

**AEGIS
OF
EMPIRES**

AE05



RACE FOR SHATAAKH-UULM



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PATHFINDER
COMPATIBLE



RACE FOR SHATAAKH-UULM

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WELCOME TO THE AEGIS OF EMPIRES ADVENTURE PATH

Welcome to the Lost Lands, the campaign setting of the adventures and books by Frog God Games and Necromancer Games before it! “But this is Legendary Games?” you say. Yes, yes it is, but as the principal developer of the Lost Lands setting — having the privilege and pleasure of combing through every single product, word-by-word, from those two companies’ considerable catalog of books to determine how it all fit together into a coherent whole — I had the opportunity to continue my work with the setting. By mutual agreement upon the end of my tenure with Frog God Games in 2018, I was able to provide them with the bible of Lost Lands material I had been collating since 2010 and was graciously allowed to retain the rights to continue to make my own contributions to the setting I had poured so much into in Lost Lands-compatible products. I also purchased the rights to the *Aegis of Empires Adventure Path* that had already been in the works for some time (though under the name *Ashes of Empires* at that time, and changed due to similarities in titles from other companies that were being released in a similar timeframe), so I could continue the development I had already started on it and nurture it through to the end. That Legendary Games was willing to adopt such a project, was icing on the cake and what has allowed me to put this product into your hands.

SPECIAL ELECTRONIC FEATURES

We’ve hyperlinked this product internally from the Table of Contents and externally with links to online resources like the [Archives of Nethys](#) and [p2.d2opfsrd.com](#)! If it is in the core rulebook, we generally didn’t link to it unless the rule is an obscure one. The point is not to supersede the game books, but rather to help support you, the player, in accessing the rules, especially those from newer books or that you may not have memorized.

ABOUT LEGENDARY GAMES

Legendary Games is an all-star team of authors and designers, founded by Clark Peterson of Necromancer Games, Inc. Legendary Games uses a cooperative, team-based approach to bring you, the Paizo fan, the best expansion material for your game. We are gamers and storytellers 1st, and we believe that passion shows in our products. So check us out, and Make Your Game Legendary!

Visit us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), and check out our website at www.makeyourgamelegendary.com.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND INSIDE THE RACE FOR SHATAAKH-UULM

Following the *Legend of the Burning Star*, the adventurers retrace the Conroi Expedition's path out into the seemingly endless plains of the Haunted Steppe and face the legendary perils to be found there. Braving the harsh elements, hostile cannibal tribes, and eerie burning undead, the party must piece together the hidden trail left by the expedition nearly a century before. In doing so they discover the true prize sought by that ill-fated group as well as an ancient evil from the Lost Lands' past that could arise to threaten all the civilized realms if left unchecked.

Race for Shataakh-Uulm is a *Pathfinder Second Edition* 12th-level adventure set in the fabled Haunted Steppe in the *Lost Lands Campaign Setting*.

While designed for use with the Lost Lands, these adventures are loosely connected rather than following a strictly controlled plotline, enabling you to easily place them into any campaign world. Your heroes can explore at their own pace to discover the secrets of antiquity or be consumed in their seeking as they brave the dark paths of the *Aegis of Empires*.

Legendary Games was founded on the principle of delivering first-class product for your *Pathfinder Second Edition* experience, brought to you by the very authors who design and contribute to the adventures, hardbacks, and campaign supplements you are already using. The Legendary Games tradition is to combine rich story and background, innovative layout, beautiful aesthetics, and excellence in design that is second to none. This product is the latest in that tradition, and we hope you enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed making it. Game on!



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The following superscript notations are used to denote references to previous products set in the Lost Lands from Frog God Games and Necromancer Games, as well as other rules citations. References followed by a dash and a number indicate the page number on which the specific reference can be found:

^{AK:M} = *Ancient Kingdoms: Mesopotamia* by Necromancer Games

^{AP11} = Issue #11 of the official adventure path series for the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*

^{AP13} = Issue #13 of the official adventure path series for the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*

^{AP15} = Issue #15 of the official adventure path series for the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*

^{AP61} = Issue #61 of the official adventure path series for the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*

^{AP110} = Issue #110 of the official adventure path series for the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*

^{DMC} = *Dead Man's Chest* by **Frog God Games**

^{F2} = *F2: Fane of the Witch King* by **Necromancer Games**

^{FB} = *Fields of Blood* by **Frog God Games**

^{G1} = *G1: The Siege of Durgam's Folly* by Necromancer Games

^{G6} = *G6: The Grey Citadel* by **Necromancer Games**

^{K1} = *K1: A Family Affair* by **Necromancer Games**

^{K12} = *K12: The Eamonvale Incursion* by **Necromancer Games**

^{LL0} = *The Lost Lands Campaign Setting* by **Frog God Games**

^{LL1} = *LL1: Stoneheart Valley* by **Frog God Games**

^{LL3} = *LL3: Sword of Air* by **Frog God Games**

^{LL5} = *LL5: Borderland Provinces* by **Frog God Games**

^{LL6} = *LL6: The Northlands Saga Complete* by **Frog God Games**

^{LL7} = *LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City* by **Frog God Games**.

^{LL8} = *LL8: Bard's Gate* by **Frog God Games**

^{PB} = *Pathways Bestiary* by **Rite Publishing**

^{QoD} = *Quests of Doom* by **Frog God Games**

^{TBM} = *The Black Monastery* by **Frog God Games**

INTRODUCTION

Race for Shataakh-Uulm is a *Pathfinder Second Edition* adventure for four to six player characters of 12th level. The adventure's events immediately follow those begun in the adventure *Legend of the Burning Star*, the fifth chapter in the *Ashes of Empires Adventure Path* and designed to pick up where its predecessor ended — at the edge of civilization preparing to cross the Wanaheeli River and enter the bleak Haunted Steppe. From there, the PCs trek across this desolate landscape in the doomed footsteps of the explorers that came before them as they search for the elusive answers to their many questions surrounding their final destination: the fabled Pit of the Burning Star. Characters should be 14th level by the end of the adventure.

Race for Shataakh-Uulm can be placed in any campaign setting but, though it is not an official Lost Lands adventure, it is designed for and fully compatible with the *Lost Lands Campaign Setting* of Frog God Games. In the *Lost Lands* setting the adventure takes place in the midst of the Haunted Steppe, the trackless plains that comprise the whole of the northwestern quarter of the continent of Akados. The Haunted Steppe is a shunned and desolate land steeped in a history of tragedy and bloodshed on a scale seen nowhere else on the world of Lloegyr. And, as the name implies, the entire accursed region is considered by most to be haunted. It is into this daunting wilderness that the player characters must sojourn.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Two millennia ago, a meteor composed of exceedingly rare starmetals — a crust of siccacite wrapped around a core of noqual — fell from the sky and landed in the midst of the vast plains of northern Akados. Its plummet was only hours behind a sister meteor that landed in the desolate Red Waste, thousands of miles to the east in the distant Assurian Plains^{AK:M}. The devastating impact from this enormous celestial projectile vaporized the earth with its heat and force and delved a crater deep into ground, while throwing up massive crater walls high above the surrounding plains. The superheated matter bored deep into the ground and



buried itself beneath the debris thrown up by its own force. What plains dwellers weren't instantly annihilated by the destruction of the landing, by virtue of being many, many miles away, nevertheless witnessed the fiery streak of its descent and felt the tremor of its arrival. All those within hundreds of miles saw the plumes of black, caustic smoke that rose taller than the highest mountains the surrounded the Haunted Steppe causing devastation to the wildlife of the region, turning the already arid landscape into an even harsher environment in the thousands of square miles surrounding the point of impact.

Because of the remote location of the devastation, only the wandering tribes of Shattered Folk noted the site where the great stone fell to earth. To scholars and astromancers* of the civilized southlands it was merely a mysterious falling star of great magnitude and was soon forgotten. And even among the Shattered Folk, beyond a general avoidance of the region, knowledge of the cataclysmic event faded from

*Astromancy has a long history in the *Lost Lands*. An astromancer is a magical practitioner who combines astrology with the physical laws of astronomy. See page 88 of *Bard's Gate* by Necromancer Games, page 197 of *LL: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City*, and page 281 of *LLS: Bard's Gate*, both by Frog God Games.

most collective thought and memory over time. The tribes of the Shattered Folk did keep the legend of the Pit of the Burning Star — or *Shataakh-Uulm* in their language of Kirkut — alive in their folklore, but little was made of it beyond a simple fable about a barren region of the central steppes where no one much wanted to travel anyway.

Nonetheless, an occasional curious or unwise soul would turn his mind's eye in the direction of the lonesome, smoldering hellhole in the middle of a godsforsaken waste and wonder what secrets it might yet hold. When more than a thousand years later, in 2861 I.R., Prince Cale, twin brother of the Foerdewaith Overking Kennet and first grand duke of the recently established Grand Duchy of Reme turned his eyes towards the open lands of the Haunted Steppe as a new frontier for colonization, he began the trek down the long road of destiny that made him perhaps the most noteworthy of the Pit's misguided visitors.

Prince Cale led the ill-fated colonization of the Haunted Steppe in what became known as the Caleen Colonies. His Rhemian colonies stretched far to the west along the Deepfells Mountains at the southern edge of the steppe and far to the northwest across the interior of the plains in what was to later become known as the Road of Sorrows. The elven heritage that ran in the veins of the overkings of Foere ensured that Cale lived to see his colonies reach all the way to the forbidden shores of Lake Hali and the foothills of the Lost Mountains in 2931 I.R., and it was this act that triggered the 16-year onslaught of ever-mounting humanoid raids that ultimately developed into a full-scale shadow walker-led invasion that rolled across the Caleen Colonies as it streamed down from the north. This devastating invasion was only prevented from penetrating into Reme and the heartlands of Foere beyond by the timely creation of the Wizard's Wall in 2947 by the archmages Margon and Alycthron^{LL1-100}, blocking Crynomar Gap from the shadow horde until it finally dispersed back into the fringes of the Haunted Steppe from which it had spawned.

Great was the grieving in Reme and the whole of the Kingdoms of Foere for the loss of the many thousands of colonists, not the least of which was the beloved Grand Duke Cale of the House of Macobert himself. But little did the southlanders know that this object of their grief deserved no such lamentation, for Cale, the Grand Duke of Reme and Prince of Foere, had died in the Pit of the Burning Star long before the shadow walker invasion.

It was almost 1,500 years before interest in the Legend of the Burning Star reared again in the southlands. This time it was the famed explorer Aroldus Gravenfar who began researching

it after searching for the infamous *Book of the Star-Seed*^{AKM} relating to the Burning Star's sister meteorite in distant Libynos. After the legendary Gravenfar disappeared upon the Haunted Steppe, it was only two years later that the Conroi Expedition likewise crossed the Wizard's Wall to explore the vast steppes beyond. Ostensibly the Conroi Expedition was to follow in the footsteps of the long-lost Caleen Colonies and find what they could of the fates of their ancestors, but while a portion of the expedition was actually successful in establishing the Conroi Settlements at the southern edge of the Haunted Steppe, a less well-known portion of the expedition indeed travelled far up the Road of Sorrows — but not all the way to Lake Hali. No, this expedition sought not the remnants of the Caleen Colonies but rather the discovery that Cale himself had made and that ultimately led to his own doom and that of his people. This expedition sought the legendary Pit of the Burning Star. The expedition suffered mightily from the privations and dangers of the Haunted Steppe, but its survivors managed to reach their intended destination, only to fall to the insidious powers that now controlled the site. In the end, the land, its inhabitants and the treasure itself devoured them in a bloody revelry of carnage and madness upon the verge of the very prize they sought.

Gravenfar and the Conroi Expedition vanished into anonymity, causing the trail to once again grow cold. Yet, the Pit of the Burning Star's patience wears thin. Its existence continues to appeal to Man's greed, and magnificent tales of rich star metals once again reach voracious ears. In response to the tantalizing rumors, several states and powerful individuals launched their own bids to acquire the Pit's riches. While dreams of fabulous riches dance in the heads of the seekers, nightmares of eldritch lore and sheer lunacy swirl about in this remote stronghold and await only the arrival of those in pursuit of the valuable star metals to be unleashed upon the lands of Akados.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

With the events of Legend of the Burning Star behind them and civilization at their backs, the PCs and their expedition cross the Wanaheeli River and enter into the ultimate uncharted territories of Akados — the Haunted Steppe. Here, numerous natural hazards and hostile creatures, including the vicious Shattered Folk, dog their every step across the unforgiving grasslands. The PCs, following Aroldus Gravenfar's journal recovered in Dun Eamon and Azmerius's writings that they unearthed in Nains, discover the landmarks known as The Path of the Six left by those that came before them. Along the way, they encounter the strange burning dead monstrosities that their predecessors described in their writings. In addition, the PCs soon realize that they are not alone in their quest, as other factions also

desire the impact site's legendary wealth. Orcs from the Stoneheart Mountains and mercenaries under the employ of an unscrupulous noble of the Kingdom of Foere stand in the way of their mission. Worse still, they may also learn that their dwarven allies have deceived them and pursue an agenda of their own that does not include the good fortune or even the survival of the PCs.

Beating back the living, unliving, and natural obstacles barring their path, the PCs finally glimpse the millennia-old, roaring fire that still burns inside the heart of an immense, smoking crater. A thorough search of the surrounding area reveals the final resting place of the Conroi Expedition inside the collapsed mine where the deranged members tore each other to pieces in wild fits of madness along with the surprising discovery that the correspondence they have followed was never sent by the survivors but somehow made its way to the archives of Nains by other unknown means.

Hordes of burning undead, a Castorhagi team of mercenary specialists, and a rival group from Bard's Gate hamper — or can potentially aid the PCs' efforts — to delve deeper into the crater. However, in the mines and caverns beneath the crater, the PCs discover the undead creatures' peculiar handiwork. They have been extracting the molten ore seeping from the burning comet for centuries and combining it with another highly radioactive crystal leached from the comet called metallurgic amber to mint coins tainted with that isotope's madness-inducing properties as part of a greater scheme begun centuries ago by none other than the Great Old One, Hastur the Unspeakable. Now controlled by undead in service to the King in Yellow, it is Hastur's will that the madness spawned by the radiation of the Pit of the Burning Star be spread throughout the Lost Lands so that the nations of Akados can be brought into the fold of a new Carcosa with the spreading of his madness. The arrival of the PCs proves to be the means of stopping this ancient plot but could well also prove to be the very means of its success if they are not careful.



CHAPTER ONE: INTO THE HAUNTED STEPPE

Unlike its predecessors in the *Ashes of Empires Adventure Path*, the previous adventure, *Legend of the Burning Star* segues directly into *Race for Shataakh-Uulm*. Accompanied by their Ironskull dwarf allies, the PCs stand on the bank of the Wanaheeli River that straddles the boundary between civilization — such as it is in the Conroi Settlements — and the largely uncharted expanse of the Haunted Steppe. A long journey across the arid grasslands awaits them on the other side of the swift waterway.

If you have chosen to run *Race for Shataakh-Uulm* without running *Legend of the Burning Star* first, you can involve your players in this adventure in multiple ways. The simplest way is to simply bring the PCs into the quest for the Burning Pit by having them hired directly by Goribald Ironskull who instructs them to meet him to undertake the quest at the Wanaheeli River at the northern edge of the Conroi Settlements. This brings the PCs immediately into the adventure at the point where *Race for Shataakh-Uulm* picks up without requiring the skullduggery and misdirection that they must endure in *Legend of the Burning Star* just to reach this point. This creates a more straightforward method of getting the PCs directly into the hunt for the Burning Pit yet still leaves the many surprises and deceptions that lie in store for them intact.

Alternately, you can have the PCs pursuing the legendary Burning Pit for their own reasons. Perhaps they are scholars of Aroldus Gravenfar seeking to retrace the steps of his last journey, or perhaps like that erstwhile explorer they too hope to locate the Burning Star whose tale parallels that of the Pit of Yhath^{AK:M-74} in Libynos. If you opt to go in this direction, you will either need to find a reason for the PCs to ally with the Ironskull expeditionary group — perhaps sharing a mutual goal and an agreement to share what is found between them — or substantially rework the adventure itself to remove the references to the PCs accompanying that company of mountain dwarf company explorers. You will also need to account for the revealed Ironskull betrayal that occurs later in the adventure.

THE IRONSKULL EXPEDITION

The expedition had opportunity to purchase supplies and mounts and hire guides at the end of the previous adventure. If you did not play that adventure, then the materials available for hire in the Conroi Settlements on the Plains of Campacha as determined by their overall settlement level (7).

Prices for supplies and mounts are available at the standard prices listed in the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook (Second Edition)*, though the only kind of horses that can be purchased are mustangs (see below). Additional types of equipment geared specifically for travel upon the plains can be found on pages 37–39 of *Fields of Blood* by **Frog God Games**.

The only hirelings that will cross the Wanaheeli River with the expedition are guides, and these must be paid 5 cp per day with a two-week advance. The expedition must also provide provisions for the guides and their mounts. No more than three guides can be hired in the settlements, and any guide has a 50% chance of being of either Foerdewaith ancestry or Compachan ancestry (for Shattered Folk). All guides ride mustangs.

CAMPACHAN GUIDE

CREATURE 7

Statistics as elite **monster hunter** (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*, *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*)

Initiative Perception +15

FOERDEWAITH GUIDE

CREATURE 7

Statistics as **hunter** (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*)

Initiative Perception +17

Plains Walker This ability works as Forest Walker, but for a plains environment.

MUSTANG

CREATURE 2

N **LARGE** **ANIMAL**

Perception +6; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +9

Str +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** –4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

AC 17; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6

HP 36

Buck ↻ **DC** 16

Speed 40 feet

Melee ♦ hoof +8, **Damage** 1d6+4 bludgeoning

Equine Endurance (exploration) The mustang may Hustle for one hour at a time, but then may not Gallop for one hour.

Gallop ♦♦ The mustang Strides twice. It has a +10-foot circumstance bonus to its Speed during these Strides.

In addition to any hired guides and the PCs themselves, the rest of the expedition consists of the expedition leader, **Goribald Ironskull**, his captain, **Okrem Kresh**, **6 Clan Ironskull guards**, and **4 halfling envoys** named Bono Curlytop, Val Nannygarter, Silas Soggybottom, and Billie Pumpkin. Remove any of expedition members that were slain in the previous adventure. The dwarves ride **riding horses**, and halflings ride **ponies**. A remuda of an additional **6 riding horses** and **2 ponies** accompanies the group as remounts along with a string of **11 pack mules** for supplies and equipment.

GORIBALD IRONSKULL

CREATURE 13

See "The Big Secret," Chapter 2 (page 58)

Initiative Perception +26; darkvision

CAPTAIN OKREM KRESH

CREATURE 11

See "The Big Secret," Chapter 2 (page 58)

Initiative Perception +20; darkvision

CLAN IRONSKULL GUARDS (6)

CREATURE 6

See "The Big Secret," Chapter 2 (page 58)

Initiative Perception +12 (+14 for initiative); darkvision

CLAN IRONSKULL ENVOYS (4)

CREATURE 4

See "The Big Secret," Chapter 2 (page 58)

Initiative Perception +14

RIDING HORSES (14)

CREATURE 1

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +5; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

PONIES (6)

CREATURE 0

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +4; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

PACK MULES (11)

CREATURE 0

Statistics as pony (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*)

Initiative Perception +4; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

CROSSING THE WANAHEELI

Once you have determined the reasons for the party's involvement in this quest across the Haunted Steppe, the adventure begins at the Wanaheeli River (area A on the Haunted Steppe map) as they prepare to cross into the wilderness of the vast and uncharted plains.

The serrated points of several stones pierce the roiling veneer of the fast-moving Wanaheeli River that carves a path across the desolate grasslands. The rocky riverbed is visible in some shallow spots, but the churning, frothy water conceals much of the bottom beneath the foam. The land beyond the river stretches for as far as the eye can see, a seemingly tireless monotony of hardy, greenish-brown grasses covers the parched swells of the rolling plain.

For most travelers, the Wanaheeli River can present a significant obstacle. Several pontoon bridges and even a few stone bridges are known to cross it, but none of these are in the area where the PCs' expedition intends to cross to start their journey as indicated by the writings of the Conroi Expedition. To do so would require a journey of at least 100 miles just to reach such a crossing and then make it back to point A on the wilderness map. Roughly 70 feet wide, the fierce current and jagged stones that line the waterway make it impassable to any vessel larger than a small kayak or canoe. Even then, the piloting check (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*) is a DC 26 Athletics check or DC 24 Sailing Lore to safely navigate to the opposite bank. On a failure on a piloting check to Drive, the boat becomes uncontrolled, while on a critical failure it crashes into the rocks, tearing a hole that causes it to rapidly sink. Someone in a capsized or destroyed boat as well as those that attempt to navigate the channel under their own power must succeed on a DC 20 Athletics check to Swim.

The Wanaheeli River averages 3d4+2 feet deep along its length, but in some areas are shallows only 1d3 feet deep. These shallows can be located with a successful DC 25

Nature or Survival check and can be used to walk across the river, although those crossing must still contend with the current, which is strongest at these shallower sections. A creature that walks atop the shallow rocks and the accompanying rapids must succeed on a DC 20 Acrobatics check to Balance as they fight against the powerful current to avoid being swept away (they gain a +2 circumstance bonus if they critically succeeded at their Nature or Survival check to find a path). Horses and ponies (and other four-legged creatures) receive a +2 bonus because of their extra footing, and PCs can Command an Animal to Aid them.

Any creature swept away by the current is carried 1d6 x 10 feet before getting clear of the shallows section he was in. They take 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet they are carried. At the end of this, they must Swim (DC 20 Athletics check) to avoid drowning and make it to shore. On a critical failure, the current carries those swept away at a speed of 2d6 x 10 feet per round for those who try to keep pace along the shore.

Development: Obviously, as high-level characters, the party can probably easily circumvent the river by magical or other means. However, the dwarves of the Ironskull Expedition and the many riding and pack animals will be forced to use more mundane means unless the party intends to whisk them across as well.

Goribald intends to try to locate an area of shallows where they can attempt a crossing (see above). He then sends two of the strongest dwarves in his company to wade across bearing heavy ropes tied to their waists unless the party volunteers to take this duty upon themselves. These dwarves bear the normal risk of being swept away as detailed above, but with the advantage that they can be pulled out by the comrades after 1 round of being buffeted for 1d6 x 5 feet. If the dwarves make it across, they secure their ends of the ropes to hardy scrub trees growing on the opposite bank while Goribald and company secures their ends to similar trees on the near bank. Then using carabiners^{MoM} to attach themselves and their animals to the crossing ropes, the dwarves will attempt the crossing. The use of the rope and carabiners provides a +4 item bonus to the crossing attempt and means on a failed check the individual is only delayed for 1 round as he slips and is buffeted for 1d6 bludgeoning damage after which he can regain his footing and make another Strength check until the crossing is complete.

TRAVELING THE HAUNTED STEPPE

From an ecological standpoint, the Haunted Steppe is just that — a steppe. It is a cool, semi-arid biome overrun

with short grasses. Water and food can be scarce, especially during the winter months. The land is overwhelming flat with some modest undulations and the occasional small hill. This fact coupled with the lack of trees — other than scrubs that proliferate along waterways — and other tall plants increases visibility throughout much of the Haunted Steppe to 6d6 x 40 feet. The range decreases slightly in regions that contain swales and other changes in elevation. The absence of undergrowth also significantly eases overland travel through the area. Horses are perfectly suited for this terrain, as any visible natural and manmade obstacles are easily avoidable in most circumstances.

Nonetheless, the roughly 900-mile trek to the crater proves to be a grueling trip that stretches out over the course of many weeks or even months. A human traveling on foot covers 20 miles of ground per day, although gear and their dwarven allies may slow the pace even more. Mounts travel faster than the average man, but the trackless terrain reduces the animals' speed to three-quarters normal speed. (See the "Exploration Mode" section in Chapter 9 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* for more details about overland movement.) The planned route is to follow in the footsteps of the Conroi Expedition in order to locate the Road of Sorrows that points them towards the impact site. This course of action takes a considerable amount of time and puts the PCs and their counterparts in harm's way, but it is also the only reliable method of finding the Pit of the Burning Star from the clues they have been given.

As was discovered by Gravenfar and can be confirmed by the PCs' own efforts, no form of magic provides guidance to the location of the Burning Pit because of its high concentration of magic-nullifying noqual. In addition, while aerial reconnaissance may prove to be of some value, until the expedition is actually in the vicinity of the Pit it will likely prove fruitless. It is true that the Pit continues to exude a column of thick smoke to this day, but with only the vaguest notion of where the Pit might lie and the fact that the central Haunted Steppe covers more than 1.4 million square miles of terrain, the chances of finding this landmark without guidance is still like trying to find a needle in a stack of needles, and includes with it the very real danger to those doing the aerial recon of losing track of their own expedition caravan. And while hiring local guides from among the Shattered Folk of the Conroi Settlements is likely to be of value in navigating safely across the steppes, no one that the PCs can locate has ever made the journey up the Road of Sorrows to find the Burning Pit. The locals remain in the dark to its location as much as the expedition members. While short range aerial patrols and local guides might prove to be of some

benefit, in general the long overland route following the clues left in the journal of Azmerius remains the surest way of reaching their destination.

Naturally, a grinding slog across the expansive grasslands may seem like an unattractive option especially in light of the fact that the PCs and their allies are competing against a slew of rivals aspiring to reach Shataakh-Uulm before they do. Compounding this problem is the fact that the Haunted Steppe deservedly earned its moniker from the inordinate numbers of undead that roam the desolate landscape. In addition to these abominations, natural hazards, aggressive tribesmen, warmongering orcs, and a host of other monstrosities also inhabit the barren grasslands in their quests for prey, riches, or to temporarily sate their uncontrollable bloodlust. But the PCs can take some small comfort in the fact that that's why they are called adventurers.

HAUNTED STEPPE RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Whether the PCs choose the long road or try a shortcut, the journey across the windy grasslands is fraught with substantial peril. While traveling through the Haunted Steppe, roll 1d8 to check for encounters once during the day and once during the night. During the day, an encounter takes place on a roll of 1; at night, an encounter takes place on a roll of 1–2. If an encounter occurs, roll d% and consult the table below or substitute creatures or hazards of your own choosing.

d%	Encounter	Average Encounter	Source
01–10	Black blizzard	Trivial 12	FB
11–15	Grassfire	Severe 12	FB
16–25	1d4+2 bat swarms	Trivial 12	B1
26–30	1d4+2 ankhrav	Trivial 12	B1
31–35	1d6+6 ghouls plus 1 ghast	Trivial 12	B1
36–40	Orc war party	Trivial 12	—
41–45	2d10 Shattered Folk	Trivial 12	GG
46–50	1d8+2 wargs	Trivial 12	B1
51–55	3d6 locust swarms	Trivial 8	B2
56–60	2d4+4 cockatrices	Trivial 12	B1
61–65	1d3+4 venomous snake swarms	Trivial 12	B1
66–70	1d3+1 cauthooj	Low 12	B1
71–80	4d10 mustangs ¹	Trivial 12	FB
81–90	3d10 bison ¹	Trivial 12	B2

91–95	3d6 mastodons ¹	Severe 12	B2
96–00	Sinkhole	Trivial 12	FB

¹ These creatures may stampede (see “Stampede” below for details).



Ankhravs: These plains burrowers attempt to attack from below ground, allowing them to use Stealth for their initiative. Every time this encounter happens, roll a DC 11 flat check, if successful, the ankhravs are accompanied by a hive mother.

ANKHRAV CREATURE 3

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)
Initiative Stealth +8

HIVE MOTHER CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)
Initiative Stealth +11

Bat Swarms: This encounter only occurs at night, the early morning hours, or the late evening hours. Insects are perhaps the most abundant form of life on the steppe, and vast swarms of bats feed upon them when they are most active during the hours of darkness. If this encounter occurs, the PCs just happen to be in an area where a particularly juicy bug population is present, and the bats are as happy to sup on the blood of the PCs as on their normal insect prey.

BAT SWARM

CREATURE 2

Statistics as elite **vampire bat swarm** (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*)

Initiative Perception +12; echolocation (precise) 20 feet, low-light vision

Bison: A herd of these ungulates grazes out on the prairie. There is a 20% chance that they are encountered as a stampede (see below). Otherwise they do not attack unless provoked or otherwise threatened. If they are not stampeding and you wish to determine if the PCs might provoke them into doing so, consult the table under “Stampede” below.

BISON

CREATURE 4

Statistics as **rhinoceros** (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)*)

Initiative Perception +19; scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Black Blizzard: A black blizzard is a dust storm that sweeps across the plains carrying tons of the loose dry topsoil with it so that it creates a thick, black cloud that covers miles of terrain. Black blizzards typically last for 2d10 hours and leave 2d3–1 feet of fine dust in their wake. These dusty storms can travel for hundreds and even thousands of miles before finally dissipating.

BLACK BLIZZARD

NATURAL DISASTER

Fields of Blood 18

Black blizzards are windstorms with wind speeds of 51–74 mph, which impose a –2 circumstance penalty on auditory Perception checks, attack rolls involving physical ranged attacks, and Acrobatics checks to Maneuver in Flight (plus Small or smaller fliers are blown away on a critical failure or if they don’t succeed at a minimum of one such check each round). Likewise their approach can cause pack animals to panic, requiring DC 20 Nature checks to Command an Animal for each to prevent them from stampeding away in a panic. Normal animals that panic and flee have a 20% chance to not survive the storm. Those that do survive can be Tracked in 1d3 days with a DC 32 Survival check (one-half that time on a critical success).

Black blizzards reduce vision to 1d4 x 5 feet — any creatures beyond that distance become concealed to each other —and turn the sky so dark that it blocks out the sun turning day into night (dim light). They smother unprotected flames and can even choke protected flames (50% chance). The fine particulates deal 1d6 slashing damage each hour to anyone caught out in the open without shelter and also pose a suffocation hazard. (A character with a scarf or similar protection across his mouth and nose does not begin to suffocate until after a number of rounds equal to 10 + their Constitution modifier). A character that begins to choke also has a chance of contracting dust pneumonia, a potentially deadly disease (see below). The dust creeps in through all but the most secure seals and seams, chafing skin and contaminating gear. In addition, there is also a 10% chance that the swirling dust generates enough static electricity to deal 1d6 electricity damage to anyone that suffered slashing damage from prolonged exposure.

DUST PNEUMONIA

DISEASE 4

DISEASE

Victims of dust pneumonia can't remove the fatigued condition and coughing while affected; victims must succeed at a DC 3 flat check to use auditory or linguistic effects (such as Cast a Spell with a verbal component) or when noise might disrupt the action (such as Hide). **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 19; **Onset** 1 day; **Stage 1** fatigued and coughing (1 day); **Stage 2** enfeebled 2, fatigued, and coughing (1 day); **Stage 3** enfeebled 3, fatigued, coughing, and take 1d6 persistent bleed damage every 1d20 minutes (1 day)

Cauthooj: These vicious birds are the bane of the plainsmen who inhabit the steppe. At night they lurk outside the party's camp and ambush a creature that strays out of its confines. If the PCs have any Shattered Folk with them as guides, they urge the PCs to hunt down any cauthooj and kill them before they can strike again, suggesting they stuff their ears with wax to protect themselves.

WEAK CAUTHOOJ**CREATURE 11***Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)***Initiative** Perception +22; thoughtsense (imprecise)
60 feet

Cockatrices: This flock is territorial and hunts insects among the long grasses that makes them concealed to all other creatures. However, they are only too happy to look for larger fare if presented to them.

COCKATRICE**CREATURE 3***Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)***Initiative** Perception +8; darkvision

Ghouls: The sheer magnitude of bloodletting that has occurred over the last 3,000 years ensures that there are always undead wandering about. Likewise, the isolated terrain and distinct possibility of death by starvation for the scattered inhabitants of the plains increases the likelihood of any undead being ghouls. This ghoulish pack is led by a ghastr and is composed of Shattered Folk tribesmen that have fallen to ghoulish fever and now hunt their own kind.

GHOUL**CREATURE 1***Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)***Initiative** Perception +7; darkvision**Languages** Common, Hundish, Kirkut**GHASTR****CREATURE 2***Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)***Initiative** Perception +8; darkvision**Languages** Common, Hundish, Kirkut

Grassfire: Grassfires can start in an instant from an errant lightning strike, an untended campfire, or even the spontaneous heat found in a large quantity of compost basking in the sun. Whatever the cause, whenever a grassfire starts on the steppes, the buffeting winds can immediately whip it into a raging inferno that races across the plain.

GRASSFIRE**HAZARD 15****COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL***Fields of Blood 17***Stealth** +30; DC 20 to spot a grassfire ignite

2d6x800 feet away (if no one notices, roll a secret check each round after the grassfire takes its actions)

Description Winds whip a spark into a raging inferno that races across the plain. Damaging the grassfire merely puts out a single square, creating a spot that won't catch on fire, but doesn't defeat the overall hazard.

Disable three DC 35 Athletics, Crafting, or Survival checks or three spells that generate water (such as *create water* or *hydraulic push*) to create a firebreak in a square. While this creates an area that will not catch fire, it does not protect from other dangers of the fire, such as heat and smoke.

AC 17; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +27

HP 74; **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage; **Weaknesses** cold 10, water 10

Ignite ⤵ (traits); **Trigger** A lightning strike, stray spark, spontaneous combustion, or some other similar spark. **Effect** The hazard rolls initiative as the front of the fire spreads to a width of 1d10x100 feet and begins moving in a random direction.

Routine ♦ The fire surges forward 2d4x20 feet, setting the grass on fire in that area for 1d4 minutes before it reduces the withered grasses and plants to fine ash. The fire generates thick smoke and all creatures within the burning area become concealed, and all creatures outside the smoke become concealed to creatures within it. The punishing heat from the hazard hits creatures before the flames do. When the grassfire is 200 feet away, characters take 1d6 fire damage on the hazard's turn (DC 29 basic Fortitude save); this damage increases by 1d6 for every 20 feet closer to the front of the fire (to a maximum of 10d6 at the fire's front as it reaches them before starting to drop again). Spells that protect against severe heat such as *endure elements* can reduce this damage by 2d6.

The area on fire is hazardous terrain, and any creature in it takes an additional 4d6 fire damage per round (DC 29 basic Reflex save). Creatures that critically fail their Reflex save catch on fire, taking

4d6 persistent fire damage. Finally, the smoke and heat are punishing, and characters within the area on fire must hold their breath or suffocate.

Locust Swarms: Clouds of voracious locusts descend on the PCs' group seeking to feed on whatever edible materials are available on the arid steppes.

LOCUST SWARM	CREATURE 2
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Statistics as **cockroach swarm** (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* (Second Edition))

Initiative Perception +6; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Speed 20 feet, fly 40 feet

Mastodons: Relatively rare in all but the northernmost portions of the Haunted Steppe, these massive grazers have migrated south in search of better forage as dry conditions to the north have left the steppe almost bare of grasses. There is a 10% chance that they are encountered as a stampede (see below). Otherwise they do not attack unless provoked or otherwise threatened. If they are not stampeding and you wish to determine if the PCs might provoke them into doing so, consult the table under "Stampede" below.

MASTODON	CREATURE 9
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Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +17; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Mustangs: Herds of wild mustangs roam the endless grasslands of the steppe and serve as the primary source of mounts for the Shattered Folk tribes, when they are able to capture and train them. There is a 30% chance that they are encountered as a stampede (see below). If so, they gain Trample [three-actions] Medium or smaller, hoof, DC 17. Otherwise they do not attack unless provoked or otherwise threatened. If they are not stampeding and you wish to determine if the PCs might provoke them into doing so, consult the table under "Stampede" below.

MUSTANG	CREATURE 2
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See page 5

Perception +6; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Orc War Party: The barren plains don't support large numbers of humanoid tribes, the vast majority living in the mountainous regions along the edges of the steppe. However, some humanoids have adopted the nomadic horseman life of the Shattered Folk that allows survival on the arid plainslands. This war party of orcs consists of a **mounted orc troop** led by 2 **champions** and a **subchief**, all mounted on mustangs. These orcs wear the buckskin hides, furs, and feathers common to the Shattered Folk tribes. They are marauders and will attack any group that they think they can defeat. Even if facing superior numbers, they attempt to raid and drive away the group's mounts that they can recover for their own later. And if such raids should leave the outsiders stranded afoot upon the plains, that just makes for easier pickings later in the eyes of the orcs.

MOUNTED ORC TROOP	CREATURE 8
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CE **HUGE** **HUMANOID** **ORC** **TROOP**

Perception +17; darkvision

Languages Kirkut, Orc

Skills Athletics +20, Intimidation +18, Survival +16

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +1

Items Javelins

AC 26; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +18, **Will** +13

HP 95; **Immunities** precision, swarm mind;

Resistances bludgeoning 10, piercing 10, slashing 5; **Weaknesses** area damage 10, splash damage 10

Ferocity 2

Speed 40 feet

Flight of Javelins ♦♦ The mounted orc troop hurls a volley of javelins. This attack can take the form of a 30-foot cone or two 60-foot lines. Either area can start from the corner of any square in the troop's space. Each creature in any of these areas takes 5d8 piercing damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save).

Mounted Endurance (exploration) The mounted orc troop may Hustle for one hour at a time, but then may not Sprint for one hour.

Sprint ♦♦ The mounted orc troop Strides twice. It has a +10-foot circumstance bonus to its Speed during these Strides.

Stabbing Troop ♦ Each creature in the mounted orc troop's area takes 5d6 piercing damage (DC 26 basic Reflex save).

Trampling Troop ◆◆◆ The mounted orc troop Strides up to double its Speed and can move through the spaces of Medium or smaller creatures, Trampling each creature whose space it enters. The creature takes 5d6 bludgeoning damage (DC 24 basic Reflex save). Any creature that critically fails its save is also knocked prone. It can attempt to Trample the same creature only once in a single use of Trampling Troop.

ORC CHAMPIONS (2)

CREATURE 4

CE MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

Perception +10; darkvision

Languages Kirkut, Orc

Skills Athletics +12, Intimidation +12

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

Items hide armor, javelins (3), +1 striking orc necksplitter, wooden shield (Hardness 3, HP 12, BT 6)

AC 21 (23 with shield raised); **Fort** +14, **Ref** +10, **Will** +9
HP 75

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

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Ferocity ↻

Shield Block ↻

Speed 25 feet

Melee ◆ orc necksplitter +14 (forceful, sweep),
Damage 2d8+7 slashing

Ranged ◆ javelin +12 (thrown 30 feet), **Damage** 1d6+7 piercing

Intimidating Strike ◆◆ (emotion, fear, mental) The orc champion makes a melee Strike. If they hit and deal damage, the target is frightened 1, or frightened 2 on a critical hit.

ORC SUBCHIEF

CREATURE 8

CE MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

Perception +19; darkvision

Languages Kirkut, Orc

Skills Athletics +18, Intimidation +15, Survival +14

Str +6, **Dex** +3, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +3

Items +1 striking composite longbow (20 arrows), firepot, hide armor, +1 striking war flail

AC 28; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +14, **Will** +15

HP 140

Attack of Opportunity ↻

Ferocity ↻

Speed 25 feet

Melee ◆ war flail +18 (disarm, sweep, trip),

Damage 2d10+10 bludgeoning

Melee ◆ spiked gauntlet +18 (agile, free-hand),

Damage 1d4+10 piercing

Ranged ◆ composite longbow +20 (deadly d10, propulsive, range increment 100 feet, reload 0, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 2d8+10 piercing

Battle Cry ◆ (auditory, concentrate, emotion, mental) The orc subchief bawls orders, giving themself and all orc allies within 60 feet a +1 status bonus to attack and damage rolls until the start of the orc subchief's next turn.

Kindle Firepot ◆◆ (interact) The orc subchief opens their firepot and stokes coals inside. For 1 minute, they can ignite arrows, which do an additional 1d6 fire damage on a successful Strike, plus 1d10 persistent fire damage on a critical hit. Their reload time if they ignite an arrow increases to 1.

MUSTANGS (3)

CREATURE 2

See page 5

Perception +6; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Shattered Folk: Nomadic tribes of Shattered Folk wander throughout the Haunted Steppe, though the central region through which the party journeys is perhaps the least populated next only to the northern lands around Lake Hali and beyond. Of those tribes that do dwell in this region, there is a 60% chance that any given tribe is cannibals who will see the PCs' expedition as a source of food and spoils. A non-cannibal tribe is initially indifferent towards the PCs and will not make contact unless approached, preferring instead to change course and move away from the intruding travelers. A cannibal tribe has a 25% chance to immediately charge and attack. Otherwise they will react the same as a non-cannibalistic tribe and hope the PCs are either lured in closer or that they are ignored and can begin

following the PCs and attack after they make camp for the night. Shattered Folk are always mounted on mustangs. If a third of their number are killed or knocked unconscious, the remainder will flee, leaving their compatriots behind. Though that doesn't mean that they won't begin stalking the PCs for a more opportune chance for revenge later.

SHATTERED FOLK TRIBESMAN

CREATURE 2

Statistics as **poacher** (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*)

Initiative Perception +9

Languages Kirkut

MUSTANGS (3)

CREATURE 2

See page 5

Perception +6; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Sinkhole: While natural-forming sinkholes are relatively rare upon the steppe, the abundance of burrowing creatures that call the plains home can be a different cause of soil subsidence. If this encounter is rolled, there is a 25% chance that it is the discovery of an already existing sinkhole, perhaps even forming a pool of collected rainwater. If the sinkhole is already present, then there is a 5% chance that another one will form nearby, though the PCs can spot its telltale signs with a DC 20 Survival check, reducing the hazard's Stealth proficiency rank from master to expert.

A PC who is using the Follow the Expert, Investigate, Scout, or Search activities during exploration mode may notice terrain conducive to creating a natural sinkhole with a successful DC 20 Nature check, though a successful check does not verify the presence of sinkhole or pinpoint one's exact location. It merely tells the character that a sinkhole is more likely to be found in a given region than elsewhere.

This hazard represents a typical sinkhole on the Steppes, though they can be larger or smaller depending upon the circumstances surrounding their creation. You can make more or less dangerous sinkholes (some may be hundreds of feet deep!) by changing the

level of the hazard and adjusting its statistics using the Building Hazard rules in the *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*.

SINKHOLE

HAZARD 6

COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL

Fields of Blood 20

Stealth +18 (master)

Description The ground looks solid, but a void has formed just below the surface.

Disable DC 25 Survival (expert) to find a safe area. This square remains safe as long as the creature that found it remains there; if they move, the creature would need to disable a new square.

Collapse **Trigger** A creature steps on the ground above the sinkhole. **Effect** The ground opens under the triggering creature, who takes falling damage from falling 2d4x10 feet. That creature can use the Grab an Edge reaction (DC 27) to avoid falling. The hazard rolls initiative.

Routine ♦ The hazard rolls a DC 6 flat check for every square adjacent to the area that collapsed.

On a failure, the square opens, causing any creature standing on it to fall 2d4x10 feet (that creature can use the Grab an Edge reaction to avoid falling). The

routine continues for 10 rounds or until a round in which all squares succeed at the flat check. Any square where a creature has Disabled the hazard, by finding it's a safe area, is immune to this effect and does not need to make a flat check.

Reset Creatures can fall into the hole, but it's easily spotted once it has opened.

Stampede: Several of the animals listed on this table have the potential to be encountered as a stampede as indicated under their individual entries. Even if they are not a stampede, the actions of the PCs may provoke them into becoming a stampede based on the table provided below.



STAMPEDE

HAZARD VARIES

Fields of Blood 24

Herd animals sometimes react en masse to a singular event that can be as mundane as a clap of thunder and as extraordinary as a ghostly presence walking among them. In most cases, the sight or scent of a fearsome predator is responsible for frightening the herd. What ensues is a stampede — a chaotic, mad dash to escape the danger as quickly as possible regardless of what stands in their way.

The first step in the process of adjudicating a stampede is to determine whether it takes place at all. Herd animals are the only creatures that behave in this manner; therefore, a stampede requires herd animals, even if there are several different species present at any given time. The next ingredient is a catalyst — an event that potentially triggers a stampede. It can be as simple as an inexplicable sound from the opposite bank of a watering hole or as unusual as a fear spell. Once these two conditions are met, the GM must determine whether a stampede takes place. This is done by rolling Will saves for the herd animals. The following table provides the appropriate Will save DC's based upon the particular situation.

Event	Will Save DC
Unexpected or startling noise ¹	10
Sight or scent of an unknown creature ¹	10
Peal of thunder ¹	15
Sight or scent of a nearby humanoid ^{1,2}	15 + 1 for every two additional humanoids beyond the first
Sight or scent of a recognizable predator ^{3,4}	15 + 1/2 predator's level + 1 for each additional predator beyond the first
Partially submerged in water ¹	20
Herd member attacked ^{1,5}	20 + attacker's level + 1 for each additional attacker beyond the first

Completely submerged in water ¹	25
Fire ¹	25
Unnatural aura	25
Sight or scent of an unnatural creature ⁶	25 + creature's level + 1 for each additional creature beyond the first
Spell or spell-like effect	DC of spell or spell-like effect
¹ Aggressive (combative) herd animals gain a +4 status bonus on their Will saves to resist panicking against these events.	
² A humanoid that makes a successful DC 20 Nature check to Command an Animal (or DC 20 Diplomacy check if they have wild empathy) grants the herd a +2 circumstance bonus to its Will saves.	
³ The herd animals must be able to identify the creature as a predator through past experience. In the event that two or more different types of predators are present, use the creature with the highest level to determine the Will save's DC.	
⁴ Aggressive (combative) herd animals gain a +4 status bonus on their Will saves to resist panicking whenever they encounter other animals and plants. They do not get this bonus against any other creature type.	
⁵ If the herd does not stampede, aggressive (combative) herd animals fight back against the attacker(s) on a one for one basis.	
⁶ Unnatural creatures include aberrations, creatures from other planes, and undead	

It is impossible to roll several hundred or even several dozen individual Will saves to determine how the entire herd responds to the potential crisis; therefore, the GM should roll a sampling of Will saves to accurately gauge the herd's overall mood. Depending upon the herd's size, it is recommended that the GM attempt at least three saves for a small grouping (30 or less), five saves for medium-sized grouping (31–100), seven saves for a large grouping (101–250) and up to nine saves for a very large herd (251+). (Odd numbers are preferable to even numbers to eliminate any potential ties.) If there are several different types of herd animals present, such as sheep and cattle, each creature type should receive at least one saving throw. If there are any remaining saving throws to be divided up based upon the herd's size, the GM may allocate them on a pro rata basis or distribute the rest to the most numerous animals within the herd. The following table details the outcome of these saving throws.

Result	Outcome
Majority of animals fail their saving throws	stampede
At least one animal fails its saving throw	herd is on edge but does not stampede, suffers a -1 penalty per failed saving throw (-2 for a critical failure) to any future Will saves to avoid stampeding
All animals succeed	herd remains calm, gains a +2 bonus to any future Will saves to avoid stampeding
All animals critically	herd gains temporary immunity to stampeding succeed Will saves

Bonuses, penalties, and temporary immunity accrued during this phase expire 1 hour later. A Will save must be made for each separate event (even if the herd is stampeding), unless the herd encountered an event within the last hour that had a Will save DC equal to or higher than the current event, and the herd did not stampede. If that occurs, the herd does not need to attempt another saving throw to avoid stampeding. For instance, if the herd spotted a pride of 10 lions thirty minutes ago and did not stampede (DC 26), a saving throw would not be needed to avoid stampeding because of a peal of thunder (DC 15).

If a stampede occurs, the entire herd turns and flees at maximum speed away from the perceived danger. In most cases, the animals run in the opposite direction from the threat; however, that may not always be possible. Another obstacle or potential threat may stand in their way, in which case, the herd bolts in a random direction. Any creature or object in the herd's path is subject to being trampled.

While stampeding, the herd animals gain Trample, if it does not already have it, and Stampede (See below). If the herd animal does not already have Trample, the damage and save DC are as listed in the individual description of the animal above.

Stampede If the creature starts or ends its movement adjacent to two other creatures with this ability when it Tramples, the size of the creature whose space it can move through increases by one step, it deals an additional die of damage, and the save DC of its Trample increases by +2.

Venomous Snake Swarms: The steppe is home to many varieties of snakes, and the PCs are unfortunate enough to have stumbled upon a knot of deadly pit vipers during their breeding season.

PIT VIPER SWARM

CREATURE 4

Statistics as elite **centipede swarm** (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*)

Initiative Perception +11; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet

Necrosis (disease) On a critical failure on any saving throw against the Centipede Swarm Venom, the victim also becomes wounded 1 for 1 week, and the DC to Treat the victim's Disease or Treat the victim's Wounds increases by 10 until the condition is removed.

Steppe Wargs: Among the apex predators of the steppe, these intelligent hunters are even more cunning and savage than their common kin. Wargs of the steppe always try to attack at night when their quarry is sleeping or otherwise has its guard down. If this is rolled as a daytime encounter, the wargs simply shadow the party and wait until after nightfall to make their attack. If this occurs, spotting the shadowing wargs requires a DC 27 Perception check as the wargs keep their distance. If scouts or outriders are used by the party, then these only need to attempt a Perception check against the wargs' Stealth DC (17) to spot the creatures or signs of them but also have a 60% chance of being attacked by the wargs while isolated from their companions.



Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)

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

Coordinated Takedown When a steppe warg hits with its jaws attack, it can use its next action to make an Athletics check against the target's Fortitude DC, with a bonus on its Athletics check to Shove the target equal to the number of other steppe wargs adjacent to the target. On a successful check, the target is knocked prone.

Outflank Whenever two or more steppe wargs are adjacent to the same target, they each gain a +1 circumstance bonus on their attack rolls against that target. If the target is flat-footed, this bonus is increased to +2. In addition, if a steppe warg scores a critical hit while flanking its target, its flanking ally can make a jaws attack as a reaction.

CHAPTER TWO: ALL ROADS LEAD TO SORROW

The journey to find the crater resembles a multiple-stage race more than a mad dash to the finish line. The unmistakable plumes of smoke rising from the smoldering comet's carcass can be seen from roughly 20 miles away in all directions. However, the Haunted Steppe's enormity makes it nearly impossible to find the impact site without following in the footsteps of the expeditions that went before them. (In real-world terms, the central portion of the Haunted Steppe where the PCs travel is roughly three times the total area of the American Great Plains at almost one-and-a-half million square miles.) The documents and correspondence that the PCs gathered during the course of the previous adventure, most notably Azmerius's dispatches are critical in locating the impact site as they describe six crucial landmarks and markers that point the way to the Pit. (See Path of the Six sidebar for more details regarding these objects.) PCs that foolishly opt to go it alone and wander blindly across the vast grassland run the risk of falling behind their competitors, a fact that the GM may reinforce to the wayward adventurers through the impatient pleadings of their dwarven allies. Furthermore,

these characters run the substantial risk of running into more of the Haunted Steppe's numerous monsters and unwelcoming residents than they bargained.

PATH OF THE SIX

The details found in the written records of Azmerius Thade fall far short of those present in a typical map. Instead, they consist of a series of cryptic clues buried within the recorded narrative of the trip that point the reader in the direction of six landmarks and manmade markers that lead to the Pit of the Burning Star. These locales appear as areas **B** through **G** on the overland map of the Haunted Steppe. The following section provides general details about each of these locations. Additional information appears under the description for each location.

The Path of the Six consists of the following sites:

The Circled Twelve: Located 160 miles north of the Wanaheeli River, this lonesome, neglected graveyard contains the earthly remains of a dozen cannibals that the Conroi Expedition slew during a pitched battle. To punish these savages the expedition members mutilated their corpses and cursed them to forever guard the way to the Pit of the Burning Star. The twelve graves are arranged in a circular pattern. In order to gain the clue leading to the next marker, the PCs must exhumate the correct grave.

The Conroi Wall: Lying 167 miles north-northwest of the Circled Twelve, this ruin, now occupied by a party of orcs, is one of the few surviving structures that remain in an ancient Caleen settlement. Currently, the encoded message found on the wall has the orcs completely stumped. If the orcs gain the upper hand on the PCs, they may be willing to spare their lives or give them a merciful death in exchange for their assistance in reading the message.

Gravenfar's Cave: This crater/cave can be found 188 miles due north of The Conroi Wall. A pitched battle between a war party of orcs and a band of cannibalistic Shattered Folk barbarians rages just outside of the cave's entrance. The PCs can join the battle on one side or the other or try to slip into the cave unnoticed and obtain the next clue on their perilous journey.

Sixtun's Spyglass: An obviously out-of-place, 20-foot-high stone tower with a window facing north lords over the flat landscape surrounding it. Built 259 miles north-northeast of the cave, this manmade structure is the only surviving remnant of another of the Caleen colonies. The tower is empty save for one object — a mounted spyglass

THE HAUNTED STEPPE



1 HEX = 100 MILES

Erbtawite-cali-Tan
(God's Ride River)

The Road of Sorrows

I
h
E

Unamed River

Pin-i-Pinjhami
(Everpar hills)

D

C

B

Stoneheart Mountains

Tabor River

Ghost River

Wheel River

Crynomar Gap

Tanjan
Petyan

Conroi Settlements

Dragonbone Peak

Shadowfall Lake

Durgan's Folly

Hansonburg

Teuswald

The Deepfells

Wizard's Wall

set to the precise coordinates of the next landmark 23 miles away slightly east of due north.

Hallelujah Springs: This natural geothermal hotspot constantly circulates steaming hot water. According to the text, Azmerius concealed a watertight stone coffer deep within the hot springs, requiring someone to dive into the scalding hot water and retrieve it. A map inside the container directs the reader towards the last landmark 94 miles east-northeast of the hot spring.

Azmerius's Angle: This refers to a ravine where a natural stone bridge cut from the surrounding rock overlooks a gentle, meandering stream beneath it. An enigmatic passage scribed on the bottom corner of the hot springs map says *To iron out the line, angle from the apex*. If the PC drops a ferrous object into the stream below from the highest point on the stone bridge, a magnetized “key” buried beneath the silt affixes itself to the ferrous object. This key also points in the direction of the greatest concentration of noqual, leading the PCs to the Pit of the Burning Star some 45 miles away.

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS

It is impossible to physically track the Conroi Expedition or Aroldus Gravenfar using conventional means or divination magic. Their footsteps and even wagon tracks were erased by time many years earlier, and the descriptions of the landmarks that appear in the journal and correspondence are far too generic and vague to rely upon for teleportation spells, *wanderer's guide*, and similar magic. Even an aerial overview would demand weeks or even months of flight time to spot a plume of smoke that on any particular day may be obscured by clouds, fog and precipitation or dispersed by strong winds. In addition, the Campachan guides that the PCs hired in the preceding adventure are aware of the ancient Caleen settlements that line the swath of ground known as the Road of Sorrows, but the exact location of these ruins and the road itself remains a mystery even to them. Despite the moniker, the Road of Sorrows is not a true thoroughfare, and is instead an incongruous trail of ruined small, scattered hamlets and villages that the colonists established almost a thousand years ago and were subsequently destroyed by the shadow walker hordes.

Armed with Azmerius's correspondence, the PCs and their expedition head out into the great unknown that is the Haunted Steppe. Each of the landmarks that comprise The Path of the Six appears on the overland map as areas **B** through **G**. According to their information, the first leg of

their journey leads to something called the Circled Twelve which, fortunately for the PCs, is relatively easy to find. The small, lonely gravesite lies 160 miles due north of a specific bend in the Wanaheeli River mentioned by Gravenfar in his journal (likely the location where the PCs choose to cross unless they wish to do otherwise). A PC DC 10 Survival check to Sense Direction or the *know direction* spell can point the adventuring party due north. Unlike any of the other landmarks, any Campachan guides that accompany the PCs know the way to the locale they describe as “The Cursed Graves” because of their reputation for being haunted. This spot serves as the apparent launch point for the remainder of their journey.

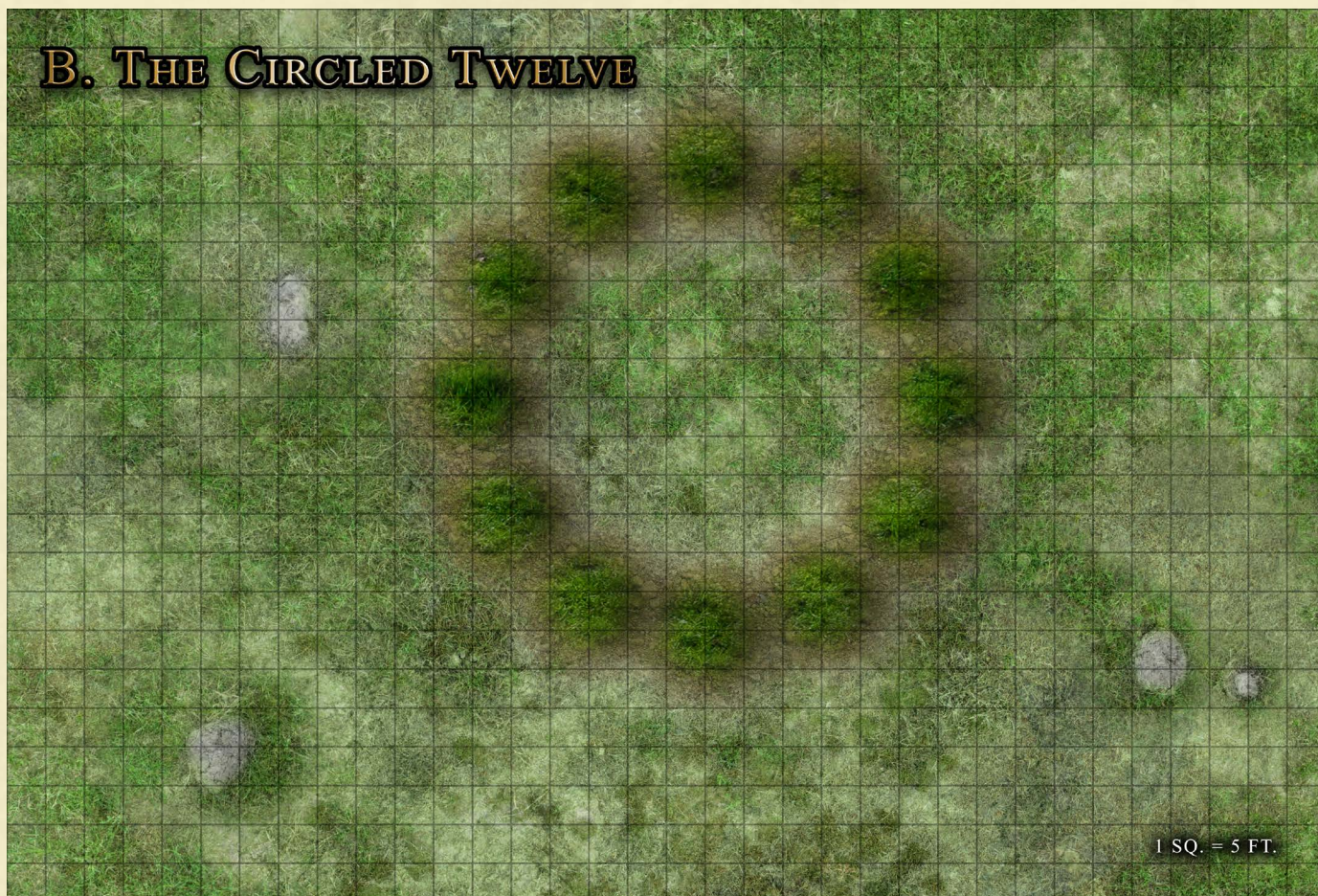
B. THE CIRCLED TWELVE MODERATE 12

A ring of twelve marks in the earth mar the ground here, clustered in four groups of three. Some are small, grassy mounds, others are sunken like old graves. From each of these sites the bony remains of arms rise among the grasses, some still bound in the dried remains of old cords, and some still bearing the remnants of skeletal hands. These twelve burials are arranged in a circle approximately 40 feet in diameter.

Weeks after crossing the Wanaheeli, the Conroi Expedition was beset by a war band of Shattered Folk tribesmen. The expedition was able to fend off the attackers in a pitched battle that left them bloodied but intact. In an attempt to dissuade other Shattered Folk groups from staging further attacks, the expedition sent an ominous warning. They buried a dozen Shattered Folk captives alive, forcing them to kneel, bowed and face down in shallow pits. Their arms were wrenched backwards and up with hands bound so that when the shallow pits were filled in, the captives' bound wrists and hands remained visible above the ground, twisting and clawing in desperate agony as they slowly suffocated in their graves. These lost souls were then cursed by the expedition's spellcasters to serve as guardians against any who dared follow them on their route across the steppe.

A DC 15 Survival check to Sense Direction or the spell *know direction* confirms that the graves perfectly align with the four cardinal directions (north, south, east, and west), and though the ordinal directions (northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest) are not marked by burials, the spaces between the burial groups do align perfectly with these. Using the precise grave placement, the expedition chaplain made use of the site as a way marker for their journey and left a cryptic riddle to enable his employers to follow the expedition's

B. THE CIRCLED TWELVE



course on future journeys to the Pit of the Burning Star. If the PCs consult Azmerius's writings they find a passage about a locale referred to as the "Circled Twelve." (This riddle and its solution appear in the accompanying sidebar.)

As a result of their torturous deaths and the curses laid upon their burials, the Shattered Folk interred in the ground transformed into **12 gravebound** that lie beneath the restless soil. When a living creature disturbs the ground or touches one of the skeletal hands or arms, all of the undead monstrosities arise from the soil and attack in a chaotic frenzy. Half of the monsters use their gravedigger ability to create pits beneath the interlopers, while the others wade into melee with their fearsome claws. It is important to note that the gravebound are made from animated grave dirt rather than the victims' actual bodies, hence their rising does not in any way disturb the actual interred corpses or the skeletal remains protruding above. The fact that they arise if these remains are disturbed is what has allowed their visible remains to continue to be even partially intact after 78 years — scavengers are quickly slain and buried.

GRAVEBOUND (12)

CREATURE 6

NE, Medium, undead

Perception +13; darkvision

Languages Necril

Skills Athletics +14, Stealth +16

Str +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +4

AC 24; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +13, **Will** +12

HP 100, negative healing; Immunities death

effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

Tied to the Grave A gravebound is tied to the area where its body is buried and cannot move more than 300 feet from it.

Vulnerable to Holy Areas A gravebound in the area of a bless or sanctified ground spell or consecrate ritual is slowed 1 for as long as it is in the area.

Speed 25 feet, burrow 25 feet

Melee ♦ claw +16 (agile), **Damage** 2d8+5 slashing plus false death

Bury Alive ♦♦ (earth, divine) The gravebound fills

in a pit it created with its Gravedigger ability, burying any creatures in the pit. A buried creature immediately take 2d6 bludgeoning damage, then takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage per minute, is restrained, and must hold its breath or begin to suffocate. Creatures outside of the pit can dig out the buried creature, moving a 5-foot-by-5-foot square every 4 minutes with a successful DC 25 Athletics check (or every 2 minutes on a critical success). Using shovels or other proper tools halves the time. Once a square of dirt has been removed, the creature in the pit can breathe, but continues to take bludgeoning damage every minute and remains restrained (DC 25 Athletics check to Escape) until freed. If the creature was prone when it was buried, two squares of dirt must be removed but the creature is immediately freed.

False Death (disease, virulent) The stupefied condition from false death doesn't improve on its own until the disease is cured. **Saving Throw** DC 21 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 day; **Stage 1** stupefied 1 (1 day); **Stage 2** stupefied 2 (1 day); **Stage 3** stupefied 3 (1 day); **Stage 4** unconscious and appears dead to any creature that doesn't succeed at a DC 25 Medicine check (1 week, after which afflicted creature is automatically cured, and wakes with no stupefied condition).

Gravedigger ♦ (earth, divine) The gravebound causes a 10-foot-deep pit to open under a single creature within 30 feet. The target can use the Grab an Edge reaction (DC 25) to avoid falling.

Development: If the characters exhume the corpses, the skeletal remains still have long, dark hair and wear tattered clothing and armor made from cracked leather and hides, and some show signs of injuries (broken bones, steel arrowheads lodged in ribs or long bones, etc.) A successful DC 20 Society check to Recall Knowledge is able to identify the clothing and armor as being the typical types worn by Shattered Folk tribesmen, though the specific tribe cannot be identified. A PC who performs a forensic examination can, with a successful DC 20 Medicine check to Recall Knowledge, determine that they have been buried for decades but probably less than a century, a timeframe that fits the travels of the Conroi Expedition.

THE CIRCLED TWELVE RIDDLE

*The rose's needle always points you where to start.
March with time to the God of War,
Then Planting's number retrace before.
Then count the just graves too, plus three more that are true.*

Solution: The first verse refers to the compass's needle always pointing north. That is the PCs' starting point for solving the riddle: the north grave.

The second verse gives the direction that the initial clue indicates. It says "march with time" which implies the direction of a clock. Clocks of the **Lost Lands** have three hands rather than two^{LL7-367}, but they travel in a clockwise direction just as their real-world counterparts. With the knowledge that the direction of movement around the circled graves is clockwise, the instruction to march to the God of War refers to the ubiquitous war god Mithras who is revered throughout Akados and much of Libynos as well. His month of Mithron^{LL7-219}, the Month of War, is the ninth month of the year and therefore instructs the PCs to count nine graves in a clockwise direction, leaving them on the grave pointing to the east.

The third verse instructs the PCs to retrace their steps, i.e. to go back counterclockwise, for a number equal to "Planting's number". The month of Freyrmond^{LL7-219} is dedicated to Freya, Goddess of Fertility, and is the traditional month for planting crops. Freyrmond is the third month, so the PCs are instructed to move backward three graves to the south grave.

The final verse is a play on words. "Just" and "true" also mean "right". The word "too" is a homophone for the number "two". Therefore, if the reader faces the south grave and then counts two graves to the right plus three more to the right, he arrives at the eleventh grave, the north-northwest grave.

If the north-northwest grave is exhumed, it is found to have a large 1-foot-cubic block of worked stone upon which the deceased tribesman kneels. The surface of the stone bears the chiseled image of a compass with its needle pointing between 22° and 23° west of due north. This north-northwesterly orientation in the north-northwest grave provides the intended clue that the expedition turned here to a north-northwesterly course along the route of the legendary Road of Sorrows (see below), the necessary course that will bring the PCs to the next landmark on the Path of the Six.

ROAD OF SORROWS

The Road of Sorrows remains alive in the verse of bards and poets. The name was first coined in 2963 I.R. by the celebrated Rheman poet Veshira Selith^{K1-31} in her classic “Lament for a Lost Prince” in which the doomed colonies of Prince Cale were described in contrast as both the Path to Promise (for the sense of optimism and modern progress held by the colonists about their venture) and the Road of Sorrows (for the horrific and ignoble ending that virtually all of the hopeful colonists met). It was never referred to as the Road of Sorrows in the time of the Caleen Colonies, and though roads did extend between the colonies the Road of Sorrows did not refer to any specific road per se. Rather they referred to the general line upon which the colonies’ route lay, extending from the Crynomar Gap towards the distant ill-starred Lost Mountains, a concourse measuring some 2,000 miles and claiming the lives of some 20,000 Rheman colonists and a Prince of Foere of the line of Macobert.

The course correction made at the Circled Twelve brought the Conroi Expedition (and subsequently the PCs) onto the route of the Road of Sorrows as it extends in its north-northwest course. No trace of the original roads remain (little more than trails for carts and mounts), but the ruins of some of the Caleen settlements, the stones of which were first laid by Grand Duke Cale some 650 years ago, can occasionally still be seen here and there. In most cases old stones, cracked foundation slabs, and depressions in the ground offer the only testimony that civilization once established a tenuous foothold in this otherwise feral domain. In some instances, the telltale signs of any humanoid presence are so faint that observers must succeed on a DC 30 Perception check to even spot the ancient building blocks covered by thick grasses. A PC examining these ruins can Recall Knowledge to confirm that they do indeed belong to the Caleen settlements with a successful DC 15 Society or Lore check, or a DC 25 Crafting check.

ROAD OF SORROWS RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

While few pieces of physical evidence remain from the Caleen settlements, hateful spirits linger long after stones and wood disappeared from the locales. Some residents refused to leave even after the shadow walkers decimated their homes and slew their loved ones. Every 20 miles spent traveling along or in close proximity to the Road of Sorrows gives the PCs a 30% chance of stumbling upon the sundered remnants of an ancient Caleen village or farmhold. When one of these sites is discovered, whether in the day or at night, there is a 50% chance of encountering some of the restless spirits that still linger within and around the ruins.

These encounters are in addition to the normal daily rolls for encounters on the Haunted Steppe. None of the regular Haunted Steppe encounters will ever occur in one of the ruins, as the locals always give them a wide berth. If an encounter is determined to have occurred, roll d% and consult the table below.

d%	Encounter	Average Encounter	Source
01–05	Revenant	Trivial 12	B2
06–10	3d4 skeletal champions	Trivial 12	B1
11–20	Devourer	Trivial 12	B2
21–30	2d4 shadows plus 1 greater shadow	Trivial 12	B1
31–40	Vrykolakas master	Trivial 12	B2
41–50	1d6+2 totenmaskes	Trivial 12	B2
51–55	1d3+1 bodaks	Trivial 12	B2
56–65	1d3+1 mohrgs	Trivial 12	B1
66–75	1d4+2 specters	Trivial 12	B2
76–85	3d4 elite cairn wights	Trivial 12	B2
86–95	1d6+6 wraiths	Low 12	B1
96–00	Gashadokuro	Low 12	AP148

BODAK

CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +17; darkvision, lifesense 60 feet

DEVOURER

CREATURE 11

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +22; darkvision

ELITE CAIRN WIGHT

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +13; darkvision

GASHADOKURO

CREATURE 13

UNCOMMON **NE** **HUGE** **UNDEAD**

Perception +24; darkvision

Languages Common (can’t speak any language)

Skills Athletics +27, Intimidation +24

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

AC 33; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +21, **Will** +24

HP 230, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; Resistances cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10, piercing 10, slashing 10

Starvation Aura (aura, divine, mental, necromancy) 60 feet. Any creature that ends its turn in the aura feels the intense pain of starvation and must attempt a DC 30 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature becomes fatigued and takes 6d6 damage. Damage and fatigue a creature takes from this aura can't be healed until the affected creature has eaten a full meal.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +27 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d12+14 piercing plus Grab

Melee ♦ claw +27 (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d8+14 slashing

Breath Weapon ♦♦ (divine, necromancy) The gashadokuro breathes a spray of bone shards in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in the area takes 8d12 piercing damage (DC 34 basic Reflex save). It can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

Corpse Consumption (divine, necromancy) If the gashadokuro kills a creature with Swallow Whole, it immediately regains Hit Points equal to the swallowed creature's level. As long as the gashadokuro still exists, creatures consumed in this way can't be resurrected except by *wish* or a similarly powerful effect.

Swallow Whole ♦ (attack) Large, 3d6+8 bludgeoning, Rupture 24

MOHRG

CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)
Initiative Perception +17; darkvision

REVENANT

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +14; darkvision, sense murderer

SHADOW

CREATURE 4

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +10; darkvision

SHADOW, GREATER

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +14; darkvision

SKELETAL CHAMPION

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +8; darkvision

SPECTER

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +15; darkvision

TOTENMASKE

CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +15; darkvision

VRYKOLAKAS MASTER

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +19; darkvision

WRAITH

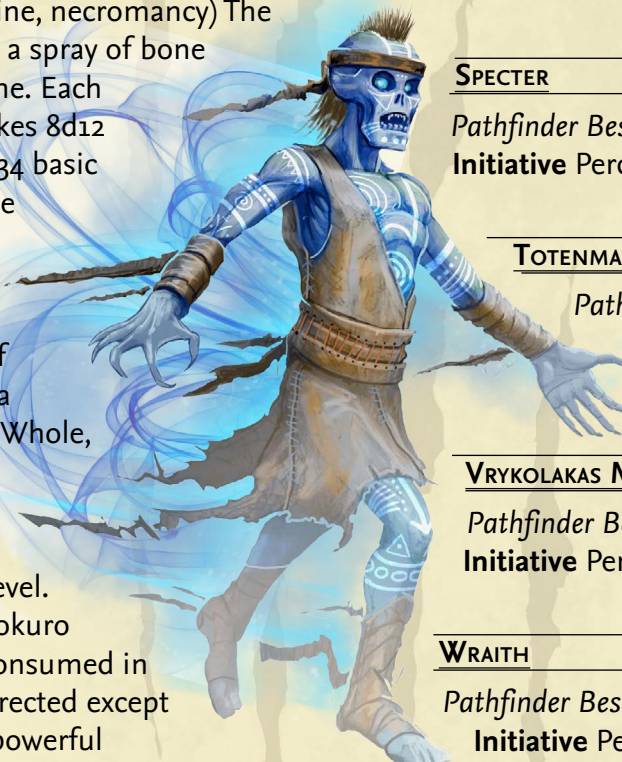
CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +14; darkvision, lifesense 60 feet

ON THE ROAD OF SORROWS

The path that the party follows from the Circled Twelve leads 167 miles north-northwest where the trail ends at a site referred to as the Conroi Wall. However, the PCs don't know how far they will need to journey exactly in this direction, so they must keep a careful eye out for their next landmark and



make a DC 15 Survival check to Sense Direction or make use of know direction spell each day to avoid becoming lost. If the party's expedition gets off course, it will take them 1d2 days to realize it and an equal amount of time to backtrack to where they went awry to continue on in the proper direction. Random encounters occur normally during this time.

ORC SCOUTING PARTY MODERATE 12

When the PCs are within 50 miles of area C, they begin to have a cumulative 25% chance per day of running into an orc scouting party. This group is a squad from the orcs at area C that have been sent to scour the countryside in hopes of finding something to help them with their predicament at the Conroi Wall (C). This troop consists of **6 orc scouts** on foot and **1 orc gorthek rider**. This mobile force is most active during the evening and overnight hours. They rest when the sun is at its brightest from mid-morning until mid-afternoon before resuming their patrol.

GORTHEKS

Gortheks are a strange combination of primeval bison and ornery rhinoceros, with a leonine head crowned with ramlike horns, 7 feet high at the shoulder and weighing over four tons. They travel the steppe in small herds and charge anything they perceive as a threat. Orcs raise the beasts from infancy to serve as living weapons, with riders bonding with them at a young age as they train together. Orc riders use specially crafted saddles mounted behind the massive horns and guide their mounts using spiked reins.

The scouts on foot fan out with a roughly 100-foot gap between each individual. The gorthek rider takes up a position near the center of the formation 200 feet behind his counterparts. They are more concerned with locating hidden objects than avoiding detection, and PCs can notice them with a successful Perception check against their Stealth DC (28 for the scouts or 13 for the gorthek rider).

Conversely, the scouts and gorthek rider are keeping a careful watch and excel at detecting the presence of other creatures. They automatically notice the PCs' caravan unless the PCs are all using the Avoid Notice exploration activity (which would slow them down considerably), in which case the adventurers and their allies must attempt DC 29 Stealth checks to elude the orc scouts' keen senses. The orcs scouts

are also extremely skilled trackers. If the PCs previously passed through the area, the scouts can locate and follow their trail with a successful Survival check.

ORC SCOUTS (6)

CREATURE 8

CE MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

Perception +19; darkvision

Languages Common, Orc

Skills Athletics +16, Scouting Lore +18, Stealth +18, Survival +16

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0

Items composite shortbow (20 arrows), orc knuckle dagger, studded leather (but see Treasure, below)

AC 26; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +17, **Will** +15

HP 135

Ferocity 2

Orc Scout's Warning 2 Trigger The orc scout is about to roll a Perception or Survival check to determine their initiative; Effect The orc scout visually or audibly warns allies, granting them a +1 circumstance bonus to their initiative rolls. Depending on how the guide warns allies, this action has the auditory or visual trait.

Trackless Step The orc scout always gains the benefits of the Cover Tracks action in natural terrains, without moving at half their Speed.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ orc knuckle dagger +17 (agile, disarm), **Damage** 1d6+8 type piercing

Ranged ♦ composite shortbow +19 (deadly d10, propulsive, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), **Damage** 1d6+8 piercing

Primal Prepared Spells DC 23; 2nd *entangle*, *longstrider*, *pass without trace*

Sneak Attack The orc scout deals an extra 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

ORC GORTHEK RIDER

CREATURE 6

CE MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

Perception +14; darkvision

Languages Orc

Skills Athletics +15, Intimidation +13, Medicine +13, Nature +13 (+18 to Command a gorthek), Survival +15

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

Items half plate, javelins (8), +1 *striking lance*

Beast Rider Whenever a gorthek rider is mounted on a gorthek, they treat that gorthek as an animal companion, giving it the minion trait and letting the rider give the gorthek 2 actions during the rider's turn if the rider uses the Command an Animal action to command it. If a gorthek rider Mounts a gorthek in the middle of an encounter, the gorthek changes its initiative to the rider's position. If the rider is killed, knocked unconscious or becomes no longer mounted in the middle of an encounter, the gorthek acts independently on its next turn.

AC 24; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +14, **Will** +13

HP 100

Combat Rider ➤ Requirements The orc gorthek rider is mounted on a gorthek. **Trigger** An attack hits or critically hits the gorthek. **Effect** The gorthek rider attempts a Reflex save with a DC equal to the attack roll. On a success, the degree of success of the attack is reduced by one step (a hit becomes a failure, a critical hit becomes a hit).

Ferocity ➤

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ lance +17 (deadly d8, jousting d6, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+8 piercing

Ranged ♦ javelin +15 (thrown 30 feet), **Damage** 1d6+8 piercing

Challenge ♦ (audible, emotion) The orc gorthek rider challenges a single foe to combat. Until the start of their next turn, they add a circumstance bonus to melee Strikes against the foe and take a -1 circumstance penalty to AC against all other foes. The circumstance bonus is equal to the number of damage dice their Strike deals. If no ally other than a gorthek the rider is mounted on attacks the target of the challenge or otherwise assists the rider in any way before the start of their next turn, the challenge lasts until the end of their next turn instead of expiring at the start of their turn.

Javelin Joust When the orc gorthek rider is mounted, if they move at least 10 feet on the

action before they make a ranged javelin Strike, they add a +4 circumstance bonus to the Strike's damage roll.

Jousting Critical Specialization When the orc gorthek rider is mounted, they have access to the critical specialization effects for lances and javelins.

GORTHEK

CREATURE 7

N LARGE ANIMAL

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

Skills Athletics +18, Intimidation +15, Survival +15

Str +6, **Dex** +4, **Con** +6, **Int** -4, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +1

AC 24; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +16, **Will** +11

HP 130; Resistances physical 5

Buck [reaction] DC 24

Speed 40 feet

Melee ♦ horns +18, **Damage** 2d10+9 piercing

Melee ♦ hoof +16, **Damage** 2d8+9 bludgeoning

Gorthek Charge ♦♦ The gorthek Strides twice and then makes a horns attack. As long as the gorthek moved at least 20 feet, the Strike's damage increases to 3d10+9. In addition, any creature adjacent to the gorthek at any point during its Strides must make a DC 25 Reflex save or be flat-footed to the gorthek until the start of their next turn. On a critical failure, they are flat-footed to all creatures until the start of their next turn and cannot use any reaction that would normally be triggered by the gorthek's move actions (such as Attack of Opportunity). Creatures mounted on the gorthek are immune to this ability.

Trample ♦♦♦ Medium or smaller, hoof, DC 25

Tactics: At the first signs of trouble, the orc scouts cast *longstrider* on themselves to increase their mobility and then train their shortbows on their targets. The archers constantly move about the field sniping at their foes in a deliberate attempt to avoid engaging in melee combat. The gorthek rider and his powerful mount adopt the opposite approach; they charge headlong into the fray as the mighty beast lowers its terrifying horns and barrels into any foe that stands in its way. The orc scouts and gorthek rider coordinate their assaults against the opponent they deem to be the weakest rather than simultaneously attacking multiple foes. If half of the force is defeated, the survivors

C. THE CONROI WALL



retreat away from the Conroi Wall and flee into the Haunted Steppe rather than risk being executed for failure. PCs that capture and interrogate the orcs by Coercing or magically compelling them to speak learn that they hail from the Stoneheart Mountains and were sent here on a secret mission known only to their leader Ornadox the Merciless. They can tell the location of their main camp at an old stone wall covered in unknown markings and glyphs (area C).

Treasure: In addition to their normal gear, one of the orc scouts wears a demon mask.

C. THE CONROI WALL SEVERE 12

Fragments of shattered stone walls in the rough outlines of formerly grand structures span the breadth of an open area awash in thick grass. The broken lines of rock and mortar are several hundred feet long in every direction, though most of these ruins reaches no more than two feet in height. One intact wall covered with letters and symbols towers over the northern portion of this area, casting its shadow across a nearby stone well.

During the Caleen Settlement's heyday, the fortress of Remeria stood along the western edge of what later became the Road of Sorrows. Although far more of the stronghold's mighty walls withstood the shadow walkers' attack than the neighboring towns and villages, a portion of the keep's inner wall and a nearby covered well are the only structures that survived the invasion relatively intact. The well's wooden cover is obviously newer, and lifting the cover reveals that an intact and functional winch, rope, and bucket are still affixed to the inside lip. The stone-lined well itself is 40 feet deep and still filled to a depth of 7 feet with cold, pure water from the steppe's aquifer. When the Conroi Expedition located this ruin (giving it its name), they repaired the well as a valuable water source in the arid plain and then incorporated it into an encoded message they etched into nearby section of intact wall.

Unfortunately for the PCs, they are not the first visitors to arrive here. A contingent of orcs from the Stoneheart Mountains have made their camp here for the last four days while they try without success to crack the cipher that the Conroi Expedition left behind. Encamped here are **6 gorthek riders** and their befuddled leader **Ornadox**



the Merciless. They congregate in the area around the wall with Ornadox and four of their number futilely wracking their thoroughly taxed brains as they examine the carved symbols, while the remaining pair sleep in bedrolls tucked against the wall's base. Meanwhile, their **7 gortheks** roam the grounds around the wall feasting on the overgrown vegetation or lying atop a bed of grass for a quick snooze.

In a vain attempt to find a solution to their current predicament, Ornadox the Merciless recently dispatched a part of his force to scout the surrounding area in hopes of finding something that can help them in their translation of the wall. Unlike the scouting party, Ornadox and his cohorts are solely focused on deducing the solution to the mystery in front of them, causing them to pay no attention to their surroundings. Likewise, the normally aggressive gortheks behave in an oddly lackadaisical manner partially attributable to their full bellies and masters' indifference.

Their disinterested state gives the characters an ideal opportunity to catch the orcs and their allies completely unaware. The short grasses offer cover to the smallest humanoids only, but the bits and pieces of sundered walls scattered around the area make for ideal hiding spots for creatures of up to Medium size.

ORNADOX THE MERCILESS

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

Perception +19; darkvision

Languages Common, Orc

Skills Athletics +20, Diplomacy +18, Intimidation +20, Survival +18

Str +6, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +3

Items chain mail, composite shortbow (10 arrows), hatchets (2), +1 *striking orc necksplitter*

Beast Rider Whenever Ornadox is mounted on a gorthek, he treats that gorthek as an animal companion, giving it the minion trait and letting him give it 2 actions during his turn if he uses the Command an Animal action to command it. If he Mounts a gorthek in the middle of an encounter, the gorthek changes its initiative to his position. If he is killed, knocked unconscious or becomes no longer mounted in the middle of an encounter, the gorthek acts independently on its next turn.

AC 28; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +16, **Will** +17

HP 195; **Immunities** fear

Ferocity ⤵

Merciless Defiance ⤵ (auditory) **Trigger** An enemy damages Ornadox with a melee strike or touch spell; **Effect** Ornadox roars his contempt for the attack, and attempts an Intimidation check to Demoralize the enemy. Regardless of the result of the check, the enemy is then temporarily immune to Merciless Defiance for 1 minute.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *orc necksplitter* +21 (forceful, sweep), **Damage** 2d8+10 slashing

Melee ♦ *hatchet* +19 (agile, sweep), **Damage** 1d6+10 slashing

Ranged ♦ *hatchet* +19 (thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 1d6+10 slashing

Ranged ♦ *composite shortbow* +21 (deadly d10, propulsive, range increment 60 feet, reload o), **Damage** 1d6+10 piercing

Cleaving Charge ♦♦♦ (flourish) **Requirements** Ornadox is mounted on his gorthek and has an *orc necksplitter* in his hand. **Effect** Ornadox Commands his gorthek to Stride twice. He may

make up to three necksplitter Strikes at any point of this movement. He can attempt to Strike the same creature only once in a single use of Cleaving Charge. Each Strike counts as normal for his multiple attack penalty, and the weapon's forceful and sweep traits apply normally.

Felling Strike ♦♦ Ornadox's strike can ground an airborne foe. He makes a Strike. If it hits and damages a flying target, the target falls up to 120 feet. The fall is gradual enough that if it causes the target to hit the ground, the target takes no damage from the fall. If the attack is a critical hit, the target can't Fly, Leap, levitate, or otherwise leave the ground until the end of his next turn.

Power Attack ♦♦ (flourish) Ornadox makes a melee Strike. If it hits, it deals an extra die of weapon damage.

Swipe ♦♦ (flourish) Ornadox makes a melee Strike and compares the attack roll result to the AC of up to two foes within his melee reach and adjacent to each other. He rolls damage only once and applies it to each creature he hits. This counts as two attacks for his multiple attack penalty. If he is using a weapon with the sweep trait, its modifier applies to all the Swipe attacks.

ORNADOX'S GORTHEK

CREATURE 8

Elite gorthek (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)* and see page 24)

Initiative Perception +16; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

ORC GORTHEK RIDERS (6)

CREATURE 6

See page 23

Perception +14; darkvision

GORTHEKS (6)

CREATURE 7

See page 24

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

Tactics: When the orcs become aware of intruders, they quickly rouse to action. The sleeping orcs keep their arms and armor close at hand. However, unless they get at least 5 minutes of advance notice, the two slumbering gorthek riders forego their armor (reduce their AC by 5) and make for their already saddled beasts 100 feet from the wall. Under Ornadox's leadership, the gorthek riders lower their lances and charge into battle atop their mounts, concentrating their attacks against their opponents' vulnerable flank or against a few isolated individuals. With no realistic options for retreat or surrender, the orcs fight to the last man.

Development: Orc captives compelled to speak will reveal that they are from the Stoneheart Mountains far to the east. They state that their tribal chiefs and shamans sent them weeks ago in search of a mysterious burning pit somewhere in the center of the Haunted Steppe. They do not know anything about this pit, why it burns, or why they were sent. They just know that they are to locate it, secure it, and report back to their chief. They can provide no other useful information and have not had any success in deciphering the message of the wall other than to say that they are sure that it provides a clue to the pit's location.

With the orcs out of the way, the PCs are free to examine the writing on the wall without any outside interference. The message on the wall is encoded (Handout 5A), and the details of the message can be found in the nearby sidebar.

Treasure: Among the saddlebags of Ornadox and his troop can be found a total of 272 sp as well as a bone scroll case sealed with copper wire (worth 10 sp). Inside the scroll tube is a parchment document given to Ornadox by the Great Chief Ekree Two-Tusk of the Stone Beast tribe of the Stoneheart Mountains. The document is written in Orc. If it is translated, provide the players with Handout 5B.

HANDOUT 5A

V6TP VJ2 J4PFN2 H5T H56T H6NN F4AU
WK2Q J5 E4FN W5 WK2 VW4UW 5I B2VW2UG4B
M3GU 3U 6Q 4OE M2U 3U G4MM
4MC RG5V SG2 V4X EQ5L SG2 V4KK

THE CIPHER OF THE CONROI WALL

The Conroi Expedition used a cipher to encode this secret message. The cipher includes a system of numbers and letters from the Common alphabet as explained below.

Deciphering Vowels

Each number corresponds to a specific vowel throughout the message as expressed in the following table.

#	Corresponding Vowel
2	E
3	I
4	A
5	O
6	U

Deciphering Consonants

Consonants appear as letters, but the ciphers change on each line. In order to decode consonants, the reader must shift the letter forward or backward in the alphabet as expressed in the subsequent table. For instance, on a line where the alphabet is shifted two letters forward, the letter D would appear as the letter F instead. If the shift forward or backward takes the reader past the beginning or end of the alphabet, the cipher wraps around the alphabet. Therefore, if the reader must shift three letters forward, the letter Y would appear as the letter B instead.

Line	Key
1	Shift two letters backward
2	Shift three letters backward
3	Shift one letter backward
4	Shift one letter forward

Solution

V6TP VJ2 J4PFN2 H5T H56T H6NN F4AU

Turn the handle for four full days

WK2Q J5 E4FN W5 WK2 VW4UW 5I B2VW2UG4B

Then go back to the start of yesterday.

M3GU 3U 6Q 4OE M2U 3U G4MM

Lift it up and let it fall.

4MC RG5V SG2 V4X EQ5L SG2 V4KK

And show the way from the wall.

HANDOUT 5B

Translated from Orcish

The shamans of Grotaag say that the time of the Burning Star has come. Go to the plains and scour the humans dead settlements. Grotaag has shown the shamans a wall with writing on it. Find the wall and follow the instructions to the next landmark. They will lead to the giant column of smoke. Tell none about your mission. Others also pursue the smoldering rock. Kill any that stand in your way.

The wall's message relates to the nearby stone well. It directs the reader to turn the handle four complete rotations in a clockwise direction, and then turn the handle one complete rotation in a counter-clockwise direction. The creature must then vertically lift the handle, allowing it drop back into position where it will then point due north from the well towards the next landmark.

Since *comprehend language* does not decipher codes, the PCs find themselves in much the same situation as the orcs before them. Allow your players to take a crack at the code and try to decipher it through trial and error. Decipher Writing checks can be made if necessary to give them a hand. A successful DC 30 Society check will provide the means to deciphering one piece of the puzzle (e.g. the vowel substitution or the consonant shift for one line of the message), so each separate part of the cipher will require an additional check. On a critical success, the PCs can decode the entire message outright — though they may still struggle with the meaning of the message.

If your players are struggling to solve the riddle, you can lend a hand and gently point them in the right direction without blatantly revealing the solution. Magic such as *augury*, *legend lore* and similar spells and rituals can be used to bestow useful information similar to the results of the DC 30 Decipher Writing checks above. In a similar vein, mechanically inclined characters that examine the well and succeed on a DC 30 Crafting or relevant Lore check discern that the crank mechanism has several unusual notches that suggest it can move in an unanticipated manner with the proper coaxing. The check does not reveal the combination needed to elicit this counterintuitive motion, but it reveals an important clue that may lead the adventurers to attempt to unravel the mystery through sheer trial and error. However, regardless of how many times the PCs turn or

twist the handle, it never falls into the correct position unless that individual follows the sequence detailed in the ciphered message.

THE CONROI WALL TO GRAVENFAR'S CAVE

The trail from Conroi's Wall leads 188 miles due north to the next landmark, Gravenfar's Cave. The path across the Haunted Steppe continues more or less along the Road of Sorrows, so continue to roll for encounters with Caléen ruins as detailed under **On the Road of Sorrows** above as well as the normal Haunted Steppe random encounters. Also, as word of the search for the Pit of the Burning Star has begun to circulate in certain circles, the orcs and Shattered Folk wandering throughout the intervening area seem to have multiplied overnight.

In addition to any randomly generated encounters, an encounter will occur with these two groups: At least one Orc War Party and group of Shattered Folk tribesmen will attack the PCs en route to their next destination at times of the GMs choosing. Use the statistics for these groups

as indicated in the **Haunted Steppe Random Encounters** table in the previous chapter. It should be noted that the orcs encountered in these encounters are of the orc tribes native to the Haunted Steppe, not members of or in any way affiliated with Ornadox's Stone Beast tribe detailed in the **Orc Scouting Party** and area C encounters above.

In addition, unlike the previously encountered Shattered Folk tribesmen, this Shattered Folk encounter is with cannibals who bear the partially shaved heads and chalk face paint of the Kwajubinay tribe, a fact that the PCs can discern with a successful DC 20 Society check to Recall Knowledge. The Kwajubinay are not a numerous tribe and are thankfully only rarely encountered out on the vast steppes because in addition to their savage and cannibalistic ways, they are known to have formed a quasi-religious cult that worships an entity known only as The Shadow. Details about the religion are scant at best, but a successful DC 30 Religion check confirms that the faith known as The Shadow (see **Appendix C**, page 137) is thought to have first emerged when the mighty Hundaei Empire collapsed over 2,800 years ago and is speculated to have been at least partially responsible for its calamitous civil war and sudden downfall.



These extra encounters are intended as a prelude to the pitched battle that awaits the PCs outside Gravenfar's Cave between a large contingent of orcs and the followers of a Kwajubinary undead lord in The Shadow's mysterious service.

D. GRAVENFAR'S CAVE EXTREME 12

The details of this site are not apparent because of its situation in a depression in the plain, however, a successful DC 25 Perception check detects the sounds of war cries and screams in the distance from 200 yards before the tableau itself comes into view.

The landscape gently slopes down into a wide, remarkably uniform depression. Battered and bloodied corpses litter the field in the vicinity of a grassy earthwork inside the sweeping basin, while a battle between savage orcs and shaved-head human tribesmen rages around it. A tunnel, crudely cut, in the exposed face of the earthwork opens into the ground. A closer look at the battlefield reveals that many of the combatants, both orc and human alike appear to be the shambling corpses of recently deceased combatants returned to life and now serving the cause of the Shattered Folk warriors.

An odd swale roughly 100 yards across dips to a gradual depth of 30 feet here, its grassy sides gently sloping to its nadir where a strangely regular grassy mound lies. The entire depression as well as the grassy wrinkle of earth at its center were formed by a fragment of noqual that separated from the Burning Star as it plummeted through the atmosphere of Boros and crashed here. For most of its history, the 30-foot deep, gently sloping depression escaped scrutiny from men and beast alike. However, now the blood and clash of battle mar the small crater.

The orc warlord Aggarak leads his company of Stone Beast orcs in a pitched battle against a smaller yet no-less-determined tribe of Shattered Folk cannibals under the direction of Kiwaha Star-Eye, a shaman of the Kwajubinary tribe of the Shattered Folk. Like the Stone Beasts the PCs encountered at area C, Aggarak and his band have been dispatched from the Stoneheart Mountains by Great Chief Ekree Two-Tusk in search of the Pit of the Burning Star. The Kwajubinary have an idea of where the Pit lies but have no such interest themselves; the cannibals have just taken note of the increase in visitors to the central steppes and seek to bring more souls to The Shadow.

The two enemy forces are arrayed across the entire depression in clusters of bloodshed, but none of them have yet entered the cave in the side of the hillock at the basin's center other than an initial exploratory group detailed below.

AGGARAK'S WARBAND

This orc band consists of the following members:

- Aggarak Stub-Ear
- 1 orc war drummer
- 4 gorthek riders mounted on gortheks
- 6 orc scouts
- 4 orc troops
- His dead include a total of 33 orc warriors, sergeants, and lieutenants, though not all of them currently rest easy (see below).

AGGARAK STUB-EAR

CREATURE 10

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

Perception +17; darkvision

Languages Common, Orc

Skills Athletics +22, Intimidation +22, Survival +20

Str +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +4

Items composite longbow (10 arrows), +1 striking greataxe, hide armor

AC 30; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +19, **Will** +16

HP 220

Ferocity 2

Cleave 2 (rage) **Trigger** Aggarak's Strike kills a creature or knocks it unconscious, and another foe is adjacent to that creature. **Effect** Aggarak makes a melee Strike against the second foe.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ greataxe +21 (sweep), **Damage** 2d12+10 slashing

Ranged ♦ composite longbow +19 (deadly d10, propulsive, range increment 100 feet, reload 0, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 1d8+10 piercing

Rage ♦ (concentrate, emotion, mental) **Requirement** Aggarak isn't fatigued or raging; **Effect** Aggarak gains 15 temporary Hit Points that last until the rage ends. While raging, he deals 12 additional damage with melee attacks and gains access to the critical specialization effects of weapons he wields, gains a +10-foot status bonus to his Speed, and takes a -1 penalty to AC. Aggarak can't use concentrate actions except Seek and rage actions. The rage lasts for 1 minute, until there are no enemies Aggarak can perceive, or until he falls unconscious. Once the rage ends, Aggarak can't Rage again for 1 minute.



Renewed Vigor ♦ (concentrate, rage) Aggarak gains 10 temporary Hit Points.

Sudden Charge ♦♦ (flourish, open) Aggarak Strides twice. If he ends his movement within melee reach of at least one enemy, he makes a melee Strike against that enemy.

ORC WAR DRUMMER

CREATURE 5

CE MEDIUM HUMANOID ORC

Perception +12; darkvision

Languages Orc

Skills Athletics +12, Intimidation +13, Religion +13, Society +13

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

Items chain shirt, drums, drumsticks (2)

AC 22; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +9, **Will** +14

HP 75

Ferocity 2

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ drumstick +12, **Damage** 1d6+4 bludgeoning

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 24, attack +16; **3rd** (2 slots) *circle of protection*, *cry of destruction*, *sound burst*; **2nd** (3 slots) *death knell*, *remove fear*, *resist energy*, *shatter*; **1st** (3 slots) *bane*, *bless*, *fear*, *phantom pain*

Bard Composition Spells 1 Focus Point, DC 24; **3rd** *counter performance*; **Cantrips (3rd)** *inspire courage*, *triple time*

Incite Rage ♦ (auditory, concentrate, emotion, mental) The orc war drummer drives a creature within 30 feet that isn't fatigued or raging into a frenzy. The creature gains 5 temporary hit points that last until the frenzy ends. The creature deals 5 additional damage with melee attacks, takes a –1 penalty to AC and can't use concentrate actions except Seek. The frenzy lasts until the end of the creature's next turn. An unwilling creature can attempt a DC 24 Will save to negate this effect

and gain temporary immunity to Incite Rage for 1 minute.

Inspiring Blow ➤ (auditory, concentrate, emotion, healing, mental) **Trigger** The orc war drummer or a creature it inspires scores a critical hit on a Strike; **Effect** The creature that triggered this reaction regains 5 Hit Points and gets an extra reaction it can use before the end of its next turn to make an Attack of Opportunity. The creature can't use more than one Attack of Opportunity triggered by the same reaction.

ORC GORTHEK RIDERS (4) CREATURE 6

See page 23

Initiative Perception +14; darkvision

GORTHEKS (4) CREATURE 7

See page 24

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

ORC SCOUTS (6) CREATURE 8

See page 23

Initiative Perception +19; darkvision

ORC TROOPS (4) CREATURE 8

CE **HUGE** **HUMANOID** **ORC** **TROOP**

Perception +17; darkvision

Languages Kirkut, Orc

Skills Athletics +18, Intimidation +18, Survival +18

Str +6, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +1

AC 26; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +14, **Will** +13

HP 100; **Immunities** precision, swarm mind;

Resistances bludgeoning 10, piercing 10, slashing 5; **Weaknesses** area damage 10, splash damage 10

Ferocity ➤

Speed 25 feet

Ranged ➤ harpoons +19 (range 80 feet), **Damage** 3d8 piercing plus tethers

Brutality An orc troop truly unleashes its wrath on creatures in its grasp, breaking bones and straining

ligaments. When it Dogpiles a creature it has grabbed, the creature must make a DC 26 Fortitude save or become wounded 1 (wounded 2 on a critical failure) and take a 10-foot status penalty to its speeds until the wounded condition is removed.

Death Awaits ♦ The orc troop pulls a creature grabbed by its harpoons toward itself. The troop attempts an Athletics check against the creature's Fortitude DC. On a success, the troop pulls the creature 30 feet closer to it (60 feet closer on a critical success).

Dogpile ♦ The orcs attack with a variety of weapons, dealing 3d8 damage to each enemy in the troop's area (DC 26 basic Reflex save); the orc troop decides each time it uses this ability whether the damage is bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing. A creature that fails its save is also grabbed.

Tethers Any creature hit by the orc troop's harpoons is grabbed. The orc troop can move while it has a creature grabbed with its harpoons, but it automatically releases the creature if the troop moves beyond the harpoon tethers' 80-foot length. The orc troop can release any creature grabbed by it as a free action. The tethers can be severed by a Strike that deals at least 10 slashing damage to it. The tethers have AC 20 and Hardness 2, and their Escape DC is 26.

THE KWAJUBINAY TRIBESMEN

This tribe consists of the following members:

- **Kiwaha Star-Eye**
- **6 Kwajubinary deathriders** mounted on **mustangs**
- **2 Kwajubinary cannibal troops**
- **7 human zombies**
- **8 orc zombies**
- **2 mummies**
- Another 5 dead tribesmen still litter the field but have yet to be animated.

KIWAHA STAR-EYE

CREATURE 12

UNIQUE **NE** **MEDIUM** **HUMAN** **HUMANOID**

Male Shattered Folk cleric of The Shadow

Perception +25

Languages Kirkut, Orc

Skills Diplomacy +22, Medicine +22, Religion +25

Str +1, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +2, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +5

Items +1 *resilient breastplate*, obsidian religious symbol of The Shadow (worth 10 sp), *staff of unholy life* (5 charges and *create undead* ritual, see **Appendix C**, page 137)

AC 32; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +20, **Will** +25

HP 200, negative healing

Sacrifice Minion ➤ (auditory, concentrate, linguistic, move) **Trigger** Kiwaha is targeted with an attack, and an undead minion is next to him. **Effect** Kiwaha orders the undead to leap in front of the attack. Kiwaha and the undead swap places, and the undead becomes the target of the attack.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ staff +22 (two-hand d8), **Damage** 1d4+7 bludgeoning

Divine Prepared Spells DC 34, attack +27; **6th** *harm* (×6), *righteous might*, *spellwrack*, *vampiric exsanguination*; **5th** *divine wrath* (×2), *vampiric touch*; **4th** *globe of invulnerability*, *spiritual weapon*; **3rd** *chilling darkness*, *crisis of faith*, *neutralize poison*; **2nd** *darkvision*, *death knell*, *ghoulish cravings*; **1st** *bane*, *bles*, *magic weapon*; **Cantrips** (**6th**) *chill touch*, *detect magic*, *divine lance*, *light*, *shield*

Cleric Domain Spells 2 Focus Points, DC 32; **6th** *malignant sustenance*, *touch of undeath*

Rituals *create undead*

Corpse Companions (necromancy) When Kiwaha uses *harm* to target a single undead creature, it is also affected as if he cast *bind undead* of the same level on it. In addition, when he uses a *create undead* ritual, he can target multiple dead creatures, creating up to 9 levels of undead at a time.

Undead Lord (necromancy) Undead are friendly to Kiwaha. Mindless undead act independently but try to follow his directions. An undead with the minion trait that serves another creature is immune to this ability.

KWJUBINAY DEATHRIDERS (6)

CREATURE 8

NE MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +16

Languages Kirkut

Skills Acrobatics +18, Athletics +18, Intimidation +18, Nature +16, Religion +16, Survival +16

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

Items +1 *striking battle axe*, composite shortbow (20 arrows), studded leather

Ride When the Kwajubinay deathrider Commands an Animal they're mounted on to take a move action (such as Stride), they automatically succeed instead of needing to attempt a check. Any animal they're mounted on acts on their turn, like a minion. If they Mount an animal in the middle of an encounter, it skips its next turn and then acts on their next turn.

AC 27; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +17, **Will** +15

HP 150

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ battle axe +18 (sweep), **Damage** 2d8+7 slashing

Ranged ♦ composite shortbow +16 (deadly d10, propulsive, range increment 60 feet, reload o), **Damage** 1d6+7 piercing

Cleric Domain Spells 2 Focus Points, DC 24; **4th** *weapon surge*, *zeal for battle*

Claim Glory ➤ **Trigger** The Kwajubinay deathrider kills or knocks an enemy unconscious; **Effect** The Kwajubinay deathrider regains a Focus Point.

Mounted Fury When a Kwajubinay deathrider Rages while they are mounted, their mount also benefits from the Rage. If the Kwajubinay deathrider becomes unmounted, the mount's Rage ends. Once the rage ends, the mount can't benefit from Rage again for 1 minute.

Rage ♦ (concentrate, emotion, mental)

Requirement The Kwajubinay deathrider isn't fatigued or raging; **Effect** The Kwajubinay deathrider gains 8 temporary Hit Points that last until the rage ends. While raging, they deal 6 additional damage with melee attacks, gain physical resistance 7 to piercing and slashing damage, and take a -1 penalty to AC. The

Kwajubinary deathrider can't use concentrate actions except Seek, rage actions and Cast a Spell for his cleric domain spells. The rage lasts for 1 minute, until there are no enemies the Kwajubinary deathrider can perceive, or until they fall unconscious. Once the rage ends, the Kwajubinary deathrider can't Rage again for 1 minute.

Spur Mount ♦ **Requirement** The Kwajubinary deathrider is mounted; **Effect** The Kwajubinary deathrider Rages and Commands an Animal to Stride twice.

MUSTANGS (6)

CREATURE 2

See page 5

Initiative Perception +6; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

KWJUBINAY CANNIBAL TROOPS (2)

CREATURE 10

NE LARGE HUMAN HUMANOID TROOP

Perception +17

Languages Kirkut

Skills Athletics +22, Intimidation +22, Survival +19

Str +7, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3

AC 28; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +17, **Will** +22

HP 125; **Immunities** precision, swarm mind;

Resistances bludgeoning 10, piercing 10, slashing 5; **Weaknesses** area damage 10, splash damage 10

Speed 25 feet

Cannibal Feast ♦ The troop rips flesh off creatures in their midst, inflicting 3d10 bleed damage to each enemy in the troop's area (DC 29 basic Reflex save). On a critical failure, creatures also take 1d10 persistent bleed damage.

Taste for Blood The cannibals pull gobbets of raw flesh into their mouths, stoking their bloodlust. If the troop ends its turn with a creature with persistent bleed damage in its area, it gains 5 temporary hit points and is quickened until the end of its next turn. It can use its extra action only to Step or Stride toward an enemy.

HUMAN ZOMBIES (7)

CREATURE 0

Statistics as elite **zombie shambler** (*Pathfinder Bestiary* (Second Edition))

Initiative Perception +2; darkvision

ORC ZOMBIES (8)

CREATURE 1

Statistics as weak **zombie brute** (*Pathfinder Bestiary* (Second Edition))

Initiative Perception +4; darkvision

MUMMY GUARDIANS (2)

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +16; darkvision

Tactics: The orcs rely upon numerical superiority and their heavy gorthek cavalry to mow through the Shattered Folk tribesmen and mindless undead. The orc foot soldiers gang up on any overmatched targets, leaving their stronger troops to deal with their foes' leader and his deathriders. Meanwhile, the outnumbered Shattered Folk tribesmen fight a defensive battle trying to take down as many of the lesser orcs as quickly as possible so their leader can animate them and bring them back into the battle. For his part Kiwaha splits his time between defending himself and using his staff to bolster his undead servitors. He knows he is down to 5 charges and is being careful about their usage.

Development: With the battle already raging before them, the PCs have options as to how they wish to proceed. Depending on what option the PCs choose, the reactions by the other combatants is provided below. If the PCs choose an option not covered here, you will need to determine its outcome using the information provided here as a guide as to the likely actions of the other parties.

Wait out the battle: The PCs may choose to sit this one out. They can pull back out of range and wait for the sounds to die down or simply observe from the fringes. If they are visibly observing from the fringes, there is a 50% chance each round that they are noticed by the combatants. If they are noticed and do not make an obvious effort to help one side or the other, there is a 50% chance that each of the sides assumes that the PCs are an enemy and engage them as well, which could likely lead to a three-way free-for-all melee. In any case, whether engaging one or both sides or remaining unobserved, the PCs can then opt to deal with

the victors however they see fit. Barring an intervention by the PCs, the orcs will withdraw from the battle in 1d4+4 rounds. They will lose another two of their orc troops plus the orc war drummer, 2 gorthek riders, and a gorthek. Whereas the Kwajubinary will lose one of their cannibal troops and 4 deathriders as well as all of their current zombies, but they will gain another 15 zombies (3 orc and 12 human) as well as a wraith (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*) with the use of the ritual stored in Kiwaha's staff. At the battle's conclusion, the Kwajubinary will turn on the PCs as soon as they become aware of them, and at the GM's discretion the PCs could run afoul of the orc survivors at some later point.

Join forces with the orcs: Though the orcs are a race almost universally hostile to the PCs and the mountain dwarves of their company, the clearly cannibalistic and undead-employing tribesmen seem to make a natural common enemy. The dwarves will attempt to hang back and avoid becoming engaged in the conflict, but if the PCs enter the battle and immediately begin attacking the tribesmen and their undead allies, the orcs will welcome the addition and battle wholeheartedly alongside the PCs. Assuming a victory over the Kwajubinary, the wary orc survivors assess the odds of killing the PCs too in one fell swoop. Aggarak will make this decision based on how effective the PCs were in battle and how injured they appear to be. If Aggarak was slain, the orcs will not attempt such a double cross. If the PCs are successfully able to parley with the orcs, see "Parley" below.

Join forces with the tribesmen: By comparison, Kiwaha and his fellow tribesmen are much less receptive to the PCs' assistance. The tribal shaman serves only one master — the mysterious entity known as The Shadow. Nonetheless, Kiwaha will not look a gift mustang in the mouth. In battle he will try to concentrate his followers and undead on the orc soldiers and leave the gorthek riders and leader to the PCs. He will try to conserve spells while using the ritual in his staff to increase the forces available to him. He intends to keep his forces as intact as possible in order to deal with the newcomers after the orcs have been dispatched. Assuming a victory over the orcs, the PCs may attempt to parley with the tribesmen (see "Parley" below).

Use the battle as cover to sneak into the cave: As is the way of adventurers, the PCs may opt to avoid the carefully prepared encounter entirely and simply use the chaos and confusion to sneak into the cave mouth which appears to be the obvious destination of this leg of the journey. Simply Sneaking will be difficult simply because of the sheer number of combatants on the field but the use of magical

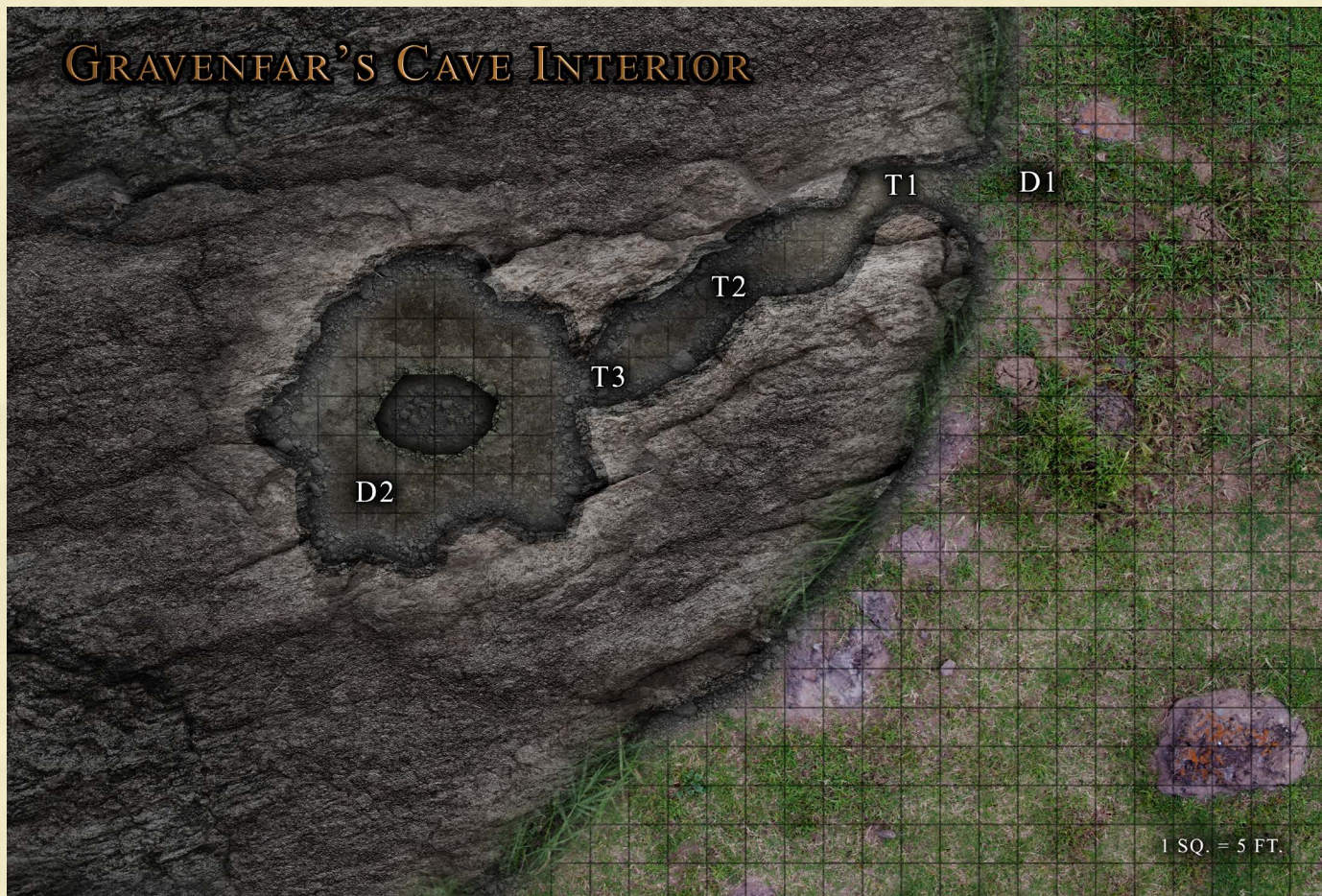
assistance such as *invisibility* or *teleport* could certainly make it possible. Unfortunately for the PCs, the effects of the noqual fragment within the cave extends that substance's potent magic suppression all the way to the cave entrance. As a result, any attempts to scry the interior of the cave will fail and any magical means of invisibility or instantaneous travel also fail at the cave entrance. This might be sufficient to gain entrance into the cave unnoticed but leaves the prospect of the dwarven caravan left unprotected nearby which will certainly be noticed by the victors of the battle outside and subsequently attacked. If the PCs are noticed at the mouth of the cave or going to the cave, see the results in *Wait out the battle* above for what occurs if the PCs are spotted.

Parley: Assuming the PCs have allied with one side or other in the conflict outside the cave, depending on the battle's conclusion they may attempt to parley with their erstwhile allies regarding access to the cave.

Parley with the orcs: If the PCs are successful in achieving parley with Aggarak, he initially is indifferent to the PCs. He will agree to allow the PCs to explore the cave first but little else. If the PCs successfully Make an Impression and he becomes friendly, he will reveal that he is of the Stone Beast tribe of the Stoneheart Mountains and was sent by his Great Chief Ekree several weeks ago to find the pit where lies the Star That Burns after the tribe's shaman experienced a dream-vision from Grotaag about its discovery. He doesn't know much about it and was sent as one of several orc bands dispatched onto the steppe in search of this prize. Aggarak does not know the numbers or fates of any other orc troops sent on the Haunted Steppe but believes that this shallow crater and cave might be the very pit he is seeking. He can relate that he and his company had just discovered it when they were ambushed by the tribesmen who they believe had been tracking them for several days. He will offer to let the PCs have the honor of exploring the cave first if they agree to share anything they find within. He makes vague promises of cooperation with his Great Chief over sharing this Burning Star, but no Sense Motive check is necessary to realize that even he is unconvinced of his chief agreeing to such a thing. But that is a matter to be worked out later in his mind. If the PCs enter the cave while Aggarak is indifferent toward them, he and his orcs will attack the caravan if they are aware of it and the PCs have left it undefended. If Aggarak is friendly toward them, he will not order such an attack.

If Aggarak's attitude is shifted to helpful, he can provide the PCs with all of the above information as well as two additional items of interest. One is that shortly before being attacked they discovered that something within

GRAVENFAR'S CAVE INTERIOR



the cave suppresses magical effects beyond the entrance. Second, he will relate that he had sent a group of four scouts into the cave just before the attack. Three were almost immediately decapitated by some hideous trap that lies not far beyond the cave mouth, and the fourth has yet to return. They assume the worst, though. Aggarak proposes they explore the cave together and share whatever is found within. If questioned about what his chief will say, he simply chuckles and says, "It takes many weeks to walk from the mountains to here. Who knows who will be Great Chief by the time Ekree learns of what we've discovered?" A PC who successfully Senses his Motive with a DC 25 Perception check can determine that there is no deception in this statement. Aggarak defers to the PCs' expertise upon entering the cave mouth, but he and his war drummer and any surviving gorthek riders (dismounted, of course) will tag along. His remaining orcs will remain wary and distrustful but will not make any trouble with the members of the caravan.

How the PCs handle the sharing of any discoveries with the orcs is up to them, but Aggarak's initial reaction will be consistent with his current attitude as detailed above.

This can change based on circumstances as the adventure progresses, of course, and the orc warlord's priority is always to obtain at least a share of the burning star's discovery for himself. In any event, a true lasting alliance is unlikely as the first moment he sees a clear advantage for himself Aggarak will seek to betray the PCs.

Parley with the tribesmen: At the conclusion of the battle, the Kwajubinay's first inclination will be to turn on the PCs. In their eyes they are agents of destruction in the service of their lord, The Shadow, and see the PCs as little more than heretics and a potential food source. If the PCs recognize the tribesmen as Kwajubinay and as servants of The Shadow (see **The Conroi Wall to Gravenfar's Cave** above for details of doing this), they may pretend to share that tribe's faith in order to gain their trust. This is difficult to do and requires succeeding at a DC 40 Deception check to Lie (Kiwaha's Perception DC is 35 but he gains a +5 circumstance bonus due to his suspicious nature). However, if the ruse is successful Kiwaha will relay that his group arrived just as the orcs were starting to enter the cave. They had been tracking the orc band for 4 days and managed to catch up to them here.

He personally knows nothing about the cave other than that it is death for anyone to enter and is avoided by his tribe. He does not know why the sudden influx of mountain orcs has occurred in recent weeks but refers to them gleefully as “good hunting.” If he was to hazard a guess, he’d say they are likely hunting for Shataakh-Uulm. He doesn’t know the exact location of that site, as even the Kwajubinary don’t venture near it, but waves vaguely in a northeasterly direction saying it is many days’ ride. He does warn that the nearer one gets to the legendary site the more one runs into the walking dead bearing strange burns and that prove exceedingly resistant to being commanded. He has no interest in the cave or Shataakh-Uulm and, if the PCs have convinced him of their own allegiance to The Shadow, he will leave them to it in peace, oddly wishing them luck in their quest before heading on in his own quest to continue harvesting souls for The Shadow. Unfortunately, if the PCs leave the dwarven caravan unattended, the Kwajubinary will likely attack it in the PCs’ absence seeking more souls for The Shadow and corpses for food.

Treasure: The gorthek’s saddlebags contain 368 gp, a +1 heavy crossbow with 40 bolts, and a mahogany jewelry box (40 sp) that contains 24 assorted gems (worth a total of 360 sp). In addition, searching the bodies of the dead who were slain before the PCs arrived locates an additional 5 lesser salamander elixirs, 7 lesser healing potions, 7 suits of hide armor, 2 composite longbows, 1 coyote cloak, and a total of 89 gp.

D1. CAVE MOUTH LOW 12

Everything beyond the cave opening is under the effects of an antimagic field. Because the magical suppression property emanates from an inherently nonmagical object, there is no way to end the effect other than physically removing the small fragment of noqual from the cave.

An apparent natural fissure in the rocky face of this hillock leads down into darkness. At some time in the past, someone has enlarged and reinforced the walls of this fissure with fieldstone masonry. The freshly decapitated bodies of three orcs lie slumped just inside the cave mouth. Their heads loll haphazardly nearby. From the splatters of blood on the tunnel floor it’s clear that something farther down the corridor took the orcs’ heads with great force and then flung them back to lie at the tunnel entrance. Other than a few fat, blue flies that have landed on the remains and puddles of congealing blood, there are no other signs of life in the tunnel.

When the noqual meteorite struck here 2,000 years ago, it blasted out this small basin and piled up a mound of displaced earth that came to cover its resting place. The

heat of the impact caused a cyst to form at the center of this debris, and millennia of weathering created a natural fissure descending to that cyst. This location was initially discovered by Aroldus Gravenfar, who made his way down into the cyst where he camped and created a trail glyph as described at area D2. When members of the Conroi Expedition discovered the location two years later, they spent some time studying Gravenfar’s work. In the process they bricked the walls of the tunnel to stabilize them and added the traps described below so that only they could safely make use of Gravenfar’s work. The tunnel descends at a gradual angle, though it is not steep enough to inhibit movement. Its floor and 8-foot ceiling are hard-packed stone and earth, but its walls are constructed of dry-stacked masonry. The entry tunnel boasts three mechanical traps that were installed by the explorers of the Conroi Expedition.

Trap 1: The first trap is a huge scythe blade placed on a rotating assembly that swings across the cave’s entrance when a creature passes through the location marked T1 and then resets itself. It is this trap that accounted for the three orc corpses at the cave mouth.

HUGE SCYTHE

HAZARD 12

MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 34 (trained)

Description A huge scythe blade placed on a rotating assembly swings across the cave’s entrance.

Disable Thievery DC 36 (master) to block the assembly at two locations

AC 33; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +19

Hardness 20; **HP** 80 (BT 40); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Decapitating Blade ⤵ (attack, death); **Trigger** A creature passes through the location marked T1; **Effect** The scythe swings across the cave entrance and makes a melee Strike against the creature that triggered it.

Melee scythe +29 (deadly 1d12), **Damage** 6d10+25 slashing plus decapitation

Decapitation On a critical hit, a target must succeed at a DC 28 Fortitude save or be decapitated, dying instantly unless it can survive without a head.

Reset The trap resets at the end of its reaction, and is ready to swing again the next round.

Trap 2: The second trap is a covered pit at the location marked **T2** on the map. Anyone succeeding at a DC 28 Perception check after the scythe trap notices a fresh blood trail on the floor, evidence of a fourth orc that survived that trap and continued on his way. However, a second DC 28 Perception check notices that the blood trail suddenly ends at the square marked as **T2**. While it takes a DC 38 Perception check to actually notice the trap, this lesser check can at least give warning of some sort of danger at the location. The pit's cover is skillfully camouflaged to blend in with the earthen floor, and the pit itself is a smooth-walled, magically excavated shaft that drops trespassers 100 feet onto a spike-lined bottom. The slope of the passage inclines up towards area **D2** after the pit, so the bottom few inches of the pit are covered in scummy, stinking water that has drained here from the infrequent rain showers on the steppes above. Lying in this rank stew is the fresh corpse of the fourth and final orc lieutenant that made it this far, but also the skeletal remains of a group of three adventurers that explored the cave several decades ago.

CAMOUFLAGED SPIKED PIT

HAZARD 12

MAGICAL MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 38 (or 20 if a creature has seen something fall through)

Description A carefully camouflaged cover hides a 100-foot-deep spiked pit.

Disable Thievery DC 30 to find safe areas to walk around the pit or to pry the cover open and prevent it from closing again.

AC 33; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +15

Hardness 22; **HP** 86 (BT 43); **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Spiked Pitfall **Trigger** A creature enters the square marked **T2**; **Effect** The creature falls in and takes falling damage (typically 50 bludgeoning damage) and 1d4 spikes make melee Strikes against the creature.

Melee spike +26, **Damage** 1d6+5 piercing plus tetanus (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*); no multiple attack penalty

Tetanus (disease); **Saving Throw** DC 14 Fortitude; **Onset** 10 days; **Stage 1** clumsy 1 (1 week); **Stage 2** clumsy 2 and can't speak (1 day); **Stage 3** paralyzed with spasms (1 day); **Stage 4** death

Reset The cover automatically resets at the end of each round. A PC in the pit can attempt a DC 30 Athletics check to Climb the wall; if she falls, she again takes falling damage and 1d4 spikes make melee Strikes. The PC can Force Open the cover with a DC 30 Athletics check.

Treasure: The fresh corpse of the orc lieutenant still wears a falchion, hide armor (with the broken condition due to damage from the spikes), a *gorget of the primal roar* (miraculously intact), and a pouch holding 17 sp and a gold necklace (25 sp). His bow, arrows, and a potion bottle were all destroyed in the fall. The three skeletal remains (all human) still bear between them +1 *resilient banded mail*, a +1 *striking battleaxe*, bottled air, a rusted and ruined suit of chainmail, +1 *half-plate*, a +1 *longsword*, 2 short swords, and a total of 117 sp and 28 cp tucked into their tattered pockets and moldy leather pouches.

Trap 3: A sinister mindfog mist trap at the location marked **T3** is the final barrier standing between the characters and their destination. In the 80 years since the Conroi Expedition left its calling card in this subterranean complex, the PCs are the first to get this far. This trap does not automatically reset itself.

MINDFOG MISTBURST

HAZARD 15

MECHANICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 39 (master)

Description A poisonous powder fills nooks and crannies in the walls and billows into a fine mist when disturbed.

Disable Survival DC 41 (master) to carefully clear the powder without causing it to become airborne or use any sort of wind or water effect to destroy the hazard from afar.

Aerosolize **Trigger** a creature enters area **T3**; **Effect** A cloud of powder fills a 10-foot-radius emanation, exposing all creatures inside to mindfog mist (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook*).

Mindfog Mist (poison); **Saving Throw** DC 35 Fortitude; **Onset** 1 round; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** stupefied 2 (1 round); **Stage 2** confused and stupefied 3 (1 round); **Stage 3** confused and stupefied 4 (1 round)

D2. GRAVENFAR'S MAP

A miniaturized topographical mosaic depicting a large basin with several geographical features covers much of the floor in the middle of the room. A black line of stones leads from a small cave mouth near its center to an indeterminate point somewhere off the tiled artistic piece.

Although the Conroi Expedition members created the traps that guard this cave, Aroldus Gravenfar actually discovered the cave first and meticulously handmade the wondrous map. A successful DC 20 Nature check confirms that the mosaic is an exact replica of the region surrounding the cave. The black line points the characters in the direction that Gravenfar and subsequently the Conroi Expedition went from here. Coordinating the points on the map with those found outside requires a successful DC 20 Nature or Survival check to Sense Direction or magical assistance with spells such as know direction or similar effects.

Aroldus Gravenfar realized there had to be a noqual deposit somewhere within this mound based on the magical suppression it caused, but he had no great need to recover and so built his mosaic map directly over the top of it. Retrieving the small piece of starmetal from the ground, therefore, requires the character to first locate it 6 feet below the soil just under the mosaic's southeastern quadrant. The remnants of smaller fires, gnawed bones and small waste holes dug in the earthen floor along the chamber's edge confirm that someone made camp here many years ago (members of the Conroi Expedition), and a PC who Searches can find a pair of slender steel pegs with a 10-foot length of twine tied between them can be found among the debris with a DC 25 Perception check. If this is discovered and anyone thinks to examine the mosaic closely, with a DC 30 Perception check they can find a tiny hole near the center of the mosaic that perfectly fits one of the pegs. Stretching the twine to its full extent and searching along the northeastern edge of the room locates a second hole where the peg at the opposite end of the string fits with a DC 25 Perception check. When the pegs are in place, the string between them lies directly along the route of the black line of stones. On either side of the far peg, small lines have been scratched into the floor and given number designations. Anyone making a DC 15 Nature check to Recall Knowledge or Survival check to Sense Direction can tell these are degrees of arc and provide an exact reading of the black line's direction as 21° north-northeast. This calculation was determined by the Conroi Expedition who then left their measuring instruments here in case they needed them again in the future.

Treasure: If the PCs excavate the fragment of noqual, it weighs a mere 2 lb. and is worth 500 sp (1 chunk, L Bulk). This noqual ore has been uniquely warped by its cosmic journey and traumatic arrival in that rather than simply absorbing magic into itself, it is amplified and actively extends its own antimagic field in an area sufficient to cover the entire interior of the mound. However, if the ore is excavated, it immediately begins to oxidize and within a matter of minutes functions as normal noqual ore (see Appendix C, page 137).

GRAVENFAR'S CAVE TO SIXTUN'S SPYGLASS

The black line imbedded into Gravenfar's wondrous mosaic points the party towards their next critical landmark, a lonely tower literally in the middle of nowhere 259 miles north-northeast of the cave. This leg of the journey culminates at the literal crossroads where the Road of Sorrows and the lush grasslands proper end, and the patchy, divergent landscape in the ominous shadow of the Pit of the Burning Star begins. The ancient Caleen settlements slowly, yet steadily trail off as the PCs draw closer to their distant objective. To reflect this change, the chances of coming across these sundered ruins (as previously described under Road of Sorrows Random Encounters) while traveling are cumulatively reduced by 5% for each 50-mile segment of this trek. Therefore, when the adventurers reach Sixtun's Spyglass 259 miles north-northeast of Gravenfar's Cave, there is only a 5% chance of encountering these lifeless communities. As before Haunted Steppe random encounters continue to occur as normal.

On the other hand, there is a (non-cumulative) 10% chance for every 10 miles traveled of stumbling across some remnant of the Conroi Expedition of old. These mementos can include one or more of the items from the following table that the members discarded or left behind on their way to their final destination. Items marked with an asterisk can only be discovered once and should be rerolled if indicated again.

CONROI EXPEDITION ARTIFACTS

d20	Item
1	A broken and rusty shaving kit
2	A dry leather pouch holding 2d8 gp in century-old Rhemian coins
3	An unmarked grave (contains a human corpse if exhumed)
4	A broken compass

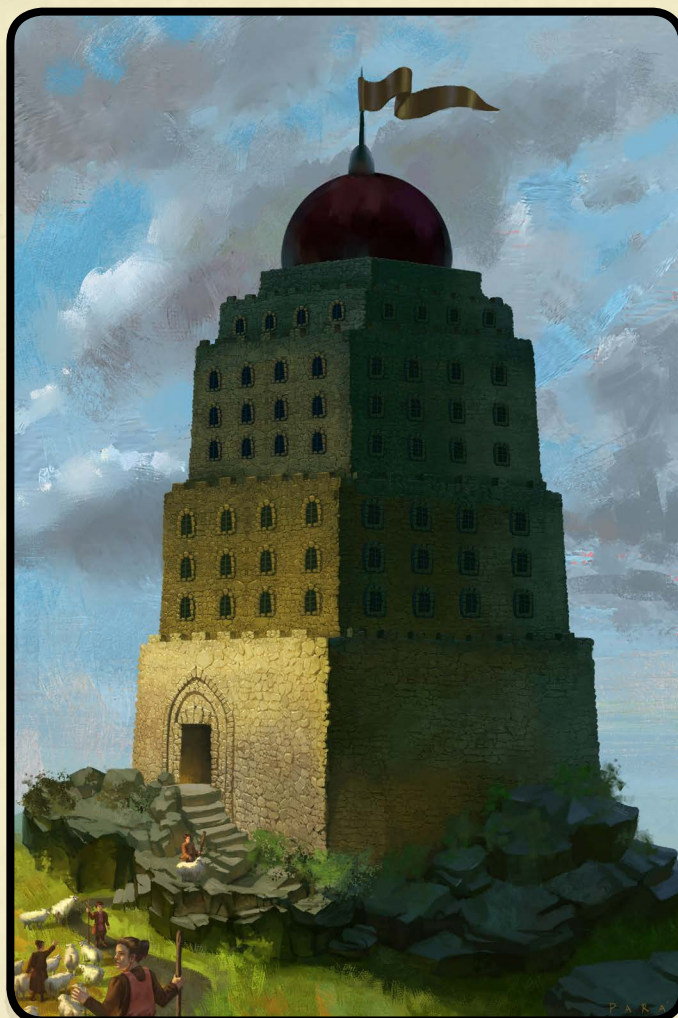
5	A human skull broken by some powerful blow
6	An empty ink vial
7	A brass button stamped with the Grandy Duchy of Reme coat-of-arms
8	A warped wooden tent pole
9	A rusty saber with the broken condition (as scimitar)
10	A jar of thick glass now filled with dirt
11	A broken set of manacles
12	A sheaf of 1d6+1 bodkin arrows, the arrow heads rusted and the shafts warped
13	A ring of stones with fragments of a campfire buried in the dirt
14	A torn and rotten stretcher bearing old bloodstains
15	A ragged bit of windblown cloth snagged in the branches of a scrub tree
16	The bones of a mule or horse bearing marks of having been slaughtered and eaten
17	A set of ivory false teeth (worth 75 gp)*
18	The soiled and brittle bicorn hat of a captain of Rhemian Cavalry*
19	A tarnished silver mirror*
20	A pewter tankard bearing the initial LVD*

E. SIXTUN'S SPYGLASS

The most easterly surviving remnant of the Caléen colonies is ideally situated. The ancient tower overlooking the surrounding area was built upon a 500-foot-high plateau, giving the site a strategic vantage point for peering across the low-lying areas around it. The ascent to the higher elevation is relatively gradual and thus has no effect on the party's speed or movement. The lonely structure is visible from five miles away, although the observer cannot discern any specific features of the stone building from that distance. When the PCs come within 500 feet of this location, the GM may read or paraphrase the following description.

A solitary, 40-foot-tall stone tower stands atop a broad, gently sloping plateau rising over the surrounding lands. The masonry walls of the structure are astoundingly intact and unbroken, save for a lone window facing northeast roughly 30 feet above the ground.

As the PCs draw near to the structure, they can make out other features as well. The building's original design featured a doorway facing to the south that once granted access to the tower's interior. The Conroi Expedition bricked



over the portal, a fact that can be discerned with a successful DC 15 Crafting or Architecture (or other applicable) Lore or DC 20 Perception check. More importantly, a DC 20 Perception check notes that the upper window has also been bricked over and leaves only a small opening through which a brass spyglass has been mounted. A DC 15 Crafting or Architecture Lore check is able to determine that the bricking of the portal happened much more recently than the construction of the tower, probably sometime within the last century (i.e. at the hands of the Conroi Expedition).

It is possible from the positioning of the spyglass and height of the tower that the PCs may conclude that simply following the direction of the spyglass's gaze will take them to the next location in their journey. However, magic with the prediction trait such as augury will either dissuade from that course of action or at least seem to hold some unidentified caveat. Nevertheless, the PCs can try and determine some information simply from a ground vantage point.

CALCULATING VISION RANGE

Using the Pythagorean Theorem, distance to the horizon can be calculated using the formula of multiplying the square root of the altitude in feet by 1.225 to determine the horizon distance in miles. This formula assumes a perfectly spherical, Earth-sized world. The planet Lloegyr is significantly larger than Earth but due to its natural atmospheric moisture content, the haze of humidity even in clear conditions approximates the Earth in the visibility distance that it allows.

Set at a height of approximately 530 feet above the surrounding ground (the height of the tower plus the plateau), the spyglass's view of the horizon is slightly over 28 miles (see sidebar). Therefore, the spyglass can be trained upon any point within a 90° arc within that distance, though because it appears to be fixed in place the entire arc does not seem to be relevant. This fact may lead the PCs to deduce that they must simply follow a line from the spyglass to some designated location within the instrument's line of sight. While it is true that the spyglass is fixed on a specific point, the arrangement of mirrors and lens inside of the device have been slightly altered causing anyone peering through the eyepiece to see everything 5° west and 4° north of where the spyglass appears to point. Therefore, if the PCs opt for the preceding approach and walk in the direction that the spyglass points, they find themselves 5° east and 4° south of their actual target, bypassing the target entirely by several miles. Characters following the incorrect line find nothing but the usual random encounters and an otherwise featureless grassland, requiring them to backtrack and take another crack at it.

Whether as a result of trial and error or simply because they want to get inside and have a better look at things, the PCs must find a way to get inside the otherwise sealed tower. They can do this simply by breaking through the 1-foot-thick masonry over the former doorway or by smashing the actual tower walls and their 2 feet of reinforced masonry. Likewise, the PCs could attempt to smash through the masonry of the bricked over window, but it is quite evident that doing so will undoubtedly jar the position of the spyglass and potentially cause it to lose its intended point of focus. Of course, as high-level characters the PCs could also easily make use of such magic as dimension door or passwall and make short work of the purely physical obstacle represented by the tower's walls.

Bricked-Up Doorway/Window: 1 ft. thick; Hardness 14; HP 40 (BT 20); Force Open DC 25.

Reinforced Masonry Wall: 2 ft. thick; Hardness 14; HP 56 (BT 28).

E1. SIXTUN'S TOWER—GROUND FLOOR

The smell of decomposition in this unlit interior chamber is almost overwhelming. The tower's interior has two floors accessible by a staircase that rises along the western wall. The heavy timbers of the second floor 25 feet above still appear to be sound after all this time. Three corpses clad in armor lie on the bare stone floor of the chamber — the apparent source of the foul odor.

The steep staircase connects the ground floor with the observation level above it. If the PCs examine the bodies on the first floor they are revealed to be two humans and a half-elf. A DC 20 Medicine check to Recall Knowledge to perform a forensic examination confirms that they have been dead for approximately one week and are in an advanced stage of decomposition, however, none of them has any sign of a wound that might have caused their demise. A DC 15 Society check is able to recognize the red hair and ruddy complexions of the humans (apparently brothers) as Uplanders, and the kilt and tartan worn by one of them confirms their point of origin as Eamonvale on the eastern border of the Grand Duchy of Reme^{K12}.

Development: If the PCs remain in this chamber for more than 2 rounds, they draw the attention of the guardian in area E2. It will then move downward to attack the intruders.

Treasure: The adventurers from Eamonvale were a fighter, a rogue, and a bard in the employ of the Angus of Dun Eamon^{G6} to try and locate the starmetal for working in the famous forges of the Grey Citadel. The half-elf bard gained their entry to the tower with a *dimension door* spell, but they almost immediately fell afoul of its guardian. The first human corpse wears a breastplate and carries a *flametongue*. The human rogue in the kilt wears *boots of bounding* and +1 *studded leather* and carries a dagger and longsword. The half-elf bard wears a mithral shirt and carries a +1 *crossbow* with 40 bolts, a dagger, and a +1 *ghost touch rapier*. Their pouches hold a total of 10 pp, 27 gp, 31 cp (all in Eamonvale coinage), and 2 pearls (100 sp each). Hidden in the bottom of the bard's boot (DC 17 Perception check to notice it) is a folded scrap of paper (see **Handout 5C**).

E. SIXTUN'S SPYGLASS

GROUND FLOOR




Upper Floor



1 square = 5 ft.

 = Bricked Up Opening

 = Spyglass

E2. SIXTUN'S TOWER—UPPER FLOOR SEVERE 12

A spiraling stair rises through the floor and ends in this circular chamber. The tower roof 15 feet above is composed of heavy rafters holding tiles of slate and still appears sound after all the long years it has stood here on the steppe. A wooden support frame, of much newer construction, has been bolted to the floor before a bricked-over window, and upon it rests a large brass spyglass, held firmly in place by both the bricked window and thick coils of rope that tie it to the frame. Huddled at the base of the frame is the dark form of a frail, humanoid form bound into a fetal position and lying beneath a thick layer of dust and cobwebs.

The Conroi Expedition used this unique vantage point on the plain to sight their next landmark objective and then carefully secured the spyglass in place so they could retrace their route in the future if needed. They then bricked up the tower entrances to prevent tampering by any plains dwellers that just happened by. Still, the passage of time and dry rot has steadily weakened the cords holding it in place. Carelessly bumping into the spyglass with significant force will dislodge the device from its position. An accidental bump has a 25% chance of causing it to shift. PCs can intentionally remove the spyglass from its mounting with a successful DC 25 Thievery check to Disable Device or a DC 30 Athletics check. If the spyglass's perspective is shifted, the PCs can only learn what it was viewing by carefully trying to

replace it in its original position using the alignment of the wooden frame and the bricked window's small opening to guide it. This is only successful with a DC 28 Crafting check.

To further guard against tampering with the device, Colonel Conroi ordered the execution of a Shattered Folk prisoner that the expedition had been interrogating for several weeks to try and glean any useful information it might have regarding the terrain ahead. Having depleted the prisoner's store of useful knowledge, Conroi had the expedition's wizard, Manx, kill the bound unfortunate with a *phantasmal killer* and then curse the body in hopes of creating an undead guardian for their landmark. Manx's cruel ministration worked all too well, and the cursed soul of the murdered tribesman arose as the **Luckless Watcher** shortly after the expedition continued on its way. Examining the bound form reveals it to be the desiccated remains of a bound Shattered Folk, the parchment-like skin of his facial features frozen forever in a silent scream. The Watcher himself arises from the corpse 1 round after the PCs enter the room unless they have already encountered him downstairs.

THE LUCKLESS WATCHER

CREATURE 15

UNIQUE CE MEDIUM INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Perception +26; darkvision

Languages Kirkut

Skills Acrobatics +30, Religion +28

Str -5, **Dex** +8, **Con** +0, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +6

AC 37; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +29, **Will** +26

HP 210, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistances** all 15 (except force, ghost touch, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Misfortune Aura (aura, curse, mental, misfortune, divine) 10 feet. Creatures in this aura take a -2 circumstance penalty on all attack rolls, skill checks and saving throws. In addition, anytime a creature in this aura rolls a natural 1 on a melee Strike, its target may make a melee Strike against it, and the creature's attacks are critical hits only if the creature rolls a natural 20.

Twist of Fate (misfortune) The first time each day that the Luckless Watcher would critically succeed on a saving throw, it instead fails the saving throw.

Speed fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ luckless hand +30 (finesse), **Damage** 3d10+13 negative plus devour luck

Divine Innate Spells DC 33; **6th** *phantasmal killer* (x2), *spirit blast*; **2nd** *dispel magic* (x2)

Calamitous Mishap ♦ (divine) **Frequency** once per minute; **Effect** The Luckless Watcher causes some calamity to befall itself and another creature within 5 feet of it. The mishap selected must be a possible result of normal circumstances, but it can be the worst possible result (typically dealing 10d10 damage). For instance, a piece of rubble could fall from the tower onto the Luckless Watcher and its foe, but a lightning strike couldn't hit in the sealed tower. A calamity cannot affect more than the Luckless Watcher and a single adjacent creature of its choice. Nearly any natural misfortune may be chosen, but it may not be as dangerous to the Luckless Watcher due to its incorporeal nature.

Devour Luck (divine) When The Luckless Watcher damages a living creature with its luckless hand Strike, it gains 10 temporary Hit Points and the target must succeed at a DC 30 Fortitude save or

become doomed 1. Further damage dealt by the wraith increases the doomed condition value by 1 on a failed save.

Diminished Criticals (curse) The Luckless Watcher's attacks are only critical hits if it rolls a natural 20.

Phantasmagoria When The Luckless Watcher casts *phantasmal killer*, it targets all living creatures within a 30-foot emanation. A creature that critically succeeds on its Will save gains temporary immunity to *phantasmal killer* cast by The Luckless Watcher for 24 hours.

Unlucky Strike (curse) When The Luckless Watcher rolls a natural 1 on a melee Strike, its target may make a melee Strike against it.

Development: A PC peering through the spyglass's eyepiece sees a steaming hot spring surrounded by a shocking array of bright, multi-colored stones. Every few minutes the spring erupts with a geyser of scalding hot water dozens of feet into the air. By looking through the eyepiece and taking a bearing on the surrounding terrain, a PC can calculate the exact location of this hot spring as slightly east of due north with a DC 20 Survival check to Sense Direction. If unsuccessful in obtaining the exact direction, aerial scouting in the generally correct direction can locate the distinct landmark, though this adds 1d3 days to the caravan's travel time.

Treasure: The great brass spyglass itself is a considerable treasure in and of itself. It is much larger and heavier than a typical spyglass — weighing 20 pounds — and provides much greater magnification, giving a view more akin to a telescope. Objects viewed through this masterpiece spyglass are magnified by 20 times, however its lenses and mirrors are slightly off causing its viewpoint to be a few degrees off of true (see above). This can be overcome with trial and error and a DC 20 Crafting or Thievery check, after which the user is able to manually compensate for this slight incongruity. Adding even further value to this treasured find is its historical value, as etched into the

HANDOUT 5C

Find the lone tower on the plateau and peer through the glass to find the way. The Angus will reward you well.

barrel of the spyglass are the words *Col. Sixtun Conroi, 4th Rhemian Cavalry, Ret. Presented in honor of 22 years faithful service this 17th day of Daan*^{1L7-219, 3436}. (Daan is the sixth month of the calendar year in Akados.) As a scientific instrument the spyglass alone is worth 200 gp. As an artifact of extreme significance in the history of Akados a collector could pay as much as 7,500 sp for it.

SIXTUN'S SPYGLASS TO HALLELUJAH SPRINGS

The abandoned settlements of the Road of Sorrows found in the previous few legs of the trek now exclusively consist of isolated bare remnants of solitary cabins or sod houses built by the most pioneering souls from that bygone era. The chances of finding these ruins decreases to 1% for every 10 miles traveled across this terrain. Conversely, the odds of uncovering evidence from the previous Conroi Expedition Artifacts table increases to 20% for every 10 miles traveled. In addition, this is the last leg of the journey in which the normal Haunted Steppe random encounters occur.

F. HALLELUJAH SPRINGS

The trail from the lonely tower to Hallelujah Springs takes the adventurers from one of the most elevated points in the Haunted Steppe to its nadir within a caldera that formed in the wake of a prehistoric volcanic eruption. The ancient catastrophe's visible scars vanished long ago, but the region still boasts numerous reminders of the earth's fiery anger in the form of hot springs. There are approximately 60 of the boiling springs clustered in a 5-mile-wide belt that starts approximately 20 miles from the Caléen tower.

The omnipresent grasses found through the Haunted Steppe temporarily cede dominance to patches of greenish-brown stubble and bare earth in this region pockmarked with small pools of frothing water and strangely molded exposed rock. If the PCs successfully unraveled the mystery of Sixtun's Spyglass and triangulated the hot spring's correct position, they readily locate the boiling spring where Azmerius hid the next clue to the Pit of the Burning Star. Otherwise, the characters must rely upon ingenuity and even blind luck to find the next piece of this cryptic puzzle.

The hot spring that the Conroi Expedition's chaplain used to hide his box looked no different than the others in the region when Azmerius chose it as a hiding cache 78 years ago. However, in addition to its now drastically changed appearance (see below), a PC within 1 mile of this spring that succeeds on a DC 30 Nature check notices an

anomalous feature in this particular hot spring when they observe an eruption (which occurs every few minutes). The plume of steam and boiling water expelled from this geyser frequently bifurcates, suggesting an unseen obstruction beneath the surface. Read the hot spring's description when the players actually reach this location.

The field of boiling pools and fluming geysers stretches for miles across the bare rock of this lowland. Everywhere the rocky surfaces are smooth and molded from the dual actions of heat and water and form fantastical shapes: dreamlike mountains, dragons, clouds, and castles in myriad profusion, all encased within an ever-present patina of condensation that never quite seems to dry in the incessant winds of the steppes. The bubbling pools that break up these rocky features range in colors from deep blue, to crystal clear, to muddy brown, to murky yellow, and the smells of sulfur and mildew are strong on the breeze.

One rocky pool, however, is quite different from the others. It has the same fantastical rock formations and bubbling pool that sends forth streams of water at irregular intervals, but its rocks are quite different. Whereas the other rock formations of the geyser field bear contours of whimsy and childlike imagination, their colors conform to the same chalky, dull brown of the rest of the landscape, this pool's rocks scintillate with unimaginable colors: vivid greens, vibrant reds, golden yellows, and lustrous blues mix in an a wild profusion, like a dollop dropped from the painter's palette by the gods of creation when these otherwise dismal plains were first formed.

Hallelujah Springs is a pool formed by thick sinter deposits that measures roughly 70 feet across that also happens to possess a geyser at its center that spews a column of scalding water and steam 80 feet into the air every 2d4 minutes. The eruptions last 1d4 rounds before the pool settles again, and each time an eruption occurs there is an 80% chance that it bifurcates at its base, as if some obstruction under the surface of the pool is altering its flow — which, of course, it is. When the PCs first arrive, it is 2d10+10 rounds before the geyser's next eruption. A successful DC 28 Nature check to Recall Knowledge can confirm that the coloration of the rocks in and around the pool are from long exposure to certain metals (including tin, lead, and copper) that have leached into the water for many years and caused the strangely colored deposits.

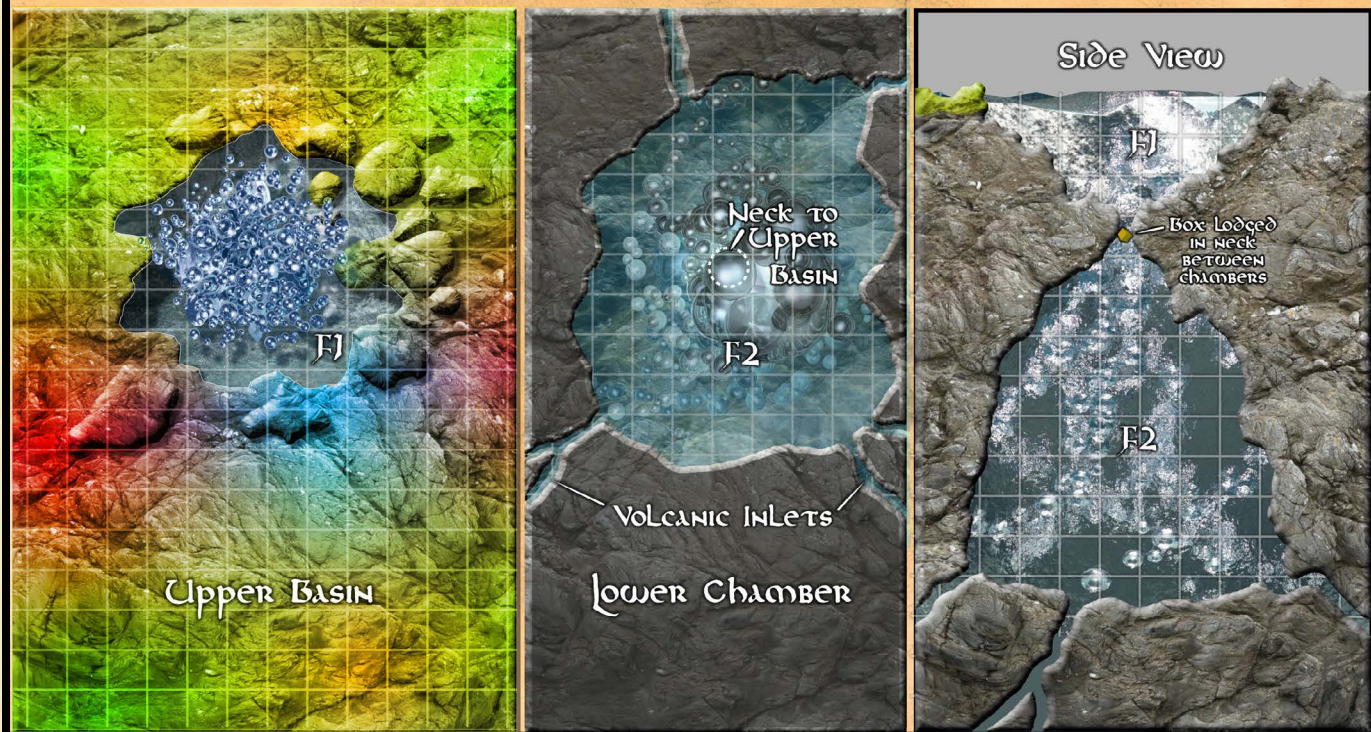
F1. UPPER BASIN TRIVIAL 7 OR SEVERE 7

Although not boiling, the water within the upper basin is a balmy 160° F. A character fully immersed in the hot spring takes 1d6 fire damage per round of exposure (no save). The waters of the pool are a vivid bluish-green because of the coloration of the rock beneath it, and visibility is poor. Anyone standing at the pool's edge can discern that the

F. HALLELUJAH SPRINGS



1 square = 10 ft.



pool is approximately 30 feet deep with a successful DC 20 Perception check. A PC who Seeks with a successful DC 30 Perception check can see the funnel-like opening at the base of the pool — obviously the source of the geyser's spout. On a critical success, the viewer can faintly make out some rectangular object, clearly not naturally formed, that partially obstructs this opening — the apparent source of the geyser's bifurcation. The DCs of these checks are all reduced by 10 for anyone actually submerged in the pool and reduced by 20 for anyone within 5 feet of the geyser funnel.

The water in the pool is calm (DC 10 Athletics check to Swim), except when the geyser erupts. When that occurs, the waters are turbulent (DC 20 Athletics check to Swim) for the entire pool except for the central 10 feet where the geyser is erupting. That portion of the pool exerts considerable upward force requiring a DC 30 Swim check to avoid being lifted 1d3 x 10 feet into the air and then falling back into the waters of the pool. Anyone who makes this Swim check is able to escape into the surrounding waters of the pool without being lifted. Anyone failing this Swim check takes 3d6 bludgeoning damage from the force of the plume, plus possible falling damage (though falling into the water means they treat the fall as if it were 20 feet shorter)

In addition, when the geyser erupts, the water in the pool reaches boiling temperature, dealing 10d6 fire damage per round to anyone immersed in the pool or the geyser's plume. Anyone standing within 20 feet of the pool when the geyser erupts is showered with its scalding droplets and takes 2d6 fire damage per round (DC 30 basic Reflex save).

Development: Anyone that swims down to investigate the strange object in the funnel can tell that it is a metal coffer wedged into a crevice down in the neck of the opening. The opening itself is 3 feet in diameter and appears to extend downward into another basin below (see F2 for details of that area and the coffer). A swimming creature has a cumulative 10% chance per round of attracting the attention of the denizens of area F2. Attempts to remove the coffer automatically attract their attention.

F2: LOWER CHAMBER SEVERE 12

A narrow passage connects the upper pool of the spring to a lower flooded chamber that lies beneath. This chamber opens out into a much larger area than the one above, and the water temperature within is much higher. The colors of the rock are even more striking in this narrow tunnel with a brilliance far surpassing that of the

rocks above, though the colors stop altogether past the neck into the chamber below. Partially blocking this narrow passage can be seen an oblong object projecting from a niche in the stone, like a small chest or coffer. A thick layer of rough calcification covers this object, and this stony layer has the brightest swirling colors of all, as if this is where the colors originate.

The waters of the neck and lower chamber are just below the boiling point, dealing 10d6 fire damage per round of immersion, and are fed by small inlets at the base of the chamber that reach down to volcanic cavities not far below. In addition, the constantly roiling waters require a DC 20 Athletics check to Swim in. However, this does not increase when the geyser occurs as the geyser is caused by the expulsion of the heated waters from the top of the chamber and causes no great additional effect in the chamber itself.

The narrow neck that connects the upper basin to the lower chamber is 4 feet wide and 8 feet long, with the strange object lodged only 2 feet below its top end. The waters within the neck are the same temperature as the waters of the lower chamber. A crevice in the side of the neck is where Azmerius deposited his coffer (see The Box below) and wedged it in tight enough that the eruption of the geyser doesn't dislodge it. Over time colorful silica deposits have built up on the 2-foot x 3-foot box so that it is now fused in with the surrounding rock. Removing the coffer requires a DC 30 Athletics check to Force Open or 56 HP of damage to the surrounding stone (Hardness 14). Alternatively, spells such as passwall or shape stone will allow easy removal of the box.

The coffer itself is made of pewter, and its composition of mixed metals has leached into the water over the last eight decades creating the rainbow deposits. In addition, the coffer is lined with lead to prevent its discovery by divination. Unfortunately, this lead lining has likewise leached into the water and settled even into the lower chamber below. At some point after Azmerius's visit a group of elemental nagas emerged from the volcanic fissures below and took up residence in the lower chamber. Over the long years of lead exposure these creatures have been tainted by the high levels of lead in the lower chamber and are now 4 poisoned scalding nagas. They are easily able to navigate the narrow neck because of their serpentine bodies but generally only visit the upper basin if they spot intruders.

However, once engaged in battle, they pursue their quarry relentlessly until it or they are destroyed. Despite the high levels of lead in the water here, the PCs will not be harmed by its toxicity unless they remain exposed to it for weeks.

POISONED SCALDING NAGAS (4)

CREATURE 11

RARE CN LARGE ABERRATION AMPHIBIOUS FIRE WATER

Perception +21; darkvision, steam vision

Languages Aquan

Skills Acrobatics +23, Athletics +23, Stealth +21

Str +5, **Dex** +7, **Con** +5, **Int** -1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +5

Steam Vision A poisoned scalding naga can see through mist and smoke. It ignores concealment from mist, smoke, and steam.

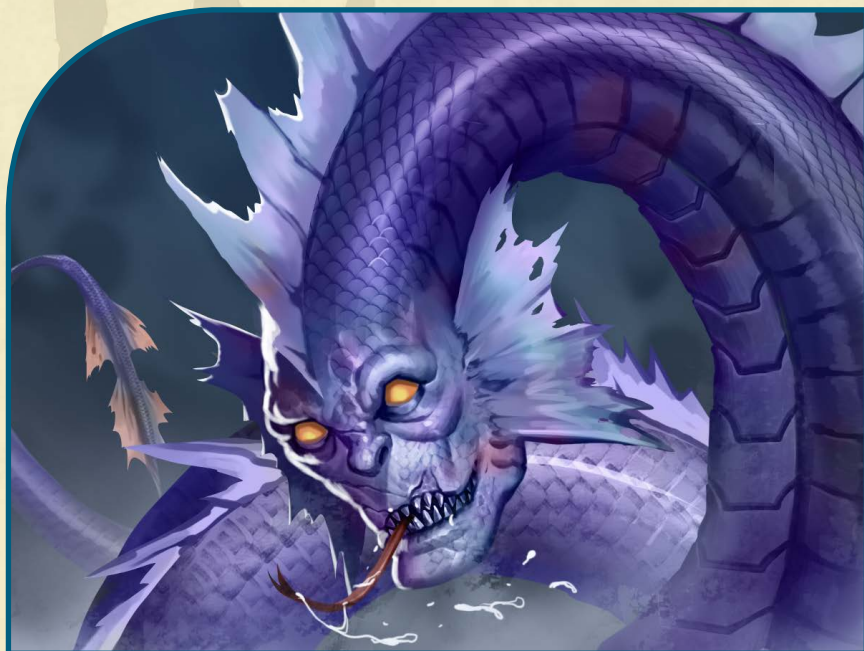
AC 32; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +22, **Will** +19

HP 190; **Immunities** fire, poison; **Weaknesses** cold 10

Steam Body (aura, fire, water) 5 feet. Whenever the poisoned scalding naga is in water, the heat from its body generates a cloud of steam. It is concealed from all creatures outside the steam. All creatures take 2d6 fire damage when they enter the aura or start their turn in the aura (DC 28 basic reflex save).

Speed 20 feet, fly 20 feet, swim 40 feet

Melee [one-action] fangs +22 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d8+8 piercing plus 1d6 fire plus poisoned scalding naga venom



Primal Spontaneous Spells DC 30, attack +24; **6th** (3 slots) *acid arrow*, *hydraulic torrent*, *purple worm sting*; **5th** (4 slots) *cloudkill*, *control water*, *creation*, *mariner's curse*; **4th** (4 slots) *freedom of movement*, *solid fog*, *take its course* (hinder poison only), *weapon storm* (works on naga's fangs); **3rd** (4 slots) *harm*, *haste*, *stinking cloud*, *slow*; **2nd** (4 slots) *faerie fire*, *flaming sphere*, *resist energy*, *obscuring mist*; **1st** (4 slots) *create water*, *detect poison*, *spider sting*, *tidal surge*; **Cantrips (5th)** *acid splash*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *prestidigitation*, *sigil*

Breath Weapon ♦♦ (fire, primal, water) The poisoned scaling naga breathes out a cloud of superheated steam in a 60-foot line or a 10 foot-emanation that deals 9d8 fire damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save). The poisoned scaling naga can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

Poisoned Scalding Naga Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 30 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 3d6 poison and fatigued (1 round); **Stage 2** 3d6 poison, drained 1 and fatigued (1 round)

Scalding Form ♦ (concentrate, primal, transmutation) **Frequency** Once per hour. **Effect** The poisoned scalding naga turns into a cloud of steam, as *gaseous form*, except any creature in the same area as the poisoned scalding naga at the start of its turn takes 5d8 fire damage (DC 28 basic Reflex save). The poisoned scalding naga loses Steam Body while in scalding form. The poisoned scalding naga can remain in this form for up to 1 minute or may use this ability again to return to its normal form.

Tactics: When the nagas spot intruders, they cast spells to hamper them, such as *cloudkill* and *mariner's curse* and then wade into battle with their breath weapon and fangs, while using their spells to support each other. Even when threatened with destruction, the deranged aberrations fight to the death rather than abandon their beloved hot spring.

Treasure: The nagas' hoard includes 30 agates (10 sp each), a huge clear opal from the Plane of Water (1,000 sp), a *greater animal staff*, and a blue-green *elemental gem*.

The Box: If the calcified pewter coffer is recovered from the spring and its stony casing chipped away (Hardness 4, HP 16), the PCs discover that it is sealed with a *lock* spell (DC 34 Thievery to Pick the Lock). Within the chest are several items that Azmerius returned and deposited here after the discovery of the next landmark as an emergency cache that he thought would be of use at a later date. The items include 2 *moderate healing potions*, a *wand of restoration* (2nd level), a water-logged leather pouch holding 3 emeralds (250 sp each), and a watertight bone scroll case. Within the scroll case are two *scrolls of fly* (4th level) and a detailed map showing the location of the next landmark at Azmerius's Angle (area G). This map is reproduced as **Handout 5C**.

Arcane-Locked Pewter Coffier: Hardness 5; HP 20 (BT 10); Force Open DC 35; Thievery DC 34 to Pick the Lock.

HANDOUT 5D

This crude map created by Azmerius shows the route to the next landmark 94 miles east-northeast of this hot spring but does not indicate any cardinal directions on the map. It takes a successful DC 20 Knowledge (geography) to correlate the points on the map with the proper direction. Unlike the preceding clues, this one includes the following passage in the lower right corner, "To iron out the line, angle from the apex."

HALLELUJAH SPRINGS TO AZMERIUS'S ANGLE

The Road of Sorrows and Caleen Settlements are distant memories as the PCs seek the final landmark leading to the Pit's location 94 miles east-northeast of Hallelujah Springs. At this point in their journey, the adventurers are no longer facing random encounters or chances of encountering creatures associated with the ancient Caleen ruins. Instead they begin coming across the strangely burned undead attackers that Azmerius described in his writings. There is a 20% chance of an encounter with these for every 10 miles traveled after leaving Hallelujah Springs. If an encounter occurs, consult the table below.

d6	Encounter	CR
1–4	2d3 radioactive combusted	Trivial 12
5	1d4+1 cinder ghouls	Trivial 12
6	3d12 radioactive combusted plus 1d3 cinder ghouls	Moderate 12

Cinder Ghouls: Slain by the actual impact of the Burning Star long ago, these creatures burn in perpetual torment, their charred flesh and bone still wreathed in the fires that killed them. When encountered with radioactive combusted they take charge of the pack, but they employ little strategy, simply charging to burn their foes to cinders at any cost. They are unable to suppress their burning form, so they are much easier to spot as they approach across the low rises of the plains.

CINDER GHOUL TOHC-313

CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON **CE** **LARGE** **FIRE** **UNDEAD**

Perception +15; darkvision

Languages Kirkut (cannot speak)

Skills Acrobatics +18

Cinder Form (air, fire) Because it is partly formed of swirling ash, the cinder ghoul can occupy the same space as other creatures, but cannot enter water or other liquids, and is treated as Tiny for the purpose of how wind affects it. Because it contains burning embers and small bits of perpetually smoldering flesh, it cannot be concealed in areas of mist, smoke, or other gas.

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

AC 27; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +18, **Will** +13

HP 135, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fire, grabbed, paralyzed, poison, precision, restrained, unconscious; **Resistances** physical 8 (except magic); **Weaknesses** cold 8
Intense Heat (aura, fire) 5 feet. 2d6 fire, DC 23 basic Reflex save.

Speed fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ touch +19 (agile), **Damage** 2d6 negative plus 2d6 persistent fire

Smoke Inhalation ♦♦ (air, fire) **Requirements**

The cinder ghoul occupies the same space as a Medium or smaller creature; **Effect** The cinder ghoul attempts to force some of its smoky form into the creature's lungs; the creature must

attempt a DC 25 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature partially inhales the cinder ghoul and takes 4d6 fire damage that can't be reduced by fire resistance. At the start of its turn, a creature that still has part of the cinder ghoul in its lungs becomes drained 1 or its drained condition value increases by 1. The creature can attempt to exhale the cinder ghoul by spending an action coughing and succeeding at a DC 25 Fortitude save. Most of the cinder ghoul remains outside the creature, so the cinder ghoul can still act normally.

Radioactive Combusted: Curious brown burns mar these abominations' undead flesh, the marks of intense radiation exposure from the Pit of the Burning Star. Their Combustion ability conveys the effects of the metallurgic amber radiation from the impact site. Many of these cursed walking dead are too old to identify their original race, but some are clearly Shattered Folk tribesmen, some are clearly orcs, and some appear to have the look and tattered clothing of the southlands — possibly members of the Conroi Expedition. Unfortunately by some quirk of fate, at a distance a radioactive combusted's howl of agony sounds eerily like the ever-blowing winds of the steppe, so they can rise from the dust where they lie among the grasses when the PCs come within 60 feet without giving their position away prior to that. When they sight intruders into their hunting lands they attack and pursue until destroyed seeking others to join them in their eternal searing inferno of death.

RADIOACTIVE COMBUSTED

CREATURE 5

UNCOMMON **NE** **MEDIUM** **FIRE** **MINDLESS** **UNDEAD**

Perception +12; darkvision

Skills Athletics +12

Str +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** –5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +2

AC 21; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +12, **Will** +9

HP 100, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fire, paralyzed, poison, unconscious

Howl of Agony (auditory, aura, emotion, fear, incapacitation, mental) 10 feet. A radioactive combusted perpetually screams in agony. Creatures that start their turn in the aura must succeed at a DC 19 Will save or be stunned 3 (stunned 6 on a critical failure). A creature that succeeds at this save is temporarily immune to this effect for 1 minute.

Stench (aura, olfactory) 30 feet. A creature entering the aura or starting its turn in the aura must succeed at a DC 19 Fortitude save or become sickened 1 (plus dazzled for as long as it's sickened on a critical failure, as it begins to tear up). A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune for 1 minute.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ fiery fist +17 (agile, fire), **Damage** 2d6+5 bludgeoning plus 1d6 fire plus combustion

Ranged ♦ fire ray +15 (agile, fire, range 60 feet), **Damage** 3d8 fire

Combustion The target must succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude save or take 2d6 persistent fire damage from metallurgic amber^{FB-202} radiation, which ignores fire resistance, for 1 minute plus suffer radiation sickness (see metallurgic amber, page 144). A creature killed by the fire damage rises as a radioactive combusted the following day.

G. AZMERIUS'S ANGLE MODERATE 12

Gently running water fills the channels of a shallow, muddy river that carves a meandering path across the steppe. On either side rocky bluffs rise above its waters. Between them a narrow, steeply peaked, natural stone arch spans this shallow gorge.

Following Azmerius's map from Hallelujah Springs brings the PCs to the south side of this arched span. The rocky bridge remains stable after its many centuries of weathering and provides a safe, 5-foot-wide path over the river below. Though the bluffs themselves only rise 40 feet above the river, the natural arch of the bridge rises somewhat steeply to a height of 75 feet at its highest point before sloping back down along its length to the far bluff 200 feet away. The stream that runs beneath the natural arch has an average depth of only 1d3 feet and is only 1d20+40 feet wide as it meanders along its course, so it can be easily forded though doing so will require the scaling of the rocky bluffs (DC 25 Athletics check to Climb), but doing so misses the opportunity to discover Azmerius's final clue as described under "Development" below.

Unfortunately for the PCs the benign nature of the stone bridge does not extend to its current unintentional occupants. On this spot 78 years ago, with their numbers dwindling under the increasingly deadly attacks of the strange undead of the region, seven members of the Conroi

Expedition attempted to desert and follow the river out of the Haunted Steppe. Their attempt to leave in the middle of the night was unsuccessful, and all seven deserters were captured. They were brought before Colonel Conroi for judgment who handed the sentence given to deserters during his long service in the cavalry. At dawn on the day when the expedition was to head out on its final leg of the journey to the Pit the seven were left swinging from nooses affixed to the bridge, their corpses slowly swaying in the steppe winds. The ropes long ago broke and dropped the corpses into the river where they were subsequently taken away by scavengers and floods over the years, but the spirits of the deceased still linger at the site to this day as a haunt that relives their execution any time living creatures seek to once again cross the stone bridge.

Haunt: As soon as anyone reaches the apex of the natural stone bridge, the spirits of the executed deserters arise and seek others to join them in an imitation of their execution. Ghostly nooses appear around the necks of those nearest the center of the bridge (to a maximum of seven targets) and an unseen force attempts to push them off to be hanged until dead just like the deserters were so long ago.

DESERTERS' DEATH

HAZARD 14

COMPLEX HAUNT

Stealth +28 (master)

Description The spirits of the executed deserters rise and attempt to hang others in a quest for vengeance.

Disable DC 33 Deception, Diplomacy, or Society check to argue for leniency and quiet one spirit; seven total successes are required to disable the haunt. The haunt can be permanently destroyed by using a consecrate ritual or casting *sanctified ground* in the area, or using an effect to assuage the cowardice for which the condemned were convicted 78 years ago (such as seven castings of *heroism*).

Hang 'em High! ⤵ (incapacitation, divine); **Trigger** A creature reaches the apex of the bridge. **Effect** Spectral nooses drop over the heads of seven random humanoids within 35 feet of the bridge's apex. The creatures must attempt a DC 36 Reflex save, and the haunt then rolls initiative.

Critical success The creature avoids the noose.

Success The noose falls over the head of the

creature, which is grabbed.

Failure The noose tightens around the neck of the creature, which is grabbed and must hold its breath to avoid suffocating.

Critical Failure The noose tightens around the neck of the creature, which is grabbed and must hold its breath to avoid suffocating. It also sweeps the creature off the bridge, causing it to take 3d10+18 bludgeoning damage and lose 1d4 rounds worth of air as it is jerked to a sudden stop.

Routine (7 actions) With each action, one of the nooses tries to hang a victim. If a noose is not around a humanoid's neck, it targets a random humanoid within 35 feet of the bridge's apex with Hang 'em High! If a noose is around a target, it attempts a check with a +26 modifier against the target's Fortitude DC. If the haunt succeeds, the creature is dragged off the edge (or lifted and then dropped again if they were already hanging), taking 3d10+18 bludgeoning damage; on a critical success, the creature also loses 1d4 rounds worth of air.

If a creature dies while being hung, the haunt drops it 60 feet to the river below and the spirit is quieted. If a hanging creature Escapes (DC 36) the noose, or the spirit is quieted while a creature is hanging, the creature is still subject to the fall unless their drop is arrested by some means.

The haunt loses 1 action for each quieted spirit.

Reset 1 hour

Development: The cryptic message scrawled at the bottom of Azmerius's map from area F provides the clue to this landmark. Azmerius wrote, "*To iron out the line, angle from the apex.*" This refers to the natural bridge's unusually high arch and directs the reader to "angle," or in this case to "fish" from the apex of the bridge. The use of the words "iron" and "line" refers to placing a piece of iron or some other ferrous metal at the end of the fishing line (simple rope will suffice) and use it to fish in the river directly below the apex. Dropping a fishing line with a piece of iron or other ferrous object into the river at this point will cause a javelin head of magnetic hematite buried in the riverbed in the spot to adhere to the ferrous fishing lure, which can then be easily hauled up by the "angler."

The javelin head is of obvious Shattered Folk make and is very old. It has no magical properties but can be identified to have been of extraterrestrial origin with a successful DC 20 Nature check to Recall Knowledge. It was, in fact, a fragment thrown off by the Burning Star when it crashed to earth two millennia ago. Found by a Shattered Folk warrior, it was shaped into a serviceable javelin head and used for years until discovered by the Gravenfar and later the Conroi Expedition and used to locate the Pit of the Burning Star. If a new shaft is attached to the javelin head, it works as a normal javelin. However, if the javelin shaft is then suspended from a string or rope and then allowed to hang freely, its magnetic hematite head will slowly turn until coming to rest at a point directly to the northwest. Every time the javelin is moved and allowed to swing freely again its head, naturally attracted to the larger deposits of hematite in the meteorite, will swing back around and point on the same bearing. In this way, the route of the journey's final leg can be discovered; the PCs simply need to carry the javelin and use it like a compass to guide them directly to the Pit. If the magnetic hematite head is taken more than 100 miles away from the Pit, the draw of its magnetic source is no longer powerful enough to attract the javelin head. But since the PCs are currently only 45 miles from their final destination, the javelin-compass can guide them unerringly to it.

SMOKE ON THE HORIZON

The unusual javelin found at area G will provide the PCs with the path to the Pit of the Burning Star. Although their goal is nearly in sight, the 45-mile journey to the smoldering crater also reinforces the fact that others seek the same prize too. In addition to the chance of encountering radioactive combusted or cinder ghouls as described under **Hallelujah Springs to Azmerius's Angle** above, the PCs are destined to meet predators of another sort when they first reach sight of the smoking pit's plume.

Despite the passage of 20 centuries since the meteor's impact, the intense heat of its siccaticite core still sends a column of black smoke hundreds of feet into the air. On a clear day, the plume of burnt dust, ash and cosmic debris can be seen from 20 miles away. Upon reaching this distance from the Pit of the Burning Star, provide the following description.

A thick column of black smoke rises, faintly visible, on the northwest horizon ahead until dispersing in the sky above. How such a fire could still be burning in the millennia since the falling star came to earth is a great mystery, but the heading is true. Perhaps the Pit of the Burning Star gained its name from more than just legend.

RIVALS AND RUMORS

The party's encounter with Earl Rannulf's men gives them a choice: They can ignore the unwelcome intrusion and press forward toward the Pit of the Burning Star (area I), or they can opt to follow their attackers' trail and turn the table on the ambushers (area H). To undertake the latter course of action, the PCs can simply interrogate a survivor among the raiders or follow the trail left by the horsemen with a successful DC 15 Survival check to Track. Any mention of the earl's "secret" regarding the PCs may well pique their interest to explore further.

However, if Goribald Ironskull has become aware of this secret, he too is greatly concerned, as he rightly fears that the revelation involves him. In this case, the mountain dwarf expedition leader who has up to this point remained reserved and allowed the PCs to take point on major decisions involving the route and activities of the expedition's caravan suddenly reverses course and vocally takes exception to the idea of "picking a fight" with an unknown adversary. He vehemently protests any decision to take the battle to the Foerdewaith force citing the many unknowns as to their numbers, disposition, abilities, etc., reasoning that any questioned prisoners could be lying and that this closer to the goal of their quest they must stay the course and try to beat their rivals to the prize. There they can lay plans to ambush and overcome any other takers if they wish. The force of his change in personality will likely seem jarring to any PC who tries to Sense his Motive with a successful DC 27 Perception check, though a PC must succeed against his Deception DC (37) to discern that it is anything more than natural anxiety of the closeness of the Pit and the proximity of a competing expedition. Only if that DC is exceeded will the PCs get an inkling that there may be something more to Goribald's protests and that he perhaps doesn't want the PCs to encounter this other group for his own reasons. If the PCs are adamant about finding the Foerdewaith expedition, Goribald and his dwarves reluctantly agree to follow the PCs as they have done throughout the expedition.

Estimating the exact distance to the smoke's source requires a successful DC 25 Survival or Cartography Lore check, a DC 30 Nature check, a DC 35 Perception check, or advanced scouting of some sort. More importantly, a rival group making its way across the steppe has also spotted the burning landmark. As they scout towards it, they catch sight of the PCs' caravan and set an ambush to test the mettle of their competitors in the race for the meteorite.

They are currently camped about 8 miles from the crater and set their ambush to spring upon the PCs before they can reach area I. See **Riders in the Dark** below.

RIDERS IN THE DARK LOW 12

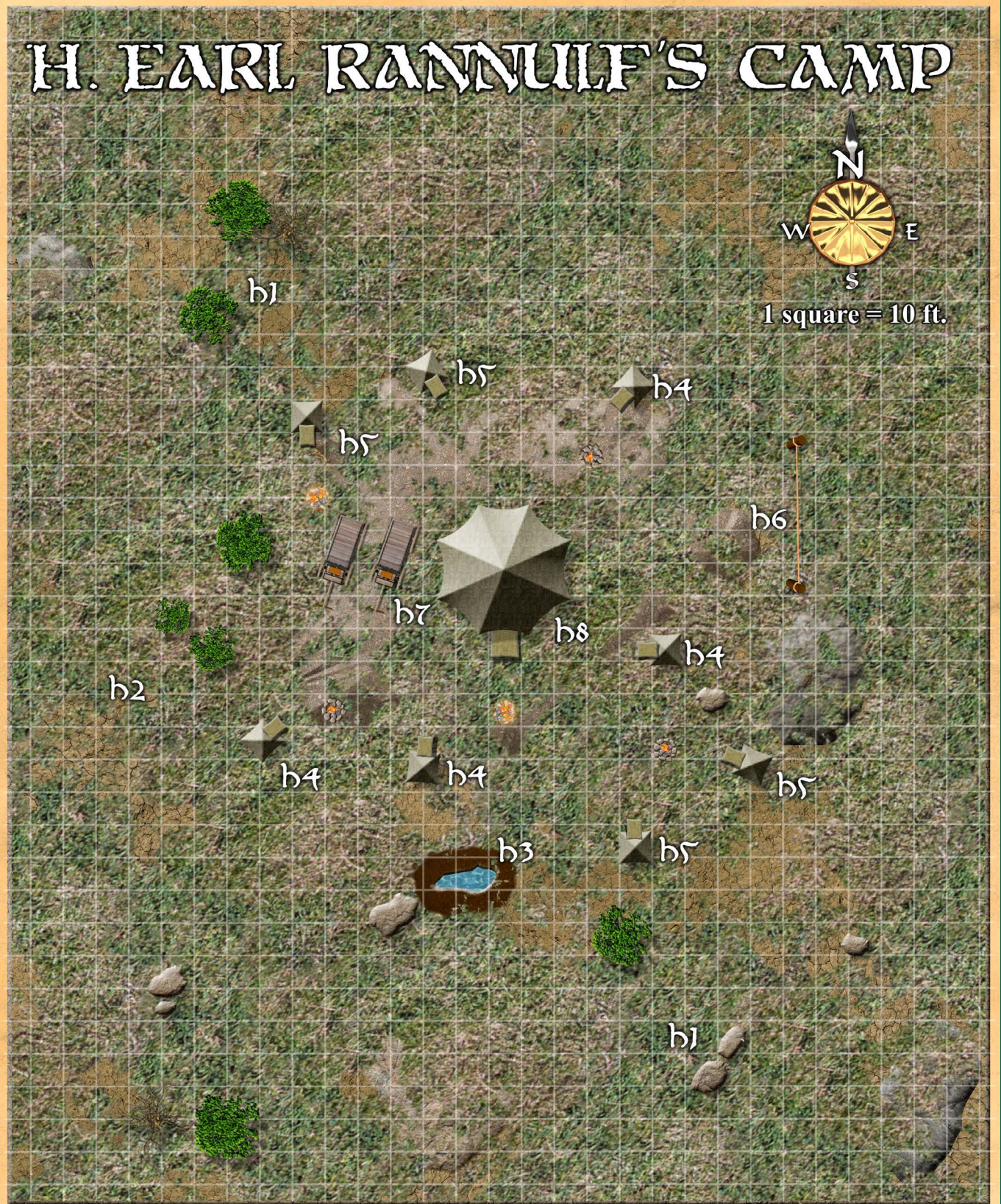
The rival group times its ambush to occur as soon as darkness begins to fall. The PCs can still be traveling or can have stopped to make camp when the attack occurs.

A line of perhaps a dozen dark mounted figures appear out of the dark. Their bodies are little more than dark smudges in the gloom of dusk, but red flecks of glowing coals are still visible on their bodies and those of their mounts, and the smell of char is strong in the air. They ride in eerie silence save for the clop of their mounts' hooves and the jingle of their harness. In an instant they lower their lances and spur their steeds onward, raising a trembling beneath the thunder of their hooves.

These riders serve the Foerdewaith earl Rannulf d'Becwith who also discovered some of Azmerius's writings and has been making his way across the plains for several weeks with his coterie of retainers in search of the prize for himself. The riders are **10 Foerdewaith men-at-arms** riding **war horses**. Having encountered the cinder ghouls and radioactive combusted of the steppe in this region, they have attempted to disguise themselves to appear to be more of the same. They hide their faces beneath dark hooded cloaks and have blackened their armor, weapons, and mounts from their campfires and tied small burning embers to their armor and tack to augment their appearance. These men-at-arms have no disguise kit, but improvise with the garb and accoutrements. A PC who tries to Recall Knowledge to identify them can make a free Perception check to Seek against the men-at-arms' DC 21 Deception DC to recognize the cavalymen as living creatures and not undead (from a distance, especially at night, it is nearly impossible to recognize them as ordinary humans, making this Deception DC higher than it would normally be).

They charge directly into the PCs and attempt to break through their line and run amok among the dwarven caravaneers behind them, spreading as much death and chaos as they can. They try to avoid getting into prolonged melee with individuals, preferring to use their mounted mobility to strike swiftly and move among their faces hoping to cause a rout. Like the earl himself, these men revel in success and flounder in defeat. The near darkness grants concealment against all combatants who don't have low-light vision or darkvision (including the riders themselves) which certainly adds to the confusion of the battle. When reduced to half of their original strength, the survivors turn and flee back towards their own camp.

H. EARL RANNULF'S CAMP



FOERDEWAITH MEN-AT-ARMS (10)**CREATURE 6****LN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID****Perception** +12**Languages** Common**Skills** Athletics +15, Diplomacy +11, Intimidation +13, Nature +11, Society +10, Military Lore +8**Str** +5, **Dex** +0, **Con** +2, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +1**Items** half-plate, lance, steel shield (Hardness 5, 20 HP, BT 10), spears (3)**Ride** When the Foerdewaith man-at-arms Commands an Animal they're mounted on to take a move action (such as Stride), they automatically succeed instead of needing to attempt a check. Any animal they're mounted on acts on their turn, like a minion. If they Mount an animal in the middle of an encounter, it skips its next turn and then acts on their next turn.**AC** 24 (26 with shield raised); **Fort** +14, **Ref** +12, **Will** +15**HP** 95**Bravery** When the Foerdewaith man-at-arms rolls a success on a Will save against a fear effect, they get a critical success instead. In addition, any time they gain the frightened condition, reduce its value by 1.**Attack of Opportunity** ↻**Shield Block** ↻**Speed** 20 feet**Melee** ♦ lance +17 (deadly d8, jousting d6, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d8+8 piercing**Melee** ♦ spear +15, **Damage** 1d6+8 piercing**Ranged** ♦ spear +15 (thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d6+8 piercing**Mounted Charge** ♦♦ The Foerdewaith man-at-arms Commands an Animal to Stride twice. They can make a melee Strike at any point of this movement after the first 10 feet, and their weapon adds one additional damage die on the Strike.**WAR HORSES (10)****CREATURE 2***Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)***Initiative** Perception +6; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Development: Any of the men-at-arms captured alive gives only his name, the name of his earl, and that his mission is to carry out the duties of his liege. If the PCs magically compel him to speak or use Intimidation to Coerce him, he reveals the numbers of his group (see area **H** below), the location of their camp 8 miles due south of the Pit of the Burning Star, and that they have also come to claim its cosmic riches and hoped to scare away any rivals. A PC who attempts to Sense Motive against the prisoner's DC 11 Deception check realizes that the prisoner appears to be holding something back and if pressed further will admit that he heard that Earl Rannulf had learned the identities of the PCs' group and had discovered a "fascinating secret" about them, though he does not know what it might be. If Goribald Ironskull is present when this information is obtained, he immediately fears that any encounter with the earl and his minions may undermine his own cause. The **Rivals and Rumors** sidebar details how he and his cronies react to this potential threat.

Treasure: In addition to the gear they carry, one of the men-at-arms' baggage contains a *wand of illusory creature* (2nd) that he pilfered from a wizard among the Conroi Settlements as they headed out to the Haunted Steppe. If any of the riders is captured, assume it is in his saddlebag.

H. EARL RANNULF'S CAMP EXTREME 12

Lying only 8 miles south of the Pit of the Burning Star, the PCs can locate this camp as described in **Riders in the Dark** above. If they choose to press on through the night after the initial Foerdewaith attack, they can arrive at the camp before dawn and catch it completely by surprise. If they wait through the night before setting out, the riders sent by the camp will be overdue and the camp will be on alert.

A bright orange pavilion tent, large enough to sleep a dozen comfortably, has been erected among a scattering of the small scrub trees that dot the plains sporadically. A pennant fluttering at the top bears a horse made of stars coat-of-arms. Around this large tent are clustered a number of smaller tents suitable for three or four occupants apiece. A pair of covered wagons are situated next to the central tent. A picket line has been set up to the east of the main tent, though it has only a few horses tied along its length. The drying remains of a pond lies at the edge of this encampment.

A DC 20 Society check to Recall Knowledge can recognize the horse constellation coat-of-arms as that of the Earl of Becwith. Earl Rannulf is an ambitious man whose father and older brother both disappeared on King Ovar's crusade two years ago. Taking the role left to him by his kin, he has

sought to maneuver for greater influence with the Court of Courghais ever since. Having learned of the possible location of the Pit of the Burning Star from other writings of the Conroi Expedition, he hastily put together his own expedition in hopes of beating anyone else to the prize and securing for himself a very comfortable and rich position in the Court as a result. Earl Rannulf has already destroyed another small expedition out of Foere, and when his scouts reported the presence of the PCs' caravan he sent out raiders to eliminate them as well rather than risk sharing the reward that he knows is so close.

Having sent out a portion of his men-at-arms already to hunt the PCs, the earl retains only 6 men-at-arms with him as well as his 2 squires, his 4 limbjack bodyguards, his seer Milgrem, and 25 footmen levied from his own earldom. His limbjack bodyguards are all Foerdewaith veterans maimed or crippled in various conflicts and who Earl Rannulf paid the finest machinists and smiths of Courghais to replace their arms and legs with mechanical prosthetics. These men wear normally clothing and armor which covers most of their modifications, though anyone expert in Perception

who succeeds at a DC 18 check notices their mechanical hands clutching sword. Having been given a new lease on life by the earl, these men are all unfailingly loyal.

EARL RANNULF D'BEWITH

CREATURE 7

Statistics as elite **captain of the guard** (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*, *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*)

Initiative Perception +17

SQUIRES (2)

CREATURE 0

Statistics as elite **apprentice** (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*, *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*)

Initiative Perception +4

LIMBJACK BODYGUARDS (4)

CREATURE 7

RARE **N** **MEDIUM** **HUMAN** **HUMANOID**

Perception +17

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +17, Crafting +15, Intimidation +17, Medicine +15, Society +15

Str +7, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +2

Items heavy crossbow (10 bolts, 1 explosive bolt), +1 *striking* longsword, repair kit, scale mail

Metal Limbs The limbjack bodyguard's limbs have been replaced by metal prosthetics, which can be targeted as if they were objects. They have Hardness 14 and 56 Hit Points (Broken Threshold 28). If a limb becomes broken, the limbjack bodyguard becomes clumsy 1 until it's Repaired; if it's destroyed, they become clumsy 2. Condition values are cumulative for each broken or destroyed limb.

Tireless When a limbjack bodyguard rolls a save against an effect other than disease or poison that would give them the fatigued condition, they roll twice and take the better result. In addition, a limbjack bodyguard can Hustle for a number of minutes equal to their Constitution modifier × 20.

AC 25 (27 with arm raised); **Fort** +17, **Ref** +15, **Will** +13

HP 145; **Immunities** caltrops; **Weaknesses** electricity 5

Stand Still **Trigger** A creature within reach of the limbjack bodyguard uses a move action or leaves a square during a move action it's making. **Effect**



The limbjack bodyguard makes a melee Strike. If it hits, it deals no damage but disrupts the move. If the attack is a critical hit, the target becomes slowed 1 for 1 round.

Limb Defense A limbjack bodyguard can use its arm as a shield. If they have their arm raised, they can use Shield Block as a free action instead of a reaction (Hardness 14, HP 56). A limbjack bodyguard can trigger its Shield Block free action when an ally within 5 feet is the target of an attack, reducing damage to that ally instead of itself but otherwise following the normal rules of Shield Block.

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ longsword +18 (versatile P), **Damage** 2d8+7 slashing

Melee ♦ punch +18, **Damage** 1d8+7 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ heavy crossbow +16 (range increment 120 feet, reload 2), **Damage** 1d10+3 piercing

Silent Presence When a limbjack bodyguard attempts to Coerce or Demoralize a foe, they can remove the auditory trait from those actions.

MILGREM THE SEER

CREATURE 6

Statistics as elite **advisor** (*Pathfinder Bestiary* (Second Edition), *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*)

Initiative Perception +16

FOERDEWAITH MEN-AT-ARMS (6)

CREATURE 6

See page 53

Initiative Perception +12

LEVY FOOTMEN (25)

CREATURE 1

Statistics as **guard** (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*)

Initiative Perception +4

Melee ♦ glaive +9 (deadly d8, forceful, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d8+4 slashing

Tactics: During the night, the camp is overseen by the guard posts (area **H1**) and a walking patrol of 2 men-at-arms and 4 footmen carrying torches who make the rounds from the picket line (**H6**) counterclockwise to the guard posts (**H1**) with a short stop by the central fire in front of

H8 on the way. The entire circuit takes approximately 10 minutes. One of the limbjack bodyguards is always awake in **H8** as well. There is also a 20% chance at any time that one randomly determined member of the camp is relieving himself at the trench (**H2**) and will be armed and armored. Everyone else will be asleep in or around their tents. If an alarm is raised, the men-at-arms will grab armor and arms and rush to the central tent (**H8**) to guard the earl. They will attempt to hole up there and help each other put on their armor for as long as possible until ready to attack or forced from the tent by circumstances. One squire will rush to the picket line to retrieve the earl's horse to bring back and into the pavilion tent while the other assists the earl in putting on his armor. The footmen sleep in their armor and quickly grab weapons. The five in the closest tent will rush to defend the horses while the rest form up in front of the earl's tent, half forming a wall of glaives and the other half firing their crossbows at any targets they glimpse in the dark. The fires in front of the earl's tent will all be stoked high providing light throughout the south portion of the encampment. The seer remains near the wagons to guard his equipment.

During the day a third of the footmen and one man-at-arms are asleep at any one time with the rest awake in and around the camp carrying out various duties, preparing or eating meals, or maintaining their equipment. All are spooked by the Haunted Steppe and the strange undead they have been encountering, having already lost more than a third of their force, and wear their armor and carry their equipment at all times. If an alarm is raised, the earl, his bodyguards and squires, and the men-at-arms attempt to reach the picket lines to mount up and take the battle to any attackers while the footmen try to provide close support with their glaives or ranged support with their crossbows, depending on the needs of the situation. The seer reacts as above, staying near the wagons to guard the valuable equipment therein.

Development: Despite his ambitions, self-preservation remains atop Earl Rannulf's list of priorities. When faced with certain defeat, the Foerdewaith nobleman calls out, "Peace! I am an earl! I can be ransomed!" and barter for his life. If the PCs seem inclined to spare him, Rannulf order his surviving men to lay down their arms. He informs the PCs that he owns many rich estates in northern Foere and can guarantee a ransom payment of 15,000 gold sovereigns for his life (a successful DC 21 Perception check to Sense Motive reveals this is an exaggeration but not an outright lie). A DC 20 Society check to Recall Knowledge can confirm the Becwith estate as modest holdings outside Châlaix^{LLO} (a major city of northern Foere situated northeast of the Star

Sea at the commencement of the Aachen Province Road) that could reasonably support a ransom of 2,500 sp in the standard coinage of Foere.

Despite his evil alignment, Rannulf is not without honor and is very much invested in the dignity of his good name and will, therefore, hold to any agreement of surrender for ransom, giving his oath to that effect. Therefore, the equipment and goods carried by himself and all his men are the property of the PCs, but if the PCs wish they can leave him and his men equipped and trust them to not attempt any escape or double-cross of the terms of their surrender. Because of the dangerous nature of the location they are in, Earl Rannulf would prefer this arrangement simply for their own protection against the known hazards associated with the Pit of the Burning Star. He and his men will fight in defense of the PCs and their expedition, though as a stipulation of the earl's surrender it is incumbent on the PCs to protect him from harm if they wish to collect as ransom. As a result, the earl will refuse to accompany the PCs into the Pit and will fight only in a defensive battle. He can be trusted to guard mounts and baggage for the party while they make their own forays, however.

If the PCs succeed on a Diplomacy check against the earl's Will DC (27), the earl can be convinced to lend them up to 2 of his men-at-arms and 6 of his footmen (if that many survive) to accompany them inside the Pit. For every 3 by which the Diplomacy check exceeds 20, he will agree to 1 more man-at-arms and 3 more footmen if the PCs should wish it. Under no circumstance will he lend his bodyguards or squires to their service, and the seer will refuse as well. He and his men have no expectation of a share of treasures recovered, though they will not turn one down if offered. To collect the 2,500 sp ransom the PCs need only return Earl Rannulf alive to Foere; the rest of the men are ultimately expendable. However, the squires are both the scions of minor Foerdewaith houses, so if they are not returned safely as well there is the possibility of assassins, mercenaries, or other engineered calamities to befall the PCs in the future at the GM's discretion.

If questioned about his reason for being on the Haunted Steppe, he readily admits that he seeks the treasures of the Pit of the Burning Star. His seer, Milgrem, was led by his study of astrological studies to a private collection in Cantelburgh where he uncovered writings of one Azmerius Thade. It was a missive apparently intended for some unknown benefactor that merely mentioned the Conroi Expedition's true purpose in following the footsteps of Aroldus Gravenfar in seeking the Pit of the Burning Star and gave the suspected location of the Pit as the expedition

neared its destination. The location is given as north of an unnamed river that cuts across the plain, traveling northwest from a strange arching rock formation. The report gave no mention of the landmarks that the PCs have been following, and Earl Rannulf's group simply traveled north until they hit the unnamed river and were lucky enough to stumble upon the arch (area G) fairly quickly.

The writings made mention of undead monstrosities and unseen fires that burn, so the earl prepared his expedition for just such occurrences. They encountered one other smaller group out of Foere that they defeated and stranded without supplies or horses (they are long since dead), which the earl shrugs at and says, "All's fair... Their leader could offer no ransom." The expedition has had several encounters with the eerie burned undead and some of the plains' other denizens, but their numbers have served them well, and they've buried less than a dozen of their own on the way (in fact, the PCs' expedition was drawing more attention from the undead of the Pit as it proceeded along the landmarks — essentially Rannulf has just been lucky up 'til now).

If the PCs wish to question Earl Rannulf about his "secret" that he knows about them, see "**The Big Secret**" below for details.

H1. GUARD POSTS TRIVIAL 12

Each of these posts is manned at all times by 2 footmen. The posts are concealed among the rocks and scrub trees of the plain, so that these watchers have greater cover and concealment. They Hide while keeping watch; with the cover and time spent finding secure location, their Stealth DC is 21 to avoid being observed by a PC who Seeks. If they spot intruders, they shout an alarm to alert the camp and begin firing their bows from cover.

H2. LATRINE TRENCH

Rannulf's men have dug a slit trench 1 foot wide by 2 feet deep by 10 feet long which they use a latrine and general dumping area. It buzzes with flies but is downwind so the smell is not noticeable from the camp. The expedition has been camped here for only a few days and has not come close to filling it yet.

H3. POND TRIVIAL 12

A shallow, dusty, oblong depression breaks the grasses here. This low-lying point forms a seasonal pond that reaches depths of up to 4 feet during rains. Currently it is only about a foot deep and surrounded by the cracked

remains of dry mud churned up by boots and hoof prints. The water itself is murky and full of weeds, tadpoles, and mosquito eggs. Milgrem must magically purify it before the man can drink it, but the mounts are still able to safely drink from it. A **giant leech** lurks in the muck at the bottom of the pool, though it lies buried and still during the heat of the day. Anyone who approaches the pond after dusk, however, stands a cumulative 25% chance per round of being attacked by the hungry creature.

GIANT LEECH

CREATURE 2

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)

Initiative Stealth +7

H4. MEN-AT-ARMS TENTS (VARIES)

Each of these tents houses four men-at-arms, though currently each only has 1 or 2 occupants (possibly more if any of the men-at-arms escaped from **Riders in the Dark** above).

Treasure: A DC 15 Perception check in the tent locates 2d10 sp scattered amid the beddings along with 1d4–1 gems (10 sp each).

H5. FOOTMEN'S TENTS (VARIES)

These tents each house six footmen, though the quarters are so cramped that up to half of them spread their bedrolls on the ground outside.

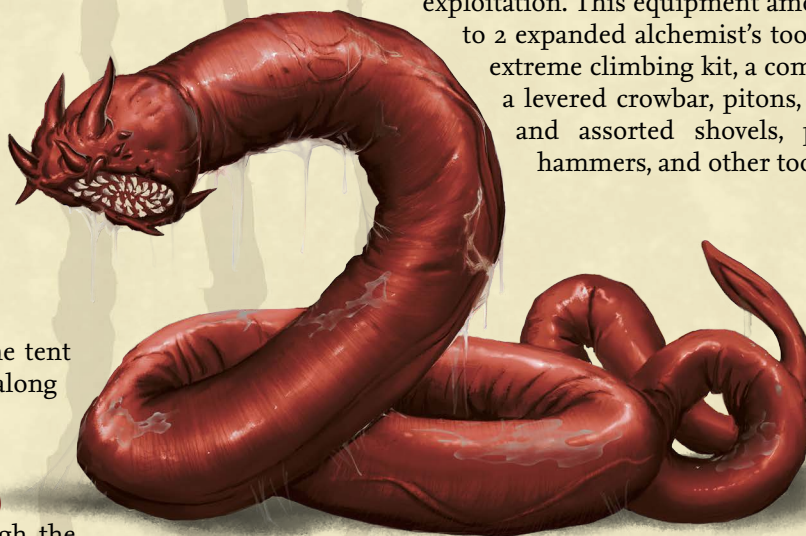
Treasure: A DC 15 Perception check in these tents uncovers 1d10 cp and 1d6 x 10 cp scattered among mundane personal belongings.

H6. PICKET LINE

This line has been strung between two stout poles driven in the ground to which the mounts and pack animals of the expedition have been tethered. Currently there are **13 war horses** (belonging to the earl, his squires, the bodyguards, and the remaining men-at-arms) as well as **4 riding horses** (shared by the seer and the footmen), **6 pack mules** (statistics as **pony** if needed) and **4 draft horses** (statistics as **elite riding horse** if needed) for pulling the wagons. There is space for another dozen or so mounts from those taken by the raiding party in **Riders in the Dark**.

H7. SUPPLY WAGONS

These two covered wagons are used to carry the supplies, equipment, and specialized gear not carried by the men or pack animals. One of the wagons holds barrels of water and sacks and chests of dried food stuffs sufficient to supply the expedition for another month — more if supplemented by wild game. The other wagon is mostly empty and is used for hauling the tents and assorted pieces of camp furniture. However, it does still hold a pair or large trunks bearing good padlocks (Thievery DC 30, five successes to Pick a Lock). These hold the survey, assayer, and specialized equipment to be used by Milgrem when the Pit of the Burning Star is found in order to ascertain the extent of the site and its potential for mineral exploitation. This equipment amounts to 2 expanded alchemist's tools, an extreme climbing kit, a compass, a levered crowbar, pitons, rope, and assorted shovels, picks, hammers, and other tools.



Treasure: With a successful DC 30 Perception check, a PC who Seeks in the equipment wagon, finds a hidden compartment beneath the driver's seat. Within is a padded box that holds 4 vials each of moderate antidote, moderate antiplague, lesser bravo's brew, lesser elixir of life, moderate salamander elixir, and *lesser potion of fire resistance*, as well as 3 *scrolls of remove disease* and 2 jars of *panacea*. Anyone cataloguing all of these items and making a DC 20 Medicine check (expert) draws the conclusion that this collection has been prepared for the eventuality of dealing with burn injuries as well as the effects of radiation sickness.

H8. EARL RANNULF'S PAVILION CR 12

This large pavilion tent is curtained off into three rooms: a large entry chamber that takes up half of the tent and openings that lead into two smaller areas that occupy the other half of the tent. The larger area of the tent is furnished with a fold-out camp table, racks for armor, weapons, and

equipment and cots for the limbjack bodyguards and Rannulf's squires. The back chambers are occupied by Earl Rannulf and Milgrem, respectively and each bears a folding cot and a pair of chests for clothing and personal items.

Treasure: A DC 20 Perception check to search the outer chamber turns up 2d4 x 10 sp and 1d4 gems (25 sp each) scattered among the occupants' personal belongings. One of the chests in Rannulf's chamber has a heavy lock (Thievery DC 35, five successes to Pick a Lock) and holds the expedition's payroll as well as spoils that have been taken on the trip so far. These include: 476 gp, 801 sp, an assortment of gems worth a total of 860 gp, 3 chain shirts, a +1 warhammer, 3 climbing bolts, a well-thumbed copy of *Illuminatus Geographica* (see sidebar), and a set of maps and old parchments written by Azmerius Thade that contain the information described under area H above. One chest in Milgrem's quarters is also locked (Thievery DC 30, five successes to Pick a Lock) and holds 3 vials of activated charcoal (see sidebar), a bundle of 12 potion testing sticks (see sidebar), a book called *Introversions of Toxins* (see sidebar), a dozen *nectars of purification*, a *channel protection amulet*, a *decanter of endless water*, and *scrolls of dispel magic*, *shatter*, *summon entity* (5th level), and *wall of force*.

"THE BIG SECRET" SEVERE 12 OR EXTREME 12

Goribald Ironskull will endeavor to be present for any questioning of Earl Rannulf. If the PCs question Earl Rannulf about any alleged secrets he has learned about them, he will look meaningfully at Goribald Ironskull and suggest that perhaps it would better to not discuss it in the presence of "foreigners" (see sidebar). This confirms Goribald's suspicion about the nature of the secret Rannulf holds. Goribald balks at Earl Rannulf's proposal and counters that the earl's false appeal is merely trying a ploy to divide and conquer the expedition and that he probably has more men-at-arms nearby and is hoping to stall until they can arrive. The PCs can attempt a Sense Motive check against Goribald's Bluff DC (37) to detect the hint of fear and desperation in the dwarf's words and his apparent animosity towards Rannulf. Even if they fail, however, a DC 21 Perception check to Sense Motive on Rannulf is enough to realize that he truly is unlikely to go back on his word as a prisoner for ransom — his entire reputation as a nobleman of Foere is at stake.

Goribald insists that Rannulf should be bound and gagged to prevent him from fomenting dissent within the expedition. Rannulf argues against such treatment but realizes he has little clout in the situation and hopes he

HUMAN-DWARF RELATIONS

Though the animosity between humans and mountain dwarves is well known and dates all the way back to the Battle of Hummaemidon in 1 I.R., the Great Mountain Clan of Ironskull is one of the few mountain dwarf clans that have maintained friendly relations with humans over the centuries. More information of the history of human-mountain dwarf relations can be found in *LLo: The Lost Lands Campaign Setting* and in *Mountains of Madness* by Frog God Games.

can maybe cut a separate deal with the mountain dwarf if the party won't hear him out. He is not aware that Goribald intends to murder him at the first opportunity and try to cover it up to look like it was during an escape attempt.

If the PCs send Goribald away and hear Earl Rannulf out, read or paraphrase **Rannulf's Tale** below. See "Development" below for how Goribald reacts. If the party refuses to send Goribald away but intends to hear the earl out, Rannulf swallows nervously but will continue with his tale after reminding the PCs once again that they have vouchsafed his life and health. For his part Goribald will calmly defer to the PCs and stand nearby to listen, though he secretly Marks Rannulf for Death. Rannulf will tell his tale, but at the point indicated in the text box below Goribald will scream that he is a liar and will make a Death Strike against the earl. His shout will bring his followers to his defense as the earl's surviving men-at-arms and bodyguards will immediately jump to his own defense. The dwarves will not attack the PCs unless the PCs turn on them but will attempt to eliminate as many of Rannulf's followers as possible before the PCs can stop them. If Goribald's Death Strike is successful, don't announce it as such, but rather play it off as a critical hit that did sufficient damage to finish the earl.

The earl's men will fight to the death if the earl is killed. If the PCs turn against the mountain dwarves they will likewise fight back, assuming the jig is up. See "Development" below for the results of a fight with the dwarves.

RANNULF'S TALE

"I first heard of your own expedition during a stopover outside Broadwater^{K12}, at the mouth of the Eamon valley. We were watering our horses — and ourselves — at a place called Finnegan's Barge^{K12}

when we heard tell of a group of adventurers and mountain dwarves recently come through from upvale at the Grey Citadel^{C6}. From the rumors we picked up we guessed where you were headed and hoped to catch up to you on the road, but never overtook you. I'm guessing you found another way across the Wizard's Wall, because we never saw any sign of you after that until now. In fact, I'd rather come to believe you were probably all dead, your bones getting picked over by the vultures by now based on what I later learned.

"We took the North Duchy Road over the High Downs and through Tanith^{F2}, and by that way came to the mountain trail that skirts the Wizard's Wall by way of the fortress at Durgam's Folly^{G1}. We didn't stop in at the fort — got a sinister reputation that place does — but a few miles down the trail we came upon the site of a battle. We found a couple graves off to one side and the corpses of a half-dozen mountain dwarves piled in a nearby creek bed. They had the look of assassins to them based off their gear and clothing, and the gods know the mountain dwarves of the Stoneheart have no love for Man, but usually they keep to their affairs in the peaks and leave matters in the lowlands to the likes of us.

"Well, we assumed these mountain dwarf assassins had hit your party maybe — rival clans like the Craenog or Krazzadak^{MoM-10} or something like that — and you'd given 'em what-for. We were considering digging up your mates to see if any goodies had been left when Milgrem, the seer, manages to question one of them dead dwarves with some scroll of his. And what a pretty trick that was, considering what he learned. He learned that these poison-hearted fellows had been waiting for you and your group, but not because they were rivals of the dwarves you traveled with; no, they worked with the dwarves you were traveling with, and you were being led into a trap like lambs to the slaughter. Only it was not your group that tripped their ambush but some other fellows, maybe out of Bard's Gate, who proved a little more than they could handle. They left two of their own dead buried there by the road but managed to take out the likes of some scruffy mountain dwarf killers.

"I couldn't understand why the vaunted Goribald Ironskull would stoop to that kind of treachery after his many years of honorable dealings on behalf of his clan when the seer plucked another tidbit out of that corpse's mouth. It wasn't Goribald Ironskull at all that you were traveling with; that's just what he had been telling anyone who had half an ear to listen. No Goribald Ironskull lies in his own shallow grave somewhere outside Panetoth, right where his cousin put him. That same cousin, Cherbaud Brazzegard, who's been passing himself off as Goribald for weeks in hopes of getting his own hands on the action at the Pit of the Burning Star.

[At this point, if Goribald is present he attacks Rannulf as described above.]

"When my scouts caught sight of your group coming from the arch, I assumed it was just those throat-cutting mountain dwarves who were left. If I'd known your band was still with them, I'd have sent my whole company to cut you down and make sure of the job. Oh well, such is the dicing of the gods. Here you are with me at your mercy, and all this time me holding the key to your salvation. You've been duped fellows, and I'm honestly surprised that you're still breathing."

Development: If Goribald is unsuccessful in silencing Earl Rannulf but a fight does not immediately break out, the canny dwarf bides his time. He waits for an ideal opportunity to slay the PCs by assassinating them in the night, poisoning their food, or betraying them and joining forces with an adversary during a pitched battle. On the other hand, if the PCs accept the earl's account and turn on Goribald as a result of his tale, the imposter and his troops fight back and make a bold proposition of their own: They offer Rannulf and his men a chance to join them and eradicate another potential rival. The earl ponders Goribald's overture but will not join him unless the PCs seem to be on the verge of defeat. If the earl and his men are still armed, the PCs can use Diplomacy to Request they help against Goribald (DC 32 for this check, which is Goribald's Diplomacy DC). On a success, the earl orders his men to assist the PCs. Otherwise, the earl and his men remain out of any fight that occurs. In any case, the earl and his men will defend themselves if attacked.

Like the earl before him, Goribald surrenders if reduced below 50 Hit Points or if Captain Okrem and half of his other remaining followers are killed. If so captured and pressed for information, he admits that he is the scion of the cadet Brazzegard branch of the Ironskull Great Mountain Clan who had ruled the clan ever since the disappearance of Old Thane Col Ironskull^{QoD-101}, and is a descendant of the old high thane Tramham Brazzegard, slain by the great red wyrm Tir'oen's Doom, whose son Trameht passed rulership of the Great Mountain Clan back over to his Ironskull cousins 60 years ago so he could undertake his quest to hunt the dragon. Cherbaud confesses that he and his agents murdered the real Goribald Ironskull and several rival searchers in Panetoth and pursued others to Dun Eamon where they fortunately ran into the PCs. He claims his goal is to return the Brazzegards to their rightful place as the Clan Ironskull's undisputed leaders. He believes that the riches found in the Pit of the Burning Star will give him the clout and the resources to affect such a bold plan. If the PCs take him prisoner, he feigns cooperation but will use all of the skills at his command to try and escape and possibly even turn up later to eliminate the PCs.

"GORIBALD IRONSKULL"
(CHERBAUD BRAZZEGARD)

CREATURE 13

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Perception +26; darkvision

Languages Common, Dwarven, Jotun

Skills Acrobatics +27, Athletics +24, Crafting +24, Deception +27, Diplomacy +22, Assassin Lore +24, Stealth +26, Society +22, Survival +22, Thievery +26

Str +1, **Dex** +6, **Con** +5, **Int** +3, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +8

Items blightburn resin (3 doses), blowgun (10 darts), clan dagger, *dagger of venom*, deathcap powder (3 doses), *deceiver's ring* (see **Appendix C**, page 137), giant wasp venom (8 doses), slumber wine (3 doses), +1 *resilient studded leather*, infiltrator's thieves tools

AC 34; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +25, **Will** +21; +1 status to all saves vs. poison effects

HP 250; Resistances poison 10

False Alignment "Goribald's" *deceiver's ring* makes his alignment appear to be Lawful Neutral.

Slippery Secrets When a spell or magical effect tries to read "Goribald's" mind, detect whether he is lying, or reveal his alignment, he can attempt a Deception check against the spell or effect's DC. If he succeeds, the effect reveals nothing.

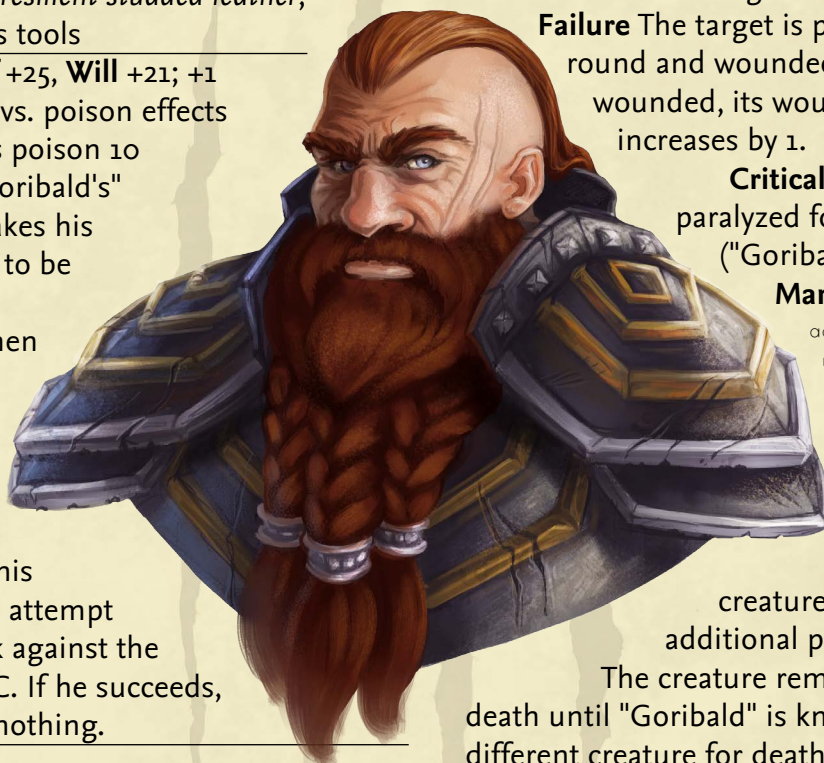
Speed 20 feet

Melee ♦ *dagger of venom* +27 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+7 piercing

Melee ♦ clan dagger +25 (agile, parry, versatile B), **Damage** 1d4+7 piercing

Ranged ♦ blowgun +27 (agile, nonlethal, range increment 20 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1 piercing

Ranged ♦ *dagger of venom* +23 (agile, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+7 piercing



Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 30, attack +24; 2nd (4 slots) *blur*, *darkness*, *invisibility*, see *invisibility*; 1st (4 slots) *illusory disguise*, *magic missile*, *sleep*, *true strike*; **Cantrips** (4th) *daze*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*

Death Strike ⤵ (death, incapacitation)

Requirements "Goribald" does precision damage with a melee Strike against a creature he has Marked for Death. **Effect** "Goribald" attempts to paralyze or kill the target, which must attempt a DC 32 Fortitude save. "Goribald" can't use Death Strike again for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success The target is unaffected and is temporarily immune for 1 minute.

Success The target is unaffected.

Failure The target is paralyzed for 1 round and wounded 1. If it was already wounded, its wounded condition value increases by 1.

Critical Failure The target is paralyzed for 1 minute or dead ("Goribald's" choice).

Mark for Death [one-action] (concentrate)

"Goribald" marks a single creature he can see for death.

The first time each round "Goribald" Strikes that

creature, the Strike deals 1d12 additional precision damage.

The creature remains marked for death until "Goribald" is knocked out, marks a different creature for death, uses Death Strike, or the encounter ends.

Poison Weapon ♦ (poison) **Requirement**

"Goribald" is wielding a piercing or slashing weapon and has a free hand; **Effect** "Goribald" applies a poison to the weapon.

Sneak Attack "Goribald" does an additional 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

CAPTAIN OKREM KRESH

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE LN MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Perception +20; darkvision**Languages** Common, Dwarven**Skills** Athletics +23, Intimidation +23, Medicine +23, Survival +20**Str** +4, **Dex** +1, **Con** +5, **Int** +1, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3**Items** +2 *striking wounding guisarme*, half plate, expanded healer's tools, javelins (6)**AC** 31; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +18, **Will** +21**HP** 245**Attack of Opportunity** ➤ Okrem gains an extra reaction at the start of each of his turns that he can only use to make an Attack of Opportunity. He can't use more than one Attack of Opportunity triggered by the same reaction.**Guardian's Deflection** ➤ **Trigger** An ally within Okrem's melee reach is hit by an attack from an attacker he can see, and the ally gaining a +2 circumstance bonus to AC would turn the critical hit into a hit or the hit into a miss. **Effect** Okrem uses his weapon to deflect the attack, granting his ally a +2 circumstance bonus to their AC against the triggering attack. This turns the triggering critical hit into a hit, or the triggering hit into a miss.**Speed** 20 feet**Melee** ➤ *striking wounding guisarme* +25 (reach 10 feet, trip), **Damage** 2d10+10 slashing plus 1d6 persistent bleed**Ranged** ➤ javelin +23 (thrown 30 feet), **Damage** 1d6+10 piercing**Battle Medicine** ➤ (healing, manipulate) Okrem attempts a DC 30 Medicine check; on a success he provides 40 Hit Points healing (50 points on a critical success). The target is then immune to his Battle Medicine for 1 day.**Debilitating Shot** ➤➤ (flourish) Okrem targets a foe's weak spot. He makes a ranged weapon Strike. If it hits and deals damage, the target is slowed 1 until the end of its next turn.**Furious Attack** ➤➤ (flourish) Okrem makes a melee Strike. If it hits, it deals two extra dice of weapon damage.

CLAN IRONSKULL GUARDS (6)

CREATURE 6

LN MEDIUM DWARF HUMANOID

Perception +12 (+14 for initiative); darkvision**Languages** Common, Dwarven**Skills** Athletics +15, Crafting +12, Diplomacy +12, Intimidation +15, Medicine +12**Str** +4, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +0**Items** dwarven waraxe, full plate, javelins (4)**AC** 24; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +12, **Will** +13; +1 status to all saves vs. poison**HP** 120**Attack of Opportunity** ➤**Speed** 25 feet**Melee** ➤ dwarven waraxe +17 (sweep, two-hand d12), **Damage** 1d8+7 slashing**Ranged** ➤ javelin +15 (thrown 30 feet), **Damage** 1d6+7 piercing**Stronghold Stance** ➤ (stance) **Requirements** The Clan Ironskull guard's last action did not have the move trait. **Effect** The Clan Ironskull guard sets his feet in an implacable stance from which he draws power. His speed drops to 0 and he deals an extra die of weapon damage on his melee Strikes. He can leave this stance as a free action on his turn.

CLAN IRONSKULL ENVOYS (4)

CREATURE 4

LE SMALL HALFLING HUMANOID

Perception +14**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Halfling**Skills** Deception +12, Diplomacy +12, Society +10, Stealth +12, Thievery +10**Str** +0, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4**Items** daggers (4), disguise kit, leather armor, rapier, thieves' tools**Keen Eyes** The Clan Ironskull envoy gains a +2 circumstance bonus when using the Seek action to find hidden or undetected creatures within 30 feet of it. When they target an opponent that is concealed or hidden from then, they reduce the DC of the flat check to 3 for a concealed target or 9 for a hidden one.**AC** 20; **Fort** +8, **Ref** +14, **Will** +11**HP** 55**Speed** 25 feet

Melee ♦ rapier +13 (deadly 1d8, disarm, finesse),
Damage 1d6+4 piercing
Melee dagger +13 (agile, finesse, versatile S),
Damage 1d4+4 piercing
Ranged ♦ dagger +11 (agile, thrown 10 feet,
 versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+4 piercing
Hidden Blade ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect**
 The Clan Ironskull envoy draws a weapon and
 then Strikes with it. The target of the Strike is flat-
 footed against the attack.
Sneak Attack The Clan Ironskull envoy deals
 an extra 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed
 creatures.

CHAPTER THREE: THE PIT OF THE BURNING STAR

This entire chapter is devoted to the exploration of the Pit of the Burning Star itself, the great crater left by the impact of a meteor 2,000 years ago, at area I on the Haunted Steppe Map. Characters should be 13th level by the start of this chapter. The sandbox nature of this part of the adventure means that the PCs can encounter any of the locations at any level, although the more difficult encounters, for which characters should be 14th level, are placed deeper in the pit and in areas harder for them to find.

After a grueling slog across the Haunted Steppe, the omnipresent column of smoke gives way to tangible reality in the form of an immense impact crater. The Pit of the Burning Star appears much as Azmerius described in his correspondence with one notable exception — the hordes of monstrosities teeming in the interior are surprisingly absent. Indeed, the giant 3,000-foot-diameter hole with a 100-foot-high rim and a maximum depth of 525 feet at its center appears to be completely abandoned.

The grasses abruptly end and relinquish their ubiquitous presence to a huge patch of bare earth dominated by a massive ridge — 100 feet high — of broken rock and sterile soil. Beyond it the column of black smoke silently rises from somewhere close at hand. It takes a moment to comprehend the enormity of what you're seeing, but it becomes clear that the ridge is circular in nature, forming a ring several thousand feet across. This ridge's sides have been eroded and weathered by millennia of exposure into an easily surmounted slope and doing so



gives a view of the contents of the earthen ring. It is a vast crater more than half-a-mile across, its bowl-like sides sloping downward more than 500 feet into a basin. At its center the thick column of smoke boils out of some unseen rift at its base. Not a breath of air stirs in the burning pit, and it is as equally devoid of plant or animal life as the surrounding impact ridge. Your prize awaits below.

Unlike the outer slope of the ridge that was formed when the dirt from below was pushed up and out and tumbled into place, the inner slope of the circling ridge and of the crater itself is quite steep and in many places nearly sheer from the explosion that originally excavated it. The Burning Star — as the meteor that struck the Haunted Steppe is known — was travelling at a speed of approximately 10 miles per second when it struck, and its impact released a blast equal to a roughly 10 megatons. The explosion vaporized much of the impact site as well as about two-thirds of the outer portion of the meteor itself, leaving the remaining meteorite as described at area M5. The result of the impact blast was to create a massive crater basin nearly 600 feet deep, though a combination of rubble from the blast as well

as the sediments of the last two millennia of erosion have filled the bottom 75 feet of to its current depth of 525 feet and created a fairly flat basin floor in the center of the crater.

The crater's inner slope from the outer rim is fairly steep for the first 200 feet. This slope is rocky and dangerous with the chance of rock falls from its exposed layers of local strata, packed ejecta, and eroded sediments. There are a few trails identified on the map, which can be traversed with reasonable care, but otherwise attempting to scale this slope requires a DC 30 Athletics check to Climb, and for every 50 feet traveled there is a 25% chance of a minor landslide (treacherous scree hazard, *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*), and climbers must make a new Climb check to avoid falling unless somehow anchored in place.

Below this steeper area of the crater wall, the slope lessens to an angle ranging from 51° to 70° (1d20 + 50°) for another 200 feet. Where the slope is less than 60°, the incline is treated as a steep slope covered in scree (difficult terrain that requires a successful DC 20 Athletics check to Climb or DC 20 Acrobatics check to Balance to traverse). In areas where the angle is 60° or more, that particular portion is treated as a wall, requiring a DC 20 Athletics check to Climb to negotiate. Below that the slope becomes a gradual slope covered in scree (difficult terrain) until finally reaching the relatively flat crater floor another 125 feet below. See "Mountain" terrain rules in the Environment section of Chapter 10 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* for further details of these types of terrain.

EXPLORING THE BURNING PIT

Exploring the Pit of the Burning Star is a very different experience depending on if the PCs are on the outer crater ridge, climbing upon its inner wall, or exploring the various features of the crater floor. Likewise flying above the crater brings its own unique dangers. However, all of them have one hazard in common. One of the layers of the meteor that was destroyed upon impact was composed of a material largely unknown on Lloeyr but has come to be known, somewhat misleadingly, as metallurgic amber^{FoB-202} by some few scholars over the years. Metallurgic amber is described in detail in **Appendix C**.

This mysterious material is extraterrestrial in origin with no known natural occurring sources on the world of Lloeyr and few enough sources derived from the rare meteorite remnant. When the Burning Star struck the surface, the layers of the metallurgic amber that had not already been incinerated in the meteor's descent through the atmosphere were vaporized and scattered far and wide.

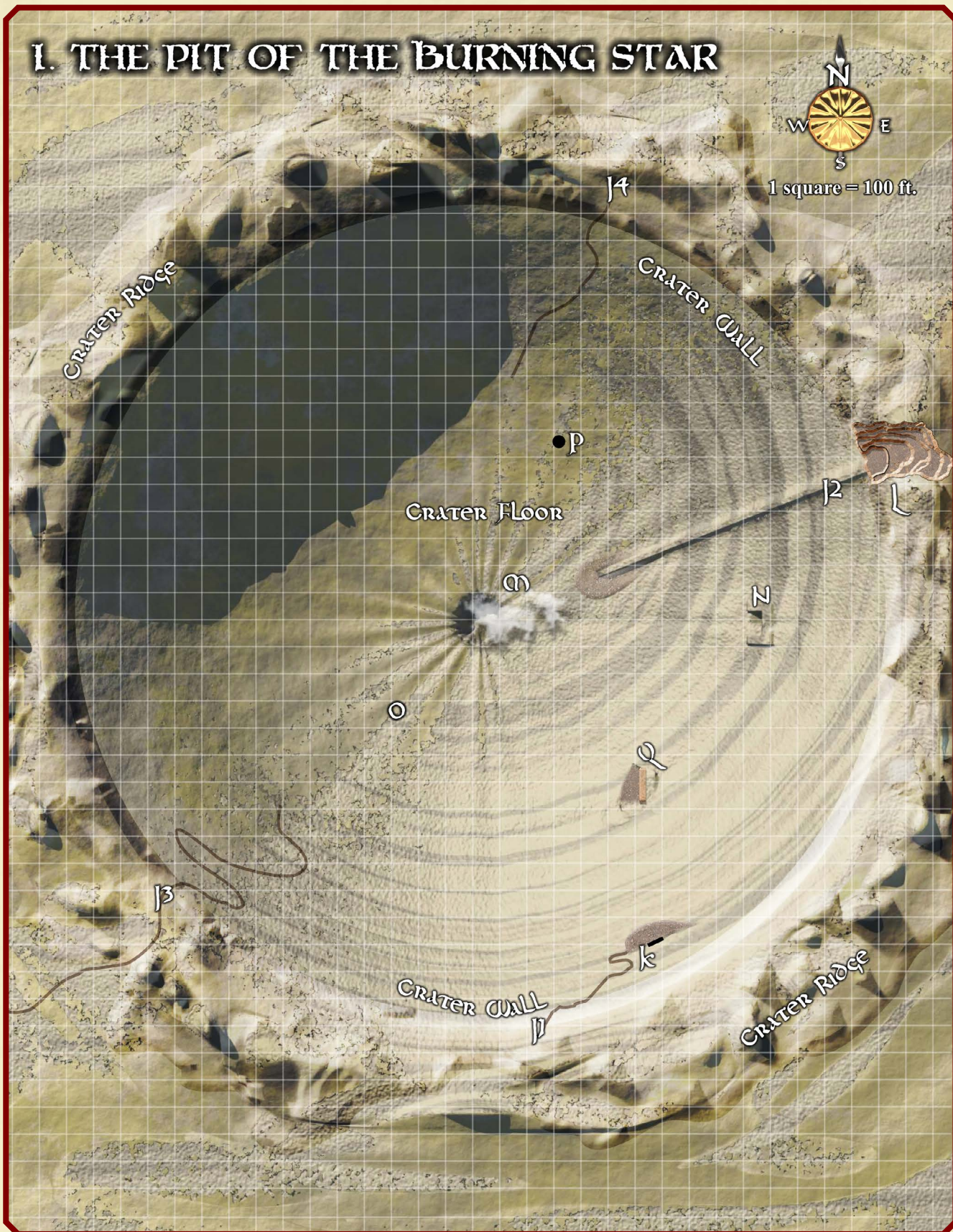
Small fragments of the substance have been found as far as 50 miles from the crater, but in general most of the heavy metal was deposited in and around the crater out to a radius of approximately 2 miles. Most of this meteoritic layer was turned to dust which has since suffused the landscape in this area to such an extent that every 5-foot-square in this area is considered to be one in which a piece of the metallurgic amber is contained (see sidebar for effects). There are also small fragments of the substance melted in the heat of the impact and cooled into tiny lumps and pellets that scattered throughout this area or buried in the walls and rim of the crater.

The PCs begin to notice the effects of exposure to the ambient radiation 2d4 hours after entering this area. Fire resistance or immunity is ineffective against the burns caused by the metallurgic amber as their mechanism is induced cell death as opposed to the application of heat. The living creatures that dwell in and around the crater are either immune to the effects of this radiation or have already suffered its effects to the point where they have built up enough of a resistance so that they incur no further damage from its exposure.

FLYING ABOVE THE CRATER (ENCOUNTER VARIES)

As high-level characters, the PCs may well decide that a little aerial reconnaissance of the site might be in order. Those doing so are likely to discover that a number of hazards, foreseen and unforeseen exist. The most obvious of these is the column of thick black smoke that rises from area M at the crater's center. This midnight black reek roils forth in an unbroken column 50 feet wide at its base but rapidly expanding to 200 feet wide as it rises above the rim of the crater. It then rises another thousand feet or so before being dispersed by the winds. All creatures flying into this cloud become concealed to creatures within 5 feet, and undetected to everything farther away; creatures outside the smoke become undetected to creatures within it. In addition, the smoke makes creatures in its midst choke and cough, requiring a DC 30 Fortitude save at the start of their turn each round. On a failure, the creature must spend its next action coughing, and succeed at a DC 5 flat check to Cast a Spell with a verbal component or Activate an Item with a command component during the round; on a critical failure, they must spend 2 actions coughing and succeed at a DC 15 flat check to Cast a Spell with a verbal component or Activate an Item with a command component during the round. They also discover that these fumes, while certainly warmer than the surrounding air are not as hot as might be expected.

I. THE PIT OF THE BURNING STAR



A less obvious hazard of flying above the crater is that the enclosed-basin nature of the crater causes the air of the steppe to not flow in and out freely and become trapped. This isn't significant enough to cause a hazard to breathing, but the lack of a cooling air current combined with the pale sand and rock of the crater's base causes the air in the crater to become much hotter than the surrounding plain. During the day, conditions in the crater are considered severe heat (105–114° F). These conditions cause a creature to become fatigued after four hours and take 1d6 fire damage every hour (see "Climate" in Chapter 10 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* for more information). But for high-level characters this unlikely to prove much of a problem. Rather the effects this has on flying creatures is much more sinister.

Because of the increased temperatures and stagnant air within the confines of the crater walls the air gains high altitude conditions, meaning the air is actually lower density, as it would be at a higher altitude. This has no effect on magical forms of flight, but for any flight that relies on wings or other forms of natural lift this thinner air makes flying much more difficult. Winged creatures attempting to Fly within the confines of the crater's basin must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check to Maneuver in Flight each round just to stay aloft. In addition, they take a –5 circumstance penalty to all Acrobatics checks to Maneuver in Flight. Finally, once a flyer has entered the confines of the crater, it is difficult to gain the altitude to be able to Fly back out again, and doing so requires a DC 20 Acrobatics check to Maneuver in Flight to avoid crashing into one of the crater walls. As long as flying creatures remain above the level of the top of the crater's surrounding ridge where the air currents flow freely, they are not in danger of these effects. Only if a flyer dips below the altitude of the top of the rim does it become subject to this hazard.

The final hidden danger to flight over and within the crater becomes evident 1d4 rounds after a flying creature larger than size Tiny enters the air space beyond the perimeter of the surrounding crater ridge. When this occurs, a flight of **1d4+1 witchfires** emerge from concealment in the column of smoke at the crater's center and quickly fly to converge upon the aerial intruders. These incorporeal undead are immune to the smoke's heat and choking effects. In addition, because they do not rely on wings to fly they do not suffer the normal penalties for flight within the crater. Every 1d4 rounds another **1d2 witchfires** will emerge to join in the battle. There is essentially an unlimited number of these creatures, so smart PCs will quickly retreat and no longer attempt to violate the crater's air space.

The witchfires immediately attack any flying creatures and pursue relentlessly within the bounds of the crater's

air space up to an altitude of 1,000 feet. Once above the level of the smoke's dispersal, they break off any pursuit and return to wait within the smoke. Likewise they ignore creatures that are on the ground within the crater, though if a flying creature lands to escape them they will continue to attack that individual as long as he remains visible to them. They will not pursue beyond the boundaries of the crater rim nor into any of the crater's tunnels.

PCs witnessing the attacking witchfires can make a DC 25 Society check to recognize their ragged trappings and equipment as belonging to Shattered Folk of the distant past. It doesn't take much insight to guess that these creatures are the remains of steppe-dwelling tribesmen who were slain by the impact blast when the Burning Star struck almost 2,000 years ago.

Flying above the crater ridge but not inside the crater itself also carries the hazard of coming under attack by the thrown boulders of ash giants as described under **Crater Ridge and Surrounding Area** below.

WITCHFIRES

CREATURE 9

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +18; darkvision

CRATER RIDGE AND SURROUNDING AREA TRIVIAL 13 OR LOW 13

Though the crater's location is remote, it is not entirely without inhabitation. It is unclear whether the ash giants of the crater ridge came from elsewhere and chose to live beside the iconic landmark or if they were perhaps originally survivors of some race of plains giants in the vicinity who were so decimated and twisted by the calamitous explosion that they chose to take up residence in a new form warped by their generations of exposure. Whatever their origin, the fact remains that scattered groups of hideously deformed ash giants dwell in and upon the outer slopes of the crater ridge.

Every hour spent upon the crater ridge or within a mile of it during daylight hours has a 10% chance of running into **1d2 ash giants**. Anyone who is flying above the ridge has the same chance anytime they pass over it or for every 10 minutes spent above it of being spotted and attacked with thrown rocks. These creatures are always hungry and interested in making a meal of strangers they encounter. They stay inside their dwellings at night in superstitious dread of the crater's inhabitants. They pursue prey that they spot for miles across the plains but do not enter the crater itself.

ASH GIANTS (1D2)**CREATURE 12****UNCOMMON CN LARGE GIANT HUMANOID****Perception** +23, low-light vision**Languages** Jotun, Kirkut**Skills** Athletics +25, Diplomacy +20, Intimidation +22, Survival +22**Str** +7, **Dex** +1, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0**Items** +1 *striking greatclub*, sack with 5 rocks**Vermin Empathy** Ash giants can use Diplomacy to Make an Impression on and Request things of arthropods (insects, spiders, scorpions, crabs, and similar invertebrate animals). Most arthropods have a starting attitude of indifferent to ash giants.**AC** 32; **Fort** +27, **Ref** +19, **Will** +22**HP** 270; **Immunities** disease; **Resistances** poison 12**Attack of Opportunity** [reaction]**Catch Rock** [reaction]**Speed** 30 feet**Melee** ♦ *greatclub* +27 (backswing, reach 10 feet, shove), **Damage** 2d0+13 bludgeoning plus radiation syndrome**Melee** ♦ *fist* +26 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d6+13 bludgeoning plus radiation syndrome**Ranged** ♦ *rock* +26 (brutal, range increment 120 feet), **Damage** 2d10+13 bludgeoning plus radiation syndrome**Radiation Syndrome** (disease, virulent) The ash giants of the Burning Pit carry a contagious form of radiation poisoning that blisters and burns the flesh of those exposed. The victim can't reduce the drained condition while the affliction persists.**Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 29; **Onset** 1 day;**Stage 1** 2d6 bleed damage and drained 1 (1 day);**Stage 2** 2d6 bleed damage and drained 2 (1 day);**Stage 3** 4d6 bleed damage and drained 3 (1 day)

Development: The ash giants dwell in enlarged crevices or crude rock shelters upon the ridge and hunt the surrounding plains for their food. They never, under any circumstances enter into the crater and consider it to be entirely taboo. They live in scattered dwellings (not shown on the map), singly or in pairs — sometimes with 1d2 young ash giants (use weak adjustments, *Pathfinder Bestiary* (Second Edition)). Locating the well-disguised lairs of these



giants is all but impossible until they are met. Once a giant is encountered, its trail can be followed back to its lair with a DC 20 Survival check to Track.

A captured ash giant that is successfully interrogated will only tell of the “cursed dead” that walk within the crater in horrified whispers. They sometimes see them stalking among the rocks below. When an ash giant dies, its body is wrapped in grass-woven burial shroud and dropped over the edge into the crater. They never see the body taken, but by the next morning it is always gone.

Treasure: Though the ash giants of the Burning Pit are exceedingly poor, they are not entirely without wealth. Anyone searching one of their shelters has a 30% chance of discovering 1d4 of the following items. Items marked with an asterisk can only be found once and should be rerolled if indicated again. Unless otherwise indicated, all coins found are a mix of Rhemian and Foerdewaith currencies.

d20	Object Found
1	Chipped stone chert hand chopper
2	1d4 throwing rocks
3	Battered pewter bowl and spoon from a Conroi Expedition mess kit
4	1d3 brass buttons dating to time of the Caleen Colonies* (1 sp each)
5	Bag of caltrops crudely made from bone and shards of tektite glass
6	Wedge of hard, slightly moldy and stinky cheese
7	Shabby, lice-infested fur cloak
8	Bone comb and hairpins
9	Crude cooking pot forged from meteoric iron* (worth 10 sp)
10	Aurochs drinking horn (worth 5 sp)
11	Skinning knife stamped with a Castorhagi maker's mark*
12	Haunch of jerked unidentifiable meat
13	Scattering of mixed centuries-old Rhemian coins (1d4 x 20 cp, 2d4 x 5 sp, and 1d4-1 sp)
14	Wash leather pouch holding (roll d6): 1-3. 1d4 x 100 cp, 4-5. 2d4 x 10 sp, 6. 1d4 x 10 gp
15	Mangy fur bedding
16	2 100-ft. coils of good, newly made rope, obviously stolen*
17	Large well-licked block of rock salt (infused with metallurgic amber [see sidebar above])
18	<i>Bracelet of dashing</i> of Shattered Folk make*
19	An empty <i>runestone</i> with fresh blood stains*
20	1d8 broken mustang or bulette teeth (no value)

CRATER WALL (ENCOUNTER VARIES)

Whether climbing down the crater wall or following one of the few trails that mark paths to the bottom (see area J), the PCs have the chance of running across some of the denizens that make their home among the exposed and inverted layers of rock strata that were stacked haphazardly by the impact of long ago. Among the many fissures, crevices, and broken crags that mar the sides of the crater lurk creatures unbothered by the crater's heat, radioactive emissions, or the presence of the undead below. For every 10 minutes spent traversing the crater's inner walls there is a 25% chance of an encounter. If an encounter occurs, roll on the following table to determine its result.

d6	Encounter	Encounter Level
1	Death worm	Trivial 13
2	1d2 elite giant crawling hands	Trivial 13
3	1d4+2 xorns	Trivial 13
4	1d2 granite glyptodonts	Trivial 13
5	1d4+1 salt drakes	Trivial 13
6	Marmora	Moderate 13

Death Worm: These solitary horrors burrow among the rock of the cliff walls eating the deposits of meteoritic iron and metallurgic amber that they find. They are fiercely territorial and immediately attack any creatures that intrude into their area. Like the radioactive combusted of the region, a death worm is infused with the radiation of metallurgic amber and creatures affected by its breath weapon apply only half their usual fire resistance. Creatures with immunity to fire use an outcome one degree of success better than what they rolled, instead of gaining the usual benefit of immunity. Its Heat reacts to fire resistance and immunity normally.

DEATH WORM

CREATURE 7

Statistics as *remorhaz* (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* (Second Edition)) but remove Ice Tunneler

Initiative Perception +14; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 60 feet

Giant Crawling Hand: Pulling themselves free from the corpses of ash giants, these stalk the crags of the crater wall, absorbing the heat and radiation given off by the crater's strata. However, when approached, they surge into action as they attack and try to choke the life out of whatever creature they encounter.

ELITE GIANT CRAWLING HAND

CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +14; lifesense 30 feet, tremorsense (imprecise) 30 feet

Granite Glyptodonts: These creatures came to the area of the crater shortly after the time of the impact, drawn by the immense elemental powers released by the explosion and the vast quantity of unusual metal salts created in its wake. Unlike the xorns, these creatures have not had their alignment warped. Granite glyptodonts are among the earth elementals of all sizes that inhabit the crater

walls, though only these larger ones ever venture to the surface due to the dangerous denizens to be found there. If encountered they do not immediately attack but spy on the PCs from hiding to learn their purpose in being there and whether they pose a threat. If spotted, they attack in hopes of keeping their presence hidden from any other creatures nearby.

GRANITE GLYPTODONT

CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +17; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 90 feet

Marrmora: A single marmora dwells within the Pit of the Burning Star. The fey revels in the crater's heat and the radiation that emanates from the metallurgic amber scattered throughout the region. Although it prefers to wallow in the crater's smoky depths, the twisted creature periodically ascends to the surface to feed on stragglers that attempt to scale its walls. Like the radioactive combusted of the region, the marmora's fires burn with the radiation of metallurgic amber, making resistance to fire less effective against it. Once this marmora has been defeated, treat any future rolled encounters with it as no encounter.

MARRMORA

CREATURE 15

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +27; low-light vision

Any creature's save result vs. the marmora's

Fascination of Flame is one degree of success worse than the result it rolled.

Salt Drakes: These stunted creatures have inhabited the cliffs of the crater for generations, and the effects of its long-term exposure on them has not been benign. These creatures have completely lost their ability to fly, having only small, sickly vestigial wings on their shoulders, and their Intelligence has been reduced causing them to lose the gift of language. They

now lead a feral existence hunting each other, small salt elementals, and the occasional other creatures that are unfortunate enough to find their way into the crater. These creatures are thin and malnourished but are strengthened by the radioactive energies that suffuse their entire genetic structure.

SALT DRAKE

CREATURE 8

Statistics as **desert drake** (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*) but remove fly speed, languages, and Wing Deflection, and add Radioactive Shock.

Initiative Perception +15; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Radioactive Shock Whenever a creature takes electricity damage from the salt drake, they apply only half their usual electricity resistance. Creatures with immunity to electricity use an outcome one degree of success better than what they rolled, instead of gaining the usual benefit of immunity.

Xorns: These creatures were originally attracted to the area of the Pit by the unusual flavors of minerals available for consumption. Unfortunately, the long exposure to the meteor's radiations has affected them strangely, turning their alignment to neutral evil and making them exceptionally aggressive. When they encounter PCs, they will immediately demand that they depart the area and leave behind all metal items. If the PCs do not immediately comply, they will attack. If the PCs do comply, the xorns will gather up their gear and hide it in a nearby crevice and then follow the PCs to ambush and slay them.

XORN CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +15; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 60 feet



CRATER FLOOR EXTREME 13

As mentioned above due to the lack of air circulation and presence of internal fires below, during the day at this time of year, conditions in the crater are considered severe heat (105–114° F). These conditions cause a creature to become fatigued after four hours and take 1d6 fire damage every hour (see “Climate” in Chapter 10 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* for more information).

After reading Azemrius’s writings, the PCs were likely expecting to see the floor of the crater abuzz with activity. Yet from the moment of their arrival, no matter how long they observe during the day there is no sign of movement. Regarding observations at night, see **Event 1: Nightscream**. However, the floor of the crater is not as deserted as it appears. Several locations exist on the crater’s floor that the PCs can explore, however, at least on the first day they will not have opportunity to. For on their first foray into the crater, the PCs will encounter an inkling of the forces that defend it from outsiders.

Upon reaching the crater floor for every round that the PCs spend therein, there is a cumulative 25% chance of them being noticed and accosted by the guardians of the Pit. Their first realization of this is when foes begin to emerge from the smoking chasm at **M**. When this occurs read the following description.

There is no wind, but it almost seems as if one has come up as a thin keening wail begins to rise on the air. In seconds it resolves itself into a cacophony of screams, cries, and growls and movement becomes visible from the edge of the smoking pit at the crater’s center. Pouring out of the burning haze come dozens of forms—burning forms, shambling forms, smoking forms, dead forms. It is as if the bowels of Hell have let loose its denizens. They are the limping, raging burned figures that you have seen previously. Corpses, both ancient and fresh, bearing disfiguring brown burns and terrible wounds yet having eyes alight with hate. Smoky, skeletal figures whose charred bones glow with burning coals. And something you haven’t seen before, charred human forms, not skeletal but far more burned than the others you have seen. These too have orbs of burning fear and move swiftly towards you.

Worse, even as this horde disgorges from the smoking maw of the crater, the sands and rock of the crater floor around you begins to shift and churn as more of these burned-yet-living forms rise from hidden pits to add their own increase to the growing horde. The formerly empty floor of the crater is quickly becoming crowded, and it appears the living are not to be long among its occupants.

The horde that emerges from the central crater consists of **4d6 radioactive combusted**, **1d6 cinder ghouls**, and **2d4 radioactive blast shadows**. They do not necessarily converge upon the PCs immediately, depending on where the party was when the undead started spilling forth. The radioactive blast shadows and cinder ghouls quickly outrun the radioactive combusted in order to attack the PCs. However, of more immediate concern are the undead emerging from the shallow burials all around the crater floor. These creatures are all within 1 round of the party’s position. These consist of **1d6 radioactive combusted**, **1d2 cinder ghouls**, and **1d3 radioactive blast shadows**. In addition, every 2 rounds another **1d6 radioactive combusted**, **1d2 cinder ghouls**, and **1d3 radioactive blast shadows** join them. All of these creatures swarm towards the PCs in wave after wave in a great mindless attack. If the PCs try to take to the air to avoid these attackers, they will likely run afoul of the witchfires as described under **Flying Above the Crater** above.

The cinder ghouls and radioactive combusted have the same appearance as those earlier, but the radioactive blast shadows bear the crude remnants of hide clothing, bone pectorals, and crude stone weapons identifiable with a DC 25 Society check as belonging to Shattered Folk tribesmen of more than a thousand years ago. This observation makes it quickly apparent that these creatures were created from Shattered Folk killed by the actual meteor impact in 1522 I.R.

RADIOACTIVE COMBUSTED

CREATURE 5

See page 48

Initiative Perception +12; darkvision

CINDER GHOUL TOHC-313

CREATURE 7

See page 48

Initiative Perception +15; darkvision

RADIOACTIVE BLAST SHADOW

CREATURE 5

CE **MEDIUM** **FIRE** **UNDEAD**

Perception +12; darkvision

Languages Kirkut, Necril

Skills Acrobatics +13, Intimidation +11, Stealth +13

Str +2, **Dex** +5, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

AC 22; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +14, **Will** +11

HP 75, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fire, paralysis, poison, unconscious;

Resistances positive 5; **Weaknesses** cold 5
Death Blast (divine, evocation, fire) When a radioactive blast shadow is reduced to 0 Hit Points, it explodes in a blast of flame and smoke. All living creatures within 30 feet take 2d12 fire damage (DC 24 basic Reflex save).

Speed 35 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee ♦ claw +15 (agile, fire), Damage 1d8+5 slashing plus 2d8 fire damage

Burn The fire damage caused by a radioactive blast shadow's attack is radioactive in nature and ignores normal fire resistance. Creatures with immunity to fire use an outcome one degree of success better than what they rolled, instead of gaining the usual benefit of immunity.

Burning Cloud ♦ (fire) The radioactive blast shadow surrounds itself with a 5-foot radius cloud of radioactive smoke that burns living flesh until the start of its next turn. While active, the radioactive blast shadow becomes concealed and all living creatures that start their turn in the cloud or enter it takes 1d8 fire damage. If the radioactive blast shadow takes any cold damage, this cloud is dispelled and the radioactive blast shadow cannot use Burning Cloud again for 1d6 rounds.

Development: Though the PCs are likely formidable in a fight, it should quickly become apparent from the seemingly endless supply of undead that continue to arise from the smoking pit and hidden burials around the crater floor that they are in danger of becoming overwhelmed. Nevertheless, the wild abandon and lack of coordination in the attacks of the undead do work to the advantage of the PCs. They never seek to encircle the PCs and trap them within the crater. Whenever the PCs realize they danger of their situation, they should be able to make a fighting retreat back to the slopes of the crater wall. The undead will follow only until the steep part of the wall is reached at which point they will howl in frustration and make their way back into the depths of the Pit to disappear once again into new shallow burials or the smoking maw itself. However, if the PCs descend to the crater floor again, the undead emerge to attack once more in similar numbers. They continue to do this throughout the first day, making the PCs' initial foray into the crater to devolve into what at best could be considered a stalemate.

EVENTS AT THE PIT OF THE BURNING STAR

In addition to the general areas of the Pit described above and the specific locations within the Pit described below, a number of events occur as well while the PCs are visiting. These events should occur in chronological order and have been given a specific time at which they should occur. If the actions of the party make these timings impossible, you should try to still fit the events in in a feasible way, as they provide clues and potential assistance to the party's exploration of the Pit.

EVENT 1: NIGHTSCREAM

This event occurs at moonrise on the party's first night at the crater, and for every night thereafter. The Nightscream is a phenomenon that occurs in the crater each night when the light of the primary moon Luna, the Pale Sister, hits the fuming chasm at the center of the crater. It is caused by the wailing despair of the souls who were destroyed in the meteor's impact as well as by the victims of the meteor in all the centuries since. The precise time of the Nightscream varies depending on the time of year, anywhere from an hour before to an hour after midnight. It does not occur on the three nights of Luna's new moon each month, but occurs at full strength on all other nights, affecting every living thing within a quarter mile of the crater regardless of location. Only those underground are unaffected by its effects.

In the minutes leading up to the Nightscream the PCs will find themselves feeling nervous and uneasy. They then hear a faint moaning sound, so quiet that it might even be their imaginations. After a few seconds however the moaning rises to a near-deafening scream, as of hundreds of loud voices screaming in fear and agony. The scream lasts a full hour, then fades away to nothing, leaving only a fading echo over the benighted crater.

During the Nightscream, creatures may not cast heal and the number of Hit Points healed or inflicted by harm are doubled. In addition, any living creature in the area of effect must attempt DC 30 Will save against the Nightscream, which has the auditory, emotion, fear, and mental traits. They then become temporarily immune to the Nightscream's fear effect for 1 hour.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected and gains a +2 circumstance bonus on their Will save the next time they hear a Nightscream.

Success The target is frightened 1 for 1 minute.

Failure The target is frightened 2 for the remainder of the night.

Critical Failure The target is frightened 2 and unable to rest for the remainder of the night, meaning they do not regain Hit Points, may not recover from some conditions, may be fatigued, and can't make their daily preparations.

EVENT 2: TIDINGS OF THE LYRE VALLEY LOW 13 OR MODERATE 13

This event occurs when morning breaks at dawn of the first day after the PCs have arrived at the crater. PCs making a DC 20 Nature check notices a gyrfalcon circling nearby. Any PC can notice this, but the Nature check is necessary to recognize it as being notable — there have been no birds of any sort seen within a mile or so of the crater since the PCs' arrival. If this skill check is successful and raises the party's suspicions, they receive a +4 circumstance bonus if they roll Perception for initiative before the bird reveals its true form in the following encounter.

Where moments before there had seemingly been only the empty plains around the great crater, now there stands a man not 20 feet away, looking directly at you and smiling. He wears a chain shirt under a dusty gray cloak trimmed in thread of turquoise and gold as well as a brown feathered cap on his head, cocked at a jaunty angle. A sheathed short sword hangs at his belt, and a crossbow is slung over his shoulder, though neither is at hand. Next to the crossbow is slung a well-worn, but lovingly cared-for harp.

Suddenly next to him where you could have sworn was only more of the drab, brownish-gray landscape you realize there stands a small brownish-gray man. He is a Shattered Folk tribesman stooped with age with his long, pleated hair the color of iron. His dark face is seamed with the lines of countless years on the plain, and the left side is sunken where some past blow from mace or hammer must have shattered his cheek and removed most of the teeth on that side. But his dark eyes are unwavering and filled with quiet confidence. Unlike his companion, this man's hands are not empty. One clutches a tribal waraxe and the other an old hunting knife, though both dangle loosely — almost casually — and somehow that makes him seem even more menacing.

The men standing before just outside the party's camp are Gabriel Targus (a tuul^{FB-84} human) and his Shattered Folk scout Two-Cuts.

The gyrfalcon, if it was noticed, is the wild-shaped elven druidess Iracina Ravenspur. They spotted the PCs' camp last evening and approached with first light, Iracina first scouting in gyrfalcon form and then Gabriel under the guise of an invisibility spell and Two-Cuts making use of his Hide in Plain Sight ability. Approximately a quarter mile away, behind cover, await the rest of their group: Iracina's older brother Huldir Ravenspur and 3 hired swords who tend to their string of 8 mustangs.

GABRIEL TARGUS

CREATURE 10

UNIQUE LN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +19

Languages Common, Elven, High Boros, Kirkut

Skills Acrobatics +19 (+21 to Escape), Deception +22,

Diplomacy +22, Occultism +19, Performance +23

Str +2, **Dex** +5, **Con** +4, **Int** +2, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +5

Items crossbow (20 bolts), +1 striking shortsword, studded leather, virtuoso handheld harp

AC 30; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +19, **Will** +20

HP 180

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ shortsword +23 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 2d6+7 piercing

Ranged ♦ crossbow +23 (range increment 120 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d8+5 piercing

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC

28, attack +22; **5th** (3 slots) death

ward, hallucination, telepathic

bond; **4th** (3 slots) blink, confusion,

suggestion; **3rd** (3 slots) ghostly

weapon, paralyze, vampiric touch;

2nd (3 slots) invisibility, shatter, sound

burst; **1st** (3 slots) magic missile, ray

of enfeeblement, true strike; **Cantrips**

(**5th**) daze, detect magic, ghost sound,

shield, telekinetic projectile

Bard Composition Spells 3 Focus

Points, DC 28; **4th** inspire heroics,

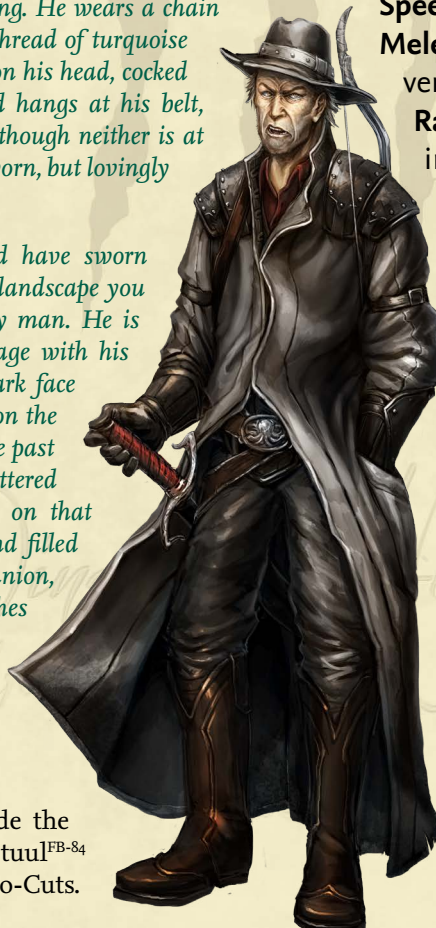
Cantrips (**5th**) allegro, inspire

courage, inspire defense

Last Man Standing ⤵ (auditory,

concentrate) **Frequency** once per

day; **Requirements** An ally Gabriel



can see is benefiting from one of Gabriel's bard compositions spells; **Trigger** The ally would be reduced to 0 Hit Points but not immediately killed. **Effect** Gabriel immediately ends the benefits of any active composition spells and the creature avoids being knocked out, remaining at 1 Hit Point, and his wounded condition increases by 1.

Valorous Deed ♦ **Frequency** Once per day; **Trigger** An ally's attack or saving throw results in a critical success when that ally is under the effects of inspire courage or inspire defense, respectively, and inspire heroics; **Effect** Gabriel gains 1 Focus Point, up to a maximum of 3 Focus Points.

IRACINA RAVENSPUR

CREATURE 10

UNIQUE N MEDIUM HUMANOID ELF

Perception +22; low-light vision

Languages Common, Druidic, Elven, Kirkut, Sylvan

Skills Acrobatics +22, Intimidation +19, Medicine +19, Nature +22, Survival +19

Str +1, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +3

Items darts (3), holly and mistletoe, leather armor, scimitar, wooden shield (Hardness 3, HP 12, BT 6)

AC 30 (32 with shield raised); **Fort** +16, **Ref** +19, **Will** +22
HP 150

Shield Block ↻

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ scimitar +17 (forceful, sweep), **Damage** 1d6+6 slashing

Ranged ♦ dart +19 (agile, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d4+6 piercing

Primal Prepared Spells DC 30, attack +23; **5th** *cone of cold, heal, summon giant*; **4th** *dinosaur form, freedom of movement, solid fog*; **3rd** *blindness, neutralize poison, remove disease*; **2nd** *glitterdust, resist energy, status*; **1st** *grease, heal, shocking grasp*; **Cantrips (5th)** *disrupt undead, electric arc, ray of frost, tanglefoot*

Druid Order Spells 2 Focus Points, DC 30; **5th** *wild shape, wild morph*

Rituals *plant growth*

Soaring Shape Iracina can use the bat and bird forms in aerial form when she uses wild shape.

Steady Spellcasting If another creature's reaction would disrupt Iracina's spellcasting action, she attempts a DC 15 flat check. If she succeeds, their action isn't disrupted.

HULDIR RAVENSPUR

CREATURE 8

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM HUMANOID ELF

Perception +19; low-light vision

Languages Common, Elven, Orc

Skills Acrobatics +16, Athletics +18, Nature +16, Survival +18

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

Items chain shirt, +1 *greater striking elven curve blade*, longbow (10 arrows)

AC 27; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +18, **Will** +14

HP 165

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ elven curve blade +18 (finesse, forceful),

Damage 2d8+8 slashing

Ranged ♦ longbow +18 (deadly d10, range increment 100 feet, reload 0, volley 30 feet),

Damage 1d8+8 piercing

Hunt Prey ♦ (concentrate) Huldir designates a single creature he can see and hear, or one he's Tracking, as his prey. He gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Perception checks to Seek the prey and to Survival checks to Track the prey. His multiple attack penalty for attacks against his hunted prey is -3 (-2 with an agile weapon) on his second attack of the turn instead of -5, and -6 (-4 with an agile weapon) on his third or subsequent attack of the turn, instead of -10. These effects last until Huldir uses Hunt Prey again.

Orc Hunter When Huldir rolls initiative and can see a creature with the orc trait, he can Hunt Prey as a free action, designating that enemy. He can use this free action even if he hasn't identified the creature yet with Recall Knowledge, but not if the creature is disguised as another creature. In addition, when he attacks a designated enemy with the orc trait, he gains access to the critical specialization effects of whatever weapon he uses to Strike.

Warden's Boon ♦ By pointing out vulnerabilities,

Huldir grants the benefits listed in Hunt Prey to an ally until the end of their next turn. If his designated enemy has the orc trait, he can grant this benefit to two allies. Depending on whether he calls out or uses gestures, this action gains either the auditory or visual trait.

Two-Cuts

CREATURE 12

UNIQUE N MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +25

Languages Common, Kirkut

Skills Acrobatics +22, Deception +22, Nature +25, Stealth +28, Survival +25, Thievery +25

Str +2, **Dex** +5, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3

Items *corn cob pipe of dreaming**, dagger, *hatchet of scalping**, *mojo amulet (luck)**, shortbow (10 arrows), tobacco pouch

* see **Appendix C**, page 137

Hide in Plain Sight While on the steppes, Two-Cuts can move up to his Speed when he uses the Sneak action, and he no longer needs to have cover or greater cover or be concealed to Hide or Sneak.

Wild Empathy Two-Cuts can use Diplomacy to Make an Impression on animals and make very simple Requests of them.

AC 33; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +25, **Will** +21

HP 200

Whoa, Nellie! ➤ (auditory, visual) **Trigger** An animal makes a melee Strike against Two-Cuts; **Effect** Two-Cuts makes a Nature check against the animal's Will DC. If he succeeds, the attack is disrupted and the animal gains temporary immunity to Whoa, Nellie! for 24 hours.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ➤ *hatchet of scalping* +24 (agile, sweep), **Damage** 1d6+11 slashing

Melee ➤ dagger +24 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+11 piercing

Ranged ➤ shortbow +24 (deadly d10, range increment 60 feet, reload o), **Damage** 1d6+11 piercing

Ranged ➤ *hatchet of scalping* +24 (agile, thrown 10 feet), **Damage** 1d6+11 slashing

Ranged ➤ dagger +24 (agile, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+11 piercing

Primal Innate Spells DC 29; **4th** *charm* (against animals only); **3rd** *animal vision*

Twin Feint ➤➤ **Requirement** Two-Cuts is wielding two melee weapons, each in a different hand; **Effect** Two-Cuts makes a dazzling series of attacks with both weapons, using the first attack to throw his foe off guard against a second attack at a different angle. He makes one Strike with each of his melee weapons, both against the same target. The target is automatically flat-footed against the second attack. He applies his multiple attack penalty to the Strikes normally.

Sneak Attack Two-Cuts deals an extra 3d6 precision damage to flat-footed creatures.

Hired Swords (3)

CREATURE 8

N MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +16

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +18, Crafting +16, Diplomacy +16, Intimidation +18, Mercenary Lore +18

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

Items chain mail, crossbow (10 bolts), +1 *striking greatsword*, holy water (2), repair kit

AC 27; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +15, **Will** +14

HP 170

Attack of Opportunity ➤

Honor the Deal (emotion, mental) The hired sword may attempt a Will save at the start of any round in which he has the fleeing condition, with the same DC as the effect that caused the fleeing condition. If he succeeds, he loses the fleeing condition for that round. On a critical success, he loses the fleeing condition for 2 rounds. He still has any other conditions caused by the effect that gave him the fleeing condition.

Speed 20 feet

Melee ➤ greatsword +22 (versatile P), **Damage** 2d12+8 slashing

Ranged ➤ crossbow +20 (range increment 120 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 1d8+8 piercing

Brutish Shove ♦ (press) The hired sword makes a melee Strike with a two-handed weapon. If he hits a target that is his size or smaller, that creature is flat-footed until the end of the hired sword's current turn, and he can automatically Shove it, with the same benefits as the Shove action (including the critical success effect, if his Strike was a critical hit). If he moves to follow the target, his movement doesn't trigger reactions.

Knockdown ♦♦ (flourish) The hired sword makes a melee Strike. If he hits and deals damage, he can attempt an Athletics check to Trip the creature he hit; if he's using a two-handed weapon, he can ignore Trip's requirement that he has a hand free. Both attacks count toward his multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after he's made both of them.

MUSTANGS (8)

CREATURE 2

See page 5

Initiative Perception +6; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Development: Gabriel Targus is careful not to make any threatening moves or approach any closer once his *invisibility* spell ends, and no threatening actions are made, though Two-Cuts continues to keep his weapons handy and Iracina continues to circle above in gyrfalcon form. Gabriel hails the camp and introduces himself as the leader of the adventuring band called The Spurious Tidings out of Bard's Gate^{LL8}. He asks for permission to come into the camp to talk with the PCs in peace. If the PCs attack, he and his comrades make a fighting retreat back to their fellows and will consider the PCs enemies going forward. Otherwise, they are friendly to the PCs, and are interested in talking. Descriptions of the members of The Spurious Tidings are provided in the accompanying sidebar.

Assuming the PCs are willing to hear Gabriel out and act in nonthreatening manner themselves, he calls Iracina to transform back into her elven form and join them and then opens up a friendly dialogue. He explains that he and his band have come from Bard's Gate at the behest of High Burgess Cylyria^{LL8} to locate the Pit of the Burning Star. The high burgess's own network of spies and informants had caught wind of the unearthing of writings of the Conroi Expedition and the whispers of what they were searching

for and its potential value. When she and her confidants consulted with learned priests of Oghma and Yenomesh* and conducted various divinations, they learned much of what was going on and surmised a great deal about the nature of the Pit. She then approached Gabriel's group to make an expedition on behalf of the City of the Lyre (i.e. Bard's Gate).

Gabriel's group only just arrived and witnessed any unsuccessful forays by the PCs into the crater on the previous day. He is aware of the PCs' group as representing the interests of the Grand Duchy of Reme, and although he understands that both groups represent competing interests, he points out that Bard's Gate and the Grand Duchy of Reme are staunch allies in trade and partners in many endeavors. Having witnessed the horrors that the crater has to offer, he believes it likely that neither group will be able to succeed alone but may have a much better chance together. He further adds that High Burgess Cylyria has entrusted him with full discretion in such matters and that he is therefore empowered to make such a cooperative arrangement with the PCs and their Rheman sponsors in good faith if they are willing to do so themselves.

Though he is not aware of Goribald Ironskull's duplicity, if Goribald Ironskull and his followers are still with the expedition after the potential events of "**The Big Secret**" in **Chapter 1** or if asked about their trip to the crater, Targus will make mention that his group came to the steppe by way of the pass at Durgam's Folly^{G1} where they were ambushed by a group of mountain dwarf assassins. The Spurious Tidings defeated the dwarves but buried their mage Lysander and a hired sword by the side of the trail after the ambush. None of the dwarves survived, and they didn't bother to question them assuming them to have been cutpurses out of the Stonehearts. However, if they are aware of the mountain dwarves traveling with the PCs, Targus will put two and two together and warn the PCs that the mountain dwarves maybe should not be trusted. If Goribald is alive and free, he vehemently opposes any cooperation agreement and suggests that the newcomers are spies and thieves attempting to eliminate any rivals for the crater's prize. His response to Targus and any accusations will be similar to those described in "**The Big Secret**," though Gabriel Targus and his companions will readily jump to the defense of the PCs against any aggression by the mountain dwarves.

As to how they arrived at the crater, Gabriel attributes his success to the siblings' tracking and expertise in slaying orcs. They stayed somewhat close to the Stoneheart foothills as they made their way north and ran into several orc parties

coming down onto the plains in search of the same prize. By tracking some, fighting others, and ultimately catching sight of the smoke plume they finally arrived. Indeed, he marvels at the fact that The Spurious Tidings survived the harrowing trek at all, let alone found the impact site. He proudly declares the mission to be a triumph, and anything that the adventuring group accomplishes going forward is merely a bonus.

If questioned further about his proposal, Targus suggests that the two groups combine forces and conduct a joint mission to survey the Pit. He is interested in scouting the basin to first determine if anyone could survive a descent into the crater's interior and secondly to assess whether the noqual contained within could be extracted and successfully returned to civilized lands to the south. He has no desire to delve into the column of smoke in search of riches or to destroy the undead hordes that mass in the pit. Gabriel and his crew are content to leave the actual mining and prolonged exploration to others better suited for the task. Unlike some of the PCs' previous associates, The Spurious Tidings abide by the terms of any agreement that they strike with the party.

THE SPURIOUS TIDINGS

Sent by the High Burgess of Bard's Gate to locate the Pit of the Burning Star and ascertain its potential as a resource for the city, The Spurious Tidings consists of the bard, Gabriel Targus, the elves Huldir Ravenspur and his younger sister Iracina Ravenspur, a Shattered Folk guide named Two-Cuts, and three hired swords out of Bard's Gate to provide additional muscle. The group left their mage and a fourth hired sword in shallow graves along the way. They obtained their guide after reaching the steppes and traded their own mounts for the better-suited mustangs. Since then Two-Cuts has managed to "acquire" another mustang from an unwary traveler. If the PCs make an alliance, they will find that The Spurious Tidings serve as loyal and trustworthy companions during the exploration of the crater. They are not suicidal and will not undertake an unreasonable share of the risk, but they will not abandon their allies in a tight spot either. You should use them as a way to supplement the PCs in particularly tough situations without having them take over the limelight. It might be advisable for them to hang back sometimes and guard the PCs' route of retreat if their presence in an encounter will be too unbalancing.

Gabriel Targus: Targus is a human bard in his early thirties. A graduate of Bard's College, he has become loosely affiliated with the Fellowship of the Note^{LL8} and has undertaken several secret tasks for the high burgess leading up to being given this mission. Gabriel is a "tuul^{FB-84}", a bard well

versed in the traditions of the Plainsmen of the Waymarch, tribal descendants of the Shattered Folk, and it was for this reason that he was such a likely candidate to undertake this mission. He is affable with a magnetic personality and a fondness for breaking into the haunting, rhythmic songs of the tribes, tunes and chants that date back thousands of years before the coming of the first Hyperboreans to Akados. He is honest and loyal, and if allied with the PCs will defer to their opinions but not if something seems foolish or unnecessarily risky. He is an effective combatant and fond of tales of daring-do, but he is not stupid.

Iracina and Huldir Ravenspur: Brother and sister, these elves hail from the Forest Kingdoms^{LL8} and first came to Bard's Gate as members of the Farseekers of Twilight^{LL8}. After working with Gabriel Targus on a shared venture against orcs in the Stoneheart Forest, they gravitated towards his charismatic leadership and the clandestine nature of his work with the Greycloaks^{LL8}, eventually obtaining their release from the Farseekers with Oberon Thanlaus' blessing in order to better serve the Queen of Parnuble from within the allied human city. Having spent the better part of a century battling threats to the Forest Kingdom—and evil humanoids in particular—this pair has developed a special animosity towards orcs. They have enjoyed their time on the steppes and the opportunity for orc hunting it has afforded. They follow Gabriel's lead regarding any alliance with the PCs, however their racial hatred of orcs runs so deep that they never directly assist an orc or a half-orc, even if doing so also endangers them as well.

Two-Cuts: An irascible Shattered Folk horse thief of indeterminate age, Two-Cuts has been relieving horses from their owners for longer than most PCs have been alive. He took a mare's kick to the face as a young man which caused his facial deformity, but he has never let it affect his good humor and sense of orneriness. While he does not reveal his given name, he has been called Two-Cuts for so long because of his propensity for fighting with a weapon in each hand, that it is all he answers to anymore. He is fond of smoking his corn cob pipe if a situation appears to be heading towards trouble so he can make ready use of that item's special powers at a moment's notice. Two-Cuts has been well paid by Targus for his services and is loyal to him to a point, but he will not enter any situations that look overly dangerous or where there is not an easy route of escape available.

Hired Swords: Named Jaym, Sheth, and Coburn (with a fourth named Markus slain near Durgam's Folly^{G1}), these warriors are members of Bard's Gate's Society of Arms^{LL8} and are under contract with The Spurious Tidings until they have returned to that city. They have no particular

interest in the value of the crater as a resource for the city — seeing such considerations as being generally above their pay grade — but they are honorable and loyal to their employers. Of any of the members of The Spurious Tidings, these are the most likely to take on particularly dangerous tasks feeling that they must uphold the honor of their organization if necessary rather than allow a report of cowardice make it back to Commandant Rahonse.

For more information on the peoples, groups, and lands mentioned above, see *LL8: Bard's Gate* by Frog God Games.

EVENT 3: THE DAY AFTER

With the new day, calm has been restored to the floor of the crater. There is no sign of the hordes of undead that once boiled up in the basin and perhaps even patrolled the air. Even any bodies of those slain by the PCs (or slain PCs and NPCs themselves) are nowhere to be seen. The marks of battle — footprints, bloodstains, etc. — still mark the sandy floor, by there are no further signs of the combatants themselves.

The hordes that guarded the crater the previous day have received a new directive from their master. Now that he knows adventurers of potential worth have found his lair, he hopes to lure them into exploring more fully and discover the cache of Rhemian coins that lie hidden below (area N) as part of his master plan (see that area for more details). In any case the PCs are now free to explore the depths of the crater without fear of the undead hordes that lurk within nor of the witchfires emerging from the smoke plume. Once the PCs reach the mine tunnels of the crater, though, that is a different story entirely.

EVENT 4: THREE PRIZE MEN (ENCOUNTER VARIES)

The Spurious Tidings are not the only competitors to arrive on the scene. The more pressing concern is the sudden appearance of three spellcasters from Castorhage that have established camp in a strip mine in the crater's northeast rim (area L). These Castorhagi agents refer to themselves as The Prize Men because of their knack for recovering priceless items for Her Majesty. The trio started out with a contingent of thirty hired guards and a half dozen Shattered Folk scouts, but despite traveling primarily by magical means the Haunted Steppe has winnowed their numbers to **8 guards** and **3 scouts**. The Prize Men themselves are the magus **Poirot Kenkery** and his extraplanar thralls **Ethos** and **Pathos**, the elven sorcerer **Jeriveau Lancolmb** and his thrall **Mr. Peepers**, and the witch **Linas Huth-Borxia**, his familiar **Averno**, and his thrall **Gargizar**.

These agents prefer to spy on the PCs and other parties at the crater through a combination of scrying, scouting, and invisibly spying. For every 6 hours that the PCs remain in the vicinity of the crater there is a 50% chance of being observed by The Prize Men. If such an encounter indicated, roll on the table below to indicate the type of spying that is being used. If any of these individuals or groups is defeated, it will not be encountered again, and if rolled again should be treated as no encounter.

d20	Encounter	Average CR
1–6	Scrying	—
7–9	Pathos	Trivial 13
10	Mr. Peepers	Trivial 13
11–13	1d2 Elitan-i-Pan scouts	Trivial 13
14–15	Combat patrol	Trivial 13
16	Poirot Kenkery	Trivial 13
17	Linas and Gargizar	Trivial 13
18	Poirot and company	Low 13
19	Jevireau Lancolmb	Trivial 13
20	Three Prize Men	Severe 13

Combat Patrol: The Prize Men have sent out a combat patrol of 1d4+1 hired guards and a Elitan-i-Pan scout. This group tries to stay to cover as much as possible but begins to follow the PCs from a distance of 50 feet (their Stealth DC, including cover and distance, is 29). If spotted, the scout engages with his shortbow to try and drive the PCs off. If the PCs attack effectively, the scout runs to report back to area L, while the guards make a fighting retreat to cover him.

ELITAN-I-PAN SCOUT CREATURE 5

Elite **guide** (*Pathfinder Bestiary* (Second Edition), *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*)

Initiative Stealth +13

GENTLEMEN'S EXPLORERS CLUB HIRED GUARDS (1D4+1) CREATURE 6

Warden (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*)

Initiative Stealth +12

Elitan-i-Pan scouts: Shattered Folk scouts from the Elitan-i-Pan Confederation^{LLo} working for The Prize Men are scouting around the crater and have spotted the PCs. They attempt to follow the PCs from cover, maintaining a

distance of 60–150 feet (1d10+5 x 10). They can be spotted by a Perception check against their Stealth DC (25, including cover). They will shadow the party for 1d4 minutes before breaking off contact and returning the area L to report. If spotted, they attempt to reach the crater rim as quickly as possible without leading the PCs directly back to their base camp. Roll for encounters for them normally on the crater wall and ridge — it is entirely possible that they run afoul of something over their heads on the trip and may never make it back to the camp at all. It is also possible that their cries could attract the PCs' attention and bring them to their aid.

ELITAN-I-PAN SCOUT **CREATURE 5**

Elite **guide** (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*, *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*)
Initiative Stealth +13

Jevireau Lancolmb: The sorcerer uses *fly* to scout out the PCs from 100 feet above. He can be spotted in daylight with a Perception check against his Stealth DC (32). He will swoop down to a height of 30 feet and attempt to cast *dominate* on one heavily armored PC before flying back up to a height of 300 feet and returning to area L. He hopes to keep tabs on the PCs by means of a dominated minion.

JEVIREAU LANCOLMB **CREATURE 13**

See **Area L**, page 86
Initiative Perception +20; low-light vision

Linus and Gargizar: The witch Linus Huth-Borxia and his yeth hound thrall, Gargizar, scout from 200 feet in the air. Neither is invisible, so during the daytime, the PCs can spot them with a Perception check against their Stealth DCs (32 for Linus and 20 for Gargizar). Whether they are noticed or not, they attack when they spot the PCs. Gargizar Bays and Linus casts *phantasmal calamity* to pound the PCs. He follows that with *cloudkill* and *chain lightning*. He uses *dispel magic* on anyone who attempts to fly up to attack him. After 5 rounds or if he takes 60 points of damage or it seems like there might be several effective flyers in the party, Linus retreats directly back to area L to warn his colleagues.



LINAS HUTH-BORXIA **CREATURE 12**

See **Area L**, page 86
Initiative Perception +21; darkvision

AVERNOS **—**

See **Area L**, page 86
Initiative Perception +16; low-light vision

GARGIZAR **CREATURE 3**

Yeth hound (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)*)
Initiative Perception +9; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet; or Stealth +10

Mr. Peepers: Mr. Peepers (not his real name), a strange retilian humanoid native to the Ethereal Plane, soars above the crater atop his *floating disk* at an altitude of 300 feet. He is not hidden in anyway, but his distance makes spotting him difficult nonetheless (his Stealth DC is 30 in daylight). If spotted, he drops to an altitude of 100 feet and uses his *spiritual weapon* spell to manifest a scimitar against anyone with ranged weapons or who appears lightly armored. After the spell expires or he takes more than 10 points of damage, he quickly rises back up to 400 feet and departs. At night, this will likely mean he is lost from sight, however, during daylight, the PCs can attempt Perception checks to keep track of his flight and follow him back to area L.

MR. PEEPERS **CREATURE 3**

See **Area L**, page 86
Initiative Perception +10; darkvision, othersight

Pathos: Pathos the cacodaemon is scouting from the air invisibly. He flies 100 feet above the ground but will swoop down to within 20 feet to get a better look at the PCs, with the normal chances of being spotted for *invisibility*. He will observe the PCs for 1d10 minutes before returning to area L to report to his master.

PATHOS **CREATURE 2**

Elite **cacodaemon** (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*)
Initiative Stealth +10; invisible

Poirot and Company: Having spotted the PCs, the magus Poirot Kenkery and a company of 4 hired guards have prepared an ambush at some likely position where they can attack from cover from a distance of 20 feet. Poirot leads with a fireball and his guards fire arrows after which the magus calls for the PCs' immediate surrender. Assuming the PCs to do not surrender, the magus and guards will continue to attack. If Poirot is reduced to 100 Hit Points or at least three of the guards are defeated, the magus will teleport back to area L to report and recover. Once the magus is gone, any surviving guards immediately attempt to retreat back to their camp by the most direct route possible.

POIROT KENKERY	CREATURE 13
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See Area L, page 86
Initiative Perception +22

GENTLEMEN'S EXPLORERS CLUB HIRED GUARDS (4)
CREATURE 6

Warden (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*)
Initiative Stealth +12

Poirot Kenkery: The magus uses *fly* and *invisibility* to scout out the party from a height of 60 feet (30 feet at night). He only reconnoiters the PCs for 1 minute before departing because he wants to make sure he gets back to the strip mine before his spells wear off. If he is spotted, he immediately retreats and returns to his camp.

POIROT KENKERY	CREATURE 13
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See Area L, page 86
Initiative Perception +22

Scrying: Linas Huth-Borxia is making use of his *crystal ball* to scry on a randomly determined PC. The Will save to avoid the *scrying* is DC 23 unless Linas has learned a PC's identity, and if successful will cause Linas to attempt again with a different PC. After two failed attempts, Linas will no longer try to scry the PCs that day (treat subsequent occurrences of this method as no encounter).

Three Prize Men: The three spellcasters and all of their thralls set up an ambush at a location where they can attack from cover. The spellcasters prefer to swoop in from the air, while the thralls attack by air or on the ground depending on their means of travel. The group attempts to overwhelm

the PCs before they can organize an effective defense. If one of the spellcasters is reduced below half Hit Points, he immediately retreats back to area L by the fastest means possible. Once a spellcaster departs, his thrall(s) retreat as well. If two of the spellcasters retreat, the third retreats as well rather than remain to take on the party alone.

POIROT KENKERY	CREATURE 13
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See Area L, page 86
Initiative Perception +22

ETHOS	CREATURE 1
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Elite **lemure** (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*)
Initiative Perception +2; greater darkvision

PATHOS	CREATURE 2
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Elite **cacodaemon** (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*)
Initiative Stealth +10; invisible

JEVIREAU LANCOLMB	CREATURE 13
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See Area L, page 86
Initiative Perception +20; low-light vision

MR. PEEPERS	CREATURE 3
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See Area L, page 86
Initiative Perception +10; darkvision, ethersight

LINAS HUTH-BORXIA	CREATURE 12
-------------------	-------------

See Area L, page 86
Initiative Perception +21; darkvision

AVERNOS	—
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See Area L, page 86
Initiative Perception +16; low-light vision

GARGIZAR	CREATURE 3
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Yeth hound (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)*)
Initiative Perception +9; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet; or Stealth +10



LOCATIONS IN THE PIT OF THE BURNING STAR

Once the PCs begin to explore the crater in earnest, they will find that there are a number of noteworthy locations. When the Caleen colonists discovered the pit, it wasn't long before they began sinking mineshafts to try and recover the valuable starmetals they suspected lay buried below. It was this intrepidity that ultimately led to their undoing but not before they had made a good start of it. And in the centuries since, their undead forms have continued the work until there is a fairly extensive system of subterranean tunnels beneath the pit and in the surrounding ridge.

An exploration of the basin floor discovers scores, if not hundreds, of small pits and shallow shafts from aborted dig attempts. These are empty and uninteresting, and many of them were where undead ambushers lay concealed on the first day at the pit. The smoking aperture at the center of the crater is an obvious ingress point into these subterranean realms, but it is not the only one. PCs surveying the crater from the surrounding ridge or from the air can notice additional likely points of entry based on the Perception

checks indicated below. These DCs account for the PCs' being anywhere around the edge of the crater and assume full daylight. Obviously if the PCs come upon one of these areas by other means, they notice it automatically. You may need to modify these checks with bonuses or penalties depending on what other manner of surveying the PCs might come up with.

- J1. Conroi Trail:** DC 18 (DC 14 with Azermius's correspondence)
- J2. Strip Mine Ramp:** DC 10
- J3. Caleen Road:** DC 15
- J4. Fortune's Folly:** DC 23
- K. Azmerius's Adit:** DC 26 (DC 32 with Azermius's correspondence)
- L. The Prize Pit:** DC 12
- M. Fuming Chasm:** DC 0
- N. Caleen Cache:** DC 14
- O. The Nest:** DC 43 or 28 (see area O for details)
- P. The Traveler's Tomb:** DC 34
- Q. The Mother Lode:** DC 33

J. RIDGE TRAILS

Each of these is a steep, winding trail that makes its way down from the rim of the crater to its base. Chances for encounters on these trails are described under **Crater Wall** above.

J1. CONROI TRAIL

This trail leads from the rim down to Azmerius's Adit (area **K**). After that mine entrance it only extends another 60 feet before ending at a sheer precipice where the trail has collapsed in some long-ago rockfall. Continuing any further will require the PCs to climb down as described under Crater Wall above. From the trailhead it is not obvious that the trail dead-ends, so the PCs will actually have to scout this to determine it for themselves.

J2. STRIP MINE RAMP

This is a vast ramp constructed of rubble and talus that extends from the strip mine at area **L** down to the floor of the crater. A trail leads down into the strip mine itself as described at that area, and the ramp extends the rest of the way down into the crater at a fairly smooth 16° grade.

J3. CALEEN ROAD MODERATE 13

The bare traces of an ancient cart track can be found at the crater's rim that leads to this trail, as it was once the main route for moving the heavy freight wagons in and out of the crater for the Caleen mining operation. The trail itself averages 20 feet wide and could even allow two of the huge wagons to pass one another. However, its greater width and exposure to the elements as well as its history of heavy use have caused it to erode more than its fellows, so its broken and rutted surface is difficult terrain along its length. In addition, it has become the lair of the **Stone Eater**. This massive monstrosity from the Plane of Earth appeared in the crater at some point in the past and after tangling with the undead off and on for years eventually made its way up here where it found a convenient hollow in the road. The behemoth is the shape of an irregular boulder with dun-colored chitinous plates surrounding a vast, toothed maw and an underbelly of pebbled flesh.

STONE EATER

CREATURE 15

UNIQUE **CN** **GARGANTUAN** **ABERRATION** **EARTH**

Perception +24; darkvision, tremorsense 60 feet

Languages Terran

Skills Athletics +33, Stealth +27

Str +9, **Dex** +2, **Con** +8, **Int** -1, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +4

AC 38; **Fort** +31, **Ref** +22, **Will** +26

HP 230, fast healing 30; **Immunities** acid;

Resistances bleed 10, cold 15, poison 10, precision 10

Elemental Body Anytime an effect would give the Stone Eater the paralyzed or stunned condition, or make it fall asleep, it attempts a DC 15 flat check. If it succeeds, it does not gain that condition.

Speed 25 feet, burrow 25 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +28 (reach 20 feet), **Damage** 6d8+16 piercing plus Grab

Melee ♦ claw +28 (agile, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 6d6+16 slashing

Barrage ♦♦ (earth, evocation, primal) The Stone Eater releases a fusillade of rocks in a 30-foot-burst centered on the corner of one of the Stone Eater's squares. Other creatures within the area of effect take 10d10 bludgeoning damage. The Stone Eater can't use Barrage again for 1d4 rounds.

Fast Swallow ↻ **Trigger** The Stone Eater Grabs a creature with its jaws. **Effect** The Stone Eater uses Swallow Whole.

Funnel Prey ♦♦ (earth, primal) **Requirements** The Stone Eater has burrowed underground; **Effect** The Stone Eater causes the ground above its area to form a muddy funnel to its mouth. The area becomes difficult terrain for other creatures (or greater difficult terrain if it was already difficult terrain), and they must attempt a DC 26 Reflex save. **Success** The creature does not slide toward the Stone Eater.

Failure The creature slides to the Stone Eater's mouth, and it makes a jaws Strike. If the Stone Eater makes multiple Strikes, each counts toward its multiple attack penalty.

Critical Failure The creature slides into the Stone Eater's mouth, and it makes a jaws Strike, ignoring any multiple attack penalties it may have. If it has no multiple attack penalty, it instead increases the result of its jaws Strike by one degree of success.

Ground Manipulation ♦ (earth, primal) The Stone Eater causes stone and earth under its body to grow soft and muddy, remaining so for 1 minute

after the Stone Eater moves off the location. A Stone Eater can move through these areas with ease, but other creatures treat them as difficult terrain (or greater difficult terrain if it was already difficult terrain).

Swallow Whole ♦ (attack) Medium, 1d10+8 bludgeoning plus 1d10 acid, Rupture 30; the Stone Eater can have up to four Medium creatures Swallowed Whole. If a creature Ruptures the Stone Eater, any other creature that has been Swallowed Whole can attempt to Escape through that hole instead of the Stone Eater's mouth until the wound is healed when any of the Stone Eater's Hit Points are restored (typically by the Stone Eater's Fast Healing at the start of its next turn).

Tactics: The Stone Eater sleeps for years at a time as its glacial metabolism slowly digests the occasional meal that comes along, and as a result it settles into its hollow and buries itself in earth and rubble so that only its mouth is exposed. When closed, this orifice just resembles a crease in the rough rock of the roadway. A PC who is using the Scouting or Searching exploration activities can notice the creature in this buried state with a DC 31 Perception check (its Stealth DC is modified by greater cover), though it still has the hidden condition as long as it remains underground. Its tremorsense awakens it if the PCs walk down the trail (though flying PCs will not disturb its slumber unless they are loud). When it detects approaching prey, it uses Funnel Prey to draw prey towards its suddenly opening maw and attacks with its claws. While it remains entrenched in its lair, it gains greater cover from attacks that are not launched from directly above. If reduced to less than 60 hit points, it attempts to burrow deeper into the ridge and cover itself in tens of feet of dirt and rock to escape its attackers.

Treasure: If the Stone Eater is slain and its Gargantuan body somehow moved, the treasures that it proved unable to digest and subsequently excreted beneath it can be uncovered. These include 26 gp, 35 sp, 180 cp, 32 pp, a pitted and scarred but functional *force shield*, a small tobacco tin holding two *effervescent ampoules*, a *gold nodule aeon stone*, and a *wand of telekinetic haul* made of corroded bronze.

J4. FORTUNE'S FOLLY

This steep and seemingly treacherous trail descends over broken terrain and crumbling cliffs and was originally abandoned as too precipitous at the time of the Caele

mining. However, today it provides the most secure and least dangerous path to the bottom of the crater. There are no random encounters when the PCs use this trail.

K. AZMERIUS' ADIT

Armed with Azmerius' writings as a guide, the PCs may search for the collapsed mine that is sure to be the Conroi Expedition's final resting place. The chances of locating the Conroi Trail (J1) and the adit itself (L) are given above. The collapsed entrance lies down the trail 105 feet below the crater rim and more than 400 feet from the bottom.

Loose rocks, earth, and debris along the trail here reveal the telltale marks of a rock fall. However, the crater wall above this collapse show no signs of the fall indicating that these rocks must have come from an internal collapse, giving evidence that a tunnel once pierced the crater wall at this location. The narrow ledge continues around this collapse and winds a convoluted path down the basin's edge.

K1. COLLAPSED ENTRANCE

The adit used by Azmerius's surviving band is a horizontal shaft burrowed into the rock of the crater rim at a slight upward angle to provide access, ventilation, and drainage for a vertical mineshaft deeper in. The tightly packed material that collapsed into this entrance completely fills the first 20 feet of the adit, making the area beyond it inaccessible to most creatures. Clearing a 5-foot-wide by 5-foot-high passage through this debris will require moving 8,000 pounds of rubble as well as providing shoring or logs or heavy beams as support at least every 5 feet. Without digging tools, a character can clear a 5-foot-by-5-foot square of rubble every 4 minutes with a successful DC 25 Athletics check (or every 2 minutes on a critical success), though only a single Medium or Small creature can work on a 5-foot-wide workface at a time with another required for each 5 feet of depth to move the rubble out of the tunnel at the same rate. Armed with appropriate tools, the work can go twice as fast. However, this sort of activity increases the likelihood of a random trail encounter to 25% every minute as predators are likely to be attracted by all the hubbub. Of course, at the PCs' level, spells and effects such as *dimension door*, *passwall*, or *shape stone* to either physically move the collapsed material out of their way or bypass the entrance altogether are likely to be options.

While digging through or otherwise penetrating this rubble-choked barrier, there is a 30% chance in each 5-foot-square cleared to come upon the crushed skeletal remains of one of the members of the Conroi Expedition who worked to collapse the tunnel as described in Azmerius's



journal entry. These skeletal remains are too crushed and decomposed to provide any useful information or anything of value, but the rusted remains of a prybar or the head of a sledgehammer might rest nearby giving mute testimony to the horrific nature of their final labors.

Beyond the collapse, the tunnels are of hewn stone with 7-foot ceilings unless otherwise noted. There are no light sources.

K2. CONROI'S LAST STAND (TRIVIAL 13)

Stale air fills the dust-choked tunnel beyond the collapse where rusty pickaxes, broken pieces of equipment and gear, and the dried and tattered remains of clothing rest on and among at least a dozen humanoid skeletons sprawled on the floor. Many have broken bones or fractured skulls and some still have their skeletal hands locked around another's neck as if they died in the course of some horrifically lethal brawl.

As described in Azmerius's writings (**Handout 4A**), in a desperate gambit to save their necks from impending doom Azmerius and his remaining associates deliberately collapsed the mine's entrance to secure their subterranean bunker

against intruders. Although they successfully sealed off the adit, several tons of rock and earth could not protect them against the meteorite's baleful influence. An examination of the skeletons with a successful DC 25 Medicine check to Recall Knowledge confirms the manner of death. The eleven individuals not killed in the tunnel collapse died from injuries consistent with those incurred during a wild melee as the metallurgic amber suffusing the site took its toll on their already thinning sanity. Two of the corpses lying at the point marked "X" on the map show signs of multiple fractures as if some powerful force from the eastern tunnel blasted them, as identified with a successful Medicine check to Recall Knowledge. A DC 23 Arcana, Nature, Occultism, or Religion check to Recall Knowledge can identify these as being consistent with the effects of a sonic blast, such as from a glyph of warding, which Azmerius cast in his final moments to ward off his insane companions.

Not all of these dead rest easily after dying in pain, insanity, and darkness. A few of them have arisen as **3 elite specters** and still haunt this chamber. However, they have long been somnolent and do not awake to rise and attack unless a PC generates positive energy in this chambers, such as by casting heal. Doing so enrages the spirits and

causes them to arise and attack immediately. They pursue relentlessly, though they will not follow fleeing PCs out of the mine into daylight. If no positive energy is used here, the specters remain quiet within the floor beneath their remains with their unnatural auras suppressed and can only be detected with magic such as detect alignment. In this case, they all arise and attack if Azmerius Thade manifests in area K3.

ELITE SPECTERS (3)

CREATURE 8

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +17; darkvision

Treasure: Other than Azmerius most of the high-level leaders of the expedition were killed by the undead of the crater before ever making it to this mine shaft, so all of the weapons and gear present of no special value and have rusted or deteriorated to the point of uselessness over the years here. However, each of these skeletons bears a pouch containing 5d10 sp. One of them wears a *ring of counterspells* and another carries an *immovable rod*.

K3. AZERMIUS'S UNREST MODERATE 13 OR SEVERE 13

The mine tunnel widens into a chamber of sorts. Columns of hewn stone have been left in place to serve as supports for the ceiling in this larger area. Dust lies thick throughout, and the chamber seems to hold a sense of long silence and undisturbed peace. Barely visible beneath the omnipresent layer of dust, a withered, desiccated corpse sits propped against the far wall. Its posture is stooped and head bent, focused on something in its lap.

This corpse has mummified in the dry air rather than succumbing to decomposition like the bodies in the prior chamber. A closer examination reveals it to be a Foerdewaith human male of middle age with a short-cropped graying beard and a balding pate with his remaining hair held back in a short ponytail. Though weathered and smeared with travel stains and blood, his golden robes bear the still-recognizable sunburst and leaves symbol of a priest of Mitra^{LL5}, identifiable with a DC 15 Religion check to Recall Knowledge. On a critical success, the indications of him being a servant of the Cathedral of Ste. Angeline in Nains are evident. This can be none other than Azmerius Thade, the chaplain of the Conroi Expedition and author of the travel reports that have guided the PCs on their way to the Pit of the Burning Star.

Inspecting the corpse reveals it still clutches a long dry quill and a small strip of crumbling parchment, the ink appearing as fresh as the day it was written from its time in the dry, lightless cave. Next to the corpse on the floor rests an inkwell (long dry) and a small cage holding the mummified remains of a single carrier pigeon. The cause of death for the corpse is difficult to discern, but a DC 25 Medicine check to Recall Knowledge can detect that its dry leathery flesh is covered in the telltale burns seen upon so many of the undead here. Examining the piece of parchment it holds reveals that it tells of the final days of the Conroi Expedition upon reaching the crater and ends with the harrowing retreat to this mine. It concludes with the eerily familiar scrawled line of, "A prince keeps his prize—" and, in fact, proves to be identical to the wording of the very sheaves of copied correspondence from Azmerius recovered from Nains and carried by the PCs since Dun Eamon. They are in fact the final three entries from **Handout 4D** from the adventure *Legend of the Burning Star*. The fact that they match these entries perfectly and that Azmerius's final carrier pigeon with which he intended to send this last missive appears to have never been removed from its cage raises the very serious question of how his final words ever made it out of this sealed cave and into the archives at Nains to begin with.

The PCs do not have long to ponder this strange conundrum, however, because like his fellows in K2, Azmerius's own soul has not remained untainted and rested easy. One minute after the PCs enter this chamber or as soon as the corpse is disturbed, the corpse lurches to its feet, its eyes burning with a hellish light and flickering shadows encompassing it. Azmerius Thade now exists as a powerful undead and seeks to destroy the living creatures that have dared to defile his tomb.

AZMERIUS THADE

CREATURE 15

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM UNDEAD

Perception +27; darkvision, lifesense 60 feet

Languages Common, Necril

Skills Acrobatics +30, Athletics +27, Religion +27, Stealth +30

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +8, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +8

Lifesense (divination, divine) Azmerius Thade

senses the vital essence of living and undead creatures within the listed range.

Items belt pouch (35 sp and 8 gp), *horn of blasting*, *phylactery of faithfulness* (not invested), silver religious symbol of Mitra^{LL5-241}

AC 37; **Fort** +27, **Ref** +26, **Will** +25

HP 300, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralysis, poison, unconscious; **Resistances** fire 10, positive 10; **Weaknesses** good 10

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 30 feet, DC 33

Obscuring Shadows (aura, darkness, shadow) 5 feet. Flickering shadows and wisps of black smoke surround Azmerius, reducing bright light in a 5-foot emanation to dim light. This is a form of magical darkness and can therefore overcome non-magical light or attempt to counteract magical light as described in the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*. If Azmerius doesn't move on his turn, he can use a free action to increase the shadows, creating an area of heightened darkness in the aura.

Negative Supercharge ➤ **Trigger** Positive damage reduces Azmerius to 0 Hit Points; **Effect** Azmerius attempts a Will save vs. the effect's DC (or the class DC of the attacker, if the effect doesn't normally allow a save) to reduce the positive damage by half. If the effect already allowed a save, Azmerius rerolls his save and takes the better result.

Speed 50 feet

Melee ♦ claw +30 (agile, curse, evil, finesse),

Damage 1d8+11 slashing plus 1d8 negative plus 1d8 evil plus curse of the grave

Ghost Form ♦ Azmerius becomes incorporeal until the end of his next turn. While incorporeal, he gains resistances to all damage 10 (except force, *ghost touch*, good, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical), gains a fly speed of 50 feet, and his claw deals 1d8 negative plus 1d8 evil plus curse of the grave (but no slashing damage). His items also become incorporeal, as if they had the *ghost touch* property rune.

Searing Darkness ♦ (attack) Azmerius can fire a dark ray of negative energy that can harm living creatures or heal undead. He attempts a ranged ray Strike with an attack modifier of +30 or may automatically choose to hit himself. If he hits, he deals 8d8 negative. He cannot use Searing

Darkness again for 1d6 rounds.

Symbol of Discord ♦♦ (concentrate, emotion, enchantment, linguistic, mental, visual)

Frequency once per day; **Effect** Azmerius scribes a symbol in the air. The symbol lasts two hours. All creatures within 60 feet that see it must succeed on a DC 36 Will save or immediately fall into loud bickering and arguing for 5d4 rounds. Meaningful communication is impossible, and no one who is bickering can treat another person as an ally. If a creature critically fails its Will save, after 1d4 rounds, it also may begin fighting a random bickering creature with a different alignment. It must attempt a DC 11 flat check each round for 2d4 rounds; if it fails, it must use all its actions to Strike or cast offensive cantrips, or use other actions to facilitate attack, such as draw a weapon, move so that a target is in reach, and so forth.

Create Spawn Any humanoid that dies while suffering Azmerius' Curse of the Grave rises in 1d4 rounds as a dread wraith. If Azmerius still exists, the creature is not under his control, but views him as an ally.

Curse of the Grave (divine, curse, necromancy)

A creature damaged by Azmerius' claw must attempt a DC 36 Will save or be cursed. The cursed creature can't regain HP except via magic, and anyone casting a spell to heal the creature or remove a condition it has must succeed at a DC 36 counteract check or the healing has no effect. Azmerius' counteract level is 15.

Tactics: When Azmerius rises, his unholy presence attracts the specters in **K2** who arrive in the next round if they haven't already been dispatched by the PCs. If the hungry fogs in **K4** haven't been dealt with, they likewise respond to the battle and arrive in 2 rounds. Azmerius uses Ghost Form, then attacks with his Symbol of Discord ability. He then uses his claws and *horn of blasting* against combatants and Searing Darkness against spellcasters or clerics attempting to use *heal* to damage him. He fights until destroyed to prevent the PCs from recovering his final correspondence (unaware that they already possess a copy) and will pursue relentlessly until it is recovered. The specters attack as long as Azmerius hasn't been destroyed, though they cannot follow into sunlight. The hungry fogs will likewise not leave the mine tunnels but continue to fight as long as living prey remains within.

Development: As he fights, the angry Azmerius speaks, though his broken mind cannot converse in a conventional sense. He constantly reiterates his desire to acquire the crater's treasures in addition to obsessing about sending his dispatches safely back to his glorious king¹¹⁷⁻²³², giving credence to the fact that the Conroi Expedition was secretly backed by the Crown of Castorhage and loyal to it rather than the Grand Duke of Reme as was publicly stated. A DC 25 Society check to Recall Knowledge reveals that at the time of the Conroi Expedition King Worn IV sat upon the throne of Castorhage, though he was debilitated with illness and Queen-Regent Lotheria Tredici ruled in his stead. Any questions posed to Azmerius go unanswered, as he is incapable of anything but his mad perseverance.

K4. HUNGRY END TRIVIAL 13 OR NO ENCOUNTER

The passage here ends at an old collapse, much older than the one that sealed the mine entrance. The floor begins to incline steeply upward here and some source of water must exist somewhere farther up because a thin mist seems to cling to this ancient rock fall, though it extends no farther than a few feet before dissipating in the dry air of the tunnel.

This tunnel provided drainage for the main mine shaft deeper in the crater rim but collapsed not long after the fall of the Caleen Colonies. Though the tunnel is sealed by hundreds of feet of earth and is impassible to the PCs, it has allowed a small quantity of the moisture in the farther tunnels to seep through. Along with this natural mist have ventured 2 **hungry fogs** that have come here seeking living creatures to feed upon. Their misty forms cling to the rock fall awaiting prey unless they have already responded to the sounds of battle in area K3. In that case, only harmless mist remains in this area.

HUNGRY FOGS (2)

CREATURE 10

N HUGE MINDLESS OOZE

Perception +14; motion sense 60 feet, no vision

Skills Athletics +19, Acrobatics +19

Str -5, **Dex** +4, **Con** +7, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -5

Misty Form A hungry fog's body is composed of a green mist. This enables it to move through spaces as narrow as 1 inch in diameter with no reduction to its Speed. However, a hungry fog can't wear or interact with objects. It also can't enter water or other fluids, and it's treated as Tiny for the purpose of how wind affects it.

Motion Sense A hungry fog can sense nearby

creatures through vibration and air movement.

AC 29; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +14, **Will** +16

HP 225, negative healing; **Immunities** acid, critical hits, mental, precision, sonic, unconscious, visual;

Resistances all physical 10; **Weaknesses** cold 10

Bewitching Brume (aura, emotion, fear, mental, visual) 10 feet. The half-glimpsed shapes of twisted phantoms dancing in the hungry fog strike fear in creatures that see them. A creature entering the aura or starting its turn in the aura must succeed at a DC 29 Will save or become frightened 1 for 1 round (frightened 2 on a critical failure).

Speed fly 15 feet

Melee ♦ misty tendrils +21 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 4d10 negative

Overflow ♦♦♦ As Trample. Huge or smaller, misty tendrils, DC 29. On a critical failure, creatures are also slowed 1 for 1 round as wisps of the hungry fog cling to them.

Enveloping Mists Any creature that begins its turn in the hungry fog's space is slowed 1. Any creature that ends its turn in the hungry fog's space takes 4d10 negative damage. The hungry fog is flat-footed to any creature in its space.



L. THE PRIZE PIT

An expansive pit has been dug into the rim of the crater here, an impressive terraced excavation replete with perilous trails, precarious ledges, treacherous talus slopes, and strangely colored pools. A great ramp of gravel and rubble extends upward to this pit from the crater floor. Ropes bolted into the stone walls above several precarious outcroppings as well as the ledge adjacent to the ramp presumably allow climbers up and down from the heights and seem to provide access to a makeshift camp of some sort.

When the Caldeen colonists discovered the crater, a large deposit of copper and lead was found in this section of the rim, and a large strip-mining operation was begun. It was the largest and most successful of the colonists' endeavors at the Pit before the destruction of the colonies. The colonists built the great ramp at J2 with the tailings of the strip mine, and the structure has weathered the centuries since in excellent condition.

The drops between levels of the pit are generally sheer cliffs (DC 30 Athletics checks to Climb), and are indicated by their height above the pit floor (area L1), so the drop off of any ledge can be determined by subtracting the indicated height of the ledge below from the height of the ledge where the fall occurred. Trails between different levels of the pit are narrow and treacherous, having eroded greatly over the centuries. Each varies from 2–4 feet in width (roll 1d6 divided by 2 +1), requiring DC 20 Acrobatics checks to Balance on them. In several places, ropes have recently been secured to the pit walls by pitons and can be Climbed with a DC 15 Athletics check.

In the last few days some new inhabitants have taken up temporary residence in the shelter of the strip mine and effectively driven off any of the local denizens that lurked in the crater rim here. A group of contracted explorers and professional agents out of the City-State of Castorhage calling themselves The Prize Men have set up camp in this semi-sheltered location. Powerful spellcasters and their assorted underlings, the Prize Men were hired by the Crown to keep tabs on the progress being made in searching for the Pit of the Burning Star, a task for which the Crown of Castorhage secretly hired the Conroi Expedition nearly eight decades ago. Though the Prize Men have pieces of Azmerius's writings as well, they have mainly kept tabs on the multiple expeditions by means of *scrying*, and then instantly travel with their entourage in 100-mile increments by means of *shrink*

spells, and their leader's *wand of teleportation*. They recently arrived after tracking the progress of Earl Rannulf's band and to a certain extent the Ironskull dwarves, with some peeping in on the Spurious Tidings. They have avoided *scrying* the PCs directly, because early on they decided that they were likely the most formidable of their rivals as well as the ones most likely to notice being *scried*. Now that they have arrived, they witnessed any initial foray by the PCs and have possibly already been encountered to some extent from their activities in **Event 4**.

The Prize Men consist of a trio of spellcasters: **Poirot Kenkery**, a magus and their informal leader, **Jevireau Lancolmb**, an elven dilettante sorcerer and artist, and **Linas Huth-Borxia**, a witch and offspring from one of the most powerful families in Castorhage. Each of these arcane casters keeps at least one extraplanar **thrall** (see page 120 of *LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City* by Frog God Games for more information on thralls), though Poirot actually keeps **2 thralls**, and Linas has his **witch's familiar** as well. The thralls are allies (rather than minions) and are fiercely loyal to their masters, even fighting to the death if so ordered, even though they know a death on the Material Plane is permanent for them. In addition to these extraplanar subordinates, The Prize Men travel with **8 hired guards** from the Gentlemen's Explorers Club of Castorhage* and **3 Shattered Folk scouts** from the Elitan-i-Pan Confederation^{LLo}. Remove any of The Prize Men or their underlings who have already been slain or captured by the PCs.

GENTLEMEN'S EXPLORERS CLUB HIRED GUARDS (4) CREATURE 6

Warden (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*)
Initiative Stealth +12

ELITAN-I-PAN SCOUT CREATURE 5

Elite guide (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*,
Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide)
Initiative Perception +16

POIROT KENKERY CREATURE 13

UNIQUE **LE** **MEDIUM** **HUMAN** **HUMANOID**

Male human magus

Perception +22

Languages Common, Dwarven, Kirkut, Orc

* See pages 225 and 260 of *LL7: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City* by Frog God Games for information on the Gentlemen Explorers Club.

Skills Acrobatics +24, Arcana +27, Athletics +27, Diplomacy +22, Intimidation +24, Stealth +22

Str +4, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** +5, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +3

Items belt pouch with a snuffbox holding 9 pinches of snuff, breastplate, crossbow (10 bolts), moderate darkvision elixir x2, *moderate healing potion* x2, silver hunter's flask^{LL7} (10 sp), scimitar, spellbook, *wand of teleport*

AC 34; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +24, **Will** +23

HP 260

Attack of Opportunity ➤

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ scimitar +27 (forceful, sweep), **Damage** 1d6+10 slashing

Ranged ♦ crossbow +27 (120-foot range increment, reload 1), **Damage** 1d8+10 piercing

Arcane Prepared Spells DC 31, attack +27; **6th** *shrink*; **3rd** *fireball*, *fly*, *illusory creature*, *vampiric touch*; **2nd** *acid arrow*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *spider climb*; **1st** *feather fall*, *fleet step*, *grease*, *magic missile*; **Cantrips (3rd)** *detect magic*, *electric arc*, *light*, *shield*

Spell Combat ♦♦ (flourish) Poirot Strikes and Casts a Spell that requires no more than two actions to cast. He may take these actions in any order. Casting the Spell counts as an attack for his multiple attack penalty; if the spell does not require an attack roll, Poirot takes a –2 circumstance penalty to the DC.

Magus Arcana ♦ (concentration) Poirot focuses his arcane power. He gains one of the following benefits until the end of his next turn: a +2 item bonus to his attack and damage rolls with his scimitar, which gains the magical trait; his scimitar Strikes deal an additional 1d6 persistent bleed damage; he becomes quickened, but can use the extra action only to Strike. He cannot use Magus Arcana again for 1d4 rounds.

Knowledge Pool When he makes his daily preparations, Poirot can choose a single arcane spell that's 3rd level or lower to prepare in place of one of his normal Arcane Prepared Spells of the same level.

Spell Strike If Poirot targets the same creature with a Strike and a spell that deals damage when he uses Spell Combat, the damage is combined for purposes of resistances. If the target has more than one type of resistance that would apply, it applies only the lowest applicable resistance value.

Steady Spellcasting If another creature's reaction would disrupt Poirot's spellcasting action, he attempts a DC 12 flat check. If he succeeds, his action isn't disrupted.

ETHOS

CREATURE 1

Elite **lemure** (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*)

Initiative Perception +2; greater darkvision



PATHOS**CREATURE 2**

Elite **cacodaemon** (*Pathfinder Bestiary* (Second Edition))

Initiative Perception +8; darkvision

JEVIREAU LANCOLMB**CREATURE 13**

UNIQUE **CN** **MEDIUM** **ELF** **HUMANOID**

Male elf sorcerer

Perception +20; low-light vision

Languages Celestial, Common, Elven


Skills Acrobatics +27, Arcana +27, Deception +24, Diplomacy +24, Performance +27, Society +24, Stealth +22

Str +0, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** +4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +6


Items belt pouch with 8 pp, insectum case with a Blake's sanguisuga, 2 festerfew, 3 howling nighshade grubs, and 5 misery slugs (see **Appendix C**, page 137), *greater hat of disguise*, rapier, *scroll of wall of force*, *serum of sex shift* x2, shortbow (20 arrows)


AC 32; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +23, **Will** +26

HP 180

Counterspell  (arcane) **Requirements** Jevireau has an unexpended spell slot he could use to cast the triggering spell; **Trigger** A creature casts a spell Jevireau has in his repertoire; **Effect** Jevireau expends one of his spell slots to counter the triggering creature's casting of a spell that he has in his repertoire. He loses his spell slot as if he had cast the triggering spell. He then attempts to counteract the triggering spell


Speed 30 feet

Melee  rapier +22 (deadly D8, disarm, finesse), **Damage** 1d6+6 piercing

Ranged  shortbow +22 (deadly d10, range increment 60 feet, reload 0), **Damage** 1d6+6 piercing

Arcane Spontaneous Spells DC 35, attack +27; **7th** (3 slots) *duplicate foe*, *prismatic spray*, *warp mind*; **6th** (4 slots) *disintegrate*, *dominate*, *mislead*, *vibrant pattern*; **5th** (4 slots) *crushing despair*, *prying eye*, *shadow siphon*, *summon dragon*; **4th** (4 slots) *dimension door*, *fly*, *sleep*, *suggestion*; **3rd** (4 slots) *enthrall*, *haste*, *lightning bolt*, *mind reading*; **2nd** (4 slots) *dispel magic*, *glitterdust*, *hideous laughter*, *touch of idiocy*; **1st** (4

slots, 1 already used on *mage armor*) *charm*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ventriloquism*; **Cantrips** (7th) *daze*, *detect magic*, *message*, *ray of frost*, *shield*
Sorcerer Bloodline Spells 3 Focus Points, DC 35; **5th** *arcane countermeasure*; **3rd** *extend spell*; **1st** *ancestral memories*

Quickened Casting  **Frequency** once per day; **Effect**

If Jevireau's next action is to cast a cantrip or a spell that is at least 2 levels lower than the highest level spell he can cast, he reduces the number of actions to cast it by 1 (minimum 1 action).

Steady Spellcasting If another creature's reaction would disrupt Jevireau's spellcasting action, he attempts a DC 15 flat check. If he succeeds, his action isn't disrupted.

MR. PEEPERS**CREATURE 3**

UNIQUE **N** **MEDIUM** **ETHEREAL** **HUMANOID**

Perception +10; darkvision, ethersight

Languages Auran, Common

Skills Acrobatics +10, Stealth +10, Survival +8

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


Items longbow (20 arrows), trident


Ethersight Mr. Peepers can see creatures on the Ethereal Plane normally.


AC 19; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +11, **Will** +10

HP 48

Speed 25 feet, fly 50 feet

Melee  trident +10, **Damage** 1d8+1 piercing

Ranged  trident +10 (thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 1d8+1 piercing

Ranged  longbow +10 (deadly d10, range increment 100 feet, reload 0, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 1d8+1 piercing

Occult Innate Spells DC 20, attack +12; **2nd** *spiritual weapon*; **1st** *floating disk*; **Cantrips** (1st) *shield*

Disk Rider Mr. Peepers can only use his fly speed in tandem with *floating disk*. He can use the spell normally, or step on it and use it to fly for the duration of the spell. The disk can support Mr. Peepers and his equipment (even if this exceeds its normal load), but nothing else. Only Mr. Peepers can ride it in this way. Mr. Peepers can Dismiss his *floating disk*.

Ethereal Interaction Mr. Peepers exists on both the Ethereal Plane and Material Plane. He ignores benefits creatures have from being on the Ethereal Plane, such as the resistance from *blink*.

LINAS HUTH-BORXIA

CREATURE 12

UNIQUE LE MEDIUM AMPHIBIOUS HUMANOID

Perception +21; darkvision

Languages Abyssal, Alghollthu, Common

Skills Acrobatics +22, Deception +25, Occultism +25, Stealth +22

Str +1, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** +4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +2

Items clear quartz crystal ball, 2 daggers, 4 doses hunting spider venom, spectacles

Light Blindness

AC 21; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +21, **Will** +25

HP 190; **Resistances** cold 5

Speed 25 feet, fly 25 feet, swim 20 feet

Melee ♦ dagger +20 (agile, finesse, versatile S),

Damage 1d4+1 piercing plus hunting spider venom

Ranged ♦ dagger +20 (agile, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+1 piercing

Occult Prepared Spells DC 35, attack +26; **6th** chain lightning, phantasmal calamity, spirit blast; **5th** black tentacles, cloudkill, summon entity; **4th** burning hands, dimension door, phantasmal killer; **3rd** haste, paralyze, vampiric touch; **2nd** death knell, dispel magic, ghoulish cravings; **1st** ray of enfeeblement, soothe x2; **Cantrips (6th)** chill touch, daze, detect magic, shield

Agony ♦♦

(concentrate, mental) Linas causes a creature within 30 feet to feel intense pain until the end of Linas' next turn based on the results of its Fortitude save. This condition value can't be reduced while Linas can see the target. Regardless of the outcome, the target is then temporarily

immune for 24 hours.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target is sickened 1.

Failure The target is sickened 2 and takes 1d6 persistent mental damage until Agony ends.

Critical Failure The target is sickened 2 and takes 2d6 persistent mental damage until Agony ends.

Cackle ♦ (auditory, sonic) **Requirements** Linas is not fatigued, and one or more creatures are affected by his Agony, Evil Eye, or Spur Misfortune abilities. **Effect** The duration of either Agony, Evil Eye, or Spur Misfortune continues for all affected creatures until the end of Linas' next turn. Cackling for more than 10 minutes ends any effects and makes Linas fatigued. If his Cackle is disrupted, the effects immediately end.

Evil Eye ♦♦ (concentrate, curse, emotion, enchantment, mental) Linas fixes his eye on a target within 30 feet. The target becomes frightened until the end of Linas' next turn based on the results of its Will save. This condition value can't be reduced while Linas can see the target. Regardless of the outcome, the target is then temporarily immune for 24 hours.

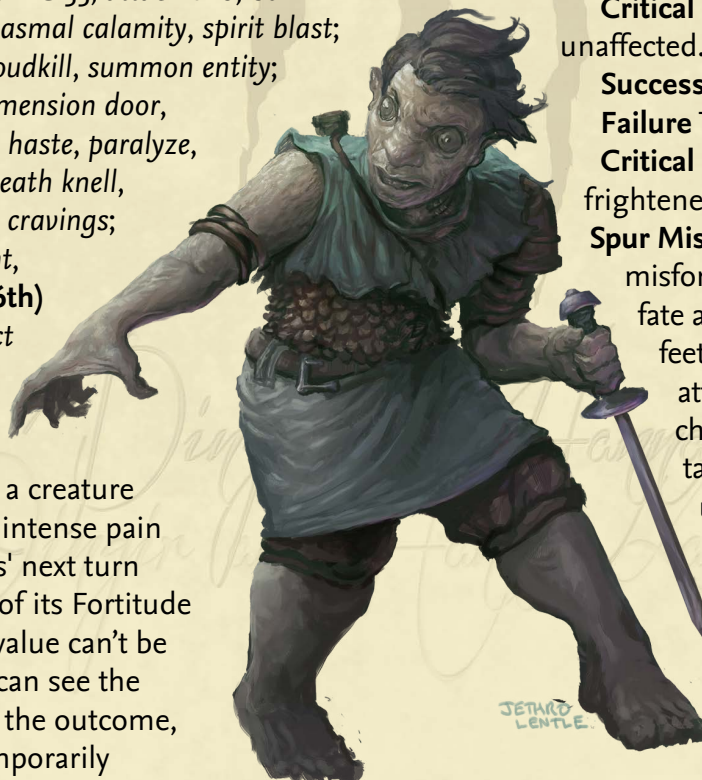
Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target is frightened 1.

Failure The target is frightened 2.

Critical Failure The target is frightened 3.

Spur Misfortune ♦♦ (concentrate, misfortune) Linas changes how fate affects one creature within 30 feet. He chooses one type of roll: attack roll, saving throw, skill check, or Perception. On the target's next roll of that type until the end of Linas' next turn, they must roll twice and use the worse result unless it succeeds at a DC 35 Will save. The target is temporarily immune for 24 hours.



Waxen Image ◆◆◆ (enchantment, incapacitation, mental) Linas creates a crude and unnerving wax duplicate of a creature he can see within 30 feet that lasts for four rounds. On his turn, he can spend one action with the concentrate trait to channel his will through the image to gain some measure of control over the creature. The target makes a Will save. On a critical success, it gains temporary immunity for 24 hours. On a success, the command has no effect. On a failure, the creature takes one action ordered by Linas, such as Stride or Strike. On a critical failure, the creature takes two actions ordered by Linas. These actions happen immediately on Linas' turn and do not affect the creature's actions on its turn. The creature takes no action if Linas issues an obviously self-destructive order. After four rounds, the target is temporarily immune for 24 hours.

Witch's Familiar Linas has a king crab familiar named Avernos, which he must commune with during his daily preparations.

AVERNOS

UNIQUE **N** **TINY** **ANIMAL** **MINION**

Perception +16; low-light vision

Skills Acrobatics +16, Stealth +16

Witch Empathy Avernos can share emotions with Linas as long as he's within 1 mile.

AC 21; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +21, **Will** +25

HP 60

Scuttle ➤ **Trigger** A creature that Avernos can see targets him with an attack; **Effect** Avernos scuttles to the side and gains a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack. After the attack resolves, Avernos can Stride up to his speed in a straight line as part of the reaction.

Speed 25 feet, swim 25 feet

Melee ◆ claw +12, **Damage** 1d4 slashing plus Grab

Constrict ◆ 1d4 bludgeoning, DC 16

Manual Dexterity Avernos can use its claws as if they were hands to use manipulate actions.

GARGIZAR

CREATURE 3

Yeth hound (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)*)

Initiative Perception +9; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Tactics: When encountered in their camp, the Prize Men and their minions take maximum advantage of their surroundings. The scouts take up high positions among the cover of the boulders and rubble of the strip mine to fire on intruders with their composite shortbows, while the hired guards take up position at trails, ropes, and other choke points where they can fend attackers off with their longbows and bastard swords for as long as possible before closing for direct melee. The spellcasters prefer to keep to the high ground and remain mobile with their various means of flight for as long as possible. Poirot Kenkery doesn't shy away from melee combat — though he always seeks to minimize the number of opponents who can attack him at any one time — but the other two try to remain at range for as long as possible. Ethos remains near Poirot, but the magus sends Pathos to bite through ropes or otherwise hinder the PCs as they traverse treacherous ledges and trails. Mr. Peepers for his part remains airborne near Jevireau seeking to provide cover from ranged attacks and take out threatening spellcasters with his *spiritual weapon* (which he manifests as a scimitar). Gargizar remains by Linas's side and only uses his Bay ability when the witch is directly threatened. The other members of the expedition are not immune to this effect, so Linas does not allow him to use it earlier.

Development: A member of The Prize Men who is captured or is in fear of death does not long remain loyal to his fellows. These "gentlemen explorers" are only as reliable as the coin they receive, and as soon as the price seems too high (usually when reduced to 20% of their maximum Hit Points), they'll seek to escape through whatever means are available. Their first choice will always be to rejoin their companions and regroup, second choice is to seek to flee somewhere as far away as possible even if it means leaving friends and underlings behind, and third choice will be surrender. If successfully captured alive and Coerced, any of these men will gladly spill everything he knows about his fellows in exchange for his life and freedom. For their part, the scouts and guards are much more loyal and will continue to fight as long as one of The Prize Men remains in the fight. A captured scout or guard can likewise be Coerced into talking, but they don't know much other than their bosses have magic which they've used to move quickly across the steppes and that their bosses are particularly lazy and loathsome.

L1. MINE FLOOR TRIVIAL 13 OR NO ENCOUNTER

The lowest level of the strip mine is accessed here by the great ramp from the crater floor (J2). The drop from this level of the strip mine to the crater floor is 370 feet. Add this to the height of the ledge if someone falls from a higher ledge into the depths of the crater. If not already encountered in Event 4, there will usually be 3 hired guards and 1 scout on guard duty here to make sure that nothing approaches from the depths of the crater. They have a small campfire and have set a small cask of lamp oil on either side of the ramp. If intruders approach from the ramp, two of the guards broach the tops of the casks with their bastard swords while the scout provides covering fire. They then roll the open barrels down the ramp covering a 30-foot-long swath of it with the oil. As soon as intruders reach that area, one guard will throw a burning brand from the fire onto the oil and ignite. The oil burns for 5 rounds and deals 2d6 fire damage per round for anyone in it and requires a DC 20 Reflex save for each round of exposure to avoid catching fire and taking 1d6 persistent fire damage.

GENTLEMEN'S EXPLORERS CLUB HIRED GUARDS (3) CREATURE 6

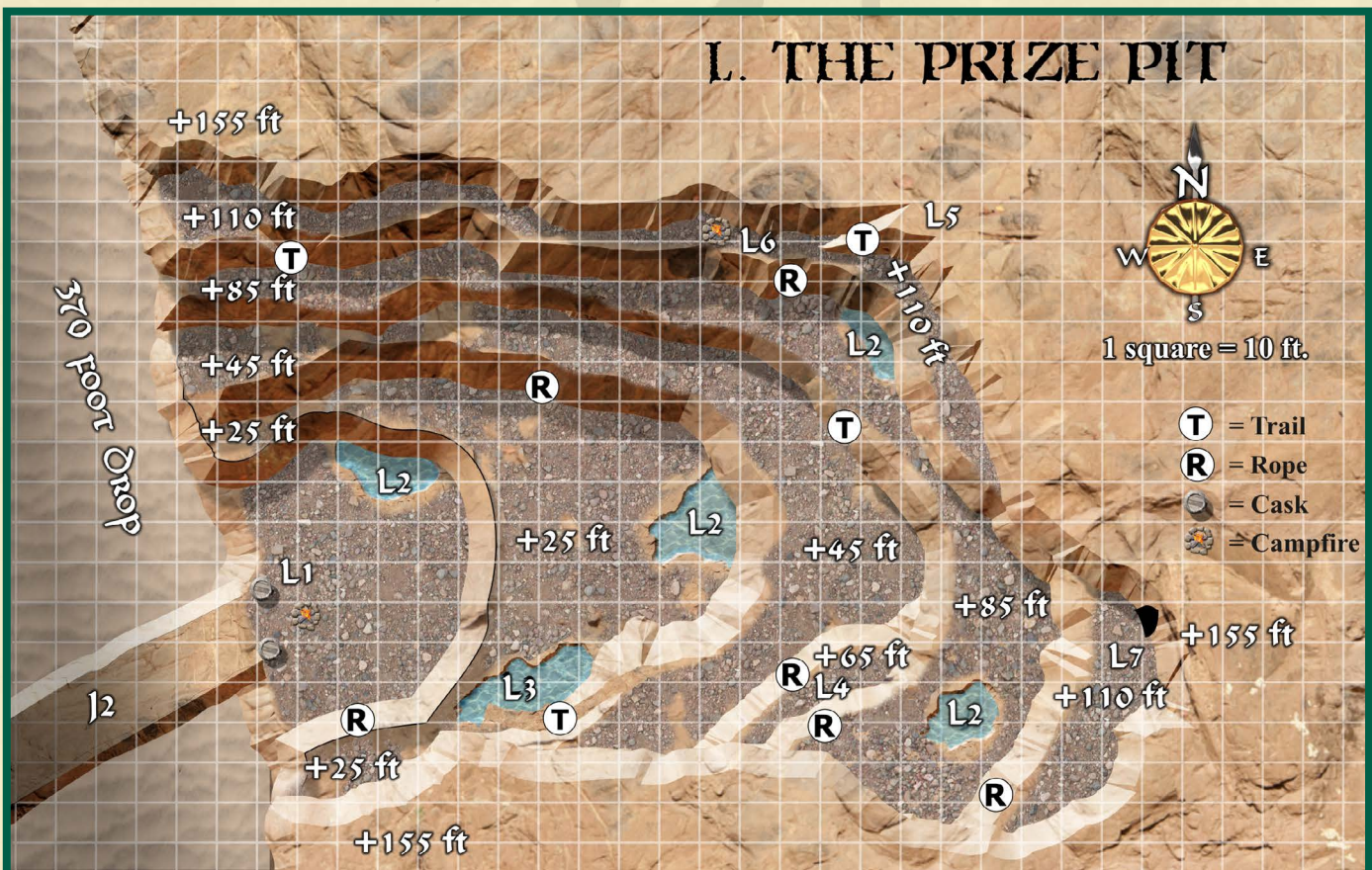
Warden (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*)
Initiative Perception +12

ELITAN-I-PAN SCOUT CREATURE 5

Elite **guide** (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*,
Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide)
Initiative Perception +16

L2. TOXIC POOLS

Each of these locations marks a pool of rainwater collected in a hollow in the strip mine's work faces. The pools vary in depth from 5–20 feet (1d4 x 5) and are strangely tinted in reds, blues, and greens with an oily sheen. These pools are highly polluted with heavy metals and other wastes from the mine. Anyone exposed to the waters risks being poisoned, and anyone actually drinking them especially so.



TAINTED WATERS**ITEM 13**

ALCHEMICAL CONTACT INGESTED POISON VIRULENT

Anyone who drinks the waters takes a –4 item penalty to their Fortitude save vs. the poison.

Saving Throw Fortitude DC 33; **Onset** 1 minute; **Maximum Duration** 10 minutes; **Stage 1** 8d6 poison damage and clumsy 1 and stupefied 1 (1 minute); **Stage 2** 12d6 poison damage and clumsy 2 and stupefied 2 (1 minute); **Stage 3** 16d6 poison damage and clumsy 3 and stupefied 3 (1 minute);

L3. INHABITED POOL MODERATE 13

This pool is tainted like the toxic pools (L2) but is shallow in its western half (only 3 feet deep) and provides easy means to wade to the trail leading up to the next ledge of the strip mine. Wading through the waters is considered contact, unless the individual is wearing watertight boots or waders. In addition, as the Castorhagi expedition discovered, this pool is also occupied. The deeper (25 feet deep) eastern half of the pool is home to 4 **giant hellgrammites**, and unlike the other crater wall denizens that The Prize Men were able to drive away with a show of force, these massive water insects have refused to leave. After losing one Shattered Folk scout to the creatures, the Castorhagi now avoid the pool and use a rope they have affixed on the opposite side of this level to reach the ledges above. For their part the centipede-like horrors do not bother anyone that does not actually enter the water or fly immediately above its surface. They are, of course, immune to the toxins of the water.

GIANT HELLGRAMMITES (4)**CREATURE 11**

N LARGE AMPHIBIOUS ANIMAL**Perception** +20; darkvision**Skills** Athletics +23, Stealth +21 (+26 in water)**Str** +7, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** –5, **Wis** +2, **Cha** –4**AC** 28; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +24, **Will** +18**HP** 245; **Immunities** poison**Attack of Opportunity** ⤵

Death Grip ⤵ **Requirements** A creature is grabbed by the giant hellgrammite; **Trigger** The giant hellgrammite is reduced to 0 HP; **Effect** The giant hellgrammite Constricts the creature each round at the start of its turn until the creature Escapes or the giant hellgrammite's corpse takes 20 slashing damage.

Speed 25 feet, swim 25 feet

Melee ♦ mandibles +24 (reach 10 feet), **Damage**

2d12+13 piercing plus Grab

Constrict ♦ 1d12+13, DC 30

Treasure: Lying at the bottom of the deep portion of the pool amid the stripped bones of the scout and a few ash giants can be found a *bracelet of dashing*, a chain shirt with an attached *vanishing coin* talisman, a scimitar with an attached *iron cudgel* talisman, a total of 27 gp, assorted gems worth 54 gp, and pieces of broken or ruined equipment and potions.

L4. WATCH LEDGE**TRIVIAL 13 OR NO ENCOUNTER**

A lone scout is normally perched atop this ledge, keeping watch over the top of the ramp and the crater below. If the strip mine comes under attack, he shouts an alarm and provides ranged support with his bow. If any of the scouts have previously been eliminated in **Event 4**, the one on this ledge is removed first.

ELITAN-I-PAN SCOUT**CREATURE 5**

Elite **guide** (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*, *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*)

Initiative Perception +16**L5. UPPER ENTRANCE****(TRIVIAL 13 OR NO ENCOUNTER)**

A trail leads down from the crater rim into the strip mine here. The Prize Men have posted a guard here of 2 hired guards and a scout to prevent any interlopers from coming up on their camp from this direction. The guards here have a good view over the entire strip mine and surrounding rim from this position. If more than one scout has already been eliminated in **Event 4**, then there is no scout here. If more than 3 guards have been defeated already in that event, then extra missing guards are removed from here.

GENTLEMEN'S EXPLORERS CLUB HIRED GUARDS (2)**CREATURE 6**

Warden (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*)

Initiative Perception +12

ELITAN-I-PAN SCOUT**CREATURE 5**

Elite **guide** (*Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*, *Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*)

Initiative Perception +16

L6. HIRELINGS CAMP (TRIVIAL 13 OR NO ENCOUNTER)

The main camp for The Prize Men's hirelings has been made here at the base of the upper trail and at the top of a rope they have affixed that reaches down to the next ledge 25 feet below. There are bedrolls for eleven here, situated around a small campfire, and crude shelters have been erected over them with tarps and rope to keep the worst of the sun and the wind off of them. Normally there are **3 hired guards** resting here who switch out in shifts with those at areas **L1** and **L5**, but if any guards have already been defeated by the PCs in **Event 4**, then subtract their numbers from here first.

GENTLEMEN'S EXPLORERS CLUB HIRED GUARDS (3) CREATURE 6

Warden (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide*)
Initiative Perception +12

Treasure: In addition to the mundane gear, water barrels, and packs of supplies to be found here, one of the guards has stashed 12 chunks of nickel he has found (10 sp each) underneath his bedroll.

L7. THE PRIZE MEN'S CAMP SEVERE 14 OR VARIES

A hollow delved 10 feet into the side of the ledge wall here serves as the makeshift camp of The Three Prize Men themselves, **Poirot Kenkery**, **Jeriveau Lancolmb**, and **Linas Huth-Borxia**, as well as their thralls **Ethos**, **Pathos**, **Mr. Peepers**, and **Gargizar** unless some have already been defeated in **Event 4**. The three spellcasters have situated their bedrolls and assorted cushions and creature comforts within the natural rock shelter and erected small awnings over them using tarps and rope. Anyone in these shelters can't be observed by and has greater cover from anyone on the crater rim above or any ledge other than this one. Unless an opponent is directly in front of the rock shelter, creatures inside still have cover and are hidden even from anyone on this ledge. None of the thralls require sleep, so they remain on watch around the ledge with the cacodaemon **Pathos** periodically flying above the strip mine pit under the effects of his *invisibility* spell to scout for any possible intruders.

Statistics for all of The Three Prize Men and their minions are found at the beginning of **L. The Prize Pit** (see page 86).

Treasure: In addition to their normal gear, the camp includes camping and cooking supplies, two *everburning torches*, a writing set with extra ink and paper in a finely carved mahogany case (20 sp), a folding table with three folding chairs holding a carved jade pachisi^{FB-161} set from Far Jaati^{LLo} (80 sp), and a locked (DC 30 Thievery) medium chest holding an extreme climbing kit, seven bottles of Sgor Craoabh: Black Isle Whiskey^{LL7-534} (13 sp each), and 522 sp as payroll for the hired hands. In the back of the shelter, shaded by the awning is a brass spittoon (2 sp) filled with fresh water where Linas keeps his crab familiar in the harsh, arid environment.

M. FUMING CHASM

As described under **Flying Above the Crater** and **Crater Floor**, the great smoking chasm at the crater's heart provides concealment and a lair for a great deal of undead that lurk within the blasted valley. However, after the PCs' initial foray into the crater, they find that these undead hordes appear to have dispersed, and they are now free to explore this gaping pit which represents the meteor core's actual point of impact. When the PCs approach the chasm's opening, provide the following description.

Dense clouds of grayish-black smoke billow out from a wide fissure in the ground. Heat likewise accompanies the thick fumes surging from the depths of the earth, though perhaps not as much as you expected for such a hellish pit. Despite the horrors that emerged previously from this smoggy chasm, there is no sign of the undead horde that previously boiled forth.

Flying or climbing down into this pit involves dealing with the smoke (see **Flying Above the Crater**, page 63). The temperature within the smoking pit is very hot at approximately 105° F, day or night. This severe heat causes a creature to become fatigued after four hours and take 1d6 fire damage every hour (see "Climate" in Chapter 10 of the *Pathfinder Rulebook* for more information).

Even a cursory search around the edge of the pit reveals the rickety remains of a wooden scaffold and staircase that provides access to the bottom of the pit. Though shaky, the stair is still stable. Otherwise a PC can Climb the broken walls of the pit with a DC 20 Athletics check.

M1. PIT OF HELL (LOW 13)

Exploration of the smoking pit reveals that its jagged and broken walls descend only 40 feet before ending at a base of sand and rubble. When the meteor's intact core punched through the earth here, the passage it left collapsed back in upon itself. The smoke rises from tiny fissures and vents

M. FUMING CHASM



1 square = 10 ft.



1 square = 10 ft.



= slag heap

that still exist within this collapse as well as from side tunnels that open off from it, but the heat of the meteor's core is greatly blunted by the thickness of the earth that separates it from this pit.

The ground at the bottom of the pit is broken and footing is uncertain causing it to be difficult terrain. However, a road of smoothed gravel leads from the base of the scaffold stairs to a mine tunnel at the pit's southern edge. The ground along this road is not difficult terrain. Barely visible through the clouds of smoke that obscure vision are the remains of centuries-old mine carts that have been abandoned. In some cases, the skeletal remains of draft horses still lie within the harness attached to the carts, though none of these skeletons are animate. These and the stairs are what remains of the Caleen mining operation that once occurred in the pit. The tunnel is the adit to the main Caleen mine that once pulled nickel, lead, trace precious metals, and valuable siccattite off of the meteorite below, though doing so was extremely hazardous work in the pit's dangerous environment.

Anyone descending into the pit by flight, climbing the walls, or using the stairs attracts the attention of **4 melodies on the wind** that call the smoky pit home. Corrupted by the Nightscream so that they're now neutral evil, these elementals ignore the undead that frequently occupy the pit but gladly attack any living creatures that dare to invade their domain. They do not pursue into the tunnels or out of the pit itself but attack relentlessly until destroyed as long as intruders remain within the pit. Each round of fighting on the rickety stairs has a cumulative 5% chance of causing them to collapse into the pit, causing the appropriate falling damage to anyone on the stairs when they collapse.

MELODIES ON THE WIND (4)

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +21; darkvision

M2. MINE HEADQUARTERS

The heavy wooden door to this side room is still locked with an extremely durable lock (Thievery DC 30, five successes, to Pick the Lock), the key long since lost.

Beyond the sturdy door, the air is less smoky. It opens to reveal an excavated room of rough-hewn walls. A number of wooden bunks remain standing around the room, their straw tick mattresses unadorned by blanket or sheets with open footlockers, tables, and chairs interspersed among them. At the far side of the room stand a line of four wooden wall lockers.

Once a headquarters for the mining operations in the central pit, at one time summoned air elementals and small vents helped keep this room clear of the smoke that permeates the pits and mines. The elementals are long gone, but the air quality in here remains superior to that outside due to good ventilation that still exists. Miners could rest and gather here between shifts. A search of the room reveals the long-mummified remains of a human miner, a Caleen colonist who was ultimately overcome by the fumes here and perished in the mine's last days, but his worn coveralls hold nothing of importance and his corpse is not animated.

Searching the first three wall lockers finds a total of seven sets of miner's coveralls, three pickaxes, and two shovels. The fourth locker is locked (DC 25 Thievery, three successes to Pick the Lock) and holds a small strongbox containing six small unrefined gold nuggets (worth 1d6 x 5 sp each), two cat's eye elixirs, and a *bottled air*. Hanging in the back of the locker are six still-functional facial bellows (see **Appendix C**, page 137) and two 10-foot-long metal poles that end in round scoops that show signs of exposure to great heat (these are skimmers for the molten pool at **M5**, though that may not be immediately obvious).

M3. UPPER MINE TUNNELS

These tunnels meander around the circumference of the Burning Pits central chasm. The valuable minerals to be found in them are largely played out, though one tunnel near the entrance intersection descends at a 30° slope down to area **M4**. These tunnels are largely unoccupied and uninteresting. They are not as smoky as the pit outside or the lower tunnels, so that no one is concealed or undetected from the smoke, and a Fortitude save against the smoke's effects is only necessary every minute rather than every round.

M4. LOWER MINE TUNNELS (ENCOUNTER VARIES)

These tunnels descend below and around the fuming pit at the crater's center. Not all of the tunnels are shown on the map as many extend out and around and the central rift, but those shown are the ones that lead to the heart of the crater. They descend a total of 80 feet from area **M3** and have a general downward slope towards area **M5**. This slope is 1d10+20° at any given location. The fire raging deep underground pushes smoke and heat into these twisting passageways. The effects of the smoke and heat are the same as those described into area **M1**.

For every minute spent traveling through these circuitous tunnels, there is a 25% chance of an encounter with the creatures that lurk here awaiting further orders from their

master. Although prevalent throughout this network of passages and old workfaces, these creatures never enter area **M5**. If an encounter occurs, roll on the following table to determine its result.

d%	Encounter	Average Encounter
01–15	1d6 radioactive blast shadows	Trivial 13
16–40	2d6 radioactive combusted	Trivial 13
41–60	1d4 cinder ghouls	Trivial 13
61–70	2d6 fire phantoms	Trivial 13
71–80	1d6+1 witchfires	Trivial 13
81–00	Roll twice and ignore this result	varies

WITCHFIRES

CREATURE 9

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +18; darkvision

RADIOACTIVE BLAST SHADOW

CREATURE 5

See page 69

Initiative Perception +12; darkvision

RADIOACTIVE COMBUSTED

CREATURE 5

See page 48

Initiative Perception +12; darkvision

CINDER GHOUL^{TOHC-313}

CREATURE 7

See page 48

Initiative Perception +15; darkvision

FIRE PHANTOM^{TOHC-278}

CREATURE 5

CE MEDIUM FIRE UNDEAD

Perception +12; darkvision

Languages Ignan, Necril

Skills Athletics +13, Intimidation +12

Str +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +4, **Int** +0, **Wis** +2,

Cha +5

AC 22; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +12, **Will** +9

HP 80, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fire, paralyze, poison, unconscious;

Weaknesses cold 5, water 5

Fiery Form Any adjacent creature that hits the fire phantom with a melee attack or otherwise touches it takes 2d6 fire damage.

Speed 25 feet

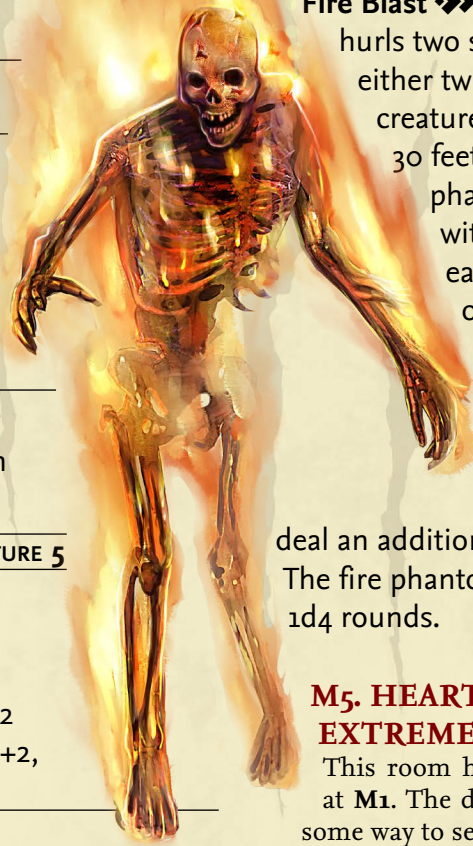
Melee ♦ fist +15 (agile), **Damage** 1d8+5 bludgeoning plus 1d8 fire

Immolation ♦♦ (evocation, fire) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** Normally used as a last resort, the fire phantom detonates itself in an inferno of elemental fire that deals 6d8 fire damage to all creatures within a 10-foot radius (DC 23 basic Reflex save). The fire phantom takes an equal amount of force damage (DC 23 basic Will save). If the fire phantom survives, its flames are extinguished for 1 minute. During this time, the fire phantom loses Fiery Form and Fire Blast and its fist Strikes deal no fire damage. After 1 minute, it may relight its fires as a free action with the concentrate trait.

Fire Blast ♦♦ (evocation, fire) The fire phantom hurls two small globes of fire, targeting either two different creatures or a single creature. These creatures must be within 30 feet of the fire phantom and the fire phantom makes a separate Strike with an attack modifier of +17 for each globe; this counts as only one Strike for the fire phantom's multiple attack penalty, and the penalty doesn't increase until after both attacks. Each globe deals 2d8 fire damage. If both globes hit the same creature, they deal an additional 1d8 persistent fire damage. The fire phantom can't use Fire Blast again for 1d4 rounds.

M5. HEART OF THE CRATER EXTREME 13

This room has the same smoke effects as the pit at **M1**. The description assumes that the PCs have some way to see through the obscuring fumes.



The smoky haze is lit by the red glow of molten rock. At the center of the large chamber is an open pool of molten material with fire licking from its surface. Around this central pool are irregularly heaped piles of cooled slag, the remnant of the mining operations that once took place here long ago. The fumes coming off of this pool fill the sweltering air with thick smoke making it nearly impossible to see anything other than the red-hot tendrils of fire dancing in the infernal pond.

The molten pool intensifies the heat in the chamber to incredible heat (approximately 150° F) dealing 6d6 fire damage per minute of breathing in the superheated air (the facial bellows do not prevent this damage) as well as causing any creature who spends 2 hours in the area to become fatigued. See below regarding any protective magic that the party may be using.

The molten pool at the center of the chamber is the uppermost remnant of the meteorite that struck here 2,000 years ago. The entire core mass measures roughly 50 feet in diameter and is surrounded by another layer of molten metals of which only the uppermost surface exposed in this room. The core of this extraterrestrial fragment is noqual, liquefied by the intense heat of the fire but surrounded and held in place by a thick shell of the star metal siccattite. The fall of the meteor and its subsequent impact ignited the volatile siccattite shell whose natural heat properties have caused it to burn for all this time in a raging inferno that cannot be extinguished until all of its siccattite fuel has been consumed (a process that will take several more millennia at least). The siccattite basin rests within a much larger outer lining of ordinary metals and stone that is roughly 20 feet thick, thus making a large-scale excavation of the more valuable star metals virtually impossible. As a result, the noqual could only be theoretically removed by extracting it in liquid form from the center of the molten pool more than 30 feet below the surface unless the burning siccattite could be somehow extinguished or removed itself. The molten layer exposed in this pool is composed primarily of stone and dozens of different metals from which the purified metals constantly leach and were formerly skimmed off by the Caleen miners, though now they simply settle back into the molten stew only to resurface again later. Fortunately for the PCs (and any other living creatures in the chamber), the meteor's outer shell composed heavily of metallurgic amber largely disintegrated upon impact and spread itself to infuse the soil in a massive radius so that this chamber is no more filled with that material's deadly radiation than any other location in and around the crater.

Anyone touching the molten metal and rock in the room's center takes 6d6 fire damage per round of exposure plus 2d6 fire damage per round for 1d3 rounds after the exposure

ceases as the molten material cools. Immersion in the pool causes 20d6 fire damage per round (10d6 per round for 1d3 rounds after the immersion ends). However, more critically, the massive concentration of liquid noqual at the pool's heart combined with lead and other metals that burn in the raging conflagration duplicates the effects of an antimagic field spell within 100 feet of the molten pool's edges (effectively covering the entire chamber). This effect suppresses spells and magic effects while within the chamber.

Without magic, few creatures could see through the dense clouds of smoke let alone survive the brutal conditions within this chamber. Yet, for the last four centuries, a lone creature has not only endured here but thrived under the wretched conditions. The allure of precious star metals from the meteorite eventually drew the attention of an adult red dragon name Fuagruun to investigate the crater after the Caleen Colonies had all been lost. Flying down from the volcanic heart of the Stoneheart Mountains, the dragon entered the smoking central rift and wormed his way down through the mine tunnels until reaching this chamber. Able to see through the smoky haze and unbothered by the hellish heat, the greedy dragon delighted in its newfound cache of invaluable treasure. However, even the dragon's formidable defenses were not immune to the effects of the metallurgic amber infusing the entire area, and the antimagic field effects likewise muted his resistances until finally Fuagruun succumbed to the baleful radiations and underwent the unholy transformation into a red dragon ravener. He has remained here ever since, feeding rarely, though the necromantic energies of the crater have kept him from starving, maintaining his Soul Ward and preventing him from becoming a ravener husk.

FUAGRUUN

CREATURE 16

UNIQUE CE HUGE DRAGON FIRE UNDEAD

Male red dragon ravener (*Pathfinder Bestiary* (Second Edition), *Pathfinder Bestiary 2* (Second Edition))

Perception +26; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet, smoke vision, soulsense 60 feet

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Necril, Orcish

Skills Acrobatics +25, Arcana +27, Athletics +31, Deception +27, Diplomacy +27, Intimidation +29, Stealth +25

Str +7, **Dex** +3, **Con** +6, **Int** +3, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +5

Smoke Vision Smoke doesn't impair Fuagruun's vision; he ignores the concealed condition from smoke.

Soulsense Fuagruun senses the spiritual essence of living and undead creatures within 60 feet. Creatures whose material bodies are one unit with their souls, like celestials and fiends, appear brighter to this sense.

AC 39; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +27, **Will** +28; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 355, negative healing; **Immunities** death effects, disease, fire, paralyzed, poison, unconscious;

Weaknesses cold 15, good 15

Dragon Heat (arcane, aura, evocation, fire); 5 feet, 3d6 fire damage (DC 32 basic Reflex)

Cowering Fear (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 90 feet, DC 35; this functions as Frightful Presence but creatures may cower in fear as well. As long as a creature is at least frightened 2 or more as a result of Fuagruun's frightful presence, it is also immobilized from the fear.

Soul Ward Whenever Fuagruun would be reduced below 1 Hit Point, all damage in excess of what would reduce him to 1 Hit Point is instead dealt to his soul ward, which has 150 Hit Points. If this damage reduces his soul ward to fewer than 0 Hit Points, he is destroyed.

Attack of Opportunity ⤵ Jaws only.

Speed 50 feet, fly 150 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +31 (fire, magical, reach 15 feet),

Damage 3d12+15 piercing plus 2d6 fire plus 2d6 negative

Melee ♦ claw +31 (agile, magical, reach 15 feet),

Damage 3d10+15 slashing plus 2d6 negative

Melee ♦ tail +29 (magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d12+13 slashing plus 2d6 negative

Melee ♦ wing +29 (agile, magical, reach 15 feet),

Damage 2d10+13 slashing plus 2d6 negative

Arcane Innate Spells DC 37; 4th *suggestion*;

Cantrips (6th) *detect magic*, *read aura*

Draconic Frenzy ♦♦ Fuagruun makes two claw Strikes and one wing Strike in any order.

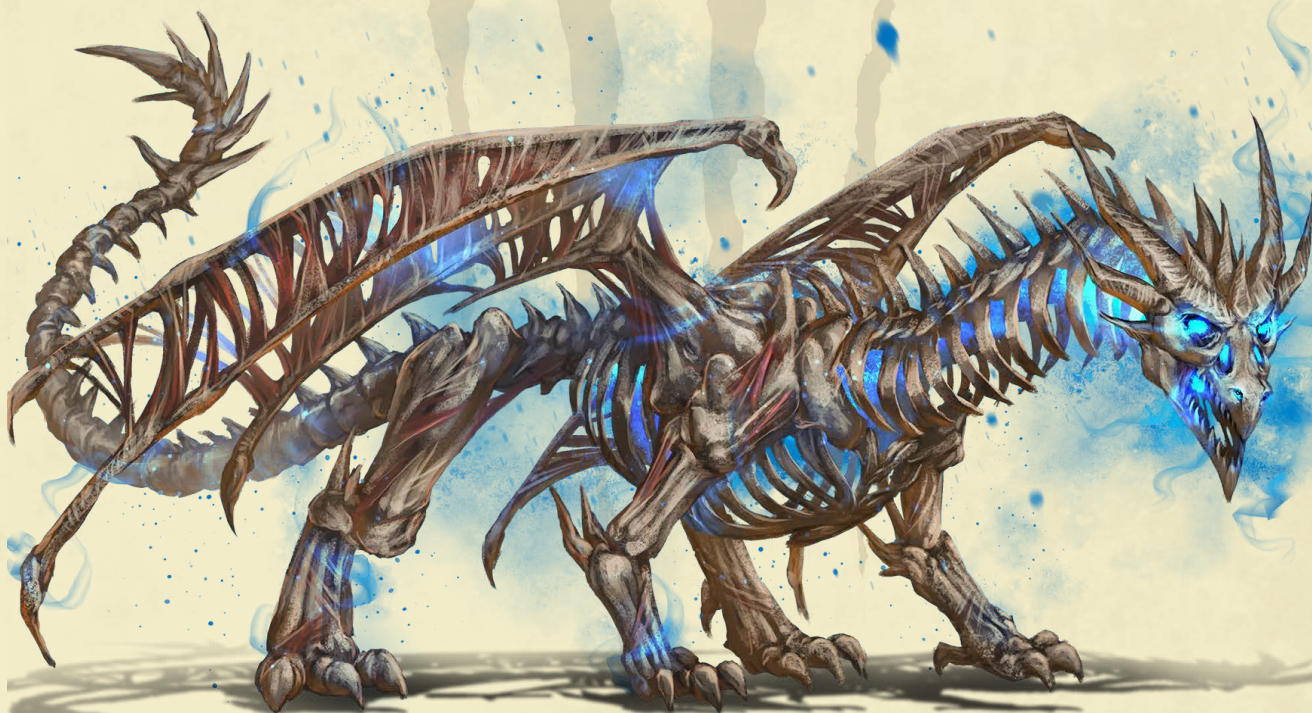
Draconic Momentum Fuagruun recharges his Breath Weapon whenever he scores a critical hit with a Strike.

Consume Soul ♦ (death, divine, necromancy)

Trigger A living creature within 30 feet of Fuagruun dies; **Effect** Fuagruun tears the creature's soul from its body with his maw and gulps it down. The dying creature must attempt a DC 38 Fortitude save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success Fuagruun tears off a small chunk of



the creature's soul. If the victim is restored to life, they are drained 1 in addition to any other side effects of returning to life. Fuagruun adds a number of Hit Points to his soul ward equal to half the creature's level.

Failure As success, but the creature's soul is ravaged. The creature is drained 3 and Fuagruun adds a number of Hit Points to his soul ward equal to the creature's level.

Critical Failure As failure, but Fuagruun devours the entire soul. The victim can't be restored to life as long as Fuagruun exists except via a 10th-level effect such as miracle or wish, and Fuagruun adds a number of Hit Points to his soul ward equal to twice the creature's level.

Discorporate ♦ (divine, necromancy) **Trigger**

Fuagruun takes excess damage to his soul ward but still has at least 51 Hit Points in his soul ward;

Effect Fuagruun draws deeply into his soul ward, discorporating his body into soul energy in order to escape. He takes 50 damage to his soul ward and his physical body vanishes, reappearing 1d4 hours later in a random location within 1 mile from the location where they used Discorporate.

Ravenous Breath Weapon ♦♦ (arcane, evocation, fire); Fuagruun breathes a blast of flame that deals 15d6 fire damage plus 4d6 persistent negative damage in a 50-foot cone (DC 38 basic Reflex save). A creature that fails its save is also drained 1 (or drained 2 on a critical failure). If a creature is drained by the Fuagruun's Ravenous Breath Weapon, his soul ward gains 5 HP. He can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

Vicious Criticals Fuagruun treats an attack roll as a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20, as long as the attack roll was a success. Additionally, whenever he makes a critical hit with one of his Strikes, the target must succeed on a DC 31 Fortitude save or gain the drained 1 condition. If the target already has a drained value of greater than 0, their drained value instead increases by 1, to a maximum of drained 4. Whenever Fuagruun applies drain to a creature in this way, his soul ward gains 5 Hit Points.

Tactics: Although deprived of his Consume Souls, Discorporate, Dragon Heat and Ravenous Breath Weapon, as well as his spells and the additional fire damage and negative damage for his Strikes, while within this cavern, Fuagruun's extraordinary senses and vision and shee power give him a decided advantage against any adversaries that might make their way down to his lair. Even though Fuagruun is without his most potent attacks, this remains an extreme encounter due to the extremely hostile conditions to be found within his lair. He prefers not to leave his lair, but if somehow lured into traversing the tight mine tunnels all of his spells and abilities return to him. In such a situation, he remains a severe encounter.

Development: Singularly devoted to his precious star metal, the greedy dragon consigned his own treasure hoard to the roaring conflagration, destroying all of his former wealth in the process. Yet, the arrogant Fuagruun cannot bear to part with a single drop of his beloved noqual. Throughout the encounter, Fuagruun refers to the trespassing adventurers as worthless thieves, spies and fodder for the domain's undead master. If the PCs engage him in conversation and succeed on a Deception or Diplomacy check against his Will DC, he inadvertently mentions that "The Pit's master outlasted the destruction of the settlements that bear his name and now worships the King in Yellow," though he will not reveal any more than that. For his part, the ravener owes no allegiance to Hastur and instead venerates the valuable star metal that consumes his every thought. When faced with potential defeat, Fuagruun cannot envision being separated from his precious noqual. He dives into the molten liquid in one last desperate gambit to be forever united with the object of his desire. Even his natural fire immunity cannot resist the inferno of the activated siccacite, and his lifeless carcass sinks into the lake of fiery alloy, completely disintegrating his remains within minutes.

Treasure: If the PCs somehow manage to skim the molten ore from the surface of the pool, they must use some sort of a heat resistant device such as the skimmers from area M2. These devices can be used to skim 1 pound of material off the surface of the pool, though unless the individual is wearing some sort of heat resistant gloves, doing so deals 1d6 fire damage by conduction through the metal handle. For every pound of molten material that is recovered, it is possible to extract 1/2 ounce of siccacite, 1/4 ounce of adamantine, 1d4 ounces each of nickel and lead, a 15% chance of 1 ounce of gold, and a 5% chance of 1/2 ounce of noqual. The rest is worthless slag.

For reference, the value of 1 pound (L Bulk) of these materials is as follows:

Material	Price (L Bulk)
Adamantine	500 sp
Siccatite	100 sp
Noqual	500 sp
Gold	50 sp
Nickel	2 sp
Lead	5 cp

N. CALEEN CACHE

The faint traces of a road are barely visible on the hardpan of the crater floor here. It extends towards a buckled rise where the eastern crater wall begins its ascent. A tunnel entrance pierces this earthen rise and appears to be the intended destination of this ancient pathway.

This short system of mine tunnels has been repurposed by Prince Cale to serve as the receptacle of his cache of tainted Rhemian coins. He purposely chose this location

because its road remnant and proximity to the very visible strip mine (L) and ramp (J2) make it likely that explorers will notice it and investigate it first.

N1. ENTRANCE APIARY TRIVIAL 13 OR NO ENCOUNTER

The broken-down remnant of an old cart lies in the dust next to the opening of this mine tunnel. In a hollow at the edge of the ridge that the tunnel delves into, a small wall of stacked stone has been constructed to shelter a collection of four large earthen jars that stand in the rocky ridge's lee. These jars are almost perfectly concealed by the stone wall such that from any distance they would be virtually impossible to spot.

The cart is merely an old wagon and is no longer operable. Anyone succeeding at a DC 29 Perception check from this location hears the faint sounds of eerie singing coming from within the tunnel, and if they have scent, they detect a strong, sickly sweet odor emanating from within. On a critical success, they can detect a faint sound of buzzing coming from the earthen jars and smell the odor even if they don't have scent.



The earthen jars stand approximately 4 feet tall and are actually beehives made from local clay. Each of the hives holds 2 bee swarms. The swarms are quiet during the heat of the day and at night, but if the PCs approach during the early morning or late evening hours the bees buzz around their hives aggressively, though they are difficult to see in the shadowy light and still require the same DC as above to notice. The bees must travel far out of the crater to find local pollen but have proven largely resistant to the effects of the metallurgic amber infusing the countryside. It does, however, make them very aggressive. If the PCs approach beyond the 3-foot stone wall during the morning or evening hours, all of the hives swarm and attack. During other parts of the day or night the bees are quiescent, but if the party disturbs any of the hives its bees swarm out to attack and the rest of the swarms attack and become agitated in the following round.

BEE SWARMS (8)

CREATURE 4

Statistics as wasp swarm (*Pathfinder Bestiary* (Second Edition)), except as noted below

Initiative Perception +10; **darkvision**

Bee Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 21; Maximum Duration 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d6 poison (1 round); **Stage 2** 2d6 poison and enfeebled 2 (2 rounds)

Treasure: If the swarms are dispersed, the party can recover 1d4 pounds of honey from each hive worth 2 sp per pound. However, this honey is tainted by metallurgic amber and has the effects as described in the **Metallurgic Amber** sidebar on anyone exposed to it unless first treated with a *purify food and drink* spell.

N2. INTERSECTION

The tunnel diverges at this point. The sounds of the eerie music can be heard coming from the direction of N4, along with additional sounds of grunting and shuffling like some sort of quiet melee is occurring, and the sickly-sweet smell of fermenting honey comes from the direction of N3.

N3. BREWERY

A thick wool blanket serves as a curtain over the entrance of this chamber. Rough-built wooden tables stand along the walls of this room, their surfaces stained with sticky brown patches, and upon them sit a number of crudely made clay jars and bowls. The smell of honey is so strong in this room as to be almost sickening.

The occupants of area N4 brew honey mead in this chamber in their handmade clay jugs. The room is kept cool with the thick blanket curtaining its entrance to lessen the chances of the honey gathered from the hives at N1 from undergoing inadvertent pasteurization that would prevent it from naturally fermenting. Stored in various jugs and amphorae are a total of 105 pounds of raw honey in various stages of fermentation (worth 210 sp). In addition, there are 32 sealed 1-gallon jars of new honey mead (2 sp each). Unfortunately, all of it is tainted by metallurgic amber requiring purify food and drink spells before being safe for consumption.

N4. MAD REVEL MODERATE 13

The temperature in this chamber is warmer, and the air seems thick and sticky with moisture and the smell of unwashed bodies and smoke. The floor is covered in the broken fragments of pottery that have been ground to tiny pieces underfoot, and torches made of tightly bound grass bundles burn in sconces on the walls. To the north is a muddy pool or spring, and next to it the ground and cave wall has been churned and excavated. Across the room stands a clay kiln, smoke and heat emanating from the fire burning within. The sound of the eerie singing is louder here and clearly emanates from a passage across the room.

This room is the lair of 5 maenads. These mad creatures resemble wild Shattered Folk tribeswomen smeared in blood and filth. They were attracted in recent years to the crater by the emanations of madness and entropy of Prince Cale and his operation. They are not aligned with the crater's undead overlord but have a tentative peace with him and his minions and allow him to store his "treasure" in their lair (area N6). They are unaffected by the metallurgic amber other than, if anything, becoming more volatile and violent than is normal for their kind.

The maenads keep the bees at area N1 and use the honey to make the mead they use in their wild revels. A natural ground water seep and its clay bed provide the raw materials for the countless pottery vessels they make and ultimately destroy in their rages, and they have constructed the kiln in this chamber to maintain the constant supply that they require. Stored in rough-spun sacks and wicker baskets around the room are their few articles of clothing and other possessions as well as hunks of spoiling, fly-specked raw meat taken from animals and even humanoids that they have slain for food.

MAENADS (5)**CREATURE 11****CE MEDIUM HUMANOID****Perception** +22; darkvision**Languages** Common, Sylvan**Skills** Nature +21, Performance +25, Stealth +21**Str** +3, **Dex** +7, **Con** +5, **Int** +1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +7**Lithe Dancer** The maenad can attempt a Performance check instead of an Acrobatics check to Balance or Tumble Through.**AC** 30; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +22, **Will** +21**HP** 200; **Immunities** confused**Speed** 30 feet**Melee** ♦ jaws +21 (finesse), **Damage** 2d8+12 piercing plus maenad venom**Melee** ♦ claw +21 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d6+12 slashing plus maenad venom**Primal Innate** Spells DC 29; **5th** *hallucination*, *moon frenzy*; **3rd** *vampiric touch*; **1st** *charm***Infectious Dance** ♦♦ (enchantment, incapacitation, mental, primal, visual) The maenad cavorts in a wild frolic. Each creature that witnesses the dance must attempt a DC 27 Will save.**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected and is temporarily immune to Captivating Dance for 24 hours.**Success** The creature is stupefied 2 and confused for 1 round and is temporarily immune to Captivating Dance for 24 hours.**Failure** The creature is stupefied 2 and confused and the maenad gains 1d10 temporary Hit Points for 1 minute.**Critical Failure** The creature is stupefied 2 and confused and the maenad gains 1d10 temporary Hit Points for 1 hour.**Mad Feast** ♦♦♦ (conjunction) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The maenad creates a supernatural feast. Up to eight willing creatures can partake in the food and drink. Creatures who consume any of it gain a +2 item bonus to attack and damage rolls, Fortitude saves and Will saves against fear, and 1d8 temporary Hit Points for 12 hours. They also take a –4 penalty to Will saves (except against fear), and find it more compelling to engage in debauchery, excess, and violence.**Murderous Command** ♦♦ (auditory, concentrate, enchantment, linguistic, mental) The maenad orders a creature within 60 feet to attack its nearest ally. It must succeed at a DC 30 Will save or use all its actions to Strike or cast offensive cantrips at the ally for 1 round, though the GM can have it use other actions to facilitate attack, such as draw a weapon, move so that a target is in reach, and so forth. On a critical success, the target is immune to Murderous Command for 1 minute; on a critical failure, the effect lasts for 1 minute.**Maenad Venom** (poison); **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 30; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 1d6 poison and drained 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 2d6 poison and drained 2 (1 round)**Tactics:** The revel of crazed women is engaged in a drunken infectious dance when the PCs first arrive, but once they see intruders, they become enraged. They pummel their foes with *hallucination* and Murderous Command before engaging in a wild melee. They fight to the death in a fit of murderous joy.**Treasure:** Resting at the edges of the room are a total of seven of the metallurgic amber-tainted jars of mead (2 sp each). There is also one jar of rare wasp metheglin mead^{PPC:MM} that the maenads brewed from special wasp honey found out on the steppe. It is miraculously untainted and worth 100 sp for its rarity and alchemical properties (for the next five minutes, anyone who drinks it gains a +1 item bonus on attack and damage rolls on their first attack against someone who damaged them in the last round). The maenads keep their more valuable objects in a clay amphora hidden behind the kiln (DC 31 Perception check to locate and DC 29 basic Reflex save to avoid taking 1d6 fire damage from being burned by accidentally touching the hot kiln). This stash includes a +1 *striking greater flaming scimitar*, a rolled up +1 *resilient greater slick chain shirt*, a *wand of healing* (3rd level), an alabaster votive statue (240 sp), and a ruby (120 sp).**N5. MAD CHORUS LOW 13***The strange, cacophonous melody issues from this area, and a gray haze fills the air in this stifling cavern. The walls still show the scars where seams of ore were chipped out by the long-ago miners. Odd globules of stone hang precariously from the ceiling and walls in addition to covering large portions of the floor. Large*

ponds of brackish water collect in the numerous depressions spread throughout, while colonies of purple, black and green fungus cling to the walls.

The wispy vapors that float throughout the large cavern make creatures and objects appear indistinct and provide concealment to anything farther than 15 feet away. The strange globules that cover the cavern's surfaces were formed when molten rock from the meteor's impact eventually cooled and hardened back into solid stone, as can be determined with a DC 25 Nature check. Many of these globules are what were chipped away by the Caleen miners. Temperatures here hover around 85° F, slightly below the threshold for any detrimental effects, but the warmth and moisture allow countless species of ordinary fungi to thrive. The puddles are only a few inches deep, though the floor is slick and uneven and considered difficult terrain.

Lurking amid the fungi and puddles on the floor are **12 gibbering mouthers**. These nearly mindless abominations have formed a sort of symbiosis with the maenads next door, consuming all of the wastes and food

scraps left by the vicious humanoids, and the maenads for their part have become immune to the creatures' constant gibbering. The mouthers have been exposed to the environs of the crater for so long, their gibbering has taken on the eerie howl-like qualities of the Nightscream (see **Event 1**), except the many mouths of the creatures cause tonal fluctuations that rise and fall and give the howling scream a haunting, musical quality, as if madness incarnate had found purchase in this cavern. For their part, the maenads consider the "music" delightful and are fond of dancing to it in their orgiastic violence.

Tactics: The mouthers constantly emit their almost musical gibbering but begin spitting acid as well when intruders other than the maenads enter the chamber. They try to do so from at least 20 feet away so that they are concealed and their amorphous forms look like the uneven floor. They are unaffected by the difficult terrain of the room and their

All-Around Vision actually allows them to ignore the concealment provided by the room's humidity. When attackers close for melee, the mouthers attempt to Engulf what they consider food sent to them by their neighbors. They will not pursue beyond this room.

Treasure: Over the years, the creatures have accumulated an eclectic collection of items between scraps thrown to them by the maenads and their days of hunting the crater from before the maenads' arrival. They have deposited these treasures behind a stone globule in the far southwestern corner of the room. It takes a DC 29 Perception check to locate their hoard in a tattered and rotten burlap sack. Within this sack are six gold nuggets (50 sp each), a rough tourmaline (72 sp), a *brooch of shielding* (1 missile already absorbed), and an obsidian *steed wondrous figurine*.

N6. "LOST" CACHE

Entry to this chamber is blocked by a heavy wooden door with a good lock (Thievery DC 35 [due to rust in its mechanism], five successes to Pick the Lock; Force Open DC 35).

Beyond the stout door is a small, dusty room. Its walls have extra wooden buttresses to reinforce them from collapse — and perhaps prevent easy access for someone trying to tunnel in. The reason for this extra security quickly becomes evident. Rough tables made of thick planks sitting on old sawhorses hold four small chests, while three larger chests rest on the floor underneath. All of the chests are open, and the glitter of coins is visible even beneath the thick layer of dust.

The chests in the room all hold what appear to be freshly minted Rhemian coins, though the images of Prince Cale and other emblems that they bear easily date them to the early 2900s with a DC 20 Society check to Recall Knowledge.

GIBBERING MOUTHERS (12)

CREATURE 5

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +15; **darkvision**

To all appearances it would seem that this cache holds the coins that were minted from the precious metals recovered from decades of mining the Pit of the Burning Star, and that is in fact what they are. However, they are also all tainted with metallurgic amber so that anyone taking these coins is subject to that substance's insidious effects.

Each of the coins in this cache is minted with only trace amounts of the radioactive isotope (roughly 0.6%), so that the coins' appearance and malleability is unaffected. Only spells like detect poison or read omens would be able to distinguish them from ordinary Rhemian currency of the same time period, though anyone specifically examining them and succeeding at a DC 30 Blacksmithing Lore or Crafting check can detect that the coins have been alloyed with some other material. The traces of metallurgic amber in the coins are so minute and dilute that they do not cause their normal radioactive burn damage. However, they do still require a DC 10 (+1 for each prior save) Will save after 24 hours of exposure to avoid developing a form of insanity (see the Metallurgic Amber sidebar for details).

The four smaller chests hold 487 Rhemian marks (cp), 450 Rhemian marks (cp), 608 Rhemian ducats (sp), and 131 Rhemian galleons (gp) respectively, while the larger chests underneath hold a total of 8,064 Rhemian furrows^{FB-182} (cp).

O. THE NEST

This small fissure in the floor of the crater has no tracks around it or leading to it and would be difficult to locate at all were it not for one particular feature: Once or twice per day at some random time a geyser of windblown sand blasts explosively from it for a few seconds. When the geyser occurs or for the next 1010 minutes as the airborne dust plume slowly settles, the DC necessary to spot this opening drops by 15. Anyone who is nearby when the dust geyser erupts is unharmed but may notice (DC 25 Perception check) that immediately before the dust blast occurs a sucking sensation comes from the fissure drawing air into it as if it were taking a deep breath. Both of these occurrences are harmless and are a result of the occupant of O6 using its Wind Blast and Sucking Wind abilities, augmented and amplified by the strange air currents and baffles within these caverns. There is a cumulative 10% chance per hour of daylight of this phenomenon occurring. Once it occurs, the chance is reset and begins to accumulate again. It does not occur more than twice in one day, however.

There are no light sources within these caves, so all descriptions assume that the PCs have provided some means of seeing.

O1. ENTRANCE FISSURE

If located, this narrow fissure is little larger than a Medium creature. Unlike the other excavated tunnels seen throughout the crater, this one seems to be a natural fissure that has occurred in the blasted bedrock of the crater. Its walls are rough and natural and descend at a steep 70° angle (DC 25 Athletics check to Climb). Old pitons embedded at the lip of the fissure hold the ragged upper rung of a rope ladder, but the blasts of air from the fissure have long since destroyed the actual ladder that descended down into the opening leaving no further trace of who left the ladder or for what purpose.

O2. THE HOURGLASS MODERATE 14

The descending fissure abruptly opens into the roof of a large, hourglass-shaped cavern that teems with ledges, precipices and the broken remains of natural stone columns that create rough perches throughout. From this vantage point the cavern almost resembles a spiraled canyon pockmarked by various animal nests, outcroppings, niches, and similar voids in the walls. The faint whistling of the wind can be heard from somewhere far below, though no breeze disturbs the air herein.

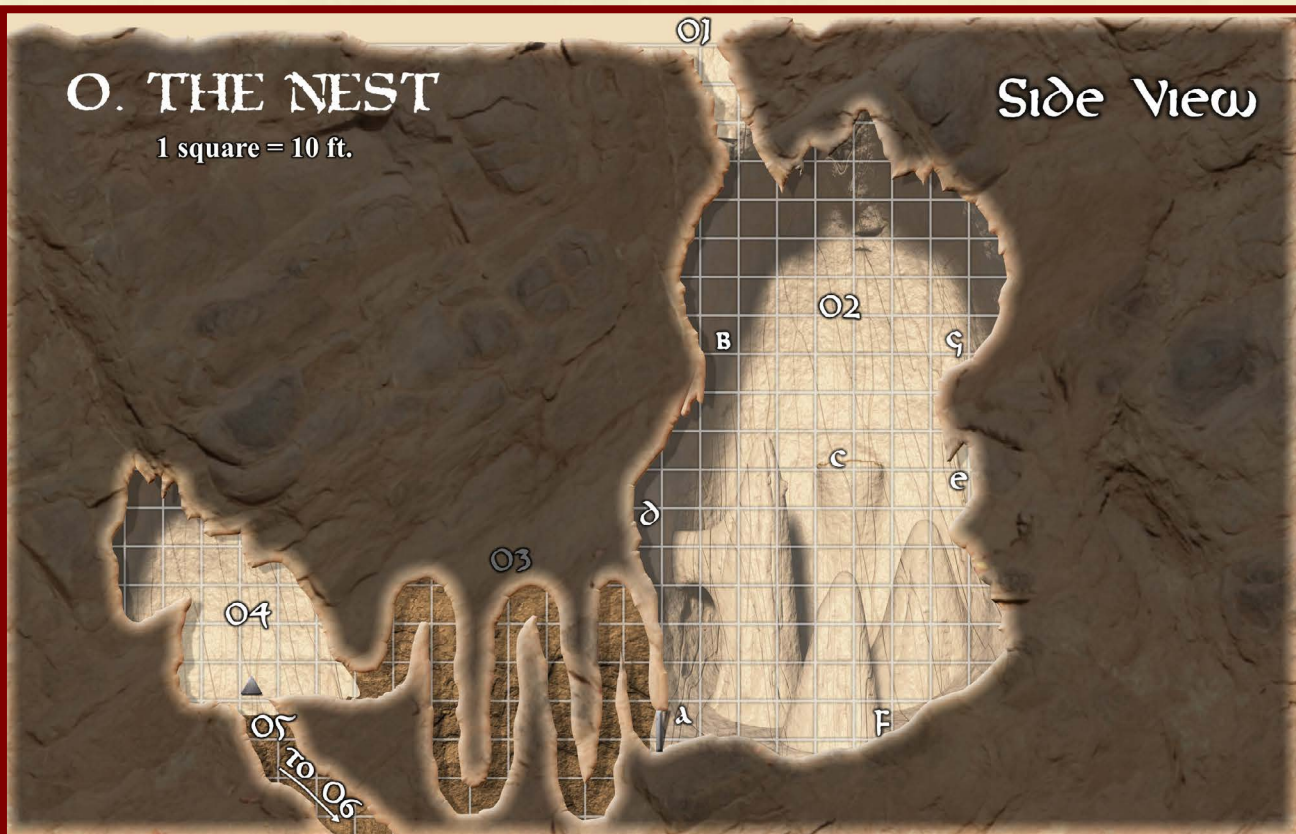
The 7-foot-diameter entrance tunnels slopes downward where it immediately ends in a sheer drop, opening into the 160-foot-high ceiling of this roughly hourglass-shaped underground chamber that measures 90 feet across at its widest and 60 feet across at its narrowest point. The end of the entrance tunnel is a precipitous drop, so unless PCs are careful, they may take a considerable tumble when entering. The walls of the chamber are natural stone that appear to be worn and eroded by high winds (DC 30 Athletics check to Climb) and there are number of natural ledges as well as outcroppings, rock formations, and arches in the chamber that have all been strangely shaped by scouring winds. The heights of the various ledges and natural pedestals are indicated on the map of this room. An iron door and six hidden caches in this cavern are described below under **O2a-g**.

This strange chamber serves as the abode of a flock of **16 void-stirges**. These strange creatures hail from another world and star system altogether, having spent years travelling through the void of space to answer the call of the King of Yellow that resounds so strongly in this place. These aberrations are vaguely humanoid in shape with two upper limbs and two lower limbs on a torso with a head in the usual location, but there the resemblance ends. They are not altogether crows, nor moles, nor buzzards, nor ants, nor vampire bats, nor decomposed human beings, but something both more and less, and when not flying they flop limply along, half with their webbed feet and half with their membranous wings (See "The Festival" by H.P. Lovecraft).

O. THE NEST

1 square = 10 ft.

Side View



TOP VIEW

Opening to O1

natural arch



1 square = 10 ft.



VOID-STIRGES (16)**CREATURE 5****CE MEDIUM ABERRATION****Perception** +11; greater darkvision**Languages** Aklo**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Stealth +13**Str** +4, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2**AC** 22; **Fort** +10, **Ref** +13, **Will** +14**HP** 80; **Immunities** cold, confused, hunger, precision, sickened, thirst

Low Metabolism While a void-stirge craves blood if it has not fed within the last 24 hours, it does not suffer any negative effects from starvation or thirst, and it can, in theory, survive forever without drinking or feeding. It is immune to effects that induce magical starvation or thirst. It can also hold its breath indefinitely, making it immune to effects that require breathing (such as an inhaled poison) if it's aware of them. In addition, its strange anatomy means whenever a void-stirge is critically hit, it attempts a DC 17 flat check. On a success, it becomes a normal hit.

Yellow Sign Affinity A void-stirge is immune to the effects of the Yellow Sign, and by concentrating, it can locate the nearest active Yellow Sign as per *discern location*. When an active Yellow Sign is visible, a void-stirge gains fast healing 4 and is quickened 1. An active Yellow Sign is either one that was created by Hastur or by the *Yellow Sign* spell (see Area Q8). Inactive Yellow Signs, such as the religious symbols carried by cultists of Hastur, do not bolster a void-stirge, but these creatures generally treat those who openly wear such symbols as allies. A character who displays a Yellow Sign in this manner gains a +2 item bonus on all Deception, Diplomacy and Intimidation checks against a void-stirge.

Speed 25 feet, fly 50 feet; starflight**Melee** ♦ beak +15, **Damage** 2d10+6 piercing**Melee** ♦ claw +15 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d8+6 slashing plus Improved Grab

Blood Drain ♦ **Requirement** The void-stirge's last action was a success with a beak Strike; **Effect** The void-stirge drinks the creature's blood. This deals 1d10 bleed damage and the void-stirge gains

temporary Hit Points equal to the damage dealt for 1 minute. A creature that has its blood drained by a void-stirge is drained 1 until it receives healing (of any kind or amount).

Bloodlust ♦ **Trigger** A creature takes bleed damage; **Effect** The void-stirge enters a frenzied bloodlust. For 1 minute, it gains a +1 status bonus to attack and damage rolls against the triggering creature. A void-stirge may have multiple Bloodlust targets, but generally focuses on one triggering creature at a time.

Swoop ♦♦ The void-stirge Flies twice up to its fly speed and makes a Strike at any point during that movement.

Abduct A void-stirge can Fly at half Speed while it has a creature of its size or smaller grabbed or restrained in either or both of its claws, carrying that creature along with it.

Starflight A void-stirge can survive in the void of outer space, and it flies through space at incredible speeds. Although exact travel times vary, a trip within a single solar system normally takes it 3d20 months, while a trip beyond normally takes it 3d20 years (or more, at the GM's discretion)—provided the void-stirge knows the way to its destination.

Tactics: The void-stirges dwell among the ledges and outcroppings that comprise this chamber but have greater cover and are hidden from anyone looking down from the entry tunnel. Once intruders dare to enter their nesting cavern, they fly forth from all around and Swoop to try and Grab their prey and then feast on their blood. If a void-stirge takes more than half its hit points in damage from a creature it grabbed, it releases its opponent and let its drop to the rocky floor far below. They have not fed in several weeks and pursue intruders relentlessly, even outside their cavern homes into the crater above. They will not pursue into area O3, however, unless summoned by the Doorkeeper and will under no circumstances pass beyond area O5.

O2A. IRON DOOR MODERATE 14

At the base of the cavern a heavy iron door, 12 feet high by 8 feet wide, has been fitted into the stone wall. The whistling of wind grows louder as one approaches the door, and it is readily apparent that the blowing air currents are behind this

WHAT'S A VOID-STIRGE?

The void-stirge is based on the byakhee from the *Call of Cthulhu* game and the stories of H.P. Lovecraft, and that name is the property of Chaosium Inc., and is not Open Content. However, that creature does have *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* statistics first presented in issue #110 of the official adventure path series, and those mechanics are Open Content. Also, like Chaosium before us, we are basing the description of the creature on the H.P. Lovecraft short story "The Festival", which is in the public domain. Therefore, we are using the existing stat block but have to change the name of the beast for use in this adventure.

So, why void-stirge? Hopefully the void portion is self-explanatory; these are creatures capable of unaided interstellar flight and, as such, can spend much of their virtually immortal lifespans soaring through the vastness between the stars. The stirge part goes a bit deeper. The stirge of the First Edition *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*, of course, gets its roots from the original *Dungeons & Dragons* game before it. Gary Gygax included the stirge as a small, blood-sucking critter in the original 1st Edition AD&D *Monster Manual*. For his part, Gary took his inspiration for the stirge from the ancient Greek and Roman folk tales of the *strix* (Greek) or *striga* (Latin), a birdlike creature known for its blood-drinking habits. It is very likely that the striga served as some form of inspiration for the later folk tales of vampires. With the blood drain and bloodlust special abilities of our void-stirge the use of the venerable name, honored as it is in a long history of gaming tradition, seemed a natural fit. Furthermore, **Frog God Games** (and **Necromancer Games** before it) had already shown a tendency for use of this naming convention with the creation of the ghou-stirge in its *Tome of Horrors* and updated *The Tome of Horrors Complete*, so the precedent exists. We're merely continuing in its time-honored footsteps.

portal. The door itself is made of thick iron plates banded with iron straps riveted in place. The metal of the door is rusted and stained, but still appears sturdy. The hinges are nested in the stone frame that surrounds the door. A keyhole pierces the door's plating on its left-hand side. The door is **trapped** with a powerful glyph that is triggered if anyone other than the Doorkeeper (see area **O4**) touches the door and resets itself 1 minute after it has been activated.

Reinforced Iron Door: 3 in. thick; Hardness 15; hp 60 (BT 30); Break DC 30; Force Open DC 35 (if locked); Thievery DC 30, five successes to Pick a Lock.

THE DOORKEEPER'S LOCK

HAZARD 14

EVOCATION **ELECTRICITY** **MAGICAL** **TRAP**

Stealth DC 39 (master)

Description An invisible rune contains powerful magic to blast any intruders who touch the door.

Disable Thievery DC 37 (expert) to erase the rune without triggering it, or dispel magic (15th level; counteract DC 32)

Electric Field ⤵ (occult, electricity, evocation);

Trigger A creature other than the Doorkeeper touches the door. **Effect** The rune sends a surge of electricity through any creatures within 5 feet, dealing 6d10+35 electricity damage to them (DC 34 basic Reflex save).

Reset The rune resets itself after 1 minute.

Anyone who Searches the door notices on a DC 20 Perception check that the floor immediately in front of the door is scoured clean of sand and dust as if freshly swept. The reason for this becomes apparent if the door is opened. If the door is opened the inside of it is revealed to also be of iron, but this side has been burnished to a high polish by the action of the winds. Opening it releases the powerful air currents that have been constrained in area **O3**. The change in air pressure caused by the opening of the door is immediately felt by the occupant of **O6** who begins to use its Eerie Exhale ability. Outside of **O3**, the PCs are unaffected beyond noticing the air current that is suddenly being drawn in through the open doorway. Anyone going through the door into **O3** during this time is affected as described in that area. This suctioning effect lasts for 2d6 rounds.

After the suctioning effect ends, there is a 1-round pause after which the occupant of **O6** cuts loose with its Wind Blast ability. This effect is augmented by the configuration of the tunnels between **O6** and here so that anyone within 10 feet of the open doorway when the Wind Blast occurs takes 10d10 bludgeoning damage (DC 37 basic Reflex save), and the entirety of area **O2** is filled with tornado-strength winds (175+ mph) for the next 1d10 minutes. See "Wind" and "Tornadoes" in Chapter 10 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* for the effects of these powerful winds as they find themselves caroming off the walls and many rocky formations in area

O2 with a cumulative 10% chance each round of being flung up and out of the tunnel entrance at area **O1**. Anyone flung out this entrance, in addition to taking the normal environmental damage for the tornado for that round, also takes 2d6 x 10 bludgeoning damage as they tumble into the crater outside, after which they are no longer within the effects the tornadic winds.

During the release of these winds every part of the cavern (**O2**) is affected by them except for the cache niches at **O2b–g**. Each of these niches is able to hold up to 3 Medium creatures, 6 Small creatures, or 1 Large creature. Creatures within these niches are completely sheltered from the winds and unaffected by them. If the PCs manage to open the iron door before defeating the void-stirges, all of the creatures immediately retreat to the nearest niches and fight to prevent their removal during the initial suction portion of the winds so that they will be protected from the effects of the Wind Blast portion.

Unless the iron door has been secured open by some means able to succeed on a DC 37 Fortitude save versus the pull of the winds, at the end of the tornadic winds the door slams shut, its lock and trap reset.

O2B. CACHE 1

Unless the PCs observe the void-stirges returning to this niche, it can only be located with a DC 20 Perception check. A hollow in the cavern's west wall situated on a 100-foot-high ledge serves as a nesting area for the void-stirges and a cache for some of their accumulated treasures. The treasure here consists of a leather sack containing 156 gold shekels^{LL7-220} (sp) of Castorhagi currency. This treasure is untainted and was recovered from trade between Castorage and the Shattered Folk of the distant Elitan-i-Pan Confederation to the west.

O2C. CACHE 2

As before, this niche requires a DC 28 Perception check unless void-stirges are observed going back to it. This hollow lies on a small ledge on the cavern's north wall, 70 feet above the floor. It holds a rusted-but-serviceable suit of +1 *resilient full plate*, a +1 *steel shield* bearing the red and white sword-and-crown heraldry of the Duchy of the Rampart^{LL5-100}, and a quiver holding fourteen arrows and six beacon shot arrows.

O2D. CACHE 3

The Perception check for this cache is DC 35. It is a hollow at the junction where the chamber's natural arch meets the

northwest corner. Crumpled within it is a human skeleton in ragged shreds of clothing still wearing *armbands of athleticism* and +1 *striking handwraps of mighty blows*.

O2E. CACHE 4

Even more difficult to locate than O2d, this niche requires a DC 41 Perception check to locate. It is a near-vertical alcove 20 feet above a ledge that itself lies 55 feet above the cavern floor. Searching it requires flight or a DC 30 Athletics check to Climb, and even if located it appears to be empty unless another DC 32 Perception check is made to notice a tiny ledge at its rear. Crammed into this small niche is a small leather pouch holding six rubies (50 sp each) and a *tourmaline sphere pearl of power*.

O2F. CACHE 5

This floor-level alcove requires only a DC 17 Perception check to locate. However, the ribcage and partial human skeleton on the sandy floor here obscures the treasure held within. A *detect magic* spell or DC 26 Perception check is necessary to notice the *wand of continuation* (3rd-level spell) lying among the skeleton's ribs.

O2G. CACHE 6

A DC 22 Perception check locates this niche 95 feet above the floor on the cavern's floor. A tattered canvas knapsack here holds four potion vials: two *lesser healing potions*, a *potion of water breathing*, and a *panacea*. However, the knapsack is extremely dry rotted, so if it is picked up by a PC who does not expressly state that they are supporting the sack to prevent it from tearing, the bottom will tear out when it is lifted and drop 1d3+1 of the potions. Anyone within 5 feet can attempt a DC 30 Reflex save to catch a single potion bottle (determine randomly) that drops; they catch two bottles on a critical success. Any that are not caught shatter of the floor below and are ruined.

O3. THE CORKSCREW TRIVIAL 14

Beyond the iron door, a round tunnel twists through the stone. It rises in a curving arc, its walls scoured smooth by the wind that whips along its length.

This tunnel extends between areas **O2** and **O4** in a triple corkscrew, each loop covering a 60 foot diameter. The tunnel averages 8 feet in diameter and has no discernable handholds, requiring a DC 40 Athletics check to Climb to traverse it without flight. In addition, the relatively small diameter of the tunnel makes flight for winged creatures larger than size Small impossible because of a lack of space

in which to stretch out the wingspan. However, flight of that sort is really not even an option because of the nature of the air currents here.

As described in **O2a**, a howling wind is always churning in this tunnel, contained behind the iron door. Anyone stepping into the confines of this tunnel can use the air pressure generated by the wind to quickly fly the entire length of the corkscrew tunnel. The wind is normally pushing from area **O4** to **O2**, so anyone stepping in at the western end is carried to the eastern end in only 2 rounds, regardless if normally capable of flight or not. However, unless successful at a DC 20 Acrobatics check to Maneuver in Flight each round, the flight involves rebounding off of the walls along the tunnels length and dealing 5d6 bludgeoning damage per round. An individual with a natural fly speed that doesn't involve the use of wings gets a +4 status bonus to this check. Creatures of up to size Large can travel along the tunnel by this method (larger creatures must Squeeze).

When the iron door at area **O2a** is opened, the west-to-east wind dies off for 1 round and then begins blowing from **O2** to **O4** for 2d6 rounds. During this time, an individual can travel from east to west along this tunnel by flying just as above. After the 2d6 rounds, the wind changes to its west-to-east direction again for 1d10 minutes. At the end of this time, the wind dies down for 1 round followed by suctioning (east to west) again as the process repeats itself. However, if the door is shut during this time (such as by the suctioning of the wind), the wind reverts to its normal flow of west to east.

The geyser of sand seen at **O1** a few times a day is caused by the occupant of **O4** traveling to **O2** occasionally and opening the door at **O2a**.

O4. THE DOORKEEPER SEVERE 14

The spiraling tunnel opens into a large curving cavern that bends from south to east towards the entrance. Directly across from the entrance the wall rock wall rises to another branch of the cave that extends to the northwest from a terrace nearly 30 feet above the floor. The walls of this chamber are worn smooth, though not so much as the nearly glass-like surface of that in the spiral tunnel, but clearly affected by the actions of the strong winds here. There is an obvious flow to the air currents as evidenced by the worn stone showing where it flows from the south, rebounds from the curved overhang from the terrace and then onto the roof of the eastern portion of the cavern where it is funneled into the spiraling tunnel.

The winds swirl into here by way of area **O5** and is shunted along the streamlined walls of this cavern directly into **O3** where the spiraling course focuses and intensifies it as described in that area. However, in here it's never particularly strong, whether blowing into **O3** or being sucked out of **O3**. The space of this room and the way its directed by the curving walls mean the wind in here is never more than severe in strength (31–50 mph), causing a –2 penalty on auditory Perception checks and physical ranged attacks, and making the area difficult terrain for Flying and requiring a Maneuver in Flight action. However, because of the curved lip below the upper terrace, that upper portion of the chamber is not subjected to the winds at all, so in combats that occur its occupants are unaffected while combatants on the main floor are affected as normal (see “Wind” in Chapter 10 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*). Climbing walls in this chamber requires a DC 30 Athletics check.

Just around the corner from the entrance (and not visible until moving farther into the room) is a heavy steel winch whose chain runs through rings spiked into the stone wall of the chamber and out the sloping passage to the south. This winch operates the portcullis in **O5**, and can raise or lower that gate as a full-round action. The portcullis is currently down.

This chamber serves as the lair of the **Doorkeeper**, a strange servant of Hastur, and his **2 terrible hybrid things**. The fiend is as incomprehensible looking as the void-stirges. Most of his form is covered by a threadbare burlap robe that appears to have possibly taken from an anchorite of one of Foere's many faiths, but though the robe gives him the appearance of a generally humanoid shape and the hood conceals his head and face it cannot entirely disguise that his body shape appears to writhe and contort unnaturally, and his face appears to undulate in the shadows of the hood. That in addition to the great, membranous wings that sprout from his shoulders quickly give truth to the picture that he is definitely not a humanoid. Beneath the robes his body is almost entirely composed of a writhing mass of intertwined snakes, and his head appears vaguely reptilian but with no mouth or sensory organs, having a smaller undulating mass of tentacles in their place. For their part, the terrible hybrid things look like void-stirges of prodigious size but with a blood-red tint to their skin rather than the grayish-black of their compatriots.

The Doorkeeper came to the Pit of the Burning Star many centuries ago seeking to exploit its tragedy and the awe it has inspired to set himself up as a “demigod” over the traumatized plains folk. Instead he was confronted with the truth of the King in Yellow's power and presence

and became suddenly gifted with strange powers. The will of the King in Yellow sent him into this cavern system where he found an affinity with the nesting void-stirges that inhabited and felt a peculiar compulsion to serve as warden over the beast trapped in O6. Now calling himself the Doorkeeper, the fiend has become an apostate among his kind, bowing to the will of the Great Old One, Hastur, and tending to the flock of void-stirges brought here from across interstellar space by the King in Yellow's powerful presence at this site. The Doorkeeper never leaves these caverns and has seen himself as the sole caretaker of the creature dwelling beyond.

THE DOORKEEPER

CREATURE 14

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM EVIL FIEND

Perception +27; darkvision, *see invisibility*

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Infernal; telepathy 50 feet

Skills Acrobatics +27, Deception +30, Diplomacy +30, Occultism +25, Performance +27, Religion +30

Str +4, **Dex** +8, **Con** +4, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +6

Items silver and electrum ceremonial dagger (125 sp), brassbound kayapi^{FB} signal horn (60 sp), pouch with key to O2a

AC 37; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +28, **Will** +24; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 300; **Resistances** mental 15, poison 15; **Weaknesses** good 15

Invisibility Revelation ⤵ (air)

Trigger The Doorkeeper is targeted with a physical attack; **Requirements** The Doorkeeper is aware of the attack and is not flat-footed; **Effect** The Doorkeeper becomes hidden against the triggering attack.

Speed 25 feet, fly 50 feet

Melee ⬥ claw +27 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d10+11 type plus 2d10 evil and Grab

Divine Spontaneous Spells DC 36, attack +30;

4th (3 slots) *anathematic reprisal, divine wrath, read omens*; **3rd** (3 slots) *chilling darkness, crisis of faith, enthrall*; **2nd** (3 slots) *augury, dispel magic, sound burst*; **1st** (3 slots) *bless, create water, heal*; **Cantrips** (4th) *daze, detect magic, read magic, stabilize*

Divine Innate Spells DC 36; **6th** *feeblemind, spellwrack*; **4th** *dimension door* ×2, *suggestion*; **3rd** *mind reading* (at will); **Constant** (2nd) *see invisibility*

Dorvae Venom (poison, virulent) A creature under the effect of this poison uses the outcome one degree of success worse than the result of any Will saving throw against the Doorkeeper's innate suggestion; **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 36; **Maximum Duration** 1 minute; **Stage 1** 2d6 poison damage and stupefied 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 4d6 poison damage and stupefied 2 (1 round)

Lightning Breath ⬥ (divine, electricity, flourish) **Frequency** twice per day;

Effect The Doorkeeper breathes lightning that deals 10d10 electricity damage in a 30-foot line (DC 36 basic Reflex save).

Writhing Snakes ⬥ (attack)

Requirements The Doorkeeper has a creature grabbed; **Effect** The serpents of the Doorkeeper's body writhe around the grappled foe, biting wherever they can gain purchase. The creature takes 4d10 piercing damage and is exposed to dorvae venom.



TERRIBLE HYBRID THINGS (2)

CREATURE 12

CE LARGE ABERRATION

Perception +21; greater darkvision

Languages Aklo, Necronomus^{LL7-56}

Skills Acrobatics +25, Stealth +25

Str +5, **Dex** +7, **Con** +43, **Int** +2, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +3

AC 33; **Fort** +20, **Ref** +23, **Will** +24

HP 215; **Immunities** cold, confused, hunger, precision, sickened, thirst

Caustic Blood The terrible hybrid thing's highly caustic blood sprays when it takes piercing or slashing damage or any effect that deals bleed damage. In either case, adjacent creatures are hit with the blood, causing them to take 2d6 acid damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save).

Low Metabolism As void-stirge.

Yellow Sign Affinity As void-stirge.

Speed 25 feet, fly 50 feet; starflight

Melee ♦ beak +26, **Damage** 3d10+10 piercing

Melee ♦ claw +26 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 3d8+10 slashing plus Improved Grab

Blood Drain ♦ **Requirement** The terrible hybrid thing's last action was a success with a beak Strike; **Effect** The terrible hybrid thing drinks the creature's blood. This deals 1d10 bleed damage and the terrible hybrid thing gains an equal number of points in its Blood Pool. A creature that has its blood drained by a terrible hybrid thing is drained 1 until it receives healing (of any kind or amount).

Bloodlust ↻ As void-stirge.

Sanguine Power ♦ **Frequency** once per turn;

Requirements The terrible hybrid thing has at least 1 point in its Blood Pool; **Effect** The terrible hybrid thing gains one of the following abilities for 1 round per blood point it spends. The terrible hybrid thing can have more than one of these abilities active at a time.

* **Bolster** ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** The terrible hybrid thing adds a +2 status bonus to a single check or DC.

* **Flurry** ♦ (flourish) The terrible hybrid thing makes two melee Strikes. The terrible hybrid thing's multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after both attacks.

* **Regeneration** The terrible hybrid thing gains regeneration 15 (deactivated by acid, bludgeoning, or fire).

* **Sanguine Spell** The terrible hybrid thing gains the Cast a Spell activity. It can cast the following occult innate spells at will, but each time must spend a number of blood points equal to the spell's level as part of casting it. It can heighten

vampiric touch up to level 6 if it has the blood points available. **6th blood to sap** (see **Appendix C**, page 139), *vampiric exsanguination*; **3rd vampiric touch**

* **Toxic Blood** (poison) The terrible hybrid thing's Caustic Blood does an additional 2d6 poison damage.

Swoop ♦♦ As void-stirge.

Abduct As void-stirge.

Blood Pool A terrible hybrid thing uses blood it drains to power many of its abilities. Its Blood Pool is filled when it uses Blood Drain, up to a maximum of 24 blood points. If it doesn't use those blood points to power its abilities, they slowly drain at a rate of 1d10 blood points every 24 hours as the terrible hybrid thing indulges in sips from its stored reserve.

Starflight As void-stirge.

Tactics: The Doorkeeper and his minions lair upon the chamber's upper terrace. Unless the PCs have magically transported themselves into this chamber, they will not be surprised because of the changes in wind patterns caused by the opening of the iron door at **O2a**. When the PCs arrive, the Doorkeeper stands at the edge of his terrace, flanked by the hulking girth of the terrible hybrid things squatting on either side. The Doorkeeper casts *mind reading* to prepare to interrogate intruders.

If the PCs attack, the Doorkeeper first uses a manipulate action to blow a long blast on his horn, which will summon any surviving void-stirges from area **O2** to his aid immediately. The Doorkeeper remains upon his perch (which gives him cover from anyone on the floor below) and uses his Lightning Breath. He uses *feeblemind* and *divine wrath* early in the fight, and *chilling darkness*, *bleed*, and *spellwrack* to help his minions. If engaged in melee, he attempts to Grab a foe and use Writhing Snakes before using *suggestion* to have that PC "raise the gate and travel down the windy way and feed the baleful beast beyond," forcing them to open the portcullis to **O5** and head down to **O6** to face the beast within.

If no void-stirges have arrived to help within 4 rounds or if both of his terrible hybrid things are killed, the Doorkeeper blows short blasts on his horn as a three-action activity with the manipulate trait each round. These blasts serve to agitate the flying polyp in **O6** who then

uses its Wind Blast at the tunnel entrance to **O5**. It is not enhanced and focused by the spiraling tunnel at **O3**, so it only lasts for a single round as normal, but the shaping of the chamber walls in **O4** causes the Wind Blast to affect every creature that is in that room who is not on the upper terrace. The creature continues to use this ability every 1d4 rounds for as long as the Doorkeeper continues making the short blasts.

While the Doorkeeper directs the battle from the terrace, the terrible hybrid things launch themselves to attack and attempt to feed on foes in the room below. Each closes to try to drain foes' blood, then uses Sanguine Power first to get Regeneration and then Toxic Blood before alternating between using Sanguine Spell and trying to Strike and Drain Blood. If either is reduced below half Hit Points that are not recovered by its regeneration, it retreats back to the terrace to defend the Doorkeeper from there. If the Doorkeeper begins to blow the short blasts to summon the flying polyp's attack, they both know to retreat to his side and defend him and try to force the PCs off of the terrace and into the effects of its Wind Blast.

Development: If the PCs are not immediately hostile, the Doorkeeper delays in his attacks to converse with the PCs while he uses *mind reading* to probe their identities. He speaks to them simultaneously in Aklo while projecting the message to them telepathically, so the effect is rather disconcerting. He identifies himself as the "Doorkeeper of the King in Yellow" and asks if the party has "come to pay homage or to feed the caged beast." If the party acts in a friendly manner, he tries to detect their true intentions through his *mind reading* and Sensing their Motive. If he believes the PCs will willingly enter area **O6** on their own or leave his lair peacefully, he allows them to do so. However, if they linger for more than 3 rounds or he doesn't believe their intentions are peaceful, he casts *enthrall* on them to allow his minions to get close to attack before launching his own attacks as mentioned in "Tactics" above.

Treasure: Though his days of seeking treasure and personal power are past since his strange calling to the King in Yellow, the Doorkeeper has still haphazardly accumulated some treasures that are collected in two piles near the back of his terrace lair. The first pile includes 356 sp, 750 gp, and a +1 longsword. The other pile contains a heap of 140 gp, a leather pouch that holds two diamonds (100 sp each) and a scroll of *bleed*, a scroll of *discern lies*, a scroll of *raise dead*, and a scroll of *true strike*.

O5. THE SILVER DOOR

A portcullis made of silver bars blocks a steeply sloping tunnel here. Only 20 feet or so down this tunnel, evidence of a past collapse constricts it down to a mere 5 feet wide and 5 feet high, making it a potentially tight climb. A constant wind whistles out of this tunnel.

The portcullis is a standard iron portcullis, but its bars are sheathed in silver. It is controlled by the winch in area **O4**. Inscribed on the eastern side of the portcullis's central crossbar is a symbol that looks like a twig with 5 branches. This is recognizable as an image of an *Elder Sign*^{HA} with a DC 30 Religion check to Recall Knowledge. It keeps the flying polyp in **O6** from trying to leave its prison and keeps the Doorkeeper and his void-stirges at least 10 feet away from the portcullis unless the portcullis is raised. When the portcullis is raised, the *Elder Sign* is obscured and does not serve to hold anything back, though the flying polyp does not attempt an escape simply out of long habit. In addition, this means that unless the portcullis is in the lowered position while the PCs are on the east side of it, they have no chance to notice the *Elder Sign*. If they should happen to notice the *Elder Sign* and are able to remove it from the portcullis intact (such as by cutting off the crossbar), they can wield the sign in one hand. If presented boldly in this way against any of the undead or unnatural denizens of the rift dedicated to the King Yellow (the Doorkeeper, void-stirges, maenads, etc.), it will cause those creatures to recoil from it exactly as a vampire from a strongly presented religious symbol. See "Revulsion" under "Vampire Weaknesses" under Vampire in the *Pathfinder Bestiary* (Second Edition) for the effects of this use.

The passage beyond the portcullis descends at a roughly 45° slope and is scoured smooth by the winds so that the Athletics check to Climb it is DC 30.

Treasure: If the time is taken to pry the silver sheathing from the portcullis (requiring approximately 5 hours), a total of 8 pounds of silver can be recovered (treat as 8 silver chunks, worth 10 sp each, and 1 Bulk). However, since the *Elder Sign* is scribed into the silver of the crossbar, doing this will destroy it. If the silver of the crossbar is left intact, then only 7 chunks of silver can be recovered.

O6. THE PRISON SEVERE 14

The sloping passage ends on a ledge overlooking a cavern of massive proportions. Its floor dips down from the ledge for at least another 100 feet, but even that is difficult to tell because the cavern floor is a chaotic geography of cliffs, crevices, rocky pillars, ledges,

ridges, saddles, rock arches, pinnacles, and pits. It's as if a canyon had been dug under the earth here, or perhaps the tumbled blocks of some mad god. Despite the depth underground and lack of any other apparent openings to the surface, currents of air continually whip and swirl throughout this enormous chamber creating a loud whistling that reverberates from the thousands of surfaces and angles.

As mentioned, the floor of this cavern is a jumble of broken and wind-carved stone ranging in depth of 10–100 feet below the level of the ledge at the entrance, while the ceiling rises as much as 40 feet above as the cavern extends away from the entrance. As such, the floor is wholly unsuitable for overland travel. Every 5-foot square traversed requires an Athletics check to Climb (DC 10 + 1d20) with a possible drop of 2d6–1 x 10 feet for a critical failure. Even with effects like *spider climb* or some other climb Speed, navigation is problematic as it takes 10 feet of movement to cross each 5-foot square. The upside is that every 5-foot square at ground level provides cover and may provide concealment from anyone more than 5 feet away (roll d6: 1–3 no concealment, 4–6 concealment). In short, this cavern's layout is especially conducive to flying creatures. However, even that is no sure thing as the constantly changing air currents that whip throughout the cavern are severe (31–50 mph) — see area **O4** for these effects — and shift in directions continuously.

This cavern serves as a prison for a strange creature known as a **flying polyp**. This tapering cylinder of flesh measures 30 feet long and is constantly shifting in and out of view as portions of its body and hide seem to turn invisible before flickering back into existence. It roils among the winds of this cavern, riding the currents in undulating maneuvers but seeks escape from this chamber where it has been held for over a millennium.



FLYING POLYP

CREATURE 15

UNCOMMON CE HUGE ABERRATION AIR

Perception +27; darkvision

Languages Aklo

Skills Athletics +30, Acrobatics +27, Nature +25, Society +27

Str +8, **Dex** +4, **Con** +6, **Int** +4, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +4

AC 35; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +25, **Will** +28

HP 270; **Immunities** air, cold, precision, sonic;

Weaknesses electricity 10

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 100 feet, DC 33

Deflecting Wind ♦ (air) Trigger The flying polyp is targeted with a physical ranged attack; Requirements The flying polyp is aware of the attack and is not flat-footed; Effect The flying polyp gains a +4 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack.

Partial Invisibility A flying polyp's body constantly flickers and shifts, passing from visibility to invisibility in a seemingly random pattern and often not wholly at once, leaving the creature's body in what appear to be multiple sections. It is always concealed to other creatures. It may spend an action with the concentrate trait to become invisible until the end of its next turn.

Speed 25 feet, fly 50 feet

Melee ♦ tentacle +29 (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d10+15 bludgeoning plus grab

Occult Innate Spells DC 36; **8th** *punishing winds*, *wind walk* (at will); **3rd** *wall of wind* (at will); **1st** *feather fall*, *gust of wind* (at will), *pushing gust*

Rituals *control weather*

Constrict ♦ 1d10+15, DC 37

Eerie Exhale ◆◆◆ (air, occult) **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The flying polyp sends a strange wind out. Using this ability creates a 100-foot aura around the flying polyp, in which it can detect creatures as an imprecise sense. It may spend an action with the concentrate trait each subsequent round to continue the effect until the end of its next turn and increase the aura's radius by 100 feet, to a maximum radius of a mile and a maximum duration of one hour. Natural windstorms or other powerful winds have no effect on this aura.

Sucking Wind ➤ (air, occult) **Trigger** The flying polyp's turn begins; **Requirement** One or more other creatures are in the flying polyp's Eerie Exhale aura; **Effect** The flying polyp increases the effect of its eerie wind to slow and eventually stop up to five creatures. The wind itself isn't particularly strong, but it creates a peculiar sucking sensation as if it were attempting to pull the creatures back toward the flying polyp. Each targeted creature must attempt a DC 38 Fortitude save or be slowed 1 until it leaves the aura; on a critical success, the creature is temporarily immune for 1 minute. A creature that is slowed that fails this save is immobilized for 1 round. *Freedom of movement* protects against the effects of Sucking Wind, but natural windstorms or other powerful winds have no effect.

Wind Blast ◆◆ (air) The flying polyp creates a powerful blast of wind up to a range of 120 feet that scours the flesh in a 30-foot burst. Creatures within the burst take 10d10 bludgeoning damage (DC 37 basic Reflex save). Creatures must also succeed at a DC 37 Fortitude save or be pushed 10 feet (20 feet and knocked prone on a critical failure) in a direct line from the center of the burst. The flying polyp can't use Wind Blast again for 1d4 rounds.

Tactics: When faced with intruders, the flying polyp relies upon its mastery of wind to buffet and bludgeon its foes. If it grabs a foe, it Constricts it for 1 round then hurls that victim down among the peaks and crevices of the floor below (where it lands and takes falling damage) as a single

action with the attack trait. The force of the throw requires a creature capable of flying to succeed at a DC 30 Acrobatics check to Maneuver in Flight to stop its fall; it takes half the normal falling damage on a failure, or normal falling damage on a critical failure.

Development: After fighting for 1d4 rounds, the flying polyp will realize that the silver gate at O5 must be open and will attempt to fly up and out of area O. Because of its bulk, the cramped tunnels between here and the entrance are difficult terrain for it, and its absence from this chamber removes the wind effects from area O3 so that pursuing PCs will have to make their own way through the corkscrew tunnel. If it is successful in escaping it will fly up and out of the crater and begin hunting on the surrounding steppes. It kills several ash giants, and there will be no further random encounters Flying Above the Crater or on the Crater Ridge and Surrounding Area other than possible run-ins with the polyp itself. Every hour spent in the air above the crater or on the ground surrounding the crater has a 15% chance of encountering the raging beast. In addition, there is a cumulative 25% chance each day of the polyp locating any camp or allies left by the PCs outside the crater. If this occurs, the flying polyp utterly destroys this, leaving only 1d2 random survivors who managed to flee with no more than 50% of their Hit Points remaining.

Treasure: Anyone taking several hours to Search among the crazed floor of this chamber who succeeds at a DC 42 Perception check or Detects Magic magic to locate any treasures discovers the item that first attracted the flying polyp to this strange cavern long ago, a fist-sized piece of stone, jet black with a rough texture that, upon closer inspection of its surface, appears to actually swirl very slowly, as if containing a ceaselessly shifting smoke. This is the *Holocaust Stone of Gun'Ta* (see **Appendix C**, page ??) that came to the **Lost Lands** upon the meteor that struck in the Haunted Steppe and that formed this cavern with its own unleashed power upon impact. The flying polyp both covets the stone and abhors it for causing it to become trapped for so long and will abandon the stone for 1d2 weeks while it rampages across the steppes above before returning to reclaim it.

P. THE TRAVELER'S TOMB

This is one of the oldest features of the crater, having been formed in the weeks and years following its initial impact. There are no footprints or trails leading to this almost perfectly round hole, so it is more difficult to spot than some of the other features of the Pit.

P. THE TRAVELERS TOMB



The fall of the Burning Star, and its twin that struck in the distant Red Waste of Libynos, came to the **Lost Lands** by no accident. The power of Hastur, as he lay near-dormant in his primordial prison, long stretched out his senses across the Dark Tapestry to locate some means of escape. For 20 million years he languished in his goddess-built incarceration after suffering his fate as a result of the impact of the much greater asteroid known alternately as the Hammer of Mercy or the Judgment of Xtu^{LL6-591}, but finally through what was perhaps fate or just the will of the imprisoned Great Old One, Hastur was able to ensnare the two asteroids that would eventually fall to earth.

The reason Hastur sought these two asteroids rather than just any of the millions that float through the vast void of space was that he could sense the presence of the *Holocaust Stone of Gun'Ta* (see area **O6**) in one of them. He intended to bring them down as meteors directly into Lake Hali in the northwestern reaches of the Haunted Steppe, reasoning that the devastation caused by the activated artifact might be sufficient to loosen the bindings that held him. He was not to experience any such salvation though, as he discovered the work of

Erce, The Goddess, who had banished him with Xtu and millions of years later at the end of the Age of Dragons would sacrifice herself to create the Blessed Tesseract to save the world once again and protect the fledgling new gods of Boros, even though it cost her life and the loss of almost all memory of her beyond the persisting vague beliefs in the Blessed Tesseract. However, this Blessed Tesseract served not only to protect the fledgling world and gods from her husband, the god Boros, now remembered only in myth as The Father^{LL5-239}, but its still-active mandate caused the falling meteors to be partially deflected. This caused them to enter the atmosphere several hours apart, and also shifted the latitude of their impact more than 800 miles south of Lake Hali. The first struck in far Libynos and the second (containing the *Holocaust Stone of Gun'Ta*) struck central Akados. The devastation was great from this collision, but rather than being focused upon the wards of The Goddess — Erce — it was instead expended upon the vastness and desolation that already existed at the center of the near-deserted Haunted Steppe. Thwarted in his plan, Hastur turned his attention to other means by which to once again rise ascendant over the world. But that was not the end of the story for the Burning Star.

Like its sister meteor in the Red Waste, which carried at its core the Pit-Worm of Yhath^{AK:M-74-79}, the meteor of the Haunted Steppe held more than just the coveted *Holocaust Stone*. It too held a sleeping passenger encapsulated at its heart, the **chyzaedu**^{PCS:OB} traveler Talethqueh-Gun'Ta, who had been selected by his people prior to the destruction of their homeworld to serve as chief attendant to the *Holocaust Stone*. Talethqueh was killed in the impact of the meteorite, but the proximity of the powerful *Holocaust Stone* caused his body to be infused by necromantic energies and arise as a horrific undead known as a **dread mohrg**. Undaunted by his new undead existence, Talethqueh began the laborious process of burrowing his way up through hundreds of feet of rock to reach the surface of the new world he had reached. But even though Hastur had turned his attention away from the Burning Star for the time being, the Elder Spirits of the Shattered Folk tribes — many of whose peoples had been obliterated by the Burning Star's fall — could sense the danger of the *Holocaust Stone* of Gun'Ta and the awakening of its guardian and potential user.

The Ethtuwate^{FB} (as these Elder Spirits are known) called Thaka the Golden Rider^{FB} summoned his tribal greatest heroes, fearing the hand of the spirit Drethra, Mother of Mayhem^{FB}, in the stone's fall and the interstellar traveler's awakening. By the time Talethqueh-Gun'Ta was able to reach the surface, he found dozens of the most powerful heroes of the Shattered Folk waiting in the newly formed meteor crater to confront him and prevent his escape. Even though suffering badly from the effects of the meteor's radiation, these were the greatest heroes among the tribes of the Haunted Steppe and, with Thaka's blessing, were able to drive the undead chyzaedu back down into the hole he had burrowed from below. Many of these heroes followed him into his former lair to keep him occupied while companions on the surface above labored to prevent him from ever escaping.

Druids of the Ethtuwate used their mastery over elemental earth to collapse a portion of Talethqueh-Gun'Ta's borehole and prevent him from quickly accessing it, though doing so meant trapping dozens of their comrades under the earth with him. Then a powerful shaman of Thaka blessed a special clay jar with his mastery over the rain and rivers and caused it to give forth a continuous bounty of flowing, pure water. The druids used their magic to excavate a secondary cavern around the lair of Talethqueh-Gun'Ta and placed the blessed jar within it as it spilled over in its abundance, while other spellcasters among the Shattered Folk enacted a ritual to place a permanent *dimensional lock* over the entire area.

By the time the dread mohrg chyzaedu had finished off the heroes pitted against him, the blessed jar of Thaka had begun to fill this newly created cavern and created an aquifer that encapsulated the traveler's cavern lair. It was then that it discovered that its newly undead form created in the fires of meteoric impact had a debilitating weakness to the touch of water. Thaka's insight into the nature of this invading creature had permitted the Shattered Folk to create a means of imprisoning Talethqueh-Gun'Ta by completely surrounding his underground home with an aqueous cocoon that has successfully kept the beast trapped and unable to recover the nearby *Holocaust Stone* for 2,000 years.

P1. THE BOREHOLE

The near featureless surface of the hardpan is broken here by an almost perfectly circular pit, 30 feet in diameter. On closer inspection, it can be seen that the walls of the pit are certainly not natural as it maintains its circular diameter as it extends straight down for as far as the eye can see and its walls remain virtually smooth, as if dug with great skill and precision.

This circular pit is what remains of Talethqueh-Gun'ta's borehole as the newly undead monstrosity burrowed its way up and out of the pit. It is also where he was driven back by the Shattered Folk heroes who sacrificed themselves to keep him contained in the pit. Those events all occurred two millennia ago, so no trace remains of that battle.

The walls of the pit are hewn through stone and, though smooth, are not perfectly so. They require a DC 30 Athletics check to Climb. The 30-foot-diameter pit descends straight down for 300 feet before reaching the surface of murky water. Anyone diving through these depths finds that the pit extends another 60 feet before ending abruptly. Anyone digging through the 2,000 years of silt that have built up can discover that the floor of the pit is actually the compressed remains of rubble and broken stone, as if the deepest portion of the pit had collapsed in upon itself at some point long ago. A shimmering emerald field covers the surface of the rubble (but hidden beneath the silt). A DC 30 Arcana, Occultism, or Religion check to Identify Magic can identify this as an active *dimensional lock* that covers the rubble and appears to extend into the walls surrounding the pit as well. Likewise, anyone examining the walls of the pit below the waterline and making a DC 20 Nature or Minnie Lore check realizes that the walls are fairly porous and that the pit appears to be part of some sort of aquifer beneath the meteor crater.

If PCs wish, they can break through this relatively thin rock wall (3 in. thick, Hardness 7, HP 28 (BT 14), Force Open DC 30) to breach area P2. This does not cause any rush of water,

because the water level of the pit and the aquifer are already equalized. If the PCs wish to dig down through the rubble below (see “Burial” in Chapter 10 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* for details on digging) at least 20 feet and horizontally at least 10 feet will breach area **P3**. In this case, water will begin to pour into area **P3** through this breach, though because of the size of the cavern it will take months for it to fill and, as long as the water source in **P2** remains in place, the aquifer itself will never drain. If the undead chyzaedu remains undestroyed, he will have a zombie troop plug the leak into **P3** long before the water level begins to threaten his lair.

P2. AQUIFER

Rough, seemingly natural caverns extend in ragged rises and drops in all directions beneath an irregular ceiling. The entire space is completely filled with cold, clean water. Strangely the rock floor glows with a faint emerald sheen providing just a hint of green illumination to this eerie aquatic cave system.

This vast area is more a series of interconnected caves that extend outward and down from area **P1** like the surface of an oblong bubble, the interior of the bubble being a layer of intact stone surrounding the hollow interior of **P3**. This serves to completely surround that area in a barrier of water that prevents Talethqueh-Gun’Ta from burrowing out. The emerald sheen is the visible manifestation of a permanent *dimensional lock* that completely encapsulates area **P3** and prevents the chyzaedu from using magic to escape.

Anyone able to breathe underwater taking the time to thoroughly explore this aquifer can discover its spheroid shape, though the water is cold (40° F) and causes a PC to take 2d6 cold damage every hour. The severity of the cold is increased because the PCs are immersed in the water. See “Climate” in Chapter 10 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* for more information.

If anyone makes such a search, allow them a DC 30 Perception check to notice an ancient clay jar of Shattered Folk design and incised with symbols of the sun, sheaves of grain, and rivers, lying on the floor of the cavern at the point marked “X” on the map. This is the jar blessed by Thaka and functions as a *decanter of endless water*. It is currently set on its “fountain” setting and pours forth 5 gallons of fresh water per round in a 5-foot-long stream. Changing the setting to “geyser” has no effect on the aquifer, as excess water drains into the local water table, but removing the jar or turning it on a lesser setting will cause the aquifer to drain away over the next 6 months. After only 2 months, the upper portion of the aquifer will be dry and will allow Talethqueh-Gun’Ta to burrow out of his prison once again.

P3. THE TRAVELER’S LAIR EXTREME 14

Beyond the mound of rocks, soil and debris that fills the southern end of this place lies an expansive cavern that reeks from the foul, stale air that fills it. The rough-hewn vaulting ceiling drips a constant precipitation into the murky pool that covers the floor of the place. In the center of the room a mound of the rubble and debris has been collected to create an island of sorts. A portion of the island is covered by some sort of tent-like structure.

This cavern served as the hibernation cocoon of Talethqueh-Gun’Ta as his asteroid home hurtled through space, and it became his temporary tomb after he died in the impact only to arise as a dread mohrg chyzaedu shortly thereafter. When he was driven back into this cavern two thousand years ago, a warband of Shattered Folk heroes followed him. He was eventually able to overcome them all, but not before the Shattered Folk on the surface above had discovered his weakness and sealed him within the chamber. The water of the aquifer (**P2**) drips through tiny pores in the stone above and has filled this chamber to a depth of 3 feet (treat the flooded portions of the floor as a shallow bog, difficult terrain for Medium creatures and greater difficult terrain for Small creatures). To stay out of the water, the chyzaedu used his minions to construct a 15-foot high rubble platform to rest on. He then used all of their clothing, equipment, and eventually even their skin to construct a tarp that he must constantly use magic to repair in order to keep the dripping water off of his sensitive undead flesh.

Talethqueh-Gun’Ta awaits intruders on the island beneath the shelter of his tent while the remnant of the attacking Shattered Folk warriors, now formed into two **zombie troops**, lurk in the surrounding waters and follow the mohrg’s commands. The fast zombies have all been skinned leaving only their decaying muscle and bone visible. Only the mohrg’s animating magic keeps them from collapsing into ruin from the long exposure to the wet cavern.

TALETHQUEH-GUN’TA

CREATURE 16

UNIQUE LE GARGANTUAN UNDEAD

Perception +28; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Aklo, Necril; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Athletics +34, Diplomacy +28, Intimidation +28, Religion +31

Str +9, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** +4, **Wis** +9, **Cha** +4

AC 37; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +25, **Will** +30

HP 300, negative healing; **Immunities** death

effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; Resistances mental 10; **Weaknesses** water 10

Ecstatic Hunger (aura, divine, mental) 30 feet.

Talethqheh-Gun'ta's zealous drive to consume infects the minds of those around him. A living creature that starts its turn in this aura must attempt a DC 34 Will save. It must spend one action consuming food or drink on its person, including potions, elixirs, and the like, on a failure (or two actions on a critical failure). A creature that succeeds gains temporary immunity for 24 hours.

Unnatural (aura, divine, emotion, mental, necromancy) 30 feet. Animals do not willingly approach Talethqheh-Gun'ta. Requiring an animal to enter this aura or, if it's in the aura, to take any actions other than moving away from Talethqheh-Gun'ta requires a DC 34 Nature check to Command the Animal (even if it has the minion trait).

Alien Vestment Talethqheh-Gun'ta wears a sheet of undulating metallic material blessed by his inscrutable gods that functions as if it had a fortification rune. Each time he's critically hit, he attempts a DC 17 flat check. On a success, it becomes a normal hit. The vestment also serves as a divine focus. The vestment does not function for any other creature.

Create Spawn (divine, necromancy) A living creature slain by Talethqheh-Gun'ta that had a lower level than Talethqheh-Gun'ta rises as a mohrg spawn (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2* (Second Edition)) after 1 round, on its turn. This mohrg spawn is under the command of the mohrg that created it. If Talethqheh-Gun'ta is destroyed, the mohrg spawn is destroyed as well, immediately collapsing into a pile of decayed flesh and bones.

Water Vulnerability Water acts as an extremely strong acid to Talethqheh-Gun'ta. Full immersion in water deals 8d6 acid damage per round.

Speed 25 feet, burrow 15 feet, climb 15 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +30 (magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d6+17 piercing plus Grab and paralysis

Melee ♦ claw +30 (agile, magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d8+17 slashing

Melee ♦ tongue +30 (agile, reach 25 feet), **Damage** paralysis

Divine Prepared Spells DC 36, attack +32; **4th** *air walk, dimension anchor, divine wrath, harm*; **3rd** *blindness, circle of protection, crisis of faith, harm*; **2nd** *silence, sound burst, spiritual weapon* ×2; **1st** *command, fear, destroy water* ×2 (see **Appendix C**, page 137); **Cantrips** (8th) *detect magic, divine lance, guidance, read aura*

Occult Innate Spells DC 36; **Constant** *mind reading*

Command Undead ♦ (divine, necromancy)

Talethqheh-Gun'ta orders all mohrg spawn and zombies within 30 feet. Normal mohrg spawn and zombies never attack Talethqheh-Gun'ta unless compelled.

Swallow Whole ♦ (attack) Large, 1d6+8

bludgeoning plus 1d6 negative, Rupture 30

Paralysis (incapacitation, necromancy, occult) A living creature hit by Talethqheh-Gun'ta's tongue Strike must succeed at a DC 37 Fortitude save or become paralyzed. The creature can attempt a new save at the end of each of its turns.

ZOMBIE TROOPS (2)

CREATURE 12

NE HUGE MINDLESS TROOP UNDEAD

Perception +19; darkvision

Skills Athletics +25

Str +7, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** -5, **Wis** +4, **Cha** -2

AC 30; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +22, **Will** +19

HP 260, negative healing; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, mental, paralyzed, precision, poison, unconscious; **Resistances** bludgeoning 12, piercing 12, slashing 8; **Weaknesses** area damage 12, splash damage 12

Speed 25 feet, climb 25 feet

Rip and Tear ♦ Each enemy in the zombie troop's area takes 5d8 slashing damage (DC 31 basic Reflex save). A creature that fails its save against Rip and Tear becomes clumsy 1 for 1 round. If the creature attempts a concentrate or manipulate action while affected, it must succeed at a DC 5 flat check or the action is lost;

roll the check after spending the action, but before any effects are applied.

Clamber ♦♦♦ The zombie troop Strides up to twice its Speed, during which it attempts a High Jump or a Long Jump, as the individual creatures crawl over each other in horrific fashion. At any point during its movement, the zombie troop can use Rip and Tear against an enemy in its reach.

Tactics: If a battle occurs, Talethqueh-Gun'Ta prefers to remain under the shelter of his tent. He is hidden from anyone not on the island, though the tent provides no cover. In fact, the tent is very fragile, and anything inflicting at least 10 points of damage to it (or any damage at all if delivered by an area effect) causes it to fall in shreds and tatters. Once the tent is ruined, Talethqueh-Gun'Ta is exposed until he can take the time to repair it, and takes 1d6 points of damage per round from the cavern's dripping water. If battle occurs, the mohrg prefers to stay high and dry using spells while his zombie minions converge on the PCs to attack.



Treasure: As a hibernating traveler before arriving in the **Lost Lands**, Talethqueh-Gun'Ta has been effectively confined to this cavern for thousands of years. Other than his personal items, the only treasures he has accumulated are what were recovered from the Shattered Folk heroes that have managed to not be ruined by the two millennia of exposure to the damp cavern. A hollow concealed by a stone on his islands (DC 32 Perception check to locate) contains his few valuables: a small collection of strangely shaped coins of ancient Hundaei minting (heirlooms that were old even at the time of the Burning Star's crash) consisting of 22 sp and 116 sp, though each is worth 10 times as much if sold to a collector of antiquities, *slippers of spider climbing* (largely useless to Talethqueh-Gun'Ta since it can Climb on its own), a +1 *striking lance*, and a torn and mildewed (but still functional) *greater hat of the magi*.

Q. THE MOTHER LODGE

This serves as the locus of activity in the crater and serves as the focal point for the party's entire reason for coming. When the area is discovered and first explored, read the following.

A short bluff rises where the crater wall begins to slope upward towards the rim. Penetrating this bluff are two cave openings. Both appear to be excavations based on the worked stone surrounding them and the tailings that lie scattered beyond their mouths, so it seems likely they were once mines of the old Caleen operation. However, one of the openings is much larger than the other, measuring 30 feet high and 30 feet wide, whereas the other is only roughly 10 feet high and 10 feet wide. A stone lintel has been carved into the rock face around the largely opening, and faint lettering can be seen chiseled into its surface.

These caves were indeed part of the earliest Caleen mines, though after the fall of the colonies they have been transformed into much more. The writing around the larger opening is discernable with a DC 30 Society check to Recall Knowledge as High Boros^{LL8-30} and a speaker of that dead language or anyone succeeding on a DC 30 Society check to Decipher Writing can translate it as saying, "Crater Mine Adit #1: The Heart of New Reme." Underneath that, more crudely chiseled has been added the phrase, "The Mother Lodge."

A search for tracks on the ground outside this entrance uncovers signs of the frequent comings and goings of Medium bipedal creatures with a DC 20 Perception check. These are the various undead of the crater who enter and exit with some frequency. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Survival check to Track notices that none of these tracks enter the smaller entrance, though there are tracks from some heavier bipedal creature with large, clawed feet



(the ghole at Q2). For every 10 minutes spent outside this entrance, there is a 20% chance of an encounter as a creature arrives or is departing. If an encounter occurs, roll on the following table to determine its result. An encounter marked with an asterisk can only occur once. If an encounter designated as “only at night” occurs during daylight hours, treat it as no encounter.

d%	Encounter	Average Encounter
01–12	1d6 radioactive blast shadows	Trivial 14
13–24	2d6 radioactive combusted	Trivial 14
25–34	1d4 cinder ghouls	Trivial 14
35–44	3d4 void-stirges	Trivial 14
45–54	2d6 fire phantoms	Trivial 14
55–60	Ossuary golem*	Moderate 14
61–70	1d4+2 specters (only at night)	Trivial 14
71–80	1d6+6 wraiths (only at night)	Trivial 14
81–85	Ghole*	Moderate 14
86–95	1d6+1 witchfires	Trivial 14
96–00	Roll twice and ignore this result	varies

WITCHFIRE CREATURE 9

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)
Initiative Perception +18; darkvision

RADIOACTIVE BLAST SHADOW CREATURE 5

See page 69
Initiative Perception +12; darkvision

RADIOACTIVE COMBUSTED CREATURE 5

See page 48
Initiative Perception +12; darkvision

CINDER GHOUL^{TOHC-313} CREATURE 7

See page 48
Initiative Perception +15; darkvision

FIRE PHANTOM^{TOHC-278} CREATURE 5

See page 96
Initiative Perception +12; darkvision

GHOLE CREATURE 16

See page 123
Initiative Perception +28; darkvision, sickness scent 30 feet

OSSUARY GOLEM CREATURE 16

See page 122
Initiative Perception +26; darkvision

SPECTER CREATURE 7

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)
Initiative Perception +15; darkvision

VOID-STIRGE CREATURE 5

See page 106
Initiative Perception +11; greater darkvision

WRAITH CREATURE 6

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)
Initiative Perception +14; darkvision

Q1. CALEEN MEMORIAL MODERATE 14

Note: If the ossuary golem has been encountered and defeated at area Q1 already, then the bone obelisk is absent, leaving only a scattering of a few fresh and old bones on the floor where it once stood. Modify the description accordingly.

This wide cavern has a flat ceiling 30 feet overhead supported by a complex series of wooden support struts. On the southern wall a smaller opening, only 15 feet high exits the chamber. The entire room has a charnel reek to it, and with good reason. The eastern wall is dominated by a construction fully 25 feet tall. It is an obelisk of sorts but is composed entirely of bones: long bones, rib cages, pelvises, spinal columns, and the frequent inclusion of a gaping-eyed skull. Most of the bones are humanoid, though a smattering of giant-sized or non-humanoid bones appear among the rest. For the most part the bones seem very old, yellowed and cracked with time and exposure, but some of them look surprisingly fresh even still tacky with blood or with gobbets of flesh still clinging to them.

What makes this even more unusual is that these fresher pieces do not appear to be recent additions to the obelisk but rather are interspersed throughout its structure, some even in the lower foundational courses of the structure which would have to have been deconstructed to insert them there seamlessly. Yet there are no

signs that any such reconstruction has occurred. Standing to either side of this bone obelisk is a 7-foot limestone statue. One depicts an angelic being with a long robe and wings, though its face has been broken away leaving a strangely disturbing blank where an expression should be. The other is a bird-headed humanoid cradling a book in one arm and holding the other extended, though it has been broken off at the elbow.

This chamber holds an impromptu memorial to the thousands of Caleen colonists and those who came after and lost their lives to the hazards of the Pit of the Burning Star. The skeletal remains are mostly human, a mix of Rheman* and Shattered Folk, though this is not evident through any means short of an involved anthropological study or use of a spell like *talking corpse*. However, mixed in among them are a few other creatures, including the odd ash giant here and there. These have all been stacked here by the ghole in Q2 who finds the structural arrangement strangely pleasing. It spends most of its time scouring the crater for the myriad skeletal remains to be found and has been constructing this obelisk for many years. The presence of the strangely fresh corpses mixed in is because of its use of Restore Corpse on random portions for the purposes of snacking, though it doesn't actually remove the restored segments because it doesn't want to upset its construction. Rather it just gnaws away at the exposed flesh it has created and allows its leavings to rot.

The presence of the bone obelisk is not the most interesting thing about the room. Rather the fact that the bones of the obelisk have spontaneously animated as an ossuary golem should provide much more excitement to the PCs, unwelcome though it may be. The bone obelisk is the **ossuary golem** in its Disassembled form. It is not disturbed by any of the creatures normally found in the mines, nor even by the ghole occasionally feeding on it. However, if touched by a PC or even examined closely for more than 1 round, the golem reassembles into its normal form as a hideous multi-legged, multi-armed conglomeration of thousands of bones haphazardly fitted together and viciously attacks. It will pursue intruders from this chamber regardless of where they go.

OSSUARY GOLEM

CREATURE 16

UNCOMMON N LARGE CONSTRUCT GOLEM
MINDLESS

Perception +26; darkvision

Skills Athletics +35

Str +9, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -5

Disassemble When at rest with no living prey nearby, an ossuary golem spends 1 minute separates into its component skeletons that lie inert in true death. While it is in this form, creatures must actively Seek and succeed at a DC 37 Perception check to detect the ossuary golem's true nature.

AC 39; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +26, **Will** +27

HP 240; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, diseased, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, magic (see below), mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious; **Resistances** physical 15 (except adamantine and bludgeoning)

Assemble ➤ **Requirements** The ossuary golem is disassembled; **Trigger** The ossuary golem rolls initiative; **Effect** Bones fly toward the creature as it forms, catching any creatures in a 10-foot burst and doing 3d12 piercing damage (DC 37 basic Reflex save). The creature is also grabbed on a failure, or restrained on a critical failure (Escape DC 34). If the ossuary golem moves, any grabbed or restrained creature moves with it. This is forced movement.

Golem Antimagic harmed by force (7d10, 3d8 from areas and persistent damage); healed by negative (area 3d8 HP); slowed by healing.

Vulnerable to Gentle Repose Casting *gentle repose* on the golem makes it flat-footed for 1d4 rounds.

Vulnerable to Talking Corpse Casting *talking corpse* on the golem makes it stunned 3 as the spirits of the many deceased temporarily confuse it while vying for control of their individual bodies.

Speed 40 feet

Melee ♦ claw (forceful, sweep) +33, **Damage** 3d6+17 slashing plus 1d6 persistent bleed

Ranged ♦ jagged bone +31 (range increment 30 feet), **Damage** 3d12+17 piercing

Multi-limb Massacre ♦♦ The ossuary golem makes up to six claw Strikes, each against a different

* Rheman/Rhemen are the singular and plural demonyms for citizens of the Grand Duchy of Reme. Rhemian is the adjectival demonym for things from Reme.

target. These attacks count toward the ossuary golem's multiple attack penalty, but the multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after all the attacks.

Treasure: The statues on either side of the obelisk are actually of ancient construction. They are of marble and a PC who succeeds on a DC 28 Society or Art Lore check to Recall Knowledge recognizes them as authentic Rhemian works of art dating to the time period of the Caleen Colonies. On a critical success, they recognize the subjects of the sculptures. The angelic being can also be recognized with a DC 30 Religion check to Recall Knowledge as Kirasaan, a deva known to serve as herald to Solanus, The Light of Civilization, Goddess of the Sun and Healing. The same checks can be made to recognize the bird-man as Arturak the Fair, a legendary tengu merchant and follower of Dame Torren, Goddess of the Four Winds. He is typically shown holding an account ledger and a merchant's scale (that was once held in the statue's broken arm). On a critical success on the Religion check, a PC also recalls that Solanus and Torren are two of the three ancient patron deities of the city of Reme^{LL3-289} (the third being Mithras) and, though largely in decline now, would have been very prominent at the time that the Caleen Colonists departed the grand duchy. Despite being damaged, each could be sold to a museum or collector for 200 sp (though each weighs 450 pounds).

Q2. HARVESTER'S HOME MODERATE 14

This irregular cave reeks of carrion and excrement. The floor is strewn with bones in various stages of consumption and decomposition, most with pieces of gnawed flesh still clinging to them. In fact, it seems like a fairly large assortment of carrion considering how desolate the general area of the crater is and how little potential prey exists close by. Some sort of nest or bed composed of sticks, bones, and great tangles of filthy hair occupies the eastern portion of the cave.

The reason for the strangely abundant supply of carrion for feeding is because of the inhabitant's penchant for using Restore Corpse to feed upon on the many, many ancient skeletal remains to be found within the area of the crater. This **ghole** can be found in here 25% of the time during the day and 60% of the time at night, unless already encountered and defeated as a random encounter outside. If the golem is not present when the PCs arrive, there is a cumulative 10% chance per hour of his return. He attacks intruders relentlessly but will not pursue deeper into the mine.

GHOLE

CREATURE 16

UNCOMMON NE MEDIUM HUMANOID

Perception +28; darkvision, sickness scent 30 feet
Languages Aklo

Skills Occultism +28, Stealth +32, Survival +32

Str +9, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** +2, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +5

Sickness Scent A ghole can smell creatures with a disease as a precise scent.

AC 39; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +26, **Will** +29

HP 320; **Immunities** disease

Speed 30 feet, burrow 10 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +31 (deadly d12), **Damage** 3d10+17
piercing plus ghole plague

Melee ♦ claw +31 (agile), **Damage** 3d8+17 type plus
ghole plague

Occult Innate Spells DC 34; **3rd** *haste*; **2nd** *gentle repose* (at will), *ghoulish cravings*, *humanoid form* (at will), *invisibility* (vs. undead only)

Bolster Disease ↻ **Trigger** The ghole succeeds on a jaws Strike vs. a creature afflicted with one or more diseases; **Effect** The creature immediately attempts its next saving throw against every disease it has. In addition, until the diseases are cured, the creature uses the outcome for one degree of success worse than the result of any saves it makes vs. the diseases.

Ghole Plague (disease, virulent) The affected creature can't remove the fatigued condition while it's infected. **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 37; Stage 1 fatigued (12 hours); Stage 2 enfeebled 2 and fatigued (12 hours); Stage 3 enfeebled 3, fatigued, and take 1d6 persistent bleed damage every 1d20 minutes (12 hours)

Restore Corpse ♦ The ghole grows flesh on a decomposed or skeletonized corpse of a Medium or smaller creature. The corpse looks as it did when the creature died. The new flesh is somewhat rotted and only edible for creatures accustomed to eating carrion.

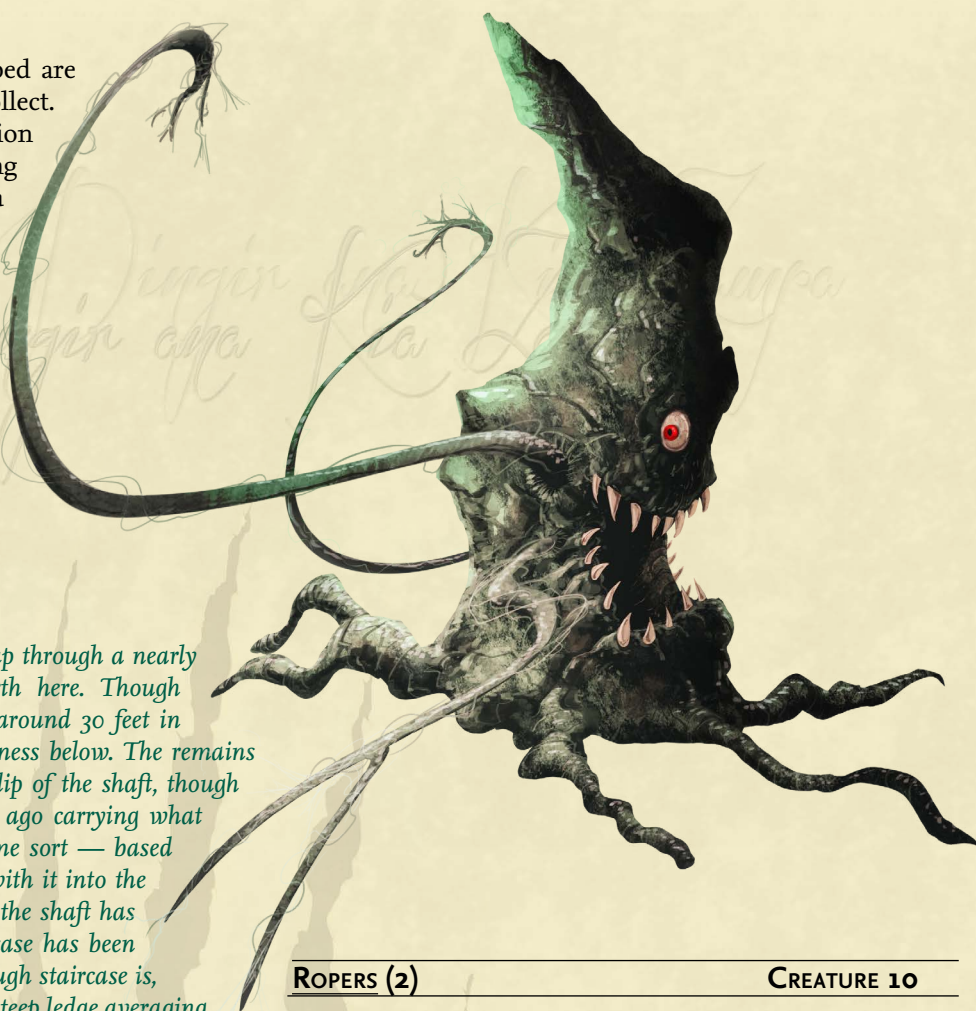
Savage The Sick Gholes are vicious when attacking a diseased foe. A ghole gains a +2 status bonus on attack and damage rolls vs. a target afflicted with a disease.

Treasure: Stashed in the ghole's bed are some treasures it has been able to collect. A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check while searching the bedding finds 1d6 of these treasures (2d6 on a critical success). They include: a pair of moldering belt pouches holding a total of 23 sp in assorted currency (none tainted by metallurgic amber) and a black pearl (150 sp), a suit of +1 shadow leather armor of Shattered Folk make, a ring of swimming, healer's gloves, a scroll of fire shield, and a wand of sound burst.

Q3. PRECIPITOUS STAIR TRIVIAL 14

Steam and the odor of a lit forge waft up through a nearly vertical mineshaft bored into the earth here. Though rough and uneven, the shaft averages around 30 feet in diameter as it disappears into the darkness below. The remains of a wooden platform still exist at the lip of the shaft, though the rotten beams have given way long ago carrying what was apparently a winch and lift of some sort — based on the remaining fragments — down with it into the darkness below. Access to the depths of the shaft has not been entirely lost, a spiraling staircase has been cut into the stone walls of the shaft, though staircase is, perhaps, a generous term. It's more of a steep ledge averaging no more than 2 feet in width that descends at a sometimes near-vertical slope into which shallow steps have been chiseled. In many cases, these steps are little more than hand and footholds on what is essentially a stone ladder.

Anyone succeeding at a DC 40 Perception check can hear the faint but discernable sound of what is apparently organ music coming from somewhere far below. The shaft is 210 feet deep, and the rough stairs that have been carved along its length provide a precarious access to below. They are treacherous to use and navigating them requires a DC 10 Athletics check to Climb. They are also the home of **2 ropers**. These aberrations have adapted to the vertical orientation of their lair. They cling to the walls of the shaft in natural hollows in the rough stone, where they are hidden. If they are noticed, they resemble nothing more than natural, stony protuberances unless the PCs succeed at Perception checks against their Stealth DCs (37 with cover). One of the ropers lurks just underneath the remains of the collapsed platform, while the other clings to a shallow hollow on the south wall of the shaft 30 feet below.



ROPERS (2)

CREATURE 10

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)
Initiative Stealth +25

Tactics: The roper beneath the platform has cover and is hidden from anyone on the ledge above. To be able to see it, the PCs will have to fly or work their way 10 feet down the stairs. This, of course, brings them in range of the second roper clinging to the wall 20 feet below that portion of the stairs. The intelligent creatures prefer to ambush their prey by waiting until at least one PC approaches the edge above. Then the first roper attacks with its strands and attempts to Pull the Strands to drag a PC off the ledge. A PC successfully pulled is then released to drop to the base of the shaft 210 feet below. When PCs move down the stairs or shaft to try and get at the first roper, the second uses the same tactic to try and grab PCs and pull them off of the stairs to release them to fall down the shaft. They then concentrate their attacks on any flying PCs or those who attempt to stay up top and out of range. Only after all the PCs up top have been dealt with will the ropers descend the shaft to pick over any bodies below.

Treasure: The treasure kept by these creatures is tucked into the hollow in which the roper beneath the platform lurked. Only by closely examining that hollow can the treasure be located with a DC 32 Perception check. If successful, the PCs find an *eye of apprehension* stuffed into a small crack in the wall.

Q4. THE FACE OF DESPAIR TRIVIAL 14 AND LOW 14

From the base of the shaft, a long mine tunnel extends as far as you can see to the northwest. Regular wooden beams still support its ceiling, though some of these are bowed or appear to be rotting. The steam and metallic smell of a forge are much stronger down here and are clearly coming from somewhere down this tunnel.

This tunnel extends for 650 feet at a slight downward slope towards the center of the crater. Despite the appearance of the support beams, the tunnel is sound. It is only a DC 20 Perception check here to hear the sound of organ music coming from the tunnel.

This tunnel was the site of one of the final tragedies of the Conroi Expedition. While most of the survivors followed Azmerius Thade after their disastrous initial foray into the crater and ended up holing up at area **K**, two other members of the expedition also survived that deadly first encounter unbeknownst to the chaplain. Those two survivors were the expedition's mage, Manx, and the expedition's leader, Colonel Sixtun Conroi. Manx used *dimension door* to reach the interior of the crater, and Colonel Conroi was able to break free from the press of undead astride his *obsidian steed wondrous figurine* (currently located in area **N5**). Well aware of the dangers the crater represented by the time the expedition had reached it, Manx had reasoned that if the seasoned explorer Aroldus Gravenfar had already been here, he would have found some safehold or way out. From a reconnaissance by his familiar, Manx had located these mine entrances and determined that they led into the heart of the crater and would have been Gravenfar's objective.

Manx made it to this tunnel with his magic only to fall to the undead that inhabit it. Not long after, Col. Conroi was able to make it here, sick with radiation poisoning, nearly mad with fear, and fixated upon finding the trail of Gravenfar in hopes of affecting an escape. Here he came upon the corpse of Manx and was also slain shortly thereafter without ever truly realizing that his cause was already lost — Aroldus Gravenfar had never come to the crater. Though the bodies have long since been removed and devoured by the assorted inhabitants of the crater, the spirit of Col. Conroi lingers on in this tunnel as a **haunt**.

Haunt: Shortly after entering this hallway, a DC 22 Perception check notices a humanoid figure shuffling down the tunnel from behind the PCs (also coming from area **Q3**). This figure does not respond to any attempts to make contact and ignores attacks (which cannot harm the haunt). He reaches the PCs' position in 1 round and will be automatically noticed if they have not already done so. When this occurs, read the following.

The figure is among you almost before you can react. It is a man, a human, easily in his mid-sixties with thick-set features and a completely bald pate and a thick, bristling white moustache that extends into thick mutton chop sideburns that never quite reach his head. His skin seems pale and unhealthy and is blotchy with brown burn patches. He wears a cavalry officer's coat showing much wear and mending and missing several buttons and one epaulette, and a pair of large gashes in the side stain the dark-gray fabric with dark blood. He limps and shuffles, his red-rimmed, watery blue eyes staring straight ahead, never noticing you.

As the man half-limps, half-shuffles in obvious pain, he keeps mumbling the same mantra, "If Gravenfar came, he would've come here...Manx said he'd know an escape...Manx said. If Gravenfar came, he would've come here...Manx said he'd know an escape...Manx said. If Gravenfar came, he would've come here...Manx said he'd know an escape...Manx said."

He suddenly stops and looks at the floor, seeing something not visible to the rest of you. "Manx," he whispers, stooping down to the floor, "Manx? I thought you had fallen in the crater. You made it here? Was he here...was Gravenfar here? Did he find an escape?"

This entire scene plays out over the course of 1 round during which, if the PCs had noticed the figure approaching, they can make whatever actions they wish against the haunt. Regardless of their actions, the figure continues to ignore them. Unless the haunt is destroyed, at the end of the round the figure suddenly looks up, an expression of utter despair in his eyes. "He was never here," it says incredulously. "Did he never come this way?...but then where—" It cuts off its own sentence and arches its head back and unleashes a wail of hopeless despair before disappearing in an instant.

Anyone seeing the figure and making a DC 25 Society check can identify the man's uniform as that of a colonel of cavalry in the army of the Grand Duchy of Reme. It is possible that the players will remember (or if not, they can Recall the Knowledge with a DC 25 Society or relevant Lore check) that Sixtun Conroi, the leader of the Conroi Expedition was a retired colonel formerly of the Rhemian cavalry. On a critical success, they also recall that Manx the Marvelous was the name of the expedition's wizard and was known to be a close confidant of Col. Conroi.

HAUNT

Stealth DC 22 (expert) to notice the spirit shuffling down the tunnel

Description Col. Conroi's spirit retraces his steps and lets out an anguished cry.

Disable DC 38 Diplomacy (three success) or DC 41 Intimidation (three successes) to calm Col. Conroi's spirit. Successfully identifying the haunt as the spiritual essence of Colonel Sixtun Conroi and verbally confirming to him that the explorer Aroldus Gravenfar seemingly did not ever come to the Pit of the Burning Star, allows the spirit to realize that there was nothing he could have done to enable the escape of him or his men. Doing so allows the incredulous spirit to loose its grip on the Material Plane and go on to its judgment.

Cataclysmic Bereavement ⤵ (divine, sonic); **Trigger** One or more creatures enters area **Q4**. **Effect** The spirit appears and shuffles down the corridor. One round later, it unleashes a hopeless wail of despair, doing 6d10+35 sonic damage (DC 34 basic Fortitude save).

Reset 1 hour

Development: After dealing with the haunt and possibly being rewarded (see "Treasure" below), the PCs may still encounter other inhabitants in this long tunnel. Whenever they travel the length of this corridor, roll twice for encounters on the table below — once at the midway point and once just before reaching the end. An encounter occurs 20% of the time and represents the fairly constant stream of undead that come and go from this area.

Statistics for creatures encountered here are described at the beginning of **Q. The Mother Lode** (see page 119).

d%	Encounter	Average Encounter
01–12	1d6 radioactive blast shadows	Trivial 14
13–24	2d6 radioactive combusted	Trivial 14
25–34	1d4 cinder ghouls	Trivial 14
35–44	3d4 void-stirges	Trivial 14
45–54	2d6 fire phantoms	Trivial 14
55–64	1d4+2 specters	Trivial 14

65–74	1d6+6 wraiths	Trivial 14
75–84	1d6+1 witchfires	Trivial 14
85–00	Roll twice and ignore this result	varies

Treasure: If the haunt is permanently destroyed (not just disabled with Diplomacy or Intimidation checks), a morrigna psychopomp appears before the PCs 1 round later. This winged, masked monitor was sent years ago to collect the soul of Sixtun Conroi for judgment, however, the haunt has proven particularly resistant to the psychopomp. Only if the haunt is permanently destroyed by the PCs does the morrigna (who was monitoring the haunt from her home plane) manifest herself in the party's presence. She thanks the party for their service to the balance of the Great Beyond and rewards them with Conroi's +2 *striking standard-grade mithral cavalry sabre* (treat as a scimitar) that the psychopomp had recovered long ago and hoped (incorrectly) might somehow hold the key to finally laying the spirit to rest. Once she has bestowed the sword upon the party, the morrigna immediately banishes herself back to the Outer Planes to report on her success. If attacked, the psychopomp defends herself for 1 round before using banishment (and choosing to fail her saving throw) to escape.

PSYCHOPOMP, MORRIGNA**CREATURE 15**

Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +28; darkvision, lifesense 60 feet

Divine Innate Spells (DC 37) 5th *banishment*

Q5. CALEEN MINT

By the time the PCs reach the corridor outside this chamber, the sound of the organ music coming from area **Q8** is clearly audible.

The chamber is oppressively hot, and the steam of the passage outside has made its way in here as well. The smell of ozone and seared metal is strong, yet this room is nothing like you would have come to expect in the hellish depths of this mine. The chamber has been very neatly arranged as some kind of workshop. A large furnace stands across the way, though its fire is banked. Wooden benches stand near it with a pair of quenching buckets nearby between them and a small anvil that stands before the furnace. Next to this is a table covered in coins and small tools, next to which sits a handcart near the chamber's entrance. By the chamber's north wall stands a large hand press.

Anyone examining the contents of this room and succeeding at a DC 20 Crafting check or DC 30 Society check quickly grasps that this chamber has been set up for

the minting of coins. The worktable holds coin molds and small tools for extracting them amid many freshly minted coins. The press holds additional molds. All of these are for different denominations of Rhemian currency that date to some 600 years ago, and this room is the source of the cache of coins found in area N6. The three bins hold processed gold and copper respectively as well as one with a green, crystalline substance (metallurgic amber — see sidebar at the beginning of the chapter).

Treasure: Scattered on the table are a total of 41 sp and 270 cp in ancient Rhemian currency. These coins have all been tainted with metallurgic amber identically to those found in area N6. The mint has not been used in several weeks as more ore is being prepared in the smelter (Q7) so a new batch can be made. The metals currently in the bins consists of 17 Bulk of the crystalline metallurgic amber, 1 Bulk of raw gold (50 sp) and 2 Bulk of copper (5 sp/Bulk).

Q6. DROSS DISPOSAL LOW 14

Discarded heaps of cooled slag litter the floor all along this stone passage. The omnipresent haze and stench of burning metal is even more pronounced here, and the previously heard discordant pipe music is now discernable as the chords of some unholy chorus whose pitch and tone seem to closely mimic that of a pipe organ, all of which seem to emanate from around a corner at the end of this tunnel.

The tunnel is larger here, with a ceiling that rises to 18 feet in height. Worthless piles of slag separated from the ore in area Q7 are deposited haphazardly where they cool into the dross to be found here. The dross is primarily composed of stone and lead. However, the resourceful Prince Cale has put some of this dross to good use over the years in the creation of 3 lead golems. These constructs crouch among the other piles of dross; they can be noticed with a DC 23 Perception check. They remain inert unless the entrance to area Q8 is approached, in which case they lurch to life and attack until destroyed. One unexpected benefit of the lead in the dross and golems in here is that the effects of metallurgic amber do not function in this room as well as Q7 and Q8.

LEAD GOLEMS (3)

CREATURE 12

N **LARGE** **CONSTRUCT** **GOLEM** **MINDLESS**

Perception +20; **darkvision**

Skills Athletics +26, **Crafting** +22

Str +7, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** -5

AC 32; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +21, **Will** +20

HP 175; **Immunities** acid, bleed, death effects,

diseased, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, magic (see below), mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious; **Resistances** electricity 10, physical 10 (except adamantine)

Acid Conductor (acid) An attack that would deal acid damage to the lead golem instead coats it, adding an additional 1d6 acid damage to its fist Strike for 1d4 rounds.

Divination Screen (aura) 60 feet. A lead golem automatically disrupts any divination spell cast in this area.

Retributive Miasma ♦ (aura, poison) Trigger A physical attack deals damage to the lead golem; Effect Fine lead particles fill the air within a 5-foot burst. The cloud persists for 1 round. Any creature in the area (or that later enters the area) is exposed to Lead Poison. Additional uses of this ability extend the duration for 1 round.

Golem Antimagic harmed by air (5d10, 2d8 from areas and persistent damage); healed by fire (area 2d6 HP); slowed by earth

Intractable Density A lead golem is treated as one size larger (usually Huge) when an effect would move them against their will, such as Shove or Trip.

Vulnerable to Neutralize Poison Casting *neutralize poison* on the golem dissipates any clouds created by Retributive Miasma and deactivates Retributive Miasma for 1d6 rounds.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ fist +27, Damage 3d8+13 bludgeoning

Lead Poison (poison) **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 32; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 2d6 poison and clumsy 1 (2 rounds); **Stage 2** 3d6 poison and clumsy 1 and stupefied 1 (2 rounds); **Stage 3** 4d6 poison and clumsy 2 and stupefied 2 (2 rounds)

Q7. SMELTER TRIVIAL 14

The air in this room is oppressively hot. A furnace roars in one corner, and large vats hold molten stone from which metals are separated. Next to it are bins of ore. A table holds an assortment of assaying equipment and various jars of chemicals and reagents. Hand carts stand by to carry away dross and pure metals.

The temperature in here hovers around 145°, considered incredible heat, causing a creature to become fatigued after two hours and doing 5d6 fire damage per minute of breathing the super-heated air (see “Climate” in Chapter 10 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* for more information).

This smelting forge is where the ores coming from area Q8 are separated from the dross. The undead of the crater are ill-suited to this technical task, so Prince Cale has managed to ally with emissaries from Hell. These devils are not followers of Hastur, nor do they particularly care about “the local politics” as they call the goings-on at the Pit of the Burning Star. Rather they are under contract to smelt for Prince Cale and that is what they do. This group consists of a **barbed devil**, known as a hamatula, overseeing a workforce of 4 **hellstoker devils** who actually do the smelting. If the PCs enter here, the barbed devil initially warns them away telling them to go find some “stinking walkers” (undead) to kill. If the PCs immediately depart, the devils pay them no further mind, and if Prince Cale is slain their contract is fulfilled allowing them to immediately dimension door away. If the PCs attack or linger in this area longer than a single round, however, the devils immediately attack and fight to the death. They do not parley and will provide no information for fear of breaking their contractual obligation to Cale.

HAMATULA

CREATURE 11

Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)

Initiative Perception +24; greater darkvision

HELLSTOKER DEVILS^{TOHC} (4)

CREATURE 5

LE MEDIUM DEVIL FIEND

Perception +11; darkvision

Languages Infernal, telepathy 100 feet

Skills Athletics +13 (+16 to Escape),

Crafting +15, Intimidation +12

Str +5, **Dex** +2, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis**

+4, **Cha** +2

Items bellows, longspear

AC 22; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +9, **Will** +12; +1

status to all saves vs. magic

HP 85; **Immunities** fire; **Resistances** physical 5 (except silver), poison 10; **Weaknesses** good

5

Oily Hide ➤ **Trigger** The hellstoker devil is grabbed, immobilized, or restrained by a physical effect; **Effect** The hellstoker devil tries to Escape.

Fiery Body (fire) Though a hellstoker devil is immune to fire damage, the oil coating it ignites for 1 minute if it would otherwise have taken fire damage. During this time, any creature that touches the hellstoker devil takes 1d6 fire damage. This does not affect the hellstoker devil's Oily Hide.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ➤ longspear +15 (reach), **Damage** 1d8+7 piercing plus 1d8 evil

Melee ➤ claw +15 (agile), **Damage** 1d6+7 slashing plus 1d8 evil

Divine Innate Spells DC 19; 5th dimension door; 4th dimension door (at will); 1st burning hands (at will)

Rituals DC 19; infernal pact

Fire Bellows A hellstoker devil may use a bellows as a material component in place of the somatic component when it casts *burning hands*. When it does so, it heightens the spell to 3rd level and may change the area of the spell to a 30-foot line.

Treasure: The assaying equipment on the table is the equivalent of expanded alchemist's tools. Waiting in one of the hand carts is separated metal ready to go to the mint (Q5). This metal consists of a total of a chunk of gold (light Bulk, worth 25 sp) and 1 Bulk of copper (worth 5 cp). The devils keep the payments that have been made for their services to date in one of the bins beneath a lair of cooled



slag (DC 28 Perception check to locate). It consists of 3 adamantine chunks (worth 1,500 sp), 4 Bulks of gold (worth 200 sp), 2 chunks of noqual (worth 1,000 sp), 1 chunk of siccacite (L Bulk, worth 100 sp), and a *chime of opening*.

Q8. CATHEDRAL OF THE KING IN YELLOW EXTREME 14

As the entrance to this room is approached, it is evident that much of the steam and fumes in the hallway emerge from here. In addition, the strange organ music clearly emerges from within, though it is now discernable as a chorus of incomprehensible grunts and howls that only resemble the music of a pipe organ through the acoustic echoes of the long tunnel.

A massive cavern has been carved out of the earth here. Polished stone walls, a vaulted ceiling and the architectural features resembling those of a classic cathedral convey a sense of grandeur that rivals the most magnificent churches of Foere. Condensation covers the floor and walls, and heat radiates from an unusual, glowing reddish-gold triad-shaped pattern in the ceiling 80 feet above. It takes a moment for you to realize that it is molten rock that has burned through the cavern's ceiling in that unusual pattern. Drippings of the molten material falls and sizzles when they hit the moist stone floor. Shambling humanoid shapes shovel the still glowing, steaming drippings into mine carts and assorted other metal containers that are stacked among older piles of cooled slag.

Perhaps even stranger than this tableau is the cavern's version of a choir loft that sits elevated upon a ledge 12 feet above the floor along the southern wall. A stair of chiseled stone leads up to this gallery, and a crude balustrade of wrought iron runs along its edge. Upon the ledge itself stands a hideous conglomeration of flesh, sinew, and dozens of gaping mouths. It is as if dozens of corpses were stitched haphazardly together into one massive pipe organ whole, with each mouth capable of emitting only one wheezing, groaning musical note. It is from this monstrosity that the eerie, arrhythmic chords echo forth like a netherworld choir. Standing before this disgusting conglomeration is a 9-foot creature that is little more than a conglomeration itself. At its heart is a mass of dripping wet organs and viscera from which protrude many arms, legs, and bladed limbs. It is these limbs that wildly wave as it conducts its ghastly chorus.

Finally, at the far end of the chamber, the cavern floor has been smoothed and carved into a two-tier dais upon which sits a low stone altar that appears to be covered in dried blood and gobbets of viscera. Perched upon this block of rough stone looking like nothing so much as a fat and satisfied vulture is a blood-hued, beaked and winged creature that looks like a hideous mix of corpse, mole, insect, and bird that lazily watches the labors of the workers on the floor below.

The cathedral's glowing ceiling is in fact the still-burning meteorite's underbelly. The molten alloy fills in lines and fissures in the cavern's cathedral ceiling and forms a Yellow Sign, the malignant symbol of the King in Yellow, fully 40 feet across. Fortunately for the PCs this Yellow Sign is not active (as the spell or Hastur's special ability), it is merely a massive — if mundane — example of the symbol, though its unique nature does give the entire room the effects of an consecrate ritual (CL 6th, dedicated to Hastur, and affecting the void-stirges, terrible hybrid thing, and the Conductor) with the secondary effect of detect good over the whole chamber. Because the sign is formed by the leaching of molten rock through the stone of the cavern's ceiling, it cannot be sealed without it eventually melting back through in the same pattern unless the internal flames of the burning siccacite are somehow extinguished — an unlikely outcome considering that the meteorite has a couple thousand years of fuel remaining.

The air in this chamber is hot (approximately 100° F), but not nearly as much in other portions of the tunnels. A creature becomes fatigued after four hours here (see “Climate” in Chapter 10 of the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook* for more information). The dripping slag, however, is extremely hot and deals 1d6 persistent fire damage (DC 22 basic Reflex save) for 2 rounds on anyone touching it. A dotted line on the map shows where the molten drippings fall. Anyone in that area has a 10% chance per round of being hit by a drop of the falling slag. The undead are unaffected by the molten material, and the void-stirges avoid flying through that portion of the room.

Toiling away here in the bowels of the crater are **6 radioactive combusted** and **3 fire phantoms**. They use metal shovels to load the still-smoldering drippings from above onto the mine carts for transportation to area Q7 while awkwardly flapping above them are **4 void-stirges** who keep watch for intruders. Overseeing them from the altar is a **terrible hybrid thing** while in the choir loft an interlocutor kyton called The Conductor that has become an adherent of Hastur conducts a symphony of despair on the fleshgine he has created called the **Unholy Choir**.

RADIOACTIVE COMBUSTED (6)

CREATURE 5

See page 48

Initiative Perception +12; darkvision

FIRE PHANTOMS^{TOHC-278} (3)

CREATURE 5

See page 96

Initiative Perception +12; darkvision

VOID-STIRGES (4)**CREATURE 5**

See page 106

Initiative Perception +11; greater darkvision**TERRIBLE HYBRID THING****CREATURE 12**

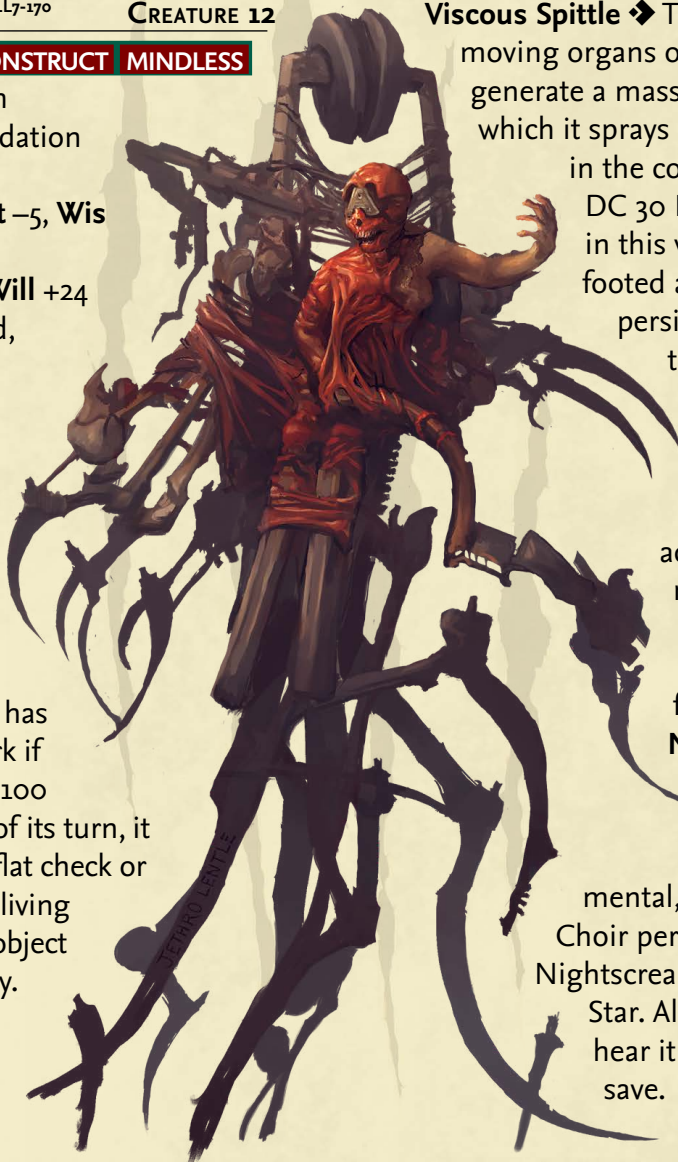
See page 110

Initiative Perception +21; greater darkvision**THE CONDUCTOR****CREATURE 12**Interlocutor (*Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (Second Edition)*)**Initiative** Perception +24; greater darkvision, painsight**UNHOLY CHOIR (FLESHGINE)^{LL7-170}****CREATURE 12****RARE N GARGANTUAN CONSTRUCT MINDLESS****Perception** +21; darkvision**Skills** Athletics +25, Intimidation +22, Performance +28**Str** +8, **Dex** +3, **Con** +6, **Int** -5, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +4**AC** 31; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +18, **Will** +24**HP** 250; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, diseased, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, mental, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious;**Resistances** sonic 10**Berserk** The Unholy Choir has a chance of going berserk if badly damaged. If it has 100 or fewer HP at the start of its turn, it must succeed at a DC 5 flat check or wildly attack the nearest living creature, or the nearest object if no creatures are nearby. If it has 50 or fewer HP, the DC of the flat check increases to 10. The

Conductor may spend an action with the auditory trait on its turn to soothe the Unholy Choir and reduce the flat check DC to 1.

Vulnerability to Silence If any part of the Unholy Choir is in an area of silence at the start of its turn, it may go Berserk, as if it were badly hurt. The DC of its flat check increases by 5 (meaning it's 5 if the creature is not badly hurt, up to 15 if the Unholy Choir has 50 or fewer HP).**Speed** 20 feet**Melee** ♦ pipe mouth +25 (reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d6+14 piercing**Melee** ♦ pedal +25, **Damage** 3d10+14 bludgeoning
Divine Innate Spells DC 34; Cantrips (6th) dirge of doom, inspire courage**Viscous Spittle** ♦ The great lungs and air-moving organs of the Unholy Choir generate a massive amount of thick mucus, which it sprays in a 15-foot cone. Creatures in the cone must succeed at a DC 30 Reflex save or are coated in this viscous goo and are flat-footed and clumsy 1 and take 1d6 persistent acid damage until the goo is removed. The mucus can be dissolved by pouring alcohol or some other solvent on it, or by spending a total of 4 actions with the interact and manipulate traits to wipe it off. The Unholy Choir can't use Viscous Spittle again for 1d4 rounds.**Nightscream Song**

♦ (auditory, divine, emotion, enchantment, fear, mental, necromancy) The Unholy Choir perfectly emulates the Nightscream of the Pit of the Burning Star. All living creatures that can hear it must attempt a DC 34 Will save.



Critical Success The creature is unaffected and gains temporary immunity for 1 minute.

Success The target is frightened 1. Also, for 1 round, it gains weakness 5 to negative energy and must attempt a DC 5 flat check to Cast a Spell that uses positive energy or the spell is disrupted.

Failure The target is frightened 2. Also, for 1 minute, it gains weakness 10 to negative energy and must attempt a DC 10 flat check to Cast a Spell that uses positive energy or the spell is disrupted.

Critical Failure The target is frightened 3 and fleeing for 1 round. Also, for 1 hour, it gains weakness 10 to negative energy and must attempt a DC 10 flat check to Cast a Spell that uses positive energy or the spell is disrupted.

Overwhelming Bites ♦♦ The Unholy Choir uses its many mouths to bite. It makes a single jaws Strike and compares the attack roll result to the AC of each creature within reach. This counts as three attacks for the unholy choir's multiple attack penalty.

Trample ♦♦♦ Huge or smaller, pedal, DC 32

Infernal Chorus The many pipe-like mouths of the Unholy Choir combine, each providing a single musical tone, into a hellish choir of disgusting voices. It can only Cast a Spell or use Nightscream Song if the Conductor or Prince Cale spent one action with the auditory and concentrate traits to conduct it since the end of its last turn.

Tactics: When the void-stirges notice intruders, they immediately swoop to attack. This catches the attention of the radioactive combusted and fire phantoms after 1 round, who drop their shovels and move to join in the attack. The Conductor attempts to remain out of the fray and instead uses the Unholy Choir to inspire courage in their allies fighting below, and Focus its Gaze on foes. If the PCs attempt to attack the choir loft, the Conductor has the Unholy Choir cast *dirge of doom*, and then they both defend themselves as best they can. If the Conductor is slain, the Unholy Choir immediately begins moving to Trample and attack intruders, almost as if it had gone Berserk but careful enough to avoid harming its allies. The terrible hybrid thing only joins the fray if the Conductor is killed, if the Unholy Choir is silenced, if all the

radioactive combusted and fire phantoms are killed, or if it is attacked itself. All of the creatures here fight until destroyed, though none of them will leave this room.

Development: If the terrible hybrid thing is killed, the altar stone suddenly cracks and bursts asunder as if struck by a powerful thunderbolt. If this occurs, the true master of the Pit of the Burning Star is roused from his slumber. When this occurs, read the following.

As the blood-covered stone altar splits and falls to pieces, a wind seems to rise around it raising a small cloud of dust. However, after a moment it becomes clear that it is no cloud of dust but rather a cloud of whirling, translucent spirits, and rising from the center of them is a single corpselike figure. It too is translucent, but it retains something of its mortal appearance: that of a regal-looking man with aquiline features, marred only by hollow cheeks and sunken eyes, in robes of gold and bearing a shining circlet upon its brown. Its withered countenance gazes at you above the sparse remnant of a once-neatly trimmed beard, and it speaks in a strangely accented, archaic version of the common tongue.

"Welcome," it says. "Welcome to the Eternal Colonies of Caleen Reme."

The creature that has risen from beneath the broken altar is none other than the spirit of the long-lost Cale, Grand Duke of Reme and Prince of Foere who now exists as an undead known as a **nemhain** fully corrupted and twisted into devotion to the King in Yellow. Swirling about him are the spirits of the many, many Rhemen who followed him on his ill-fated expedition to colonize the Haunted Steppe. He does not immediately attack, but his appearance does cause the giant Yellow Sign in the cavern's ceiling to activate as a *Yellow Sign* spell (see sidebar) and requires all in the cavern to make a secret DC 36 Will save or become dominated under the command of Prince Cale (as the closest representative of Hastur's will).

Prince Cale avoids combat and instead congratulates the PCs on their endeavor and finally breaking the "curse" that has plagued him and his people ever since their cursed venture centuries ago. He states that the gods have deserted him and the remnant of his loyal subjects who came to this place but that the PCs can at least set some of it aright by taking word of what happened and the cursed nature of the crater to the outside world to finally answer the question of what happened to the Lost Prince of Foere. He provides them with directions to his treasury at area **N6** (though will warn them that they will have to deal with some rather nasty creatures that have since taken up residence there) and encourage them to take his riches as a reward for their efforts and considering that he has no further need of such worldly goods.

This is all a part of the plan the Prince Cale has been building towards since first succumbing to the allure of Hastur's worship. And with the vast store of these coins he has been able to mint over the last 5 centuries, he knew that the time to unleash madness and bring Hastur back to dominance in the world was near at hand. To this end, he recently sent a cultist of Hastur far to the south — to the city of Nains, as well as other places — to plant the sheaves of correspondence Cale had found upon the body of poor Azmerius. Having only brought a few carrier pigeons on the Conroi Expedition and losing most of them to harsh conditions or misadventure, Azmerius never actually sent many of his letters but rather held onto them and saved his final pigeon to carry actual news of the Pit's discovery, news that he was never able to send before his death. Only the incorporeal Cale was able to read their contents and have cultists reproduce them and present them as the authentic original.



Any PCs hearing Prince Cale's offer can attempt to Sense Motive check against his Deception DC (37) to detect the malicious intent behind his words, but anyone dominated by the effects of the *Yellow Sign* spell will believe him unconditionally.

If his offer is rejected or the PCs attack, Prince Cale ends the pretense. He compels the Unholy Choir (if still alive) to begin its Nightscream Song, and orders any of his remaining servitors in the room to attack, including any dominated PCs. He then has his bound spirits fan out and make attack all enemies within range, while his minions assault opponents beyond the spirits' reach. When he exhausts his innate spells, the apparition resorts to melee Strikes and moves into the area beneath the molten dripping to force the PCs to risk its effects (Cale cannot be harmed by the molten drops). Cale fights until destroyed, confident in the knowledge that he will regenerate 1d4 days later. His bound object is the sundered altar stone. It is made from meteoric iron cast off from the Burning Star, and the two individual halves must each be destroyed (Hardness 10, 240 HP) in order to permanently eradicate him.

Though it was a cultist of Hastur that initiated the entire race for Shataakh-Uulm, he did not survive to return to his master. Fearing the instability of a typical cultist of the King in Yellow, Prince Cale sent orders to the Sagging Man at his outpost in the Wizard's Wall (see *Legend of the Burning Star* for details) to dispatch void-stirges to find and devour the hapless cultist once his mission was fulfilled. Other members of the Cult of Hastur across of Foere were unaware of Cale's grand plan to reveal the location of the Pit and heard the rumors of its discovery just like everyone else. It was they who followed the trail of the letters to Dun Eamon and broke into Elinda Bannon's tower to steal Gravenfar's journal in an attempt to prevent the Pit's discovery, not realizing they were actually working against the will of Prince Cale, their cult's earthly master.

PRINCE CALE

CREATURE 15

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Perception +27; darkvision

Languages Common, Necril, telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +30, Deception +27, Diplomacy +30, Society +27

Str -5, **Dex** +6, **Con** +5, **Int** +4, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +8

AC 36; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +26, **Will** +29

HP 250, negative healing, rejuvenation; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, sleep; **Resistances** all damage 15 (except force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Spectral Shroud (aura, divine, necromancy) 30 feet. Bound spirits surround Prince Cale in a whirling cloud, spreading his power beyond his own reach. Any creature in this area is considered within his reach, and he may Strike or touch it as if it were adjacent to him (including for purposes of spells). He ignores cover unless the cover completely surrounds a creature in all directions.

Attack of Opportunity ➤ Prince Cale gains an additional reaction at the beginning of each of its turns that it can only use for an Attack of Opportunity. It can't use more than one Attack of Opportunity triggered by the same action.

Rejuvenation (divine, necromancy) When Prince Cale is destroyed, his soul immediately transfers to the sundered altar stone, his bound object, where it re-forms, fully healed, in 1d4 days. He can be permanently destroyed only if both sides of the altar stone are destroyed.

Resurrection Vulnerability Casting *breath of life* or *raise dead* on Prince Cale or on his Spirit Spies causes Spectral Shroud, Spirit Spies, and his extra Attack of Opportunity to be deactivated for 1 hour. Casting *revival* or using a *resurrect* ritual causes them to be deactivated for 24 hours.

Speed fly 25 feet

Melee ➤ hand +29 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 3d10+13 negative plus draining touch

Divine Innate Spells DC 36; **7th** *harm, finger of death*; **6th** *harm, repulsion, wall of force*; **5th** *harm, telekinetic haul*

Draining Touch A creature damaged by Prince Cale's touch must attempt a DC 36 Will save (DC 41 if the attack was a critical hit). If it fails the save, it's drained 1 for 1 day (drained 2 on a critical failure), and Prince Cale regains HP equal to half the creature's level. If the target was already drained, it instead increases the condition's value by 1 (or 2 on a critical failure), to a maximum of 4.

Spirit Spies (divine, necromancy) Prince Cale can send his bound spirits up to 1 mile away to act as scouts. He can have them move 60 feet per round as a free action, and see and hear everything they do, as if he were in their

location. The spirits are impervious to all attacks and magic, but are susceptible to Prince Cale's Resurrection Vulnerability. Using this ability deactivates Spectral Shroud and the extra reaction Prince Cale gets at the start of each turn to make an Attack of Opportunity.

Treasure: The 80 pounds of metal drippings in the mine carts that have been gleaned from the meteorites drippings consist of 40 ounces of siccative (2 L, worth 200 sp), 20 ounces of adamantite (1 L, worth 500 sp), 12 pounds of nickel (2 Bulk, 24 sp), 10 pounds of lead (2 Bulk, 5 sp), 12 ounces of gold (1 L, 25 sp), and 2 ounces of noqual (50 sp). The rest is worthless slag.

In addition, digging into the stone 1 foot beneath the altar (Hardness 14, 56 HP) reveals the mortal remains of Prince Cale, where he was magically sealed at his death long ago. His remains consist of little more than a partially intact human skeleton that shows signs of significant burn damage. But it still wears the platinum coronet that Cale wore as a Prince of Foere (worth 750 sp for its metal content but 5,000 sp to a collector, the Grand Duchy of Reme, or the Court of Courghais). In addition, interred with the remains are a suit of standard-grade elven chain, a *greater staff of conjuration* and a rusted *storm flash* (with the broken condition).

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs have fully explored the Pit of the Burning Star, they will have discovered not only the fate of the last remnant of the Caleen Colonies but that of the long-lost Prince Cale as well. Unfortunately, they will have also discovered the undead prince's devotion to serving the Great Old One, Hastur, and possibly have figured out his plan to sow madness throughout the **Lost Lands** through the spread of tainted money.

Adventurers that participated in the **Frog God Games** adventure "Madness Grows" from **Fields of Blood** cannot help but recognize this familiar pattern. In fact, it is not a coincidence, as Prince Cale used the unwitting Tibula Ottika to test his devious scheme. If the PCs haul Cale's tainted Rhemian coins back to civilization and place them into circulation, deliberately or accidentally, Hastur's

machinations take hold as the metallurgic amber within the contaminated coins spreads insanity like wildfire throughout the civilized lands bringing an unholy apotheosis for the Great Old One that much closer...word of a new play called *The King In Yellow* soon begins to spread throughout the lands. It is also likely that the prolonged exposure to the radioactive substance takes a significant physical and mental toll on the adventurers, which may prompt astute characters to more closely scrutinize the ancient Rhemian coins.

PCs returning to their prospective employer(s) can also confirm that the Pit of the Burning Star contains vast quantities of star metals, specifically noqual and the combustible siccattite. If the PCs somehow still count Cherbaud Brazzegard among their numbers, he and his faction of Ironskull double agents try to kill the adventurers in their sleep during the long journey back and lay claim to the star metals for their familial line. For their part, the Spurious Tidings amicably part with the PCs and then report back to the authorities in Bard's Gate about their astounding discovery. If the party avoided the other adventuring companies on their journey to the impact site, most notably Earl Rannulf and The Prize Men, these individuals wait for an ideal opportunity to pounce on the hopefully wounded and exhausted explorers and claim their secrets for themselves.

Prince Cale, for his part, if not permanently destroyed resumes mass production of his tainted coins. He then sets about seeking to recruit others and to entice them to venture to the Pit of the Burning Star to disperse madness and chaos throughout the continent. However, this time the correspondence dispenses with pretenses and instead provides precise directions to the impact site in the hopes that the prospect of acquiring immense wealth may ignite wars between rival political and military powers seeking to control these valuable resources.

Finally, the fate of Aroldus Gravenfar looms as the only remaining unanswered question of any great note. Although it appears likely that he saw the Pit of the Burning Star, there is no evidence supporting the theory that he ever delved into the crater or even investigated the locale beyond merely locating it for his own purposes. Why else the famed explorer might have ventured across the Haunted Steppe and what fate he ultimately met remains a mystery, but the truth remains that his alleged quest to locate the Pit of the Burning Star was the last time he was sighted in civilized lands and produced the last correspondence known to have ever come from him. Where his remains lie — if he is indeed dead — remain a tale of the **Lost Lands** for another day.

APPENDIX A: THE HAUNTED STEPPE

HISTORY OF THE HAUNTED STEPPE

Thirty-five hundred years ago the vast empire of the Hundaei people dominated the grasslands of the Great Steppes — later to become known as the Haunted Steppe. These nomadic horse archers and peerless warriors literally lived off the land, hunting the plentiful game and reaping the wild grains that grew in abundance on the endless steppes. Joined from thousands of disparate tribes into a single great people in 7 I.R. by the Great Khan Jaganga, he formed his legendary Invincible Horde, and for the next 650 years dominated the entirety of the steppes and provided the only real and credible threat to the burgeoning Hyperborean Empire since its battle for independence from its Borean forebears. Always the threat of the “Hun” lances and arrows were poised at the throats of the Hyperborean imperators, and though they fortified themselves against the horselords’ incursions they could never be said to have truly felt safe.

Then something happened that significantly changed the balance of the two empires and the very shape of life on Akados forever, and the Hundaei ceased to exist as a people in only three short years. Known to only the most thoroughly invested scholars of the Hundaei and understood by none known to be alive today, some clans of the Hundaei dared to settle in the shadow of the Nam-i-Budhani — the Lost Mountains — on the very shores of distant Lake Hali. Much like what occurred with the Caleen Colonies more than 2,000 years later, a bloodbath quickly ensued. But this bloodbath was no invasion at the hands of savage humanoid tribes or near-mythical shadow walkers, this was a bloodbath wrought by the hands of the Hundaei themselves.

Long had the lands around Lake Hali and the slopes of the Lost Mountains been strictly taboo to the folk of the Hundaei. None could say for sure why, but many clan elders and shamans spoke of bloodlust and madness that must always ensue from those who dare to break the taboo.

Within the span of three short years, the Hundaei inexplicably descended into anarchy. The formerly unified clans fought a brief but ferocious civil war that left Hundaei civilization and its people in ruins. Some survivors fled to distant Libynos, but many refused to abandon their

TIMELINE OF THE HAUNTED STEPPE*

Imperial Record (I.R.)	Erylle Cycle (E.C.)	Huun Chronicle (H.C.)	Event(s)
7	6491		Great Khan Jaganga arises among Hundaei and unites them into Invincible Horde
11	6495		Vengeful mountain dwarves show Hundaei secret passes through Stoneheart range
678	7162		Hyperborean Legions push into Great Steppes
680	7164		Hundaei settle in Nam-i-Budhani due to Hyperborean pressure
681	7165		Civil war erupts among Hundaei clans
683	7167		Hundaei cease to exist as a people; Survivors flee to Libynos or become the Shattered Folk of the Great Steppes
687	7171		Beginning of Pax Hyperborea
711	7195		Massive host of humanoid tribes rises in Haunted Steppe and marches towards Crynomar Gap and central Akados
712	7196		Elven defense of Crynomar Gap
717	7201		Remenos extends marchlands north; Clear cuts forest
725	7209		Wild elves withdraw to the west in Third Exodus; Green Warders Established
1522	8006		Meteors strike in Red Wastes of northern Libynos and in central Haunted Steppe
2494	8978		Ulnat tribe of the Shattered Folk arrives in the Far North and begins to settle beyond Wailing Mountains in abandoned cities of lost Boros
2840	9324	345	Foerdewaith settlers push through Crynomar Gap
2843	9327	348	Twin royal heirs Kennet and Cale born to Overking Paulus
2858	9342	363	Cale abdicates claim to throne and given port of Reme
2861	9345	366	Cale leads Colonization of Great Steppes
2899	9383	404	Caleen colonists discover Pit of the Burning Star
2931	9415	436	Caleen colonies reach shore of Lake Hali; Humanoid attacks begin
2947	9431	452	Shadow walkers lead humanoid hordes from Lost Mountains; Caleen colonies destroyed, Prince Cale is lost; Wizard's Wall raised at Crynomar Gap
3437	9921	942	Disappearance of the explorer Aroldus Gravenfar after a short stopover in Castorhage
3439	9923	944	Conroi Expedition crosses Wizard's Wall to begin exploration of Haunted Steppe
3517	10,001	1022	Current year

* Excerpted from the *Lost Lands Campaign Setting* timeline by Frog God Games.

ancestral homeland. Over time, the Hundaei's descendents devolved into the Shattered Folk, a scattered, utterly broken people that scratch out a meager existence in this unforgiving realm. Whether it was the rebellious Hundaei settlers or the orthodox members of the greater empire who drew first blood has been lost to history and hardly matters, for once blood was spilled over the broken taboo the flames of bloody civil war swept across the millions of inhabitants of the Great Steppes in almost no time at all.

It is estimated that more than 23 million Hundaei lived upon the Great Steppes at the height of the Hundaei Empire in or around 680 I.R. By 683 scholars believe there were no more than 100,000, split up into tiny, scattered clan and family groups, many of which fled the steppes altogether to find homes in northeastern Akados or across the Isthmus of Irkaina. The few intrepid explorers that dared breach the suddenly silent grasslands where once had thundered the hooves of countless horselords described vast battlefields of the dead — of all ages — left to decompose in the sun and at the talons and teeth of vultures and other scavengers. Such was the carnage that one nameless witness with a bit of a poetic bent was known to have famously said that the skulls of the dead lay so thick across the plains that one could walk from the Crynomar Gap to the Lost Mountains without once ever stepping foot upon the earth. An obvious exaggeration of outrageous proportions, this summation nevertheless held enough truth that what were once the Great Steppes of the Hundaei Empire became indelibly changed to become known as the cursed and forlorn Haunted Steppe, home to only the few scattered and furtive tribes of survivors — now known as the Shattered Folk — that remained.

And so it was that after the passage of a thousand years, only these few tribes of Shattered Folk were present to bear witness to a burning star that fell from the sky and landed in the center of the steppes.

COINAGE IN THE HAUNTED STEPPE

Many forms of currency and coinage can be found across the Haunted Steppe, but those from Foere are perhaps the most common. Gold sovereigns (sometimes referred to as “crowns”) are the standard coinage of Foere^{LLo, TBM-41}; which includes the following coins of the realm.

Emperor (platinum) “rex” = 1 pp
Sovereign (gold) “crown” = 1 gp
Noble (silver) = 1 sp
Silver penny (silver) = 5 cp
Penny (copper) = 1 cp

APPENDIX B: THE SHADOW

The religion of The Shadow plays a significant role in the lives of the Shattered Folk tribes.

THE SHADOW

Areas of Concern unknown

Alignment NE (CE, LE, NE)

Divine Font *harm*

Divine Ability Strength or Charisma

Divine Skill Intimidation

Domains darkness, destruction, death, undeath

Alternate Domains might, nightmares, tyranny

Cleric Spells 1st: *grim tendrils*, 5th: *shadow walk*, 7th: *possession*

Edicts any creature that doesn't serve The Shadow is the enemy, harvest souls for The Shadow

Anathema allow enemies to encroach on The Shadow's territory; destroy a body when it could be made into an undead, suffer an enemy to live

Favored Weapon scimitar

Symbol: Obsidian disk (representing an accretion disk)

Garb: Dark colors (no formal garb)

Form of Worship and Holidays: Killing sentient beings to claim their souls for The Shadow. Unknown if any holidays.

Typical Worshippers: Unknown (shadow walkers, some Shattered Folk)

The subject of The Shadow remains as much a mystery today as it was at its first appearance on the steppes millennia ago. It is a religious or quasi-religious cult that is believed to have brought about the destruction of the mighty Hundaei Empire more than two thousand years ago. Known simply as The Shadow — when it is mentioned at all — historians believe that it was a deity, entity, or powerful cult that was encountered when the Hundaei first dared to migrate to and begin to settle in The shadow of the Nam-i-Budhani — the Lost Mountains. Whatever it was, it introduced madness and violence to the peoples of the Great Steppe in unprecedented intensity and brought about the downfall and near extinction of the formerly indomitable empire after two years of civil war.

The Shattered Folk avoid the northern reaches of the plains and tell of how monstrous humanoids have swept down in great hordes of in the past, spurred on by The Shadow. When

these hordes march, the Shattered Folk scatter and head to the far reaches of the plains to avoid them. In the past the elves of the Green Realm and the forces of the Foerdewaith have spent their strength to hold back these hordes, and only the creation of the legendary Wizard's Wall stymied the last incursion when strange shadow walkers drove the horde on. Always these hordes have dispersed, and their mysterious masters have disappeared back into the distant northern regions of the Haunted Steppe, but whispers of The Shadow are never far behind. In fact, the cursed lands east and north of the Lost Mountains are called the Shadowlands, and no plainsman in his right mind would ever go within a thousand miles of there. The steppes are huge and hold many secrets; The Shadow is one that folk of the plains hope never comes to light.

The Shadow first appeared in *Fields of Blood* by Frog God Games.

APPENDIX C: INTERESTING ODDS AND ENDS

Explorers in the Haunted Steppe may come upon a number of rare and unique items or abilities from here, which are described below.

EQUIPMENT

The following mundane items appear in this adventure. A number of them can be found in the chests in area **H8** (see page 57), and their effects and function are described here.

ACTIVATED CHARCOAL

ITEM 6

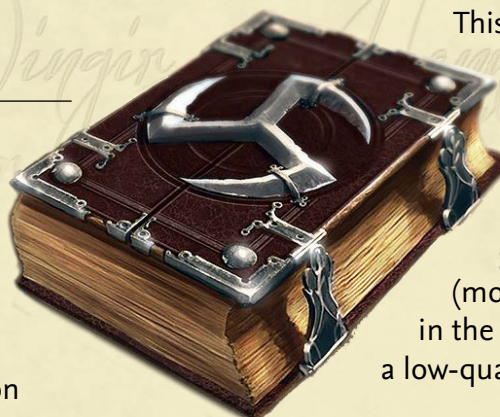
ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE ELIXIR

Price 35 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activate ♦ Interact

Ordinary charcoal, typically made from peat, wood and materials burned in the absence of oxygen is an outstanding fuel source with no medicinal properties. With the infusion of hot gases or certain chemicals, alchemists can transform common



charcoal into activated charcoal. In this form, activated charcoal's surface area increases exponentially, allowing its molecules to bind with those found in many poisonous substances and thus prevent the digestive tract from absorbing the toxins. Alchemists frequently combine activated charcoal with a strong cathartic to accelerate its exit from the body. If you drink activated charcoal within 10 minutes of ingesting poison, you may roll each saving throw against the poison twice and take the better result for the next hour. However, activated charcoal does not grant a benefit against acids, alcohol, and arsenic.

Original Source: Page 49 of *Marshes of Malice* by Frog God Games.

FACIAL BELLOWS^{AP13}

ITEM 3

ALCHEMICAL

Price 40 gp

Usage worn mask; Bulk 1

Activate ♦ Interact

Facial bellows are a type of mask made of leather tubing and brass fittings. It is worn over the mouth and nose and includes a small hand-operated bellows. This is a crude breathing device that filters out harmful gases. When you operate the hand pump, using an action with the manipulate trait, you draw air through the alchemical filters within the mask, providing a +1 item bonus to Fortitude saves against gases that affect breathing until the end of your next turn.

ILLUMINATUS GEOGRAPHICA

This well-thumbed tome was penned by Master Scrivener Drembrar of Bard's Gate and gives a fairly complete description of the known terrestrial and celestial geography of the planet Boros (more commonly known as Lloegy in the current age). This copy is from a low-quality printing by the Lyre Valley

Press^{LL8-296} in 3511 I.R., and the pages regarding the known geography of the Haunted Steppe are much dog-eared. The information they hold does not add anything to the corpus of knowledge already accumulated by the PCs but provides a good primer to someone wishing to venture out on the steppes for the first time. This book is worth 10 gp.

Original Source: This tome was first mentioned on page 4 of *LL1: Stoneheart Valley* by Frog God Games.

INTROVERSIONS OF TOXINS

Originally compiled by a healing order known as the Brotherhood of Arn, this book provides descriptions and treatments for hundreds of different toxins and toxic substances. Use of this book as a reference provides a +1 item bonus to Medicine checks to Treat Poison and to counteract checks from neutralize poison. The religious order is known to have largely disappeared after an ill-fated attempt to create a hermitage in the Dungeon of Graves, so very few copies of this book are known to exist. This particular copy has been bookmarked in the section entitled “Unseen Vapours, Fumes, and Emissions” that seems to principally deal with types of radiation poisoning. The book is worth 40 gp.

Original Source: This tome first appeared on page 199 of *Rappan Athuk* by Frog God Games.

POTION TESTING STICK

ITEM 4

ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE

Price 20 gp

Usage held in 2 hands; **Bulk** —

Activate ♦♦♦ Interact

These small wooden sticks are approximately the size of a tindertwig and are kept in small wooden containers lined in felt. The top third of their length is black in color, and the bottom two-thirds is coated in a rough gray substance. When the gray end of the stick is dipped into a

liquid or exposed to a nongaseous substance, it changes colors depending on the property of the substance it has been exposed to. If the substance has the elixir trait, the gray portion turns to a green color. If the substance has the magical (or arcane, divine, occult or primal) trait, the gray color turns to blue. If the substance has the poison trait, the gray portion turns to a rusty red color. If the substance has none of the above traits, the gray color turns white. If a substance has two of the elixir, magical, and poison traits, the stick has an equal chance to turn to the related color. Felt and similar soft cloth does not activate a potion testing stick.

Original Source: Potion testing sticks first appeared on page 35 of *R1: Rappan Athuk—The Dungeon of Graves: The Upper Levels* by Necromancer Games and appeared again on page 175 of *Rappan Athuk* by Frog God Games.

MAGIC ITEMS

Many of the following magic items are first mentioned in products by Frog God Games but are given full *Pathfinder Second Edition* rules here.

Item	Source
<i>Corn cob pipe of dreaming</i>	<i>Fields of Blood</i>
<i>Deceiver's ring</i>	<i>LL4: Cults of the Sundered Kingdoms</i>
<i>Hand axe of scalping</i>	<i>Fields of Blood</i>
<i>Mojo amulet (luck)</i>	<i>Fields of Blood</i>
<i>Staff of unholy life</i>	new item

CORN COB PIPE OF DREAMING

ITEM 10

MAGICAL ILLUSION

Price 900 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

Carved from a hollowed-out cob of corn, this simple 6-inch long pipe can and frequently is used to smoke ordinary tobacco or any other combustible material. The pipe's magical effects require no fuel and no ignition source.

Activate ♦♦ Interact, envision; Frequency twice per

day; **Effect** You smoke the pipe and manipulate the wispy strands of gray smoke that billow out of the pipe's bowl to cast a 3rd-level *illusory creature*, *illusory disguise*, or *illusory object* spell.

DECEIVER'S RING**ITEM 7****RARE ABJURATION INVESTED MAGICAL****Price** 300 gp**Usage** worn; **Bulk** —

A *deceiver's ring* is a gold ring of virtually any design but always appears to be quite valuable — at least 60 gp. While wearing the ring, you gain a +1 item bonus to Deception to Lie and Impersonate. The ring's magic, like illusion magic, is detected by spells such as *detect magic* only if that spell is a higher level than the ring. Few outside the Cult of Fraz'Urb-luu are aware that these rings exist, as they are a closely guarded secret.

Activate ◆◆◆ **envision**; **Frequency** once per day;

Effect You choose an alignment. For 24 hours, you appear to be that alignment to all effects that would detect your alignment. This does not actually change your alignment, and you gain no benefit for any other effect based on alignment (such as damage).

HATCHET OF SCALPING**ITEM 9****UNCOMMON MAGICAL NECROMANCY****Price** 700 gp**Usage** held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

This +1 *striking wounding hatchet* is most commonly found among nomadic peoples living in the temperate grasslands. The haft is always fabricated from the bone of a large predatory animal, and etched images of fearsome birds adorn the blade. If you can reach the target's head, you can strip flesh from the bone: If the hatchet deals bleed damage to a target that didn't already have bleed damage when you scored the hit, the target becomes dazzled (blinded on a critical hit) for 1 round unless it succeeds at a DC 25 Reflex save. In addition, you can activate the hatchet to deliver an even deadlier blow.

Activate ☞ **envision**; **Frequency** once per day;

Trigger You deal bleed damage to a creature with the hatchet of scalping; **Effect** The creature is stunned 1 (stunned 2 on a critical hit).

MOJO AMULET**ITEM 3+****INVESTED MAGICAL****Usage** worn; **Bulk** —

Also known as a relic bag, this amulet consists of a flannel or linen bag attached to a leather cord that hangs around the wearer's neck. A small bone from a beast or a divine spellcaster must be placed inside of the bag. The mojo amulet grants the wearer one of the following abilities.

Type charm amulet; **Level** 3; **Price** 60 gp

You cast *charm* as a 1st-level divine innate spell once per day, and gain a +1 item bonus to your spell DC when you cast it. This mojo amulet also has the enchantment trait.

Type fortune amulet; **Level** 5; **Price** 160 gp

You cast *locate* as a 3rd-level divine innate spell once per day, but can only use it to find gold. This mojo amulet also has the detection and divination traits.

Type luck amulet; **Level** 9; **Price** 700 gp

You cast *tempt fate* as a 4th-level divine innate spell once per day. This mojo amulet also has the divination and fortune traits.

Type spirit amulet; **Level** 9; **Price** 700 gp

You cast *positive luminance* as a 4th-level divine innate spell once per day. This mojo amulet also has the light, necromancy, and positive traits

STAFF OF UNHOLY LIFE**ITEM 16****MAGICAL NECROMANCY STAFF****Price** 8,000 gp**Usage** held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

Prized by necromancers and other practitioners of dark magic associated with animating the dead, this grisly staff is made from a fused spinal column topped by a humanoid skull. A spellcaster can choose the staff as the target of a *create undead* ritual, storing the magic as with

other spells. The ritual's primary caster may then choose another legal target for the ritual with a single action with the concentrate trait, at which point they attempt the skill check listed in the Primary Check entry to determine the ritual's outcome. The staff holds the ritual until a creature other than the primary caster prepares the staff.

Activate Cast a Spell; **Effect** You expend a number of charges from the staff to cast a spell from its list

1st *harm*

3rd *bind undead*

4th *malignant sustenance*

Craft Requirements You are evil, supply one casting of all listed levels of all listed spells, and know a *create undead* ritual.

ARTIFACT: HOLOCAUST STONE OF GUN'TA

Though this is an extremely powerful artifact, its effects are devastating and virtually uncontrollable. While it remains in area **O6** its effects upon activation are constrained to that cavern alone, however, if removed from there it effects its normal 1d6-mile radius every time it is activated — accidentally or otherwise. Though it could make a powerful doomsday device, its very unpredictability and inability to be safely activated make it virtually useless outside of a suicide mission, though a powerful potential deterrent. As a result, keeping it sealed within this chamber might be the safest thing for it. At the very least, you should be very careful about allowing the stone into your campaign.

To warn your players of the stone's potential you may want to have it dropped while still in area **O6** and have one of its less-instantly deadly results, like *abyssal plague*, *mass bedlam*, or *rain of fire*, occur to give the party a bit of warning. If you prefer to not have to deal with it at all, either have it go unfound by the PCs or have it accidentally activated and cause its *earthquake* effect which brings the cavern collapsing down and allowing the PCs to only barely escape, only to discover that the stone was lost somewhere during the mayhem and now lies buried somewhere under thousands of tons of rock, beyond the reach of detection or recovery.

HOLOCAUST STONE OF GUN'TA

ITEM 26

UNIQUE ARTIFACT CHAOTIC EVOCATION MAGICAL

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

Activate ♦ Interact

This is fist-sized piece of stone, jet black with a rough texture that, upon closer inspection of its surface, appears to actually swirl very slowly, as if containing a ceaselessly shifting smoke. It is an extraterrestrial artifact rumored to have originated in some strange dimension or the distant void of space. The stone can't be controlled, but its power is activated whenever it is jarred in some collision (e.g. thrown to the ground, dropped, struck with another object, struck by an energy or otherwise damaging spell, or simply if the individual carrying suffers a fall). When the stone is activated, it releases a burst of chaotic energy that triggers a massive, cataclysmic event. These events are activated immediately and occur at random. They are not under the control of the activator and are centered on the stone itself. All spells are heightened to level 10, and all applicable saves are DC 35. Roll on the table below to determine the type of cataclysm that is activated.

d%	Result
01–06	<i>Abyssal plague</i>
07–12	<i>Cataclysm</i>
13–18	<i>Earthquake</i>
19–24	<i>Eclipse burst</i>
25–30	<i>Lightning sphere</i>
31–36	<i>Massacre</i>
37–42	<i>Mass bedlam</i>
43–48	<i>Power word kill</i>
49–54	<i>Rain of fire</i>
55–60	<i>Reverse gravity</i>
61–66	<i>Spirit song</i>
67–72	<i>Storm of vengeance</i>

73–78	<i>Wail of the banshee</i>
79–84	<i>Weird</i>
85–90	<i>Wilting blast</i>
91–93	Reroll, but double the effect radius
94–96	Reroll, but double the effect duration
97–99	Reroll twice with both effects occurring simultaneously
00	Reroll, but add create <i>undead horde</i>

Abyssal Plague: As the spell. Targets all creatures within 1d6-mile radius. The disease gains the virulent trait.

Cataclysm: As the spell. Affects a 1d6-mile radius.

Earthquake: As the spell. Duration is 1d10+5 rounds and a radius of 10 miles. Effects occur every round at the top of the initiative order.

Eclipse Burst: As the spell. Covers a 1d6-mile radius.

Lightning Sphere: A sphere of lightning emanates from the stone, dealing 20d6 electricity damage to everything within a 1d6-mile radius (basic Reflex save). When a creature gets a critical success on its saving throw, treat it as a success instead (including if it has evasion or a similar ability).

Massacre: As the spell. Affects all living creatures in a 1d4-mile radius. If no creature dies, all are affected by the negative energy violently exploding back toward the holocaust stone.

Mass Bedlam: Every creature within a 10-mile radius must succeed at a Will save or suffer the effects of a confusion spell for 1d10 x 10 minutes.

Power Word Kill: As the spell. Targets every living creature within a 1-mile radius.

Rain of Fire: Clouds gather and a rain of fire and embers showers down in a 1d6-mile radius for 1d10 minutes. This rain deals 2d6 fire damage per round (basic Reflex save), and anything flammable catches fire.

Reverse Gravity: As the spell. The spell has a 1d6-mile radius.

Spirit Song: As the spell. The duration is 1d10 minutes and it affects all creatures within a 1-mile

radius. The damage caused by the spell occurs every round at the top of the initiative order.

Storm of Vengeance: As the spell. The storm affects a 1d10-mile radius with a duration of 1d10 minutes. The storm effect is random each round, but can't be the same twice in a row.

Wail of the Banshee: As the spell. Affects all living creatures in a 1d4-mile radius.

Weird: As the spell. Affects every creature in a 10-mile radius.

Wilting Blast: As *horrid wilting* spell but affecting all creatures within a 1d6-mile radius. All bodies of water within the radius evaporate and the land dries to a seared husk.

Create Undead Horde: This only occurs in conjunction with another effect. Anyone killed by the stone while this effect is active rises 1 round later as an undead creature as determined by its Hit Dice. These undead are not controlled and immediately attack any living creatures they can find. All of these undead can be found in the *Pathfinder Bestiary (Second Edition)*.

Hit Dice	Undead Type
1–3	Zombie shambler
4–6	Ghoul
7–9	Ghast
10–12	Shadow
13–14	Wraith
15–16	Poltergeist
17–18	Graveknight
19+	Lesser death

Destruction The stone can be damaged normally and has Hardness 20 and 100 Hit Points, though each attack on it triggers a cataclysm. Likewise, as an artifact of pure, coalesced chaos, if transported to a plane of Law such as Axis (LN), Heaven (LG), or Hell (LE) the stone immediately detonates in an incredible conflagration that triggers all of its different effects simultaneously (minus create undead horde), destroying the stone and likely a large swath of the plane upon which it detonated.

SPELLS

BLOOD TO SAP

SPELL 6

RARE **TRANSMUTATION**

Traditions occult, primal

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range 30 feet; **Targets** 1 creature

Saving Throw Fortitude; **Duration** sustained up to 1 minute

You cause the target's blood to thicken and slow in its veins. It must make a Fortitude save.

Blood to sap can target only living creatures with a discernible anatomy and a bloodstream. Constructs, elementals, oozes, plants, and undead (except those with blood-related abilities, such as vampires) are immune to the effects of this spell.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target takes 6d6 damage and for the duration of the spell is clumsy 2, but gains a +1 status bonus to AC, plus resistance 5 to bleed and poison.

Failure The target takes 12d6 damage and for the duration of the spell is clumsy 4 and slowed 1, but gains a +1 status bonus to AC, plus resistance 5 to bleed and poison.

Critical Failure The target takes 12d6 damage and for the duration of the spell is clumsy 4 and slowed 2, takes a -10-foot circumstance penalty to its Speeds, and gains a +1 status bonus to AC, plus resistance 5 to bleed and poison.

Original Source: The original version of the terrible hybrid thing spell *blood to sap* was created by Steven D. Russell and first appeared in the *Pathways Bestiary* by **Rite Publishing**.

DESTROY WATER

SPELL 1

EVOCATION **WATER**

Traditions divine, primal

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range 30 feet; **Area** 10-foot burst

You destroy (dry up) up to 2 gallons of liquid in the area, including magical water, but excluding magical potions or alchemical elixirs or bombs.

You can target a single creature with the water trait or made primarily of liquid (such as many oozes) in the area instead, and it takes 2d4 damage (basic Fortitude save).

Note: This spell can't destroy water within any other creature. Water weighs about 8 pounds per gallon. One cubic foot of water contains roughly 8 gallons and weighs about 60 pounds.

Heightened (+1) The amount of water increases by up to 2 gallons, and the damage increases by 2d4.

Original Source: The original version of the spell *destroy water* appeared in the *Book of Lost Spells* by **Frog God Games**.

YELLOW SIGN

SPELL 10

RARE **ENCHANTMENT** **INCAPACITATION** **MENTAL** **VISUAL**

Traditions divine, occult

Cast 10 minutes (material, somatic, verbal)

Range touch; **Targets** 1 object

Saving Throw Will; **Duration** unlimited

You scribe a Yellow Sign, the three-sided, tentacled device that is the religious symbol of the Great Old One, Hastur. You can set a password; a trigger such as when a creature looks at the rune, touches the rune, passes over the rune, or passes through a portal bearing the rune; or both for the symbol. If it is triggered, the glyph activates for 1 hour, and all creatures that look at it must attempt a Will save or become controlled by Hastur as the spell dominate.

This causes such creatures to seek to aid any obvious minions or worshipers of Hastur in sight, and any true worshiper of Hastur can command the affected creatures as if that worshiper had been the one to dominate them. In the case of conflicting commands issued from different true worshipers of Hastur, the second worshiper must attempt a flat check against a DC equal to the level of the first worshiper; on a success, the second worshiper can command the targets for that round. If no worshipers or agents of Hastur are in sight, an affected creature can act normally. When affected by Yellow Sign in this way, the effects last for 1 day.

When a creature critically fails its saving throw against this spell, Hastur takes note and, for reasons of his own, decides to control the target personally. In this case, the actions taken by the dominated creature are left to the GM to determine, but the effects of this spell's Yellow Sign persist for 10 days and the commands issued cannot be countermanded by any other creature, even if they are Hastur worshipers. Regardless of how long the effects last or whether Hastur directly controls a victim, if a creature failed to resist this spell's effects, Hastur can target that victim's dreams for the rest of its life. Whether or not the Great Old One ever chooses to do so is left to the GM to determine.

Original Source: The original version of this spell first appeared in issue #110 of the official adventure path series for the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*.

RARE MATERIALS

Many strange and even otherworldly substances can be found in the distant reaches of the Haunted Steppe, too remote for easy exploitation yet tempting enough for their value to issue a siren call to those seeking profit despite the danger.

INSECTUM

Introduced in *LLj: The Blight: Richard Pett's Crooked City* by Frog God Games, insectum are large and unique insects and other types of vermin native to the City-State of Castorhage that the city's ruthless Insectum Guild has through a combination of alchemy, toxicology, and insect husbandry produced a range of alchemically enhanced drug-like insect venoms. There are dozens of varieties of these vermin with dozens of different effects, but only a few are encountered here. The effects (and market value in Castorhage) of these insectum have been reproduced here for your convenience.

BLAKE'S SANGUISUGA

ITEM 7

UNCOMMON ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE
CONTACT DRUG POISON

Price 60 gp

Usage worn; Bulk —

Activate [one-action] Interact

This mottled brown leech greatly elevates your

pain threshold for the few hours it remains attached to your skin.

Saving Throw Fortitude DC 23; **Onset** 1 minute; **Maximum Duration** 3 hours; **Stage 1** resistance 3 to all mental and physical damage, clumsy 1 (1 hour)

FESTERFEW

ITEM 6

UNCOMMON ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE DRUG
INGESTED POISON

Price 35 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk —

Activate ♦ Interact

You eat a handful of these live lice. You can't recover from the sickened condition from festerfew while affected.

Saving Throw Fortitude DC 20; **Maximum Duration** 4 hours; **Stage 1** +2 item bonus to Fortitude saving throws against diseases and poisons, sickened 1 (1 hour); **Stage 2** +3 item bonus to Fortitude saving throws against diseases and poisons, sickened 2 (1 hour)

HOWLING NIGHTSHADE GRUB

ITEM 4

UNCOMMON ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE DRUG
INGESTED POISON

Price 20 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk —

Activate ♦ Interact

This sausage-sized grub tastes disgusting and howls when eaten.

Saving Throw Fortitude DC 18; **Maximum Duration** 24 hours; **Stage 1** resistance 5 to cold and fire damage from temperature, +1 item bonus to AC and saves to which you are taking penalties caused by the fatigued condition due to temperature, -1 to initiative rolls (6 hours); **Stage 2** resistance 10 to cold and fire damage from temperature, +1 item bonus to AC and saves to which you are taking penalties caused by the fatigued condition due to temperature, -2 to initiative rolls (12 hours); **Stage 3** resistance 10 to cold and fire damage from temperature, +1 item

bonus to AC and saves to which you are taking penalties caused by the fatigued condition due to temperature, -2 to initiative rolls and slowed 1 for 1 round after rolling initiative (6 hours)

MISERY SLUG

ITEM 6

UNCOMMON **ALCHEMICAL** **CONSUMABLE** **DRUG**
INGESTED **POISON**

Price 40 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** —

Activate ♦ Interact

You eat a slimy, black finger-long slug.

Saving Throw Fortitude DC 20; **Maximum**

Duration 4 rounds; **Stage 1** regain 1d8 Hit Points (1 round), flat-footed; **Stage 2** regain 1d8 Hit Points, flat-footed, and fatigued, (1 round); **Stage 3** regain 1d8 Hit Points, flat-footed, fatigued, and enfeebled 1 (1 round)

METALLURGIC AMBER

Metallurgic amber is a radioactive heavy metal with a crystalline structure. Though the unusual ore shares many characteristics with more common radioactive materials such as uranium and radium, it differs in several important respects. Unlike other isotopes, metallurgic amber's atomic structure allows the metal to be grown from a seed crystal. A character who is a master in Crafting and has the Alchemical Crafting feat can attempt a DC 30 Crafting check to crystallize metallurgic amber and yield 1d4 x 10% more metallurgic amber in the process, though the process takes one week.

Prolonged exposure to metallurgic amber causes telltale radiation burns like most other radioactive substances, but that is the general extent of its similarities to other unstable ores. Outside of superficial burns, metallurgic amber causes no other damage to humanoid tissue and structures except for one critical organ — the brain. Metallurgic amber would be generally safe if not for its debilitating effects on the humanoid brain and, to a lesser extent, those of animals. Every time a humanoid comes within 20 feet of metallurgic amber for 2d4 hours over the course of a 24-hour period, he must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save to avoid suffering radiation burns that deal 1d3 points of damage and is not prevented by fire resistance. These hours need not be consecutive, and the PC may be required to make multiple saves over the course of a 24-hour period. The DC for this save increases by +1 for every previous save.

If the individual fails this save, he must then succeed at a DC 10 Will save to avoid getting radiation sickness, which affects everyone differently. The DC for this save increases by +1 for every previous save.

RADIATION SICKNESS

(DISEASE 6)

Radiation sickness affects each person's brain differently. At each stage, a victim rolls 1d8 (2d8 on a critical failure) on the following table. If the effect allows an additional saving throw, use the same DC. Conditions caused by the disease can't be healed until the disease is removed, but if the affliction is reduced to below Stage 1, it doesn't progress again. **Saving Throw** Will DC varies; Stage 1 Roll on table below (1 day); Stage 2 Roll on table below (1 day).

2d8	Result
1	You are clumsy 1.
2	You are fatigued (rest does not remove this condition).
3	You are flat-footed to all creatures.
4	You are frightened 1 (and cannot reduce your frightened condition below 1 by any means).
5	You are sickened 1 (successfully retching removes the condition for 1d6 minutes).
6	You are stupefied 1.
7	You are slowed 1.
8	You see minor hallucinations and take a -2 status penalty to Perception checks and saves against mental effects.
9	You are paranoid, and treat no one as an ally.
10	You are clumsy 2.
11	You are sickened 2 (successfully retching removes the condition for 1d6 minutes).
12	You are stupefied 2.
13	You are slowed 2.
14	Each time you roll initiative, attempt a Will save. On a failure, you are stunned, with a value of 1d8 (2d8 on a critical failure).
15	Each time you roll initiative, attempt a Will save. On a failure, you are confused for 1d6 rounds.
16	Reroll twice with both effects occurring simultaneously (if you get redundant conditions, add the values together).

If the effect is later cured and he is exposed to metallurgic amber again, he must resume attempting Will saves to avoid radiation sickness once more. Strangely, most non-humanoid creatures suffer no ill effects whatsoever from long-term exposure to the odd substance with the exception of animals; metallurgic amber makes them highly aggressive.

Lead absorbs metallurgic amber's radioactive emissions, a fact a PC can determine with a successful DC 25 Nature check. The lead contained in a pewter ring or pendant is sufficient to nullify metallurgic amber's debilitating effects within a 5-foot radius of the lead object. Larger quantities of lead provide no additional beneficial effects and do not extend the metal's shielding properties beyond 5 feet. Positioning a lead object within 5 feet of the metallurgic amber completely absorbs all of the radiation emitted by the object, thus completely nullifying its effects. This does not, however, protect from the radiation damage caused by creatures infused with metallurgic amber (e.g. the radioactive combusted above or ash giants below).

Metallurgic amber melts at a temperature of 1,050° F, roughly one-third that of iron, and half that of copper.

NOQUAL ORE MATERIAL 8+

UNCOMMON PRECIOUS

The starmetal noqualAP61 looks like a pale green crystal to the untrained eye but can be worked as iron despite its appearance. Noqual is light—half as heavy as iron, yet just as strong. More importantly, noqual is strangely resistant to magic. An object made of noqual gains a +4 item bonus on any saving throw made against a magical source. Weapons made of noqual gain a +1 item bonus to damage rolls against

constructs and undead. The wearer of a suit of noqual armor gains a +1 item bonus on all saving throws against spells and magical effects and resistance 5 to damage from magical sources, but must make a DC 3 flat check to Cast a Spell or the spell is disrupted.

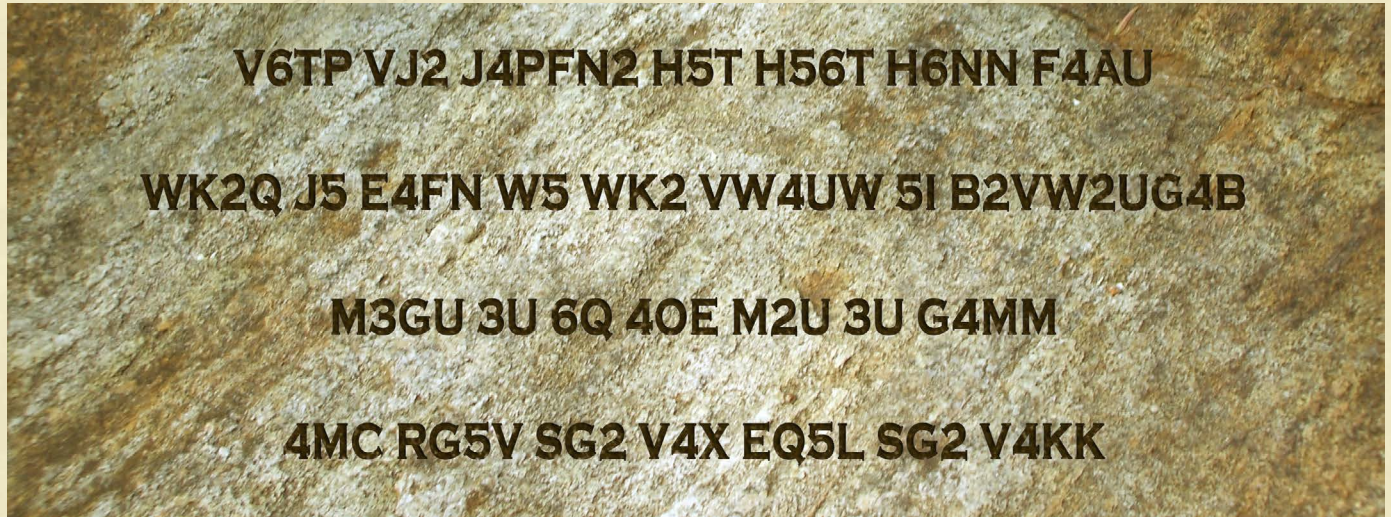
A metal item made of noqual is lighter than one made of iron or steel: the item's Bulk is reduced by 1 (reduced to light Bulk if its normal Bulk is 1, with no effect on an item that normally has light Bulk). The Price of an item made of this material is based on the item's normal Bulk, not its reduced Bulk for being made of noqual, but reduce the Bulk before making any further Bulk adjustments for the size of the item.

- Type noqual chunk; Price 500 gp; Bulk L
- Type noqual ingot; Price 5,000 gp; Bulk 1
- Type standard-grade noqual object; Level 8; Price 350 sp per Bulk
- Type high-grade noqual object; Level 16; Price 6,000 sp per Bulk

NOQUAL ITEMS	HARDNESS	HP	BT
Thin Items			
Standard-grade	5	20	10
High-grade	10	40	20
Items			
Standard-grade	11	44	22
High-grade	14	56	28
Structures			
Standard-grade	22	88	44
High-grade	28	112	56

APPENDIX D: PLAYER HANDOUTS

HANDOUT 5A



HANDOUT 5B

(TRANSLATED FROM ORC)

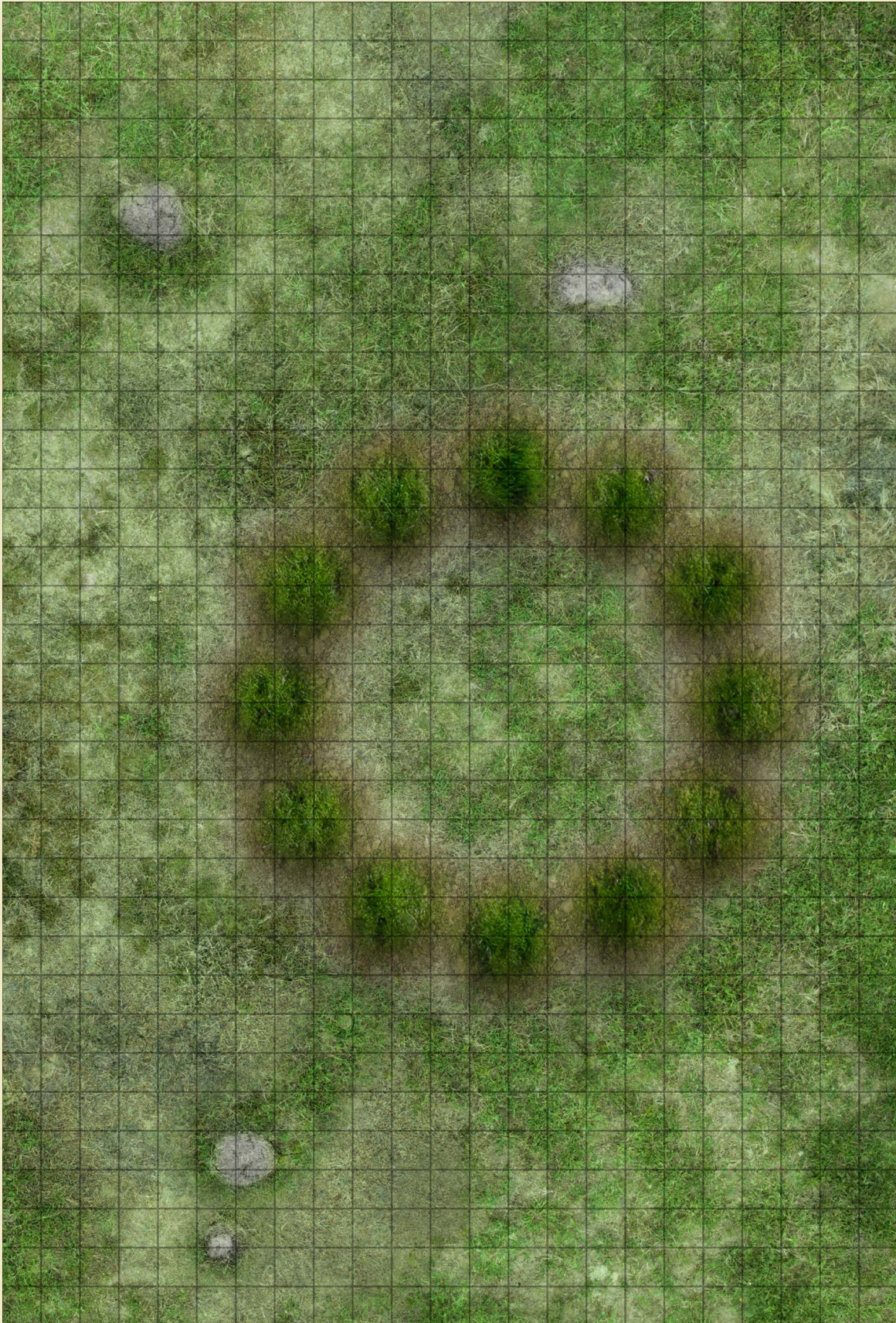
THE SHAMANS OF GROTAAG SAY THAT THE TIME OF THE BURNING STAR HAS COME. GO TO THE PLAINS AND SCOUR THE HUMANS DEAD SETTLEMENTS. GROTAAG HAS SHOWN THE SHAMANS A WALL WITH WRITING ON IT. FIND THE WALL AND FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE NEXT LANDMARK. THEY WILL LEAD TO THE GIANT COLUMN OF SMOKE. TELL NONE ABOUT YOUR MISSION. OTHERS ALSO PURSUE THE SMOLDERING ROCK. KILL ANY THAT STAND IN YOUR WAY.

HANDOUT 5C

Find the lone tower on the plateau and peer through the glass to find the way. The Angus will reward you well.

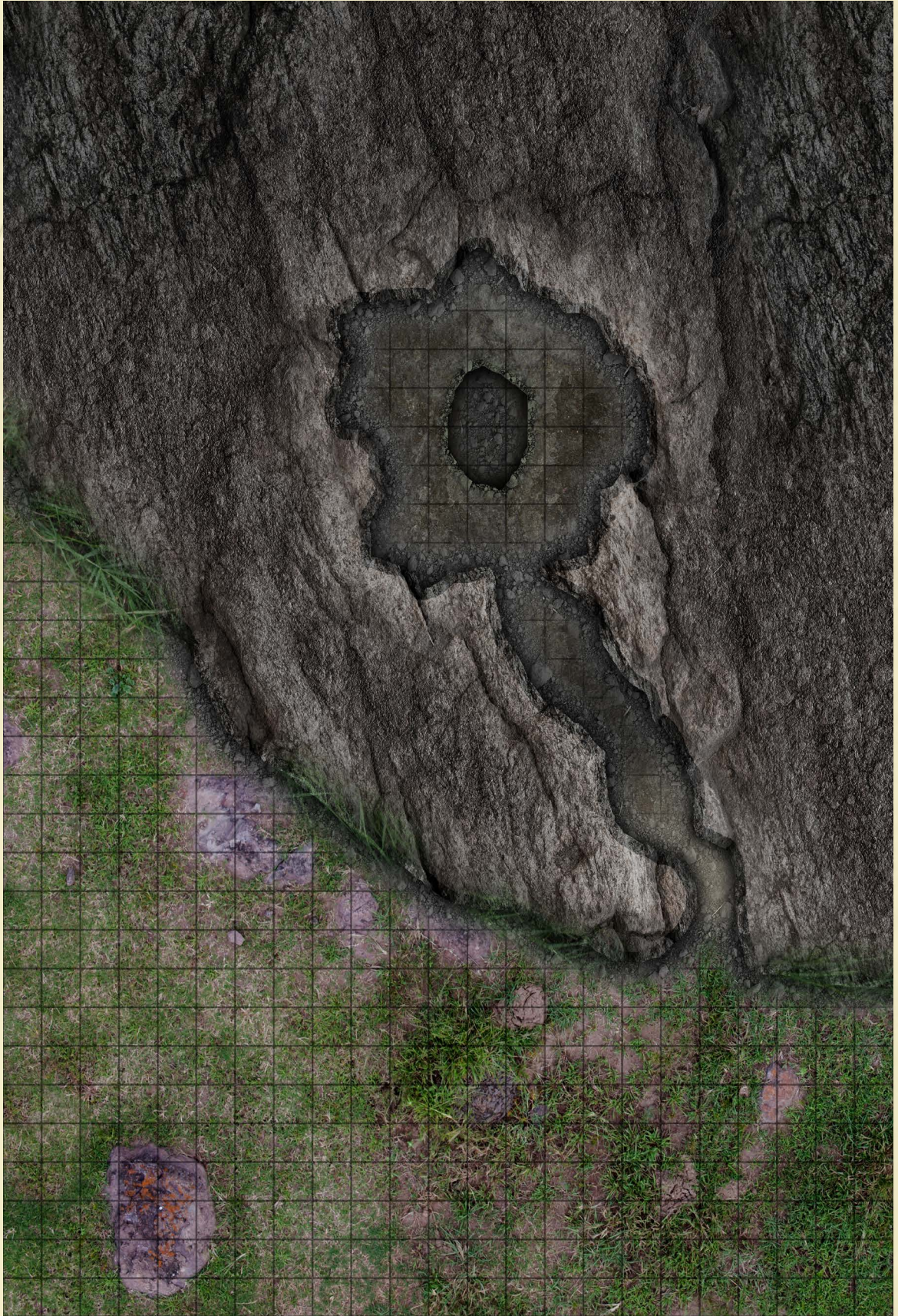
HANDOUT 5D

"To iron out the line, angle from the apex."





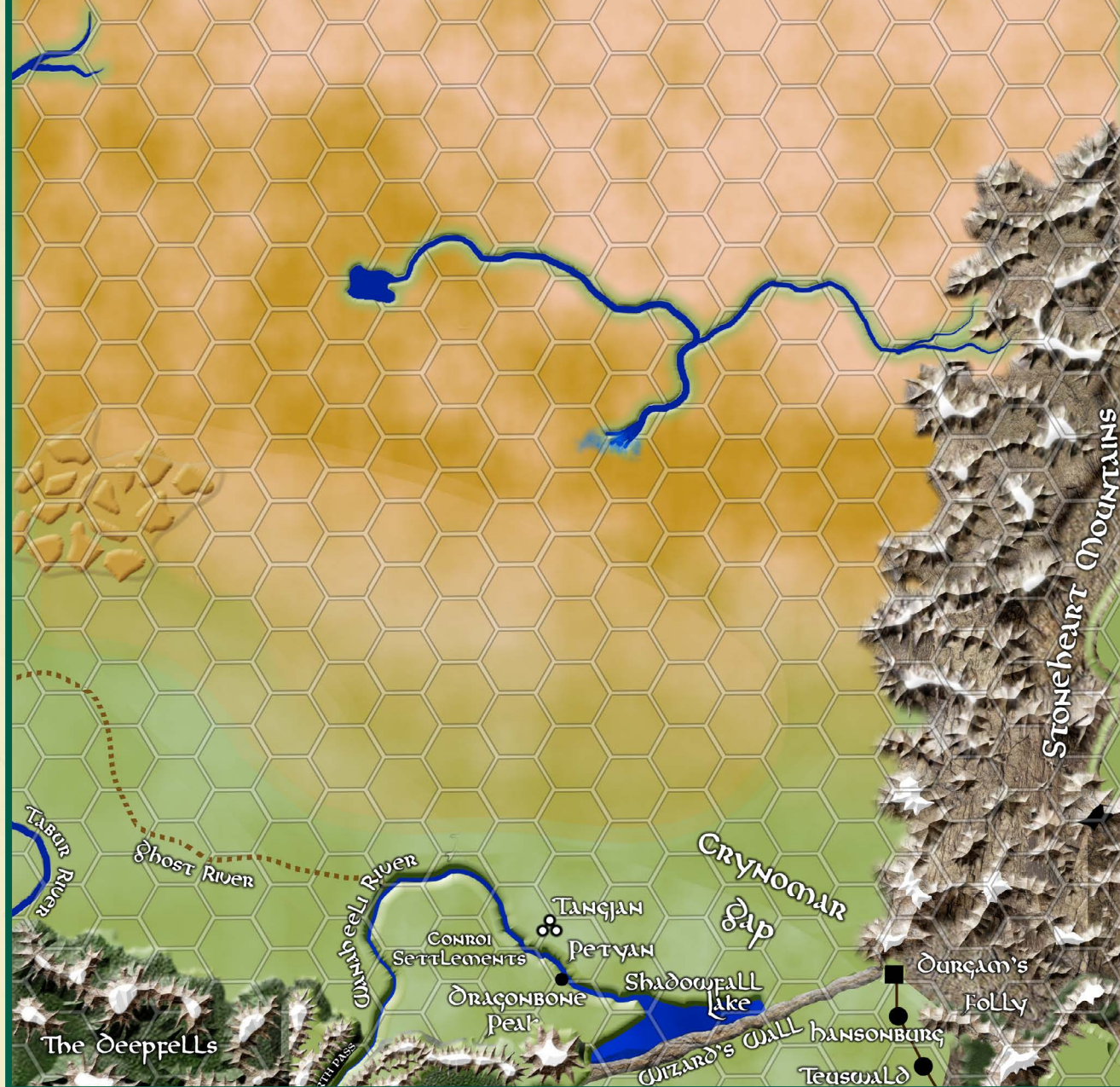




THE HAUNTED STEPPE



1 HEX = 100 MILES



E. SIXTUN'S SPYGLASS

GROUND FLOOR



Upper Floor

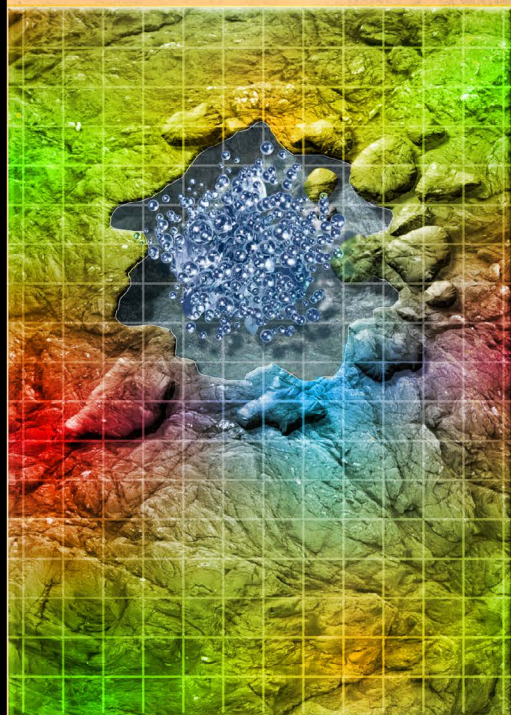


1 square = 5 ft.

F. HALLELUJAH SPRINGS



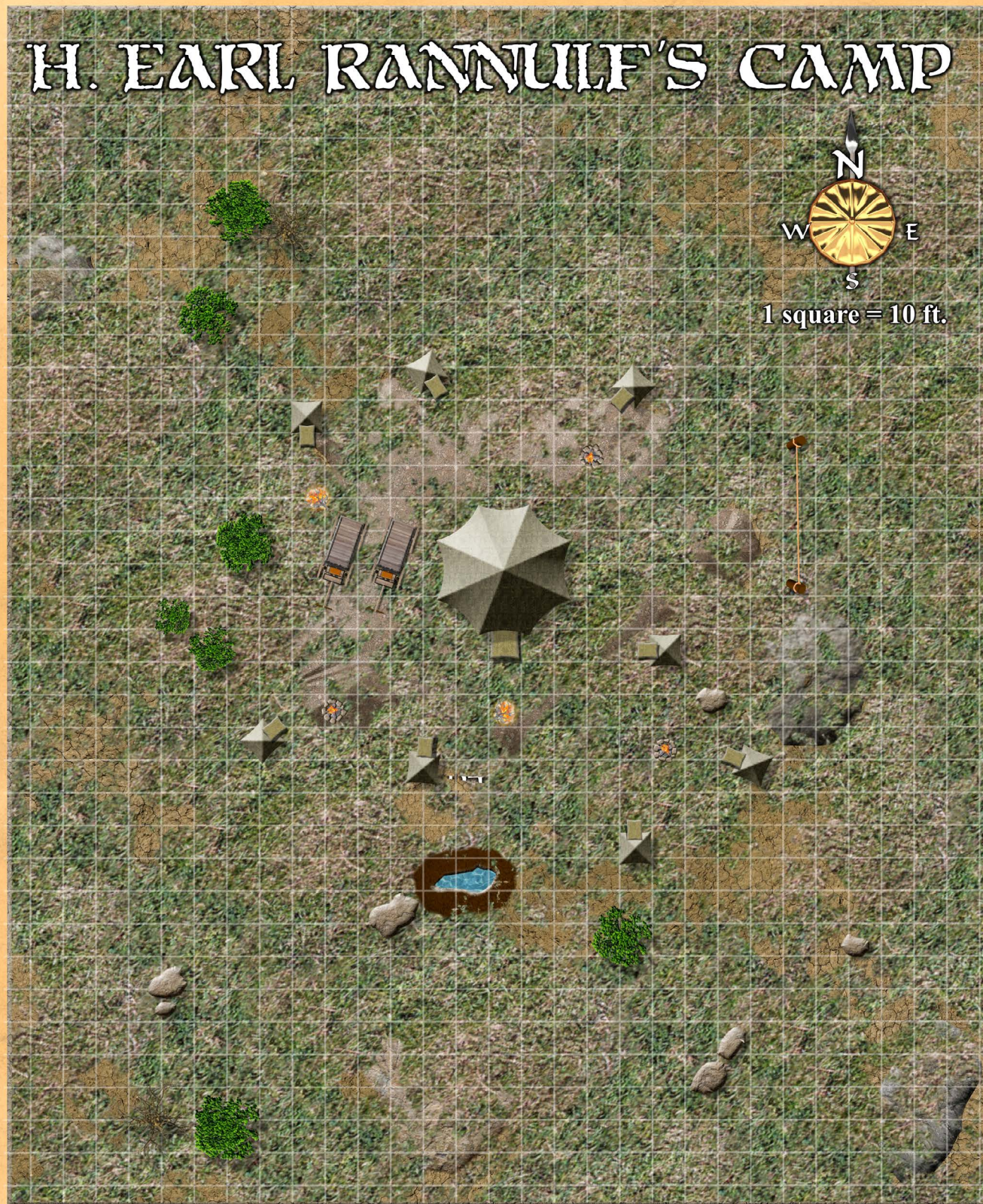
1 square = 10 ft.



H. EARL RANNULF'S CAMP



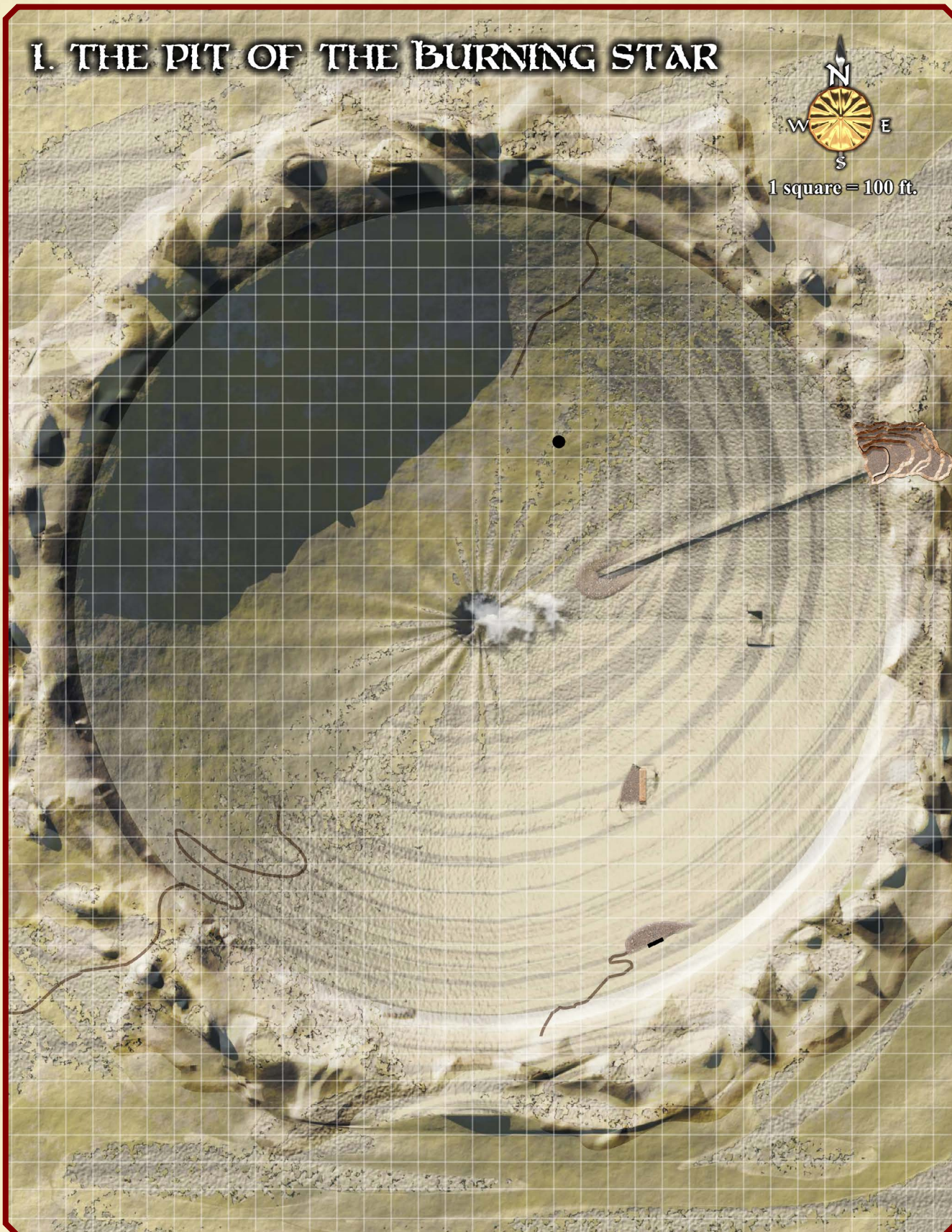
1 square = 10 ft.



1. THE PIT OF THE BURNING STAR



1 square = 100 ft.

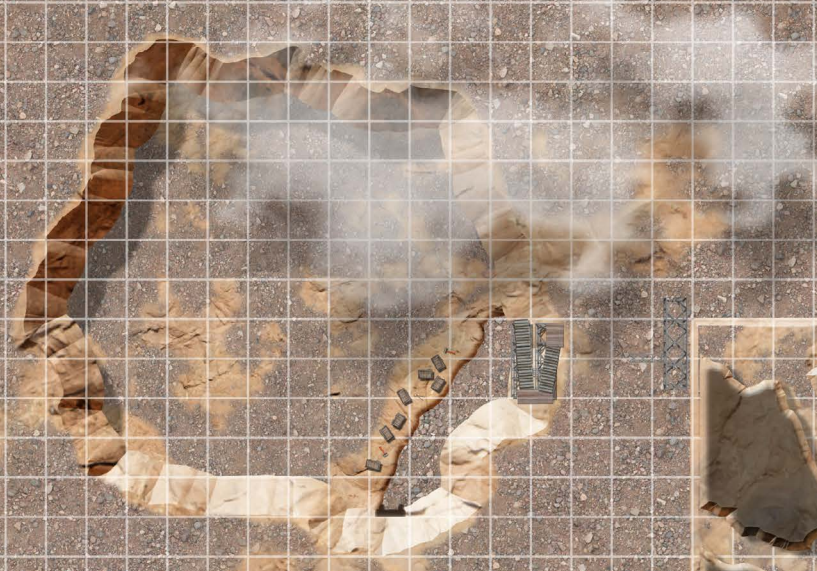




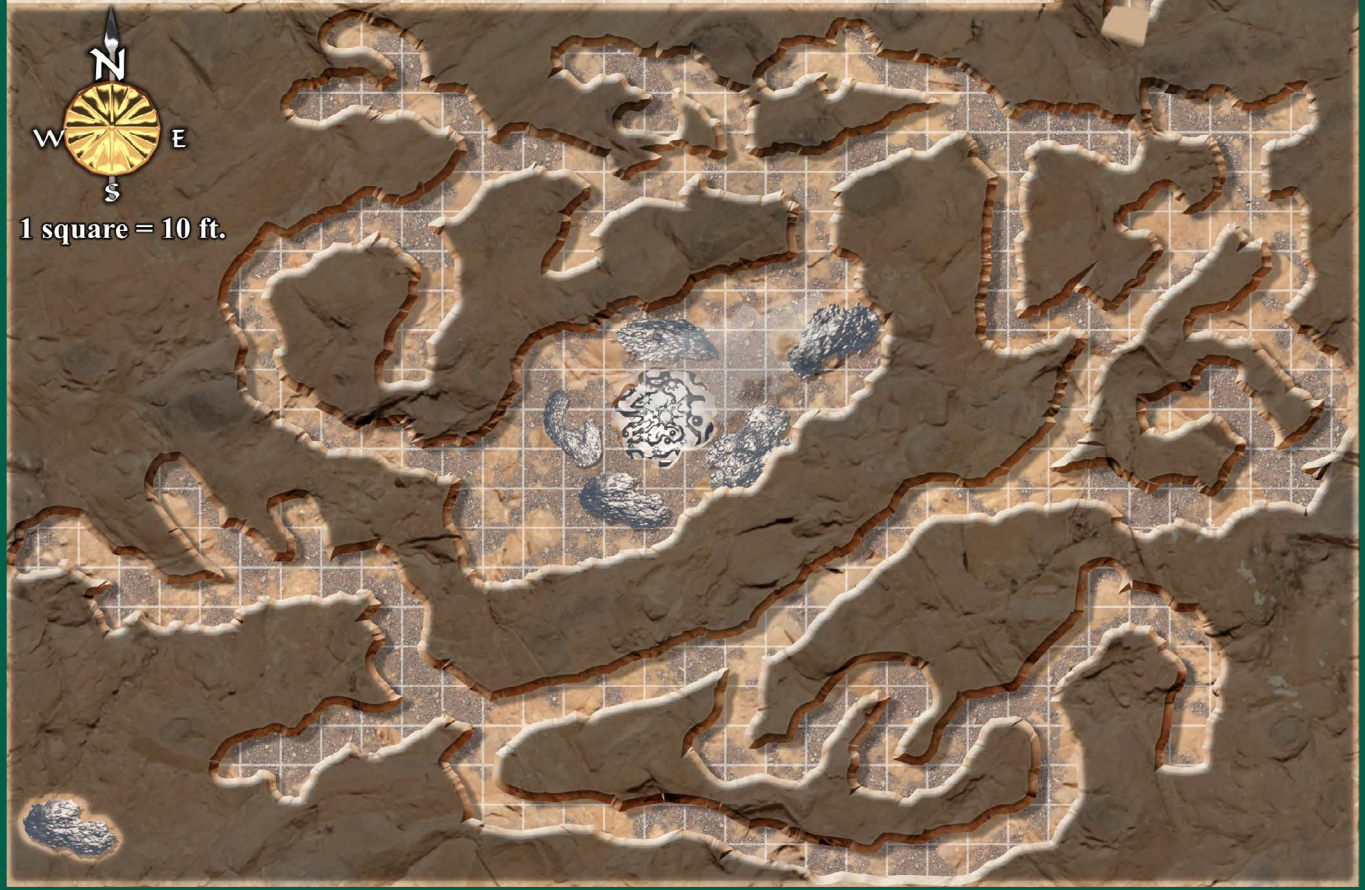
M. FUMING CHASM



1 square = 10 ft.



1 square = 10 ft.





O. THE NEST

1 square = 10 ft.



TOP VIEW

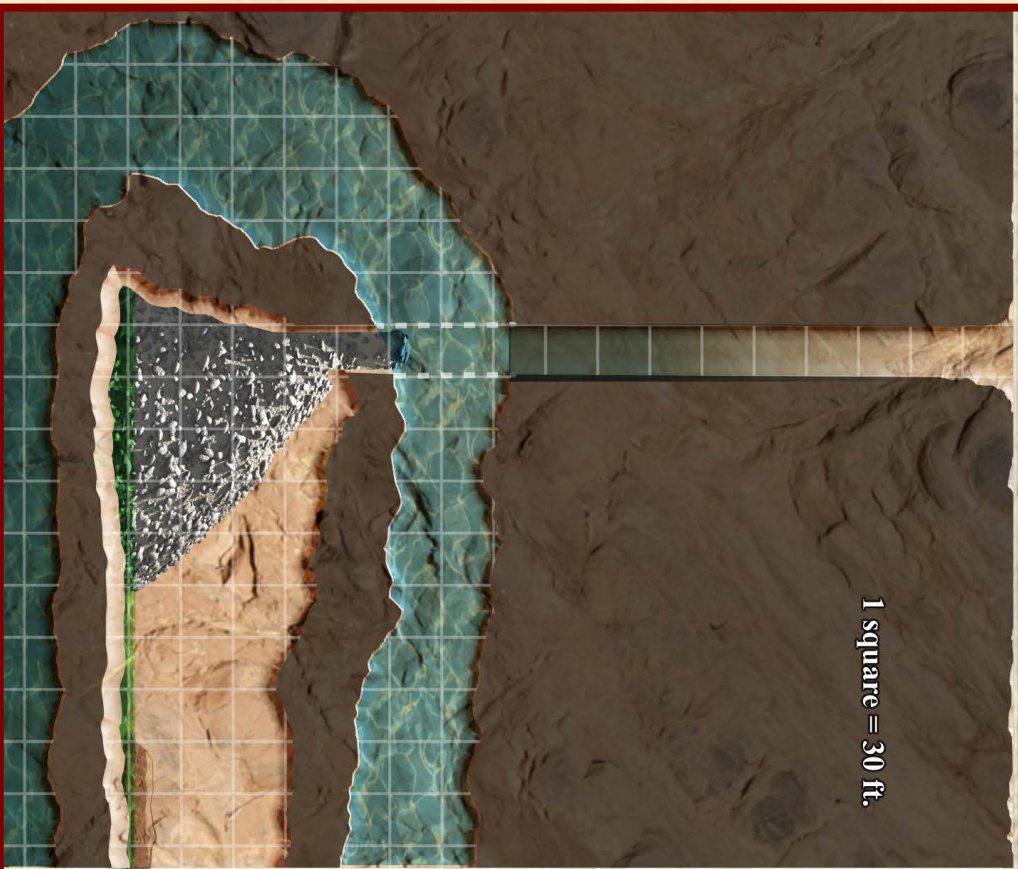


1 square = 10 ft.



P. THE TRAVELERS' TOMB

1 square = 30 ft.



Top View

1 square = 30 ft.



1 square = 10 ft.



Q. THE MOTHER LODE

Upper Tunnels



1 square = 10 ft.



Lower Tunnels



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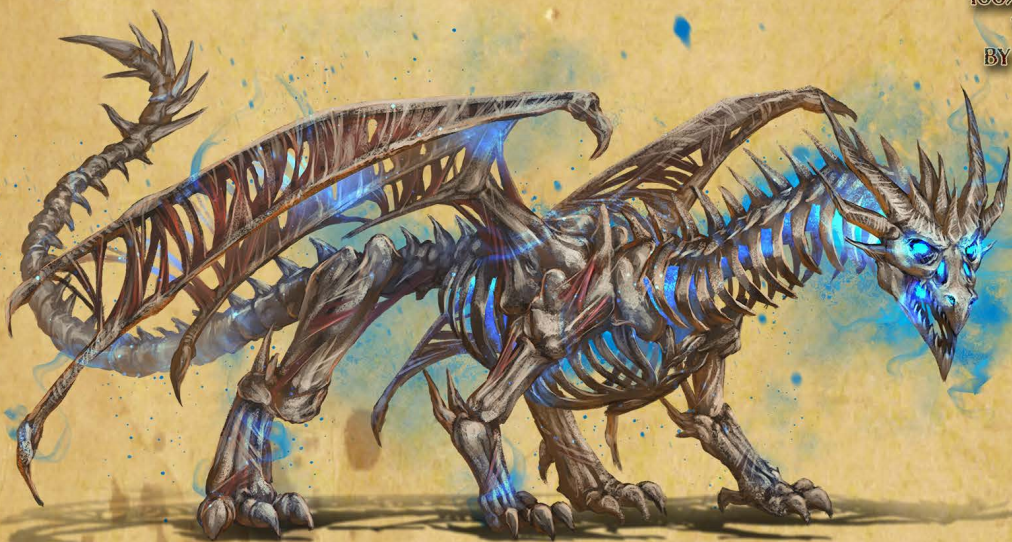
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