater festrogs behave much like their smaller kin. Darakhul prize these undead as mounts and killers, however, and will typically take them away from the site of their death and use them in hunts or as guardians for households, businesses, or temples.





DOOMSPEAKERS

Among the worst evils in the multiverse are demons and those depraved souls that worship them. Darkest among them are antipaladins, the antithesis of life, hope, and good. The vilest of those are the Doomspeakers, antipaladin champions of demon princes. Inducted into the profane secrets of *The Book of Nine Dooms*, a corrupt and unholy tome that teaches them to focus their hatred in new ways, these villains practice magic that devours a portion of its caster and wreaks great misery upon their foes. The followers of this entropic order seek nothing less than the destruction and dissolution of all order and light in the world.

LEADERS, ORGANIZATION, AND GOALS

The Doomspeakers, being demon worshipers, are understandably lacking in organization and discipline. The mightiest and most cunning among them retain power over the group for as long as they can hold it. A typical Doomspeaker collective is led by an antipaladin with other cultists under his direct command—often clerics, but evil wizards, oracles, barbarians, and others swell the cult's numbers as well. Advancement in the ranks is as much ability as luck and circumstance. Many rise by taking

advantage of their predecessors' destruction, and often they have hands in their demise. Due to this deadly competitive nature, individual cells often work alone, though they band together in order to succeed in their plans against particularly strong foes. Most factions utilize large numbers of gnolls as shock troops and general minions.

The goals of the Doomspeakers are nothing less than the goals of their demon masters, though each leader achieves those goals in his own manner. Some favor might and lay waste to their targets with their troops and their own strength of arms. Others prefer guile and subtly work at their enemies, often sowing paranoia and dissension to fracture their foes, turning them against one another before they sweep in to kill whoever remains. The Domspeakers are especially feared for their nihilistic tendencies. Those who have learned the dark secrets of *The Book of Nine Dooms* do not hesitate to harm themselves in order to bring about the destruction of their enemies.

The following are a few Domspeaker leaders.

NARN THE CRUCIFIER

CR 15

XP 51,200

Male human antipaladin 16 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +4

Aura cowardice (10 ft.), despair (10 ft.), vengeance (10 ft.), sin (10 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 24, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 23 (+13 armor, +1 Dex) **hp** 148 (16d10+48)

Fort +17, **Ref** +11, **Will** +14

Immune disease

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee +1 *anarchic falchion* +24/+19/+14/+9 (2d4+10/15–20 plus 2d6 vs. lawful) or *demon armor gauntlets* +23/+18/+13/+8 (1d10+7 plus *contagion* [DC 14])

Ranged +1 *returning throwing axe* +18 (1d6+7)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 5/day (DC 21, 8d6), cruelties (DC 21, cursed, disarmed*, entangled [33 hp]*, nauseated [5 rounds], stunned [4 rounds]), smite good (6/day), touch of corruption (8d6, 11/day)

Antipaladin Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; conc. +19)

At will—*detect good*

Antipaladin Spells Prepared (CL 13th; concentration +16)

4th—*doom of serpent coils*^{DM} (DC 17)

3rd—*blade of dark triumph*^{UM} (DC 16), *doom of dancing blades*^{DM}, *vampiric touch*

2nd—*darkness*, *darkvision*, *doom of consuming fire*^{DM}, *doom of sundering*^{DM}

1st—*doom of cowards*^{DM} (DC 14), *doom of the cracked shield*^{DM}, *false savior* (DC 14)*, *litany of sloth*^{UC} (DC 14)

TACTICS

Before Combat Narn typically starts combat by activating his fiendish boon and uses Power Attack. These benefits are not reflected in his stat block.

During Combat Narn casts *doom of cowards*, seeking to inflict the shaken condition on as many opponents as possible, then uses his Dazzling Display feat to strike further fear into them, hoping to make attacks of opportunity against fleeing opponents. If an especially potent foe, such as a paladin or good outsider, enters battle, he reads his *scroll of unholy sword* and then wades in with his smite good ability and Power Attack. Additionally his disarm cruelty is an affective strategy against another martial opponent, while his entangled cruelty can keep a spellcaster occupied while he deals with another threat.

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 33

Feats Blinding Critical, Cleave, Critical Focus, Dazzling Display, Furious Focus^{APG}, Improved Critical (falchion), Intimidating Prowess, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (falchion)

Skills Bluff +10, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (religion) +9, Linguistics +2, Perception +4, Ride +4, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +8

Languages Abyssal, Common, Gnoll

SQ aura of evil, fiendish boon (weapon, +4 enhancement, 16 minutes/day), unholy resilience

Combat Gear *feather token* (whip), *potion of bull's strength*, *potion of cure serious wounds* (3), *scroll of disguise self*, *scroll of protection from good*, *scroll of unholy sword*; **Other Gear** *demon armor*, +1

anarchic falchion, +1 returning throwing axe, belt of giant strength +2, blood reservoir of physical prowess^{UE}, cloak of resistance +2, headband of alluring charisma +2, golden unholy symbol^{UE}, spell component pouch

SPECIAL ABILITIES

CR Adjustment (Ex) Narn's CR is 1 higher due to his superior equipment.

* See the Antipaladins and Doomspeakers appendix on page 201

Narn, called the Crucifier for his favored way of dealing with captured enemies and disloyal minions, is the most powerful and certainly one of the most terrifying of the Doomspeakers. He operates out of Shadowhold, a dark fortress perched on the edge of a narrow box canyon in a mountain range that abuts the plains where he recruits his gnoll troops.

GRUULOK

CR 12

XP 19,200

Male gnoll antipaladin 11 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

CE Medium humanoid (gnoll)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception –1

Aura cowardice (10 ft.), despair (10 ft.), vengeance (10 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 17
(+5 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 106 (13 HD; 2d8+11d10+37)

Fort +14, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8

Immune disease

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 battleaxe +16/+11/+6
(1d8+4/×3)
or mwk dagger +16/+11/+6
(1d4+3/19–20)

Ranged +1 flaming burst composite longbow
+16/+11/+6 (1d8+4/×3 plus 1d6 fire)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 3/day (DC 17, 6d6), cruelties (DC 17, dazed [1 round], frightened [5 rounds], shaken [11 rounds]), smite good (4/day), touch of corruption (5d6, 7/day)

Antipaladin Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th; conc. +13)

At will—*detect good*

Antipaladin Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +10)

3rd—*doom of blue crystal*^{DM} (DC 15)

2nd—*darkness*, *doom of consuming fire*^{DM}

1st—*disguise self*, *feed the worms* (DC 13)*, *hobble mount*^{DM} (DC 13)

TACTICS

Before Combat Gruulok typically uses his fiendish boon and Rapid Shot with his longbow. The effects of these abilities are not included in his stat block.

During Combat Gruulok likes to attack from ambush if possible, pelting his opponents with arrows from cover or concealment. He attempts to neutralize or at least hinder mounted opponents using hobble mount. If he is surrounded and outnumbered, Gruulok casts *doom of the blue crystal*, attempting to petrify his foes before smashing the statues to pieces with his axe. He freely mixes his touch of corruption ability with his melee attacks, thanks to his Fast Corruption* feat.



STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 30

Feats Deadly Aim, Fast Corruption*, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow)

Skills Bluff +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (religion) +5, Stealth +9

Languages Gnoll

SQ angelskin, aura of evil, fiendish boon (fiendish boon [weapon; +3 enhancement, 11 minutes, 2/day]), unholy resilience

Combat Gear belt of teeth^{UE}, potion of cure serious wounds, potion of protection from good (2), greenblood oil (5); **Other Gear** +2 angelskin studded leather, +1 battleaxe, +1 flaming burst composite longbow (+3 Str) with 40 arrows, mwk dagger, ring of protection +2, iron unholy symbol, mewling horn^{ARC}, spell component pouch

SPECIAL ABILITIES

CR Adjustment (Ex) Gruulok's CR is 1 higher due to his superior equipment.

* See the Antipaladins and Doomspeakers appendix on page 201

The gnoll Gruulok is a creature of exceptional ferocity and vileness that showed enough promise for the Domspeakers to indoctrinate him into the mysteries of *The Book of Nine Doms*. Gruulok is a ferocious but cunning fighter, preferring ambush tactics against greatly outnumbered or outmatched foes. He is a notorious cannibal, though he has a preference for the flesh of centaurs and halflings.

KOLYA THE RUINED

CR 12

XP 19,200

Female demon-spawn tiefling oracle 12 (*Pathfinder Player Companion: Blood of Fiends*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

CE Medium outsider (native)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +1

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 24 (+8 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +4 shield)

hp 105 (12d8+48)

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

Immune fatigue; **Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee bone whip +11/+6 (1d3+2 nonlethal)

Ranged +1 heavy crossbow +11 (1d10+1/19–20)

Special Attacks bleeding wounds (3 bleed), death's touch 6/day (1d6+5 negative energy, +2 channel resistance for 1 minute)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +16) 1/day—*shatter* (DC 16)

Oracle Spells Known (CL 12th; concentration +16) 6th (3/day)—*circle of death* (DC 22), *harm* (DC 22), *mass cure moderate wounds*

5th (5/day)—*doom of ancient decrepitude** (DC 21), *doom of the earthen maw*^{DM}, *mass cure light wounds*, *slay living* (DC 21)

4th (7/day)—*cure critical wounds*, *fear* (DC 20), *inflict critical wounds* (DC 20), *spiritual ally*^{APG}, *unholy blight* (DC 18)

3rd (7/day)—*animate dead*, *bestow curse* (DC 19), *cure serious wounds*, *glyph of warding*, *inflict serious wounds* (DC 19), *magic vestment*

2nd (7/day)—*cure moderate wounds*, *darkness*, *desecrate*, *false life*, *pilfering hand*^{UC}, *resist energy*, *spiritual weapon*

1st (7/day)—*cause fear* (DC 17), *cure light wounds* (2), *deathwatch*, *detect good*, *divine favor*, *obscuring mist*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 16), *create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *mending*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *spark*^{APG} (DC 14), *stabilize*

Mystery bones

TACTICS

Before Combat Kolya activates her armor of bones ability, which is reflected in her stat block.

During Combat Kolya lays into her opponents using her spells, casting *righteous might* before engaging. She channels her death's touch ability through her bone whip, using its enervation ability on what appears to be the most powerful of her opponents, especially enemy spellcasters. She saves her *inflict critical wounds* spell to use with her bleeding wounds ability against frail targets.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Iron Will, Spell Focus (necromancy), Toughness

Skills Diplomacy +14, Heal +14, Knowledge (religion) +14, Perception +1, Profession (soldier) +12, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +15; **Racial**

Modifiers +2 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Common, Gnomish

SQ oracle's curse (lame), revelations (armor of bones, bleeding wounds, death's touch, spirit walk), slow and steady

Combat Gear *potion of fly*, *potion of nondetection*, *scroll of righteous might*, *spellguard bracers*^{UE}; **Other Gear** *bone whip**, +2 *heavy steel shield*, +1 *heavy crossbow* with 10 crossbow bolts, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *ring of protection* +1, healer's kit, *mwk backpack*^{UE}, *mwk manacles*, silver unholy symbol



SPECIAL ABILITIES

CR Adjustment (Ex) Kolya's CR is 1 higher due to her superior equipment.

Kolya was born with visible traces of demonic taint in her bloodline, which she tried to hide as best she could. In her teens, her secret was discovered while traveling through a small frontier town. She was brutally savaged by the townsfolk—disfigured and crippled—before being left for dead outside of town. She survived, crawling away to find an animal den in which to recover. She believes that demons spoke to her during the fever dreams she had then, and perhaps they did. Either way, she was granted abilities that aided in her eventual recovery (though her legs remain damaged, a sacrifice for her gifts). Her new power allowed her to rise from prey to predator. She attracted a contingent of gnolls drawn to her destructive, violent demeanor. United, they visited death upon the deserving, beginning with burning the town that brutalized her to the ground. In Kolya's eyes however, all are deserving of death. Eventually, she was recruited by the Doomspeakers, who admired her power, demonic connections, and mercilessness. With her divine gifts and the spells learned from *The Book of Nine Dooms*, she works diligently to carve a bloody path through the world.

Kolya wears a copper mask to cover her scarred face, missing nose, and mouth of broken teeth. Only her orange eyes remain visible. The verdigris running from the eyeholes, down over the burnished cheeks, gives the appearance of green tears. Her horns are broken but still visible beneath her mop of unruly brown hair. Her left leg is twisted, and she limps badly on the right, her ankle permanently damaged. When attempting to intimidate and unnerve prisoners and sometimes foes, she removes her mask and exposes her ruined visage, promising to work on the individual until he looks just like her.

SKERR'ESH

CR 8

XP 4,800

Male gnoll cleric 8

CE Medium humanoid (gnoll)

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

Aura destructive aura (30 ft., +4 damage and auto-confirm critical hits, 8 rounds/day)

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+5 armor, +3 deflection, -1 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 83 (10d8+38)

Fort +11, **Ref** +1, **Will** +9

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *spear* +10/+5 (1d8+4/×3)

Ranged mwk sling +7 (1d4+2)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 5/day (DC 18, 4d6), chaos blade (4 rounds, 1/day), destructive smite (+4, 6/day)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concen. +11) 6/day—*touch of chaos*

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +11)

4th—*doom of serpent coils*^{DM} (DC 17), *inflict critical wound*^D (DC 17), *unholy blight* (DC 17)

3rd—*animate dead*, *cure serious wounds*, *protection from energy*, *rage*^D, *summon monster III*

2nd—*blood track*^{ARC}, *cure moderate wounds*, *dread bolt*^{UM} (DC 15), *shatter*^D (DC 15)

1st—*comprehend languages*, *murderous command*^{UM} (DC 14), *protection from law*^D, *ray of sickening*^{UM} (DC 14), *sanctuary* (DC 14), *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *read magic*

D domain spell; **Domains** Chaos, Destruction

TACTICS

Before Combat Skerr'esh casts *shield of faith* before entering combat. This is reflected in his stat block.

During Combat Skerr'esh lets his minions engage opponents directly, supporting them with summoned fiendish hyenas, *unholy blight* spells that target enemy spellcasters, and other offensive spells. If engaged directly, he uses his spear, using his destructive smite to drop a foe quickly.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21

Feats Extra Channel, Improved Channel, Improved Initiative, Selective Channeling, Toughness

Skills Diplomacy +9, Knowledge (religion) +7, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +7, Survival +10

Languages Gnoll

Combat Gear cheetah paw fetish^{ARC}, potion of barkskin +2, potion of blur, scroll of lesser planar ally; **Other**

Gear +1 mithral chain shirt, +1 spear, alchemical sling bullet, mwk sling with 10 sling bullets, headband of inspired wisdom +2, mwk manacles, silver unholy symbol, jewelry worth 150 gp.

Skerr'esh is an old gnoll, having survived nearly 50 years. At full height, he would be over 7 feet tall, but his natural slouch, combined with the hunching of old age, makes him stand no more than a few inches above 6 feet. The fur on his muzzle and along his shoulders and spine has gone gray. He remains a powerful combatant due to his divine power, though his physical abilities have faded with time. Skerr'esh serves as Kolya's right hand. He appreciates her subtlety and her well-planned and smartly executed violence. He advises her on her operations, offering his aged wisdom and practical experience dealing with slaves as well as the political machinations of demon cultists. Skerr'esh keeps several slaves himself, docile body servants to help and comfort him in his advanced age.

ANDORA NAVARRE

CR 6

XP 2,400

Female half-elf bard (arcane duelist) 7 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

CE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +10

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)

hp 49 (7d8+14)

Fort +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4; +2 vs. enchantments

Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +8 (1d6+3/18–20)

Ranged +1 composite shortbow +8 (1d6+2/×3)

Bard Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +10)

3rd (2/day)—*confusion* (DC 16), *doom of dancing blades*^{DM}

2nd (4/day)—*doom of the slippery rogue*^{DM}, *mirror image*, *silence* (DC 15), *suggestion* (DC 15)

1st (5/day)—*charm person* (DC 14), *detect secret doors*, *disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*, *grease*

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 13), *message*, *read magic*, *spark*^{APG} (DC 13)

TACTICS

Before Combat Andora casts *expeditious retreat* and *mirror image* before combat if possible. These spells are not reflected in her stats.

During Combat Andora likes to roam the battlefield, sticking and moving. She uses the extra movement from *expeditious retreat* to prevent too many foes from closing on her. She casts *confusion* on other melee fighters to keep them disorganized and *silence* near spellcasters to thwart their efforts and to herd them closer to her so she can hit them with Spring Attack. She uses her bladethirst ability to give her rapier the keen special ability for as long as possible.

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 16

Base Atk +5; CMB +7; CMD 20

Feats Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Disruptive, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Skill Focus (Perform [oratory]), Spring Attack

Skills Acrobatics +12, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +10, Perception +10, Perform (oratory) +16, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +6, Stealth +6;

Racial Modifiers +2 Perception

Languages Common, Elven

SQ arcane bond (rapier, 1/day), bardic performance 19 rounds/day (move action; bladethirst, distraction, fascinate [DC 16], inspire competence +3, inspire courage +2, rallying cry), elf blood

Combat Gear *elixir of tumbling*, *potion of bull's strength*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, smokestick (4); **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, darkwood buckler (wooden), +1 composite shortbow (+1 Str) with 20 arrows, +1 rapier, *elixir of hiding*, disguise kit, silver unholy symbol, jewelry (worth 100 gp).

The fifth daughter of a minor nobleman, Andora fled her home as soon as talk of an arranged marriage began. She lived by her wits, traveling with an acting troupe for a time, learning fencing and narration, and engaged in a decadent and hedonistic lifestyle. After a scandalous affair with a married noble was discovered, she was sent to jail on trumped-up charges. Her life in prison was rough, and she quickly grew jaded and hateful of those born into power. As luck would have it, a Doomspeaker was imprisoned with her. When his allies came to

break him out, she made herself useful and was taken along, falling quickly into their depraved cult and learning their ways. As is her wont, Andora's schemes usually involve the downfall of the nobility, either by involving them in scandals or by straightforward assassination or kidnapping.

CULT ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURE HOOKS

Here are several methods of introducing the Doomspeakers as adversaries in your campaign. They can be opponents for single adventures or returning enemies in an extended campaign, pitting the PCs against increasingly more powerful members of the cult as they do their demonic masters' wills and spread chaos and destruction throughout the land.

APL 1–3

- **Caravans crossing the great plains are not reaching their destination.** PCs investigating the situation (perhaps joining a caravan as guards) find themselves attacked by the walking corpses of those lost in prior caravans. With a bit of skill, the PCs can discover where they came from. In an old ruin on the plain, a member of the Doomspeakers placates his gnoll troopers with goods and food from the caravans while industriously reanimating the corpses of the fallen. The undead are sent out to wander uncontrolled over the roads in order to further disrupt trade. Should the PCs defeat the cleric and his gnoll troopers, they find a book about unholy demonic texts, including one called *The Book of Nine Dooms*, among the cleric's possessions. That tome has copious handwritten notes in the margins, including mention of a hidden settlement around a forgotten oasis deeper in the desert.
- **Gnolls are reported lurking in the ruins near an oasis on a busy trade route.** The PCs are hired to scout the situation and roust the gnolls if possible. The gnolls put up a fierce fight but flee after losing a third of their number. An exploration of the area reveals that the gnolls were intent on opening a sealed vault under the remains of some large, important building—perhaps a temple or civic building—too far gone to discern its exact purpose.

Should the PCs commit to opening the vault, they find it a long and arduous process, as the walls and door are two feet of solid stone. The gnolls return during the process and attack the PCs. Again, they flee if they lose half their numbers. Should the PCs enter the vault, they find a room filled with strange trappings— boxes containing crumbling incense and temple accouterments, a locked shrine, and a golden idol of an obviously demonic entity. It is up to the PCs what they wish to do with this discovery, but the remaining gnolls once more throw themselves at the party in a desperate last attempt to win the contents of the vault, fighting to the death. Should the PCs win, they can head back to civilization.

- ***The PCs are hired as night watch for a rather strange museum exhibit.*** An eccentric collector of sculpture has acquired six statues of blue crystal, all done in the likeness of men and women in the throes of combat. She keeps them on display in her public gallery while she attempts to research their

origins. She bought them from a caravan master who claimed he found them alongside the route he traveled to get to the city, simply sitting in the sand at the side of the trail. The collector is certain they were not made by any local artisan, living or dead, that she knows.

After the gallery closes for the evening, the place is invaded by gnolls, who attempt to get past the PCs to smash the statues and attack any heroes who interfere. The gnolls flee into the night after succeeding at their task (though some might take the time to grab a few portable valuables on the way out). Should the PCs capture any of the gnolls, they may discover through interrogation that the statues were once alive, turned to crystal by a powerful spell cast by a Doomspeaker. If the PCs manage to find a way to return the statues to flesh again, they find a party of competent adventurers who reward the PCs for their assistance and possibly recruit them in the crusade to root out the Doomspeakers and bring them to justice.

THE DOOMSPEAKERS IN MIDGARD

In the Southlands, the Doomspeakers recruit many of the gnolls of the Sarkland Desert, the gnolls drawn by their strength and the thought of easy conquest. While the Doomspeakers are universally despised by all peace-loving citizens of the Southlands, one name in particular inspires great fear and loathing: Narn the Crucifier. The antipaladin's depredations and atrocities have caused the sultana to declare him an enemy of the empire, promising great riches to the one that presents his head before her throne, and torturous death is guaranteed for any found aiding Narn in any way.

Narn's fellow antipaladin Gruulok avoids such powerful resistance. He sticks to raiding the caravans, wandering tribes, and occasional settlements in the vicinity of the Sarkland Desert. Despite this cautious outlook, Gruulok has his own ambitions, hoping his show of strength allows him to unite most, if not all, of the gnoll tribes in the area under his banner, providing a powerful enough force to safely move on larger targets, like the cities of Nuria Natal.

The Doomspeakers have a hidden temple complex in the south that serves as their main base of operations

and the resting place of *The Book of Nine Dooms*. Some say it is hidden in ruins somewhere in the desert, others that it is hidden below ground in one of the cities in Nuria Natal, perhaps Per-Bastet or the City of Scorpions. Another theory says it actually lies in a sea cave on one of the islands off the southern coast of the Mharoti Empire. Wherever they lair, the Doomspeakers have proven a threat to all civilized areas in the Southlands, even daring to challenge the might of the Dragon Empire.

The Doomspeakers also have a presence on the Rothenian Plain. Some say they lair in caves under Demon Mountain by permission of the Master of the Mountain. Others claim they lurk in the forests north of the plain. Here, like in the Southlands, they also avail themselves of the local gnolls as troops, using them to bring grief to all residents of the plain—centaurs, huginn, kariv—through raids, pillaging, and enslavement. In particular, Kolya the Ruined, and her lieutenant, the aged priest Skerr'esh, are fond of enslaving the plainsfolk. Kolya fancies kariv slaves in particular; it amuses her to end family bloodlines by tying them to one place and allowing the kariv curse to take effect.

APL 4–6

- ***Warring clans have caused a steady stream of refugees to flee westward away from the conflict.***

Many settlements turn them away, afraid of disease, overcrowding, and food shortages. However, word of a place of sanctuary begins spreading among the refugee camp tents. In the foothills of the mountains to the north, a valley settlement has sent out an open invitation to the refugees, promising food, shelter, and opportunity. Yet, a feverish, exhausted refugee arrives on the outskirts of a town the PCs are currently visiting. Before collapsing into unconsciousness, she mumbles a few cryptic words “Good Hope... betrayed... false friendship... everyone taken...”

A brief investigation yields the information that Good Hope is the name of the community that is supposedly taking in refugees. Should the PCs investigate, they find a walled but peaceful looking community where the refugees are being tended. Overly curious visitors soon discover that the town is actually a cover for slavers working for the Doomspeakers, overseen by Skerr’esh the gnoll cleric and his band of gnolls hidden in a network of tunnels beneath the town. These passageways enable the gnolls to shuttle the new slaves out to buyers elsewhere. If the PCs win here, they attract the personal attention of Kolya the Ruined, who seeks revenge for this disruption of her work.

- ***A notorious rogue seeks to sell a tome to a spellcaster or religious figure in the party.***

He says he has nicked a powerful magical tome: *The Book of the Nine Dooms*. At first, he is cagey and wrangles for a good deal but soon becomes desperate to be rid of the book—agreeing to an amount well below his original asking price. When the night of the hand-off finally comes, the rogue is nervous and strange sounds in the night cause him to panic. He thrusts the wrapped book into the hands of a PC and flees into the night. If they pursue, they come upon him as he is struck down by several dark-garbed figures. Should the strangers see the packaged book in other hands, they target that person and any who assist.

Should the PCs instead decide to leave with their new prize, they hear of the rogue’s demise the

following day. He apparently died of near-complete exsanguination from his eyes, ears, and mouth, found lying in a great pool of his own blood. The party eventually discovers that what they hold is not *The Book of the Nine Dooms*, but a copy. Despite this, the Doomspeakers are ready to slay anyone in their path to recover the book. What the PCs do with it is up to them. If they keep it, they are sure to become regular targets for assassins and agents of the Doomspeakers. Should they turn it over to the authorities or a temple, then it is safe for a while, until a daring raid returns it to the hands of the cult. If they destroy it, the Doomspeakers stop pressing them, but they mark them as enemies to be dealt with later.

- ***A wronged noble seeks out one of the PCs to be his champion in a duel of honor.*** He invites the other PCs to attend and expects them to come along to the victory feast after their companion wins in the noble’s name. Unfortunately for the noble, his retinue, and the PCs, the man who wronged him was not actually another noble, but Doomspeaker Andora Navarre in disguise. She takes advantage of her effrontery to lure the noble and his people to a remote location where her minions hide, ready to kill or capture everyone. What first appears to be honorable single combat soon turns into a desperate battle against a horde of evil with the PCs not only having to defend themselves, but also the noble and his entourage of courtiers and attendants.

APL 7–9

- ***The centaurs of the plains become suddenly aggressive towards traveling humans.*** If the PCs manage to make contact without being attacked themselves, the centaurs demand that their leaders stop their raids on the centaur tribes, and they threaten outright war if this demand is not met immediately. Investigation leads to a group of Doomspeakers, disguised as soldiers from a nearby country, who are killing the centaurs to goad them into open warfare.
- ***The PCs discover a secret slave market in a city where such trade is outlawed.*** Interrogating prisoners after breaking up the ring reveals that the slaves are smuggled into the city via ship

at regular intervals. If the PCs await the ship's next landing, they find a fierce Doomspeaker antipaladin and his scurvy cohorts ready to defend their living cargo, drugged and hidden in barrels marked as salt pork. They are not above distracting overly moral opponents by kicking barrels of enslaved folk overboard into the bay.

- ***The son of a local noblewoman travels with a caravan to meet his bride and stay with her and her family is kidnapped by gnoll raiders.*** The noblewoman learns of this from survivors of the attack. What concerns her is that no ransom demand has been made. Fearing the worst, she hires the PCs to track down the raiders and rescue her son. The raiders are found in an ancient ruin deep in the desert, where the PCs soon discover that the gnolls serve the Doomspeaker Gruulok. The gnoll intends to sacrifice the noble's son in an extravagant and extraordinarily bloody ritual in order to bind a demon to his service. The PCs should work to disrupt this ceremony quickly, or they may not only face a powerful antipaladin, but also his new demonic ally.

APL 10–12

- ***Seeking a challenge worthy of his might, Narn the Crucifier has set off on a rampage of historic carnage.*** He makes his way toward the coast to slaughter caravans, wandering tribes, and settlements in his path. Narn leaves a trail of crosses hanging with his dead and dying victims in his wake, a road of carnage to the sea, until he finds foes worthy to face him. The PCs are asked to slay the Doomspeaker, in hopes that his gnoll troops will scatter back to the plains once he is dead.
- ***The PCs attend the memorial service of a wealthy guild merchant.*** The service is interrupted by the local constabulary, who accuse the merchant of conspiring with slavers. Damning evidence is presented and the estates of the deceased merchant are seized by the government. His wife begs the PCs to investigate the matter. She hopes the heroes turn up anything that clears her deceased husband of the charge so that she and her children are not be turned out in the street, or worse, found to be collaborators. If the PCs can

convince the constables to cooperate, they can peruse the evidence and find the trail that leads them to the slavers. A group of Doomspeaker cultists is in charge of the slaver operation, under the command of Kolya the Ruined. Defeating or driving off the Doomspeakers allows the party to gather evidence that the merchant was being blackmailed into cooperating. While not clearing him of wrongdoing, it may be enough to convince the law to be more lenient in his case.

- ***People of importance throughout the realm are being assassinated.*** There seems to be no rhyme or reason to the choice of targets, save that they are all influential men and women—priests, nobles, wealthy merchants—and no two murders are alike. In fact, some feel there is no connection to them at all, that it is simply a rash of murders only coincidentally linked. A paranoid noble or a priest troubled by a premonition asks the PCs to stay close. Soon, the assassin shows, and it is none other than Narn the Crucifier. The Doomspeaker has recruited a wizard to fashion for him new weapons, a collection of *primal dooms* (see page 82) Narn finds it poetic that each target dies at the hands of her worst fears. Faced with the PCs, he uses his arsenal of items in rapid succession, which leaves the PCs to face not only a powerful cultist, but creatures from their darkest nightmares.

CULTISTS OF THE DOOMSPEAKERS

The Doomspeakers recruit the vile, the ruthless, the dangerous, and the insane. The following NPCs can be used as cultist minions, intermediaries, and lower-level leaders to provide suitable enemies for the PCs as they strive against the Doomspeakers.

RUTHLESS THUG

CR 3

XP 800

Gnoll unchained rogue (thug) 3 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Pathfinder Unchained*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

CE Medium humanoid (gnoll)

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

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural, +1 shield)

hp 40 (5d8+18)

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk short sword +7 (1d6+2/19–20)

Ranged composite shortbow +5 (1d6+1/×3)

Special Attacks brutal beating, frightening, sneak attack +2d6

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16

Feats Dazzling Display, Improved Initiative, Intimidating Prowess, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (short sword)

Skills Acrobatics +8, Climb +7, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +8, Perception +6, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +9, Survival +8

Languages Gnoll

SQ rogue talent (strong impression^{APG})

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), alchemist's fire (3), large scorpion venom; **Other Gear** mwk studded leather, mwk buckler (wooden), composite shortbow (+1 Str) with 20 arrows, mwk short sword, mwk manacles, silk rope (50 ft.), 27 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Frightening (Ex) Whenever a thug successfully uses Intimidate to demoralize a creature, the duration of the shaken condition is increased by 1 round. In addition, if the target is shaken for 4 or more rounds, the thug can instead decide to make the target frightened for 1 round.

Brutal Beating (Ex) Whenever a thug deals sneak attack damage, she can choose to forgo 1d6 points of sneak attack damage to make the target sickened for a number of rounds equal to 1/2 her rogue level. This ability does not stack with itself—only the most recent duration applies.

The ruthless thug is the backbone of the Doomspeakers' forces. This strong but craven rogue is easily manipulated and motivated as much by the promise of wealth as the opportunity to cause fear and pain. Groups of ruthless thugs guard strongholds or raid caravans and settlements for loot and slaves.

DARK SQUIRE

CR 4

XP 1,600

Human fighter 2/rogue 3

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 44 (3d8+2d10+15)

Fort +6; **Ref** +5; **Will** +2; +1 vs. fear effects

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, evasion, trap sense +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk bastard sword +7 (1d10+3/19–20), shield bash +5 (1d4+1)

Ranged mwk heavy crossbow +7 (1d10/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Shield Bash, Power Attack, Shield Focus, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (bastard sword)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +6, Disable Device +10, Intimidate +10, Perception +9, Stealth +5, Swim +4

Languages Common

SQ trapfinding

Combat Gear antitoxin (2), oil of taggit (1 dose), shadow essence (2 doses), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of protection from good*; **Other Gear** mwk bastard sword, mwk heavy crossbow with 10 bolts, +1 *breastplate*, mwk spiked light steel shield, poison pill signet ring^{UE}, poison sheath^{UE}, silver unholy symbol, 60 gp

Dark squires serve as attendants and companions of the Doomspeakers. Typically a dark squire is attached to a particular Doomspeaker, serving in the hopes of one day ascending to higher rank. Those squires that perform well and survive the rigors of their service are often given positions of command over lesser troops of the cult. While a single dark squire is usually encountered with a Doomspeaker, they are occasionally sent on missions, either alone, with one or two other dark squires, or in command of three to six ruthless thugs.

DOOMSPEAKER

CR 8

XP 3,200

Human antipaladin 9

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +3**Aura** cowardice (10 ft.), despair (10 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 22 (+10 armor, +2 deflection, +1 Dex)**hp** 72 (9d10+18)**Fort** +10; **Ref** +7; **Will** +8**Immune** disease

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.**Melee** +1 *unholy falchion* +13/+8 (2d4+4/15-20)**Ranged** mwk composite longbow +11/+6 (1d8+3/x3)**Special Attacks** channel negative energy (DC 16, 5d6), cruelties (DC 16, poisoned, shaken [9 rounds], staggered [4 rounds]), smite good 3/day (+2 to attack and AC, +9 damage), touch of corruption (4d6, 8/day)**Antipaladin Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 9th, conc. +11)At will—*detect good***Spells Known** (CL 6th; concentration +8)2nd—*doom of consuming fire*^{DM}, *invisibility*1st—*death knell*, *doom of cowards*^{DM}, *protection from good*

TACTICS

Before Combat The doomspeaker casts *protection from good* on himself, and uses his fiendish boon to give his greatsword the unholy special ability. The benefits of these effects are included in the stat block. If powerful foes are known or expected, the doomspeaker will load poison into his sheath to poison his falchion.

During Combat The doomspeaker moves into melee with the most dangerous opponent, attempting to strike that enemy down quickly. Against large numbers of opponents, he uses channel energy. Note, his Channel Cruelty* is especially useful for multiple enemies. If outmatched, the doomspeaker casts *invisibility* and attempts to escape.

Base Statistics Without his fiendish boon enhancement and spells active, the doomspeaker's stats are **AC** 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19; **Melee** +1 *falchion* +13/+8 (2d4+4/15-20)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 23**Feats** Channel Cruelty*, Corrupting Smite*, Extra Lay on Hands, Improved Critical (falchion), Improved Initiative, Power Attack**Skills** Intimidate +8, Knowledge (religion) +5, Perception +3, Ride +2, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +7**Languages** Common**SQ** aura, fiendish boon (weapon; +2 enhancement bonus, 2/day, 9 minutes), unholy resilience**Combat Gear** alchemist's fire, antitoxin (2), large scorpion venom (2 doses), tangleburn bag^{UE}, *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 full plate, +1 falchion, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, *cloak of elvenkind*, poison sheath^{UE}, silver unholy symbol, 45 pp

* See the Antipaladins and Doomspeakers appendix on page 201

The doomspeaker is one of the demon-worshipping knights that lead this dark cult. A doomspeaker typically leads a small cell, and is often accompanied by a dark squire and up to 20 ruthless thugs. It isn't uncommon for a doomspeaker to also have a lieutenant, often a cleric of the doomspeaker's patron demon (use the wrath priest stats from the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex*) or sometimes a wizard to summon fiendish aid (use the conjurist stats from the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Mastery Guide*).

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Fear, destruction, and violence are aspects of items favored by those that revel in spreading doom.

BONE WHIP

Aura moderate necromancy; **CL** 9th**Slot** none; **Price** 21,265 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

This whip is constructed of humanoid vertebrae, their edges magically sharpened and pointed, joined together in a single, coiled line by strands of blackened steel wire. The handle is half a femur wrapped in soft leather of tanned human skin. This weapon functions as a +1 *conductive scorpion whip*^{UE}. In addition, once per day after a successful attack, the wielder can affect the target with an

enervation effect, bestowing 1d4 negative levels on the target. For every negative level afflicted on the target, the wielder of the bone whip gains 5 temporary hit points and a +1 profane bonus on damage rolls for 1 hour, after which these bonuses end and the target's negative levels are removed.



CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *enervation*;

Cost 10,632 gp

PRIMAL DOOM

Aura strong conjuration; **CL** 11th

Slot none; **Price** 3,300 gp; **Weight** 3 lbs.

Each *primal doom* appears to be a globe of crystal or glass with a murky liquid or smoke churning within. The wielder of a primal doom chooses a target and hurls the globe at it. The globe must strike within 10 feet of the intended target (treated as a splash weapon), otherwise the primal doom selects another target in range, at random. If no other target is within range, the primal doom is wasted. Upon breaking (which does no damage if it actually strikes the target), the contents of the globe—dark, primal essence of the Abyss—escapes and latches onto the mind of the target and forms itself into a fiendish creature based on the darkest fears of the target.

The formation of a creature takes a full round. The target creature is allowed a DC 20 Will save to avoid this psychic dredging of its mind. If the target's saving throw is successful, she is attacked by an animate dream (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*), in the form of their worst fear. If the target fails the save, the doom is an animate dream with the advanced simple template.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *summon monster VI*, creator must be a Doomspeaker; **Cost** 1,650 gp

NEW SPELL

All that live must die. Magic only speeds the process.

DOOM OF ANCIENT DECREPITUDE

School necromancy; **Level** antipaladin 4, druid 5, oracle 5

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, DF

Range personal

Target you

Effect 20-ft.-radius aura centered around you

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Fort negates, see text;

Spell Resistance yes

You generate an entropic field that rapidly ages you and anyone in the area of effect. On the first round, anyone within the area of effect must attempt a Fortitude saving throw. You gain a +2 profane bonus to saving throws against the spell. Failure advances a creature to middle age; it suffers the decrease to its physical statistics (–1 to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution) but gains none of the benefits. A successful saving throw staves off the aging effects, but each round a creature remains in the area, it must make another saving throw.

On a second failed save, the creature advances to old age, reducing its physical statistics by 2. A third failed save advances the creature to venerable age, reducing physical statistics by 3.

Any further failed saves continue to age a creature, causing physical disabilities.

Roll 1d4 for effect:

1	blindness	2	deafness
3	reduced mobility (reduce all movement speeds by 10 ft.)	4	dementia (treat target as <i>confused</i> for the duration of the spell).

Each failed saving throw past the third spent within the field ages the target another 10 years. A creature aged to the limit of its life span dies.

Once the spell ends, or a target leaves the area of effect, an affected creature's age begins to revert to normal, removing 1 round's worth of effects for every round outside the spell's area of effect. Any creatures killed by the spell's effects remain dead, however. Since they died of old age, they can only be returned to life with a *miracle* or *wish* spell.



THE EMERALD ORDER

The Emerald Order is devoted to the guardianship and understanding of the mysteries of the *Emerald Tablets*, on which the greatest arcane secrets of Thoth-Hermes are inscribed. The inner circle has divined the secrets of the tablets to enhance their already formidable magical abilities. Some have even tapped into the innate power invested in slivers of the gemstone tablets, drawing upon strange eldritch energies and create new items and fearsome guardians. Members of the Emerald Order guard the tablets and its secrets zealously, even from their fellow worshipers of Thoth-Hermes. Outsiders who

discover their presence or meddle in the affairs of the order find swift and often fatal retribution.

LEADERS, ORGANIZATION, AND GOALS

The Emerald Order is a secret society of cultists devoted to Thoth-Hermes. They consider themselves exalted among the god's followers due to their guardianship of the *Emerald Tablets*, a collection of knowledge carved into plates of transparent, high-indestructible verdant stone, which are said to contain the greatest secrets of their deity. Though

many followers of Thoth know about the existence of the tablets, the precise knowledge inscribed on them is a closely guarded secret, and the order ensures that only those initiated into their ranks and indoctrinated into the mysteries of the cult know of its contents.

The head of the Emerald Order is Dromdal-Re. He is its high priest as well as its chief instructor in the alchemical arts. The heads of arcane research, astrology, history, and theology comprise the rest of the High Council of the Order, though Dromdal-Re is the final arbiter should the other four fail to reach a consensus on an issue.

As custodians of ultimate knowledge, the followers of the Emerald Order consider it their duty to guide society through use of assassination, terrorism, manipulation, bribery, blackmail, and the other myriad tools of the political game. They scoff at those who call their actions wrong. Such myopic skeptics cannot see their long-term goals, nor do their opponents have access to the wisdom of the *Emerald Tablets*. The grand vision of the Emerald Order is a world that runs by their rules, if not directly under their control.

To this end, the members of the Emerald Order come from all walks of life. In their everyday lives, they are merchants, scholars, courtiers, counselors, healers, guild masters interwoven in the fabric of society and do their jobs without complaint. In secret hours of the night or in hidden meeting places during the day however, they come together to plot and conspire. These schemes usually involve members using their positions of power to manipulate events to the order's wishes. This sometimes is perceived as sowing chaos, but those with the order's understanding—or simply gifted with the ability to see the greater picture—know these seemingly disparate forces are merely pieces of a larger puzzle.

DROMDAL-RE

CR 16

XP 76,800

Male middle-aged human alchemist 6/disciple of the emerald esoterica 10 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*, see page 94)

LE Medium outsider (native)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +21

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 13, flat-footed 23 (+6 armor, +2 deflection, +1 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 119 (6d8+24)

Fort +9, **Ref** +10, **Will** +8; +4 bonus vs. poison

Resist poison resistance

DR 5/adamantine; **Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *adamantine sickle* +9/+4 (1d6)

Ranged +1 *light crossbow* +11 (1d8+1/19–20) or bomb +11 (3d6+5 fire) or frost bomb +11 (3d6+5 cold)

Special Attacks bomb 11/day (3d6+5 fire, DC 18)

Disciple of Emerald Esoterica Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +21)

At-Will—*elemental wall* (16 non-consecutive rounds)

5/day—*copycat*

3/day—*dimension door* (self only), *haste*, *slow*

1/day—*breath of life*, *dancing lights*, *finger of death*, *ghost sound*, *greater teleport* (self only), *prestidigitation*, *speak with animals*

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 16th; conc. +21)

6th—*heal*

5th—*contact other plane*, *delayed consumption*^{APG}, *drake form* II^{DM}, *elude time*^{APG}

4th—*death ward*, *detonate*^{APG} (DC 19), *greater invisibility*, *stoneskin*, *universal formula*^{APG}

3rd—*lesser age resistance*^{UM}, *amplify elixir*^{APG}, *arcane sight*, *fly*, *heroism*, *protection from energy*

2nd—*alchemical allocation*^{APG}, *alter self*, *fire breath*^{APG} (DC 17), *fox's cunning*, *lesser restoration*, *undetectable alignment* (DC 17)

1st—*disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*, *identify*, *magnetism*, *negate aroma*^{APG} (DC 16), *shield*, *true strike*

TACTICS

Before Combat Dromdal-Re starts his day with an extract of *lesser age resistance*, offsetting his age penalties. He is also the beneficiary of a permanent *barkskin* effect through use of his eternal potion discovery. Additionally, if he has time to prepare for an encounter, he drinks his *shield*, *protection from energy*, and *fly* extracts, followed by his *copycat* ability, in that order, before confronting opponents.

The effects of the latter three extracts are not included in his stat block.

Base Statistics If Dromdal-Re's *lesser age resistance* is dispelled or otherwise denied him, his ability scores change as follows **Str 8, Dex 12, Con 14**.

STATISTICS

Str 9, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 20, Wis 15, Cha 13

Base Atk +9; CMB +8 (+10 dirty trick); CMD 21 (23 vs. dirty trick)

Feats Brew Potion, Combat Expertise, Extra Discovery^{APG}, Improved Dirty Trick^{APG}, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Throw Anything, Toughness

Skills Appraise +16, Bluff +17, Craft (alchemy) +24 (+30 to create alchemical items), Diplomacy +17, Fly +12, Heal +15, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (nature) +24, Knowledge (religion) +15, Perception +21, Sense Motive +18, Sleight of Hand +8, Spellcraft +24, Use Magic Device +12

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnome, Infernal, Terran

SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +6), discoveries (concentrate poison, eternal potion, extend potion, frost bomb, poison conversion^{UC}, precise bombs [5 squares]), key of cause and effect, key of correspondence, key of magic (conjuration school), key of mysteries (additional discovery), key of time, key of wisdom (trickery domain), key to above and below, key of prophecy, keys of life and death, mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural armor, 60 minutes), poison use, secret of secrets (additional discovery) swift alchemy

Combat Gear *fey child necklace*^{UE}, *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of nondetection*, blue whinnis (4), healer's kit, shadow essence (10);

Other Gear +2 glamerd mithral chain shirt, +1 adamantite sickle, +1 light crossbow with 20 crossbow bolts, *blessed book*, *cloak of resistance* +2, *handy haversack*, *headband of mental prowess* +2 (Int, Cha), *ring of protection* +2, mwk thieves' tools, signet ring, silver holy symbol of Thoth-Hermes

SPECIAL ABILITIES

CR Adjustment (Ex) Dromdal-Re's CR is 1 higher due to superior equipment.

A striking man, Dromdal-Re is the offspring of a Nurian alchemist and a beautiful traveling scholar from Skaldholm. Though nearing 40, Dromdal-Re remains handsome with a strong presence. His dark hair has receded slightly, forming a widow's peak and has begun to gray at the temples. Independently wealthy, Dromdal-Re maintains the public persona of an adjunct sage or professor to some of Nuri Natal's finest institutes of higher learning. Within those university halls, he lectures on obscure arcana and offers his services to those who need consultation on ancient artifacts or bygone magic.

The majority of Nuri Natal's academia is unaware that he is secretly the head of the Emerald Order. His peers and subordinates within the Order play the roles of mere acquaintances, academic rivals, and even complete strangers. In secret, they work to decipher more knowledge from the *Emerald Tablets* and to use that knowledge to reshape to create a new world order, one in which the reins of power are held firmly by Dromdal-Re.



Dromdal-Re's *blessed book* serves as his formula book (alternatively the GM may treat it as a different wondrous item that is otherwise identical but suitable for formulae) and contains all his prepared extracts as well as the following: 6th—*quintessence*^{DM}; 4th—*freedom of movement, restoration*; 3rd—*haste, remove disease, water breathing*; 2nd—*detect thoughts, eagle's splendor, vital mark*^{DM}; 1st—*comprehend languages, reduce person*. In a Midgard setting campaign, replace Celestial, Elven, Infernal, and Terran with the Ankeshelian, Elemental, Enochian, and Nurian languages.

CULT ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURE HOOKS

You have several options to introduce the Emerald Order as adversaries for the PCs in your campaign. They can be opponents for single adventures or returning enemies in an extended campaign that pits the PCs against the growing threat of the cult as its members expedite their cunning, convoluted plans, and march inexorably closer to world domination.

APL 1–3

- ***The PCs are hired by the business partner, close friend, or relative of a prominent citizen in the city.*** This prominent citizen is acting strangely, and the PCs' employer fears this prominent citizen is being somehow manipulated. The employer can see the subtle differences but is unable to convince anyone else and they would like to hire the PCs to discreetly investigate. The PCs discover the most prominent new life change is the subject's recent induction in a group called the Whitehall Brotherhood, a spiritual retreat that offers enlightenment through membership and ritual meditation techniques. This is a cover for the Emerald Order, who uses the apparently benevolent society to gain access to well-to-do subjects and manipulate them through magic and the tainted water of the brotherhood's bathhouse.
- ***The PCs are hired by city leaders to escort a local diplomat to the hinterlands, where she will negotiate peace between two warring clans.*** However, at some point during the trip, the

diplomat disappears. PCs that track the missing diplomat eventually realize she was not abducted but ran off on her own. If captured, she admits that she is being extorted by an unknown agency, who kidnapped her family and promised to do them harm unless the peace talks fail. She was told that if the clans make peace, the kidnappers will know, and her family will be dead before she returns to the capital. The PCs must convince her to do her duty or allow the clan feud to erupt, disrupting trade and endangering travelers. The PCs also discover a spy observing the negotiation, which might lead to a chase scene in order to stop the spy before he gives his report and imperils the diplomat's family. The captured spy could give up the location of the hostages, prompting a rescue mission by the PCs while the diplomat does her job.

- ***The party witnesses a mysterious cloaked figure in a tavern while they enjoy a couple of drinks.*** The stranger appears to watch the PCs carefully after he enters and sits down. If the party does not confront him, he is discovered dead a short while later. The PCs might even be considered suspects in his murder. The server says she received a generous tip on the condition that she must leave the stranger (and any guest that shares his table) alone unless called. The barkeep says the stranger instructed him to send over anyone asking for someone of his description. If the PCs elect to investigate, they receive the tavern owner's gratitude, as the presence of the city watch is bad for business. If the PCs determine whom the stranger intended to meet, they discover he planned to sell a copy of the writings from the legendary *Emerald Tablets*. These duplicates have mysteriously vanished. This can be just the first step in a series of leads that reveal the Emerald Order's various nefarious conspiracies.

APL 4–6

- ***A local town council has made a major change of direction in their governance.*** A concerned guildmaster or local noble is puzzled as he has many allies on the council, and these new policies are hostile to his position and threaten the balance of power. He hires the PCs to investigate, sure that

someone or something has gained some manner of influence over the council. In actuality, the entire council is dead. They were assassinated and replaced by doppelgangers that operate under the directives of the Emerald Order.

- ***The PCs are hired to deliver healing herbs to a group of tribesfolk.*** An illness has broken out among the tribe and the herbs will help ward off the disease, especially for the elderly and the very young. One of the PCs is the spitting image of a person heralded in a local prophecy as the great savior of the people. The delivery of medicine fits in nicely with the first part of the prophecy. There are other tasks the tribe expects the savior to perform, including the location of a new oasis, the restoration of a relic to the tribe's holy shrine, and the defeat of a nasty monster that preys upon the people. Should the "savior" not live up to preordained expectations, then there is political fallout that leaves the local clergy out of favor. This was, of course, the Emerald Order's plan all along and why the PCs were hired for the mission in the first place—to fail. Once the old clergy is gone, the Order can maneuver their own people into place and further their own agenda. If the PCs have the gall to start to successfully fulfil the prophecy, the Emerald Order must covertly intervene to undermine them.
- ***A local noble receives a ring of regeneration as a gift.*** A kingly present for one of her station until the curse upon the ring takes effect. She begins to grow, her skin becoming green and warty, her mind tempted to violent outbursts. The PCs must track down the gift-giver or someone able to remove the curse, which is strangely difficult to do. Otherwise, the noble transforms into a troll and will be deposed so that someone more pliable is installed—someone directly loyal to the Emerald Order.

APL 7–9

- ***A wizard of renown uses a newly acquired spell to summon a demon.*** However, an unnoticed flaw in the protective spell he used, allows the demon to possess the wizard. Competent adventurers are needed to help stop the wizard from running amok and spreading death and destruction.

Also, as the wizard is also a favored relative of the queen, it is preferred he be taken alive so an exorcism can be performed. Whether they succeed or not, the PCs discover the wizard purchased the spell from another student of the arcane. Pursuit of this individual leads them to a member of the Emerald Order, who purposely sold the wizard the flawed spell as an attempted assassination, which the PCs may unwittingly be party to.

- ***In the midst of an ocean voyage, the PCs' ship is attacked by a great sea creature and sunk.*** They are saved by a friendly group of aquatic humanoids and taken to the nearest shore—a small, lonely island far from any shipping lanes. A monastery sits upon the highest point of the island. Should the PCs seek out the inhabitants, they find a cell of academic hermits who are oddly suspicious about their arrival. This branch of the Emerald Order is not keen to have the PCs as guests, and if the PCs are caught snooping, they incur violent reprisals. Yet, whatever transpires in this remote location is of vital importance to the Emerald Order's sinister and long-reaching plans.

APL 10–12

- ***A once beloved ruler is rapidly falling out of favor with his people.*** Every policy instituted by the noble seems to backfire or have unintended consequences that further anger the people and push them closer to open rebellion. The PCs are heroes of the realm, respected and well liked by both the common folk and the noble. He asks them to join his council and help sort out the mess. The noble's closest adviser, however, is not keen on this plan and seeks to have the PCs ousted, and perhaps even used as scapegoats for everything, unless they can compete at this level of political machinations.
- ***An archaeological expedition in the desert hasn't been seen in weeks.*** When the PCs are sent to investigate, they come upon the remains of the camp outside a long-forgotten pyramid. Notes left by the head of the expedition speak of terrible traps, crystalline guardians, and a beautiful set of emerald tablets devoted to the god Thoth-Hermes.

- **A virulent disease has stricken the kingdom's crops, monsters disrupt trade, and a neighboring nation is threatening war.** Amid all this, the queen is presented with a great gift: the *Emerald Tablets of Thoth-Hermes*, whose power could help save the kingdom from its perils. This is a ploy by the Emerald Order, a final gambit to throw the whole region into chaos. Use of the tablets without the proper knowledge is dangerous and the great scholar Dromdal-Re offers his assistance in deciphering the tablets. The PCs, tasked with guarding the tablet, begin to suspect Dromdal-Re's intentions are not as benevolent as they seem. He ingratiates himself with the queen however, and their investigations into him are stymied as she sends them off to deal with various outside threats.

CULTISTS OF THE EMERALD ORDER

The Emerald Order recruits members of intellect and guile who understand that the knowledge of the Emerald Tablet is ultimate power. Cult members are subtle, well prepared, and typically have back up plans should things go wrong. The following NPCs can be used as cultist minions, intermediaries, and lower-level leaders to provide suitable enemies for the PCs as they strive against the Emerald Order.

EMERALD APPRENTICE

CR 2

XP 600

Human alchemist (internal alchemist) 3 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic*)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+3 armor, +1 Dex, +4 shield)

hp 23 (3d8+6)

Fort +4; **Ref** +4; **Will** +5; +3 vs. disease, +2 vs. poison

Defensive Abilities disease resistance +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. with all equipment)

Melee mwk cold iron sickle +3 (1d6)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +4 (1d8/19-20) or bomb +3 (2d6+2 fire plus 1d4+1 **Str** penalty)

Special Attacks bomb 5/day (2d6+2 fire plus 1d4+1 **Str** penalty, DC 14)

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 3rd)

1st—*disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*, *shield*, *withering bomb admixture*^{DM}

TACTICS

Before Combat If given time to prepare, the emerald apprentice drinks her *shield* and *withering bomb admixture* extracts. Those benefits are included in her stat block.

During Combat The emerald apprentice targets any strong-looking opponents with bombs, looking to sap their strength before they engage in melee.

Base Statistics Without *shield* or *withering bomb admixture*, the emerald apprentice's stats are **AC** 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; **Ranged** bomb +3 (2d6+2 fire); **Special Attacks** bomb 5/day (2d6+2 fire, DC 14)

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 12, **Con** 13, **Int** 15, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 13

Feats Brew Potion, Extra Discovery, Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Skills Craft (alchemy) +8 (+11 to create alchemical items), Disable Device +7, Heal +8, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Perception +8, Sleight of Hand +7, Spellcraft +7

Languages Common, Draconic, Gnoll

SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +1, identify potions), breath mastery, discoveries (cognatogen, spontaneous healing), mutagen, poison use

Combat Gear acid (2), alchemist's fire (2), antitoxin, blue whinnis (2 doses), large scorpion venom (1 dose), oil of taggit (2 doses), *potions of cure light wounds* (2), tanglefoot bags (2); **Other Gear** mwk cold iron sickle, mwk light crossbow with 10 bolts, mwk studded leather, alchemy crafting kit, formula book (contains all prepared extracts as well as comprehend languages and cure light wounds), sunrods (2), 29 gp

Emerald apprentices are alchemists recruited by the cult. Given tantalizing glimpses of the alchemical secrets scribed upon the *Emerald Tablets*, they have thrown in with the Emerald Order with hopes of rising high enough in the ranks to further delve into the knowledge contained therein.

These apprentices are often tasked with delicate missions, such as silencing competitors seeking the location of the *Emerald Tablets*, recovering lost copies of the tablet's knowledge, or retrieving likely recruits for meetings with minor leaders of the cult. Such subjects are typically convinced to serve the Emerald Order's interests using a combination of bribery, blackmail, and veiled threats.

AGENT OF THE ORDER

CR 4

XP 1,200

Dwarf investigator (spiritualist) 5 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Class Guide*)

LE Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex)
hp 31 (5d8+5)

Fort +1; **Ref** +6; **Will** +5; +2 vs. poison, spells, and spell-like abilities; +4 vs. death effects and negative energy

Defensive Abilities strong life, whispering spirits

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 sword cane +5 (1d6+2)

Ranged +1 hand crossbow +6 (1d4+1/19-20)

Special Attacks studied combat, studied strike +1d6

Commune with Spirits Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th, Casting time: 1 minute)

2nd—*augury*

1st—*comprehend languages, detect secret doors, identify*

TACTICS

Before Combat The agent of the Order applies *oils of magic weapon* to his sword cane and hand crossbow. These benefits are included in his stat block.

During Combat The agent of the Order only fights if the odds are with him. If obviously outmatched or severely outnumbered, he attempts to flee as best he is able, using his *snapleaf* to take a route his opponents cannot follow, such as out a window or over a cliff.

Base Statistics Without *oils of magic weapon* applied, the agent of the Order's stats are **Melee** mwk sword cane +5 (1d6+1); **Ranged** mwk hand crossbow +6 (1d4/19-20)

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16

Feats Extra Inspiration, Improved Initiative, Inspired Strike

Skills Acrobatics +10, Appraise +10, Bluff +8, Climb +8, Disable Device +10, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +9, Sense Motive +9, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +10

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Gnoll
SQ commune with spirits 6/day, inspiration pool (7 points), investigator talents (inspired alertness, quick study), keen recollection, sixth sense, spirit sense, trapfinding +2

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds, oil of magic weapon* (2), *snapleaf*^{UE}, antitoxin; **Other Gear** mwk sword cane, mwk hand crossbow with 10 bolts, mithral shirt, mwk thieves' tools, 10 pp

Agents of the Order often seek out important targets, such as enemies fleeing the cult's wrath, or lost knowledge that is exceptionally well hidden or in dangerous locales. Their ability to speak with the spirits of the dead sees them often combing old ruins or tombs, possibly racing adventurers to a common goal. For difficult missions, an agent of the Order may be accompanied by two to four emerald apprentices.

INITIATE OF THE INNER CIRCLE

CR 7

XP 3,200

Human diviner 5/disciple of emerald esoterica* 3

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +8; **Senses** Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +4 shield)

hp 45 (5d6+15)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee mwk quarterstaff +3 (1d6-1) or dagger +2 (1d4-1/19-20)

Ranged *wand of scorching ray* +5 ranged touch (4d6 fire)

Special Attacks erase from time (DC 12 Fort, 1 rd.)

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; conc. +12)
7/day—*diviner's fortune* (+2)

Diviner Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +12)

4th—*charm monster* (DC 20), *screaming* (DC 18),
summon monster IV, *triggered suggestion*^{ACG}
(DC 20)

3rd—*arcane sight*, *deep slumber* (DC 19), *dispel
magic*, *nondetection*, *portal jaunt*

2nd—*glitterdust* (DC 16), *master's eyes*, *resist
energy*, *see invisibility*, *steal voice*^{UM} (DC 16)

1st—*charm person* (DC 17), *detect secret doors*,
grease, *mage armor*, *obscuring mist*, *shield*

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 16), *detect magic*, *light*, *read
magic*

Opposition Schools illusion, transmutation

TACTICS

Before Combat The initiate casts *mage armor* and *shield*.

During Combat The initiate uses spells to incapacitate or inconvenience as many enemies as possible. If the odds are against her, she casts *obscuring mist* to cover her escape, drinking her *elixir of hiding* or *potion of invisibility* to improve her chances to evade pursuit. She might use metamagic mastery to cast a silent spell that may grant her any other additional advantage, such as *summon monster IV* to slow her pursuers.

Base Statistics Without her spells, the initiate of the inner circle's stats are AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11

STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 10

Base Atk +3; CMB +2; CMD 15

Feats Combat Casting, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (enchantment)

Skills Appraise +15, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +6, Fly +10, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (nature) +15, Perception +8, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +15

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Giant, Gnomish

SQ agile feet (4/day), arcane bond (raven familiar), forewarned, key to wisdom (travel domain), key to magic (universalist school), key to mystery (time mystery), metamagic mastery (1/day)

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of displacement*, *potion of invisibility*, *wand of scorching ray* (30 charges), *antitoxin* (2); **Other Gear** *mwk quarterstaff*, *dagger*, *cloak of resistance +1*, *elixir of hiding*, *elixir of vision*, *ring of protection +1*,

signet ring, *spell component pouch*, *sunrods* (2), *travelling spellbook* (contains all prepared spells, plus a suitable number of 0 level spells, 3 1st and 3 2nd level spells, and 2 3rd and 4th level spells of the GM's choice)

These promising candidates have been introduced into the Order's inner circle, learning the first secrets of the *Emerald Tablets of Thoth-Hermes*. They use their enhanced power to serve the Order, hoping to win enough favor to continue advancing in their studies. One of the initiates is often trusted with performing a piece of one the Emerald Order's extensive operations. If this requires more operatives, the initiate is typically assisted by one to two agents of the Order and four to eight emerald apprentices.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

The godly knowledge of Thoth-Hermes is been made manifest in these magic items.

EMERALD TABLETS OF THOTH-HERMES (*TABULA SMARAGDINA*, MAJOR ARTIFACT)

Aura overwhelming universal; CL 20th

Slot none; **Weight** 25 lb.

This object consists of 12 tablets—slabs of transparent emerald green crystal—inscribed in an ancient language. They lay stacked upon one another, held together by golden hoops strung through holes in the tops of the tablets and suspended from a rod of the same material. Though it appears to be gold, this metal is apparently as indestructible as the tablets themselves. Only those who have studied the tablets can take off a sliver of the tablet's gemstone material. Even then, it takes a magical adamantite blade and the tablets regrow these lost fragments within a day.

The tablets are inscribed with a wealth of knowledge about the universe, magic, and other subjects. Yet simply reading the words is only the beginning. The very essence of the *Emerald Tablets of Thoth-Hermes* is infused with knowledge that the reader unconsciously absorbs while interacting with the artifact. While using the tablets, the reader can add a +10 insight bonus to any Knowledge checks. If the tablets are used to research a new spell, the research can be done in only two days, and costs for that spell are reduced by 50%. Additionally, only one

who has touched and read the tablets can take levels in the disciple of the emerald esoterica prestige class.

A creature that holds the tablets can attempt to control a nearby smaragdine golem through force of will as a full round action. The golem must attempt a Will save (DC = 10 + the possessor's HD + her Charisma modifier) or remain under the owner's control as per dominate monster, with a duration of 10 minutes.

Finally, the owner of the *Emerald Tablets of Thoth-Hermes* can manipulate the very essence of the universe itself to produce a particular desired effect, though doing so is a dangerous enterprise for the uninitiated. The possessor chooses a specific spell-like effect to enact, or describes a general result, and the GM then decides what spell effect best achieves the desired result. The possessor must attempt a Will save (DC = 20 + the level of the spell effect + 2 for each additional use of this power within the same 24 hour period).

If the possessor's Will saving throw is successful, then the desired effect takes place. The possessor must then attempt a Fortitude save against the same DC. A failed save leaves the possessor exhausted while a successful save means the possessor is instead fatigued. If the possessor fails the Will save, the desired effect does not come to pass, though she must still attempt the Fortitude save against exhaustion. If the possessor fails the Will save by 10 or more however, then the desired effect is warped, backfires, or otherwise produces an undesired

outcome, at the GM's discretion. If the possessor also then fails the Fortitude save, she takes 2d6 damage per level of the attempted spell effect instead of becoming exhausted. The owner is utterly destroyed if this damage is greater than her total hit points plus her Constitution score, and can only be restored to life with a *miracle* or *wish* spell.

DESTRUCTION

The method to destroy the *Emerald Tablets of Thoth-Hermes* is unknown. Ironically, it is a piece of knowledge left undiscovered. Likely possibilities include: defacement by an illiterate child; buried beneath a great library or temple of knowledge which has been first desecrated and then destroyed; or sundered by the weapon of a hitherto unidentified demon lord of ignorance.



THE EMERALD ORDER IN MIDGARD

The Emerald Order has their headquarters in Nuria Natal, where Dromdal-Re and the other masters live most of the time. The *Emerald Tablets*, however, have been returned to the great pyramid where they were originally unearthed, hidden in the desert east of the ruins of the God King's Hall. This pyramid is trapped—laid with deadly devices both mechanical and magical—and a quartet of smaragdine golems protects the chamber in which the tablets reside. The Emerald Order keeps several copies of the writings, in the original Ankeshelian as well as translations into

several other languages, and protects these copies as zealously as they would the original tablets. The Emerald Order pulls many strings throughout the Southlands. They specialize in the manipulation of political tensions, shipping routes, prices of goods and myriad other elements that gently strengthen their control over Nuria Natal and, eventually, the Dragon Empire. The world of Midgard and even beyond are conquests within the sight of the Order's masters as they believe the power of the tablets and its knowledge make them the fittest to rule.

IOUN STONE, EMERALD SHARD

Aura strong abjuration; **CL** 12th

Slot none; **Price** 4,800 gp; **Weight** —

This irregular fragment of translucent, emerald-green crystal always floats in the air and must be within 3 feet of their owner to be of any use. When a character first acquires a stone, she must hold it and then release it, whereupon it takes up a circling orbit 1d3 feet from her head. Thereafter, a stone must be grasped or netted to separate it from its owner. The owner may voluntarily seize and stow a stone (to keep it safe while she is sleeping, for example), but she loses the benefits of the stone during that time. An *emerald shard ioun stone* provides its user with a DR 5/adamantine while in use. Once the stone has absorbed 120 hit points worth of damage, it burns out and turns dull gray. Emerald shard ioun stones share some of the hardness and durability of the *Emerald Tablets* from which they are grown, and have AC 24, hardness 10, and 20 hit points.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *stoneskin*, crafter must be 12th level with at least one level of the disciple of the emerald esoterica prestige class*; **Cost** 2,400 gp

NEW MONSTER

Only magic can find the life in a shiny gem.

GOLEM, SMARAGDINE

This large statue of emerald-green crystal has a humanoid body with the head of an ibis.

SMARAGDINE GOLEM

CR 12

XP 19,200

N Large construct

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 9, flat-footed 27 (+18 natural, -1 size)

hp 134 (16d10+46)

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

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

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +25 (2d10+10)

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

Special Attacks absorb magic

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 11, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +27 (+29 bull rush, +29 sunder); **CMD** 37 (39 vs. bull rush, 39 vs. sunder)

Feats Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Iron Will, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Perception +16, Sense Motive +16

SQ sense tablet

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary or gang (2–4)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Absorb Magic (Su) A smaragdine golem can, as a free action, absorb a non-instantaneous effect of a spell or spell-like ability it touches, including spells that target the smaragdine golem directly or existing effects in an area, such as a *silence* spell or a *fog cloud*. Alternatively, this can be done in conjunction with a slam attack to absorb a spell effect on another creature. The strongest spell is always absorbed before any other. The spells listed in the smaragdine golem's immunity to magic ability cannot be absorbed and have their described effect instead. A smaragdine golem can only hold one absorbed spell effect at a time.

When it has absorbed a spell effect, the golem's body glows, as if affected by a *light* spell. As a standard action, the golem can release absorbed spell energy as an aura of green energy, which expands out in a radius of 10 feet per level of the absorbed spell. Any creature within the area of effect must succeed at a DC 21 Reflex save or take 1d6 points of damage per spell level of the absorbed spell and become blinded for 1 round. A successful save reduces the damage by half and negates the blindness. Smaragdine golems receive a +2 racial bonus to this ability's saving throw DC, which is Charisma-based.

Immunity to Magic (Ex) A smaragdine golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and

effects function differently against a smaragdine golem, as described below. These specific spell effects override the smaragdine golem's normal immunity to mind-affecting effects.

- A *shatter* spell damages a smaragdine golem as if it were a crystalline creature.
- A *touch of idiocy* spell causes a smaragdine golem to act as if it were confused for 1 round.
- A *feeblemind* spell stuns a smaragdine golem for 1 round.

Sense Tablet (Su) A smaragdine golem can sense the presence of the *Emerald Tablets of Thoth-Hermes* as an at-will standard action, as per locate object. This ability functions only on the *Emerald Tablets* and is not blocked by lead, although *nondetection* works normally.

Smaragdine golems are creations of the Emerald Order, crafted by disciples of the emerald esoterica to guard their secret meeting halls, sacred texts, and the *Emerald Tablets* itself. As they are grown from fragments of the *Emerald Tablets*, the golems have an innate intelligence from their connection to Thoth-Hermes. This makes them in some ways akin to retrievers, the Abyssal constructs of certain Demon Lords. This trait also makes them strangely susceptible to spells that normally have no effect on constructs.

Their link to the *Emerald Tablets* also means they can track it unerringly if commanded to do so. Although they lack individual personalities, the golems have an inhuman intelligence and use tactics in a physical confrontation. Unlike normal golems, they select situationally appropriate targets, utilize reach, and make tactical 5-foot steps if appropriate. Similarly, smaragdine golems do not blunder through walls or other obstacles in their path. They seek a doorway or some other indirect path to the tablets if necessary, but always with relentless determination.

The question arises: Is a smaragdine golem true to the Order (and ergo its leader), the *Emerald Tablets* and Thoth-Hermes, or does it obey its creator? The answer lies in

whether the smaragdine golem was grown from a piece of the *Emerald Tablets* or fashioned from other green crystals.

CONSTRUCTION

A smaragdine golem's body must be fashioned from 2,750 pounds of cut green crystal, costing 7,500 gp. Alternatively, it must be grown from a sliver of the *Emerald Tablets of Thoth-Hermes*, a process that requires access to the tablets, the law of cause and effect class ability, and 68 days to reach full maturation.

CL 15th; **Price** 129,500 gp

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Construct; **Spells** *fox's cunning*, *geas/quest*, *limited wish*, *locate object*; **Special** creator must be caster level 15th; **Skill** Craft (glass) or Craft (jewelry) DC 22; **Cost** 68,500 gp



NEW PRESTIGE CLASS

To live is to learn. There is power in the word of a god. Knowledge above all.

DISCIPLE OF THE EMERALD ESOTERICA

Disciples of the emerald esoterica are members of the Emerald Order devoted to the study of the *Emerald Tablets* to unlock and utilize the secrets they contain. As their understanding of the tablets' contents grows, they attain greater control of the world around them.

Role: The disciple of the emerald esoterica can be a powerful ally. The disciple's study of the *Emerald Tablets* boosts already potent arcane or divine abilities. Disciples of the emerald esoterica always seek to expand their knowledge of the world and the powers that the *Emerald Tablets* unlock. Most disciples have no qualms about teaming up with groups of adventurers as long as the group's goals do not directly conflict with their own.

Alignment: Those who follow the Emerald Order rarely do so for altruistic reasons. Most are concerned with the accretion of knowledge for its own sake or to further their own power. Due to the restrictions and highly regulated society the order demands, most disciples of the emerald esoterica are lawful neutral or lawful evil. True neutral and neutral evil disciples are uncommon, and those of chaotic or good alignments are almost unheard of.

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

To become a disciple of the emerald esoterica, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 3 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 3 ranks

Spells: Able to cast or create 2nd-level spells or extracts.

Special: The character must be a recognized member of the Emerald Order in good standing and have physical access to the *Emerald Tablets* at least once for study.

Class Skills: The disciple of emerald esoterica's class skills are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (any) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Fly (Dex), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge

(any) (Int), Linguistics (Int), Perception (Wis), Profession (any) (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Int), Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Ranks per Level: 6 + Int Modifier.

Class Features

The following are features of the disciple of the emerald esoterica prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Disciples of the emerald esoterica gain no proficiency with any weapon or armor.

Spells per Day: When a character gains a new disciple of the emerald esoterica level, she gains new spells per day as if she had also gained a level in any one spellcasting class she belonged to before she added the prestige class. Alchemist extracts are considered spells for purposes of this feature. She does not, however, gain other benefits a character of that class would have gained. This means she adds the level of disciple of the emerald esoterica to the level of whatever other arcane or divine spellcasting class the character has, then determines spells per day, spells known, and caster level accordingly. If a character had more than one spellcasting class before she became a disciple of the emerald esoterica, she must decide to which class she adds each level of disciple of the emerald esoterica for the purpose of determining spells per day.

If a spontaneous caster, the disciple of the emerald esoterica can choose to learn a new spell in place of one she already knows at every even level. In effect, she loses the old spell in exchange for the new one. The new spell's level must be the same as that of the spell being exchanged. A disciple of the emerald esoterica can swap only a single spell at any given level and must choose whether or not to swap the spell at the same time that he gains new spells known for the level.

Key of Wisdom: A disciple of the emerald esoterica gains a greater understanding of her place in the universe and the insights bestowed by Thoth-Hermes through her sacred tablets. She gains one domain power from the Thoth-Hermes's domains (Knowledge, Magic, Rune, Travel, and Trickery). Any existing levels in a class that grants domain powers (from any domain) stack with her disciple of the emerald esoterica levels for the

purpose of meeting minimum level requirements. Similarly, the two class levels stack when determining uses per day and any level-dependent variables for this domain power.

Key of Magic: A disciple of the emerald esoterica gains a greater understanding of her place in the universe and the calling of her aptitudes as her knowledge of the Emerald Tablets grows. She gains one wizard school power of her choice. Any existing levels in an arcane spell-casting class (including those of spontaneous spellcasters and alchemists) stack with her disciple of the emerald esoterica levels for the purpose of minimum level requirements. She must also meet any additional requirements needed to use the school power, such as the ability to cast arcane spells or metamagic feats. Similarly, the two class levels stack when determining uses per day and any level-dependent variables for this school power.

Key of Mysteries: A disciple of the emerald esoterica has begun to unlock the secrets of the universe once he approaches mastery of the *Emerald Tablets*. She can choose one of two benefits. If he has alchemist class levels, the disciple can choose to gain one alchemist discovery and add her disciple of the emerald esoterica levels to her alchemist class levels for the purpose of minimum level requirements. The disciple must meet all other requirements of the discovery.

Alternatively, the disciple gains one oracle revelation from any mystery and treats her disciple of the emerald esoterica levels as oracle levels to determine uses per day and power. If she already has oracle class levels she must select a revelation from her existing mystery, but her oracle levels stack with disciple of the emerald esoterica levels for determining minimum level requirements, uses per day, and level-dependent variables for this revelation. The disciple must meet all other requirements.

Key of Correspondence (Sp): A disciple of the emerald esoterica learns that she is one with the cosmos, and as all things are interconnected, then distance is but an illusion. Once per day, she can use *dimension door* as a self-only spell-like ability, using her character level as her caster level. When she reaches 7th level as a disciple of the emerald esoterica, she can use *teleport* once per day as a

self-only spell-like ability, and gains an additional use of *dimension door* per day. At 10th level, she gains one additional use of *dimension door* per day, and her *teleport* ability becomes a *greater teleport* ability once per day.

Key of Time (Sp): A disciple of the emerald esoterica learns that even the laws of time are fluid and can be made to run at speeds dictated by the disciple. She can use *haste* and *slow* as spell-like abilities, using her character level as caster level. Either spell can be used once time per day, and an additional use per day at 7th level, and again at 9th.

Key to Above and Below: A disciple recognizes the building blocks of the planes themselves, gaining a fundamental understanding of how to tap into their essences. She gains darkvision 60 feet and her type changes to outsider with the native subtype. If she is of an evil alignment, she gains cold, electricity, and fire resistance 5. If she is of a good alignment, she gains acid, cold, and electricity resistance 5. If of neutral alignment, she can choose either option, but cannot switch once it is chosen.

Key of Prophecy (Su): A disciple of the emerald esoterica can always act in the surprise round even if she fails a Perception roll to notice a foe, but she is still considered flat-footed until she takes an action. In addition, she receives a bonus on initiative checks equal to 1/2 her disciple class level.

Keys of Life and Death (Sp): A disciple of the emerald esoterica delves into the mysteries of life and death, unlocking their powers and adding them to her own. Once per day, she can use *breath of life* or *finger of death* as spell-like abilities, using her character level as her caster level. Additionally, if she has not used this ability yet and is hit with an attack that drops the disciple to negative hit points or even kills her, she is affected by an immediate *breath of life* effect. When used in this fashion, this ability can't be used again for 1 week.

Law of Cause and Effect: A disciple of the emerald esoterica learns that the future is not fixed, and that all actions have predictable consequences. She gains the ability to manipulate the emerald crystal of the tablets. This seemingly indestructible material can be chipped if struck at just the right angle with a magical, adamantine weapon. These fragments can be used by a disciple of emerald esoterica to craft

TABLE: DISCIPLE OF THE EMERALD ESOTERICA

Level	BAB	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+0	+0	+1	Key of wisdom	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
2nd	+1	+1	+1	+1	Key of magic	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+2	Key of mysteries	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
4th	+2	+1	+1	+2	Key of freedom of space	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
5th	+2	+2	+2	+3	Key of time	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
6th	+3	+2	+2	+3	Key to above and below	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
7th	+3	+2	+2	+4	Key of prophecy	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
8th	+4	+3	+3	+4	Keys of life and death	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
9th	+4	+3	+3	+5	Law of cause and effect	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
10th	+5	+3	+3	+5	Secret of secrets	+1 level of existing spellcasting class

ioun stones as if she possessed all the prerequisite spells and feats. Likewise, she can grow crystal bodies and invest them with life as smaragdine golems. The disciple must still pay the gold-piece requirements associated with crafting magic items and constructs.

Secret of Secrets: A disciple of the emerald esoterica that reaches 10th level has gained as much knowledge as a mortal mind can absorb from the Emerald Tablet, allowing him to achieve truly amazing breakthroughs in personal power. She can choose one of the following.

- She can choose any alchemist discovery, regardless of minimum level requirement. If she is 20th character level, she can choose a grand discovery instead. She must have alchemist levels to select this option.
- She can choose any oracle revelation, regardless of minimum level requirement, although it must be from her chosen mystery if she has levels in the oracle class. If she is 20th character level, she can choose the final revelation instead.
- She can choose any sorcerer bloodline power, regardless of level requirement with one exception. She must be 20th character level to qualify for a power with a 20th-level minimum level requirement. The disciple of the emerald esoterica must also choose a bloodline power from her already existing bloodline, if she has levels of sorcerer.
- She can choose to gain a +2 untyped bonus to the DCs of all spells cast.
- She can choose to gain a permanent +2 bonus to any one ability score, or a +1 bonus to any two ability scores.





HAND OF NAKRESH

Forty-Fingered Nakresh is the simian demon-god of wizards and thieves. His eight hands grasp all there is to take and hold tight. It is said he reserves his lowest left hand for the boldest and most daring of his thefts. And this cult—a pentarchical assemblage of the region's most infamous scoundrels and their followers—revere their god by emulating this behavior. These five crime lords plot the most audacious and spectacular thefts in order to appease their deity and outdo the other members of their organization.

LEADERS, ORGANIZATION, AND GOALS

The undisputed leaders of the Lower Left Hand of Nakresh are the Five Exalted, the five most devoted and larcenous members of the cult—the five fingers of the hand, as it were. Each remains in a position of power until he is unable to properly bestow adoration upon the name of Nakresh. For the cult, adoration means theft. The bigger and more daring the heist, the greater the respect and admiration gained by the perpetrator and in turn bestowed

upon Nakresh. One of the five is chosen every 8 years to be the High Exalted, highest of the five and the one who directs the cult in its activities.

On that occasion, the crime lords compete to see who can commit the greatest theft. Their efforts are judged on the value of loot (stolen magic is prized above all else), the infamy of the crime, and the style in which it was committed. Each crime lord is head of an ardent group of followers that carry out their leaders' nefarious plots with zeal. These lesser cult members cast secret ballots to determine which of the five becomes the High Exalted for the next 8 years.

The Five Exalted are fiercely competitive and do whatever is necessary to surpass their fellows in this contest. Sabotage and double-dealing are expected. At times, two of the Five may join forces, usually when one with little chance of winning throws in with another of the Five, expecting favors in return should his aid help achieve a win. The inviolate rule of the contest is that none of the members shall kill another or betray another to the authorities. In fact, should one be captured, the others are duty-bound to attempt a rescue if the possibility exists. When one of the positions of the Five becomes vacant—whether due to death, expulsion, or capture without hope of rescue—the other four vote to raise a promising member of the cult to the position.

LORD VERMIN

CR 10

XP 9,600

Male roachling unchained rogue (sanctified rogue) 10
(*Midgard Bestiary for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*,
Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Pathfinder Unchained,
Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat)

NE Small humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 10 ft.;
Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 17, flat-footed 17 (+3 armor, +2
deflection, +4 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

hp 78 (10d8+30)

Fort +6 (+2 bonus vs. disease), **Ref** +11, **Will** +3; +2
vs. poison

Defensive Abilities danger sense +3, improved
evasion; **DR** 5/piercing or slashing

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +11/+6 (1d4+5/18–20), +1 dagger
+11 (1d3+1/19–20), +1 dagger +11 (1d3+1/19–20),
+1 dagger +11 (1d3+1/19–20)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +13 (1d6/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +5d6

TACTICS

Before Combat Lord Vermin uses a charge from
his *wand of expeditious retreat* to increase his
mobility and attempts to use Stealth to sneak attack
opponents at the opening of combat.

During Combat Lord Vermin prefers to outnumber
his opponents, flanking to gain advantage of his
sneak attacks, and to exchange witty banter with
the enemy. He uses Two-Weapon Feint to maximize
the number of sneak attacks he can make.

Morale He will flee at the first sign the odds are
turning against him.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 28

Feats Combat Expertise, Greater Feint, Improved
Feint, Multiweapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Feint^{UC},
Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +17 (+22 to reduce damage
from falls), Bluff +14, Climb +15, Disable Device
+24, Escape Artist +21, Knowledge (local) +11,
Perception +12, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand
+17, Stealth +22, Use Magic Device +14; **Racial**
Modifiers +2 Climb, +2 Stealth

Languages Aklo, Common, Undercommon

SQ debilitating injury (bewildered, disoriented,
hampered), divine epiphany, favored terrain (urban
+2), resistant, rogue talents (esoteric scholar, fast
stealth, hide in plain sight^{UC}, improved evasion,
terrain mastery), trapfinding +5

Combat Gear *charlatan's cape*^{UE}, *scroll of message*
(2), *wand of expeditious retreat* (20 charges), *wand*
of obscuring mist (15 charges), giant wasp poison
(5); **Other Gear** *boneless leather*^{APG}, +1 dagger (3),
+1 rapier, mwk light crossbow with crossbow bolts
(10), *bag of holding II*, *ring of protection* +2, *rope of*
climbing, mwk thieves' tools

SPECIAL ABILITIES

CR Adjustment (Ex) Lord Vermin's CR is 1 higher
due to superior equipment.

Divine Epiphany (Su) Once per day, Lord Vermin can peer into the immediate future and predict the results of a specific action as if he had cast an *augury* spell at CL 10th.

Mutant (Ex) Lord Vermin displays stronger insectile features than his roachling kin and sports an extra pair of functional arms. Only one is a primary hand; the other three are off-hands. The extra hands can be used for other purposes that require free hands.

Lord Vermin stands four feet tall, and his skin and carapace are an oily, tan color. Glittering black eyes sit beneath long antennae and an unusually thick mop of black hair, which he keeps coiffed in fashionable style. He dresses in the fashion of a dilettante noble, eschewing all ornamentation except his signet ring and the silver and ebony scabbards for his weapons.

Lord Vermin is the most recent ascendant to the Five. A young and ambitious cult member, he rules in a subterranean lair beneath a large city, leading a contingent of larcenous roachling followers. His initial crimes involved invading sites through sewers, moats, cellars, and other such entrances. Boiling up from below, Lord Vermin and his followers would scuttle in and loot whatever they could, disappearing back down the dark holes from whence they came loaded with ill-gotten gains.

When the wealthy became wise to this approach—barring sewer grates, sealing tunnels, and placing cellar guards—Lord Vermin switched tactics and came in from above. His crew scaled walls and went in windows and skylights. When his targest guarded against this tactic, he simply went farther afield, finding new marks in foreign cities. If these new targets had ever heard of him it was usually in exaggerated tales and hearsay. They learned soon enough, and Vermin's name became a curse on the lips of the wealthy.

Lord Vermin is the most ambitious of the Five. His heists are always grand in scale. He is determined to win the next contest and become the High Exalted. At 15 years old, he is nearing middle age, given the short lifespans of his folk. If he misses this opportunity, he may not receive a second. He is determined to succeed.

MASTER KIPRAK**CR 11****XP 12,800**

Male kobold alchemist 11 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

LE Small humanoid (reptilian)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (+5 armor, +2 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

hp 75 (11d8+22)

Fort +11, **Ref** +13, **Will** +6

Immune poison

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 *dagger* +10/+5 (1d3+1/19–20)

Ranged +1 *sling* +13 (1d3) or

bomb +13/+8 (6d6+5 fire) or

frost bomb +13/+8 (6d6+5 cold) or

smoke bomb +13/+8 (6d6+5 fire plus smoke) or

stink bomb +13/+8 (6d6+5 fire plus stinking cloud), or

tanglefoot bomb +13/+8

(6d6+5 fire plus entangled)

or

mwk blowgun +13/+8 (1

plus poison)



Special Attacks bomb 18/day (6d6+5 fire, DC 20)
Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 11th; conc. +16)
 4th—*drake form* ^{IDM}, *freedom of movement*, *stoneskin*
 3rd—*arcane sight*, *cure serious wounds*, *displacement*, *haste*, *lightning lash bomb* ^{UC}
 2nd—*alter self*, *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *invisibility*, *see invisibility*
 1st—*ant haul* ^{APG}, *anticipate peril* ^{UM}, *bomber's eye* ^{APG}, *detect secret doors*, *expeditious retreat*, *reduce person*, *shield*

TACTICS

Before Combat If forewarned, Master Kiprak takes the time to imbibe his *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, and *bomber's eye* extracts, as well as his mutagen. The benefits of these effects are not included in his stat block.

During Combat Master Kiprak prefers to keep his minions between himself and opponents, using his bombs liberally to take out enemies. Enemy spellcasters are usually his first targets.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 20, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8
Base Atk +8; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 21 (25 vs. overrun, 25 vs. trip)

Feats Brew Potion, Extra Bombs ^{APG}, Extra Discovery ^{APG} (2), Far Shot, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Throw Anything

Skills Acrobatics +3 (+7 to maintain balance), Appraise +10, Craft (alchemy) +20 (+31 to create alchemical items), Disable Device +15, Fly +15, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Perception +16, Sense Motive +11, Sleight of Hand +11, Spellcraft +19, Stealth +17, Use Magic Device +13; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Undercommon

SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +11), discoveries (fast bombs, frost bomb, precise bombs [5 squares], smoke bomb, stink bomb, tanglefoot bomb ^{UM}, wings ^{UM}), mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural armor, 110 minutes), poison use, swift alchemy

Combat Gear *boots of escape* ^{UE}, *elixir of truth*, giant wasp poison (4), oil of taggit (4), shadow essence (4); **Other Gear** +2 *balanced* ^{UE} *stanching* ^{UE} *studded leather*, +1 *sling*, +2 *dagger*, alchemical sling bullet

(4 acid, 4 alchemist's fire, 4 liquid ice), blowgun darts (10), mwk blowgun, *cloak of resistance* +3, *formula alembic* ^{UE}, *handy haversack*, *headband of vast intelligence* +4, *hybridization funnel* ^{UE}, *insistent doorknocker* ^{UE}, *ring of protection* +2, alchemy crafting kit ^{APG}, formula book ^{UE}, mwk thieves' tools, portable alchemist's lab ^{APG}

SPECIAL ABILITIES

CR Adjustment (Ex) Master Kiprak's CR is 1 higher due to superior equipment.

Standing 3-1/2 feet high, Master Kiprak is an unassuming figure. His scaly form is ashen, emaciated, and thin, wrapped loosely in the well-tailored but stained robes of an academic. Deep-set, bright eyes show a keen intellect and miss nothing of their surroundings. A belt hangs heavy with pouches and equipment of his trade.

Master Kiprak is a kobold of great intellect and high ethical standards within his alchemical profession. Outside of that work, however, he is completely immoral and unscrupulous. His outrageous acts of larceny, which funded his research, attracted the attentions of the Hand of Nakresh.

Master Kiprak is the only member of the Five Exalted to have been brought into their ranks from outside the brotherhood of the cult. For his part, Master Kiprak is happy to play by the cult's rules, and he finds the challenge of the octennial contest stimulating and a fine venue in which to test new alchemical experiments or apparatuses.

Kiprak is the most open of the Five, accepting anyone of the proper intelligence, devotion, and criminal demeanor into the ranks of his followers—except for loathsome gnomes. After all, he does maintain some standards.

MOGNYR DUNESTALKER

CR 11

XP 12,800

Male gnoll ranger (trapper) 9 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* Bestiary, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic*)

NE Medium humanoid (gnoll)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (+6 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 89 (11 HD; 2d8+9d10+31)

Fort +11, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft. (30 ft. in armor)

Melee +1 *frost falchion* +15/+10
(2d4+7/18–20 plus 2d6 on charge plus 1d6 cold)

Ranged +2 *distance composite shortbow* +14/+9 (1d6+5/×3 plus 2d6 on charge)
or

javelin +12 (1d6+4 plus 2d6 on charge)

Special Attacks combat style (mounted^{APG}), favored enemies (humans +4, magical beasts +2), trap 4/day (freezing, sleet, snare, swarm)

TACTICS

During Combat Mognyr stays on the move, peppering opponents with arrows. If unable to keep them at a distance, he draws his falchion and has Kerrshek charge the nearest opponent.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 28

Feats Deadly Aim, Endurance, Iron Will, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Ride-By Attack

Skills Climb +10, Disguise +10, Handle Animal +11, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Perception +9, Ride +13, Stealth +13, Survival +11

Languages Common, Gnoll

SQ favored terrains (desert +4, urban +2), hunter's bond (animal companion), swift tracker, track +4, trapfinding +4, wild empathy +9, woodland stride

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds* (2), *ring of ferocious action*^{UE}, *antitoxin* (2); **Other Gear** *rhino hide*, +1 *frost falchion*, +2 *distance composite shortbow* (+3 Str) with 50 arrows, *searing arrows*^{UE} (5), *sizzling arrows*^{UE} (5), javelins (5), *boots of striding and springing*, *efficient quiver*, *equestrian belt*^{UE}, *hat of disguise*, *ring of protection* +2, animal harness^{APG}, exotic riding saddle, saddlebags (2)



SPECIAL ABILITIES

CR Adjustment (Ex) Mognyr's CR is 1 higher due to superior equipment.

Special Mount (Ex) Mognyr has a special thematically appropriate mount outside the options normally made available to rangers.

KERRSHEK

N Large animal

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +10

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +6 natural, –1 size)

hp 51 (6d8+24)

Fort +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3; +4 vs. enchantment spells and effects

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee bite +8 (2d6+6 plus trip)

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

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 15, **Con** 16, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 6
Base Atk +4; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20 (24 vs. trip)
Feats Skill Focus (Perception, Stealth), Toughness
Skills Perception +10, Stealth +11; **Racial Modifiers**
+4 Stealth in tall grass
SQ link, share spells, tricks (combat training, fetch, seek, track)

Mognyr Dunestalker stands nearly 7 feet in height, his lean frame covered in fur the color of wet sand. A thick scar on his muzzle pulls up his lip, leaving him with a permanent snarl. He is rarely seen without Kerrshek, his hyenadon companion and mount.

Mognyr has been a devoted follower of the cult for many years. He made his devotion evident in caravan raids while traveling the deserts between settlements. His steady flow of plunder caught the attention of the Hand's leadership, and he was inducted into the vacant seat shortly after. Whether Mognyr is able to vie for the position of the High Exalted remains to be seen. His successes can't be denied, but while a cunning raider and master of ambush tactics, he tends to pluck at low-hanging fruit, bringing in steady but unremarkable gains.

SISTER STARKFEATHER

CR 13

XP 25,600

Female tengu cleric of Nakresh 13 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

CN Medium humanoid (tengu)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 21 (+7 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 101 (13d8+39)

Fort +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +14

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 anarchic short sword +10/+5 (1d6+7/19–20 plus 2d6 vs. lawful) or bite +4 (1d3)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 6/day (DC 19, 7d6), hand of the acolyte (9/day, +15 ranged)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; conc. +19)

13/day—master's illusion (DC 22)

9/day—copycat

2/day—dispelling touch

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 13th; concentration +19)

7th—*bold errantry*^{DM}, *spell turning*^D

6th—*heal*, *holy chance*, *mislead*^D (DC 22),
word of recall

5th—*breath of life* (DC 21), *false vision*^D, *flame strike* (DC 21), *reprobation*^{UM}, *symbol of sleep* (DC 21)

4th—*baleful conjunction*^{DM} (DC 20), *confusion*^D (DC 20), *cure critical wounds*, *find treasure*^{DM}, *spell trap*^{DM} (DC 20), *spiritual ally*^{APG}

3rd—*blessing of the mole*^{UM}, *dispel magic*, *nondetection*^D, *prayer*, *protection from energy*, *wind wall*

2nd—*bull's strength*, *enthrall* (DC 18), *find traps*, *hold person* (DC 18), *invisibility*^D, *mantle of trust*^{DM} (DC 18), *silence* (DC 18)



1st—*comprehend languages*, *disguise self*^P, *entropic shield*, *liberating command*^{UC}, *obscuring mist*, *remove fear*, *sanctuary* (DC 17)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *read magic*

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

TACTICS

During Combat Sister Starkfeather prefers to keep enemies at a distance and off balance, using her spells to incapacitate or hinder foes while helping her allies. She typically casts *invisibility* early, followed by *spell turning*. If forced into combat, she casts *spiritual ally*.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 23

Feats Channel Smite, Combat Casting, Extra Channel, Guided Hand^{UC}, Improved Initiative, Selective Channeling, Toughness

Skills Bluff +7, Knowledge (religion) +9, Linguistics +8, Perception +16, Spellcraft +9, Stealth +11;

Racial Modifiers +4 Linguistics, +2 Perception, +2 Stealth

Languages Aklo, Common, Tengu, Undercommon
SQ aura, gifted linguist, swordtrained

Combat Gear *rod of thunderous force*^{UE}, *universal solvent* (2), *wand of cure serious wounds* (15 charges);

Other Gear +3 *spell storing mithral chain shirt* (*bestow curse*), +1 *anarchic short sword*, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *chime of opening*, *dust of tracelessness*, *handy haversack*, *headband of mental prowess* +4 (Wis, Cha), *philter of love*^{APG}, *ring of protection* +2, *traveler's any-tool*^{UE}, *treasure hunter's goggles*^{UE}, golden unholy symbol of Nakresh, spell component pouch

SPECIAL ABILITIES

CR Adjustment (Ex) Sister Starkfeather's CR is 1 higher due to superior equipment.

Standing 5 feet, 10 inches in height—though her hunched posture makes her seem shorter—Sister Starkfeather's albinism is plainly seen in her pure white plumage, ivory beak, and pinkish-red eyes. She dresses in plain but well-cut clothing of comfortable fit and dark colors that contrast with her pale feathers.

Sister Starkfeather runs her portion of the cult

much like a thieves' guild. Outsiders who pay tribute and respect to Nakresh are protected. Thieves and practitioners of magic that venerate the demon-god are left alone. All others are fair game to the tengu and her followers—competent rogues and wizards all—and a healthy tithe of all wealth taken is given to the temple.

Sister Starkfeather is the current High Exalted and has been so for the last 16 years. The only true cleric among a group of lay priests, she considers her position a sign of favor from Nakresh for her more ardent devotion. She crafts her plans and executes her thefts with as much zeal as flourish, always leaving a calling card, an ivory holy symbol of Nakresh, to let her victims realize the hand of her profane lord is behind their misfortunes. Sister Starkfeather has no intention of losing the position of the High Exalted to any of her fellows. They can vie for the seat after she dies of old age as far as she is concerned. She constantly works to turn her compatriots against one another, using off-hand remarks and seemingly innocent reminders of wrongs—real or imagined—to reignite old feuds and start new ones.

ZHEITA THE MAGICMONGER

CR 15

XP 51,200

Female derro sorcerer 13 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

CE Small humanoid

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 20, flat-footed 21 (+4 armor, +3 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 insight, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 151 (16 HD; 13d6+3d8+93)

Fort +9, **Ref** +11, **Will** +20

Defensive Abilities unusual anatomy (50%); **SR** 14

Weaknesses vulnerable to sunlight

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee *shrieking aklys* +14/+9 (1d4+1)

Ranged *shrieking aklys* +14 (1d4+1)

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

Special Attacks long limbs (10 ft.), sneak attack +1d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +10)

At will—*darkness*, *ghost sound* (DC 17)

1/day—*daze* (DC 18), *sound burst* (DC 19)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; conc. +20)

10/day—acidic ray (1d6+6 acid)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 13th; concentration +20)

6th (5/day)—*flesh to ooze*^{DM} (DC 25), *tar pool*^{UC} (DC 25), *veil* (DC 23)

5th (7/day)—*absorb toxicity*^{UC}, *feeblemind* (DC 23), *grasp of the tupilaq*^{DM} (DC 22), *teleport*

4th (7/day)—*black tentacles*, *calcific touch*^{APG} (DC 23), *confusion* (DC 22), *earth glide*, *greater invisibility*

3rd (8/day)—*fireball* (DC 20), *fly*, *mad monkeys*^{UM}, *scattered images*^{*}, *tongues*

2nd (8/day)—*alter self*, *detect thoughts* (DC 19), *ghoul touch* (DC 19), *glitterdust* (DC 19), *scorching ray*, *see invisibility*

1st (8/day)—*enlarge person* (DC 20), *expeditious retreat*, *grease*, *mage armor*, *ray of the eclipse*, *vanish*^{APG} (DC 18)



0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *shadow blindness*^{DM} (DC 19), *slap*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 17)

Bloodline aberrant

TACTICS

Before Combat Zheita casts *greater invisibility* if circumstance permits.

During Combat Zheita either attacks at range with spells like *black tentacles* and *tar pool* to take out as many foes as possible, or she moves into combat using her long limbs to deliver touch spells. If available, Zheita may drive the clockwork siege crab into combat, wreaking havoc with its claws.

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 24

Base Atk +8; CMB +7; CMD 26

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (transmutation), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Focus (transmutation), Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +4 (+0 when jumping), Appraise +7, Fly +15, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Perception +7, Spellcraft +15, Stealth +11, Use Magic Device +15

Languages Aklo, Common, Undercommon

SQ bloodline arcana (+50% duration on polymorphs), madness, poison use

Combat Gear *orb of utter chaos*^{UE}, *potion of cure serious wounds* (2), *scroll of polymorph*, *scroll of stone shape*, *wand of meld into stone* (11 charges), blue whinnis (2), *ghast retch flask*^{UE}; **Other Gear** *shrieking aklys*^{*}, *dusty rose prism ioun stone*, *bag of holding III*, *engineer's workgloves*^{UE}, *headband of alluring charisma* +4, *ring of protection* +3

SPECIAL ABILITIES

CR Adjustment (Ex) Zheita's CR is 1 higher due to superior equipment.

A derro savant, Zheita stands nearly 4 feet tall. She keeps her white-blond hair shaved on the right side, where strange glyphs are tattooed in an arch over her ear. Her pale blue skin is covered with self-inflicted scars. She wears a high-collared robe of spidersilk, tie-dyed in a dizzying mixture of mauve, olive green, and yellow.

Zheita the Magicmonger is obsessive in her pursuit of arcane objects, spells, and components. Her heists pull in many of these treasures, from potions to more powerful items. With a band of derros at her command, along with a few stray troglodytes and loyal but insane human thralls, she commands enough power and prestige to have a seat with the Five. However, her insanity has kept her from claiming the position of the High Exalted. Her hauls during the last contest were too esoteric and lacking in monetary value to win her the title. Still, her madness often spawns inspired crimes, and she has the power and resources to accomplish them.

CULT ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURE HOOKS

Here are several methods of introducing the Hand of Nakresh as adversaries of the PCs in your campaign. They can be foes for single adventures or returning enemies in an extended campaign, pitting the PCs against the growing threat of the cult as its members boldly increase their depredations to please their god and outdo one another.

APL 1–3

- ***The warehouses of the dock district have suffered a rash of robberies.*** A nervous merchant who recently brought in a shipment of rare spices and ivory from the south is worried. He hires the PCs as guards to prevent any theft of his goods. In the night, three of Lord Vermin's roachling followers attempt to infiltrate the warehouse to sneak past the PCs and make off with whatever they can carry.
- ***The caravan the PCs are hired to guard on its journey south is attacked by a band of gnolls.*** If the gnolls threaten to overwhelm the PCs and their allies, a patrol of soldiers (use stats for the caravan guard in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide*) arrives to aid the party and drive off the attackers. Otherwise, the soldiers show up after the gnolls have been defeated, having noticed them and diverted from their normal patrol to pursue them. This good turn however, was only a ruse. While the patrol was diverted to help the PCs, another richer caravan was attacked

and robbed by a second band of Mognyr's raiders. The heroes are then asked to assist in tracking these bandits to their source.

- ***A rise in thefts of alchemical reagents and equipment alarms the Alchemists' Guild.*** The PCs are offered a substantial reward to guard a fake shipment of goods on a river barge and kill or capture the thieves responsible for these crimes. A group of kobolds serving Master Kiprak, outfitted with various types of alchemical gear, attacks the barge by night.

APL 4–6

- ***Outrage strikes the city in response to a rash of thefts targeting clerics and temples.*** Sister Starkfeather feels her deity has been slighted by other local religions. Holy symbols are pickpocketed from clerics, the altars of temples are laid bare, and poor boxes are emptied in the night. The faithful clamor for justice. The final outrage occurs when the symbol of Nakresh is painted in white on the main street in the temple district. The PCs are approached by either the local government or religious representatives of their own faiths and asked to seek out the perpetrators. Several clashes with Sister Starkfeather's loyal cultists result. A group of burglars led by a conjurist is appropriate (see the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide* for statistics).

Eventually, either Sister Starkfeather herself or her representative approaches the PCs under a flag of truce to resolve the situation. Good negotiation results in much of the stolen goods being returned in exchange for some token offering to placate Sister Starkfeather. A bad result leads to the PCs being marked as enemies of the cult of Nakresh, and targeted for reprisal at a later date.

- ***The PCs are hired to watch over the egg of a magical monster until it hatches.*** This egg is targeted by Zheita the Magicmonger, who sends a group of her followers to steal it. The PCs must contend with a mob of insane cultists (use the stats for the village idiot in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide*) and troglodytes, led by a pair of derro overseers.

- ***The city watch, unable to keep up with a rash of crimes in the city, suspect spies or corrupted officials are tipping the thieves off to the watch's tactics.*** They want the PCs to conduct an informal internal investigation of their ranks to find the problem. The PCs might uncover the doppelganger that has replaced a captain of the guard on behalf of Sister Starkfeather, a trio of guards who have been leaking information to keep hostages taken by Mognyr from being harmed, or both.

APL 7–9

- ***The year-long contest among the Five to determine who becomes the next High Exalted is underway.*** Lord Vermin has outshone Master Kiprak in recent months. The kobold decides to even the odds and plants evidence at one of his own crime scenes to lead the PCs to Lord Vermin's hideaway. The PCs have to work their way through a trapped and guarded maze of subterranean tunnels to reach the crime lord. During the battle, Vermin realizes he has been set up (or if the PCs are defeated, he may have a chat with survivors). He offers the PCs a deal. If they go after Master Kiprak instead, he will give them some concessions, such as avoiding targets the PCs want

protected, making small amounts of restitution to his victims, or leaving the city to work elsewhere.

- ***The PCs are hired to go undercover, infiltrating the cult to ascertain their numbers, assets, and locations and reporting their findings.*** They must somehow make contact and offer their services to one of the Five. This mission is secret, and once ensconced in the cult, they are considered enemies by law enforcement and others that are set against the cult of Nakresh. The heroes are required to prove themselves worthy before being initiated into the cult. The organization tests their abilities, and they have to perform a noteworthy theft against a target of their potential patron's choice.
- ***As part of a task force assigned to defeating the cult, the PCs stumble across information that leads them to the current lair of one of the Five.*** If the PCs are victorious in their battle against the crime lord, they discover that their target is merely a *simulacrum*. Zheita acquired several scrolls of the simulacrum spell in a recent theft and made copies of each of the Five to act as decoys. While the PCs have cleared out part of the cult, they have also made themselves known to the Five as enemies, who respond accordingly.

THE HAND OF NAKRESH IN MIDGARD

The cult has its home in Nuria Natal, their main temple hidden within the sprawl of the capital. An honor guard comprised of some of the best followers of each of the Five defends it against intruders. This includes a group of crack-shot gnoll archers, kobolds loaded with alchemical weapons, a cadre of arcane rogues, a gang of roachling rogues, and a pack of derros. At most times, the main temple is not in regular use, as each of the Five worships in the holdings of her own domain, traveling to Nuria only when they convene for business or high holy days.

The main sanctum of the temple is guarded by a hoard golem (see *The Collected Monsters of Sin*)—a glittering pile enticing interlopers to their doom. Mognyr Dunestalker claims Per-Kush, though he and his gnolls are normally abroad, stalking the caravan lanes, ready to

relieve merchants of their goods. Master Kiprak holds sway in Per-Xor. Per-Bastet is normally the home of Zheita the Magicmonger, but recently, she has moved her operations out to the ruins of Per-Set, becoming even more secretive and paranoid concerning her recent plans.

Sister Starkfeather plays out her complex and many-layered cons in Corremel. Lord Vermin plies his trade in Nuria itself. During the year of the contest, it isn't uncommon for the Five to seek plunder outside of their homeland. Lord Vermin stays away from Nuria Natal regularly, especially when the authorities are pressing for his capture. His nefarious heists have been reported in Harkesh and the islands of Marea, once as far away as Reth-Saal in the Ruby Despotate.

APL 10–12

- ***Zheita develops a strange romantic obsession for one of the PCs. She showers that PC with gifts—stolen of course—in an attempt at wooing.*** Things escalate over time. Zheita closely observes the PC's habits and acts on any information she gleans. If the PC shows an enmity toward a particular enemy, Zheita attack said enemy and delivers it, dead or alive, to the PC. She delivers a favorite drink or style of dress by the barrel or crate. If allowed to escalate, Zheita determines that it is the other PCs who keep her apart from her new love, so she stages a kidnapping to bring the PC to her.
- ***Master Kiprak is envious of Zheita's clockwork siege crab and wishes a similar vehicle of his own, so he enacts a plan to have one built.*** First, he steals the plans to the alchemical engine that powers the clockwork siege crab. Then, he begins stealing the materials and components necessary to construct the engine and the vehicle. Finally, Kiprak kidnaps the dwarf engineer responsible for building the crab in order to force him to craft another such vehicle. The crime spree comes to the notice of the PCs somewhere along the way. They must piece together the clues to figure out where Master Kiprak will strike next, or they might end up as the first test subjects of his new clockwork monstrosity.
- ***Guilds and governments alike have had enough of the depredations of the Hand.*** An ostentatious reward has been put forward to anyone able to break the power of the cult and either slay the group's leaders or bring them to justice. The PCs must set out to track down the Five in the midst of their crime sprees as part of the contest for the seat of the High Exalted. One by one, the crime lords either fall or flee, culminating in an invasion of the temple of Nakresh, where any of the Five still at large make a last stand to defend their religion against the interlopers.

CULTISTS OF THE
HAND OF NAKRESH

The demon-god Nakresh reserves his lowest left hand for cunning theft. The cult that bears its name recruits members that can swell the coffers of the cult with wealth pilfered with cunning and style. Foes are dealt with in a manner fitting their god, by robbing them of all they hold dear. The following NPCs can be used as cultist minions, intermediaries, and lower-level leaders to provide suitable enemies for the PCs as they strive against the Hand of Nakresh.

TENGU BRAVO

CR 1/2

XP 200

Tengu rogue 1 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)
CN Medium humanoid (tengu)

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

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 10 (1d8+2)

Fort +1; **Ref** +4; **Will** -1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee rapier +2 (1d6+2/18-20) or
sap +2 (1d6+2 nonlethal)

Ranged dagger +2 (1d4+2/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

Before Combat The tengu bravo moves into melee, using Acrobatics to take up a flanking position with an ally if possible.

During Combat The tengu bravo attacks, attempting to get in as many sneak attacks as possible. If the battle appears lost, she attempt to escape, lighting a smokestick to provide concealment if the opportunity arises.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +0; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14

Feats Dodge

Skills Acrobatics +6, Bluff +5, Disable Device +6, Knowledge (local) +4, Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6

Languages Common, Tengu

SQ trapfinding

Combat Gear alchemist's fire (2), smokestick, thunderstone, *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** daggers (3), rapier, mwk studded leather armor, thieves' tools, 17 gp

These bravos often operate as grunts for the Five Exalted and their lieutenants. Often they are used in situations where being stealthy and unobserved is not an issue. A small band of bravos might be tasked with committing a flashy, smash-and-grab style robbery. Sometimes this theft is merely a distraction to divert attention away from a more carefully planned and executed crime being staged nearby.

DIVERSION EXPERT

CR 4

XP 1,200

Kobold illusionist 5 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

NE Small humanoid (reptilian)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+1 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

hp 25 (5d6+5)

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

Weaknesses light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee club +2 (1d4-1)

Ranged light crossbow +5 (1d6/19-20)

Arcane Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th; conc. +8)
6/day—blinding ray

Illusionist Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +8)
3rd—*deep slumber* (DC 16), *invisibility sphere*, *major image* (DC 18)
2nd—*alter self*, *hypnotic pattern* (DC 17), *magic mouth*, *touch of idiocy*

1st—*color spray* (DC 16), *expeditious retreat*, *hold portal*, *obscuring mist*, *ventriloquism*

0—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *message*

Opposition Schools evocation, necromancy

TACTICS

Before Combat The diversion expert casts *expeditious retreat*.

During Combat The diversion expert attempts to incapacitate foes by casting *color spray* and *deep slumber* and using his *wand of web*. The diversion expert casts *obscuring mist* to cover a stealthy retreat, possibly taking the time to cast *hold portal* on any door between him and his pursuers, or *alter self* to blend into a crowd.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 12

Feats Brew Potion, Greater Spell Focus (illusion), Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (illusion)

Skills Appraise +9, Fly +8, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Perception +9, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +12

Languages Common, Draconic

SQ arcane bond, extended illusions (+2 rounds)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of shield of faith*, *scroll of fly*, *scroll of mage armor*, *scroll of stinking cloud*, *wand of web* (15 charges), flash powder^{APG} (2), smokesticks (2), sneezing powder^{APG} (2); **Other Gear** club, mwk light crossbow with 20 bolts, *bracers of armor* +1, spellbook, 205 gp

The diversion expert's job is to distract attention away from the criminal activities of other Hand of Nakresh operatives. He can use illusions to cover the activities of the cult's thieves or to create the appearance of a more imminent threat to draw

FOR MIDGARD CAMPAIGNS

Zheita has received an epiphany this year, the result of either a premonitory dream or research into a rare book of lore, whichever version of the tale she's telling at the time or what best suits your campaign. This allowed her to uncover an ancient engine of magic from deep underground, a lost artifact from another age. This

year Zheita believes the position of the High Exalted is certainly hers. None of her peers can match her claims because she plans to steal magic itself. She has discovered a device that can steal ley lines (see the *Ley Line Absorber* item on page 109). Whether such a crazy and far-fetched scheme will work remains to be seen.

the law away, such as a fire or a riot. The diversion expert can also use spells to cover the retreat of allies should they need it. A diversion expert usually works in concert with other cult members, often three to six tengu bravos or a pair of burglars (see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide*).

ROACHLING LIEUTENANT**CR 6****XP 2,400**

Roachling rogue 7 (Midgard Bestiary for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game)

CN Small humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 10 ft.; Perception –1

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 dodge, +3 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

hp 49 (7d8+14)

Fort +4; **Ref** +8; **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +10 (1d4+1/18-20)

Ranged mwk shortbow +10 (1d4/x3) or dagger +9 (1d3+1/19-20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +4d6

TACTICS

Before Combat The roachling lieutenant drinks her *potion of invisibility*.

During Combat The roachling lieutenant uses Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, and Improved Disarm against her opponents.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +13, Appraise +11, Bluff +12, Climb +10, Escape Artist +13, Knowledge (local) +11, Perception +9, Sense Motive +9, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +17, Use Magic Device +12;

Racial Modifiers +2 Climb, +2 Stealth

Languages Common, Draconic

SQ rogue talents (befuddling strike^{APG}, fast stealth, finesse rogue), trapfinding +3

Combat Gear brooch of shielding, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** +1 studded leather, +1 rapier, mwk shortbow with 20 arrows, mwk thieves' tools, 82 gp

The roachling lieutenant oversees a number of lesser thieves associated with the cult, answering directly to one of the Five Exalted. This individual will often exhort her underlings to pull off heists that are both lucrative and showy, in the hopes of one day displacing one of the Five Exalted and taking her place among the leaders of the Hand of Nakresh.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Who needs skill when such incredible magical items are around?

LEY LINE ABSORBER/DWEOMER ABSORBER (MAJOR ARTIFACT)

Aura strong universal; **CL** 20th

Slot none; **Weight** 4,000 lbs.

This strange and ancient device of bronze is composed of a raised platform surmounted by a horseshoe-shaped console of levers, buttons, cranks, and dials. Arcane diagrams and words are etched into the metal. When activated, panels open in the back of the console, releasing two twisted, branching antennae that rise to either side of the console to a height of 10 feet and crackle with energy.



Midgard: In the Midgard campaign setting, this device feeds upon and absorbs ley line energy. The operator of the *Ley Line Absorber* is considered as having all ley line feats (see the *Midgard Campaign Setting*) while standing on the platform. When active, the artifact can draw upon the power of any ley line within a mile of its location. Those with the ability to see ley lines actually note them bending toward the location of the *Absorber*, drawn in by its reality-warping powers.

Ley lines may still burn out if overtaxed, but the device absorbs the backlash and the operator suffers no ill effects. If such backlash occurs, then the device is inoperable for 24 hours until it repairs itself. By manipulating the controls on the console, the operator of the *Ley Line Absorber* can produce the following effects.

- Once per week, the operator of the *Ley Line Absorber* can draw upon the powers of the machine and use ley line energy to restore personal casting ability. As a full round action, any spent prepared spells or spell slots are restored as if the operator had rested and/or prepared new spells for the day.
- The operator can secure a ley line, making it inaccessible to anyone but the operator until the operator releases the ley line. The procedure to secure or release a ley line takes 10 minutes.
- The operator can teleport herself as per teleport, and the *Ley Line Absorber* to any location by traveling along the flow of energy to the desired destination. This takes a minute of preparation, after which the device and the operator vanish in a white flash of energy. This method of travel is imperfect, and all locations are considered “seen casually” no matter how familiar the operator is with the location. On a “mishap” roll, in addition to the usual effects, the Absorber shorts out and cannot be used for 24 hours.

Other Settings: In other settings, this device is known as the *Dweomer Absorber*. When activated, it draws magic from numerous sources within a one-mile radius of its location. While on the platform, the operator casts spells as if his or her caster level were 2 levels higher and under the effects of *arcane sight*.

Using the displays and sensors of the console, the operator can gain a +10 circumstance bonus to any Knowledge (arcana) and Spellcraft checks. In addition, by manipulating the controls of the console, the operator can produce the following effects.

- By manipulating the flow of arcane energies, the operator can use any one metamagic feat for the next 24 hours. If the operator prepares spells, this feat can be applied the next time she prepares. If a spontaneous caster, the operator can apply this feat as normal.
- The caster can use the artifact to interfere with the manipulation of magical energies. When in effect, any spellcaster within 500 feet of the *Absorber* (with the exception of the operator) must attempt a concentration check when casting (DC = 20 + spell level) or lose the spell.
- Once a year, the operator can take 1 hour to draw upon massive amounts of magical energy in the nearby region and concentrate them with the *Absorber* to accomplish amazing wonders. At the end of the hour, the area within a quarter mile of the *Absorber* is affected as per *mage's disjunction*. The remaining area out to a mile from the Absorber is affected as per *greater dispel magic* (in addition to the effects described below). The operator can then utilize the magical energies to cast wish. Using this wish to produce greater effects than described in the spell is especially dangerous, and the GM should feel free to twist the effects as appropriate.

The presence of the *Absorber* has undesirable effects upon magic in an area up to a 1-mile radius. Roll on the chart (see next page) whenever the *Absorber* is used (except for its once per year ability) to determine what sorts of problems are experienced due to the Absorber's effects.

DESTRUCTION

Midgard Campaign: The *Ley Line Absorber* must be set on a feedback loop while sitting on a titanic ley line, and then be targeted with *mage's disjunction*. This destroys the artifact and also burns out the ley line, causing the caster of *mage's disjunction*, as well as all other spellcasters within 100 feet, to suffer backlash.

Absorber Effects on Nearby Magic

1–10	Magical traps (including <i>glyphs of warding</i> , <i>symbols</i> , and similar spells) have a 50% chance of not functioning when triggered.
11–25	Casters find their bonds to magical energies weakened. All casters must succeed at concentration checks (DC = 15 + spell level) when casting or lose their spells.
26–35	All spells in the area are effectively cast at 1 caster level lower. (1st level casters have a 50% chance of spell failure.)
36–50	Magic item function is affected. All wands expend 2 charges per use.
51–65	Magic item function is affected. All weapons and armor with enhancement bonuses function as 1 less than normal (for instance, a +2 <i>longsword</i> functions as a +1 <i>longsword</i> ; +1 weapons or armor are considered masterwork and nonmagical).
66–75	Magic item function is affected. All wondrous items that grant enhancement bonuses function as one less than normal (for instance, an <i>amulet of natural armor</i> +2 functions as an <i>amulet of natural armor</i> +1; items of +1 power are considered nonmagical).
76–85	Spells cast from scrolls have their effects or durations halved.
86–00	Potions have their effects or durations halved.

Other Campaigns: The *Dweomer Absorber* must be targeted with a *mage's disjunction*, followed by a *wish*, and then touched with a *sphere of annihilation*.

MONKEY'S PAW OF FORTUNE

Aura moderate divination; **CL** 10th

Slot neck; **Price** 5,000 gp; **Weight** —

This preserved monkey's paw hangs on a simple leather thong. The wearer can use its magic to alter his or her fate. Whenever a die roll for an attack, saving throw, skill check, or ability check is failed, the wearer can use one charge from the monkey's paw of fortune as an immediate action to reroll the die with a +10 luck bonus. The results of the second roll must be taken. When this ability is used, one of the paw's fingers curls tight to the palm. When all five fingers are curled tightly into a fist, the monkey's paw loses all magical ability.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *moment of prescience*;
Cost 2,500 gp

SHRIEKING AKLYS

Aura faint necromancy; **CL** 7th

Slot none; **Price** 9,305 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

This +1 *returning aklys*^{UC} has holes drilled through it and makes a keening wail when thrown. Any target struck by a *screaming aklys* must succeed at a DC 15

Will save or become shaken for 1 minute. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *doom*, *telekinesis*;
Cost 4,805 gp

NEW SPELL

Sneakier members of the Hand of Nakresh use the following spell to keep their opponents guessing.

SCATTERED IMAGES

School illusion (figment); **Level** bard 3, magus 4, sorcerer/wizard 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range personal (see text)

Target you

Duration 1 round/level

When you cast this spell, you create illusory doubles that move when you move but in different directions, distracting and misdirecting your opponents.

When *scattered images* is cast, 1d4 images plus one image per 3 caster levels (maximum eight images total) are created. These images remain in your space, acting as *mirror image*, until you move or until you chose to have them move by themselves. When you move, your images can stay in your square or move

an equal distance in any direction you wish, with any movement speed you currently possess (for example, if you have a fly or swim speed, your images do as well). You can also cause some images to splinter off in different direction while others remain in your square. Finally, you can remain in your current square and cause the images to move without you, although doing so still counts as a move action. These figments must remain within medium range (100 feet plus 10 feet per caster level) or they are destroyed.

While in your square, the images mimic your movements, sounds, and actions perfectly, functioning as per *mirror image*. Figments in other squares do not perfectly imitate your actions, but instead perform logical alternative actions which you may dictate. They can appear to make melee attacks (always narrowly missing), attempt to flee the area, cast a spell with no visible effect, drink a potion, and so on. They cannot produce illusory spell effects, or appear to interact with objects that you don't have. The figments navigate terrain in a realistic manner and can move out of your direct sight if such a path is available. The figments move to stay within range of you. The movement and actions of the figments do provoke attacks of opportunity normally; however any feats that prevent or modify such attacks apply to the figments as well.

Finally, once per spell casting, you can exchange places with one figment in a different square as a short range teleportation effect. Doing so requires an immediate action and may be in response to a successful attack. You can switch places before damage is applied and the figment is destroyed.

An attacker must be able to see the figments to be fooled. If you are invisible or the attacker is blind, the spell has no effect (although the normal miss chances still apply).

NEW VEHICLE

This enormous vehicle may not be subtle, but it gets the job done.

CLOCKWORK SIEGE CRAB

Gargantuan land vehicle

Squares 16 (20 ft. by 20 ft.; 20 ft. high); **Cost** 50,000 gp

DEFENSE

AC 6; **Hardness** 10

hp 320 (159)

Base Save +3

OFFENSE

Maximum Speed 60 ft.; **Acceleration** 20 ft.

CMB +4; **CMD** 14

Ramming Damage 4d8

DESCRIPTION

This massive fabrication of brass, iron, and glass resembles nothing less than a giant crab. The prototype of a dwarf artificer who built machines to work the city's river docks, this vehicle was stolen years ago by Zheita on a whim. She now considers it her personal chariot, and uses it when she needs to abscond with large cargo or when she needs additional offense. It costs 100 gp in alchemical reagents to fuel 1 hour of activity. Creatures in the clockwork siege crab gain either total cover (in the lower deck) or improved cover (on the upper deck). Only the upper deck has view ports, allowing those inside the clockwork siege crab to look out.

Propulsion alchemical (8 squares of alchemical engines; hardness 8, **hp** 200)

Driving Check Knowledge (arcana) or Craft (alchemy) (+10 to the DC)

Forward Facing one side of the square vehicle space

Driving Device two levers used to move the legs

Driving Space a single 5-ft.-by-5-ft. square that contains the two levers that serve as the steam giant's driving device; these levers are located on the second (top) deck of the vehicle

Crew 4

Passengers 4

Decks 2. The upper deck contains the controls for the driver and arm operators, as well as room for additional passengers. The lower deck allows access to the alchemical engine, where an additional crew member maintains the engine. The lower deck also has cargo space equal to a heavy wagon.

Weapons 2 clockwork pincers located on the arms, used by two operators to attack or to load cargo into the first (bottom) deck of the vehicle; 2 pincers +8 (2d6+15 plus grab; **CMB** +20)



NIGHT CAULDRON OF CHERNOBOG

According to the sacred texts of the Night Cauldron of Chernobog, the multiverse began in darkness. The god Chernobog argued with the other deities about bringing illumination to mortals. In the end, the other deities convinced Chernobog to permit the formation of the stars, so long as the places between their loathsome glow would remain dark and all light would cast shadows. The god seemed amenable to this compromise, but he immediately turned his attention to returning darkness to creation one world at a time. The dark god's vision appeals to creatures who thrive in the night and to those who carry out their misdeeds under cover of darkness. Plentiful agents assist with his goals on worlds such as Midgard. The Night

Cauldron of Chernobog, a relatively small yet ancient and pervasive cult in Midgard's Northlands, is but one of his cults.

LEADERS, ORGANIZATION, AND GOALS

Simply put, the Night Cauldron of Chernobog seeks to bring eternal darkness to all of Midgard. Nikolai Savitch directs the overall operation of the Night Cauldron from Vellarsheim, Domovogrod, but the widespread nature of the cult gives its members a fair amount of autonomy over how they conduct their activities.

A winter hag coven is a prominent force in the Night Cauldron. The coven advises Savitch based on their divinations. The hags travel throughout Midgard to supervise major cult initiatives and mete out punishment to those who fail in their duties or bring too much unwanted attention to the cult. The winter hags convinced Savitch to bring on a third member to create an overarching system of three leaders, so he recruited a former adventuring companion, now a greater shadow.

The Night Cauldron counts a diverse array of creatures as members. Foremost are hulking humans and trollkin, representative of Chernobog's teaching that the strong should control the weak. Hags also join the cult out of reverence for Chernobog, and many winter hags are especially drawn to the idea of a world perpetually covered in ice and darkness. Undead who shun daylight support the cult, but most undead joining the Night Cauldron are incorporeal creatures which feel no connection to the established kingdoms of Morgau and Doresh or the Empire of the Ghouls, where Chernobog earns only a passing amount of respect. Living underground creatures also join the cult's ranks with the goal of making the entirety of Midgard habitable for themselves. Dark Folk and derro make up most of the underground rank and file, but the Dark Folk have unknowable agendas and the derro are far too insane to move up in the cult's hierarchy. Gnomes comprise the final major group of cultists. A group of gnomes has recently joined the Night Cauldron as an alternative to serving the lords of the Eleven Hells. After all, they reason, a god is certainly more powerful than even the mightiest demon or devil, and, as they have learned, Chernobog is at the very least a rival to Baba Yaga, who desires all gnomes in her stewpot.

Very few clerics of Chernobog fill the Night Cauldron's upper ranks. While the god's clerics readily assist cultists as their abilities allow, many of them feel the cult misses the deity's true purpose by focusing solely on eternal night. Less powerful clerics who join the Night Cauldron eventually find themselves disenfranchised within the cult as they learn more about the breadth of Chernobog's portfolio. A mild rivalry has developed between Chernobog's priests and the cult, but not enough to undermine either groups' activities.

The Night Cauldron has spread throughout the Northlands, often allying with followers of Boreas and Marena, and progressed extensively into central Midgard. Savitch has turned his attention to the bright and sunny Southlands. He realizes that it will be a hard fight to bring darkness to these lands, let alone stand out among the many other cults operating in the region, but he is more than willing to take on that battle.

Many cultists use the symbol of a cauldron etched faintly with a bear paw to identify themselves to fellow followers. Another symbol the cult uses is a bear paw with a sun in the center, the claws subtly curling inward toward the sun. This seemingly innocuous or even promising symbol represents Chernobog crushing the sun.

NIKOLAI SAVITCH

CR 15

XP 51,200

Male human alchemist 16 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** see in darkness; Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 39, touch 20, flat-footed 33 (+4 armor, +4 deflection, +6 Dex, +11 natural, +4 shield)

hp 218 (16d8+143)

Fort +21, **Ref** +19, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities fortification 25%; **Immune** cold, poison

Weaknesses vulnerability to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *morningstar* +21/+16/+11 (1d8+13)

Ranged bomb +20/+15/+10 (8d6+5 fire)

Special Attacks bomb 21/day (8d6+5 fire, DC 23)

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 16th; conc. +21)

6th—*quintessence*^{DM}, *shadow walk*

5th—*broken mind*^{DM}, *contact other plane*, *delayed consumption*^{APG}, *spell resistance*

4th—*detonate*^{APG} (DC 19), *fire shield*, *greater ingest*^{DM}, *shadow attack*^{DM}, *stoneskin*

3rd—*cure serious wounds* (×2), *displacement*, *false death*^{DM}, *haste*, *protection from energy*

2nd—*alchemical allocation*^{APG}, *barkskin*, *bear's endurance*, *false life*, *fox's cunning*, *see invisibility*, *slither*^{DM}

1st—*arcane siphon*^{DM}, *disguise self*, *enlarge person*, *shield*, *stone fist*^{APG}, *third eye*^{DM}, *true strike*

TACTICS

Before Combat Nikolai drinks his mutagen, uses his *wand of mage armor*, and drinks his *extracts of barkskin*, *false life*, *bear's endurance*, and *shield* (already calculated in his statistics). If he expects to fight in melee, he coats his morningstar with deathblade poison.

During Combat Nikolai stays just out of reach to throw bombs, using his precise bombs discovery to avoid damaging his allies. He usually starts off with a darkness bomb to hinder his opponents. If necessary, he joins melee combat with his morningstar, taking time to use protective extracts such as *displacement* and *stoneskin* first.

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 22, **Con** 22, **Int** 20, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 39

Feats Brew Potion, Extra Discovery^{APG}, Great Fortitude, Improved Iron Will, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Master Alchemist^{APG}, Star and Shadow Casting^{DM}, Throw Anything, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bomb)

Skills Acrobatics +22, Craft (alchemy) +28 (+44 to create alchemical items), Diplomacy +18, Intimidate +26, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (local) +21, Perception +18, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +24, Use Magic Device +21

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Dark Folk, Draconic, Gnome, Infernal

SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +16), discoveries (darkness bomb^{ARG}, explosive bomb, fast bombs, grand mutagen, greater mutagen, poison bomb, precise bombs [5 squares], preserve organs^{UM}, smoke bomb), mutagen (+8/+6/+4/-2, +6 natural armor, 16 hours), poison use, swift alchemy

Combat Gear +1 *morningstar*, *potion of fly*, *potion of invisibility*, *wand of mage armor* (40 charges), blue whinnis (3), deathblade (3), shadow essence (10);

Other Gear *belt of physical might* +4 (Str, Dex), *circlet of persuasion*, *cloak of resistance* +3 (made from a polar bear pelt), *headband of mental prowess* +2 (Int, Cha), *ring of protection* +3, alchemist formula book, alchemist's lab, alchemy kit^{APG}, diamond worth 1,157 gp

Nikolai Savitch is a physically imposing human, standing at six and a half feet tall and weighing over 300 pounds. His dark hair is nearly matched by the dark complexion of his skin, something he attributes to hard labor in the sun during the scant months it makes an appearance. Despite his muscularity, he is nimble and skillful at maneuvering during a fight. His physical qualities belie a cunning intelligence, which he uses to create alchemical supplies that he sells in Vellarsheim. The people there know him as a boisterous man who often engage in tests of physical might and the occasional bar brawl. He wears clothing appropriate to the north, most prominently a magical cloak made from a polar bear pelt.

Nikolai was a devil-may-care adventurer who sought treasure and glory throughout Midgard. During an excursion into a series of underground caverns far to the north, he was separated from his party and found himself in a chamber of cloying darkness. Feeling fear for the first time in his life, Nikolai heard a voice asking him if he desired a way out of the darkness. The voice promised to lead him out and, more enticingly, it promised a path to power and fortune greater than the trinkets and fame from adventuring. All he had to do was allow the darkness to take someone in his place. Nikolai had no reservations about knocking one of his fellow adventurers unconscious and allowing the darkness to take the patsy while he watched. His indoctrination into the cult of the Night Cauldron complete, Nikolai almost immediately sought leadership of the cult. He seeks to unify the cult's international efforts and drastically expand its membership.

FAVORED OF CHERNOBOG

Creatures and NPCs in higher echelons of the Night Cauldron cult undergo a ritual devoted to Chernobog called the Black God's Blessing so they may better carry out his will. This ritual grants them the ability to see in darkness and immunity to cold. However, as the cult focuses solely on the darkness aspect of the god, and Chernobog does not wish to make life easy for his followers, the gift comes with the price of vulnerability to fire. More details about the ritual appear later in this chapter.

Savitch poses as an apothecary in Vellarsheim. He presents himself as a boisterous and friendly person who likes to hear the latest gossip, which he uses to determine potential threats to the Night Cauldron or possible recruits to the cult. He also exploits his guise to travel around Midgard to sell his goods (“after all, I won’t make enough money if I stay here among the good people of Vellarsheim”) and arrange clandestine meetings with powerful regional cult leaders.

When Savitch uses his mutagen, he takes on ursine qualities. He seeks to cow his foes rather than start combat, mostly so that he doesn’t have to reveal his considerable prowess, but he joyously enters the fray when his opponents prove intractable.

Night Cauldron Coven Hag (Anastasiya, Irina, and Klavdiya) CR 13

XP 25,600

Winter hag sorcerer 10 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 4)

CE Medium monstrous humanoid (cold)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness, see invisibility, snow vision; **Perception** +20

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 15, flat-footed 24 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 insight, +9 natural)

hp 202 each (20 HD; 10d6+10d10+110)

Fort +12, **Ref** +13, **Will** +17

DR 10/magic; **Immune** cold; **Resist** fire 20; **SR** 18

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.; icewalking

Melee 2 claws +20 (1d4+5)

Special Attacks breath weapon (30-ft. cone, 4d6 cold and blinded for 1d6 rounds, Reflex DC 21 partial, usable every 1d4 rounds), lash of shadows (1d6+5 cold damage, 9/day), swirling shadows (10d6 cold, Reflex DC 21 half, 1/day)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; concentration +16)

Constant—*pass without trace*, *see invisibility*

At will—*chill metal* (DC 18), *detect magic*, *fog cloud*, *frostbite*^{UM}, *whispering wind*

3/day—*alter self*, *charm monster* (DC 20), *invisibility* (self only), *major image* (DC 19)

1/day—*cone of cold* (see ice staff) (DC 21), *control weather* (windy or cold weather only), *wall of ice* (DC 20), *waves of fatigue*

Coven Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th; conc. +16)

1/day—*animate dead*, *baleful polymorph* (DC 21), *blight* (DC 20), *bestow curse* (DC 20), *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *charm monster* (DC 20), *commune*, *control weather*, *dream*, *forcecage*, *mind blank*, *mirage arcana* (DC 21), *reincarnate*, *sculpt simulacrum*^{UM}, *simulacrum*, *speak with dead*, *veil* (DC 22), *vision*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 10th; concentration +16)

5th (4/day)—*dominate person* (Irina only, DC 21), *suffocation*^{APG} (Anastasiya only, DC 21), *teleport* (Klavdiya only)

4th (6/day)—*devouring shadow*^{DM} (DC 20), *phantasmal killer* (DC 20), *shadow conjuration* (DC 21)

3rd (7/day)—*deeper darkness*, *displacement*, *lightning bolt* (DC 19), *shadow snare*^{DM}

2nd (8/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 18), *caustic blood*^{DM}, *mirror image*, *scorching ray*, *shadow jump*^{DM}

1st (8/day)—*mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of the eclipse*^{DM}, *shadow hands*^{DM} (DC 17), *shield*, *voidmote*^{DM} (DC 17)

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *deepen shadow*^{DM}, *detect magic*, *hoarfrost*^{DM}, *mage hand*, *read magic*, *resize shadow*^{DM}, *shadow blindness*^{DM} (DC 16)

Bloodline shadow^{DM}

TACTICS

Before Combat Each hag casts *mage armor* and *mirror image* (already calculated in their statistics).

During Combat While they can, the hags use their coven spell-like abilities to afflict their opponents, usually with *baleful polymorph* and *bestow curse*. When separated, they use their most powerful abilities (*dominate person*, *suffocation*, *cone of cold*, or the swirling shadows special attack depending on the hag). They then tailor the remainder of their spell-like abilities to their targets.

Morale The hags come together if one is gravely injured (reduced to 40 hp or less) and Klavdiya teleports them away.

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 16, **Con** 18, **Int** 14, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 35

Feats Ability Focus (breath weapon), Alertness, Allied Spellcaster^{APG}, Blind-Fight, Combat Casting,

Deceitful, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude, Lookout^{APG}, Star and Shadow Casting^{DM}, Toughness
Skills Bluff +23, Craft (alchemy) +10, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +20, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Perception +20, Ride +11, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +11 (+15 in snow); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth in snow

Languages Aklo, Common, Giant

SQ bloodline arcana (+1 DC for spells of the shadow subschool), *cloak of shadows* (resist cold 10, +4 bonus on initiative checks), *ice staff*

Combat Gear *lesser maximize metamagic rod*, *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** *dusty rose prism ioun stone*, *hat of disguise* (Irina only), *major ring of fire resistance*, *marble sphere ioun stone*^{DM}, *pink rhomboid ioun stone*

Typically, hags who venerate Chernobog refuse to work with one another. However, the Night Cauldron promotes unity among its members in pursuit of their lofty goal of bringing about eternal night. The winter hag “sisters” Anastasiya, Irina, and Klavdiya are shining examples of the cooperation the cult fosters. They joined the Night Cauldron at relatively young ages—Anastasiya, the youngest, joined at the tender age of 83—and have worked together ever since. They are intensely protective of each other and have learned to maximize their abilities while training in sorcerous ways.

The hags are all six feet tall and indistinguishable from each other, an odd side effect of the solidarity they have achieved. However, Irina has recently begun using her *hat of disguise* to give herself an appearance nearer to her conception of Chernobog, with an eye toward making the change permanent. She has been unable to convince her sisters to do likewise, but they do not discourage her efforts.

Prior to Nikolai Savitch’s rise to leadership, the coven carried out small plots to further the cult’s goals. They made the winter months crueler and darker but retired to safe places during the longer summer days. When they learned the Night Cauldron had a new leader, they offered their services to him, and they were pleased to discover that the human wanted to better organize the cult’s efforts.

The hags use a cauldron wherever they travel as a focus for the magical abilities their unity as a

coven grants them. Together, they commune with Chernobog’s lieutenants—and occasionally the god himself—to discover the best path for the cult to follow in their goal of eternal darkness. They convey their findings from these consultations to Nikolai.

SERRIN

CR 12

XP 19,200

Female advanced greater shadow antipaladin 6
(Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player’s Guide, Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary)

CE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +24

Aura cowardice (10 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 27, flat-footed 18 (+8 deflection, +8 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 199 (15 HD; 9d8+6d10+126)

Fort +24, **Ref** +21, **Will** +24

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

OFFENSE

Speed fly 40 ft. (good)

Melee +2 *ghost touch unholy warhammer* +23/+18/+13 (1d8+10/19–20/×3) and incorporeal touch +15 (1d8 Str)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 5/day (DC 21, 3d6), create spawn, smite good 2/day (+8 attack and AC, +6 damage)

Antipaladin Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; conc. +14)
 At will—*detect good*

Antipaladin Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; conc. +11)
 1st—*death knell* (DC 19), *doom of blood*^{DM} (DC 19), *murderous command*^{UM} (DC 19)

TACTICS

During Combat Serrin casts her *doom of blood* and *murderous command* spells if she starts combat at a distance from foes. If she detects good creatures, she uses smite good to eliminate them, finishing them off with *death knell*. She prefers to use her ghost touch warhammer in conjunction with her Strength-sapping touch but switches to a two-handed stance if she feels the need to deal more physical damage.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 26, **Con** —, **Int** 12, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 26

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 39

Feats Deceitful, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (warhammer), Mobility, Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Focus (warhammer)

Skills Bluff +27, Disguise +28, Fly +18, Intimidate +26, Perception +24, Stealth +27 (+23 in bright light, +31 in dim light); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth in dim light (–4 Stealth in bright light)

Languages Common, Dark Folk

SQ cruelties (shaken, staggered), fiendish boon (weapon +1, 1/day), touch of corruption 11/day (3d6)

Gear +2 *ghost touch unholy warhammer, pink and green sphere ioun stone*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dark God's Boon (Ex) When Serrin underwent the Black God's Blessing ritual, her nature as a greater shadow made her better suited to accept its power. Instead of vulnerability to fire, she has the ability to add her Dexterity modifier to her damage rolls with her warhammer.

A former adventuring compatriot of Nikolai Savitch, Serrin became a mercenary for hire after Nikolai's conversion and sacrifice of their compatriot dissolved their adventuring group. At the time, Serrin only knew that both her companions disappeared, and she fled the caverns in terror. Nikolai kept tabs on her exploits after they parted ways and was dismayed to discover that a powerful shadow creature had slain her. Unbeknownst to him, however, she had returned to unlife and started a minor reign of terror, draining travelers on the road. When the winter hag coven informed him of her activities and the potential of recruiting her, he leapt at the opportunity. Serrin enjoyed the idea of having an organization at her back and was pleased to reunite with Nikolai.

Serrin is just over five feet tall, and she maintains a shadowy mockery of her appearance in life, complete with spiky plate mail armor and a wicked spiked warhammer. Her enemies find out very quickly that her apparently insubstantial weapon deals powerful blows. She also enjoys stalking her prey, pretending to be a mark's shadow and then launching an attack when her victim least expects it.

CULT ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURE HOOKS

Below are several methods of introducing the Night Cauldron of Chernobog as adversaries for the PCs in your campaign. These hooks can represent a single adventure or combine into a recurring thread where the PCs must thwart the cult before they achieve their objectives and bring permanent darkness to a region. Statistics for all named NPCs referenced in the hooks below appear in this chapter.

APL 1–3

- **A larger town or city illuminates major thoroughfares at night for the safety of people conducting business at late hours and revelers returning home from popular taverns.** Lately, the lanterns have been extinguishing themselves shortly after being lit, allowing the city's ne'er-dowells to take advantage of victims surprised by the sudden darkness. The constabulary is baffled as to the exact cause and asks the PCs to investigate the incidents. Examination of the lanterns reveals a *darkness* spell that triggers when the lantern oil reaches a certain temperature. The PC's search eventually leads them to a warehouse, where mercenaries (human fighter 1) employed by the Night Cauldron stand guard. These mercenaries do not know who hired them, only that the pay for the job was good. Further investigation uncovers that the lantern oil was produced by an alchemical supplier who works for Nikolai Savitch.
- **A series of petty thefts occurs at stores and taverns the PCs have recently visited.** Shop owners eventually suspect the PCs are responsible for the crimes and refuse to do business with the PCs unless they pay restitution or find the true culprit. A skulk rogue named Whisperfoot is responsible for the crimes. He has chosen the PCs as his targets to prove himself a valuable member to the Night Cauldron. If the PCs smooth things over with the merchants, Whisperfoot steps up his efforts and begins stealing items from the PCs and leaving them at the scene of various crimes. If the PCs confront the skulk, he makes a couple of attacks before attempting to slip away, only to return to vex them from the shadows later.

- **During an unusually long-lasting solar eclipse, a pair of dark creeper cultists are sent to deliver a message from Quexxl to another Night Cauldron agent.** Taking advantage of the lack of light on their first trip above ground, they become distracted from their task and, in a fit of rage, attack people on the street. The commotion draws the PCs' attention; if they fight the dark creepers, the dark creepers retaliate until they realize they are outmatched and attempt to escape. Fragments of the message survive the dark creeper's violent death throes, and the PCs can make out the location and date of a clandestine meeting sometime in the future.

APL 4–6

- **This adventure hook leads out of the first adventure hook for APL 1–2.** Verrazi Pinth has seeded magical objects emanating darkness among those supposed to bring light during a Midwinter ceremony. Nikolai Savitch has improved upon his darkness oil recipe and plans to test it on a larger scale. Characters who figured out the oil's secret earlier have a chance to stop the cult from plunging the ceremony into darkness and inviting horrific creatures to attack the celebrants. Shadows target the PCs during the attack. More shadows guard the lanterns, prepared to strike against anyone who would dare to interfere with the cult's activities.
- **Night Cauldron cultists have abducted several people with knowledge about the stars.** One of the PCs may know an abductee, or an NPC may ask the PCs to find their missing friend or relative. If the PCs investigate a kidnapping site, they notice that the site contains tomes about the stars, but specific passages of these tomes have been hastily removed or destroyed. The fragmentary remains discuss a rare celestial event set to occur within the next couple of weeks. Fortunately for the PCs and their rescue attempt, the cultists have left their captives alive in order to question them. The PCs must track the kidnappers to their source, and then dispatch the derro cultists before they murder their captives.
- **A contaminant shade has spread its shadow affliction to an entire village (see the creature's statistics page 127).** The Night Cauldron plans to enshroud the village in darkness with a minor

ritual to spur the villagers' horrific and permanent transformation. Before the cultists can carry out their plan, one of the afflicted people flees the village in an attempt to find relief from her bizarre malady and stumbles across the PCs. She tells the PCs that she "faded to oblivion, skin and eyes becoming as night" when she read strange words on a scroll (unbeknownst to her, a *scroll of darkness*). Under the effects of the contaminant shade's curse, when she is exposed to magical darkness she transforms into a contaminant shade and loses control over her actions. If the PCs cure her, she thanks them and suggests that others in her village may also be stricken. Characters traveling to the village to investigate the shadow transformation must defeat the original contaminant shade before it can infect them at well.

APL 7–9

- **After the PCs rescue an elderly man from Verrazi Pinth, they learn that the man was a former adventurer with an unfinished quest.** He sought the starcore gem, an artifact reputed to contain the heart of one of the first stars brought to the universe when the gods illuminated the darkness. Characters who have dealt with the Night Cauldron during their careers may be interested in locating the artifact to help in their fight against the cult. However, with the potential to awaken a star at the artifact's location, will the PCs generate a vast explosion of fiery light in their quest to put an end to the Night Cauldron?
- **The Night Cauldron regularly hires a brother and sister team of shadowdancers to eliminate troublesome foes like the PCs.** Since the shadowdancers aren't members of the cult, they know nothing about the cult's activities (use the stats for the CR 8 shadowdancer from *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex*). However, in the unlikely event the PCs capture them (the duo ingest lethal poisons if they cannot avoid capture), the PCs learn that Serrin hired them. Persuasive or exceedingly rich characters may be able to convince the shadowdancers to work for them to attack the cult, provided the PCs don't mind allying with obviously evil people.

- **Melakian murdered the high priest of a temple devoted to the day aspect of the goddess Lada without asking the rest of the Night Cauldron for permission.** The rest of the cult disapproves of his action, as they have bigger plans in the area that are now at risk of being exposed during an investigation. The church of Lada asks the PCs to investigate the assassination (especially if one or more of them are worshippers of Lada). A cleric of Chernobog, initially unaware of the details behind the murder, masquerades as one of the sun goddess's clerics, using her access to the Fire domain to emulate *light* spells, and throws the PCs off the derro's trail. If throwing the PCs off the trail entirely fails, the cult may point the PCs in Melakian's direction in hopes that his sacrifice will allow their greater plots to continue. If the PCs dispatch Melakian, the Night Cauldron may cease any ongoing hostilities they had against the PCs (at least until their paths directly intersect again).

APL 10–12

- **Strange diagrams detail an ancient vril device that that once controlled the movement of planets.** Moldering books detail a possible underground location for a mostly intact device. The Night Cauldron sees the potential of permanently blocking the sun with one of Midgard's moons. At Serrin's direction, a pair of vampires searches for more diagrams and the device's whereabouts. Their search sends them into the PCs' path, as the PCs have recently found one of these diagrams tucked away in a spellbook or another esoteric book. If the vampires retrieve the diagram in the PCs' possession, they attempt to flee. If the PCs instead defeat the vampires, they find a collection of drawings similar to the mysterious diagram they found earlier. The PCs can attempt to follow the scant leads to the vril device, currently guarded by an adult cave dragon (*Midgard Bestiary*) or they may wish to protect (or destroy) the material to keep the device out of nefarious hands.
- **Irina has grown tired of the PCs' meddling.** She convinces her sisters to dispatch an allied coven of winter hags, along with their three winter wolf companions, to harass them. One of the hags wears *boots of teleportation* that she uses to escape

with the other winter hags, leaving the winter wolves behind to fight the characters. Irina and her sisters also send simulacra to further confuse the PCs, wearing the PCs down to a point where the hags can attack them directly.

- **Nikolai Savitch uncovers the location of the bituminous orb in the lair of a sleeping ancient umbral dragon (see the description of the artifact later in this chapter).** Since the artifact's recovery involves dealing with a fellow umbral dragon, Qaallaaq takes charge of the recovery plan. The dragon hopes to use the PCs as pawns. She informs the PCs about the discovery and tells them the Night Cauldron seeks to take the orb from the dragon's horde. If the PCs ask Qaallaaq why she can't retrieve the orb herself, she tells them she is an outcast from the umbral dragon enclave protecting the orb. She claims that if the PCs can plant evidence that the Night Cauldron was involved, she could get revenge both on the dragons and the humans who have slighted her.

The intelligence she provides about the ancient dragon and its lair proves accurate, and the characters retrieve the orb with little incident (unless GMs wish to create a lethal encounter for the characters). Ultimately, she hopes the characters do her dirty work and extract the orb. She then intends to kill her cat's paws and claim the glory of acquiring such a magnificent prize. With the orb in hand, she can achieve her true goals of returning to the enclave's fold and allying with more powerful dragons to punish Nikolai for not placing her in a position of leadership in the Night Cauldron.

Characters who defeat Qaallaaq and keep the orb find the artifact far too dangerous to use effectively. They must determine a way to destroy the artifact or hide it from the cult (and possibly an enraged dragon).

SAMPLE NIGHT CAULDRON MEMBERS

Nikolai and his lieutenants cannot personally undertake every task required by the cult. The following members represent the rank and file as well as several sergeants that the PCs may encounter in their battles against the cult.

**QAALLAAQ****CR 14****XP 38,400**

Female adult umbral dragon (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*)

hp 195

Dragons who live comfortably within the Dragon Empire worship draconic deities. Those dragons who don't fit into the civilized veneer of the empire find themselves outcast, and most of them turn their backs on the draconic deities. Most such dragons are violent and destructive, and some see Chernobog as a viable alternative. This group includes a handful of foul-tempered red dragons, but the overwhelming majority of the Black God's draconic worship comes from umbral dragons, who appreciate the god's dominion over the night and undead.

Qaallaaq went one step further in her devotion by joining the Night Cauldron. She wishes to apply her might to bring about the eternal darkness the cult seeks. Like many dragons, Qaallaaq is a prideful creature, and she views her absence from the cult's leadership as an insult. She plays a dangerous yet

thrilling game of pitting powerful enemies against the cult in hopes of eliminating one of the leaders, preferably Nikolai. She provides the PCs' main entry point to the cult's activities as she secretly cultivates them and sets them on the path to a confrontation with Nikolai, the winter hag coven, or Serrin.

For their part, the leaders of the Night Cauldron are aware of Qaallaaq's ambitions and tolerate it as long as she furthers the cult's objectives. Their confidence in their own ability to predict the dragon's machinations may be misplaced.

MELAKIAN**CR 10****XP 9,600**

Male derro witch 9 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

CE Small humanoid (derro)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +1 size)

hp 128 (12 HD; 9d6+3d8+81)

Fort +10, **Ref** +9, **Will** +14

SR 14

Weaknesses vulnerability to sunlight

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee spiked gauntlet +11/+6 (1d3–1)

Special Attacks hexes (cackle, coven, evil eye, flight, misfortune), sneak attack +1d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd; concentration +7)

At will—*darkness*, *ghost sound* (DC 14)

1/day—*daze* (DC 14), *sound burst* (DC 16)

Witch Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; conc. +14)

At will—*feather fall* (self only), *fly* (self only)

1/day—*levitate* (self only)

Witch Spells Prepared (CL 9th; concentration +14)

5th—*hold monster* (DC 20), *suffocation*^{APG} (DC 20)

4th—*curse of burning sleep*^{ACG} (DC 19),

phantasmal killer (DC 19), *shadow step*^{UM}

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 18), *howling agony*^{UM} (DC 18),

pain strike^{APG} (DC 18), *ravenous urge*^{DM} (DC 18)

2nd—*bone shards*^{DM}, *bone swarm*^{DM} (DC 17),

burning gaze^{APG} (DC 17), *disfiguring touch*^{UM}

(DC 17), *vomit swarm*^{APG}

1st—*burning hands* (2, DC 16), *charm person*

(DC 16), *delusional pride*^{UM} (DC 16), *mage armor*,

not so fast^{DM} (DC 16)

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *bleed* (DC 15), *deepen*

shadow^{DM}, *touch of fatigue* (DC 15)

Patron Vengeance^{UM}

TACTICS

Before Combat Melakian casts *mage armor* (already calculated in his statistics).

During Combat Melakian seeks to inflict as much harm as he can from a distance. He flies above his foes and uses hexes to debilitate opponents before using his most harmful spells, typically *suffocation* and *phantasmal killer*. If threatened with combat, he waves his clawed gloves at opponents claiming they are tipped with deadly poison. When he nears death, he vengefully curses as many opponents as he can.

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 19, **Con** 20, **Int** 20, **Wis** 5, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 19

Feats Accursed Hex^{UM}, Combat Casting, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Craft (alchemy) +12, Escape Artist +16, Fly +12, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Perception +9, Sleight of Hand +16, Spellcraft +15, Stealth +18, Survival +1, Use Magic Device +15

Languages Aklo, Common, Dark Folk, Umbral, Undercommon

SQ madness, poison use, witch's familiar (centipede)

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** spiked gauntlet (shaped like gloves with bear claws), *cloak of resistance* +1, *headband of vast intelligence* +4, spell component pouch

Tall for a derro, Melakian stands at three and a half feet tall. Several years ago, he happened upon a hidden altar devoted to Chernobog and, in his madness, he heard the god speak to him of a cult devoted to bringing everlasting night to the world. He found a pair of stiff leather gloves shaped like bear claws at the altar and took their presence as a sign of the god's favor. Gleeful at the idea of participating in such a worthy objective, he focused his efforts on enhancing his power.

He kept the secret of the altar to himself—he didn't want other derro to receive attention from the god, and he wanted to be a hero to the race when he extinguishes the sun. Nikolai vouches for the crazed derro, even though Melakian sometimes forgets his responsibilities to the cult to pursue vendettas against those who have wronged him, even fellow cultists.

VERRAZI PINTH

CR 7

XP 3,200

Female dread gnome oracle 8 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Race Guide*)
NE Small humanoid (gnome)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural, +1 size)

hp 80 (8d8+40)

Fort +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +9; +2 vs. poison

Defensive Abilities bond to the land (forest), evasion; **DR** 5/force; **Immune** fatigue

OFFENSE

Speed 15 ft.

Melee dagger of venom +6/+1 (1d3–1/19–20)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +12)

1/day—*bleed* (DC 12), *chill touch* (DC 13), *detect poison*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 12)

Oracle Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +12)

4th (4/day)—*curse of magic negation*^{UM} (DC 18), *inflict critical wounds* (DC 19), *terrible remorse*^{UM} (DC 18)

3rd (6/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 18), *deeper darkness*, *inflict serious wounds* (DC 18), *ray of exhaustion* (DC 18)

2nd (7/day)—*darkblindness*^{DM} (DC 17), *darkness*, *dread bolt*^{UM} (DC 16), *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 17), *ray of the eclipse*^{DM}

1st (7/day)—*chill heart*^{DM} (DC 15), *fate denied*^{DM}, *inflict light wounds* (DC 16), *obscuring mist*, *protection from good*, *shadow's blessing*^{DM}, *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *cleansing ray*^{DM}, *create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *kobold's fury*^{DM}, *resistance*, *virtue*

Mystery void^{DM}

TACTICS

Before Combat Verrazi drinks her *potions of barkskin* and *cat's grace* and activates her *armor of the void revelation*. The effects of these spells and abilities are included in her statistics.

During Combat Verrazi casts *deeper darkness* and then touches the most powerful looking opponent with *fate denied* before leaping back and using her ranged spells. If she benefits from the cover of darkness, she closes with opponents to poison them with her dagger of venom.

STATISTICS

Str 6, **Dex** 18, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 18

Feats Dodge, Extra Revelation^{APG}, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness

Skills Intimidate +15, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +11, Stealth +20

Languages Common, Gnome, Sylvan

SQ knack with poison, oracle's curse (lame), revelations (absence of body, armor of the void, body of the void, vision of the void)

Combat Gear *potion of barkskin*, *potion of cat's grace*;

Other Gear *dagger of venom*, *cloak of resistance* +2

Verrazi Pinth is a slight gnome, standing just under 3 feet tall and weighing 30 pounds. She has jet-black hair and her irises appear to be swirling shadows. Chafing at what she saw as gnome enslavement to the lords of the Eleven Hells, and furious at a devil-inflicted injury that rendered her left leg all but useless, she made a pilgrimage to Königsheim to see the Black Spire devoted to Chernobog. While there, she thought she had been struck blind by a ray from the Spire, but realized she had instead received a vision from the Black God. She believed she could emancipate her race by shrouding the world in darkness, hiding it from the foul demons and devils which had too much control over the gnomes.

She pledged her service to the Night's Cauldron shortly thereafter and has steadily moved up the ranks. While she has no ambition for leadership, her devotion to the cult and divine insights mark her as a natural leader.

QUEXXL

CR 7

XP 3,200

Dark stalker ranger 3 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

CE Medium humanoid (dark folk)

Init +10; **Senses** see in darkness; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +6 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 87 (9 HD; 6d8+3d10+39)

Fort +9, **Ref** +14, **Will** +4

Weaknesses light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +10/+5 (1d4+3/19–20)

Ranged +1 *light crossbow* +14/+9 (1d8+1/19–20)

Special Attacks combat style (crossbow^{APG}), favored enemy (humans +2), sneak attack +3d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +6)

At will—*deeper darkness*, *detect magic*, *fog cloud*

TACTICS

Before Combat Quexxl poisons 6 of his crossbow bolts with black smear.

During Combat Quexxl uses *deeper darkness* to give himself the upper hand in combat. He drinks his *potion of haste*, and then draws close to his foes to

maximize damage with his crossbow. He prefers humans over other victims, and he never accepts surrender, going as far as to track foes who flee faster than he can pursue them.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 22, **Con** 18, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 26

Feats Deadly Aim, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Rapid Shot

Skills Climb +12, Perception +15, Stealth +24, Survival +10; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Climb, +4 Perception, +4 Stealth

Languages Dark Folk, Undercommon

SQ death throes, favored terrain (underground +2), poison use, track +1, wild empathy +3

Combat Gear *potion of haste*, black smear (6 doses);

Other Gear +1 *shadow leather armor*, +1 *light crossbow* with 100 bolts, dagger

Like many underground races profoundly affected by sunlight, the enigmatic dark folk appreciate the notion of snuffing out the sun so they can enjoy life on the surface. While the Night Cauldron has made very few inroads with the dark folk, who typically kill or torture cultists making overtures, Quexxl has gained a renewed purpose in the cult's ambitions. He has no problem killing in someone else's name and believes that having the cult's backing will prove advantageous in schemes involving other dark folk.

Because Quexxl keeps his motivations hidden, the cult has been slow to trust him. However, his timely assistance has proven important to several initiatives, thanks to his covert intelligence gathering and behind-the-scenes manipulations.

WHISPERFOOT

CR 2

XP 600

Skulk rogue 1 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 2)

CE Medium humanoid (skulk)

Init +8; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +7

DEFENSE

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

hp 30 (4d8+9)

Fort +3, **Ref** +9, **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk short sword +3 (1d6/19–20)

Ranged light crossbow +6 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

During Combat Whisperfoot is a cowardly fighter who attacks with his crossbow while hidden.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 19, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18

Feats Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Escape Artist +10, Knowledge (local) +4, Perception +7, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +13

Languages Common, Undercommon

SQ camouflaged step, chameleon skin, trapfinding +1

Combat Gear purple worm poison; **Other Gear** leather armor, crossbow bolts (10), light crossbow, masterwork short sword

Whisperfoot believes that the presence of sunlight makes it impossible for skulks to hide, so the Night Cauldron's promise of a world without natural light appeals to him. A low-ranking cultist, Whisperfoot proves valuable because he constantly listens in on conversations pertaining to cult activities and stalks those interested in the cult. He has a special knack for escaping notice and finds that running away from combat allows him to spy on his targets again. Every now and then, he goes on a vengeful streak and slays someone whom he feels wronged him.

NEW POISONS

Many Night Cauldron cultists employ poison when they engage in combat. Nikolai developed the shadowmaker poison with his former adventuring companion Serrin, and dark folk brought the maddening blindness poison to the cult.

MADDENING BLINDNESS POISON

Type poison, contact or injury; *Save* Fortitude DC 15

Frequency 1/round for 6 rounds

Initial Effect blindness for 1d4 hours; *Secondary*

Effect 1d4 Wis damage; *Cure* 1 save

A dose of maddening blindness poison costs 400 gp.

NEW SPELL

The Night Cauldron of Chernobog uses the following spell and magic items to further their goal of bringing darkness to every corner of the world.

SHADOW SPAWN

School illusion (shadow); **Level** cleric 6, sorcerer/wizard 6

Casting Time 4 hours

Components V, S, M (onyx gem worth 1,000 gp per HD of shadow creature, corpse of creature to be duplicated)

Range 0 ft.

Effect one duplicate creature

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** none

Casting this spell consumes the corpse of a creature, creating a shadowy duplicate of it. The duplicate has stats as if it gained the phantasmal creature template (*Midgard Bestiary*) at 50% real. The duplicate has a vague and dreamlike version of the original creature's memories, but it may act out scenes and events from the past. It does not have a glass heart; its incorporeal rejuvenation occurs after 8 hours regardless.

In normal or bright light, the duplicate's effectiveness is reduced to 50%; creatures who disbelieve the duplicate in such conditions reduce its effectiveness to 25%. Each round the duplicate is exposed to bright light, it must succeed at a Fortitude save with a -4 penalty against a DC 15 in natural daylight, or against the DC of the spell that created the light, to avoid permanent destruction.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

SHADOW DIRK

Aura strong necromancy and transmutation; **CL** 15th

Slot —; **Price** 60,302 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This wavy +1 *ghost touch dagger* forces opponents it harms to become shadowy and indistinct, unable to affect the world around them, while allowing the wielder to continue to attack them. A creature struck by the dagger must succeed at a DC 16 Fortitude

save or become incorporeal for 2d4 rounds. A creature undergoing the transformation must succeed at a DC 16 Will save to avoid becoming staggered for the duration. The victim's spells and effects deal half damage to corporeal creatures, and it cannot harm corporeal creatures with weapons, unless it wields a ghost touch weapon or weapon producing a similar effect. If a transformed creature is slain by the dirk, it rises as a shadow 1 round later, independent of the creator.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *devouring shadow*^{DM}, *greater create undead*;

Cost 30,302 gp



UMBRAL LANTERN

Aura moderate abjuration and evocation; **CL** 13th

Slot —; **Price** 39,000 gp

DESCRIPTION

This item looks like a typical hooded brass lantern, but it has shadowy forms crawling across its surface and it radiates darkness instead of light. The lantern can burn for up to 8 hours per day. While the lantern burns, it affects a 30-foot radius as per the *darkness* spell. With a command word, the lantern's bearer can intensify the effect to *deeper darkness*, but each minute of *deeper darkness* consumes one hour of the lantern's daily use.

Additionally, as a standard action, the bearer can attempt to have the lantern devour all ongoing spells with the light descriptor in its radius, as if applying the area dispel effect of *greater dispel magic*. For each spell successfully dispelled this way, the lantern loses one hour of use.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *deeper darkness*, *greater dispel magic*; **Cost** 19,750 gp

BITUMINOUS ORB (MINOR ARTIFACT)

Aura strong conjuration, evocation, and necromancy; **CL** 20th

Slot —; **Weight** 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

A tarlike substance continually leaks from this orb, which radiates a cloying darkness and an unnatural chill. The bearer of the bituminous orb gains the ability to see in darkness and immunity to negative energy. He takes damage from positive energy effects such as channel energy, but gains a +4 profane bonus on saves allowed by a spell or effect that deals positive energy damage. If he succeeds at the save, he takes no damage from the spell or effect. If the bearer does not worship Chernobog, she receives cryptic messages from the god in the form of horrifying nightmares and other harmful or unsettling effects.

The bearer can fire a ray of viscous material at a target as a standard action. The ray affects the target as per *enervation*. Additionally, the material attempts a grapple combat maneuver using a CMB of +22 to ensnare the target. The victim becomes blind unless it has the see in darkness ability, and it takes 1d4 points of Strength damage at the beginning of its turn until it escapes the substance (DC 23 Fortitude negates). The material need not make additional grapple checks, but the grappled creature can attempt to escape the material (CMD 37). Escaping from the material ends its effects. A creature who targets the material with a light spell of 3rd-level or higher may attempt a caster level check to dispel it.

Once per day, the bearer can target an opponent with an extremely powerful ray, affecting a target as per energy drain. The sticky material adds 10 to its CMB and CMD, and it deals 1d4 points of Strength drain per round it remains attached to its victim.

Creatures reduced to 0 Strength die and return as shadows one round later under the command of the orb's bearer.

DESTRUCTION

A bituminous orb can only be destroyed by bringing it within one mile of a star.

NEW OCCULT RITUAL

The Night Cauldron uses this ritual to enhance promising cultists with Chernobog's favor.

THE BLACK GOD'S BLESSING

School transmutation; **Level** 7

Casting Time 7 hours

Components V, S, M (onyx worth 2,500 gp, vial of unholy water), F (a gem-studded, obsidian warhammer worth 25,000 gp)

Skill Checks Knowledge (religion) DC 33, 3 successes; Intimidate DC 33, 3 successes; Knowledge (arcana) DC 33, 1 success;

Range touch

Target one creature

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

Backlash Caster gains 1 temporary negative level and 2d6 points of fire damage.

Failure The caster gains 1d4 permanent negative levels and must succeed at a Will saving throw (DC = 20 + caster's Charisma bonus) or become permanently vulnerable to fire (if the caster is already vulnerable to fire, it instead takes maximum damage from spells and effects that deal fire damage). *Remove curse* or more powerful spells cast by a cleric of Chernobog is required to remove the vulnerability to fire.

EFFECT

Chernobog doesn't particularly care that the Night Cauldron only focuses on one aspect of his dominion—eternal night leads perfectly well to destruction and murder, especially by the desperate fools seeking to survive in the new lightless world. Having devotees at the forefront of the mayhem suits him, so he allows a small measure of his power to infuse worthy souls.

After contacting the Black God, the ritual caster makes a respectful yet forceful demand to impart some of his power into the vessel at the center of the ritual. A ritual caster who fails to impress the god with her power brings doom to herself.

The ritual begins with the caster standing in a circle containing a sacrificial victim, preferably one she knows and has betrayed. She anoints the warhammer sacred to Chernobog with unholy water, and as she

speaks the ritual words, she sacrifices the victim with the hammer. She must then demand Chernobog's attention and convince the god of the recipient's worthiness for his gift.

If she succeeds, the target creature receives the see in darkness ability and immunity to cold. Should the recipient show weakness or otherwise transgress against Chernobog, the god revokes his gift and causes the creature to self-immolate, dealing 20d6 points of fire damage (no save). Depending on the transgression, the ritual caster may be punished as if she had failed the ritual, and she may also self-immolate.

NEW MONSTER

Another gift from the Black God, a contaminant shade seeks to spread its shadowy curse to all it touches.

CONTAMINANT SHADE

As darkness strikes this woman, wild shadowy hair appears on her right side, and shadow oozes across from the right side of her body. The shadowy creature gives a mocking smile, revealing a greater depth of darkness within the shadow.

CONTAMINANT SHADE

CR 6

XP 2,400

NE Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

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

hp 67 (9d8+27)

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

Defensive Abilities incorporeal; **Immune** cold, undead traits

Weaknesses light blindness, sunlight powerlessness

OFFENSE

Speed fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee incorporeal touch +11 (1d6 Strength)

Special Attacks contaminant shade curse, lingering damage

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +12)
1/day—darkness

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 21, **Con** —, **Int** 9, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 24

Feats Combat Reflexes, Deceitful, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Bluff +12, Disguise +12, Fly +13, Perception +12, Stealth +20

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Contaminant Shade Curse (Su) Creatures that take strength damage from contaminant shade's lingering damage ability or who are reduced to 0 Str by the shade's touch attack must succeed at a DC 17 Will save or contract the contaminant shade curse. An afflicted creature shows no symptoms at first. However, when the creature is exposed to magical darkness, it transforms into a contaminant shade. This transformation persists for one hour after leaving the area of magical darkness, but it ends immediately upon exposure to a 3rd-level or higher spell with the light descriptor. If a creature remains transformed for four hours or longer, it must attempt another DC 17 Will save or become a contaminant shade permanently. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

A *remove disease* or *heal* spell cast by a cleric with the Sun domain (or any of its subdomains) cures this curse. Alternatively, reducing an afflicted creature to 0 hp with a damaging spell with the light descriptor allows the creature to attempt a new Will save to shake off the curse. However, if a creature has transformed permanently, only a *resurrection* can restore it to its original form.

Lingering Damage (Su) At the beginning of the contaminant shade's turn, all creatures that the shade struck with its touch attack since the beginning of its previous turn must succeed at a DC 17 Fortitude save or take an additional 1d4 points of Strength damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Contaminant shades are patient hunters beholden to Chernobog. They cling to their victims' shadows and wait for the opportunity to attack them while they are alone. Once the shades inflict their victims with their curse, they move on to new targets. They use their *darkness* spell-like ability to awaken new contaminant shades temporarily, allowing them to further spread the curse and ensuring that at least some of their victims succumb to the curse and add to the undead ranks.



RED SISTERS

Marena is a destructive and vengeful goddess whose sphere of influence includes matters of sickness, death, and decay. She promotes life in twisted forms, from the second existence as vampires that she bestows upon her favored children to her deft use of lust as a tool of manipulation and ruin.

The worshipers of Marena are a powerful force in the Principalities of Morgau and Doresh, where their goddess reigns supreme. In their base of power, Marena's followers are called Red Sisters. Elsewhere, they are a greatly feared but fugitive cult called the Blood Sisters, luring victims and new adherents

into the fold with lustful rites. Wherever they live, Marena's devotees carry out the strict edicts of their goddess, spilling blood at her command, both their own and that of their sacrificial victims.

LEADERS, ORGANIZATION, AND GOALS

The Red Sisters are divided into an orthodox, accepted cult in evil kingdoms and a more dangerous group evangelizing their dark goddess in secret in good or neutral-aligned realms.

The Orthodoxy: The Red Sisters in Morgau and Doresh

Under the rule of the vampire Prince Lucan, the Principalities of Morgau and Doresh worship Marena first among several dark gods. Temples and shrines to Marena exist in all settlements, down to the smallest hamlet.

The Red Sisters support and maintain the monarchy and power structure of the nation, which places intelligent undead above the living. At the same time, the Red Sisters maintain Marena's will. Even vampires must abide by the edicts of the cult. Should the vampires, including those in the nobility, fail to show the proper gratitude and respect to the Red Goddess, it falls to the Red Sisters to remind them of their obligations. These reminders rarely end in violence against the offending vampire. However, the Red Sisters do not hesitate to exact a hard price to reinforce the lesson, such as taking one of the vampire's favored servants for ritual sacrifice. If the vampire has been especially wayward, the Red Sisters might bleed one of his vampire progeny dry and destroy it as a warning.

The people of Morgau and Doresh accept this harsh justice as a matter of course, as the swiftest way to fall from power is to openly oppose the followers of Marena. Even the clergy of other deities give Marena's chosen a respectful berth.

Hidden in Darkness: The Blood Sisters

In the lands beyond the Principalities, Marena's name and religion are anathema. The Blood Sisters cannot openly worship for fear of retaliation by inquisitors and devout warriors of the gods of light. Marena's followers work quietly in the night, plotting and carrying out their machinations and secret rites.

In the end, their goals are the same as those of their sisters who are able to act openly: to slay Marena's enemies and to maintain the consistent flow of blood to their goddess—both their own and that of their sacrifices. They keep their numbers in a given place small so as to avoid attention. When their numbers grow, the most adept of the faithful travel elsewhere to set up a new shrine and spread the faith. In this way, the Blood Sisters spread their goddess's influence into as many lands as possible, while minimizing their losses when inquisitors do uncover

their secret altars. Even in lands sacred to the gods of light, Marena's cult may lurk below the surface.

SISTER ALKAVA

CR 6
XP 2,400

Female human cleric 7

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +3

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +2 shield)

hp 49 (7d8+14)

Fort +7; **Ref** +3; **Will** +9

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee +1 *heavy mace* +8 (1d8+3)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +6 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 7/day (DC 17, 4d6)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; conc. +10)

 6/day—*bleeding touch* (3 rounds), *touch of darkness* (3 rounds)

Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +10)

 4th—*death ward*^P, *unholy blight* (DC 17)

 3rd—*animate dead*, *bestow curse* (DC 17), *deeper darkness*^P, *dispel magic*

 2nd—*death knell*^P (DC 16), *cure moderate wounds*, *desecrate*, *owl's wisdom*, *silence* (DC 15)

 1st—*bane* (DC 14), *cause fear*^P (DC 15), *cure light wounds*, *deathwatch*, *doom* (DC 15), *shield of faith*

 0—*bleed* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *resistance*
D Domain spell; **Domains** Darkness, Death

TACTICS

Before Combat Alkava casts *deathwatch*.

During Combat Alkava casts *deeper darkness* to hide from her enemies, and then casts *owl's wisdom* and *shield of faith*. She uses her channel negative energy to destroy her foes. She casts *cause fear* to turn melee combatants away and *bestow curse* if they do not flee.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 17

Feats Blind-Fight^B, Command Undead, Extra Channel, Improved Initiative, Improved Channel, Spell Focus (necromancy)

Skills Knowledge (religion) +7, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +7

Languages Common

SQ aura

Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2);

Other Gear +1 heavy mace, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, masterwork breastplate, masterwork heavy wooden shield, *cloak of resistance* +1, *pearl of power* (1st), silver unholy symbol, spell component pouch, onyx gems (worth 150 gp), silver dust (worth 25 gp), 7 gp

Sister Alkava is a passionate devotee of Marena. She often chafes at the restrictions of the order and the disciplinary actions of the senior clergy, however, and hopes her necromantic pursuits will bring her enough power to gain some level of autonomy.

MOTHER ABBESS CALLE

CR 12

XP 19,200

Female human cleric of Marena 13

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+7 armor, +3 deflection, +1 shield)

hp 101 (13d8+39)

Fort +11; **Ref** +5; **Will** +14

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft. (30 ft. in armor)

Melee +1 *deadly whip* +13/+8 (1d3+4) or mwk silver spear +13/+8 (1d8+3/x3)

Ranged mwk heavy crossbow +10 (1d10/19–20)

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

Special Attacks channel negative energy 5/day (DC 18, 7d6)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th, conc. +18)

At will—*dimensional hop* (130 ft. per day)

2/day—*staff of law* (6 rounds)

8/day—*touch of law*

Spells Known (CL 13th; concentration +18)

7th—*dictum* (DC 22), *greater teleport*^D

6th—*blade barrier* (DC 21), *heal*, *hold monster*^D (DC 22)

5th—*breath of life*, *cleansse*^{APG}, *dispel chaos*^D, *righteous might*, *true seeing*

4th—*aura of doom*^{UM} (DC 21), *cure critical wounds*, *death ward*, *dimension door*^D, *divine power*, *greater magic weapon*

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 20), *chain of perdition*^{UC},

cure serious wounds, *dispel magic*, *fly*^D, *prayer*

2nd—*bull's strength*, *death knell* (DC 19), *hold person* (DC 18), *locate object*^D, *spiritual weapon*, *stigmata of the red goddess*^{*}

1st—*bleed*, *compel hostility*^{UC}, *cure light wounds*,

deathwatch, *divine favor*, *longstrider*^D, *shield of faith*

0—*bleed* (DC 17), *detect poison*, *resistance*, *stabilize*

D Domain spell; **Domains** Law, Travel

TACTICS

Before Combat Mother Abbess Calle casts *bull's strength*, *deathwatch*, and *shield of faith*. The benefits of these spells are factored into her statistics.

During Combat Mother Abbess Calle casts *divine favor* and *righteous might* if melee is imminent.

Otherwise, she uses *blade barrier* to keep foes contained, hitting them with spells to kill and disable. She uses *death knell* on any nearby dying foe.

Base Statistics Without *bull's strength*, Calle's statistics are **Melee** +1 *deadly whip* +11/+6 (1d3+2) or mwk silver spear +11/+6 (1d8/x3); **Str** 12; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 20.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** 9, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 22

Feats Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Selective Channeling, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Penetration, Toughness

Skills Diplomacy +11, Heal +13, Knowledge (religion) +10, Perception +10, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +10

Languages Common

SQ +10 base speed from Travel domain, agile feet 8/day, aura

Combat Gear antitoxin (2), antiplague^{UE} (2), *potion of invisibility*, *scrolls of lesser restoration* (2), *scroll of heal*, tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear** +1 *deadly whip*^{UE}, masterwork silver spear, masterwork heavy crossbow with 10 bolts and 10 silver bolts, +1 *glamered chainmail*, darkwood light wooden quickdraw shield^{UE}, *cloak of resistance* +1, *headband of inspired wisdom* +2, *heavyload belt*^{UE}, gold holy symbol, healer's kit, illustrated holy text bound in fine leather and cornered in silver (35 gp), midwife's kit, spell component pouch, string of carnelian, ivory, and silver prayer beads (worth 200 gp), gold signet ring (worth 50 gp), 228 gp

Mother Abbess Calle resides in the Cantri Abbey at the base of the Cloudwall Mountains, one of the most prominent temples of Marena in the Principalities. Calle is in charge of the Cradle, a section of the Abbey devoted to the care of pregnant women. Women who suffer difficult pregnancies, or those predicted to suffer complications during childbirth, make pilgrimages to the Abbey. The Mother Abbess is attentive and dutiful, but she has no real compassion for her charges. In her eyes, they are the results of lust stirred by the Red Goddess, and ultimately destined to be cattle for their vampire lords.

No men are allowed within the Abbey. Mother Calle insures that all trespassers are dealt with swiftly. Some are lucky enough to be left bleeding on the ground outside the gates; others are slaughtered and hung from the gatehouse as a warning to those who would violate this sanctum. The Mother Abbess takes her position very seriously and anyone—even a vampire—that attempts to harm one of her charges faces her implacable punishment.

Calle is a stout, matronly figure, with a stern gaze. She keeps her long, brown hair tied up in a tight bun. The Mother Abbess is never seen publicly without her scarlet robes of office and cowl. A brass belt at her waist holds a human skull stained with ocher. She is terse and business-like with the other members of her order, but is known to display a dry wit and macabre humor when ministering to her charges in the Abbey's Cradle.

**COSMINA HOLROSU****CR 14****XP 38,400**

Female vampire mesmerist 13 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Occult Adventures*)

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, human)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +26

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 16, flat-footed 22 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural)

hp 179 (13d8+117); fast healing 5

Fort +12; **Ref** +14; **Will** +16

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, towering ego; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

Weaknesses vampire weaknesses

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 frost spear +14/+9 (1d8+7/x3) or slam +13 (1d4+4 plus energy drain)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +14 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks blood drain, bold stare (allure, psychic inception, sapped magic), children of the night, create spawn, dominate (DC 25), energy drain (2 levels, DC 23), hypnotic stare (–3), mesmerist

tricks 13/day (compel alacrity, false flanker, mask misery, psychosomatic surge, reflection of weakness [DC 23], spectral smoke, vision of blood [DC 23]), painful stare (+9 or 6d6+9)

Spells Known (CL 13th; concentration +20)

5th (2/day)—*feeblemind* (DC 24), *mass inflict pain*^{OA} (DC 24)

4th (4/day)—*create mindscape*^{OA} (DC 21), *greater invisibility*, *mind probe*^{OA} (DC 21), *phantasmal killer* (DC 21)

3rd (5/day)—*adjustable disguise*^{ACG}, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *confusion* (DC 22), *mindscape door*^{OA} (DC 20), *nondetection* (DC 20)

2nd (7/day)—*babble*^{OA} (DC 21), *cognitive block*^{OA} (DC 21), *detect thoughts* (DC 19), *pilfering hand*^{UC}, *pyrotechnics* (DC 19)

1st (7/day)—*adoration*^{UC}, *beguiling gift*^{APG} (DC 20), *deja vu*^{OA} (DC 20), *ill omen*^{APG}, *mental block*^{OA} (DC 18), *unnatural lust*^{UM} (DC 20)

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 17), *daze* (DC 19), *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 17), *message*, *read magic*

Before Combat Cosmina places *compel alacrity* and *false flanker* on herself or allies.

During Combat Cosmina uses her hypnotic stare and spells to disable enemies. If she engages in melee, she switches to her painful stare and uses Vital Strike.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 18, **Con** –, **Int** 15, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 29

Feats Ability Focus (dominate), Alertness^B, Bleeding Stare^{OA}, Combat Reflexes^B, Devastating Strike^{UC}, Dodge^B, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Initiative^B, Intense Pain^{OA}, Lightning Reflexes^B, Spell Focus (enchantment), Toughness^B, Vital Strike

Skills Bluff +34, Diplomacy +20, Disguise +22, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (local) +14, Knowledge (nobility) +14, Knowledge (religion) +14, Perception +26, Perform (dance) +15, Sense Motive +26, Sleight of Hand +17, Spellcraft +15, Stealth +20; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Bluff, +8 Perception, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Infernal

SQ change shape (dire bat or wolf, *beast shape II*), consummate liar +6, gaseous form, glib lie [DC 28],

manifold tricks (4), mental potency, shadowless, spider climb, touch treatment (10/day, greater)

Combat Gear oil of taggit^{UE} (3 doses), *potion of eagle's splendor*, *potion of inflict serious wounds*, *potion of resist energy* (fire), *wand of color spray* (24 charges); **Other Gear** +1 frost spear, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, masterwork studded leather armor, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *headband of alluring charisma* +2, *glove of storing*, *ring of protection* +1, disguise kit, gold poison pill ring^{UE} (worth 80 gp), silver unholy symbol, assorted gold jewelry (worth 325 gp), 72 gp

Cosmina Holrosu appears to be a stunning beauty in her mid-twenties, with long, auburn hair and gray eyes. Her pale skin is flawless but for a wine-colored birthmark that runs down her right cheek, jawline, and chin. A manifestation of Marena appeared before Cosmina and caressed her face. Overwhelmed, Cosmina swore devotion to the goddess for eternity, and Marena's hand left its mark upon her skin as a reminder of the oath. Cosmina's new existence as a vampire affirms her promise. She has spent four decades now as Marena's chief agent abroad.

Cosmina travels in metropolitan areas, seeking out each city's dark underbelly. She uses her charm and magical abilities to rapidly rise in influence in the shadows. Once she has gained a foothold, she establishes or takes over a brothel or similar establishment. The lustful activities in such places are pleasing to Marena, and they serve as useful fronts for secret temples. She lures some of the most debauched clientele to participate in the cult's orgiastic blood rites. Once the temple has grown in influence and worshipers, she chooses the most loyal servants to be her successors, granting them the gift of vampirism before departing for a new city.

Cosmina especially likes using her powers to bend enemies to her will, forcing them to participate in the cult's dark activities. She enjoys humiliating them and keeping evidence of their complicity with the cult. This blackmail keeps her foes subservient, or at least assures their noninterference in cult activities.

**GRAND INQUISITOR REKA
MESZAROS****CR 15****XP 51,200**

Female human inquisitor (infiltrator) 16 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*,
Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +11; **Senses** Perception +15**DEFENSE**

AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 21 (+8 armor,
+2 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 155 (16d8+80)**Fort** +15; **Ref** +9; **Will** +15**Defensive Abilities** stalwart**OFFENSE****Speed** 60 ft. (50 ft. in armor)

Melee +2 *greatsword* +21/+16/+11 (2d6+11/17–20)
or +2 *silver light mace* +21/+16/+11 (1d6+9)

Ranged +1 *composite longbow* +19/+14/+9 (1d8+8/×3)

Special Attacks exploit weakness, greater bane 16
rounds/day, judgment (3 simultaneous)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; conc. +20)At will—*detect alignment*7/day—*dazing touch***Inquisitor Spells Known** (CL 16th; conc. +20)6th (1/day)—*heal*, *overwhelming presence*^{UM} (DC 20)

5th (3/day)—*flame strike* (DC 19), *mass castigate*^{APG}
(DC 19), *spell resistance*, *true seeing*

4th (4/day)—*defile armor*^{APG} (DC 18), *divine power*,
fleshworm infestation^{UM} (DC 18), *freedom of
movement*, *greater invisibility*

3rd (6/day)—*burst of speed*^{UC}, *coordinated effort*^{APG},
cure serious wounds, *dispel magic*, *heroism*

2nd (6/day)—*confess*^{APG} (DC 16), *cure moderate
wounds*, *effortless armor*^{UC}, *invisibility*, *knock*,
litany of defense^{UC}

1st (6/day)—*divine favor*, *ear-piercing scream*^{UM}
(DC 15), *expeditious retreat*, *forbid action*^{UM}
(DC 15), *lend judgment*^{UM}, *wrath*^{APG}

0—*brand*^{APG} (DC 14), *detect magic*, *detect poison*,
guidance, *light*, *read magic*

Domain Charm (Lust)**TACTICS**

Before Combat Reka drinks her *potion of cat's grace*
and casts *divine favor* and *expeditious retreat*. The
benefits of these spells are included in her statistics.

During Combat Reka uses greater bane to target
whichever creature type is most plentiful among her
enemies. She uses whatever judgments are of best
benefit while sharing teamwork feats with allies,
flanking if possible.

Base Statistics Without her potion and spells, Reka's
statistics are **Init** +9; **AC** 22, touch 13, flat-footed
21; **Ref** +7; **Speed** 20 ft.; **Melee** +2 *greatsword*
+18/+13/+8 (2d6+8/17–20) or +2 *alchemical silver
mace* +18/+13/+8 (1d6+6); **Ranged** +1 *composite
longbow* +14/+9/+4 (1d8+5/×3); **Dex** 12; **CMD** 27.

STATISTICS**Str** 18, **Dex** 16, **Con** 18, **Int** 8, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 29

Feats Bleeding Critical, Cleave, Combat Reflexes,
Critical Focus, Escape Route^{B,UC}, Furious Focus^{APG},
Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Initiative,
Martial Weapon Proficiency (greatsword),
Outflank^{B,APG}, Paired Opportunists^{B,APG}, Power
Attack, Shake It Off^{B,UC}, Stealth Synergy^{B,UC}
Skills Bluff +23, Disguise +19, Intimidate +19,
Knowledge (religion) +18, Perception +15, Sense
Motive +15, Stealth +19

Languages Common

SQ anything to please 3/day, cunning initiative,
forbidden lore, guileful lore, misdirection,
necessary lies, solo tactics

Combat Gear *elixir of truth*, *potion of fly*, *scroll
of protection from energy*, *scroll of see invisibility*;
Other Gear +2 *greatsword*, +1 *composite longbow*
(+4 Str) with 20 arrows, +2 *agile breastplate*^{APG},
ring of protection +2, *amulet of natural armor* +1,
belt of physical might +2 (Str and Con), *brooch of
shielding* (67 points), *cloak of resistance* +1, *gloves of
reconnaissance*^{UE}, *headband of inspired wisdom* +2,
adamantine wire saw^{UE}, *disguise kit*, *everburning
torch*, *grappling hook*, *masterwork backpack*,
masterwork manacles, *spider's silk rope*, *silver
unholy symbol*, *spell component pouch*, *gold and
amethyst brooch* (400gp), 84 gp

As Grand Inquisitor, Reka Meszaros oversees the
efforts to root out and eliminate the enemies of her
goddess, both within and outside of the Principalities.
If cult activity outside Morgau and Doresh is
threatened, she sends what aid she can. She instructs
her followers in techniques of stealth and subterfuge,

which they use with some caution to eliminate threats to the faithful. Reka herself occasionally leads such strikes when the threat is great enough.

CULT MEMBERS AND MINIONS

The GM can use the following NPCs as cult members, functionaries, and minor leaders.

BROTHEL AGENT CR 1

XP 400

Human expert 2/rogue (spy) 1 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +1 Dex)
hp 17 (3d8)

Fort +0; **Ref** +3; **Will** +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +3 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

Before Combat Unless ordered to kill enemies or defend a leader, a brothel agent uses her smoke pellet to create cover for a stealthy escape.

During Combat If forced to fight, a brothel agent engages in melee, attempting to flank with allies if possible.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 13, **Con** 11, **Int** 9, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 12

Feats Alertness, Skill Focus (Bluff), Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +11, Disable Device +7, Knowledge (local) +5, Perception +7, Profession (prostitute) +5, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +6

Languages Common

SQ skilled liar +1

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, oil of taggit^{UE}, smoke pellet^{APG}; **Other Gear** masterwork dagger, masterwork leather armor, masterwork thieves' tools, silver poison pill ring^{UE} (40 gp), 18 gp.

These men and women work in the brothels run by the Blood Sisters. They profile clients for potential as new recruits, sources of information or blackmail, or

even as sacrifices. They also watch for those who pay too much attention to the brothel's operations. In the Principalities, the brothel agent statistics can be used for loyal cultists, assistants to clerics, or other temple functionaries.

DARAKHUL MERCENARY

CR 5

XP 1,600

Darakhul fighter (polearm master) 6 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception –1

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +2 Dex)
hp 67 (6d10+30)

Fort +8; **Ref** +4; **Will** +3

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

Weakness hunger, light blindness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee mwk bardiche +12/+7 (1d10+5/19–20) or bite +10 (1d6+3)

Ranged mwk heavy crossbow +9 (1d10/19–20)

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

Special Attacks pole fighting –3, polearm training, steadfast pike +1

TACTICS

During Combat The darakhul mercenary lays into opponents with the bardiche, using the Stand Still feat to keep opponents from getting to allies or maneuvering into flanking positions.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** –, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 21

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Stand Still, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bardiche)

Skills Climb +8, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +4, Knowledge (engineering) +4, Profession (soldier) +3, Swim +4

Languages Common

Combat Gear silversheen, universal solvent; **Other Gear** masterwork bardiche^{APG}, masterwork heavy crossbow with 10 bolts and 10 cold iron bolts, masterwork spiked agile breastplate^{APG}, masterwork

backpack^{APG}, spider's silk rope^{APG}, grappling hook, signal horn, 71 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Hunger (Ex) Each day, a darakhul must consume at least a small meal of fresh or rotting meat. A darakhul that does not feed for more than 24 hours must make Charisma checks to avoid starvation (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*). Damage from starvation is lethal damage for darakhul. Once starvation sets in, only a meal consisting of one full pound of flesh ends the condition. Once he takes lethal damage, he must make a Will save whenever he makes a Constitution check. Failure indicates the darakhul obeys the compulsion to feed on any creature available, including allies or even himself. A starving darakhul must confirm a critical hit with his bite attack in order to tear off enough meat to satisfy this compulsion.

Darakhul mercenaries are powerful and well-disciplined troops. The Blood Sisters often employ them as protectors of secret shrines and temples, bodyguards while traveling outside the Principalities, or as the daytime guardians of vampire members of the cult. Such mercenaries are often paid in flesh as well as coin, an arrangements provide a convenient method for the Blood Sisters to dispose of the bodies of their victims.

BLOOD RITUALIST

CR 8

XP 4,800

Female dhampir sorcerer (wildblooded) 9
(*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Race Guide*,
Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic)

LE Medium humanoid (dhampir)

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

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)

hp 72 (9d6+41)

Fort +5; **Ref** +7; **Will** +6; +2 vs. disease and mind-affecting effects

Defensive Abilities negative energy affinity, resist level drain; **DR** 10/lethal; **Resist** cold 10, undead resistance

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +6 (1d4+1/19–20)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st; concentration +5)

3/day—*detect undead*

Sorcerer Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; conc. +13)

1/day—*grasp of the dead* (9d6 slashing, DC 18)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 9th; concentration +13)

4th (5/day)—*animate dead*, *calcific touch*^{APG}

(DC 18), *ice storm*

3rd (7/day)—*blood biography*^{APG} (DC 17), *dispel magic*, *fly*, *vampiric touch*

2nd (7/day)—*false life*, *ghoul touch* (DC 18),
greater *blood tide*^{DM} (DC 18), *sanguine spear**,
spectral hand

1st (7/day)—*chill touch* (DC 17), *lock gaze*^{UC}
(DC 15), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *obscuring mist*, *vanish*^{APG}

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 16), *blood tide*^{DM} (DC 15),
detect magic, *disrupt undead*, *ray of frost*, *mage hand*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 16)

Bloodline Sanguine^{UM}

TACTICS

Before Combat The blood ritualist casts *false life* and *mage armor*.

During Combat The blood ritualist casts *ice storm* on groups of foes and uses *spectral hand* to deliver touch attacks, such as *vampiric touch*.

Base Statistics Without *false life* and *mage armor*, the blood ritualist's statistics are **AC** 16, touch 15, flat-footed 12; **hp** 61.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 10,

Wis 8, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 20

Feats Blood Drinker^{ARG} (human), Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials^B, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Focus (necromancy), Toughness

Skills Bluff +13, Fly +10, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (religion) +5, Perception +4, Spellcraft +5; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Bluff, +2 Perception

Languages Common

SQ bloodline arcana (+1 effective caster level for necromancy spells), the blood is the life (7/day)

Combat Gear liquid ice^{UE} (2), *potion of inflict serious wounds*, *scroll of communal protection from evil*^{UC}, *wand of touch of idiocy* (10 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +1, boots of the cat^{UE}, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, robe of needles^{UE}, assorted onyx gemstones (worth 500 gp), 28 gp

Blood ritualists are often leaders of secret conclaves of the cult outside the Principalities or church functionaries within them. Products of blood and lust, they are often inducted into the cult from birth. Their magical talents reflect Marena's spheres of influence, and much of their magic emulates her control of blood and association with winter's chill.

CULT ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURE HOOKS

Below are several methods of introducing the Blood Sisters into your campaign. Consider pitting the PCs against increasingly powerful minions and leaders, culminating in a battle against vampires led by the most powerful members of the cult.

APL 1–3

- **An NPC comes to the PCs for help. Her father's behavior has become increasingly erratic and it is beginning to threaten the family business.** His wife died four years ago, and until recently, he wore

a black scarf as a sign of mourning. However, he has now set the scarf aside without explanation. Money is missing from the family's accounts and he has been returning home very late. His daughter recently followed him and, to her shock, found him entering a brothel. She asks the PCs to investigate her father's dramatic change in behavior. The PCs' discover that the Blood Sisters use the brothel as a front and recruitment center. They also learn that the father is involved in erotic blood rituals in the building's basement. However the PCs proceed, if any harm is brought to the cult, including exposing its activities, they mark the meddling adventurers as enemies and may seek retribution later.

- **In the Principalities, the nobility's primary coin of exchange is the blood mark.** A red gold coin with a hole in the center, the blood mark represents a measure of blood from an actual living citizen. When the bearer of a blood mark chooses to redeem it, the blood is magically drawn from the body of the person who first promised it. If that person has pledged multiple blood marks, they could die if all are redeemed at once. Recently, a woman pledged 10 blood marks to the Blood Sisters in exchange for their magical and financial aid to cover debts and cure the blight that had infected her orchard and threatened to destroy her entire livelihood. Now, a friend of her family who works as a servant at the local temple has brought the woman a warning. A great soiree is being

THE BLOOD SISTERS OF MARENA OUTSIDE OF MIDGARD

The cult of Marena is a primary religion in the Principalities of Morgau and Doresh, which gives them a more substantial base of power than many of the other cults of this book. However, the Blood Sisters can be placed easily in any campaign world. If you would rather present them as a fringe cult without such a base of power, omit the information about the Red Sisters. The Cradle could be a secret redoubt in a remote mountain hideaway, or it could be hidden in plain sight as an actual monastery with hidden rooms behind an innocent front. It could even be relocated to a city, where Calle takes in women in need, secretly funneling some of them to her other Sisters for nefarious purposes.

Alternately, you could transplant the established portion of the faith to an evil nation in the campaign setting of your choice. Perhaps it is located completely underground, among races that are more accepting of such cruelty and evil in their society. The setting may have an evil nation where Marena and her worshipers could find common ground with other evil deities. Another place to introduce the cult could be a cosmopolitan metropolis where many things are permissible, so long as they conform to city law. The Blood Sisters could exist in the shadows in such a place, toeing the line of propriety in public while continuing to faithfully serve Marena in more insidious ways in hidden shrines and back rooms.

planned at a nearby noble's castle to celebrate the turning of a faithful servant into a vampire. The temple is donating 100 blood marks to help with the celebration. Worried that her life may end as a result, the owner of the orchard beseeches the PCs to find the blood marks on her account at the temple and get them back before the magical coins drain her blood completely.

- **The PCs attend a raucous celebration.** People are reveling, and food and drink flows freely. While merrymaking often sparks incidents of violence and debauchery, this celebration is far more lascivious than normal. The revelers are making lustful advances on others, who are responding in kind. As the night progresses, outraged lovers catch their partners involved in trysts with their neighbors, and fights break out. The PCs may also fall under the sway of these strange events.

In the aftermath of the celebration, there is a prevailing sense of anger, shame, and confusion. If the PCs investigate, they find lingering magic in many of the cups and barrels from the party. As it turns out, the primary drink of the evening was wine from one particular winery. An investigation of the winery uncovers a band of Blood Sisters who have used a combination of magic and alchemy to create a drink that encourages lust and debauchery.

APL 4–6

- **In preparation for a special ceremony held on Midwinter's Night, the Blood Sisters seek a selection of exceptional candidates for sacrifices.**

The vampire nobility in attendance take great delight in participating in an orgiastic blood frenzy with the clergy in a remote, snowbound forest glade. Some sacrifices are chosen from the populace of the Principalities, but for this special occasion, the Blood Sisters search far afield for valuable sacrifices. Whether it is their beauty, innocence, or some natural talent or practiced skill, each victim is taken so that the Winter Maiden can sample their sorrow and rejoice in the darkness left by their loss from the world.

The Blood Sisters recently abducted a woman from a small town not far from the border of the Principalities. To all appearances, she was simply

a tutor to the mayor's children. However, she was betrothed to a powerful noble from a neighboring kingdom. Her position in an unassuming settlement was intended to keep her hidden from the political machinations of the noble family's rivals until the time of the wedding. Now, her husband-to-be has sent out a call for rescuers. Divination spells point to a dark end if she is not freed by Midwinter's Night. The noble's retainers and allies have traced her to Morgau; specifically, to a hunting lodge nestled deep in a wooded mountain valley. The PCs must enter Morgau, confront or sneak past a group of cultists, free the woman, and find their way across the border again. However, this lodge is only one of several locations where the Red Sisters are keeping their victims until the ceremony, and the PCs may decide to embark on further rescue missions.

- **A local duke and powerful opponent of the Red Sisters has been, until recently, an unrepentant bachelor, despite pleas from his court to marry and produce an heir.** Now the duke has taken up with a woman of questionable birth and has begun to neglect his duties in order to court her and lavish her with gifts. Rumors are spreading, and the court is in an uproar over their sovereign's improprieties. The latest outrage is his proclamation that they will marry. Should the nobility not recognize her position as duchess, he has claimed that he will marry her anyway and abdicate his throne to his brother, who is widely regarded as incompetent. The duke's chamberlain hires the PCs to investigate the woman and her strange hold over the duke. The woman is an agent of the Blood Sisters (perhaps even a vampire, if the GM wishes) sent by the Principalities to undermine one of their main rivals. Worse, she has the backing of a secret group of cultists that has infiltrated the ranks of the servants to protect the house the duke has bought for his mistress.
- **A desperate woman seeks aid in finding her sister.** If the PCs are receptive, the woman explains how her sister's personality has changed recently, becoming more distant and distracted. On several occasions, she has apparently wandered off into woods or fields after sunset. Now, she has failed to

return after a night out. A neighbor reports seeing her in the company of a large man and another woman walking out into a nearby forest.

The PCs can track the group to a cabin in the woods. There, they find a number of men and women. The women, including the sister that the PCs were sent to find, pretend the men have kidnapped them to catch the PCs off-guard. However, the women are all actually members of the Blood Sisters, and the men are pawns for their unholy rites. The cult's vampire leader has established mental control over her victims, and leads all of cabin's inhabitants as soon as the party sheds some armor and rests for the night.

APL 7–9

- **A local guild mistress or young noblewoman reaches out to the PCs after several attempted kidnappings of her relatives.** She assigns the PCs to guard her elderly aunt at her estate. The PCs may find evidence that this is not simply a kidnapping for ransom. The Blood Sisters plan to use the family as a focus for their bloodstrike incantation.
- **A local authority figure hires the PCs to keep watch over someone whose recent activities have aroused suspicion.** Their task is to observe and report the NPC's movements, but to keep their surveillance a secret and not to engage under any circumstances. However, on the PC's watch, the suspicious individual joins up with members of the Blood Sisters and attempts to abduct someone. Do the PCs follow orders, or do they intervene?
- **Raiding parties from the Red Sisters are searching in surrounding territories for sacrificial victims.** The PCs arrive at a familiar roadside inn only to find the aftermath of such a raid. Evidence suggests the raiders left with prisoners. The PCs can track the raiders back to their camp and hope to overtake them despite the raider's vastly superior numbers, or they can lay an ambush along the most likely point of return.

APL 10–12

- **A friend or patron of the PCs comes to them for aid.** He and his wife have never been devout and spend no time at worship at the temple

of any god. It is a point of pride that they are successful without being religiously faithful, and the local clergy are not fond of them. His wife is pregnant with their first child, and there have been complications. Rather than admit defeat in their rivalry with the clerics, his wife decided upon a pilgrimage to a mountain monastery, where she has heard they deal with such problems. It was only later that the man found out the monastery is devoted to Marena. He fears for his wife's safety and asks the PCs to retrieve her. Mother Abbess Calle does not take kindly to the intrusion, nor does she appreciate any implication that she means any harm to the child or its mother. (This adventure hook works best when placing the Cradle in another campaign setting.)

- **One of the PCs is struck with an unshakable sense of despair and foreboding.** This sudden fear has no apparent cause. Shortly thereafter, the PCs discover that one of that PC's relatives is dead. Magical investigation may reveal that the deceased was being used as part of an incantation to strike at the PC. If the heroes do not work to protect the targeted PC's family, soon another blood relative goes missing. If the PCs cannot find and stop the ritual, the Blood Sisters can make attacks on the affected PC wherever she happens to be, unless they can find and free the relative being used as the focus for the incantation.

APL 13–15

- **Because the PCs have been instrumental in thwarting the plans of the Blood Sisters in the past, they are targeted for elimination.** Grand Inquisitor Reka Meszaros is determined to end the PCs' lives. Her preferred methods are to infiltrate the party in some way—hiring on as an NPC if they are looking for aid—or by slipping into an organization friendly to the PCs, such as a nearby temple to a good deity. She attempts to coordinate an attack from the cult's darakhul mercenaries when the PCs are at their most vulnerable.

If she infiltrates the party, she may plan an ambush when the PCs are returning from an adventure (low on resources, possibly injured, and presumably burdened with treasure.) If she

infiltrates a nearby temple, she might organize a special ceremony and have the PCs invited. She insures that the PCs are asked to leave their weapons in the keeping of the clergy and don special robes for the ceremony. When they and other participants are unarmed and unarmored and in the midst of the ritual, the darakhul storm the place and Reka reveals herself to deal retribution on the PCs.

- **The forces of good have discovered that the Blood Sisters have infiltrated a major city.** The location of their hidden temple is unknown, but several likely cover operations—a cemetery, a brothel, and a slaughter house—have been located. The PCs are charged with investigating these locations, finding the hidden temple, and purging the Blood Sisters from the city. This investigation leads to a variety of encounters with cultists and vampire spawn. The search ends in the catacombs below the city, where the PCs navigate trapped corridors and undead guardians, eventually confronting Cosmina Holrosu, her vampire companions, and a slew of cultists.

NEW SPELLS: MORE BLOOD MAGIC

The Blood Sisters draw power from the red essence of life that is central to their religion and the key focus of their rituals and sacrifices. The Red Maiden reveals the mysterious potential of blood to those that show proper devotion. Many of the Blood Sister's favorite spells appear in *Deep Magic*. In addition, the following new spells are available to those who count themselves among Marena's faithful. At the GM's discretion, other characters may also gain access to these spells.

SANGUINE SPEAR

School transmutation; **Level** alchemist 2, bloodrager 2, sorcerer/wizard 2, summoner 2, witch 2
Casting Time 1 standard action
Components V, S, M (the corpse of a creature)
Range 0 ft.
Effect magical spear made of blood
Duration 1 min./level (D)

Saving Throw none;

Spell Resistance yes

You draw the blood forth from the corpse of a creature that has been dead for no more than 24 hours and create a masterwork spear of frozen blood. This spear deals 1 point of cold damage in addition to normal spear damage. If the spear leaves your hand for more than 1 round, it melts and the spell ends. At 6th level, the spear functions as a +1 *frost spear*. At 11th level, it gains the bane property against creatures of the same type as the corpse you used in the spell's casting.

STIGMATA OF THE RED GODDESS

School necromancy [evil]; **Level** antipaladin 2, cleric 2, inquisitor 2, witch 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, DF

Range personal

Target you

Duration 1 round/level (D)

You cut yourself and bleed as tribute to Marena, gaining power as long as the blood continues to flow. This stigmata typically appears as blood running from the eyes or ears, or from wounds manifesting on the neck or chest. You take 1 bleed damage and gain a +2 profane bonus on damage rolls. The bleed damage increases by 1, and the bonus by +2, for every three caster levels beyond 2nd (to a maximum of 5 bleed and a +10 profane bonus to damage rolls at 14th level). Any healing, magical or otherwise, that ends the bleed damage also ends the spell.

NEW INCANTATION

BLOODLINE STRIKE

"Blood calls to blood. The blood of this one calls death down upon his father."

School divination, necromancy; **Effective Level** 8th
Skill Check Knowledge (arcana) DC 28, 4 successes;
 Knowledge (history) DC 28, 4 successes

Casting Time 8 hrs.

Components F, M, S, V

Focus a living creature or vampire; see text

Material Components an infusion of rare herbs and wine worth 500 gp; red ink mixed with powdered

gemstones worth 500 gp, and blood offerings from the performer and all secondary performers

Special primary performer must have the Blood Ritualist^{DM} feat

Secondary Casters up to 12 secondary performers may assist the primary performer

Range see text

Target see text

Duration permanent; see text

Saving Throw none; **SR** no

DESCRIPTION

This ceremony turns a captured victim into a living conduit that can be used to transfer spell and spell-like effects to another creature of the victim's bloodline.

The creature used as the focus must remain stationary during the ritual—the ritual performers typically restrain the victim. To begin the ceremony, the primary performer presides over a bloodletting. All performers add some of their own blood to an infusion of wine and herbs, which they force the focus to drink. Performers must make Knowledge (arcana) checks during this part of the ritual.

After the bloodletting is complete, the primary performer uses the specially prepared red ink to inscribe arcane runes and symbols, as well as a history of the bloodline of the focus, while the secondary performers give a formal recitation of this information. Performers must make Knowledge (arcana) checks during this part of the ritual.

Upon completion of the incantation, the focus becomes a conduit for magical energies. The ritual participants can target any member of the focus's bloodline, so long as they inscribed the creature's name upon the focus during the ritual. If they cast a spell or spell-like ability that targets a single creature and does not deal damage upon the focus, they can instead channel it to a target that shares the bloodline of the focus. Range is not a factor, as long as the target creature is on the same plane as the focus. The focus suffers no effects of the spell. Spell resistance still applies and the target is allowed a saving throw, if any, against the spell's effects.

This incantation does not work on constructs, undead, or any living creature that does not have blood, such as plants. The exceptions to this rule are vampires. A vampire can be used as the focus of

the incantation, and spells channeled through that vampire can target any vampire sired by the focus, or the vampire that sired the focus, so long as their names are known and used during the ritual.

This ritual is lifelinked. The incantation is bound to the life of the focus creature. If the focus creature dies, the effect ends. The incantation also ends if someone casts *erase* on the symbols painted on the focus, then casts *dispel evil*, *limited wish*, *wish*, or *miracle* on the focus itself.

BACKLASH

All performers participating in the incantation are exhausted, suffer 8d6 damage, and 1 negative level.

FAILURE

Failing four skill checks during the incantation causes it to fail completely. Performers still suffer backlash, and the focus must succeed at a DC 25 Fortitude save or die. All blood-related creatures feel the death of the focus in the form of pain and an unshakable sense of despair and foreboding. These blood relatives receive no further insight into what has occurred.

MAGIC ITEMS

EXSANGUINATING BLADE

Aura moderate necromancy; **CL** 7th

Slot weapon; **Price** 20,302 gp;

Weight 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This double-bladed dagger has an ivory hilt, and its gold pommel is shaped into a female head with ruby eyes, her fanged mouth opened in a scream. In addition to functioning as a +1 *wounding dagger*, the exsanguinating blade can drink deeply of a victim's blood, providing life force to sustain its wielder. Once per day on a confirmed critical hit, the dagger stores the energy. The wielder of the *exsanguinating blade* can use that stored energy as a swift action to use her choice of *cure light wounds* or *inflict light wounds* as a spell-like ability on herself or on another willing creature by touching them with the dagger.



CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *bleed*, *vampiric touch*; Cost 10,302 gp

SCOURGE OF DEVOTION

Aura faint necromancy; **CL** 5th

Slot none; **Price** 4,200 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

The multiple tails of this cat o' nine tails have barbs of silver woven into them. The *scourge of devotion* is used for self-flagellation. The user strikes her own bare back and shoulders with the scourge, scoring her flesh and inflicting 10 points of nonlethal damage. This damage cannot be healed through either normal or magical means for 24 hours, unless the user wills it. After 24 hours, the damage can be healed normally.

While the nonlethal damage lasts, the *scourge of devotion's* user receives a +4 bonus on concentration checks made when taking damage while casting a spell, and a +4 profane bonus on saving throws vs. spells and effects with the pain descriptor.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *stigmata of the red goddess**; Cost 2,100 gp



MONSTERS

BLOOD FAMILIAR

This large hound's mouth is a snarling nest of overlong fangs, and its eyes glow an unnatural red.

BLOOD HOUND

CR 2

XP 600

Blood familiar riding dog (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

LE Medium magical beast (augmented animal)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +8

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 natural)
hp 18 (2d8+9)

Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1; +4 vs. compulsions

Weaknesses blood dependence

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +4 (1d8+4 plus trip)

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 17, **Con** 17, **Int** 3, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17 (21 vs. trip)

Feats Diehard, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +7 (+15 when jumping), Perception

+8, Survival +1 (+5 when tracking by scent); **Racial**

Modifiers +8 Acrobatics when jumping, +4 Survival

when tracking by scent

Languages Common (cannot speak)

SQ improved empathic link, superior healing

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or pack (3–10)

Vampires can bend the living to their will with a glance. Often they enlist willing mortals by offering the promise of eventual immortality in exchange for loyalty. Others gain the loyalty of an animal by feeding it their blood and gaining a fierce sentinel to guard them during the daylight hours. Such creatures are known as blood familiars.

Blood familiars are animals or magical beasts that are given regular doses of a vampire's blood. This feeding creates a bond between the creature and its master, giving the beast powers beyond a normal specimen of its type. Many vampires prefer bats and wolves, including those of the dire variety—but some prefer more exotic choices, such as large cats, bears, and even snakes. More powerful vampires often choose rarer and more dangerous creatures, such as owlbeats or griffons. A vampire may create more than one blood familiar, but is limited to a total Hit Dice in blood familiars equal to its own, even if it owns only a single blood familiar.

Creating a Blood Familiar

"Blood familiar" is an acquired template that can be added to any living creature of the animal or magical beast types (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

Challenge Rating: Base creature's CR +1.

Alignment: A blood familiar's alignment is the same as that of the vampire that created it.

Type: If the base creature is an animal, its type changes to magical beast. Do not recalculate Hit Dice, BAB, or saves. It gains the augmented subtype.

Senses: A blood familiar gains darkvision 60 feet and scent. If the base creature already has darkvision, increase the range by 30 feet.

Armor Class: Increase the creature's natural armor bonus by 1.

Defensive Abilities: Blood familiars have the following defensive ability.

Profane Loyalty (Su) A blood familiar gains a +4 profane bonus on saving throws against compulsion effects.

Weaknesses: A blood familiar gains the following.

Blood Dependence: A blood familiar must ingest the blood of its vampire master at least once a week, or it loses this template and all its accompanying modifications. A blood familiar automatically fails any saving throw against compulsion effects cast by its vampire master.

Melee: A blood familiar's teeth become longer and sharper. Increase the base creature's bite damage as if it were one size category larger. If the base

creature does not have a bite attack, it gains a bite attack as a primary natural attack that deals typical damage for a creature of its size category.

Special Qualities: A blood familiar gains the following.

Improved Empathic Link (Su) The vampire that created the blood familiar gains an empathic link with it. This functions like an empathic link with a familiar, except the vampire can also shift her perception to the blood familiar, allowing her to experience what it sees, hears, and so on. She can maintain this connection as long as she likes (as long as the blood familiar is within 1 mile) and end it as a free action. The vampire can only use this ability on one blood familiar at a time, even if she possesses multiple familiars, and cannot see, hear, or smell with her own body while maintaining this connection.

Superior Healing (Ex) A blood familiar heals hit point and ability damage while resting at twice the normal rate.

Ability Scores: Strength +2, Dexterity +2, Constitution +2. If the base creature has an Intelligence of 2 or less, its Intelligence increases to 3. It gains the ability to understand one language of the vampire master's choosing, but it cannot speak.

Feats: A blood familiar gains the Diehard and Toughness feats, even if it does not meet any prerequisites.

BLOOD PUDDING

A large pool of congealing blood rises from the ground.

BLOOD PUDDING

CR 6

XP 2,400

N Large ooze

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

DEFENSE

AC 6, touch 6, flat-footed 6 (–3 Dex, –1 size)

hp 76 (8d8+40)

Fort +7, **Ref** –1, **Will** –3

Immune acid, negative energy damage, ooze traits

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee slam +13 (2d6+12 plus grab and blood drain)

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

Special Attacks blood drain, engulf (DC 19), blood drain)

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 4, **Con** 20, **Int** –, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +15 (+19 grapple); **CMD** 22
(can't be tripped)

Skills Climb +16

SQ suction

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary, pair, or clot (3-6)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blood Drain (Ex) Each round a blood pudding maintains a grapple, it automatically deals 2 points of Constitution damage as it drains blood. The blood ooze gains 5 temporary hit points for every point of Constitution damage it deals.

Suction (Ex) A blood pudding can create powerful suction against any surface as it climbs, allowing it to cling to inverted surfaces with ease. A blood pudding can establish or release suction as a swift action, and as long as it is using suction, it moves at half speed. Because of the suction, a blood pudding's receives +10 circumstance bonus to its CMD to resist bull rush, awesome blows, and other attacks and effects that attempt to physically move it from its location.

This disgusting creature resembles little more than a pool of fouled water or a great blood slick when seen in poor light. When attacking, it rises up into a mound of quivering, crimson sludge. As hungry for blood as any vampire, blood puddings are constantly on the prowl for fresh sources of food within the dark tunnels and caves which they inhabit.

BLOOD ZOMBIE (NEW ZOMBIE VARIANT)

This zombie is drenched head to foot in fresh blood, which flows down its body. Its attacks draw blood from an opponent's body to rejuvenate the zombie.

Defensive Abilities: A blood zombie does not gain DR 5/slashing.

Special Attacks: A blood zombie gains the following special attack.

Blood Drain (Su): When a blood zombie hits with its slam attack, it draws blood from the target, dealing 1 point of Strength and Constitution damage in addition to its slam damage (Fortitude negates, DC = 10 + 1/2 the zombie's HD + the zombie's Cha modifier). The blood zombie gains 5 temporary hit points every time it successfully drains blood from a target.





THE SANGUINE PATH

The mystery cult known as the Sanguine Path celebrates the power inherent in the blood—power to bring enlightenment and health through blood sharing and sacrifice, to revitalize the land through ritual, and to practice blood divination. In metropolitan areas, the cult attracts those seeking meaning, status, or simply a distraction from their everyday concerns. While in the countryside, it can be the difference between prosperity and famine. Far from prying eyes, however, the Sanguine Path engages in ritual orgies and hematophagy, the ritual consumption of blood.

LEADERS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND GOALS

Sect leaders of the Sanguine Path come in all forms. In some cases, sorcerers are at the forefront, their forceful personalities and magical abilities making them potent leaders. Their very existence hints at powers within the blood that might be unlocked by association with the cult. Witches are also prominent in the cult, and at times, even covens of hags get involved. When divine casters are present amongst the leadership, they are often associated with the demon lord Caizel.

Given its strong association with blood ritual, vampires are often attracted to leadership positions in the cult. Their powers allow them greater control over the cultists, and the position makes it easier for them to feed. It also provides a group of devoted followers to shield them from hunters.

Cult leaders are typically addressed as “father” or “mother” or “elder.” Cult members refer to one another as “brother,” “sister,” or “sibling.” They believe the comingling of blood in their rites binds them together as family.

The followers of the Sanguine Path are many and varied. The cult welcomes all intelligent beings into its ranks with the exception of intelligent undead other than vampires. Magical beasts and monstrous humanoids may well reside in a Sanguine Path compound alongside the more typical humanoid members, and it is said, they participate equally in the depraved rites of the cult. Unless these creatures are normally tolerated within the settlement, their presence must be kept secret. Often, blood golems are used to protect the inner sanctums and quarters of cult leaders. In addition, the differences between urban and rural sects of the cult are significant.

Blood of the City

Cities are hubs of travel and trade with myriad races, cultures, and religions passing through them. And sometimes, they stay and add to the cosmopolitan stew of urban life. New religions and cults crop up often—some die out, while others thrive. In the city, the Sanguine Path is a mystery cult known for its oracular use of blood in exchange for coin. The leaders use their powers to determine the parentage of children or trace lines of descent to solve disputes over inheritance. Sacred prostitutes serve the general public within the open portion of their temple. The cult is often described as “odd, but useful,” by those that only know its public face.

Those that seek membership in the cult often return with rumors of wild orgies and strange blood rites. These rumors are based in truth. Blood is the central symbol for the cult, they believe bodily fluids exchanged during sex hold power. The cult deliberately allows these rumors to spread in order to pique the interest of potential members. However, the Sanguine Path’s greater mysteries are open only

to those that meet their trials of initiation and are inducted into the organization’s inner circles. By the time members attain the highest echelon of the Sanguine Path, they have either been completely corrupted by the depravities of the cult or are too firmly connected to its dark doings to even think about betrayal or escape.

In cities where the cult has existed for generations, the sexual activities of cult members have many of the expected outcomes. All born under the auspices of the cult are raised as members. Since cultists of the Sanguine Path tend to shun the taboos of society, inbreeding does occur. Those poorly affected by such inbreeding are kept within the cult but given simple tasks, such as menial labor and guard duty.

Those with obvious deformities are kept out of sight of any not initiated into the mysteries of the cult. However, these members still participate in all privately held cult functions, for the cult teaches that true beauty resides inside oneself. (For these cultists, use the inbred creature template from *Collected Monsters of Sin*.)

Urban sects often work toward recruiting those in power—nobility, rich merchants, and the like—to shield the cult from suspicion and persecution. However, anyone interested in joining the cult can go through the initiation. New members are often recruited by holding mock ceremonies in public places (such as the Taurobolium described below) to draw interest or by sending attractive members of

A WARNING ABOUT SEXUAL OVERTONES

The Sanguine Path, especially in its urban incarnation, is heavily devoted to lust and deals in wanton extravagance and sexual taboos, including incest. GMs should determine their groups’ comfort levels with these topics in their games and provide only as much detail as is agreed upon with the players. Be ready to tone things down by only alluding to such activity, or you can simply end scenes by fading to black and move on if too much interaction or description might be problematic. The important thing is that everyone at the table is able to enjoy the game. *Collected Monsters of Sin* by Kobold Press also serves as a potential useful resource for this cult.

the cult wearing simple shifts and sandals into public areas to hand out flowers and talk to passers-by. Canny cult leaders know to look for those who are easily led, in obvious need of companionship, or without family. Often, when the Sanguine Path wishes a person of status to join, they recruit someone close to that person—a relative, business partner, or lover—and use that person to bring their true target into the fold.

This ritual sacrifice is typically held shortly after the initiation of a new crop of blood-bound cultists (see the blood-bound creature template on page 157). The newly blood-bound are taken out to a public area in hooded white robes. A scaffold is built and a bound bull or ox is raised upon the platform with ropes and pulleys. A senior cult member stands above, next to the sacrifice, and pronounces the words of the ceremony with scripted responses from the robed cultists.

Finally, the senior cultist cuts the bull's throat and the assembled blood-bound cultists stab it from below with spears. The cultists remove their robes and receive a baptism in blood as the animal is exsanguinated. Afterward, they put on displays of their new strength and vigor, allowing spectators to believe their newfound power was gained through the Taurobolium, though it is actually gained in a manner known only to the senior members. The inexperienced cult members are just as in the dark as spectators, thinking that there is meaning and magic involved in this ritual.

Blood of the Land

In times of drought and famine, a name is carried on the winds to desperate ears: the Sanguine Path. A mystery cult said to restore life to the soil and bring untold bounty to the land. The farmers and peasants are told to submit to the cult and allow it to work its mysteries—mysteries centered on the power of blood. In small agrarian communities, the Sanguine Path can establish itself much more quickly than in an urban environment. All it needs is to gain the confidence of those in charge or, failing that, do what the leaders of the community cannot—bring rain from the sky and a harvest from the soil—and usurp control.

The cult finds easy footholds where the people are already insular and set against outsiders, insinuating themselves by providing invaluable service and assuring continued prosperity for those willing to convert. Those communities that benefit from the Sanguine Path's blessings protect the cult and its mysteries as readily as they will their own folk and livelihood. This insularity often causes the same inbreeding problems found in city cults, usually in a shorter amount of time. This leads to neighboring settlements being able to readily spot visitors from a cult town, as they possess “the look” and are set apart by their inbred traits.

In rural sects of the Sanguine Path, one often finds hags (sometimes in conjunction with witches) or druids in positions of leadership. If not, the cult leadership typically has access to some sort of magic item that gives them control over weather or plants, assuring continued prosperity for their new community while keeping up the charade that the blood rituals practiced by the cult are providing the land's bounty.

THREE LEADERS OF THE SANGUINE PATH

Here are three of the Sanguine Path's most notorious figures. Whether calling the shots behind the scenes or interacting with the PCs directly, they can add just the right flavor to any adventure.

DREKKAN

CR 9

XP 6,400

Male human vampire witch 8 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

NE Medium undead (humanoid, human)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 16, flat-footed 21 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

hp 86 (8d6+56); fast healing 5

Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **DR** 10/magic and silver; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10

Weaknesses vampire weaknesses

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +8 (1d4+3/19–20) or
slam +7 (1d4+4)

Special Attacks blood drain, children of the night,
create spawn, dominate (DC 19), energy drain
(2 levels, DC 19), hexes (blight, cauldron, coven,
poison steep^{UM}, scar^{UM}, slumber)

Witch Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +12)

4th—*confusion* (DC 20), *dimension door*, *sanguine
horror III*^{DM}

3rd—*blink*, *ray of exhaustion*
(DC 18), *sands of time*^{UM}, *sanguine
horror II*^{DM}

2nd—*blood transcription*^{UM}, *boiling blood*^{UM}
(DC 16), *hold person* (DC 18), *unnatural lust*^{UM}
(DC 18)

1st—*beguiling gift*^{APG} (DC 17), *command* (DC
17), *loki's gift*^{DM} (DC 17), *mage armor*, *shadow
weapon*^{UM} (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *message*,
read magic

Patron deception

TACTICS

Before Combat Drekkkan casts *mage armor* in
advance to any situation which may require combat.

During Combat Drekkkan typically begins
combat by casting *confusion* or by targeting
a martial-oriented PC with his slumber hex,
employing his Accursed Hex feat.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 18, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 23

Feats Accursed Hex^{UM}, Alertness, Brew Potion,
Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Extra Hex^{APG}, Greater
Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Initiative,
Lightning Reflexes, Spell Focus (enchantment),
Spell Focus (necromancy), Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +12, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +10,
Fly +15, Heal +10, Intimidate +15, Knowledge
(arcana) +13, Knowledge (history) +10, Perception
+15, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +15, Stealth +15;
Racial Modifiers +8 Bluff, +8 Perception, +8 Sense
Motive, +8 Stealth

Languages Abyssal, Common, Giant, Infernal, Sylvan



SQ change shape (dire bat or wolf, beast shape II),
gaseous form, shadowless, spider climb, witch's
familiar

Combat Gear *pearl of power* (2nd level), *potion of
protection from good*; **Other Gear** mwk dagger,
bottled misfortune^{UE}, *ring of protection* +1,
ceremonial robes (equivalent to a courtier's outfit),
gold chain set with bloodstones (worth 300 gp)

GOLDIE

Pig (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3*)

NE Small magical beast (animal)

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

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+1 Dex, +5 natural, +1 size)

hp 43 (1d8+2)

Fort +6, **Ref** +3, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities improved evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +5 (1d4)

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 12, **Con** 15, **Int** 9, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 4

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 14 (18 vs. trip)

Feats Great Fortitude

Skills Acrobatics +12, Fly +14, Heal +6, Perception +7, Spellcraft +7, Stealth +11

SQ alertness, empathic link, share spells, speak with master, speak with pigs

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Stored Spells (Su) Drekkan's prepared spells, plus: 0—all; 1st—*ill omen*^{APG}, *mask dweomer*^{APG}, *ray of enfeeblement*, *ventriloquism*; 2nd—*augury*, *cure moderate wounds*, *enthrall*; 3rd—*dispel magic*, *remove blindness/deafness*, *remove disease*; 4th—*cure serious wounds*, *divination*

Drekkan is Krewsjung's lover and fellow coven member. When not participating in official cult activities, he takes on a rather unassuming role as a simple man of the land, an everyman with a penchant for pig farming, downplaying his keen intellect and speaking with a sort of earthy wisdom that endears him to the common folk. This makes him the most approachable of the trio but also the most dangerous for those with doubts or misgivings about the Sanguine Path.



KREWSJUNG

CR 9

XP 6,400

Red hag oracle 6 (*Midgard Bestiary for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

NE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +5; **Senses** blood sense, darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +21

Aura siphoning aura (DC 18)

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (+1 deflection, +5 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 136 (13 HD; 6d8+7d10+71)

Fort +11, **Ref** +12, **Will** +18

DR 5/cold iron; **Immune** fatigue, poison; **SR** 18

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +16 (1d6+5 plus bleed plus grab)

Special Attacks bleed (1d6), blood drain (1d4 Con)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +12)

At will—*summon monster I*

3/day—*charm monster* (DC 20), *summon monster III*

Oracle Spells Known (CL 6th; concentration +11)

3rd (4/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 18), *cure serious wounds*, *speak with plants*

2nd (6/day)—*barkskin*, *boiling blood*^{UM} (DC 17), *cure moderate wounds*, *pilfering hand*^{UC}

1st (8/day)—*charm animal* (DC 16), *cure light wounds*, *inflict light wounds* (DC 16), *murderous command*^{UM} (DC 16), *sanctuary* (DC 16), *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *detect poison*, *light*, *purify food and drink* (DC 15), *read magic*, *resistance*, *spark*^{APG} (DC 15)

Mystery nature

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +15)

4th—*air walk*, *flame strike* (DC 22), *freedom of movement*

3rd—*call lightning* (DC 21), *cure moderate wounds*, *meld into stone*, *poison* (DC 21)

2nd—*barkskin*, *bear's endurance*, *cat's grace*, *flame blade*, *resist energy*

1st—*entangle* (DC 19), *faerie fire*, *liberating command*^{UC}, *obscuring mist*, *pass without trace*, *produce flame*

0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect magic*, *mending*, *stabilize*

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 20, **Con** 20, **Int** 21, **Wis** 26, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +16 (+20 grapple); **CMD** 32

Feats Alertness, Blind-fight, Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Intimidating Prowess, Rending Claws^{APG}

Skills Acrobatics +5 (+1 when jumping), Bluff +15, Craft (alchemy) +15, Craft (sculpture) +15, Diplomacy +15, Fly +15, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (history) +15, Knowledge (nature) +16, Knowledge (religion) +16, Perception +21, Sense Motive +17, Spellcraft +15, Stealth +15, Survival +15, Swim +17, Use Magic Device +11

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Giant, Infernal, Sylvan

SQ amphibious, oracle's curse (lame), revelations (natural divination, transcendental bond)

Combat Gear *bloodwhisper cauldron*^{*}, *potion of gaseous form*, blue whinnis (3), bottled lightning^{UE} (3), good invisible ink^{UE}, smoke pellet^{APG} (3);

Other Gear *ring of protection* +1, inkpen, gold and black pearl belly chain (worth 1,000 gp), various gold body piercings, earrings, rings, and toe rings (worth 1,000 gp).

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blood Sense (Su) Krewsjung can detect the blood of a living creature within 90 feet and pinpoint its location within 30 feet.

Siphoning Aura (Su) Krewsjung can radiate an aura in a 30-foot radius as a free action that causes a creature to bleed from its mouth, nose, eyes, and ears. Affected creatures must succeed on a DC 17 Fortitude save each round or take 1 Constitution damage from blood loss. The saving throw DC is Constitution-based.

Spells (Sp) Krewsjung casts spells as a 7th-level druid.

The leader of this particular sect of the Sanguine Path, Krewsjung uses the cult as a way to slake her bloodlust without drawing undue attention to her appetites. It also allows her to openly practice her religious rites without fear of reprisal from opposing religious institutions. Finally, she enjoys the power and prestige gained from her control of the cult, always pushing to see how much influence she can gain. She is a visible figure in the cult, maintaining a role as the adored but unapproachable leader. She leaves it to Drekkian to be the congenial face of the cult and Mother Brimming to be the disciplinarian. The power of the coven, bolstered by her possession of a bloodwhisper cauldron, is the foundation of the cult's continued success.

MOTHER BRIMMING

CR 9

XP 6,400

Blood hag (*Midgard Bestiary for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*)

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** blood sense 90 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+3 Dex, +11 natural)

hp 114 (12d10+48)

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

DR 10/magic; **SR** 20

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee blood-drinking hair +17 (2d6+5 plus grab),
2 claws +17 (1d6+5)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with blood-drinking hair)

Special Attacks blood drain (1d4 Constitution), call the blood, face peel

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

At will—*death knell* (DC 16), *deathwatch*, *disguise self*, *ghost sound* (DC 13), *invisibility* (DC 15), *knock*, *pass without trace* (DC 14), *protection from good*, *tongues*, *ventriloquism* (DC 14), *water breathing*

3/day—*quickened bestow curse* (DC 16), *mirror image*, *empowered vampiric touch* (DC 16)

1/day—*cloudkill* (DC 18), *modify memory* (DC 17)

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** 18, **Int** 19, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +17 (+21 grapple); **CMD** 30

Feats Deceitful, Empower Spell-Like Ability (vampiric touch), Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Power Attack, Quickened Spell-Like Ability (bestow curse)

Skills Acrobatics +12, Bluff +14, Climb +20, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +17, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Perception +20, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +13, Stealth +14

Languages Abyssal, Common, Giant, Infernal, Sylvan

Combat Gear *anatomy doll*^{UE}, *potion of eagle's splendor*, *robe of needles*^{UE}; **Other Gear** belt pouch with 50 gp and several pieces of amber worth 650 gp, silver belt encrusted with moonstones and carnelian (500 gp), collection of 8 peeled faces.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blood Drain (Su) Mother Brimming's hair is a morass of disgusting worms, ever thirsty for fresh blood. Foes struck by these worms take 1d4 Constitution damage. Mother Brimming heals 5 points of damage or gains 5 temporary hit points for 1 hour (up to a maximum number of temporary hit points equal to its normal full hit points) each round she drains blood.

Blood Sense (Su) Mother Brimming can detect the blood of living creatures within 90 feet and pinpoint their locations within 30 feet.

Call the Blood (Su) Mother Brimming can target a living creature within 60 feet that she detects with her blood sense (she need not have line of sight) and make them bleed uncontrollably. A successful DC 19 Will save negates this ability, and anyone making her save cannot be affected by Mother Brimming's call the blood ability again for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based. She may choose any of the following effects.

Blood Choke Curse—The victim's lungs fill with blood, and it cannot speak or cast spells with verbal components.

Blood Eye—The victim's eyes well with blood, and crimson tears stream down its face. A target is blinded as per *blindness/deafness* for 1 minute.



Heart like Thunder—The only sound the victim hears is the rushing of its own blood in its ears and the thumping of its own heart for 1 minute. During this time, a target is deaf as per *blindness/deafness*.

Rupturing Arteries—The victim takes 5d6 points of damage as its veins and arteries suddenly burst open. It can attempt a second save on the following round to avoid beginning to drown on their own blood (attempting a new save every round thereafter).

Face Peel (Su) Mother Brimming can peel the face right off a grappled foe. The victim takes 2d6+5 points of damage and is dazed for 1 round. Thereafter, the victim suffers a 50% chance of spell failure when casting any spell requiring verbal components, not to mention being in abject agony (–4 penalty on attacks, saves, and skill checks). Only *heal* restores the stolen features, though any curative magic causes an ugly sheen of scar tissue to form over the skull and sinew (–4 penalty on all Bluff and Diplomacy checks thereafter, +4 bonus on Intimidate checks). Any face peeled off in this manner animates and bizarrely retains a semblance of the former owner's memories and personality (though the face is insane with agony). Mother Brimming can also wear this face to gain a +5 circumstance bonus on any Disguise checks to imitate the former owner. She often claim the faces of prey as trophies or fond keepsakes.

Despite her title and withered, crone-like visage, Mother Brimming is actually the youngest member of the coven, the unholy offspring of Drekkian and Krewsjung. She keeps her monstrous appearance hidden beneath a deeply cowed robe during most cult activities, and in the presence of those who have not delved deeply into the mysteries and rituals of the cult, she uses her *disguise self* ability to appear as a short, plump, elderly human woman with short, curly, silver hair and bright blue eyes. However, at the most intimate and powerful ceremonies of the Sanguine Path Mother Brimming disrobes, showing all her hideous features. She is a constant reminder of the fate that awaits anyone that would seek to betray or turn away from the Sanguine Path.

CULT ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURE HOOKS

Here are several methods of introducing the Sanguine Path in your campaign. In some instances, the cult is a new evil rearing its head in the area. In others, the cult should be part of the background, giving it an established presence before having it attract the attention of the PCs or those that seek their aid.

APL 3–4

- ***A local official is distrustful of a charismatic evangelist recently arrived in town.*** His preaching has attracted a number of citizens who have joined his movement—known as the Sanguine Path—and they have moved into an old inn on the outskirts of town that the newcomer recently purchased. Swayed by the pleas of several residents disturbed by the changes in their friends and family that have joined the cult, the official wants to determine if there is any wrongdoing afoot. The PCs are hired to investigate. They can infiltrate the cult as initiates or clandestinely enter the compound, but the official wants evidence that the cult is up to no good, so she can lawfully have its leader arrested.
- ***Accompanying a small caravan on a long overland journey, the PCs must take a long detour due to severe weather wiping out the regular route.*** As they reach the end of their travels in the fast-fading light, they are surprised to find a thriving little farming community not marked on their map. The townsfolk sport strange deformities and are leery of the strangers. However, the priest of the local temple seems friendly enough and offers to put them up for the night while finding accommodations for the caravaneers in barns since the village has no inn. Come morning, several of the people from the caravan are missing.

The priest says they were likely taken by a local goblin tribe and helpfully points the PCs in their direction. If the PCs successfully deal with the goblins, they discover that the goblins are working with the people of the village and must return quickly to stop the remainder of the caravan folk from becoming victims of the Sanguine Path's bloody fertility rites.

- *The PCs' hometown—or at least the town they have been living in recently—suffers raids by hostile, crimson-clad forces.* These warriors aren't average bandits. They are strong, fast, and hard to kill. The local constabulary hires the PCs to root out these raiders. The trail leads to some old ruins where a band of brigands has fallen under the sway of a witch cultist of the Sanguine Path. Her former sect destroyed and her followers killed or scattered, she seeks vengeance against those that defied her. When captured by brigands, she bargained with them, offering power and riches if they submitted themselves to the Sanguine Path. Now the bandits are all blood-bound and loyal cultists. The cult leader uses them to raid nearby settlements to replenish her riches and bring back sacrifices to once more increase the power of the cult.

APL 5–6

- *A friend or relative of one of the PCs joined the Sanguine Path in the past and seemed very happy, vibrant, and full of energy and purpose.* Now this individual has sought out the PCs, weak, pale and terrified. After recently being initiated

into the final mysteries of the cult, she rebelled, fled the cult, and went into hiding. However, as a blood-bound member of the cult, her vitality is linked to the monthly consumption of a speical elixir. The PCs must find a way to help her and—armed with the terrible truth behind the cult—brave the Sanguine Path compound and bring an end to the cult, so they can no longer corrupt the locals with their foul practices. In this instance, the Sanguine Path is well established in the community and has a number of resources to bring to bear against their enemies. Not only do the heroes have to contend with the cult leadership and their blood-bound servants, but prominent authorities of the community may be either members or under the sway of the cult.

- *A shambling undead creature drags itself up out of a nearby midden and rampages through town, attacking anyone that hinders its progress.* The PCs recognize the creature as a former crime boss in the city who recently vanished and was assume murdered by a rival. The undead is a revenant, recently slain in one of the Sanguine Path's blood rites, and seeks venegance on the cult leader that

THE SANGUINE PATH IN MIDGARD

In the Midgard Campaign Setting, the Sanguine Path can be used in much the same way as presented in the general information here. Divine casters associated with the cult often have ties to Marena, Hecate, or Ceres Vindicator, or to a pantheon of the three in a bizarre triad, especially in rural areas where the cult's priests venerate the goddesses with the sacrifices of their enemies on moonlit nights and consecrate the fields with their blood. In areas affected by drought or famine, sects of the Sanguine Path are quick to move in and provide aid, undermining faiths already established in the area, such as the Oaken Ring or the official church of Ceres.

A farming settlement on the northern border of Verrayne fell under the sway of the Sanguine Path years ago. Veneration of Marena and the Goat of the Woods figure heavily in their tenets, and it is said that the lush fields of the isolated community provide two bumper crop harvests a year, so long as the soil drinks deep of

the blood spilled from the town's enemies and occasional visiting outsiders. Rumor has it that degenerate humans and goblins mingle freely there and that one of the cult's leaders is an exceptionally old and powerful worg.

An urban sect of the Sanguine Path has firmly entrenched itself in the city of Triolo, based in Little Nuria. The sect's tenets include a strange dual veneration of both Marena and V'ashra the Tormentor. This works to the cult's advantage as they appeal to the hedonistic and the sadistic, gaining followers from those citizens looking for sexual outlets as well as pirates and fighting folk wishing for more violent forms of worship. The sect is led by a figure known as Elder Ichorous (intersex human oracle^{APG} 5/sorcerer 5/mystic theurge 2) who claims to be an avatar of both Caizel and V'ashra and is rumored to be a hermaphrodite. The Elder keeps a personal guard of blood-bound minotaurs near at all times.

sacrificed it. The PCs can follow the creature into the Sanguine Path's compound and discover the horrors that take place there, leading them to assist the revenant in its cause. Should the PCs slay the revenant, they discover information on its body that implicates the cult in its death, possibly impelling them to investigate. The cult chose to dispose of the criminal in retaliation for his attempts at blackmail.

- ***In the midst of widespread drought, one settlement continues to have plentiful water and is able to keep their crops green and growing despite the blight all around them.*** Messengers from that village promise relief for others suffering nearby. They will send aid in exchange for allowing missionaries to establish themselves in the nearby communities. The missionaries offer hope to end the drought and bring prosperity as they have in the one that sent them here. All they ask is of affected citizens is to renounce their current deities and embrace the ways of the Sanguine Path. Devout PCs in town may take exception to this, or they may arrive as part of a relief force, sent from the capital, only to find themselves in the midst of a settlement ready to tear itself asunder. Caught between those loyal to their gods and those desperate to do anything to save their town, the PCs will have to choose sides.

APL 7–9

- ***An unnatural sickness seems to be targeting certain politically powerful figures. The local clergy are unable to stop the sickness, and it is killing quickly.*** It doesn't take long to notice a pattern. Those that die are replaced with people forwarding a particular agenda. The Sanguine Path, long established in the city, has gained enough power and prestige that it begins to move forcefully against its enemies. The cult has carefully recruited blood relatives of their political enemies and blood-bound them and then refused to give them the elixir, causing them to go into withdrawal. Then, using *blood strike*, a unique spell created by the cult, they transfer the effects of the withdrawal along the bloodline to the intended target, using the cultist relative as a focus. The only way to save the victim

is to remove the curse from the focus or kill him.

Once the PCs have determined the cause, it is up to them to decide how to deal with the problem. The cult and its leadership need to be removed in order to stop the killing and keep the Sanguine Path from consolidating its power in the political vacuum it has created. The coven described in the leadership section would work well as the primary villains for this scenario. The PCs could work to uproot the cult from the city, only to have the coven escape and flee to the countryside. In the second part of the adventure, the PCs could go abroad looking for clues of the Sanguine Path, locating a village where they've begun to insinuate themselves and forcing a final confrontation between the heroes and the coven to destroy the cult's influence once and for all.

CULTISTS OF THE SANGUINE PATH

The Sanguine Path ensures that its public face is mysterious and enticing, leaving the truth of their bloody rituals unknown to all but the most loyal. Members of the cult must prove their loyalties or else be bound to their duty by the cult's powerful blood rites. The following NPCs can be used as cultist minions, intermediaries, and lower-level leaders to provide suitable enemies for the PCs as they strive against the Sanguine Path.

ECSTATIC

CR 1

XP 400

Blood-bound inbred human commoner 3

(*Collected Monsters of Sin*, see page 157)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+1 Dex, +2 shield)
hp 22 (3d6+9)

Fort +3; **Ref** +2; **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities ferocity, witless; **DR** 2/-;

Immune mind-affecting effects

Weaknesses blood-binding elixir addiction, greasy

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk morningstar (1d8+3/x3)
Ranged sling +2 (1d4+2)
Special Attacks carrier, unpredictable

TACTICS

During Combat The ecstatic attacks any obvious enemies or whomever he is ordered to by a ranking cult member.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 7, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 6
Base Atk +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 14
Feats EnduranceB, Shield Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, ToughnessB
Skills Climb +6, Handle Animal +2, Swim +6
Languages Common
SQ gullible
Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, tanglefoot bag; **Other Gear** masterwork morningstar, sling and 10 bullets, masterwork heavy wooden shield

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blood-Binding Elixir Addiction (Ex) An ecstatic that fails to imbibe its monthly dose of blood-binding elixir suffers the effects of withdrawal.

Carrier (Ex) The ecstatic's melee attacks spread filth fever.

Greasy (Ex) When the ecstatic suffers energy damage, he takes 1 additional point of damage from the attack.

Gullible (Ex) The ecstatic takes a -2 penalty on Sense Motive checks.

Unpredictable (Ex) The ecstatic gains a +1 circumstance bonus against opponents that have fought humans in the past.

Witless (Ex) The ecstatic is immune to mind-affecting effects.

Ecstatics are devoted followers of the Sanguine Path, villagers who have committed their community to the cult's ways in exchange for agricultural bounty. These zealots also imbibe the blood-binding elixir crafted by the cult's leaders, which imbues them with a strength and fervor that is not typically found in their inbred physiology.

CRIMSON GUARD

CR 5

XP 1,200

Blood-bound minotaur fighter 5 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, see page 157)

LE Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception -1

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20 (+9 armor, +1 shield)
hp 57 (5d10+25)

Fort +8; **Ref** +1; **Will** +0; +1 vs. fear effects; +4 vs. pain and mind-affecting effects, -4 vs. mind-affecting cast by cult leader

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, ferocity, natural cunning; **DR** 2/-

Weaknesses blood-binding elixir addiction

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee masterwork battleaxe +13 (1d8+7/x3) and gore +6 (1d4+3)

Ranged masterwork heavy crossbow +5 (1d10/19-20)

Special Attacks weapon training (axes +1)

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 10, **Con** 18, **Int** 6, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 21

Feats EnduranceB Improved Initiative, Toughness^B

Skills Climb +11, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +6, Swim +12

Languages Common

SQ armor training 1

Combat Gear antitoxin, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, tanglefoot bags (2); **Other Gear** +1 *agile half-plate*, mwk light steel quickdraw shield^{UE}, mwk battleaxe, masterwork heavy crossbow with 10 bolts, 200 gp

The crimson guards are devoted and skilled warriors inducted into the mysteries of the Sanguine Path. Usually one or more crimson guards are assigned as bodyguards for leaders of the cult. They undergo blood rites that bind them to their charges, ensuring that they can be controlled and kept from rebellion and treachery.

SANGUINE SORCERER

CR 6

XP 2,400

Half-elf sorcerer 7

CE Medium humanoid (human, elf)

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+1 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 shield)

hp 51 (7d6+24)

Fort +2; **Ref** +2; **Will** +5; +2 vs. charm, cold, enchantment, fear, and fire

Defensive Abilities wretched endurance;
Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 *keen dagger* +4 (1d4+1/17-20)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +5 (1d8/19-20)

Special Attacks horrific visage (30 ft., DC 17, shaken 3 rounds)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +11)

3rd (5/day)—*blood biography*^{APG}, *vampiric touch*

2nd (7/day)—*false life*, *hideous laughter* (DC 17),
invisibility

1st (7/day)—*cause fear* (DC 16), *charm person*
(DC 16), *obscuring mist*, *ray of enfeeblement*,
stanch^{DM}, *weapon of blood*^{DM}

0 (at will)—*bleed*, *dancing lights*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *message*, *read magic*

Bloodline accursed

TACTICS

Before Combat The sanguine sorcerer casts *false life* and *weapon of blood*, and casts *shield* from her scroll. The effects are included in her stat block.

During Combat The sanguine sorcerer uses *ray of enfeeblement* and *hideous laughter* to stave off enemy melee combatants, attacking with her wand, or closing with other spellcasters to attack with *vampiric touch* and her *weapon of blood*.

Base Statistics Without her spells, the sanguine sorcerer has the following statistics; **AC** 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11; **hp** 41; **Melee** dagger +2 (1d4-1/19-20).

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 13

Feats Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials,

Skill Focus (Spellcraft), **Spell Focus** (enchantment),
Spell Focus (necromancy), **Still Spell**

Skills Bluff +14, Perception +13, Spellcraft +13

Languages Common, Elven

SQ elf blood

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *scroll of levitate*, *scroll of resist energy*, *scrolls of shield* (2),
wand of scorching ray (25 charges); **Other Gear**
mwk light crossbow with 20 bolts, dagger, *ring of protection* +1, *mask of stony demeanor*^{UE}, spellbook,
148 gp

A living tribute to the power of blood, the sanguine sorcerer is a charismatic lieutenant. Descended from distant red hag ancestors, the sorcerer has answered



the singing call of her blood. She is often called upon to use *blood biography* to provide information for contributions to the cult, though she just as often performs bogus blood rituals and simply bluffs her petitioners with false information. When the cult is threatened, the sanguine sorcerer leads supplicants to battle, often with a crimson guard for protection.

NEW FEATS

When the needs are great, the blood delivers. And the Sanguine Path knows this better than all.

BLOOD DIVINATION

By ingesting the blood of an intelligent creature, you can improve your chances of gaining information.

Prerequisites: Member of the Sanguine Path in good standing, 5th-level caster.

Benefit: If you ingest at least a pint of blood from a creature, when you cast *blood biography*^{APG} or *speak with dead* and that creature is the target, the target takes a –4 penalty to the Will save against that spell.

GREATER BLOOD DIVINATION

By ingesting the blood of an intelligent creature, it is helpless against your demands for information.

Prerequisites: Blood Divination, member of the Sanguine Path in good standing, 5th-level caster.

Benefit: If you ingest at least a pint of blood from a creature, it receives no save against *blood biography*^{APG} or *speak with dead* when you cast those spells with the creature as the target.

NEW MAGIC ITEM

The leadership of the Sanguine Path has access to this vile artifact.

BLOODWHISPER CAULDRON (MINOR ARTIFACT)

Aura strong universal; **CL** 20th

Slot none; **Weight** 30 lbs.

This ancient, oxidized cauldron sits on three stubby legs and has images of sacrifice and ritual cast into its iron sides. When filled with concoctions that contain blood, the bubbling cauldron seems to whisper secrets of ancient power to those bold

enough to listen. A hag coven within 10 feet of each other and the cauldron can add the following spell-like abilities to their cooperative magic: *blood strike**, *blood biography*^{APG} (DC 18), *crur of visions*^{DM}, *exsanguinating clouds*^{DM} (DC 20), *plant growth*, and *sanguine horror* ^{VDM}. Additionally, once a year, if the cauldron is filled with the blood of a sentient being (at least one fully exanguinated creature of Medium size), the coven can cast wish as a spell-like ability after invoking an hour-long ritual.

All coven spell-like abilities function at CL 12th (or at the highest CL available to the most powerful hag in the coven). The save DCs are Charisma-based and function as if with a Charisma score of 20 unless one of the hags has a higher Charisma score, in which case the spell-like ability DCs are adjusted by that hag's Charisma modifier.

DESTRUCTION

A *bloodwhisper cauldron* can be destroyed by being filled with the freely given blood of intelligent good creatures and then having two clerics of good-aligned deities of at least 12th level channel positive energy into it while a third casts *dispel evil* upon the cauldron.



NEW SPELLS

Blood without magic is mundane. Magic without blood is simply dreadful.

BLOOD STRIKE

School necromancy [curse]; **Level** cleric 6, druid 5, sorcerer/wizard 6, witch 5

Casting Time at least 10 minutes; see text

Components V, S, F (a blood relative of the target)

Range 1 mile; see text

Effect see text

Duration see text

Saving Throw see text; **Spell Resistance** yes

By casting this spell, you are able to transfer the effects of another single target spell or an affliction currently that affects the focus creature to a target creature that is also the focus creature's blood relative. The relationship should be relatively close (for example, the two must at least be cousins). Blood strike requires no line of effect but the spell must be cast within 1 mile of the target and on the same plane. The duration and saving throw are determined by the spell to be transferred. A creature can be only affected by blood strike once every 24 hours; subsequent castings automatically fail.

When transferring a spell, the *blood strike* spell and the spell to be transferred are cast at the same time. The 10-minute casting time is the minimum total for both castings; if the transferred spell has a casting time longer than 10 minutes, that casting time is used instead. You must pay any costs associated with the transfer spell when you cast *blood strike*. Upon touching the focus creature, the effects of the transferred spell immediately take effect upon the intended target, which makes a saving throw (if applicable) against the spell as normal.

Alternatively, you may choose one affliction currently affecting the focus creature. That affliction is immediately transferred to the target creature, which receives any applicable saving throw against the effect. If the target fails their saving throw, the affliction is transferred and no longer affects the focus creature.

NEW TEMPLATE: BLOOD-BOUND CREATURE

This elven warrior seems flush with strength and vitality, her eyes bright yet somehow vacant.

BLOOD-BOUND CULT GUARD

CR 2

XP 800

Female elf warrior 3

NE Medium humanoid

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 22 (3d10+6)

Fort +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1; +2 vs. enchantment spells and effects, +4 vs. mind-affecting and pain, -4 vs. mind-affecting cast by cult leader

Defensive Abilities ferocity; **DR** 2/-; **Immune** sleep

Weaknesses blood-binding elixir addiction

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee elven curve blade +5 (1d10+3/18-20)

Ranged composite shortbow +5 (1d6+2/×3)

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 9, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15

Feats Dodge, Endurance^B, Improved Initiative, Toughness^B

Skills Climb +6, Perception +2, Ride +6, Swim +6

Languages Common, Elven

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), antitoxin (1), bloodblock (1), troll oil (1); **Other Gear** breastplate, elven curve blade, composite shortbow (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, belt pouch, signal whistle, 23 gp, 1 sp, 8 cp

Creating a Blood-Bound Creature

Followers of the Sanguine Path that prove exceptionally zealous and useful are invited to participate in a special ritual that endows them with vitality, making them stronger, faster, and inured to pain. The price for this power is unwavering loyalty to the cult. The special elixir required for the ritual contains the blood of the cult's leaders and magically binds the will of those who drink it. The elixir must



be taken at regular monthly intervals. Failing to do so leads to the creature's loss of the template and painful, eventually fatal, withdrawal symptoms.

"Blood-bound" is an acquired template that can be applied to any creature of the fey, humanoid, magical beast, or monstrous humanoid type. A blood-bound creature retains the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

CR: The base creature's CR + 1.

Defensive Abilities: A blood-bound creature gains a +4 circumstance bonus on saves against effects with the pain descriptor and against mind-affecting effects, as well as the ferocity ability and DR 2/-. The boiling blood^{UM} spell affects a blood-bound creature as if it has the orc subtype.

Weaknesses: A blood-bound creature takes a -4 penalty on saves against mind-affecting effects cast by any cult leader whose blood was used in the blood-binding ceremony. Should a blood-bound creature fail to imbibe its monthly dose of elixir, it begins to suffer the effects of withdrawal. Treat this as a severe drug addiction, but while the blood-bound creature can attempt Fortitude saves against the daily damage, those saves will not cure the addiction.

BLOOD-BINDING ELIXIR WITHDRAWAL

Type disease, curse; *Save* variable; *Onset* 1 day; *Frequency* 1/day; *Effect* -2 penalty to Dex, Con, Str, and Wis; creature cannot naturally heal ability damage caused by this addiction; *Cure* remove curse, followed by remove disease

Speed: Increase a blood-bound creature's base speed by 10 feet.

Abilities: A blood-bound creature gains a +2 bonus to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. A blood-bound creature takes a -2 penalty to Intelligence and Charisma.

Feats: A blood-bound creature gains Endurance and Toughness as bonus feats.



SELKET'S STING

For those who lead their lives in sun-scorched lands, Selket's name is both feared and revered. Her cult is strong among the desert nomads. She protects her faithful and grants them their place in the afterlife. Her name is typically translated as "she who closes the throat," perhaps in reference to the venom of the scorpion, a creature most sacred to her. Her name however, can also be read as "she who opens the throat," to reflect her aspect as a goddess of healing, as one who meets the dead in the afterlife, reviving them once more to take their place in service to the gods. Yet, civilization has all but forsaken her. Her city—the City of Scorpions—lies ruined and forgotten in the burning wastes. Her

devoted servants work toward the day when she once again takes her rightful place in the hearts and minds of those that live in the great cities and the fertile lands around them. Those who refuse Selket's protection, though, feel her sting.

LEADERS, ORGANIZATION, AND GOALS

Many who wander the desert are Selket's children. They look to her for defense against the dangers that surround them—venomous creatures, sandstorms, the blazing sun—and for healing for their afflictions. Should outsiders wrong them, they look to her to

inflict retribution. The new high priestess of Selket, though happy with the homage paid to the goddess by the nomads, is not altogether satisfied with the situation. Seeing her goddess as the true patron of the southern lands and the one to whom its people owe their blessings, she has taken it upon herself to remind the soft cityfolk of Selket's power. Selket's Sting is poised to remind them of the harshness of life in these climes, where one mishap—be it drought, fire, or poison—can change everything for the worse, especially for those not in Selket's favor.

Charismatic and persuasive bards and sorcerers are those in charge of portions of the cult. Clerics of Selket and occasionally desert druids with an affinity for scorpions also find positions of leadership within the cult. Selket's Sting is organized in small cells. Each cultist within a cell knows one another and answers to a leader. That leader alone knows to whom the cell answers. The organizer of a group of cells then answers to a priest of Selket. That priest answers to no one but the high priestess herself. Often situated at oases and caravansaries, these fanatics watch for those that cross the desert nomads or abuse the name or reputation of the goddess. Those who fail to repent their deeds frequently find death at the end of a stinger or sometimes a poisoned blade. Some fall asleep and drown in baths, apparent accidents.

In recent days, the cultists have infiltrated the outskirts of towns and cities in civilized areas near flood plains and rivers, seeking to increase Selket's influence—through either love or fear. The impetus makes no difference, so long as the people recognize Selket's power. Their places of worship are secret, hidden in basements or abandoned buildings, identifiable only by the likeness of the goddess in sculpture or wall art: a beautiful woman wearing a scorpion headdress or a giant scorpion with the face of a beautiful woman. Rites and celebrations within Selket's cult are orgiastic affairs with wild music played on flutes and percussion instruments, narcotic vapors wafting from braziers, and cultists showing their devotion by handling scorpions. Getting stung by the creatures is inevitable, but the faithful see it as a test rather than as a sign of disfavor. The afflicted are treated, and if they survive, Selket's blessing is upon them.

Out in the dunes rest the ruins of a once great city, the City of Scorpions, once and still the seat of Selket's power. Here, her high priestess resides with her attendants and loyal followers within the still-intact temple of Selket. A great hidden aquifer beneath the city provides life-giving water to those that live there. It is home to a gypsosphinx (see the *Midgard Bestiary for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*) set here by Selket herself as an eternal guardian, and the temple contains myriad mummies to defend against unwanted intruders. Any who find their way in are met by the wrathful Daughter of Selket, who prefers to summon all her nearby faithful and venomous pets to defend against any infidels daring to defile the holy place of her goddess.

The Desert Scorpions

Selket's cult employs its own assassins, named for Selket's sacred animal. They are a group of fanatical killers that readily eliminate any target set before them in Selket's holy name. Unlike hired murderers, the Desert Scorpions only kill those the cult's priests denounce as enemies and anyone attempting to interfere with them carrying out the clergy's divine decree. Poisoning is the most common manner of execution, though often their murders are set up to look like accidents or divine retribution. An asp may somehow slip unnoticed into a merchant's bath. Or maybe a priest known for persecuting the faithful of Selket is found dead in a garden, surrounded by myriad scorpions.

The killers of the Desert Scorpions are many and varied. Alchemists, fighters, rangers, and rogues are common among their ranks. Even sorcerers and wizards have been known to serve with them. Many, of course, take the assassin prestige class as they rise in rank. Out in the desert, they wear hot-weather outfits the color of the sands so as to better conceal themselves in the wastes. In communities, they use various disguises, but a member can be identified by a tattoo of a scorpion, in sepia tones, concealed somewhere on the body. As the Desert Scorpions are zealous fanatics, these tattoos are usually only seen on the dead.

SADIKI SEFU**CR 11****XP 12,800**

Male dwarf alchemist 9/ unchained rogue (poisoner)
3 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Pathfinder Unchained*)

LE Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12**DEFENSE**

AC 25, touch 15, flat-footed 22 (+5 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural, +4 shield)

hp 102 (12d8+45)

Fort +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +6; +2 versus spells, and spell-like abilities, +8 vs. poison

Defensive Abilities defensive training, evasion**OFFENSE****Speed** 20 ft.**Melee** +1 short sword +11/+6 (1d6+3/19–20)**Ranged** +1 *sling* +11 (1d4+2) or

bomb +11 (5d6+3 fire) or

smoke bomb +11 (5d6+3 fire plus smoke) or

stink bomb +11 (5d6+3 fire plus stinking cloud)

Special Attacks bomb 14/day (5d6+3 fire, DC 17), hatred, sneak attack +2d6

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 9th; conc. +12)3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *fly*, *haste*, *nondetection*2nd—*cat's grace*, *false life*, *fox's cunning*, *invisibility*, *protection from arrows*1st—*adhesive spittle*^{APG} (DC 14), *bomber's eye*^{APG}, *cure light wounds*, *disguise self*, *shield*, *true strike***TACTICS**

Before Combat Sadiki drinks his *shield* extract. This is reflected in his stat block.

During Combat Sadiki prefers to act with stealth, taking enemies by surprise (usually by using his *invisibility* extract) before they have a chance to react. Before engaging a target, he may plant a delayed bomb nearby, using the explosion and fire to distract any guards.

Morale Sadiki is not especially brave or proud, and if outnumbered or obviously outclassed, he flees, using smoke bombs to cover his escape.

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

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 24 (28 vs. bull rush, 28 vs. trip)

Feats Brew Potion, Dodge, Extra Bombs^{APG}, Extra Discovery^{APG}, Extra Discovery^{APG}, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Throw Anything, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +12, Appraise +13 (+15 to assess nonmagical metals or gemstones), Craft (alchemy) +18 (+19 when working with poison, +27 to create alchemical items), Disable Device +11, Disguise +10, Fly +7, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (local) +12, Perception +12 (+14 to notice unusual stonework), Sleight of Hand +7 (+12 to conceal items contained within), Spellcraft +12, Stealth +12, Use Magic Device +8; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Appraise to assess nonmagical metals or gemstones, +2 Perception to notice unusual stonework

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Gnoll, Undercommon



SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +9), discoveries (concentrate poison, delayed bomb, precise bombs [3 squares], smoke bomb, sticky poison, stink bomb), master poisoner, mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural armor, 90 minutes), poison use, rogue talent (combat trick), swift alchemy

Combat Gear *potion of fox's cunning*, *sandals of quick reaction*^{UE}, *wand of cure moderate wounds* (15 charges), blue whinnis (3), large scorpion venom (3), oil of taggit (2), sassone leaf residue; **Other Gear** +2 *studded leather*, +1 *short sword*, +1 *sling*, alchemical sling bullet (loaded with alchemist's fire) (10), *amulet of natural armor* +1, *concealing pocket*^{UE}, ring of protection +2, alchemy crafting kit^{APG}, animal glue^{UE}, disguise kit, mwk thieves' tools, silver unholy symbol of Selket, traveling formula book (treat as traveling spellbook^{UE})

The current leader of the Desert Scorpions is a dwarf known as Sadiki Sefu. He looks like many of his people that inhabit the desert: shaven head, beard wrapped tightly in gold wire, light tunic, and sandals. However, this mild, unassuming individual has killed more people than half the assassins under his command. He is unwavering in his loyalty to the high priestess and the goddess and is a fearsome foe. His position is normally one of overseer, handing out missions and coordinating the movements of his assassins, but should a great enemy arise to threaten the cult, he does not hesitate to join the fray. Nearly all the poisons used by the cult are manufactured by Sadiki, or at least under his watchful eye.

GAHIJI

CR 12

XP 19,200

Divine guardian gypsosphinx (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 4*, *Midgard Bestiary for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*)

NE Huge magical beast

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, mystic sight; **Perception** +23

DEFENSE

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

hp 147 (14d10+70); fast healing 5

Fort +14, **Ref** +11, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities ability healing; **Immune** disease, mind-affecting effects, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 100 ft., fly 90 ft. (perfect)

Melee bite +22 (2d6+10), 2 claws +22 (1d8+10)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks pounce, rake (2 claws +22, 1d8+10)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th; concentration +21)

At will—*augury*, *detect magic*, *dimension door* (within the City of Scorpions only), see *invisibility*
3/day—*alarm*, *comprehend languages*, *greater dispel magic*, *knock*, *legend lore*
1/day—*arcane lock*, *augury*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *commune*, *dismissal* (DC 22), *forbiddance*, *guards and wards*, *hold portal*, *slay living* (DC 23)

TACTICS

Before Combat If Gahiji spies intruders first, he casts *augury*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, and *commune* to gather intelligence upon his prospective opponents. He casts *see invisibility* before an engagement. When toying with intruders, Gahiji seeks a high perch from which to look down and ask his riddles.

During Combat When combat ensues, he prefers a height advantage to pounce and use his rake attack, usually choosing a lightly armored opponent—a spellcaster, if he can determine one. Should Gahiji notice that an enemy is separated from her companions, he uses his divine swiftness to overtake the opponent and do as much damage as possible before her allies can interfere. Should things go poorly, Gahiji uses *dimension door* to escape, taking time to heal before ambushing the opponents later.

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 14, **Con** 20, **Int** 18, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 38 (42 vs. trip)

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]), Skill Focus (Knowledge [history]), Skill Focus (Knowledge [religion])

Skills Acrobatics +2 (+30 when jumping), Bluff +17, Climb +14, Diplomacy +11, Fly +18, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (history) +21, Knowledge (religion) +21, Perception +23, Sense Motive +19, Stealth +11; **Racial Modifiers** +5 Perception, +5 Sense Motive

Languages Common, Draconic, Sphinx (if using the Midgard Campaign Setting, add Darakhul to his list of languages)

SQ blessed life, divine swiftiness, sacred site

SPECIAL ABILITIES

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

Blessed Life (Ex) Gahiji does not age or breathe. He does not require food, drink, or sleep.

Divine Swiftiness (Ex) Gahiji is gifted with incredible speed, granting him a +4 bonus on initiative rolls. In addition, each of his movement speeds is doubled and his fly maneuverability is perfect.

Mystic Sight (Ex) Gahiji sees death coming and often can foretell the manner of a person's death. This ability does not come with a corresponding urge to share that information, however. Gypsosphinxes are notorious for hinting, teasing, and even lying about a creature's death (*"If we fight, I will kill you and eat your heart. I have seen it,"* is a favorite bluff).

Sacred Site (Ex) Gahiji is assigned to guard the City of Scorpions by Selket. He is charged with protecting it from harm and preventing incursions from those not of the faith. Gahiji must keep his vigil until Selket deems his task done. If Gahiji ever moves out of the city's area, he immediately loses the divine guardian template. He cannot regain the template unless he atones for his failure (usually by completing some quest or via an atonement spell) and reenters the city within 1 week. Otherwise, he loses the template permanently, taking 6d6 points of Constitution drain as the years of lost food, drink, and sleep return to him tenfold.

Gahiji the eternal guardian is the defender of Selket's holy city. He gleefully destroys those that come to the city who are not followers of his deity. While he no longer needs to eat, he still enjoys feasting on the flesh of the slain. To placate his boredom, Gahiji often toys with intruders, putting on a big show by making a grand entrance—often swooping down to perch on a pillar or arch—announcing himself and appearing impressive, saying they can pass if they answer his riddles first. This is a lie, as he is bound to destroy or repel all invaders.

The following are some of his favorite riddles.

"What begins and has no end? What is the ending of all that begins?"

Answer: Death.

"When we meet, you see nothing. But apart, you can see it all."

Answer: Eyelids.

"The only weapon which sharper grows when it is used in any row."

Answer: A tongue.

"Delivered by breath, scares heroes to death."

Answer: A riddle.

DAKHAMUNZA SAT SELKET

CR 14

XP 38,400

Female human cleric of Selket 15

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init –1; **Senses** Perception +5

Aura doom (20 ft., shaken, Will DC 19 negates)

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 13, flat-footed 24 (+8 armor, +4 deflection, –1 Dex, +2 natural, +1 shield)

hp 146 (15d8+75)

Fort +13, **Ref** +4, **Will** +14; +3 resistance bonus vs. poison

Defensive Abilities death's embrace, vermin sanctuary (DC 22, 8 rds.)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *cruel unholy reliquary scimitar* +17/+12/+7 (1d6+4/18–20) or

+2 *impervious scorpion whip* +17/+12/+7 (1d3+5 lethal or nonlethal)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 7/day (DC 23, 8d6), death's kiss

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 15th; concentration +20)

8th—*fire storm* (DC 23), *summon nature's ally VIII^D* (animals only)

7th—*blasphemy* (DC 22), *destruction^D* (DC 22), *ethereal jaunt*

6th—*antilife shell*, *create undead^D*, *harm* (DC 21), *heal*

5th—*cleanse^{APG}*, *dispel good*, *giant vermin^D*, *insect plague*, *righteous might*, *slay living* (DC 20)

4th—*aura of doom^{UM}* (DC 19), *greater summon swarm^{*D}*, *neutralize poison*, *poison* (DC 19), *restoration*, *spit venom^{UM}* (DC 19)

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 18), *cure serious wounds*, *invisibility purge*, *magic vestment*, *repel vermin^D* (DC 18), *sands of time^{UM}*

2nd—*bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *death knell* (DC 17), *desecrate*, *eagle's splendor*, *ghoul touch*^D (DC 17)

1st—*bane* (DC 16), *bless*, *cause fear*^D (DC 16), *command* (DC 16), *liberating command*^{UC}, *shield of faith*, *sun metal*^{UC} (DC 16)

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *create water*, *detect poison*, *resistance*

D domain spell; **Domain** Animal (Vermin subdomain), Death (Undead subdomain)

TACTICS

Before Combat Dakhamunza casts *aura of doom*, *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *eagle's splendor*, *magic vestment*, and *shield of faith* prior to combat. These benefits are included in her stat block.

During Combat Dakhamunza prefers to use her spells and channeling from a distance to allow her underlings to engage opponents, but if pressed, she engages while mounted on Chatha. Should an enemy get in close, she unleashes *harm* or spontaneously casts an *inflict* spell to do as much damage as possible.



Base Statistics When not prepared for combat, Dakhamunza's stats are adjusted as follows: **AC** 20, touch 9, flat-footed 20; **hp** 116; **Fort** +11, **Ref** +4, **Will** +14; **Melee** +1 *cruel unholy reliquary scimitar* +16/+11/+6 (1d6+2/18–20) or +2 *impervious scorpion whip* +15/+10/+5 (1d3+3 lethal or nonlethal); **Str** 12, **Con** 14; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 21

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 8, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 27

Feats Channel Smite, Command Undead, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Extra Channel, Guided Hand^{UC}, Improved Channel, Selective Channeling, Weapon Focus (whip), Whip Mastery^{UC}

Skills Craft (alchemy) +7, Heal +17, Knowledge (religion) +13, Ride +5 (+7 to stay in the saddle), Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +13

Languages Common (if using the Midgard Campaign Setting, add Tamasheq to her known languages)

Combat Gear *crown of blasting* (minor), *feather token* (whip), *potion of cure serious wounds* (2), *scroll of align weapon*, *scroll of owl's wisdom*, *scroll of spell immunity*, healer's kit, large scorpion venom (2); **Other Gear** +2 *poison-resistant*^{UE} *mithral breastplate*, *mwk buckler*, +1 *cruel*^{UE} *unholy reliquary*^{UM} *scimitar*, +2 *impervious scorpion whip*^{UE}, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *headband of inspired wisdom* +2, exotic military saddle, platinum unholy symbol of Selket^{UE}

CHATHA

Giant scorpion animal companion

N Large vermin

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 11, flat-footed 22 (+2 Dex, +13 natural, –1 size)

hp 85 (10d8+40)

Fort +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3 (+4 morale bonus vs. enchantment spells and effects)

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 claws +12 (1d8+6 plus grab), sting +12 (1d8+6)

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

Special Attacks poison

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 2, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +14 (+18 grapple); **CMD** 26 (38 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Natural Armor, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Improved Natural Attack (sting), Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

Skills Climb +14, Perception +11

SQ devotion, tricks (attack, combat riding, come, defend, down, guard, heel, stay)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Scorpion Venom (Ex) Sting—injury; *save* Fort DC 18; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds, *effect* 1d2 Str damage, *cure* 1 save.

Dakhamunza Sat Selket—or “The Daughter of Selket”—is high priestess of Selket and leader of her cult. All the myriad machinations against the followers of other gods inevitably lead back to her. She is usually found in the City of Scorpions, a once great city now ruined and half-buried in the dunes. Her constant companion, Chatha, a giant scorpion, is never far from her side. The temple also contains many guardian mummies of both the normal and the venomous variety (see page 170), as well as living cultists that participate in secret rites and brew the deadly toxins that Selket's Sting uses against their enemies. Dakhamunza uses the Vermin subdomain which appears later in this chapter (and in the

Southland's Campaign Setting by Kobold Press).

For the purpose of the Guided Hand^{UC} feat, Selket's favored weapon is the scimitar.

CULT ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURE HOOKS

Selket's Sting can be either adversaries for single adventures or returning enemies in an extended campaign, where the PCs take the role of defenders of civilization against the rising threat of a presumptuous goddess and her fanatical followers.

APL 1–3

- ***A caravan that the PCs are either guarding or traveling with draws attention during a routine check at a city gate.*** After the discovery of a hidden cache of poisons, the caravan leader is arrested for contraband. She protests her innocence and begs the PCs to find the real culprit and clear her name. Subsequent investigation reveals a Selket cultist among the caravan folk and leads to a confrontation with a local cell of Selket's Sting for whom the poisons were intended.
- ***A local government or religious authority hires the PCs to investigate rumors of a dangerous cult within the city.*** The PCs must gather information, leading them to a cell of Selket's Sting, and find a way to infiltrate their ranks. Dangerous initiation rites—like handling scorpions—have to be endured in order for the PCs to gain the trust of the cult and learn of its leaders and plans, eventually performing a “sting” of their own by setting up the cell to be taken down by the local authorities.
- ***The son of a local merchant is kidnapped by Selket's Sting to be used as a sacrifice.*** The PCs must track the cultists to their lair, interrupt the ceremony, and save the young man.

APL 4–6

- ***A rash of scorpion attacks leads to a call from local authorities for a bounty on the creatures as well as a reward for anyone able to find the cause of the infestation and stop it.*** If the PCs take up the cause, they eventually find a cave in the hills nearby where Selket's Sting cultists are breeding the vermin.

- ***After publicly disparaging the goddess Selket, a local noble narrowly avoids an assassination attempt.*** He receives a note that declares the Desert Scorpions will deliver his soul to the goddess before the new moon ends. He hires the PCs to protect him for the next three days, during which they must thwart various attempts on the noble's life. Snipers, poisoned food and drink, and other freak "accidents" must be thwarted before a final attempt is made, involving a full assault on the noble's house by a group of Desert Scorpions and a venomous mummy.
- ***A prestigious art gallery or museum is robbed.*** The thieves have taken only a single piece: a gold scorpion statuette. PCs must track the thieves back to their lair. There, they find cultists of Selket led by a priestess who is unwilling to give up the relic of her goddess so recently returned to the hands of the faithful.

APL 7–9

- ***A prophecy states that the region will anger a popular deity if his sacred animals ever leave the area.*** Selket's Sting seeks to actively bring about this prophecy so Selket's influence can reign in the area. PCs must protect the sacred animals and find and stop the cultists before they bring their plans to fruition.
- ***A renowned alchemist is kidnapped by Selket's Sting.*** They wish her to create a particularly virulent poison for them to use against their many enemies. The PCs must seek out the cult and either negotiate for the alchemist's release or stage a rescue.
- ***A notorious bandit chieftain is wanted by the authorities and has a sizeable bounty on her head.*** However, she knows this and is on the run. Furthermore, she is considered a favored daughter of Selket and friendly with the cult. The local government wants to avoid any major transgressions against the cult but wants the bandit captured. PCs must pursue her as she flees for sanctuary in the City of Scorpions and catch her before she makes it into the ruins.

APL 10–12

- ***A noble lies on his deathbed, but the followers of Selket refuse to mummify his body for burial until he atones for an incident where he wronged the cult. He begs the PCs to intercede on his behalf, to consult the high priestess and find what can be done to balance the scales.*** Entering the City of Scorpions requires gaining passage past Gahiji, the eternal guardian, by answering his riddles. If this is accomplished, Dakhamunza demands they travel to an ancient pyramid filled with deadly traps and mummified guardians and reclaim relics sacred to the cult.
- ***The waters of the sacred, life-giving river have become polluted and toxic.*** All the settlements along its banks are doomed unless the cause can be found. PCs taking up the quest trek upstream to find a strong bastion of the cult pumping poisons into the river from within their fortress. The cult fights fiercely to protect their secret weapon: a great cauldron that constantly produces a miasma of toxins, flowing out in an endless torrent. Should the PCs defeat the cultists, they then need to find a way to destroy the noxious artifact before its toxins turn the fertile floodplains of the river into a poisonous wasteland.
- ***The cult of Selket can no longer be tolerated. Its machinations against the civilized people of the cities have gone on long enough.*** The PCs are tasked with crushing Selket's Sting once and for all. First, they must roust any cells in the immediate area, taking prisoners in order to determine where the cult is based. This leads to retaliation from the Desert Scorpions, who look to eliminate the PCs before they find the cult's headquarters. Eventually, the PCs confront Sediki Sefu. Killing or capturing the head of the Desert Scorpions reveals the location of the City of Scorpions and the temple of Selket. Alternatively, he escapes, and they follow him there. Finally, the PCs must invade the city, defeat its eternal guardian, and storm the temple of Selket, facing the most fanatical of cultists, monstrous scorpions, and a horde of mummies, and, finally, the Daughter of Selket herself.

PLAYING FOR THE OTHER TEAM

While the cult of Selket is portrayed here as an enemy to set against the PCs, it does not have to be so. Another option is to play Selket's Sting as protagonists that deserve the PCs' aid. View the cult as zealous followers, attempting to help their goddess regain her standing among an uncaring populace that has forgotten her and worship jealous gods that wish her to remain out of favor. While Selket is at best a neutral goddess, the case can be made that she plays an important role, given her purview is healing and death—specifically, the proper passage of the dead into the afterlife. In this sort of scenario, the PCs can be secret followers of Selket, helping to spread her influence and increase her worshipers.

This could be a tricky line to toe, as the use of poison and assassination is usually frowned upon by good (or polite) societies. Yet if the opponent is a corrupt government or an overbearing and intolerant religion holding all the power, the underdog may need to resort to extreme measures in order to fight back. Poison could be a weapon of last resort or reserved for those too powerful to deal with on equal terms. Stealth, subterfuge, and guerrilla tactics are perfectly acceptable means of dealing with a greater foe. The people may long for a return of the old traditions and may secretly favor Selket's cult, providing what aid they can while outwardly obeying the current regime.

A campaign of this sort would require a bit of retooling. In this case, the PCs need to work in secret with cover stories, disguises, and other methods of hiding their identities and activities from authorities. Should they be discovered, they may have to go underground to avoid capture. Since the PCs are working against the powers that be, they need other resources upon which to draw. A wanted criminal cannot just walk into the market bazaar to do their shopping. However, the black market is glad to sell them what they require. Other outlaws may be willing to work deals based on having mutual enemies.

The PCs of course would be open to the mysteries of the cult. In this case, the Selket's Favor and Expert Embalmer traits (see page 172) would be options for them. The poisoner archetype would be well-suited as a follower of Selket, as would an oracle with

the life mystery. Alchemists specializing in poison bombs or taking the mummification discovery would work thematically as well. Desert druids with vermin animal companions and clerics of Selket with the new vermin subdomain are obvious choices. Victory for the PCs could mean the ushering in of a new age with Selket once again gaining primacy.

CULTISTS OF SELKET

The Cult of Selket have a fanatical devotion to their goddess. Cult members are ruthless against those that scorn Selket and her ways. Like the scorpion, they are swift and deadly. The following NPCs can be used as cultist minions, intermediaries, and lower level-leaders to provide suitable enemies for the PCs as they strive against the Cult of Selket.

GNOLL RAIDER

CR 3
XP 800

 Gnoll ranger 2 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

NE Medium humanoid (gnoll)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 34 (4 HD; 2d8+2d10+14)

Fort +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee falchion +6 (2d4+4/18–20)

Ranged composite longbow +5 (1d8+2/×3)

Special Attacks combat style (archery), favored enemy (humans +2)

TACTICS

During Combat The gnoll raider fires at opponents with his bow, first targeting any humans in range, switching to melee if opponents close.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18

Feats Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot

Skills Climb +7, Knowledge (nature) +3, Perception +7, Stealth +8, Survival +7

Languages Gnoll

SQ track +1, wild empathy

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, alchemist's

fire (2), smokestick (2), vermin repellent^{UE}; **Other Gear** mwk studded leather, composite longbow (+2 Str) with 20 arrows, dagger, falchion

The Cult of Selket often uses converted tribes of gnolls to enforce their will in desert areas. Bands of these raiders will set upon caravans traveling the sands, attacking as punishment upon nonbelievers or demanding a tithe to the goddess from caravan goods to remain unmolested. Any number of desert raiders can be part of an encounter.

DESERT SCORPION

CR 5

XP 1,600

Human ninja 6 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat*)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +3 Dex)
hp 42 (6d8+12)

Fort +4; **Ref** +8; **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *shortsword* +8 (1d6+2/19-20) or
unarmed strike +7 (1d3+1)

Ranged shortbow +7 (1d6/x3) or
shuriken +7 (1d2+1)

Special Attacks poison use, sneak attack +3d6

TACTICS

Before Combat The desert scorpion poisons a shuriken and uses Stealth to attack from ambush.

During Combat The desert scorpion attacks using poison and sneak attacks. If overmatched, she drinks her *potion of invisibility* and flees.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative,
Improved Unarmed Strike,
Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +12, Bluff +10, Climb +10, Disable Device +10, Disguise +10, Perception +10, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +10

Languages Common

SQ ki pool (4 points), light steps, ninja tricks (bleeding attack, flurry of stars, pressure points), no trace +2

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (2), *potion of invisibility*, large scorpion venom (3 doses); **Other Gear** +1 *chain shirt*, +1 *shortsword*, shortbow with 20 arrows, 20 shuriken, disguise kit, mwk thieves' tools, tear-away^{UE} hot weather outfit^{UE}, peasant's outfit, 42 gp

The deadly messengers of Selket's displeasure, the Desert Scorpions are the assassins sent to deal with the cult's enemies and those that interfere with the will of Selket's clergy. A Desert Scorpion may be sent to kill a target as a solo operation, or a team of two to four may work together to bring down a particularly powerful or hard to reach foe.



PRIEST OF SELKET**CR 8****XP 4,800**

Human cleric of Selket 9

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init -1; **Senses** Perception +4**DEFENSE****AC** 20, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+7 armor, +3 deflection, -1 Dex, +1 natural)**hp** 80 (9d8+36)**Fort** +9; **Ref** +4; **Will** +10**OFFENSE****Speed** 20 ft.**Melee** +1 *spear* +8/+3 (1d8+1/x3) or
mwk dagger +8/+3 (1d4+1/19-20)**Ranged** mwk sling +8 (1d4+1) or
mwk dagger +8 (1d4+1/19-20)**Special Attacks** channel negative energy 7/day
(DC 18, 5d6)**Domain Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 9th; conc. +13)
7/day—bleeding touch (4 rounds), rebuke death
(1d4+4)**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 9th; concentration +13)5th—*slay living*^D (DC 19), *true seeing*4th—*death ward*^D, *freedom of movement*, *giant vermin*, *poison* (DC 20)3rd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 19), *cure serious wounds*^D, *dispel magic*, *protection from energy*, *wind wall*2nd—*bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *death knell*^D (DC 18), *delay poison*, *spiritual weapon*, *undetectable alignment*1st—*bless*, *command* (DC 15), *cure light wounds*^D, *divine favor*, *obscuring mist*, *shield of faith*0—*bleed* (DC 14), *detect poison*, *light*, *stabilize***D** domain spell; **Domains** Death, Healing**TACTICS****Before Combat** The priest of Selket casts *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, and *shield of faith*. She casts *undetectable alignment* at the start of each day when dealing with those outside the cult.**During Combat** The priest of Selket casts *giant vermin* on a scorpion and uses it to defend her against attackers while she casts spells against enemies. If accompanied by other cultists or similar allies, she casts *bless*.**Base Statistics** Without her preparatory spells, the priest of Selket's statistics are **AC** 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17; **hp** 62; **Fort** +7; **Melee** +1 *spear* +6/+1 (1d8-1/x3) or mwk dagger +6/+1 (1d4-1/19-20); **Ranged** mwk sling +8 (1d4-1) or mwk dagger +8 (1d4-1/19-20); **Str** 8, **Con** 12.**STATISTICS****Str** 12, **Dex** 13, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 14**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18**SELKET'S STING IN MIDGARD**

Worship of Selket is common among the Tamasheq nomads of the Sarklan Desert. Her priests hold great sway among them, providing protection, healing, and vengeance. Dakhamunza Sat Selket resides in the City of Scorpions, directing the cult's activities from the temple there with Gahiji, ever watchful for the approach of the cult's enemies. Sadiki Sefu calls the free city of Siwal his home, overseeing the activities of the Desert Scorpions from there and producing poisons that are shipped secretly with the caravans headed west to cells throughout Nuria Natal. Given Selket's connection to death and especially mummification, it is not unheard of for nobles to be sympathetic to her followers or, possibly, secretly cult members themselves in order to ensure they are properly delivered into the afterlife upon death. Some tribes of gnolls venerate her name as well.

Selket's Sting, under Dakhamunza's fervent leadership, is forcefully bringing recognition of Selket's power to Nuria Natal. Farms and settlements along the Nuria River have reported increased animal attacks. The animals in question are unusually aggressive in their attacks, leading some to believe they are compelled by magic. Recently, there has been a rash of killings among the merchants in Per-Kush, retaliation by Selket's Sting for underhanded dealings with the Tamasheq. In Per-Bastet, the poisoning of cats has the Reborn Queen-Goddess wroth with anger and the gnolls are unsettled by an unexplained infestation of scorpions in the city. Per-Xor's religious tensions over the cult of Ra-Amon-Ra have been rising in recent months, due to cultists of Selket's Sting playing the established religion of Aten against the messiah cult in an attempt to goad them into open warfare.

Feats Extra Channel, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Channel, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Penetration

Skills Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (religion) +12, Perception +7, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +12

Languages Common

SQ aura, death's embrace, healer's blessing

Combat Gear *scroll of air walk*, unholy water (2); **Other Gear** +1 *breastplate*, +1 *spear*, mwk daggers (2), sling with 10 bullets, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *robe of bones*, silver unholy symbol, eye ointment for true seeing (worth 500 gp), 100 gp

This appointed servant of Selket deals death or life to those around her as the goddess sees fit. A priest of Selket will often reside in a settlement in secret, posing as just another townspeople while secretly ministering to the faithful and dealing out vengeance to those that oppress the cult or thwart the designs of Selket. She might have a Desert Scorpion in attendance as a bodyguard. Camps of gnoll raiders faithful to Selket often have a priest in attendance as leader and spiritual advisor.

NEW MAGIC ITEM

It should be no wonder that the magic items tied to Selket are thematically tied to things she holds sacred.

SELKET'S BRACER

Aura moderate necromancy and transmutation; CL 9th

Slot wrists; **Price** 13,800 gp; **Weight** 1/2 lb.

This bronze bracer is crafted in the shape of a scorpion, its legs curled around the wearer's wrist, tail raised and ready to strike. Once per day as a swift action, the wearer can poison a weapon. This weapon must be wielded in the same arm upon which the bracer is worn. The tail of the scorpion animates and touches the blade, envenoming it with a dose of giant scorpion venom. Also, as a free action, the wearer can command the bracer to grant her tremorsense 30 feet for 10 rounds once per day. These rounds do not need to be used consecutively, and the ability can be dismissed as a free action. Finally, the wearer gains a +2 resistance bonus on Fortitude saves against poison.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *beast shape III*, *poison*;
Cost 6,900 gp

NEW MONSTERS

The desert demands much from those that would call it home. To survive, creatures must be strong.

MUMMY, VENOMOUS

CR 5

XP 1,600

LE Medium undead

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14

Aura despair (30 ft., paralyzed for 1d4 rounds, **Will** DC 17 negates)

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20 (+10 natural)

hp 60 (8d8+24)

Fort +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** +8

DR 5/—; **Immune** undead traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee slam +14 (1d8+10 plus Selket's venom)

Special Attacks Selket's venom, toxic smoke

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 10, **Con** —, **Int** 7, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 23

Feats Cleave, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Perception +14, Stealth +11

Languages Common

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, squad (2–6), or detail (7–12)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Despair (Su) All creatures within a 30-foot radius that see a venomous mummy must make a DC 17 Will save or be paralyzed by fear for 1d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature can't be affected again by the same mummy's despair ability for 24 hours. This is a paralysis and a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Selket's Venom (Su) A venomous mummy's

body and wrappings are magically imbued with substances that are highly toxic. Any creature hit with its slam attack is subject to this arcane poison, as is any creature that comes in physical contact with the venomous mummy (e.g. touching the mummy bare-handed, grappling, using a bite attack, and so on) without taking proper precautions.

Curse and poison—type contact/slam; *save* Fort DC 17; *onset* 1 minute; *frequency* 1/minute; *effect* 1d6 Con and 1d6 Dex; *cure* —. Selket's venom is both a curse and a poison and can only be cured if the curse is first removed, at which point the poison can be magically removed. The save DC is Charisma-based.



Toxic Smoke (Ex) The venomous mummy's poison-imbued wrappings and flesh create toxic fumes when burned. Each round a venomous mummy takes fire damage, it is surrounded by a cloud of toxic smoke in a 10-foot radius. This cloud persists for 1 full round after the venomous mummy takes fire damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Toxic smoke—inhaled; *save* Fort DC 17; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1 Con drain/1d3 Con; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

These variant mummies are crafted by Selket's faithful to guard their holy sites and tombs. Should Selket be slighted by a particular community, it might feel the goddess's wrath in the form of a group of venomous mummies descending upon them. Retribution is often delivered by killing the leaders of the group, but for greater heresies, a decimation of the population is not unheard of.

SCORPION SWARM

CR 4

XP 1,200

N Diminutive vermin (swarm)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +4 size)
hp 39 (6d8+12)

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities swarm traits; **Immune** mind-affecting effects, weapon damage

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., burrow 5 ft.

Melee swarm (2d6 plus poison and distraction)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks distraction (DC 16)

STATISTICS

Str 1, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** —, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 2

Base Atk +4; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Skills Climb +7, Perception +5, Stealth +19 (+23 in deserts); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Climb (uses Dex to modify Climb), +4 Perception, +4 Stealth (+8 in deserts)

ECOLOGY

Environment warm deserts

Organization solitary, pair, or colony (3–6 swarms)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Swarm—injury; *save* Fort DC 15; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* 1 Dex and 1 Str; *cure* 2 saves.

NEW SPELL

The life of a cultist, filled with scorching sands and bloody encounters, demands serious magic.

SUMMON SWARM, GREATER

School conjuration (summoning); **Level** bard 4, druid/shaman 4, sorcerer/wizard 4

Casting Time 1 round

Components V, S, M/DF (a square of red cloth)

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)

Effect one swarm of centipedes, crabs, death butterflies, scorpions, or wasps

Duration concentration + 3 rounds

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

You summon a swarm of centipedes, crabs, death butterflies (*Midgard Bestiary for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*), scorpions, or wasps (your choice), which attacks all other creatures within its area. (You may summon the swarm so that it shares the area of other creatures.) If no living creatures are within its area, the swarm attacks or pursues the nearest creature as best it can. You can direct the swarm to attack a creature other than the one nearest by spending a move action.

NEW TRAITS

To live by the sands is to die by the sands. Those born under Selket's gaze show the signs of her influence.

Expert Embalmer: You have studied the embalmer's trade and know the secrets of proper mummification. In areas where mummification is practiced, you gain a +1 trait bonus on Diplomacy checks. Your knowledge of anatomy also provides a +1 trait bonus on Heal checks, and any mummy created by you that is subsequently animated gains 3 bonus hit points.

Selket's Favor: You have often participated in the cult's ritual handling of scorpions. While you have been stung, you have always survived the trials of the goddess. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Fortitude saves against poison.

VERMIN SUBDOMAIN

Associated Domain: Animal.

Replacement Power: The following granted power replaces the speak with animals domain power of the Animal domain.

Vermin Sanctuary (Su): This ability activates automatically the first time each day that you would be attacked by one or more vermin. Any creature of the vermin type that attempts to attack you must immediately attempt a Will save (DC = 10 + half your cleric level + your Wisdom modifier). If the save succeeds, the vermin can attack normally and this ability is not expended. If the save fails, the vermin can't follow through with the attack, that part of its turn is lost, and it can't directly attack you for the duration of this ability. This ability lasts a number of rounds per day equal to 3 + your Wisdom modifier.

Vermin Companion (Ex): The 4th-level animal companion ability for this subdomain uses the rules for the druid rules for vermin companions found in *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic*. It otherwise functions as the 4th-level granted power for the Animal domain.

Replacement Domain Spells: 1st—*skittering vermin*^{DM}, 2nd—*summon swarm*, 3rd—*repel vermin*, 4th—*greater summon swarm*^{*}, 5th—*giant vermin*, 6th—*voracious vermin*^{DM}



SERVANTS OF THE WHITE APE

The great southern jungles are a powerful natural force. Their verdant growth has reclaimed the ancient ruins of lost nations, buried entire civilizations. Within the vine-choked ruins are dark secrets best left forgotten. An ambitious foreigner from the north, eager to capitalize on the rich resources of the region, stumbled upon the power of ages past hidden in a moldering temple. Through intensive study, he harnessed a portion of it. Now, he has revived the old practices, spearheading an ancient evil's return. The White Ape and its followers again rise to trouble the region.

LEADERS, ORGANIZATION, AND GOALS

Youngest son of a declining noble house in a northern free city, Josef Kranz sought his fortune far to the south. Seeing his house diminished in political power and dwindling in fortune, young Josef resolved to help restore the influence and glory of the line. He became involved in trade, and gained new wealth from the sale and export of the land's rich resources. Being of old money and conservative traditionalists, his parents abhorred the idea of their son lowering himself to a mercantile trade. Josef decided that, if the fortune was vast enough, even his parents could not deny his ability or his noble heart.

Seeking even greater fortune, he forged farther south, into the jungles, to discover new sources of ivory, spices, rare woods, and gemstones. Unfortunately, he was lost to darkness on this excursion. The merchant barge he was traveling on ran aground. During the crew's attempts to free the vessel and make repairs, they were set upon by a band of apes—especially savage and cunning for their kind and as white as snow—that made quick work of the expedition and its defenders. Josef narrowly escaped, fleeing into the jungle and stumbling upon the overgrown ruins of an ancient city. As he crept through the vine-choked streets, a sinkhole opened beneath him, sending him plummeting into a flooded chamber. Wandering the subterranean passages of the city, he discovered an ancient vault of lore, long untouched. Josef hid and studied, living off pooled rainwater and what little rations he had carried with him. He eventually found the door out of the vault, which opened into the main room of a temple beneath a great idol of white onyx in the form of a four-armed ape. Josef soon found that the white apes used this building as a shrine of sorts, leaving offerings of fruit and other food harvested from the jungle. He could not leave the building without being torn asunder as the apes called this lost city home, so Josef snuck out of the hidden vault from time to time to partake of these offerings, snatching up bowls and baskets to eat and then hurrying back to his bolt-hole. Eventually, through his studies, he was able to summon forth what he believed to be an avatar of the Great White Ape, the deity to which the creatures outside prayed. It was small for an ape, but Josef knew it would grow larger and more powerful as he honed his art. Tired of being alone and hoping that his new companion would help his cause, Josef went out to meet his fate.

Josef Kranz went out to the temple steps, his eidolon at his side. Appearing with this new white ape at his side, the others seemed sufficiently impressed. Without a common language, they communicated with pantomime and drawings in the dirt. They eventually established that the apes wished him to stay and indicated they would provide for him. He accepted, returning to the temple to continue his studies. Six long years passed. With intensive contemplation and practice, both Josef

Kranz and his eidolon grew in power. He learned the apes' language and their ways. The white apes began to call Kranz—they used his surname as it was easier for them to pronounce—the New Father, believing him sent to replace the Last Father, whose tomb the white apes guarded. Eventually, Kranz began to believe this himself, for his time isolated with these savage beasts had worn his sanity thin. Once his eidolon was powerful enough, Kranz turned his attention to the local tribes, going out with his simian followers, and gave them an ultimatum: submit or be destroyed. Some capitulated, but others fought, knowing the evils associated with the white apes and their ruined city. Those that resisted were on borrowed time. The spellscourge (see page 183) that the white apes carry did its work, crippling the tribes' spellcasters and decimating their defenses. Soon, all the nearby tribes took the sign of the white ape as their symbol. Now, a decade after entering the dark heart of the southern continent, the brooding Kranz is turning his eyes to the countries of the north and, possibly, to his homeland.

The spellscourge has all but annihilated spellcasters in the local area. Kranz is the most powerful magic-wielding being for miles around, his connection to the Great White Ape somehow granting him immunity to the spellscourge. This and his fanatical will give him the strength to rule over the cult, which consists of the white apes themselves and the people of several local tribes who have joined him or been forced to the cult's cause. This gives him a formidable force of warriors under his command, and each human village has a white ape in residence, both as a proxy for the New Father and as insurance that no new spellcasters arise to lead a rebellion.

JOSEF KRANZ

CR 15

XP 51,200

Male human aristocrat 1/unchained summoner 15
(*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Pathfinder Unchained*)
CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 25, **touch** 14, **flat-footed** 24 (+6 armor, +3 deflection, +1 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 170 (16d8+95)

Fort +11, **Ref** +10, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities greater shield ally;

Immune spellscourge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 keen spellstealing greatsword +17/+12/+7 (2d6+7/17–20)

Special Attacks maker's call 3/day, transposition

Summoner Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th; conc. +22)

10/day—*summon monster VIII*

Summoner Spells Known (CL 15th; conc. +22)

5th (4/day)—*baleful polymorph* (DC 22), *cloudkill* (DC 23), *greater rejuvenate eidolon*^{APG}, *teleport*

4th (5/day)—*black tentacles*, *greater evolution surge*^{APG} (DC 21), *greater invisibility*, *greater torc of the pharaoh*^{DM}

3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic*, *evolution surge*^{APG} (DC 20), *haste*, *rejuvenate eidolon*^{APG}, *spiked pit*^{APG} (DC 21)

2nd (7/day)—*barkskin*, *lesser evolution surge*^{APG} (DC 19), *phantom steed*, *communal protection from good*^{UC}, *lesser restore eidolon*^{UM} (DC 20), *see invisibility*

1st (7/day)—*alarm*, *ant haul*^{APG} (DC 18), *expeditious retreat*, *lesser rejuvenate eidolon*^{APG}, *skill bond*^{DM}, *unfetter*^{APG} (DC 18)

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *daze* (DC 17), *detect magic*, *message*, *read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat If prepared for combat, Kranz casts *barkskin* and *greater torc of the pharaoh* on himself (giving him a 50% chance to negate critical hits and sneak attack damage), as well as *greater evolution surge* on the Great White Ape (adding the huge size evolution). These benefits are included in their stat blocks, and Kranz may use his extend metamagic rod to draw out the durations.

During Combat Kranz casts *haste* on himself and his eidolon. He is comfortable in melee, especially when targeting other spellcasters with defensive magics he wishes to take with his sword's ability. He and his eidolon flank when possible, concentrating on one opponent before moving to another. Kranz uses his spells to remain mobile and to avoid being outnumbered in melee, dividing the battlefield by casting *black tentacles* or *spiked pit*.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 12, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 29

Feats Augment Summoning, Combat Casting, Extra Evolution^{UM}, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Resilient Eidolon^{UM}, Spell Focus (conjuration), Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Bluff +12, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Linguistics +6, Perception +11, Ride +7, Spellcraft +12, Use Magic Device +14

Languages Abyssal, Ashabe (local tribal dialect), Common, White Ape

SQ bond senses (15 rounds/day), eidolon (unchained), life bond, life link



Combat Gear *extend metamagic rod, the Father's staff** (10 charges), *scroll of heal*, *wand of scorching ray* (15 charges); **Other Gear** +1 *keen spellstealing greatsword*, *belt of physical might* +4 (Str, Con), *cloak of resistance* +2, *headband of alluring charisma* +4, *ring of protection* +3, spell component pouch, gold and silver inlaid ivory ape mask (worth 1,650 gp)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

CR Adjustment (Ex) Kranz's CR is 1 higher due to superior equipment.

GREAT WHITE APE EIDOLON (UNCHAINED)

CE Huge outsider (demon, biped)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 10, flat-footed 27 (+2 Dex, +19 natural, -2 size)

hp 126 (12d10+60)

Fort +13, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8 (+4 morale bonus vs. enchantment spells and effects); +4 bonus vs. poison

Defensive Abilities improved evasion; **DR** 5/good;

Immune poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, electricity 15, fire 15

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee bite +21 (3d6+11), 4 claws +22 (2d6+11)

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

Special Attacks rend (2 claws, 2d6+16)

STATISTICS

Str 32, **Dex** 14, **Con** 20, **Int** 7, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 37 (can't be tripped)

Feats Eldritch Claws^{APG}, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Acrobatics +7, Climb +26, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +5, Perception +10, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +6, Survival +15

Languages White Ape

SQ demon save bonus, devotion

The Great White Ape is accepted by the white apes as authority over everyone save the New Father, Kranz. The eidolon enjoys its position and exults when it has the chance to engage in battle against the cult's enemies. Given the opportunity, it would rend asunder any and all that have ever caused Kranz

pain... or even discomfort, slight embarrassment, or the most trivial inconvenience. Its favorite pastime outside of battle is to oversee the ceremonial placement of the skulls of the cult's enemies into the growing mountain of them that sits before the tomb of the Last Father.

CULT ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURE HOOKS

Here are several methods of introducing the Servants of the White Ape as adversaries for the PCs in your campaign. They can be adversaries for single adventures or as a continuing threat in an extended campaign where the PCs work to foil the rising threat of Josef Kranz, the Great White Ape, and their army of white ape warriors and subjugated natives.

APL 1–3

- **An expeditionary group from a prominent merchant house went south a year ago.** Regular reports had been coming north for the first 6 months, then stopped. Now, two members of the expedition have returned, weary and weak from their trials. They report rising hostility from the natives in the area, prompting them to hastily strengthen the fortifications of their camp. After a succession of raids, a full-scale attack was mounted. Most in the camp were killed, but the leader of the expedition—the daughter of a powerful merchant within the house—was captured and borne away by the natives. The two escapees witnessed this but were in no condition to mount a rescue and instead headed home to report.

The merchant house offers a reward to anyone willing to head south and investigate the situation and rescue the expedition's leader if she is still alive, or extract revenge if she is not. Should a party of adventurers make a timely arrival, they find the woman still alive, but about to be sacrificed upon an altar that sits before a whitewashed stone statue of a great ape.

- **The city's spellcasters have been subjected to random attacks at night by some great beast.** The thing attacks from the shadows and then quickly flees into the night, scaling walls and rooftops.

While the victims are often bloodied and battered, none of the attacks have been fatal. Still, a sizeable bounty is offered to whoever stops the beast. The attacks are the work of one of Kranz's white ape warriors, sent to spread spellscourge to weaken the place before its eventual conquest. Should a few days pass before the PCs deal with the ape, a number of the victims start displaying symptoms of spellscourge, causing the spellcasters of the city to either go into hiding or flee the city and the bounty on the beast to rise significantly.

- ***The PCs are hired as guards for a merchant consortium seeking to open new trade lanes south.*** They man the small, fortified trading post aside a river that flows from the wild, untamed jungle. The natives have thus far been receptive and trade has flourished, but now, some tribes no longer come to barter the spoils of their lands for northern goods. Worse, others become hostile. The PCs must repel several raids against the trading post, culminating in a horrific late-night attack, when a great white ape scales the walls and takes the place by surprise.

APL 4–6

- ***A newly established temple suffers sacrilegious attacks against their priesthood.*** Trained killers, dressed in hides that make them resemble white apes, ambush clerics on mercy missions among the local populace. They lure paladins into traps, and even attempt to infiltrate the temple itself. Worse yet, some of the survivors of the attacks have contracted a strange disease that attacks both mind and body. Some of the afflicted are healed only to have those that attended them contract the disease themselves. The clergy cannot fight the disease and the warriors of this vicious cult at the same time. They need the PCs to find and stop these so-called Servants of the White Ape and find some clue to this strange malady, how it spreads, and how it can be stopped.
- ***The PCs are members of a native tribe of the southern jungle.*** Life has been good, but now, darkness looms on the horizon. The dreaded white apes of the deep jungle have emerged to strike at the local tribes. The apes demand the tribe submit

to the ape's leader, whom they call the New Father, or face destruction. The PCs can help the tribe resist these conquerors for a time, but as once-allied tribes are destroyed or capitulate, their strength is added to the ape cult's forces. The tribe's elders ask the PCs to help the tribe escape rather than surrender. They must be the vanguard of an exodus to a new land where they are beyond the reach of the Servants of the White Ape. It is a long and perilous journey with new and unknown dangers ahead and the threat of pursuing cultists behind, not content to let them out of Kranz's grasp.

- ***A renowned naturalist and owner of a world famous zoo of exotic creatures has commissioned the PCs for an extraordinary expedition.*** He seeks an example of a rare type of white ape known only to the jungles of the far south. The PCs are promised a handsome commission to return a live, healthy specimen that he can study and put on display. Unfortunately for the PCs, their patron is ignorant of the true nature of the apes—their intelligence, malign attitudes, and the terrible spellscourge they carry. The safari quickly turns into a race for survival, escaping the jungles before the wrath of the Servants of the White Ape catches up to them. If they still manage to complete their mission, they bring spellscourge to the north, and their patron is the first to suffer its effects.

APL 7–9

- ***The PCs travel to a remote monastery in the mountains on the edge of the great southern jungle.*** Perhaps they seek enlightenment or lost knowledge or are delivering much needed supplies. Whatever the case, the ascetics of this isolated location need their help. The abbot, in years past, made a great friendship with a powerful denizen of the jungle below, a winged serpent known as a couatl. The good being was a beneficial ally to the remote sanctuary. Sometimes, it simply visited to have theological discussions with the abbot or just play a game of chess. Then, for reasons unknown, the couatl ceased its visitations. Now, it has returned, but the creature is no longer the same benign ally. Something has transformed this wise and beautiful being into an

undead horror. Their former ally seems bent on their destruction. If the PCs avert the threat, the abbot happily provides them with whatever they came in search of or rewards them with access to the knowledge held in their libraries.

- ***With the dreaded spellscourge spreading among those with magical ability, a desperate search for a way to control the disease and stop its advance has yielded results.*** One bright mind has theorized that exposure to an antimagic field neutralizes the disease without the risk of it spreading to those who treat the afflicted. Such power is rare in this area however, and while word has been sent north to other cities, the fear of spellscourge makes it unlikely that any practitioners of the magical arts will risk coming south to aid. There is one wizard locally with access to such magic. However, this wizard is a bit paranoid and has sealed his home and not been seen in weeks.

The local authorities make a decision that the needs of the community outweigh his personal safety and privacy. The PCs are deputized and ordered to enter the wizard's home by any means necessary and gain access to the wizard's magical knowledge as they can. Not only do the PCs have to deal with the mage's traps, safeguards, and guardians, but the old wizard himself has succumbed to the disease and haunts his home as one of the spellscourged—a crazed undead thing that wishes nothing more than to spread its suffering among the living.

- ***An ancient and valuable relic was being transported north after its discovery in the southern jungles, but the barge carrying it up the river was attacked and the relic lost.*** The PCs are hired to track down the thieves. A white ape adept and his group of warriors are responsible and are hastening to bring their newly won spoils back to Kranz as a gift. The heroes must move swiftly before the apes return to their home territory where they have many allies to call upon to dissuade pursuit. The thieves prove challenging enough since the white apes carry spellscourge. Not only can the warriors spread it through physical contact, but their adept leader's spells are likewise contaminated with the disease.

APL 10–12

- ***The PCs are trekking to the newly rediscovered location of a lost city, part of an ancient civilization whose lands have been reclaimed by the jungle.*** Whether for a patron or for their own gain, the heroes seek an ancient relic purported to be held within the city's greatest temple. Unknown to them, Kranz has also recently learned of the artifact and has sent some of his best forces to retrieve it. A dangerous exploration of the lost city and whatever lurks within might well end in a showdown between the PCs and Kranz's expeditionary force, led by a white ape druid who can turn the very jungle against the heroes.
- ***The PCs run a bustling frontier town in the south near the jungle border.*** The town is owned by a merchant consortium that gathers in exotic goods here to ship north for sale. A group of hunters recently came into town with a strange prize: the hide of a great ape, white as snow. It becomes quite a topic of conversation in town and folk visit the hunters' tent outside the city to view the pelt. Meanwhile, the owner of one of the local taverns known for being rather cheap often buys questionable meat from his local hunter friends. This included the carcass of the ape, for which the hunters had no use.

After serving the public his latest batch of sausages, a local wizard has fallen ill, as has the priest of a local temple that was treating her affliction. When the PCs' attention is drawn to the matter, they find an odd outbreak of a disease that affects spellcasters adversely. More fall sick as the investigation continues, both from the tainted meat as well as from handling the fresh pelt of the white ape. Soon after the PCs discover the cause, deal with its origins and deal with the afflicted, the white ape's brethren descend upon the town for revenge.

- ***All trade to the far south has ceased. Tensions mount as a near-forgotten plague has reared its head once more, laying low spellcasters and causing panic.*** Mundane folk ostracize and even attack those with magical abilities from fear of the disease. The Servants of the White Ape seem ready to claim the lands to the north once the plague has done its work and society has collapsed.

The greatest heroes of the area are summoned to a meeting in a secluded fortress, far from the fearful populace and the worst instances of the spellscourge. Information from spies, magical divinations, and captured enemies reveal the figure behind the cult. Known as the New Father, this outsider from the north has turned the white apes of the far jungles and the local tribes into his personal army and seeks the conquest of the northern lands. Too many resources are in play keeping control, so a large force cannot be sent.

The PCs are asked to head south on a mission to find this New Father—a disinherited nobleman named Kranz—and kill him in the hopes that his death dissolves the cult or, at least, fracture it and halts its offense. The PCs are given access to a river barge with a crew and sent south along the great river to the lands of the cult. They must brave the dangers of the chaos wrought by the cult—disease, banditry, and fanatics who believe that killing all spellcasters will stop the plague—before arriving at the furthest reaches of the south. They must deal with the dangers of the wild jungles, natives loyal to the cult, and the deadly white apes to find Kranz in his ancient lost city. There, they must confront and defeat the New Father and his formidable ally, the Great White Ape.

CULTISTS OF THE WHITE APE

The Servants of the White Ape seek to return worship of their terrible god to prominence. To this end, the cult garners followers that are relentless in their pursuit of the cult's goals, and merciless against their enemies. The following NPCs can be used as cultist minions, intermediaries, and lower-level leaders to provide suitable enemies for the PCs as they strive against the Servants of the White Ape.

CULTIST GUARD

CR 1
XP 400

Human fighter 2

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +3 shield)

hp 23 (2d10+8)

Fort +5; **Ref** +1; **Will** +1; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk shotel +6 (1d8+3/x3) or shortspear +5 (1d6+3/x3)

Ranged hunga munga +3 (1d6+3) or shortspear +3 (1d6+3/x3)

TACTICS

During Combat The cultist hurls a hunga munga at the closest opponent before drawing his shotel and moving into combat, using Power Attack against lighter-armored foes. If the cultist identifies a foe as a spellcaster, he throws his thunderstone at that opponent instead. If outmatched, the cultist will use his signal horn to summon reinforcements.

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16

Feats Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (shotel), Power Attack, Shield Focus

Skills Climb +4, Intimidate +4, Survival +6, Swim +4

Languages Common

Combat Gear *oil of magic weapon*, thunderstone;

Other Gear leather lamellar armor ^{UC}, mwk heavy wooden shield, mwk shotel ^{UC}, hunga munga ^{UE} (2), shortspear, mwk manacles, signal horn, 81 gp

These cultists are the main contingent of the White Ape's forces, comprising the guards for their temple and camps, as well as the bulk of forces used to attack enemies of the cult.

WHITE APE WARRIOR

CR 5
XP 1,600

 Dire ape warrior 2 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

NE Large magical beast (animal)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +4 natural, -1 size)

hp 73 (8 HD; 6d8+2d10+26)

Fort +11, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

SERVANTS OF THE WHITE APE IN MIDGARD

Kranz's ruined redoubt lies atop the Black Lotus Mesa, south of Nuria Natal, near the source of the Nuria River. Kranz resides there as the New Father and ruler of the white apes. He has begun to bring the various local tribes under his banner, consolidating his power within the jungles. Once he has established himself as the sole authority there, he plans to expand north, starting with Nuria Natal. Rather than march in with an army and risk being defeated on the battlefield, his plan calls for subtlety and slow attrition from within. He hopes to spread the plague among the priesthood and arcane cabals by sending white apes and fanatical followers to infect them, sapping Nuria's greatest strength before marshaling his forces and taking each city in turn.

Should this first leg of conquest succeed, Kranz plans to spread east to Siwal, then north into the province of Mezar. Kranz claims this will be a satisfactory empire and that he will treat with the Mahroti Empire for truce after these conquests. He may be hard-pressed to keep to this plan however, if the spellscourge spreads further than the boundaries of his new domain. He hungers for power, respect, and, above all, the recognition of his parents that he is a strong, healthy offshoot of his sickly family tree. He secretly dreams of marching on their estate outside Hirschberg, ensconced on a throne carried upon the shoulders of his army of simian warriors, to demand their fealty and respect.

Melee mwk greatclub +11/+6 (2d8+7) or bite +5 (1d6+2 plus disease), 2 claws +5 (1d4+2 plus disease)

Ranged atlatl +8/+3 (1d8+5)

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

Special Attacks rend (2 claws, 1d4+7)

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 9, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 25

Feats Iron Will, Power Attack, Rapid Reload, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Acrobatics +8, Climb +17, Perception +9, Stealth +3



Gear mwk wooden armor^{APG}, atlatl^{UC}, atlatl dart^{UC} (10), mwk greatclub, artisan's tools, various semi-precious stones (worth 50 gp)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

CR Adjustment (Ex) A white ape warrior's CR is 1 higher for being awakened to account for additional hit dice, Intelligence, skill points, and access to class levels.

Disease (Ex) *Spellscourge*: bite, claws, contact—contact and injury; *save* Fort DC 21; *onset* 1d6 days; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d3 Wis damage and 1d3 Int damage, if the target takes more than 2 damage in either Wis or Int from a single check, target must succeed at an additional Fort save or take 1d4 Con damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution based. This ability has a +4 racial modifier to the DC.

These hardy soldiers warriors serve as the New Father's elite bodyguard.

RELIC HUNTER**CR 6****XP 2,400**Human occultist 7 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Occult Adventures*)

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** aura sight; Perception +11**DEFENSE****AC** 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)**hp** 56 (7d8+21)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +1 *short sword* +8 (1d6/19–20) or flesh rot +4 touch (2d8+7)**Ranged** energy ray +7 touch (4d6) or mwk light crossbow +8 (1d8/19–20)**Implement Schools****Abjuration** (white ape amulet, 2 points)—*Resonant* warding talisman (+1); *Focus* energy shield (35 damage), mind barrier (14 damage)**Divination** (book of prophecy, 2 points)—*Resonant* third eye (+1); *Focus* danger sight (+3), sudden insight (+3)**Evocation** (wand, 4 points)—*Resonant* intense*focus* (+4); *Focus* energy blast (6d6, 100 ft., DC 16 half), energy ray (4d6, 30 ft.)**Necromancy** (Old Father's fingerbone, 4 points)—*Resonant* necromantic focus (8 HD); *Focus* flesh rot (2d8+7), mind fear (30 ft., DC 16), necromantic servitor (3 servants, 70 minutes)**Occultist Spells Known** (CL 7th; concentration +10)3rd (2/day)—*arcane sight*, *call lightning* (DC 16), *dispel magic*, *inflict serious wounds* (DC 16)2nd (4/day)—*create treasure map*^{APG}, *ghost whip*^{OA}, *node of blasting*^{OA} (DC 15), *spectral hand*1st (5/day)—*burning hands* (DC 14), *comprehend languages*, *shocking grasp*, *warding weapon*^{UC}0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *grave words*^{OA}, *light*, *resistance***TACTICS****Before Combat** The relic hunter casts *spectral hand*.**During Combat** The relic hunter uses her energy blast ability on groups of foes, *spectral hand* to deliver melee touch spells, and her wand on heavily armored opponents.**STATISTICS****Str** 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 17, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17**Feats** Dodge, Extra Focus Power^{OA}, Extra Mental Focus^{OA}, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse**Skills** Appraise +12, Diplomacy +10, Disable Device +9, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (religion) +10, Perception +11, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +13, Use Magic Device +14**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven**SQ** implements 4, magic item skill, mental focus (12/day), object reading, shift focus**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of delay poison*, *wand of heat metal* (11 charges); **Other Gear** +1 *mithral breastplate*, +1 *short sword*, mwk light crossbow with 10 crossbow bolts, *cloak of resistance* +1, occultist's implements^{OA} (amulet, book, wand, bone), 50 gp

The relic hunter serves the cult and the New Father by seeking new items of power for the Servants of the White Ape. Sometimes this means scouring the jungle for lost ruins and braving the dangers for any forgotten relics that may be within. At other times, a relic hunter will lead cultists in raids against local settlements that hold such items. In a raid, a relic hunter is accompanied by four to six cultist guards, and one to two white ape warriors.

WHITE APE WARLORD**CR 9****XP 6,400**Dire ape ranger (divine tracker) 5 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Class Guide*)

CE Large magical beast (animal)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +14**DEFENSE****AC** 22, touch 14, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural, –1 size)**hp** 123 (11 HD; 6d8+5d10+60)**Fort** +14, **Ref** +13, **Will** +6**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft., climb 30 ft.**Melee** bite +14 (1d6+6 plus disease), 2 +1 *claws* +15 (1d6+7 plus disease)

Ranged javelin +12 (1d8+6)

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

Special Attacks combat style (natural weapon^{APG}), favored enemies (animals +2, humans +4), rend (2 claws, 1d6+9)

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 2nd; concentration +3)
1st—*longstrider*, *magic fang*

TACTICS

Before Combat The white ape warlord casts *longstrider*, followed by *magic fang* on its claws.

During Combat The white ape warlord charges into combat, using natural attacks to destroy his enemies. He throws javelins if he cannot close into melee.

Base Statistics Without his spells, the white ape warlord's statistics are **Speed** 30 ft.; **Melee** 2 claws +14 (1d6+6 plus disease)

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 18, **Con** 20, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +16 (+19 grapple); **CMD** 32 (34 vs. grapple)

Feats Dodge, Endurance, Improved Grapple, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Iron Will, Mobility, Rending Claws^{APG}, Skill Focus (Perception), Spring Attack
Skills Acrobatics +7, Climb +17, Craft (armor) +11, Intimidate +8, Perception +14, Stealth +6, Survival +10

Languages White Ape

SQ blessings (Strength: strength surge, War: war mind), favored terrain (jungle +2), track +2

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, antitoxin (2), troll oil^{UE}; **Other Gear** mwk lamellar (leather) armor^{UC}, javelin (5), armbands of the brawler^{UE}, *ring of protection* +1, masterwork artisan's tools

THE GREAT WHITE APE

For purposes of creating clerics and other divine servants of the Great White Ape, use the following information for the demon's aspects. The Great White Ape's favored weapon is natural attacks.

Name	Great White Ape
Portfolio	Animalism, dominion, savagery
Worshippers	Southern tribes, white apes
Domains	Animal, Chaos, Evil, Strength, War
Subdomains	Blood, Demon, Ferocity, Fur

SPECIAL ABILITIES

CR Adjustment (Ex) A white ape warlord's CR is 1 higher for being awakened to account for additional hit dice, Intelligence, skill points, and access to class levels.

Disease (Su) *Spellscurge*: Bite, claws, contact—contact, injury; *save* Fort DC 22; onset 1d6 days; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d3 Wis damage and 1d3 Int damage, if more than 2 damage in either Wis or Int from a single check, target must succeed at an additional Fort save or take 1d4 Con damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based. This ability has a +4 racial modifier to the DC.

Leaders of the Servants' offensive forces, these intelligent apes combine their natural strength with a fervent devotion to the Great White Ape. They are often found leading both white ape warriors (see above) as well as cultist guards.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

The Great White Ape has granted the use of the following items to its most devoted followers.

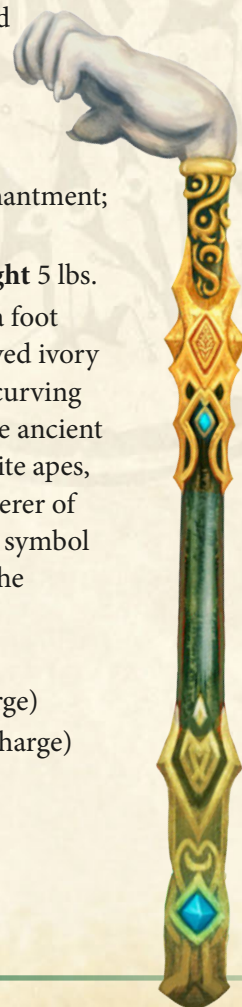
THE FATHER'S STAFF

Aura strong abjuration and enchantment;
CL 17th

Slot none; **Price** 68,000 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.

This staff of polished ebony has a foot capped in ivory and a top of carved ivory and inlaid gold in the form of a curving claw. A relic from the ruins of the ancient civilization that spawned the white apes, this staff once belonged to a sorcerer of power and was both a tool and a symbol of office. The staff allows use of the following spells:

- *dispel magic* (1 charge)
- *protection from energy* (1 charge)
- *magic circle against chaos* (1 charge)
- *dismissal* (2 charges)
- *dominate monster* (3 charges)
- *hold monster* (3 charges)



CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Staff, *dismissal*, *dispel magic*, *dominate monster*, *hold monster*, *magic circle against chaos*, *protection from energy*; **Cost** 34,000 gp

WHITE APE HIDE

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 9th

Slot armor; **Price** 7,165 gp; **Weight** 25 lb.

This +2 *hide armor* is made from the flayed remains of a white ape, usually one that has fallen in battle or been executed for failing the cult. Gifted to loyal non-ape followers, this magical armor grants some of the might and abilities of the white ape to the wearer. Once per day as an immediate action when engaged in combat, the wearer gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength and Constitution until the combat ends. Also, the wearer can gain a climb speed of 30 feet for up to 10 minutes per day. These minutes need not be consecutive but must be spent in 1-minute increments. Finally, once per week the wearer can attempt to inflict spellscourge on an opponent. This requires a successful touch attack. If the wearer hits, the target must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or contract the disease.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *beast shape I*;
Cost 3,665 gp

NEW TEMPLATE: SPELLSCOURGED CREATURE

This decayed, winged serpent's eyes glow with a flickering orange malevolence.

SPELLSCOURGED COUATL**CR 10****XP** 9,600

CE Large undead (augmented native outsider)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft., arcane sight; Perception +23

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +11 natural, -1 size)

hp 114 (12d8+60)

Fort +11, **Ref** +14, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4;

Immune undead traits; **SR** 21

Weaknesses antimagic fields

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee bite +14 (1d8+9 plus plus grab plus disease poison plus poison) or nullifying touch +14 (9d6 plus disease)

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

Special Attacks devour magic, constrict (1d8+7), nullifying touch (DC 21)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +14)
Constant—*arcane sight*

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 17, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +16 (+20 grapple); **CMD** 31 (can't be tripped)

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Empower Spell, Eschew Materials^B, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Acrobatics +19 (+15 when jumping), Bluff +8, Diplomacy +20, Fly +21, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (religion) +15, Perception +23, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +18, Survival +16, Use Magic Device +20

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ residual enhancement, spelltrap

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Ex) Spellscourge: bite, contact—contact and injury; *save* Fort DC 21; *onset* 1d6 days; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d3 Wis damage and 1d3 Int damage, if the target takes more than 2 damage in either Wis or Int from a single check, target must succeed at an additional Fort save or take 1d4 Con damage; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Ex) Injury—bite; *save* Fortitude DC 21; *frequency* 1/minute for 10 minutes; *effect* 1d4 Str; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Charisma-based.

This creature is the result of a couatl that attempted to aid victims of the Servants of the White Ape only to be attacked and repelled by the cult's white ape warriors. Injured, it returned to its lair but fell victim to the spellscourge that infected it during the battle. The disease struck the couatl down, bringing it back in this tormented, undead form.



The spellscourged couatl looks much like it did in life, though withered and decayed. Its sunken eyes glow with a foul orange light. The same light crackles along its scales and fangs when in combat and taints any spells it captures and hurls back at its victims.

Creating a Spellscourged Creature

The spellscourge is a terrible disease and greatly feared by those who use magic. They would fear it all the more if they knew that, in rare instances, a spellcaster that dies of the spellscourge comes back as an undead creature, its mind twisted and broken from the disease. A spellscourged creature is a hateful thing that desires nothing more than to spread the disease so that others share its suffering. The more powerful the spellcaster was in life, the more terrible it is in undeath as one of the spellscourged.

“Spellscourged” is an acquired template that can be added to any living, corporeal creature with the ability to cast spells or spell-like abilities. A spellscourged creature uses all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted here. A creature with 9 or more Hit Dice that dies from the spellscourge must attempt another Fortitude save against the disease. It retains its Constitution bonus for this saving throw. If the creature makes the save, it rises as a spellscourged creature. A failed save means the creature dies of the disease and does not rise.

CR: Same as the base creature.

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Type: The spellscourged creature’s type changes to undead (augmented). Do not recalculate class Hit Dice, BAB, or saves.

Senses: The spellscourged creature gains darkvision to a range of 60 feet (if the base creature already has darkvision, increase the range by 30 feet) and arcane sight as a constant spell-like ability.

Armor Class: Natural armor bonus increases by 2.

Hit Dice: Change all HD to d8, including those gained from class levels and racial HD. As undead creatures, spellscourged creatures use their Charisma modifiers to determine bonus hit points.

Defenses: A spellscourged creature gains channel resistance +4 and spell resistance equal to 11 + the spellscourged creature’s CR.

Weaknesses: A spellscourged creature is particularly vulnerable to antimagic fields. If a spellscourged creature enters an antimagic field or has one move into its area, the spellscourged creature is staggered for as long as it remains in the area of effect. Each round that a spellscourged creature spends within an antimagic field, it takes 6d6 points of damage.

Speed: A spellscourged creature’s movement rates remain unchanged.

Attacks: A spellscourged creature retains all the natural weapons, manufactured weapon attacks, and weapon proficiencies of the base creature.

Special Attacks: A spellscoured creature retains all of the base creature's special attacks. Any of the base creature's special abilities that were Constitution-based become Charisma-based. The creature also gains the ability to transmit the spellscourge disease through either its natural attacks or its nullifying touch attack (see below). The statistics for this disease are the same as those for the white ape warrior, except the DC is Charisma-based and the spellscoured creature has no racial bonus to the DC.

Devour Magic (Su): As a full-round action, the spellscoured creature can drain the magical energies from a magic item. The creature must make physical contact with a melee touch attack against an attended item. The magic item's owner must make a caster level check, using their highest spellcasting class level (creatures without a caster level must use the magic item's caster level). On a failed check, the spellscoured creature drains the magic item's power. One-use items such as potions and scrolls are rendered non-magical. Charged items are drained of 1d4 charges. Permanent magical items have their properties temporarily suppressed for 1d4 rounds as if affected by a targeted dispel magic. This ability has no effect on artifacts.

The spellscoured creature can use the stolen magical energy for one of the following effects:

- Heal 1d6 points of damage per caster level of the item or spell.
- Gain *haste* for a number of rounds equal to the caster level of the item or spell. This benefit does not stack with itself or similar effects and must expire before it may be regained.
- Gain a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength or Dexterity for a number of rounds equal to the caster level of the item/spell. This benefit does not stack with itself or similar effects and must expire before it may be regained.

Nullifying Touch (Su): The spellscoured gains a touch attack based on the base creature's caster level, inflicting 1d6 points of damage per former caster level (spellcaster level or spell-like ability caster level; if the base creature had both, use the higher of the two). This attack draws out the ambient magic in all existence, except that which is paired with necromancy. Undead creatures are immune, but this

attack otherwise affects even constructs powered by magic. A Fortitude save halves the damage inflicted.

Spell-like Abilities: A spellscoured creature loses any spell-like abilities it had in life. It gains *arcane sight* as a constant spell-like ability at a caster level equal to the caster level it had in life.

Spells: A spellscoured creature loses any spell casting ability it had in life.

Abilities: +2 Str, +2 Dex, Cha +4. As an undead creature, a spellscoured creature has no Constitution score.

Skills: A spellscoured creature retains all racial skill ranks from its former class levels.

Special Qualities: A spellscoured creature retains any special qualities of the base creature. In addition, it gains the following special qualities.

Residual Enhancement (Su): Spellscoured creatures cannot use magic items, but they retain the use of any permanent, non-charged magic item that they had when they died. These items become drained of all power and become imprinted on the undead spirit, such that the memory of them allows the spellscoured creature to call upon their powers. Such items are non-magical in the hands of other creatures, but when worn or used by their original owner, they appear to function normally. If deprived of the item, the spellscoured gains no benefit from it. Such items are typically rings of protection, weapons, bracers, and the like. The GM may determine unusual and delicate items do not transfer their benefit. Artifacts are immune to this ability.

Spelltrap (Su): If a spell or spell-like ability targeting the spellscoured creature is negated by its spell resistance, then the spellscoured creature can absorb that spell. The spellscoured creature can cast any absorbed spell as a spell-like ability at its caster level. Any creature targeted by this spell must also succeed at a secondary Fortitude save or contract spellscourge, whether or not its saving throw against the spell is successful. Spellscoured creatures cannot absorb area effect spells, though spells that target multiple specific creatures can be absorbed if the spellscoured creature is one of the targets of the spell. If the spellscoured creature has any metamagic feats, it can apply these to an absorbed spell as if it were a sorcerer when casting.



WEAVERS OF TRUTH

Many say that seeking the truth is a noble endeavor. Philosophers, theologians, and everyday people make the effort to discern what is true, and many are unhappy with what they find. Some argue the truth is fixed; others say the truth is mutable or at least relative. Those in the ranks of the Weavers of Truth believe that the truth is, quite literally, what you make it. They tap dangerous powers to shape the reality of the world around them—or rather peoples' conception of that reality—to that of their own choosing and to their own ends.

The woman now known as Vadoma Donesti was born among the lowest of the low, the illegitimate offspring of a prostitute in the worst district of

her home city. She was immediately given up to an orphanage that, while founded with the best of intentions, constantly struggled to meet the needs of a growing number of charges with its steadily diminishing resources.

Eventually, the latest headmistress, increasingly desperate and morally questionable, struck a deal with a local ne'er-do-well. He would harvest the best and brightest of her waifs in exchange for coin. The amount was enough to keep the orphanage running with enough left over for the headmistress to ignore any misgivings that might plague her. The man then took his newly procured orphans and taught them various thieving trades—pickpocketing,

simple cons, second-story work—based on their natural inclinations and talents. Once competent, they would be offered up to various city gangs as operatives in exchange for a modest fee.

Vadoma excelled at lies and deception. She was working for a local gang as bait in no time, acting as a woman in distress to lure clueless saps into ambushes to be beaten and robbed. Yet Vadoma always longed for something more. She watched those of noble birth or even those of the mercantile classes and wondered why she could not be like them. After all, they were flesh and blood, just like her. She was no less intelligent, no less attractive when she washed up. The only reason they looked upon her and her ilk with contempt was nothing more than an accident of birth. Her goal became to insert herself into their society, to make them believe she was one of their own, and to take what she felt was her due, denied by the fate of being lowborn.

When not doing her required work for the gang, Vadoma studied and practiced. She learned how to walk and talk like the nobility, how to dress with style, and how to eat and drink with the proper utensils. She saved her shares of the gang's income to purchase clothing, make-up, perfumes, and lessons in etiquette and dancing. Eventually, she created a new identity, one with a tragic backstory. She became Esmeralda Goleescu, last scion of an aristocratic house from a distant city. She spread rumors of her unfortunate circumstances and the last of the family fortune in transit to her new home by ship. This stratagem landed her a wealthy husband nearly 50 years her senior. When the ship carrying her family's fortune and Vadoma's sizeable dowry was reported sunk, her new husband barely cared. And when he died without an heir, she inherited his fortune and estate.

This luck did not last. His surviving relatives unravelled her web of lies and exposed her as a fraud. The city's justices stripped her of her title and possessions and would have thrown her in prison had she not orchestrated a prison break with members of her former gang, whom she had kept on retainer as bodyguards in her new life. Once free, she fled into exile, ironically ending up in the city in which her alter ego had supposedly been born, the capital city of a prosperous barony. Here she attempted to rebuild her reputation, and here she found unexpected aid.

Vadoma's obsession with and envy of the rich and powerful caught the attention of a servant of Pazuzu, the echo demon Malesussuri. Seeing a way to further the pain and suffering of mortals, he approached Vadoma under the guise of a bargain to assist her in achieving her goals. The demon introduced her to the bard Tal Grazelt, and together they plotted. The end result is the cult of the Weavers of Truth.

Vadoma is the queen in a hive of venomous vermin, all seeking to change the world to their own advantage. She doesn't care about her followers but plays the part of the devoted priestess, using her minions to further her own grasp for wealth, fame, and power. Grazelt improves his reputation with his demonic masters. Meanwhile, Malesussuri merely revels in the suffering they sow, hoping that soon the cult's lies further corrupt the fabric of society until everything crumbles into chaos.

LEADERS, ORGANIZATION, AND GOALS

The majority of the cult is organized more like a crime syndicate than a religion. Members operate in small groups, each with a specific task. Some work as information gatherers, gleaning secrets about all parts of the city's day-to-day operations. From the habits of merchants to the hobbies of the nobility, from the grumblings of the common folk to the private prayers of the high priests, any shred of information that might be useful is written down.

All of this information is then given to the whisperers. These operatives seed rumors, lies, and misinformation in the right ears to ensure it goes where they wish it to go. Their most common goals are to turn possible enemies of the cult against one another, to plant false evidence and testimony against enemies to discredit them or make them run afoul of the law, and to convince those with money and influence to look favorably upon the cult. These cultists are primarily rogues with a few bards and experts assisting.

The cult keeps a an old bathhouse on the edge of the temple district of the city. They have converted it to a temple of sorts where they keep their "oracles." These mysterious figures, heard but never seen, supposedly have the power of divine insight. Visitors

seeking answers from the oracles must first bathe in the pools here, using consecrated oils and sacred waters—nothing more than normal water and common fruit and flower oils—and don ceremonial robes to trod barefoot to the upper floor where the oracles await behind sheer silken curtains. The supplicants believe the temple servants hold their belongings in safekeeping downstairs. In the meantime, cult members search thoroughly through their clothing and accoutrements for anything that can be used against them later.

The supplicants' answers don't come right away. They often must wait for "an auspicious time" before approaching the oracle. This gives the information gatherers time to discover the person's situation through their belongings. A supplicant then receives pronouncements tailored to that specific individual's circumstances, creating self-fulfilling prophecies, usually helped along by cult agents.

The cultists here are commonly clerics of Pazuzu (use the statistics for the cultist in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide*, but with CE alignment and with the Chaos and Trickery [or the Deception subdomain] domains). The "oracles" are often bards putting on a good show for the supplicants, though on occasion an actual oracle or witch fills the role.

The upper floor of the bathhouse is the demesne of Vadoma Donesti. It is also the lair of Vadoma's personal bodyguard, a re-echo doppelganger (see *Monsters of Sin* by Kobold Press). This creature of envy sees Vadoma as a kindred spirit. Since she also uses it as her personal assassin to eliminate those people she cannot sway to her side, it also gets immense pleasure from the challenges she presents it in the way of powerful targets to mimic and defeat.

VADOMA DONESTI CR 15

XP 51,200

Human rogue (charlatan) 16 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat*)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+ 5 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)



hp 91 (16d8+16)

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

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny
dodge, uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 heartseeking dagger +15/+10/+5
(1d4/19–20)

Ranged +1 seeking hand crossbow +15 (1d4+1/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +8d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +18)

2/day—hypnotism (DC 13)

3/day—detect magic

TACTICS

During Combat Vadoma prefers to let others do the fighting for her, but in a pitched battle, she will do her best to fell foes, reading her scroll of stonesskin before maneuvering into a flanking position with an ally or taking cover in order to sneak attack with her hand crossbow.

Morale Should Vadoma drop to fewer than half her hit points, she uses her potion of *cure serious wounds*. If she loses half her allies, she orders the rest to cover her retreat, uses her *scroll of fly*, and attempts to escape.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 23

Feats Blood Ritualist^{DM}, Ceremonial Group

Casting^{DM}, Combat Expertise, Craft Incantation^{DM}, Craft Lesser Incantation^{DM}, Dodge, Improved Feint, Skill Focus: Knowledge (local), Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +26, Diplomacy +26, Disable Device +13, Escape Artist +21, Intimidate +26, Knowledge (local) +27, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Linguistics +10, Perception +20 (+24 to hear details of a conversation or find concealed/secret objects), Sense Motive +21, Sleight of Hand +15, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +15, Use Magic Device +20

Languages Common, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Orc, Sylvan (or substitute any 2 local human dialects for Orc and Sylvan)

SQ grand hoax, natural born liar, rogue talents (canny observer, convincing lie^{UC}, hard to fool^{APG}, honeyed words^{APG}, minor magic, major magic, rumormonger^{UC}, unwitting ally^{UC})

Combat Gear *elixirs of love* (3), *elixir of tumbling*, *nightdrops*^{UE}, *potion of cure serious wounds*, *scroll of fly*, *scroll of stonesskin*, *wand of charm person* (39 charges), *wand of dizzying bolt*^{DM} (50 charges);

Other Gear +2 glamerer studded leather armor, +1 heartseeker^{UE} dagger, +1 seeking hand crossbow with 10 bolts, boots of escape^{UE}, carriage of whispers*, circlet of persuasion, cloak of resistance +2, concealing pocket^{UE}, ring of protection +1, disguise kit, mwk thieves' tools, silver holy symbol, various outfits and clothing for disguises, 300 gp worth of jewelry

Vadoma's ultimate goal is to be rich, powerful, and admired. She is obsessed with the popularity and success of others, constantly comparing her social status with others and vying for more. Once her knowledge of the incantation of lies made truth ritual is complete, she performs it at the next solar eclipse and attempt to insert herself as the country's titular ruler. Vadoma hates that she must rely on Tal Grazelt's knowledge to accomplish this, but so far, he has been loyal, and Malesussuri ensures his complicity, so she grudgingly accepts the necessity of the situation. It does leave her afraid of losing Tal before the ritual is ready, so she has cultists watching him to insure his safety.

TAL GRAZELT

CR 9

XP 6,400

Half-elf bard (court bard) 10 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

CE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+ 5 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex)

hp 68 (10d8+20)

Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +7/+2 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged mwk shortbow +9/+4 (1d6/×3)

Special Attacks bardic performance 26 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate, glorious epic (DC 19), mockery –2, satire –3)

Bard Spells Known (CL 10th; concentration +14)

4th (2/day)—*discordant blast*^{APG}, *modify memory* (DC 20)

3rd (4/day)—*charm monster* (DC 19), *glibness*, *major image* (DC 17), *screaming* (DC 17)

2nd (5/day)—*enthrall* (DC 18), *honeyed tongue*^{APG}, *invisibility*, *suggestion* (DC 18), *trilling field*^{DM}

1st (6/day)—*alarm*, *charm person* (DC 17), *disguise self*, *dome of silence*^{DM}, *grease* (DC 15)

0—*daze* (DC 16), *detect magic*, *glorious music*^{DM} (DC 16), *marvelous music*^{DM} (DC 16), *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

TACTICS

During Combat When he is involved in a combat where he is expected to participate—such as during an attack on the cult’s base of operations—Tal Grazelt stays back and casts his spells and uses his bardic performance to aid allies and hinder enemies, saving spell slots for *invisibility* and *suggestion* to escape if the battle goes against his allies.

Morale Tal Grazelt avoids combat whenever possible. If not caught in the midst of a criminal activity, then Tal will cry for the city watch while evading attackers as best he can, casting *invisibility* to avoid attacks or major image to cover his escape. He is a known public figure and will rely on his reputation (and *glibness* if he is able to cast it) to win authorities to his side and have any attackers imprisoned.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 16

Feats Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]), Skill Focus (Knowledge [history]), Spell Focus (enchantment)

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (history) +21, Knowledge (local) +20, Knowledge (nobility) +20, Perform (act) +17, Perform (comedy) +17, Perform (dance) +17, Perform (oratory) +17 (+22 when used as Diplomacy), Spellcraft +15

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome
SQ heraldic expertise +5, versatile performance (comedy, oratory), wide audience

Combat Gear antitoxin, giant wasp poison (1 dose), *elixir of love*, *potion of eagle’s splendor*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, *wand of confusion* (10 charges);

Other Gear +1 mithral shirt, masterwork dagger, masterwork shortbow with 20 arrows, *ring of protection* +1, *brooch of shielding*, *bookmark of deception*^{UE}, ledger of compromising information on the local nobility disguised as a book of boring epic poetry, courtier’s outfit, jewelry worth 150 gp

Tal Grazelt is Vadoma’s second in command. His loyalty is not so much to Vadoma as it is to Malesussuri and the demon’s master, Pazuzu. As long as serving the cult is what is desired of him, then the bard remains loyal. His powers are often used to help maintain the cult’s secrecy and deal with those



whose suspicions are roused. A few artistically placed illusions or a well-timed modify memory are often all that is needed.

MALESUSSURRI

CR 6

XP 2,400

Advanced echo demon (see page 197)

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +9; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14

Aura cacophonous aura (30 ft., DC 17, 1d4 rounds)

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+5 Dex, +7 natural)
hp 66 (7d10+28)

Fort +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +9

DR 10/cold iron or good; **Immune** electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 17

Weaknesses vulnerable to sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 20 ft. (poor)

Melee 2 claws +13 (1d6+6 plus iron claws)

Special Attacks iron claws, rend (2 claws, 1d6+9)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +10)

Constant—*tongues*

At will—*ghost sound*, *invisibility*, *sound burst* (DC 15)

1/day—*summon* (level 3, 1 echo demon 30% or 1d4 dretches 50%)

TACTICS

Before Combat Malesussuri prefers to start combat invisibly, staying near known or obvious spellcasters so his cacophonous aura interferes with their casting.

During Combat Malesussuri becomes invisible if not already and moves, keeping his enemies paranoid and unprepared. Often, he readies a claw attack to disrupt a spell, using his everywhere at once ability to ensure he is within striking distance when a caster begins a spell (see Dimensional Agility). Should the opponents prove difficult, he summons more demons to assist. If his ability to become invisible is countered and opponents can bypass his DR, he moves away, keeping his distance, and harasses them with his sound burst.

Morale If a battle appears hopeless, then Malesussuri flees, taking the opportunity to grab up Vadoma and fly off with her if possible.

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 20, **Con** 19, **Int** 14, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 28

Feats Dimensional Agility^{UC}, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Climb +16, Fly +11, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +14, Sense Motive +14, Stealth +18

Languages Abyssal, Celestial; *tongues*

SQ everywhere at once

CULT ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURE HOOKS

Here are several methods of introducing the Weavers of Truth as adversaries for the PCs in your campaign. They can be foes for single adventures or returning enemies in an extended campaign, pitting the PCs against the growing threat of the cult as it threatens to take the region under its control.

APL 1–3

- ***A colony of giant spiders has made its lair in an abandoned building just outside, or on the outskirts of, the city.*** The city is offering a bounty for every spider killed. Another party however, is offering twice that bounty for every one brought in alive. The baron doesn't care one way or the other so long as the offending creatures are removed. If the PCs take up the offer to take them alive, they are well paid but also assist Vadoma in acquiring a source of spider-silk that she needs to help complete her incantation. Should the PCs hear the offer and slaughter the spiders anyway, it may well put them in the ill graces of the Weavers of Truth, who may target them for manipulation or worse at some point later in their adventuring careers.
- ***The PCs are witness to a peculiar incident of street violence.*** During some downtime, the PCs are in the market quarter of the city, eager to spend the profits of their last adventure. They mill around various shops and stalls examining goods, jostling for position amongst the crowd, momentarily moving aside as a black carriage passes down the road. Shortly thereafter, a merchant is seen punishing a lazy servant or young apprentice, laying about his head and shoulders with a stick. Suddenly, a mob mentality takes over as bystanders are unnaturally outraged over this act and move to attack the merchant, who quickly shuts herself into her shop just before the press of people overwhelms her. The crowd is under the effects of Vadoma's *carriage of whispers*. The PCs are the only ones able to stop the mob as even the local guardsmen seem caught up in it—perhaps they even have to stop one or more of their own if they too fall under the malign effects of the magical coach!

- ***The party rogue awakens one morning to find the city guard downstairs waiting to arrest him or her for a crime on the testimony of one or more witnesses.*** The PC in question has no recollection of the event. This is because Tal Grazelt charmed the character, convincing the PC to commit the crime and then used *modify memory* to erase all remembrance of the incident. The party might be able to bluff and come up with an alibi for their companion, but actually proving innocence can't be done because the PC actually did it. They might be able to convince a justice of the peace to take into account the possibility of magical influence. Whether that gets the character off the hook or is cause for a reduced sentence—perhaps a mission on behalf of the city with the PCs' companions in tow—remains to be seen. This also leaves Tal Grazelt as a loose end. The PC remembers meeting him prior to when the crime took place but nothing else. Make sure the player in question is comfortable with a temporary loss of agency or consider using an NPC rogue instead.

APL 4–6

- ***A meticulous merchant seeks the aid of the PCs, thinking he is the victim of magical or supernatural mischief.*** His account books show more money than he actually has in his coffers. His treasury shows no signs of forced entry or robbery, and he has the only key, but he knows he hasn't removed any coin. Still, he trusts his careful accounting more than his memory and insists something is amiss. His only clue is an odd one: a repertoire of hilarious jokes (*"Have you heard the one involving the duchess, her jester, and a donkey?"*). The merchant didn't make them up, and he can't remember ever hearing them before, yet he knows them. The PCs discover that the jokes are the creation of Tal Grazelt, a local bard favored in the baron's court. A closer examination of the bard leads to a local mystery cult. Tal, having been slighted by the merchant, has been charming him into making large donations to the Weavers of Truth, then modifying his memory to forget the donations, knowing the merchant will resent the magical manipulation once the enchantments wear off.
- ***A serial killer haunts the city.*** Someone or something is stalking the docks and leaving a trail of victims in its wake, horribly torn apart, their faces masks of terror. The latest victim, a dockside prostitute, was found curled up in a dead-end alley, hands clutched over her ears as if trying to block out a sound. A large reward has been offered to anyone that can discover the killer. An echo demon formerly working for the Weavers of Truth has gone rogue, preferring to wreak its own brand of havoc rather than jump to the commands of Vadoma and Malesussuri. It stalks the docks at night looking for victims and, by day, lairs in an abandoned warehouse at the end of a collapsed pier. If the PCs near victory in their fight against the demon, it offers information in exchange for its life. Should they take such a deal, it informs them that the Weavers of Truth are a cult that has unexpected depths. If they kill the beast, the baron rewards them, and they become heroes of the city meanwhile unknowingly helping the cult and securing their secrecy once more.
- ***The PCs are asked to act as neutral mediators between two factions—rival gangs, merchant houses, or noble families, depending on what best suits the characters—whose conflicts have begun turning into open warfare in the streets.*** The situation needs to be resolved before more powerful entities in the city become involved and punitive measures are taken. Diplomacy and investigation reveal that the rift between the two parties is recent and has escalated with surprising quickness. Should the PCs delve deeper, they will find a framework of lies and deception, leading to the conclusion that an outside party is manipulating both sides and turning them against one another. If the PCs convince the two sides of this, then they will make peace. If the PCs pursue this lead further, they find a cell of Weaver operatives working to undermine the two groups to some advantage of their own (for instance, if the two noble houses don't stop fighting, the local baron will confiscate their properties and bequeath some of the land to Vadoma). The cultists will flee if overmatched. If captured, they likely only confess under extraordinary duress.

APL 7–9

- ***Ambush! The PCs are taken unaware by an unrecognized enemy intent on spilling their blood.*** This is no case of mistaken identity. Their assailants know who the PCs are and take the time to plan a carefully orchestrated attack that takes into account the strengths and weaknesses of the party. They are within the bounds of civilization, so the city guard could come to their aid should they need help defeating their foes. Interrogating any surviving attackers leads the PCs to the people who hired the assassins. Again, the PCs are faced with people they either don't know or hold no animosity toward. Eventually, the heroes discover these people—a thieves' guild, crooked merchant house, or shady noble family—were retaliating against blackmail or strong-arm attempts made in the PCs' name. They produce letters in the handwriting of one or more of the PCs, perhaps even signed with an *arcane mark* known to be the sigil of the party's arcane caster. Clearly, the PCs have a hidden enemy that wishes them harm. Depending on how the heroes proceed, they may discover that the Weavers of Truth have had enough of their past meddling or were using the PCs as convenient scapegoats.

- ***A wealthy and prosperous merchant in the city had his life fall apart around him 2 years ago.*** First, his wife left him after finding evidence of an affair. Then, his two children died in separate, tragic accidents. Finally, the crown put him under investigation for smuggling contraband into the city. He hung himself in a fit of despair. Some say his ghost haunts his manor house. None of the local clergy have been able to remove the haunting. The next of kin wish the situation resolved so they can sell the property.

Should the PCs intercede, they find a half-mad, angry spirit that tries to possess one of the PCs, preferably the one that looks the most physically dangerous. The merchant's ruin was plotted and carried out by the Weavers of Truth. The sorcerer in charge of the mission was arrogant and had the audacity to show himself to the merchant as he dangled from the rope, slowly strangling due to botching the hanging, and confessed his role in the

man's downfall. It was the last thing the merchant heard before he died. He was certainly guilty of the things of which he was accused, but his son and daughter were innocent of any wrongdoing. Now, the merchant's ghost wants the sorcerer dead. Killing him will allow the ghost to pass on, but the sorcerer readily surrenders and explains why he carried out the plot.

- ***The PCs receive an unexpected visitor.*** A hound archon approaches them in disguise, claiming to be a holy warrior on a quest to avenge an unthinkable evil. Someone has summoned, trapped, and killed a celestial. He can find the site where the celestial was killed but wants assistance against those who perpetrated this atrocity. Should the PCs agree, they are led into the sewers beneath the city—where encounters with nasty things are sure to happen—and into an old cellar where the cultists, clerics of Pazuzu, are busy draining the last of the blood from the celestial's corpse. One flees with the blood while the rest hold off the archon and the PCs. Should the heroes manage to pursue, the cultist leads them directly to Tal Grazelt in the building above, who has arrived with another group of cultists to receive the blood and take it to be magically preserved until it is time for the incantation to be performed.

APL 10–12

- ***An intrepid adventurer, heir to a noble house in a far off city, has come to find Esmeralda Golescu, a woman of low birth that masqueraded as a woman of quality and married his elderly uncle.***

This young man has no vendetta. In fact, he was the only one in the family to show her any real kindness or respect before she was found to be a fraud. Unfortunately for him, "Esmeralda" still holds a grudge against the entire family, thinking he turned on her like all the rest. As he searches the city, Vadoma finds out he is here and has the young man kidnapped. The baron wants the young man found immediately before word of his disappearance spreads. He has no desire for conflict with his northern neighbors. The PCs, among other able bodies, are enlisted to track down the nobleman before there is an incident.

THE WEAVERS OF TRUTH IN MIDGARD

After fleeing justice in Zobeck, Vadoma settled in the city of Capleon, where the cult was formed and continues to operate. The oracular portion of the cult—the only one visible to the public eye—claims to be a mystery cult devoted to Thoth-Hermes, having recently arrived from Friula to take up residence in accordance with visions received by their leader. Those cult members that interact with the public are well versed in the customs and ways of that religion. Anyone showing obvious suspicion or hostility is tailed by a pair of information gatherers when they depart. These cultists attempt to spy on the suspicious persons and determine if they are a threat, warning the other members if that is the case. Tal Grazelt is a favorite in the court of Baron Cazagoza and can call in favors to make enemies' lives miserable in order to take pressure off the cult.

Vadoma's plan remains much the same, though here she may eventually uncover the baron's intent to ally

with the Mharoti. When it comes time to use the incantation, she will expose the baron's plan. Then during the ensuing uprising and revolt, she will use the incantation to make herself the glorious patriot who others followed during the civil revolt, allowing her to take the throne and bask in the admiration of an entire nation. In reality, she will have her followers assassinate the baron and take over the monarchy for herself.

In the meantime, her agents work to exert their influence over the city's populace, especially the wealthy and powerful. Vadoma rides in her *carriage of whispers* through the city on various social calls or errands, using its powers to sway the citizenry a little bit more her way each day.

In a Midgard campaign, substitute Infernal, Kariv, and Nurian for Halfling, Orcish, and Sylvan on Vadoma's list of known languages.

In the meantime, the young man languishes in a cell in a hidden underground complex, guarded by cultists. Vadoma plans to use him as one of the blood sacrifices during the ritual.

- ***A heat wave has struck the city, and tempers are short in the stifling city summer.*** It seems the city is about to boil over as the city watch is dealing with riots all over the city. A thoughtful guard, or perhaps an observant PC, notes that the riots are concurrent, seeming to spring up along a winding path through quarter after quarter of the city. Investigation along this route finds one interesting thing of note: a black carriage passed through mere minutes before the riots started. Vadoma is preparing for the upcoming eclipse and wants the city ready to tear itself apart at the seams so she can swoop in as its savior, the incantation making everyone believe she is ascending the throne to bring peace and prosperity in the wake of poor leadership. One of her minions, possibly even Tal Grazelt, rides through the streets, putting thoughts of anger into the population, giving them that nudge they need to push the city over the edge.

- ***Astronomers have predicted a solar eclipse in 2 days' time.*** This has the population unsettled since many are superstitious and believe this event portends some great ill. Indeed, whispers tell of corruption in the halls of the highest, rumblings of rebellion, even of a military coup. Now a priest of the god of knowledge has arrived from a neighboring country to the south. She says that her deity has given her a vision of heretics here in the city, plotting evil in her god's name. She looks for stalwart adventurers to help, since she can get no one in government to listen. She will turn her divinatory talents toward finding leads for them, eventually pointing them toward the oracles at the bathhouse of the Weavers of Truth. This sets the PCs up for a final confrontation with the cult, facing cultists, demons, and Vadoma herself, in a fight to stop her before she completes her ritual and makes the entire city—possibly even the PCs—into her adoring subjects.

CULTISTS OF THE WEAVERS OF TRUTH

The Weavers of Truth are masters of lies and deception. Their members are best at destroying foes with misinformation and manipulation. The following NPCs can be used as cultist minions, intermediaries, and lower-level leaders to provide suitable enemies for the PCs as they strive against the Weavers of Truth.

WHISPERER

CR 2

XP 600

Human charlatan (rogue) 3 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat*)

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +1 dodge, +2 Dex)

hp 23 (3d8+6)

Fort +2; **Ref** +5; **Will** +0

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk shortsword +5 (1d6/19-20)

Ranged mwk shortbow +5 (1d6/x3)

Special Attacks sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

Before Combat The whisperer attempts to use Stealth to hide before enemies arrive.

During Combat If faced with a combat that cannot be avoided, the whisperer attempts to flank with allies or feint to catch opponents off guard. If a fight is unnecessary or going badly, the whisperer lights a smokestick, attempting to use its concealment to make a stealthy getaway.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 12

Feats Dodge, Skill Focus (Bluff), Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +8, Appraise +8, Bluff +11,

Diplomacy +8, Disable Device +8, Disguise +8,

Knowledge (local) +8, Perception +5, Sense Motive +5, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +8

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven

SQ grand hoax, natural born liar, rogue talent (convincing lie)

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, acid, smokestick (2); **Other Gear** mwk studded leather armor, mwk shortsword, mwk shortbow with 20 arrows, mwk thieves' tools, 100 gp

Whisperers are the mouthpieces and hands of the Weavers of Truth. They move among the populace, spreading rumors and gossip, planting seeds of misinformation to grow until their words are considered unquestionable fact. They also seek out interesting gossip and tidbits of information that the cult can use. A whisperer might eavesdrop on private conversations, spy on illicit activities, or pilfer letters and notes left lying within reach.

SEEKER OF SECRETS

CR 5

XP 1,600

Half-elf diviner 6

NE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +6; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +4 shield)

hp 29 (6d6+6)

Fort +3; **Ref** +4; **Will** +7; +2 vs. enchantment effects

Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee club +4 (1d6-1)

Ranged light crossbow +5 (1d8/19-20)

Special Attacks

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 6th; concentration +9)

3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *stinking cloud* (DC 17), *suggestion* (DC 18)

2nd—*daze monster* (DC 16), *detect thoughts* (DC 16), *spider climb*, *web* (DC 15), *whispering wind*

1st—*charm person*, *comprehend languages*, *mage armor*, *obscuring mist*, *shield*

0—*daze* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *read magic*

Opposition Schools illusion, necromancy

TACTICS

Before Combat The seeker of secrets casts *mage armor* and *shield*.

During Combat The seeker of secrets uses his spells to incapacitate opponents, hoping to interrogate them afterward. If he has allies, he uses them as a screen to avoid melee. He uses his wand to injure any persistent melee opponents. If the combat seems lost, the seeker of secrets uses *spider climb* to escape, possibly casting *obscuring mist* first.

Base Statistics Without his spells cast the seeker of secret's base statistics are **AC** 13, **touch** 12, **flat-footed** 11.

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Bluff), Spell Focus (divination), Spell Focus (enchantment)

Skills Appraise +12, Bluff +14, Knowledge (local) +12, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +9, Spellcraft +12

Languages Common, Elf

SQ arcane bond (raven)

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (2), *potion of invisibility*, *wand of magic missile* (50 charges), antitoxin; **Other Gear** club, light crossbow with 10 bolts, *bracers of armor* +1, catching cape^{UE}, key of lock jamming^{UE}, spell component pouch, spellbook, 150 gp

Where the whisperers are the hands and mouths of the cult, a seeker of secrets serves as the cult's eyes and ears. He uses his magic and natural wiles to seek out information that can benefit the Weavers of Truth. The seeker's divinatory magic uncovers what can be seen and heard, while his enchantment magic can be used to loosen tongues and create temporary friends to supply more aid and information. For difficult missions, or ones of an extended duration, a seeker of secrets may lead a team of two to four whisperers.

GRAND WEAVER

CR 7

XP 3,200

Human bard (sandman) 8 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 16, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 14 (+3 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex)

hp 55 (8d8+16)

Fort +4; **Ref** +8; **Will** +7; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

Defensive Abilities trap sense +2

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *longsword* +8/+3 (1d8+2/19-20) or dagger +7/+2 (1d4+1/19-20)

Ranged mwk composite shortbow +9/+4 (1d6+1/x3) or dagger +8 (1d4+1/19-20)

Special Attacks bardic performance 21 rounds/day (move action; countersong, dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate, slumber song, spellsteal [standard action; DC 19]), sneak attack +1d6, sneakspell +1

Bard Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +13)

3rd (3/day)—*confusion* (DC 20), *cure serious wounds*, *glibness*

2nd (5/day)—*alter self*, *animal messenger*, *detect thoughts* (DC 17), *suggestion* (DC 19)

1st (5/day)—*charm person* (DC 18), *comprehend languages*, *expeditious retreat*, *magic mouth*, *unnatural lust*^{UM} (DC 18)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *message*, *read magic*, *resistance*

TACTICS

Before Combat The grand weaver casts *eagle's splendor* from her scroll.

During Combat The grand weaver casts *confusion* to throw a group of opponents into disarray. She uses her wand to make it difficult for enemies to close in melee. If the encounter goes badly, the grand weaver drinks her *potion of invisibility* and attempts to escape.

Base Statistics Without using her scroll, the grand weaver's base statistics are **Cha** 16; reduce all save DCs by 2; concentration +11.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 20**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19**Feats** Combat Casting, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Spell Focus (enchantment)**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Bluff +17, Disable Device +13, Diplomacy +13, Knowledge (local) +12, Perception +10, Perform (oratory) +15, Sleight of Hand +17, Stealth +16, Spellcraft +12**Languages** Common, Elven**SQ** master of deception +4**Combat Gear** *potion of invisibility*, *scroll of eagle's splendor*, *scroll of whispering wind*, *wand of grease* (15 charges), tanglefoot bags (2); **Other Gear** mwk studded leather, +1 *longsword*, mwk composite shortbow (+1 Str) with 20 arrows, daggers (2), *burglar's bracers*^{UE}, *ring of protection* +1, adamantite wire saw^{UE}, everburning torch, signal whistle, skeleton keys^{UE} (3), spell component pouch, 270 gp

Grand weavers ply their cunning towards making the cult's plots reality. They disguise themselves as respectable citizens to plant rumors. They leave magic mouths in public areas to announce shocking gossip or outright lies when the places are most crowded with listeners. They make "friends" with charm person to use as scapegoats and cast suggestion to goad people into doing seemingly innocuous things that further their schemes. When working on an especially complex scheme, a grand weaver may be accompanied by one or two seekers of secrets and up to six whisperers.

NEW MONSTER

Like an echo, some monsters can appear to come from everywhere at once.

ECHO DEMON

This vaguely humanoid creature has a batlike face and large claws of twisted, rusting iron at the end of winged arms. Strangely soft rust-colored fur covers its body.

ECHO DEMON (CHIROPTUS)

CR 5

XP 1,600

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +7; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12**Aura** cacophonous aura (30 ft., DC 15, 1d4 rounds)

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+3 Dex, +5 natural) **hp** 52 (7d10+14)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7**DR** 10/cold iron or good; **Immune** electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 16**Weaknesses** vulnerable to sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 20 ft. (poor)**Melee** 2 claws +11 (1d6+4 plus iron claws)**Special Attacks** iron claws, rend (2 claws, 1d6+6)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th; concentration +8)Constant—*tongues*At will—*ghost sound*, *invisibility*, *sound burst* (DC 13)

1/day—summon (level 3, 1 echo demon 30% or 1d4 dretches 50%)

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 16, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 24**Feats** Dimensional Agility^{UC}, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Stealth)**Skills** Climb +11, Fly +9, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (planes) +10, Perception +12, Stealth +16**Languages** Abyssal, Celestial; *tongues***SQ** everywhere at once

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Abyss)**Organization** solitary, pair, cluster (2–6)



Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cacophonous Aura (Su) An echo demon produces a perpetual swirl of shrieks, chirps, and other shrill noises which bear a more-than-passing resemblance to words—or, more specifically, uttered lies. These sounds bounce and reverberate throughout the surrounding area, sowing confusion. Any non-deaf creature within 30 feet of an echo demon must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened

for 1d4 rounds. A successful saving throw renders a creature immune to the cacophonous aura of that particular echo demon for 24 hours. Additionally, any non-deaf creature attempting to cast a spell within this area must succeed at a DC 15 concentration check. As a result of this aura, anyone within 30 feet of an echo demon is automatically aware of the creature, though attempts to use Perception to pinpoint its location through hearing alone take an additional –5 penalty. The echo demon can turn this ability on and off as a swift action, permitting it to move with stealth. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Everywhere at Once (Su) As a swift action and once every 1d4 rounds, an echo demon can teleport to any space within its cacophonous aura. The echo demon can only transport itself and its belongings. Otherwise, this ability functions as *dimension door*.

Iron Claws (Ex) The twisted claws of an echo demon create a high-pitched metallic squeal when raked over metal. Any creature that wears metal armor stuck by these claws must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or become deafened for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Nearly every evil soul told lies during its mortal life—some petty, some bold, and some even deadly. It is said that when a truly despicable liar's soul passes to the Abyss, it can sometimes take the

form of an echo demon. The tormented creature is surrounded by a constant echoing chatter that supposedly repeats every lie ever told, surrounding the demon with a cacophonous aura of noise that disorients and demoralizes foes.

Echo demons (or chiroptus demons) are dangerous hunters that love nothing more than to prowl near-empty halls in cavernous dwellings in search of creatures to torment and kill. They use their sound-based powers to sow discord and confusion,

picking off groups of adventurers one at a time. Their ability to appear anywhere within earshot allows them to launch attacks from surprising angles, often catching their prey off-guard. Ironically, the claws of an echo demon cause the victim to be deafened, rendering them immune to the creature's potent sonic powers.

Though they can see as well as other demons, echo demons often rely on their bat-like echolocation to find their foes. This leaves them vulnerable to sonic attacks but provides them with their most potent abilities. They can focus their sonic senses to batter their foes. Even more deadly than a single demon, a cluster of the monsters can use their ability to be seemingly everywhere at once to set up ambushes and vicious flank attacks. Thankfully, like most demons, echo demons rarely cooperate for long, finding the noise generated by their brethren to be the most grating sound they can imagine.

NEW OCCULT RITUAL

With enough power, even reality can be changed on a massive scale. For more information about occult rituals, see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Occult Adventures*.

INCANTATION OF LIES MADE TRUTH

School enchantment (compulsion) [mind-affecting];

Level 9th

Casting Time 9 hours

Components V, S, M (celestial blood, demon ichor, mockingbird feather quills, powdered gold and silver, and rare inks worth 25,000 gp), F (a blank book bound in hag skin, stitched with spider silk and platinum fittings, worth at least 5,000 gp), SC (at least 5 and up to 25)

Skill Check Knowledge (arcana) DC 31, 3 successes; Knowledge (history) DC 31, 3 successes; Knowledge (local) DC 31, 3 successes

Range see text

Target one creature, organization, or kingdom (see text)

Duration see text

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

Backlash All casters take 4d6 points of damage and are exhausted.

Failure All casters take 2 permanent negative levels, and the primary caster is also affected as per *feeblemind* (CL 17th).

EFFECT

This ritual must be cast during a solar eclipse. This ritual can target a person, organization (including a city), or kingdom. If targeting an organization or kingdom, the incantation requires an object epitomizing the entity as part of the focus, such as a crown, mayoral seal, standard, or primary relic. If targeting a person, the primary performer must hold a vial of the person's blood. In the case of a single creature or small organization, the ritual must be conducted within long range (400 feet + 40 feet/character level of the primary caster). If the target is a city or kingdom, the ritual must take place within its borders, preferably near its capital or seat of power.

Over the course of the incantation, the components are mixed and the primary caster inscribes a false history and a sum of knowledge concerning the target into the book using the mockingbird quills.

Upon successful completion of the incantation, whatever has been written in the book is known and accepted as truth by the target. The target can attempt a Will save (DC = 19 + the primary caster's Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma bonus [whichever is highest]) to prevent this effect. The current leader or ruler attempts the save for the organization or kingdom with a +5 bonus. If the leader or ruler fails this saving throw, all citizens of members of the target organization or kingdom hold all lies recorded in the book as common knowledge and beliefs. The duration is indefinite. Any information contrary to what has been written in the focus book is forgotten within an hour of reading or encountering it. Individuals who make a sustained study of such information can attempt a Will save (as above) to retain the contradictory knowledge.

The effects of this ritual can be reversed by washing the written words from the focus using universal solvent and then burning the book to ashes in a magical fire.

Note that incantation of lies made truth is intended to be a villainous masterstroke of a campaign. The GM should take care not to remove too much player agency with this ritual. The creatures affected should be predominantly NPCs, with PCs and even select

NPCs able to resist its power. Reversing the effects of the ritual can be made into the entire basis of a campaign in of itself.

NEW VEHICLE

The carriage of whispers is a hybrid of magic item and vehicle.

CARRIAGE OF WHISPERS

Large land vehicle

Squares 6 (10 ft. by 15 ft.; 6 ft. high); **Cost** 15,000 gp

DEFENSE

AC 9; **Hardness** 5

hp 90 (44)

Base Save +1

OFFENSE

Maximum Speed twice the speed of the pulling creature(s); **Acceleration** the speed of the pulling creature(s)

CMB +1; **CMD** 11

Ramming Damage 1d8

DESCRIPTION

This black-lacquered, gold-trimmed carriage is typical of the fine conveyances used by the well-to-do. The doors are emblazoned with shields that the owner of the carriage can, as a standard action, transfigure to display any heraldic device of her choice. Anything said within the confines of the coach cannot be heard from outside.

The coach contains the bound spirit of an echo demon, and the coach's magic allows the owner to twist the demon's sound magic to their own ends. When the coach is in motion, the owner, or a passenger designated by the owner, can whisper words within the coach that echo into the surrounding area and are subconsciously heard by those nearby. This requires the complete concentration of the whisperer, who cannot do anything else while using this ability. Any non-deaf creature with an Intelligence of 3 or more within 100 feet of the carriage's passing must succeed at a Will

save DC 15 to ignore the whispers. On a failed save, that creature is subject to the effects, as determined by the carriage's owner, from the following list.

- The whispers play upon the subject's doubts and fears. The subject is shaken for 1d6 minutes after the carriage passes.
- The subject is subconsciously made more favorably inclined towards a person mentioned in the whispers. The subject's starting attitude toward that person is improved by two steps and that person receives a +2 bonus on all Charisma-based checks to influence the subject for the next 8 hours.
- The subject becomes more hostile toward a person mentioned in the whispers. The subject's starting attitude toward that person is worsened by two steps and that person takes a –2 penalty on all Charisma-based checks to influence the subject for the next 8 hours.
- The subject is under the influence of the whisperer's whims, as per the spell *suggestion*, except the suggestion must be very general in nature. The motion of the carriage does not permit the time required for a very specific command.

Propulsion muscle (pulled; 6 Medium creatures or 2 Large creatures)

Driving Check Handle Animal or Profession (driver) (in the case of creatures with animal intelligence pulling the vehicle), Diplomacy or Intimidate (in the case of intelligent creatures pulling the vehicle)

Forward Facing toward the creatures pulling the vehicle

Driving Device reins

Driving Space the most forward squares of the carriage's upper deck

Decks 2; a lower cab with enough room for four passengers and an upper deck with room for a driver and another passenger

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS

Craft Wondrous Item, *planar ally* or *planar binding*, *suggestion*, *whispering wind*; **Cost** 7,500 gp

ANTIPALADINS AND DOOMSPEAKERS

EXAMINING AND EXPANDING THE ANTIPALADIN

Evil is not simple, it is not stupid, and above all it is not weak. While paladins and their kind may cower in castles or waste their time on the unworthy, the antipaladin understands that true power comes to those who take it. Why should good get all the glory?

Antipaladins are mirror images of paladins. While both rely on martial prowess and supernatural judgement to destroy their enemies, antipaladins corrupt where paladins protect.

This appendix expands the options available to antipaladin player characters. A player can use these alternative abilities to customize a PC beyond what is presented in the rules. Additionally, we discuss how best to utilize the class's strengths and tactics.

FALLING AND RISING: MAKING THE SWITCH

What happens when a paladin falls? Well, much like a star, he either goes out with a fizzle or he goes out with a bang.

A paladin is closer to an antipaladin than he is to a common foot soldier. They are not two sides of a coin, but rather two faces of a razor-thin knife, with only a hair's breadth of separation.

When a paladin seriously breaks his code (most gods forgive the occasional lapse), he has a choice: reject the sin and be penitent, or embrace the strength it provides. In the overwhelming number of cases, the paladin rejects the transgression. He is a true paladin, and he enjoys his status and moral guidance. He does what he can to make amends, or roils in his failure and fades into a lifetime of obscurity and guilt.

However, if the transgression was in pursuit of a greater goal, then the paladin might accept the sin. For these paladins, one particular objective (vengeance, justice, honor, or the like) supersedes any overarching moral framework. If the paladin's current patron is unwilling to provide the strength needed, then another patron may step in.

Such dramatic and momentous decisions are often determined in the heat of the moment, though they are never made without some sort of warning. A paladin on the edge may openly profess to "do anything" in pursuit of a questionable goal. These paladins express strength, not weakness, when deliberating on difficult decisions. If the paladin makes his sinful choice with utter confidence, then he becomes an antipaladin. If the paladin makes his choice regretfully, then he simply falls but does not turn to evil.

As above, so below, and an antipaladin may rise just like a paladin falls. Good is just as seductive as evil, promising love, freedom from guilt, and a pleasant afterlife. Paladins often see their antagonists as bereft of inner conflict, but antipaladins experience just as much self-doubt as their kin on the other side of the blade. When they begin to doubt, and question why they are propagating such injustice, they are in danger of rising.

Just like a paladin, an antipaladin may be deprived of his powers if he loses his way. If he decides to use his abilities for good instead of evil, his deity may rob him of his unholy strength as punishment. If the choice is a difficult one for the antipaladin, then he rises, but does not become a paladin. If the choice is made without guilt or uncertainty, then an antipaladin may take his role among the leaders of good as a paladin of the light. Angels endeavor to save the damned just as devils seek to corrupt the good.

What does this all mean in game? If one thing is certain, it is that the vast majority of players do not enjoy having their class abilities taken away from them. If a GM or player feels that a campaign would be improved by falling or rising, then he must discuss it with the other party. Such a dramatic character shift can be an incredible moment for a story, but it needs to be a willing, plot-driven transformation, and cannot be a surprise to those involved.

HOW TO USE THE PLAGUE BRINGER CLASS ABILITY

Plague bringer is one of the most intriguing class abilities in the game. With just 47 words, the class ability opens up an entirely new realm of combat mechanics to explore. But what does it all mean?

Plague Bringer (Ex): At 3rd level, the powers of darkness make an antipaladin a beacon of corruption and disease. An antipaladin does not take any damage or take any penalty from diseases. He can still contract diseases and spread them to others, but he is otherwise immune to their effects.

With this ability, an antipaladin can seek out diseases and intentionally infect himself. There is no limit to the number of illnesses that an antipaladin can host at one time. With each new disease, he gains an entirely new penalty to bestow on enemies. The only question is; how can he give these diseases to his enemies?

Unfortunately, the rules are not entirely clear. There is no explicit way that disease is spread, and creatures with a disease often bestow it with only one of their attacks. In most cases, the spread of disease to enemies is not terribly relevant, as the onset time is likely longer than the combat itself. However, in those rare cases where disease does become relevant (for example, with the plaguebearer archetype on page 206), use the following rules.

Each time that a diseased character makes a natural or unarmed attack, he chooses a single disease with which he is currently afflicted. He can apply an injury disease to slashing or piercing attacks, or a contact disease to bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing attacks. If the attack deals damage, then the target must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC varies with disease) or contract the disease.

This rule allows an antipaladin to spread his disease without slowing down the game more than is necessary. The collection of diseases becomes an enjoyable, fascinating goal for the antipaladin, rife with roleplaying opportunity and dangling story threads, while also increasing his combat prowess.

NEW CRUELITIES

The following additional cruelties are available to any antipaladin.

At 3rd level, an antipaladin can select from the following additional cruelties.

Bleed: The target suffers 1d4 points of bleed damage. This bleed damage increases to 2d4 when the antipaladin reaches 9th level and to 3d4 when the antipaladin reaches 15th level.

Disarmed: The target momentarily loses use of his arms, and drops anything carried in his hands.

Distracted: Distracting pain courses through the target's body. The target must immediately succeed at a concentration check or lose any spells in the process of being cast. On the target's next turn, it must succeed at a concentration check if it casts a spell. The DC of this check is equal to 10 + 1/2 the antipaladin's level + the antipaladin's Charisma modifier.

Lapse: The target forgets all events since the beginning of its last turn. This is a mind-affecting effect.

Plague: The target contracts one of the diseases which afflicts the antipaladin (the target does not attempt a save separately against the disease's DC).

Prone: The target momentarily loses the use of his legs, and falls prone.

Tongue-tied: The target loses the ability to speak for 1 round per level of the antipaladin. The target can attempt a new save as a full-round action.

At 6th level, an antipaladin adds the following cruelties to the list of those that can be selected.

Degeneration: The target's natural healing, fast healing, and regeneration are halted for 1 round per level of the antipaladin. Creatures with regeneration can be permanently killed during this time.

Entangled: The target grows writhing tentacles which constrict its movements. The target is entangled for

1 round per level of the antipaladin. An entangled creature can break free by succeeding at a Strength check or by dealing damage to the tentacles with a slashing weapon. The DC of this Strength check is equal to 10 + 1/2 the antipaladin's level + the antipaladin's Charisma modifier, and the amount of damage needed to sever the tentacles is equal to twice the antipaladin's level + the antipaladin's Charisma modifier. A creature trying to attack the tentacles, or another creature assisting, does not need to make an attack roll; hitting the tentacles is automatic, after which the creature rolls damage to see how much the tentacles are damaged.

At 9th level, an antipaladin adds the following cruelties to the list of those that can be selected.

Confused: Pain blots out all semblance of rational thought. The target is confused for 1 round per 2 levels of the antipaladin.

Phase: The target phases out of existence until the end of the antipaladin's next turn. No magic or divinations can detect the creature during this time, as it exists outside of time and space. In effect, the creature ceases to exist for the duration of this ability. At the end of the duration, the creature reappears unharmed in the space it last occupied (or the nearest possible space, if the original space is now occupied). No time passes for the target during this time.

Weakness: The target loses all energy resistance and damage resistance for 1 round per 2 levels of the antipaladin.

At 12th level, an antipaladin adds the following cruelties to the list of those that can be selected.

Arcane Vulnerability: The target loses all spell resistance for 1 round per 2 levels of the antipaladin.

Dispel: The antipaladin ends one ongoing spell that has been cast on the target. If the spell's caster level is higher than the antipaladin's level, then this cruelty has no effect.

At 15th level, an antipaladin adds the following cruelties to the list of those that can be selected.

Energy drain: The target takes 1 negative level.

Petrified: The target is petrified for 1 round per 2 levels of the antipaladin.

At 18th level, an antipaladin adds the following cruelty to the list of those that can be selected.

Kill: If the target has 100 hit points or fewer, it is killed. If the target has more than 100 hit points, this cruelty has no effect.

ANTIPALADIN ARCHETYPES

Evil demands much. These antipaladin archetypes present new ways to do the unholy lords' work.

BLOODWARG

Not content to spill blood in their own form, bloodwargs tear apart the living in the guise of savage beasts.

Wild Shape (Su): At 4th level, a bloodwarg gains the wild shape ability as a druid of his level. A bloodwarg can smite and channel energy while in wild shape form.

This ability replaces the antipaladin's spellcasting. A bloodwarg does not gain any spells or spellcasting abilities, does not have a caster level, and cannot use spell-trigger or spell-completion magic items.

DEATHBOLT MASTER

The deathbolt master corrupts from afar, inflicting his enemies with horrible cruelties.

Ray of Corruption (Su): Beginning at 2nd level, a deathbolt master can emit a gout of fiendish flame from his hand, opening terrible wounds on those he attacks. As a ranged touch attack with a range increment of 30 feet, a deathbolt master can cause 1 point of damage for every antipaladin level he has. Using this ability is a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity. He can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 1/2 his antipaladin level + his Charisma modifier.

Alternatively, a deathbolt master can use this power to heal undead creatures, restoring 1 hit point for every antipaladin level he has.

This ability is modified by any feat, spell, or effect that specifically works with the lay on hands paladin class feature or the touch of corruption antipaladin feature. For example, the Extra Lay On Hands feat grants a deathbolt master 2 additional uses of the ray of corruption class feature.

This ability replaces touch of corruption.



GOREMASTER

The goremaster revels in blood, drawing it forth from his enemies and using it to shape the battlefield.

Bloody Smite (Su): When a goremaster smites a foe, he does not add his Charisma modifier to attack or damage rolls. Instead, his smite attacks deal an amount of bleed damage equal to his Charisma modifier. This ability modifies smite good.

Bloody Touch (Su): At 3rd level, a goremaster gains the bleed cruelty (see page 202). This ability replaces the cruelty gained at 3rd level.

Bloody Channel (Su): Starting at 4th level, when a goremaster channels negative energy, he deals 1d4 damage at 1st level, plus 1d4 points of damage for every 3 antipaladin levels beyond 1st. Any creature who fails its save takes 1 point of bleed damage for every damage die rolled. This ability modifies channel negative energy.

Bloody Spellcasting (Su): At 4th level, when a goremaster casts a blood magic spell (as found in Kobold Press's *Deep Magic*), his caster level is treated as 2 higher and the DC to resist the spell is increased by 1.

Aura of Blood (Su): At 8th level, when an enemy within 10 feet takes bleed damage, it takes an additional 50% bleed damage. The goremaster gains this additional 50% damage as temporary hit points. This ability replaces aura of despair.

KNIGHT OF HELLFIRE

Knights of hellfire enter into obtuse legal pacts with devils, transforming themselves into the masters they are sworn to serve.

Alignment: Knights of hellfire are lawful evil instead of chaotic evil.

Summon Devils (Sp): At 5th level, a knight of hellfire can cast *summon monster III* as a spell-like ability a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier. He can cast this spell as a standard action and the creatures remain for 1 minute per level. At 7th level, and every 2 antipaladin levels thereafter, the power of this ability increases by 1 spell level, allowing him to summon more powerful creatures (to a maximum of *summon monster IX* at 17th level). At 19th level, this ability can be used as *gate* (to Hell

FURYKNIGHT

The furyknight's profane destruction is powered not only by corrupted justice but by unbridled hatred.

Rage (Ex): At 4th level, a furyknight can channel his anger into a torrent of destruction. This ability functions just like the barbarian's rage ability, except that the furyknight's effective barbarian level is equal to his antipaladin level – 3.

This ability replaces the antipaladin's spellcasting. A furyknight does not gain any spells or spellcasting abilities, does not have a caster level, and cannot use spell-trigger or spell-completion magic items.

only) or *summon monster IX*. If used as *gate*, the knight of the hellfire must pay any required material components. The knight of hellfire cannot have more than one *summon monster* or *gate* spell active in this way at one time. If this ability is used again, any existing *summon monster* or *gate* spell immediately ends. These summon spells are considered to be part of his spell list for the purposes of spell-trigger and spell-completion items. The knight uses his class level as his caster level when using summon devils. The knight of hellfire can only summon creatures with both the evil and lawful subtypes when using this ability. This ability replaces fiendish boon.

Fortitude of Hell (Ex): At 8th level, a knight of hellfire gains immunity to poison. He also gains darkvision 60 feet if he does not already have it. This ability replaces aura of despair.

Cloak of Hell (Ex): At 9th level, the knight of hellfire gains acid resistance 5, cold resistance 10, and fire resistance 10. This ability replaces the cruelty gained at 9th level.

All-Seeing Eyes of Hell (Ex): At 11th level, a knight can see in darkness of any kind, even that created by a *deeper darkness* spell. He also gains telepathy 100 ft. This ability replaces aura of vengeance.

Hellfire Lord (Ex): At 15th level, a knight of hellfire becomes immune to fire. His acid and cold resistances increase to 10. His attacks are treated as lawful and evil for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. This ability replaces the cruelty gained at 15th level.

Hellfire Champion (Ex): At 20th level, a knight of hellfire becomes a true devil. He is treated as an outsider with the devil, evil, and lawful subtypes for the purpose of spells and magical effects. His DR increases to 10/good. Whenever he uses smite good and successfully strikes a good outsider, the outsider is also subject to a *banishment* spell, using his antipaladin level as the caster level (his weapon and unholy symbol automatically count as objects that the subject hates). After the *banishment* effect and damage from the attack is resolved, the smite ends. When he smites a creature, the knight of hellfire's summoned creatures also gain the benefits of the smite. This ability replaces unholy champion.

KNIGHT OF MANY EYES

The knight of many eyes prays to the old ones, demanding his fair share of eldritch power in return for his mortality.

Eldritch Transformation (Ex): At 5th level, a knight of many eyes gains a tentacle natural attack (which deals 1d4 points of bludgeoning damage for Medium creatures). The knight of many eyes has a 25% chance of ignoring critical hits and the bonus damage from sneak attacks as though he were wearing armor with the light fortification special ability. This ability replaces fiendish boon.

Many Eyes (Ex): At 8th level, a knight of many eyes cannot be flanked. He also gains darkvision 60 feet if he does not already have it. This ability replaces aura of despair.

Abominable Physique (Ex): At 9th level, the knight of many eyes gains immunity to poison. His chance of ignoring critical hits and sneak attacks increases to 50%, as though he were wearing armor with the moderate fortification special ability. This ability replaces the cruelty gained at 9th level.

Grasping Pseudopods (Ex): At 11th level, a knight of many eyes gains a second tentacle natural attack (which deals the same amount of damage as his other tentacle). All of the knight's tentacle natural attacks gain the grab special ability. This ability replaces the aura of vengeance ability.

Crushing Tentacles (Su): At 14th level, a knight of many eyes gains a third tentacle natural attack (which deals the same amount of damage as his other tentacles). He also gains the constrict special ability, dealing damage equal to his tentacle damage on a successful grapple attempt. This ability replaces aura of sin.

Eldritch Lord (Ex): At 15th level, a knight of many eyes' chance of ignoring critical hits and sneak attacks increases to 75%, as though he were wearing armor with the heavy fortification special ability. His tentacle natural attacks deal damage as if he was one size category larger. This ability replaces the cruelty gained at 15th level.

Eldritch Flesh (Ex): At 17th level, a knight of many eyes gains DR 5/good. He gains a fourth tentacle natural attack (which deals the same amount of damage as his other tentacles).

Eldritch Champion (Ex): At 20th level, a knight of many eyes becomes a true abomination. His type changes to aberration. He gains a fifth tentacle natural attack (which deals the same amount of damage as his other tentacles). He gains the frightful presence monster ability with a range of 60 feet. Any creature who fails a Will save against this effect (DC = 10 + 1/2 the antipaladin's level + the antipaladin's Charisma modifier) cower for 1 round and become shaken for 5d6 rounds. A creature hit by the antipaladin's smite good ability becomes nauseated for 1 round unless it succeeds at a Fortitude save (DC = 10 + 1/2 the antipaladin's level + the antipaladin's Charisma modifier). This ability replaces unholy champion.

KNIGHT OF THE ABYSS

Knights of the Abyss pledge their souls to demonic lords, and wreak chaos upon the world in their names.

Summon Demons (Sp): At 5th level, a knight of the Abyss can cast *summon monster III* as a spell-like ability a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier. He can cast this spell as a standard action and the creatures remain for 1 minute per level (instead of 1 round per level). At 5th level, and every 2 antipaladin levels thereafter, the power of this ability increases by 1 spell level, allowing him to summon more powerful creatures (to a maximum of *summon monster IX* at 17th level). At 19th level, this ability can be used as *gate* (to the Abyss only) or *summon monster IX*. If used as *gate*, the knight must pay any required material components. The knight of the Abyss cannot have more than one *summon monster* or *gate* spell active in this way at one time. If this ability is used again, any existing *summon monster* or *gate* spell immediately ends. These summon spells are considered to be part of his spell list for the purposes of spell-trigger and spell-completion items. The knight uses his class level as his caster level. He can only summon creatures with both the evil and chaotic subtypes when using this ability. This ability replaces fiendish boon.

Fortitude of Abyss (Ex): At 8th level, a knight of the Abyss gains immunity to poison. He also gains darkvision 60 feet if he does not already have it. This ability replaces aura of despair.

Cloak of the Abyss (Ex): At 9th level, the knight of the Abyss gains acid resistance 5, cold resistance 5, electricity resistance 10, and fire resistance 5. This ability replaces the cruelty gained at 9th level.

Demonic Corruption (Ex): At 11th level, a knight of the Abyss gains telepathy with a range of 100 feet, and gains a +2 insight bonus on Perception checks and initiative checks. This ability replaces aura of vengeance.

Abyssal Lord (Ex): At 15th level, a knight of the Abyss becomes immune to electricity. His acid, cold, and fire resistances increase to 10. His attacks are treated as chaotic and evil for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. This ability replaces the cruelty gained at 15th level.

Abyssal Champion (Ex): At 20th level, a knight of the Abyss becomes a true demon. He is treated as an outsider with the demon, evil, and chaotic subtypes for the purpose of spells and magical effects. His DR increases to 10/good. Whenever he uses smite good and successfully strikes a good outsider, the outsider is also subject to a banishment spell, using his antipaladin level as the caster level (his weapon and unholy symbol automatically count as objects that the subject hates). After the banishment effect and the damage from the attack is resolved, the smite immediately ends. When he smites a creature, the knight of the Abyss's summoned creatures also gain the benefits of the smite. This ability replaces unholy champion.

PLAGUEBEARER

Plaguebearers bring disease and blight wherever they go, spreading monstrous epidemics to which they are immune.

Class Skills: The plaguebearer adds Heal to his list of class abilities. This alters the antipaladin's class skills.

Touch of Disease (Su): At 3rd level, a plaguebearer gains the plague cruelty (see page 202). This ability replaces the cruelty gained at 3rd level.

Ravaging Plague (Su): At 5th level, the DC to resist a plaguebearer's disease is equal to 10 + 1/2 the plaguebearer's antipaladin level + his Charisma modifier (instead of the listed DC). The onset time for the plaguebearer's diseases is reduced to immediate. This modified DC and onset time applies

to all saves made against the disease, and the disease retains the modified DC and onset time even if it is spread to additional hosts. This ability replaces fiendish boon.

Direct Contagion (Su): At 8th level, the plaguebearer gains Corrupting Smite (see page 209) as a bonus feat. If he already has Corrupting Smite, he gains another feat that he qualifies for instead. This ability replaces aura of despair.

Channeled Contagion (Su): At 11th level, a plaguebearer gains Channel Cruelty (see page 209) as a bonus feat. If he already has Channeled Cruelty, he gains another feat that he qualifies for instead. This ability replaces aura of vengeance.

Exploit Illness (Ex): At 14th level, a plaguebearer gains a +2 insight bonus on attack and damage rolls against diseased targets. This ability replaces aura of sin.

Aura of Frailty (Su): At 17th level, a plaguebearer gains DR 5/good. Each enemy within 10 feet takes a –4 penalty on saving throws against diseases (including the plaguebearer's disease cruelty). This ability functions only while the antipaladin is conscious, not if he is unconscious or dead. This ability replaces aura of depravity.

Plague Champion (Su): At 20th level, a plaguebearer becomes a conduit for the might of the plague. His DR increases to 10/good. The first time each round that a plaguebearer hits the target of his smite with an attack roll, the target of his smite must succeed at a Fortitude save or become infected with all of the plaguebearer's diseases (the plaguebearer chooses to use this ability or Corrupting Smite prior to the attack). The DC is equal to 10 + 1/2 the plaguebearer's antipaladin level + his Charisma modifier. In addition, whenever he channels energy, he can choose to deal no damage. If he does, any creature who fails its save is inflicted with all of the plaguebearer's diseases.



NEW SPELLS

These new spells assist the antipaladin in destroying his enemies. Additional new antipaladin spells can be found in Kobold Press's *Deep Magic*.

DELAY PASSING

School necromancy [death, evil]; **Level** antipaladin 1, cleric 2, inquisitor 2, witch 2;

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range touch

Target living creature touched

Duration instantaneous and varies; see text

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

You draw forth the ebbing life force of a creature to question. Upon casting this spell, you must touch a living creature with –1 or fewer hit points. If the subject fails its saving throw, it dies, and you

temporarily prevent its spirit from passing into the next realm. You are able to hear the spirit, though it does not appear to any creature without the ability to see undead. The spirit lives within your psyche, and cannot see or hear anything but what you tell it.

You can ask the spirit one question per 2 caster levels, and must ask it a new question when the previous question is answered. The corpse's knowledge is limited to what it knew during life, including the languages it spoke. The spirit cannot lie to you, but it can refuse to answer or truthfully answer that it does not know. However, it will not pass into the next realm until it truthfully answers your questions. Once the spirit truthfully answers your questions, it passes.

FALSE SAVIOR

School enchantment (charm) [mind-affecting];
Level antipaladin 1, bard 1, mesmerist 1, shaman 1, sorcerer/wizard 1, witch 1; Domain charm 1; Subdomain slavery 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target one afraid humanoid creature (see text)

Duration 1 hour/level

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

You play upon the target's fears and present yourself as a friend. This spell acts in all ways like *charm person*, except for the following: You can only target a humanoid creature with the shaken, frightened, or cowering condition. If the target ceases to be shaken, frightened, or cowering, then the spell immediately ends. The creature gains no bonus on its Will save for being currently threatened or attacked by you or your allies.

FALSE SAVIOR, MASS

School enchantment (charm) [mind-affecting];
Level antipaladin 4, bard 4, mesmerist 4, shaman 5, sorcerer/wizard 5, witch 5

Target one or more afraid humanoid creatures, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart

Duration 1 hour/level

This spell functions like *false savior*, except that it affects a number of afraid humanoid creatures whose combined Hit Dice don't exceed twice your

level. If there are more potential targets than you can affect, you choose them one at a time until you reach the limit of HD you can affect. If you target only one creature, you ignore the spell's HD limit. When a creature ceases to be afraid, it is no longer charmed.

FEED THE WORMS

School necromancy [death, evil]; **Level** antipaladin 1, cleric 2, inquisitor 2, witch 2; Domain death 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range touch

Target living creature touched

Duration 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw Fortitude negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

You draw forth the ebbing life force of a creature and use it to feed the worms. Upon casting this spell, you invoke Qorgeth, Demon Lord of Worms, and touch a living creature that has –1 or fewer hit points. If the subject fails its saving throw, it dies and its body is completely consumed by worms in moments, leaving no remains. In its place, you summon a swarm of worms (treat as a *cockroach swarm*; *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*) which attacks all other creatures within its area except for you. If no living creatures are within its area, the swarm attacks or pursues the nearest creature as best it can.

LITANY OF FESTERING WOUNDS

School necromancy [evil, language-dependent];

Level antipaladin 1, inquisitor 1

Casting Time 1 swift action

Components V, S, DF

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target one injured creature

Duration 1 round and varies; see text

Saving Throw no; **Spell Resistance** yes

You draw upon Qorgeth, Demon Lord of Worms, and proclaims your target's wounds corrupted. You cannot target a creature with maximum hit points. Your target is sickened for 1 round. If your target is taking bleed damage, it is sickened until no longer taking bleed damage. While subject to this spell, the target cannot be the target of another spell that has the word "litany" in the title.

UNHOLY TEMPTATION

School enchantment (compulsion) [evil, mind-affecting]; **Level** antipaladin 2, bard 2, bloodrager 3, cleric 2, inquisitor 2, shaman 2, sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 2

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S, F/DF (a single gold coin and a drop of blood)

Range medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target one creature

Duration 1 round/level (D); see text

Saving Throw Will negates;

Spell Resistance yes

The subject is tempted by a moral quandary to which it is particularly weak-willed. For the duration of the spell, the target detects as chaotic evil, and loses any class abilities which rely on an alignment other than chaotic evil. Spells and abilities affect the target as though it were chaotic evil (for example, it can be the target of smite good, but not smite evil, and *protection from evil* provides defenses against it).

The subject does not morally or mentally become chaotic evil during this time, it only detects as chaotic evil to the universe. When the spell elapses, the target returns to its original alignment and regains the use of any alignment-dependent abilities.

WIELD SOUL

School necromancy [death, evil]; **Level** antipaladin 4

Casting Time 1 standard action

Components V, S

Range touch

Target living creature touched

Duration instantaneous and varies; see text

Saving Throw Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

You draw forth the ebbing life force of a creature and use its arcane power. Upon casting this spell, you must touch a living creature that has –1 or fewer hit points. If the subject fails its saving throw, it dies. You gain knowledge into the remaining spells and spell-like abilities that it could have cast that day were it still alive. Chose one of these spells or spell-like abilities with a casting time of 1 standard action or shorter. As a free action, you can cast this spell or spell-like ability, using the creature's caster level and relevant attribute score.

NEW FEATS

These new antipaladin feats expand the antipaladin's options both in and out of combat.

ARCANE SMITE

Your smite weakens your target's defenses against your spells.

Prerequisite: Antipaladin or paladin 5th level.

Benefit: The target of your smite takes a –4 penalty on saving throws to resist your spells and spell-like abilities.

CHANNEL CRUELTY

By calling on your boiling malice, you inflict terrible cruelties on all those nearby.

Prerequisites: Ability to channel negative energy, cruelty class feature

Benefit: Instead of channeling raw negative energy, you can choose to channel your cruelty. When you channel energy, you can add one of your cruelties. Creatures who fail their Will saves take half damage and are afflicted by the cruelty. Creatures who succeed at their Will saves take no damage.

CORRUPTION AURA

Your power surrounds you like a cloud of black flame.

Prerequisite: Touch of corruption class ability.

Benefit: As a swift action, you can expend two uses of your touch of corruption to gain an aura of negative energy for 1 round per every 2 antipaladin levels you have. All creatures within 5 feet take 1d6 points of negative energy damage at the beginning of your turn. Creatures healed by negative energy are healed by this aura. If you are healed by negative energy, you are also healed by this aura. Otherwise, it does not affect you. A 10th-level antipaladin with this feat has an aura of 10 feet. A 15th-level antipaladin with this feat deals 2d6 points of negative energy damage with his aura. A 20th-level antipaladin with this feat has an aura of 20 feet.

CORRUPTING SMITE

Those you hate will suffer the most under your wrath.

Prerequisites: Cruelty and smite good class features.

Benefit: On the first successful attack against the target of your smite, the target must succeed at a Fortitude save or suffer from one of your cruelties.

The DC of this save is equal to 10 + 1/2 your antipaladin level + your Charisma modifier.

DOUBLE CRUELTY

Not content with base misery, you relish in overwhelming your enemies with corruption.

Prerequisites: Antipaladin level 15th, cruelty and touch of corruption class features.

Benefit: When a target fails a save against your touch of corruption, you can afflict them with two cruelties instead of one.

ENEMIES OF ALL BREEDS

You have many enemies, and not all of them are good. None will stand in your way.

Prerequisites: Smite good class feature.

Benefit: You can spend two uses of your smite good ability to smite an evil target as though it were good.

EXPANDED AURA

Your divine auras spread far beyond what should be possible for a mortal.

Prerequisite: Antipaladin or paladin level 3rd.

Benefit: The size of your holy or unholy auras double. This includes your aura of courage, aura of cowardice, aura of depravity, aura of despair, aura of faith, aura of justice, aura of resolve, aura of righteousness, aura of sin, and aura of vengeance, as well as similar auras granted by antipaladin or paladin archetypes.

FAST CORRUPTION

By working your unholy power into your attacks, you are able to speed your spread of corruption.

Prerequisite: Touch of corruption class feature.

Benefit: You can make a touch of corruption attack in place of an attack.

Normal: Touch of corruption is a standard action.

IMPROVED CRUELTY

Your cruelties are harder to resist.

Prerequisite: Cruelty class feature.

Benefit: Add 2 to the DC of saving throws made to resist the effects of your cruelty ability.

MISLEADING AURA

Deception is crucial on the path of evil, and there is no better disguise than that of your enemies.

Prerequisites: Cha 15, antipaladin level 7th.

Benefit: You detect and leave an aura as a lawful good paladin of your level for the purposes of *aura sight*, *detect alignment*, and other attempts to learn your alignment. You can dismiss or reactivate this guise as a swift action.

PERSONAL SACRIFICE

You may overextend yourself to draw upon the great powers above (or below).

Prerequisite: Antipaladin or paladin 5th level.

Benefit: You can smite good or smite evil without expending a use of smite good or smite evil by accepting 2 points of burn (2 points of nonlethal damage per antipaladin and paladin level). You can use lay on hands or touch of corruption without expending a use of lay on hands or touch of corruption by accepting 1 point of burn (1 points of nonlethal damage per antipaladin and paladin level). These points of burn act in all ways like the kineticist's burn class ability; it is nonlethal damage which can only be cured by a full night's rest.

STRIKE OF CORRUPTION

The strike of your fist is infused with evil power.

Prerequisites: Improved Unarmed Strike, touch of corruption class feature.

Benefit: When you hit an enemy with an unarmed strike, you can expend one use of touch of corruption to deal an additional 1d6 points of negative energy damage for every 4 antipaladin levels you have.

STRIKE OF CRUELTY

Your cruelties are channeled through brutal strikes.

Prerequisites: Improved Unarmed Strike, cruelty class feature.

Benefit: When you hit an enemy with an unarmed strike, you can expend one use of touch of corruption to inflict the target with a cruelty. The target can attempt a Fortitude save to resist, as normal.

SAMPLE ANTIPALADINS

The forces of evil require many dark servants.

HEBROG, QORGETH SUPPLICANT CR 7

XP 3,200

Female human antipaladin (plaguebearer) 8
(*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init –1; **Senses** Perception +1

Auras cowardice (10 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18 (+9 armor, –1 Dex)

hp 80 (8d10+32)

Fort +13, **Ref** +6, **Will** +12

Immune disease

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee unarmed strike +11/+6 (1d3+3)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 5/day (DC 19, 4d6), cruelty (DC 19; plague, sickened), smite good 3/day, touch of corruption 11/day (4d6)

Antipaladin Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; conc. +13)

At will—*detect good*

Antipaladin Spells Prepared (CL 5th; conc. +10)

2nd—*feed the worms* (DC 17), *litany of festering wounds* (DC 17)

1st—*cause fear* (DC 16), *curse water* (DC 16), *doom of blood*^{DM} (DC 16)

TACTICS

During Combat Hebrog moves close to her enemies, either using her fists or her touch of corruption to share her diseases with her enemies. She typically leads with tuberculosis, then moves on to filth fever and cholera. If she suspects an enemy is carrying a disease, she intentionally gets hit by one of its attacks to contract the illness. If facing a creature with immunity to disease, she instead attempts to smite it, or take the hits so that her weaker allies are not slain.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 8, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 19

Feats Corrupting Smite, Deceitful, Extra Lay on Hands, Improved Unarmed Strike, Misleading Aura, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics –7 (–11 when jumping), Bluff +18, Disguise +18, Heal +9, Stealth +4

Languages Common, Elven

SQ aura of evil, ravaging plague (bog rot, cholera, filth fever, leprosy, tuberculosis; DC 19), touch of corruption, unholy resilience

Combat Gear *potion of eagle's splendor*, *potion of haste*; **Other Gear** full plate, *amulet of mighty fists* +1

Hebrog worships Qorgeth, Demon Lord of Worms, and weakens civilization in his name. The antipaladin poses as a healer, and travels the realm offering “assistance” to the weak and injured. She cures patients of their wounds, but infects them with virulent diseases which spread like wildfire throughout the populace. In her wake, she leaves hundreds of dead or dying—proper worm-meal for her master.

CARREON, LORD OF BLOOD CR 14

XP 38,400

Male half-orc antipaladin (goremaster) 15
(*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*)

CE Medium humanoid (human, orc)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception –1

Aura blood (10 ft.), cowardice (10 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 132 (15d10+45)

Fort +13, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities orc ferocity; **Immune** disease

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *keen wounding greatsword* +21/+16/+11 (2d6+8/17-20 plus 1 bleed)

Special Attacks aura of sin, bloody channel 4/day (DC 19, 6d4 plus 6 bleed), bloody smite 5/day, cruelty (DC 19; bleed, blinded, cursed, degeneration, poisoned), touch of corruption 9/day (7d6)

Antipaladin Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th; conc. +17)

At will—*detect good*

Antipaladin Spells Prepared (CL 12th; conc. +14)

4th—*sanguine horror III*^{DM}

3rd—*caustic blood*^{SG} (DC 16), *sanguine horror II*^{DM}

2nd—*hold person* (DC 14), *sanguine horror I*^{DM}, *vital mark*^{DM} (DC 15)

1st—*bane* (DC 13), *cause fear* (DC 13), *litany of festering wounds* (DC 13), *staunch*^{DM}

TACTICS

During Combat Carreon sees little use for complex tactics in combat. He channels bloody negative energy if surrounded by foes, and simply strikes down his enemies if he is engaged in one-on-one combat. Occasionally, he will horrify his enemies by summoning bloody minions, but usually prefers to just cut them to pieces.

STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 14
Base Atk +15; CMB +20; CMD 31

Feats Bleeding Critical, Bloody Assault, Cleave, Corruption Aura, Critical Focus, Furious Focus, Power Attack

Skills Intimidate +22, Survival +14; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Intimidate

Languages Common, Orc

SQ aura of evil, aura of vengeance, fiendish boon (weapon), orc blood, touch of corruption, unholy resilience

Other Gear +1 agile breastplate, +1 keen wounding greatsword, scabbard of stanching^{APG}

Carreon is a Doomspeaker, leader of a demon cult and adherent to the *Book of Nine Dooms*. He leads a small host relative to other Doomspeakers of his power, for his ferocity drives away all but the craziest of minions. The antipaladin revels in death and destruction. His army sacks cities and villages, putting all to the sword and performing horrifying blood rites in the gore that follows.

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